



100 Days Later...

Area Map - The North Andaman Coast



The Villages and Areas Serviced by NATR

1. Laem Naew
2. Baan Talae Nok
3. Had Sai Kaew
4. Hat Praphat
5. Tung Nang Dam
6. Kuraburi
7. Tung La Ong
8. Bak Jok
9. Koh Ra
10. Golden Buddha Beach Resort
11. Tapa Yoi
12. Tung Dap

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NATR - The beginning

On 26 December 2004, the world changed—forever. The tsunami that hit the Andaman coast in the south of Thailand caused devastating losses and touched many lives. Some people might have read about it, and moved it to the back of their minds. Others might have been fortunate enough to live through it and remember—remember, because they are still living it. Still picking up the pieces of what they lost, and looking for ways to put it all back together again. The survivors' stories are beyond belief. The losses are tragic, and yet, there is still hope and they still smile. And it is because of this hope we are able to reach out to each other, find the strength to move on, and adapt to the change. And it is from this change that caring, supportive, community-driven organizations such as **North Andaman Tsunami Relief** are formed.

The lack of any tsunami warning system resulted in an enormous death toll and the destruction of many coastal communities and tourist resorts. In Thailand, the islands of the North Andaman Sea and adjacent coastal areas were severely impacted, causing widespread devastation of many communities. The villagers not only lost loved ones and homes, but almost all of their fishing boats and means of income. One of the largest islands in this area, Koh Phra Thong, consisted of the three villages of Tapa Yoi, Bak Jok, and Tung Dap, as well as the Golden Buddha Beach ecolodge. Of these, only Tapa Yoi was spared by the wave. Other severely affected villages in the area include Ban Talae Nok, Tung Nam Dam, Laem Naew, Hat Praphat, Had Sai Kaew, Koh Ra, and the Moken (Sea Gypsy) villages of the Surin Islands. Several organizations came to Thailand to provide aid to the affected areas, however, few of them actually made it to the North Andaman. That is where **NATR** stepped in.

It is important when working for or with an organization to know what it stands for, where it came from, how it began. This is where the story of **NATR** needs to be told. The one of Bodhi Garrett and his vision to help the people he saw in need. The one about a young marketing director at a small eco-resort on the island of Koh Phra Thong in the North Andaman Sea who believed that he could make a difference, and actually did!

In no time at all, Bodhi was approached by numerous individuals offering their funds and services to help with the clean up and restoration of the island villages and the resort. Despite suffering their own personal and tragic losses, they felt that they were in a unique position to aid the local communities.

So Bodhi (who happened to be in the United States at the time) came back to the area and began reaching out to his friends, both near and far. As a result of his time living on Koh Phra Thong and Ban Talae Nok, Bodhi's desire to serve the people he had come to love and respect, in concert with the resources offered by others who shared his compassion, led him to the mainland town of Kuraburi. There, Bodhi, and a small, but dedicated core group of volunteers—working with a mobile phone, a borrowed computer, and tsunami-salvaged furniture—started **North Andaman Tsunami Relief**.

NATR- 100 Days Later

Last night, on 28 March, 2005 (almost 100 days after the tsunami) all 13 members of our staff were gathered in our small office until 3 am. We often work late, but this was unusual. I was woken out of my bed when one of our translators came knocking on the door announcing another earthquake that hit almost exactly the same area. This must be a nightmare, I thought, as I stammered out of my bed and into the office. But then I saw the news and slowly woke up to the stark realization that it was all really happening. All of the villagers we had been helping were frightened another giant wave was on the way. And frankly, so were we. As the local communities fled their homes and shelters for higher ground, we all thought and believed that once again Mother Nature would show her strength. Yet we remained calm and focused and managed to reach out to each other in the face of yet another disaster. Thankfully, this one never came.

In the morning, I woke up thinking it was all a dream—we were back in the office business as usual. But it wasn't a dream and this is not business as usual. This is compassion, and love, and caring for all human beings. Doing all that we can to be there for one another in times of need. Understanding we are all here on this planet together affecting one another for however long that may be?

I had met Bodhi at Golden Buddha Beach when I was traveling through Thailand in December. Luckily I had traveled north the day before the tsunami hit, so unlike many, I lost nothing. I flew back to my home in California, attempted to go about my own business as usual, and not even three weeks later, got on a plane and came back. That was almost three months ago now and each day moves faster than the last.

When I arrived at the office in Kuraburi, I really had no idea what was in store. I actually thought I was going to be stationed on the island of Phra Tong to clean up Golden Buddha Beach Resort for a few weeks and then I would return home again. Most of the volunteers at NATR probably expected a similar experience. Drawn here for different reasons, to stay an indefinite amount of time, to do whatever we can to help.

Over the last 100 days, NATR has grown from a staff of one to a dedicated cadre of thirteen volunteers and Thai staff. In addition, NATR has gone from addressing the immediate needs of tsunami-affected families to administering over thirty community-driven programs across ten villages. These programs, which began for the short term, have grown into long term commitments with the villagers and the ever rotating staff has morphed into a tight-knit family.

Focus

By working closely with the tsunami-affected peoples, NATR is developing both short- and long-term initiatives that will enable self-sufficiency. Long-time relationships between NATR staff and the local population have provided the foundation for our ability to move quickly into the villages and ingratiate ourselves with their displaced inhabitants. Ultimately, NATR hopes to empower the local communities through a continuous cycle of needs assessment and project developments that meet those needs in a way that will allow them to retain autonomy.

NATR believes in close collaboration with the villagers in order to provide immediate relief that enables productive long-term development and is governed by the following guidelines in determining the viability of current and future projects:

Assessment

- Engage in constant and continuous assessment that encourages input from all members of the village community in order to determine need.

- Retain the flexibility that will allow us to serve the evolving needs of villagers on an immediate basis, and fill gaps left by the highly-structured efforts of government and large aid groups.

Coordination and Cooperation

- Work with all stakeholders, including government agencies and non-governmental relief groups to promote effective, non-redundant aid in the villages. To this end **NATR** has developed a database that is used to track aid dispersal at the individual level as well as coordinate other aid agencies and their programs.
- **NATR** believes in open communication and is committed to sharing resources with all involved parties to promote the best possible solutions for villagers.
- Utilize local resources to invigorate the severely impacted economy.

Differentiated Assistance to Coastal Communities

- Focus on the varied needs of different groups, including women, resort workers, fishermen, the Moken (Sea Gypsies), Burmese immigrants, and children.
- Implement immediate and longer-term projects that encourage community members to play a key role in the reconstruction of their villages.
- Identify where gaps exist in the ever-evolving relief effort, and fill those gaps with targeted projects that are implemented quickly and without bureaucratic delay.

Livelihood

- Work with families of those that have lost their livelihoods.
- Assist with repair and replacement of long tail boats and fishing gear.
- Explore and provide economic alternatives to fishing.

Education

- Provide educational materials, books, supplies, and temporary teachers for education while schools are being rebuilt.
- Provide immediate scholarships for all children in tsunami affected villages and continuing scholarships for families that are unable to afford to send their children to school.

The Database

While many groups are engaging in tsunami-related aid activity in the Northern Andaman area, there has been no thorough effort to document and centralize information about local needs or aid activities. Thanks to one of our incredibly talented volunteers, **NATR** has developed an extensive database to track project goals, associated costs, all groups operating in a particular village, and continual field reports. This powerful information tool allows **NATR** not only to track its own efforts, but also track what agencies are providing aid to which communities, what kind of aid is being provided, and whether or not any overlap is apparent. The database is a resource for those interested in helping with efforts in the region, and is being used to channel further assistance to the areas in the most efficient way possible. Already, the Peace Corps and a nationwide network of tsunami relief groups are utilizing our database, and several independent donors have been connected with communities in need. By collating existing knowledge in a single place, the database saves time and money, and reduces duplication of relief efforts. Lastly, the database will soon be used to automatically update our website.



Jao and his boat

Jao's Story

Jao stood in the shade of the temporary housing and watched as the first delivery of the promised food truck approached. His sun-darkened skin and calloused hands told the story of a sea gypsy employed, as most are, in the fishing trade. Like everyone else in the village of Bak Jok, Jao's way of life had been washed away as the Indian Ocean surged beyond its normal boundaries and laid waste to the lives that flank its shores. The tsunami had taken much from everyone and left only a chaotic, tenuous existence for those who survived. At first, there was only the desperate need for information about loved ones. Over time, as the magnitude of their losses became clearer, the need to know was supplanted by the need to seek out the basics for survival and to rebuild some semblance of normalcy.

Within weeks of the tsunami, five-hundred baht (about \$11) in immediate aid had been disbursed by **NATR** to Jao, his wife, and the rest of the inhabitants of the decimated village of Bak Jok. Although a pittance by most standards, the money had allowed his family to meet their most immediate need: food. The food delivery and five-hundred baht assistance to supplement the delivery would prove a harbinger of things to come.

Jao glanced over at his wife Juree and a smile broadened his weathered features—the promise had been kept, the food would be delivered. This was the second time the aid agency had helped to mitigate the suffering and devastation visited upon Bak Jok and Jao was beginning to feel more secure in that his family would not be abandoned and left to wander the shores of the Andaman coast clutching only their memories of a life gone.

Jao's worn hands not only evidenced his previous life as a fisherman, but also belied a master craftsman's talent for a dying craft. During one of the subsequent food deliveries, the Moken (Sea Gypsy) people of Bak Jok were asked for ideas that could lead to future financial independence. Jao sensed his opportunity to apply his craft and perhaps help improve the quality of life in his village, "I know how to make model boats...I used to sell them."

"How many people can make them?"

"I'm the only one, but I can teach others, I only need supplies," replied Jao.

Soon, a cottage industry was given life and a market was developed for the masterly works from Jao's skillful hands. Crushed by the loss of most of their fishing boats, many villagers now find employment under Jao's tutelage. Although slow at first, the ensuing weeks brought improved proficiency and soon many of Jao's students were producing boats on par with their teacher's.

While creating the model boats has begun to provide Jao and his apprentices with an alternative source of income, the need for rebuilding their fishing capabilities is still the village's primary concern. Another meeting with the aid group would help to realize this need and within days, supplies necessary to build fifty squid traps per family would be delivered.

Jao's story highlights the spectrum and scope of aid that **North Andaman Tsunami Relief** provides. Jao and other villagers like him have enabled us to serve his community. Through seeking out and respecting local voices, and with the help of our numerous supporters, we are able to make a difference in peoples' lives.

The Villages and Areas Serviced by NATR

After such a life-shattering event, it would be difficult to expect that people could just return to their original way of life. Everyone's world view changes and this had to be taken into account with any development initiative. **NATR**, therefore, is committed to supporting projects that give villagers choices about when or even whether to return to fishing as a way of life. The notion of helping people return to a "pre-tsunami way of life" sounds quaint, but ignores the fact that even before the tsunami these communities were striving to improve their quality of life.

Summarized here is a list of projects that are in the process of making a positive impact in the different villages. Our future projects aim to keep that momentum going and to expand into areas that make sense. We see education, resource conservation, and community center construction as some of the major long-term areas needing investment.

As villagers begin to move out of the temporary shelters and into permanent housing, it will be important to set aside resources for the emergence of unforeseeable needs, such as: nets, fresh food, household items, short-term labor, livestock, further boat repair, etc. **NATR** recognizes this need, and will be here to support the villagers.

Laem Naew

This is a very small fishing community set deep in the mangroves accessible only by boat—forty-five minutes from the nearest road or village. It has 30 homes and 30 to 35 families. Somehow, the homes survived the tsunami, and are still standing, but a majority of boats and fishing equipment in the village were destroyed. Fortunately, no one was killed because someone saw the wave coming and everyone had time to get to higher ground. However, there were five members of the village that were in another village at the time of the tsunami that did not survive. The school is intact because it was on a hill; however, it is at risk of being washed out by a landslide directly behind it. The villagers of Laem Naew are fortunate to still have their homes, but without many of their boats and traps, their livelihood has been severely affected.

- **Livestock Replacement Project**



The Thai government has agreed to compensate for livestock, but will not pay for at least six months. All 30 households in Laem Naew owned chickens. Some goats and water buffalo survived, but most of the chickens died in the tsunami. Focus groups have indicated that villagers want local variety chickens from Ranong, not factory-bred chickens from Takua Pa. Since there were none left in Ranong, the chickens had to be sourced from the surrounding villages that did not suffer. Sourced, meaning two of the **NATR** staff had to actually go out and chase down the 120 chickens which were then put in nets and delivered.

- **Fish and Crab Net Repair**

There are two main types of nets used by the fishermen: the *lob pla kaew* (fish trap) and the *ooan poo* (crab net). The fishermen usually need a minimum of one set of crab traps per boat. **NATR** immediately provided crab traps for 24 families and later supplied all the necessary fishing equipment for these families to assemble the fish traps. Once the fish are caught, they are put in a farm where they can grow to a marketable size. A resumption of fishing activities provides villagers a more stable diet, and generates income from the sale of the seafood. In the long term it will allow the community to repay debts owed to local middlemen while additional projects enabling financial independence are implemented.

- **Boat Repair and Replacement Program**



Even though all of the homes were left standing, most of the 29 boats were damaged, including several which were completely destroyed. These long tail boats are not only a means of transportation for the villagers, but their main source of livelihood on the sea. Only two families with workable boats are currently fishing while the others are utilizing wood and tools provided by **NATR** to repair their boats. We have purchased 5 new engines and have

provided the parts to repair 16 more.

- **School Improvement /Landslide Prevention Program**

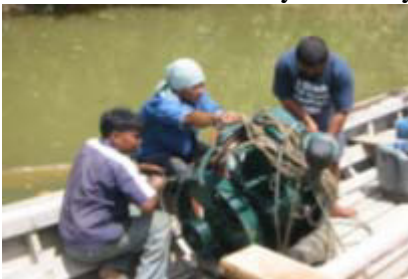
Because the small school in the village of Laem Naew was located on the hillside and is slightly elevated off the ground, it did not suffer any damage from the tsunami. However, with the heavy rains last year the school nearly suffered severe damage caused by a landslide directly behind it. With an environmental restoration expert from Phuket and a group of volunteers from California, we have stabilized the earth behind the school to prevent damage if another landslide should happen in the future. We have also purchased a brand new boat for the school to use for transportation to and from the mainland.

- **Educational Scholarship Program**

The goal of the educational scholarship is to provide funding for 16 children whose families can no longer support them for studies out of village. After collecting the letters and photos from each student, discussing the program with the families, and meeting with the teacher who will supervise, **NATR** agreed to pay each student's expenses for one year. The scholarship program is two-fold. The first phase supplied two months of emergency funding for each child to finish their studies from this past year. Phase two will provide the funding for the new school year beginning in May, 2005.

NATR is also supporting 5 women to study outside of the village. Two of these women will study Public Administration and Primary Education at universities with the intention of returning to the community to utilize their degrees. The other 3 women will be continuing their high school education, while at the same time maintaining their jobs in the village.

- **Generator- Electricity Delivery**



The villagers of Laem Naew were in need of a new generator even before the tsunami hit. The one they had was pieced together with a dynamo from one manufacturer and an engine from another. After the tsunami hit, the villagers had little or no income to try to repair or even replace it. But they needed electricity so they were renting a temporary generator at an increased cost. Caught in this circle, **NATR** was able to help by

replacing the old, outdated, and irreparable generator with a used, yet more efficient one.

Ban Talae Nok

Ban Talae Nok is a traditional Andaman Muslim fishing community divided into two parts (lower and upper). Lower Ban Talae Nok was built adjacent to the beach from natural materials therefore; it was completely destroyed by the tsunami. The effect of the tsunami in this village was severe, from a population of 228, 47 people perished. In total, 20 of the houses were destroyed. Upper Ban Talae Nok was spared since it is located away from the coastline, and it now serves as the location for the temporary housing for the affected villagers. The air force and border police helped

the villagers rebuild 20 new houses, while the government and private sector took action to augment the food and water supply. Even with this assistance the villagers still do not have enough to support themselves and sustain growth in the future. The mainstay of the economy was fishing, but all of the boats were lost in the tsunami, including those from the upper village.

The following is an email from a volunteer who was living and working at Wild Animal Rescue (War) in Ban Talae Nok at the time of the Tsunami:

“As for the village, everything within 500 meters of the ocean is in big trouble. There was a hut in the middle of the road and the huts are all flattened. Some of them are just gone—there is no rubble or debris to clean up everything has disappeared. You'd never know that there was a hut left there unless you'd seen it before. The school is a pile of rubble and apparently there were a few kids as well as the teacher in it when the wave struck. The teacher is dead as well as lots of the kids. There are 39 definite deaths and one body still unaccounted for. That is about one fifth of the population of the village....

We went to the fishing village near the mangroves and it's unbelievable. There is nothing left at all. It's not like there's some foundations or rubble because the houses were all wooden. A government worker went to assess the situation and said that there was no disaster because he couldn't see any sign that humans had lived there. All the kids were killed and every adult except for two who climbed trees. The bodies of the rest have been found.

The only sign that humans have been there for any length of time is a kid's swing left swaying poignantly in the wind; unfortunately there's no-one left to swing on it now. When you think of all the kids shouting "Hello!!" at you it really brings tears to your eyes.

Some of the villagers up near the mangroves saw the wave coming and instead of climbing a tree they got on their motorbikes with their families and tried to beat the wave to the school where they could turn left and move away from the sea. None of them made it.

What was even worse was that we were driving back to the centre and we saw a woman lying in the road. We put her in the back of the pickup and then took her down the road to some paramedics. She was ok and not involved in the wave—she'd just fainted upon finding her son's body.”

- **Women's Programs**



Through a one-week training program, the Thai government has assisted in the implementation of soap making and baking programs for the women of Ban Talae Nok to supplement family income, but has provided no marketing assistance to sell these products. The women are showing great enthusiasm for these programs, however, they fear that the projects will fail due to the lack of access to a stable market. Our goal is to implement a suitable

marketing program that will empower the women and encourage creativity through capacity building, as well as ensure the long-term viability of the government projects. To insure the success of this program, funding will be required to support long-term marketing initiatives.

NATR has been aiding the women to get their products sold on the local market, namely at a tsunami handicraft shop in Khao Lak. We are also developing a market for the soaps at several gift shops in Phuket and in Bangkok.

- **Fresh Food Supply Project**



Currently, non-perishable food supplies are being delivered by the government, but based on extensive interviews and focus groups with the villagers; it was brought to our attention that they were not receiving adequate amounts of fresh fruits, vegetables, or meat. This is caused by lack of access to the markets, lack of cash, or both - and has left the villagers without proper nutrition. A basic list of desired fresh food has been

produced by the locals and twice a week the items are purchased at the local market in Kuraburi and delivered directly to the families.

- **Community Center**



The community center in Ban Talae Nok will serve as a coordination facility for community-driven development projects that sustain the unique culture and heritage of the local people. The center will allow for effective aid distribution and as a medium to implement educational and vocational training programs. One of the most important elements of the facility will be the communications room, which will give villagers access to important information, such as tsunami warnings. It will also serve as the headquarters for the **NATR** women's programs. The community center was suggested by our staff and is being built by the Village Working Group – a collective of organizations chaired by **NATR** that cooperate in service of Ban Talae Nok.

- **Crab Trap Repair**

Forty-seven damaged boats are to be supported by the private sector, but there has been no mention of any net or trap replacement for the villagers. After numerous discussions with the chief, **NATR** determined that if the villagers were supplied the minimal number of crab traps and/or fishing nets, they could begin to provide their families with a more balanced diet and begin earning more of an income. Eighty crab traps have already been delivered to each family and with the boats they now have repaired; the villagers have begun catching crabs again.

Koh Surin – Moken Village

Forty-eight miles from the North Andaman coast, the Surin Islands rise like a gem from the sea. The land rising out from the water is forested and small stretches of beach line the shores. For centuries, the Moken (a.k.a. Sea Gypsies), a nomadic tribe of sea-faring fishermen, have lived on and around these islands. They have no written language, their small bamboo homes are built directly on the sand, and they live very simply, relocating when the resources are no longer available—traveling where the fish are swimming. Because their entire history and way of communication is only spoken, the Moken villagers have achieved a degree of fame within Thailand. They had an understanding of tsunamis passed down over the years from a previous occurrence in 1907 when one villager saw the water recede and called everyone up onto the highland just before the water returned in the form of a giant wave. When the tsunami occurred in December, all of the villagers (except for one who was to sea) and several tourists were saved. In only 10 days, they rebuilt 56 new huts in perfect rows all on one small stretch of beach.

“The Moken compare themselves to their ‘mythical sister’ the turtle. They live between two elements, water and land. Moored in a lagoon or the leeward edges of an island, their houseboats are removed from the threats of coastal predators but not far enough to be swept away by ebbing currents.

In earlier days, the Moken traveled to coastal and island areas in the Mergui Archipelago by their ‘kabang’. This boat serves as a home and a means of transportation. The Moken are particular in selecting wood to build their kabang—it is believed that the well-being of kabang’s owner depends on kabang itself. For example, if the kabang is made from knotty or bumpy wood, then the owner will have sickness which will cause him or her to have knotty skin. Therefore, the Moken have to select tree which is tall, straight, and without any defects. The Moken also organize a spirit-offering ritual before cutting down the tree.”

- **Fresh Food Supply**



The focus of this project is to ensure the Moken families on the island have an adequate, balanced diet available until they can sustain themselves again. After the tsunami, 26 Moken families escaped from Burma and have taken up residence on Ko Surin. In cooperation with the Thai government, **NATR** will continue monthly visits bringing fresh fruit, pork, and 50-kilo bags of rice to each family.

- **Moken Handicraft Production**



Before the tsunami, Moken villagers would sell hand-carved miniature boats, woven baskets and mats to visiting tourists. This provided much-needed cash for basic staples (cooking oil, shrimp paste, etc.) as well as the necessary income for purchasing boat fuel, tools, and equipment. With the post-tsunami decline in tourism, the market for these boats vanished. **NATR** provided the necessary tools and equipment to allow the renewal of handicraft production and continues to purchase the products for resale. The program aims to develop the craftsmanship skills of the local villagers, and provide long-term markets for Moken handicrafts. In doing so, the program will help to promote traditional practices, and create awareness in Western markets through a fair-trade based resale program.

Tung Dap

The village of Tung Dap, located on the south western edge of Koh Phra Thong, was one of the two villages totally destroyed by the tsunami. A majority of the 22 Moken households and 10 Thai families living there lost all of their homes, possessions, and most of their boats and fishing supplies. The residents of Tung Dap are now living in temporary shelters near the mainland village of Tung La Ong. Above all, the former residents of Tung Dap desire to return to Koh Phra Thong so they may begin to rebuild their lives, but this will take months to achieve. Most poor villagers are in a state of perpetual indebtedness to rich land owners (on whose land they usually live). The land owners have repossessed the boats of the villagers that survived the tsunami, on the grounds that they cannot pay their loans. Ironically, many of the repossessed boats have been sold to tsunami relief groups. Ten Moken families have already moved back to the island, and are living in an area with small reserves of fresh water. **NATR** will continue to monitor the situation of these families, and provide for any emergency needs that may arise. Dependable access to fresh water remains a paramount concern.

- **Island Clearing on Tung Dap**



At first no one wished to return to their land for fear of the angry seas, spirits left behind, and the site of all their possessions scattered about or completely washed away. Mid February, with the assistance of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit and some volunteers from **NATR**, several of the villagers returned to their land to begin clearing away all the rubble left behind. The boats left the mainland early in the morning and, all day long, in the hot sun, the volunteers and villagers gathered debris together. Seeing the volunteers working so hard for their benefit gave the villagers a sense of hope and helped form a bond, solidifying the fact that they were not alone.

- **Fresh Food Supply Project**

The fresh food supply project in Tung Dap is very similar to the fresh food supply project in Ban Talae Nok. Please refer to the description found in the Ban Talae Nok section of this report.

- **Educational Support**



There are currently 22 children from Tung Dap who are attending school in Tung La Ong. The devastation to their island threatens their future ability to attend proper schooling without sufficient monetary aid. NATR has committed to providing financial support for all children who attend school in the village and three children who go to school out of village. This project will last a minimum of two years.

- **Drinking Water Program**

During our assessments with the chief from Tung Dap, we learned that the villagers do not have a sufficient clean water supply as promised by the government. The tanks that have been supplied are meant to provide the water for all cleaning as well as cooking and drinking, but they continue to get dirty on the inside and can't be cleaned. A new water supply was then set up, but it requires someone to stand over it pushing a button while the water slowly trickles out. NATR is providing the villagers with large jugs of drinking water each week and will continue to do so until they have a running supply in permanent housing.

- **School and Library Improvements / Furniture Workshop**



Because the school on the island was destroyed, it was necessary for the teacher and the students of Tung Dap to set up an education facility near the temporary housing in Tung La Ong. The logical location was the already existing school; however, it needed serious structural improvements and additional supplies. To date NATR has: repaired a hole in the classroom floor, installed additional book shelves for the library, provided three

desks and chairs for the teachers, and a new gas rice cooker and draining board. We have also started a furniture building workshop whereby training will be provided for the villagers to learn how to make their own desks and chairs for the schools. They can then continue to make items to have in their homes. In the short term, the villagers are providing their own schools and homes with needed furniture. In the longer term, with their new skills, they have the prospect of making a living out of their new trade.

- **Teacher Salary Support**

Once the villagers relocated from Tung Dap on the island to Tung La Ong, the children began attending the local school. After a lengthy interview with the teacher from Tung La Ong, it became apparent that she felt some resentment for the extra work necessitated by the additional students. Therefore, NATR implemented a salary increase of an extra 2000 baht per month for the next six months.

- **Mangrove Clearing and Reforestation Project**

The destruction of the tsunami not only immediately affected the villagers lives by taking or injuring loved ones, but also left massive amounts of rubble in the wake. Most of the debris was forced into the mangrove forests on the coastlines. Clearing up the debris as soon as possible will allow the fish populations recover, and the fishermen to have a sustainable harvest. As the debris is cleared, the villagers will begin replanting the mangrove seedlings. In addition, the trees that were once on the coast line will also be replanted which will help protect the village should another tsunami threaten them in the future.

Bak Jok / Koh Ra

Located on the extreme northern tip of the island of Koh Phra Thong was the small village of Bak Jok. When the tsunami hit, this entire village was wiped into the sea. All 88 families lost nearly everything—all of their homes were completely destroyed and their boats and personal belongings were washed away. Many of the villagers were swept into the sea and their relatives were left behind with only a memory. One of our Thai staff, Duk Sae-ngow, lost 13 members of his family. He was actually on the phone with this mother when the wave hit—her body was found days later. On the island of Koh Ra just to the north of Bak Jok, the 38 families also lost nearly everything. Both groups were relocated to the mainland and can now be found living in temporary housing adjacent to the Kuraburi pier. Most of the villagers have told us they are afraid to move back to the island. In fact, many never will.

- **Handicraft Production Plan - Bak Jok / Koh Ra**



Before the tsunami, the Moken villagers on Koh Ra had almost no access to a cash economy and lived in a state of indebted service to the owners of the fishing boats on which they worked. Initial assessments indicated that the Moken villagers wanted to work again, as soon as possible, in order to earn much needed cash for basic staples (cooking oil, shrimp paste, etc.). One man, Jao (whose story is found above), suggested earning money through handicrafts – specifically miniature boat making and basket weaving. The “kabang” (traditional Moken boat) is a marvel of indigenous engineering, and a potent symbol of the Moken culture. To date, **NATR** has funded the necessary tools and equipment to allow the renewal of handicraft production; including procurement of raw materials, training workshops, and a subsidized learning process. **NATR** has also purchased all finished products for resale, and is in the process of developing domestic and international marketing strategies, with post-marketing profits re-invested in the community. In doing so, the program will help to promote traditional practices, and create awareness in Western markets through a fair-trade based resale program. The program aims to develop the craftsmanship skills of the local villagers, and provide long-term income for the Moken people.

- **Fresh Food Supply - Bak Jok / Koh Ra**

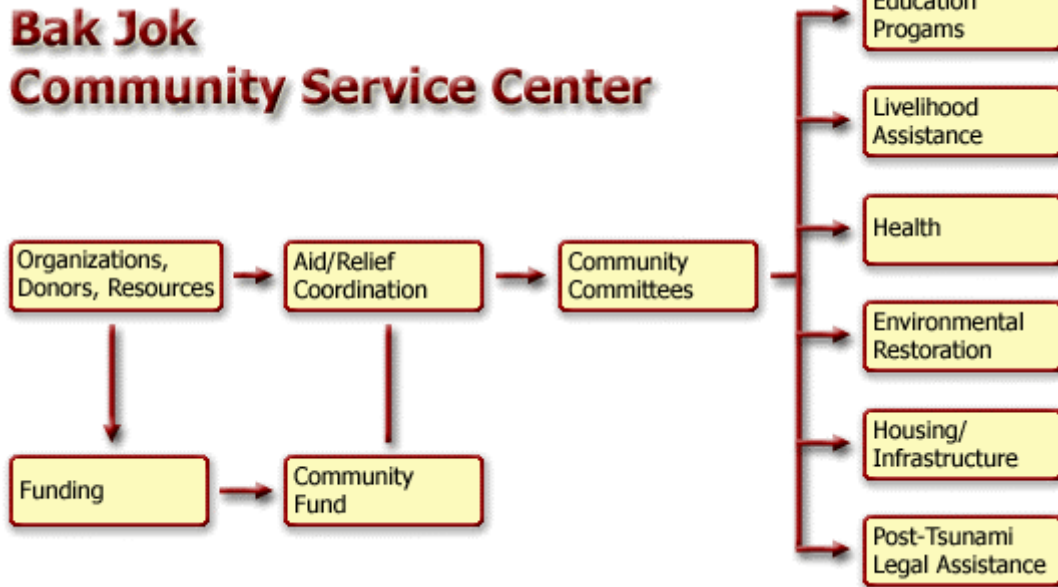
Once the temporary housing was established, the government helped support the villagers by providing a small supply of non-perishable foods. After conducting various focus groups and interviews, **NATR** decided that it would be necessary to supplement this delivery by supplying fresh vegetables, fruits, and meats to allow for adequate nutrition. Two times a week, an **NATR** staff member purchases fresh food from the local market in Kuraburi and delivers it directly to the villagers. This program will continue on until the villagers have begun earning some sort of an income and can provide for themselves.

- **Squid Trap Replacement Project – Bak Jok / Koh Ra**



There are approximately 47 families from the villages of Bak Jok and Koh Ra who relied heavily on squid fishing as a way of life. These families are receiving assistance to recover, repair and/or replace their fishing boats, but no one has offered to support them in repairing their nets or traps. Typically a fully equipped boat carries 200 squid traps. **NATR** is providing 50 squid traps to each fisherman, enough to begin fishing and to provide sustenance and income. In order to cut costs and provide as many families as possible with squid traps, local fishermen agreed to construct the traps themselves as well as harvest the wood necessary to build the traps.

- **Community Service Center**



One of the most crucial elements of sustainable aid is effective coordination of efforts. The villagers of Bak Jok are beginning to see numerous organizations making offers to help, without much accountability for promises. As such, it is crucial to the well-functioning of the community that villagers gain control over the distribution of aid within their community. By providing a community center, we are helping to put an end to the aid fatigue which is negatively impacting the people of Bak Jok. The benefits of the community centre are three fold: providing employment, promoting self reliance, and preserving and restoring traditional livelihoods. It will also serve as a medium to implement educational programs, environmental education, legal assistance (especially where land ownership is in question), clinical and medical education and assistance, vocational training, and many other community oriented programs that sustain the unique culture and heritage of the local people.

Tung Nang Dam

Literally translated, this means Field of Black Women. Tung Nang Dam is a Muslim village located in the middle of a mangrove forest on an island a short 20 minute boat ride from the Kuraburi Pier. When the tsunami hit, the villagers' homes were spared, but almost all of their fishing boats and equipment was lost. The already dilapidated 320-meter bridge, the only access to the village, also suffered severe damage and they had massive amounts of salt water intrusion in their one and only fresh water supply. The island has an extremely diverse range of land use with cashew nut trees and rubber plantations inland around 1.5 kilometers from the sea. There is a small network of very good roads around the island which are fully cemented, providing access to the villagers' homes.

- **Rice Delivery**

It all began one day when two Thai men walked into the **NATR** office. Normally, people wait for one of us to locate and greet them, asking what we can do to help. These men didn't stop at the door. Instead, they came right on in and politely asked us if we could help their village. They seemed to have been completely left out by other agencies—ours included. The main topic of discussion was helping them get sufficient water to the island, but they also expressed a need to have an adequate supply of rice, cooking oil, and sugar. **NATR** has now delivered a 50-kilogram bag of rice to each family.

- **Bridge Repair**



There is only one access way to the village which is a 320-meter wooden bridge leading straight through the mangroves. Every year the villagers must replace or repair parts of the walkway that have been rotted out or broken. When the water rushed in from the tsunami, the bridge suffered further damage. NATR is seeking funding to help the villagers replace the existing structure with a new, sturdier concrete bridge.

- **Water Supply Project**

The villagers of Tung Nang Dam are in desperate need of water for all purposes. The wells are almost completely dried up and the ground water supply has depleted to a state below minimum. They must, therefore, import water from the mainland for all household and drinking purposes. Although the rainy season is coming, the shortage of water has added more stress into the lives of the villagers who survive on fishing and agriculture as their way of life. The tsunami destroyed and damaged most of the fishing farms and equipment, whilst the fruit farms, rubber plantations, and cashew crops are drying up from the shortage of water. The village heads have been in discussions to begin implementing a long term water supply system. They propose building a reservoir where water will be transported from high holding tanks at the mountain top in the centre of their village land. The piping, tanks and implementation costs are holding them back from continuing with their plans at this stage.

- **Educational Scholarships**



Because there is no school located on the island of Tung Nang Dam, the students presently attend seven schools on the mainland. It has always been expensive for parents to send their children away for an education, and now it has only become more difficult with the present situation. In the short term, NATR has provided emergency funding which has helped support 37 students to study for the remainder of the school year. This project is now seeking funding for phase two of the student education support. The educational scholarships for all students attending school outside of the island will further allow families the time and opportunity to reassemble their lives. The importance of allowing the students the right to an education is valued highly by the community, however many families are presently in difficult financial situations following the damage to their fishing livelihoods from the tsunami.

Hat Praphat / Had Sai Kaew

All 70 homes on Hat Praphat (located north of Kuraburi on the mainland) were destroyed by the tsunami. Of the population of 200, one-quarter was killed and half were injured. In the village of Had Sai Kaew, just across the river, there were approximately 170 families living in about 100 homes with an unknown number of boats—most of which were destroyed. The villagers have not yet received funds from the government; however, temporary shelters were built right away. A focus group was conducted by our team with several villagers and the chief to assess what they would like to see happen both short and long term. They noted that 26 families did not legally own houses, and therefore the government has no plans to compensate them or provide housing.

- **Mangrove Restoration and Coastal Reforestation**



The destruction of these two villages left massive amounts of debris in the wake. Most of this was forced into the mangrove forests on the coastlines where it now threatens the environment and population even further. It is extremely important to clear up the debris as soon as possible so that the fish population and ecosystem can regenerate and the villagers can regain their livelihood. In coordination with the Ranong Coastal Resources

Research Station, RCRRST, our organization assisted the villagers by providing short term labor for clearing out the mangroves. This gave the villagers some income so they could afford to buy their own fresh food and supplies. Mangrove saplings have been collected and will be planted as soon as the salinity levels restabilize themselves. In addition, the trees that were once on the coast line will be replanted to protect against further damage.

Golden Buddha Beach Resort

Golden Buddha Beach (GBB) was an eco-resort situated on Koh Phra Thong - one of the most out-of-the-way, naturally beautiful resorts in the North Andaman region. Small wooden houses, with no hot water or regular electricity, provided just the perfect setting to relax out of the hot sun. The owner, Dick Sandler, had spent over 14 years establishing relationships with the local villagers on the island and provided employment to many. When the wave hit, most of the structures (including the office, the dining facility, the yoga sala, the massage platform), and several of the individually-owned houses were totally destroyed. The shape of the beach was completely transformed and reshaped with only memories left scattered behind. Just last week, beneath a broken down palm tree, a digital camera was found sticking out of the sand. Because Bodhi personally knew all of the employees, he immediately helped **NATR** source the funding which enabled each family to receive emergency financial aid.

- **Golden Buddha Beach Conservation**



The tsunami destroyed many buildings at GBB, the work of Naucrates turtle conservation project, much of the mangrove forest, and a large area of the coral reef. It also deposited debris everywhere imaginable. In January, as volunteers arrived at **NATR**, we helped coordinate groups to travel by long tail boat to the island and begin manually cleaning up the resort. Since this volunteer work began, the attendance and enthusiasm of the villagers coming to work at GBB has greatly increased. There is a strong desire for this work to continue so the resort can again provide employment for the local villagers. Looking toward the future, **NATR** plans to provide financial support to Naucrates so this fine organization can continue its mission of sea turtle protection, resource conservation, and environmental education programs.

Tapa Yoi

The one village on the east side of Koh Phra Thong called Tapa Yoi was, miraculously, relatively untouched by the tsunami. All of the 55 families, however, have moved to Kuraburi for fear of another earthquake, tsunami, and/or landslides. Until the villagers feel comfortable enough to move back to their homes, **NATR** has decided to maintain communication, assess their needs, and help them regain sustainability.

- **Fresh Food Supply Project**



Until the villagers are able to sustain themselves and move back to the island our goal is to provide them with access to locally bought fresh food. With evidence of reduced fish catches since the disaster, it will also be important to monitor their livelihood for the next few months at least. We have met with the chief and a basic list of desired fresh food has been produced by the locals. The food is purchased by **NATR** from the local market in Kuraburi and delivered two times a week. As of now, there is no other group fulfilling this need in the Kuraburi/Suksamran/Koh Phra Thong area.

Note: If only the days were as long as this report, maybe, just maybe, we could do even more here at **NATR**. We could start up new projects (beyond the 30 already implemented), find more villages to assist, enter more data...

But then, this would be **100 Pages later** and take you days to read.

And that is not our goal, anyway. More is not better—it is what you do and how you do it that counts. And every little step along the way is another lesson in this life we have. So as I prepare to leave, the 3 weeks having turned into 3 months, I am finally able to sit back, take a deep breath, and at least know - we are making a difference.

- Nicole Abiouness

NATR Staff and Volunteers

Bodhi Garrett – our Founder, Director, and Inspirational Leader

Andrew Witt
Bom
Bonnie Doyle
Chris Gish
Christine Kolisch
Den
Duk (Surasak) Sae-Ngow
Erik Rogers
Georgi Marshall
Greg Voelm
Iang (On-anong) Thongrong
Jeltje Roetink
Jo Birrell
Lucy Dixon-Clarke
Luzi
Mary
Natalie Ryan
Nicole Abiouness
Nim
Ning
Nitchie
Pa Kiatprajak
Peach
Phylippa Levine
Richie Chang
Richie Ralphsmith
Sarah Johns
Scot Domergue
Shannon Binns
Shara Carlone
Somchai (Meth)
Zander Lanfried

Contact Information:

North Andaman Tsunami Relief

188 M. 1

Tumbon Kura

Khuraburi District

Phang-Nga 82150 THAILAND

01 917 7165 (in Thailand) 011 66 1 917 7165 (out of country)

email: relieffund@inet.co.th

www.northandamantsunamirelief.com

Tax Deductible Donations: Business for the Environment Tsunami Relief Fund

3524 Dutch Way

Carmichael, CA. 95608