



Tsunami Terror Alert: Voices of Youth

25 January 2005 – New York / Somalia / Voices of Youth – Below is the fifth Voices of Youth update on what young people are saying about the tsunami. Written by a VOY member from Somalia, with inputs from the VOY team, this update focuses on specific suggestions for action – in partnership with children and adolescents, the role of the media and how young people are contributing to relief efforts.

A snapshot of who is participating:

Since opening on 30 December 2004, young people from every region have posted in the Voices of Youth “Tsunami Terror” discussion forum. 14% of all posts come from young people in affected countries, and 26% from the affected region overall. The largest single group of participants live in the USA, with East Asia and the Pacific the best represented region. Three times as many girls are active than boys, with the majority (36%) between 15 and 17 years of age.

Voices of Youth member summary

Zuhur, 19, Somalia

Posts are continuing on what, where and how aid for the victims of the 26 December tsunami should be used. Youth from all over the world are contributing ideas and concerns through VOY. Here are some of the many posts that are posted every day.

Suggestions to UNICEF for action: Partnering with adolescents

Participants on Voices of Youth continue to put forth specific suggestions for action they hope UNICEF will consider – in partnership with children and adolescents.

Dialogue : « Est-ce qu'on pourrait discuter avec des personnes qui ont aidé les enfants victimes du tsunami, sur VOY, afin qu'on puisse mieux savoir le déroulement de ces actions d'aides? Ne pourrait-on pas aussi être en contact avec quelques enfants de ces régions sinistrées sur le forum pour les soutenir moralement? » (*Fz ben fkira, Morocco*)

English translation: “Can we speak with those helping child victims of the tsunami on VOY so we can better understand the relief processes and actions? Can we get in contact with some young people from the affected region on the forum to provide them with moral support?”

“What could VOY do? Well quite a lot actually. What is happening right now is really great as well. People are getting to know about the exact situation in the region and are doing their little bit to help. Let's continue from there, and continue what we have been doing. As young people we could:

- **Create awareness:** Get involved through schools. Create awareness about the tragedy in your school, and ask people in your school what they would like to do.
- **Fundraise:** Maybe you guys can collect money and donate it to an organization such as UNICEF or the Red Cross asking it to be used for children,
- **Network:** Or you could speak to UNICEF and create correspondence between your school and an affected school. That would make you more aware to the disaster.
- **Communicate:** Write letters to the kids in the affected schools and ask them how they feel.” (*Rusiru, Sri Lanka*)

Media

The discussions on Voices of Youth focus on the role of the media and its power to convene and influence. They criticize the media for not giving equal attention to all countries and emergencies, but also celebrate its ability to foster international interest and action.

“It seems to me that the media only pays attention to efforts where lots of money is being poured in. It really isn't fair how the media gives attention to only "big" things and they ignore the other events in the world. This is mass-media production for the world.” (*Ko, USA*)

“By highlighting, even for a brief period, a crisis, the media does help in creating awareness about that crisis. It is sad that awareness is often attained only when something drastic happens, like a new spate of deaths through famine or killing, but it can hardly be helped.” (*Juline, Singapore*)

Taking action: Global creative commitments

Coming together: “We started selling rice, porridge and had many fund raisers in aid for the tsunami victims. Although it may not bring back their loved ones, but we indeed hope that it will save the living. A speaker that went to Aceh to help showed us pictures on how life was there.... and it was the last place on earth you would wanna live... it's heart breaking and at the same time, relief, that at this time of suffering and lost of hope, many others went to give hope, help and aid for the victims.. no matter race, religion or country...” (*Jenniferghc, Malaysia*)

Art: “I am going to have try and get the kids in our church to draw pictures and write letters of comfort for those in tsunami struck areas. I know the children's ministry people very well so I'm going to suggest it to them. I'm going to try to get that going. just thought I'd tell you guys.” (*Jla, USA*)

Music: “Hee, I'm going to join the busking festival held at Orchard Singapore to raise funds for Tsunami. Although I would rather help the children specifically but there isn't much efforts in Singapore on that. So I thought that such help should be universal regardless of race, language or religion.” (*Kenny, Singapore*)

A poem from Aceh, Indonesia *Yukakharisma, 18*

I'm spending my time,
Looking back at all these years,
The times that we had,
Be it good or bad,
It's the time that we shared.

The dreams that we had,
Shatter just like broken glass,
Your waves came so fast,
You lay down your wrath,
On everything in your path.

They say that life goes on,
Leave scenes of the past behind,
Let us rebuild our lives,
Let us open our minds,
And lead a brand new life.

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.