

How World Vision Works: Relief and Rehabilitation



In poor communities, many people struggle to provide for their daily needs, and have nothing left over for emergencies. When a disaster strikes, agencies like World Vision are called upon to help. Every year World Vision helps save many lives that would otherwise be lost. But we don't just help during the emergency. Wherever possible we stay on afterwards to help people re-build their lives.

Emergency Relief

Every emergency is different, but they can be divided into three main types:

Slow On-Set Emergencies

These are emergencies that develop over months or even years. They include drought and famine.

Rapid On-Set Emergencies

These are caused by natural events such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and volcanic eruptions, or by major accidents (such as at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the former Soviet Union in 1986). They are commonly known as disasters. Natural disasters include avalanches, cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, floods, snowstorms, tornadoes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions.

Complex Emergencies

Complex emergencies are caused by people, or by people combined with a natural cause. War and other armed conflict are the most frequent causes. Over the past ten years complex emergencies have been the most common type of emergency. Fighting between ethnic groups in Africa, the Balkans and the Pacific has forced millions of people to flee from their homes. Natural and human causes were combined in the emergency in the Sudan in 1998. A severe drought along with civil war led to the deaths of many thousands from starvation.

So-called natural disasters are often made more complex by people's actions. The 1999 earthquake in Turkey killed 18,000 people through collapsing buildings. A large number of the buildings had been constructed quickly to house immigrant workers. They did not meet earthquake standards.



As wave after wave hit the coastal regions of Asia on 26 December 2004, the devastation in some parts was almost total. World Vision, which works in all the affected countries, was quickly able to front up with urgently needed relief aid within the first few hours: cooked food, family survival kits, shelter, clothing and fresh water. *Photo: Jon Warren.*

A Quick Response

It's important to respond as quickly as possible after a disaster. Within hours World Vision staff survey the situation and talk to community leaders. The first priority is saving lives that are in immediate danger. Depending on the disaster, people may need search and rescue teams, emergency medical help, communications equipment, or transport to evacuate them from the area. They are also likely to need basic necessities like food, water, warm clothing, shelter and health care. In the first few days after a disaster, overcrowding in temporary accommodation, contaminated water supplies, inadequate food, poor hygiene and a breakdown of health services can quickly lead to the spread of disease. Sometimes more people die from diseases like cholera and dysentery after a disaster than from the disaster itself.

Readiness

Because a quick response is so important, World Vision prepares in advance for sudden emergencies. We stay alert for early warning signs by monitoring weather and news reports and relief websites and by keeping in regular contact with our offices around the world. If a disaster does happen, the World Vision regional office decides what to do. There are four: Asia/Pacific, Middle East/Eastern Europe, Latin America/Caribbean, and Africa. Between them they cover all the countries in



the less-developed world. World Vision also has national offices in more than 90 countries. National offices also plan in advance so they are ready if a disaster occurs. Each regional office is responsible for ensuring that up-to-date emergency plans are made for every country in its area, whether World Vision has an office there or not.

Partnerships

Working in partnership with other organizations makes it easier for World Vision to help in countries where we don't have an office. We work with other aid agencies, governments, and the United Nations. The UN through its agencies, WFP (World Food Programme), UNICEF (UN Children's Fund), WHO (World Health Organization), UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) and UNDP (UN Development Programme) coordinates emergency relief activities. Working together avoids duplication, and helps each organization focus on its strengths. One agency may be strong on supplying water, another on health care, another on food delivery. In Kosovo in 1999, for example, World Vision agreed to take responsibility for providing shelter, food and other urgently needed provisions like blankets, warm clothes and medical supplies. Sometimes relief work is divided up geographically, so that one agency works in area X, and another in area Y.

Supplies

World Vision has emergency supplies stockpiled so that they are ready in the event of a disaster. We have large warehouses in the U.S.A., Germany, Italy and the Netherlands with pre-packed supplies. These include food packs, survival kits (see picture below) and



What's in a survival kit varies according to the situation. World Vision distributed survival kits like this one in the Sudan in 1998. This one contains: 2 blankets, 2 cooking pots with lids, 1 piece kanga cloth, 2 mosquito nets, needle and thread, 2 aluminium cups, 2 aluminium plates, 2 bags of salt, 4 bars of soap, 1 plastic sheet, 1 guinea worm pipe, 2 packets of razor blades, 1 large plastic container. *Photo: James Addis.*



Grandfather Khazam Ghazarfari, 57, stands in front of his new tent with his children and grandchildren. Khazam lost his home, a wife, a son and a son-in-law in the Bam (Iran) earthquake of 26 December 2003. But he could not stop thanking World Vision after it delivered a tent that gave the surviving members of his family respite from the bitter cold. "And then I think God helped us a lot, too," he said. The magnitude 6.6 quake left over 40,000 people dead and 150,000 people homeless. World Vision partnered with local organizations to distribute 27,000 blankets, 15,000 water containers, 3,000 tarps, 8,000 bars of soap, and hundreds of winterized tents. Families who received the tents had been sleeping outside in the bitter cold. "This is the first day we have a roof over our heads", said Khazam Ghazanfari, whose house was reduced to a pile of rubble. "Before that we would wrap the children into blankets and huddle around an open fire." *Photo: James Addis.*

hygiene kits. Where possible though we prefer to buy supplies locally. This can be quicker and cheaper for us, and better for the community. Too many imported goods can have a bad effect on local businesses.

Transport

Relief supplies are usually airlifted from our warehouses to a location near the emergency area. During the war in Iraq, World Vision flew supplies from Brindisi, Italy, to Jordan (see photo next page). Sometimes normal transport routes are blocked or unsafe and staff must find alternative ways to bring supplies to the crisis area. In 1998 in the Sudan, when fighting blocked supply routes, many tons of food were air-dropped into remote areas. In Kosovo in 1999, when a group of Albanians found themselves trapped between Serb and Kosovo Liberation Army forces, twenty runners made the 17-kilometre journey over mountains on foot, to bring them food.

Who World Vision helps

The poorest and most vulnerable members of a community – children, pregnant women, the elderly and the homeless – tend to be the hardest hit in a disaster. Anaemia and hunger among pregnant and breast-feeding women also affect their babies and unborn children.





A truck containing relief supplies is loaded onto a World Vision chartered heavy transport plane at Brindisi airport, Italy. The plane was destined for Jordan, where World Vision set up camps for refugees fleeing the war in Iraq. *Photo: James Addis.*

For this reason the United Nations World Food Programme, with which World Vision often partners, requires that 80% of relief food goes directly to women, especially when they are the heads of households. World Vision provides emergency help regardless of race, religion or gender, but pays particular attention to the needs of women and children.

Staff

Staff with a wide range of skills and knowledge are needed for relief work. These include purchasing, finance, administration and security officers, kitchen staff, and journalists. Technicians are needed to set up generators, radios, computers and internet links. Staff are recruited locally where possible. If the right people are not available, staff are recruited from World Vision offices around the globe.

Funding

As a quick response to an emergency is so important, World Vision always has funds in reserve. Funds still need to be raised, and these come from three main sources:

1. Governments.
2. Businesses - mainly through “gifts in kind” – that is, food or other supplies instead of money.
3. Private donors. Most of World Vision’s relief money comes from the public. Mailings are sent to regular donors and advertisements placed in newspapers and magazines and on the World Vision website. T.V. and newspapers are asked to put a phone number in news items about the disaster.

Communication

People can’t help if they don’t know there’s a problem,

so it’s important to get word of the disaster out to the news media as soon as possible. Local journalists send photos and stories to international news services. World Vision has its own communicators who send stories and pictures by email to our offices around the world, so we can give them to their local news media.

Rehabilitation

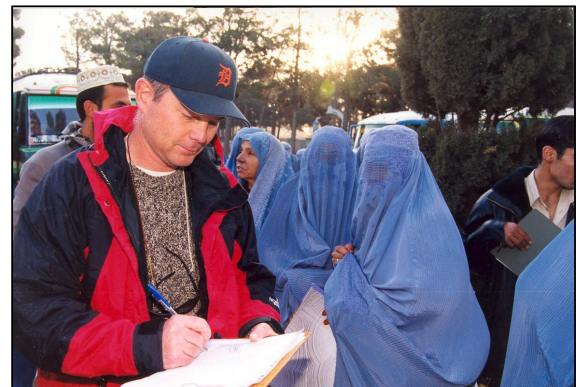
Wherever possible, emergency relief should be followed by long-term development. While World Vision’s first response may be based on survival and distributing goods, we try to move on to rehabilitation and development. Rehabilitation is medium-term aid which helps a community recover from a disaster and begin to plan for the future.

From the start of a relief operation, it is important to consider what its long term effect will be. When goods are distributed free for too long, people may become dependent on them and lack the will to go back to work and provide for themselves. World Vision often links food distribution to rehabilitation, through “food for work” schemes for those who are able to take part. In East Timor in 1999, returning refugees received food in exchange for a few hours work clearing the streets of rubble and debris. The East Timorese were happy to take part in this scheme.

It is important for refugees and displaced people to be resettled in their own communities as soon as possible, as a first step towards rehabilitation. World Vision helps re-build communities in these ways:

Reconstruction

Houses and other community facilities like schools and hospitals may need to be re-built. Pipes, wells and tanks for safe drinking water may also need to be replaced.



World Vision relief worker Al Dwyer organizing a food distribution in Herat, Afghanistan. Al is a member of World Vision’s Global Rapid Response Team, a group of troubleshooting relief experts who work around the world as emergencies arise. *Photo: James Addis*

Sources of food and income

Many people cannot do their usual work after an emergency. They may need help to return to earning a living. In rural areas World Vision helps re-establish agriculture. We distribute AgPaks containing seeds and tools, and provide agricultural training to help with the next planting season. In both rural and urban areas we sometimes give loans to help people re-start businesses.

Health

World Vision gives advice on long-term health care and disease prevention. We may provide help for those disabled by a disaster, such as prosthetic limbs for amputees. Both adults and children may have emotional problems caused by loss of home and family or other difficult experiences. World Vision sometimes provides counselling for these people.

Reconciliation

Where there has been conflict between ethnic groups, reconciliation programmes can help them learn to live together peacefully in future.

Funding

The cost of reconstruction after a disaster is usually much higher than that of providing emergency relief. Unfortunately it is much more difficult to fund. Disasters tend to receive a lot of media attention, and this combined with the urgency of the need to save lives makes it easier to get a response to a fundraising appeal. By the time the rehabilitation phase starts, the disaster is usually no longer news. But a community's needs may still be very great.

Disaster mitigation

This means taking steps to reduce the impact of future natural disasters. World Vision has helped villagers along the Juba river in Somalia build an embankment and dam to prevent flooding as occurred in 1997. Following cyclones in Bangladesh in 1991, World Vision helped build 11 cyclone shelters and 1 flood shelter, which are used as schools and storage facilities in the off season for storms.

Development

The Ethiopian famine of the mid 1980s is a good example of how World Vision moves from emergency relief to

rehabilitation and long-term development. World Vision distributed relief food to a drought-stricken area. This was followed by a food for work scheme which built canals to irrigate the farmland. The work eventually became the Saatusa Area Development Programme. The programme served 150,000 people in 20 villages, improving agriculture, health and education.

Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances

Children often find themselves in very difficult circumstances after an emergency. For example they may be orphaned or have been forced to be soldiers. Even where there has been no emergency, poverty and family breakdown in the developing world result in many



This girl works on a dump in Phom Penh, earning a little money recycling paper, plastic and metal. Disease is rife, and the children liable to be killed or injured by heavy machinery. Many children have moved into the city alone or with their families to escape rural poverty.

children having to live in the street. Others are forced to work long hours for very little pay, and in dangerous or unpleasant conditions. World Vision has rehabilitation projects to help children like these. The Children of the Dump project in Phom Penh, Cambodia, is one. This helps child scrap collectors who work on the unhygienic city dumps, looking for items that can be re-sold. The project assists the children into school, and helps them or their families start small businesses as an alternative source of income.

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