



# IOM Sri Lanka Newsletter

June 2008

- Mentors help voluntary returnees with their questions – pg 2
- Helping communities of Jinnah Nagar in Trincomalee – pg 2
- A new preschool for the children of Sandilipai North, Jaffna – pg 2
- IOM and EC creating better learning environments for students – pg 3
- IOM organizes an effective writing skills and report writing course for senior immigration officials – pg 3
- IOM assists the Sri Lankan government to strengthen labour migration – pg 3
- “We Can” campaign addresses the root causes of discrimination against women among IDPs – pg 4
- IOM renovates school that housed tsunami-affected families – pg 5
- A housing development for the tsunami-affected communities in Ampara – pg 5
- IOM helps landslide victims in the central hills of Sri Lanka – pg 5
- IOM’s efforts in rehabilitating communities – pg 6
- Livelihood options for IDPs – pg 6

## Regulating Migration

### COUNTER-TRAFFICKING

IOM’s counter-trafficking programmes support national efforts to prevent and prosecute trafficking cases by drawing on the organization’s technical expertise and local resources. A series of capacity building activities, funded by USAID and US State Department (G/TIP), are underway to strengthen national efforts in addressing trafficking issues.

#### Training of law enforcement officers

After an assessment on the process of identifying and prosecuting cases of trafficking in Sri Lanka, IOM developed a training curriculum in consultation with stakeholder agencies, such as the departments of Police and Attorney General’s and the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE). IOM has trained 175 police officers to date in identification, prevention and investigation of trafficking cases and continues to support institutional training of the police systematically through the Police Higher Training Institute and through training workshops conducted in the districts. IOM will also help to incorporate the training on trafficking into the police training curriculum.



*A police training in progress*

#### Support to local NGOs and its staff

IOM’s support to Women In Need (WIN), a local NGO providing counselling, legal and temporary shelter for victims of violence in many parts of the country, allows the organization to continue assisting individuals. The services provided by WIN include operating crisis centres in several districts, providing psychosocial and medical support, operating a 24-hour hotline, conducting awareness programmes on gender and gender-based violence and opening a permanent Counsellor Desk attached to the Sri Lanka Police Headquarters in Colombo.



*Participants during a workshop organized by IOM*

To further strengthen the capacity of local NGO staff, workshops were also organized on report and proposal writing as well as on counter-trafficking awareness.

## RETURN ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS AND GOVERNMENTS

### Mentors help voluntary returnees with their questions

IOM Sri Lanka's Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Unit which assists and facilitates the voluntary return of Sri Lankans; failed asylum seekers, irregular migrants and stranded migrants from Europe and en-route countries, introduced a new approach to their programme – a mentor scheme.

Mentors are returnees who have already returned through this programme, willing to share their experience of return and reintegration with 'prospective returnees' over the

telephone. Under the mentor scheme, returnees who are considering returning home are given an opportunity to speak to these mentors to get a first hand account about their experience in being assisted.

IOM offices in the country of residence will provide returnees with telephone calls to ask a returnee in their home country about his/her experience of return and reintegration in the relevant country.

### Happy to be of help

Mr D. Sivakumar from Kurunegala, in central Sri Lanka is one of the returnees in the mentor scheme who responds to questions from potential IOM returnees. Having returned and started his own business, transporting goods, through IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return programme he is happy to help other returnees with information "to make that big decision". "This is a real good initiative as most of these people have left the island years back they have a lot of concerns before they actually make a decision to return to their motherland", explains Sivakumar. "They are happy to hear it from someone who has returned through the programme and if they have questions I can answer I am extremely happy to be of help to these people".

According to Sivakumar most of the returnee questions are based on immigration procedures, reintegration grants and then of course IOM's support.

### Helping communities of Jinnah Nagar in Trincomalee



*At the opening ceremony of the community building*

Jinnah Nagar, located in the outskirts of the Trincomalee town is a village with around 400 families. Some of these families have returned from India with the support of an IOM-AusAID funded programme "Sustainable Return and Reintegration of Sri Lankan Refugees from India".

An important component of this programme aims at supporting both returnees and local communities through cooperative planning and joint initiatives that promote harmony and address particular early recovery/development needs. Within this framework, IOM with the

support of local government bodies, the Rural Development Society of Jinnah Nagar and the villagers constructed a multi-purpose community building.



*A signboard outside the building*

The village lacked a community building and the villagers as a result travelled a long distance to attend to their daily needs. The newly constructed building now houses offices of local government agents (*Grama Niladhari and Samurdhi*), a preschool for 40 children, a mother and child care clinic and a room for storage.

### A new preschool for the children of Sandilipai North, Jaffna



*Preschoolers in the play area of the newly constructed preschool*

IOM successfully completed the building of a preschool in Sandilipai North, a village with over 300 families in the Jaffna district. For over a decade, the children of these families have been attending a make-shift preschool with no proper facilities in a nearby house.

IOM, together with the Sandilipai North Community Centre, constructed a building to house the preschool; along with permanent water and sanitation facilities and provided furniture and play material to the school.

The preschool project was made possible with financial support from the European Commission (EC) under IOM's 'Enhanced Capacity Building in Migration Management to Support Effective Return and Sustainable Reintegration of Returnees to Sri Lanka' programme.

## IOM and EC creating better learning environments for students

IOM and the EC opened the ground floor of a new building at the Good Shepherd Tamil Girls Vidyalayam in Kotahena, along the western coast of Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital.

The school which provides education for over thousand students, some of whom are either children of voluntary returnees from abroad or displaced due to the tsunami and the conflict, lacked adequate space to conduct classes. Hence, for over two decades the school has been functioning in two sessions.

Sister Marie Euphrasia, the Principal of the school speaking at the opening said, "As the school conducted classes in two



*Special invitees lighting the traditional oil lamp at the opening ceremony*



*Young students of Good Shepherd Tamil Girls Vidyalayam entertaining the guests*

sessions the time duration of the sessions was not sufficient to fulfill the educational needs of our students. Moreover, the primary school students had to sacrifice their play time to attend school and also due to unsuitable hours, they could not fully concentrate on their studies".

## TECHNICAL COOPERATION ON MIGRATION MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

### IOM organizes an Effective Writing Skills and Report Writing course for senior immigration officials



*IED officials at the workshop listen to the trainer*

IOM continuing its efforts in supporting the Government of Sri Lanka to manage migration effectively at entry and exit points by providing capacity building and technical assistance organized an effective writing skills and report writing course for forty senior officials from the Immigration and Emigration Department of Sri Lanka.

The four-day training at the Immigration Training and Education Centre in Colombo conducted by the British Council, aimed at improving the skills of the officials in different styles of modern business writing by introducing accurate and clear business writing methods and writing reader-friendly reports. Additionally, the trainers provided information on continued education opportunities.

## Facilitating Migration

### IOM assists the Sri Lankan government to strengthen labour migration

The IOM funded labour migration programme is developed to support the Government in its efforts towards poverty alleviation and economic development through enhancing management of outward labour migration.

The programme consists of three phases. The first phase will focus on conducting a comprehensive assessment including provision of feasible recommendation on all aspects of outward labour migration in Sri Lanka. The second phase of the programme is designed to support with provision of pre-departure training for female domestic migrant workers accompanied by enhancing of training curricular with new training materials. The final phase of the programme seeks to provide training to officials in market research and in modern techniques of market penetration.

# ***Movement, Emergency and Post Crisis Migration Management***

**SUPPORT TO POPULATIONS AFFECTED BY THE TSUNAMI AND OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS**



*Men and women engrossed in activities during the campaign*

## **“We Can” campaign among IDPs addresses the root causes of discrimination against women**

IOM together with the Socio Economic Development Organization of Trincomalee (SEDOT), a local grassroots organization launched a campaign to raise awareness among IDPs in the Trincomalee district in the East of Sri Lanka on women related issues.

The ‘We Can’ (end all violence against women) campaign started by Oxfam in 2004 is a coalition of over 400 organizations, collectives and individuals active in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and Pakistan. The campaign works to increase public awareness and to change deep seated gender-biased attitudes and practices that endorse inequality and discrimination.

The main objective of the campaign conducted in the Trincomalee district, was to encourage people within the community to recognize the root causes of discrimination against women and to motivate them to change

their perceptions towards women, thus becoming “Change Makers” within their community.

Approximately five hundred men and women from IOM-managed tsunami and conflict shelter sites participated in the campaign. A trained ‘We Can’ resource person from SEDOT facilitated the open and group discussions using pictures and other material to examine a number of important topics. Other activities included: poster painting, briefings on discrimination and violence against women and women’s rights and the distribution of campaign kits with information material for Change Makers to use in their communities.

At the end of the campaign over 100 participants volunteered to become Change Makers. They will attempt to break the cycle of violence by talking to friends, neighbours and colleagues to influence their opinion on violence

against women; by increasing their own awareness on the issue and making changes in their own lives; disseminating information on the campaign and supporting women who experience violence.

The campaign concluded with a slogan, “Living without Violence will Create a Happier Life”.

Participants’ voices from the “We Can” campaign:

*“Changes cannot be made overnight, it will take some time to change our attitudes but what is important is “We can”.*

*“We want to especially make the young generations aware about violence against women.”*

*“The real change must come from our attitudes”.*

*“Men must share the domestic chores then we can reduce the work load of women”*

## **IOM renovates school that housed tsunami-affected families**

Students of Methodist College, Dehiwela, in the South of Sri Lanka’s capital, eagerly waited for over three years to return to their school which housed tsunami-affected families in the area until recently.

At the request of the school authorities, IOM, through its Care and Maintenance programme, renovated the

play area, classrooms, the laboratory and the staff room, upgraded sanitation facilities and constructed a canteen.

The Minister of Education, Hon. Susil Premajayantha addressing the crowd of local officials, students and

*Minister Premajayantha declaring open the renovated school*



staff members of Methodist College at the handing over ceremony of the renovated school buildings said, "The much needed renovation of the school buildings will resume the education of the students who until now attended a school nearby. We are grateful to IOM for undertaking this project". Minister Premajayantha also assured the support of his Ministry in providing extra facilities such as a computer centre to the school.

IOM's Care and Maintenance programme ensures that adequate care and maintenance support is provided to tsunami-affected people living in



*Classrooms of Methodist College before renovation and after renovation*

transitional shelters in Gampaha, Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts. The programme also includes decommissioning of voluntarily vacated shelter sites, garbage collection,

fire-extinguishing equipment, water supply, lighting, gully suckers, hygiene promotion training, and workshops on topics such as gender equality, protection, health and safety.

### **A housing development for the tsunami-affected communities in Ampara**

IOM with funding from the Saudi Charity Campaign for the Relief of Earthquake and Tsunami Victims in East Asia is building a housing development including 500 permanent houses, infrastructure and other facilities in the Ampara district for tsunami-displaced people.

Construction work is already under way on over 400 houses including two completed model houses, and six public buildings, schools, multi-purpose hall, hospital and two bus

stands. Once completed the housing development will also include a market, a mosque, a mini stadium and a road network with pavements, landscaping and road signage. The Government has provided electricity for the project and work is underway on planning water provision.



*A completed house*



*Inside the house*

### **IOM helps landslide victims in the central hills of Sri Lanka**

Walapane and Hanguranketa are two areas in the Central Province of Sri Lanka worst affected by floods and landslides. Over 600 families who were left homeless in the aftermath of the landslides have taken refuge in makeshift welfare camps in nearby temples and schools.

The government has recently provided some of these families with a plot of land, a cash grant and basic material to rebuild their houses. While a number of these families have been relocated some of the families still await to be transported to their relocation sites, some of which are 20 kilometers away from where they live at present. The local government authority in the area has sought IOM's assistance in providing transport to families who await relocation. IOM hired lorries to facilitate the voluntary transportation of these families and their belong-

ings to the new relocation sites.

IOM's transport and logistics service, which is free of charge, ensures a rapid response in the event of a humanitarian emergency. The service is funded by the Government of Australia's Department of Immigration and Citizenship.



*Lorries transporting families victimized by landslides and their belongings to new locations*

---

## ASSISTANCE TO CONFLICT – AFFECTED POPULATIONS

### Livelihood options for IDPs

As part of its early recovery operations, IOM has developed livelihood support programmes that enable IDPs to develop self-sustaining activities. Over 200 IDPs in the Jaffna district, North of Sri Lanka benefited by the programme receiving training on composting under an IOM-ECHO project. As a result, the families will be earning income by selling compost and other products from their home gardens.

The beneficiaries will also receive additional training on gardening, business skills and marketing of compost; seeds and planting and gardening equipment. IOM, along with partners, will also identify potential markets for beneficiaries to sell their products.

IOM in partnership with Sewalanka, a local NGO developed a livelihood support project to promote hybrid goats among 60 female-headed households affected by the conflict in the Jaffna district. The project aims to empower these women by assisting them to be socially and economically independent. The identified women and their families also received support in overall livestock management and trainings on business skills development and livestock.

Addressing a request made by local government bodies for livelihood projects in Batticaloa, 150 beneficiaries were also assisted in livestock farming, the only means of livelihood for most families living in the area. The

farmers were trained on best practices in animal care as well as on new technologies of vaccination. They also received training on business development and Bird Flu awareness and were introduced to potential markets. The families received goats, cattle and chickens.

Another 100 residents from IDP shelter sites in the Batticaloa district received livelihood kits to further support their vocations or received livelihood assistance to start income generation activities. In both instances the beneficiaries were selected after a detailed assessment considering current status, previous experiences and aspirations of the families in this site.

---

### IOM'S efforts in rehabilitating communities

IOM with funding from AusAID will resume community rehabilitation activities with all ethnic communities who have been directly or indirectly affected by the conflict. The programme will target the North, East and also the central parts of Sri Lanka. The project

titled "Community Rehabilitation and Socio-Economic Support for Conflict Transformation", will support socio-economic development of these communities and undertake initiatives that contribute towards peace building as well as capacity building of local

partners and communities to ensure sustainability of project activities.

IOM implemented a similar project in three districts in the North and East of Sri Lanka last year.

---

Should you require more information on any of IOM Sri Lanka's activities write to us on:

**24 Police Park Avenue, Colombo 05, Sri Lanka. Phone: +94 115 333 432 Fax: +94 115 333462**

**E-mail: [iomsf@sltnet.lk](mailto:iomsf@sltnet.lk) Website: [www.iomsrilanka.org](http://www.iomsrilanka.org); [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)**



---

IOM International Organization for Migration

**Current IOM Sri Lanka programmes are funded by the Government of Australia (AusAID & DIAC), the European Commission, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), the Saudi Charity Campaign for the Relief of the Earthquake and Tsunami Victims in Asia, the UK Home Office and the European Refugee Fund, UNICEF, the U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and USAID.**

**Photos taken by IOM staff**