



## LITTLE SMILE ASSOCIATION

Non Government Organisation registered under Social Ministry  
Registration No.: FL. 46004

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### Help for self-help – Little Smile boats are no alms



Already in February, the fishing boats we have let build in Negombo, were transported into the destroyed city of Kalmunai across the island.

Their arrival is a symbol, a ray of hope for these muslim people, a sign that they – far away from tourist beaches - are not forgotten.

In Kalmunai, at the East Coast of Sri Lanka, the Tsunami hit especially fishermen's families.

Here we offered those families a new perspective for future life, helping them to establish new work without making them beggars by donating

money freely.

Before the Tsunami came, Little Smile had been engaged in aid work for children in and around Kalmunai already. This experience and our contacts were very important to find the people who had been affected most badly by the waves.

Mr. Ramesh, our supervisor at the East Coast, introduced us to Mr. Rafeek from Kalmunai, who had lost all his fleet of 18 fishing boats during the flood. From his boats, more than 50 families had made a living. Mr. Rafeek's home had been destroyed; many of his family members had drowned.

But - why did Little Smile grant help to the *businessman* by delivering him 5 fully equipped fishing boats, why didn't we give them to 5 poor fishermen?

Everybody who wants to help on the long term and with reason has to regard the structures and conditions of the time before the catastrophe. Especially at the East Coast, where distance to markets and civil war made marketing of seafood difficult, family companies have always been playing a significant role. Maintenance of the boats and motors, sale of the catch and support of the community during the months where not much fish could be caught – all this is possible only if knowledge and financial resources exist.

After the Tsunami disaster, many boats were given to fishermen, who had been employed before, for free. The small- and medium enterprises did not find any fishermen to work on their boats any more. Still, the new boat-owners did neither have knowledge nor the financial margin to maintain the boats properly. Furthermore, a social change was implemented from outside which caused envy and discontent – as not everybody had received a new boat. In some parts of the island, the coastal areas were even overfished.

The Little Smile boats offer jobs and a new perspective for 25 family fathers (5 fishermen per boat). At the same time, we made a contract with the businessman: We selected 20 poor families hit by the Tsunami. These families will receive the amount of 2,000 Rupees on every 15th of a month – for the following 4 years. Payment takes place in our office. So, a part of the investment in boats and equipment is being repaid in form of social engagement to poor people by the businessman.



**Assumption of social responsibility, quick help for self-help and a new job- and life perspective – with these boats we are on the right course.**

We will repeat this programme „Aid through boats“, most likely in the Batticaloa area.

*The costs for this project are calculated with 32.000 €*