

EMPOWERMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF TSUNAMI AFFECTED FAMILIES

*A proposal submitted by the International Foundation for
Revitalization, Empowerment, Education and Development*



Project Justification

The tsunami that struck South East Asia on December 26, 2005 caused an unprecedented number of deaths and devastation to the coastal communities of Sri Lanka. The resultant damage has caused immeasurable hardship to the affected families, and placed a severe burden on the government. The government assisted by relief organizations is working round the clock in order to provide relief to the affected people. However, breadwinners of a large number of affected families are still in camps and temporary houses and require targeted assistance in order to regain self-sufficiency. The project objective is to assist the survivors rebuild their vocation and provide effective relief to these devastated communities. This collaborative project will be implemented by I-FREED (USA), Rotary Club International (Sri Lanka), College of the General Practitioners (Sri Lanka) and Sinhala Women's Organization (SWO), Sri Lanka.

Objective

To improve the quality of life of the tsunami affected families in Sri Lanka by providing assistance to restore their livelihood. This will be achieved by:

- **Facilitating self employment needs**
- **Assisting small businesses that were damaged by the tsunami**
- **Providing medical help to families with members who have disabilities due to chronic injuries and medical or psychological illnesses from tsunami related events**

Information on collaborating organizations and their role in the project

International Foundation for Revitalization, Empowerment, Education and Development (I-FREED)

I-FREED, a US based non-profit organization has been providing assistance to rural families and villages to revitalize and empower their communities. The organization website, www.i-freed.org documents these projects. In the aftermath of the tsunami, I-FREED spearheaded relief efforts to Sri Lanka and delivered much needed medical supplies and help to the affected communities. Ranil Abeysekera and Kanishka de Silva will direct this project. Ranil Abeysekera received his Bachelors and Masters Degree in Computer Science and Engineering from University of Houston, Clear Lake and is currently a senior software architect at International Business Machines (IBM). Kanishka de Silva received his Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka and his Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering from Texas A & M University. He is currently working at NASA Johnson Space Center as an Engineering Specialist for the Space Shuttle and International Space Station programs. The leadership skills of Ranil Abeysekera and Kanishka de Silva were evident as they led I-FREED to organize its biggest fund raiser, "Run for Tsunami Relief", held at University of Houston, Clear Lake on March 19, 2005. The event was organized in five

short weeks and raised US \$ 47,000 to benefit the victims of the tsunami disaster. In order to assist other tsunami affected countries, part of the collected funds were donated to the Bush Clinton fund. The project directors will be assisted by I-FREED executive committee members Mahendra Rodrigo (Secretary, I-FREED and Vice President, Gulf Coast Engineering Inc.) and Nuwan Samaranayaka (Director, I-FREED and Software Engineer, GHG Corporation). The project directors will coordinate all project activities with the affiliate organizations in Sri Lanka and will lead the decision making advisory board for this project in the USA (See appendix 1 for details of the advisory boards). I-FREED expects this project to span over a period of one year. At the end of the year, the project goals will be re-evaluated, and further assistance will be provided when deemed necessary.

Rotary Club International (RCI) -Sri Lanka

The Rotary Club International (Sri Lanka) was formed in 1993. The Rotarians have mounted a massive relief effort following the Tsunami. The organizational strength and the large volunteer base that they bring to this project during the data gathering and implementation phase will lead to the successful realization of the project objectives. Mr. Clarence Seimon AID, Deputy District Governor (2001 -2002) and the past president of the Colombo Uptown Rotary Club will be the project coordinator for this project. Mr. Lucky Peeris, the current District Governor, will assist him. Information regarding the Rotary Club Sri Lanka and their tsunami relief activities are documented on their web site, www.rotary-srilanka.org. Members and volunteers of RCI, through their local clubs in the selected areas will gather detailed information from the affected families in order to determine their eligibility to receive assistance. They will assist and monitor the distribution of the funds to the affected people. They will also track and monitor effectiveness and usage of aid provided to the affected families for a period of one year.

The College of General Practitioners (CGP) - Sri Lanka

The College of General Practitioners (Sri Lanka) an organization formed by the medical practitioners of Sri Lanka, provided emergency relief, medical relief and disaster management in the aftermath of the tsunami. Neil Abeysekera MBBS, DSM, MD (Family Medicine) will be the overall project director for this project in Sri Lanka. He was the past president of The College of General Practitioners (2000 – 2002) and was a Co -founder of the Lions Club International (Divulapitiya – District 306B). Dr. Abeysekera brings his impeccable track record of community service and advocacy for the improvement of indigent medical services in Sri Lanka to this project. His knowledge of the country, relationships with the various governmental organizations, medical organizations and the Lions Club will give strength to this project. Information and Tsunami relief activities of the College of General Practitioners can be found on their web site www.cgp.lk. The CGP will organize medical camps and provide medical services and psychological counseling as well as needed medications to the affected individuals. If further referral services are needed those too will be arranged.

Sinhala Women's Organization – Sri Lanka

The Sinhala Women's Organization (SWO) is a registered charity in Sri Lanka (1985) with a mission to promote the advancement and welfare of women, children and families. It has pioneered many projects at grass root levels as well as at a national level. The current organizational record of accomplishment spans over 20 years. Members and volunteers with extensive experience in rehabilitation and welfare services in the Northern and Eastern Province has pioneered vocational training projects in carpentry, masonry and house construction in these areas. The organization also has vast experience in disaster management as evidenced by the projects they have implemented. Some of these projects were funded by the **World Health Organization** ("community health and prevention of HIV/STD/AIDS", 1997-99 for Rs. 2.0 million), World Bank ("Janasaviya poverty alleviation program", 1994-95 for Rs. 2.3 million) and Sri Lanka-Canadian Development Fund ("Welfare, rehabilitation and reconstruction of families affected by the North East conflict", 1990-96 for Rs. 5 million).

Ms. Indrani Iriyagola (President), assisted by Susila Weerakody (Vice President) will direct the project activities for SWO. Ms. Iriyagola received her Bachelors Degree from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and has received postgraduate training in Education from the University of London. She was the Chairperson of the National Committee on Women at the Ministry of Women's Affairs until 2004 and has served on many advisory bodies including a project sponsored in collaboration with the United States State Department and University of Illinois. SWO (assisted by the Rotarians) will be principally involved in the project implementation phase where they will provide support services, guidance in obtaining financing for equipment and infrastructure, rebuilding and repair of equipment and vocational training.

Aid Recipients

Preliminary needs assessments done by the local collaborating organization have identified broad groups of families who were affected by the tsunami in distinct ways with individual needs. They can be classified into the following groups:

- **Families that have partially or completely lost their livelihood:** This includes instances such as fishermen who lost their fishing boats and nets, small business owners who lost their buildings and inventory, taxi drivers who lost their taxicabs, tourism related small businesses that are inactive due to lack of tourism, self-employed craftsman, tailors, reed basket weavers and food vendors who lost their tools and equipment.
- **Families that lost their breadwinner:** This group requires support to continue a family owned small business or vocational training to start a new enterprise to facilitate economic sustainability.

- **Families that sustained infrastructure damage to their businesses:** This group includes family owned shops, restaurants and guesthouses that were damaged and need assistance to repair or rebuild.
- **Families that have had serious injuries to members who are unable to continue employment or self-employment:** This includes individuals who have sustained injuries and experiencing psychological illnesses that require continuous medical attention. Long-term medical care and assistance is required to assist these families.

Project Implementation

With the assistance of the Rotary Club, SWO and the College of General Practitioner, I-FREED has identified approximately 500 families that meet previously discussed needs. These families are primarily from the Eastern and the Western Provinces. The project directors with the assistance of affiliate partners has completed a preliminary needs assessment, and will commence detailed data gathering to identify specific needs. A questionnaire designed to gather required information would be utilized in the project implementation phase. (See Questionnaire with support documents). The information gathered from the questionnaire will identify specific needs related to regaining their livelihood, as well as hardships and challenges faced by these families. After this data is processed, I-FREED and the collaborating organizations will implement the project. I-FREED has already commenced a similar project to support over 150 orphans with their general and educational needs for a period of one year

The project will disburse the required assistance to the families as described below:

Families that have partially or completely lost their livelihood:

Collaborating organizations will direct assistance to industries such as the fisheries industry (repair/provision of boats and nets), assistance to vendors (fish and vegetable vendors that ply their trade door to door) and home enterprises such as tailoring, food processing and reed basket making and tailors.

With the assistance of local affiliate partners, specific equipment that is needed for their vocations will be provided to them. Certain low cost items such as fishing nets, woodwork equipment, sewing machines etc, will be purchased outright and handed over. In other instances where the costs of the items are high, a down payment will be provided, and assistance will be given to obtain zero or low interest loans to finance the remainder. The average estimated cost is US\$ 350 per family.

Families that lost their breadwinner:

Support will be provided to surviving family members for a period of one year (\$100 initial payment followed by \$20 per month for a period of one year). I-FREED with the assistance of affiliate organizations will provide vocational training, assistance with childcare etc., until remaining family member/s can regain self-sufficiency. At the end of the first year, the need for assistance will be re-evaluated.

Families that sustained infrastructure damage to their businesses:

Funds will be provided to repair or rebuild damaged facilities. Assistance will be in the form of down payments for zero or low interest loans to these families who lost their houses (home based businesses), stores, and guesthouses. The amount will not exceed US\$500 per family.

Families that may have members with serious injuries and are unable to work:

Families with one or more members with physical disabilities or psychological illnesses that prevent them from earning a livelihood will be provided with medical assistance and funds for necessities for a period of one year. An initial payment of US\$100 followed by US\$20 per month will be given for a period of one year. At the end of the year, the needs will be reassessed and sponsors will be found for those who need further assistance. The collaborating organizations will also provide psychological counseling (by volunteer doctors) for all needed individuals. However, it is expected that some of the physician travel related expenses; expenses for food and lodging will be met with grant funds. These expenses will not exceed 5% of the total cost of the project. Cost of medications will be arranged by the CGP through drug companies and other sponsors.

Budget

The budget for the project is based on preliminary data gathered by the collaborating organizations following the initial needs assessment. Assistance will be provided to approximately 500 families in the Eastern and the Western Province. Most families will require more than one form of assistance. An example would be to provide funds to repair a family owned restaurant as well as providing cooking utensils, tables, chairs etc. The same family could also have members who need medical assistance.

Activity	US\$
Purchasing or repair of equipment and assistance to affected families, (\$350 per family for 500 families) ¹	175,000
Renovation/ assistance for loans for infrastructure rebuilding, (\$500 per family for 330 families) ²	165,000
Travel, board and lodging for medical doctors ³	5,000
Travel and per diem expenses for local volunteers ⁴	5,000

¹ This is an estimated cost for the required items or an estimate for necessities for a family provided by our local advisory board. Low cost items (bicycles, nets, sewing machines etc.) will be purchased out right and given to the identified families. This will include funds required for repair of boats. For high cost items such as fishing boats, taxi cabs etc., a down payments to obtain these items will be paid and assistance will be provided to obtain low interest/ no interest financing arrangements. Families who need assistance until they “get on their feet” will be given monetary assistance to meet basic needs. The advisory boards in Sri Lanka will monitor the activities of the recipients for a period of one year.

² Minor repairs to existing infrastructure will be provided by distributing funds to the affected families or purchasing the needed items for repairs. However, major rebuilding will be done again by assisting families to obtain low or zero interest financing and providing the required down payments for loans. This cost estimate was provided by our local collaborating organization based on the preliminary needs assessment

³ Travel, board and lodging for volunteer medical professionals. These medical camps will be held once a month or twice a month based on the need. Medications and medical services will be provided free of charge. The College of General Practitioners will solicit donations for medications from other donors and drug companies.

⁴ Travel and per diem expenses for volunteers sent out to gather detail information from the affected families, verify claims for infrastructure damages and distribution of assistance.

Total cost of project	350,000
Funds provided by I-FREED	(50,000)
Funds requested from the Bush Clinton Fund	300,000

Schedule

The following table shows the project schedule based on our initial assessment:

Activity	Month												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Identifying families and assessing their needs	■	■											
Providing tools and equipment and assistance in obtaining loans			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Infrastructure rebuilding and assistance in obtaining loans			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Medical and psychological assistance	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Monitoring of aid distribution			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Some activities may start early if the required information and funds are available.

Accountability

I-FREED will ensure full accountability to individual donors and donor organizations in distributing funds to affected families. I-FREED will strive to keep overhead expenses to less than 5% of the project cost. I-FREED and our local collaborating organizations will volunteer hours required to plan and execute this project. I-FREED will make the following information available to donor organizations to ensure complete transparency of how the funds are disbursed to the affected families.

- Receipts for all tools and equipment purchased down payments for rebuilding, and incidental expenses.
- Detailed profiles of families with pictures of the recipients (for internal use of the donor organization only).
- Photographs and monthly interim reports to the donor organization.
- Direct feedback from aid recipients to I-FREED (families will be provided with a feedback form and a self-address stamp envelop to report the amount of funds and or equipment received).
- A full audited accounts report for the entire amount will be submitted at the end of the fiscal year.

Project outputs

- At the end of one year, 500 families will be on the road to economic and emotional stability.
- A minimum of 300 small business related infrastructure will be repaired or reconstructed
- A minimum of 12 medical camps will be held in the two project areas and the affected individuals be provided with medications and needed counseling.

Appendix 1

Project Advisory boards and their affiliations:

Project Advisory Board in the USA

Ranil Abeysekera, MS

Senior soft ware architect, IBM

Project Director

Kanishka de Silva, MS

Engineering Specialist, Jacobs Sverdrup Inc.

Project Director

Mahendra Rodrigo, PE

Vice President, GC Engineering Inc.

Project Coordinator

Nuwan Samaranayaka, MS

Soft ware engineer - GHG Corporation

Project Coordinator

Dilanka Seimon, BS

Analyst, Sequent Energy Management Inc.

Kishani Abeysekera, MS

Systems Analyst/Lecturer, University of Houston, Clear Lake

Project Advisory Board in Sri Lanka

Neil Abeysekera, MBBS, DSM, MD (family medicine)

General Practitioner, Past President of the CGP

Project Director

Indrani Iriyagola, BA (Sri Lanka)

President, SWO

Project Co-Director

Clarence Seimon, AID

Deputy District Governor, Rotary Club International

Project Co-Director

Susila Weerakody

Vice President, Sinhala Women Organization

Preethi Wijegunewardena, MBBS

President, College of General Practitioners

Lucky Peeris

President, Rotary Club International