

CERI responds to flooding in Sri Lanka, 10 years after deadly tsunami

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BATTICALOA , Sri Lanka—A few days before the 10th anniversary of a tsunami that claimed more than 226,000 lives and devastated Indonesia's island nations, [Children's Emergency Relief International](#) received notification of torrential rainfall in Sri Lanka.



CERI delivered essential supplies to families displaced by flooding in Sri Lanka. Rains sparked massive flooding and mudslides across the region, driving thousands out of their homes—and prompting CERI to action.

Since responding to the tsunami a decade ago, CERI—the overseas branch of BCFS, formerly Baptist Child & Family Services—has operated a foster

care program in two of the hardest-hit cities, Batticaloa and Weligama.

The foster care effort focuses on reuniting or finding safe, loving families for orphaned children. In-country staff members conduct trauma and loss counseling for children overcoming loss and hardships. They also distribute microloans to entrepreneurial foster parents looking to break the cycles of poverty in their families and rural communities.

As the waters rose in late December, CERI again found itself searching for children and families through waterlogged streets and helping many of the 100,000 people affected by floods find refuge and food after their homes were destroyed.

CERI South Asia National Director Anita Ramesh sent daily reports to the United States. Flooding damaged three CERI foster homes beyond repair, but every family and child was accounted for. The organization coordinated temporary housing for displaced families, and CERI plans to rebuild the lost homes.



CERI also helped victims relocated to government camps after flooding in Sri Lanka. After floodwaters receded, many families asked if they could return to their homes. Sri Lankan custom demands families spend the New Year in their homes, performing thorough cleaning—symbolic of purging the previous year and preparing for a prosperous year to come.

CERI staff helped many families prepare their homes for their New Year's customs, but other houses were too damaged by the flooding. Those families moved in temporarily with relatives or neighbors.

CERI provided all families who returned to their neighborhoods with dry goods and water for immediate use. CERI staff asked families to list necessary household items destroyed by the disaster, and BCFS was able to replace those items promptly.

"I am always inspired by the bravery and resiliency of those we serve around the world," said Dearing Garner, CERI executive director.

“In the wake of such tragedy, hope shined as brightly as it did a decade ago thanks to the prayers and support from not only our Sri Lanka staff, but also our many friends and sponsors here in the United States.”