



## **Disaster Relief - Tsunami**

### ***Unity of Mankind Initiative***

Immediately after the tsunami disaster (26<sup>th</sup> December 2004), Optima Foundation put its **disaster action plan** into motion to support the children who are affected by the disaster in the East of Sri Lanka (The South of Sri Lanka is covered by another group led by Miss Marilyn

Fleischman from Hertfordshire, UK). Thus, an appeal for funds was launched. Then a team was assembled to travel to the affected area for the first hand assessment and to provide the remedial help.

The team of disaster relief volunteers included Mr. Tom Jeyendran (Hon. Secretary), Miss Michelle Robson (Volunteer / member), Mr. Jim Linganayagam (Volunteer / member) and Mrs. Debbie

Linganayagam (Volunteer / member).

The appeal raised around £3000 (both in the UK and in IOM) and with the existing funds in the bank, Optima Foundation was able to take around £3500 to be spent on the remedial work. While every penny collected was used for the remedial work, the cost of travel, accommodation and subsistence of the team members was paid by the volunteers themselves.

### **Achievements:**

*Over a thousand smiling faces - Priceless*

### **Coverage during the stay in Sri Lanka**

| <b>Location</b>        | <b>Coverage</b>   |
|------------------------|---|
| Colombo                | 2 children's homes (approx 450 children) – not directly affected by tsunami but previously supported by Optima Foundation   |
| Batticaloa             | 13 children's homes / orphanages (approx 700 children) – partially or wholly affected by tsunami. Optima had previously supported 4 orphanages and one was lost to tsunami in Thirukovil (Batticaloa).  |
| Trincomalee            | 5 children's homes / orphanages (approx 400 children) – partially or wholly affected by tsunami. Optima had previously supported 3 orphanages.  |
| In cognito             | A group of 50 children (who were directly affected by the tsunami) were with Rev Father Joe Mary on an all island coach tour to overcome the trauma and fear. The Optima Foundation team spent some time with the children offering friendship and support. |
| Dutch Bar (Batticaloa) | A group of over 100 volunteers (adults) who were clearing the concrete and brick rubbles from the tsunami.  |

All the children's homes and orphanages in Batticaloa and Trincomalee are either directly or indirectly affected by the tsunami disaster. Hence these locations were targeted by the team members.

## Action taken by the team during the visit

1. Over 900 children and over 100 adults were invited by the team members to join in and share biscuits to symbolise the **unity of mankind**. The cost of biscuits etc was paid for by the Optima Foundation (Appeal funds).
2. As part of the support, children were encouraged to join in singing, playing and other fun activities (Out of the 21 groups of children 20 took part in this).
3. On the 24<sup>th</sup> March around 500 children in 10 children's homes / orphanages received food (for many 3 meals and for some one main meal) paid for by the Optima Foundation (Appeal funds) and some were sponsored by the team members themselves.
4. Additional feeding programmes were added after 24<sup>th</sup> March mainly funded by the team members themselves.

## Deliverables – delivered by Optima Foundation on behalf of the sponsors

| No: | Institution / Deliverables delivered   | Sponsorship / Funding  |
|-----|--|--|
| 1   | <u>Yoga Swami Girls Home (Batticaloa)</u><br>a. Bed linen (36 units)<br>b. Cooking utensils / kerosene cooker<br>c. Toilet repairs             | Optima Foundation<br><b>Mr &amp; Mrs Linganayagam</b><br>Optima Foundation |
| 2   | <u>Mangayarkarasiyar Girls Home (Batticaloa)</u><br>Personal care items  | <b>Provided by the Manx People</b>   |
| 3   | <u>Vipulananda Illam (Home for the boys)</u><br>Personal care items  | <b>Provided by the Manx People</b>   |
| 4   | <u>T. S. Kurukulam Boys Home (Batticaloa)</u><br>a. Replaced the tsunami damaged water pump<br>b. Replaced the tsunami damaged power generator | Optima Foundation<br>Optima Foundation                                     |
| 5   | <u>Hari Children's Home (Batticaloa)</u><br>Replaced chairs (30)   | An anonymous well wisher from Bedfordshire (UK)                            |
| 6   | <u>Osanam Home for the disabled (mentally handicapped children) (Batticaloa)</u><br>Provided toys  | <b>Miss Michelle Robson</b>  |
| 7   | <u>Manicka Vasagar Illam (Home for the boys) (Batticaloa)</u><br>Bed linen (50 units) / Brooms   | Optima Foundation  |
| 8   | <u>Thillaqavathiyar Illam (Home for girls) (Batticaloa)</u><br>40 sleeping mats and pillows  | Optima Foundation  |
| 9   | <u>Thabovanam (both girls and boys) (Trincomalee)</u><br>2 Gas cookers   | Optima Foundation  |
| 10  | <u>Sri Shanmuga Girls Home (Trincomalee)</u><br>Fridge / Freezer   | Optima Foundation  |
| 11  | <u>Sri Shanmuga Boys Home (Trincomalee)</u><br>Personal care items   | Optima Foundation  |

## Deliverables – Future Projects for considerations (Short term)

Optima Foundation is deeply committed to the **self worth** of the individuals in children's homes and orphanages. Thus, the projects that will enhance the development of children, including their own skills development is considered as worthwhile projects. On this basis, all major building projects were considered outside the scope and resources of Optima Foundation.

The trustees discussed the following projects during the visit. However, the progress on these projects by Optima Foundation is subject to the funds that can be raised in the UK and in Isle of Man.

|   | Institution   | Projects   | Rough estimate in £                               |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Yoga Swami Girls Home (Batticaloa)                                  | 1. A new well / pump / generator<br>2. Landscaping the garden area for producing vegetables<br>3. Setting up of a dairy cattle system to provide milk for the children (Building a shed / 5 dairy cattle)<br>4. Feeding cost of the dairy for 12 months<br>5. A play ground for under 12's | £900 - £1000<br>£750<br><br>£5000<br>£960<br>£400 |
| 2 | Vipulananda Illam (Boys Home ) (Batticaloa)                         | 1. Setting up of a dairy cattle system to provide milk for the children (Building a shed / 5 dairy cattle)<br>2. Feeding cost of the dairy for 12 months<br>3. A play ground for under 12's<br>4. A workshop area / building for skills development including M/C and tools                | £5000<br>£960<br>£400<br>£10,000                  |
| 3 | Sakthi Illam (Girls Home) (Batticaloa)                              | 1. Setting up of a dairy cattle system to provide milk for the children (Building a shed / 5 dairy cattle)<br>2. Feeding cost of the dairy for 12 months   | £5000<br>£960                                     |
| 4 | Manicka Vasagar Illam (Boys Home) (Batticaloa)                      | 1. A 3 wheeler (Auto rickshaw) to do the shopping / take the children to hospital<br>2. Cost of driving lessons / test for 2 adults<br>3. Stackable chairs and tables for studies (50)   | £1100<br>not estimated<br>£400                    |
| 5 | T S Kurukulam (Boys Home) (Batticaloa)                              | 1. Cost of making the soil good (ruined by the sea water!) in the vegetable garden area.   | not estimated                                     |
| 6 | Dharishanam (Home for the blind and partially sighted) (Batticaloa) | 1. Teaching aids (including the Braille machines and dictation machines)   | not estimated                                     |
| 7 | Osanam (Home for the mentally handicapped) (Batticaloa)             | 1. Handicraft moulds<br>2. Envelope making machines<br>3. Rug manufacturing hand looms<br>(all should be suitable for handicapped children)  | not estimated                                     |

In addition to the above projects, Optima Foundation intends to increase the feeding days to those orphanages and children's homes where the local sponsors are no longer able to maintain the sponsorship. On average, Optima Foundation spends around 50 Pence for an elaborate / fully balanced main meal per child. **This requires continuous flow of funds.**

### Developing the children in children's homes and orphanages (Medium term)

In order to develop and support the children, Optima Foundation intends to assign volunteer /

members to those institutions where the knowledge and skills from the advanced economies will be of benefit. This will include the volunteer / members to travel to the institution and spend

around 4 weeks living with the children and demonstrating the life skills.

However, before a volunteer can be assigned to an institution, Optima Foundation is required, by law to obtain character

reference of the volunteer (including any criminal records). Each accepted volunteer is then expected to undergo a training workshop and raise the funds for their travel and subsistence, if possible through commercial sponsorship.

## Finally

While every effort is taken to provide the accurate reflection of the situation among the needy children in the East of Sri Lanka from the recent visit, any changes in the social, political and economic factors locally may impact on the future plans of Optima Foundation.

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## New Year Greetings!

Optima Foundation takes this opportunity to wish all those in Sri Lanka who are celebrating their New Year on the 13<sup>th</sup> April.

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## Unforgettable moment during the trip to Sri Lanka

After distributing the biscuits to a group of children in Batticaloa, the team realised that the boys were hesitating to eat the biscuits. On prompting, one boy came forward to share his biscuits with the Optima Foundation team members, as the children felt that they had received the biscuits from the team, yet they had nothing to offer in return apart from the biscuits they had just received.

Here is a lesson to all on *sharing*.

*Tom Jeyendran*

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## Optima Foundation – Poverty Relief

### Our Aim

Optima Foundation exists to provide Poverty Relief on a global basis, thus reducing the physical, intellectual and spiritual hunger. In this mission, Optima Foundation aims to promote the concept of Human Values. They are **Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Non Violence**.

### Our Commitment

Optima Foundation is fully committed to the Principles of Interfaith Harmony and Human Values. Thus we shall carry out our work, rising above any social barriers resulting from gender, race, class, religious affiliation and physical or mental limitations of individuals.

Optima Foundation has no political or sectarian alliances or affiliation and is funded by donations and membership fees only. Currently, every Penny collected (100%) is spent on the under privileged children in various countries. Administration costs are borne by a few selected benefactors and the committee members.

### Our Objectives

*In the Short and Medium Term, Optima Foundation shall:*

1. Sponsor feeding Programs for children in need
2. Provide books etc to orphanages and children's homes to enhance their educational abilities.
3. Promote religious harmony among young children and develop interfaith understanding.
4. Provide training and development workshops for the volunteers, members and supporters.
5. Help those who endeavour to help themselves

**Love All Serve All**

*For further information –*

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At Optima Foundation

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