

TSUNAMI AND BASIC THERAPEUTIC ACTIONS: WHICH EFFECTS ON SRI LANKAN CHILDREN?

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In this study we want to show the results of a psycho-social project made in East Coast of Sri Lanka after tsunami. The project was coordinated by an Italian NGO named "Amici dei Bambini" (Friends of Children) and it was financed by Italian Civil Protection. A team of psycho-social operators of Catholic University worked for 12 months in seven refugees camps in the Ampara Districts. Italian operators worked only with local animators. Only local operators worked directly with children and families in the camps.

This research wanted to verify the efficacy of the project. School behaviour and scholastic results of children in the camps were selected as psycho-social well-being indicators.

When the project started a questionnaire was submitted to all the family in the seven camps involved in the program. The questionnaire was about: family members, religion, losses after tsunami, frequency of school and school results before tsunami and at the moment. Another questionnaire was submitted to local teachers to explore scholastic behaviour of children. The questionnaires were submitted to 418 families for a total of 962 children and to 35 teachers.

At the end of the projects the questionnaires were revised and submitted to the same family and teachers. Children were distinguished in three groups: children who never took part to the program of Basic Therapeutic Actions (BTA), children who frequented BTA sometimes and children who always took part to BTA program.

The results show the tsunami impact on children, the effect of time and a positive effect of the program. We found a statistical increase of well-being in children who took part regularly to psycho-social program: they showed an improvement of scholastic results and behaviour statistically more significant than children that never/rarely frequented the programs.

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