



Tsunami Education Kit **World Vision**

Case Studies

Play returns for child survivors in Aceh

By James East

The sound of a child's laughter was again heard among the homeless of Aceh—two weeks after the tsunami struck Indonesia's coast. Dozens of children played with balls, colouring books, building blocks and sang songs.

In the depressing surroundings of the camp the sight of children running and kicking balls is a reminder to families that life moves on, even in spite of the truly tragic losses experienced by many.

The establishment of a tent for children—a special place of their own—is a key step in ensuring that children are given a safe place to play and work through any trauma with counsellors.

So many children have lost loved ones and had their homes erased that restoring a sense of stability and a regular routine is crucial.

Typically a child displays trauma by withdrawing, by becoming irritable or being aggressive when their trauma is not dealt with. Art work is central to the informal curriculum.

Fadhal Parmizi, 10, has drawn a picture that shows people floating in the sea crying "help" while hundreds of stick men flee the scene up the hills and inland. Luckily his father escaped the worst of the deluge after he was flung into a tree. His dad is now searching for any relatives who lived in his village. In the meantime Fadhal is living with eight members of his extended family in a

tent based at the social welfare centre. Fadhal himself lost his older brother to the tsunami. The tent is one of many erected around the centre.

Grace Hukom, a World Vision worker who is overseeing the children's tents says bringing youngsters together helps her and the three volunteers from the camp, identify those who might need further counselling and support.

"A lot of the children have been drawing big waves, houses falling over and others have drawn helicopters flying over," she said.

Lynn Arnold, Vice-President of World Vision's Asia-Pacific Region, said: "We know from relief situations all over the world that post-traumatic stress is part of the normal human response to disasters. Children are not immune from this debilitating condition and in some cases they are more affected."

He said parents would be reassured by having their children back in a safe environment. World Vision hoped to quickly set up ten tents.

India—Prehaba



Prehaba, 9, has taken on the responsibility of looking after her younger brother and sister since the tsunami. She has no choice. Her parents were drowned, and her grieving grandmother has no strength left in her to care for the orphans.

So it's Prehaba who has signed for and collected the relief packages from World Vision. She's brought them back to the shelter they now call home, so that the family can open them together.

Inside is a change of clothes for everyone, the first they've had in days. There's more to come—a kerosene stove, notebooks for when they return to school, and a locker to secure their meagre belongings while at the shelter.

Prehaba's mother used to support two families with a small business. Now she's gone, Prehaba's grandmother doesn't know what will happen to them. "I'm scared about the future for these children," she says tearfully.

Sri Lanka—Nanandhuga

Nanandhuga and her mother are crying for joy.

They were separated while fleeing the tsunami in Ampara, Sri Lanka. For four awful days Nanandhuga believed her entire family was dead.

Instead, they'd been sheltering and hoping that when it was safe to return they would find their missing daughter.

Nanandhuga, a sponsored child, was recognised by World Vision staff, making it easier to locate her parents.

World Vision has helped the family with food and basic supplies to see them through this terrible time. Now Nanandhuga and her family are ready to return home and start their lives again.



Indonesia

“I have no tears left,” says Sufana, aged 34. “My eyes have gone dry.”

Sufana’s family lived in Banda Aceh, and his brother’s family in nearby Meulaboh.

The brothers were out of town when they heard the news about the tsunami.

It took five days before they could return to their home. During that time they gradually came to terms with the fact that their families were likely to have perished in the disaster.

Of his 27 relatives, Sufana found only one survivor—his younger sister, in the local hospital with a broken leg.

His brother’s wife and five children, living in the direct wake of the epicentre, will probably never be found.

Sufana is now throwing his energies into caring for his sister, and helping others at the hospital.

Thailand

Montip Sayoon, 26, was away from her community working on the island of Phuket when the wave struck. She rushed back home to find nothing left.

Her home on the Phang Na coast, which took the full brunt of Thailand’s tsunami, had been obliterated and her whole family and all the neighbours were gone.

“I went around more than 15 hospitals. I searched the temples where people were staying but I haven’t found anyone.”

“This makes me think my family is all dead.”

Despite her distress, Montip is keeping herself busy. Already she’s helped pack and

distribute World Vision supplies including rice, footwear and clothing for some of the 500 families living in her makeshift relief camp.

India



Ten-year-old Arul was playing near a bridge when she heard a sound like an aeroplane.

“When I looked, I saw that there was water near the temple,” explains Arul.

“Everybody was running so I pulled my younger sisters with me and ran along with everybody else. I didn’t know what was happening.”

The crowded bridge stood its ground and saved their lives, along with many others from their community.

Miraculously, their parents had also survived, although it took many frightening hours to find them.

Arul’s mother explains that her children were playing near the bridge while her husband had gone fishing.

“If Arul had not acted immediately and protected her younger sisters, they would all have died,” she says.

They’re very lucky to be alive. But with no savings, no home, and no fishing boat, the family will need significant help to rebuild.

Thailand

Growing up in Phuket, 17 year old Max was almost always near the main beach. He worked for his father on a tourist dive boat, and also dropped in regularly to World Vision Thailand's youth centre, to see friends or talk through issues he was facing.

But on the morning of the tsunami, Max was away from the beach. The centre was closed, and no dive was booked.

Max worries that he was not there to help. Two of his closest friends were washed out to sea. His father also lost friends and employees, as well as his boat.

Father and son have not yet talked about their grief together, nor have they discussed their loss of livelihood.

Instead, Max is putting his energies into helping World Vision, both with distributions and with fixing the swamped and battered youth centre. Difficult times lie ahead for the communities of Phuket; it will be needed more than ever.

Sri Lanka

Chathurange is in hospital with just a broken arm. But the 22 year old has taken more substantial emotional damage. He was on the train, with his three best friends, that was ripped from its tracks by the tsunami.

"My friends screamed at me to climb on top of the train and float myself to safety as they all knew I could not swim."

Somehow Chathurange managed to cling to a tree until the waters subsided. He watched others, including children, succumb to the force of the wave. And his three friends were swept away.

"If I cannot forget them. I must carry this pain every day of my life. Who will unburden me?" asks Chathurange.

"I keep thinking I am cursed to go on living. I was the most afraid of the four of us and the only one who could not swim."

World Vision will work closely with individuals like Chathurange to ease their psychological trauma in the wake of this disaster.

Activities

Choose one of the stories to illustrate to the rest of the class. Here are some ideas:

- You could tell their story and use actions to illustrate the impact of the Tsunami on their life
- Draw pictures to represent how the Tsunami affected their family
- Write a poem
- Design a cartoon strip illustrating the impact of the Tsunami on their family and village

Read the story from James East, "Play returns to child survivors". As a follow-up activity:

You have been asked to provide support to children in one of the camps in Aceh. You are planning a visit to the camp and will stay there for 2 weeks. Make a list of activities you plan to do with the children to make a difference to their lives.