



February 4, 2005 - Relief International dispatched emergency relief teams within days of the tsunami and was one of the first international NGOs to reach the hardest hit eastern coastline of Sri Lanka. In Ampara District, a particularly hard-hit and remote region across the island from the capital city, Colombo, more than ten thousand people died (one third of the total deaths in Sri Lanka) and almost 134,000 have been displaced.

Since the disaster, RI's relief teams have been implementing an integrated program of delivery of relief supplies and services including: **Emergency Health Services, Drinking Water, Family Food Rations, Sanitation and Public Health and Emergency Shelter.**

RI is complementing these emergency *Life Saving* programs with *Livelihoods Rebuilding* programs including:

- **Microcredit for men and women involved in significantly impacted industries, including fishing, commerce, vocational trades, weaving, handicrafts and cottage industries;**
- **Educational resources for children through back to school Kid-Kits**
- **Reconstruction of shelter, schools and clinics.**



Details of the program to date are as follows:



Emergency Health Services: RI's emergency health teams have focused their efforts on the hard hit Ampara district. The southern tip of the district was particularly devastated, as the coastal areas are essentially islands connected by causeways to the mainland. In this area, which includes the towns of Aragama Bay, Ulle, Panama and Pottuvil, the team set up mobile clinics to treat injuries resulting from the tsunami or rapid migration away from beach areas. The team also assessed the health needs of the displaced population as camps formed and assessed the remaining health infrastructure and supply chain. They indicated that even with deployment of field hospitals by INGOs, there was a need to re-supply pharmaceuticals to these communities and established a full service pharmacy and clinic as a base of operations. Due to the relatively stable health situation and lack of any major disease outbreak in Sri Lanka, this area will not be a primary focus of further RI activities.

Family Food Rations: During the first week RI began purchasing food to transport from Colombo to Ampara. The food is distributed in 25 kilogram packages to thousands of families. Each package consists of culturally appropriate items including: rice, dhal, mung bean, sugar, chili, curry, soya, tea, salt, canned fish and powdered milk. The package is designed in collaboration with a local nutritionist and is intended to last a family a minimum of one week. With its trucking fleet RI has also facilitated the shipping of food for other NGOs such as RebuildSriLanka.Org and Sarvodaya.



Drinking Water: Contaminated water is the primary cause of post disaster mortality. RI began a massive drinking water distribution program in association with American Premium Water, Sri Lanka's major water bottling company. APW has provided unlimited drinking water to RI free of charge. RI distributes family-size containers of drinking water to camps throughout the Ampara region. This rapidly deployable resource provides tens of thousands of displaced persons with not only water, but also with plastic containers they will need in subsequent weeks to obtain water from central distribution points. Convoys of trucks have been operating in cycles, bringing five-ton loads of water to camps in the Ninthavur region since RI began operating in Sri Lanka. The distribution of drinking water will be phased out as RI's sanitation and public health programs develop more sustainable solutions.



Sanitation & Public Health: In addition to distribution of drinking water RI's water and sanitation experts are examining well water and evaluating the adequacy of sanitation systems in camps and towns. This step is a prerequisite for reconstruction efforts and essential to promote public health. In some areas the majority of people have been sheltered in schools; but with the resumption of schools they are displaced to camps. RI is monitoring the public health situation during this relocation. RI has designed culturally sensitive toilet facilities utilizing local masons and construction workers to build sufficient toilets in the camps and in other central locations. Our reconstruction effort in the town of Ulle augments shelter construction with well restoration, hand-pump installation and new septic system development. As the monsoon season draws to a close this month in the Ampara district, RI is also concerned that standing water will breed mosquitoes, fueling cases of malaria and dengue fever.

Our efforts are also aimed at improving drainage of stagnant water and eliminating this threat.

Emergency Shelter: During early deployment, RI provided transport for the distribution of emergency shelter material by local groups that experienced difficulty in distributing their stockpiles of donated material to locations in Hambantota and Ampara. RI has now established an integrated town reconstruction program in Ulle that centers on assembly of single-family houses with a modular iron and concrete frame and composite roofing material. The structures are made near Colombo by an RI partner, a Buddhist monastery. The monastery's vocational school has extensive experience in metal cutting and welding and the capacity to produce adequate quantities of the needed materials. The monks are donating their labor and assisting in procurement of materials, thus containing the cost of each unit to \$300. The structure is designed for on-site assembly that requires only a minimum number of tools.



Livelihoods: Relief International is working to rebuild the local household economies of the families impacted by the tsunami. RI is launching a Revolving Microcredit Loan Fund with an initial start-up capital of \$100,000 to assist families in restoring their livelihoods in areas such as commerce, fishing, vocational trades and cottage industries. In the short term, RI is also providing cash-for-work opportunities for debris clean-up and initial community restoration. In the coastal areas affected by the tsunami, 80% of the economy is based on fishing. Our teams have conducted a survey of the damage sustained by fishing boats, motors, nets and lines and have started repairing boats, patching cracks and dents in the fiberglass hulls and mending nets. RI

has formed cooperative relationships with local microfinance organizations that empower women by financing small businesses.

Education: In many of the communities of Ampara, up to a third of the population died instantly. Even with the extended family structure present in Sri Lanka, many children have been left parentless while other families have been dispersed or left without income earners. In the aftermath of any disaster, it is important to restore normality as quickly as possible. RI is facilitating children's return to school with the distribution of "Kid Kits" – backpacks filled with basic school supplies.



RI's Team: RI's highly experienced relief teams were dispatched to the regions most affected by the tsunami within the first days of the disaster. RI's current relief team includes personnel from our US, UK, Bangladesh and Tajikistan offices as well as international and national volunteers.

FOR INFORMATION & TO DONATE:

<p>By Check: Make payable to: Relief International Mail to: Relief International - Tsunami Relief 1575 Westwood Blvd. Suite #201 Los Angeles, CA 90024</p>	<p>By Credit Card: Online: www.ri.org or www.ri.org/tsunami-relief By Phone: (310) 478-1200 or (800) 573-3332</p>
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