

Case Study

Catholic Relief Services Upgrade Indonesian Relief Efforts

Relief workers of the Aceh Program in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, the epicenter of the earthquake that led to the tsunamis of 2004 in southeast Asia, are benefiting from their part of a \$41 million donation of software from industry giant Microsoft Corporation. The donation, originally gifted to and dispersed through NetHope, Inc., a collaborative entity comprised of the world's-leading non-governmental organizations, and the Interagency Working Group on Emergency Capacity Building Project came in the form of a cash donation and signature Microsoft software applications such as Project and the Office Suite (consisting of Word, Excel and PowerPoint).

The donations have already begun to improve organizational effectiveness and facilitate collaboration in Banda Aceh. Lance Alloway, a relief worker stationed on site through NetHope member organization Catholic Relief Services, notes that the Microsoft applications, particularly Excel, have proven to be highly versatile in transferring and analyzing data between on-site groups and have been used both in planning capacities and in tracking and analyzing data to develop best practices in the area.

Specifically, the applications' near seamless interactions between each other facilitate relief projects. "We have made efforts in the Aceh program to integrate our monitoring and evaluation systems with the management tools our managers use on a day-to-day basis. [The Microsoft software grant] allows us to minimize the degree to which our monitoring and evaluation systems and reports constitute an extra monthly task for field staff," says Alloway.

By minimizing administrative work through the ease of transferring and analyzing data between each other, the Microsoft applications maximize the capacity for relief workers to provide true relief to the damaged area of Aceh. According to Alloway, the field team for the Aceh Project has already begun encouraging Catholic Relief Services to expand the use of MS Project to all sector and geographic teams as they believe that doing so would greatly "simplify translating activity plans and scheduling across areas of a given sector."

Synopsis

- Catholic Relief Services upgraded their entire Microsoft lineup using Microsoft grant deployments
- Allows for collaboration and standardization of all documents, forms and other shared resources between different CRS groups working in Indonesian tsunami relief
- CRS says the upgrades and ease of collaboration allow them to better aid the refugees of the tsunami disaster

For More Information:

[Catholic Relief Services](#)

[Microsoft Corporation](#)

[NetHope](#)

[CRS.org](#)

[Microsoft.org](#)

[NetHope.org](#)

Catholic Relief Services was founded in 1943 by the Catholic Bishops of the United States. Our mission is to assist the poor and disadvantaged, leveraging the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to alleviate human suffering, promote development of all people, and to foster charity and justice throughout the world.

Working through local offices and an extensive network of partners, CRS operates on five continents and in 99 countries. We aid the poor by first providing direct assistance where needed, then encouraging people to help with their own development. Together, these approaches foster secure, productive, just communities that enable people to realize their potential.

Microsoft Corporation

announced in February of 2006 that it would donate \$41 million in software and cash to NetHope and The Interagency Working Group on Emergency Capacity Building. This grant is intended to enable efficient and rapid communication among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) during times of crisis, when speed, collaboration and efficiency can make a true difference in people's lives.

NetHope is a new generation charitable organization comprised of seventeen leading NGOs involved in humanitarian, conservancy and relief efforts across the world. By encouraging collaboration between NGOs, NetHope seeks to maximize efficiency and productivity in the non-profit world. NetHope focuses on generating best-practices as well as on using connectivity and technology to amplify and maximize its member groups' ability to help millions of end beneficiaries.