

**CIVIL  
PROTECTION  
DEPARTMENT**

Agreements n.  
**34 and 51**

District  
**Galle**

Cost  
**1,750,403.03 Euros**

Duration  
**March '05 - November '06**

The cost indicated  
above refers to the three  
schools completed with  
this project.



**1 THE AKURALA SCHOOL**

Kahawa is one of the many little towns lacking a centre that can be found along the way, where some houses belong to the municipality but the rest of the people live in small houses scattered among the trees in a labyrinth of paths and lanes heading inland from the coast. One needs to patiently follow the one road that is slightly wider than the others for about a kilometre before arriving at the school, built in an open area beyond the rather run-down Buddhist temple on the left. The Akurala school is the smallest one built by the Department in the area, but it seems huge compared to the rest of the buildings one passes to reach it, and the little unfinished houses lined up along the perimeter wall, and the other houses in the vicinity, some occupied and some under construction, that make one think there may someday be a settlement of some size. It stands on a plot donated by a man who survived the tsunami but lost his wife and a son who attended the old school. That is why Akurala is dedicated to the dead boy, A.D. Priyanjaya De Silva and his mother, K. D. Wijethilaka. Past the gate, one enters the long, narrow courtyard of a rectangular complex, accessed through a portico on the ground floor of the largest building. This structure, which spreads over three sides of the courtyard, contains the classrooms and offices. The courtyard rectangle is closed on the left by two other buildings, one yellow with three floors in back and one red, housing other classrooms, restrooms and the Assembly Hall. The school takes boys and girls in the first and second education cycles – five years for the first cycle, six for the second – and was planned and constructed to be used by a minimum of 410 students. At the back of the complex, in a corner between the perimeter wall and the yellow building, there is a very small playground: an iron structure to climb on, a swing and a teeter-totter. The games are painted white, red and green, the only sign, together with the plaque affixed at the entrance, near the Principal’s office, to remind people that this school in the forest, on the lowlands that had to be reclaimed and



solidified to be able to build and to avoid future flooding, was constructed with the resources and commitment of people from Italy. For the rest, in the middle of the courtyard, the Sri Lankan Red Cross, using U.S. money, built a fountain, and then decorated the most visible wall of the Assembly Hall with a mural; finally, it placed a large sign at the entrance

indicating that the school is a training centre for teachers who have to deal with children who were victims of the tsunami. In the end, this is a good thing; it is another way used by the people who live in this remote place to take possession of the gift they received.

## 2 THE JINARATHNA SCHOOL

Since the tsunami, the boys and girls of Telwatta, one of the areas where the wave caused the most victims and damage on the south coast, had been the guests of the Buddhist



monk who took them into the buildings near the temple, on the hill overlooking it. Now his hosting duties have come to an end, and his blessing accompanied the start of activities at the new school. The Jinarathna complex consists of a cluster of buildings, distributed as always around an inner courtyard. Past the gate, you find yourself between two

three-storey buildings. The one on the right, painted a pale pink, houses the principal's office and the administrative offices: the principal and his associates can monitor the courtyard and entrance from the windows of their rooms. Classrooms start on the second floor. In the building on the left, painted light blue, the ground floor is completely taken up by a large meeting room, with a stage for shows, and restrooms. Smaller buildings are located on both sides. One is the result of the remodelling of a classroom in the old school, which reproduces in brick the typical structure of so many schools in Sri Lanka, simple huts with two walled short sides, and the long sides, protected by grating, open to the surrounding space. At Jinarathna, the buildings have tile roofs, but around the island one most often sees roofs in sheet metal or Eternit. Across the way, on a two-storey building painted sky blue, where the old school's library was rebuilt, there is a wavy blue line at the level of the second-floor windows: approaching, one reads a sign in a corner recalling that this was the height reached by the tsunami wave. The courtyard in back ends in a four-storey building, entirely for classrooms. The school provides both primary and secondary classes as well as two final classes that convey a specialised diploma. In all, the complex hosts 410 students entrusted to the care of 22 teachers, but the buildings built by the Department can accommodate twice those numbers. The principal also teaches, which does not happen often in other schools around the country, and when one

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hears him talk it is apparent how much he thinks of the school as his. He proudly shows off the computer room and library which already contains 4,645 volumes catalogued in two large files. And he is very passionate when talking about the school, and confident about what it can do for the children who in many cases lost more than one family member to the tsunami. He displays the same responsible and open look that could be seen in the eyes of the monk when he decided that Buddha would not be too bothered in his eternal meditation by the presence of hundreds of little pupils in his temple precincts.



**3 THE THOTAGAMUWA SCHOOL**

The Thotagamuwa school in Hikkaduwa is only about fifty meters from the state road that heads towards Galle: passing by, one sees a large blue building on the left, with a few nicely kept little houses in front of it. If you go to the gate and ask to see inside – which they will grant you without any problems, because the people here are happy to show off the school – you need only walk a few paces on the short side of the blue building to find yourself in the middle of a rainbow of buildings distributed around a large courtyard. On the left, yellow, the meeting room and the principal's offices. Farther to the left, six little green buildings, arranged corner to corner, raised about a meter up off the ground – some ten steps in all, just enough to give families the peace of mind and security destroyed by the sea on December 26 – contain the same number of primary-cycle classrooms. Ahead are three large columned pavilions, open on four sides around a single central room; this is the lunch area. Off to the side on opposite sides of the courtyard, near the perimeter wall, two bright-red buildings house the restrooms. On the right you see that the blue building you saw first is in fact a large L-shaped two-storey building, with a forepart that is also deep blue, which houses the secondary-cycle classrooms, the library, computer room, a science lab and a "domestic sciences" lab. Peeking through the windows, you see tables, chairs, drawings hung on the walls, kitchen equipment and a three-burner gas stove, which is sufficient to explain the crux of the education imparted only to the school's girls.

The complex, big enough for up to 410 students, has a festive air; you feel it is lived in,

cared for and loved: on the perimeter wall, large, colourful designs done by the kids are starting to appear: on the wall of one of the green classrooms there is a large mural with scenes of hope, work, and festivals; flower-filled gardens surround the buildings, the lawn is crisscrossed by gravel and sand pathways, the plants are starting to grow up over the supports that protected them. Then there is the tiny temple with the Buddha in the lotus position, having escaped the tsunami's fury and been restored with care. On the wall, a stone tablet and the photo of a child, perhaps a classmate who did not take his seat among the others. But there is no sadness even in this tiny monument to friendship. Little by little, the tsunami has stopped being a nightmare and is becoming a memory. Soon it will be only a memory, handed down from class to class by the cheerful pupils of Thotagamuwa.

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Agreements n.  
**34 and 51**



COMITATO DI  
COORDINAMENTO  
DELLE  
ORGANIZZAZIONI  
PER IL SERVIZIO  
VOLONTARIO

Agreements n.

**6 and 57**

District

**Galle**

Cost

**881,700.00 Euros**

Duration

**January '05 - November '06**



**4 THE COSV AND HOUSES AT HIKKADUWA**

The COSV, a longstanding NGO headquartered in Milan, was also the Department's partner in Sri Lanka, with two projects, one in the south and the other in the northeast. On the south coast, COSV responded in the area of Hikkaduwa, in eight of the many tiny villages along the coast that constitute the scattered periphery of this small town, which was hit hard by the tidal wave. In the early months, COSV dedicated itself to building 90 temporary shelters, small houses made of light materials to provide a more solid refuge to the families housed in the tent camps; later, when the emergency had passed, conditions made it possible to proceed to build 87 permanent shelters, real small masonry houses equipped with electricity and water from wells, one per house. Together with the houses, the families were given the minimum equipment and furnishings needed to resume domestic life.



## 5 THE CISP AND HEALTH FACILITIES

The Health Post is a local facility for the entire Division of Hikkaduwa: it coordinates the health-care activities performed by the peripheral health centres (preventive medicine, public health, epidemiological monitoring, outpatient care) and by the network of mother-child clinics, public facilities where health care is provided, normally by a professional obstetrician, to pregnant women and new mothers, pre-partum and post-natal courses are held, and a family planning consulting service is offered. These are generally small buildings, with a waiting room, restrooms and an outpatient clinic.

The Health Post headquarters and the mother-child clinics, located in various villages along the coast, were damaged by the tsunami and by the subsequent stagnant salt water. The local authorities immediately pointed up the need to return these public health facilities to operating condition. The CISP carried out a project on the two Health Post buildings in Hikkaduwa, which were completely restored and equipped, and restored and put back in operation eight mother-child clinics in the area, two of them located in the area bordering on Welgama, in Talaramba and Peelana.



## COMITATO INTERNAZIONALE PER LO SVILUPPO DEI POPOLI

Agreement n.

**8**

District

**Galle, Matara**

Cost

**449,125.25 Euros**

Duration

**February '05 - December '05**



**COMITATO  
INTERNAZIONALE  
PER LO SVILUPPO  
DEI POPOLI**

Agreement n.

**9**

District

**Galle**

Cost

**548,927.40 Euros**

Duration

**January '05 - December '05**



**6 THE CISP AT HIKKADUWA**

The CISP's activity in the Hikkaduwa area began quickly, in early January 2005, with emergency responses like the cleaning and restoration of three rainwater channels, reconstruction and return to operation of 446 latrines, the cleaning of 434 wells, and the reactivation of 11 public fountains to restore the essential gift of water to the tsunami's victims. Then, in accord with the local community, which together with the NGO set the criteria for identifying beneficiaries, the CISP decided to devote itself to the work of recovering and completing 130 homes, some damaged by the tsunami, some already rebuilt by other international agencies but left incomplete without kitchens, bathrooms, lighting – because they ran out of funds.



**7 INCONTRO FRA I POPOLI AT WELLAWATTE**

Roberto Nichele and Rosemary Fabian were there, a few kilometres from Unawatuna, on December 26, 2004, vacationing tourists like others who experienced the tsunami firsthand. Once back in Italy, the Nicheles felt they ought to do something for the residents of the island who survived the disaster along with them, since the tsunami had spared their lives while sweeping away homes, boats, jobs, everything. In Italy they stayed just long enough to make contact with the NGO Incontro Fra i Popoli, collect the first aid and materials and set off for Wellawatte, a fishing village reduced to a pile of rubble near Hikkaduwa. There they first distributed the aid brought from Italy, then they set up a reconstruction programme with the local families that became part of the projects funded by the Department, enabling the NGO to complete its work with the economic resources and technical assistance provided by the Mission Structure in Colombo. The result: 43 wells decontaminated in the first few weeks, a 400 meter canal freed of debris and put back into service, 60 new houses, 37 restored homes, 8 fishing boats provided, and 45 family businesses aided for the resumption of village life. Wandering around the unpaved streets of Wellawatte, you come to a clearing in the lush vegetation. There the residents have built a sort of little monument dedicated to the Nichele family and the aid they received from Italy.

**INCONTRO  
FRA I POPOLI**

Agreements n.

**21 and 50**

District

**Galle**

Cost

**495,282.32 Euros**

Duration

**January '05 - December '05**

**ALISEI**

Agreement n.

**15**

District

**Galle**

Cost

**587,351.95 Euros**

Duration

**February '05 - October '05**



**8 ALISEI AND THE MAHAMODARA TEACHING HOSPITAL OF GALLE**

The Mahamodara Teaching Hospital of Galle is a large hospital complex with some 400 beds; it serves as the primary facility for all of southern Sri Lanka in terms of maternal and child health specialisations. It trains nurses, obstetricians, gynaecologists and paediatricians, with more than 800 students every year.

The tsunami of December 26 damaged the hospital, bringing down the perimeter wall on the ocean side, flooding the wards and destroying the equipment on the ground and first floors. Adding to the damage, the subsequent stagnating water made much of the structure completely unusable.

Restoring function to the Mahamodara complex, for that part dedicated to the wards that provide specialist maternity and gynaecological services for the area, was identified by the authorities as an absolute priority.

Alisei took charge of this, immediately undertaking the reconstruction work on eight of the hospital's wards: roof repair, remaking of the ceilings and electrical systems, installation of new fans, overhaul of the floors and painting of the walls, restrooms, installation of new fixtures with mosquito screens, restoration of the open walkways connecting the various wards.

The restored areas were equipped and furnished: 200 beds with mattresses and sheets, plus a long list of medical and health-care equipment for outpatients, the delivery room and the recovery wards.

The project ended with restoration of the perimeter wall and reconstruction of the section knocked down by the tsunami. Although much of the complex, already unused prior to the tsunami, is still empty and awaiting future work, the project managed as part of the Department's programme at Mahamodara enabled the hospital to resume all its activities: one need only cross the threshold and follow the various covered walkways connecting the various wards – including the new first-floor access ramp made by Alisei – to find nurses hustling about quietly and smilingly, the patient gaze of an expectant mother, family groups coming to take home the new mother and her newborn child just released from the crowded wards that welcome the little ones and their mothers two by two.



## 9 ALISEI IN THE GALLE AND MATARA DISTRICTS

Alisei, the NGO that we encountered already for rehabilitation of the Mahamodara hospital, also got involved in a second project, for the rehabilitation, restoration and improvement of many houses damaged by the tsunami in some divisions of Galle District indicated by the local authorities: Katugoda, Megalle, Thalapitya and Dewata, near Unawatuna. In these areas, Alisei immediately conducted reclamation efforts in urban areas invaded by debris and on three kilometres of drainage canals, the cleaning and reopening of 26 wells implemented by NGO personnel assisted by residents of the affected areas, including suitable equipment and tools. Then Alisei took charge of the reconstruction of hookups to the water system in buildings deemed recoverable, doing 42 for private beneficiaries and 128 for families previously served by the public water system. In 26 houses away from the water system, Alisei installed tanks to collect rainwater to improve availability for the resident families. Finally, reconstruction work was begun on 403 houses identified jointly with the local authorities. As these activities were getting under way, a series of liquidity problems for the head office in Italy meant that Alisei was unable to complete the work, finishing 88 houses but leaving the work started on others in various stages of completion. The work of restoring these unfinished houses was then continued by the residents themselves; in terms of accounting, the relationship with the Department was interrupted when the NGO announced it was unable to complete the project.



## ALISEI

Agreement n.

**16**

District

**Galle, Matara**

Cost

**185,544.33 Euros**

Duration

**February '05 - October '06**



**DIPARTIMENTO DEI  
VIGILI DEL FUOCO,  
DEL SOCCORSO  
PUBBLICO  
E DELLA DIFESA  
CIVILE**

Agreement n.  
**26**

District  
**Galle, Matara**

Cost  
**525,411.47 Euros**

Duration  
**March '05 - February '07**



**10 FIREFIGHTERS BARRACKS AT GALLE AND MATARA**



In the intense initial emergency phase, the firefighters were the first components of the National Civil Protection Service to take part in the response teams that left the day after the tsunami to provide assistance and rescue services in the stricken areas. Their commitment in the field beginning in the days just after the tsunami was then extended over time with a project to reinforce the facilities of the local firefighters, approved by the Department as part of the reconstruction efforts to be carried out in the country. In fact, along with the high number of victims and the widespread devastation of buildings and infrastructure, the tsunami

had exposed the extreme weakness of the prevention and rescue facilities in a country subject to various types of natural calamities on a fairly frequent basis. Based on this premise, the Firefighters Department directed part of its efforts at the construction of two firefighters barracks, in Galle and Matara in the southern part of the country, both of which were subsequently provided with lifesaving and rescue equipment: furnishings, uniforms, computers, generators, etc. The first barracks, located in the immediate vicinity of the city's main street, Galle Road, consists of two two-storey buildings that face a large asphalt parking area for vehicles, bordered by kerbs and lawns. A fire door on the second floor isolates the rooms serving as garage from the dormitories. The second barracks, in Matara, is also located in the town centre, close to the city hall, and consists of two communicating buildings with an adjacent parking lot. The project also called for a 30-day training course for 16 firefighters who were part of the teaching staff at the Colombo command. This course, focusing on the main rescue and response techniques, was held in Rome at the Operations Training School of the Montelibretti National Firefighters Corps.



**DIPARTIMENTO DEI  
VIGILI DEL FUOCO,  
DEL SOCCORSO  
PUBBLICO  
E DELLA DIFESA  
CIVILE**

Agreement n.

**26**



**MOVIMENTO  
E AZIONE DEI  
GESUITI ITALIANI  
PER LO SVILUPPO**

Agreement n.

**3**

District

**Galle, Trincomalee**

Cost

**1,330,934.88 Euros**

Duration

**January '05 - September '06**



**III THE MAGIS AT GALLE AND TRINCOMALEE**

The Magis is the Italian NGO ran by the Jesuits. This link enabled the Magis to operate immediately after the tsunami in two different areas of the country where the Jesuits were present historically: in the south around the city of Galle and in the northeast in the difficult Trincomalee area. Making use of the network of relationships established by the Jesuits in these areas with the communities of all the regions present on the island, the Magis worked in two different sectors, responding to the emerging needs of the families hit by the tsunami: in the first few weeks, it distributed food and urgently needed goods; helped fishermen resume their activity, purchasing and distributing 38 canoes, 17 motors and 46 fishing kits; provided aid to craftsmen and small businessmen; and distributed 88 sewing machines to as many women. Over time, the main needs – expressed by local families and communities – that the Magis took charge of were education and housing. The NGO assisted dozens of children of extremely poor families with scholarships, provided psycho-social assistance, organised training courses for teachers to help them manage the post-tsunami trauma of their young students, and promoted events in schools with drawing and painting competitions. The final area of the project run by the Magis involved construction: Near Galle, in Sinhalese or Muslim minority villages, the NGO built 56 new houses and restored 79, in addition to making the offices of four fishing cooperatives in the Galle area usable by restoring them and equipping them with new machinery. In Trincomalee, where the civil war made advisable to reduce to a minimum the presence of Italian personnel beginning in summer 2006, 31 houses were restored, and the electricity and water hookups were created from scratch or redone by connecting with existing aqueducts or with wells or hand pumps for houses too far from the available water system. The main beneficiaries in this area were Tamil and Muslim population. At the end of 2005, six schools in the Trincomalee area, Muslim, Tamil and Sinhalese, participated together in “Art Competition 2005”, which involved the students in a drawing competition. The best drawings were taken to Italy and shown in more than 30 Italian cities in an exhibition called “The Wave and Hope” arranged by the Magis together with the Department, which enabled thousands of Italian elementary and middle school kids to think about the tragedy and the dramatic and difficult return to life and openness towards the future.

## 12 ANPAS AT WALAHWANDUWA

ANPAS, the National Civil Protection Association, built 27 one-storey houses with indoor kitchen and outdoor toilets in Walahwanduwa, a village that stands on a hill just off the coastal road after the city of Galle. The site, which was indicated to ANPAS by the local authorities, hosts homeless families who previously lived along the coast on a plot of land next to which other houses are being built at the initiative of various international donors and agencies. Like other communities that sprang up from nothing after the tsunami, this one, which involved ANPAS assisted in its relations with the local authorities and population by a Sri Lankan NGO headquartered in Galle, had many problems to be resolved. Up until a year ago, Walahanduwa was just barren land, the tip of a hill that had over time been home first to the forest and then to coconut plantations. They started from scratch, initially building the access road and then proceeding with development of the area, making the water and electricity hookups, with the usual constant dealings with the many local authorities interested in the creation of the new village. Heavy rains came as the foundations for the houses had just been laid, demonstrating that further consolidation work was required before they could proceed. With support from the Department, which took over direct management of the works, containment walls were built to protect each building. The project was successfully completed in August 2007, when a public handover ceremony accompanied the signing of the official ownership documents and the families moved into their new homes. ANPAS also built two social centres, one at Walahwanduwa and the other in the village of Katugoda, and carried out efforts on behalf of local communities for resumption of economic and family life, the restoration of suitable health/sanitary conditions, assistance and support for the youngest children of the families struck by the tsunami.



## ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE PUBBLICHE ASSISTENZE

Agreements n.

**40 and 64**

District

**Galle**

Cost

**549,219.52 Euros**

Duration

**May '05 - August '07**



**GRUPPO UMANA  
SOLIDARIETÀ  
GUIDO PULETTI**

Agreement n.  
**22**

District  
**Matara**

Cost  
**1,097,786.15 Euros**

Duration  
**April '05 - September '06**



**13 GUS IN THE MATARA DISTRICT**

This NGO, which was in Sri Lanka one week after the tsunami, decided to work on behalf of small fishing communities along the beach: one at Wellaaddara, the other at Jayasavurupura, near Weligama. Both villages were completely destroyed by the tsunami, and the families of the survivors were housed in reception centres and tent camps. That was the beginning of relations with the two communities, which initially were assisted with improvised shelters and then helped to return to a stable and welcoming home. At Jayasavurupura, GUS's activity led to the construction of 18 two-storey houses, complete with connections to the sewerage system, and the distribution of fishing boats and equipment for the families. For the other community, which was living right on the beach, the local authorities chose an area three kilometres from the sea in Monrovia. At this new site, GUS built 50 single-family one-storey homes, each equipped with outdoor kitchen, as is customary in the area. The nature of the land made available to the homeless by the local authorities, located in a rugged area, made consolidation work necessary to protect the homes and systematise rainwater runoff. Together with the homes built by GUS with funds from the Department, which were assigned to very poor families, several organisations from other countries built new houses: Monrovia is on its way to becoming a substantial community.



**14 MOVIMONDO AT MATARA AND WELIGAMA**

This NGO's work in Matara began right after the tsunami and, like many other projects, followed a sequence closely associated with the needs of the stricken populations. Initially, the NGO concentrated its efforts on the most urgent needs: emptying and restoration of 806 septic tanks, rehabilitation (221) and construction (120) of toilets, support for municipalities in waste disposal, rehabilitation of 29 damaged homes, restoration and expansion of another 17, and rehabilitation of the Weligama market area. Then it was time to build 24 new houses, prepare or bring up to standard the electrical systems of the restored houses, see to hookups with the water system or the drilling of wells for more isolated homes, and create a new drainage system for the market area.

**MOVIMONDO**

Agreements n.

**11 and 58**

District

**Matara**

Cost

**792,856.90 Euros**

Duration

**January '05 - November '06**

**CIVIL  
PROTECTION  
DEPARTMENT**

Agreement n.

**35**

District

**Matara**

Cost

**620,265.75 Euros**

Duration

**December '05 - October '06**



**15 MATARA HOSPITAL**

The Matara hospital, a large facility with 900-plus beds, is the main health-care centre for all of the southern part of the island. Located in the city centre, it was not damaged by the tsunami, which stopped closer to the coast, but it was precisely for this reason that it had to deal after the tsunami with a dizzying increase in the demand for medical care, due to the unexpected blockage of all of the lesser facilities throughout the region which were destroyed or severely damaged.

For this reason the Department, in agreement with the Health Ministry and hospital administration, which actively followed the work in all phases, reinforced the complex, building a three-storey building at the entrance to the hospital area housing the new first aid unit, with an attached operating room, cast room, six specialist outpatient clinics and the blood bank. The building also features various bed units with men's and women's wards, for a total of 27 beds and two labs.

The new facility was built in place of an old building used to store drugs, which was demolished and rebuilt according to more functional criteria in an area inside the hospital complex. The new first aid unit was the only work done by the Department in Sri

Lanka that had to come to terms with the cultural properties authorities, who were interested in protecting and respecting the remains of an old Portuguese wall that stands next to the current outer walls. The project, carried out in the obviously difficult situation of a construction site open at the entrance to a heavily attended health-care facility that never stopped operating, was successfully completed: both the health authorities and the cultural properties office declared themselves very satisfied with the work.



**16 ISCOS CISL AT HAMBANTOTA**

ISCOS CISL carried out a project aimed at reviving the fishing industry in the southern part of the country, devoting itself to rehabilitating occupational training facilities and boosting the training itself. The synergy established with NIFNE – the National Institute for Fishing and Nautical Engineering – made it possible in Tangalle to restore the Institute’s headquarters, a major training centre for young people from all over the Southern Province. The tree buildings that make up the boarding school underwent minor remodelling and additional works needed to provide more complex courses, equipped with furniture, technical and computer tools and two vehicles, for the mobility needs of the centre and its students. The project also involved the repair of three school ships used by the NIFNE – the Trincomalee, the Batticaloa and the Kaits Mauru – which were refloated, rehabilitated and again made serviceable for navigation. With regard to training, some 800 young people attended the many free courses offered by ISCOS, both away and at the rehabilitated facilities, on nautical topics and fishing-related activities.


**ISTITUTO  
SINDACALE PER  
LA COOPERAZIONE  
ALLO SVILUPPO - CISL**

Agreement n.

**23 and 62**

District

**Hambantota**

Cost

**802,989.56 Euros**

Duration

**March '05 - November '06**
