CORPORATE GUIDE TO DISASTER RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS

Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF), a global leader in innovative grantmaking and customized philanthropy services, created this guide to help prepare and support corporate social responsibility (CSR) practitioners in their efforts to contribute to disaster relief preparedness and response.

HOW TO TARGET SUPPORT

STAGES OF DISASTER RESPONSE

As a part of a disaster response strategy, CSR practitioners should determine which stage(s) of a disaster their company plans to support: before a disaster, during and immediately following, or several months after. According to the Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP), in 2013 more than 40 percent of all disaster spending was directed to response and relief efforts, while nearly 19 percent was for reconstruction and only 4 percent was for preparedness.[1] Mixed efforts made up 11 percent.[2] In deciding the stage(s) to support, companies should consider community needs and the company's own capacity. The three main stages of a disaster are:

- **Preparedness: Before the next disaster**
  Includes building relationships with nonprofits and disaster relief organizations/ networks early, and investing in organizational capacity around disaster response, disaster preparedness research or tools (see IFRC's disaster preparedness programming). Some organizations provide vehicles to collect resources prior to a disaster, such as UNICEF's Bridge Fund, UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and CDC Foundation's Global Disaster Response Fund.

- **Relief: During and immediately following a disaster**
  Includes targeted giving toward disaster relief services that provide emergency response (e.g., healthcare, nutrition, water, sanitation, temporary shelter, search and rescue, communications).

- **Reconstruction: Several months after the disaster**
  Includes contributing toward rebuilding permanent infrastructure or to activities that help rebuild the economy. Three months after the onset of a disaster can be a good time to reach out to organizations with support. Initial relief funds may be depleted, yet needs may still be great.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

There are many ways corporations can get involved in disaster response. Most commonly, corporations engage through financial support, pro bono work (volunteering) or in-kind donations. It's often most efficient to support an existing project/campaign organized by a disaster relief NGO, multilateral organization or government agency, either through capacity-building, skills-based services, in-kind supplies or cash contributions.

In addition to direct support from the company, CSR practitioners may consider:

- **Sponsoring an event** to raise awareness and mobilize donations from employees/the public.

- **Starting a giving campaign or hosting a disaster response page** (e.g., via the company's online matching gifts platform such as YourCause). SVCF can help companies with these initiatives; email SVCF at donate@siliconvalleycf.org with questions about creating a custom giving page or donating through a corporate advised fund.

STEP-BY-STEP ACTION SUMMARY

Before the next disaster:

- Determine preferred stage of disaster response
- Formulate company's disaster relief policy

When a disaster hits:

- Research the facts of the disaster
- Benchmark sector-wide responses
- Determine giving/pro bono strategy
- Identify the scope of your engagement (e.g., contribution amount)
- Create a timeline for action and communications
- Choose partner organizations
- Leverage social media and employee engagement
- Report on impact

- **Investing in critical disaster risk reduction activities**, such as those outlined by the UN report on disaster relief. Such investments have economic benefits to society, such as improving food supply chains and water systems or reducing a community's vulnerability to poverty.

- **Designating a disaster response team**, such as Cisco's Disaster Incident Response Team or DHL's Disaster Response Teams, to be able to respond in a timely way when a disaster strikes.

HOW MUCH TO GIVE

RESEARCH THE DISASTER

To determine how much to give, start by **researching the facts of the disaster**. For example, consider how large-scale the disaster is, how remote the location is, whether employees are directly affected, what the critical needs are or how expensive goods are in that economy. This knowledge will help you determine the role your company could play in disaster relief efforts. Refer to the Resource section in this guide for a list of sources with reliable information on disasters.

Make sure to **connect with your local company staff** in the case of a disaster or emergency near a company office location, to determine immediate needs of staff and local community. This information may affect the budget you decide to put toward response to a disaster.

Additionally, it may be helpful to **research how much other companies are giving** as a benchmark to inform your internal decision-making. Resources for benchmarking corporate giving include:

- CDP's list of donor responses for major disasters, along with disaster facts and responding NGOs
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Corporate Aid Trackers
- USAID's Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) site, which provides detailed reports on major overseas disaster responses
- Local peer groups of CSR practitioners, if available

WHEN AND WHERE TO GIVE

TIMELINE FOR ACTION IN CASE OF DISASTER

- **Within the first few days**
  Gather preliminary facts, identify sector responses, determine your company's disaster response plan, establish company giving platforms and communicate your action plan to employees.

- **Within the first few weeks**
  Partner with other stakeholders to carry out your action plan, create a social media/communications strategy and track contributions for reporting.

- **After a few months**
  Compile data and conduct impact assessments of the company's overall involvement in disaster relief and/or preparedness, publish materials showcasing impact, and reassess company strategies for post-disaster relief efforts and future disaster response.

DISASTERS MAY AFFECT YOUR EMPLOYEES DIRECTLY

As you make strategic decisions about your company's disaster response and relief, consider planning specifically for situations where your employees may need additional support.

One way to support your employees is to set up employer-sponsored emergency disaster and hardship programs, such as an employee relief fund. This type of fund enables companies to provide timely charitable financial support to employees and their dependents who face financial difficulties due to personal hardship or disaster.

SVCF's preferred referral partner, Emergency Assistance Foundation (EAF), has the technical expertise in this complex field to provide global employee disaster and hardship relief funds.

SELECTING PARTNER NGOs IN DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS

There is no standard definition for the "right" NGO partners in disaster response. In some cases, local grassroots organizations are better positioned to respond quickly on the ground than larger international NGOs. It's important for a company to ensure that its partners can and will provide transparency and accountability around the use of funds. Sources that provide lists of NGOs that respond to disasters include:

- SVCF's List of International Disaster Relief Organizations

- CDP's Current Disaster Database lists NGO responses within each specific developing/ongoing disaster

- Global Corps' List of Relief Organizations

If you are planning to make a charitable grant, it may be more efficient to start your search with a list of vetted organizations. One source of vetted NGOs is SVCF's Global Charity Database. Companies can leverage SVCF's international grantmaking expertise and advisory services.

MAXIMIZING IMPACT

STRATEGIC COORDINATION

Disaster relief responses are often criticized for overlapping services, large amounts of un-absorbable funds and a lack of coordination.[3] To mitigate these risks, engaging local groups and coordinating cross-sector responses are key to making an impact. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for example, mobilizes and coordinates humanitarian action for disasters. A company should ensure its response (or that of its partner NGOs) is coordinated properly with others.

Other helpful resources include:

- InterAction's NGO Aid Map
  Various NGO responses to disaster and emergency situations are compiled onto a global map.

- NetHope's Open Humanitarian Initiative and Open Humanitarian Data Repository
  The open data-sharing network enables coordination of cross-sector responses to humanitarian emergencies.

- Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
  The online database provides up-to-date visualizations of alerts, and allows practitioners to better exchange information and coordinate after major sudden disasters.

- Silicon Valley Community Foundation
  Community foundations can be key intermediaries for disaster relief efforts.[4] When appropriate, SVCF creates a fund for disaster response to pool donor resources for greater impact.

COMMUNICATIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

Leveraging communications, social media and technology is crucial for expanding the reach and impact of a response. A streamlined company response is vital to success, and begins with a strong communications strategy.[5]

- **Communicate internally**
  Create a strategy that will leverage key networks and communication tools in emergencies. Creating a list of all social media assets, useful intranet links, internal contacts and resources will help expedite communications in an emergency.

- **Engage with social media and tech**
  Plan outreach strategies for your social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) and communicate via emails, newsletters, website posts and other multimedia. Learn how to use social media in the different phases of an emergency as suggested by the United Nations. Tech companies may be interested in referencing TechChange's Best Practices for Using Tech in Disaster Response.

- **Expand your network**
  Build a master contact list to connect with media, nonprofits and local/regional goodwill ambassadors. Identify ways to connect with the affected population and general public.

- **Track and assess impact**
  To collect data on the efforts and impact of your company and employees, track all response efforts. Keep an open line of communication with your nonprofit partners, while being sensitive to their time and resource restrictions during a disaster. After things calm down, request impact reporting from partners on your contributions, and communicate that reporting to appropriate internal and external stakeholders.

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL DATA ON DISASTERS AND INFORMATION ON RELIEF EFFORTS

International disasters
- USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)
- U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Amnesty International

Domestic disasters
- Save the Children's Disaster Relief in America
- American Red Cross' Disaster Relief
- United Way
- Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services

Disaster incidence, magnitude and trends over time
- Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters Emergency Events Database

Disaster preparedness
- Ready.gov's Disaster Guides
- FEMA's Mitigation Programs and Resources

Updates on global disasters and community needs
- Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS)
- ReliefWeb

First responder assessments of disasters
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Playbooks for disaster response
- Center for Disease Philanthropy's Disaster Philanthropy Playbook
- Farmers Insurance and St. Bernard Project's Disaster Recovery Playbook for Residential Recovery
- USAID's CIDI Smart Compassion Toolkit
- USAID's CIDI Guidelines for Giving

Other resources
- DARA's Annual Humanitarian Response Index
- DARA's Risk Reduction Index
- Foundation Center and Center for Disease Philanthropy's Measuring the State of Disaster Philanthropy

[1] "Measuring the State of Disaster Philanthropy," CDP (2015)
[2] Ibid.
[3] http://portal.gdacs.org/about
[4] Ibid.
[5] "Social Media and Disaster Response Guidelines," UNICEF (2012)