

After the tsunami...

A huge amount of money has been raised after the terrible tsunamis – the tidal waves resulting from the undersea earthquake in the Indian Ocean last December. Attention is now focused on some of the world's poorest nations.

1 Work with a partner and create sentences with some of the following words.

poverty	pledge	relief
donation	collection	debt

2 Scan the article and underline as many of these words as you can in just one minute.

Disaster and debt The worldwide response to the tsunami disaster has convinced many that 2005 can really be a breakthrough year in tackling world poverty. Millions of dollars in donations poured in to help the victims in what is, above all, a human tragedy.

Corporate aid from firms such as *BP*, *HSBC*, *Vodafone* and *Astra Zenaca* was swift. Companies started their own relief funds, or promised to match staff donations. *Next* pledged money to reconstruction work; *Shell* offered free fuel for rescue operations in Thailand; and *Ebay* ran an online collection.

But what happens after the short-term help with emergency shelter, food and drink, and essential medical supplies? Economists assessing the damage put the cost of rebuilding at over \$14 billion. How will the work of restoring a

country's infrastructure, such as the roads, railways, bridges, electricity, sanitation and communication systems, begin? Or building new houses, and redeveloping the tourism or the fishing industries?

Some argue that setting up a tsunami warning system to help prevent such catastrophes in the future is a priority. Others feel that such disasters are rare, and it is better to invest money in the fight against poverty. Debt relief is expected to be a key element in long-term efforts to tackle the aftermath of the tsunami disaster. Poverty, it is claimed, makes these populations disproportionately vulnerable to natural disasters of this type. So, in the year when the campaign '*Making poverty history*' is launched in the UK, perhaps there is real potential for cancelling the debt of the developing countries, and maybe also a move towards fairer free trade.

3 Read the whole article and summarise the key points.

4 Find words in the article from their definitions.

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|---|---------------|
| (a) an achievement that comes after a lot of hard work | (Paragraph 1) |
| (b) the set of systems (e.g. transport) in a country that affect how well it operates | (Paragraph 3) |
| (c) the effects and results of something bad | (Paragraph 4) |
| (d) an event that causes a lot of damage, or makes a lot of people suffer | (Paragraph 4) |
| (e) weak and therefore easy to hurt, harm, or attack | (Paragraph 4) |
| (f) a series of actions intended to achieve something, such as social change | (Paragraph 4) |

(Definitions from or based on *Macmillan English Dictionary*. Text © Bloomsbury Publishing Plc 2002)

5 Work in small groups. Look at the areas which now need long-term investment in the affected countries. Decide the three most important. Present your choices to the class and give reasons for your decisions.

transportation	housing	communications	a tsunami warning system
tourism	local industries	medical aid	eradicating long-term poverty