

Background

Pre-schools in the coastal areas were one of the most devastated of educational facilities impacted by the tsunami. Unlike primary and secondary schools, construction, maintenance and running of pre-schools does not come under the Sri Lankan Government's Educational System policy and there is no governmental budgetary allocation for development. Hence this vacuum has to be filled by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector.

Research has shown that over 80% of mental development takes place between the ages of 0 to 5 years. In order for children to fully develop their emotional, physical, intellectual, and social skills, increase their pre-reading and pre-writing abilities, and learn correct physical health and behavioural habits it is essential that new pre-school infrastructures be built and staffed in these areas. This is a crucial aspect of re-building the lives of those affected by this natural disaster.

The **objectives** of this project are to:

1. Construct a child friendly pre-school, (approx. 40' by 20') equipped with appropriate teaching and learning materials, as well as adequate sanitation and furniture.
2. Construct adjoining play facilities, making up a universal play park for recreational purposes, which will include play items and basic sporting equipment.
3. Set up a maintenance plan for 1 year - employment of 1 or 2 teachers, 1 cook/cleaner/watcher, supply exercise books and stationery, food and water, and provision for sundry expenses.

Needs Assessment

The importance of pre-schools cannot be overly stressed. In surveys and direct consultations with parents affected by the tsunami, parents and community elders have together identified the following issues:

- (i) there is a paramount importance set for educational development and schooling which will in turn provide a prosperous life for the future of the children. As a result of 25 years of war and the effects of the tsunami parents find security, solace, and peace of mind in knowing that their children are attending schools, giving hope and direction for the future.
- (ii) There is a definite need for post-tsunami children to be given an area which caters especially to their needs. Children are very efficient in that they will use almost any natural resource as play items. The community elders and parents have dealt with many accidents as a result of children playing on unsafe equipment and are anxious for a change. It is necessary to keep the children safe and away from playing in areas that are too dangerous for them.
- (iii) children deserve and would benefit from a unique area filled with play items designed with necessary regulations in mind.
- (iv) Qualified teachers, with an understanding of war and tsunami affected communities, need to be available to teach and nurture pre-school children.

Description of Learning Circles:

There will be 10 learning circles in the preschools in different parts of the classroom. Each circle will have materials suitable for children aged 3 - 5. The general concept is that the children will learn through activity and play.

1. Mathematics: basic numbers
2. Language: Alphabet
3. Science: Beginning concepts - plants, colours, leaves, nuts, nests, robots, animals
4. Water
5. Sand
6. Cultural
7. Drama
8. Dance
9. Music
10. Story Telling

Outlined in the table below are the costs for the maintenance and upkeep of the pre-school for 1 year. To ensure the sustainability of pre-schools constructed, we invite donors to provide funding for the maintenance and up-keep for more than one year.

TABLE 2: Maintenance and Up-keep of Pre-school for 1 year

2 Teachers@ Rs 15,000/ month x 12months	360,000 LKR
1 Cook/Cleaner/Watcher@ Rs 8,000 / month	96,000
Stationery (board, books & writing materials)	40,000
Provision for food and water (approx. but subject to number of children)	800,000
Provision for sundry expenses (approx.)	200,000
TOTAL	1,496,000

Construction of a pre-school takes approximately 2 - 3 months to complete.

(Please note that these costs may vary slightly depending on the accessibility of the construction site, fluctuations in the market price of raw materials, and other unknown factors)

Source : Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation