



Secure a Family's Future – Lila's Story

Lila lives in rural Nepal with her ten-year-old son, Sanjay*. Like so many mothers in rural Nepal, Lila has to raise her children and run the household alone.

With very few local jobs, Lila's husband has to migrate to India for work, leaving his family behind for months at a time.

"We were in a very difficult financial situation," Lila says.

"I relied entirely on my husband's income."

Lila tried her best to provide for her children. Her youngest son Sanjay lives at home, while her eldest son is in Kathmandu completing high school, as education in the district finishes at grade 10. But despite her best efforts, Lila was barely able to provide the essentials.

"Before, I primarily grew wheat

and maize, which provided a limited income," says Lila.

"I could only afford to buy stationery for the children and save money when my husband sent money home."

When ADRA began the GOAL II project in her local community, Lila was eager to participate. She saw it as her chance to earn an income for herself and her children.

CEO Message



In March, I had the privilege of being interviewed by Faith FM to talk about ADRA.

We discussed how we go about our humanitarian focus, and how our Seventh-day Adventist identity influences our work. It was a fantastic opportunity to reflect on our achievements and the incredible impact our programs and partners make, all thanks to generous supporters like you.

There are many organisations in the relief and development sector, but what sets ADRA apart is our faith, which we demonstrate through the practical actions of Justice, Compassion, and Love. As part of the holistic ministry of the church, our role involves practical action, following Jesus' example by helping the most vulnerable meet their immediate needs while also working on long-term solutions. Beyond this, our Christian identity brings hope to situations that often feel hopeless. While those in need desperately require their material needs to be met, they also need nourishment for their soul.

In Ukraine, we've been rehabilitating bunkers where people seek shelter during air raids. We've transformed these into safe, hopeful spaces for children, creating a unique type of daycare.

While bombs fall outside, children have a secure place to go where they can receive psychosocial support from ADRA staff, do some drawings, and hear stories of hope.

In Australia, the ADRA Community Centre in Blacktown offers counselling and social work services to clients struggling with addictions or poor mental health. These services help to alleviate immediate pain while addressing underlying causes. We also meet their physical needs by providing food relief to families facing empty shelves. These services help lead clients to a stable, normal life. They gain the ability to make good decisions, find employment, and secure housing. While we recognise the need for immediate relief during crises, we also focus on follow-up activities to help people face life with renewed hope.

Grace Copoceanu, the manager of ADRA Community Centre Blacktown, shared that her team invites the Holy Spirit into their work, a privilege and blessing they haven't experienced in other workplaces. We know that when God is with us, amazing things happen.

Thank you for being a part of ADRA's ministry to serve humanity so that all may live as God intended. I hope you are blessed by the updates in this issue of ADRA News.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "DGrellmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Denison Grellmann
CEO, ADRA Australia



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Through the project, which is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), Lila received agricultural and financial training, as well as a variety of vegetable seeds for new crops.

“We received vegetable seeds, drip irrigation systems, plastic tunnels, and nursery materials,” Lila says. “I was trained in preparing bio-fertiliser using locally available resources such as cattle urine, sugarcane juice, and herbs. The project also taught us about the importance of greenhouses and nurseries – how they protect vegetables from harsh weather conditions.”

Lila now grows a variety of vegetables including cucumber, capsicum, eggplant, cabbage, cauliflower, tomato, bitter melon, bottle gourd, and chilli. Lila no longer has to buy vegetables at the market. Now, she grows enough for her family’s personal consumption, as well as having plenty left to sell.

Working with the municipality, ADRA established a local market so the farmers from the project had somewhere to sell their produce. The farmers pool their produce and then negotiate a price and sell to traders.

“My income has increased approximately ten times compared to what I used to earn from maize and wheat farming,” Lila says. “Vegetable farming demands more effort



Your gift by 30 June can provide mothers like Lila with the seeds and training they need to provide for their family and send their children to school. Donate today to help a mother secure her family’s future at adra.org.au/efy

and attention compared to wheat and maize cultivation, but the income it generates is truly impressive. And everything is under my ownership!”

For Lila, the biggest difference is the financial freedom she has to earn money and provide for her children without worrying about when the next payment will come from her husband.

“Since starting vegetable farming, I have been able to generate my own income and become self-reliant,” says Lila.

“Now, I can afford to buy enough essentials for my family and even save money from my own earnings. I no longer have to rely on my husband’s salary for daily expenses or savings.”

With the boost to her income, Lila has the means to send her eldest son to Kathmandu so he can complete his high school education. She intends to do the same for Sanjay.

“If I hadn’t been part of the project, my financial situation would likely have remained difficult,” Lila says. “The situation has improved significantly now. I am able to send both my children to good schools for better education.”

Lila also dreams of supporting her eldest son through his bachelor’s degree. It is her wish that she can do the same for Sanjay, too.

“We aim to send our younger son to a good school in Kathmandu after he completes grade 10 here. I also plan to continue with vegetable farming. Currently, we face challenges with regular irrigation, but once this issue is resolved, I aim to increase production in the future.”

**Name changed for child protection purposes.*



New ADRA Projects Expand Community Support in Victoria

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has launched two new initiatives in Victoria, expanding support for communities facing food insecurity and homelessness.

On 31 March 2025, the ADRA Bairnsdale Community Food Pantry and Warehouse officially opened its new purpose-built facility. According to federal MP Darren Chester, the centre is “helping East Gippsland families experiencing food stress” and the upgraded space will allow the service to meet growing demand and function as a hub for emergency supplies during disasters.

Currently, the food pantry supports 280 individuals per week with the help of more than 70 volunteers. The site also includes an Op Shop with a used furniture section and the Smile-A-While cafe, which aims to promote a sense of community.

A few days later, on 3 April, ADRA officially opened its new Op Shop in Frankston to support local fundraising efforts for people experiencing homelessness. According to the Council for Homeless Persons, Frankston ranks 17th among Victoria’s 88 electorates for homelessness.

Frankston deputy mayor Steffie Conroy and councillor Emily Green attended the opening and thanked the volunteers. The shop is managed by Josie and Mario, with support from ADRA



Darren Chester MP (left) and Victoria SDA President Graeme Christian at the ADRA Bairnsdale Community Pantry Opening.

Op Shops in Boronia, Garfield and members of Frankston Seventh-day Adventist Church.

“We are blessed to work alongside the Adventist Church and members who give so much of their time to support the community,” said Rebecca Auriant, ADRA Director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Victoria. “The new ADRA Op Shop at Frankston will be a light in the community—more than a place to shop, an opportunity to meet warm, kind and generous church and community volunteers who together will see lives changed.”

BECOME AN ADRA CHAMPION!

Being an ADRA Champion is a simple, powerful way to change lives—starting right from your local church. Whether you love sharing from the front or prefer working behind the scenes, we’ll support you with everything you need.

**INTERESTED? CONTACT US ON 1800 242 372
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A Tribute to Pastor Willie

On 20 January 2025, the Adventist community was rocked by the unexpected passing of Pastor William Strickland.

Pastor William 'Willie' Strickland's car was swept off a causeway by floodwaters in northern New South Wales on Saturday 18 January. The area had received more than 100 millimetres of rainfall in a very short time.

Pastor Willie's vehicle was discovered 400 metres downstream, but Pastor Willie was not found until Monday around midday, according to ABC News.

In a statement posted to Facebook, the Strickland family confirmed that Pastor Willie's body had been found. "We would like to thank those who have been eagerly praying for this moment, and for those who have been here actively searching for Dad, especially our local church community, the NSW police, and SES. It has not been in vain."

The family paid tribute to their "charismatic and loved" father "who gave his life in service and ministry of the gospel".

"He touched many people's lives through his work as a pastor with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in both Australia and New Zealand, and his community work through ADRA."

Tweed-Byron Police District Inspector Matt Woods said more than 170 people turned up to help with the search.

"It just shows you the standing and the love that this gentleman has had in his community," Inspector Woods said.

At the time of his passing, Pastor Willie was serving as the Chaplain for the ADRA Community Centre Logan and was well known by local politicians for his community work.



Councillor Teresa Lane for the City of Logan shared her condolence motion in council chambers.

"He dedicated his life to the service of others and making a difference," said Cr Lane. "He fostered an environment that was warm and welcoming. He was just the coolest dude who would welcome people so warmly into his life and his heart. The loss of someone like Pastor Willie is a real loss for our community."

Pastor Willie's Celebration Service took place on 6 February, while the Funeral Service and Burial Service took place on 7 February.

To honour Pastor Willie, attendees were encouraged to wear cultural/traditional clothing, ADRA, Pathfinder, SummerCamp or Big Camp shirts, or their favourite sport team's jerseys to all services.

In lieu of flowers, Pastor Willie's family requested that funeral attendees make a gift to ADRA to honour Pastor Willie's heart for service.



Disaster Updates



Myanmar Earthquakes



On 28 March 2025, two consecutive earthquakes – measuring 7.7 and 6.4 in magnitude – struck central

Myanmar.

The devastation is the worst Asia has experienced in over a century, with tremors also felt in Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Laos, and China. The death toll has surpassed 3,600 and more than 17 million people have been affected.

Countless families have been displaced and are staying in open areas with nowhere to shelter. Necessities like clean drinking water are scarce, with water facilities being affected by the quake.

“The sanitation facilities and wells were damaged with contaminated water, and that is also leading to the scarcity of drinking water,” explains Manish Thapa, ADRA’s Emergency Response Coordinator.

A member of our team shared the situation from her location in Madalay City:

“People no longer have a place to live or food to eat. Many have lost their homes. Another issue is that there is no security. We have to sleep along the roadsides. Additionally, we continue to experience aftershocks and are still enduring the consequences of the strong earthquake.”



ADRA is on the ground providing families with cash assistance. Cash assistance allows those affected to acquire goods that are most needed, whether that is a tent for shelter, food, water, clothing, or medicine. So far, 1,698 families have received cash assistance in the affected areas of Mandalay, Sagaing, S. Shan, Bago, and Naypyidaw. ADRA plans to support an additional 1,030 families with non-food items and shelter kits in the coming weeks.

Vanuatu Earthquake



On Tuesday 17 December 2024, a 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck Port Vila, Vanuatu.

There have been 14 deaths and over 200 people injured. The Vanuatu Government declared a state of emergency. Businesses, homes and



properties around Port Vila have been destroyed.

ADRA distributed more than 4,000 litres of water, hygiene kits, dignity kits, and menstrual hygiene kits to families and individuals sheltering across five evacuation centres.

Health awareness campaigns, psychological first aid, and the dissemination of information materials were also part of ADRA's immediate response. Medical supplies and clean water remain critical priorities for families left without access to these necessities. ADRA is working with the Department of Water Resources to help restore the water supply to affected communities.

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred



Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred was a prolonged storm which brought destructive winds, flooding, and significant rainfall to parts of south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales in early March.

Starting on 3 March 2025, ADRA began working with volunteers, ADRA projects, and churches to help prepare for the impact of the cyclone. Though Tropical Cyclone Alfred was eventually downgraded from a category 4 storm to a

tropical low shortly before making landfall on 8 March, the storm was initially projected to make landfall with high intensity, and crucial preparation efforts were well underway.

Together with various ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, ADRA responded to those affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and the subsequent flooding.

ADRA's response included offering hot meals and barbeques, the distribution of food hampers and frozen meals, clean up support, referral services, and cash assistance.

Our response would not have been possible without the support and collaboration with Lifeswich Church, Ipswich Church, Gold Coast Central Church, Coastlife Church, Ballina Church, Ballina ADRA Op Shop, 5 Loaves, Kingscliff Church, ARISE Australia, ADRA Logan Community Centre, ADRA Eight Mile Plains Emergency Relief, ADRA Northpine Food Pantry, and ADRA Lockyer Valley Food Pantry.

A big thank you to Sanitarium Health Food Company for donating pallets of food. We're also thankful for the support we received from local businesses when our ADRA Op Shop Chinchilla flooded. Thank you to Lawrence Carpet Cleaning for providing free services, and to Jaycar in Chinchilla for providing discounts to replace our computers.



To support ADRA's disaster response efforts, visit adra.org.au/disaster

Miracles Amid Disaster: A Humanitarian Journey After the 2004 Tsunami

by Robert Patton



A village near the coast of Sumatra lies in ruins after the tsunami



An Indonesian man looks through the debris in his home in Meulaboh

In the aftermath of the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, I experienced what I can only describe as a series of miracles while working as a disaster management specialist for ADRA.

My mission was clear: identify the communities most in need and find a way to reach them. Meulaboh, a town of 55,000 residents in northwestern Sumatra, quickly emerged as critical.

With damaged roads and airport, and a destroyed seaport, accessing this devastated community seemed nearly impossible.

At the Medan airline counter, I discovered flights to Tapaktuan – the nearest operational airport to Meulaboh – were booked solid for ten days.

A Boston Globe journalist offered me a charter seat for \$1,700, but as we negotiated, a Japanese journalist began outbidding me, driving the price up to \$2,400.

Just then, a young man tapped my shoulder and offered two commercial tickets for the next morning at just \$200 total. I accepted immediately.

The following morning, my translator Rully and I flew to Tapaktuan alongside this helpful stranger, who was searching for his family in a coastal village.

Upon arrival, we found chaos as people desperately sought transportation north along the tsunami-ravaged coast. Our ticket benefactor helped us squeeze into an overcrowded Suzuki van that was heading to Meulaboh.

About 150km north, the driver refused to continue due to deteriorated road conditions. As Rully and I contemplated walking the remaining 40km, a four-wheel drive vehicle stopped.

Remarkably, one passenger had studied with Rully at a university 2,500 kilometres away seven years earlier and recognised him on the spot!



Rully, the small plane and the damaged runway



Meeting with the military commander



At the military base



Discussing a flight with the Singapore Air Force

The family was heading to Meulaboh and drove us directly to the military compound.

We registered with the local military commander who was coordinating the disaster response, becoming the first NGO to do so. We conducted a rapid assessment that identified critical needs.

Unable to use my satellite phone due to weather conditions, I needed to return to Medan to report our findings. While speaking with Singaporean Air Force personnel about possible helicopter transport, a small plane landed on the damaged runway. I approached the pilot, who agreed to fly us back to Medan after his brief five-minute stop.

That evening, I filed my assessment with recommendations for ADRA's response. By the

next morning, ADRA Denmark had secured funding from the Danish government.

I returned to Meulaboh in the same plane, carrying one and a half tonnes of relief supplies – the beginning of years of relief, recovery, and rehabilitation operations.

Looking back, I'm humbled by how these seemingly random incidents enabled critical assistance to reach a desperate community.

Whether you attribute it to divine intervention or the collective human spirit of helping those in need, this extraordinary sequence of events ensured timely aid reached those who needed it most.

Kenya Update

Located in rural Kenya, ADRA is working with the local staff of the Nyalgunga Women's Empowerment Project to improve the livelihoods of women and children who have been affected as a result of HIV/AIDS.

Since 2004, the group has established small businesses and experimented with new farming practices. Currently, the group operates the Pam Clifford Academy, a small preschool that provides quality education and preparation for primary school. The existing school building is in a marketplace and will soon be closed down by the government. The project has secured land for farming and a new preschool that meets government standards.

The project also empowers members to develop a self-help group to strengthen their governance, enhance income through entrepreneurship support, and access Village Savings and Loans schemes.

In February 2025, International Programs Director Olive Orate visited the new school build.

"During my visit to the project, I met the inspiring women leading the savings group that manages the academy," says Olive. "These women, 100% of



Natsai Mhosva from the International Programs team at ADRA Australia (back row, far left), Olive Orate (next to her in the ADRA t-shirt) and other women from the project.

them widows due to HIV/AIDS, also farm to support orphaned children in their care. Their commitment, leadership, and deep gratitude were truly moving. With ADRA's support, they have sustained the school through income from farming and their savings group."

During her visit, Olive toured the following facilities for the new school that have been completed:

- Main building with 3 classrooms, 1 library, and 2 teacher's rooms
- Kitchen behind the main building
- Toilets – 3 rooms for girls and 3 rooms for boys
- Fence with concrete posts, barbed wire, and chicken mesh

The school plans to move to the new building this year, but there are still some needs before they can move such as:

- Desks and chairs for kids (at least 20 per room)
- Desks for the 3 teachers
- Water tanks for kitchen and toilets

"This project is more than just a new building; it is a symbol of hope, dignity, and resilience," Olive says.

"The newly constructed school now stands ready to welcome children into a safer, more nurturing learning environment. We remain committed to supporting a smooth transition from the old facility while continuing to guide these women in boosting their agricultural productivity and building the skills needed to lead and sustain their livelihoods.

"With the right support, these women will continue to transform not only their own lives, but also the future of the children they care for."

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