

Tsunami Challenged: PIM's Response in Action

Gunapala Nanayakkara

ABSTRACT

As a learning organization, PIM readily recognized the challenging opportunity created by the Tsunami destruction (for creative intervention and experimentation). A creative program of action was launched with the participation of teachers, students, employees, donors and public officials in order to address both short-term and long-term issues involving post-tsunami reconstruction. It contained multifaceted projects of complex dimensions ranging from recovery management, human resettlement and business development to pre-school education, skills development of affected children and social rehabilitation. The experiment carried out over three years, with a financial budget of Rs. 110 million, resulted in discovering new frontiers of management knowledge, pedagogy and andragogy, both tacit and explicit. The rich data and experiences documented in the MBA/MPA skills projects by student groups who undertook the field projects strongly support, inter alia, that (a) a welfare-recipient mentality governs rural communities, (b) religious leaders play a catalyst role in community crises, (c) community bonds and caste can harm cooperative efforts, (d) cultural support for group work is very low, and (e) the public institutional system is rather inward-looking.

Dr. Gunapala Nanayakkara is Professor of Management Studies and Director, Postgraduate Institute of Management.