A Bridge in the Night

The speeding winds of CYCLONE NARGIS struck the populated coastal areas of the Irrawaddy Delta in southern MYANMAR, leveling homes and sinking boats during the tumultuous night of May 2, 2008. Hundreds of desperate people searched for a place where they could take refuge from the rising waters pushing inland from the Andaman Sea.

Residents from a low-lying village fought their way through the darkness to a sturdy, tall bridge. It had replaced one that was destroyed during the 2004 Asian tsunami. Standing on the bridge, people wrapped their hands and legs around the railings and then hung on for dear life. The storm waters rushed below them, and the winds screamed around them, but they remained fastened to the structures, and lived. That scenario was repeated with hundreds more villagers on 21 other bridges around the region. That night, 885 lives were saved.

“People stood on the bridge and were saved because the bridge was the highest point during the tidal waves and subsequent flooding,” said Raymond Chevalier, who assisted during ADRA’s emergency response in Myanmar.

But many others weren’t so fortunate. Thousands didn’t even know the storm was coming. Between May 2 and 3, 140,000 men, women, and children died or were never seen again.

Within hours of the disaster, ADRA, one of the few international humanitarian organizations on the ground, launched what would become one of its largest emergency responses. Food, medical supplies, and
water treatment systems were flown into the region. Mobile medical clinics and Zodiac boats brought much-needed assistance to the hardest-hit communities. Diseases, which would have caused many more to become ill or even die, were stopped in their tracks by proper medication, new toilets, clean shelters, and education programs that reinforced proper hygiene.

In the Irrawaddy Delta, where almost everyone had either died or fled during the storm, life began to resume, to pick back up, slowly, painfully, and only with help. The smiles on the humanitarian workers’ faces revealed their inner joy in the knowledge that a large number of people would live to see another day because of the generosity of individuals in faraway countries. Where the winds and waves of Cyclone Nargis had gone, so did ADRA workers burdened with the tools needed most to keep survivors of the storm alive.

Today, the work continues long after the news cameras have left. ADRA remains in Myanmar, rebuilding hospitals and clinics, caring for the needs of thousands of displaced individuals, reestablishing schools, and training teachers. And yes, ADRA continues to build bridges, too.

It’s hard to believe that men and women could pick up the pieces of their lives and begin again, or that children could find a reason to smile once more. But each year, thousands of people around the world are finding hope among the ruins. And it’s all because of ADRA. And you.

“Humanitarian work is work for people by people who are, in turn, themselves human. It’s tough to feel your limits in the face of others who are suffering. But there are immensely satisfying moments, too, when you feel that your help has reached the people and done something good,” says Frank Tieuwen, bureau chief for emergency management at ADRA International.

With the same determination that ADRA assisted the survivors in Myanmar, ADRA also came to the aid of thousands of families affected by dozens of other disasters around the world.

ADRA wants to extend its ministry of hope to many more people. The EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FUND, a bridge that stands firmly during difficult times, will provide crucial relief whenever a community is devastated by tragedy. This year, ADRA invites you to become involved, to give generously by sending a gift of love to someone in need, to be a humanitarian.

Article and photos courtesy of ADRA International

The 22 ADRA-built bridges withstood severe stresses as a powerful storm surge swept inland on May 2, 2008. One structure alone held 145 people for several hours.

MAXIMIZE Your Giving Through the CFGB!

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) is a partnership of 15 Canadian church-based agencies (including ADRA Canada) working to end hunger in developing countries.

The Foodgrains Bank collects grain and cash donations, provides funds and expert advice for projects submitted by member agencies and their partners, manages the procurement and supply of food commodities, and engages in public policy and education activities related to hunger and food security.

For several years, ADRA Canada and CFGB have partnered to support a successful agricultural initiative in Mongolia. This year that partnership also includes the Tibini Region of Niger where local inhabitants are introduced to new crop varieties and learn new agricultural techniques for water retention, soil erosion reduction, and planting methods.

With funds contributed by participating partners and CFGB-accessed government grants, your contribution to ADRA Canada CFGB fund may receive a match of up to FOUR TO ONE!
Helping Cambodia Butt Out

Tobacco is the second major cause of death in the world. Half the people who smoke regularly today—about 650 million people—will eventually be killed by tobacco. Equally alarming is the fact that hundreds of thousands of people who have never smoked die each year from diseases caused by breathing second-hand tobacco smoke.

In Cambodia, ADRA partners with the local Ministry of Health, helping to stimulate change at both the grass-roots and governmental levels. ADRA Cambodia is recognized as one of the most effective agencies providing tobacco awareness resulting in reduced smoking prevalence in Cambodia.

The tobacco awareness program advocates for tobacco control through various means and has helped thousands of smokers kick the habit through the use of valuable smoking cessation tools. The ADRA program has been particularly successful with young people. Smoke-free areas have been established in government institutions, pagodas and NGOs (non-government organizations). Youth are mobilizing their peers and campaigning together to end tobacco use.

Tobacco is no longer present in traditional Khmer weddings or Buddhist ceremonies, nor is it given as gifts for other occasions.

It is an encouraging sign of progress that the pictorial warning labels on tobacco products are soon expected to be approved by the Royal Government of Cambodia. The general public appears increasingly well informed about the health concerns of tobacco use and how second-hand smoke can affect everyone.

The ministry of information has dedicated much attention to preventing tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. The Ministry now has a policy to not renew any advertisement contracts for Tobacco Industries.

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY is celebrated every year on MAY 31. Designated to draw global attention to the widespread prevalence of tobacco use and to its negative health effects, the day aims to reduce the 5.4 million yearly deaths from tobacco related health problems.
Community Development - Finding the Positive

Communities all over the world face challenges. When Canadians try to find solutions to challenges in developing countries, they usually take one of two approaches. They either focus on what the community needs and the areas in which it is deficient, or they focus on what the community has and the assets it holds.

The first approach requires substantial financial and human resources and creates the need for the community to describe itself as a ‘victim’, with nothing to contribute to its own development.

The second approach focuses on what the community has and the assets it holds, based on the understanding that even the poorest community has something upon which to build.

Non-government organizations (NGOs) like ADRA Canada have learned that effective community development activities are based on an understanding of the community’s assets and abilities. Taking time to identify local assets is one of the keys to good community development. Once local assets have been identified, ADRA helps the community work together to multiply the power and effectiveness of these assets and to harness new opportunities. This approach empowers communities to improve their own lives and avoids a ‘victim’ mentality.

ADRA Canada currently has community development projects in the following countries:

![Globe Image]

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Update on Murwira Children’s Home
(excerpts from a letter written March, 2009)

Greetings to all you wonderful friends,

Thank you, dear friends. You have been a direct answer to prayers. I am acutely aware of the economic woes in Canada, yet many of you have dug deeper into your pockets to keep Murwira Children’s Home and our food and medical programs going. You have been saving lives and I am deeply grateful to each of you...

We now have 37 Murwira orphans, of these, seven are under the age of two. Sometimes the children are quite near death when they arrive and their recovery and healing can be dramatic...

We need mature volunteers to help at Murwira orphanage. If you would like to know more, please contact my volunteer coordinator, Sandy Schultz at (818) 243-3284 rifenbark@aol.com.

Again, bless each of you for your continuing help, even for some of you under increasingly difficult circumstances... We are grateful to God for each of your sacrifices, but most of all for your prayers for the Murwira children, the hungry people we are feeding, and for my courage and wisdom to conquer current and future problems.

Love, Pauline Leen
After Cyclone Nargis came ashore in southern Myanmar, ADRA, one of the few humanitarian organizations present on the ground at the time, sent relief aid to many survivors of that terrible disaster. The food, water, shelters, and medical assistance that the survivors received provided a sense of comfort and helped them cope with the grim reality they faced. Thanks to an outpouring of generosity, the Emergency Management Fund saved many lives. Today, your support of this fund will enable ADRA to be there when it really counts.

Please accept my gift of:

$___________ for Emergency Management
$___________ for Cambodia Tobacco Awareness
$___________ for CFGB
$___________ for wherever needed most

OR

Donate online: www.adra.ca

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
City: __________________ Prov: ______ Postal Code: ______
Phone: ( ______ ) ______ E-mail: ________________________
Method of Payment: □ Cheque □ MasterCard □ VISA □ AMEX
Credit Card #: ___________ Expiry: ___________
Cardholder Name: ____________________________
Cardholder Signature: ____________________________

Make cheques payable to ADRA Canada.
Now your contributions to ADRA Canada’s Emergency Management Fund do more!

In addition to providing essential emergency assistance to survivors of disasters, this year your gift can help ADRA build wells in Darfur, Sudan, to supply clean water to those who need it desperately.

Please help us raise $300,000.00* for wells in Darfur.

*this will be matched with $200,000 for a total of $500,000!

(dsinate your gift to Emergency Management)