

# Disasters and Emergencies Overseas:

## How you can help

This flyer tells you:

- How the world responds to major disasters
- What you can do to help save lives and assist people under threat in an emergency



# Why

## **is it often the poorest people affected by disasters?**

Disasters and emergencies caused by natural hazards (e.g. floods, earthquakes or cyclones) or conflict often impact the poorest people the hardest. Poverty makes communities more vulnerable to disasters by reducing their ability to cope when one strikes. Enabling communities to cope with disasters requires an immediate response when lives and property are threatened, along with efforts to deal with underlying issues such as poverty and inequality that make people vulnerable.

# What

## **happens immediately after a major disaster?**

- After any major disaster local communities and emergency services in the country affected respond immediately.
- If the disaster is too big for them to cope alone, their government may request help from other countries or the United Nations. At the same time, humanitarian agencies already working in the country will quickly gather information and requests for help from local people.
- International humanitarian agencies send specialist disaster assessment teams to the affected country to work with local authorities to decide how best the world can support the country.
- Once the initial assessment is made, governments and humanitarian agencies, as well as the United Nations, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), provide equipment, medicines, food, shelter and people to help the country cope with the disaster.

# How

## **does New Zealand respond to disasters overseas?**

In emergency situations NGOs are often able to reach those in need quickly and effectively through community partnerships. They are frequently the first on the ground in the disaster zone. A number of Aotearoa New Zealand based NGOs respond regularly to disaster situations around the world.

NGOs may deploy their own experienced personnel to the disaster zone to assist those on the ground with initial needs assessments and relief activities. In the days and weeks that follow a disaster, these teams work alongside local organisations to ensure that people affected by the disaster have access to food, clean water and emergency shelter as quickly as possible.

New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency (NZAID) leads the New Zealand Government's response to humanitarian crises in developing countries, whether these arise from natural disasters or conflict. NZAID works with a variety of organisations when responding to disasters.

In the longer term, the reconstruction of disaster-affected areas in developing countries often takes several years. The rebuilding of homes, businesses and roads is done by local people often with outside assistance. Aotearoa New Zealand based NGOs and NZAID often assist with long term reconstruction efforts and work to reduce poverty in developing countries that can make people vulnerable to disasters.

**Enabling communities to cope with disasters requires an immediate response when lives and property are threatened, along with efforts to deal with issues such as poverty that make people vulnerable.**



# How can you help?

## **Donate to an appeal**

It is likely that several Aotearoa New Zealand based NGOs will respond to a major disaster overseas. They will appeal for funds to assist those in need. Donating to an appeal is the most appropriate way you can help people affected by disasters. Appeals are often run on TV and radio and in national newspapers. Check the websites of NGOs to find out how you can make a donation. You can also assist organisations running appeals by:

- Volunteering to staff appeal phone lines or providing public information. Register with the organisation in advance of a disaster occurring.
- Organising local fundraising events through your community organisations, schools or workplace and donate the proceeds to an appeal.

## **Make a regular donation**

This helps NGOs and other humanitarian organisations to build up their funds, allowing them to respond to emergencies immediately. It may also be used by an NGO to help reduce communities' vulnerability to disasters through helping them to prepare for future disaster situations and addressing issues of poverty.

The media attention that disaster events can attract often results in serious under-funding of many equally critical 'silent emergencies'. Consider making a simultaneous donation to a separate appeal outside of the media spotlight or make a regular donation to a humanitarian agency.

And remember, on behalf of all New Zealanders, NZAID responds to disasters and emergencies overseas, as well as its long-term work to fight global poverty.

**Register to assist  
(if you have the specialist skills required)**

People with specialist skills are sometimes required in disaster situations. If you have the necessary skills and wish to be considered for future disaster relief operations register online with the Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief (RedR) New Zealand. If you want to equip yourself to work in this field you can seek advice from RedR New Zealand about their relevant training programmes.

**Speak out on behalf of the poor**

You could speak out about the problems facing developing countries and become actively engaged in fighting the global poverty that can make people vulnerable to disasters. Signing an email petition, writing in the media and to your local MP are ways that you can get involved.

**Do not go to the disaster area**

If you lack the specialist skills required to assist in humanitarian operations travelling to a disaster affected area can do more harm than good. Do not travel to a disaster area as there is a high chance that in addition to using up crucial travel, accommodation, food, or translation resources you will not effectively contribute to the relief effort and make it more difficult for those who can.

**Do not collect and send goods**

A common response to disasters overseas is to organise the collection and donation of goods that are thought to be urgently needed. Receiving goods that are not needed or are inappropriate for recipients can be a hindrance for humanitarian operations. Please avoid donating goods that haven't specifically been requested by a humanitarian agency, as these items can clog up airports and docks and prevent essential supplies from reaching people in the disaster-affected area.

If food, clothing and medical supplies are needed, major NGOs and other agencies are geared up to provide bulk supplies quickly, without the need for sorting, packing, finding transportation costs or seeking permits. A cash donation to an appeal helps them to buy whatever is needed most.



# New Zealand based organisations making a difference:

## NGO Disaster Relief Forum (NDRF)

<http://www.cid.org.nz/emergencies/NDRF/index.html>

- Arena
- Adventist Development Relief Agency New Zealand
- Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand
- ChildFund New Zealand
- Christian Blind Mission
- Christian World Service
- Oxfam New Zealand
- RedR New Zealand
- Rotary New Zealand World Community Service
- Save the Children New Zealand
- Surf Aid International
- TEAR Fund New Zealand
- The Leprosy Mission New Zealand
- The Salvation Army New Zealand
- UNICEF New Zealand
- World Vision New Zealand

These Aotearoa New Zealand based international NGOs are all members of the NGO Disaster Relief Forum (NDRF).

The NDRF is an autonomous sub committee of the Council for International Development (CID). It is an open forum for Aotearoa New Zealand based NGOs that are involved in international humanitarian response and emergency/disaster management. It provides a collective civil society voice and forum for cooperation and shared learning around humanitarian action.

## NZAID

<http://www.nzaid.govt.nz/>

NZAID's Humanitarian Assistance to Natural Disasters and Complex Emergencies programmes reflect NZAID's commitment to provide assistance for a wide range of humanitarian needs.

Humanitarian support is provided through multilateral agencies, international voluntary agencies, Aotearoa New Zealand-based NGOs and direct bilateral assistance. Activities include immediate humanitarian assistance, reconstruction activities and preparedness programmes.

In addition, NZAID provides annual core funding to key humanitarian agencies (United Nations, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent and the International Committee of Red Cross and Red Crescent). This support, accompanied by NZAID engagement in agency governance, policy and evaluation processes helps ensure that capacity and readiness is maintained at a high level.

For more information visit:

<http://www.nzaid.govt.nz/what-we-do/humanitarian-assistance.html>

## RedR New Zealand

<http://www.redrnz.org.nz>

RedR stands for "Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief". RedR assists in relieving suffering in disasters by selecting, training and providing competent and effective relief personnel to humanitarian agencies worldwide.

## Dev-Zone

<http://www.dev-zone.org>

If you are interested in finding out more about the problems that developing countries face and how you can help to make a real difference to the lives of millions of people living in poverty, visit Dev-Zone: Aotearoa New Zealand's resource centre on international development and global issues.



**Many New Zealand based NGOs are affiliates of large international networks. This enables these organisations to respond to humanitarian need around the world as soon as a disaster occurs. This map highlights some of the countries where New Zealand based NGOs currently have disaster preparedness, relief and reconstruction activities.**