



Canadian Red Cross / Croix-Rouge canadienne

“Lending a Hand” Learning Activities

*Four learning activities about disaster relief
and recovery programs for the survivors of the
December 2004 Southeast Asia Tsunami*



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Introduction

Tsunami Relief and Recovery, One Year Later

During recent months, it seems as though the number and severity of natural disasters has been increasing. This past year, we witnessed the terrible tsunami in December 2004, which caused many deaths and impacted 13 countries in Southeast Asia and Africa, as well as several destructive hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, the flooding of New Orleans, drought and hunger in Africa, volcanic eruptions in Guatemala and a catastrophic earthquake in Pakistan.

The tragedy of the tsunami, in particular, generated an unprecedented outpouring of generous support from Canadian schools and students. For many, it was their first experience supporting international humanitarian aid and recovery.

“Lending a Hand” Learning Activities

The first anniversary of the tsunami brings a unique opportunity to provide insight into disaster response. Using the tsunami as the backdrop, these learning activities examine the remarkable challenges of delivering effective emergency relief and recovery.

Some of the activities also explore disaster relief from a donor’s perspective. What are the things people require after a disaster? Why are financial donations more effective than donating goods? How should you choose an agency to entrust with your donation? How can you measure success of recovery programs? Students are asked to think about these, and other important questions relating to helping survivors after a disaster.

Two of these learning activities are for the elementary level and two are for the secondary level. Each activity touches on the relief and recovery aspects of disaster response. Teachers and educators may use and copy any of the activities free of charge. Supplemental information regarding Canadian Red Cross programs related to the tsunami is available at: www.redcross.ca/tsunami.

Feedback on the activities will be greatly appreciated. Comments and suggestions can be sent to: feedback@redcross.ca.

A Final Word on “Lending a Hand”

When disasters happen, the reaction of many Canadians is to help in anyway they can to save lives and to help survivors rebuild their communities.

The experience of the Canadian Red Cross is that the most effective ways to help are to contribute financially and to volunteer one’s time. Donations of food, clothing and other items, while always well intentioned, are not the best way to help those in need.

It is very expensive to process and transport these items to survivors. Local purchases of food and clothing helps the local economy recover in affected communities and are more culturally appropriate and effective to meet the most urgent needs.

Teachers and students who wish to help disaster survivors should keep these broad guidelines in mind if they are considering organizing school-based fund-raising activities.

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Activity One: Basic Needs

Description: Students distinguish between what is important for survival after a disaster and what is not essential. They also think ahead to a time when the emergency has passed but people still may need help.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify basic human needs in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.
2. Students will be able to identify potential assistance required after the emergency phase of a disaster has passed.

Age/Grade: 7-8 years old, Grades 2-3

Skills: Understanding basic human needs, discussion, establishing priorities, and applying practical knowledge

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Duplicates of the activity sheet on page six.

Directions:

1. Go over the definition of a disaster with students and discuss different types of disasters (examples could include: earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, power failures, snow/ice storms and forest fires). Talk about the impact these disasters can have on families and communities. Let students brainstorm on what people need to survive, and how a disaster could destroy resources and make it difficult for the community to cope without outside assistance.
2. Have students complete the activity sheet on page six. For each item, they decide if whether or not it would be useful in a disaster to help people survive. Have the students discuss their choices in the class.

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Activity One: Basic Needs

3. Ask students to answer this question:

Do you remember the tsunami that damaged or destroyed many communities in many countries in Southeast Asia in December 2004?

What would a family of five people need six months or even a year after the disaster happened? Ask students to make a list of as many things they can think of.

Items might include: a new house, the school fixed and re-opened, the water system restored, a medical clinic, new roads and so forth. While all these items still fit the category of basic needs, they are all part of the recovery and development aspects of disasters.

Note to Educators:

For more detailed activities of disasters and disaster preparedness for Grade 2-3 students, please consult the Red Cross online program “Expect the Unexpected...It Can Happen, Be Ready” at www.redcross.ca. (under Educator’s Resources on the left-hand menu)

This resource is free and can be copied.



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Basic Needs - Activity Sheet

After a disaster, what items on this list would be most useful to help people survive? Which items would not be needed?

For each item, mark with an X if it would be needed or not needed after a disaster. Give a short explanation for your choice.

Item	Needed	Not Needed	Why?
Shelter			
Video Game			
Food			
Clean Water			
Movie Tickets			
Toys			
Medical help			
Clothing			
Flashlight			
Pencil case			

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Activity Two: Writing Up a Storm

Description: Students brainstorm about the basic needs of survivors immediately after a disaster. Then they write a newspaper article describing those needs pretending that it is only one week after the disaster. A second article emphasizing recovery efforts is written as though it were six months after the disaster.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify basic human needs in the aftermath of a disaster.
2. Students will be able to identify some aspects of the recovery process in the period after a disaster has occurred.

Age/Grade: Ages 10-12 years old, Grades 5-6

Skills: Analysis, discussion, establishing priorities, application of practical knowledge, and writing.

Time: One hour

Materials: None

Directions:

1. Have students brainstorm the definition of a disaster and give examples of recent disasters. Some attributes of disasters might be: leaving large groups of people vulnerable; covering a wide geographic area, doing large scale damage; and the damage is beyond the capacity of the local community to cope. Recent examples might be: the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, the 2005 hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico; the flooding of New Orleans or the Pakistan earthquake.
2. Have students write two articles as if they were newspaper reporters:
 - a. The reporter goes to the area affected by the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia and reports on the emergency relief efforts, such as: what people need and what they are receiving. The report should mention basic needs: food, clean water, shelter, medical help and clothing.

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- b. The reporter goes to the tsunami area one year after the disaster and reports on the recovery efforts. The article should mention rebuilding of homes, schools, hospitals and safe sources of water. Keep in mind that there are still likely emergency relief activities needed as people wait for houses.
 - c. Discussion: What are the differences between basic needs after a disaster and the needs required to rebuild an area after a disaster? How are they similar?
3. Variations:
- Students can write their articles in pairs; half the class can write the first article and the other half can write the second
 - Instead of being newspaper reporters, they can be television reporters and deliver their stories in front of the class as if they were broadcasting from the tsunami-affected area. They could also conduct interviews with other student, role playing as aid workers and disaster survivors.
 - Students can search for similar articles appearing in newspapers or from online media sources, and make a “tsunami” relief and recovery effort scrapbook.

Note to Educators:

For more detailed activities of disasters and disaster preparedness for Grade 5-6 students, please consult the Red Cross online program “Expect the Unexpected...It Can Happen, Be Ready” at www.redcross.ca. (under Educator’s Resources on the left-hand menu)

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Activity Three: Making Relief Plans

Description: Students identify and analyze the emergency basic needs of survivors of the 2004 Southeast Asia tsunami by developing an emergency relief plan. They then develop a post-disaster recovery plan one year after the tsunami.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify basic human needs in the aftermath of a disaster.
2. Students will be able to identify some aspects of the recovery process in the period after a disaster has occurred.

Age/Grade: Ages 14-15, Grade 9

Skills: Analysis, discussion, establishing priorities, application of practical knowledge, research, writing.

Time: Two hours

Materials: None (Some activity variations may require materials. See below)

Directions:

PART ONE

1. Divide the class into groups of 3 to 4 students. Give them the fact sheet on page 10, ask them read it and complete the activity.
 - Each group presents its plan, giving reasons for the priorities it has established.
 - No one plan will be perfect. All plans must somehow deal with the distribution bottlenecks. Depending on the weather, clean water and shelter are generally the greatest needs.

Variation:

You may have students go back and find print or online media stories about the situation one week after the disaster. Compare their plans with the plans of government and international aid organizations.

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Making Relief Plans - Activity Sheet

NEWS BULLETIN: December 31, 2004, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

It's been seven days since one of the worst natural disasters in modern history. The actual number of casualties and the damage caused by the devastating tsunami in Southeast Asia far exceeds the original estimates by the authorities.

To make matters worse, the transportation system (roads and railroads), electrical grids, the sanitation system (clean water and sewage treatment), hospitals and schools are almost completely destroyed.

Reports estimate more than 100,000 deaths in Banda Aceh alone and several hundreds of thousands of people are homeless. The army and international aid agencies are finding it difficult to reach survivors in some of the more remote areas and villages. As a result, casualties may increase yet again due to lack of clean water and medicine.

Relief supplies donated by governments and aid agencies are piling up and taking valuable space at the airport and the harbour. The difficulty is sorting out what supplies are going to be helpful. There are crates of winter clothing, which are definitely not appropriate in such a hot climate. Then the challenge is distributing the relief supplies with so many of the roads still covered in debris.

Your assignment: save as many lives as you can!

With the above information, develop a plan to provide emergency relief to the survivors of the tsunami. The plan should have targets, solutions, a priority of activities and an outline of how you would deal with special problems.

For Example:

Target: Get clean water to survivors to avoid dehydration and to prevent them from using dirty water.

Solution: Distribute water purification tablets by cart and by bicycle throughout the region

Your relief plan should include not only relief supplies but a way to get the items to survivors. It should also list in priority the basic needs of the survivors and who you would help.

Use the Canadian Red Cross Tsunami Relief Website as a reference for the activity and for the follow up discussion.

Reference: www.redcross.ca/tsunami

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Activity Three: Making Relief Plans

PART TWO

1. Form new groups or keep the previous groups. Distribute the fact sheet on page 12 to students, ask them to read the information and complete the assignment listed.
 - Compare plans from each group. The plans should somehow touch on the major issues as identified in the information sheet.
 - Ask students how effective they feel that their plans would be in a relief effort.

Variation:

- Have students look at the Websites of major international aid organizations to see if their tsunami recovery plans are easy to find. If so, compare these plans to the ones developed in class.
- Have students research “six months later” stories about tsunami recovery programs, from the media or online sources. What was the relief and recovery situation six months after the disaster?

Points to Discuss

- What is the connection between relief programs and recovery programs? How are they similar and how do they differ? How are they linked?
- What made relief and recovery so difficult after the tsunami disaster?
- What disaster prevention steps might have reduced the destruction caused by the tsunami?
- How would you decide which international aid organization to support after a disaster such as the tsunami? What criteria would you use?

Note to Educators:

For more detailed activities of disasters and disaster preparedness for Grade 9 students, please consult the Red Cross online program “Expect the Unexpected...It Can Happen, Be Ready” at www.redcross.ca (under Educator’s Resources on the left-hand menu). The resource has been designed for Grade 7-8 students; however some activities may be appropriate.

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Making Relief Plans - Activity Sheet

NEWS BULLETIN, December 26, 2005, Ampara, Sri Lanka

One year after the tsunami devastated this city, thousands of people are still living in temporary tents and shelters. There are many challenges. Permanent homes have not yet been rebuilt because the land where some villages once stood is now under a metre of water. Also, even though there is a shortage of building supplies, aid agencies are careful not to purchase illegally lumbered black market wood so that it doesn't create further deforestation in the country.

There is pressure mounting from governments, donors and the media to build homes faster. But history has shown that survivors are better served by doing it right instead of cutting corners to build fast.

It will take time to assess safe places to build, carefully plan the design of the new towns with access to clean water and sanitation, and consult frequently with community leaders to make sure reconstruction plans are culturally appropriate.

But recovery is about more than just building houses. The people of Sri Lanka are resilient and working hard to bring normalcy back to their lives. They are anxious to start earning a wage to support their families. Many people were fisherman before the tsunami, but many lost their boats or are still too traumatized to return to the water.

The good news is that much progress has been made. Many of the roads have been rebuilt and the bottleneck at the airport and harbour has been resolved. Relief supplies are getting through to the area with relative ease. Many recovery plans are underway.

Your assignment: Help the people of Banda Aceh get back on their feet!

Using the above information, develop a plan on how to help the people of Ampara, Sri Lanka (and surrounding areas) recover from the tsunami. Use the same format as in the first activity plan. Your plan should have targets, solutions, a priority of activities and an outline of how you would deal with special problems.

How long many years will your plan last? What basic humanitarian needs still must be maintained? How do you incorporate the special needs of women and children? What are potential negative side-effects to aid efforts? Can communities sustain your plans once the aid organizations leave?

For Example:

Target: Maintain temporary shelters to keep survivors comfortable while they await their permanent homes.

Solution: Train survivors on construction to help with repairs. They will then have these skills to earn a living once aid organizations leave.

Use the Canadian Red Cross Website as a reference for the activity and for the follow-up discussion. **Reference:** www.redcross.ca/tsunami

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Activity Four: Long-Term Recovery

Description: Students analyze media coverage of the 2004 Southeast Asia tsunami and evaluate the progress of aid organizations.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will become familiar with the complexities associated with disaster relief and recovery programs.
2. Students will analyze the impact of media coverage on the public response and support to disasters.
3. Students will be able to compare information about the tsunami relief and recovery programs of different aid groups

Age/Grade: Ages 16-18, Grades 11-12

Skills: Analysis, discussion, research, and writing.

Time: Two hours for discussion, research and preparation; 30 minutes for presentations of reports

Materials: Internet access

Directions:

Project One: Tsunami Disaster Media Scan

1. Divide class in groups of 3-4 students. Ask each team to research online media stories which appeared within two weeks and six months after the tsunami disaster on December 26, 2004.

Ask students to discuss the following questions in their groups:

- How was the first story reported? How did coverage change over time? How were survivors portrayed?
- How were emergency relief aid programs and organizations described?
- Is the information useful in deciding which organization to support?
- How does media coverage affect the amount public and government support given to the survivors of a disaster?
- How did the media coverage compare to other recent disasters?

2. Have each group present their answers to the class.

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Activity Four: Long-Term Recovery

Project Two: Evaluating Aid Organizations

Many aid organizations were, and still are, involved in relief and recovery efforts in the tsunami-affected region.

They received millions of dollars in donations from individual Canadians and from governments. But how are they providing information to their donors and supporters and to the public about their activities and how they are using these donations?

Ask the same student project teams to select between two and four different aid organizations and compare the tsunami information on each of their Websites. Students should consider: How detailed is the information? How up-to-date is it? Is the financial information clear? Are future plans laid out? Is the information easily accessible? Are e-mail questions answered promptly?

Points to discuss:

- How would you choose an organization to support?
- What kind of information would you expect in return for your support?
- How would you hold the organization accountable for the funds it receives from the public?

2. Have each group present their answers to the class.