

Save the Children Helping Children and Families Recover after South Asia's Worst Flooding in Decades

September 26, 2017

The Emergency

This year's monsoon floods and landslides in Bangladesh, India and Nepal were the most severe in recent decades. At the peak of the floods, nearly 41 million people in the three countries were affected. Tens of thousands of houses, as well as schools and hospitals, were damaged or destroyed.

In **Bangladesh**, the floods affected an estimated 8 million people in 32 districts. The waters have receded, and families now face huge challenges in rebuilding – over 101,000 houses were destroyed and 619,000 damaged.

In **India**, over 11,000 villages in the Assam, Bihar and West Bengal states were submerged, forcing more than 1 million people to seek shelter in relief camps. Farmers are counting the massive cost of the flooding in their lives, as over 3 million acres of crops were destroyed.

The worse rains **Nepal** experienced in 15 years caused floods in 35 districts. The Nepal Red Cross estimated that 1.7 million people were affected, 20,880 families temporarily displaced and 43,400 houses destroyed. The majority of people displaced have returned to their communities, where they must contend with exposure to water-borne diseases, repairs to houses and regaining their incomes.

The Impacts on Children

Children are always the most vulnerable in any emergency. Across the three countries, children are susceptible to water-borne diseases and malnutrition, poor hygiene and sanitation, and are known to be suffering from infections and skin



People collect tarps and hygiene kits from a Save the Children distribution site in Nepal's Saptari District in late August.

Photo: Ganga Pyakurel/Save the Children

rashes due to coming in contact with dirty water. Girls are especially at risk, as they and their mothers usually bear the burden of collecting water, increasing their exposure to contamination. Traveling long distances to collect water also heightens the risk of abuse.

More than 10,000 schools in India alone are closed. While children are out of school, they not only lose out on their learning, but are at increased risk of being exploited, trafficked or forced into child labor.

Our Responses

Save the Children has worked across South Asia for decades and has the trained staff and capacity to respond when children's and families' survival and well-being are jeopardized by disasters. Our teams are now working in all three countries. Their main activities are focused on water, sanitation and hygiene; shelter; food and non-food distributions;

education in emergencies; and protecting vulnerable children from harm.

We are seeking generous contributions to scale up and expand our recovery programs for children and families affected by these extreme floods. Your contribution, pooled with other resources, will help our teams in all three countries drive critical work in these early weeks of the recovery phase. Although the floodwaters have receded, the damage and challenges that children face are more apparent than ever.

Bangladesh:

We launched relief in the districts of Kurigram and Sirajganj, where we have been distributing hygiene kits and providing over 1,000 families with cash grants that they can use to meet their shelter, food and livelihood needs. We have also started work to repair water points and latrines. We have identified a need to play a lead role in restoring access to education, as few other responders are focusing on helping speed children's return to school. Families' food security and ability to regain incomes are also among our early recovery priorities, as are addressing water and sanitation and hygiene needs.

To date, we have reached 13,000 children and adults.

India:

We deployed relief in the Assam, Bihar and West Bengal states, reaching 18,400 children and adults to date. Highlights of this work include distributions of large numbers of hygiene and household kits. Over 400 children have attended activities at our child-friendly spaces, which provide structured, normalizing activities that protect children from harm and promote their well-being. Additional support will enable us to scale up distributions of food and key supplies to 10,000 vulnerable households over the coming year. Contingent on funding, we will also see that families receive livelihoods support to regain incomes and that children are back to school quickly and continuing their education. We would also seek to help repair water and sanitary facilities.

Nepal:

We have provided support to 30,275 children and adults to date, with a priority on distributing food, shelter supplies, hygiene supplies, water purification tablets and packets of oral rehydration solution – used to treat children suffering from debilitating diarrhea. We have also deployed medical teams in seven areas that have to date treated over 2,200 children and adults. We have developed a recovery strategy that would address children's quick return to school by assisting with repairs and renovations at damaged schools and providing children with new school supplies; and constructing more permanent shelters for families.

Why Save the Children?

Save the Children is a leading humanitarian organization for children in all three countries, and we have decades of experience in mobilizing relief and recovery work when children and families are imperilled by the region's frequent disasters.

We have a global humanitarian roster of staff who can also be sent to help our national staff as needed.

Nobody knows when the next crisis will strike. That's why 10 percent of your generous gift goes to helping our emergency teams prepare for and provide critical assistance when and where children need us the most.