

## Children's Voices



Their names are Rajan, Sri, Mehala, Matti, Nathiya, Darshini, Selvakumari...

They form a team, young and newly united. Since May, they have come together at our Batticaloa Community Center in eastern Sri Lanka, each with his or her own history colored by their country's past conflicts and disasters. Through their words, art and body language they show a truthful enthusiasm. They want to believe that their dreams can be achieved. They want to believe that each person they come across signals the beginning of an adventure and that they will contribute to a child, a mother or a father's future.

Let's listen to the dreams of their drawings.

### - Sophie Wodon

Sri Lanka Psychosocial Coordinator  
Our Grantee: The Comité d'Aide Médicale

## Who We Are

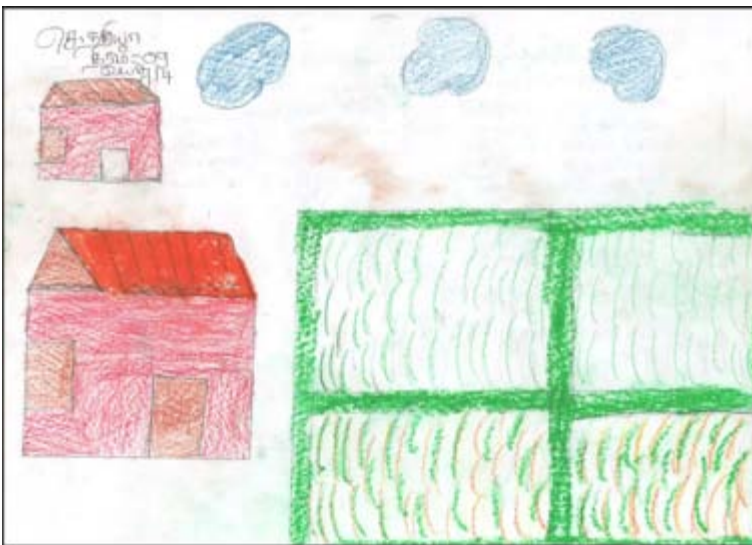
The Medical Aid Committee (MAC) is a non-profit humanitarian organization which supports the provision of health care to communities affected by conflict, natural disasters and epidemics. All of our supported programs are developed in partnership with local communities and prioritize the strengthening of local health capacities and resources. We support primary health care programs of fixed and mobile health clinics, access to safe, clean water, preventative health education and programs supporting traumatized individuals and communities. In this way, we strive to improve the health and wellbeing of communities emerging from crises.

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*"I am Mekala and I study at the Viranaga Mixed School. There are seven people in my family. This is the first time that I have ever created a drawing. This drawing is my dream. There is a waterfall, mountains, fish, flowers and trees. This is the environment of my dreams and I like playing in this space. I can neither see nor enjoy this drawing because it is just a dream. I do not want the war to return. I would like to stay in this village, enjoy this environment."*

**- Mekala**, age 13  
South Korali Patu, Sri Lanka



*"My name is Nathiya and I study at the Utuchchenai Mixed School. In 2006, there was war and then displacement. In 2008, we came back. I lost my house and rice fields. My heart feels sad for that loss. I thought about the house and the rice fields before the war. I kept them in my heart, and then draw them. Because of the conflict, I lost my education. Only today can I go back to class. I wish to start in the 6th or 7th grade. That would be wonderful."*

**- Nathiya**, age 13  
South Korali Patu, Sri Lanka

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## Cleaning Up Hospitals, One Incinerator at a Time

Hospitals and clinics are dedicated to healing but those in conflict zones – limited by meager funding, poor infrastructure and lack of training – often end up inadvertently increasing the risk of contamination for their staff and neighboring communities by throwing away syringes, soiled bandages and other infectious material in open dumps, which often double as a favorite play site of children.

A potent issue in health centers in post-crisis zones around the world, we decided to tackle it in Angola, where we sponsor an environmental health program in Uige Province and the capital city of Luanda.



The innovative, sustainable approach includes designing and building incinerators and hermetically sealed waste treatment pits for anatomical waste, both of which are adapted to local socio-economic and environmental

conditions. Trainings - for local artisans in their construction and use, and for local medical staff in the proper separation and treatment of infectious waste – is essential so that the method can be replicated locally.



The Child and Maternal Health Center of Pedreira delivers 80% of the city’s babies. Despite the fact that the Health Center is located in a neighborhood sporadically affected by cholera outbreaks, it lacked a proper system to manage medical waste.

“In the past, without incinerators, managing biomedical waste was a significant problem for us,” Isabelle Kutumua, 30, a nurse at the Center explains. “We were limited to pits and trenches to dispose of the waste. Medical materials were burnt in one open-air pit and the placentas in another one, without processing or treatment... We didn’t have any other means to do better. The smoke was a major inconvenience for the staff and the people living close to the dumping sites, not to mention environmental pollution.”

Now the Center has a new biomedical waste system and a healthier community and environment.

“Both [the new incinerator and the anatomical waste treatment pit] ensure not just a helpful and cost-effective system for waste disposal management but also training and awareness-raising for the paramedical staff. We are not concerned by the smoke anymore, pollution of the environment is considerably reduced and our work is safer,” notes Isabelle. “Big thanks.”

[Learn More About Our Supported Programs In Angola](#)

## From the Ground Up: Launching A Program In Chad



*Mission: Set up a program to provide health care for 40,000 Sudanese refugees living in desolate refugee camps in Chad, just over the border from Darfur.*

*Time Allotted For Set Up: One month*

Isabelle Voiret, grantee Comité d’Aide Médicale’s Medical Advisor, and Béatrice Galbas, their Field Coordinator, give us an inside look at what it takes to build a post-crisis medical program from the ground up.

**The clinics are located in refugee camps that are very close to the Sudanese border. How do your programs place you in the reality of the region?**

All together, this region is deeply reliant on humanitarian aid; most of the Darfuri refugees are registered with the United Nations Refugee Agency

(UNHCR), while the World Food Program (WFP) covers most of their nutritional needs, and other UN agencies and international NGOs provide other necessities and care. We are a part of this mix and deal with the realities faced by our beneficiaries every day: poverty, displacement, insecurity and uncertainty. You can see that the needs are considerable but working with refugees, you find that, most of all, they aspire to return to their homes.

Read the rest of the interview on our [website](#).

[Learn more about our supported program in Chad](#)

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