



Australian Government
AusAID



www.ausaid.gov.au

Australia's Humanitarian Aid
Protecting People





Globally, the number and scale of disasters is increasing.

The Asia-Pacific is the most natural disaster-prone region.

Around the world, millions of people live on the edge of survival due to natural disasters or human-generated events such as armed conflict and state decline. Crises can arise suddenly, like an earthquake or tsunami. Others can unfold more slowly, such as droughts, famine and armed violence and conflict. Either way, those most vulnerable always suffer most.

Social and political instability, poor infrastructure and a lack of regular food and income leave poverty-stricken populations most vulnerable to conflict and disaster, with limited resources to draw on for their own survival and protection. Saving lives and protecting people is at the heart of Australia's humanitarian assistance.



Se Hasibagen



Marianne Jago/AusAID



Protecting those affected by natural disasters and conflict is both a humanitarian imperative and a pragmatic one—without safety and security traditional humanitarian assistance such as food, water and shelter is rarely effective.

Women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV and displaced populations are often the most vulnerable.

Discrimination, exclusion and poverty are further exacerbated in times of crisis. Australia works with its aid partners to involve vulnerable groups in the planning, delivery and evaluation of our humanitarian response.

Australians donate more than \$100 million each year to help those affected by disasters and conflict overseas.



Evelyn Hockstein/CARE





We help countries develop the skills needed to manage disasters themselves.

These skills also help countries to coordinate aid from other nations.



UNFPA Myanmar

Civilians caught in the midst of armed conflict face violence, injury, forced displacement, family separation, detention, forced recruitment and death. They can be deliberately targeted by armed groups as a means of terrifying and controlling populations. Increasingly, sexual violence is used as a weapon of war to displace and demoralise populations. Australia supports the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations to train peacekeepers to prevent and respond to sexual violence. The International Committee of the Red Cross also disseminates humanitarian law principles to soldiers in peacekeeping missions.

Australia funds programs which help prevent and respond to sexual violence. We focus our humanitarian assistance on reproductive and sexual health, training health care professionals and providing access to medical care and services.



ICRC/Boris Heger



Australian Red Cross/Jessica Letch

The world has about 42 million people who have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict or persecution. Protecting displaced populations and the communities that receive them is a major challenge. Civilians who seek shelter in refugee and internal displacement camps often face overcrowding, insecurity, and inadequate humanitarian assistance, that leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. AusAID works closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist refugees and displaced populations.

AusAID also works with the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Red Cross works on many levels to protect people, providing humanitarian assistance such as food and water to those affected by conflict, advocating for strengthened laws to protect people's rights and reconnecting families who get separated in the chaos of a crisis—often for many years, as endured by the mother and her children pictured above.

Australia is increasing its humanitarian work to help those in dire need.



RAMS



Alice Clements/UNICEF/RedR Australia



Alice Clements/UNICEF/RedR Australia

**We work in
partnership around
the world.**

**Humanitarian action
is strongest when
everyone works
together.**

People affected by natural disasters also face violence, exploitation and abuse.

Australia's support to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) helps countries look after their orphans and protect children from dangers such as landmines and disease.

After the Haiti earthquake UNICEF provided families with clean water, water purification tablets and hygiene kits to combat cholera outbreaks. As it does with many emergencies, UNICEF established child-friendly spaces following the Pakistan floods. These special areas support families recovering from the trauma. The spaces and activities allow children to have structured play in a safe, supervised place.



People with disabilities make up to 20 per cent of the poorest individuals in developing countries and are the largest, most disadvantaged minority. For every child killed in conflict, three are injured, resulting in permanent impairments that can lead to disability. Many children and adults are hurt after an actual conflict has ended, from unexploded ordinances including landmines.

During natural disasters people with a disability are extremely vulnerable. They can be left behind during evacuations and excluded from humanitarian relief and vital services which are inaccessible to them. In the recovery phase, people with disabilities are often left out of decisions about rebuilding.

Mainstreaming disability into emergency responses and preparedness, by making disability issues and persons with disabilities visible in national and international action plans and policies, is essential to ensure equality and human rights.

Preparing for disasters and reducing their potential impact, protects lives and development progress.



Jim Holmes / AusAID



ICRC / Marko Kokic



© UNICEF/NYHQ2010-0792/Kate Holt



RAMSI/Brian Hartigan

Disaster response is important.

More information about Australia's humanitarian aid is available online at www.ausaid.gov.au



AusAID

Protecting our humanitarian aid workers is a critical issue for Australia and globally. Armed groups can deliberately target aid workers. The security issues facing humanitarian personnel, either delay, restrict or stop aid—with devastating results for affected communities, humanitarian organisations and the families of aid workers. In Afghanistan—arguably the most dangerous place to deliver aid—AusAID staff require Australian Defence Force protection.

Australia is an advocate for the protection of civilians and the unhindered access of humanitarian personnel in times of crisis. Globally, we promote respect for international humanitarian laws, refugee laws and human rights. We will continue to work with mandated protection agencies to deliver aid that protects people affected by armed conflict and natural disasters.



Front cover image: ICRC