



Disaster or Development?

Asked what **ADRA** stands for, many people will say that it means “Adventist Disaster and Relief Agency”. That’s because when people think of **ADRA** they almost always think about the work that we do in times of disaster in the way of distributing food and emergency supplies.

Many people are surprised to discover that disaster relief and emergency response is only a part of what we do! Have you ever wondered what ADRA does when we are not handing out food to earthquake and flood victims? There is a clue in our name.

In reality, **ADRA** stands for, “Adventist Development and Relief Agency”.

What does it mean to do “**development**”? Development is a word that has a wide range of meanings. Here in the UK we may think of development as the new subdivision going up in our community, improved roads, or better parks and school systems. Over the years we have witnessed big improvements to the communities where we live. We can be thankful that we live in a country where people enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world.

With the prosperity that we enjoy comes the responsibility to help other countries that are still struggling to provide their citizens with even the most basic services and necessities of life. The UK Government is very active in what is called “International Development”. Working with UK companies, educational institutions and non-profit organizations like ADRA-UK, the Department for International Development (DFID) is helping the developing nations of our world build better societies for their people.

While there are many ways that international development can be implemented, the philosophy of ADRA leads us to concentrate on what we call, “Community-based Development”. What this means is that we design programmes that help people live better, healthier, happier lives, at community level. Working together with people of remote villages, ADRA develops new systems that deliver safe water close to home. Latrines provide new levels of sanitation and improved health. Agricultural instruction helps people grow more nutritious food, even on marginal land. Skills training and workshops that teach how to start own small businesses help people break free from the cycle of poverty. Health instruction, especially for new mothers and children under five, not only saves lives but helps children thrive!

In many ways, you could say that the ‘Development’ in the “Adventist Development and Relief Agency” is all about personal development. We seek to help people live better lives through personal growth. While it is very important to save lives with food and services in times of emergency, we believe that it is even more important to change lives through development.

As we consider the life we enjoy here in the UK because of the well-developed communities in which we are able to live in and the amazing opportunities that we have, let’s remember those that are still just starting out on the pathway of development to a better life.