

CONTACTS:

Michael Geller/JDC/(212) 885-0838

michael.geller@jdcny.org

Andrea Kotuk/Andrea & Associates/(212) 353-9585

andreapr@earthlink.net

NEWS ALERT

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE FROM AMERICAN JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE (JDC) PROVIDED NEW LIFE FOR MYANMAR CYCLONE VICTIMS

- JDC Partnered with Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist NGOs to Deliver Aid -

New York, NY, May 2, 2009 – Days after Cyclone Nargis devastated Myanmar, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) was on-the-ground working in partnership with faith-based, Israeli and other international NGOs to ensure that victims of the disaster had access to clean water and medical care, new homes and storm-resistant shelters, and revitalized the fishing industry through loan programs. JDC raised more than \$550,000 from North America’s Jewish community to aid in the vital relief and subsequent recovery efforts that have supported Buddhist, Christian and Muslim populations in the most decimated areas of Myanmar.

One of the first JDC initiatives, along with international partners, was the immediate delivery, together with Mashav, Israel’s Center for International Cooperation, and the Myanmar Red Cross, of a **container of medical supplies to the stricken areas.**

Reflecting on the impact over the last year in one of the most devastated areas of Myanmar, JDC helped **build 56 new houses**, ensured that **50 middle school and high school students were able to continue their education** in nearby towns, provided **1,100 people with transportation to the health facilities**, and **provided 240 people with safe drinking water** in their village. JDC partnered with the International Blue Crescent of Turkey (IBC) and IYCA, a local Myanmar Muslim NGO, to aid in this work.

JDC also installed two water treatment and supply systems, **providing safe drinking water to 15,000 villagers in the Irrawaddy Valley**, together with the International Rescue Committee (IRC). In addition, through JDC support, IRC health teams distributed hygiene promotion tools and visual aids to trained staff.

“Our work in Myanmar is part of JDC’s unique humanitarian aid formula,” said JDC CEO Steven Schwager. “We balance immediate relief with sustainable, long-term programs that can be replicated. This model made it possible for cyclone survivors to build stable infrastructure, get much-needed medical care, and return to work.”

JDC worked on a local initiative **to repair an embankment that used to protect farmlands from salt-water** during high tide in eastern part of Dedaye Township. JDC and the Myanmar/Burma Emergency Aid Network (MBEAN) teamed up with local engineers and community leaders to prevent future flooding by replacing the sand embankment with concrete.

In addition, JDC also helped **aid local women in vulnerable households**, and **provided cash to men in the traditional fishing industry** for purchase of new boats and nets. JDC partnered with the U.S. based NGO Pact whose micro-finance networks ensured the loans reached the villagers.

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JDC, harnessing its ability to carefully implement disaster relief, conducted an assessment of the situation in Myanmar, **creating a plan that called for the provision of shelter and livelihood support to cyclone victims through two local organizations.** This work was done in cooperation with JDC's longstanding partner, the All India Disaster Management Institute (AMDI).

Among the many projects for immediate relief after the storm, JDC **distributed humanitarian aid through a local Buddhist monastery** in Myanmar together with Sarvodaya, a Sri Lankan-based Buddhist organization; provided the villagers of Myout Chang and their neighbors in Fayarrlayngu village with **basic necessities such as blankets, food, tarpaulins for shelter and cooking facilities** together with NOW and the Civic Society Initiative (CSI).

Following the Jewish tradition of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), JDC's renowned non-sectarian efforts have also provided aid to those who were affected by the cyclone in Bangladesh; the earthquake in Peru; the Tsunami in South Asia; the floods in Haiti and the Dominican Republic; the victims of terror in Turkey; the earthquakes in El Salvador, India, Morocco, and Turkey; the displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo following the eruption of the Mt. Nyiragongo volcano; and the war-torn communities in Kosovo.

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Since 1914, JDC has given global expression to the principle that all Jews are responsible for one another. Working today in over 70 countries, JDC acts on behalf of North America's Jewish communities and others to rescue Jews in danger, provide relief to those in distress, revitalize overseas Jewish communities and help Israel overcome the social challenges of its most vulnerable citizens. JDC also provides non-sectarian emergency relief and long-term development assistance worldwide. For more information, please visit www.JDC.org.