

Latvia's Relief Effort for Asian Tsunami Disaster Is Aimed at Sri Lanka

Out of the horrors of the Tsunami disaster, another positive story is developing in the small European country of Latvia. Patricia Tourist Office a foreign managed firm and a Latvian NGO Platform LAPAS is cooperating to collect items to be sent to the citizens of Sri Lanka. As volunteerism and the work of NGO's (non governmental organizations) is new to most Latvian's, a byproduct will be that local Latvian citizens will begin to see the actions of volunteerism at work.

(PRWEB) January 12, 2005 -- Sheltered by 50 years of Soviet occupation, volunteerism and the work of NGO's (non governmental organizations) is new to most Latvian's. In addition, Latvia has been fortunate up this past weekend not to have experienced many natural disasters in its long history.

But as we all know, that can change in a heartbeat, as Latvians' found out with the gale force winds that plunged over 70% of the country into darkness for 24 to 48 hours Saturday night January 8th.

Working together in Riga, using teamwork (another novel concept), a Latvian NGO named Platform - LAPAS and Patricia Tourist Office are providing leadership to expose the Latvian society to the rewards of giving.

Approximately 23 donation drop off collection points are being created in cities around including Riga the capital city of Latvia.

Patricia Tourist office is donating large corrugated cartons marked with a distinctive label displaying the outline of the country and flag with the inscription "from the people of Latvia". NGO Platform is coordinating the logistics of the various drop off point locations.

The desired result is to collect some donated items from the citizens of Latvian that are currently needed by the citizens of Sri Lanka; such as, tents, blankets, towels and some medicines. Collected items will be sent to the Sri Lankan consulate in Stockholm who will forward the items to Sri Lanka by airplane.

As a byproduct, local Latvian citizens will begin to see the actions of volunteerism at work.

As a part of the activity, the group will share the theory behind the concepts of volunteerism and NGO's and hopefully recruit local Latvian citizens to take part in this and future similar activities.

One such person is Kristine Mace from Riga who has written an emotional story about the Asian Tsunami disaster in Latvian language. Kristine learned about the effort on a local Latvian web bulletin board and sent an e-mail volunteering her time.

Her story may be read in Latvian language <http://www.sosinfo.net/storylv.html>

This is an excellent start of what is hoped to be a very rewarding experience for all the volunteers.

Another byproduct is to try to find a way to incorporate other NGO's like the Latvian Red Cross into the effort. So far, this is proving to be somewhat difficult. It's a part of the Latvian culture for people and organizations to be apprehensive of others wanting to cooperate. Breaking this barrier is an important cultural



change that needs to be achieved - but it may take a while longer.

For additional information, visit <http://www.sosinfo.net> or contact Mike Johnson USA 1+214-432-5872 and Latvia 371-721-0180 or Gunta Berzina in Riga 371-914-4564.

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