

Starting Over

Two girls in Sri Lanka walk past the rubble that was once their school. It was destroyed in the **tsunami**¹ (soo-NAH-mee), or series of huge waves, that hit South Asia in December of 2005.



AFP/Getty Images

The tsunami destroyed thousands of buildings, including homes, stores, and schools.

Since then, temporary schools have been set up in buildings that are still standing and in tents. The girls, along with thousands of other students, can now return to school.

"The opening of these schools is a powerful sign for people that life can begin again," said Carol Bellamy, the director of **UNICEF** - a group that helps children in need. UNICEF and other groups have donated thousands of tents and school supplies to countries affected by the tsunami.

Overcoming Disaster

A tsunami is usually caused by an underwater earthquake or volcanic eruption. The recent tsunami smashed against the coasts of 12 countries in South Asia and East Africa. Tens of thousands of people were killed. Millions of others were left homeless.

1 **Tsunami:** large wave caused by an earthquake or volcanic eruption at sea

Reading Passage



Leigh Haeger

This map shows the countries in South Asia and East Africa where the tsunami hit. They are shown in yellow.

Since the **disaster**², the world has reached out to help people rebuild their lives. Officials predict that it could take up to 10 years to help the region recover from the tsunami.

Returning to school is helping students focus on rebuilding their lives. "When a school opens in a disaster zone, everyone feels a sense of hope," said Bellamy.

Think About It

What are some other ways that schools can rebuild?

² **disaster**: something that happens suddenly and causes great suffering and loss