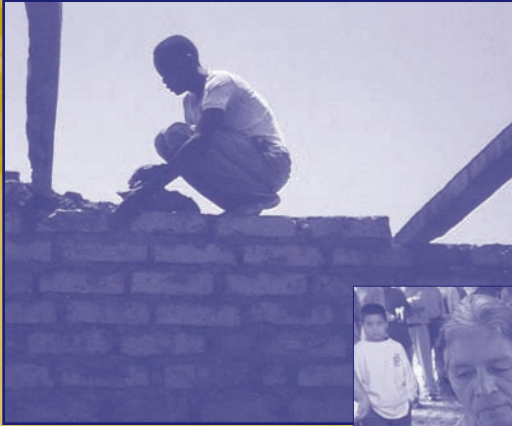


# DISASTER GRANTMAKING:

*A Practical Guide for Foundations and Corporations*



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EUROPEAN  
FOUNDATION  
CENTRE

  
COUNCIL ON  
FOUNDATIONS

# DISASTER GRANTMAKING: A Practical Guide for Foundations and Corporations

The Report of a Joint Working Group of the  
European Foundation Centre and the Council on Foundations

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# Executive Summary

Moved by widely publicized human suffering and increased disaster aid requests, foundations and corporations are becoming more active in the disaster field. Grantmakers have a distinct role to play in disasters because of their ongoing relations with grantees, long-term perspective, flexibility and convening capacity. Lacking the sizable emergency relief resources of governments and some well-known nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), foundations and corporate grantmakers nevertheless can make a significant contribution, for instance, by filling critical gaps in underfunded areas like disaster rehabilitation, prevention, research and education activities.

Based on lessons learned from a year-long study by a joint working group of the European Foundation Centre and the Council on Foundations, grantmakers can be more effective and strategic in addressing disasters by following eight principles of good disaster management:

1. First, do no harm.
2. Stop, look and listen before taking action.
3. Don't act in isolation.
4. Think beyond the immediate crisis to the long-term.
5. Bear in mind the expertise of local organizations.
6. Find out how prospective grantees operate.
7. Be accountable to those you are trying to help.
8. Communicate your work widely, and use it as an educational tool.

A number of practical suggestions for good disaster grantmaking flow from these principles and are highlighted in this guide.

# Introduction

This report is intended to guide and inform foundations and corporate grantmakers interested in becoming more effective and strategic in their disaster grantmaking. Included are some broad principles, lessons from experience, examples of good and bad practices, facts and figures, and a list of useful Web sites.

While discussions leading to this guide began two years before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC, those events serve to underscore the initiative's timeliness and relevance. They also serve as a tragic reminder that disasters take many forms and touch people in many different ways. For the purposes of this report, the concept of a disaster encompasses natural events such as earthquakes, cyclones, volcanic eruptions, fires and floods, but also more complex emergencies that result in widespread human suffering like famine, civil conflict and acts of terrorism.

A joint working group, comprising members of the Council on Foundations and the European Foundation Centre compiled this information at the request of their respective memberships. The report reflects a series of meetings, surveys and discussions with disaster experts from around the world. The recommendations were substantially shaped at a three-day EFC–Council workshop for grantmakers, aid agencies, businesses, governments and multilateral organizations held in Kingston, Jamaica, June 17–19, 2001.

# Context

During the 1990s, the advent of instant global media coverage and the dramatic expansion of foundation and corporate grantmaking worldwide converged to increase media coverage of disasters and to focus the attention of grantmakers on how to respond in the most effective and responsible manner.

## A Comprehensive Approach to Disasters

Over the past fifty years, there has been a significant evolution in thinking about disasters among aid workers, economic development specialists, policymakers, community planners, academics and others involved in the disaster field. The debate has shifted from the narrow concept of providing quick disaster “relief” based on a charitable impulse to a broader concept of disaster “management” that encompasses community involvement in prevention and preparedness, mitigation, emergency relief, rehabilitation as well as long-term development that incorporates both prevention and preparedness. Instead of viewing disasters as single tragic events, they are seen by professionals in the field as part of a larger process or cycle, which requires a long-term perspective that addresses root causes as well as immediate needs. Integrating disaster prevention with long-term development is seen as the most effective way of saving lives and protecting livelihoods.

## Reducing Vulnerability to Disasters

Some experts believe that disasters are neither natural nor inevitable but are the result of social, political and economic (*i.e.*, man-made) factors that cause certain populations—usually impoverished and politically marginalized minorities, especially the elderly,

women and children—to live in circumstances that render them especially vulnerable to the impact of hazards like floods, earthquakes, typhoons, drought or conflict. Programs that aim to reduce people’s vulnerability to these hazards lie at the heart of good disaster management.

## Key Role of Local Organizations

Disaster management is based on the concept of active community participation in all phases of the disaster cycle. Rather than seeing disaster-affected individuals as victims or passive recipients of outside assistance, good disaster management recognizes local people and their community-based organizations—village committees, agricultural cooperatives, tribal councils, women’s associations, youth groups, etc.—as valuable assets. When a disaster strikes, local people, working through their community structures and organizations, are the first to respond. They save lives. They know which members of the community are hardest hit, and they know what assistance is appropriate. What these local organizations may lack, however, are financial resources, organizational capacity, advanced equipment, and training in disaster prevention, preparation and planning.

## Unique Role of Grantmakers

Disasters involve a variety of actors; governments at all levels, multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and World Bank, and private aid organizations can all play key roles. Collectively they provide the bulk of assistance and on-the-ground programs. Foundations and corporate grantmakers have a distinct and crucial role to play in disaster management. Their resources may appear comparatively modest, yet given some of their strengths listed below, the results can be effective:

- A mission to **serve the public good** in diverse ways
- Ongoing **relationships with local organizations**
- A **long-term perspective**, often five to ten years or more
- An ability to convene key actors across sectors and to serve as a catalyst for **cross-sector collaboration**
- A capacity to call attention to **political, economic and social policies** that exacerbate the vulnerability of populations to hazards
- **Experience supporting research** and disseminating results to interested parties
- **Programmatic flexibility** that permits them to respond creatively and strategically to disaster situations

- Administrative flexibility that permits **timely action**

At the same time, grantmakers face serious challenges when deluged with emergency grant requests in times of disasters. Decisions about disaster funding often fall outside a grantmaker's regular program areas, with typically limited or absent in-house expertise on the complexities of disaster issues. Moreover, disaster grant decisions can be subject to emotional appeals and are often made quickly under perceived time pressures.

This report attempts to assist foundations and corporate grantmakers to meet these challenges, to understand the disaster process better, and to make the most of their comparative advantages in disaster grantmaking.

# Principles of Good Disaster Grantmaking

## 1. First, do no harm.

Not all disaster assistance is beneficial. Inappropriate items can overwhelm limited transportation, storage and distribution capacities, thereby delaying the delivery of aid that is desperately needed. Aim to ensure that your grant contributes to the solution and not the problem.

## 2. Stop, look and listen before taking action.

Information is the key to good disaster grantmaking. Every disaster has unique characteristics. Take the time to learn about the specifics of a disaster before deciding how to respond.

## 3. Don't act in isolation.

Coordination among disaster grantmakers, among NGOs operating on the ground, and between these two groups, can reduce duplication of effort, make efficient use of resources, and ensure that the highest priority needs are addressed first.

Grantmakers can participate in various standing and ad hoc forums—both in person and through electronic means—where needs are discussed, information exchanged and assistance coordinated.

#### 4. Think beyond the immediate crisis to the long-term.

The emergency phase of a disaster attracts most of the attention and resources. Grantmakers can play a useful role before the crisis by supporting disaster prevention and preparedness activities, and afterward, by filling gaps between emergency relief and long-term development programs.

#### 5. Bear in mind the expertise of local organizations.

Community-based organizations and NGOs with a local presence are the first on the scene when disasters occur. They know best what assistance is needed and they understand the complex political, social and cultural context of a disaster. However, these organizations are often hampered by lack of resources and organizational capacity. Working with and supporting these organizations allows them to carry out their important role while providing grantmakers with valuable information about the situation on the ground.

#### 6. Find out how prospective grantees operate.

Organizations that work on disasters vary greatly in their approach and overall philosophy. Some specialize only in emergency relief, while others have a long-term development orientation. Some support the work of local organizations, while others do not. It is wise to know what approach you are supporting before making a grant.

#### 7. Be accountable to those you are trying to help.

Grantmakers are accountable, not only to their donors, boards and shareholders but also to the people they seek to assist. Grantmakers need to go beyond merely determining how their grant was spent to engage their grantees in a process that assesses social impact.

#### 8. Communicate your work widely and use it as an educational tool.

Highlighting examples of good disaster grantmaking is an excellent way for grantmakers to educate both internal and external audiences about the disaster process. It is useful to build a knowledge base, record lessons learned, and share your experience with boards, staff, employees, other grantmakers, the media, community groups, public officials and international organizations.

# Tips for Good Disaster Grantmaking Practices

## 1. Developing an internal plan for handling disaster requests.

- If you have local employees in the disaster area, **develop a disaster plan** for communicating with them (as well as their families) and for meeting their needs, as this may be your first priority.

*Example: Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, American Express customer service representatives called all New York-based employees to verify their contact numbers, check on their safety and identify any problems. Employee assistance hotline numbers were launched, along with a section on the company Web site, to provide necessary information.*

- **Establish internal guidelines and criteria** for when and where your organization will make disaster grants, but make them flexible enough to respond to unanticipated situations. Some grantmakers only respond to disasters where they have programs and partners on the ground. Others respond only in certain countries or regions.

*Example: When making disaster grants, Philip Morris uses flexible guidelines developed by an internal humanitarian aid task force composed of representatives from corporate affairs and each of its operating companies. Through the task force, Philip Morris coordinates a range of responses, which included—in the case of the El Salvador earthquake—cash for emergency relief and donation of food as well as grants for tents and reconstruction of 100 permanent homes.*

- Decide if you want to **link disaster grants to your organization’s mission**, expertise or program focus.

*Example: Following the January 2001 Gujarat earthquake in India, local Ericsson offices started working to restore the communications networks in the affected areas. A project manager from Ericsson India was appointed to coordinate the actions, which included supplying the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with mobile telephones and additional requested supplies.*

- **Set up streamlined internal decisionmaking procedures** for disaster grants.

*Example: Some grantmakers require only a brief written proposal in emergency situations, or they may permit the grantee to write a formal proposal after the grant has been made on the basis of a verbal agreement. Other grantmakers allow partners in disaster-affected areas to redirect previously approved development grants for emergency purposes.*

- **Identify potential grantee partners in advance.**

## 2. Learning about the disaster situation before responding.

- **Don’t make assumptions** about what is needed in a particular disaster situation; every disaster is different.
- Good sources of information about local conditions and needs include locally based foundation or corporate staff, local grantees or partner organizations, and community philanthropy organizations serving the area.
- Seek information about a disaster, including an assessment of needs, from an experienced international aid organization or a reputable local organization. A list of useful organizations and Web sites is provided in the resources section of this guide.
- Media reports can provide spot information, but caution should be exercised; news accounts should not be taken as substitutes for a **professional assessment of disaster needs**.

*Example: Initial media reports that clothing was desperately needed after floods along the U.S.–Mexico border in 2001 led to the shipment of more than 12 tractor-trailer loads of clothing. It was realized soon after the initial report that in fact the clothing was not needed, yet it arrived anyway and ended up sitting around for months.*

- Unfortunately, government information about disasters can sometimes be skewed for political purposes in order to channel aid toward certain favored populations while ignoring or downplaying the needs of others.

**Example:** *For more than a year after parts of northern Ethiopia experienced severe famine in the early 1980s, the government of that country denied the problem because the affected regions were in rebellion against the central authorities.*

### 3. Thinking about when to make a disaster grant.

- Don't wait for a disaster to occur. **Consider supporting disaster prevention**, early warning systems, preparedness and planning activities in a disaster-prone region *before* a disaster happens.
- Don't feel pressured to make a quick grant when a disaster takes place. It's unlikely that your funds will make a difference in the first 48 hours when most casualties occur. **Take time to find out about the situation**—what types of assistance are most needed and appropriate, and which organizations are active on the ground.

**Example:** *The Foundation for the Support of Women's Work found that during the 1999 earthquake in western Turkey, 9,600 victims were rescued by local people and communities, which were able to respond immediately, while later only 400 people were rescued by professional rescue teams.*

- Keep in mind that big international relief organizations sometimes receive more contributions for a specific disaster than they can spend on the immediate emergency, and so more relief funding may not be needed.
- Grantmakers can play a useful role by waiting a few weeks or months to see what important recovery needs remain after the relief agencies have moved on. **Consider splitting your grant**, so that part is given for immediate relief and part is held back to fill critical gaps in the recovery process a few weeks or months after the emergency has passed.

**Example:** *The Ford Foundation responded to the February 2000 floods in Mozambique with a grant of U.S. \$930,000 from its reserve funds to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of Mozambique. About ten percent was targeted for the emergency with the remainder going for long-term development to reduce vulnerability to floods in the future.*

- Consider linking disaster response needs with long-term development.

*Example: The Kresge Foundation responded to Hurricane Mitch, which hit Nicaragua and Honduras in late 1998, with a grant to rebuild and improve permanent community water systems.*

#### 4. Deciding whether to provide cash assistance, or goods and services.

- **Cash assistance is nearly always preferable** to donated goods, because it allows for maximum flexibility to meet the highest priority needs and can be used to purchase required items in the disaster-affected area, thereby boosting the local economy while minimizing transport costs.
- Donated goods, such as pharmaceuticals, can be helpful, provided they **respond to specific requests**; are coordinated with local organizations for transportation, storage and distribution; and are clearly labeled in the appropriate local language(s).

*Example: After mudslides hit El Salvador in 1998, GlaxoSmithKline worked with its partners AmeriCares, the Order of Malta and the Minister of Health in El Salvador to identify and deliver the specific antibiotics that were needed.*

*Example: Boxes of medicine airlifted following Hurricane George in the Dominican Republic in 1998 were left sitting in a warehouse because they were not labeled as to what they were and how they should be used. Medicines labeled in English could not be used by local people who spoke only Spanish.*

- Spontaneous individual donations of food, clothing and household items arrive far too late, are often inappropriate, and can clog limited local transport, storage and distribution capacities. In general, these should be discouraged.

*Example: Boxes of winter coats sent to victims of 1998's Hurricane Gilbert in the Caribbean region were useless, and their transport and storage slowed the relief effort.*

- Donated services (e.g., health professionals, rescue teams, engineers, logistics, transport, and technical experts, etc.) can be helpful provided they **do not duplicate services** available locally and are closely coordinated with disaster response organizations on the ground.

*Example: During the 1999 Kosovo emergency, Microsoft helped set up a special computer database that assisted with family reunification.*

## 5. Looking at the disaster management picture.

- Think about **making disaster grants aimed at disaster prevention or preparedness** so that communities regularly hit by floods, earthquakes and other disasters can develop disaster plans, raise public awareness about disaster preparedness, and train local disaster response teams for the next emergency.
- **Fill important gaps between relief and long-term development**, such as rebuilding damaged schools and health clinics or restarting agricultural production with seeds and tools.

*Example: Following the January 2001 Gujarat earthquake, Charities Aid Foundation India developed a 12-month plan to help establish a Kutch Community Foundation to carry out development projects for the region. Plans call for seven schools to be reconstructed and five schools to be repaired, a health center to be built and the livelihoods of 605 families to be restored, along with various other initiatives.*

- Don't overlook grants to organizations working on conflict resolution or supporting the care of refugees displaced by war.

*Example: During the 1999 crisis in Kosovo, AT&T matched contributions from its employees to the International Rescue Committee to assist with refugee populations worldwide. As a result, employees donated more money to the International Rescue Committee during a three-month period than they had to any other disaster prior to the crisis in Kosovo.*

- Grants that **strengthen local organizational capacity** to respond to future disasters are a good investment in saving lives and livelihoods. Consider making grants for general operating support.

*Example: In keeping with its objectives to strengthen civil society and the nonprofit sector, the Charles Stewart Mott foundation has given grants for humanitarian efforts at local, national and international levels, including a 1999 grant to the International Rescue Committee to build the capacity and sustainability of the nonprofit sector in Bosnia-Herzegovina.*

- Consider **making grants for research on the root causes** of specific disasters, how people have traditionally coped, and what modern technology can contribute to mitigating future problems. Be sure to include funds to disseminate the results.

*Example: The Aga Khan Foundation, through its Planning and Building Service in Pakistan, has supported developing appropriate technology related to earthquake-*

*resistant buildings, solar energy use, thermal efficiency and village planning. Studies are underway on hazard mapping and on renovating structurally unsafe housing in mountainous areas through community-based actions.*

## 6. Choosing a grantee.

- Explore the **various options for channeling support**, including multilateral organizations, government agencies, international, national and local NGOs. Keep in mind that appropriate NGOs may include religious institutions, labor unions, research organizations and the media, among many others.

*Example: In response to the ongoing drought and famine in Ethiopia, Johnson & Johnson Europe worked with government representatives in the region and AmeriCares to identify appropriate medical supplies for the population.*

- Some grantmakers find it useful to **develop a long-term relationship** with a reputable international relief organization, depositing “rapid response” funds with the organization on an annual or multiyear basis that can be drawn down quickly as disasters occur around the world. Some of these organizations support local efforts while others implement their own independent programs. Grantmakers should investigate how their funds will be used, whether or not the grantee works in ways that support and build local capacity, and whether or not they coordinate their activities with others.

*Example: Bristol-Myers Squibb provides ongoing support to four international relief organizations that have local staff in disaster-affected countries and are able to provide assessments for appropriate product donations. In addition, they provide a multiyear grant to the American Red Cross that can be drawn upon as necessary.*

- Consider looking beyond the obvious choices to **smaller indigenous organizations**, for example nondiscriminatory, religion-based groups. Bear in mind that organizations—whether locally based or international—which have an ongoing presence in a community, a local staff, and a commitment to participatory development, are better positioned to respond to all phases of the disaster cycle than external organizations that enter a community only during the emergency and then withdraw.

*Example: After Hurricane Mitch hit Central America in October 1998, The Global Fund for Women set up an Emergency Grant Fund and invited 34 previous grantees in Honduras and Nicaragua to submit brief proposals for funding.*

- Be aware that **legal restrictions may affect direct grants** to organizations in other countries. In some cases, organizations may not be permitted to receive funds from abroad. It is best to check with potential first-time grantees before sending any funds. In addition, some governments impose complete or partial embargoes on its citizens providing aid to certain countries for political or military reasons.
- Check to see if prospective grantees subscribe to one of the **international codes of conduct** or **standards for disaster response**. We are currently aware of codes developed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, InterAction and the SPHERE Project.
- Look for disaster grantees that **support long-term community and economic development programs**; talk to them about how you can support efforts to integrate disaster prevention and preparedness into their long-term community development activities.
- Where ongoing relationships with local partners already exist, think about ways of working with them that strengthen their capacity to prevent or mitigate disasters. For example, disaster awareness and preparedness can be taught as part of an educational program in the schools. Health programs can incorporate a local disaster planning and training component.

## 7. Coordinating your disaster grants with others.

- **Explore partnerships and cooperation with other grantmakers.** Find out which grantmakers are responding to a disaster and what they are funding by participating in existing disaster information-sharing networks and online bulletin boards, such as those listed in the resources section.
- **Associations of grantmakers can play a useful role** by collecting and posting information about how their members respond to a specific disaster.
- After finding out the priority needs, see what areas are being funded by other donors, so that you can **identify gaps that need filling**.

*Example: Citigroup established a relief fund to provide higher education scholarships for the children of those who died during the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.*

- **Communicate what you are doing** with other grantmakers and with operational organizations responding to disasters on the ground.
- Consider making a grant to **support a temporary or ongoing coordinating body** for operational agencies working on the ground in response to a specific emergency. This type of coordination is extremely valuable, even though funds are often not available for it.

*Example: After a series of floods, earthquakes and forest fires in 1989–90 in a county north of San Francisco, the Marin Community Foundation convened all the key disaster planning and response organizations from both the government and nonprofit sectors to ensure coordination of services.*

## 8. Monitoring and evaluating disaster grants.

- Monitoring disaster grants is no less important than monitoring other types of grants, since even purely relief grants can have positive or negative consequences (or both). The chaos that often surrounds disaster situations can foster an environment in which misuse of aid may occur. Grantmakers should follow up with their disaster grantees, whether intermediary or local organizations, to **ensure that funds or donated products are used as intended**.

*Example: The monitoring of a Bernard van Leer Foundation grant to register and reunite children separated from their families, during the floods in southern Mozambique in February 2000, enabled the grantmaker to ensure accountability and use the data collected for the longer-term development of the communities.*

- Proper grant monitoring is an essential tool to **ensure grantmaker accountability**. Foundations and corporate grantmakers are accountable to their boards, their donors, their shareholders (for corporates), and their employees as well as to people they serve through their grants.
- **On-site monitoring of disaster grants** is best, although this may be impractical for the majority of foundations.
- **Make your reporting requirements clear** to grantees. Written monitoring reports can suffice so long as grantmakers insist on a specific description of how the grant was used backed up by a clear financial report and supporting documentation.

- Require that grantees provide more than just a financial report that shows how the funds were spent. Press them to **assess the social impact of the grant**—*i.e.*, how it affected the community, whether or not it strengthened local capacity, which groups benefited and which did not.
- Formal evaluations are not normally undertaken for small disaster grants. However, **evaluations may be useful for larger grants**, if carried out as a learning exercise with the grantee and as part of a longer-term development program. Such an evaluation can improve the effectiveness of future disaster grants.

## 9. Enhancing understanding of disasters.

- Make it a point to **educate your boards, employees, donors and shareholders** (in the case of corporate grantmakers) about the disaster cycle and how your foundation or corporate grantmaking program is applying a comprehensive disaster management approach to your disaster grantmaking.
- **Convene or support meetings of funders and grantees** to exchange experience and ideas with respect to disaster management issues.
- **Work with the media** to raise public awareness about disasters by encouraging disaster coverage that goes beyond dramatic events and personal stories to include an examination of root causes of disasters; the political, economic and social factors that contribute to them; and the important role of disaster prevention. Consider making a grant to send a member of the media on a site visit to a disaster area to publicize why the affected population was so vulnerable and what steps could be taken to reduce their vulnerability in the future.
- Don't be shy about communicating your disaster grantmaking activities and experience with both internal and external audiences.
- **Make use of the Internet and other mass communication tools** to communicate your disaster grantmaking and the lessons you have learned from it.

*Example: After severe flooding on the Red River in North Dakota and Minnesota in 1997, the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation set up a Web site so that grantseekers could post their needs and grantmakers could choose what they wanted to fund.*

- Consider making grants for disaster prevention education and programs to raise awareness in disaster-prone areas or study trips for public officials and opinion leaders.

**Example:** *The Bangladesh Freedom Foundation provides funding for disaster preparedness training and hazard mitigation strategies in the disaster-prone coastal areas of Bangladesh. The main objective of the project is to harness and share local expertise, knowledge and wisdom. A further aim is to advocate incorporating disaster preparedness training into school curricula.*

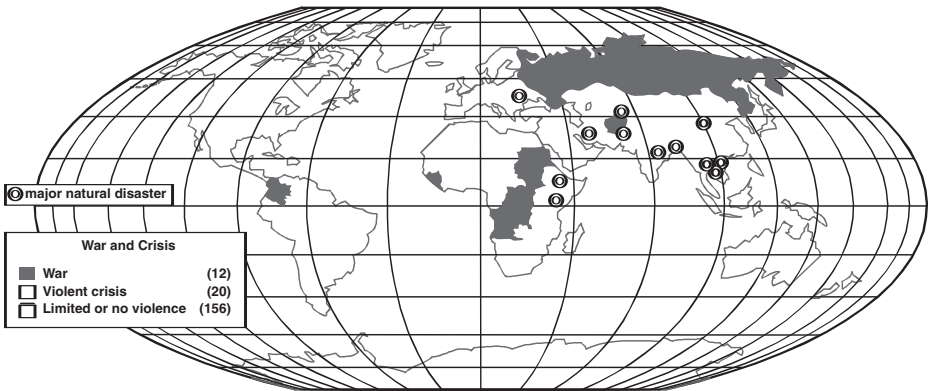
# Facts and Figures

## Disasters

“The combined cost of disasters worldwide, according to the Center for Epidemiology of Disaster in Belgium, was U.S.\$741 billion (thousand million) between 1990–99. Human lives lost during this period were 589,000, and the number of deaths has climbed each year since 1994. These are officially reported deaths, it must be remembered, so the actual number could be even higher.”

—Ben Wisner, *The Same Old Story*

## War, Crisis and Disasters in 2000



**Figure 1.** Highlights the major natural disasters of 2000 and countries that experienced varying levels of war and violent crisis.

Source: *European Commission, Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO)*

“One billion people are living in the world’s unplanned shantytowns, and 40 of the 50 fastest growing cities are located in earthquake zones. Another 10 million people live under constant threat of floods.”

—*International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent*,  
World Disasters Report, 1999

## Disasters—By World Region

The following five tables list some of the disasters experienced by five world regions over the past decade. The list of disasters is by no means comprehensive but does provide selected key examples.

*\*See following pages for greater detail on disasters marked with an asterisk.*

### EURASIA

Disaster	Location	Date	Deaths/Injured/Homeless	Cost (U.S. \$)
<b>Earthquake*</b>	<b>Northwest Turkey;</b> magnitude 7.4 quake near Izmit	Aug. 17, 1999	More than 17,000 killed; about 44,000 injured	\$8.5 billion
<b>Civil Strife*</b>	<b>Southeast Europe</b>	1990 to Present	Thousands killed in ethnic cleansing	

### SOUTHEAST ASIA

Disaster	Location	Date	Deaths/Injured/Homeless	Cost (U.S. \$)
<b>Earthquake</b>	<b>Bhuj, India;</b> magnitude 7.7 quake in western Indian state of Gujarat	Jan. 26, 2001	Nearly 19,000 killed; 600,000 homeless	\$1.3 billion
<b>Flooding</b>	<b>Mekong River;</b> flooding in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam	September 2000	235 killed; 4.5 million homeless	\$50 million in Cambodia; \$24 million in Thailand
<b>Tsunami</b>	<b>Papua New Guinea;</b> three tsunamis wiped out villages in northwest province of Sepik	July 17, 1998	More than 2,000 dead or presumed dead or died later of injuries	

## SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Disaster	Location	Date	Deaths/Injured/Homeless	Cost (U.S. \$)
<b>Flooding</b>	<b>Northern Venezuela;</b> Heavy rains caused catastrophic flooding and mudslides	Dec. 15–16, 1999	5,000 to 20,000	
<b>Earthquake</b>	<b>Armenia, Colombia</b>	Jan. 25, 1999	1,124 killed; 4,000 injured; more than 200,000 homeless	
<b>Hurricane*</b>	<b>Central America</b> <i>Hurricane Mitch</i> devastates Honduras, and Nicaragua	Oct. 26– Nov. 4, 1998	More than 11,000 killed; 3 million homeless	More than \$5 billion in Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala

## NORTH AMERICA

Disaster	Location	Date	Deaths/Injured/Homeless	Cost (U.S. \$)
<b>Drought</b>	<b>Southern United States;</b> severe heat and drought spread from Texas and Oklahoma east to North and South Carolina	Summer 1998	At least 200 dead	\$6–9 billion
<b>Earthquake</b>	<b>San Fernando Valley, California;</b> quake measuring 6.6 on Richter scale	Jan. 17, 1994	61 killed; more than 8,000 homeless	\$13–20 billion

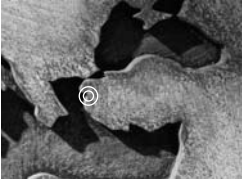
## AFRICA

Disaster	Location	Date	Deaths/Injured/Homeless	Cost (U.S. \$)
<b>Flooding*</b>	<b>Southeast Africa;</b> weeks of rain brought deadly floods in Mozambique and Zimbabwe	February 2000	About 700 dead; more than 280,000 homeless	
<b>Drought</b>	<b>Kenya</b>	1999 to Present	2.2 million people affected	
<b>Conflict*</b>	<b>Democratic Republic of the Congo</b>	1998 to Present	Hundreds of thousands killed and injured	

Disaster Statistics Source: [www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com), BBC News Online and [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

# Natural Disasters and Vulnerability

## EARTHQUAKE—WESTERN TURKEY, 1999



During 1999, two devastating earthquakes struck northwest Turkey within the space of three weeks. The first earthquake, centered on the city of Izmit, left 17,000 dead and thousands more homeless. Three weeks later, a second earthquake struck just 100km away, killing hundreds more.

### Vulnerability

“The Turkish government was repeatedly warned by the country’s leading geologists that its industrial heartland and tens of thousands of homes were being built on the highest-risk earthquake zones, but nothing was done to prevent construction.”

“Turkey has a higher proportion of earthquake risk zones than any other country in the world; 92 percent of the country is rated as *at risk of a ground tremor*.”

““The government realised this region was totally unsafe for building these kind of high-rise structures,’ Prof Yuzer said. ‘Unfortunately, officials were not able to limit it. The local government agencies were left in charge of granting building permits.’”

—“*Ankara failed to heed experts’ warnings.*” Owen Bowcott in *Istanbul*, the Guardian, Thursday, August 26, 1999

## HURRICANE—HONDURAS, GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR, AND NICARAGUA, 1998



Hurricane Mitch was described by the United States Geological Survey as one of the most destructive hurricanes in the recorded history of the Western hemisphere. In October 1998, a tropical depression formed in the southern Caribbean Sea. One day later, the storm became a tropical storm and was given the name Mitch. It left thousands dead and many more homeless.

*Countries most severely affected: Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. The flooding and landslides that followed claimed 11,000 lives in Honduras and Nicaragua.*

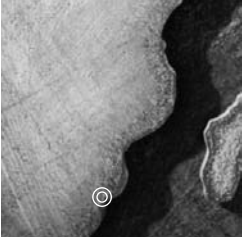
## Vulnerability

Clearing of hillsides for farming had left slopes vulnerable to landslides and people were ill-prepared for such a disaster, because Mitch had been wrongly predicted to move northwards.

—Source: USGS, *Hurricane Mitch Program*, Hurricane Overview

## FLOOD—MOZAMBIQUE, SOUTHERN AFRICA, 2000

*In February 2000, a cyclone that swept across southern Africa led to three weeks of severe flooding, which devastated Mozambique.*



“...Southern Mozambique bore the full impact of the rains and rising waters. In the capital, Maputo, tens of thousands of people were forced to flee their homes. The worst hit were people living in makeshift homes in the slums around the capital.”

“Aid workers estimate **100,000 people need to be evacuated and around 7,000 are trapped in trees**. Many have been there for several days, without food and water. Floodwater levels are said to have risen from four to eight metres (more than 26 feet) in five days.”

—BBC Online, *February 2000*

## Vulnerability

“Planning to move communities away from the river valleys, to prevent future disasters, would not work. In countries as poor as this, people have no choice but to live where they can make a living. The poorest people usually live on the most marginalised and vulnerable land, because they have no choice. And this is a trend that is likely to intensify.”

—BBC Online, *Mozambique Floods 2000, May 2000*

# Civil Strife and Displacement

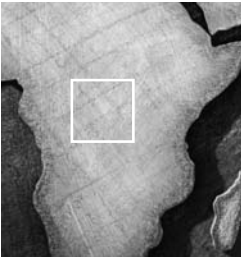
**“Currently, more than one in every 280 people on earth is either a refugee, returnee or displaced person.”**

—*Oxfam Briefing: An End to Forgotten Emergencies*

“In the past fifty years our world has been **ravaged by violent conflicts that have claimed the lives of many millions of civilians and left tens of millions more permanently displaced.** These civilians have been expelled from their homes, and are often denied access to life-saving food, medicine and shelter. Grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and blatant disrespect for the normative framework of humanity that has emerged over the past 50 years is common to many of these conflicts. **Civilians have become the primary target of attack motivated by ethnic or religious hatred, political confrontation or simply ruthless pursuit of economic interests.**”

—Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, *The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, WEST AFRICA



“The survey of deaths in eastern Congo by the New York-based International Rescue Committee (IRC) concluded that 350,000 civilians have died violently at the hands of armed men. It says more than 2 million others fell victim to the consequences of war, usually hunger or disease. And that is without considering what has occurred on the Kinshasa government side. ‘The loss of life is perhaps the worst in Africa in recent decades,’ said the

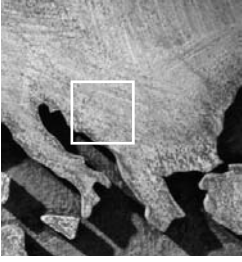
IRC’s president, Reynold Levy.”

—*Huge Death Toll on Congo, the Guardian, July 31, 2001*

“As a result of the conflict that started in August 1998, over 700,000 persons were internally displaced, most of them inaccessible to relief organisations. Some 95,000 Congolese have sought asylum in Tanzania, while 25,000 have fled to Zambia. In addition, over 285,000 Angolans, Sudanese, Congolese (Brazzaville), Ugandans, Rwandans and Burundi remain in the DRC.”

—*UN High Commission for Refugees, DR Congo Overview*

## SOUTH–EAST EUROPE



“The collapse of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s precipitated the worst crisis in Europe since the end of World War II. A decade of upheaval produced political chaos throughout the Balkan region, wars—which at one point involved not only local antagonists but also the world’s major military powers, the flight of millions of civilians and a ruthless campaign of ethnic cleansing not witnessed since the dark days of the Nazi era.”

“At the height of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s, nearly three million people fled their homes.”

“In 1999, nearly one million people fled or were forcibly evicted from the Yugoslav province of Kosovo, as NATO warplanes launched an air campaign against Serbian forces there.”

—*UN High Commission for Refugees, South–East Europe Overview*

# Selected Resources

## Nongovernmental organizations, whose focus is primarily on disaster relief and coordination initiative

- *AIDMATRIX* (<http://www.aidmatrix.org>)  
AIDMATRIX leverages the power of technology and partnerships to bring items such as food, clothing, building supplies, medical and educational supplies to people in need during the time of need.
- *Alertnet* (<http://www.alertnet.org>)  
A free news and communications service designed to provide concise, reliable information to organizations responding to humanitarian emergencies with the aim of helping them coordinate their efforts and get aid to those affected by disasters faster.
- *AmeriCares* (<http://www.americares.org>)  
AmeriCares is a nonprofit disaster relief and humanitarian aid organization, which provides immediate response to emergency medical needs—and supports long-term healthcare programs. AmeriCares solicits donations of medicines, medical supplies and other relief materials from U.S. and international manufacturers and delivers them quickly and efficiently to indigenous healthcare and welfare professionals in 137 countries around the world.

- *Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre* (<http://www.adpc.ait.ac.th/>)  
Regional resource center working towards disaster reduction for safer communities and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.
- *CARE* (<http://www.care.org>)  
One of the world's largest international relief and development organizations.
- *Caribbean Disaster Mitigation Project* (<http://www.oas.org/en/cdmp/>)  
Aimed at establishing sustainable public/private disaster mitigation mechanisms that measurably lessen loss of life, reduce potential damage, and shorten the disaster recovery period.
- *Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Association*  
(<http://www.disasters.org/index.html>)  
Assists communities worldwide in disaster preparedness, response and recovery, and serves as a professional association linking professionals, volunteers and organizations active in all phases of emergency preparedness and management.
- *Disasterrelief.org* (<http://www.disasterrelief.org>)  
A joint Web site of the American Red Cross, the Cable News Network and IBM, devoted exclusively to global disaster relief information.
- *InterAction (American Council for Voluntary International Action)*  
([www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org))  
A coalition of more than 165 nonprofit organizations for sustainable development, refugee and disaster assistance, and humanitarian aid.
- *International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*  
(<http://www.ifrc.org>)
- *American Red Cross* (<http://www.redcross.org>)  
The world's largest humanitarian organization carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of its member national societies, such as the American Red Cross, the British Red Cross and others. The federation's work focuses on four core areas: promoting humanitarian values, disaster response, disaster preparedness, and healthcare and community care.

- *International Rescue Committee* (<http://www.theIRC.org>)  
 Founded at the request of Albert Einstein to assist opponents of Adolph Hitler, the IRC helps people fleeing racial, religious and ethnic persecution as well as those uprooted by war and violence.
- *Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management* (<http://64.77.83.172/default.htm>)  
 Committed to taking proactive and timely measures to prevent or reduce the impact of hazards on Jamaica, its people, natural resources and economy through its trained and professional staff, the use of appropriate technology and collaborative efforts with national, regional and international agencies.
- *Oxfam International* (<http://www.oxfam.org>)  
 In many parts of the world, the name Oxfam is most associated with response to man-made and natural disasters. The member national societies of Oxfam share a “joined-up” approach to such humanitarian response and longer-term development work.
- *Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)* (<http://www.paho.org/english/ped/pedhome.htm>)  
 Disaster preparedness, mitigation and response activities.
- *Pan American Development Foundation (PADF)* (<http://www.padf.org/>)  
 PADF is uniquely qualified to address the immediate and long-term needs of communities that have been devastated by natural disasters. Our Disaster Assistance Program enables private sector donors to address the most critical needs of disaster victims with Emergency Shelter Packages.
- *Radix–Radical Interpretations of Disaster*  
 Links from the Radix Web site (<http://www.anglia.ac.uk/geography/radix/>)  
 (<http://www.anglia.ac.uk/geography/radix/links.htm>)
- *Regional Disaster Information Center for Latin America and the Caribbean* ([www.crid.or.cr/crid/Indexen.htm](http://www.crid.or.cr/crid/Indexen.htm))  
 An initiative sponsored by six organizations that decided to join their efforts to ensure the compilation and dissemination of disaster-related information in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- *Relief Web* (<http://www.reliefweb.int/>)  
Relief Web is the world's premier electronic clearinghouse for those needing timely information on humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters—designed specifically to help the humanitarian community improve its response to emergencies.
- *SPHERE Project* (<http://www.sphereproject.org>)  
Begun in 1997 by a group of humanitarian agencies, this project has developed a humanitarian charter and a set of universal minimum standards in core areas of humanitarian assistance. The aim of the project is to improve the quality of assistance provided to people affected by disasters.
- *United Way International (UWI)* (<http://www.uwint.org>)  
UWI is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to strengthen communities and improve lives around the world. By mobilizing local people and companies to give time and money and by helping local charities become more effective, United Way organizations in 41 countries outside the United States help create long-term solutions to local human needs.

## United Nations and other International Organisations

- *Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC)* (<http://www.cepredenac.org/en/>)  
Coordination center for strengthening the capacity of the region as a whole to reduce the vulnerability of the population to the effects of these phenomena.
- *ECHO (European Union Humanitarian Affairs Office)*  
([http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/index_en.html))  
The European Union Humanitarian Aid Office is one of the world's biggest donors of humanitarian aid.
- *United Nations, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction*  
(<http://www.unisdr.org>)  
Aimed at enabling all societies to become resilient to the effects of natural hazards and related technological and environmental disasters, in order to reduce human, economic and social losses.

- *Relief Web* ([www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int))  
A project of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), provides extensive information and links related to disaster and humanitarian relief
- *Relief Web Links Page* ([www.reliefweb.int/contacts/dirhomepage.html](http://www.reliefweb.int/contacts/dirhomepage.html))  
Extensive list of links to Humanitarian Web sites, including UN Agencies, government, nongovernment agencies, and news and media organizations
- *World Bank Disaster Management Facility*  
(<http://www.worldbank.org/html/fpd/dmf/>)  
Official World Bank site with links to other World Bank Group Organizations

## Official Government Sites

- *Canadian International Development Agency* ([www.acdi-cida.gc.ca](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca))  
Canadian government's foreign assistance agency
- *Japan International Cooperation Agency* ([www.jica.go.jp](http://www.jica.go.jp))  
Official Web site of Japanese foreign assistance
- *British Department for International Development* ([www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk))  
Official Web site of the British foreign assistance office
- *U.S. Agency for International Development* ([www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov))  
Official Web site of the U.S. foreign aid office
- *Australian Agency for International Development* ([www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au))  
Australian government's international aid Web site

## Academic and Research Institutions

- *Internet Journal of Rescue and Disaster Medicine*  
([www.ispub.com/journals/ijrdm.htm](http://www.ispub.com/journals/ijrdm.htm))  
Peer-reviewed journal for medical professionals involved in disaster response
- *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* ([www.jha.ac](http://www.jha.ac))  
Forum established to encourage communication between the diverse sectors of humanitarian response

- *War-Torn Societies Project* ([www.unrisd.org/wsp/wsp.htm](http://www.unrisd.org/wsp/wsp.htm))  
 Forum established with UN support to encourage the main actors in war-torn countries to analyze the complex relationships between peacekeeping, relief, rehabilitation and development activities, and between local, national and external actors.
- *Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder*  
 ([www.colorado.edu/hazards](http://www.colorado.edu/hazards))  
 The center's primary goal is to increase communication among hazard/disaster researchers and those individuals, agencies and organizations actively working to reduce disaster damage and suffering.
- *Unit for Disaster Studies, University of the West Indies*  
 (<http://isis.uwimona.edu.jm/uds/>)  
 Provides scientific information, data sources and references that may enable a better understanding of the Earth, with special reference to the Caribbean, its active processes, and how people interact with its natural environment.
- *The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters* ([www.cred.be/](http://www.cred.be/))  
 Established in 1973, this Brussels-based, nonprofit institution's main focus is on safeguards, public health and sanitary aspects of disasters. CRED also studies the socioeconomic and long-term effects of large-scale disasters.

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