

EMERGENCY EDUCATION

Sector Analysis

Around 20% of schools for 50,000 children (200 of 1033 schools / 50,000 of 300,000 children) were affected by the Tsunami in some way. The national response in the education sector was, however, both strong and swift and almost all schools were able to re-open on January 4th after the cool-season break. All schools re-opened by the end of the following week. Although children's attendance was initially low, this is now rising.

Direct damage and destruction of school buildings affected less than 3% of schools in the six affected provinces (26 of 1033 schools). Alternative arrangements were quickly made to ensure that children continued their learning without interruption. Damaged school buildings were urgently repaired and school materials

Province	Schools	Damaged	Teacher deaths / missing	Student deaths / missing
Krabi	232	10	0	16
Phang Nga	167	4	3	217
Phuket	57	6	2	20
Ranong	88	4	2	23
Satun	165	0	0	0
Trang	324	2	0	1
	1033	26	7	277
Source: Ministry of Education				

purchased or borrowed. Temporary classrooms were erected, some of brick construction and others using tarpaulins. Some children attended nearby schools for the first two weeks post-Tsunami and in one case children attended school at their teacher's house. In some cases temporary schools were erected and are already operating.

Tragically the Tsunami claimed the lives of several teachers in three provinces but this has no significant impact on the overall teaching workforce (7 died or missing of 312,000 teachers nationwide). Temporary teachers have since been hired (15 for 7 schools) pending longer term re-assignments. Temporary cleaning staff have also been hired for damaged schools to minimise the risk of injury to school children.

School attendance: In several schools in the hardest hit communities in Phang-Nga province, only around 50%-75% of children attended school in the two weeks after re-opening. Attendance has gradually increased since then. Five weeks post-Tsunami, around 10% of children in the worst affected schools are still away from school. Non-attendance appears to be similar for girls and boys. "Fear" is reported to be the single most important reason for non-attendance - families wishing to stay together after their traumatic experiences. In all other schools, that is the majority, attendances appear to have already returned to those pre-Tsunami.

Overall, the Tsunami has therefore had very limited impact on Thailand's ability to deliver education services. Damage to school buildings and loss of teaching staff is very limited. Temporary disruptions to schooling, largely in the worst-hit Phang Nga province, have been overcome.

Psychological effects: The psychological effects of the Tsunami have had, however, a major negative impact on children's learning. Children are suffering psychologically from the dramatic changes in their normal routines. In some cases children have lost their homes and are living in temporary shelters, their families have lost their means of income. In some cases children have lost friends and classmates - almost 300 school children have died or are still missing. In other cases children have lost their school building. Almost one thousand

children have lost one or both parents. Teachers have themselves been affected psychologically – losing homes and family members – and have, at the same time, the added burden of playing a supporting role to school children under their care.

Two issues are now of over riding importance if children's learning is to return to that pre-Tsunami. First, the need to help children to recover psychologically. This is a pre-requisite for optimum learning. Getting children into school and keeping children in school – a familiar environment - is a major component of the psychological recovery process. Second, the urgent need to restore family incomes to ensure that there are no financial barriers to children's attendance. This will also be a key contribution to the return to family and community normalcy and therefore to psychosocial recovery.

Psychological recovery activities initiated immediately post-Tsunami are ongoing. Getting children back to school was successful and various psychosocial recovery activities are underway - led by the Ministry of Health's Mental Health Department and supported by a number of other institutions and organisations, including UNICEF. Schools and teachers are important components in the recovery. Teacher training has started to help them carry out relevant school based psychosocial activities as well as to identify children in distress. Information materials for teachers and for families / caregivers have been disseminated. Sports and play materials are now being provided to schools and child development centres to ensure play and recreation – essential to psychosocial recovery. All of this needs to be continued, expanded and better coordinated for greatest impact. For more information see the Child Protection Sector Assessment.

Loss of livelihoods: The livelihoods of over 100,000 people have been affected across all six affected provinces. There is an urgent need for interim support to protect children's education from now until tourism, fisheries and related sectors are re-equipped and revitalised (See the UNDP/World Bank/FAO Livelihoods Assessment January 2005 for more details). A number of education funds have been set up and funds disbursed through Government and non-Governmental channels. These have provided immediate needs such as school uniforms and learning materials as well as transport and school lunch costs. There is a need to ensure that such schemes are comprehensive and adequate to protect vulnerable children's participation in early childhood learning schemes and in schools.

Gender concerns: The social division of labour in Thailand assigns reproductive (household duties) and productive duties to girls / women. This traditional division of labour places girls in a vulnerable and disadvantaged position in the context of the current hardships faced by families. An abundance of international experience suggests that girl's attendance suffers disproportionately to boys due to expectations and obligations within the household. Other known risk factors for girl's access to education are present and may contribute, including poor sanitation facilities in schools. If family livelihoods are not restored urgently there is a risk of girls and boys dropping out of school to help supplement the family income – this would include the possibility of entering the commercial sex-trade / of children being trafficked.

Especially vulnerable children: Government and agency assessments and field visits in Tsunami affected areas have also highlighted serious barriers to learning for certain children. Children of ethnic minority families living on some nearby islands (Koh Surin for example) do not attend, and have never attended, school. Despite a stated local demand for full time schooling from parents, teachers are not assigned. Early learning centres are not located in the vicinity of some of these communities. There are few if no learning opportunities for children of migrant worker families who make up a large proportion of the local work force in these provinces.

Immediate and medium term priorities: While immediate priorities are to get children back into school, to expand and increase psychosocial recovery programmes and to ensure that education costs are covered for the most vulnerable children there are also a number of medium term priorities if the rights to education and learning for all children in the Tsunami affected communities is to be realised.

Assessments have shown that many schools and early child learning centres in the 20 affected districts lack adequate water and sanitation facilities and are not equipped with educational toys and learning materials to the standard required – restricting children's learning. Education quality in the affected districts appears to be lagging when compared to the national situation.

A more detailed analysis is needed to identify the extent of the out-of-school problem. Tracking of key education indicators over the coming year will be especially important to follow the impact of Tsunami-induced economic changes on education and learning, especially for girls, who are known, by international experience, to suffer disproportionately in these types of situations. The risk of significant gender disparity is therefore high.

Objectives (Appeal Objectives January – July 2005)

- All children are back to school for the January 4th opening (or as close as possible to this date) and attendance is sustained as a contribution to the return to normalcy.

Activities

- Monitor school attendance in the very short term (during early part of January 2005)
- Undertake an assessment of school services in all six provinces
- Ensure teachers are provided with appropriate training to identify children in the classroom who are traumatised or experiencing difficulties as a result of the crisis and are able to refer to the referral services.
- Provide replacement education supplies and equipment in the 50 most affected schools for teachers and students
- Provide a coordination platform for partners and technical support to Government.