



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
HOTLINE**

Church World Service Hotline for the week of December 24, 2007 – available in Spanish (linea de noticias) and in [podcasts](#) in English and Spanish--at www.churchworldservice.org

- Roma children in **Serbia** attending school
- CWS assists war-affected families in **Iraq**
- Rebuilding continues three years after the tsunami in **Indonesia**
- Families in the **Dominican Republic** recover from storm

Serbia--Forty vulnerable Roma children in the Zemun district of Belgrade are attending school, thanks to the CWS Roma Children's Initiative.

"Focus on Roma children is exactly where we should be concentrating," says CWS Executive Director John L. McCullough. "CWS can help these children have better opportunities in life." The minority Roma community often suffers discrimination and extreme poverty, and struggles to keep their children in school.

Pre-school Roma children who participated in a CWS pilot preparatory education project have shown excellent test results, and transitioned well to school in the now ongoing program. The students are now also enjoying recreational activities to which they previously had no access.

Some of the Roma families are now participating in CWS-supported income generation activities as well. The families receive grants and business training to prepare them for starting their own small businesses.

Iraq--CWS is supporting efforts to get much-needed assistance to war-affected and internally-displaced families in Iraq.

Some 48,000 victims of violence in western, southern, and central Iraq (including Baghdad) are receiving medicines, and hospitals are gaining new equipment. And, vulnerable children in orphanages, community centers, and mobile street units for children at risk are being re-integrated into family settings. CWS is helping to support a food component of the project, which is providing children with monthly food baskets.

CWS is also working in partnership to assist six local Iraqi non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The NGOs are opening a computer center, equipping a school library, and initiating a household hygiene awareness campaign and peace awareness/conflict mitigation initiatives. Each NGO will also mentor a new NGO, which will receive small grants and assistance in implementing community projects.



Serbia--Roma children show CWS Executive Director John L. McCullough their schoolwork.
Photo: Tatiana Dwyer/CWS

Indonesia--Some three years following the devastating December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, CWS continues to assist families rebuilding their lives and communities. From the outset, CWS worked in partnership to provide emergency and recovery assistance in Indonesia, Somalia, India, and Sri Lanka.

For example, in Indonesia, where CWS has been most hands-on in the long-term recovery, 37,432 households have received CWS assistance. More than 5,100 children received supplementary feeding; some 4,700 people gained health services; 4,984 children took part in recreational activities or received other psychosocial assistance; and 810 women and 428 adolescents took part in support groups. With CWS assistance, 610 families are now

living in permanent homes. Some 4,326 families received seeds and tools or small grants to start businesses and 53,677 people have clean water and sanitary facilities, thanks to CWS and its partners in Indonesia.

Dominican Republic--Some 66,800 people in the Dominican Republic were displaced by Tropical Storm Noel in October. Overcrowding and unsanitary conditions since the storm are causing illness. There is also a lack of clean drinking water, and flooding has affected many crops.

Some 679 people living in sugar cane plantations in the border areas of Haiti and the DR are receiving assistance through CWS partner Grupo de Pastores Interdenominacionales. In addition, CWS partner Social Service of the Dominican Churches (SSID) is working to provide more than 1,000 families in 25 communities with food, hygiene packets, school kits, clothes, mattresses, medical care, and drinking water. SSID also plans to assist 20 families to construct new homes, 60 families to repair their homes, and 450 families to rehabilitate their crops and food production. SSID is also training community organizations in emergency and risk management.

CWS has provided SSID with School Kits, CWS Hygiene Kits, toothpaste, canned chicken, water jugs, and lightweight blankets, and is seeking support for recovery efforts.

In this season of hope, Church World Service prays for peace and well-being for neighbors here at home and around the world. Merry Christmas!

Thank you for your prayers and support for the life-sustaining work of Church World Service. Contributions may be sent through your church or directly to Church World Service, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515. Credit card contributions may be made by calling 1-800-297-1516 or at www.churchworldservice.org. To SUBSCRIBE or UNSUBSCRIBE to the e-mail version of the Church World Service Hotline, reply to this message, or write to jcarlson@churchworldservice.org.