



CENTRE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (COSTFORD)
THRISSUR/TRIVANDRUM, KERALA, INDIA

AN APPEAL

20 August 2018

Dear All,

As you all know, the state of Kerala is undergoing an unprecedented emergency situation as a result of incessant rains for the last three weeks, resulting in widespread floods and submergence of most of its low lying areas. Out of the 14 districts, 12 have been severely affected by the floods and consequent devastation in several areas. As of now, several thousands of families have been directly affected in the form of being marooned and therefore, trapped in their homes or institutions such as schools, colleges, hospitals, or hostels. An entire area straddled between Kottayam and Alappuzha (Alleppey) districts called Kuttanad have been submerged under water. More than 200,000 people have been rescued and evacuated out of the region to various relief camps. The state government machinery, the army, navy, and air force are working round the clock to help people stranded in their homes and other buildings. Immediate rehabilitation work has started yesterday with water level receding in some areas.

Thousands of citizen groups including civil society organisations, educational institutions, student associations, political parties, workers unions, cultural organisations, and women's groups are working closely with the official machinery 24 x 7 including Sundays.

The COSTFORD is a charitable society, founded by three eminent people - C Achutha Menon, an outstanding Chief Minister from 1969-1977, Prof. K.N Raj, a renowned economist and founder of the Centre for Development Studies in Thiruvananthapuram, and Laurie Baker, a British born architect who lived and worked in Kerala to promote a culture of alternative architecture for cost effective and environmentally sustainable living. We are continuing their legacy with a team of over 120 full-time staff and hundreds of construction workers spread over nine centres in Kerala. To contribute our might to the relief work, the COSTFORD has taken the following initiatives:

Raising funds which will be consolidated and handed over to the CM's Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF). Several friends have informed us that they are unable to contribute directly on the CM's website due to constant heavy traffic and internet problems. We would, therefore, appeal to you to contribute to the CM's Distress Relief fund either directly or through the COSTFORD. A dedicated bank account has been opened the details of which are given at the end. Receipts for donations will be sent to the donors and a list of contributors will be submitted to the CMDRF.

Started five help centres in five district headquarters to work as centres for collection of relief material from donors in those areas. These materials will be packed and sent to the nearest official collection centres. We have started relief work in Chengannur from 20 August 2018.

Formed a volunteer group which will work on a rehabilitation plan that will have to be taken up immediately after the floods subside. We envisage large scale cleaning and repair of buildings, restoring drinking water supplies, attending to plumbing/electricity and restoration of sanitation facilities. Nearby areas and infrastructure facilities will also have to be cleaned, repaired and restored. Training in sanitation and first aid is being organised to these volunteers/workers who will attend to the rehabilitation work. We will be sending our teams of volunteers to one or two locations for greater effectiveness consisting of masons, plumbers, electricians, architects, civil engineers, social activists as well as health personnel.

We are also trying to mobilise expertise to provide counselling who have been mentally distraught because of this unprecedented catastrophe that has befallen them.

We will be working in close coordination with other organisations with expertise in public health, eco restoration, humanitarian assistance and related aspects to prepare a plan of action. This will be made available to the public so that all those who would like to make use of it can also do so.

As you know, apart from our association with COSTFORD and its sister organisation, the Laurie Baker Centre for Habitat Studies (LBC), we have been associated with a number of other organisations during the last several years. That includes the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) which includes a large circle of alumni, the Indian Society of Labour Economics, the alumni network of the Trivandrum Medical College, former officials of the Kerala government, the People's Science Movement led by the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), Health Action for people, and other agencies and organisations. We would, therefore, appeal to each one of you to come forward at this critical moment and donate to the CM's Distress Relief fund. You may either do so directly (<https://donation.cmdrf.kerala.gov.in>) or send your contributions to the COSTFORD with the following details:

Beneficiary: COSTFORD,

Bank Name and Branch: State Bank of India, Medical College Branch, Trivandrum 695011, Kerala, India. Account Number: 37889816332, IFSC: SBIN0070029.

Those who wish to send money to the COSTFORD's direct rehabilitation work may please use the following bank account details.

Beneficiary: COSTFORD

Bank Name and Branch: State Bank of India, Medical College Branch, Trivandrum 695011, Kerala, India. Account Number: 57036262612. IFSC: SBIN0070029. MICR Code: 695002925.

Friends and well wishers from abroad may send money in Indian Rupees through their bank accounts in India. If they do not have one, they may send their money (in foreign exchange) to a dear friend in India who in turn may send a rupee contribution to either of the abovementioned accounts on their behalf. This is because COSTFORD does not have the required Government of India license for accepting contributions in foreign currencies.

We would also like to invite your suggestions, ideas, and other assistance for the preparation of a rehabilitation plan that is appropriate to a post-flood situation in a context such as Kerala. We thank you for your understanding and hope to hear from you.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

K.P. Kannan, Chairman, COSTFORD and LBC, Honorary Fellow and Former Director, CDS. (HYPERLINK "<mailto:kannankp123@gmail.com>" kannankp123@gmail.com)

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