

YMCA OF SINGAPORE

DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAMME

BACKGROUND

As at 31 December 2004, more than 123,188 people are feared dead or missing and millions displaced as the strongest earthquake in the world in 40 years unleashed flash floods and giant waves on South and South-east Asia. Tsunamis crashed into coastal areas in Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and the Maldives on 26 December 2004.

YMCA'S FOCUS

Sri Lanka has been worst hit and has been identified as the country to which YMCA should mobilize aid, to ease the sufferings of the people.

- The extent of damage in Sri Lanka is the worst;
- Sri Lanka is relatively one of the poorer countries affected;
- There are YMCAs on-site. Information has been forthcoming from the National Council of Sri Lanka.

DEFINING YMCA'S ROLE

YMCA will serve as a platform for :

1. Mobilization of volunteers in the region who wish to help out in the disaster-stricken areas. Areas of assistance include:
 - (i) general relief work
 - (ii) food and clothing distribution
 - (iii) medical aid
 - (iv) civil construction.
2. Collection and disbursement of donations in cash and in kind.

COURSE OF ACTION

1. “Disaster-Relief Programme Committee”

A Disaster Relief Programme Committee comprising of YMCA Board members and representatives of partner organizations will be chaired by the President of YMCA, Mr David Lua.

Mr Chiang See Poh, a businessman and member of YMCA has agreed to volunteer his services as Director of Operations. He has some experience in related relief work in West Papua. Aged 57, he has been involved in community development work in West Papua, Myanmar, Mongolia and Siberia.

2. Advance Party

An advance party will leave for Sri Lanka.

The primary roles of this team are:

- (i) to establish the infrastructure to facilitate distribution of aid and relief;
- (ii) to act as facilitators for volunteers going into Sri Lanka;
- (iii) to assist in establishing the command centre;
- (iv) to obtain more information for dissemination back to Singapore.

3. Volunteers

The areas of service of the volunteers will be :

- (i) to provide medical help;
- (ii) to comfort those who have lost their loved ones;
- (iii) to facilitate relief organizations who need general helpers;
- (iv) to assist in distribution of food/clothing etc.

(Maximum no. of days recommended for volunteers to be stationed in Sri Lanka is 6 days. New groups will go to Sri Lanka to replace the returning volunteers on a rotational basis.)

Criteria for volunteers who sign up :

- (i) People with a heart for people; medically and physically fit;
- (ii) Age requirement - Minimum of 21 years and above.

4. **Outbound YMCA staff**

YMCA staff may go to Sri Lanka either in their capacity :

- (i) As staff working in the command centre; or
- (ii) As volunteers.

5. **Fundraising**

We will be collecting donations. Cash donation for this programme can be addressed to “YMCA Disaster Relief Fund”.

6. **Sharing of Resources**

We will liaise with other official relief organizations in sharing of resources.

RESTORATION WORK

Restoration work will be carried out at a later stage.

ISSUES

1. **Financial**

- (i) All funds raised will go directly to the relief and restoration work as well as purchase of relief aid and medicine
- (ii) Volunteers may have to pay for their own airfare which will be subsidized by Sri Lanka Airline
- (iii) YMCA will fund the cost of the Ops Centre to be located in the Y and other necessary expenses for this disaster relief programme.

2. **Emergency Evacuation Plan**

Information is provided daily by our YMCA counterparts in Sri Lanka in order to update the Emergency Evacuation Plan. It has been reported that aftershocks may follow massive quakes and further waves may hit.

3. **Risks**

- (i) Further waves as mentioned above.
- (ii) Land mines have been found in parts of Sri Lanka which were previously zoned as "land mine-free" areas. Tsunamis may have dislodged land mines from their original positions. However, the volunteers are unlikely to be going into the villages/rural areas. They are more likely to be stationed in the hospitals.
- (iii) The districts of Batticaloa, Kalmunai and Ampara in the eastern part of Sri Lanka are badly affected areas, with heavy loss of lives and properties. They will be about 10-12 hours' drive from Colombo.
- (iv) BBC has reported that in Sri Lanka, the water pollution is bad. There is a risk of typhoid, cholera, dysentery.
- (v) Communication lines are bad.

4. **Accomodation**

The advanced party and teams will be housed in Colombo YMCA

For more information, please contact:

Hotline: 6430 2333 (3 lines)

Fax: 6430 2279

Email: relief@ymca.org.sg

Source: Michelle Tan

Senior Executive

International Programmes

YMCA of Singapore

One Orchard Road Singapore 238824

YMCA Disaster Relief Programme Volunteer FAQ

1) How Can I Volunteer?

You can help us out in the following areas :

i) Ops Centre Operations

Venue : YMCA of Singapore, Level 3, Room 301
Address : 1 Orchard Road Singapore 238824
Hotline : 6430 2333

Shift A : 8am – 2.30pm

Shift B : 2pm – 8pm

* You can volunteer for either shift

You can :

- handle phone enquiries
- handle email enquiries
- help with volunteers data entry

ii) Donation

Venue : YMCA of Singapore, Level 3, Room 301
Address : 1 Orchard Road Singapore 238824
Operation hours daily (Monday – Sunday) : 8am - 8pm

Cash Donation :

- Drop it into our cash box located at our Ops Centre on Level 3, Room 301.

Cheque Donation :

- Attention cheque to ‘YMCA Disaster Relief Fund’
- You can either send or deliver the cheque to us.

Funds Transfer :

- Transfer money to DBS auto-save account 003-901673-5
- Then email your name, I/C number, address, contact number, and the amount that you have donated to relief@ymca.org.sg

YMCA would not be handling donation in kind.

2) Would food & beverage be provided for volunteers?

Yes. Food and beverage would be provided for volunteers.

3) What do I tell my friends who want to volunteer?

You can ask them to call 6430 2333 or email relief@ymca.org.sg for more information. They can also fill in these information and email us so that we can update them.

- 1) Name :
- 2) Contact :
- 3) Email :
- 4) Relevant skills :
- 5) Age :
- 6) Remarks :
- 7) Available date/s & time slot (for ops centre) :

4) I would like to find out more information about the trip to Sri Lanka.

Currently we are not able to provide you with any information yet, however we would update you if we are having any information session. The advance party would advise if they need a team to follow up with them.

5) Do you need volunteers?

Currently, we need volunteers in the area of helping us handle enquiries at our ops centre. The shifts are as follows : 8am – 2.30pm or 2pm – 8pm. At YMCA of Singapore Level 3 Room 301. Kindly let us know your available dates / time slots. In the case where we have enough volunteers, you can still leave us your contact so that should the need arise, we can update you regularly of any volunteering opportunities.