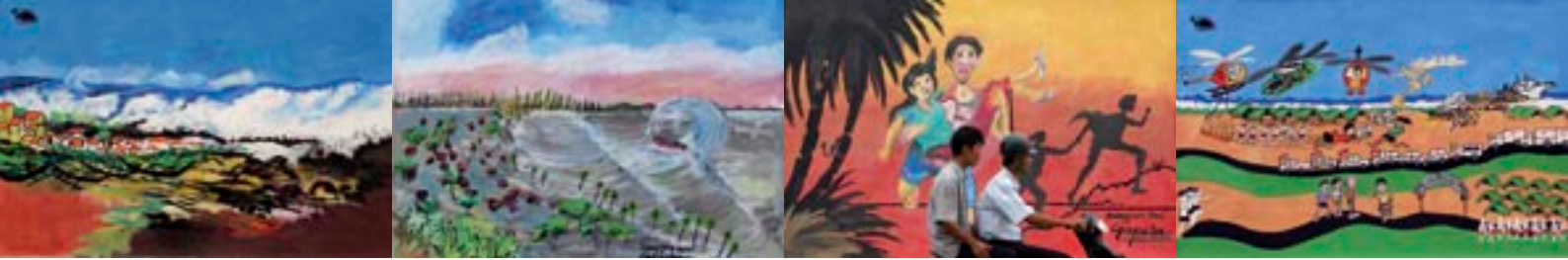




# Tsunami communities reborn

Rebuilding livelihoods  
better than before





# Much progress visible in year after **TSUNAMI**

LOCAL RESOLVE, MANY HELPING HANDS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



**F**or the fishers and farmers working along the Indian Ocean, extreme weather has long been an adversary. During the monsoon, roads become flooded and impassable, and seaside communities are isolated from markets for their products. Deep-sea fishers brave storms in fragile craft to bring home their catch, and rice farmers suffer through seasons without rain. Drinking water is often scarce.

None of these hardships prepared poor fishers and farmers for the devastation wrought when a massive tsunami crashed without warning onto the shores of 12 Indian Ocean nations on 26 December 2004, ripping through towns and villages, killing 200 000 people and leaving nearly one million homeless.

Livelihoods were shattered, schools flattened and offices destroyed. Freighters were washed inland, harbours disappeared and fishing vessels snapped like matchsticks.

The geography of affected coastlines was transformed. In some areas as much as 98 percent of mangrove forests, breeding grounds for fish, crabs and prawns, disappeared. In

others nature created new problems. In Sri Lanka, crocodiles invaded farms and rangeland, threatening humans and cattle.

The global response to the tsunami was one of the most generous in history. Funds and relief poured into Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand – the hardest hit countries. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) launched operations in affected areas as far-flung as the Maldives atolls and Somalia. Governments allowed waves of foreign aircraft to land urgently needed medical supplies, tents and food. Only India was able to decline initial offers of assistance and even sent relief to Sri Lanka.

Some accuse authorities of failing to meet survivors' expectations. At times

internecine conflict has hampered the return to normal life. It is acknowledged that bureaucracy slowed down recovery in the initial stages, and frequently coordination between donors, ministries and other agencies was inadequate.

In the year after the carnage, however, significant progress has been made in feeding and housing survivors and clearing debris from fish ponds and fields to allow farmers to resume work. Much remains to be done as emphasis shifts from relief to reconstruction and development.

This booklet profiles the rebuilding of livelihoods in fisheries and agriculture in Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. In interviews with the men



“ Step by step, FAO projects are improving the livelihoods of fishing households here.”

Seksan Matcha - District Fisheries Officer, Kura Buree, Thailand



building new fishing boats and the women planting new trees in the orchards where their loved ones died, a story of rebirth and hope emerges, with the generosity of both the national and international public playing a major role. ■

Top, left to right: Tsunami-hit communities reborn in Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia. (FAO/P. Singh/P. Singh/S. Khan/A. Berry)

Opposite, top: Tsunami murals created by three local painters in Meulaboh, Indonesia. (FAO/A. Berry)

Opposite, bottom: Painting tsunami-damaged boats in Sri Lanka. (FAO/P. Singh)

#### OVERALL FUNDING OF FAO TSUNAMI RESPONSE as of 20.10.2005

Donor	Contribution US\$
European Community	12 219 130
Italy	9 367 684
Norway	7 614 769
Belgium	5 773 090
Japan	5 000 000
Finland	3 776 100
Spain	2 600 000
China	2 000 000
UN Development Programme	1 961 000
Trinidad and Tobago*	1 750 000
Greece*	1 597 680
UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)*	1 526 545
Germany	1 433 687
United Kingdom	1 113 000
Canada	809 454
Ireland	184 965
Lao People's Democratic Republic	100 000
United States	100 000
Palau*	25 886
Other private donations	462 496
<b>Total</b>	<b>59 415 486</b>

\* Funds channelled via OCHA

## FAO's post-tsunami role

FAO assessment teams rushed to Asia after the tsunami ravaged the region, evaluating damage and rehabilitation needs in fisheries and agriculture to be able to assist governments overwhelmed by the scale of the disaster.

In the initial phase of emergency relief, FAO concentrated on restoring farmers' and fishers' access to seeds, tools and fishing nets to reduce the length of time people would be dependent on food aid. FAO also began cash-for-work programmes as part of efforts to kick-start local economies, and provided technical advice to governments and directly to disaster-affected rural households.

The main challenge now facing governments is rebuilding the livelihoods and economic base of coastal communities that were completely or partially destroyed.

In many tsunami-stricken areas, FAO helps by coordinating the work of NGOs so that the various organizations do not unwittingly target the same survivors for help while leaving others out.

In the Indonesian province of Aceh and the worst-hit parts of Sri Lanka, FAO is carrying out work that ordinarily would have been performed by local civil servants, killed by the tsunami. To fill that role in Indonesia, an emergency coordination office was established at Banda Aceh, the provincial capital near the epicentre of the tsunami damage.

“FAO provides leadership for the entire boat-rebuilding initiative,” says Eric Lyman, co-founder of the Austin International Relief Operations, an American NGO that helps fishers rebuild boats in Aceh province (see Helping Aceh's “lucky ones” build a future, page 4). “FAO officials keep track of the type of boats that should be introduced to avoid overfishing. They are keeping standards high.”

Seksan Matcha, District Fisheries Officer in the southern Thai area of Kura Buree, where FAO has distributed fish traps and aquaculture equipment to help fishers recover from the tsunami, echoes those sentiments.

“Step by step, FAO projects are improving the livelihoods of the fishing households here,” he says.



Nur Hamifah fled the tsunami while pregnant with daughter Julianti. (FAO/A. Berry)

Bottom: Eric Lyman (left) helps builders at the boatyard that his NGO set up with FAO assistance. (FAO/A. Berry)

# Helping Aceh's "LUCKY ONES" build a future

## BREATHING HOPE INTO DISASTER'S EPICENTRE

**MALAHAYATI, Indonesia-** Boatbuilder Tahrudin counts himself among the luckier inhabitants of this tranquil fishing village 30 kilometres north of Banda Aceh, capital of the province worst hit by the tsunami.

Some 2 500 people, more than half Malahayati's population, perished in the disaster. Tahrudin, 27, and his wife Nur Hamifah lost "only" their home.

When the tidal wave struck Tahrudin thought first about his wife, at the time five months pregnant with their baby daughter, Julianti.

"I was very worried," he recalls. "I was near the beach and my wife was at home. The first water that came in covered my feet. The second wave was two metres high. I climbed on top of the roof of a house."

Nur Hamifah, meanwhile, fled the couple's

home when she saw the tsunami crashing in and ran up a nearby hill. Minutes later the water began receding around her husband's rooftop refuge. "I ran to the hill and found my wife there," he says.

Six weeks after their narrow escape,

Tahrudin had further good fortune. He met Eric Lyman, a businessman from the United States who was among millions of people worldwide who saw the plight of tsunami victims on television. Eric, from Boise, Idaho, and his brother Aaron, an entrepreneur from Austin, Texas who had worked in Indonesia for 19 years, flew to Jakarta and put their savings into the Austin International Relief Operations (AIRO), a charity for tsunami survivors. "We just came down here off the cuff, not knowing how long we'd be here," Eric Lyman says.

The brothers quickly decided to open a boatyard to build vessels for fishers who had lost the craft that provided their livelihoods. Eric Lyman hired Tahrudin to build them.



“FAO helps us because we hesitate to start a project unless we know it is ecologically sound.”

*Eric Lyman - Austin International Relief Operations, Indonesia*



Eventually, the Lymans turned to the FAO office in Banda Aceh to ask about obtaining financing to continue their mission. Soon AIRO was receiving not only funds but expert advice from Robert Lee, a resilient master fisher from Trinidad with an irrepressible sense of humour, sent to Banda Aceh by FAO to bolster its relief team. Mr Lee has been in the vanguard of Indonesian reconstruction ever since, taking special care to discourage excessive production that might result in overfishing.

“FAO helps us because we hesitate to start a project unless we know it is ecologically sound,” says Mr Lyman.

Now the boatyard has 11 full-time workers. Mr Lee keeps an eye on the boatbuilders, teaching them some tricks about how to build vessels that last.

“We have improved their construction techniques, teaching them, for example, a different way of putting nails into the wood, going in at an angle to lock the pieces together,” Mr Lee says. “I also encourage them to stagger the joints and to order more wood than they need so that they can eliminate wood with faults.”

FAO has provided funds to build a boat shed, a tool shed and a wood-drying rack for the team, and wood for the next set of five-metre boats.

In addition to materials, FAO also provided the workers with replacement tools. Carpenter Ramli Hachim, 25, was happy to see the new kit arrive: 40 or 50 items in all, including a chainsaw, six electric and hand drills, tape measures, spirit levels, whetstones, a circular saw and a grinder, all purchased locally in the city of Medan.

“With this FAO project, work will be better than before,” Mr Hachim says. “We have new equipment and new tools. We are trained to use new techniques. I couldn’t have afforded to build new boats myself.”

Nur Hamifah, Taharudin and Julianti have a new house now on high land overlooking the boatyard.

“I am happy my husband has a new job,” Nur Hamifah says. “When he’s not building boats he goes fishing. Before the tsunami he didn’t own a boat. Now he has one of his own that he helped build.”

## Banda Aceh makes progress

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia – FAO has built a new fish market here where fishers from communities like Malahayati can take their catch of tuna and grouper. Among the sellers chopping tuna into pieces for housewives is Rizkian Syah, 24, who lost all 40 of his family members in the tsunami, including his mother, father and six brothers and sisters.

Until a month ago he was living in a tent. He eked out a living salvaging and selling scrap iron from damaged buildings. His new market job pays the equivalent of US\$60 a month. “In the scrap trade I earned only a little less but it was much heavier work.” With more free time on his hands, Rizkian devotes himself to the sad search that preoccupies so many survivors – trying to find his relatives’ missing bodies.



Rizkian Syah, who lost 40 family members in the tsunami, works at a new fish market built by FAO in Banda Aceh. (FAO/A. Berry)

Top: FAO master fisher Robert Lee (blue cap) checks tools distributed by FAO to boatbuilders constructing replacement fishing vessels. (FAO/A. Berry)

“ If FAO hadn't given this to us, it wouldn't have been possible for us to buy it. ”

Hasballah - Farmer, Indonesia



# Making the land productive **AGAIN**

TOOLS, SEEDS AND FERTILIZER ARRIVE FOR RICE SEASON

## MEULABOH, Indonesia -

As tsunami-battered farming communities prepare their fields for the next rice season, FAO and a constellation of NGOs are racing to provide them with tools to help make up for a dramatic labour shortage.

Tens of thousands of people were killed by the tsunami in and around Meulaboh, on the west coast of Sumatra, the island where Aceh province is located.

"On the west coast the tsunami bore down like a cobra. Nobody had time to escape," recalls Ramadhan Nusfi, a national logistics expert in FAO's sub-office here. "About 80 percent of the people living here died."

The 20 percent who survived gave thanks for their good fortune during solemn prayers held recently at the mass graves of their relatives, as farmers were awaiting the right moment to prepare paddy-fields for planting.

Mr Nusfi and allied NGOs, such as France's Solidarités, worked to provide farmers with hand tractors, threshers, rice seed, hoes and fertilizer to breathe life back into the fields.

Thousands of seedlings also have been distributed. In time they will yield a cornucopia of cacao, mangoes, coconuts and palm oil. Agriculture in Meulaboh is mixed, with farmers producing rice, cash crops and fruit.

## Sharing equipment

In Kuala Tuha, a village 20 kilometres from Meulaboh, farmers have received FAO hand tractors distributed by Solidarités.

"Using the tractor is much quicker than ploughing by hand," say Ruslia and Hasballah, two members of a farming group sharing one of the new tractors. "If FAO hadn't given this to us, it wouldn't have been possible for us to buy it," says Hasballah as his neighbour nods agreement.

Each farming group signs a contract with Solidarités, Catholic Relief Services or another of FAO's partners in Meulaboh. Solidarités retains the right to withdraw the tractor in the unlikely event that farmers obtain more than one machine by applying to different charities. FAO has rehabilitated or is helping rehabilitate about 7 000 hectares of paddy-fields in Indonesia through distribution of seeds, fertilizer and farm equipment. The Organization also is restoring about 3 600 hectares of dryland secondary crops, vegetables and estate crops. ■



Top, left to right: FAO logistics officer Ramadhan Nusfi checks farm trailers, part of a shipment of relief supplies for Meulaboh, Indonesia. (FAO/A. Berry) Farmers Hasballah, right, and Rusli received a hand tractor and thresher donated by FAO. (FAO/A. Berry) An FAO warehouse in Meulaboh, Indonesia. (FAO/A. Berry) Left: New crop of cucumber in tsunami-hit Banda. (FAO/A. Berry)

**PIDIE, Indonesia** – On tsunami-battered fish-farming land on Sumatra's eastern shore, FAO experts and a local NGO are training farmers to form self-management groups to restore the previously prosperous aquaculture sector.

In the sun-baked coastal village of Koulam, 20 kilometres from the town of Pidie, about 50 farmers gathered recently in a prayer house to listen to FAO agronomist Arun Padiyar.

"We understand all of your troubles and how the people are suffering here," Mr Padiyar tells the throng of villagers sitting on mats, immediately capturing their attention. "We are here to bring a cash-for-work programme for rehabilitating your *tambaks* (fish ponds)."

"To revive your ventures, you will have to think of all of the problems that you were facing before the tsunami, maybe diseases affecting the fish, the health of the mangrove around the *tambaks*, the market forces ..." he continues. "Our focus now is to make the *tambaks* and this area very sustainable for the long term."

"The concept here is that we work together to form farmer groups pooling resources for self-management," he says.

A vote by show of hands is called for, to see if participants accept FAO's conditions. Every farmer raises his hand in favour of the programme.

Each farmer will receive enough fingerlings and other inputs for one pond of about one-half hectare, plus invaluable technical advice. Mr Padiyar cautions that miracles cannot happen overnight.

"The expectation from you farmers is that immediately, tomorrow, you will start working.



# Ensuring sustainable FISH farming

## FARMERS REVIEW PAST PROBLEMS BEFORE RESTARTING

But we have to plan a lot. It may take one to two months."

Afterwards, farmers form working groups, studying maps of the canals linking the *tambaks* to decide how to start.

Among them is Ibrahim, 30, owner of only one pond, which was destroyed by the tsunami.

Before the disaster he earned enough from selling milkfish and small crabs to support his wife Miriam and their two-year-old daughter

Miskalia. Afterwards, he turned to growing chili. "But it is not enough," he says.

Ibrahim is enthusiastic after the meeting, which was organized together with a local NGO, the Forum Banda Aceh. "I really hope that FAO can help me rebuild my *tambak*," he says.

## Aquaculture in Thailand

In Thailand, FAO is helping with a similar project, providing fish cages and fingerlings to tsunami-traumatized fishers to rebuild aquaculture businesses in the coastal estuary area near the Maenang Kao mountains.

Suleyman Tchidchewa, 48, works on the project.

"After the tsunami we felt that we had nothing. We had no hope," he says. "Now my courage is back, not fully, but 70 to 80 percent."

Fish cages were provided for 38 fishers, including three women, in April. By May they had begun breeding sea bass and grouper in the project, one of many organized by FAO for fishing communities near Phuket.

“ Now my courage is back. ”

**Suleyman Tchidchewa** - Fish farmer, Thailand



**Left:** A fish farm in Phuket, Thailand rebuilt with FAO help. (FAO/S. Khan)

**Top:** FAO aquaculture expert Arun Padiyar (in blue cap) explains plans for reviving tsunami-hit fish ponds during meeting with farmers in Pidie, Indonesia. (FAO/A. Berry)



“ This is a completely new design, making reference to FAO guidelines for internal construction. ”

**Wimal Wimalasiri** - Boat designer, Sri Lanka

# Redesigning SRI LANKA'S fishing fleet

EMPHASIS ON HIGHER INCOME AND SAFETY

**COLOMBO, Sri Lanka** - It is not often that a naval architect has the opportunity to redesign an entire country's fishing fleet. That was the challenge facing Stefano Thermes when FAO sent him here to map a strategy for the renewal of the island nation's fishing industry.

Mr Thermes has focused not only on getting the fishers fishing again but also on a longer-term approach to improve coastal communities' incomes and improve safety standards.

"Before the tsunami, Sri Lanka's boat-building programme was at its lowest ebb," the architect tells a workshop of experts from the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. "With a few exceptions, there was a general lack of technical ability on the drawing board, few records of what modifications had been made on which boats, and many vessels that were built without official approval or seaworthiness checks."

In Sri Lanka, the aftermath of the tragedy spawned frenetic boat-building.

"After the tsunami we had an emergency situation. International donations were available. There was sudden pressure on the



A Sri Lankan fisher with nets provided by FAO. (FAO/P. Singh)  
Top: A boat-engine repair shop in Sri Lanka. (FAO/P. Singh).

industry. New boatyards were created," the architect adds.

Sri Lanka now enjoys an array of boatyard assets, he explains. "There is increased demand, there is a very good cash flow, a lot of NGOs want to contribute in a very good way ... fibreglass technology is well accepted by fishers and the ministry."

A senior ministry official at the workshop concurs with the architect, adding only that "a fisherman is poor, he cannot afford all the ideas that we come up with. Some ideas are not so expensive, like having scuppers on the boats."

In a local boatyard, boat designers such as Wimal Wimalasiri are spearheading the

new approach. His company started building 40-foot trawlers to replenish the tsunami-hit fleets.

"This is a completely new design, making reference to FAO guidelines for internal construction," Mr Wimalasiri says, gesturing at a sturdy vessel taking shape. "In the past boatbuilders here didn't have much theoretical knowledge," he explains. "They got their experience from their forefathers."

FAO's strategy is to dissuade the new boat builders and NGOs from constructing too many of the old one-day boats, usually 9.5 metre or 3.5 tonnes, so called because of their short range and therefore short time spent at sea.

Sri Lanka needs to build more multiday boats, which can stay at sea as long as six weeks as they search for lucrative species like tuna as far away as Malaysia or Somalia. The boats will be a source of employment for Sri Lankans.

Mr Thermes has promoted multiday boats at 16 out of 18 of Sri Lanka's biggest boatyards, and reports that the yards are now building 200 of them, while not replacing all the one-day boats that were destroyed.

One of his main concerns is to convince boatbuilders to adopt FAO safety guidelines for the design and construction of small fishing vessels. One example of dangerous practice is the overloading of vessels with on-deck water and fuel tanks, which causes boats to capsize by raising the centre of gravity. Unless fishers' knowledge of safety at sea improves, their craft will remain uninsurable, he points out. ■







# Reaching out to more than 50 ISLANDS

## BOLSTERING AGRICULTURE INCLUDES IMPROVING NUTRITION

**LANDHOO, Maldives** – This country of hundreds of islands scattered over the Indian Ocean presented FAO with an exceptional logistic challenge in tsunami relief. Bounded by reefs prohibiting access to big ships, the islands stretch from 100 kilometres south of the equator to 800 kilometres north.

FAO's office in Male, the capital, is delivering assistance to the 50 agricultural islands most affected by the tsunami, to alleviate problems such as soil salinization, which has killed many fruit trees. FAO also encourages islanders to diversify production to improve diets.

"You won't see hunger and starvation here," says FAO Representative Winston Rudder. "There are always fish and coconuts. But there are the insidious effects of malnutrition."

Deliveries can take days to reach outlying islands as traditional *dhoni* boats navigate stormy seas.

On this northern island, chief Hassan Nasir is overjoyed as islanders unload sacks of fertilizer, compost and hoes from the *dhoni* into small boats and row them to shore through the surf. The materials will help restore production of bananas, chili, cucumbers and watermelon.

"This will encourage our farmers in their

work. We appreciate this being delivered in the rough sea," he says. "We thought we might receive something but not so much." During the tsunami the islanders worked feverishly placing sandbags on the white beaches ringing the island to protect their homes.

Farmer Abu Bakher Qasim, 65, will use the tools and fertilizer to prepare a second field in addition to the plot on which he grows cassava, sweet potatoes, limes and custard apples.

"I hope to be able to grow more now than before the tsunami," he says. On his second field he will grow guava, sweet potato and watermelon.

### Aid for fisheries

Maldivian fishers also have benefited from various types of FAO assistance, including training from Indian boatbuilder Derek Mennezes and an FAO naval architect, Oyvind Gulbrandsen. The training enabled Maldivian boatbuilders to construct fibreglass fishing vessels on the island of Thulusdoo for the first time in the country, which previously depended on imported expertise from Sri Lanka.

FAO is giving fishing gear to more than 4 000 Maldivian fishing families. Its agriculture programme will benefit some 20 000 people. ■

“ I hope to be able to grow more now than before the tsunami. ”

**Abu Bakher Qasim - Farmer, Maldives**

Top, left to right: Residents of Landhoo Island, the Maldives unload guava seedlings. (FAO/P. Singh)

Villagers eagerly await relief supplies. (FAO/P. Singh)  
Assisted by FAO experts, a worker finishes the hull of a fibreglass boat in the Maldives. (FAO/P. Singh)

Right: Farming kits for tsunami-hit farmers being delivered to Landhoo Island, the Maldives. (FAO/P. Singh)



“FAO has helped smallholders a lot.”

Wichien Kasemsri - District Extension Officer, Thailand



## BAN BANG NJANG,

**Thailand** – Virut Hokhua spent 33 years cultivating his fruit orchard but nothing in his long experience prepared him for the day when dozens of dead and injured people washed up among the trunks of his rambutan and durian fruit trees.

Mr Hokhua, 65, recalls how he helped some of the foreigners carried to the orchard by the tsunami and how one, a German tourist, died there. Among the dead was Mr Hokhua's eldest son, Tamarat, 29.

The tidal wave flattened the orchard but now Mr Hokhua has replanted his plot of just under one hectare with rambutan, mangosteen and longkon as well as oil-palm, all of which he received from FAO. "FAO is the only agency that is giving some practical help in agriculture here," he avows. "Without FAO it would have been quite difficult. They gave me fertilizer and gypsum as well as the seedlings."

Like many farmers in the area, Mr Hokhua introduced oil-palms to his land for the first time because of the growing demand for palm oil to make biological diesel fuel and because they take four years to bear fruit compared with five years for rambutan.

**Top, right:** A farmer, FAO consultant and government extension officer in south Thailand discuss how fruit orchards will be replanted. (FAO/S. Khan)

**Top:** Farmer, south Thailand. (FAO/S. Khan)

**Bottom, left to right:** FAO provided tree seedlings after Wananek Wilai (left) and her sister Malle Navaloi, farmers in south Thailand, lost their coconut trees in the tsunami. (FAO/S. Khan)

Thai farmer Somchai Plodtuk stands next to a fruit tree killed by salt water from the tsunami. Gypsum supplied by FAO saved other trees on his land. (FAO/S. Khan)

# Thailand's orchards blossom **ANEW**

## FAO SPEARHEADS SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY

Mr Hokhua's satisfaction is echoed by Wichien Kasemsri, District Extension Officer for the Khao Lak area, north of Phuket. "FAO has helped smallholders a lot," he says, assessing the plight of 600 households in his territory. "Its assistance is more sustainable than other forms of help. People here still are suffering from losing all sources of income, including tourism. But for agriculture maybe next year will be better."

Also helped by FAO was Wananek Wilai, 58, whose livelihood was interrupted when dozens of coconut trees she cultivated with her sister Malle Navaloi, 56, were uprooted by the tsunami. Both sisters received 50

seedlings from FAO. Ms Wilai lost her two daughters in the tsunami when they drowned in their home. Her grandchildren, Kanchana, 2, and Pensiri, 8, survived because they were on high ground with Ms Wilai, who fled with them to safety as the tidal wave approached.

Not all orchards suffered immediate effects. In nearby Lam Kaen village, farmer Somchai Plodtuk lost some mangosteen and durian trees as much as two months after the tsunami as salt attacked their roots. "My smallholding has suffered but FAO gave me gypsum, which I applied and which saved some trees," he says. "It made a difference." ■





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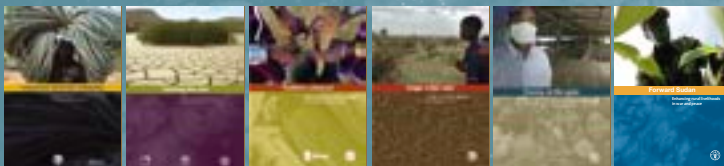
Web site: [www.fao.org/reliefoperations](http://www.fao.org/reliefoperations)

#### Acknowledgements

This booklet is the result of an FAO Information Division photo-reportage mission to Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand in 9-10/05. The division would like to thank mission leader and writer John Phillips, government officials, FAO Representations and FAO field staff for their invaluable contributions. FAO would like to thank the donors who generously support its tsunami recovery programme, including Belgium, Canada, China, European Community, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Norway, Palau, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Back cover photo: Farmers in a tsunami-hit area of Sri Lanka harvest rice grown from seed distributed by FAO. (FAO/P. Singh)

Cover photo: Boatbuilding in Aceh, Indonesia. (FAO/A. Berry)



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