

# **“SOS SADISH” a unique and exceptional project!**

## **Why?**

### **“Miracle”**

It can be called a miracle that there were no victims in the small fishermen's village of New Nemelli Kuppam. They lived on a ridge of sand in huts about 50 m away from the sea. A couple of minutes before the first wave arrived, Sadish father tried to pull his catamaran on the beach, but the sea pulled him back every time. He felt that something was wrong with “their sea”. The first, smaller, wave came whilst they were discussing this phenomenon.

They realised immediately that something was wrong and they evacuated wives, children, elderly and handicapped people to the roadside situated at about 200 m. From this distance they saw the second and shortly after the third wave who destroyed all their belongings or took them away. In about half an hour they lost everything but luckily everybody was unharmed.

### **“Small-scale project”**

It is a small-scale project for a fishermen's community, 50 families – about 180 persons, whom I have known for the last ten years en visit about 3 to 4 times a year. It is a community who was hardly known by the government before the tsunami. They have no voice and so they cannot be heard. As I am almost a member of their family I “borrowed” them my voice.

### **“First”**

Up to now India refused each form of foreign help. In the least 25 years and with more than 70 visits to India, I have been able to build up a lot of useful contacts, which will now do our friends well. “SOS Sadish” will probably be the “first” small project that will be recognized by the government and financed with foreign money. Moreover, they promised logistic support from the government, whilst we will be able to keep control of the financial side.

We will be the first foreign private organisation who will receive the permission to “adopt” a fishermen's community in the largest sense of the word.

### **“International”**

What has grown from an impulsion to help my friends in southern India has become an international solidarity action.

After I had heard on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December in which situation they were in Mamallapuram, after the tsunami, we opened immediately a separate bank account and sent a couple of e-mails to friends with the hope to collect a couple of hundred, maybe a couple of thousand euro to help them.

The first reactions to collect the necessary funds for the project came from people who went once with me to the fishermen's village and had, tasted their friendship and hospitality. Most of the initiators are in fact young people who have been adopted from India and who returned the past 14-year to their native country under my guidance.

Notwithstanding the fact that they were not able to grow up in their own country, due to certain circumstances, they were the first to help in every way to make the project a success. Their solidarity is amazing!

Although we can call our project "small" in India, it has become international! These adopted children have, together with parents, family and friends, started actions everywhere. Funds are collected in the whole of Belgium, France (Bretagne), Netherlands, Luxemburg, even in the United Arab Emirates.

**"Exemplary function"**

Taking into account the large support and the generous donations that we receive from everywhere and the contacts I have with the government on a high level in India, we took the decision to engage ourselves on a long term. We will try to work out our project in such a way that it can be considered as an example in order to improve the living conditions for other small similar fishermen's communities.