



78 Weeks Later

A descriptive, quantitative
and qualitative summary
after the Tsunami in Thailand

By Karl Segschneider and
Walaitat Worakul

Tsunami Aid Watch is a programme of the Southeast Asia Regional Office of Heinrich Boell Foundation, in co-operation with Southeast Asia Consult and Resource Co., Ltd.

Heinrich Boell Foundation (HBF) affiliated with the German party Alliance 90/The Greens and headquartered in Berlin, is a legally independent, non-profit organization working in the spirit of intellectual openness. The Foundation's primary objective is to support political education both within Germany and abroad, thus promoting democratic involvement, socio-political activism, and cross-cultural understanding. Development cooperation is one of the major fields of the Foundation's activities. Tsunami Aid Watch is a special contribution to the Development Watch initiatives that the Southeast Asia Regional Office of HBF has been carrying out for many years.

Southeast Asia Consult and Resource Co., Ltd. (SEA-C.R.) is a consulting agency based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The company's core competence is in the fields of development cooperation, organization development and facilitation. In its cooperation with clients of the private and public sectors alike, SEA-C.R. employs a strong cross- and intercultural perspective.



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Krabi Declaration on Sustainable Post-Tsunami Rehabilitation

The participants of the forum would like to extend their gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all individuals, communities, national and international groups, parties and organizations for the help and aid they have provided for the individuals and communities affected by the Tsunami of December 26th 2004. We hope that they will continue to give us unwavering support during the remaining task of long-term rehabilitation. The Tsunami has left Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Maldives and other countries with devastated coasts, shattered communities, economies and hundreds of thousands of people in need of support. This destruction was, however, only the initial direct impact of the Tsunami disaster. The ensuing aid efforts were part of just the first phase of Tsunami rehabilitation.

Nine months have now passed since the Tsunami and in most affected areas treatment has been delivered to the wounded and basic shelter is available for the surviving victims; in many cases the boats and fishing gear needed for livelihood restoration of the fisher folk have been provided; the remaining tasks are ready to be overseen by restored community structures and local administrations. The situation can, thus, in most instances be described as approaching stability. However, it is a far cry from being normal.

The Tsunami recovery now enters a second phase of transformation that is the recovery from a disaster into a more permanent and functioning economic and social set-up, i.e. the mitigation of the secondary Tsunami impact. While the aid to rehabilitate from the initial direct impact of the Tsunami was characterized by speed and efficiency, the recovery support effort needed for the indirect impact recovery must strive for long-term effectiveness and sustainability. Taking into account livelihood, economic recovery, disaster management, issues of land and housing for the displaced, the landless, women, children, gender issues as well as migrant labor problems. In order to achieve this, a number of measures are urgently needed. Based on past aid delivery experience we therefore ask the international community and supporting NGO's and GO's to mobilize all available resources to:

- Ensure that the long-term rehabilitation of the Tsunami affected area is based on definitions of fairness, justice, sustainability and stability as perceived and defined by the Tsunami affected communities and individuals;
- Develop the secondary Tsunami recovery support into an opportunity to address and solve pre-Tsunami problems that have been worsened and/or exposed by the disaster;
- Deliver assistance and support in an accountable and transparent form that ensures participation of those affected in planning, implementation and execution of long-term rehabilitation programs;
- Establish – a vitally important point - a proper, honest and forward-looking information system and data-base on the Tsunami disaster for the use and to the benefit of its affected individuals and communities, independent of nationality, race or religion;
- Initiate an aid-tracking system / mechanism to avoid the misuse of aid-resources or its appropriation for something other than aid purposes;
- Ensure that the remaining rehabilitation becomes a stepping stone for further development of the affected areas leading to better conditions than before the Tsunami disaster.

If the international community, governments and civil societies help to continue with the Tsunami recovery support based on the conditions given above, the Tsunami disaster itself can be turned into an opportunity for development that is in line with sustainability needs and economic progress of all mankind. We believe in the in the strength of cooperation, coordination, openness and solidarity in times of need.

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Acronyms

ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
AIT	Asian Institute for Technology
CHARM	Coastal Habitat and Resources Management
CODI	The Community Organization Development Institute
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DVI	Disaster Victim Identification
DDPM	Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GO	Governmental Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PAD	People's Alliance for Democracy
RTG	Royal Thai Government
SAN	Save Andaman Network
SAR	Search and Rescue
SDC	Swiss Development Agency
SDF	Sustainable Development Foundation
TAW	Tsunami Aid Watch
TRCS	Thai Red Cross Society
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
WB	World Bank

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Preface I

In July 2005, The Heinrich Böll Foundation's Southeast Asia Regional Office initiated the Tsunami Aid Watch programme (TAW) as a specific contribution to HBF's broader Development Watch initiatives. TAW's major objective is to bring the connection between structural deficiencies of participatory democracy and the problems related to Tsunami aid into the discussion on post- Tsunami reconstruction, crisis and rehabilitation management.

The publication at hand was in its original edition the first that evolved from the Tsunami Aid Watch programme. It opened up a broad perspective on the social, economic, environmental and political impact of the Tsunami and the first phase of recovery. It resulted from a presentation at a symposium of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in April 2006 in Berlin, when Karl Segschneider – the Director of the Tsunami Aid Watch Programme – delivered a striking analysis of the tsunami disaster response in Thailand.

This paper was first published as an attachment to the report of a joint fact finding mission on Tsunami rehabilitation to Sri Lanka of medico international, Brot fuer die Welt and the Heinrich Boell Foundation (see www.taw-hbf.org). Due to great demand, and also to make this analysis accessible in the Thai language, we decided to publish a second edition in the Tsunami Aid Watch series.

The Heinrich Böll Foundation once again wishes to thank the authors Walaitat Worakul and Karl Segschneider for their work and hopes that new readers will gain a fresh perspective on the Tsunami issue and those who are already familiar with the text would like to have another glance.

July 28th, 2007

Dr. Heike Löschmann

Director of the Southeast Asia Regional Office of Heinrich Böll Foundation

Preface II

After the presentation of this short analysis in Berlin in April 2006, both the Tsunami Aid Watch team and I were rather pleased by the reaction of the audience in regard to the point of view we offered, bringing local social and power structures into the center of our analysis. We were also rather amazed to learn that this analytical approach was – at least then – not yet widely available.

We therefore decided that a more detailed look at Thai culture-specific structures and its impact on sustainability might be an ideal outlook for one of our final publications on Tsunami rehabilitation in Thailand, planned for January 2008.

To publish this second edition of '78 WEEKS LATER', thus, serves two purposes. It firstly and hopefully will make for an appealing read for those interested in the Tsunami rehabilitation process, or more generally, in the process of post-disaster rehabilitation, whether in Thailand or abroad. Secondly, '78 WEEKS LATER' might prove to be a beneficial introductory publication in respect to the one planned for January 2008.

Small revisions were made to the text and some footnotes added where needed to up-date the reader on current political developments that are relevant to the situation in Thailand.

July 28th, 2007

Karl H. Segschneider

Director of the Tsunami Aid Watch Programme of Heinrich Böll Foundation

Introduction

When the Tsunami hit Thailand on the 26th of December 2004, the coastal areas of the southernmost provinces of Ranong, Phang Nga, Krabi, Phuket, Trang and Satun were in part as thoroughly devastated as areas that have experienced civil war. This comparison is not just a simile to dramatize a report. It is rather an accurate description of the extent of the destruction. Casualties were not only measured in loss of life, but also the loss of infrastructure, destruction of livelihoods, income generation, plus the environmental and ecological destruction and – last but not least – the eradication of the local administration and administrative structure. Efforts to aid the impacted region had to achieve a reconstruction that went beyond mere first aid and was rather reminiscent of aid activities after intensive armed conflict.

In extending the ‘armed conflict’ analogy, we can measure the reconstruction efforts 78 weeks after the Tsunami based on the ‘Practical Guide to Multilateral Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations’, which was released in August 2004 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank (WB) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). Considering the absence of international guidelines on a massive post-disaster scenario, this practical guide was the closest set of recommendations for planning and implementing aid after the Tsunami had struck.

On page 3, under the heading of ‘THE POST CONFLICT SITUATION: THE CONTEXT OF RESPONSE’, the post-conflict guide states that:

“...Development assistance to countries in transition from violent conflict to peace generally aim[s] to:

- *support the implementation of a peace agreement;*
- *provide the population with an early peace dividend;*
- *address the developmental cause of conflict; and*
- *assist in restoration of stable and just structures in the country.”*

Translated into a post-Tsunami-disaster context, we can paraphrase the UNDP guide as ‘support the implementation of an *aid agreement*; provide the population with a *quick first aid response*; address the *underlying cause*

¹ Available as .PDF copy through the UNDP, WB and UNDG home-pages

of conflict in the reconstruction process; and assist in keeping the restoration based on stable, just and sustainable structures’.

The similarities between a post-conflict and severe post-disaster scenario also extend into the time frames and estimates given for reconstruction², with the achieved results being

- Stabilization and transition after 12 months
- Transformation and Institution building after 12 to 36 months, and
- Consolidation after 36 to 120 months, respectively.

78 weeks have now passed since the Tsunami, and – at least in Thailand – most of the impacted areas do not now look as though they have been hit by one of the most severe disasters in living memory. Medical care has been delivered to the injured, housing restored to the surviving victims, the necessary boats for livelihood restoration of the fisher folk have been donated, and the remaining tasks are being overseen by a restored administrative structure. The situation can, thus, be described as stabilized. The Tsunami aid now enters the phase of transformation that is the recovery from a disaster area into a more permanent and functioning economic and social set-up.

But what if the restoration and transformation cannot be so easily based on *stable, just and sustainable structures*? What if there is a strong disagreement between those giving and those receiving aid about what constitutes justice, stability and sustainability? Shouldn't we then expect some aspects of the post Tsunami aid to remain in a critical state of non-deliverance, or at least urgently needed adaptation and re-definition of its goals and targets?

Quantitatively assessing the delivered aid, describing analytically the occurred changes and linking it with target group experiences allows us to triangulate and characterize some of the post-Tsunami aspects important for the mid-term recovery. It is possible to identify a number of issues critical for long-term recovery where aid has and has not delivered in line with its promise, yet.

The following short overview first considers post-Tsunami disaster management, its objectives and its impact to outline the status quo of

² UNDP guide, pages 6 ff

Tsunami aid in Thailand. It is then followed by an overview of the Tsunami effects on the local experience with social, economic, political and environmental structures of communities taken into consideration. Currently it looks as if for most stakeholders the Tsunami repercussions are likely to continue for at least another four to five years in Thailand before a consolidation can be achieved. This is in line with the extended time-frame expectations of the UNDP for a recovery after a conflict. During that period of time reconstruction is likely to remain a hotly debated issue among all stakeholders involved.

Part A. Quantifiable disaster management

1. The Disaster and its impact

The Tsunami that hit Thailand on 26 December 2004 was the greatest disaster in the country's history. It affected six provinces along the Andaman Coast of Thailand, leaving at least than 8,000 dead, a third of them foreigners. It impacted 407 villages, and completely destroyed 47, including well-known tourist destinations. Vulnerable fishing communities were destroyed and livelihoods lost. Children suffered the loss of parents or guardians, and survivors were left to cope with the psychological trauma of the disaster. The impact on the environment included damage to coral reefs, marine and coastal habitats. The intrusion of sea water affected water quality and agricultural land.

The total financial impact of the Tsunami is estimated at more than 2 billion USD. This makes Thailand the second worst affected country in financial terms. It is estimated that the Tsunami reduced overall GDP growth by 0.4%. The sectors most affected were tourism and agriculture.³ Table 1 presents details of the Tsunami impact in various aspects.

Table 1: Impact of the Tsunami on humans, housing, environment and livelihoods in Thailand

Dimension of impact	Sub-dimension	Degree of damage/impact
Human	Dead	5,395
	Injured	8,457
	Missing	2,817
	Children without one or both parents	1,449
Housing units	Destroyed	3,302
	Damaged	1,504
Natural resources	Coral	Minimal damage 32,013 rais; ⁴ Substantial damage 3,812 rais
	Beach	1,485 rais
	Mangrove forest	Around 2,300 rais
	Beach forest	90,093 rais
	Waste/Disposal waste	2 sites
	Saline Soil Area	About 3,957.5 rais

³ Tsunami Thailand One year Later: National Response and Contribution of International Partners, United Nations Country Team in Thailand, 2005.

⁴ 1 Rai = 6.25 hectares

Water sources	Surface water ponds	102
	Shallow wells	2,324
	Ground water ponds or wells	737
Livelihoods	Fisheries	USD 44,044,117
	Livestock	USD 429,158
	Agriculture	USD 161,314
	Business enterprises	USD 308,205,908
	Tourism	Around USD 15 million loss

(Sources: DDPM website, October-November 2005; ADPC Report, 2005; Ministry of Social, Development and Human Security; DDPM Report 2005; Tsunami Migration Centre, Chulalongkorn University, March 2005; Balance of Payment, Bank of Thailand)

2. Thailand's response

Thailand is widely recognized for its effective disaster relief. With strong leadership, robust institutions, experienced staff and adequate emergency financing from the national budget, the country was able to mobilize a quick and efficient response to the disaster. This included a massive forensic operation to identify the bodies of thousands of foreign visitors and Thai citizens and prompt delivery of services to address humanitarian needs, such as shelters, food, water and medical services. Specifically, Thailand adopted a three-phase response to the disaster. Phase one focused on search and rescue (SAR) of survivors and the recovery and identification of human remains; phase two on preventing infectious diseases and secondary losses amongst those who had survived the tragedy; and phase three on reconstruction and longer term rehabilitation of those affected. Eight sub-committees were established as a mechanism for short term and long-term assistance. These were as follows:

- Sub-committee on assisting foreign tourists
- Sub-committee on assisting Tsunami affected people
- Sub-committee on assisting Tsunami affected fishermen
- Sub-committee on assisting unemployed people
- Sub-committee on assessing assistance to small vendors
- Sub-committee on assessing assistance to large business entrepreneurs
- Sub-committee on providing accommodation to Tsunami affected people
- Sub-committee on assisting Tsunami affected students

One of the striking features of the various relief operations was the contribution of the Thai public, the Thai private sector and local NGOs. Solidarity among the Thai people came out in many ways through the volunteering of their time to help fellow citizens, foreign victims and donating to local charities.

With the support of these various sectors, the Thai government was able to provide upwards of 1 billion USD in direct and indirect assistance to 442,460 affected people. The focus now is moving towards the longer-term recovery of the affected communities and the local economy through various schemes such as recovery of livelihoods in fishing, tourism, business and agricultural sectors; social protection measures for children and orphans; psychological support for the survivors of the disaster, restoration of the environment and natural resources, the establishment of an early warning system and the development of disaster preparedness plan.

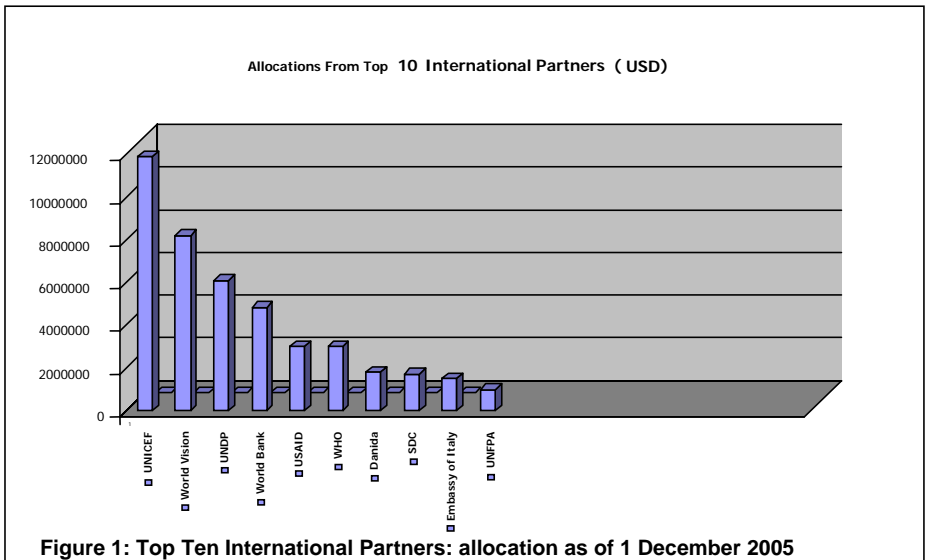
Table 2: RTG long-term assistance to Tsunami affected communities and people

Type of assistance	Activity/Target Groups	Details /coverage of assistance
Provision of shelter	Permanent shelters	2,688 houses built for those seeking government support
Support to fisheries	Small fishing boats	7,351 persons; 4,697,769 USD
	Large fishing boat	634 persons; 1,384,746 USD
	Fishing tools	6,062 persons; 901,126 USD
	Hatcheries	6,025 persons; 2,938,772 USD
Support to small Business	Restarting business	5,147 persons; 1,427,952 USD
	Livelihood tools	5,065 persons; 1,059,606 USD
Support to unemployed workers/migrant workers	Employment projects	22,000 persons; 2,809,057 USD
	Job provision	23,000 persons; 10,043 USD
	Labor transferring service	1,200 persons; 8,765 USD
	Job creation project	760 persons; 222,152 USD
	Job training project	10,000 persons; 1,095,650 USD
Psychological support to victims	Psychiatric drugs	4,725 services
	Counseling	17,812 services
	Medical Treatment	5,551 services
Early warning system	Disaster preparedness plan	A comprehensive and integrated disaster database established at national level, school curriculum incorporated knowledge on Tsunamis, handbooks on natural disaster response procedures prepared and distributed to coastal communities.

	End-to-end warning system	Twenty-four of sixty-two warning towers established and tested in December 2005, the rest to be ready by March 2006.
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(Sources: 1. DDMP website November 2005; 2.The Mental Health Centre for Thai Tsunami Disaster, November 2005)

Apart from direct support to the affected communities, the RTG through its concerned departments in collaboration with national and international partners and academic institutes developed a plan with a mechanism to assess the impact, repair of the damage and promotion of a longer term sustainability of natural resources affected by the Tsunami. Thailand is also now positioning itself as a knowledge center for natural resources management to share this knowledge with other countries in the region.



3. Contribution from international partners

Given its capacity, resources and institutions, Thailand did not appeal for international financial assistance but welcomed technical support from international partners; including know-how, equipment and direct support to the affected communities. Financial and in-kind contributions also came from foundations, the private sector and individuals from around the world in support of Thailand’s response to the Tsunami. The United Nations Country Team, bilateral agencies, and international NGOs contributed more

structured technical support, with allocations of 69 million USD for the immediate and long-term recovery efforts in various areas such as child protection, psycho-social support, livelihood recovery, support to migrant workers, environmental rehabilitation, disaster preparedness, and support for co-ordination.

It is estimated that this support is being provided by some 45 international partners in nearly 200 projects through a wide range of government and community organizations and NGOs. Top ten international partners (as of 1 December 2005) included United Nations Children Fund, World Vision, United Nations Development Programme, The World Bank, USAID, The World Health Organization, DANIDA, Swiss Development Agency-SDC, Embassy of Italy and UNFPA⁵.

I. Initial emergency support by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Thailand

Within 24 hours after consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the morning of the 27th of December 2004, the United Nations transferred funds for relief and support in coordination and logistics. Within 48 hours, initial help for emergency interventions including funds for logistics and coordination, water supply and sanitation upgrading, temporary shelters, first aid and survival kits, etc. took place. In 72 hours, a UN Disaster Coordination mission (UNDAC) from Geneva was in Phuket for 3 weeks to assist local authorities in the coordination of international support and to conduct initial requirement assessments. After a week, the UN Country Team in Thailand started to plan for a longer term recovery and initiated a number of needs assessments focusing on social protection, livelihood recovery, environmental rehabilitation, shelter, migrant workers, and healthcare needs.

II. UN Support- longer term recovery

The joint UNCT engagement in Thailand focused on two levels. First, policy advice and technical cooperation for government agencies on strategic issues related to local governance, coordination, livelihood recovery, social protection, land rights, coastal zone environmental management and disaster preparedness and early warning. Secondly, direct support to local government and community-based organizations to facilitate community

⁵ Tsunami Thailand One year Later: National Response and Contribution of International Partners, United Nations Country Team in Thailand, 2005.

mobilization and empowerment, strengthening community capacity for self-organization and enhancing the interface between the communities and local government.

Thematically, the main areas of UNCT engagement in long-term rehabilitation are as follows:

- Livelihood recovery in fishing, agriculture and tourism sectors
- Social protection for children and vulnerable groups, including migrant workers
- Environmental rehabilitation (land subsistence, mangrove and other forestry issues, coral reef clean-up and improved coastal zone management)
- Disaster preparedness and early warning system development
- Coordination of international support.

III. Contribution of bilateral donors

The involvement of bilateral donors, especially those whose citizens were killed in the disaster, took the form of immediate support to the RTG's efforts in the search for and rescue of survivors, the identification and repatriation of the bodies of the victims, humanitarian assistance and long-term support for the post Tsunami recovery and rehabilitation efforts.

Table 3: Bilateral donors and their involvement in the immediate relief and long term recovery measures for Tsunami affected people and areas.

Relief/recovery area	Contribution of bilateral donors
Search and rescue	Military personnel from many countries, US Navy and the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Units of Japan Self-Defense Force, JICA provided support to the Search and rescue operations by using special boats, supply ships-with shipboard helicopters and SAR experts.
Disaster victim identification	DVI teams from more than 30 countries, the Australian Federal Police, Kenyon International (a disaster management company supported initially by the Australian government and later on by several other countries), US Armed Force experts, a US forensic anthropologist provided support to a massive post disaster forensic operation, victim identification and DNA collection and other technical matters.

Humanitarian assistance	The Center of Disease Control and emergency medical teams from many countries assisted the RTG in dealing with medical needs of the survivors, surveillance for communicable diseases and health assessments.
Reconstruction support to livelihoods, housing, childcare and education	Several countries including Canada, France, the Netherlands, Austria and USA provided help in repair and construction of boats and boatyards, furniture making, aqua farming and internships with national institutes; the EC re-directed its ongoing fund to focus on initiatives in the field of environment and sustainable livelihoods; USAID in partnership with the Asian Institute for Technology (AIT) funded sustainable coastal livelihood project; the Andaman Forum (under the EU CHARM project) played a vital role as a clearing house for community needs and donor support in the area of livelihood rehabilitation; France, Canada, Italy and Denmark provided support in the housing sector whereas educational and childcare support was covered by a number of countries such as Canada, France, Italy, Hungary and the Netherlands , with financial and implementation support from foundations, charities, local governments and NGOs from their home countries.
Support for environmental rehabilitation	JICA assists in the coral reef recovery; Denmark and France support the rehabilitation of the biodiversity and ecosystems; Germany helps to build capacity of national institutions in the environmental fields; Australia strengthens capacity of the RTG in sustainable management of Thailand's Andaman Sea Coastal Area and the EU supports capacity building through the transfer of European know-how and best practices in coastal environment management.
Support for early warning system and disaster preparedness	USA supports technical assistance on systems integration and capacity development for the National Disaster Warning Center; USAID launched the Indian Tsunami Warning System Program in September 2005 to support the ongoing international efforts to develop a regional warning system under UNESCO's intergovernmental Oceanographic Commissions; joint consultations with the UN organizations, Germany, Japan and Australia are being undertaken.

(Sources: USA Contribution to Tsunami One Year Later Report, November 2005; Japan Contribution to Tsunami One Year Later Report, November 2005; Australia Contribution to Tsunami One Year Later Report, November 2005 as quoted in the UNCT Contribution to Tsunami One Year Later Report, December 2005)

IV. The contributions of NGOs

Various international and local NGOs supported the national relief and recovery efforts and helped fill many operational gaps because of their presence at the grassroots level and their timely outreach programs. Table 4 below explains the scope and focus of their support.

Table 4: NGOs contribution to the Tsunami affected communities and people

Relief/recovery area	Contribution of NGOs
Emergency response and relief	The Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS) mobilized money, materials, food, personnel and volunteers for the emergency relief operation, assisted families in settling into the temporary shelters and provided medical and psycho-social care; the TRCS Blood Center sent blood supplies to the hospitals in affected areas; a number of Participating National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement provided support in the areas of healthcare, livelihood recovery, reconstruction and community-based disaster management
Livelihoods	Several NGOs including World Vision, Oxfam and Plan International provided support with boats, fishing gear, marine engines and boat building skills; Save Andaman Network and Oxfam promoted community participation in outreach programs to ensure equal access of community members to natural resource management; World Vision worked with women's groups to upgrade their skills for more options in livelihood activities.
Migrant workers	Plan International, Oxfam and other NGOs filled a critical gap by providing migrant workers with much needed relief and assistance; the Cross Cultural Foundation supported legal assistance to migrant workers.
Childcare, Education and Youth	Several NGOs were engaged in responding to the needs of children and in enhancing the education facilities and opportunities for children and youth; World Vision, Plan International and the Asia Foundation provided psycho-social, health, nutrition support and security and care for children living in temporary shelters, enhanced capacity of teachers, trained youth in disaster management skills, and supported construction of schools and daycare centers.

Housing	World Vision and the Asia Foundation assisted in the construction of new houses, water systems and in improving conditions of temporary shelters.
Environment	The World Conservation Union supported environmental rehabilitation and recovery by evaluating Tsunami-related economic damage to natural resources to influence decision making on the importance of the environment in post-Tsunami reconstruction; the AFD, WWF for Nature assisted the Department of National Parks in the rehabilitation of national parks and sustainable tourism initiatives.
Legal Aid	The Asia Foundation worked through the Women Lawyers Association of Thailand to provide legal aid and rights protection for victims in some affected areas.

4. What we can deduct from the quantitative description:

78 weeks after the Tsunami, Thailand has successfully achieved most of its short-term assistance goals. Several lessons have been drawn from the early emergency response, also a number of sustainability-related issues have been identified as it moves from emergency relief to mid-term and long term recovery.

I. Lessons learnt

Due to the magnitude of the relief operation, several problems were revealed at different levels. The most frequently stated problem was related to staff shortage, insufficient guidance and non-systematic work procedures for relief delivery. Another problem related to the management of donations. The scale of the disaster and the attention generated by the media brought contributions from national and international actors. However, large quantities of inappropriate charity could not be utilized. There was clearly a need to improve communication to the benefactors in connection to assessed needs and to find an acceptable method of declining or redirecting contributions.

The fact that the Government did not formally request international assistance, while welcoming spontaneous gestures of generosity also created room for misunderstanding, especially at the local level. It would have considerably eased the situation if clear-cut administrative instructions had been issued at the outset. Significantly, more attention was required to adequately address the needs of ethnic groups and unregistered migrant

workers as well as to protect vulnerable children against possible exposure to sexual exploitation, trafficking and abuse. Emergency communication was another area of concern. A backup emergency communication system, including local radio operators would have been very helpful.

II. Challenges for longer term recovery

The Tsunami raised certain issues and challenges, some of which had been persistent problems, long with us, but have never received sufficient public attention or policy debate. These include land tenure and titles, the special needs of vulnerable communities, improved management of natural resources and the environment as well as increased preparedness to face disaster. To be more specific, the key challenges in long-term recovery of the Tsunami affected areas include the following:

i. Local governance and community participation

Local administrative organizations are mandated to take the lead in many of the rehabilitation programs. In many cases, communities are not involved in the local administrative organizations' decision making process in Tsunami recovery efforts, particularly in the more marginalized communities of Sea Gypsies and Muslims. To ensure a sustainable recovery from the Tsunami, it is essential that local governance is inclusive, that communities are empowered and understand their rights and the significance of their involvement in local administrative affairs.

ii. Livelihood recovery for poorer communities

Poorer communities were particularly hard hit by the Tsunami and continue to need support to recover from the disaster. Further support is required to strengthen the capacity of the communities to organize so to manage community-based revolving funds and cooperatives, to gain access to credit and to find alternative sources of income.

iii. Land rights

The Tsunami impact has led to land disputes between local communities, private developers and local governments. This has become an obstacle to the recovery process. Villagers facing insecure land tenures are mostly fishing communities along the Andaman coast who have lived and relied on resources from the sea for many decades. Their claim is that they have settled on these pieces of land long before the title deeds were issued to either private or public entities. After the Tsunami, many of these communities were not allowed to return to their original settlements and

risked being moved further inland to live on houses away from the sea, the source of their livelihoods.

iv. Housing design

The Thai government has provided a budget to build 3,349 houses for the Tsunami survivors. By November 2005, 2,685 houses had been completed. In addition, a number of housing units were constructed with the support of international NGOs and the Thai private sector. According to critics, there has been little consultation with the communities on the design, planning, construction and allotment of these units. Efforts are being made to improve this situation. The Community Organization Development Institute (CODI) under the Social Development and Human Security Ministry is working with local governments, NGOs and international agencies to support local communities in developing plans for rebuilding their houses.

v. Protecting children

Although the immediate national response to provide protection for children was swift, much remains to be done. Around 100,000 people remain without adequate family incomes and this fragile situation exposes children to the risks of deterioration in health and nutritional levels, dropping out of school, sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Tsunami assessments have further revealed that some children in the affected areas have never attended school nor had access to health services even before the Tsunami. There for, there is a need to strengthen local family structures and community mechanisms for protecting these children.

vi. The rights of migrant workers

The situation for migrant workers in Thailand was precarious enough before the Tsunami and since the disaster it is much worse. The six Tsunami affected provinces hosted around 127,282 migrant workers, 98 % of whom were from Myanmar. In addition, there were a number of unregistered migrants. After the Tsunami, many of these people were displaced, had lost family members, their employment and suffering damaging psychological effects. Due to their illegal status, many were excluded from receiving help. The health and wellbeing of migrant workers affected by the Tsunami remains a concern and more support is needed as an integral part of the longer term recovery efforts.

vii. Ethnic groups

The rehabilitation of coastal-dwelling ethnic groups poses a particular challenge because of their unique and special characteristics. Due to their semi-nomadic lifestyles and substantial differences in culture, language and traditions, many communities have not actively participated in the local government's planning process for the sustainable recovery of their settlements and livelihoods. What is needed therefore is a more culturally sensitive and appropriate rehabilitation, which allows them to retain their distinct identity and culture while affording access to basic social services.

viii. Environmental rehabilitation

The Tsunami helped to highlight the unsustainable, environmentally damaging and at times, chaotic development of the tourism industry along the Andaman coast. Many environmentalists, government officials and experts see the Tsunami recovery as an opportunity to put things right, by improving coastal zone planning and strengthening measures to protect the environment. To ensure this, a sound framework for Integrated Coastal Zones Management and Longer-Term Environmental Rehabilitation and Protection needs to be put in place.

ix. Community-based disaster preparedness

The RTG's priority to develop and put in place an early warning system has an important psychological dimension. An effective early warning system will calm fears among local communities and reassure tourists that it is safe to visit Thailand. However, an effective warning system depends not only on high-tech solutions, but also strong community involvement and awareness. For the early warning system to work, community consultation and dialogue is needed in order to give everybody the opportunity to provide input and express their views. This will ensure each community and every household a disaster preparedness that is grounded in reality and based on the trust of communities.

Part B. Local experience with social, economic, political and environmental structures

1. Economic infrastructure

Among the main income generators in the South of Thailand are fishing, agriculture and tourism⁶. The coastal economic infrastructure destroyed in Thailand by the Tsunami was a segregated economy. On the one hand there was a mainly urban economy complete with a support structure of bank-loans, business networks, chambers of commerce, investment brokers, real-estate agents, construction firms and international corporations etc. This urban economy depended mainly on financial/investment capital, land ownership as well as skilled and unskilled labor. The structures in economic centers such as Ranong, Phuket, Khao Lak and Krabi were set-up to accommodate large scale investments and projects with local administrations especially geared up for assisting tourism projects and the large scale fishing industry.

There was on the other hand, and existing side by side, the rural economy with an entirely communal support structure. Local administrations were often not in tune with local needs, working more in accordance with the before stated urban style economic visions and policies. The rural economy was mostly dependent on human resources and capital (assets for income generation) and to a lesser degree on land ownership. There were no densely populated areas with adjoining villages. Communities were trying to be self-reliant and self sufficient. Although a network between the communities existed, community members mostly depended on tourism or fishery related work outside of their villages to provide additional income for their families.

The separate types of economy existing in the Tsunami affected areas need a different kind of mid and long term aid-package in order to achieve a restoration based on stable, sustainable and just structures. The last few months have shown that the Thai government's policies on economic recovery unfortunately focus too much on supporting the urban style economy and its administrative principles. Not surprisingly problems in the mid-term economic aid delivery process are manifold.

⁶ National Statistics Office, Office of the Prime minister, Statistical Yearbook No 48 - year 2001

The immediate disaster relief of the government concentrated on hospital care, hygiene, food and water, emergency shelters and small cash funds which were distributed without discrimination. This immediate first aid was remarkably quick, supported by the entire Thai population and delivered very effectively. However, two to three months after the Tsunami much of the government's mid-term first-aid had not even arrived in the effected areas. Financial economic starter-packages could not be paid as death-certificates could not be issued. Re-housing and repairs could not start as aid recipients and government donors could not agree on the number houses affected. Loans on re-building small companies were not forthcoming as land-title deeds and other documents were destroyed and could not be replaced, and so on...These mostly administrative problems are still unsolved.

On the other hand, large scale loans for hotels and other tourist industries were easily accessible. Budgets for planning post-Tsunami reconstructions, like for example in Phang Nga (Khao Lak), Phuket and Krabi (Phi-Phi Island) were quickly allocated. A trend became apparent: the higher the urban economic status of the affected area before the Tsunami, the more financial aid and other assistance was provided. Affected areas based on rural economies were mostly given over to the care of foreign national or international aid organizations, which in many instances were asked to 'leave their first aid projects' in areas of intensely developed tourism and 'shift their work to local communities'⁷.

Although the reconstruction process is progressing, former huge income earners for places like Phuket, Phi-Phi Island or Khao Lak are either still completely out of business, for example Phi-Phi Island and Khao Lak with less than 10% of their former turnover, or have only slightly recovered, like Phuket which had in July/August 2005 just 30% of the turn-over in the industry sector compared to the same time in 2004⁸. All together, tourism in 2006 is expected to generate at most 50% of its overall turnover of 2004 for the whole of the South. A similar down-turn can be described for the fishery sector, aggravated by recently sharply rising oil prices.

The urban economic recovery of the South as supported by government programs is therefore only partly successful or not successful at all.

⁷ Quote from a well-known European foundation during a Tsunami-Aid briefing in Bangkok in March 2006.

⁸ The Bangkok Post, August 29th, 2006: Perspective, 'Disaster phase two'

Furthermore, the failure of the government to successfully re-start the urban economy in the affected areas impacts directly on communities, as those industries provided important alternative income generation outside the village economies. For the rural economy, deprived of just and equal access to government aid, most first-aid rehabilitation of communal areas was achieved by local NGOs in cooperation with their Thai and international partners.

Now that immediate and short-term aid is provided, mid-term measures of transition are becoming increasingly important. However, mid-term measures addressing structures, such as the urban and rural economies are based on different strategies of resource use and are therefore different processes, conflicts between the two are becoming increasingly common.

2. Social infrastructure⁹

To analyze the Tsunami impact on a social level, it is first necessary to understand its predominant structure before the impact. Below are a few concepts that are paramount for Thai social structures in a community, but also have a meaning on the wider national and even regional level in Theravada Buddhist countries.

I. Rabob Phi Noong

The main aspects of Thai social structures focus on responsibility for other community or family members. This is expressed in a rigid system of respect, originally based on age: the elders are responsible for their minors in age and are at liberty regarding decision-making. The younger acknowledges the elder's responsibility and the opportunity it creates for him/her by respecting the decision without (voiced) reservations¹⁰. Family structures are open and flexible, and not necessarily dependent on any relation based on lineage. An unrelated individual can become a proper family member at any time in what we might call 'social adoption'.

Thus, smaller family units connected by birth can quickly extend into a larger family consisting of any number of individuals firmly united by the

⁹ Parts of this chapter are adapted from the HBF publication: Limits to sustainable development? World Summit Papers Series

¹⁰ The opportunity, here, would consist of the provision of a 'care-free' time in certain respects of life, which the younger individual can use to explore and learn in accordance with his/her own needs. These needs are only curtailed by respect for the elder and by the duties he/she has towards others younger than him or herself.

commonly shared responsibility for each other within the family's groups. The resulting system is called '*Rabob Phi Noong*' - and includes a strong political aspect of alliance and loyalty.

In an example from another SEA country, this type of system was largely responsible for the comparatively small number of orphans housed in public facilities after the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia in 1979. Either immediate or extended families through social adoption took in most of the children that had lost their parents and gave the country a working social buffer to help in organizing new communal development after the demise of the Khmer Rouge. However, with the increasingly waning traditional social structures modern Cambodia is seeing a rise in child abandonment and a rapid disappearance of social responsibility towards children in general.

II. Khreua Yaad

While a member of the family is always considered an older or younger (*Phi* and *Noong*, respectively) 'brother' or 'sister', independent of whether they know each other closely or not, social contacts outside the individual's family are described as acquaintances (*khon ruu djak*), friends (*phuan*) or close friends (*phuan sanit*). These social contacts can over time reach a level where the terms *Phi* and *Noong* are used to address each other, or even more intimate pronouns like '*gu*' and '*mueng*' that are not always used with direct family.

The calling upon of resources or their provision is managed by the '*Khreua Yaad*', which is the network of all people united in a group that provides social security for its members in times of need and opportunities in times of affluence. The *Khreua Yaad*¹¹ can extend over several groups in order to further mutual interests.

III. Rabob Upphatam

The social discipline needed by all individuals to adhere to the basic framework of the larger family-society is cemented by what is called the '*Rabob Upphatam*'. This is a system of unquestioning respect for the social elder within a group of people and guarantees his or her prerogative in decision-making for the whole group.

¹¹ Although the *Khreua Yaad* might at times look similar to a patron-client relationship, it is much more based on respect than on dependency and thus not really comparable to the patron-client concept.

A social elder would be a person who has earned the trust of his or her community so the position is not necessarily connected to age. The '*Rabob Upphatam*' can also be described as a system of conflict management, not only within a family but also between two or more families and their support networks, when social elders meet to discuss and solve problems for the communities they represent¹². To function appropriately, it is necessary that all members of a society believe in the correctness and goodness of the decision of a social elder. This system applies especially in SEA countries that adhere to Theravada Buddhism, but to some extent also in Islamic countries of the region. A strong link with religious teachings and institutions is therefore a basic pre-condition for becoming a social elder or leader.

IV. Political aspects of the traditional family structure

As every person in Thailand is both *Phi* and *Noong* to at least one other member of their social group or extended family, the social regulating mechanisms of *Khreua Yaad* and *Rabob Upphatam* also plays a role in politics. Due to their impact on the political system, the country's traditional administration was and is a consistent mixture of power (*Amnahd*) and influence (*Ithiphon*) as reflected in any politician's dual responsibilities towards his administration and, at the same time, his 'extended social family or group network'¹³.

However, with the demise or de-linking of the old social system from the local community starting in about 1987, what is left in modern day Thailand is a close cooperation between power and influence to further personal interests. For example, the number of schemes between the country's administrators (power or *Amnahd*) and the private sector (influence or *Ithiphon*) are countless. The local Thai press uncovers and exposes scams to cheat the public of literally billions of Baht of tax-money almost daily (in 2006). The moral aptitude of care-taker Prime Minister Thaksin has become the center of a socio-political divide, where the poor house of Thailand (the Isaan region) largely promotes him, while other regions and the middle classes largely oppose him.

¹² The standard translation of the term '*Rabob Upphatam*' as 'peer-ship system' or 'patron-client relationship' is misleading and not correct, as its concept is not based on an economy centered culture, but a community oriented network of responsibilities and opportunities.

¹³ In spite of claims otherwise, the western political system follows a very similar principle and allows lobbying to take place in order to influence political decisions.

V. Longstanding environmental conflicts

Based on the structure outlined above, the environment has always been a point of contention between rivaling families, groups of interest, local communities and outsiders. While culturally being a people that try to live Buddhist-based concepts of sufficiency, groups of interest were often abusing and exploiting the local environments for their own gain. Before the Tsunami, a particular status quo had developed, where through their networks local people could hold their own (though barely) against large outside investors. This changed with the disappearance of the elders after the disaster.

Table 5: A summative evaluation of community strength and weaknesses before the Tsunami

Positive (summative, according to target groups)	Negative (summative, according to target groups)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large extended families • Strong family network (Kreua Yaad) • Strongly structured families and duties (Rabob Phi Noong) • Functioning decision making structures (Rabob Upphatam and consensus democracy) • Labor intensive mixed economic structures and dependencies • Relative economic sufficiency • Adapted to local environment with relatively sustainable cohabitation • Relative control over environment and development in immediate communal vicinities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively weak communal emergency network • Fixed gender roles • Weak inter and intra-communal communication • Weak communal administration • Weak political participation in decision making • Weak investment structures and thus hardly any participation in macro-economy • Weak protection against encroachment into local environments by outsiders

3. Changes wrought by the Tsunami's impact

The Tsunami of December the 26th 2004 met a population wholly unprepared for it with no memory or oral tradition of a tsunami, as many of the Thai coastal communities were part of a population expansion that had taken place in the last 100 years or so. Even the local Morgan People (sea-gypsies) with their intimate knowledge of and relationship with the sea, had left so much of their traditional way of life behind, that they failed to recognize the receding tides as warnings of an approaching tsunami.

The warnings that were raised (and reported afterwards) were few and far between and mostly in foreign languages as they originated from tourists, who had learned about the phenomenon in their own countries. So it was, a potential 15 minutes warning time to evacuate was wasted, leaving especially the oldest and youngest with the least chance of survival. When the waves receded, the informal heads (almost always elderly people) of the socio-economic community structure were mostly dead, injured or had simply vanished. While the economic vacuum was quickly filled by outsiders from non-impacted areas and in line with political or economic extensions of family networks, the restoration of the local leadership, took much longer.

I. Local experience with social, economic, political and environmental structures

The Tsunami directly impacted a number of key aspects of local structures that needed to be addressed after the Tsunami for a successful rehabilitation: Destruction of

- Networks (families, Khreua Yaad, Rabob Phi Noong, Rabob Upphatam)
- Livelihood, infrastructure and collateral assets
- Local self-sufficiency environment and traditions

The immediate disaster relief was – especially when compared with other countries – a swift and successful operation. It was out of necessity top-down and carried forward by a huge number of volunteers. Reconstruction and re-building was still comparatively successful, but less so addressing the actual need of recovering communities. The aid delivered impacted the communities both directly and indirectly:

- Immediate disaster relief
 - Characteristics:** Non discriminatory, effective, efficient, improvised, top - down, disaster-focused, a strong voluntary aspect with strong civil society participation
 - Impact:** Almost immediate relief, strengthened survivors, damage-control, initial statistics compiled
- Reconstruction projects
 - Characteristics:** Target-group specific, effective and sufficient, often top-down, strong international involvement, project objective focused, limited sustainability (mid-and long-term), investor/donor dominated, sometimes linkages with non-aid objectives

Impact: Transitory relief, partially damaging, missing physical and moral ownership

- Rebuilding communal structures

Characteristics: superficial on community group level, economically prejudiced, environmentally unaware, politically (decision-making, leadership) biased, non-inclusive leading to division

Impact: Inter- and intra-communal conflicts, weak communities, limited communal self-awareness

Thus, 78 weeks after the Tsunami – and in spite of the many best efforts – structural changes and challenges remain for the recovery process to be addressed. In a number of workshops with the Tsunami Aid Watch (TAW) Project of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, communities were able to summarize by themselves a comparison of the status quo before and after the Tsunami. Based on this information a list of key-issues and the most urgent tasks remaining was developed.

The most striking difference from after the Tsunami was a remarkable increase in self-awareness of the community. The process of raising self-awareness was supported by a well-developed civil society network that had existed before the Tsunami. It could – with relative ease – substitute for the lost family network. Thailand was therefore basically the only affected country where communities successfully fought the implementation of recovery projects that were not sustainable from the community's point of view.

The momentum of Tsunami recovery and the emergence of a strengthened civil society network was (and remains) a crucial factor in the ongoing policy conflict of the opposition with the Thaksin Administration. An extensive percentage of the core-protesters against the Thaksin government in the spring of 2006, the Peoples Alliance for Democracy (PAD), consisted of members from the post-Tsunami communities. They were only partially expressing their dissatisfaction with the Tsunami recovery process. They mostly gathered to demonstrate as an act of showing political responsibility as a united civil society towards a government that - from their perspective - was a threat to democracy and a liability for their new found Thai national civil society identity.

Table 6: Current communal status quo after the Tsunami

Before Tsunami (summative, according to target groups)	After Tsunami (summative, according to target groups)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large extended families • Strong family network (Kreua Yaad) • Strongly structured families and duties (Rabob Phi Noong) • Functioning decision making structures (Rabob Upphatam / consensus democracy) • Labor intensive Mixed economic structures and dependencies • Relative economic sufficiency • Adapted to local environment with a relatively sustainable cohabitation • Relative control over environment and development in immediate communal vicinities • Relatively weak communal emergency network • Fixed gender roles • Weak communal communication • Weak communal administration • Weak political participation in decision making • Weak investment structures and thus hardly any participation in macro-economy • Weak protection against encroachment into local environments by outsiders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Smaller family size ⇒ Strong NGO network ⇒ Shifting gender roles and more equity ⇒ Newly defined roles and responsibilities ⇒ Slumping micro-economy and missing economic structures ⇒ Economic dependence and debt ⇒ Environmental helplessness ⇒ Loss of control over the immediate environment ⇒ Strong NGO network ⇒ Opening up of gender roles ⇒ Strong recognition of the role of communication and an intent to improve the situation ⇒ Clearer understanding of the administration structures needed ⇒ Determination to politicize issues of decision making ⇒ Almost no investment structure, no participation with macro-economy, outside capital is invading the local economy ⇒ No protection against outside encroachment

The protests against the current (2006) Thai government¹⁴ can therefore be seen as a symbol of the progress of civil society ideas and activities not from outside, but from within Thai society and following the traditional Thai socio-economic structure. Civil society is increasingly replacing older and partially defunct socio-economic networks. To strengthen this emergence of increased civil society leadership and participation also in the Tsunami affected areas; according to the target groups the development of a few key issues would benefit the remaining Tsunami mid-term recovery tasks, as well as the new found civil society identity.

II. Key-issues

i. Advocacy

In line with the Thai cultural trait to follow established community leaders in their decisions (consensus democracy), the ability of community members to discuss individual, immediate family and community problems and potential solutions with 'elders'. The availability of advocacy centers or institutions needs to be promoted and increased. Considering that many former community elders are dead, missing or grieving for loved ones, access to legal, economic, social and psychological advocacy plays an

¹⁴ The Thaksin administration was finally overthrown by a military coup in September 2006, just two months after the first publication of '78 weeks later'. The fashion of removal of Thaksin's administration is – outside of Thailand – often seen as non-democratic and thus – automatically – anti civil society. From a Thai point of view, this is not necessarily so. For some within the Thai social and political power structures the military's intervention is a logical extension of power-brokering, which in this case was aimed at avoiding blood-shed after one of Thaksin's ministers publicly announced that he would order his mountain and forestry police to open fire on the anti-Thaksin demonstrators.

Combined with Mr. Thaksin's previous negative remarks towards the role of the king – from their point of view – this development meant that in case of a conflict there would be no party left to mediate between civil society, the police and the administration. Once the troopers would have opened fire on the demonstrators, civil war would have become a real threat to the nation. The bloodless nature of the coup, i.e. the complete absence of any form of bloodshed or mass-arrests, demonstrated sufficiently for the majority of Thais that those behind the coup were mostly interested in ending the political stalemate 'peacefully' and open venues for a new political beginning.

Thus, after the first week the initial approval rating for the coup was more than 80% (source: Bangkok Post) and one could see people walking up to soldiers and presenting them with flowers. Children were taken to see the tanks and have their pictures taken with them. A general atmosphere of relief could be felt everywhere, even in the North, which is traditionally, politically supportive of Thaksin. Nonetheless, at the same time civil society geared up to check on the promises of the coup-makers, especially after they declared the 1997 constitution void. Currently, in August 2007, the Thai people are being given an opportunity to vote on a new charter. And even if it is not accepted by the public, the coup-makers promise is for elections to be held in December 2007, but then based on one of the previous constitutions of the country.

important role in the self-healing process of Tsunami-impacted communities and the transformation of the established disaster aid into long-term sustainable development.

ii. Increase cohesion of communities

The process of rebuilding communal networks, which is currently guided and supported by Tsunami related civil society networks like 'Save Andaman Network (SAN)' or the outside umbrella organization 'Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF)', has to be implemented by the communities themselves. The emerging new leaders or (social) elders need support to restore and increase former intra- and inter-communal cooperation, coordination and networking.

iii. Strengthen communal, regional, national capacity to decentralize

The overall administrative structure of Thailand needs to increase participative approaches. The communal potential to aid in that process should be developed. Local knowledge and wisdom should become an integral part of decision making. The already existing legal frames for decentralized administration need to be put into practice.

iv. Support for local leadership development enabling access to political decision making

According to the 1997 constitution¹⁵, only citizens with an IBA or BA degree are allowed to stand for elections into provincial, regional and national parliaments and senates. Most of the evolving new leaders after the Tsunami do not have that educational equivalent, thus depriving overall civil society development of incorporating tsunami recovery and reconstruction experience to enter the administrative process and decision making bodies. Pro-active support to allow this level of community leaders to further their education *while remaining in their communal roles and duties* is paramount to redeem this situation.

v. Empower to diversify economic choices

More alternative concepts and options to participate in the economic micro- and macro-markets are needed for communities. Concepts should focus on sustainability, cultural diversity and win-win situations in private sector/communal cooperation.

¹⁵ See previous footnote

vi. System for long-term monitoring

The communities ought to build their own information-compilation, -management and -dissemination systems. By acquiring knowledge in information technology and information management communities will be enabled to start their own monitoring that can be used to enhance / correct / adapt the official post-Tsunami monitoring systems of the administration. Experience with monitoring will empower communities to constructively and analytically contribute to administrative processes and decision-making.

vii. Most urgent tasks

Recommendations by our target groups for *immediate corrective measures* to strengthen economic, political, social and environmental sustainability:

- Create an information/experience exchange switchboard
- A local regular tsunami related information service on a provincial level between impacted communities, for example, newsletters, periodicals or a community-radio
- Empowerment for more potential, skills and training options in information management and technology
- The availability of access to a lawyer for the villagers at all times to discuss urgent matters
- A thorough medical check-up for the many villagers affected by the Tsunami
- The early warning system needs to be studied and adapted to include local wisdom and knowledge
- A programme for environmental conservation that includes all aspects of: economic, political, social and ecological sustainability.
- Information empowerment
- Problems related to affected youths: psychological and social (increased crime, break-down of families, etc.)

4. Lessons learnt from a qualitative perspective

The post Tsunami recovery and reconstruction process has been an enormous challenge for local communities, while at the same time constituting an opportunity in rebuilding, developing and improving social, economic, political and administrative structures. This aspect of 'an opportunity in crises' has already been approached, discussed and publicly addressed by the international Krabi-Conference on Tsunami rehabilitation in September 2005 (see Krabi declaration).

Now, eight months after this conference, experience has shown that an additional aspect to what has been addressed in the Krabi declaration is quickly evolving: the tendency of communal structures to react conservatively to an extended period of enforced change.

For example: Many women were forced under the post-Tsunami circumstances to take a more active role in communal administration and decision-making; many men were forced to cede their prerogatives to new family structures with newly defined gender roles; many teenagers were forced to act responsibly as adults in a society that normally treats them as minors well into their mid-twenties; many communal administrative decisions were placed into the hands of the communities for lack of alternatives, etc.; i.e., many structures were forced to open up to a different but more efficient way of doing things.

78 weeks after the Tsunami, the immediate recovery comes to an end and the mid-term recovery begins. While achieving a very high degree of 'normalcy' many older and more conservative communal structures try to return and impose themselves again in the wake of the Tsunami created emergency-synergies. Giving way to this tendency would radically alter and destroy many of the opportunities for civil society development that have resulted from the crises of the Tsunami which have become apparent over the last 18 months.

What is needed now is political and policy empowering aid to successfully translate the new dynamics of the post-Tsunami era into a successful mid- and long-term sustainable development structure and scheme for the community *by* the community. Currently, in the year 2006, the overwhelming majority of organizations involved in the Thai Tsunami recovery effort will close their projects. Tsunami Aid Watch of the Heinrich Böll Foundation will be one of the very few to remain and focus now on the much needed political and policy aspect of the Tsunami mid-term recovery process. The empowerment aspect, which is always inherent in a disaster, needs to be clearly outlined and understood. Those who have risen to the Tsunami challenge need to be supported making the structural changes permanent that empower and help to sustainably develop communities and civil society alike.

Attachment

1. Positive Experiences of TAW target groups in the Tsunami context

- The Tsunami resulted in strong cooperation among communities with a clearly defined structure of communal and personal responsibilities
- Strong factor in personal emancipation through Tsunami lessons learnt and experience
- Intra- and inter-communal Samaritan help distinguishes much better between emergency relief and communal/personal needs and wants (+ and – experience)
- Correcting measures resolving Tsunami related problems will strengthen and bind communities together in the future
- Much improved intra- and inter-communal, as well as personal communication skills
- Women have strongly increased their roles in representing community affairs to the outside world while men have increased their role as a back-up for internal family affairs and family safety
- Communities have gained a very clear picture of what successful administration of their own affairs looks like and learned about linking the problems at their cores
- Methods in reconstruction and rebuilding of the communities are now firmly routed in religion, means of income and economic considerations, shared activities and a regular exchange of experience

2. Negative experiences of TAW target groups in the Tsunami context

- Relief and reconstruction aid after the disaster was often not addressing the actual communal needs
- Some relief organizations were freely distributing money without verification by the communities
- Very little community involvement offered by organizations in the aid and reconstruction effort
- The freely uncontrolled distribution of aid was often a source for contention and conflict within communities
- Most aid tried to fix fishery problems and completely ignored other professions
- Steps and processes to involve communities (when they occurred) were often flawed and neglected communal reality
- The children-fund is a problem
 - The structural organization is not clear, rules and decisions on aid often seem arbitrary

- Some organizations/individuals were using children's account numbers for their own benefit
 - No details on transactions are available
 - The source of the donation remains unclear
- Widespread land-grabs
- Insufficient Electricity and water infrastructure (including waste management)
- Profession-related conflicts and problems in aid allocation and distribution, as not all relevant community professions and skills were addressed by aid and relief
- The seas, beaches and groundwater sources of Tsunami affected areas are changed in their composition, polluted or otherwise degraded. The impact on health and other activities like agriculture is not being monitored, information is missing
- The eco-system has changed after the Tsunami and communities are not prepared
- Often the distribution of aid was not equal, following no rules. There are no standards or structures available
- The government organizations strictly followed rules and laws without considering whether they were appropriate. Subsequent policies in reconstruction were therefore in almost all cases irrelevant to the actual need of reconstruction and re-establishing the status quo taking into account the communities and their structure. For example: All community members living by paying rent are only helped under immediate aid, but completely ignored in the subsequent aid and reconstruction effort.
- The social family structure has changed in communities. Instead of living in complete/extended families – as before the Tsunami – people now face the loss of one or more parents or grandparents and have split into smaller family units
- The psychological Tsunami impact is not appropriately addressed. Many still suffer from a loss of interest in living, unwillingness to work and move on, even suicides and death through mental exhaustion etc.
- Aid is delivered top to bottom
- Individuals in the community are still psychologically unbalanced – for example overworking, alcoholism, hooliganism, criminality etc.
- The Tsunami early-warning systems are made for tourists and their psyche but are in no way relevant for the use of or even workable for local communities and are completely run without community participation

- There is a lack of a sufficient, efficient and effective government system to deliver reconstruction and mid- and long-term aid
- Outside intervention in reconstruction and mid- and long-term aid needs to be discussed and outlined with a strong participation from the impacted communities. Coordination with outside organizations needs urgent improvement

Note:

- (1) Most of the information in this paper concerning quantitative DATA is based on the UNCT Report on “Tsunami Thailand One Year Later”, jointly prepared by the United Country Team in Thailand. The report was launched in December 2005.
- (2) Information not specifically quoted is derived from comments and interviews from the communities and from TAW experiences. Many of the points raised in this paper steadily reinforce what we’ve heard from the villagers during our visits and workshop with them.

3. Publications under Tsunami Aid Watch

Forthcoming, resulting from short term research projects

1. Tsunami early warning system: Myth and Reality.
2. Morgan culture and its origins.
3. Operating structure of Save Andaman Network (SAN), a case study in rebuilding houses and rehabilitating the communities.
4. Operating structure of the Save Andaman Network (SAN), a case study of boat repair and community shipyards.
5. Land problems after the Tsunami.
6. The changing ways of life in Andaman's coastline communities.
7. Changed environments: Permanent effects of the Tsunami on communal ecology.

Forthcoming, resulting from long term research projects

1. Data collection regarding land problems and solutions for Tsunami impacted areas.
2. Morgan (Sea-gypsies) ways of life and the history of Morgan land use.

Previously published

1. TSUNAMI. A study on disaster response in Sri Lanka, with a contribution on the situation in Thailand by Karl Segschneider, Director of the TAW team, and Walaitat Worakul ,published in cooperation with Heinrich Böll Foundation, Brot für die Welt and medico international, July 2006
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