

Project Kalapuwa Sri-Lanka

February/March 2015

1.000 Rupees = € 6.50

In the first place we want to sincerely thank everyone who has given their assistance to our Project. In total we have managed to raise € 12.000 to further the efforts and aims of our project and we are able to state, with some pride, that this has enabled meaningful advances to be made.

On the Kalapuwa Peninsula there are 150 families that were, as we have previously mentioned, seriously hit by the Tsunami. Not only in materialistic terms, no possible economic recovery, but for many families a lasting trauma as a result of the devastation. One example of this is a father who witnessed the drowning of his three children and himself sustained permanent physical injury.

The first object of our visit this time was for Tineke and I to visit the families that we had been able to help during the last visit and see for ourselves, first hand, what the impact has been of our financial assistance. Obviously we had our expectations but the reality far exceeded these in a positive sense.

Further in this Newsletter is the result of our interview with the fishermen with the Nimco boat and how they have managed to pick up the pieces of their lives. We also talked to other fishermen and their reactions were the same. (see photo + interview)

We also visited the recipients of the sewing machines given during the previous trip and their story is also very much a positive one. To assist in their work and business expansion we had decided to add to their starting capital (€ 100) to enable larger and better material purchase thereby enabling a product stock to be built up. (see photo Seamstress + interview)

What else was accomplished this time:

We purchased 10 boats, 9 bicycles and 6 sewing machines but we have approached this phase in a slightly different way. Firstly we made contact with a lawyer to make sure of the legality of our plans and to set further commitments in the legal framework of a 'cooperative' in which, recipients of assistance become members. Using this construction we no longer simply give money but an agreement is entered into allowing financing and repayment of two thirds of the amount with one third being in the form of a gift.

The two thirds is to be repaid on a monthly basis over a 36 month period, interest free.

For example, in the case of a boat costing 60.000 Rs., 20.000 Rs. is in the form of a gift with 40.000



Rs., interest free, to be paid back over 36 months. For the boats we have made an additional one-off gift (12.000 Rs) for the nets required.

This construction has also been used for the sewing machines and the bicycles. Similarly in the case of the bicycles the requirement for a set of weighing scales and a carrying box for the fish has been satisfied with a one-off gift and for the sewing machines a gift of 10.000 Rs. as starting capital. (photo of the presentation and signing of the agreements)



Our aim with this new system is to help 50 families into a self-sustaining existence.

A second part of the project has been to help 40 school children with school satchels, books, shoes and uniforms without which they would be unable to attend school.

All the children on the Kalapuwa peninsular now attend school and will be able to stay there as their parents have now a means of supporting their families.



New business starters

The third element of the planning has been to help numerous new starters to get their businesses up and running with a start capital donation.

1. Mechanical repair of a Tuk Tuk severely damaged in an accident allowing the owner to be back on the road earning a wage. (95.000 Rs.)
2. A graphic designer who needed funds (200.000 Rs.) to purchase stock for her business.
3. A man who could make and sell concrete blocks to the local construction industry (100.000 Rs.) (see photo)
4. To start up a production unit for 'catamaran' boats (100.000 Rs.)
5. To set up a fish drying facility (225.000 Rs.)
6. For a young lady making quality evening dresses but who is only able to purchase the necessary material in Colombo (50.000 Rs.)
7. Help for a starter from the previous visit to expand his stock (55.000 Rs.)



For all of these starters we have discussed their prospects and set up a business plan, made eventual modifications and have reached agreements with regard to the repayment schedule for the start capital. Here also the 1/3 gift and 2/3 loan construction is in operation.

We have not been able to help everyone. Some have been rejected, for various reasons, and six others will have to be looked at in more detail in the continuation of the project.

Lottery ticket seller

A handicapped lottery ticket salesman, who was only mobile on a plank with wheels, has now received a hand-driven three-wheeler significantly improving his quality of life.



Restaurant /community house

As a final action this time a start has been made with the construction of a restaurant/community house.

On the peninsular live 18 people, older than 80, many of whom have no relatives or family to look after their wellbeing. Before the Tsunami arrived there was, at this location, a restaurant/community house where the old and infirm, a couple of times a week, received meals and attention and where social interaction was possible. Simply to sit under a tree looking out to sea, enjoying their old age.



The photo shows that the foundations have been laid for the new building and we need to see it completed. The 1/3 gift – 2/3 loan, financing arrangement applies to this project as well.

Interview Seamstress

We visited a seamstress whom we had met in 2014 and given a sewing machine to build up her business.

As the photo shows, together with her mother, she was working hard making more traditional Singalese dresses. These garments are being sold to local shops over a wide area in the Kalutara community.

Business is good and both of them have built up an income of approx. 18.000 Rs. per month and it was apparent in our conversation with them that they had positive ideas for expansion but had no capital to invest in the material needed. Having seen new model designs and discussing a business plan we decided to invest 20.000 Rs. for the purchase of new material. The system of 1/3 gift and 2/3 interest-free loan over a 36 month period was agreed upon.



Interview fishermen with the Nimco boat

In May 2014 these fishermen received a boat and equipment sponsored by Nimco.

Sunday morning, 09.00am. we sat down with two happy people. We asked them how they were doing. Their happy reaction was enthusiastic and very positive.

They go out to sea fishing 6 days a week and being able to do this has changed their lives. The sea fishing season is about 7 months and this gives them a daily income of 1750 Rs. per person. For the rest of the year they fish on the river which brings in 1200 Rs. per person per day.

nb# an average income in Sri Lanka is approximately 40.000 Rs. per month.

Their new employment enables our fishermen to invest in new nets and the maintenance of the catamaran.

The retail of the fish caught provides for a 1200 Rs. per person, per day income for two other persons. The daily income for 4 families has given them a chance to establish a stable life and in this case, the 11 children in the families are able to go to school. Not a rich life but most certainly a happier one.

We asked what they expected from the future, for themselves but also for the children.

Their future looks bright. Their children's future is most important and money is saved for school and for further education and a couple of their offspring are turning their eyes to the sea. Sometime in the future there will have to be a new catamaran or a motor boat with which a 12 month sea fishing season is possible.

All in all, these 4 families are on their way to a better future.



