

Stay with us...



Aranayake Landslide One Year On

Stay with us...

Community and the local authorities request World Vision

It's been one year since the massive landslide in Aranayake, Kegalle District Sri Lanka. As World Vision concludes its work, there is one request that is continuously repeated by the community and the local authorities – 'Stay with us World Vision.'

World Vision's relief response to the affected children and their families which began 14 hours after the disaster, continued for nine months. We continued to be present, offering support to the local government authorities in their plan of rebuilding and recovery. The local authorities have already offered World Vision a space in the Government Agent's Office requesting us to continue our presence as the community journeys forward.

The landslide that occurred on the evening of May 17th buried three villages on its path as it gushed down the mountain. Only 48 bodies were recovered during weeks of rescue operations and 110 still remain missing.

Families, both who were affected and those in the surrounding risk areas were removed to temples, schools, government buildings and other safer locations. World Vision response team arrived in the location within 14 hours of the disaster and provided non-food-items and health and hygiene packs to 400 affected families in five camps.

World Vision continued its response in coordination with the government and other NGO for the next 9 months. The response had a special focus on child protection and water, sanitation and hygiene making the life of the displaced community as comfortable as possible. Child Friendly Spaces provided the affected children a place of safety while helping them to recover and regain a sense of normalcy.

The Disaster...



3 villages
completely
destroyed



48 bodies
recovered



110 persons
missing



1,100 families
Were displaced



300 families
Still living in
8 temporary camps

World Vision Response at a glance...



425 families provided with non-food relief goods



255 families provided with bathing areas



200 baby kits provided for children under 3



50 families provided with folding mattresses



563 families provided with sanitation facilities



4,625 Families received hygiene packs



299 Families benefit from water storing tanks



198 families benefit from the communal kitchens



250 children benefitted through Child Friendly Spaces



250 children received school supplies



529 Families living in camps provided solar lamps



190 families provided with water filters



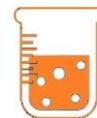
125 families provided with bicycles



537 individuals trained in first-aid



75 Youth and young adults trained in rescue operations



575 families benefit through chlorination units



479 families benefitted through waste bins and other equipment provided for camp management



150 rain gauges provided



875 families provided with hygiene awareness

Our funding partners:

UNICEF
USAID
IOM
WV US
WV Australia

Our working partners:

District Secretariat
Disaster Management Centre
Pradeshiya Sabha, Aranayake
National Water Supply and Drainage Board
National Building Research Organisation (NBRO)
National Disaster Relief Service Center
Divisional Secretariats of Aranayake, Mawanella, Bulathkohupitiya, Kegalle, Rambukkana and Yatiyanthota
Medical Office of Health, Aranayake
Sri Lanka Red Cross

In their own words...

Very Flexible. That's what World Vision is. We worked with a lot of local and International NGOs during this disaster and World Vision is Number One. They were constantly working keeping the wellbeing of affected people in mind.

We had no experience in responding to children during a disaster, because this was a first time for us, but they were experts in that area. Because they focused on their protection and wellbeing it made it a lot easier for us to focus on other things. Child Friendly Spaces were a great help for the children in their recovery.

Most of the organisations who come for the response want to push their own plan to us. But World Vision approach was different. They are excellent in building relationships. They engaged us in conversation and always suggested new ideas that made us think. They thought ahead of us. We have used every idea that they brought to the table in planning our response. Because of them now we have very good knowledge in responding to a disaster.

That is why we repeatedly request them to stay on with us. Even if they don't do any activities, their presence makes a difference.

they left an impression in everything they did. We involved them a lot in planning our recovery and the wayforward. I have no words to describe what it was like to work with them or to thank them. World Vision is family now.

*Ajith Priyantha Bandara
Development Officer and the Assistant Secretary to the
Government Agent of Aranayake*

I remember while handling the Landslide response initially we used to get anxious about how to manage the affected people. We are really very thankful that World Vision helped form a rescue team and train them for future emergencies. During the training I could understand what I could have done differently to better support the affected community.

We learnt from first-aid to caring for the children and those who are most vulnerable, camp management and practical knowledge on what steps to take during an emergency. The first-aid knowledge I already use at home. They even taught us about fire safety which was quite useful.

We have fire extinguishers in our officers but never knew how to use them in case of an emergency.

I didn't know that even first-aid had to be different when it's given to children and to those with disability. We were also taught how to stay calm during a disaster. I feel confident that we can better respond to our communities during a disaster now.

*Kanchana Thilakarathne
Member of the Rescue Team Kegalle*

At first I felt scared when we moved to the camp. I was worried how clean the place would be and if the children would fall sick.

The camp has become more like being at home after all the facilities set up by World Vision. We have access to clean water for bathing and toilets have been set up and well managed in our campsite.

But World Vision gave us filters to use for drinking water. They also provided us with solar lamps. It has made doing household work at night easier.

Earlier we used a torch so that the children could do their homework. Now with the solar light we just charge it in the morning under the sun and at night it gives us light for the children to study. I am also able to cook dinner without difficulty.

World Vision also supported the children's education with essential school supplies.

Anusha, mother of three children

In pictures...



The vegetation has begun to close up the wound on the mountain. But healing would take longer for those who were affected. Longer than for the mountain.



There are still 300 families living in eight displaced camps in Aranayake. Finding appropriate land in the locality with no landslide risk has been a challenge to the government. But while the families live in the camps, World Vision has supported in improving their living conditions.



Private Companies have come forward to support the Government's resettlement efforts in Aranayake, building new housing in safer locations for families. 50 families have already been resettled.

In pictures...



Children are the most vulnerable victims of any disaster. But often they are also the first to bounce back to life. World Vision's Child Friendly Spaces provide a place of safety for children during displacement and help them recover and regain a sense of normalcy through a variety of activities. In Aranyake, CFSs operated in six camps catering to 250 affected children. The CFSs funded by USAID and UNICEF were managed by trained staff of World Vision and volunteers.



Chamalsha (7) stopped talking after the disaster. She was always afraid and needed her mother to stay by her even when she went to school. CFS helped her recover and be back to her bubbly self again. She called it her second school.



Saumya (17) was buried face down. She could move neither her hands nor her legs. But in that position, she could still breathe through her mouth.

[Read her story](#)



“World Vision’s solar-powered lamps are very useful because it gives enough light for the tent. I didn’t want to take the risk in lighting lamps or candles because the tent can easily catch fire,” says Sithara, mother of two.

World Vision distributed 529 laps to families living in the camps.

Needs, concerns and challenges in the coming days...



Finding appropriate land within the locality with no landslide risk to relocate the affected families is one of the biggest needs.



Need for counseling and psychosocial support continues to be high for vulnerable families.



Monsoon rains are expected in the coming weeks and can make life difficult for the families still living in tents.



The Risk of spread of diseases will be high if the rains continue



Heavy rain will also increase the risk of more landslides

DRR

Urgent need to implement disaster risk reduction activities in disaster prone locations.



Supporting the community with new income generation activities is crucial.



Almost 60% needed to change livelihood, as their previous livelihood can't be continued due to reasons, such as their cultivation lands being declared as high risk areas.

Aranayake Emergency Response

Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs
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