



FACT SHEET

Disaster Relief 2.0: The Future of Information Sharing in Humanitarian Emergencies

Disaster Relief 2.0

The recent humanitarian crisis in Japan and Libya remind us of the importance of fast and accurate information to effective emergency response efforts. Today's humanitarian actors face an unprecedented challenge: learn how to leverage and manage information being sourced through public networks ('the crowd'), or risk missing vital information.

The rise of mobile phones, social networks, and open source crisis mapping tools is creating a new culture of community driven disaster preparedness and response. These tools can harness the power of mass collaboration to quickly aggregate and distribute information about urgent needs.

Yet without a direct interface with the humanitarian system, these emerging 'volunteer and technical communities' can end up producing data without the assurance that it can be acted upon by the aid community.

To help bridge this gap, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), together with the UN Foundation and Vodafone Foundation, commissioned the *Disaster Relief 2.0: Information-Sharing in Humanitarian Emergencies* report to examine the opportunity of bringing the work of the humanitarian and technology communities into close alignment.

About the Report

A research team at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) interviewed over 40 individuals from the humanitarian and technology communities, including UN officials to volunteer crisis mappers who worked hand in hand with Haitians after the quake.

The resulting report is being launched on March 28, 2011 at the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development (DIHAD) Conference, whose theme is 'New Technologies: How These Impact Humanitarian and Development Operations'.

The report analyzes how the humanitarian and Volunteer & Technical Communities (V&TCs) collaborated in the 2010 Haiti earthquake response, and makes recommendations to strengthen collaboration in future emergencies.

A New Path Forward

To spur a dialogue between the formal (humanitarian) and informal (V&TC) communities about a shared path forward, the report proposes a draft framework that includes a:

- **Humanitarian Technology Forum** – a “neutral” space where representatives from the UN, humanitarian, and V&TCs interact to identify challenges and solidify agreements in collecting and sharing disaster-related information
- **Humanitarian Innovation Lab** – a physical space where humanitarian staff and V&TC staff meet face-to-face to experiment with, learn from, and advance tools, practices and policies, based on the needs identified by the Humanitarian Technology Forum

- **Humanitarian Information Coordination Cell** – a team with a mandate to use the best available tools and practices from the V&TCs (including in tools created or adapted in the Humanitarian Innovation Lab) in deployments to humanitarian emergencies, and to perform field tests on prototypes outside of disasters
- **Humanitarian Research and Training Consortium** – a network of education institutions that focuses on: researching problems identified by the Coordination Cell; training the volunteer and technical communities; establishing monitoring and evaluation practices, and; laying the groundwork for discussions at the Humanitarian Forum.

Adapt, Learn, Connect

This is a draft framework for discussion; ultimately the framework should be developed according to the needs of the communities it will serve. Addressing these challenges will require commitment from many stakeholders and adaption of specific practices on the part of the UN, humanitarian agencies, clusters, and V&TCs. These communities are already deepening their collaboration: OCHA recently partnered with the Crisis Mappers community to produce www.LibyaCrisisMap.net.

Why the UN Foundation?

This report is a result of the five-year partnership of the United Nations Foundation and Vodafone Foundation to connect the UN with the latest technology to help address some of the world's toughest challenges. Working with OCHA and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, the UN Foundation and Vodafone Foundation are committed to bringing together the experts from the technology and emergency response fields to save lives and improve disaster communications.

For more information on this study, please contact:

UN Foundation & Vodafone Foundation Partnership

Sarah Hiller shiller@unfoundation.org

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Nigel Snoad snoad@un.org

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative

John Crowley jcrowley@post.harvard.edu