

# REBUILDING LIVES

THE PHILANTHROPIC RESPONSE TO THE INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI OF 2004

A NYRAG REPORT



New York Regional Association of Grantmakers

This report has been prepared by the New York Regional Association of Grantmakers (NYRAG). The ideas expressed in this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the funding organizations, except where expressly quoted.

A nonprofit membership organization founded in 1979, NYRAG promotes and supports the practice of effective philanthropy for the public good. For more than 25 years, it has been privileged to provide assistance to multiple generations of grantmakers in acquiring and enhancing their knowledge, resources, and skills. NYRAG's membership exceeds 270 grant-making organizations, whose collective giving represents the world's largest concentration of philanthropic capital. Its members provide more than \$3.5 billion

in grants to local, national, and international nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations each year. NYRAG provides its members with opportunities for collaboration and collective action. It also serves as a key information source for government officials and the media on the local, national, and international level on the contributions of the philanthropic sector to society.

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Michael Seltzer, President  
New York Regional Association  
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Dear Colleague,

On December 26, 2004, the largest earthquake in 40 years struck the earth beneath the Indian Ocean, displacing billions of tons of water and unleashing a tsunami that hit a dozen countries. With mammoth waves traveling at jetliner speeds, it was perhaps the most destructive tsunami in history. More than a quarter of a million people were confirmed dead or missing and 1.9 million people were displaced.<sup>1</sup> More recently, tragedy struck U.S. soil when Hurricane Katrina crashed into the Gulf Coast in August 2005, flooding 80 percent of the city of New Orleans. The hurricane turned out to be the costliest natural disaster in American history, creating a humanitarian crisis unlike any other in the U.S. since the Great Depression. Katrina caused a massive loss of property and left more than 1,000 dead or missing in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. Subsequently, nearly a half million people lost their jobs.<sup>2</sup>

Sadly, these natural disasters, separated by eight months and thousands of miles, are hardly isolated events. There has been a three-fold increase in the number of natural disasters in the 1990s, compared to the 1960s, and they're on the rise. In October 2005, there were mudslides in Guatemala that turned a village into a mass grave for thousands and an earthquake in Pakistan that claimed more than 30,000 lives and put an estimated 2.5 million people in need of winter shelter assistance.<sup>3</sup>

By the fall of 2005, several news articles reported that scientists were predicting a rise in hurricane activity that would likely continue for the foreseeable future due to cyclical conditions in the Atlantic Ocean. And there was more bad news: these cyclical conditions were being met by rising sea levels, the result of global warming, creating the perfect breeding ground for monster, killer storms. While our ability to track these mega-storms has improved, we are still in hot water. The latest census figures indicate that between 2000 and 2004 more than 50 percent of the fastest-growing U.S. counties were on the East Coast and in Gulf Coastal states, which places them either in or dangerously close to the strike zone. According to *National Geographic Magazine*, "societal risk—roughly defined as the number of people and value of property vulnerable to hurricanes—has exploded."

Faced with calamities on the scale of 9/11 and the Indian Ocean tsunami, the philanthropic community is taking action and developing flexible, well-thought-out programs to meet critical needs. As a result, principles and preferred practices for disaster grantmaking are being identified. In order to successfully meet future challenges, we must continue these focused grantmaking efforts, especially in light of the increasingly interconnected world in which we live. The impact of the tsunami extended to New York City, where Asian Americans with roots in the tsunami-devastated region were directly affected, as evidenced in the special report included here.

Recovery and reconstruction require the long-term commitment of the global community and will most likely take decades. In response to the Indian Ocean tsunami, organized philanthropy has already accomplished a great deal in providing relief for the many

thousands of people who survived the loss of family, housing, and livelihood. The first section of this report covers this extraordinary response and insights gained by grantmakers based in the New York metropolitan area. It is intended to help identify ways that grantmakers and other donors can effectively target their grant dollars in the years ahead in response to other natural disasters. The special report that begins on page 27 covers the ongoing needs of South Asian immigrants in New York City who were affected by the tsunami. It was prepared by the Asian American Federation of New York.

This publication lays important groundwork for future collaborations in the philanthropic community. At NYRAG, we are expanding our core functions while working closely with infrastructure organizations to ensure that grantmakers have the tools they need to operate effectively in advancing their charitable missions. As such, our primary focus at NYRAG is grantmakers helping grantmakers.

We are grateful to our colleagues at the Council on Foundations and the European Foundation Centre for their publication, *Disaster Grantmaking*, which informed many of our members' efforts. We look forward to hearing from our members and other grantmakers regarding how we can assist them in crafting their responses to future disasters, when we will once again be called upon to help alleviate human suffering.

Sincerely,

Michael Seltzer  
President  
New York Regional Association  
of Grantmakers

<sup>1</sup> Oxfam, *Targeting Poor People: Rebuilding Lives after the Tsunami*, June 2005.

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Labor, October 21, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> [www.interaction.org/south\\_quake](http://www.interaction.org/south_quake)

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## INTRODUCTION

In the days and weeks following the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, the New York Regional Association of Grantmakers (NYRAG), an association that facilitates collaboration and knowledge-sharing among its members, received inquiries from its members about how they could most effectively respond to this catastrophe. NYRAG immediately posted pertinent information online, shared knowledge of what steps many grantmakers were taking, and kept its members abreast of the situation in tsunami-torn areas.

With this disaster, grantmakers had a unique set of challenges. Many questions had to be addressed quickly to prevent further loss of life and help survivors, such as:

- What were the needs of the peoples and regions affected by the disaster?
- Where could charitable funds be used most effectively?
- Which organizations were best positioned to utilize grants to fulfill needs?
- Should disaster relief be needs-based?
- How should grantmakers decide whether to engage on a short- or long-term basis?

This publication attempts to answer these and other questions by relaying the experiences of NYRAG members in providing grants for tsunami relief,

recovery, and reconstruction assistance in order to construct a practical model for successful disaster grantmaking.

In drafting this report, NYRAG conducted research, interviews, and an online survey, finding that its members had donated nearly \$240.6 million in response to the tsunami—more than 13 percent of total contributions by Americans. This report, which covers experiences that can be used to guide grantmakers in future disaster efforts, includes the following:

- NYRAG members' tsunami initiatives
- Aggregate data about these initiatives
- Challenges and successes of grantmaking in tsunami-devastated areas
- Lessons learned in disaster grantmaking that emerge from this experience
- Preferred practices for disaster grantmaking
- Resources available online

A special report prepared by the Asian American Federation of New York, which begins on page 27, covers the ongoing needs of South Asian immigrant communities in New York City.

## OVERVIEW

The tsunami that hit South Asian and parts of African coastlines in 2004 caused wide-scale devastation. Waves as high as palm trees killed what is estimated to be more than a quarter of a million people. As news of the disaster spread, organizations began to formulate relief plans.

There are several unique aspects to the philanthropic response to the devastation caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami. Because of the extensive media coverage of the tsunami, potential donors were almost instantly aware of the severity of the situation. Many virtually watched the situation unfold via video footage in the media and on the Internet, and then closely followed events reported in newspaper articles. Due to the widespread visibility of the disaster, organizations in New York and around the world were flooded with donations. By December 12, 2005, the Center of Philanthropy at Indiana University estimated that, excluding government grants, Americans had donated \$1.795 billion in cash and in-kind contributions to organizations that responded to the tsunami.<sup>4</sup> Many NYRAG members led the way—including Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer Inc., Citigroup Foundation, Credit Suisse Group, Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., and the Ford Foundation—committing millions within days of the tsunami. California-based Give2Asia established a Tsunami Recovery Fund, which received \$3 million in donations. In addition to private donations, significant government donations flowed into the

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/tsunami\\_relief\\_giving\\_1-18-05.html](http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/tsunami_relief_giving_1-18-05.html)

relief effort as well. By the beginning of May 2005, more than 24 countries had contributed. The U.S. government alone pledged \$950 million.

Strategic disaster relief is always tailored to the particular characteristics of a disaster. In the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami, a large number of communities lost key elements of their societal and physical infrastructure. Not only were family members, friends, and business traders lost, but houses, fishing boats, roads, and railways were destroyed. Ultimately, the tsunami's massive waves redrew coastal maps of the region, wiped away rice fields and other farmland, and altered life for untold millions.

Grantmakers' responses to the Indian Ocean tsunami were informed by their relief, recovery, and rebuilding efforts after 9/11. Media scrutiny of response efforts then centered on the discrepancy between the amounts contributed and the amounts actually distributed.<sup>5</sup> Thus, among the first questions relief and humanitarian assistance organizations faced after the tsunami was how quickly the funds received should be distributed and whether funds should be pledged toward short-term or long-term assistance. This report found that while grantmakers are sensitive to the view that funds should be distributed quickly and efficiently, most note that one of the main lessons they have learned from previous disaster-related experiences is the importance of taking time to carefully assess a situation so as to allocate funds most effectively. The decision to provide either short- or

long-term assistance is made individually by each grantmaking organization and often depends on both the extent of its funding and the nature of its mission.

With the influx of numerous organizations engaged in relief and reconstruction in the tsunami-torn areas, another challenge commonly faced by NYRAG members was choosing which organizations to support.

Desperate situations call for innovative responses, which many tsunami relief efforts reflect. Among the most interesting was that of American Express, which helped families track down tsunami survivors through their credit card use. There was also an increased use of blogs as tools to locate family members and gain information on tsunami relief efforts. One blog (<http://tsunamihelp.blogspot.com>) provided posts and links to information pertaining to fundraising events, aid contributions, helpline numbers, and lists of the deceased. The immediate exchange of information via blogs meant that caring, compassionate people around the world could feel more connected to the region. In many of the areas most severely affected by the tsunami, however, Internet access was limited. As a result, many smaller organizations without Internet access were not able to communicate effectively with the world community.

In New York City, where most NYRAG members are located, donors collaborated in their tsunami relief efforts. Corporations and nonprofits worked together to compile information, form disaster relief plans for South Asia, and exchange ideas. On January 7, 2005, the New York

Immigration Coalition hosted a conference call among various New York organizations to present and discuss their planned relief contributions. NYRAG posted tsunami relief information on its Web site, and the Foundation Center began online documentation of tsunami grantmaking. New York University's Asian/Pacific/American Studies Program and Institute and the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health hosted an event in March called "The Indian Ocean Tsunami: The Context, The Response, The Future." It brought together medical experts, professors, and staff from various nonprofits, such as Doctors Without Borders and the World Health Organization, and included firsthand accounts from those who had just returned from the region, as well as analysis of the situation. Also in March, the American Express Foundation hosted a panel that gave New York philanthropists an opportunity to discuss their tsunami relief initiatives. Representatives from Citigroup, Pfizer Inc., NYRAG, and the World Food Program participated. In May, Give2Asia, the Tsunami Recovery Fund, and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors hosted a similar briefing about the Recovery Fund's projects. This report continues efforts to share information regarding ongoing tsunami-related initiatives.

<sup>5</sup> See Tom Seessel, "The Philanthropic Response to September 11: Lessons from Relief and Recovery in New York City" in *September 11: The Philanthropic Response* (New York: Foundation Center, 2004), 11.



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# Early Responses

INTERVIEWS WITH NYRAG MEMBERS

It has been said that the great tsunami of 2004 not only shook the world, but also transformed the landscape of philanthropy. Millions of people and thousands of organizations worldwide donated money and time to prevent further loss of life and to alleviate suffering in tsunami-devastated areas. Philanthropic organizations, corporations, nongovernmental organizations,

governments, the military, and the media worked together effectively, helping to shed light on the magnitude of the disaster and seizing opportunities to rebuild lives.

Grantmakers can provide targeted resources that supplement what governments are doing in times of disaster. NYRAG members were some of the first grantmakers to respond to

the Indian Ocean tsunami. Among these early responders were The Starr Foundation, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson. Within days of the catastrophe, and with images of the destruction still fresh in everyone's mind, NYRAG asked executives from these member organizations for their perspectives on disaster responses in the region. The interviews follow.

REBUILDING LIVES



**Florence A. Davis**  
President, The Starr Foundation

“There is no substitute for people on the ground who can attest to the effectiveness of the myriad efforts that emerge in response to a natural disaster.”

**The Starr Foundation, a private foundation, was established in 1955 by Cornelius Vander Starr, the founder of what is now known as American International Group Inc. (AIG), one of the world’s largest insurance and financial services firms. The company was established in Shanghai in 1919. The foundation has been involved with disaster relief efforts for some time.**

**NYRAG:** *What did Starr do in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami?*

**DAVIS:** We are fortunate to have a close relationship with AIG colleagues around the globe through the company’s 92,000 employees in 130 jurisdictions and countries. In particular, the company’s country managers are an invaluable on-the-ground resource for us. They are knowledgeable about what local and international nongovernmental organizations are doing and what their pressing needs are. As a result, we immediately contacted the country managers in the key affected countries and solicited their advice.

**NYRAG:** *When did you anticipate that The Starr Foundation might be able to act on the information that you had received?*

**DAVIS:** We learned from our work in response to 9/11 that it takes a few weeks to get a full assessment of how resources can be most effectively applied.

**NYRAG:** *With all of the competing demands in disaster situations, how did you decide where Starr can most effectively apply its grant resources?*

**DAVIS:** The foundation has had a longstanding interest in health care, so we have tended to support efforts that ensure emergency medical care. That is a logical area for our intervention. We have learned a great deal over the years; for example, what kinds of medical supplies are most needed, such as oral rehydration tablets and malaria pills. But I think we will want to fund reconstruction efforts as well.

**NYRAG:** *What other lessons have you learned from your other past efforts in dealing with earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, and 9/11?*

**DAVIS:** We know that there is no substitute for people on the ground who can attest to the effectiveness of the myriad efforts that often emerge in response to a natural disaster. We have

also learned that the most effective efforts might include local nongovernmental grassroots organizations and charities, in addition to international humanitarian assistance organizations. Finally, we have discerned that we need to be flexible and open to assisting in meeting immediate, short-term or long-term needs, depending on the particular circumstances.

**NYRAG:** *Have you found it challenging to direct grants to organizations in other countries that do not enjoy 501(c)(3) status in the United States?*

**DAVIS:** We use the services of Give2Asia, which exercises the proper level of expenditure responsibility and performs the necessary due diligence. Their administrative costs are reasonable and lessen the burden that would otherwise fall on our small staff.

**NYRAG:** *Any closing thoughts?*

**DAVIS:** Through our experiences over the years, we have developed some expertise in disaster relief and knowledge of the key players and the quality of their work. We are happy to share that with our fellow grantmakers. ▲



**Paula Luff**

Senior Director, International Philanthropy, Pfizer Inc.

“Once the headlines fade,  
the donor community will still be badly needed.”

**Two immigrants established Pfizer Inc. in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York, in 1849. In its early days, the company was active in helping other immigrants to assimilate and settle in the United States. Today, Pfizer is the world’s largest biomedical and pharmaceutical company, with 122,000 employees in practically every nation.**

**Paula Luff oversees all of Pfizer’s philanthropic activities outside of the U.S. In 2004, Pfizer’s global giving was approximately \$1.26 billion in grants and medicines, double the amount donated in 2003. In addition, the company offers products and involves its skilled employees in non-governmental organizations.**

**NYRAG:** *Please tell us about the announcement that Pfizer made on Wednesday, December 29, 2004.*

**LUFF:** We have a strong business presence in the region most affected by the tsunami. Area presidents, country managers, human resources, and corporate affairs managers in Thailand, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia started emailing me as early as Monday [December 27th] with reports on what they were seeing. We were able to put together a crisis team to begin to pull together our plan of action, even though Monday was not a business day. We knew that the aftermath of the tsunami would have untold impact on human lives, the civic and health care infrastructure, and the economy of the nations where our subsidiaries are operating. As a result, we felt that a strong commitment was warranted. Our company decided on Monday evening to make a major commitment. On Wednesday morning, we committed up to \$10 million in funds to local and international relief organizations operating in the affected region and also donated an estimated \$25 million worth of pharmaceutical products—such as antibiotics, anti-malarials, and painkillers—and other items, such as plastic sheeting for body bags and for shelter. The international recipients are the

American Red Cross, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Rescue Committee, Catholic Relief Services, CARE, the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, and Save the Children. The Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program will match U.S. employee contributions dollar for dollar to nonprofit organizations assisting in the relief effort.

**NYRAG:** *What led Pfizer to make such a substantial commitment?*

**LUFF:** This disaster is one of unprecedented proportions. Every day, we are seeing the death toll go up by the tens of thousands. We became immediately aware of the disastrous consequences on the ground for our 4,000 employees in Asia, their families, and their communities. From our perspective, the response on our part is of a magnitude that is only matched in our history by our efforts after 9/11.

**NYRAG:** *What lessons did the corporation’s previous disaster relief experience provide?*

**LUFF:** In the past, as a large health care company, Pfizer has provided donations of antibiotics and cash support. Our largest relief effort had been mounted in response to the World Trade Center disaster in 2001, when Pfizer and the Pfizer Foundation contributed approximately \$11 million, including \$600,000 contributed by Pfizer employees, which was matched by the foundation. In addition, we made medical personnel available and opened up our headquarters to relief personnel.

We chose our beneficiaries on the basis of our past relationships with them. We have worked with all of the organizations that we chose over the years. We know their track record in times of disasters. They are on the ground in the affected countries and have a significant presence. They are able to mobilize quickly. We know from our past work with them over the last 15 years—in Kosovo, Ethiopia, Somalia, and other humanitarian crises—that they have the capacity to deliver. There are other organizations whose work is superb. We simply turn to those agencies that we have had the closest working relationship with over time.

We use our employees on the ground as subject experts. We have also learned that it is important to be flexible with your funding. Finally, we know that the

recovery will take years. Donors will need to be in for the long haul. Once the headlines fade, the donor community will still be badly needed.

**NYRAG:** *On what priorities did you focus your initial funding?*

**LUFF:** Our primary initial focus was on relief, although we instructed our beneficiaries that they can choose to spend down the funds within three to six months. The reconstruction work requires enormous commitment from multilateral agencies and bilateral government donors.

The funding is flexible. It can be used for needs assessments and the purchase of basic supplies, whether they are coffins, plastic sheeting, water purification tablets, food, cooking fuel, or other basic necessities. The best thing that the agencies can do is to source those materials locally to support merchants who are also suffering from this disaster. That helps the economies of those affected communities and countries get back on their feet. Also, one can avoid the logistics of shipping items from the United States. People should send money rather than goods for these reasons. We will also be providing a logistical and engineering supply chain where needed. As needs become more apparent in the weeks and months ahead, Pfizer will be providing additional medical supplies.

**NYRAG:** *To what extent are those local nongovernmental organizations on the ground visible on your radar screen?*

**LUFF:** They are very much on our radar screen. Our subsidiaries in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, and India had already allocated \$250,000 as of [December 27th]. Our country managers and medical personnel in those countries are best positioned to determine with whom we should be working, including hospitals, government officials, and ministries of health.

**NYRAG:** *To what extent does your disaster relief work mirror your ongoing funding priorities?*

**LUFF:** Very much so. Our approach is a full asset model; it's medicine, expertise, cash, and other resources. Our ongoing interests are promoting access to health care, including medicines, for low-income populations both here in the United States and in developing countries. ▲



**Conrad Person**

Director, International Programs and Products Giving, Johnson & Johnson

“We believe that it’s very important that donors rely upon people who have experience in these areas. This is not for amateurs.”

**Johnson & Johnson is the largest and most diversified health care company in the world, with approximately 105,000 employees in more than 140 countries. The company has a history of involvement in natural disaster relief that goes back to the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Over the last nine years, the company has assisted with efforts related to hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, ice storms, and other disasters.**

**NYRAG:** *What is the focus of Johnson & Johnson’s corporate contributions?*

**PERSON:** The bulk of our donations goes to meeting chronic needs—disaster relief is a relatively small portion of what we do. In all instances, we are seeking to increase access to health care, especially for women and children. The organizations we assist provide support to health care systems from the clinic level to the major hospital level, treating everyone regardless of their ability to pay.

**NYRAG:** *How do you decide what to do in disaster relief situations?*

**PERSON:** Disaster relief is an ongoing line of work with Johnson & Johnson. As a corporation and as a donor, we are removed from the situation on the ground when a disaster hits; that is to say, we don’t consider ourselves disaster experts—the experts are the relief and development organizations. They know what is really needed. We believe that it’s very important that donors rely upon people who have experience in these areas. This is not for amateurs. We have a group of organizations that we support every year, such as AmeriCares, Project HOPE, Direct Relief International, MAP International, Interchurch Medical Assistance, Heart to Heart International. These groups do a great deal of relief and development work that addresses the chronic need for health care support in the developing world. They provide this support routinely, but when a disaster occurs, if they have experience in that region, they will seek to meet the needs that emerge from that disaster as well. Very often, when a disaster occurs, there is a huge drain on the supply system in that region. In response to this, we have created what we call a “disaster relief module,” in consultation with the agencies I mentioned earlier. They advised

us on what is needed most commonly in the event of a disaster. This is typically wound care products—sutures, bandages, wound dressings—as well as pain relief and hygiene products. These are products that are made by Johnson & Johnson, and we donate these modules to select organizations *in advance* of disasters. When a disaster occurs, they then come to us to replace the modules they have on hand and are about to send to the affected area.

**NYRAG:** *Have your efforts also included situations of civil unrest and man-made disasters?*

**PERSON:** Yes, we have been involved in both Kosovo and Darfur.

**NYRAG:** *Does your assistance result in a stronger health care infrastructure on the ground for the long-term?*

**PERSON:** Absolutely. But we’re a small part of it—we’re products and maybe cash. The people who take their knowledge and skills there are the real heroes.

**NYRAG:** *Does Johnson & Johnson get involved in any way with nongovernmental organizations or others that are seeking to minimize the impact of future disasters through putting in place multilateral understandings?*

**PERSON:** Not internationally, but after 9/11 we did several things, such as providing a grant to the National Organization for Disability to help develop and distribute a handbook for facility managers on how to deal with disabled people in the event of an emergency. We also gave a grant to UCLA's disaster management program; they developed a Web-based disaster planning system.

**NYRAG:** *So you do not need to make a decision immediately after a disaster; because you have already equipped these organizations with resources?*

**PERSON:** What we were seeking to do was to remove the lag time. If you've defined your gift, and you're sure that it's the kind of thing that people need universally, then you're sending a fixed item or set of items and you know that these items are not going to go to waste because they're needed universally.

**NYRAG:** *Could you describe the response to the Indian Ocean tsunami to illuminate this?*

**PERSON:** We had already provided disaster relief modules to AmeriCares and to MAP International with instructions that, when a disaster occurs, donations that we have given that are *not* disaster relief modules not be sent there until after 90 days, because we don't want our product going into a chaotic situation without having some say over this. So Johnson & Johnson

materials going into a disaster area are either a disaster relief module or are being provided as part of a specific request. We donated additional disaster relief modules—nine at the value of \$180,000 total to AmeriCares, MAP International, and Direct Relief International. We also set up with American Red Cross the opportunity for employees to give by Web or in the old-fashioned way to the American Red Cross' International Disaster Relief Fund, with the company matching dollar for dollar.

**NYRAG:** *What is the 90-day period for?*

**PERSON:** To give us the opportunity to advise. It's a chaotic situation when a major disaster occurs. We have great confidence that a disaster relief module will be universally useful, but how can we be certain that another product may not be an appropriate donation? What we're trying to avoid is the kind of bad press that has afflicted many organizations when their products ended up just being in the way as opposed to being really useful.

**NYRAG:** *Can you tell us something about the Partnership for Quality Medical Donations?*

**PERSON:** I was chair of that organization until quite recently. The Partnership serves as a resource for improving the quality of donation processes. What we were trying to do was encourage people to treat donations much more seriously. We saw there were many individuals, smaller

organizations, or sometimes governments, making donations out of the goodness of their hearts, but without really understanding the realities of what happens at the other end. That would cause them to do things that were quite dangerous, like donating expired drugs, or drugs that had already been dispensed.

**NYRAG:** *In response to the Indian Ocean tsunami, were the disaster relief modules that you provided an extraordinary budget commitment?*

**PERSON:** A decision was made by the company's Executive Committee to fund this effort beyond our regular budgetary commitments.

**NYRAG:** *What is your policy on sending support to nongovernmental organizations that are known to employees on the ground in affected areas?*

**PERSON:** We have individual operating companies in the affected countries that set up their own matching gifts programs for their local employees, so they were able to select more locally popular NGOs, but even in those countries we had employees who elected to select the Web to donate under the corporate program to the American Red Cross. ▲



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# Tsunami-Related Efforts of NYRAG Members

The contributions listed in this report do not necessarily reflect final amounts donated for disaster recovery by all NYRAG members.

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# Public and Private Foundations

In the aftermath of the tsunami, giving by public and private foundation members of NYRAG totaled \$18.6 million.

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## Achelis & Bodman Foundations

**TOTAL** \$50,000

**GRANTEE** The American Red Cross for the purpose of tsunami relief.

**COMMENT** “The U.S. and New York City philanthropic community in its unique and special way through foundations, corporations, and individual donors responded immediately to the catastrophic disaster.”

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## Albert Kunstadter Family Foundation

**TOTAL** \$5,000

**GRANTEE** Continuing support of Mercy Corps to aid with relief efforts in Indonesia.

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## Carnegie Corporation of New York

**TOTAL** \$1 million

**GRANTEES** Allocated \$500,000 among the American Red Cross International Response Fund, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, and Save the Children in five \$100,000 grants, to assist with fulfilling short-term needs. A further grant of \$500,000 was made to UNICEF to aid long-term rebuilding efforts, particularly educational infrastructure.

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## The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

**TOTAL** \$500,000

**GRANTEE** Project HOPE (Health Opportunities for People Everywhere) to aid long- and short-term tsunami-related efforts.

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## Ford Foundation

**TOTAL** \$6+ million

**GRANTEES** Multiple recipients involved in long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation. In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, the Ford Foundation informed current grantees that they could re-direct certain grant funds to relief activities. With the help of its offices in Jakarta, New Delhi, Hanoi, and Nairobi, the foundation is making grants to local NGOs across the affected regions that focus on re-establishing community institutions, improving coordination, and enhancing institutional capacity among NGOs engaged in the relief effort.

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## Give2Asia

**TOTAL** \$4.1 million

**GRANTEES** Administered grants to 50 local nonprofits in tsunami-affected communities throughout 2005 via the newly established Tsunami Recovery Fund. Give2Asia, a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) organization that increases the quality and quantity of charitable investments in Asia by providing personalized services to donors and nonprofit organizations, created the Tsunami Recovery Fund to provide resources to organizations in the affected areas that are providing health care, education, micro-finance, and other services to tsunami survivors. Nearly one year after the tsunami devastated countries across the Indian Ocean, Give2Asia created a new fund, the Tsunami Recovery Fund—2006, to address key rebuilding needs in the hardest hit regions. The new fund will address the needs identified by the first phase of the Aceh Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Appraisal, a 16-month assessment designed to accelerate and guide the revitalization of Aceh, as well as Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, and the Maldives.

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### Ittleson Foundation

**TOTAL** \$15,000

**GRANTEES** \$5,000 to the Asian American Federation of New York to assess the needs of New York City residents affected by the tsunami; \$10,000 to the Center for the Advancement of Children's Mental Health at Columbia University for the International Society for Research on Child & Adolescent Psychopathology. The latter was used to bring young clinicians to the U.S. from countries affected by the tsunami to provide support, training, and materials as part of the Society's June 2005 New York City meeting. The training was designed to enable these clinicians to deliver effective programs upon return to their home countries. As a foundation exclusively funding in the United States with one of its three program areas being Mental Health, Ittleson sought out opportunities within its funding tradition to respond to the special needs created by the tsunami. Ittleson may be making additional tsunami-related contributions.

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### The Posner–Wallace Foundation

**TOTAL** \$2,500+

**GRANTEES** International Rescue Committee to support tsunami victims. In addition to the above, this family foundation maintains ongoing support to refugee and relief organizations in the affected areas. The foundation's principal funding areas include hunger and nutrition and international grantmaking.

**COMMENT** "We provide ongoing support for a few organizations that provide long-term economic assistance following emergencies, i.e., both first and second responders. Within our routine grant budget, we support Doctors Without Borders, American Jewish World Service, and the International Rescue Committee."

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### The Prospect Hill Foundation

**TOTAL** \$100,000

**GRANTEE** Oxfam International for tsunami-related efforts. Oxfam is a confederation of 12 organizations working with over 3,000 partners in over 100 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty, suffering, and injustice. Prospect Hill is also matching employee donations.

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### Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

**TOTAL** \$250,000

**GRANTEES** In response to donor interest in longer-term reconstruction efforts, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors created the Tsunami Support Fund. Contributions to this fund were pooled and grants have gone to projects supported by Give2Asia, Acumen Fund, Synergos Institute, and Sri Lanka Care for projects focused on long-term efforts to assist those affected by the tsunami.

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### Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation

**TOTAL** \$10,000

**GRANTEE** UNICEF, for short-term relief for the victims of the tsunami.

**COMMENT** "The Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation's grantmaking priorities changed as a result of the tsunami, and the foundation will reconsider its guidelines regarding providing general support in cases like the tsunami."

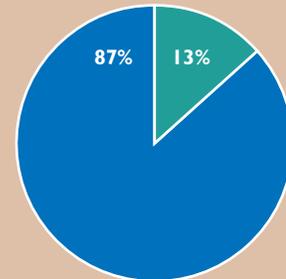
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### The Sister Fund

**TOTAL** \$2,500

**GRANTEE** FORWARD, a women's organization in Tamil Nadu, India, to support tsunami-related efforts.

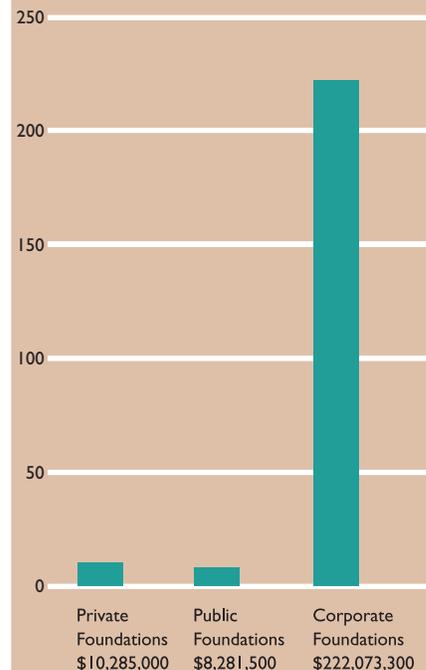
### Contributions by Americans



● NYRAG members: \$240 million  
● Others: \$1.55 billion  
Total: \$1.795 billion

### Contributions by NYRAG members

in millions of U.S. dollars



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## The Starr Foundation

**TOTAL** \$2.5 million

**GRANTEES** \$500,000 to the International Rescue Committee for recovery efforts in Indonesia shortly after the disaster; and an additional total of \$2,065,717 to the AIG Disaster Relief Fund, a 501(c) organization, matching on a one-to-one basis AIG employees' contributions for tsunami relief efforts.

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## Tides Foundation

**TOTAL** \$611,500

**GRANTEES** Multiple projects funded by the newly created Tides Rapid Response Tsunami Relief Fund. The distribution of funds was guided by the principles of addressing emergency needs; reaching those most in need; identifying, preserving, and replacing productive assets; ensuring broad and balanced local participation in expenditure decisions; supporting indigenous organizations; and rebuilding local capacity. In line with these principles, Tides Foundation has awarded grants to a number of local organizations that were identified by partners working in the affected areas.

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## Trinity Grants Program

**TOTAL** \$100,000

**GRANTEES** Episcopal Relief and Development and Christ Church, based in Bangkok, to rebuild infrastructure in the southern areas of Thailand that were affected by the tsunami. The funds were contributed through the grantmaking program of Trinity Church.

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## UJA–Federation of New York

**TOTAL** \$3.3+ million

**GRANTEES** Bulk directed through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) to reconstruction efforts in India and Sri Lanka; \$635,000 went to fund a collaborative project between the Israel Trauma Coalition, the UJA–Federation of New York Agency Trauma and Disaster Consortium, the American JDC, the Israel Ministry of Health, and Sahanaya Sri Lanka. UJA–Federation of New York responded to the devastation caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami as a validation of a commitment to values of *tzedakah* (justice and charity) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). The goal of this project is to help foster the psychosocial resiliency of tsunami survivors. Professionals of local institutions are provided with special mental health training.

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## United Way of New York City

**TOTAL** \$20,000

**GRANTEES** A grant to the Asian American Federation of New York for an assessment of the ongoing needs of South Asian immigrant communities in New York City. Additionally, the organization helped a number of companies conduct tsunami relief drives. Individuals and corporations that wanted to contribute toward tsunami relief through United Way were directed to the United Way South Asia Response Fund, established by United Way International to assist tsunami survivors.

# Corporations and Corporate Foundations

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In the aftermath of the tsunami, giving by corporations and corporate foundation members of NYRAG totaled more than **\$222 million.**<sup>6</sup>

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## AT&T Foundation

**TOTAL** \$426,000, including employee contributions

**GRANTEES** Multiple agencies. In reaction to the devastation caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami, the AT&T Foundation donated \$101,000 to the American Red Cross International Response Fund. It also matched employee donations to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, Oxfam, UNICEF, Télécoms Sans Frontières, and other charities engaged in tsunami relief work. To date, more than \$325,000 has been registered through this effort. AT&T supported several

<sup>6</sup> Includes employee contributions.

organizations that were working in the affected areas by providing links on a special page established on AT&T's Web site.

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## **AXA Foundation**

**TOTAL** \$1.3 million, including employee contributions

**GRANTEES** U.S.-based organizations that could document their efforts and the American Red Cross International Relief Fund. The AXA Foundation is the philanthropic arm of AXA Financial: the U.S branch of the global financial services organization, AXA Group. AXA Foundation administered AXA's U.S.-based charitable response to the tsunami. It initiated an employee matching-gift program that is designed to raise a total of \$1.3 million and will close at the end of 2005. AXA Foundation's match to employees' contributions will be directed to the American Red Cross International Relief Fund. In recognition of the unprecedented nature of the Indian Ocean tsunami, AXA Foundation will not count contributions for tsunami relief toward the annual maximum employee charitable contribution that is eligible for matching.

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## **Accenture**

**TOTAL** \$4 million, plus employee donations of more than \$2 million

**GRANTEES** Primarily the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and UNICEF, which were chosen for their global scope and reputation. Accenture made an additional matching contribution of \$500,000, also distributed to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and UNICEF. To date, Accenture people around the world have made personal donations of more than \$2 million.

**COMMENT** "As part of Accenture's commitment to provide assistance with long-term reconstruction, the Accenture Foundations are working with local teams

in affected areas to determine how best to employ the skills and expertise of Accenture people. Accenture is also coordinating with several global nonprofit organizations involved in the relief effort. Accenture estimates that it will provide in excess of \$2 million in in-kind services to the reconstruction."

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## **Altria Group, Inc.**

**TOTAL** \$6 million, including employee donations

**GRANTEES** The American Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Friends of the World Food Program, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Rescue Committee, and AmeriCares, among others. The parent company of Kraft Foods, Philip Morris International, and Philip Morris USA, Altria contributed a total of \$6 million to assist tsunami relief efforts. This included an employee matching-gift program in addition to a number of grants made to the above organizations. Altria supported AmeriCares by helping to underwrite its first airlift to Sri Lanka, which included much-needed medicines, medical supplies, and water purification kits. Altria is currently working with key humanitarian aid partners to identify the long-term needs of the affected region and develop strategies to fulfill them.

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## **American Express**

**TOTAL** \$3.4 million, including employee contributions of \$1.2 million

**GRANTEES** American Express Company allocated \$1 million to the American Red Cross, distributed to Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the region. American Express Foundation matched employee donations of \$1.2 million to the American Red Cross, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Mercy Corps, Save the Children, U.S. Fund for UNICEF, the American Jewish World Service, Friends of the World Food Program, International Rescue Committee, Oxfam America, and Doctors Without Borders.

**COMMENT** "Choosing which organizations or affected areas on which to focus money and resources was a challenge, as was determining an appropriate dollar response in the face of daily escalations of damage and loss of life, and establishing how to match donations of employees to non-U.S. charities which we could not vet. Our existing disaster relief fund partnership with the American Red Cross was particularly helpful in obtaining the information we needed in a timely manner."

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## **Bank of America Charitable Foundation**

**TOTAL** \$1.5+ million, including employee contributions of \$946,000

**GRANTEES** Multiple agencies. Responsible for the Bank of America's charitable investment strategy, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation contributed more than \$1.5 million to tsunami relief efforts. It made an initial contribution of \$600,000 to AmeriCares, the American Red Cross International Response Fund, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, UNICEF, and World Vision. These organizations were chosen on the basis of the foundation's previous experience with them, the organizations' experience and presence in the affected areas, and the input of the company's domestic and overseas associates. Furthermore, an employee matching-gift program was initiated through which employee contributions to U.S.-based organizations for tsunami relief were matched by the foundation, with the traditional minimum contribution of \$25 waived so as to accommodate as many donors as possible. Through this program, employees contributed \$946,000. The Bank of America also supported the fundraising initiatives of several relief organizations through its network of 5,800 banking centers.

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## **BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company)**

**TOTAL** \$1.75 million, including employee contributions

**GRANTEES** Multiple agencies. A global medical technology company, BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) made a total contribution of \$1.75 million toward tsunami relief, \$250,000 of which was directed to the American Red Cross and the U.S. Fund for UNICEF through cash donations. BD also initiated a matching-gift program, pledging to match employee contributions worldwide to the American Red Cross or UNICEF for tsunami relief, up to \$250,000. Medical equipment totaling \$1 million was donated by BD for the relief effort to Direct Relief International and AmeriCares.

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## **Bristol-Myers Squibb**

**TOTAL** \$8.84 million, including employee contributions

**GRANTEES** Multiple agencies. The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation and several regional businesses have contributed \$1.1 million to the American Red Cross Disaster Response Fund, the International Red Cross, and the Canadian Red Cross. The company has also donated more than \$7 million in medicines, including much-needed antibiotics, antifungals, analgesics, Mead Johnson nutritionals, and Convatec wound care items. The company routinely partners with several designated international relief organizations and will continue to monitor needs and provide medicines for both immediate and long-term care through these organizations. Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada donated medicines to Health Partners International of Canada. Also, over 2,400 employees have donated approximately \$370,000 to the special employee program that was matched on a one-to-one basis.

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## **Citigroup Foundation**

**TOTAL** \$12 million

**GRANTEES** Grants included \$1 million to the American Red Cross, and \$2 million to relief and reconstruction agencies that included United Way International, Habitat for Humanity International, the Partham India Education Initiative, the Indian Red Cross Society, Working Women's Forum, Mercy Malaysia, Rajaprajanugroh Foundation Thailand (The King's Foundation), and the Thai Red Cross. Through Citigroup's special tsunami matching-gift program, employees worldwide contributed \$4.5 million. This was matched by the foundation, which committed \$4.5 million to the American Red Cross. Citigroup also made office space and office equipment available to various UN agencies in the affected countries.

**COMMENT** "Our most successful initiative was matching employee donations. The offer to match contributions by employees around the world resulted in contributions from more than 23,000 employees."

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## **Credit Suisse Group Foundation**

**TOTAL** \$11.8 million, including employee contributions of \$300,000

**GRANTEES** Multiple international NGOs. Immediately after the tsunami, the Credit Suisse Group (CSG), a global financial services company based in Zurich, distributed an initial donation of \$1.5 million among the American Red Cross, CARE, and the Swiss Red Cross. To assist in the long-term redevelopment of the region, CSG also endowed the Credit Suisse Group Foundation with \$10 million, which was supplemented by an additional contribution of \$300,000 from employees. These funds will be used to support education and microfinance initiatives in the areas affected by the tsunami and for future disaster relief activities. While the distribution of these funds is not yet finalized, they are to be allocated among international NGOs working in these regions that have similar long-term priorities.

**COMMENT** "The outpouring of funding has been significant. The true challenge now lies in ensuring the funds are put to good use. [A staff member] moved to Asia specifically to assist with the distribution of a \$10 million fund that was established to support education and microfinance. It is much more difficult than [one would have] imagined to distribute the funds, given the amount of money pledged already."

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## **Gap**

**TOTAL** \$2.3 million, including employee contributions of \$425,000

**GRANTEES** Multiple agencies. Gap Inc. pledged \$1 million dollars for relief and rebuilding efforts. A portion was given to the American Red Cross, CARE, UNICEF, and Habitat for Humanity International. The balance of the funds will be allocated to a range of projects and/or organizations in tsunami-affected areas. To identify the recipients, Gap Inc. deployed a regional team that conducted a thorough needs assessment, including interviews with government officials, humanitarian and development organizations, vendors, factory workers, and other community members. In using this method to allocate funds, Gap Inc. emphasized its focus on meeting long-term needs and using local knowledge. Gap Foundation also initiated an employee matching-gift program through which employees worldwide donated \$425,000. This was matched by Gap Foundation on a two-to-one basis, raising \$1.3 million. While employees in the U.S. were asked to donate to the American Red Cross International Relief Fund, those in the affected areas gave to local organizations through Global Giving, an online organization that connects donors to ongoing local projects in regions across the world.

**COMMENT** "As a result of the tsunami, Gap will be starting a permanent disaster relief fund within our regular budget."

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## HSBC

**TOTAL** \$3 million

**GRANTEES** HSBC's operations throughout the world supported Sumatra earthquake and tsunami relief efforts. HSBC, through the Hongkong Bank Foundation, made a \$1 million donation to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In addition, HSBC employees contributed more than \$1 million globally, and HSBC matched the contributions.

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## IBM

**TOTAL** \$3.2 million, plus employee contributions of \$1.2 million

**GRANTEES** Multiple tsunami-related efforts. The heart of IBM's contribution was made through the development of hardware and software solutions and the provision of technological expertise. An extensive number of software applications were developed in India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka, most of which facilitated the tracking and identification of victims, and the management and distribution of relief materials. In addition, IBM employees worldwide contributed a total of \$1.2 million either directly to the Red Cross or through payroll deduction programs to organizations of their choice. These employees also collected and distributed relief supplies in the affected countries.

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## Johnson & Johnson

**TOTAL** \$84.1 million, including employee contributions

**GRANTEES** The American Red Cross, AmeriCares, MAP International, and Direct Relief International. A broadly-based manufacturer of health products, Johnson & Johnson (J&J) made an initial cash contribution of \$2 million to the American Red Cross. Donations of more than \$81.4 million of medical supplies have been made, providing antibiotics, antiseptics, disinfectants, wound care products, soap, anti-diarrheal medicine, and other supplies. Individual J&J employees have contributed more than

\$330,000 to the American Red Cross International Relief Fund and the company is matching their donations. Donations from employees and companies in the region have totaled \$400,000, and J&J associates in the area are aiding in the coordination and distribution of medical products, food, water, and blankets. While food and cash donations have been made in India, J&J's focus is on formulating plans for product donations and long-term assistance in line with the country's continuing health needs. In Malaysia, employees have contributed cash toward governmental relief efforts. J&J companies in China and Japan have also offered product donations to J&J companies and nongovernmental relief organizations in the affected areas.

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## Lucent Technologies

**TOTAL** \$100,000

**GRANTEE** International Disaster Relief Program

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## JPMorgan Chase

**TOTAL** \$5 million, including employee contributions of \$2 million

**GRANTEES** Multiple projects. The global financial services firm JPMorgan Chase pledged an initial \$1 million to help with disaster relief efforts. It also agreed to match \$2 million in employee donations from around the world.

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## Merrill Lynch

**TOTAL** \$2 million

**GRANTEES** The American Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Merrill Lynch, the financial management and advisory company, also pledged \$1 million to match employees' gifts to CARE, the International Rescue Committee, the Red Cross International Response Fund, Save the Children, and UNICEF. Merrill Lynch also helped mobilize regional responses in Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Zurich, and London.

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## Morgan Stanley

**TOTAL** \$4 million, including employee contributions of \$2 million

**GRANTEES** Multiple projects funded through the newly created Tsunami Disaster Relief Program. Immediately reacting to the devastation caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami, the financial institution Morgan Stanley created the Tsunami Disaster Relief Program. Through it, employees could make contributions to any organization worldwide involved in the humanitarian aid effort. Morgan Stanley matched these contributions to support the tsunami relief work of the American Red Cross.

**COMMENT** "Employees contributed well over \$2 million in less than 30 days of the disaster. We received very positive feedback on the firm's backing their efforts through a matching-gift program. We think it was far more successful than if we had simply made our gift of \$2 million and not tied it to our employees' personal efforts. When reviewing response, whether or not companies had direct business interest in the region seems to have played a big role. All companies were not created equal in this way, as some had long-term interest in the region already, and some, like us, gave out of humanitarian reasons only. All the giving was good, but the length of service, dedication of non-monetary resources, etcetera seem to have been significantly affected by the amount of business presence already there."

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## Pfizer Inc.

**TOTAL** \$51.6 million, including employee contributions of \$1.6 million

**GRANTEES** Multiple agencies. Pfizer Inc., one of the world's largest biomedical and pharmaceutical companies, made an initial cash donation of \$10 million to the American Red Cross, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, and UNICEF. These organizations were chosen on the basis of Pfizer's long-standing relationship with them and the organizations' on-the-ground experience in international development and relief work in the affected regions. The Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program was used as an additional

fundraising tool to bring in \$1.6 million. Pfizer regional offices around the world made medical supplies, including Pfizer antibiotics, antifungals, and anti-inflammatories worth close to \$40 million, available to assist those affected by the tsunami. With more than 4,000 colleagues in affected countries, Pfizer had a large network of information and resources available. Thus, it was able to deploy medical, engineering, and supply chain management expertise to assist local and international health officials and relief organizations.

**COMMENTS** “Based on Pfizer’s experience in deploying colleagues, the CEO-driven organization Business Roundtable is developing a cross-sector volunteer program to support future disaster relief efforts from health care to finance to logistics to communications. In order to give this initiative momentum, a high-level private sector/UN conference was held in April at the United Nations.”

“It is incredibly powerful and rewarding to see the value a company like Pfizer can bring, not only in its donation of medicine and cash grants, but through the expertise of its people. The crisis drove home the importance of coordination among donor agencies, relief organizations, and others, particularly with respect to the receipt and distribution of medicines.”

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### **PSEG Foundation**

**TOTAL** \$132,300, including PSEG employee contributions of \$58,650

**GRANTEES** Multiple agencies. On recommendations made by its global company, PSEG made a corporate donation of \$15,000 to Apollo Hospital in India for its rebuilding. It also initiated an employee matching-gift program through which PSEG employees contributed a total of \$58,650 that was matched by PSEG Foundation. These funds went to the following organizations: the American Red Cross, AmeriCares, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, BAPS Care International, Doctors Without Borders, Salvation Army, Save the Children, UNICEF, World Vision USA, Sarvodaya Relief Fund, NetAid, Action Against Hunger, Oxfam America, and the Islamic Circle of North America’s ICNA Relief.

**COMMENT** “As a result of our experiences with the tsunami, PSEG is rewriting its guidelines to give us more flexibility when facing disasters. Our biggest challenge after the tsunami was selecting which organizations or affected areas were to receive money and resources. Our strongest point when making disaster relief grants was that we could move quickly and our senior management and employees were highly supportive.”

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### **SI Bank & Trust Foundation**

**TOTAL** \$125,000; donation helped to inspire local efforts to raise \$300,000

**GRANTEES** The American Red Cross and UNICEF to provide relief for tsunami victims. Traditionally, SI Bank & Trust Foundation only made grants that directly supported local initiatives. This grant, however, was motivated by the knowledge that the foundation had the ability to respond quickly and the desire to support local fundraising initiatives in Staten Island.

**COMMENT** “The public announcement of our giving to tsunami relief helped inspire the efforts of the community’s Staten Island Tsunami Relief Day, which raised over \$300,000 from local individuals and businesses.”

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### **Target Corporation**

**TOTAL** \$1 million

**GRANTEE** The American Red Cross to support relief efforts

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### **Time Warner Inc.**

**TOTAL** Over \$4.2 million, including public service announcements valued at \$3.17 million and employee contributions of \$700,000

**GRANTEES** The American Red Cross, CARE, Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF, and others. Time Warner, a global media and entertainment company, awarded grants totaling \$4,202,659 (both cash and in-kind) to these organizations. It also initiated an employee matching-gift program through which employee contributions to the same organizations were matched up to \$500,000.

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### **Toyota**

**TOTAL** \$4 million, including matched contributions of up to \$1 million

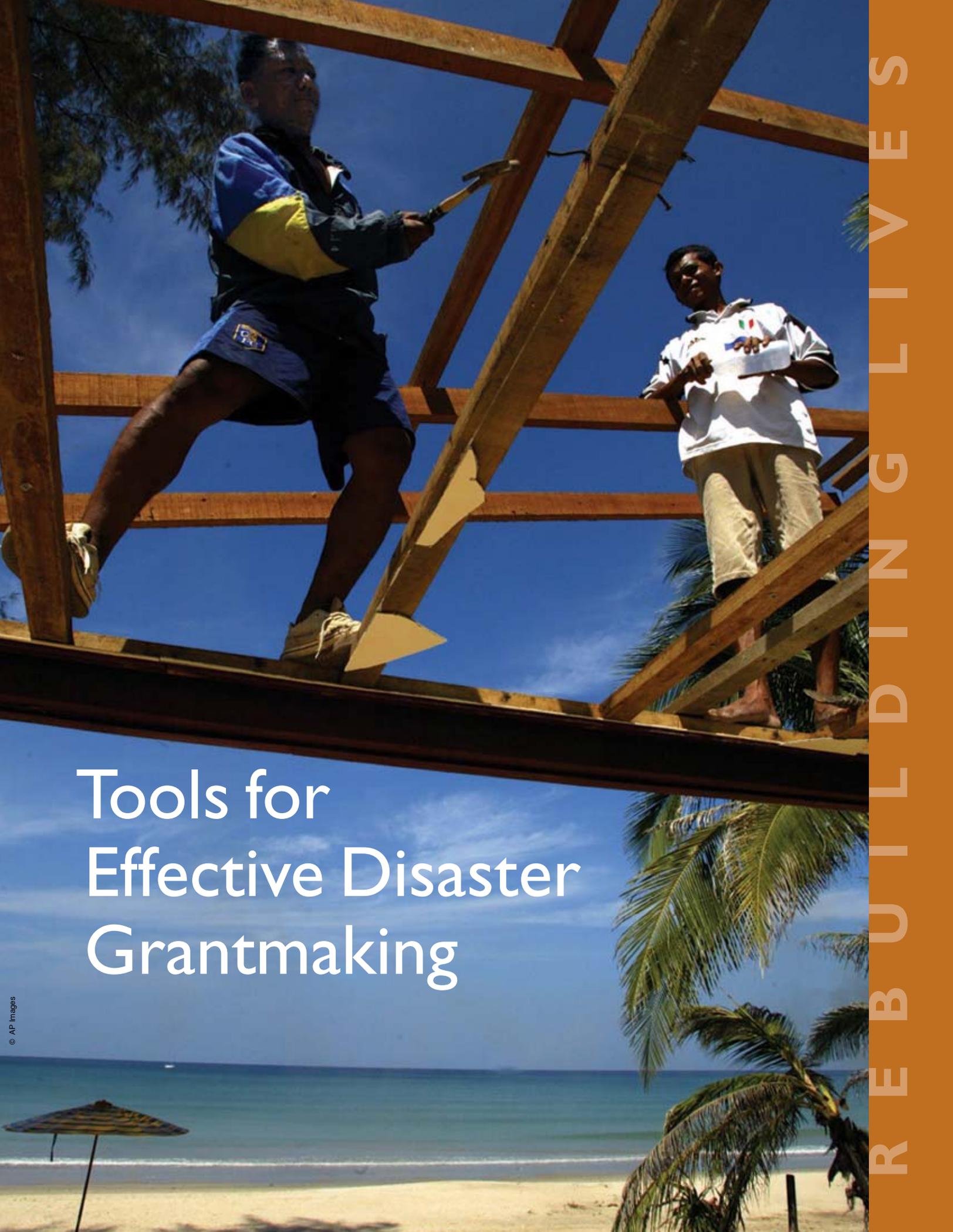
**GRANTEES** Multiple agencies. Toyota made a direct donation of \$3 million to tsunami relief organizations. It also matched up to \$1 million in team member and associate contributions to the International Response Fund of the American Red Cross and UNICEF.

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### **UBS**

**TOTAL** \$3.1 million, including employee contributions

**GRANTEES** Multiple agencies. The global financial firm UBS made a donation of \$3 million to immediate relief efforts. Cash donations were made to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, Swiss Solidarity, and Disasters Emergency Committee UK within a week of the tsunami. UBS also created the Tsunami Relief Fund to match employee contributions, bringing the total collected to over \$3.1 million. These funds are dedicated to specific medium- and long-term rehabilitation efforts in the areas affected by the disaster in the fields of education and community regeneration. UBS also encouraged employees to utilize its regular employee matching-gift program by matching donations to other worthy organizations engaged in tsunami relief. A committee of senior management in the Asia-Pacific region with input from employees in the affected areas determined the distribution of funds.



# Tools for Effective Disaster Grantmaking

REBUILDING LIVES

# The Three R's

## OF TSUNAMI DISASTER ASSISTANCE

By Peter F. Geithner

**relief** *n* : any aid given in times of need, danger, or disaster, as supplies sent into flooded areas; aid in the form of goods or money given, as by a government agency, to persons unable to support themselves

The massive tragedy following the earthquake off the Indonesian province of Banda Aceh on December 26, 2004, and resulting tsunamis that swept across the Indian Ocean has again focused the world's attention on the three R's—not the R's of “reading, (w)riting, and (a)rithmetic,” but of “relief, recovery, and reconstruction.”

As the prefix suggests, these three R's all have to do with “back” (as in “restore”) or “again,” “anew,” or “over again” (as in “reappear”). They are generally used to characterize the three sequential phases in responding to natural and man-made disasters. The boundaries between the three phases are not sharply drawn, and elements of one are often found in the others. The elements of each also vary with climate, accessibility of the affected populations, available infrastructure, and other variables. Still, the terms provide a generally useful way to think about the evolving hierarchy of needs in the aftermath of major catastrophes.

Walls of water as high as 40 feet and traveling at speeds of up to 500 miles per hour obliterated low-lying coastal areas in 12 countries from Indonesia to the east coast of Africa. More than 225,000 men, women, and children are now estimated to have lost their lives. Thousands of others remain missing. Those who somehow managed to survive were left stranded without food, water, clothing, or shelter. Responding to the survivors' needs is both more

**recovery** *n* : the act or an instance of recovering; specifically, a) a regaining of something lost or stolen, b) a return to health, consciousness, etc.

critical and more difficult because of the widespread poverty in those areas that were hardest hit.

**Relief** is clearly the immediate imperative: to reach the survivors, in this case a major challenge in itself, and to provide them with the minimum essentials for existence. Huge quantities of materials have to be transported by air, sea, and ground as close to the affected areas as possible and then somehow moved by truck, helicopter, elephant, bicycle, or whatever other means may be available to those most in need. Attention must also be paid to finding the missing and to the identification and burial of those who did not survive. The relief phase is normally the briefest of the three, a matter of days.

The **recovery** phase follows almost immediately and may last several months. The focus is on treating the sick and injured and preventing the outbreak of cholera, malaria, dengue fever, and other communicable diseases. Medical supplies, health care, provision of safe drinking water, cooking oil, and temporary sanitation facilities take priority. Reestablishing reliable access and communications with the affected areas is a related requirement.

The third phase—**reconstruction**—needs to begin as soon as feasible. It is also takes the longest, often years rather than months. Attention tends to focus on rebuilding the physical infrastructure—roads, bridges, water, sewage and sanitation systems, housing,

**reconstruction** *n* : the act of reconstructing, rebuilding, constructing again

schools, clinics, and hospitals. But the human infrastructure needs—doctors, nurses, teachers, administrators—also requires attention. Both are essential to the most critical and most difficult challenge: the rebuilding of lives and communities, particularly among those who have lost their parents or children, their homes and furnishings, their jobs or businesses and whatever meager savings they may have had. The psychological trauma following major disasters, particularly among the young and elderly, is likely to linger long after material needs have been met.

Responding to the aftermath of the deadly earthquake and tidal waves that struck the countries surrounding the Indian Ocean provides only a recent example of the Three R's and the need to combine generosity and compassion with commitment and expertise. ▲



Peter F. Geithner is an advisor to the Asia Center at Harvard University and former director of Asia Programs at the Ford Foundation. This article appears on NYRAG's Web site, [www.nyrag.org](http://www.nyrag.org).

# Lessons

## FROM TSUNAMI DISASTER-RELATED EFFORTS

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### A Diversity of Corporate Resources

Corporations, depending on what business they are in, have unique capabilities in a disaster situation. Large corporations with offices worldwide are able to mobilize their staff quickly and efficiently in affected regions. In the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami, corporations contributed office space, computers, and other supplies for relief workers. Medicine and other products are also donated by companies specializing in certain areas. Pfizer Inc.'s donations for tsunami relief are a good example of this [see pages 17–18]. The reach of corporations can ensure that relief efforts cover all areas in desperate need of assistance using experts on the ground.

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### Local and International Organizations on the Ground Need Support

At the beginning of a disaster, the non-local organizations that first reach the affected area are usually large international disaster relief organizations. Especially in the chaos immediately following a disaster, these organizations are vital. Many of the South Asian communities affected by the tsunami had an abundance of local nonprofits. Some of these had little or no staff left alive after the tsunami, but some had the personnel to contribute to rebuilding efforts. There are several advantages to working through local organizations. Their workers often have an intimate knowledge of the community that only comes with a long history of work there. In addition, translation is not an issue. These organizations also have the ability to remain in the region after

the larger, international relief organizations leave. A disaster like the Indian Ocean tsunami, which has the capacity to devastate local economies, compels donors to focus much of their attention on long-term reconstruction projects. Donating funds through local organizations and initiatives is an excellent way to commit to long-range projects.

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### The Value of In-Kind Contributions

The significance of in-kind contributions cannot be overstated. Immediately following the Indian Ocean tsunami, items such as medicines and fresh water were sorely needed. Office space and equipment provided in the region enabled organizations to carry out their missions. Without these supplies, the tsunami relief process would have been severely hampered. An important thing to remember about in-kind donations is that when disaster strikes, there are usually very specific needs, and it is vital that donors communicate directly with grantees to decide what the most needed in-kind donations are. This ensures that relief efforts will be as streamlined as possible and donations will not be duplicated or go unused.

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### Consumer Philanthropy

Consumer philanthropy was an important mechanism for engaging customers in giving in the wake of the Indian Ocean tsunami. This is a highly effective method of raising money because it places the disaster in the context of peoples' day-to-day lives. Companies such as the Gap and Von Dutch had specific items of clothing made to support tsunami relief. Designers and stores chose specific items, the proceeds

of which would go entirely toward tsunami relief. There were tsunami relief T-shirts, bracelets, and pins, all designed to raise money and awareness. Online giving was at a record high after the tsunami largely because online sellers offered an opportunity to contribute with a purchase. American Express gave its customers the option of contributing when they paid their monthly bill. Each of these examples illustrates the effectiveness of connecting philanthropy to consumers.

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### Applying Lessons Learned From Previous Disasters

Each disaster has unique aspects and presents new challenges. But applying past lessons to new disaster relief projects is worthwhile to grantmakers. When discussing tsunami relief, several NYRAG members referred to the lessons they learned after 9/11. Organizations with experience in disaster relief were well prepared to face the tsunami. Their expertise is invaluable to other donors. Valuable lessons such as the importance of making assessments for long-term needs are essential for effective grantmaking.

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### The Success of Matching Employee Donations

The millions of dollars contributed to tsunami relief through matching employee donations are a testament to the effectiveness of matching gifts programs. Matching gifts programs offer companies an opportunity to connect with their employees as well as assist in increasing the amount that employees donate. This serves as an incentive for employees to donate when they otherwise might not. ▲

# Gearing Up

## FOR DISASTER RESPONSE

**Through their grantmaking, networking capacities, and relationships with both international development and humanitarian assistance organizations in the United States and in many of the countries directly affected by the tsunami (and, in some cases, with their own local offices and staff in key countries), NYRAG members have called upon the many resources available to them as they sought concrete ways to provide assistance. This resulted in a knowledge base for responding to disasters of great magnitude and geographic scope. Here are some important considerations for use in calibrating an institutional response:**

- In those cases where a corporation or a foundation may have employees in the affected region, solicit their input on what paramount needs are emerging on the ground, and which organizations—both international and local—are best positioned to respond effectively to these needs.
- Where the organization does not have these on-the-ground resources, contact other grantmakers who have offices in the region. The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, for example, have field offices in Jakarta, New Delhi, and Bangkok, and the Asia Foundation has offices throughout Asia.
- Determine whether your institution is interested in providing immediate, short-term, and/or long-term assistance.
- Observe whether emerging needs correspond to your existing grantmaking priorities and/or if you want to make an extraordinary allocation.
- Determine if you would prefer to support U.S.-based humanitarian and relief organizations (e.g., CARE, Doctors Without Borders, American Friends Service Committee, Red Cross) or intermediaries, such as Give2Asia, that can extend assistance to local nongovernmental organizations or directly to those regions themselves.
- If your interests preclude any international funding, consider providing support to diaspora organizations that are assisting communities whose loved ones have been hard hit. For example, Buddhist centers in Staten Island, where many Sri Lankan New Yorkers live, have been providing emotional support and channeling financial and material assistance. The Asian American Federation of New York monitors these grassroots efforts to determine how best they can be supported.
- If your organization has a charitable matching gifts program, determine whether employees can make contributions earmarked for disaster relief efforts and recommend potential beneficiaries. ▲

# Fundamentals

## OF EFFECTIVE DISASTER GRANTMAKING

### 1. **Ensure that what you give is needed.**

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Not all disaster relief is needed. Inappropriate services and items will overwhelm already taxed transportation, storage, and distribution capacities. This delays the delivery of desperately needed aid.

Reports from Aceh highlight the large quantity of medicines that have been received that cannot be used for a number of reasons and lay stockpiled in warehouses using up valuable storage space.

In Sri Lanka, the Food and Agricultural Organization and the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources warned that there is a risk of over-provision of small fishing boats as a result of tsunami relief efforts. This will contribute to over-fishing and long-term environmental damage.

### 2. **Take time to assess: Use a needs-based approach.**

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Information is key to good disaster grantmaking. Every disaster situation is unique and takes place within a pre-existing socio-political and economic environment. Therefore, what is needed may not always be immediately obvious. Grantmakers must take time to accurately assess what the needs are and respond accordingly.

### 3. **Develop an internal disaster response plan.**

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Disasters, particularly natural disasters, are unexpected. Develop a response plan that outlines the procedure that must be followed in an emergency.

### 4. **Think beyond immediate relief to long-term support.**

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Disasters result in long-term consequences. Railways must be rebuilt. Businesses and livelihoods must be restored. Homes must be found for orphaned children, and psychosocial effects must be addressed. While the outpouring of funds for immediate relief in the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami was tremendous, with several relief organizations eventually ceasing to accept them, contributions toward long-term needs have slowed considerably. Consider supporting long-term relief, where funds, due to a lack of supply, will probably be more effective.

### 5. **The logistical aspect of humanitarian aid is important.**

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Logistics, while not a very visible aspect of humanitarian aid, are often under-resourced. Funding processes and systems involved in mobilizing people, resources, skills, and knowledge, such as methods to track and warehouse goods, customs clearance, transportation, and last-mile delivery, could result in more effective relief operations.

A report of the Fritz Institute found that the tsunami relief operation was marred by deficiencies in logistics experts, inadequacies in methods for tracking the flow of relief supplies, and insufficient planning and assessment. It was also reported that collaboration and coordination by humanitarian aid agencies were sometimes ineffective because of the lack of standard operating procedures and management.

### 6. **Support the local economy.**

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In a disaster, economic institutions are often disrupted. Support organizations that try to source supplies from within the affected regions, as this will inject cash into the local economy and develop industries.

## 7. Remember that local organizations are experts on local needs.

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When a disaster occurs, community-based organizations and nonprofits with a local presence usually are first on the scene and last to leave. They understand the complex political, social, and cultural context of a disaster, and know what is most needed. Thus, the impact they have is often sustainable and effective. However, they are often hampered by insufficient resources and organizational capacity. Working with and supporting these organizations allows them to carry out their important role. They also provide grantmakers with a source of valuable on-the-ground information.

## 8. Become familiar with local banking procedures.

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Banking procedures differ across the world. If you are making a grant to a local nonprofit, be sure to find out how to write the check and/or how to transfer funds.

A NYRAG member who wrote a check to a hospital in India noted that it had to be written three times before it was accepted—the result of having to deal with unfamiliar procedures and names. This delay was exacerbated by the amount of time it took the Indian bank to clear the check.

## 9. The most vulnerable populations often suffer the most.

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Natural disasters, however *natural* they might be, are often profoundly discriminatory in their impact upon people. In the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami, fragile houses of low-income families were washed away, while the brick houses of richer people often withstood the force of rushing water. Reconstruction also tends to be marked by similar characteristics as the focus often falls on the more high profile groups to the disadvantage of marginalized communities.

“After the tsunami, everyone went to help the fishermen. But there were still fish in the sea. My rice crop was destroyed and my fields were covered in mud and salt.”

—Smallholder farmer in Poompuhar, Tamil Nadu, India (Oxfam International *Targeting Poor People*)

## 10. Know your grantees.

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Ensure that the priorities and strategies of your grantees match your own. Learn about their familiarity with the affected regions and disaster relief. Avoid supporting organizations that do not have this type of experience. Also, do not support project plans that go beyond the expertise of the organization.

## 11. Be accountable.

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Grantmakers are accountable not only to their donors, boards, and shareholders, but also to the people they seek to assist. Therefore, they must go beyond traditional guidelines of monitoring how a grant was spent, to engage their grantees in a process that assesses the social impact of their projects, and must also be accountable to the public so as to maintain their integrity.

## 12. Communicate with other grantmakers and nonprofits.

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Sharing experiences within the grantmaking community and highlighting examples of successful and unsuccessful instances of disaster relief is an excellent way for grantmakers to gain information that will increase the effectiveness of their grants. ▲

These fundamentals have been adapted from *Disaster Grantmaking: A Practical Guide for Foundations and Corporations* by the European Foundation Centre and the Council on Foundations.

## CONCLUSION

**T**he Indian Ocean tsunami on December 26, 2004, serves as a startling reminder that natural disasters—floods, earthquakes, mudslides, hurricanes—could happen anywhere in the world at any time. In an interconnected world, disasters unfold before our eyes via news coverage and global communications technology such as the Internet. Catastrophes, which always require relief and recovery funding, pose opportunities for governments, international development and humanitarian assistance agencies, and donors. Our actions as grantmakers help set the pace for disaster response efforts,

sometimes making the critical difference between life and death for people at the latest ground zero.

The great tsunami of 2004 offers many valuable lessons for grantmakers, in particular. The global response to this disaster has been unprecedented, as was the cooperation among governments, the military, and donors. This experience has given us noteworthy examples of preferred practices and principles for the future, some of which are discussed in these pages, as well as in meetings of NYRAG members.

But we must remember that these efforts are set in stark contrast to the intense struggles accompanying the “silent tsunamis” in our midst, as the

head of the United Nations Foundation so aptly noted—the less-visible ethnic conflicts that claim millions of lives, for example, or medical scourges such as HIV/AIDS, which kills a person every 10 seconds worldwide.

Hundreds of tsunamis—both the “silent” ones and those that make the news—have occurred but did not receive the funding commitment this tsunami generated. The overwhelming response to the Indian Ocean tsunami demonstrates the capacity of the global community to provide critically needed resources in times of crisis.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

### Council on Foundations

[www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org)

*Legal Dimensions of International Grantmaking: Grantmaking in an Age of Terrorism*

Available online at [www.cof.org/files/Documents/Newsletters/InternationalDateline/2004/LD2Q2004.pdf](http://www.cof.org/files/Documents/Newsletters/InternationalDateline/2004/LD2Q2004.pdf)

### European Foundation Centre and Council on Foundations

[www.efc.be](http://www.efc.be)

*Disaster Grantmaking: A Practical Guide for Foundations and Corporations*

Available online at [www.efc.be/ftp/public/IC/DisasterGrantMaking.pdf](http://www.efc.be/ftp/public/IC/DisasterGrantMaking.pdf)

### The Foundation Center

[www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)

The Foundation Center provides information for grantmakers through its various libraries and publications. Among its many publications is *Philanthropy's Response to 9/11: Creating the Record and Telling the Story*, a three-part report on the philanthropic response to 9/11.

### InterAction

[www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org)

A coalition of more than 160 humanitarian organizations working on disaster relief, refugee assistance, and sustainable development worldwide.

### ReliefWeb

[www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

ReliefWeb provides up-to-date information, from a variety of nongovernmental and governmental sources, about various emergencies around the world. It contains a section devoted to tsunami relief.

### Treasury Guidelines Working Group Council on Foundations

*Principles of International Charity*

Available online at [www.cof.org/files/Documents/International\\_Programs/2005Publications/Principles\\_Final.pdf](http://www.cof.org/files/Documents/International_Programs/2005Publications/Principles_Final.pdf)

### United States International Grantmaking Council on Foundations

[www.usig.org](http://www.usig.org)

A project that seeks to ease the process of international grantmaking. Provides useful resources, issues discussion and analyses, country information, and other things.

### U.S. Department of the Treasury

[www.treas.gov](http://www.treas.gov)

*Anti-Terrorist Financing Guidelines:*

*Voluntary Best Practices for*

*U.S.-Based Charities*

Available online at [www.treas.gov/press/releases/docs/tocc.pdf](http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/docs/tocc.pdf)

### U.S. Internal Revenue Service Exempt and Government Entities Division

Includes advice on how to give through existing U.S. charitable organizations, how to establish a charitable organization, and what documentation is required. Available online at [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3833.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3833.pdf)

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## Sources for up-to-date information on the effects of the tsunami and rebuilding efforts

### BBC In Depth: Tsunami Disaster

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in\\_depth/world/2004/asia\\_quake\\_disaster/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/world/2004/asia_quake_disaster/default.stm)

BBC news reports related to the Indian Ocean tsunami have been compiled in this special news section.

### Reuters AlertNet Reuters Tsunami Aidwatch

[www.alertnet.org/thefacts/aidtracker/](http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/aidtracker/)

Contains news, a "pledge-o-meter" that measures whether governments are keeping their aid promises, country profiles, an NGO directory, and more.

### South-East Asia Earthquake and Tsunami Blog

<http://tsunamihelp.blogspot.com>

This blog offers information about the tsunami, with links to aid agencies, media, confirmed deaths, fundraising efforts and other tsunami relief information.

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## Analysis of the effects of the tsunami and relief and rebuilding efforts

### Fritz Institute

*Logistics and the Effective Delivery of Humanitarian Relief*

[www.fritzinstitute.org/PDFs/Programs/TsunamiLogistics0605.pdf](http://www.fritzinstitute.org/PDFs/Programs/TsunamiLogistics0605.pdf)

Published by the Fritz Institute, which brings private sector expertise to solve complex problems in delivering relief to vulnerable people, this survey highlights the importance of logistics in the tsunami relief effort.

### Oxfam International

Briefing notes:

*The Tsunami's Impact on Women*

[www.oxfam.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/issues/conflict\\_disasters/bn\\_tsunami\\_women.htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/conflict_disasters/bn_tsunami_women.htm)

*Targeting Poor People: Rebuilding Lives after the Tsunami*

[www.oxfam.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/issues/conflict\\_disasters/bn\\_tsunami\\_6months.htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/conflict_disasters/bn_tsunami_6months.htm)

# The Impact of the Indian Ocean Tsunami

ON NEW YORK'S ASIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

The Asian American Federation of New York is a nonprofit leadership organization that works to advance the civic voice and quality of life of Asian

Americans in the New York metropolitan area. Established in 1990, the Federation supports and collaborates with 35 member agencies to strengthen

community services, promotes strategic philanthropy within the Asian American community, and conducts research and advocacy concerning critical issues.

## INTRODUCTION

In early January of 2005, the United Way of New York City contacted the Asian American Federation of New York (AAFNY), expressing an interest in supporting an inquiry into the local impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. Shortly thereafter, members of AAFNY's Research Department began identifying communities in the New York City area comprised of individuals with roots in the most affected regions. They then began placing calls to community leaders, temples, and mosques in these communities. The results of the preliminary assessments confirmed the need for a more thorough assessment of the impact on local South Asian communities.

AAFNY then drafted and submitted a project proposal to United Way to organize an official community outreach team to assess the impact of the tsunami on Asian American communities in the New York metropolitan area.

The results of that research provide the context for this special report. It intends to provide members and participants of the philanthropic sector, policymakers, local community, and civic leaders in the New York City area with an understanding of how the tsunami has affected local immigrant communities with ties to the affected regions of South and Southeast Asia. To our knowledge, this type of assessment has never been done. The project should help identify ongoing needs, and provide direction for institutions and

services. Beyond these two primary concerns, the report will provide a summary of the internal processes, obstacles, and successful strategies of the Asian American Federation of New York that will be useful for community organizations in their future work.



Immediately after the December 26, 2004, tsunami struck countries in the Indian Ocean, the Asian American Federation of New York was in discussions with philanthropic institutions, major television networks, member agencies, and concerned individuals regarding relief efforts. In addition to joining a community fundraising effort, the Federation began to consider whether there might be families in the New York area affected by the disaster. Shortly afterward, local Chinese newspapers reported the death of a Chinese American woman from New York who had been vacationing in Thailand.

The Federation proceeded to inquire into the extent to which Asian immigrant families were affected. The staff conducted telephone outreach to various sources, including AAFNY member agencies, consulates general of the affected countries, ethnic associations, and local religious organizations. Preliminary information suggested that a number of Asian families in the New York area had lost loved ones and that a more thorough community outreach and assessment was warranted.

### **Intensive Community Outreach**

With immediate funding support from the Ittleton Foundation and United Way of New York City, the Federation quickly organized a Tsunami Response Team to conduct community outreach and needs assessment. The communities targeted for outreach were Indonesian (Acehnese and Bahasa-Indonesia speaking), Indian (South

Indian, primarily Tamil speaking), Sri Lankan (Sinhalese and Tamil speaking), and Thai. According to the 2000 census, some 3,000 individuals identified as Indonesians were living in New York City, as well as 2,600 Sri Lankan and 5,000 Thai. While the number of Indian Americans in New York is significant at 206,000, the actual number of immigrants from tsunami-devastated areas of South India is unknown. This presented a special challenge to outreach efforts.

Recruiting team members with language fluency and comprehensive knowledge of their respective diasporic communities was critical to successful outreach. This phase was mostly successful, with the exception of locating someone to work in the Sri Lankan Sinhalese community. Prior to conducting outreach, the team members completed two training sessions on outreach strategies and mental health issues.

A toll-free helpline was set up to facilitate responses from affected families. It consisted of a main line, which greeted callers in English, and four extensions, which conducted calls in Acehnese, Bahasa Indonesia, Tamil, and Thai and encouraged callers to leave voicemail messages in their native languages.

Fliers in English, Thai, and Bahasa Indonesia were posted in or near community landmarks. The fliers briefly explained the purpose of the project and invited community members to call the helpline. In addition, the Federation issued several press releases in local and ethnic media to extend its outreach. *New York Newsday* provided full-page coverage of community outreach efforts on June 8, 2005.

After an assessment form was developed, the team members made extensive contacts in their respective communities between March and July 2005.

## **Findings**

### **Overview**

The results of the community outreach efforts provide an informed understanding, rather than conclusive evidence, of the impact of the tsunami on local Asian immigrant families in New York City. The findings indicate that a small number of Indonesian families in the area, mostly Acehnese, have been directly affected, while families from South India, Thailand, and Sri Lanka have been affected to a much lesser degree.

According to the Indonesian consulate general, most Indonesians in New York are not from the main affected area. The Federation's source in the Indonesian Muslim community of New York reports that Indonesian immigrants are spread throughout the East Coast and that about 15 Indonesian families in New York City have been personally affected by the tsunami. This source also observes that the lack of proper documentation needed to travel back to Indonesia to visit surviving family members is a common problem in the community.

The Thai consulate general does not have any knowledge of Thai immigrants in the New York area who were affected. Tsunami victims in Thailand were mainly tourists and workers in coastal hotels. According to a number of Thai community leaders interviewed, as



well as the Federation's source at the tourism authority of Thailand, the impact on local Thai has not been severe because these immigrants generally are from more affluent sectors of Thai society, while most of those personally affected are poorer or working class. This source reports that, in his work since the tsunami, he has learned of only one or two people who were affected. After many weeks of attending community gatherings, the Thai team member managed to find just one person who suffered losses.

A similar picture emerges from the Tamil and Sri Lankan communities and has been confirmed by sources at the Sri Lankan consulate general and the New York Tamil Sangam. Most people who perished in Tamilnadu were fishermen. Tamil community leaders who were interviewed emphasized that it was uncommon to find an immigrant originating from the fishing community in Tamilnadu. The Tamil team member found only two people who were affected personally and hardly found anyone with connections to the regions of Tamilnadu that were impacted by the Tsunami. The Federation's contact at the New York Buddhist Vihara, a popular Sri Lankan Buddhist temple in Queens, added that he knew of only four or five local families that have been impacted, in part because the Sri Lankan population in New York is relatively small.

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## Stories of Loss

The outreach team conducted in-depth interviews with 16 individuals whose families have been directly affected. Twelve were Acehnese (from Indonesia), two Tamil (from the Southern Indian state of Tamilnadu), and two Thai. Six were male, and 10 were female. These interviews did not include any Sinhalese from Sri Lanka due to the lack of a Sinhalese-speaking outreach worker.

All the interviewees had been impacted in one or more ways. One individual had lost only property; one had lost acquaintances and a business; one person's family had been displaced; three people had lost family; one had lost friends, acquaintances, property, and hometown; and nine people had lost family, friends, acquaintances, property, and hometown. Among these nine people, some had also experienced displacement of family and friends. Of the 12 individuals who reported loss of family or friends, 11 were Acehnese, and one was Thai.

The presenting needs among interviewees varied. None of the Tamil or Thai individuals reported any current needs. One Thai who had lost family members is married to a clinical psychologist, who had provided her with emotional support. A monk at the Staten Island Buddhist temple, another popular Sri Lankan temple, spoke about people who have lost family members and how they sought out temple events for companionship and counseling. Among the 12 Acehnese, four reported financial needs; one reported legal needs; one reported

legal and financial needs; and six reported emotional, financial, and legal needs. A majority (7 out of 12) felt frustrated by not being able to go to their country to visit surviving family members due to a lack of proper legal documentation to re-enter the United States and/or money to travel to Indonesia. Many of the Indonesian community members interviewed also agreed they needed psychological assistance.

The five stories below reflect the range of problems that affected individuals face. Several similarities emerged, particularly among the Acehnese community, mainly emotional distress and the lack of legal documentation. For confidentiality, pseudonyms are used.

### Poorna

#### Farmland washed away

Poorna is a 42-year-old housewife whose husband works in New York. His small income supports his family of four, including his wife and two daughters, as well as his extended family in India. Poorna and her younger daughter have only recently joined him in New York City. When the tsunami struck, Poorna was in her hometown of Poompuhar in the Southern Indian state of Tamilnadu with her two daughters. She heard screams coming from the direction of the beach and followed the crowd running away from the shoreline, not fully understanding what was happening. While her husband was anxiously trying to reach her from New York, Poorna spent the night with her family at a temple where fleeing crowds had congregated. Poorna and her family returned home after about two days and discovered that all their agricultural land had been destroyed by the influx of seawater. Poorna,



however, considers herself lucky since everyone in her family survived, and their home, which was three miles from the shore, sustained only minor damage. At the time of her interview, Poorna had just arrived in New York and feared for her family's safety back home. She yearned to talk to people to soothe herself and to alleviate some of her pain. A follow-up conversation with Poorna's husband revealed that she is unhappy being separated from her family and older daughter, and is planning to move back to India soon.

## Abu

### **Dozens of relatives lost, cut off from surviving family members**

Abu is a 31-year-old waiter who has lived in the United States for the past 10 years. He heard about the tsunami while at work and was incredulous. His immediate desire was to call home to ascertain his family's safety. He had not seen his parents since leaving his hometown of Banda Aceh. In one deadly act of nature, Abu lost his parents, brother, and other relatives. He feels that he has lost the desire to live. He misses his family terribly and tries to keep himself distracted from his pain and grief. The only support he has received is financial assistance from an Indonesian mosque. Although he needs it, he says that financial help is not what he seeks. He feels that no amount of money will give him back the 41 family members lost to the tsunami. He does not know what other types of assistance are available. Unfortunately, since he does not have the appropriate legal documentation, he is unable to return to Indonesia to visit his surviving family members.

## Zain

### **Lost family and business**

The issue of legal status is also pertinent in the case of Zain, a 32-year-old limousine driver who has been living in the United States for 10 years. When he first heard news of the tsunami, Zain was shocked to find out that it had struck his hometown of Meulaboh, Indonesia. Immediately, he thought about his family. When he finally heard from them, Zain found out that his brother had been swept away by a wall of water just as he was gathering up some belongings from his newly opened business. Zain's mother, sister, and another brother managed to survive by holding on to an electric cable. Their home, located near the beach, was washed out to sea. He expresses frustration about not being able to help his family, while knowing that they are struggling. Zain's helplessness also comes from not having appropriate legal papers to go back to Indonesia to visit his surviving family members. He stresses the need for legal assistance that would make it possible for many undocumented individuals to visit their surviving family back home.

## Maria

### **28 relatives lost, causing severe psychological trauma**

Severe and extreme personal losses may leave individuals desperately seeking psychological assistance. This is evident with Maria, a 41-year-old housewife living in the United States for the past 12 years. Her hometown of Tapak Tuan, Indonesia, was devastated by the tsunami. Maria lost property, friends, and acquaintances, in addition to more than 28 members of her family. The experience has left her feeling

hopeless, weak, sad, and desperate.

Maria's brothers and sisters are still in refugee camps, where she is not able to contact them regularly. As with Abu and Zain, Maria does not have appropriate documentation to visit her surviving family members. Maria openly expresses extreme emotional pain and says it manifests in symptoms of vigorous shaking and shivering. Maria wants psychological support, but has not sought assistance because she does not know where to obtain it.

## Nina

### **Powerless to help surviving family members**

Even if the individual is documented, he or she may still face difficulties in bringing surviving family to the United States. This is seen in the case of Nina, a teacher from Lhokseumawe, Indonesia, who has been living in the United States for 17 years. The tsunami claimed several of Nina's family members, friends, and acquaintances, including her uncle, aunt, cousins, and others from her husband's family. Her immediate family members survived, but she lost property, and several of her family members have been displaced. Nina's two-year-old cousin, who survived the tsunami, is facing poor treatment for his respiratory problems in Indonesian hospitals. Nina wishes to bring him to the United States for treatment, but has no idea where to seek assistance.



## Implications

The Federation's Tsunami Response Team has uncovered real needs of affected Asian families in the New York area, including financial assistance, legal consultation, and mental health counseling. However, finding appropriate services to meet these needs has been very challenging. Unfamiliar with the existing service providers in the New York area, those in need of help have turned to relatives, ethnic associations, and religious organizations in their own communities. Existing service organizations in the city, on the other hand, have had little contact with and understanding of these populations, lack relevant language capabilities on staff, and thus are not readily equipped to serve them. The lack of legal status for a number of affected individuals also presents additional barriers to meeting their needs.

Extending eligibility for disaster relief to include affected individuals in the local areas as well as providing pro-bono legal services would alleviate this situation. Culturally appropriate and professionally guided mental health intervention is needed to help affected individuals deal with lingering emotional stress as well as long-term psychological recovery. To respond to these varying needs effectively, some forms of linkages and cooperation should be established between professional service providers and the ethnic associations and religious organizations that have been in direct contact with the affected families.



Cao K. O.  
Executive Director  
Asian American Federation  
of New York

## Acknowledgments

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Initial community outreach in January 2005, which informed the subsequent tsunami response, was conducted by other Federation staff members, including Anna Lee, Carol Peng, Lai-Wan Wong, and intern Caroline Mar.

Cooperation from many community sources has been invaluable, particularly from the Indonesian consulate general, the Indonesian Muslim community of New York, the New York Buddhist Vihara, the New York Tamil Sangam, the Sri Lankan consulate general, the Staten Island Buddhist Vihara, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

The Asian American Federation of New York is indebted to the 16 individuals who came forward to share their stories of how they have been affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami and how they have been coping.

Larry Mandell and Elwanda Young of United Way of New York City, Michael Seltzer of the New York Regional Association of Grantmakers, and Anthony Wood of the Ittleson Foundation were among the few colleagues who expressed concern early on about any possible impact of the tsunami on local families in New York and encouraged the Federation to look into the situation.

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**REBUILDING LIVES**



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