

An aerial photograph showing a village in a state of severe flooding. The water is a muddy, brownish-tan color, completely submerging the ground between the buildings. Several houses with corrugated metal roofs are visible, some with roofs that appear to be partially submerged. There are several palm trees and other tropical vegetation scattered throughout the scene. The overall atmosphere is one of devastation and displacement.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Taking action to support fragile communities

DEVELOPINGWORLDCONNECTIONS

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Many families living in developing nations face poverty, food scarcity, inadequate housing, and a lack of access to health care every single day. In the wake of a catastrophic event such as a natural disaster they are the hardest hit and need support to cope.

DWC's Emergency Response program becomes vital support for those affected in the early days and weeks after a disaster.

Lost income and food sources leave many families with few places to turn. This program allows us to take immediate action by funding relief packages of food and medicine and facilitating efficient and direct distribution to those who need it the most.

In the months and years following a natural disaster, where homes have been washed away, schools levelled, medical centers demolished, and businesses reduced to rubble, DWC helps communities with the challenge of rebuilding and reclaiming their lives.

Supporting devastated regions has entailed spearheading water projects to ensure there is access to clean water, latrines for sanitation and health, constructing houses for displaced families experiencing extreme hardship, or building new schools and community centers from the ground up.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE



December 26, 2004, a 30 meter high wave struck the Sri Lankan coastline without warning, devastating hundreds of thousands of lives and livelihoods. DWC initiated a recovery and reconstruction process that included livelihood support and sending teams of volunteers to build orphanages, homes, schools, community centers and other infrastructure that had been destroyed. This legacy and partnership continues today with DWC developmental projects that have lasting positive value.



Measures to curb the global Covid-19 pandemic disrupted life for the working poor in dire ways. Strict lockdowns left daily wage earners unable to feed their families. People unable to work remotely were without any income or assistance. DWC's Emergency Response program directly delivered food and supplies to families in Peru, Guatemala, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

An earthquake in April, 2015 left vast parts of Katmandu, Nepal in ruins and, only 17 days later a second earthquake hit near Mount Everest, taking more lives and destroying more buildings and infrastructure.

When the emergency phase ended, the situation remained dire as survivors continue to live in disarray while Nepal struggles to get back on its feet.

DWC committed to carry out work and make positive impacts by funding projects and sending volunteers. The rebuilding of schools, including of one of the first to open after the earthquake, constructing new houses for vulnerable families, and a solar-powered, rural community center have empowered local, marginalized people to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.



Ranjith's Family Home

The rainfall, flooding and mudslides of May 2017, were the worst in recorded history for Sri Lanka. According to reports, this devastation killed nearly 200 people and displaced or negatively affected half a million people.

Along with other parts of southern Sri Lanka, the area around Tangalle was badly hit. Residents were dealing with loss of loved ones, personal injury, contaminated water and destruction of their homes. Many livelihoods were threatened by damaged equipment and the impact of the flooding on the fields. In most cases, these families had no savings to recover from the loss.

DWC's Emergency Relief program focused volunteer time and resources to build and repair homes, refurbish wells and supply basic furnishings like kitchens, toilets and showers.

The home of the Ranjith family borders on paddy field in Tangalle town. The torrential downpour destroyed their outside kitchen and a wall of their house. The shelter was very poorly constructed originally, and the large family with eight children, one with downs syndrome, shared a pit toilet with their neighbour.

With a disability of his left lower leg causing difficulty walking, and at the time, recovering from a broken arm, the father was unable to work as a labourer. The family was solely supported by the mother, a garbage collector. After the flood, they had no hope of moving or repairing anything on their own.

DWC teams removed debris, completed an outdoor covered kitchen with a concrete counter and sink, stabilized the house structure, and plumbed an indoor toilet for the family. The volunteers took a crumbling house and made it a home. Leaving the family with two new beds, mattresses, pillows, bed linens, towels, pots, utensils and dishes.

Settling into a safe, secure house, strong enough to withstand the wind and rain, was a milestone of the family's strength and healing.

