



THAILAND



Impact of 2004 Tsunami

Perished and missing:	8,212
People displaced:	6,000
Houses and buildings destroyed:	4,800
Damage and losses:	USD \$1.6 billion

CARE's Response

People reached:	51,308 with life-saving assistance and long-term recovery programming.
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CARE's Response to the 2004 Tsunami

The Andaman coast of Thailand was ravaged by the 26 December 2004 tsunami, causing the worst natural disaster in the country's history. The areas of Phuket, Krabi, Phang Nga, Ranong, Satun and Trang were heavily affected. Almost 60,000 people were impacted by the tsunami, and over 30,000 people lost their source of income in the fisheries sector and over 120,000 in the tourism industry.

Through its relief and recovery projects, CARE assisted more than 51,000 people. CARE's emergency response in Thailand began on December 27 2004 - the day after the tsunami struck. The immediate response focused on providing medical supplies and food to hospitals and shelters that were already set up by the Government of Thailand and other agencies. This was followed by improving temporary shelters, upgrading living conditions and social networks at emergency response shelters such as temples and crisis centres, and providing other emergency help as needed. In the months and years that followed, CARE focused on restoring and strengthening people's livelihoods through access to credit and savings, establishing small business groups to support economic recovery, particularly for women; and improving natural resource management practices.

CARE in Thailand

CARE has been operating in Thailand since 1979. Initial program focus was on responding to the Cambodian refugee influx along Thailand's borders. In 1984, CARE expanded its development activities to include disadvantaged populations in Thailand's north region. Today, CARE's core activities in Thailand focus on health promotion and prevention of HIV/AIDS; educational support; promotion of business, community enterprise and occupational development; natural resource management and the environment; and emergency response.

CARE'S TSUNAMI RESPONSE

The tsunami hit Thailand's southwest coast along the Andaman Sea, causing death and destruction from the northern border with Myanmar to the southern border with Malaysia. Having worked in Thailand since 1979, CARE was well positioned to respond quickly and effectively.

Following the Tsunami

CARE's immediate response focused on helping the Government of Thailand provide thousands of people with food, clean water, medical treatment and temporary shelter. We provided 2,400 people with food and basic relief items and supplied temporary shelter to 760 people. We also repaired and constructed five schools and three community centres.

Long-term Focus

The tsunami had a profound economic impact on small fishing communities, as families struggled with the loss of jobs and breadwinners.

Three months after the tsunami, CARE established the Southern Thailand Affected Area Rehabilitations and Strengthening Project (STAARS). This five year project was set up to restore and strengthen the livelihoods and security of 13,970 families in 133 tsunami affected communities in Krabi, Ranong and Phang Nga Provinces, and 230 domestic migrant families in three provinces in the northeast of the country.

The project focused on helping communities establish resilient livelihoods, learn how to prepare for an emergency, and repair and protect the natural environment.

CARE established 134 Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) to make credit available to families that were impacted by the tsunami.

More than 50,000 people took out loans from the revolving funds to buy boats, fishing nets or livestock.

The community-run RLF were used to help families save money, buy insurance and take part in welfare schemes. 8,699 tsunami affected families restored their livelihoods by taking part in the RLF. In allowing local communities to administer the RLF, CARE empowered them to steer their lives instead of being passive recipients of aid donations. Today, the RLF are still operating and many are now community institutions that provide a range of services including social welfare, emergency health funds and support to school children.

After the tsunami there was a strong sense among many families that they were too dependent on fishing as their only source of income, and women in particular expressed a desire to contribute to household income through new livelihood activities.

CARE helped 1,216 people, mostly women, establish small business groups to diversify their income and develop new skills in a range of trades including sewing clothes, fish and chilli sauce production, fishing, mushroom farming, fertilizer production, food stalls, crab banks and mussel farms. Participants received training in business planning, marketing, leadership and evaluation.

Following the tsunami there was significant emphasis placed by communities and local government on protecting the environment to conserve traditional practices and to prevent the risk of natural disasters such as flooding. CARE supported communities to plant 13,900 mangrove saplings in tsunami affected areas, and helped to establish artificial coral reefs and crab banks. CARE also helped build awareness amongst communities of natural resource issues and their links to disaster risk reduction.

CARE's tsunami-related programming was completed in 2009. Since then, CARE Thailand has continued to help vulnerable people affected by other natural disasters and worked to support communities to be better prepared for future emergencies.

CARE would like to deeply thank the Government of Thailand for its leadership in the response to the emergency. We also thank all of our donors for their vital support in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, which made a lasting difference in the lives of thousands of people in Thailand.

