



Tsunami Terror Alert: Voices of Youth

10 January 2005 / New York / *Voices of Youth* - Since December 30, 2004, young people from every region of the world, including from the affected countries, have posted 200+ messages on Voices of Youth discussing the tsunami and what they can do to help.

Every few days, a Voices of Youth member will contribute a short summary of the concerns and suggestions as expressed by children and adolescents on Voices of Youth. These summaries are supplemented by additional information collated by the Voices of Youth team. Please circulate.

Voices of Youth member summary, 10 January 2005

Catalina, 19, Columbia

"When I became a member of voices of youth I thought that it was a good alternative, to communicate with the teens around the world about the problems that surround us and find a solution to them, now I know that what I was thinking was true.

In these days with the tragedy happened in South Asia I realized that the youngsters are sympathetic and want to participate and make a better world, for that reason they are participating at the forums giving ideas of what people can do for help the tsunami survivors, here are some ideas :

Recollect money, sell t-shirts with supportive messages (and write letters 😊), and make cakes, recollecting books to rebuild schools, and many other things with the purpose to collect money and donate it to the victims.

All those ideas show that the young people are united and willing to help the people that need of their support and of their contribution. The youngsters are acting locally and it's great because they show their urge to live in a better world."

Voices of Youth: Summary of concerns

In addition to Catalina's summary, Voices of Youth members are also particularly concerned with the following:

- The potential for disease, such as cholera and dysentery, following the tsunami due to lack of clean water and sanitation and poor access to health care

"It is predicted that the number of dead will DOUBLE due to diseases spreading like wildfire through these countries. The aftermath of the tsunami is going to kill as many again. There is no food, no clean water, no sanitation." *Kim, Ireland*

"but the situation in here just not the trauma things but also disease. I think we will need a huge number of medicine support for cholera and dysentery." *OPe_daFunk, Indonesia*

"If they do not get rid of the dead bodies quickly, diseases might start to go around the region and refugees who move to other regions may also bring the disease there." *J.O.Y, Indonesia*

- Reaching the hard to reach

“I think we should think of ways to send out the food, water and medicine to these affected areas especially in hard hit Indonesian Aceh. The people are swarming military helicopters making it difficult for the soldiers to send them aid and also the bad weather lately with rain and wind makes things worse. everyone's afraid of another tsunami attack. communications are bad and things are not reaching the victims. why can we do to facilitate their logistics?” *Mingzy, Singapore*

“The worst devastated region, Nangroe Aceh Darusallam urgently needs help. The region is quite isolated because it is a region controlled by the rebels, so outside help is very hard to reach there. Even if people tried to help, it would be quite hard to reach to the refugees due to corruption. There are uncountable refugees who until now have not receive enough food.” *J.O.Y, Indonesia*

- Protecting the children from exploitation and abuse by providing additional policy support and effective registration and surveillance.

“I think that police are needed to protect the refugees and tighter security must be enforced in the tsunami devastated areas. In today's ST news, it reported that human traffickers have now swooped in to take advantage of the situation. A 12 year old Swedish boy was apparently kidnapped from the hospital by people claiming to be his relatives but are not. Similar incidences have happened in India where strange people are claiming orphaned children. there are fears that these children may be forced into child prostitution and sold as child labourers.” *Mingzy, Singapore*

- Providing the affected children with access to an education by rebuilding schools, donating books and training teachers. An education will also help affected children regain a sense of normalcy.

“In Sri Lanka 161 schools are completely (59) or partially (102) destroyed. No educational activities can be conducted in them. These schools need to be rebuilt fast.” *Rusiru, Sri Lanka*

- Participants are also concerned that the tsunami is diverting attention away from other tragedies that also require an international response and support

“When the Tsunami hit South East Asia, the news had all it's eyes on the tsunami, from BBC to CNN. The Tsunami is a very big tradgey and I agree, but I also think the world should pay more attention to Sudan and other crisis. Yes the Tsunami should get attention, but other crisis should get just as much attention.” *Pokemonfreak27, Canada*

Voices of Youth: Suggestions for action:

- Start a fundraising campaign via internet. (Lucy12, Romania)
- Write letters to the affected in support (all in agreement)
- Contact the Asian authorities, make a list of number of volunteers needed, and then submit it to an online volunteering service(like UN volunteers for example) (Lucy12, Romania)
- Sing, put on plays and dance performances to raise money (Pzlosophy, Malaysia)
- Collect stuffed animals to send to children to help them with trauma (Jla, USA)
- Empower the people to take control of their situation and better their own lives (Tusharpasrija, India)
- Come together – Youth Unite! – to bring about change (Kels, Canada)

Voices of Youth: Thoughts from the affected countries:

"As a Sri Lankan who witnessed the horror first hand, and as a person who tries and I am still trying my best to get involved in relief efforts I know the trauma that people specially children are going through in Sri Lanka. They should be helped to rebuild their lives and to forget what they have gone through. The Children need stuff like toys or stuffed animals (teddy bears etc.) or books or something that could get their mind off the horror of losing their parents and families and homes. Please give suggestions and if there is anything that you know would help children get their mind off the horrors please donate (TOYS ETC.) to a local NGO or Red Cross UNICEF etc. which you know would get the stuff to Sri Lanka. We need your help at this hour."

Rusiru, Sri Lanka

"It is indeed sad and heart breaking to see our countries being washed away by the massive tsunami that hit on the 26th of December 2004. It was unbelievable. How painful to see the people who were victims of it cry for the loss of their loved ones property and everything they ever owned. I helped them too but I feel that it wasn't enough. However in the future no matter what it takes I devote myself to help those people. For no matter who they are and what they are they are our sisters and brother, mothers and fathers, uncles and aunts. I know that day they weren't the only ones to cry in fact it was the whole world who cried along with them. The time has come to rebuild our nations. To lift up our spirits and work together. We can't bring back the dead but we can make those who are left behind live again. Give them new hope."

Simingalo17, Sri Lanka

"Life is never the same anymore,
My life is filled with pain and heavy tears,
As I search for you my mum, dad, son, daughter,
Grandson, granddaughter, niece nephew cousin,
My in-law, my friend and my neighbour.
I cannot find you, but i have faith that all will
Be okay, though I have so much pain in my heart
I see a small child hold my hand though she is hurt
She smile at me and tears flow from my eyes freely
Ten she says to me "don't cry God is watching over us"
And indeed as we stand their together the sun shines .
And I know though it will take long for me to heal from
My loss God is surely watching over me.
Yes I know all this people affected by the tsunami have the most unmentioned pain God will give them
the heart to go on.
All we can do is pray for them and assist in all we can."

Jannet, Kenya

You can read more of the Voices of Youth discussions on the Voices of Youth discussion forums at: Tsunami Terror: <http://www.unicef.org/voy/discussions/forumdisplay.php?f=68>. We request you to please use available channels to publicise this e-space with your staff, partner organisations and especially youth organisations and networks in your country and region.