

Tsunami through the window

From the pupils of Father Francisco Soares School, Portugal

Account 1

We are in the Geography class, when we notice that something is wrong. A crowd starts screaming in the street because the sea is rapidly moving back.

The whole class is panicking now. Some of us are very frightened and in shock when we realise that a huge wall of water is approaching! We know that we must leave the room immediately and run away to a higher ground. The students run to the attic, on the 2nd floor.

The wave has picked up anything that floats, including all sorts of objects, cars, parts of buildings, trees and ...people. Luckily it reaches only the first floor. We had to spend a terrifying day in the attic, a small area, along with 300 students. There we are safe from the tsunami waters that run beneath us.

We just couldn't believe what was happening before our eyes. As a result of the strongest earthquake we have felt and the tidal waves many people in the area are dead, missing or separated from their relatives. The seawaters killed many of our classmates and caused a massive destruction on its path. No word will ever describe the horror of what our eyes saw!

There was a lot of tension in the attic. The students were alone, far from the support of their family. They were clearly in distress and they were also very hungry!

At the beginning of the second day a teacher told us we could leave the attic. There were cries of joy and at the same time cries of despair from the students who were looking for their family and friends. Many families have lost contact and are without news of their loved ones.

When we got out of the attic our parents and relatives were waiting for us. At that time we only wanted to embrace them and return to our home.

Ana Rita Ribeiro, Catarina Antunes, Catarina Silva, Inês Correia, Inês Silva

Account 2

We are in our classroom and we look through the window and then we see a tsunami coming, devastating everything in its way. The wave is coming very fast and it's brown because of the garbage and the mud on the streets and farming lands.

The people start running to the first floor or trying to hang on to a tree or something similar. Everyone is feeling very scared and terrified. We are frozen and in panic.

Our class is still together, we run to the first floor. We try to help the students who are in shock.

The wave is already losing force so we are helping who is hurt and everyone is calling for their parents and family to see if they are ok.

At the end of this nightmare we realise that no one knows if another tsunami wave is about to come. Luckily the tsunami warning system is working now, so the people can be warned. In fact, a second wave is approaching; we must leave. The only safe places are in a higher or inland area. We must react quickly! Let's hurry!

Inês Miranda, Joana Torcato, João Torres, Miguel Antunes

Account 3

We are in the Geography class when we look through the window and see a small wave. It is flowing across the ground and as it moves forward it is sweeping away things in its path. It is becoming higher and higher! We are seized by panic, especially because we are on the ground floor and the wave is quite close. We are very afraid and the only thing to do is to run upstairs. Our only concern is to save ourselves. The wave is getting closer and closer. We can't believe our eyes – the tsunami waters carried off many teachers and students!

We are very sad because the tsunami killed many of our friends and destroyed our school. The water had already destroyed many houses and killed thousands of people.

It was very shocking and a moment of great sadness, distress and panic. Luckily we saved our lives!

Beatriz Santos, Carolina Donas, João Veloso, Vasco Rocha

Account 4

It's the 5th November 2007, we are in classroom no. 3 (on the ground floor), having a Geography class, we've just seen an enormous wave coming in our way, which makes sense since we have felt a big earthquake.

The wave is brown and it flows very fast (about 30km/h), carrying people, cars, trees, parts of buildings and everything that stands on its way.

We are running to the first floor so that we can save our lives.

Now we are a bit calm because we are safe, but some minutes ago we were in panic and afraid of losing our lives.

We don't know where our friends are; we just ran to save ourselves and didn't remember them.

We know what happened because a man told us that the sea was driven back and it started making a lot of bubbles; then a big wave hit the beach at a high speed.

Gonçalo Peralta, Inês Costa, Maria Carolina Rosa, Maria Miguel Bogalho, Pedro Pereira

Account 5

We were at school, in a regular class. Everything was normal. For a moment I wanted an adventure, something exciting.

After a while, we felt a small earthquake, nothing special.

In the next class, I heard a big noise, I looked through the window and I saw a giant and powerful wave, destroying everything in its way.

There was no warning and suddenly the sea wave just hit the city!

I screamed:

- A TSUNAMI!!! RUN!!!

We weren't ready for a situation like that, we ran to the stairs, but many of my friends didn't make it.

I looked down and I saw the water, and it was very dirty, with mud. It was two metres high.

I wrapped myself around a pillar to avoid being swept away. The wave repeatedly hit the room and took most of the things with it.

Everything was destroyed; the flow was very strong, it was impossible to survive.

I saw many dead people in the water; it was horrible seeing so many dead bodies – all my friends and lots of people were dead!

I survived, but I didn't want to live, because many people died. I wish I had never thought of something different to happen!

Diogo Pires, Francisco Lopes, Gonçalo Antunes, João Rodrigues, João Sarzedas

Account 6

We were in the Maths class when our friend João Madeira looked through the window. He screamed in panic: "We have to run away immediately!"

"Why?" - the students wanted to know. He said, "Look at the window! A big wave is approaching!" At that moment we ran to the door and we went up to the second floor.

The damaging wave reached the first floor. It carried all kinds of things in its path. It was brown from the mud it has picked up. Its speed and strength was incredible!

The students were horrified and in distress. They missed their families. The teachers were also scared but tried to calm down the students who were wet and wounded.

A few hours later, the firemen arrived and brought many blankets. They told us we had to spend the night at the school.

Fortunately going to high ground and stayed there helped save many lives.

During the following days, the Emergency Services provided refugee camps for the population and informed them about the process of the cleanliness of the city.

A month later, everything was back to normal, although great part of the city had been destroyed.

Joana Simões, Marta Geraldès, Sara Correia

Account 7

We were in the Geography class, it was half past twelve. João Madeira looked through the window and screamed:

- A TSUNAMI!!!

Everybody was in panic.

The students ran as fast as they could to the school canteen on the first floor.

The teachers tried to stay calm and to calm down the students.

Two hours later the ground floor was completely destroyed, with dead bodies and mud everywhere.

The rescue operation had to be done by helicopter because the ground floor was completely flooded.

All people died, except the people who were on the first floor.

This was an unforgettable experience. We will never forget it.

Fortunately our friends were alive because our team spirit kept our class together.

Bernardo Lúcio, Flávia Costa, Ivan Esteves, João Madeira, Joel Candeias

Account 8

We are studying Geography in the class.

The weather is fine with no clouds. It is very sunny and hot.

Mariana asks the teacher if she can close the curtains. She gets up and goes to the window when she notices that the sea is moving back and says:

“- Teacher, the sea is very strange. It’s going back very quickly and it’s bubbling!”

All the students understand what is happening. They get up at once and start running up the stairs to the first floor because there they are safe. But there is a problem... a girl can’t walk because she is using crutches. But, as the class is really close, they all help each other and everyone survives to this unforgettable experience.

Alexandra Reis, Carolina Santos, Inês Severino, Mariana Lafaia, Mariana Antunes