

Tsunami Education Project (TEP) in Sri Lanka NEWSLETTER No. 4

TEP continues at the East Coast of Sri Lanka

The Tsunami Education Project (TEP), which is financed by the German NGO HELP from Germany, is running in Sri Lanka since March 2006. In August 2006 this teachers training project was prolonged by HELP till March 2007. So far, the TEP carried out 84 geography workshops reaching more than 2.300 people (mainly teachers from Junior-, O-Level and A-Level schools) in the tsunami affected areas at the South and East Coast of Sri Lanka. Two local experts were also trained by the TEP and more than 150 sets of new educational geography materials were distributed to schools.



Explaining the plate movement as the reason of earthquakes in one workshop in 2006

During their workshops the TEP Team is explaining the scientific reasons of earthquakes and tsunamis to improve the geography education in Sri Lanka and to decrease superstitious fear about the ocean.

Till the end of project the TEP will focus on the training of new local experts at the East Coast of Sri Lanka (in the Ampara District) and will carry out more workshops for teachers. Furthermore, it will evaluate how teachers who already participated in the different workshops are using the new educational materials. If necessary, more support will be given.

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Cooperation with Eastern University of Sri Lanka

In November 2006 the TEP Team established an important cooperation with the Geography Department of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka (EUSL) near Batticaloa. This cooperation will simplify the selection of local experts who should have a geography or geology background.



From left: Ms. Sandra Laskowski (TEP), Ms. Ponniah (Head Geography Department EUSL), Mr. Thorsten Klose (TEP)

The Head of the Geography Department of the EUSL (Ms. Ponniah) was very interested in the TEP and offered support. “Also almost two years after the Tsunami many people still did not understand what exactly happened on Tsunami Day”, Ms. Ponniah told the TEP Team.

Selection of first local expert at East Coast

In 2006 the TEP Team already selected two geography graduates from the the University in Ruhuna near Matara (South Coast). These two local experts were finally carrying out their own workshops very successfully.

On November 24th, 2006 Mr. Vasanthanrajah was selected as the first local expert inside the project at the East Coast. He is 26 years old and a geography graduate of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka. From 2000 to 2006 he was the president of the “Geography Society at the EUSL”. Mr. Vasanthanrajah started his work inside the TEP on December 1st, 2006.

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**Mr. Vasanthanrajah
(Local expert TEP)**



**First training of Mr. Vasanthanrajah in the
TEP Office in Ampara**

Mr. Vasanthanrajah will work inside the TEP till end of March 2007. First he will translate the geography workshops from English into Tamil / Sinhala. In a second step he will conduct and carry out workshops on his own.

Cooperation with Zonal Education Offices in Ampara District

In November 2006 the TEP also established a cooperation with the Zonal Education Offices (ZEOs) in Akkaraipattu and Kalmunai, which are responsible for all tsunami affected schools in the Ampara District.



Zonal Education Office in Akkaraipattu

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The Zonal Directors of Education in Akkaraipatthu (Mr. Hashim) and in Kalmunai (Mr. Nizam) highly welcomed the TEP and gave their official permissions to teach in all related educational divisions. The Divisional Education Offices (DEOs) handed over the lists of all tsunami affected Junior-, O-Level and A-Level schools.

Because of national examinations and school vacation in December 2006, the TEP will start to run geography workshops in January 2007 in the following divisions:

- Potthuvil Division
- Ninthavur Division
- Karaitivu Division
- Sainthamarathu Division
- Kalmunai Division (Tamil)
- Kalmunai Division (Muslim)

Geography Workshop for HELP Staff in Ampara

During the period of national school examinations and vacations the TEP will also run its workshops for the international and local staff of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the Ampara District.

On December 1st, 2006 for example the TEP Team hold one geography workshop in the Ampara field office of HELP from Germany.



Mr. Vasanthanrajah (local expert TEP) is explaining the construction of the earth to staff members of HELP from Germany

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Especially the local staff of NGOs has direct contact to tsunami affected families at the East Coast of Sri Lanka and is often confronted with the fear of the people regarding the ocean and a new tsunami. After the participation in a TEP workshop the staff will be able to give on their knowledge about tsunamis to their beneficiaries in the field.



Sandra Laskowski (TEP) is explaining the creation of tsunami waves in the famous TEP water bowl



After the workshop every participant gets a certificate (in the photo: Mr. Kumara, HELP Field Driver Ampara)

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