



DISASTER GIVING IN ASIA

Lessons, Guidelines & Opportunities

Introduction

We live in a world where people and organizations have the desire and ability to help each other in times of disaster and are able to reach across the globe to lend a hand. Individuals, foundations and corporations are inspired by stories and images provided by global communications and 24-hour-a-day media to support emergency relief of the communities affected by a catastrophe. While immediate relief is critical, philanthropy when strategically executed can have a much greater and longer-term impact on recovery in affected communities.

Since the 2004 tsunami in Asia, the international community has significantly increased its disaster giving, with philanthropy sourced from the United States, Europe and within Asia. This increase has motivated more nonprofit organizations to take

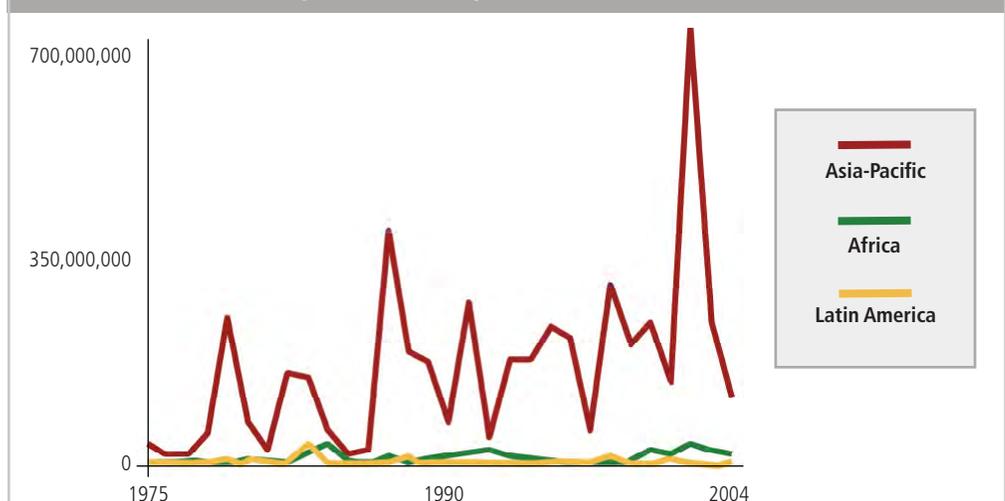
part in disaster relief and recovery work, creating an environment where experience in disaster programming varies greatly from organization to organization. As a result, donors may find it difficult to determine where, when and how their giving can have the most impact.

Donor education is critical for effective disaster philanthropy. Philanthropy must find ways to meet both the immediate and long-term needs of disaster survivors to ensure communities are able to recover and regain sustainability. In this paper, Give2Asia shares lessons we have learned through our extensive post-disaster work, and offers guidance and opportunities for donors to provide successful disaster response and contribute to the long-term security of communities at risk.

Cover image:

Iwate Prefecture, Japan in June 2011 three months after the March 11th earthquake and tsunami. Photo by Gillian Yeoh

Chart 1: Number of People Affected by Natural Disasters (1975-2004)¹



Disaster Trends in Asia

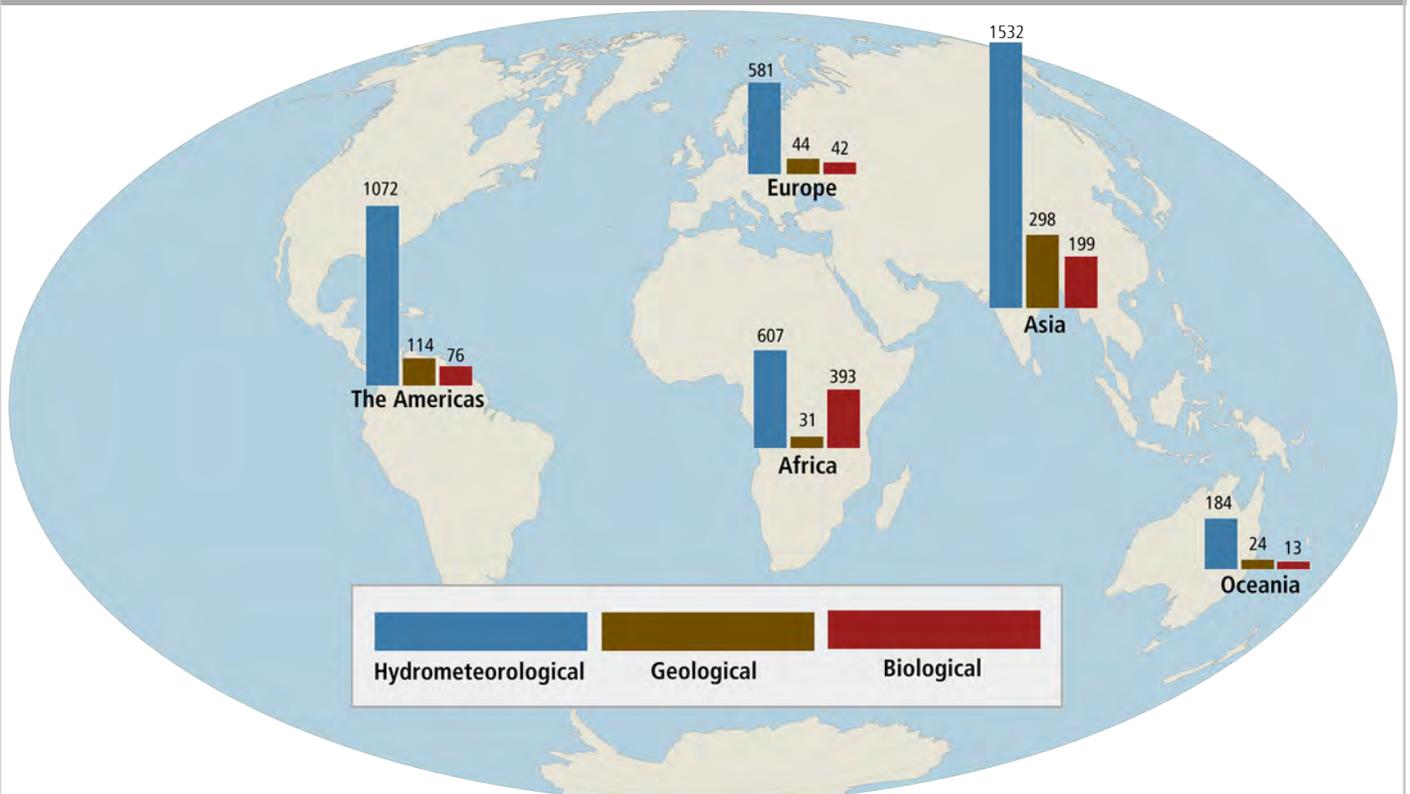
Statistically, Asia is more susceptible to disasters than most regions. As seen in Chart 1 on the previous page¹ and in the map below², the rate of natural disasters in Asia has outpaced that of other continents. Meanwhile, Chart 2 on the next page shows that the frequency of hydrometeorological disasters has been increasing since 1970³. Hydrometeorological disasters include floods and wave surges, storms, droughts and related disasters (extreme temperatures and forest/scrub fires), and landslides and avalanches. This may be partially due to environmental degradation and climate change. For instance, scientists argue that the mangrove forests along the coast in tropical climates act as a natural defense against storms and tsunamis⁴. However, most mangrove forests are in decline or threatened in many locations.

Of all people globally affected by disasters between 1975 and 2004, 43 percent live in Southern Asia and 41 percent live in Eastern Asia⁵. The impact of disasters in Asia is affecting more lives than necessary due to the lack of disaster preparedness, limited government planning and ongoing environmental

degradation⁶. Since 2004, other massive disasters have received global attention:

- Starting with the 2004 tsunami, other severe earthquakes and tsunamis have also received global media attention, including the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China, the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the 2011 earthquake & tsunami in Tohoku, Japan.
- The Ring of Fire, a geologically unstable region, presents ongoing threats to local communities. For example, Mount Merapi in Indonesia erupts every 1-4 years. The latest volcanic eruptions in October and November 2010 were particularly devastating, severely affecting communities and their access to critical resources such as water.
- Seasonal monsoons and heavy rain appear to have a greater and greater impact on the entire region. For example, Pakistan suffered its worst flooding in decades in 2010, with waters displacing millions of people, and deadly flooding in Queensland, Australia beginning in December 2010 destroyed thousands of homes, as well as cattle and farmland.

Map: Regional Distribution of Natural Disasters by Type (1991-2005)²



Note: Geological Disasters are divided into earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions while Biological Disasters are defined as disasters caused by the exposure of living organisms to viruses, bacteria and toxic substances.

Lessons Learned Since 2001

1. Emergency Relief vs. Longer-term Recovery

Immediate relief and longer-term recovery are both important to disaster response. However, more funds tend to be earmarked for relief activities rather than longer-term recovery. As a result, longer-term assistance—such as livelihood restoration, psychosocial services, and permanent housing—tends to receive less funding support, although it is no less important. Philanthropy has an opportunity to help rebuild communities and local economies so that they are stronger than they were before the disaster.

From a survey of tsunami-affected communities in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka, the Fritz Institute reported higher dissatisfaction with recovery efforts than with relief efforts⁷. Survivors and the local economy of tsunami-affected areas continue to struggle for years after the disaster. For instance, after the tsunami, the ecosystem of Aceh changed, causing traditional professions such as shrimp farming to become unfeasible. Due to the lack of investment in livelihood programs in the area, many are still unable to create a sustainable livelihood for themselves and their families.

Similarly, in the aftermath of the March 11 tsunami and earthquake in Japan, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry of Japan reported that over 49,000 acres of agricultural land in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures were damaged. According to the UN, experts estimate desalination

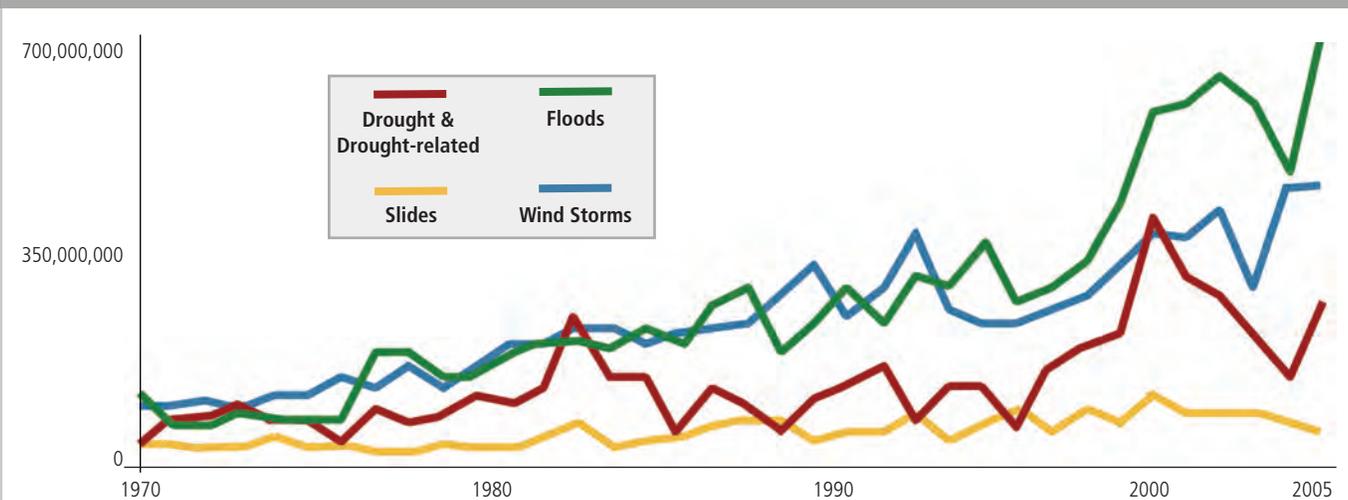
will take longer than one year⁸. Therefore, Give2Asia is currently working with local Japanese organizations to design effective and sustainable programs to restore the livelihoods of the affected farmers in the long term.

2. Balancing Speed and Impact

When disaster strikes, it is understandable to focus on a speedy response. However, if the donation is made after the first few weeks following the disaster, it is not wise to focus on the speed of the donation and project implementation without evaluating needs and project impact. Donors need to assess whether the organization has the capacity to absorb the donation and implement the proposed project, and find out if a proper assessment has been conducted. If not, the donations may not be used as intended or the project could fail, because the local organization lacks the skills and understanding of the situation in its target areas.

For instance, a local nonprofit in India purchased large chilling units for five tsunami-affected villages dependent on the fishing industry. The purpose of the project was to help the fishermen store their fish for a longer period of time, which would give them more bargaining power when taking their fish to market. However, the chilling units required higher voltage than provided by the standard electricity outlets in the villages. In addition, the villages face power cuts up to 12 hours each day. To this day, the chilling units are not being used because the villages still lack the proper infrastructure.

Chart 2: Number of Hydrometeorological Disasters by Type (1970-2005)³



Note: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) defines a disaster as a "situation or event which overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request to national or international level for external assistance; an unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction and human suffering." For a disaster to be entered into the database at least one of the following criteria must be fulfilled: 10 or more people reported killed; 100 people reported affected; declaration of a state of emergency; and call for international assistance.

3. Involving Local Communities in Their Own Recovery

Members of the community should be involved in needs assessment and project planning. This ensures that each project fully addresses the local community's needs. After the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia, for instance, some foreign organizations rushed into Banda Aceh and built houses for fishing communities. However, the houses were built too far inland and it was inconvenient for the fishermen to travel to the ocean daily. As a result, many of these houses remain abandoned to this day⁹. When Give2Asia visited Burma after the 2008 Cyclone Nargis, we observed that many villagers were not using the coal stoves they received from an aid organization because coal was an expensive commodity the villagers could not afford to purchase.

Involving the local community in the project also ensures that the resources provided are appropriate. The implementing organization must understand the local politics and culture of the affected community. After the 2004 tsunami, new houses in parts of Indonesia were built from plans that had been developed for other countries. The toilets were built inside the house and the local community refused to move into the houses because they believe that having a toilet inside the family's living space is not sanitary. In Pakistan after the 2008 Baluchistan earthquake in Pakistan, a water tank construction project was delayed due to internal tribal conflicts within a village as to where the tank should be built. The village leader was so concerned about the conflict that he asked the nonprofit to halt the construction of the water tank.

4. Coordination Among Nonprofits

In the rush and mayhem of a disaster, it is difficult for nonprofits to coordinate their responses. However, coordination can help avoid redundant efforts and reduce any waste of resources. In the Maldives after the 2004 tsunami, two nonprofits rebuilt homes for the same group of beneficiaries, resulting in more houses than necessary in that area.

Over the past few years, organizations are beginning to invest more in relief and recovery coordination. When Typhoon Ketsana hit in 2009, a group of local nonprofits in the Philippines established an online network to publicize their relief and recovery efforts and target areas. In Vietnam, there were inter-agency coordination meetings that helped clarify nonprofit responses by sector and location and avoided duplication of response work. Currently, two network organizations, JANIC and Japan Platform, are working together to coordinate their member organizations' disaster response in the tsunami and earthquake affected regions in Japan.

5. Sustainable Recovery with an Exit Strategy

After a disaster, many international and foreign nonprofits enter areas in need where they have not previously had a



Devastation in Aceh, Indonesia following the 2004 Andaman Sea tsunami.

presence. It is important that these nonprofits partner with local organizations whenever possible, so that the local community will benefit from the nonprofits' knowledge and be able to carry on longer-term projects without foreign assistance. This will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the recovery. The nonprofits should also plan an exit strategy to ensure that the community or a local organization takes ownership of the project or program. If not, the high influx of foreign nonprofits may leave a vacuum once their disaster work is completed, impacting the local economy and creating an overdependence on aid.

6. Planning for Future Disasters

The World Bank and the US Geological Survey estimate that the economic losses incurred worldwide from natural disasters in the 1990s could have been reduced by US\$280 billion if US\$40 billion had been invested in disaster preparedness and preventative measures¹⁰. More importantly, countless lives could have been saved. For instance, before the 2009 earthquake, Give2Asia's partner in Indonesia, Build Change, provided earthquake-resistant construction training to the local community in Padang, Indonesia. After the earthquake, 100 percent of the houses that were built according to Build Change's construction standards withstood the disaster. No lives were lost.

The Fritz Institute's survey disclosed that 91 percent of those rescued in Indonesia were rescued by local individuals¹¹. The importance of community disaster preparedness was further exemplified in a finding that most survivors are rescued by friends and neighbors during the first 48 hours after a disaster rather than by organized rescue teams¹².

Four Types of Disaster Philanthropy

There are four types of disaster response giving. Understanding this can help donors decide when and how to assist.

1. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Preparing communities for disaster situations can arguably be the most effective investment to save lives. This is particularly true for places that are prone to disasters. For instance, promoting and teaching local people to construct earthquake-resistant buildings could save thousands of lives, especially in areas on fault lines such as Northern India, Nepal, Indonesia and other countries within the Ring of Fire.

2. IMMEDIATE RELIEF

This phase often includes providing survivors with immediate needs such as medical assistance, food, clean water and shelter. Other necessities, such as heavy equipment to remove rubble in the search-and-rescue operations are also needed.

Guidelines & Tips for Donors

1. Donate Wisely

Specifically for institutional and corporate donors, it is important to think about the timing of your support. For instance, if it will take you weeks or months to mobilize resources and acquire necessary approval to make a donation, you may wish to give to short-term or long-term recovery instead of immediate relief operations. If you are not familiar with the region or to whom to give your funds, you should contact organizations that have expertise or long-standing presence in that country to learn about the groups that are on the frontlines of relief and recovery efforts. Be aware of issues with corruption and bureaucracy whether you are giving to a government organization or a nonprofit.

2. Be Flexible and Mindful

Nonprofit organizations are fighting against time to implement relief and short-term recovery efforts. Encourage accountability, but give the organization latitude to use the funds as needed in a rapidly changing environment. If you are making a sizeable donation, this is not the best time to ask an organization to develop a new program specifically for you, or to request special meetings or site visits. However, if you are donating toward medium and/or long-term recovery efforts, you should ensure that the proposal provides adequate details about needs, issues, the logic of the project, stakeholders involved and how the nonprofit will monitor the expected impact of the program. Due Diligence on organizations assesses their past performance and capacity to deliver the promised results. If the proposal does not provide clear information, you should ask for further clarification to confirm that the nonprofit has conducted proper project planning and surveys of ongoing needs to ensure the viability and long-term impact of the project.

3. Assess the Appropriateness of In-Kind Donations

While in-kind gifts (non-monetary donations such as blankets, clothes and food) are very generous gestures, donors should avoid making in-kind donations for international relief because transportation and distribution are very expensive and time-consuming. In addition, in-kind donations may not match the real needs of survivors. For example, they may be inappropriate from a cultural, climatic or religious perspective. It is much more practical to provide funds to local groups to purchase relief supplies locally, which also helps support the local economy, thereby contributing to the recovery process. On the other hand, some in-kind donations from corporate donors (e.g. heavy equipment to move rubble or computers and software to strengthen local non-profit organizations) can be useful in the right situation. Donors should assess each situation and ensure they have the right partners to effectively use or distribute their in-kind donations.

4. Support Programs that Involve the Affected Communities

It is vitally important that affected communities participate in recovery programs to ensure that assistance addresses the diverse needs within the community and that resources are not used for wasteful or inappropriate projects. At the same time, the survivors will feel empowered, which contributes to their psychosocial recovery. Engaging local stakeholders also lays the foundation for continued recovery and development in the community. For example, several years ago community action in response to flooding in the Philippines resulted in the formation of the Visayan Forum Foundation, which has since won international awards for its work fighting human trafficking.

3. SHORT-TERM RECOVERY

This phase happens during the weeks and months following the immediate relief effort. This may include some of the immediate relief needs as well as temporary housing, temporary schools, initial rebuilding of infrastructure, and services for displaced children and families such as counseling services. During this time, most families and parents are busy cleaning up their damaged homes or retrieving their belongings, some leaving their children behind at temporary shelters, which often exacerbates the trauma that children have experienced.

4. LONG-TERM RECOVERY

The long-term recovery period is usually measured in years. This includes livelihood restoration and training; educational support for disaster-affected students; permanent rebuilding of homes, schools and infrastructure; and psychosocial support. This phase offers the opportunity not only to recover from the disaster but also to address the underlying development issues that existed previously in the community.

5. Remember the Need for Long-term Recovery

While the majority of donations for a disaster typically go to short-term assistance, affected communities often need support for several years. Sustained involvement helps them rebuild the lives they had before the disaster so that they do not become reliant on aid. Long-term recovery also offers an opportunity to rebuild safer, healthier and more sustainable communities. For instance, in the aftermath of the 2008 China earthquake, ongoing programs by Global Village of Beijing are providing survivors with the skills to build eco-friendly and earthquake-resistant homes.

6. Build Back Better

Disaster usually affects the most disadvantaged and vulnerable populations¹³, especially women and girls¹⁴. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the 2011 disaster in Tohoku, Japan was its disproportionate effect on the elderly. Communities already living in poverty and/or conflict are usually most adversely affected by disaster due to poor infrastructure, environmental degradation and ineffective governance. The disaster often exacerbates the situation and further widens the gap between the rich and the poor. Longer-term recovery projects should be the catalyst to promote:

- Women's rights
- Social equity
- Poverty reduction
- Better environmental practices
- Safer and sturdier infrastructure
- Better local governance

7. Make Impact the Top Priority

For medium and longer-term disaster recovery projects, it is important that the project is well-planned and seeks long-term solutions. Nonprofits must design projects on the basis of actual needs in the affected community. This is important to ensure that all needs are met in a resource-effective way and the community will benefit in the long term. Larger reconstruction projects should never be done in haste. Rebuilding projects should ensure that they address legal issues and that the rebuilding meets a higher standard than previous construction. Nonprofits may need to help survivors access government services to obtain important personal legal documentation that may have been lost in the disaster, including a valid property title before commencing any reconstruction.

8. Support programs that strengthen local capacity

International and foreign nonprofits should ensure that the local community does not grow over-dependent on their aid and expertise. This can undermine longer-term recovery because the local stakeholders, such as the local government, businesses and nonprofits, may not have the resources to maintain needed projects once the foreign nonprofits withdraw. After the 2004 tsunami, the Asia Foundation understood the importance of strengthening local capacity in Sri Lanka. Give2Asia supported their program to provide training to community-based commerce associations and enabled them to provide micro-grants and technical support to survivors to rebuild their small and medium enterprises. As a result, the program has built trust and capacity.

What Donors Can Do Now

Is it possible to take a proactive approach to disaster philanthropy? There is no way to predict when and where the next natural disaster will occur. But, there are things that donors can do today to get ready and help others prepare:

1. Incorporate Disaster Preparedness in Your Current Projects

Disaster preparedness is applicable to all organizations and projects. For instance, if you are already supporting an orphanage in China, you can encourage the orphanage to utilize part of your upcoming grant to develop a disaster response plan for the staff and children. You can also discuss with your current grantees how they may better ready themselves for a disaster, which may bring to light new project opportunities. Similarly, if you are supporting a construction project, you can encourage your grantees to build infrastructure that is earthquake resistant.

2. Think About Your Philanthropic Budget and Goals

If disaster response is a part of your philanthropic agenda, you can set aside funds in advance for quick action when a disaster hits. You can also develop a relationship with a partner that you already trust to ensure you support effective disaster projects.

3. Support Programs that Focus on Disaster Preparedness

If some of the regions that you care about most are vulnerable to disasters, you should consider supporting disaster preparedness and prevention programs, including awareness campaigns and community-based disaster risk reduction teams. Regardless of your philanthropic goals, the community you are supporting will benefit from disaster preparedness if a disaster strikes.

4. Help Prevent Disasters by Supporting Environmental Programs

There has been some evidence of causal links between environmental degradation and vulnerability to disasters¹⁵. Uncontrolled deforestation contributes to erosions, floods and landslides and as mentioned earlier, the loss of mangrove trees along the coasts in tropical climates is also the loss of a natural seawall against storms and tsunamis¹⁶. Supporting environmental programs means you are also supporting disaster prevention.



Following the 2008 Sichuan earthquake in China, Give2Asia funded the building of schools built to new standards that can withstand similar quakes in the future.

About Give2Asia

When disasters strike Asia, Give2Asia is at the forefront of supporting local response and recovery. Through the generosity of our donors, Give2Asia has provided over US\$30 million toward relief and recovery efforts for nearly 30 major disasters throughout the region (as of September 2011). Give2Asia granted US\$7.9 million for the 2004 Andaman Sea tsunami alone and was the second-largest US donor to the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, providing US\$16.7 million for relief and recovery. As of September 2011 we have dedicated US\$5 million for the 2011 disasters in Japan.

Give2Asia is a U.S.-based public charity that helps private philanthropy achieve its intended impact in the Asia-Pacific region. Give2Asia brings donors together with issue experts and the best local groups doing charitable work in Asia, enabling donors to pinpoint specific causes and support communities in need.

Since 2001, Give2Asia has worked with corporations, private and family foundations, and individual donors to respond to natural and man-made disaster, such as the 2009 humanitarian disaster in Sri Lanka. Thanks to the generosity of our clients, Give2Asia has supported affected communities to rebuild their homes, schools, infrastructures and livelihoods, and to overcome their trauma. Recent work has supported survivors of the 2011 tsunami and earthquake in Japan, the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, the 2010 floods in Australia, the 2010 Qinghai earthquake, the 2010 Pakistan flood, and the 2010 Indonesia volcano eruptions, tsunami and earthquake. More information is available at www.give2asia.org.

Summary

Guidelines and Tips for Donors:

1. Donate wisely
2. Be flexible and mindful
3. Avoid in-kind donations
4. Support programs that involve the survivors
5. Remember the need for long-term recovery
6. Build back better
7. Make impact the top priority
8. Support programs that strengthen local capacity

What Donors Can Do Now:

1. Incorporate disaster preparedness in your current programs
2. Think about your philanthropic budget and goals
3. Support programs that focus on disaster preparedness
4. Help prevent disasters by supporting environmental programs

PROJECT LEAD

Gillian Yeoh is the Project Lead for disaster projects and the primary author of this report. Since 2006, Ms. Yeoh has led coordination and grantmaking for Give2Asia's disaster response in the Asia-Pacific region. She can be reached at gyeoh@give2asia.org.

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