

2010

Sankalp Disaster Relief Partner Programme

Let's Give Life a Better Chance



Background

In the wake of a major disaster, there is a greater need for the active participation of the community to provide relief to the victims. In our nation we see that people and organisations are highly inclined and motivated to participate in providing relief to the victims. Even with the best of intent the key challenges faced by everyone is to ensure that **appropriate** help reaches the **neediest** at the time when it is **most needed**. Many times the intent of the donors does not meet the desired outcome. There are several factors that contribute to this:

- **Delays in providing relief:** It takes a lot of time for community to acknowledge that the disaster requires their help. Then the mobilisation that takes place consumes more time. The relief agencies in our country are known for the speed at which they act. In all, most of the time disaster relief never reaches when the need is the most. For eg. During Karnataka floods most organisations started providing relief almost a fortnight after the disaster. During the Tsunami of 26th December, 2005, the community came forward to help only after a week.
- **Misuse of funds:** The most unfortunate part about disaster relief is that most organisations that work for disaster relief actually misuse the funds and materials for their own benefit.
- **Inappropriate Use of Funds:** The other problem seen is that many times the overheads that are incurred in providing relief takes away a substantial portion of the contribution for the disasters.
- **Inadequacy of Relief Supply:** The needs of the people suffering from a disaster change rapidly as time passes. While food, medicines and clothes are the needs in the immediate aftermath, soon the focus shifts to rehabilitation from relief. Failure to account for this causes supply of less needed materials.
- **Difficulty in locating and supplying to the most affected:** With no common disaster assessment and communication authority functional, it is very difficult for people to choose the individuals/organisations who will be in the greatest need of the help they are providing.

Sankalp India Foundation has been working since the Tsunami of December 2005 to overcome these hurdles and provide appropriate and timely help to the Most Needy when the disasters strike.



Introduction

Sankalp India Foundation is a voluntary youth organisation working since 23rd May 2003. Though the main thrust of the organisation is Voluntary Blood Donation, the volunteers of the organisation could not keep watching their countrymen suffer in the disasters. In the wake of the Tsunami, the organisation realised that even after 36 hours of the disaster little relief had reached the affected area. Yet, after 7 days, all the roads going to the region were full of relief supply vehicles. The organisation realised that there is a major gap in the time when the relief supply reaches affected people and having chosen to act to plug this. Sankalp Disaster Mitigation and Management wing was born with the intent to ensure that the organisation can provide relief to the victims of the disasters at the fastest possible pace and in the best possible way.

Sankalp Disaster Mitigation and Management wing was born with the intent to ensure that the organisation can provide relief to the victims of the disasters at the fastest possible pace and in the best possible way.

Disaster Cycle



1 Sankalp participates only in the response phase of the disaster cycle

This is the phase when the affected community is shattered and are suffering from trauma and loss. In this phase there is widespread helplessness and most victims are either involved in lamenting the loss or struggling to survive. Availability of the most basic survival needs of the community is in question in this phase. Normally the relief phase lasts from 2-3 days to up to a week.

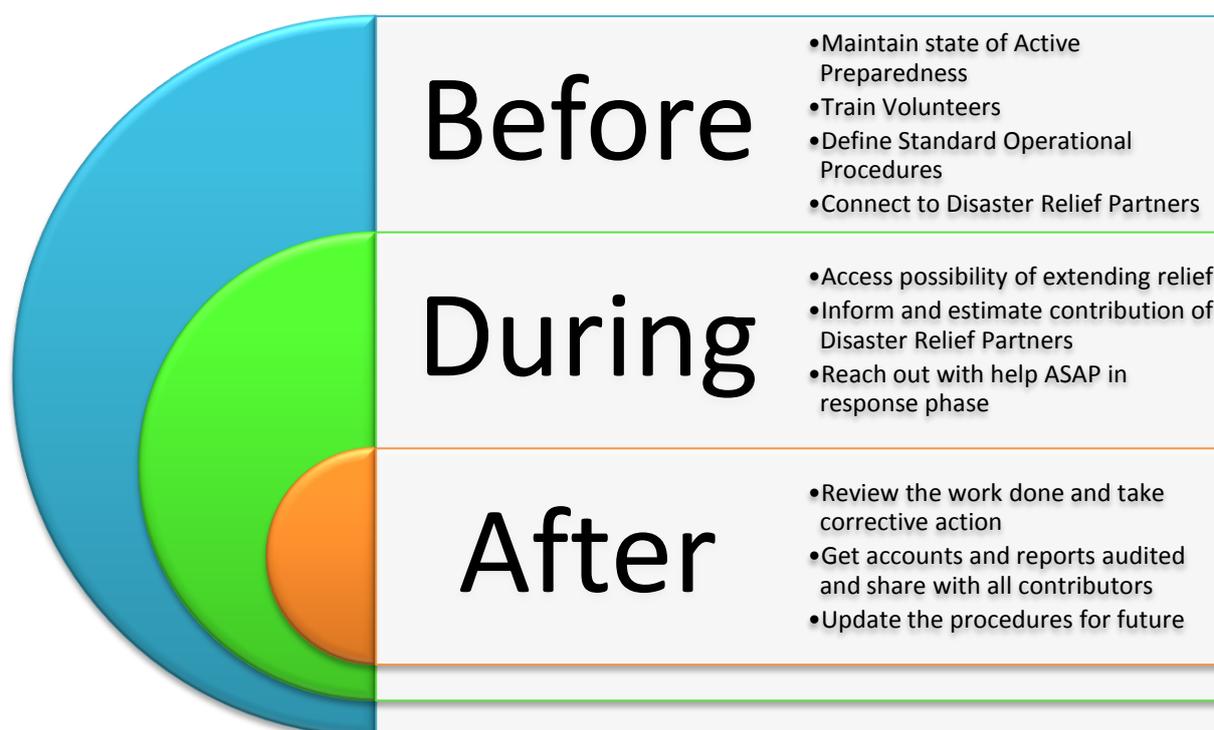
The recovery phase comes in at a time when there is no more danger to life and the essential supply lines have been restored. At this time the focus shifts to REHABILITATION. Here the people have accepted the loss and start rebuilding their lives. The focus of the external agencies is to start providing materials and essentials to let the community restore their lives back to normalcy.

Sankalp India Foundation plans to act only in the Response phase of the disaster. In our country there is minimalistic response from the community in the response phase. The world is just beginning to acknowledge the magnitude of the disaster and is waking up to respond. By the time the mobilisation occurs, it generally is too late for the response phase. The other involved problems include difficulty in travel, danger to self and lack of proper communication and information channels for the relief providers. This is where Sankalp India Foundation believes it has the greatest competency and opportunity to make a difference.

The figure shows the disaster cycles. Each disaster has a response phase which starts the minute the disaster happens. This phase is followed by the recovery phase which starts a few days after the disaster. Our interest is in the transition from Response to Recovery part of the cycle.

The main thrust of the response phase is to provide immediate RELIEF to the

The Plan



Before Disaster Strikes

- Sankalp India Foundation will maintain a state of **active preparedness** to respond to any disaster in future.
- The Standard Operational Procedures, the Response Team Structure, the Interfaces of the organisation with the community and the intricate details that are needed to ensure fastest possible mobilisation and deployment of relief to the needy will be put in place and maintained.
- The organisation will organise 16-20 trainings in a calendar year to ensure the operational readiness and impart disaster relevant skill training to the volunteers.
- Unlike previous disasters, the organisation **will not aim at requesting participation from the community after the disaster has struck**. The changed approach will require a **prior understanding with the partner organisation on their participation**. In the event of a disaster, the organisation will simply trigger all the contact points and expect fastest possible supply of relief equipment.

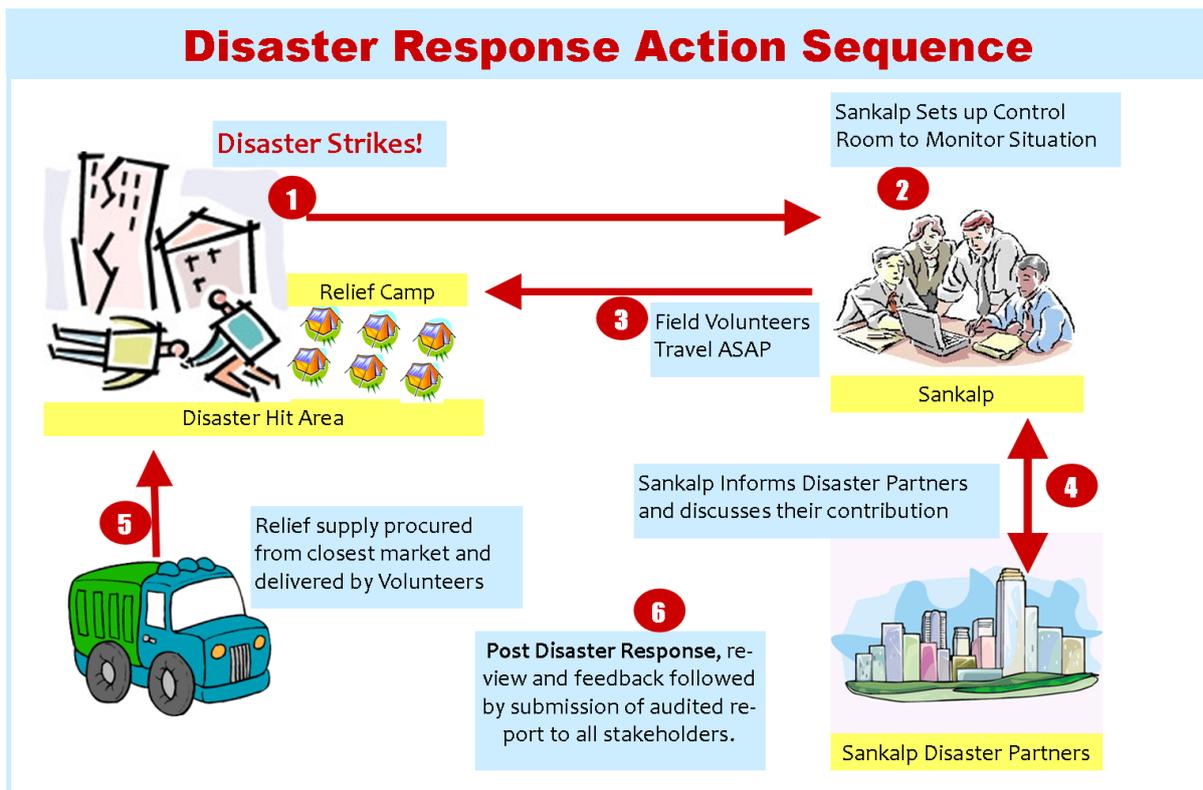
During the Disaster

- In the event of a disaster, the Sankalp Senior Volunteer Team will take a decision on whether or not the organisation's involvement in that particular disaster is meaningful. If the outcome of this is positive, immediately the relief process will be initiated.
- Understanding that there still may be delays up to 2 days to access the contribution of the partner organisations, the organisation will maintain a buffer fund for relief process.
- Sankalp will not work for rehabilitation. We would aim to be there to provide relief in the fastest possible manner and once the relief phase is over we will conclude our activities.

- The learning will be leveraged to other agencies working for the disaster. As in all past disasters, the organisation will ensure that **all operational expenses for any relief program that we undertake are completely borne by the organisation.**

After the disaster

- Sankalp will carry out a complete end to end review of the disaster relief effort to understand how things could have been done in a better way.
- All stakeholders will get an audited report at the end of the disaster.
- The operational procedures for disaster response will be updated on the basis of the newly acquired knowledge and understanding after the review is over.



Sankalp Disaster Relief Partners

Sankalp's objective is to provide appropriate relief to the neediest people at the time of greatest need. If we are to attain this objective, it would mean that we mobilise the entire relief process in a few hours after the disaster and complete the delivery in the next few days. This requirement imposes a restriction on the way we can request the community for participation in our program. We want all our contributors to understand and be confident about the approach that we take and we prefer not to hurry this understanding. Thus we have decided to come up with a "Sankalp Disaster Relief Partner Programme".

Sankalp Disaster Relief Partner Programme will enable the organisations who are interested in supporting Sankalp in the event of a disaster to have a prior understanding with the organisation on the nature of their participation. The partner organisation will get an opportunity to carefully review all of Sankalp's past relief efforts, understand and get acquainted with the organisation's quality process, financial and regulatory compliance etc. If the organisations are keen on participating with Sankalp they can get into an understanding with the organisation which will enable lightning fast collection of relief supply, monetary contribution and volunteers when required.



The following are the broad options available to organisations for participation:

Monetary Contribution

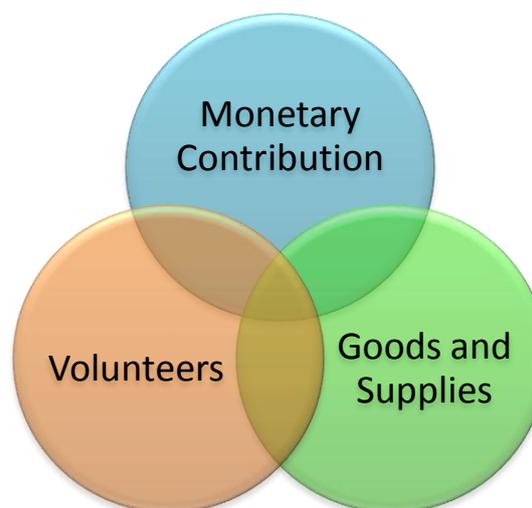
An organisation may wish to commit itself to contribute financially to Sankalp's future disaster relief initiatives. Organisations choosing to contribute monetarily will be expected to ensure that the regulatory requirements and clearances that may be involved in contributing funds towards disaster relief are in place in advance to ensure speedy collection in the wake of the disaster. The organisation would inform the relief partner of the extent and other relevant details of the monetary requirement in case a disaster relief is initiated. The relief partner will be expected to ensure speedy collection and transfer of funds so that the money is available at the right time for proper relief.

As indicated before, all operational expenses will be borne by Sankalp and any of the funds contributed by relief partners will be used fully for the relief process.

Sankalp has the following registrations and regulatory compliances that make the organisation eligible to collect funds and use them for disaster relief:

- Society Registration
- Income Tax Registration
- 80G Clearance
- Credibility Alliance

The audited report of the relief process highlighting all the expenses and contributions along with the bills of purchase for all the commodities will be provided to all participating relief partners.



2 Options for participating as Disaster Relief Partners

Goods and Supplies

If the relief partner chooses to contribute goods and supplies to Sankalp, they have an option to do that.

Generally Sankalp discourages organisations to insist upon providing supplies and goods without very active consultation. This is because:

- Providing goods adds transport costs and delays. We prefer to buy goods closest to the affected area for optimisation.
- The appropriateness of the goods is limited. The Sankalp Volunteers who go to the affected area give us live inputs on what is required. It is best to provide just that and in the quantity they prescribe. Other materials may not be the most required things.

If relief supply is available in the vicinity of the affected area the partner organisations will have an option to make direct purchases these are hand over the goods to Sankalp for distribution.

Nevertheless, if a partner organisation still wants to contribute goods alone, we will be providing them the list of items and they can procure and supply the same. Needless to say, the goods should fall into the category of relief materials as required by the working teams on field.

Volunteers

The partner organisations may commit to provide volunteers for the disaster relief process. Sankalp welcomes voluntary participation. There are guidelines for people who volunteer in our teams and those will have to be strictly adhered to by the volunteers while they work with us. Basic safety, comfort and operational guidelines cover the people who volunteer for the organisation. The volunteers will be made aware of these before they start work. Absolute compliance is a must for a joint relief effort.

However, on a more liberal note, the volunteers of the organisation who wish to visit the affected area with Sankalp volunteers are welcome to do so. In this case Sankalp Volunteers would provide them whatever help possible within the set guidelines.

An organisation may choose to join Sankalp as a Disaster Relief Partner by choosing one or more of the above participation options.

Steps ahead

Sankalp welcomes you to join in as a disaster relief partner with the organisation. If you choose to explore the option of joining in as a Disaster Relief Partner with Sankalp, please send a mail to sankalp.admin@gmail.com. We will be happy to have a meeting with the relevant stakeholders in your organisation in order to develop a better understanding of the programme.

History of Sankalp's Disaster Relief Efforts

Tsunami

- Sankalp was the only organization outside Tamil Nadu to be reaching out for relief of the victims of the Tsunami in December 2004 at Nagapattinum within 36 hours of the disaster.
- We provided assistance in managing the ambulance services at base hospital and clothes and food for the victims at Nagore.

Kashmir Earthquake

- Sankalp reached out to the victims of the massive earthquake that struck on 8th October 2005 in Kashmir with 600 blankets.
- The blankets were delivered to the victims suffering from extreme cold 3 kms from the Line of Control in the Tangdhar District of J&K.
- It took Sankalp Volunteers 5 days to travel to reach the affected area and yet, they were the first to reach out to the victims from outside J&K

Flood Relief in Tanjavur

- Sankalp organized relief for the flood affected Tanjavur in November 2005.
- On request of Tanjavur Red Cross, food supplies were distributed in the affected area.
- From start to finish the mission was executed in less than 72 hours.

Bihar Floods

- Sankalp contributed to the relief efforts after Bihar Floods by providing the food grains, medicines soaps, milk powder, baby food etc. to other trusted organisations.
- The distance, the nature of disaster and the timing at which we started intervention inclined us to participate only by providing relief supply.

Terror Attacks

- Sankalp had been instrumental in mobilizing blood donors in the wake of the terror attacks in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Delhi and Jaipur.
- We ensured that there was no shortage of blood for the victims of these attacks.

Karnataka Floods

- Relief operation initiated in 96 hours of disaster
- More than 1008 sets of utensils distributed to affected families in North Karnataka
- The review of the effort led to the updated strategy of disaster participation with focus just on relief.

Sankalp's Training Programme for Volunteers

In order to ensure that the organisation is ready to provide meaningful relief in the event of a disaster, Sankalp is organising a series of trainings for the volunteers. Every fortnight one of these trainings takes place.

Topic	Description
Code Red	The volunteer behavioural and functional protocol that comes into effect in the event of a disaster
Communication protocol	The communication scheme for internal co-ordination
Collecting reliable information	Since Sankalp believes in early intervention, so it is likely that the standard information sources will be too slow for us.
First aid training	Volunteers should be equipped to participate in providing first aid
PTSD	Handling Post Trauma Stress Disorder is necessary for every relief volunteer
Finance	Special protocols that govern the working of finance
Backup for current tasks	Sankalp in normal times handles many emergencies. It is required to safeguard these tasks at the time of disaster response activity
Crowd Control	Absolute necessity for providing relief
Volunteer's safety	We need to ensure that minimum risks are taken by volunteers on field.
Distribution strategy	Delivery of relief to the victims in the correct manner is a challenge.
Purchasing material	Lowest cost, fastest delivery, best quality anywhere, anytime!
Exploring local contacts and other NGOs	Considerations while internetworking
Travel	Considerations while travelling in hostile environment
Task allocation	Internal protocol for efficient manpower utilisation

So far 5 of these sessions have been conducted. Mock drills and scenario based training exercises are also undertaken. Response patterns for various different disasters are discussed and closely studied in these trainings.

Contact Us

If your organisation is interested in being a Sankalp Disaster Relief Partner or if you are interested in knowing more about this programme, please mail us at sankalp.admin@gmail.com or call us at +919880132850.

Past Relief Partners

In the past the following major organisations have contributed to our disaster relief efforts:

- ✓ M S Ramaiah Institute of Technology
- ✓ Dhariwal and Company
- ✓ Cambridge Solutions

- ✓ National Instruments
- ✓ M S Ramaiah Group of Institutions