

“A man never stands as tall as when he kneels to help a child”

Arobanam Children Fund

Charity No: 1082803



Supporting Children in need in North and East of Sri Lanka

Welcome to the Arobanam Children Fund Newsletter January 2010

Picking up the Pieces – Now that many of the IDP have been released from the camps, we are beginning to find out the true extent of damage to some of our homes in Vanni. In the Mahadeva Ashram complex 11 buildings have been badly damaged and rebuilding these homes will be a long-term process. Recently 162 children from the Mahadeva Ashram were found alive in the camps and are currently being looked after in relief centres. The children need to return home, but cannot wait until it is fully re-built.

Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral wrote these words:

*Many things we need can wait
The child cannot.
Now is the time
His bones are being formed.
His blood is being made.
His mind is being developed.
To him we cannot say tomorrow.
His name is today.*



In May 2009, war end brought devastation to Mahadeva Ashram and other homes in Vanni

History is written by those who realise there's never a right way ... ONLY A BETTER WAY

Our **sponsorship scheme** has been severely affected by the war. From the homes, a total of 307 children were missing. We have now located 162 of them and are still trying to locate the others. Now, given the current circumstances, there is a need for Arobanam Children Fund to take a different course of action to maximise our work.

Of our six homes, four are badly damaged and the Sri Lankan government has allowed us to visit some of them: Arobanam Boys Home and the Mahadeva Ashram have been severely damaged. Unfortunately, we have still not been able to visit Senthilir Children's Home, in Udayakaddu and we have lost all contact with Bharathi Children's Home, in Mullaitivu. It has become painfully obvious to us that re-building and re-establishing these homes is going to be a slow process. We now wish to concentrate on expanding our Foster Care Scheme where children are looked after in their own homes.

As most of you know, we introduced our first Foster Care scheme in 2004. This was done on the advice of UNICEF. The war has left many children having lost one or both parents. Many are living with relatives and often with grandparents. We have recently identified 65 children in Adampan in Mannar district and they are from families recently released from the camps. We have brought them under our Foster Care Scheme, which is run by our partners 'Destitute Welfare Fund' in Mannar. Now, we need to find new sponsors for these children.

Another exciting project

At present, we are also building our own children's home in Mannar at a cost of £49,000.

This building is expected to be ready by March 2010 and will house 100 children.



Arobanam Children Home ... a new 3-storey building currently under construction in Mannar

For further information, please contact one of our committee members at:

Arobanam Children Fund, 29 Helmsdale Road. London SW16 5UT

E-mail: Rama: vijayanathar@yahoo.co.uk, Thenu: thenup@hotmail.com

Together We Can Make A Difference

The Indian Connection

An Australian charity has now taken over the management of the Mandapam camp day-care centre, in Rameswaram, South India, and is funding it entirely.

This is very good news for us as it allows us to concentrate on another project in India - to help 31 children in the Anaiyur Camp in Madurai, where most of the families arrived in this camp after being displaced from Mannar and Trincomalee. We are setting up learning centres to help them. These centres will be run by the "Mother Mary Education Trust" based in Dindugull in Tamil Nadu, which is already registered with the Indian authorities and licensed to help 100 children in the camp. Once this is up and running the annual progress reports of the children will be sent to us, as agreed, and then forwarded on to the sponsors.



Please sponsor one of these children. Please fill-in a form today and help us to help them. Form available at: www.arobanam.org

Sponsoring a child costs just £15 per month. That's only 50p a day ... the cost of a bottle of mineral water. Just think of the difference you can make to a child's life by giving such a small amount. You will be touching a child's heart in the most profound way possible, by helping to provide him or her with a better future. We have more than 150 children awaiting sponsorship.

PLEASE DON'T WAIT - complete a standing order form now. Furthermore, if you complete our GAD form it allows us to receive money from the Inland Revenue too. Don't delay - you can download a form from our website: www.arobanam.org

Evolution not Revolution

The people in North and East of Sri Lanka have suffered an unprecedented level of hardship as never before. They lost their homes and their livelihood completely. Family lives are shattered ... members not knowing if their loved ones are alive or dead.

The community has to rebuild itself and this cannot be done by charities, like us, alone. While we all expect the Sri Lankan government to take on this responsibility, with the help of the international community, we should not take it for granted. We must do what we can ... the Diaspora must come to their aid ... we have a duty.

With this in mind, Arobanam Children Fund and two other charities have formed a network named "Relief and Rehabilitation Network" (RRN). The 2 other member charities are: Tamil Health Organisation (THO) who must take the credit for initiating the idea for this network and the Standing Committee of the Tamil Speaking People (SCOT).

Under this network Arobanam will have its complete independence and will manage all its funds as it has always done. There is a misunderstanding among some of our friends that others may manipulate Arobanam's funds. This is strictly incorrect. We give you complete assurance that all donations to Arobanam Children Fund is only be used for Arobanam Children Fund's projects. In fact, the whole idea of the RRN is to help expand our work. If the RRN raises funds and chooses to spend some of it to promote child welfare, its funding committee will, more than likely, choose Arobanam Children Fund to take on such projects.



The RRN concept is a sound one. We must come together as community to provide relief work more efficiently and to strengthen the help our people receive back home.

Already there are external forces dividing the unity of the Diaspora and working to keep it apart. We must not fall into that trap. Let us unite and achieve our goal together

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