

# British Red Cross: Evaluation of the Tsunami Hardship Fund

## Background

The British Red Cross is a neutral and impartial humanitarian organisation, working both in the UK and overseas, whose mission is to help people in crisis, wherever and wherever they are. They have an officially recognised support function to the UK Government in humanitarian matters. They are part of a global voluntary network – the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – and respond to conflicts, natural disasters and individual emergencies.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004 the Indian Ocean Tsunami struck. In total 141 British citizens were killed in the tsunami and 147 survivors were hospitalised.

Following a period of consultation and negotiation with the UK government, the British Red Cross announced the establishment of a special grant programme for UK citizen survivors and bereaved on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2005. The Tsunami Hardship Fund (THF) was designed to alleviate financial hardship, which was a direct consequence of the Tsunami. The programme involved grants for direct loss of income and the provision of grants for counselling.

The fund officially closed on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006. In total it distributed 40 hardship grants totalling £235,823.

## Challenge

By helping those with no recourse to other sources of financial help, the British Red Cross was aware that the project has set a precedent and had raised some important implications for its work in four key areas: principles and mandate, partnership working, policy, and operations.

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## CASE STUDY

In order to gain a full and comprehensive overview of the impact of the project on these four areas, the British Red Cross asked =mc to get involved.

### =mc's Brief

We were asked to evaluate the Tsunami Hardship Relief fund. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify what aspects of the Tsunami Hardship Fund worked well, what could have been improved, and what lessons were to be learned from this experience.

***“The 2004 Tsunami set an unprecedented challenge for the British Red Cross and the wider networks we’re involved in. As an organisation focused on responding to emergencies, we not only place a lot of value on action, but also on our own learning. In this case, =mc helped to identify the Tsunami Hardship Fund’s strengths, and areas to improve, to ensure that we continue to deliver the most effective help in any future disasters of a similar scale.”***

***- Margaret Lally, Director of UK Service Development, British  
Red Cross***

### What we did

The evaluation report was compiled as a result of data collection undertaken primarily through interviews with internal and external stakeholders. Questionnaires were sent to all individuals who had applied for the hardship fund. Additional document analysis and desk research was undertaken to compile a complete picture.

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### Result

The evaluation report highlighted that the decision of the British Red Cross to take on the responsibility to provide and distribute hardship grants for the UK Tsunami survivors and bereaved, was welcomed by all stakeholders. Many stakeholders interviewed as part of our research also commented favourably on the commitment of the staff, senior management and trustees of the British Red Cross in what was certainly a challenging and unprecedented project.

A number of lessons for the future were identified within policy, planning and operational and partnership working. This learning has already been integrated into the British Red Cross planning, which is underway for a sustainable aftercare support programme for UK citizen survivors and bereaved of natural and terrorist disasters overseas. The evaluation report has consolidated some learning and manifested new thinking, which the British Red Cross can apply in their discussions with government on how financial support can be best delivered in future.

### Want to know more?

Visit <http://www.redcross.org.uk> for the British Red Cross website.

Or contact Ian Vale on +44 (0) 207 978 1516 or email [i.vale@managementcentre.co.uk](mailto:i.vale@managementcentre.co.uk) to find out how we can help you.