



REBUILDING YOUNG LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

The Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative

Final Report

*“I cannot
overemphasize
how critical youth
employment
is to the
development and
reconstruction
process.”*

— Martti Ahtisaari,
Nobel Laureate,
at the International
Centre for Aceh and
Indian Ocean Studies
February, 2009



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KEY (acronyms for implementing partners):

- Community Collective Society for Integrated Development (CCFID), India
- Center for Community Development and Education (CCDE), Indonesia
- Indonesia Business Links (IBL), Indonesia
- Foundation of Goodness (FoG), Sri Lanka
- Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC), Sri Lanka
- National Council for Child and Youth Development (NCYD), Thailand





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) extends its gratitude to Nokia for its support and far-reaching vision in launching the Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative (TRI). Through an emphasis on youth livelihood development as the centerpiece to long-term reconstruction efforts, the TRI distinguished itself, paving the way for youth needs to be accorded priority in future post-disaster reconstruction efforts. We also thank the Sylvan/Laureate Foundation and Unocal for their generous financial contributions to the initiative's success. We recognize that building effective partnerships — and leveraging the diverse expertise of partners — was essential to achieving the TRI's ambitious goals.

None of the accomplishments outlined in this report would be possible without the hard work and perseverance of the initiative's implementing partners in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, who, in a number of cases, exceeded the program's goals. We recognize that the 2004 Asian tsunami presented unique challenges — as well as opportunities — to contribute to current knowledge and practice around how to best support youth livelihood development in the aftermath of such a disaster. Our partners in the region excelled in their service to youth and commitment to capturing these valuable lessons.

Our appreciation also extends to those organizations that supported the initiative with their technical knowledge, including Youthreach (India) and Indonesia Business Links. Your expertise was invaluable in strengthening the capacity of local implementing organizations, who are now better equipped to address youth needs and fulfill new roles in their respective regions.

While we hope natural disasters of this magnitude will be few and far between, may the lessons resulting from the TRI help strengthen long-term reconstruction efforts in the future for the benefit of young people and societies as a whole.

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“Livelihood projects must balance immediate needs for tsunami victims with a long-term vision of economic recovery and sustainable growth for all market participants.”

— *Tsunami Recovery: Taking Stock after 12 Months*
Office of the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, United Nations, December 2005

An estimated 230,000 people perished and over five million were left homeless as a result of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami that ravaged several South and Southeast Asian countries on 26 December 2004.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An estimated 230,000 people perished and over five million were left homeless as a result of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami that ravaged several South and Southeast Asian countries on 26 December 2004. The days and weeks following the disaster demanded an immediate response to meet victims' urgent needs for water, food, shelter, medicine, and psychosocial support. While emergency relief efforts received widespread media coverage, another story — of efforts to rebuild lives and livelihoods over the long term — remains largely untold.

Summarized here is the experience of the Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative (TRI). Launched by Nokia and the International Youth Foundation (IYF), the TRI provided critical livelihood support to affected youth through enabling them to access training, jobs, apprenticeships, and/or loans. Carried out in tsunami-affected areas of India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, the initiative also benefited from the support of the Sylvan/Laureate Foundation and Unocal.

Why the specific focus on youth livelihood development? Needs assessments conducted in the aftermath of the tsunami underscored the urgency of supporting youth, given that many young people suffered interruptions in their education and the loss of key family members and livelihood opportunities.

From 2006-2009, the US\$3.09 million program reached more than 12,400 youth, ages 16 to 29. With the support they received, youth created a range of micro- and small-enterprises — from processing cashews to bottling juices, from producing handicrafts to promoting tourism. The economic ripple effect is now being felt through the creation of jobs and business sector growth. The need for a livelihood/entrepreneurship development program — as opposed to an employability program that would offer skills development for jobs within existing businesses — was soon evident.

In developing the program, IYF identified local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in each country with knowledge and experience in youth livelihood development. Diverse strategies were pursued (see Figure 1, page 5) depending on the local context and each partner's core strengths. In India and Indonesia, for example, programs supported the formation and strengthening of Self-Help Groups as part of their broader goals. In Sri Lanka, young entrepreneurs were matched with local business mentors. In Thailand, a community-engagement strategy was stressed. This multiplicity of approaches enabled Partners to learn and share diverse strategies with one another. Part of the program's richness and legacy is the adaptation of effective approaches across the four countries. Each program was tailor-made to address the specific needs, context, and conditions of the country.



Figure 1

Summary of Approaches, Results, and Lessons Learned			
Implementing Partner	Approach	Results	Lessons Learned
INDIA Community Collective Society for Integrated Development CCFID	<p>Provided life skills and vocational training to youth, plus micro-credit (up to US\$500) and livelihood financing loans (US\$1,000+). Pursued a holistic, flexible approach based on beneficiary needs, offering customized supports (e.g., business counseling, institutional development, knowledge management, and investment services), along with micro-insurance to mitigate future crises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 7,600 loans, totaling US\$1,008,000 were made, enabling 1,500 youth-led enterprises to take root. 177 youth businesses employed five or more employees. 1,900 youth trained in essential life skills. 5,020 youth gained access to affordable micro-insurance. 	<p>Youth empowerment programs require community-wide buy-in and collaborative approaches. Holistic strategies to youth entrepreneurship are needed that combine credit with a comprehensive set of livelihood support services (e.g., product development, business planning, marketing). CCFID adopted a range of interventions that proved far more successful in reaching diverse beneficiaries than pursuing a single approach.</p>
INDONESIA Center for Community Development and Education CCDE	<p>Equipped youth with life and computer skills and offered enterprise development training and apprenticeships. Special emphasis placed on women's empowerment. Loan fund terminated due to unfavorable external conditions and limited institutional capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 320 youth received training, and 155 youth acquired loans to start their own businesses. 216 youth participated in small business and/or finance training. 71 youth trained to lead Self Help Groups comprising 265 members. 	<p>Key challenges included youth complacency and the 'free money' mentality that followed the tsunami, along with 30 years of civil unrest with ongoing foreign aid. Most agencies and international NGOs were unable to spend the money they had collected for Aceh and left a multi-donor fund to be managed by the World Bank. CCDE would have benefited from upfront capacity building in program management, employability training, and micro-finance.</p>
SRI LANKA Foundation of Goodness FoG	<p>Provided life skills and enterprise development training (e.g., handicraft production, cooking, and beautician training) and workshops on how to access loans from banks. Special attention focused on women's enterprise development. Diving Training Center launched to train, employ, and place youth in jobs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,300 youth completed training in women's enterprise, business skills development, or professional diving. 205 youth started their own businesses. 62 youth placed in jobs. 	<p>Loan fund transferred into a grantmaking mechanism due to FoG's lack of microcredit experience and desirability of launching a Diving Training Course. While program exceeded beneficiary targets in employability training, internship and job placement rates were lower than expected due to limited economic opportunities. More targeted follow-up support needed to help beneficiaries gain employment/start their own businesses.</p>
SRI LANKA Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce HDCC	<p>Provided life skills and vocational training, along with loans (averaging US\$1,500) and mentoring from representatives of the business community. Special sub-focus on minority youth and/or those with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 257 youth trained in entrepreneurship skills; 72 youth provided with loans to start their own enterprises. 862 youth received life skills training (e.g., job search skills, computer, and basic English training). 90 youth placed in jobs. 	<p>Program reached 119% of target beneficiaries; yet employment rates were lower than expected due to lack of local jobs. Participants would have benefited from increased English-language training. Through being embedded within the local Chamber of Commerce, the program benefitted from engaging a range of mentors.</p>
THAILAND National Council for Child and Youth Development NCYD	<p>Offered life skills and vocational training (e.g., computer usage, boat building, motorcycle repair), provided equipment, and facilitated relationships with banks. Special emphasis placed on engaging the community at large in program design/implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 869 youth trained (e.g., in motorcycle or diesel engine repair, tourism, boat building, and/or life skills). 386 youth either placed in jobs or self-employed. 216 youth participated in small business and/or finance training. 490 youth and community leaders trained in community-based planning and childcare. 	<p>Five percent of trainees did not complete training. Trainee selection for employability programs is critical in order to identify those whose needs and commitment merit their inclusion in the program. Post training monitoring and support is vital to ensuring trainees maximize their knowledge and skills in a workplace environment.</p>

This flexibility and adaptability to meet changing circumstances would emerge as a vital key to the initiative's overall effectiveness.

In all countries, approaches were fine-tuned and course corrections made in response to local realities. In Thailand, for example, initial plans called for a majority of beneficiaries (70%) to be placed in jobs. This was later changed in favor of supporting youth enterprise development with loans coming from available sources. This flexibility and adaptability to meet changing circumstances would emerge as a vital key to the initiative's overall effectiveness and offers an important lesson for similar programs addressing post-emergency needs.

Program goals and strategies were developed to address specific local needs with each program varying in size, scope, and type of intervention. IYF devoted special attention to increasing the capacity of local partners in the areas of micro-enterprise development, the execution of loan funds, life skills training, and evaluation. Two face-to-face workshops enabled implementing partners to share their methodologies and seek solutions to specific challenges. An exchange component further enhanced knowledge-sharing with several partners visiting others' programs to learn from their approaches. For example, representatives of the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC) in Sri Lanka visited the Community Collective Society for Integrated Development (CCFID) in India to learn from its experiences in delivering comprehensive livelihood support services. This particular exchange triggered a reciprocal visit for CCFID staff and key board members to learn about HDCC's approach in engaging volunteers and Board members.

In addition to support provided by IYF staff, outside consultants were contracted to offer specialized training and capacity-building. For example, Youthreach, an IYF partner and Delhi-based NGO, shared its expertise in life skills training for youth with CCFID and its program beneficiaries and also offered its recently developed English language learning program to CCFID. Likewise, Indonesia Business Links strengthened the capacity of the Center for Community Development and



Education (CCDE) in the areas of micro-finance, monitoring/reporting, and program management.

This report summarizes, not only the strategies pursued and results from each program, but valuable learnings with the goal of informing youth livelihood development efforts and post-disaster responses.

Key Learnings

The diversity of country and specific area contexts in which the TRI was carried out resulted in a number of valuable learnings, summarized below.

1. Overcoming a “Free Money” Mentality

In each of the target areas, implementing partners faced a prevailing ‘handout mentality’ that emerged following the sizeable outpouring of aid following the tsunami.¹ This attitude contributed to passivity and complacency among substantial numbers of youth who were less motivated to pursue entrepreneurship and employment training opportunities.

“A second tsunami followed the first, in the form of substantial amounts of relief funding,” said Srisak Thaiarry, Executive Director, National Council for Child and Youth Development in Thailand. “This second tsunami eroded self-confidence. People didn’t have the opportunity to think and plan for themselves — international agencies and NGOs were suddenly dictating what had to be done, leaving little room for locals to design appropriate support approaches.” Her sentiments were echoed by R. Sudhakar, CCFID’s Chief Executive Officer, “Breaking the



cycle of dependency on ‘free aid’ has taken time. When it comes to livelihoods you can’t have a throw away approach.”

The situation was especially prevalent in Aceh, Indonesia where three decades of armed conflict had accustomed the local population to receiving financial support from opposing parties to win their loyalty. In Aceh, youth were less interested in accessing loan funds, with repayment rates in the region lagging behind those in other countries as well as in neighboring parts of the country.

To counter the negative affects of this flow of ‘free money’ in the future, partners offered proposals from limiting cash donations to the first six months after a disaster to encouraging donors to regulate how much of their funding be used in this way.

2. Importance of Life Skills Training

Building on IYF and Nokia’s long-term support of life skills development among youth globally, life skills training formed a foundational core of each program. Without such training — in confidence-building, effective communication, time management, teamwork, and critical thinking — youth would be ill-prepared to succeed either in a mainstream job or entrepreneurial activity. The exact nature of the training differed from country to country. In India, for example, training in ethical business practice was emphasized to counteract negative stereotypes of business owners as too narrowly focused on pursuing profits at the expense of adhering to ethical principles. In India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, the teaching of spoken-English was emphasized.

3. Recruiting and Selecting Participants

Partners learned through experience the profile of those youth who would benefit most from program offerings. The six-month motorcycle repair training in Thailand, for example, demanded that youth commit to an extended course of study in a residential environment, requiring that many temporarily relocate from their

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In the area of microfinance for youth, partners recognized that credit-only approaches would not be sufficient to ensure young people's success as entrepreneurs.

homes. This proved challenging for some young people, resulting in a five percent dropout rate. Similarly, in the face of youth passivity, CCDE in Indonesia learned to exercise greater vigilance in identifying youth with the perseverance and entrepreneurial spirit to succeed in its program.

4. Nurturing an Environment Supportive to Youth Livelihood Development/Enterprise Creation

Even the most well-intended initiative cannot deliver on its promise if those it seeks to reach don't participate — and if the environment overall — is not supportive of its efforts. TRI partners recognized early on the importance of sensitizing the local community about the strengths and potential role of youth. In India, CCFID held festivals and events to showcase youth-led enterprises. CCFID also persuaded banks to work with male groups, rather than solely with female groups, as was the tradition. In Thailand, NCYD staff worked closely with local communities to gain acceptance of new ways of constructing boats in fiberglass rather than wood, which was no longer available in large quantities. In Sri Lanka, FoG convinced local banks to extend credit to youth who had received training and support through TRI, while HDCC held job fairs to link employers to youth and generate greater visibility for its programs overall.

5. Comprehensive, Flexible Approaches Work Best

A key learning in carrying out reconstruction activities is the importance of remaining flexible and adaptable so that new types of training programs can be developed to meet evolving needs. In Sri Lanka, for example, FoG determined a year into the program that the creation of a professional Diving and Training Center would address an important need among youth who were no longer able to pursue livelihoods in coral mining.

In the area of microfinance for youth, partners recognized that credit-only approaches would not be sufficient to ensure young people's success as entrepreneurs. Loans needed to be supplemented by non-financial services (e.g., assistance with business planning, product development, marketing, and even

insurance products). Beneficiaries have different needs (e.g., for skills training, capacity building, financing, and institutional development) at different points in the business development cycle, therefore programs needed to be flexible enough to address these needs as they arise.

6. Investing in the Role of Women

In each target area, special emphasis was placed on empowering young women with skills training and micro-credit support to help bridge existing gender divides. In a number of contexts, women have historically proven to repay loans, save money, and invest in their children's education at a greater rate than men. Through gaining access to credit, women's roles began to shift. In targeted communities in India, for example, women who prior to the tsunami concentrated their efforts largely on caring for children and the home, emerged as successful entrepreneurs. These women were particularly effective at creating and sustaining Self-Help Groups, where credit and savings are pooled.

At the same time, traditional views of women's roles in Sri Lanka posed a barrier to young women taking full advantage





of opportunities through the TRI. In response, FoG expanded opportunities for its female beneficiaries beyond traditional income-generating activities such as cooking, baking, and beauty-making. Women were encouraged to pursue small-scale handicraft production and services such as tailoring.

7. Lack of Employment Opportunities

Job training alone — no matter how well implemented — cannot result in long-term livelihood opportunities in the absence of employers to absorb youth. Lack of opportunities contributed to lower than expected job placements in India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka.

In India, CCFID devoted considerable effort to organizing youth “exposure visits” to potential employers. However, many of the job opportunities that surfaced were located in major cities (e.g., Chennai) requiring that the youth leave their homes and relocate. In one instance, CCFID secured job placements for 16 youth in Chennai, with the two who accepted eventually returning home to be closer to their families. To address this issue, CCFID offered life skills trainings to the parents of job seekers to create a more conducive support structure for youth considering a move away from home.

Similarly, in Sri Lanka, FoG excelled in providing quality life skills and job training to youth; yet fell short of meeting its job placement goals. The rate of internships and job placement

was relatively low (12% and 35% of target respectively). This is attributed to limited economic activities in the somewhat isolated coastal community of Seenigama where the foundation is based. To be successful, young people seeking jobs would need to move to larger cities which most were unwilling to do. In the future, FoG will integrate spoken-English into its life skills training to facilitate job placements, particularly in the tourism industry.

While jobs in mainstream businesses were challenging for youth to secure, the program in India was successful in generating jobs for youth at those youth-run enterprises to benefit from TRI loan funds. Each of the 175 youth-run businesses created with support from CCFID, ended up employing five or more youth, generating over 1,400 jobs.

8. Supporting Youth Micro-Entrepreneurs Beyond the Start-up Phase

Partners recognized that to be successful over the long-term, young entrepreneurs need support beyond the initial start-up phase of their businesses. Such support can include: revising business plans to include growth strategies (e.g., product diversification, mergers, or joint ventures); providing additional training/mentoring, along with exchange visits to similar enterprises; hosting workshops that bring young entrepreneurs together to discuss their successes and challenges; and working with government to create a more supportive environment for youth entrepreneurs.

9. Building Public-Private Partnerships

Building alliances with institutions that shared similar goals played an important role in the success of the TRI programs. In India, CCFID leveraged additional funding for its work through partnering with the Asian Development Bank to support of cashew producers. In Thailand, NCYD benefited from its long-standing relationships with key government ministries, such as the Department of Labour, which offered its training services. And in Sri Lanka, HDCC relied heavily on its membership of local business owners to offer mentoring to program participants.

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The Entrepreneurial Spark: How to Ignite it?

Despite the successes of those young entrepreneurs highlighted in this report, statistical evidence shows that only 10-15 percent of the general population has the innate drive and mindset to pursue an entrepreneurial venture. A key challenge faced by TRI implementing partners was how to “spark” this entrepreneurial spirit among youth, who may not otherwise be motivated to do so. In many cultures/communities, economic security is often associated with mainstream jobs, particularly in the public sector; yet a lack of such opportunities makes entrepreneurship a potentially attractive/necessary option, particularly in the aftermath of a disaster.

To help spark the entrepreneurial spirit among youth, TRI implementing partners emphasize the importance of:

- Educating family and community members about the importance of entrepreneurship and the acceptability of the concept;
- Using the media to spotlight successful entrepreneurs and depict them as ethical with a view to motivating young people;
- Working with government to offer incentives (e.g., tax breaks) for aspiring young entrepreneurs;
- Teaching life skills in schools and providing opportunities for youth to visit small businesses to stimulate business creation;
- Providing youth with access to loans, equipment, markets, and incubation facilities where they can access support and mentoring;
- Creating business linkages, forums, associations, and virtual opportunities for young people to network;
- Hosting competitions and awards ceremonies to honor young entrepreneurs.



Conclusion

The Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative overwhelmingly reinforced the importance of supporting youth livelihood development in the aftermath of a major disaster. While this was a natural disaster, similar steps would be necessary in dealing with the aftermath of a human-generated disaster, such as a civil war. Young people whose educations have been interrupted and who face severely limited livelihood opportunities need help in developing job-related skills and support in pursuing self-employment/enterprise creation. In the absence of such supports, youth are far more likely to lose hope and succumb to negative behaviors, denying society the benefit of their productive contributions.

The TRI demonstrated that, when given the chance, young people can not only be successful entrepreneurs, but can stimulate job growth through hiring their peers, family members, and others. The TRI experience reflects the creativity and drive of young people when given the chance to pursue their entrepreneurial instincts and interests. This contradicts the prevailing notion in many countries that youth, lacking experience and collateral, represent a high loan risk and are therefore ‘unbankable.’ Increased public awareness and improved policies are needed that support the credit worthiness of youth when the proper supports (e.g., training, sustained technical assistance, and mentoring) are in place. The TRI underscores the importance of sensitizing local communities to the potential role of youth as successful entrepreneurs.

As we reflect on the experiences of the TRI, it is important to note that the local NGO environment differed substantially in sophistication and access to resources across the four countries. The program in Indonesia, for example, was hampered by the limited capacity of the local implementing partner in the areas of micro-finance and enterprise development, along with external threats including the prevailing ‘free money’ mentality in the province and conservative attitudes towards the role of

women as entrepreneurs. To circumvent such circumstances in the future, more emphasis needs to be placed on assessing local organizational strengths and making investments — upfront — in building organizational capacity.

The role of Nokia in conceiving of, shaping, and supporting the TRI deserves recognition. Nokia occupies a special niche as a global company that understood and supported the integral role of youth livelihood development in post-disaster reconstruction and whose commitment to those affected by the disaster far exceeded the initial crisis call. As a result of Nokia’s support — and that of the Sylvan/Laureate Foundation and Unocal — more than 12,400 young people have now gained access to employment, started their own businesses, and/or developed job-related skills. Far more difficult to measure are changes in



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public perceptions of youth as valuable employees, business owners, and engines of economic growth in their own right.

With climate-related natural disasters expected to increase in the coming years, IYF is looking at how lessons from the TRI could be applied to other natural disasters — such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. A critical first step is assessing youth needs and identifying local NGOs with the experience and expertise needed to carry out youth livelihood programs, and in the absence of such, pursuing strategies to strengthen NGO capacity so that programs are locally-driven and sustainable. Another key factor is engaging the support of the local business community to absorb qualified youth as employees and serve as mentors to young entrepreneurs.

The TRI experience in India and Sri Lanka offers ample evidence of why the participation of the local business community is vital and strategies for doing so (e.g., through local chambers of commerce and using special events to rally the support and interest of business owners). Lastly, a critical lesson to emerge from the TRI is the importance of offering flexible, adaptable supports for young people. “One size fits all” approaches fail to address the different needs and circumstances

of young people who require different types of support at different stages of developing their businesses.

In the final analysis, one of the TRI’s most valuable legacies is that it offers a portrait of how NGOs operating in diverse contexts customized their approaches to address local needs — often sharing and building on one another’s strategies. It is this ‘cross-fertilization’ of ideas that will continue to inform the work of IYF and its partners in addressing the needs of youth in future disaster situations.

For additional information on the Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative please visit: www.iyfnet.org or contact Jean-Pierre Isbendjian, Program Director, j.isbendjian@iyfnet.org.



INDIA

In India, the tsunami took more than 10,800 lives and affected over 2.79 million people. The cost of damage — to fisheries, housing, infrastructure, and agriculture — exceeded US\$75 million.²

To address youth livelihood needs, IYF entered into partnership with the Community Collective Society for Integrated Development (CCFID), a local nongovernmental organization established in 2004 with the mission “to promote diverse, sustainable livelihoods for women and youth, and to facilitate access to financial resources for livelihood promotion.”

CCFID’s efforts concentrated on the tsunami-affected areas of Cuddalore, Karaikal, and Puducherry. A critical first step in CCFID’s work was to foster an entrepreneurial mindset among local youth, ages 16 to 30, and equip them with the skills needed to get jobs or create small businesses. Equally important was raising awareness among the community at large as to the potential role of youth.

“We needed to mobilize and sensitize the community to the fact that youth can be trusted with money and can succeed as entrepreneurs,” said Meenal Patole, CCFID’s Head of New Initiatives. Toward this end, CCFID conducted frequent competitions and festivals (youth *mela*) to stimulate young people’s creativity and spotlight youth groups with innovative business ideas.

Training focused on equipping youth with life skills such as confidence, goal setting, creative problem-solving, and critical thinking. Emphasis was also placed on the teaching of basic English and ethical behavior, particularly in the world of business. Next came the task of organizing the youth and providing access to loan funds. Within six months of launching the initiative, CCFID had formed two youth federations — one in Karaikal and one in Cuddalore. The two federations represented nearly 600 youth. Participants organized themselves

into groups of roughly 15 members each. Each federation set up a bank account and elected a board of representatives. Loan funds were distributed through the federations to individual youth groups. Loans, averaging US\$150, carried a 24% interest rate and needed to be repaid within ten months.

Equally important during the program’s early stages was “mapping” livelihood opportunities with the greatest potential for business growth and employment creation. CCFID’s extensive surveying of potential livelihoods assessed opportunities in six key sectors — agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, manufacturing, trading, and services. Based on this research, CCFID identified three focus areas for its support of livelihood initiatives: financing, marketing, and technical training.

CCFID recognized early on that providing training and loans alone would not be sufficient to launch — and sustain — new



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enterprises. Instead, it developed a comprehensive set of livelihood support services — offering assistance with product development and business planning, linking producers to markets, and pursuing diverse business models designed to increase the profitability and scale of local enterprises.

“Microfinance is increasingly viewed as not going far enough,” said R. Sudhakar, CCFID’s CEO. “It emphasizes small loans but overlooks important financial services like savings and insurance.”

Results

Over three years, CCFID met or exceeded its initial targets. TRI efforts in India directly impacted the lives of 7,014 young people (compared to an initial target of 1,000, subsequently revised to 5,692) and indirectly benefited more than 26,000 youth and community members. More than 1,900 youth received skills training, with 80% securing jobs. Over 5,800 loans were made over three years, totaling US\$880,000 (more than three times the value of the loan fund when it was initially established), enabling 1,500 small enterprises to take root. From cashew processing to soda making, from sari weaving to handicraft production, CCFID contributed to the creation of a range of local businesses.

Long-Term Outcomes

Improved Income	
Youth having regular income	86%
Youth entrepreneurs whose net profit increased after one year of business startup	94%
Continuation of business	90%
Youth entrepreneurs whose working capital increased	87%
Improved employment	88%
Increase in civic participation	94%
Business growth (increase in employees)	400%



Repayment of Loans and Business Sustainability	
% of first time borrowers also repeat borrowers	96%
% of businesses that increased their customer target	78%
% of businesses that sustained their operation	88%

During the program period, CCFID launched the Livelihood Resource and Training Center (LRC) to provide customized and non-financial services to better meet the needs of youth entrepreneurs and women. Recognizing that most micro-enterprises lack market linkages and access to business development services, the LRC works to fill these gaps. Center services are offered in four areas: business counseling, knowledge management, institutional development, and investment services. Through this flexible approach, clients can access specific services when they need them, returning when necessary for trouble-shooting or to access a new package of services. “Our goal is to limit risk to potential clients,” said Sudhakar. “In working with individuals, the very first question we ask is: can this business be sustained?”

An unintended result of the program was the provision of micro-insurance coverage for young people, with 5,020 youth covered through CCFID's risk mitigation program. The TRI also supported CCFID in strengthening its own financial position in terms of livelihood financing for youth. CCFID now enjoys partnerships with a number of development institutions and commercial banks as it works to strengthen livelihood opportunities within rural communities.

Lessons Learned

Through the TRI, CCFID not only supported thousands of youth in building viable enterprises and securing jobs, but strengthened its own capacity to deliver services in the future. A positive challenge for CCFID has been managing its growth – from a staff of 7 working in 2 locations in 2004 to 45 staff working at 6 branch offices. To accommodate the growing sophistication of its model, CCFID needed to access new skill sets (e.g., experts in livelihood financing and value chain analysis). To do so, it forged partnerships with academic institutions (e.g., the Indian Institute of Forest Management, Pondicherry University), bringing in outside researchers on a temporary basis. According to its current five-year plan, CCFID expects to steadily expand its reach to more than 42,000 youth by 2014.

Placing youth in jobs was also difficult, with many of the opportunities identified by CCFID located in cities (e.g., Chennai) requiring that youth leave their homes and relocate. To address this issue, CCFID began offering life skills trainings to the parents of job seekers to create a more conducive support structure for youth considering a move away from home.

Building on CCFID's success, its approach is now being adapted in seven impoverished neighborhoods in Mumbai through an affiliated organization, Takshashila Development Services (TDS). In these slum areas, where per capita income is less than US\$150 per month, TDS is working to fill a gap in access to credit, with most micro-finance programs targeting rural areas.

WOMEN PURSUE A BETTER FUTURE THROUGH FATTENING CRABS

Diners at fine restaurants in Singapore pay as much as US\$100 for the delicacy of jumbo crab, unaware that the shellfish on their plate could easily have originated in Killai, a coastal village in southern India, once devastated by the tsunami. A stone's throw from the beach in Killai are a half dozen large netted enclosures, where crabs of varying sizes are fed and cared for by rural women — and increasingly men.

CCFID's initial research into business opportunities identified "crab fattening" as a relatively low-cost enterprise with the potential for high returns. Small crabs could be purchased for just over US one dollar, fed, and sold 40 days later, weighing more than double, for US\$2.50-3.75 each.

CCFID introduced the concept to local villagers and provided them with business counseling. Self-Help Groups (SHGs), comprised of 15-20 members each, joined together in forming the Water Crab Federation, governed by a board of 14. As a Federation, the SHGs benefited from purchasing raw material in bulk at a reduced price and had greater negotiating power when it came to selling the fattened crabs.



Placing youth in jobs was difficult, with many of the opportunities located in cities and requiring that youth leave their homes and relocate. To address this issue, CCFID began offering life skills trainings to the parents of job seekers to create a more conducive support structure for youth.

CCFID obtained working capital of nearly US\$300,000 to mobilize cashew growers to form a cashew production company, enabling them to increase cashew nut production by 25 to 40%, purchase additional processing equipment, negotiate better prices, and improve the quality of cashews sold.

At the same time, CCFID entered into partnership with the Asian Development Bank, which provided funding, and the government of Tamil Nadu, which helped implement the program. As an added benefit, CCFID negotiated with the Bajaj Allianz, an insurer, to provide all loan recipients with accidental death and life insurance worth US\$400 each. In the future, CCFID hopes to make health and asset insurance available to more and more of its loan recipients as part of its risk mitigation strategy.

CASHEW PROCESSING LEADS TO INCREASED INCOMES

In the months following the tsunami, CCFID's extensive livelihood mapping identified cashew processing as a business opportunity with the potential to be scaled up. Despite soil damage from seawater, certain regions of Cuddalore maintained much of their cashew growing capability. Local residents were also skilled at cashew processing and successfully imported raw nuts from the neighboring state of Kerala.

CCFID began by mapping the entire production cycle and the skills and resources needed to obtain, process, market, and sell the nuts. The mapping exercise underscored two key constraints to expanded production. The raw cashews could only be purchased during three months of the year, requiring a substantial cash outlay. Once processed, the nuts needed to be transported to wholesalers in urban areas. CCFID also identified areas where producers could benefit from enhanced knowledge (e.g., in growing techniques) and skills (e.g., quality control, marketing). CCFID began by providing small loans (e.g., US\$1,000) and technical assistance to a handful of cashew producers.

Today, CCFID supports 800 cashew growers and processors. One of those is Venugopal, now 31 and the father of two. Venugopal received a CCFID loan of US\$1,550, which he expects to repay in two years. Following negotiations with the National

Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, CCFID obtained working capital of nearly US\$300,000 to mobilize cashew growers to form a cashew production company, enabling them to increase cashew nut production by 25 to 40%, purchase additional processing equipment, negotiate better prices, and improve the quality of cashews sold.



INDONESIA

More than 128,645 people were killed and 595,000 displaced in Indonesia as a result of the tsunami that struck Aceh Province and Nias Island. According to the World Bank, more than half the population of Aceh was found to be living below the national poverty line in the years following the tsunami, an increase of more than 50 percent compared with before the disaster.³

To address youth livelihood needs in the region, IYF partnered with the Center for Community Development and Education (CCDE), a local NGO established in 1993 to empower and strengthen the role of women and young women. TRI efforts focused on youth, ages 16 to 29, who dropped out of school or were vulnerable in five districts affected by the tsunami (Banda Aceh, Great Aceh, South Aceh, Southwest Aceh, and Nagan Raya).

The following three activities were carried out through the program:

- **Self-Help Group training** — Providing group members with the skills needed to overcome problems together and support the development of their businesses.
- **Small business enterprise training** — To build entrepreneurship skills and support the development of small businesses.
- **Finance management training** — To support program participants who had started small businesses.

CCDE began with identifying potential “Community Organizers” (COs) in selected communities — and training them how to organize a community group and conduct a basic needs assessment. A second training phase focused on small business and financial management. At the end of the training, qualified COs were eligible to receive a loan proportionate to their needs. The COs were mandated to organize regular group meetings enabling members to discuss issues, problems, or successes. CCDE also monitored those businesses that had the

greatest potential to grow beyond self-employment and could be scaled up and/or result in job creation.

Results

In all, 479 young people benefited from the program, with 34 youth groups formed comprising 350 members.⁴ A total of 155 individual youth received microfinance loans (320 loans over the three-year period) to start their own businesses, ranging from establishing food stalls to roadside eateries, from making crafts to providing services (e.g., tailoring). Loans ranging from US\$55 to US\$2,740 were made on a 10 to 12-month basis with an interest rate of one percent per month. Beneficiaries were eligible to receive new loans in the 2nd and 3rd years to grow their businesses. To become eligible to receive a loan, a youth needed to be a member of a Self-Help Group. Groups were supported by a coordinator, a secretary, and a treasurer.

Lessons Learned

The program in Indonesia fell short of reaching its overall beneficiary goal, reaching only 40 percent of the target, for a



According to the World Bank, more than half the population of Aceh was found to be living below the national poverty line in the years following the tsunami.

“The youth wanted to do business but didn’t have business ideas.”

— Tabrani Yunus,
Executive Director,
CCDE, Indonesia



variety of reasons. Foremost among these was apathy among youth in applying for loans, given the prevalence of ‘free money’ in the region following the disaster and the long period of civil war. Lack of motivation and the distance youth had to travel to attend trainings also limited participation, with only 60 percent of those youth invited to monthly discussion groups actually attending. Also, the traditional structure of Self-Help Groups, based on the needs of elderly women who are less mobile, proved to be a liability with young people who came and went more frequently. Another significant challenge was the lack of an entrepreneurial spirit among those youth participating in the program. “They wanted to do business but didn’t have business ideas,” says CCDE Executive Director Tabrani Yunus.

CCDE’s limited institutional capacity for managing a microfinance program also proved a barrier in meeting program goals. To strengthen its capacity in the areas of microfinance, evaluation, and program management, IYF contracted the services of Indonesia Business Links (IBL), a nongovernmental organization promoting responsible corporate citizenship. Through its Young Entrepreneurs Start-Up Program, IBL raises awareness about entrepreneurship among Indonesian youth and assists youth in starting and sustaining successful business.

SELLING CHILDREN’S CLOTHING OFFERS NEW HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Twenty-six-year-old Indri Susanti grew up in a rural village in Aceh. One of six children, Indri discontinued her education at the end of elementary school to help with her family’s modest farm. Following the death of her mother, Indri moved to Jakarta with a cousin to find work. After six months of searching, she finally landed a job as a housekeeper.

But life in Jakarta proved too difficult for Indri who saved all her money so she could move back to Aceh to live with her grandmother. Upon returning home, Indri heard about the youth groups that met regularly through the Center for Community Development and Education (CCDE). While hesitant at first because of her limited education, Indri accepted CCDE’s invitation to join a group and attended small business enterprise trainings.

“The training opened my eyes and I got the knowledge and motivation to make changes in my life,” she says. After first attempting a business selling cookies, Indri abandoned the idea as a result of too much competition. With encouragement and a loan of US\$435 from CCDE, she then started a children’s clothing business which has taken off. Her monthly income is now US\$125-150, giving her enough money to pay off her loan and live on the what’s left over.

Says Indri, “Finally, the bleak story of my life has ended and I’m able to think of the future with cheerfulness.” She’s now looking to grow her business and offer better opportunities to her brother and sister.

SRI LANKA

An estimated 35,000 people were killed, 21,000 injured, and over 500,000 displaced as a result of the tsunami in Sri Lanka. To best reach affected areas, the TRI was implemented by two local partners: the Foundation of Goodness, operating in the coastal community of Seenigama, and the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce. Both programs developed tailored approaches to addressing youth needs. Below is a summary.

Foundation of Goodness, Seenigama

Founded in 1999, the Foundation of Goodness (FoG) was created to support community development in Seenigama and surrounding villages, near Hikkaduwa. The Foundation pursues a “holistic approach to tackling all aspects of poverty and exclusion that affects people’s lives focusing on health, education, economic development, environment management, infrastructure development, and village welfare.”⁵ Immediately following the tsunami, FoG was forced to shift its focus from developing the scenic village of Seenigama to rebuilding it completely. FoG realized that helping young people gain skills and generate an income would be critical to realizing its long-term vision of fostering a sustainable, prosperous community. Of particular concern was finding alternative livelihood opportunities to the coral mining industry which had employed 90 percent of the community for generations. Following the tsunami, coral mining was banned, leaving a significant number of people with no means of providing for their families. The challenge lay in equipping youth with new skills and seeding the creation of new businesses — all with the hope of creating jobs and strengthening the local economy.

With support from TRI, FoG developed three training centers:

- **The Business Skills Center** — Supported employment and entrepreneurship training, including courses in accounting, business planning, marketing, and management; and offered internships and mentoring.
- **The Women’s Enterprise Center** — Taught women how

to create handicrafts, identify overseas buyers, and develop cottage industries. In addition, the Center linked trainees to apprenticeship opportunities and provided technical assistance to young entrepreneurs.

- **The Diving and Training Center** — Provided youth with instruction in commercial diving and underwater welding to enable them to work in harbors or offer diving courses to tourists.



Results

A total of 1,301 young people graduated from the training centers, including 635 women’s enterprise participants, 607 business skills trainees, and 59 diving trainees. Sixty-two youth were placed in jobs and 205 started their own enterprises. The average income of those with jobs ranged from \$100 per month for business trainees to up to \$500 per month for dive trainees. In addition to the training they received, youth participants were encouraged to give back to the local community through raising funds to carry out volunteer projects. This helped instill in youth the sense that just as they were helped, it was their responsibility to help others. It also reinforced life

In addition to the training they received, youth participants were encouraged to give back to the local community through raising funds to carry out volunteer projects.

“When this project started, we had very little knowledge of or experience in running a project of this size and complexity... The main factor influencing program delivery was the support of the IYF team and the exchange visits staff made to India and Thailand.”

— FoG Final TRI Report, 2010



skills development in critical areas ranging from teamwork to project planning.

An important outgrowth of TRI's support was FoG's increased capacity. “When this project started, we [FoG] had very little knowledge of or experience in running a project of this size and complexity... The main factor influencing program delivery was the support of the IYF team and the exchange visits staff made to India and Thailand.”⁶ Through the program, staff developed monitoring and evaluation systems, gained better command of English, and learned computer skills. They are better able to plan projects, deliver programs, and solve problems.⁷

Lessons Learned

While the program succeeded in delivering quality training, it was less successful in placing youth in jobs due to the lack of large employers in the area. An additional obstacle was the inability of many rural youth to speak English, a necessity in gaining employment in urban areas within, or outside, Sri Lanka. In the area of entrepreneurship, FoG overcame its lack of microcredit experience by forming partnerships with local banks to enable youth to access loans.

An encouraging byproduct of the program was the launch of Dive Seenigama Lanka, an industrial diving and training company founded in 2008. The company selects and employs the best students from FoGs Diving and Training Center to undertake industrial diving contracts and provide recreational diving opportunities. Profits are invested back into the Diving Center to further its sustainability.

FoG is currently replicating its holistic community development model in the north of Sri Lanka in a region recovering from 30 years of conflict. There, it will continue to apply the lessons and approaches it developed through the Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative.

A DIVING CENTER TRAINEE EXPRESSES HIS GRATITUDE

Dear Sir,

I'm writing this letter to inform you that I have been selected to work as a research officer at the Maritime Archaeology Unit at Galle. After my father's death, I faced a lot of financial difficulties in completing my studies. Without any hesitation, you came forward to help me until I completed the degree successfully. Furthermore, you gave me an opportunity to follow a Professional Diving Course conducted by the Seenigama Diving Training Center.

We are fortunate to have such an organization which offers services to improve the welfare of the people in our area. I would like to pay my heartiest gratitude to you, the staff of the Foundation of Goodness, and the Diving Training Center for helping me.

Yours Faithfully,

Nishantha

Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce

The Hambantota District was one of the worst tsunami-affected areas in Sri Lanka, with over 800 commercial buildings and 2,500 houses destroyed. In 2007, there were over 30,000 unemployed youth in Hambantota with 26 percent of the population considered poor.

Founded in 1993, the mission of the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC) is “to serve as the gateway for development in the region, ensuring its social cohesion and economic success.”⁸

TRI support was used by HDCC to provide livelihood and employment opportunities to disadvantaged youth, ages 16 to 29, who were directly or indirectly affected by the tsunami. It did so



through two existing initiatives. The Hambantota Youth Business Programme (HYBP) supports entrepreneurship through providing youth with access to credit, mentoring, training, and supportive networks. The Career Service Center (CSC) offers job seekers counseling, skills training, and networking opportunities with potential employers.

The program also sought to raise awareness among the region's youth and society at-large of the potential of youth to become self-employed or launch their own enterprises. In addition to its “Best Entrepreneur of the Year” competition, HDCC added a “Best Young Entrepreneur of the Year” award to promote exemplary business practices and a high level of entrepreneurship. Two major trade fairs were also held in the district to enable entrepreneurs

— including youth producers of handicrafts, foods, ornamental items, textiles, and plants — to showcase their products. The first of these in 2008 attracted more than 25,000 visitors over three days. The second, in 2009, was attended by 4,000 people, including distinguished guests representing NGOs, local government, and businesses.

Results

Through the program in Hambantota, 257 youth participated in entrepreneurship training and 72 started their own businesses with loans provided through the program. Training sessions focused on basic business management, bookkeeping, working with financial institutions, and financial management. Each young entrepreneur was provided with one-on-one mentoring by a business professional, along with ‘on the spot’ advice through a series of mobile mentoring programs organized by HYBP.

Another 148 individuals, 93 percent of them youth, gained employment opportunities through these young entrepreneurs. In addition, 1,300 young people participated in employability training (including training in resume writing and interview skills, computer usage, hotel services, and basic English), with 90 securing jobs. To facilitate job placement, a website was developed enabling youth to post their profiles and linking job seekers with opportunities. A job fair was also held to provide young people in the district with the chance to meet with potential employers and network with training and higher education institutions. Information was provided on vocational training, higher education, self-employment, IT, and counseling services. HDCC staff also increased their capacity in the areas of business management, counseling, and advanced computer training.

Beyond the benefits to participating youth, the program was found to have a significant impact on their family members. “HYPB created an opportunity for disadvantaged youth to become successful business people and to contribute to improving the standard of living of their families.”⁹ Through the TRI, HYBP also increased its partnerships with a number

Each young entrepreneur was provided with one-on-one mentoring by a business professional, along with ‘on the spot’ advice through a series of mobile mentoring programs organized by HYBP.

“The businesses of those youth who failed to maintain close working relationships with their mentors performed far below the level of those businesses where youth maintained strong relationships with their mentors.”

— HDCC Final TRI Report, 2010

of governmental, nongovernmental, and private sector organizations, creating more opportunities for beneficiaries to improve their capacities and build up business support networks.¹⁰ One example is 23-year-old Chinthaka, who started a natural fruit drink enterprise with HYBP support and was able to market his product in Colombo and Malaysia through JICA-South Cap, an international NGO with close ties to HYBP.

Lessons Learned

Overall, the program exceeded its target beneficiaries by 119%. As a result of HDCC's community outreach and events, there is increased awareness within the district of the services provided by CSC and HYBP. Based on the program, HDCC is exploring new economic developments in the region and how to tailor its program accordingly, for example, integrating temporary employment services into its approach or providing human resource services for employers. Likewise, the CSC will look to strengthen its services to meet growing demand for IT and English-language skills.

HDCC will also be looking at how to create a greater gender balance in promoting youth livelihood opportunities. Generally within the District male employees are preferred to female employees. More attention needs to be placed on educating employees on the merits of hiring female workers. Women were also found to be less willing than men to take entrepreneurial risks. The distribution of loans by gender was 44 percent women and 56 percent men.

The global economic downturn is believed to have impacted slightly the performance of those youth businesses supported through HDCC, resulting in a loan repayment rate of 72 percent (as compared to a projected rate of over 75 percent). A lack of viable business ideas proposed by youth posed another challenge. Annually, out of 300 business concepts submitted, only 17 percent were approved for loans. To address this need, HDCC plans to form Youth Business Clubs, enabling young people to access business development services through HYBP.

Overall, the program's mentoring component was found to strongly influence outcomes. “The businesses of those youth who failed to maintain close working relationships with their mentors performed far below the level of those businesses where youth maintained strong relationships with their mentors.”¹¹

Demand for HDCC's youth livelihood services is expected to grow due to economic developments within Hambantota such as the construction of an international port, airport, and conference center. A major challenge — and opportunity — will be preparing local youth with the skills needed to benefit from the District's economic boom, given that individuals are likely to migrate to the district already possessing those skills required.

A WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR SETS AN EXAMPLE FOR HER PEERS

Before the tsunami, Priyanka sewed clothes at a garment factory. After the disaster, she needed to make more money to support her parents and decided to start her own clothing business. For this, she needed capital to purchase sewing machines and raw materials.

After being rejected for a bank loan, Priyanka approached the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC), which helped her develop a business plan, secure a loan for US\$440, and access a professional mentor. Now, her business is poised to expand and Priyanka is setting an example for other young women who have traditionally not been supported in becoming business owners.

Priyanka is one of more than 70 young entrepreneurs supported by HDCC through the Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative.

THAILAND

More than 5,000 people were killed and thousands displaced as a result of the tsunami that hit southwestern Thailand. The local economy, especially the fishing and tourism trades, were deeply affected, along with the marine and coastal environment. In the second month following the disaster, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the central government agency responsible for recovery efforts, issued a policy statement concerning the long-term development of affected communities. The plan emphasized children and youth as a major target group — and career development and participatory approaches as key themes.

Carried out by the National Council for Child and Youth Development (NCYD), a national NGO founded in 1985, the TRI program in Thailand focused on providing young people, ages 16 to 29, with training to pursue diverse income-generating projects. Efforts concentrated on four affected provinces: Pang-Nga, Ranong, Krabi, and Phuket.

The project began with carrying out a needs assessment of affected youth and communities over four months. Based on the results, five training courses were developed in boat



construction and repair, motorcycle repair, tourism, childcare, and community-based participatory planning. The first three courses included life skills and entrepreneurial training and apprenticeships. The last two sought to build the capacity of youth and community leaders to become catalysts for recovery and the development of their communities. After year one, additional courses were added in boat engine and diesel engine repair, electronics, computer usage, and ecotourism to meet emerging needs.

While the initial design for the program included non-interest loans for vocational trainees to set up their own self-employment activities, this strategy was abandoned in favor of providing ‘graduates’ with follow-up training and equipment. The influx of “easy money” in the aftermath of the tsunami made loans less attractive to local youth and harder to reclaim. Heavy equipment was given to groups of trainees/community members who set up shops. Committees were then established to oversee the care and management of equipment, thereby reinforcing a sense of community responsibility.

Results

The number of youth who enrolled in the vocational training courses was 410 (compared to the target goal of 285), with 490 enrolled in community capacity building (compared to an original target of 300). Ninety-five percent of vocational trainees completed their training, with 100 percent of community capacity-building trainees ‘graduating.’

The program provided follow-up support for trainees, including heavy equipment, computer usage kits, English-language training, and assistance with job placement and obtaining bank loans.

A final evaluation workshop attended by 106 of the vocational trainees demonstrated the following results:

- 51.9% of participating trainees were successful in pursuing

Ninety-five percent of vocational trainees completed their training, with 100 percent of community capacity-building trainees ‘graduating.’

“In designing vocational training processes for youth, community context and involvement have to be carefully taken into account, not only in terms of their needs but also their potential for generating successful outcomes and long-term impact.”

— NCYD Final TRI Report, 2010

self-employment, while 42.5% were involved in family occupations.

- 57.6% of participating trainees had regular income from their occupations while 42.2% had occasional income. The lowest income was US\$100 per month; the highest was US\$1,000 per month.
- 71.7% of participating trainees shared the knowledge and skills gained through the program with friends, family members, and other community members; 51.9% volunteered in their communities; 9.4% donated some of their income to a community development fund; and 14.2% were able to offer apprenticeship and employment opportunities.

Lessons Learned

To ensure the program's acceptance and sustainability, the Thai effort pursued a community engagement approach. In addition to youth, community members were invited to participate as trainees, and trainers, as appropriate. Approximately 25% of trainees in the boat building and engine repair course were adult community leaders. By incorporating adults, the program sought to generate community-wide buy-in and contribute to the sustainability of its efforts. According to NCYD, “In designing vocational training processes for youth, community context and involvement have to be carefully taken into account, not only in terms of their needs but also their potential for generating successful outcomes and long-term impact.”¹²



Project staff were also sensitized to local traditions. For example, the boat-building program was instituted in a Muslim community where fishing in wooden boats was a way of life. Given the durability and longevity of fiberglass boats, program staff had to carefully introduce a new way of building boats into the community. Detailed information about fiberglass boats was distributed, demonstrations were held, and local leaders were consulted at the earliest stages to secure their blessing and cooperation.

The program also benefited from NCYD's close relationships with government agencies, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the Ministry of Labor. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, for example, served as the program's national partner, enabling NCYD to benefit from its knowledge of youth needs in affected areas and contacts with local community leaders. The endorsement of the Ministry of Labour resulted in the use of a local government training center for vocational training courses. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education recommended Phuket Community College as a provider of ecotourism training. These examples affirm the benefits of working with public sector authorities; yet such relationships are not always easy. According to NCYD staff, “Bureaucratic working habits and an individual ministry's scope of work and staff capacity have to be considered in order to avoid negative coordination experiences.”¹³

A key lesson learned through the TRI program in Thailand was the importance of identifying trainees with the greatest potential to benefit from the program through fully assessing their way of life, maturity, and backgrounds. Of growing importance was gauging trainees commitment and perseverance to engage in an in-depth training experience (e.g., six months for the motorcycle repair training, requiring that some trainees relocate for a set time period). Because of this resistance, five percent of trainees did not complete the program. Assessment

methods also needed to take into consideration trainees preferences for verbally articulating their experiences/goals; rather than relying solely on a written questionnaire. A related challenge was finding efficient local trainers who could commit their time through the life of the project. And lastly, program staff emphasize the importance of post-training follow-up and providing program graduates with additional support to maximize their acquired knowledge and skills in an actual work setting.

As a result of the program, 39 communities that were engaged in project activities now have increased awareness and knowledge in vocational enhancement and are poised to play a catalytic role in expanding these activities within neighboring communities.

AN ENTREPRENEUR PURSUES HIS PASSION FOR MOTORCYCLES

Standing behind the counter of his motorcycle repair shop, 29-year-old Wuttichai Khunsri, beams with pride. Carefully displayed on shelves behind him is an assortment of motorcycle accessories and spare parts — premium motor oils, inner tubes, chrome wheel rims, and neon stickers boasting popular brand names.

Wuttichai's shop occupies a storefront on the busy main street of Meuang District in the Pang Nga Province of southern Thailand. Just outside the door is a table with chairs where customers and acquaintances sit and talk — as long as they speak loudly enough to be heard over the din of traffic passing by.

As a relatively inexpensive and accessible form of transportation, motorcycles are big business here, with more and more people looking to distinguish their bikes with fancy accessories.

Five years ago, the province was devastated by the Asian tsunami, with waves measuring five to seven meters high battering the coast and inundating areas more than 300 meters inland.

Like many young people his age, Wuttichai was at a loss for what to do in the aftermath of the devastation. Fortunately, he found out about a six-month motorcycle repair course made available through the Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative. Upon completing the intensive seven-hour-a-day training, Wuttichai borrowed the money he needed to start his shop from relatives.



“I knew if I had my own business I’d make more money than being an employee at a company,” says Wuttichai.

It turns out he was right. A year and a half after opening his shop, Wuttichai is earning US\$800-1,000 net a month. He’s also hired a full-time employee and a part-time assistant. His success has earned him the role of sole distributor of “NB” products in the district and spurred more than ten youth, including several young women, to ask if he plans to offer motorcycle repair training.

While the number of motorcycle shops in the area has grown, Wuttichai maintains his competitive edge through offering top-notch customer service and participating in

“I knew if I had my own business I’d make more money than being an employee at a company.”

— Wuttichai Khunsri, 29, loan recipient

“Through promoting ecotourism, the community supports good health and social wellbeing as part of economic development.”

— Srisak Thaiarry,
Executive Director,
NCYD, Thailand

motorbike races on weekends. Competing is a good way of marketing his services, he says, and allows him to exercise his passion for the sport.

Wuttichai is one of more than 400 youth to receive life skills and technical training through the Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative in Thailand.

TRAINING YOUTH AS ECOTOURISM AMBASSADORS

The journey from the Thai tourist capital of Phuket to the island of Koh Yao Yai takes only thirty minutes by ferry, but transports visitors to a different world. Here, travelers find pristine beaches and a simple way of life, far removed from the sprawling hotels, shops, and restaurants that have accompanied the region’s rapid growth as a vacation hot spot.

Stretching 34 kilometers from end to end, Koh Yao Yai is home to 1,300 Muslim families whose ancestors arrived here centuries ago from Indonesia and Malaysia. In the aftermath of the Asian tsunami of December 2004, community leaders committed to preserving the island and its culture, in part, through developing it as an ecotourism destination. A comprehensive plan was devised for engaging community members — including youth — in protecting and promoting the island’s natural and cultural wealth.

Today, more than thirty young people, ages 15 to 18, have developed the life skills needed to contribute to their community’s development. “The program equips youth with practical skills while nurturing community pride,” says Srisak Thaiarry, Executive Director of the National Council for Child and Youth Development. “Through promoting ecotourism, the community supports good health and social wellbeing as part of economic development.”

Following a ten-day training focused on building participants’ self-confidence, English language skills, and knowledge of health and hygiene, the youth applied what they learn. To hone their marketing skills, each travelled to the mainland where they

served as cultural ambassadors, conversing with tourists and explaining the island’s ecotourism offerings. To ensure customer satisfaction, each assisted in the island’s ‘home stay’ program through which visitors stay overnight with a family. The youth learned to cook and clean for guests, while adhering to proper health and hygiene standards.

“I liked practicing what we learned,” says 17-year-old Supamong, who is finishing the tenth grade. “I especially liked interviewing people on the mainland about their interests and telling them about our island.”

Demand for the ecotourism program is growing with fifty guests per month participating in the island’s home stay activities. Overnight guests pay 3,000 Thai baht (the equivalent of US\$80), which includes their meals, accommodations, and sightseeing activities. Visitors learn how rubber is grown, watch as fishermen prepare for their daily catch, and marvel at monkeys who help harvest coconuts. Instead of manufactured souvenirs, they take with them memories and perhaps a package of Babin, a mouth-watering coconut dessert now patented by the community.

Upon graduating from the ecotourism training program, participating youth receive vocational credits to help them as they pursue their future livelihood goals.



THE PARTNERS

The International Youth Foundation gratefully acknowledges the following local implementing partners for their roles in achieving the goals of the Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative.

India

Community Collective Society for Integrated Development

Since 2004, the Community Collective Society for Integrated Development (CCFID) has facilitated the development of marginalized and poor families through livelihood programs. CCFID recognizes that a substantial proportion of India's youth are excluded from the nation's economic growth and recent developments in science and technology. It works to address this disparity by providing opportunities for the poor, especially young people and women, to improve their lives. To learn more, visit: www.ccfid.org.in

Youthreach

Founded in 1997, Youthreach seeks to inspire individual and collective transformation through creating opportunities for individuals and organizations to contribute time, energy, skills, materials, and financial resources in response to critical community needs. In pursuit of its mission, Youthreach spreads awareness of social issues and creates highly leveraged programs that enhance the impact of its partner NGOs. To learn more, visit: www.youthreachindia.org

Indonesia

Center for Community Development and Education

Established in 1993, the Center for Community Development and Education (CCDE) is a local

nongovernmental organization in Aceh, Indonesia, working to empower and strengthen the role of women and children. CCDE provides social and educational programs and provides financial services through microcredit activities.

Indonesia Business Links

Since 1999, Indonesia Business Links (IBL) has been actively promoting responsible corporate citizenship and ethical business practices in Indonesia through workshops on business ethics and capacity building of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Through its Young Entrepreneurs Start-Up Program, IBL raises awareness about entrepreneurship among Indonesian youth and assists youth in starting and sustaining successful business. To learn more, visit: www.ibl.or.id

Sri Lanka

Foundation of Goodness

Since 1999, the Foundation of Goodness (FoG), a nongovernmental organization, has supported community development in Seenigama and surrounding villages. Its holistic approach is unique to the region, focusing on the integrated needs of villagers for housing, infrastructure, livelihoods, medical care, welfare, education, skills development, sports, and cultural preservation. To learn more, visit: www.unconditionalcompassion.org

Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce

The Hambantota District of Chamber of Commerce (HDCC) serves the needs of its members by making available a wide range of development services and helping accelerate economic growth and enhanced prosperity throughout the Hambantota District. HDCC offers business development support to both members and nonmembers and operates a job placement service to link job seekers with

employment opportunities. To learn more, visit: www.hdcc.lk

Thailand

National Council for Child and Youth Development

Founded in 1985, the National Council for Child and Youth Development (NCYD) promotes coordinated efforts between the Thai government and NGOs in support of the nation's children and youth. Composed of 65 children and youth organizations from throughout the country, NCYD is recognized by both the government and private sectors as the official national coordinating body for child and youth development efforts.

ENDNOTES

1. References to "free money" include cash donations/grants to individuals/organizations, inflated wages, and redundant handouts.
2. www.undp.org
3. Center for Community Development and Education, Final Programmatic Report, January 2010
4. Some Self-Help groups were disbanded after a year or two of operation.
5. From three-year report submitted to the International Youth Foundation, January 2010.
6. Ibid
7. Ibid
8. HDCC Final Programmatic Report, Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative, January 2010
9. Ibid
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. Final Report, Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative — Thailand, January 2010.
13. Ibid



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