



THE IMPACT OF UNSOLICITED BILATERAL DONATIONS (UBDs) ON THE RESPONSE TO HURRICANE DORIAN IN THE BAHAMAS

© International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2022

Any part of this publication may be cited, copied, translated into other languages or adapted to meet local needs without prior permission from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, provided that the source is clearly stated.

Contact us:

Requests for commercial reproduction should be directed to the IFRC Secretariat:

Address: Chemin des Crêts 17, Petit-Saconnex, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland

Postal address: P.O. Box 303, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland

T +41 (0)22 730 42 22 | **F** +41 (0)22 730 42 00 | **E** secretariat@ifrc.org | **W** ifrc.org

**The Impact of Unsolicited Bilateral
Donations (UBDs) on the response
to Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas**

June 2022

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Report was commissioned by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). It was authored by Nicholas Polley, Consultant, supervised and reviewed by Jessie Jordan, IFRC Dutch and English-speaking Caribbean Delegation Disaster Law Officer, based on the guidance and technical inputs of Sophie Teyssier, IFRC Americas Disaster Law and Legislative Advocacy Coordinator and Rachel McLeod, IFRC Senior Officer, International and Public Relations, National Society, Policy and Knowledge Development.

This Report analyses the impact of unsolicited bilateral donations (UBDs) to the emergency response operations in the Bahamas, in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian in 2019, with a view to proposing recommendations to reduce the incidence of UBDs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the special assistance provided by the Bahamas Red Cross Society for this project, particularly from Terez Curry, President of the Bahamas Red Cross Society and Caroline Turnquest, along with that of Captain Stephen Russell of the National Emergency Management Agency and his team. The research would not have been possible without their collaboration and guidance. A warm thanks is extended to all contributors who kindly gave their time and insights to the investigation.

The IFRC wishes to thank and acknowledge the support of the Canadian Red Cross and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, which provided financial assistance for the development of this document. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the Canadian Red Cross or USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance.



Front cover photo: © Angela Hill

Great Guana Cay, Bahamas: A Red Cross delegate walks through some of the more damaged areas of Great Guana Cay, a small island off the island of Abaco in the Bahamas.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	9
1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	11
1.1 Hurricane Dorian	11
1.2 Research rationale	11
2. METHODOLOGY	13
2.1 The IDRL Guidelines	13
2.2 Research methodology	13
2.3 How to read this report	15
3. WHAT ARE UNSOLICITED BILATERAL DONATIONS (UBDS)?	17
3.1 Defining UBDs	17
3.2 Examples of UBDs from around the world	18
4. WHEN PEOPLE HEAR YOU HAVE LOST EVERYTHING, THEY SEND ANYTHING	21
4.1 UBDs in the response to Hurricane Dorian	21
4.2 Motivations	22
5. LEGAL AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND ITS FUNCTIONING DURING THE RESPONSE	25
5.1 Disaster Management Legal framework	25
5.2 Analysing the management of UBDs against the IDRL Checklist	25
6. COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING	31
6.1 Current communications practices in the humanitarian sector	31
6.2 Hurricane Dorian Communications	32
7. PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY	35
7.1 Resources and impact	35
7.2 Involvement of multinationals and large corporations	37
8. RECOMMENDATIONS	39
8.1 The Policy Framework on UBDs	39
8.2 Communications and messaging	40
9. CONCLUSION	43
10. REFERENCES	45



Brian Junior Swain and Red Cross delegate Pierre Bruwier work in the hot sun to unload relief items during a distribution at the Marsh Harbour port. The Red Cross is supporting people on Abaco Island impacted by Hurricane Dorian by distributing items such as cooking sets, hygiene supplies, tarps, garbage bags, food and water. © Angela Hill/ IFRC

ACRONYMS

ACE	Agency Centric Effort
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
BRCS	Bahamas Red Cross Society
CAN	Collaborative Aid Network
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Management Agency
CIDI	Centre for International Disaster Information
DPRA	Disaster Preparedness and Response Act
DRA	Disaster Reconstruction Authority
DRAA	Disaster Reconstruction Authority Act
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ERU	Emergency Response Unit
ESF	Emergency Support Function
IDRL	International Disaster Response Law
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
PSA	Public Service Announcements
PSAid	Public Service Announcements for International Disasters
RDRS	Regional Disaster Response Support Doctrine
RRM	Regional Response Mechanism
UBDs	Unsolicited Bilateral Donations
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme



Distribution 16.09.2019 of relief items in Abaco, the Bahamas; Hygiene kits, kitchen set, shelter toolkits, buckets, jerry cans and blankets. Hygiene and health promoted. © John Engedal Nissen / IFRC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hurricane Dorian struck The Bahamas in September 2019, devastating the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama, leading to an outpouring of support and humanitarian aid. A significant portion of this aid was provided as physical in-kind goods, sent from other islands in The Bahamas, and neighbouring countries including the United States. Donors included individuals, private companies, humanitarian organisations, and foreign governments, among others.

Unsolicited Bilateral Donations (UBDs) are goods that are spontaneously donated after a disaster which were not specifically requested at any point. UBDs can be problematic when they arrive in large quantities, they do not match the needs of the affected population, or they are not suitable for the climate and culture of the receiving country. They can put pressure on an already-stretched humanitarian supply chain system and incur many thousands of dollars in storage and handling fees. They can also have a substantial environmental impact if they are disposed of as landfill in a region where safe waste management options are scarce. While the negative impacts of UBDs can be clearly identified, this research acknowledged that grey areas may exist in relation to categorizing which goods should be considered as UBDs, and categorization may be dependent on the approach used. In this report, the specific context of the Hurricane Dorian response is used to shape the understanding of UBDs, using the most practical approaches to analyse this phenomenon.

This study examines the impact of UBDs in the response to Hurricane Dorian and is grounded in the recommendations stemming from the ***“Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance”*** otherwise known as the “IDRL Guidelines”. Key findings revealed that individuals and organisations in the Caribbean and the USA mobilised large amounts of humanitarian aid after seeing striking pictures of the disaster and reacting to wide-spread calls from various official and unofficial sources. However, much of the aid sent fell into the category of UBDs. For example, in Grand Bahama, out of 100 containers of in-kind goods received, at least 40 were not usable due to spoilage – food was rotten and used clothes were soiled. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) received several large shipments of unsolicited goods including 70 tonnes of kitchen sets, 1008 food parcels and 5000 mattresses, which contributed to bills of over USD 500,000 in freight charges for NEMA for goods which were not needed and caused blockages to the humanitarian response system.

In light of these findings, the research analyses the management of UBDs under three main headings:

1. Response of government authorities
2. Communications
3. Private sector and civil society.

To reduce the incidence of UBDs, this Report recommends developing a UBD policy as part of an update to the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan which:

- Clarifies the development and communication of Needs lists;
- Reviews the conditions on which legal facilities are made available to assisting actors; and
- Focuses on sharing convincing 'cash is best' messaging. Specifically, 'cash is best' communications resonated most when coupled with stories explaining why this is the case – for example emphasising that cash can boost the local economy, highlighting the likelihood of wastage where in-kind aid is shipped from overseas and demonstrating the logistics challenges and costs of shipping.



Two months after the devastation caused by Hurricane Dorian and signs of hope emerge alongside signs of recovery as people return to the island. Artists are painting murals on the sides of the few buildings still standing. © Angela Hill / IFRC

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Hurricane Dorian

Hurricane Dorian struck The Bahamas between September 1st – 3rd 2019. It first made landfall on the Abaco Islands and then moved onto the island of Grand Bahama. As a Category 5 hurricane with maximum wind speeds of 185mph (297km/h), it represents one of the strongest Atlantic hurricanes ever recorded. The official death toll stands at 74 and 282 people are still unaccounted for.¹ The hurricane moved extremely slowly, at just 1mph. Storm surges two-stories high caused severe damage, largely because 80% of The Bahamas' landmass is within 1.5m above sea-level. Over 36 inches of rain fell and damage to houses and infrastructure was widespread. Overall damage was estimated at USD 2.5 billion.²

The Bahamas is made up of approximately 700 islands but only two of the most populous islands suffered a direct hit from Dorian. This resulted in a significant displacement of people to the less affected islands like New Providence, where the capital city Nassau is located. The housing stock in many communities across Abaco and Grand Bahama was completely washed away leaving thousands homeless and seeking refuge in storm shelters. Even towns and villages that were not underwater were cut-off from outside help with communications networks inoperative and roads and bridges destroyed.

The humanitarian community mobilised rapidly to respond to the disaster. The national response mechanism was activated and worked to coordinate a plethora of domestic response actors including the Bahamas Red Cross Society (BRCS), NGOs, faith-based organisations and the private sector. Regional support was provided from other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) nations, co-ordinated through the inter-governmental Caribbean Disaster Management Agency (CDEMA), as well as organisations like the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO). International assistance was provided by foreign governments, agencies of the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and a wide range of international NGOs. Images showing the scale of the disaster rapidly spread across the globe leading to a significant response in terms of both financial and in-kind support.

1.2 Research rationale

Unsolicited Bilateral Donations (UBDs) have been identified as an issue in countless responses around the world since the 1950s, with the most recent in-depth research focussing on the Pacific region. As an example, in the response to Tropical Cyclone Winston in February 2016, Fiji received more than 133 (20ft and 40ft) containers of UBDs plus 8,147 pieces of loose cargo (ranging from packages to pallets). This was enough to fill 33 Olympic sized swimming pools. In the response to Tropical Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu in 2015, over 70 shipping containers of UBDs were sent, which generated more than USD 1.5 million in

¹ NEMA update: Death Toll Rises to 74 post-Hurricane Dorian, The Government of the Bahamas, February 28, 2020

² United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Assessment of the effects and impacts of Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas, 2020

storage, handling and destruction fees.³ Whilst the phenomenon of UBDs in humanitarian responses is one that is familiar to many aid workers and governments alike, it is a difficult topic to study. By definition, UBDs are in-kind donations that are unrequested and arrive unexpectedly to chaotic disaster response environments. This means reliable data can be hard to come by and anecdotal accounts form the bulk of existing research. Despite the frequency with which the Caribbean region is hit by natural disasters and the increasing challenges caused by the influx of unsolicited donations, this is one of the first in-depth studies of its kind in the region.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement played a significant role in the response to Hurricane Dorian. During its relief efforts, The Bahamas Red Cross Society as well as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in support of the Government of The Bahamas, recognised that the arrival of UBDs from both domestic and international sources negatively impacted the relief effort. This recognition provided the impetus for the research documented in this report, which aimed to gather examples of UBDs during Hurricane Dorian, explore the sources and motivations behind them, and to develop recommendations and communication strategies aiming to change attitudes and reduce the incidence of UBDs in future humanitarian emergency operations in The Bahamas and the wider Caribbean.



Working on a response the size of Hurricane Dorian requires many organizations to work together. The blue jerry cans were a donation from Amazon to the Red Cross, which in turn were supplied to Water Mission, so people on Abaco Island could have easy access to safe, clean drinking water. © Angela Hill / IFRC

³ Young, Anna. The Challenges of Unsolicited Bilateral Donations in Pacific Humanitarian Responses, Australian Red Cross, December 2016

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 The IDRL Guidelines

The *Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance*, commonly known as the “[IDRL Guidelines](#)”⁴ are the foundation for the analysis in this report. The *IDRL Guidelines* have set the global agenda on governance and legislative standards for the regulation and facilitation of international disaster relief. Unanimously adopted and endorsed by State Parties to the Geneva Conventions in 2007 at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the *IDRL Guidelines* provide recommendations on how disaster laws and policies can address the common regulatory problems faced during international disaster response operations, many of which relate to the import of relief goods and equipment. The *IDRL Guidelines* are accompanied by an [IDRL Checklist](#),⁵ a 10-question benchmarking tool which is used in this report to identify strengths and weaknesses in The Bahamas’ national disaster management regulatory framework in regard to the handling of in-kind aid. It should be noted that while the *IDRL Checklist* covers a wide range of topics relating to the provision of international disaster assistance, this analysis focuses only on questions 1-7 of the Checklist as these are most closely related to UBD issues.

2.2 Research methodology

The research underpinning this report took place over a 4-month period from May to August 2021, and was conducted in four key phases:

- In the **initial phase**, a desk review of relevant reports, evaluations, academic articles, policy documents and legislation was prepared. A Project Taskforce, comprising key focal points, was also established to guide the research and facilitate access to Key Informants.
- In the **investigation phase** interviews with Key Informants were held in 1:1 or focus group settings, with the aim of capturing the knowledge and perspectives of individuals with first-hand experience of the response to Hurricane Dorian.
- In the **analysis phase** a preliminary report was drafted based on the results of both the desk review and Key Informant interviews.
- In the **delivery phase** a virtual stakeholder workshop was held to validate report findings and discuss solutions and recommendations. Stakeholder comments from the workshop, as well as feedback provided via questionnaire, were included in final report.

⁴ Introduction to the Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance (IDRL), IFRC, 2017

⁵ The Checklist on the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (The ‘IDRL’ Checklist), IFRC, November 2017



Leona Laing sorting out donated clothes. Leona is a retired hairdresser. She like so many others lost her home. Her son was saved from the rooftop of his house. © Maria Santto / Finnish Red Cross

With respect to the **investigation phase**, Key Informant interviews and consultations were undertaken with approximately 40 individuals from: BRCS; the IFRC; Partner National Societies; Red Cross Emergency Response Unit (ERU) members and deployed delegates; representatives of The Bahamas Government [NEMA, DRA and a Family Island representative]; USAID; WFP; faith-based organisations; disaster-affected persons; UBD donors; local and international NGOs; and private companies, including shipping companies.

2.3 How to read this report

In terms of the report’s structure, Chapter 3 provides an introduction to UBDs, including definitions, as well as its impact in other parts of the world. Chapter 4 is a brief case study on the receipt of UBDs during the response to Hurricane Dorian, providing some key facts and figures as well as insights on the sources and motivations behind their supply into the response. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 contain the main analysis of the report. As a backbone to the analysis, Chapter 5 utilizes the questions of the *IDRL Checklist*, to provide an appraisal of the handling of UBDs by government authorities. Chapter 6 examines the role of communications and messaging practices in contributing to and reducing the incidence of UBDs and Chapter 7 highlights the significant role played by the private sector and civil society in managing and also generating UBDs. Chapter 8 provides recommendations based on the findings of the previous chapters and is followed by concluding remarks in Chapter 9.



Bianca Taylor and her family fled the rising water on Grand Bahamas. “It was so scary, we just ran,” she said. Bianca and her daughters received financial assistance at a Red Cross distribution in Freeport. © IFRC



Red Cross volunteers unloaded pallets of ice from a semi-truck and distributed it to the community in the island of Grand Bahama. The ice will help people keep their food from spoiling and can be used for drinking water. © Jenelle Eli/IFRC

TROPICAL

22 64

3. WHAT ARE UNSOLICITED BILATERAL DONATIONS (UBDs)?

3.1 Defining UBDs

Unsolicited Bilateral Donations (UBDs) are goods that are spontaneously donated after a disaster which were not specifically requested at any point. In addition, UBDs often share a number of common characteristics such as arriving unannounced or at very short notice, having incomplete or no paperwork, lacking a defined consignee, failing to meet quality standards, having improper packaging and/or being inappropriate for the needs of the disaster-affected population.⁶

UBDs can come from a wide-range of domestic or international sources and, while often donated with good intentions, may cause significant problems for the humanitarian supply chain in-country. UN OCHA's Strategic Plan⁷ on unsolicited donations highlights some of the key negative impacts of UBDs:

- Human impact – if items are not relevant to the urgent needs of affected population, needs go unmet.
- Humanitarian supply chain – unsolicited goods block entry points (ports, airports, roads) and create unnecessary congestion in the supply chain (e.g. occupying warehouse space, large amounts of time and resources dedicated to managing customs procedures and sorting). This ultimately impedes the movement of *solicited* goods.
- Costs – financial costs of processing, transporting, storing and distributing can add up to be much more than the value of the goods.
- Environmental impact – aside from the carbon footprint of the shipping, UBDs can negatively affect the environment if they are not handled or disposed of properly.
- Reputational impact – an abundance of poor quality relief items undermines the idea that humanitarians or government agencies are able to help people effectively.

It should be recognised that grey areas exist when categorising whether items are solicited or unsolicited. Humanitarian needs lists shared by national authorities or relief actors can vary in terms of the specificity of items being requested, which can produce inconsistencies. For example, if 'food' is listed as a need and no further details are provided, then technically any edible, non-expired food has been solicited. In contrast, if a request for 100 generators with specifications of '60kW, 120 Volts, US standard outlets' is shared, then a generator which does not match this technical specification would be considered unsolicited. The *IDRL Guidelines* highlight the importance of making requests as specific as possible and recommend that States indicate the types and amounts of goods that are required.⁸ A lack of specificity creates a risk of items, that may technically be considered as solicited, being sent in good faith, but ending up being of little use, something seen in the Dorian response. As a result of some of these categorisation

⁶ Young, p.5

⁷ Boulet-Desbareau, Pierre. Unsolicited In-Kind Donations and Other Inappropriate Humanitarian Goods Strategic Plan, OCHA, May 2013

⁸ IDRL Guidelines, p.17

difficulties, academics researching this area have proposed to instead 'focus on the intrinsic usefulness of the item donated, rather than whether or not it was "solicited" or "unsolicited" by the local authorities.'⁹ They point to a system of classification used by PAHO which focuses exclusively on usefulness, rather than solicitation – 'High Priority' items are immediately required for distribution, whereas 'Low Priority' and 'No Priority' are items that, respectively, may be of use after the emergency phase, or are not useful at all.¹⁰ Indeed, it is not the case that all unsolicited aid causes negative impacts, as will be discussed later in relation to the Hurricane Dorian response. The usefulness approach is highlighted here in recognition of the fact that categorisation based purely on solicitation has limitations and that alternative approaches exist.

3.2 Examples of UBDs from around the world

The shipment of UBDs, also known as 'material convergence'¹¹, is a complex problem due to the variety and volume of goods that arrive from a huge range of sources over a short time period, in circumstances where there is often a lack of capacity and resources to deal with them. The most commonly donated items are medical products, food and drink, clothing, household and hygiene items, tents, tarpaulins, blankets, school materials, children's toys, generators and electrical devices.¹² Although each of these items can create challenges for a wide variety of reasons, the most problematic examples of UBDs are those that are incompatible with international and local standards including 'local cultures, customs and preferences'. For example, in previous responses, donors have sent jeans to Darfur, where it is uncommon for people to wear trousers, and bacon to Lebanon, a predominantly Muslim country. In the response to flooding in China in 2001, size 12 sports shoes were shipped from the US to China. These shoes were far too large for the typical shoe size of Chinese people and the footwear had originally been manufactured in China, meaning it was reshipped back to China from the USA at a high financial and carbon cost.¹³

Another key drawback of the arrival of UBDs is how much it costs to deal with them. In the aftermath of the 2009 Australian 'Black Saturday' bushfires it was estimated that managing material donations cost in excess of USD 5.8 million and the goods themselves took up more than 50,000 square metres of storage.¹⁴ The New South Wales Office for Emergency Management referred to this phenomenon as a 'second disaster'.¹⁵ Similar challenges were also experienced in the in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, where a 'non-stop caravan of 18-wheelers' brought 185,000 square metres' worth of material aid to warehouses across New York. The estimated value of these items was more than USD 75 million but very little of it was needed and significant costs were accrued storing the items in warehouses.¹⁶ Even where goods are solicited, as in the case of water after the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan, where an excess of that product arrives it can become problematic. Just one distribution centre had more than 700 metric tonnes of bottled water which was enough to satisfy one day's drinking water needs of 350,000 people.¹⁷ What's more, water is extremely bulky to store, and plastic bottles can degrade if not warehoused properly.

These examples consistently emphasize the need for governments to be as specific as possible, as to the types and quantities of goods required, when communicating the needs of affected populations to donors, as recommended by the *IDRL Guidelines*.

Sources of UBDs can be very wide-ranging. Significant contributions often come from diaspora groups or well-meaning individuals, faith-based groups and small or improvised NGOs. These donors are characterised by an ability to quickly generate large amounts of in-kind aid but typically have less

⁹ Holguin-Veras, Jose., Jaller, Miguel., Van Wassenhove, Luk N., Perez, Noel., Wachtendorf, Tricia. Material Convergence: An important and Understudied Disaster Phenomenon, *Natural Hazards Review*, 4 January 2012

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Boulet-Desbureau, p.10

¹³ Osman, Moustafa. In-kind donations: who benefits? *Humanitarian Exchange*, Number 49, January 2011

¹⁴ Flint, Josie., Henty, Pip., Hurley, Brendan. The cost of good Intentions in the Australian Bushfires – perspectives from the international humanitarian sector, Blog, 8 February 2020 <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/the-cost-of-good-intentions-in-the-australian-bushfires-perspectives-from-the-international-humanitarian-sector/>

¹⁵ Brown, Michelle. Plea for people to stop donating goods directly to 'overwhelmed' fire-affected communities, ABC Australia, 6 January 2020 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-07/unsolicited-donations-spark-problems-in-nsw-fire-affected-areas/11848180?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web

¹⁶ Newsweek, \$75 Million of Stuff, February 2002 <https://www.newsweek.com/75-million-stuff-148091>

¹⁷ Holguin-Veras et al, p.6

knowledge about established emergency response mechanisms.¹⁸ Corporate humanitarian action is also now a common feature of relief efforts around the world and whilst private companies provide significant resources, disasters can offer a way to offload unwanted inventory or to access tax breaks for charitable contributions. Corporate support is also a marketable event which can mean needs-based decision-making is influenced by company priorities. One example of this comes from the 2010 Haiti Earthquake where 'less than 24 hours after the Haiti earthquake, a plane landed in Port-au-Prince loaded with children's toys donated by a Thai manufacturer, accompanied by a television crew from that country. After pictures and videos were taken, the planes and the television crew left, leaving several tons of toys on the tarmac where they remained for months, obstructing traffic'.¹⁹

State humanitarian action, often government-to-government donations, typically benefits from greater communication around proposed in-kind donations. However, it can still be politically difficult for receiving governments to refuse offers, particularly if humanitarian cooperation is part of a wider package of agreed collaboration between nations. Similarly, countries that have recently emerged as major players in providing humanitarian aid may lack experience in the coordination of emergency operations, resulting in inappropriate donations being sent. In the response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, 39 foreign governments contributed to thousands of tonnes worth of pharmaceuticals being sent, despite medicine never being requested for the response.²⁰ Even experienced humanitarian organisations, can sometimes be culpable of sending UBDs. Whilst undoubtedly benefitting from significant experience in managing response operations and handling in-kind support, major humanitarian organisations are vast global networks made up of smaller regional and national entities which often do not have access to the same information at the same time. Internal coordination systems to respond to disasters thousands of miles away do not always run smoothly and can result in UBDs from humanitarian organisations.²¹

Looking towards Latin America and the Caribbean region, there are numerous examples of UBDs causing significant problems in responses. The devastating 2010 Haiti Earthquake represents the most studied example with in-kind goods flooding into the country in the first days and weeks after the 7.0 earthquake. The number of planes transiting Port-au-Prince airport rose from an average of 25 flights per day to more than 120 take-offs and landings per day, overwhelming airport capacity. Two dozen planes could be circling at any one time, and many had to be diverted to other airports. It was determined that 60 to 70% of the goods sent did not have a consignee, it was simply described as 'Aid for Haiti' meaning national authorities with stretched resources had to take charge of it.²² Donations coming through the Dominican Republic into Haiti were so great that 'on one occasion five trucks had to be stopped at Jimaní, a border town in the Dominican Republic, for 5 days, because the warehouses at Port-au-Prince were full and could not take the cargo'.²³ This is just one example of how congestion at entry points produces bottlenecks in the humanitarian supply chain, which can prevent planned aid from reaching its destination.

In response to earthquakes which hit El Salvador in January and February 2001, it was reported that 37% of the medicines provided were inappropriate for the affected population's needs.²⁴ In the response to Hurricane Maria in Dominica in 2017, the IFRC described being unable to accommodate unexpected donations of mattresses due to a lack of warehousing space.²⁵ The region has also seen shipments of completely inappropriate donations. During the 2010 floods in Colombia, the Colombian Red Cross received a variety of wedding gowns, party outfits and even carnival costumes.²⁶ In the 2010 Haiti Earthquake response, 10 containers of refrigerators with incorrect voltages for the country arrived, along with tuxedos and wedding dresses.²⁷ Compounding the lack of utility of these items, the operations incurred costs for storing and disposing of these items, reducing the resources available to the relief effort.

¹⁸ Boulet-Desbareau, p.14

¹⁹ Holguin-Veras et al, p.12-13

²⁰ Boulet-Desbareau, p.42

²¹ Boulet-Desbareau, p.33

²² Holguin-Veras et al, p.13

²³ Holguin-Veras, José., Jaller, Miguel., Wachtendorf, Tricia. 2012 "Comparative Performance of Alternative Humanitarian Logistic Structures after the Port-au-Prince Earthquake: ACÉs, PIEs, and CANs." *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 46(10): 1623-1640.

²⁴ Saber Donar, Afiche #5, 2011. <http://www.saberdonar.info/materiales/Afiche05.pdf>

²⁵ Logistics Sitrep Dominica Hurricane Relief Operation, IFRC, December 2017

²⁶ Ovalle, Víctor. Cruz Roja 'inundada' de donaciones absurdas, El Heraldo, 2011 <https://www.elheraldo.co/local/cruz-roja-inundada-de-donaciones-absurdas>

²⁷ Boulet-Desbareau, p.43



Bahamas Red Cross volunteers work through the registration questionnaire with people impacted by Hurricane Dorian during a financial assistance distribution held in Freeport, Grand Bahama. © Angela Hill / IFRC

4. WHEN PEOPLE HEAR YOU HAVE LOST EVERYTHING, THEY SEND ANYTHING

4.1 UBDs in the response to Hurricane Dorian

In the weeks and months following Hurricane Dorian in 2019, there was an outpouring of support to The Bahamas, including significant in-kind donations. The arrival of UBDs in the affected islands was largely not tracked and there are only limited data records available. Nevertheless, Key Informants provided detailed examples of UBDs encountered during their respective operations in The Bahamas.

The Bahamas Government, led by its disaster management body the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), reported receiving the most UBDs out of any group involved in the response. This included cases where the government was listed as consignee as well as shipments which lacked any consignee and NEMA had to step in to process them. The Bahamas lies just 50 miles off the coast of Florida and well-meaning individuals in the US and diaspora groups sent many UBDs. The Bahamas is also home to well-connected individuals and has a large second-home community. These groups sprang into action to bring millions of dollars' worth of goods by plane and boat to Abaco which government officials struggled to control. In the case of Grand Bahama, which was heavily impacted by Hurricane Dorian, at least 40 out of 100 containers of in-kind aid received by the Government were not usable due to spoilage. Food items were either expired or about to expire, used clothing was of poor quality and not packaged properly and mattresses were soiled. Some of the rotting food was covered in insects which meant that environmental health teams had to be brought in to fumigate the food or advise on its disposal. Similar problems also presented in Nassau where hundreds of containers and pallets received by Government needed to be sorted through in order to retrieve useful items. NEMA was left with bills of over USD 500,000 in freight charges and had to rent new warehouse space which could cost up to USD 20,000 per month. At the height of the response, NEMA was managing 13 warehouses and storage facilities.

Government-to-government donations of UBDs were also significant, with 70 tonnes of kitchen sets, 1008 food parcels and 5000 mattresses being received from a regional neighbour. Similarly, one Caribbean country dispatched a vessel with 20ft containers of wheat (100lb bales), grains and other canned goods, while another sent four 40ft containers full of bottled water, which could have been provided by domestic sources. Other miscellaneous items that were sent included thousands of 2-man tents and thousands of mosquito nets, as well as Dell computer brackets and obsolete outdoor security camera brackets. Where possible, these UBDs were sorted and useful items were brought into the operation and distributed, although unfortunately little is known about how recipients viewed them. On the other hand, some of these items are still sitting in warehouses two years after the hurricane, impeding the ability to use scarce storage space to stockpile goods and equipment needed for future disasters.

The Bahamas Red Cross Society (BRCS) was also inundated with donations of miscellaneous clothing, household items, food, water and hygiene items. Hundreds of items were dropped off to BRCS offices by members of the public on a daily basis or were donated through corporations, hotels and cruise



IFRC delegates use any means of transport needed to get aid to people in need. Here, they use shopping cart to load water onto a truck, which will be loaded onto a boat bound for devastated islands in the Bahamas. Water is so contaminated with salt water and chemicals on the islands that it's unsafe to drink. © Brad Zerivitz / IFRC

ship companies. Faulty televisions and fridges arrived, perishable dairy food items were donated, and unusable second-hand toys were also provided. On approximately five occasions, unexpected shipping containers arrived into Nassau and Freeport with BRCS listed as consignee, leading to a scramble to try to manage their arrival. The sheer quantity of goods required up to 20 volunteers and supervisory staff working non-stop to manage them. These UBDs also congested the BRCS warehouse in Nassau and created a situation where goods were hard to organise and track. The BRCS, as well as other local and regional NGOs, also reported feeling pressure from some international companies to accept goods which were not needed for the emergency phase or that represented donations of old inventory that companies wanted to clear.

4.2 Motivations

There is relatively little data looking at the reasons why individuals and organisations send unsolicited donations. One of the few studies exploring this issue was commissioned by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) in 2018 and sought to understand the decision-making behind the sending of UBDs in the context of behavioural economics and psychology (the **2018 ACFID Study**). The study concluded that “The behaviour of sending a UBD is largely governed by a System 1 mode of

thinking, people do not stop to explore possibilities of how the good will get to the destination, how much money will be required to do this, who will unpack it or where it will eventually end up".²⁸ This Systems Thinking approach, a well-known model in psychology, describes two systems for processing information in the human brain. System 1 operates automatically and quickly, is intuitive, emotional and looks for patterns; System 2 thinking requires full attention and effort to think through problems consciously and deliberately.²⁹

The conclusion from the 2018 ACFID Study, that decisions on sending UBDs are made using System 1 thinking, concurs with the responses given by Key Informants when asked about why people decided to send UBDs to the Hurricane Dorian response. UBD donors, as well as aid workers managing UBDs during the Hurricane Dorian response, were asked for their perspectives on why unsolicited donations arrived. One Key Informant commented that 'when people see the images, part of their humanity is activated'. Another Key Informant, who happened to be a humanitarian worker and also affected by the disaster observed, 'when people hear you have lost everything, they send anything'. These responses both point to an emotional and intuitive thought process rather than a System 2 thinking process which contemplates the idea in its entirety. In support of this, two Key Informants that were UBD donors admitted that the goods they chose to send in coordination with friends in the USA were borne out of a feeling of wanting to help in some way, rather than a consideration of whether or not they would meet the needs of affected people. Research shows that donors of unsolicited aid do not realise or believe they are creating a problem.³⁰

Another insight provided by the Key Informant interviews, which also concurs with the 2018 ACFID Study, is that whilst donors often understood the "cash is best" message in theory, some did not feel complete trust that their cash would go to where it was needed and felt it was a less personal way of supporting.³¹ Donors often had close connections to The Bahamas and placed value on knowing that physical items they provided would replace those items which had been destroyed, even if this was a somewhat mistaken belief. This is linked to the impact of the media on generating financial and in-kind support. Key Informants mentioned that the tremendous international media attention, driven by social media posts showing the absolute devastation, led to a mis-framing of the disaster. The reality was that two islands, not the whole archipelago, were badly affected and other islands still had the capacity to locally supply needed goods. This nuance was largely missed in the media coverage and led to a situation where people thought there was absolutely nothing left, meaning any and all goods were urgently needed.³²

In addition to the above, the Key Informants identified a number of other motivations and causal factors for UBDs to the Hurricane Dorian response. One factor identified was the fact that the Government of The Bahamas shared Needs Lists which were not very detailed and covered a wide range of needed items, a topic which will be covered in subsequent sections. Faith-based organisations in the US with church connections in The Bahamas also mobilised rapidly and may have been particularly motivated by the destruction of churches across the islands. Additionally, the hurricane, which was expected to hit the USA, did not have the severe impact that was expected. As a consequence, coastal communities that had prepped to respond domestically pivoted to respond internationally instead. This pivot may have been partly influenced by survivors' guilt, a phenomenon occurring where a person feels guilt for surviving a life-threatening event when others did not survive.

²⁸ The Real Story Ends in Landfill, Australian Council for International Development and the Behavioural Architects, 2018

²⁹ Kahneman, Daniel. Thinking, Fast and Slow, 2011

³⁰ Young, p.8

³¹ ACFID, p.11

³² *ibid*



Warehouse and volunteers in Nassau, Bahamas © IFRC

5. LEGAL AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND ITS FUNCTIONING DURING THE RESPONSE

5.1 Disaster Management Legal framework

Prior to Hurricane Dorian, the primary legislation governing disaster management in The Bahamas was the *Disaster Preparedness and Response Act, 2006*, (DPRA 2006) which establishes the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) with responsibility for disaster relief management in The Bahamas.³³ The DPRA 2006 is supported by a National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan produced by NEMA. However, at the time of writing, only outdated previous versions of the Plan were available for review. At an inter-governmental level, The Bahamas is also a Participating State to the Agreement establishing the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA),³⁴ which confirms CDEMA's role in promoting comprehensive disaster management in terms of 'mitigation, management and coordinated response' to disasters across CARICOM States. CDEMA promotes a Regional Disaster Response Support Doctrine (RDRS) in which all 20 Participating States commit to providing 'effective and efficient coordinated disaster response support' to other nations facing disasters. Practically, this means the provision of technical and operational assistance through units of the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM), including the co-ordination of regional in-kind support through CDEMA.³⁵ CDEMA is also currently working with WFP to develop a digital inventory management system in the Caribbean, something which could be of future benefit to The Bahamas.

In November 2019, two months after Hurricane Dorian hit, the *Disaster Reconstruction Authority Act, 2019* (DRAA 2019) was passed to establish a new Disaster Reconstruction Authority (DRA) charged with managing reconstruction and restoration efforts.³⁶ This new Authority frees up NEMA to return to its usual mandate of preparing for new disasters and both the DRA and NEMA now sit under a new Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction.

5.2 Analysing the management of UBDs against the IDRL Checklist

The following is an assessment of the elements of The Bahamas' national disaster management framework which pertain to the handling of in-kind humanitarian assistance. The strengths and weaknesses of the legal and policy framework are assessed against the IDRL Checklist questions. Although the IDRL Checklist contains 10 questions in total, this analysis considers questions 1 – 7, within the context of in-kind aid and more specifically, UBDs. The examination is also complemented by information provided by Key Informants.

³³ Disaster Preparedness and Response Act 2006, Government of The Bahamas, (No. 4 of 2006)

³⁴ Agreement Establishing The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), CDEMA, 2008

³⁵ Caribbean Disaster Management Agency (CDEMA) The Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) Booklet, CDEMA, 2016

³⁶ Disaster Reconstruction Authority Act 2019, Government of The Bahamas, 29 November 2019

Question (1)

Does your country have a clear legal framework for disaster risk management which includes procedures relating to international disaster assistance?

The *Disaster Preparedness and Response Act 2006* provides a clear framework for preparedness and relief activities in The Bahamas. It establishes the NEMA as the primary government agency responsible for coordinating and implementing disaster relief actions, including those of an in-kind nature, led by a Director holding ultimate accountability. The DPRA 2006 also provides for the establishment of an Advisory Committee made up of members appointed by the Prime Minister of The Bahamas, including representatives from a range of government departments and other organisations which work in the sphere of disaster response. The Director of NEMA, together with the Advisory Committee, can also establish any sub-committees deemed necessary to respond to disasters. Many of those sitting on supporting committees may also be a part of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) which is convened following disasters as the headquarters of relief activities, as was the case following Hurricane Dorian. On the advice of the Director of NEMA, the Prime Minister can declare a disaster emergency, and requests for international assistance must be co-ordinated through NEMA.

The DPRA 2006 also establishes Consultative Committees across the main inhabited islands, headed by the respective Administrator of each island, to discharge the functions of NEMA across the entire country.

Question (2)

Do your country's laws and regulations clearly set out a focal point for coordinating international disaster assistance?

Following Hurricane Dorian, Key Informant feedback suggests NEMA, supported by CDEMA and OCHA representatives, was a visible focal point and played a central role in organising and coordinating response activities. NEMA activated the Emergency Support Function (ESF) system which is the principal humanitarian co-ordination structure in The Bahamas. Fourteen ESFs were activated during Hurricane Dorian including ESF 7 'Relief Supplies and Distribution' and ESF 4 'International Assistance'. Each of these had a domestic lead agency as well as regional counterparts. By way of example, ESF 4 'International Assistance', was led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the national lead agency and CDEMA and OCHA provided international support.

It was reported that early briefings at NEMA headquarters could draw over 100 people. Comments from a number of Key Informants indicated the tremendous international media attention in the first few weeks brought an intense pressure to the response along with a flood of offers of assistance, despite needs of the population not being clearly defined at that early stage. This led to a heavy involvement and eventual leadership of the response by the Office of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

NEMA also held daily meetings on New Providence (Nassau) in an effort to manage the domestic response in conjunction with the resources provided by a high number of incoming international actors.

Outside of New Providence on the affected islands, respondents commented that the ESF system was largely not in effect and the initial response was chaotic. On Abaco, USAID and other NGOs took the lead to manage and coordinate in-kind aid. The Bahamas diaspora, including private well-connected individuals with access to significant resources, chartered private planes which arrived at Treasure Cay airport. These actions were generally not coordinated with the government and contributed to the arrival of UBDs. The airport was unsecured due to security fencing being damaged and there were no security or local air traffic control personnel to manage movements of people and goods, plus no accountability or tracking of aid coming in.



Bahamas Red Cross volunteer Misty with 81-year-old hurricane survivor Elvita as Red Cross goes door-to-door to bring hurricane survivors with relief items to help recover after Hurricane Dorian in Westend, Grand Bahamas © John Engedal Nissen / IFRC

Question (3)

Do your country's laws and regulations outline the roles and responsibilities of different institutions relating to international disaster assistance?

To understand the roles and responsibilities of disaster management agencies in The Bahamas, it is also relevant to briefly consider the *Disaster Reconstruction Authority Act 2019*. This legislation was passed in November 2019 with the goal of founding a new authority to manage reconstruction and restoration efforts in areas designated as 'Disaster Zones'. In the Hurricane Dorian response this allowed NEMA to hand over management of recovery activities to a new specialised agency, freeing it up to return to its usual mandate of disaster preparedness and response.

However, some confusion may be generated by the DRAA 2019 as it appears to give the Disaster Reconstruction Authority (DRA) and associated Ministers a range of relief powers. For example, the DRAA 2019 allows the Prime Minister to designate a Disaster Zone immediately after a disaster has struck and the DRA can then order immediate needs assessments to be undertaken. It also gives the DRA the ability to advise if domestic capacities are sufficient to respond to a disaster and if they are not, the Prime Minister has the authority to engage international contributors. Where this happens, the DRA is the designated focal point to coordinate this aid and can publish a preliminary list of goods, services and equipment required for the response. When asked about this issue government representatives confirmed that, in practice, the areas of responsibility are clear between the two agencies.

Question (4)

Do your country's laws and regulations outline a process for requesting/welcoming offers of international assistance?

Under the DPRA 2006, following the declaration of a disaster emergency or threatened disaster emergency, the NEMA Director or the Prime Minister can order media houses such as TV and radio-stations or other communications organisations to broadcast notices relating to future or existing disasters including information concerning in-kind needs. During the Hurricane Dorian response the EOC co-ordinated the sharing of preliminary Needs Lists. This was coupled by calls for in-kind assistance which were communicated through a variety of media appearances and public speeches. Key Informants suggest that these did not always contain consistent information, leading to confusion and a disproportionately high level of financial and in-kind support, particularly from sources in the USA, when compared to the level of need.

Looking specifically at the shared Needs Lists, in collaboration with NEMA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published an 'Immediate Assistance Supplies list' on September 4th, 2019, which included a reasonably short list of WASH, shelter, non-perishable food, reconstruction tools and first aid items. The list also contained required quantities and specifications for some items and was shared through various channels, including to relevant embassies as an official communique.³⁷ However, two days earlier on September 2nd, the Ministry of Finance published a 'Declaration of Exigency' Order which included a large range of urgently needed goods such as 'Medicine', 'Food for personal consumption' and 'Clothing' – further details were not included. This undermined the clarity provided in the 'Immediate Assistance Supplies list' shared by NEMA, the agency mandated to lead the response, and represents a breakdown in internal communication about how and by whom in-kind aid should be requested. The existence of these broad requests also raises the question of whether, in general terms, aid sent after Hurricane Dorian can really be defined as *unsolicited*.

³⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Preliminary Needs List, Government of The Bahamas, 04 September 2019

Question (5)

Do your country's laws and regulations provide for necessary legal facilities to be provided to international assisting actors?

This question focusses on whether or not legal facilities including tax exemptions, customs arrangements and registration of actors exist for the benefit of assisting actors. Regarding in-kind aid, the 'Declaration of Exigency' Order shared by the Ministry of Finance stated that for an initial period of up to 90 days, listed items would not attract customs duties or VAT if imported for the purposes of the response. These facilities were extended several times throughout the recovery process. The Order also removed several taxes and duties for humanitarian aid flights and indicated relief goods sent without a consignee would be deemed a 'Gift to the Government' and would be accepted and distributed by NEMA.

Whilst a good starting point, the *IDRL Checklist* recommends providing these facilities only to a select group of approved actors that provide quality assistance in line with humanitarian principles. The wholesale availability of these facilities to a wide range of actors likely created a relaxed regulatory environment which was a contributing factor for incidences of UBDs.

Question (6)

Do your country's laws and regulations set out quality standards for international assisting actors?

Except for limited specifications being shared as part of the NEMA/Ministry of Foreign Affairs Needs List published on September 4th, 2019, Key Informants were not aware of any minimum standards shared by national authorities which in-kind aid had to meet. There were no requirements around packaging or standardisation of items. NEMA respondents commented they were overwhelmed with UBDs and lacked the capacity to sort through all the miscellaneous, poorly packed items. There were also challenges in warehousing across all islands due to a lack of organisation, tracking and scarce warehousing space.

Question (7)

Do your country's laws and regulations set out eligibility requirements for international assisting actors to receive legal facilities?

The process to register as an assisting actor and to access financial facilities like import tax waivers are not set out in relevant disaster management legislation or supporting policy documents. Although Key Informants from NGOs and the private sector commented that the process to be able to take advantage of customs and VAT waivers was not hard to access or follow, despite some initial delays when the process was being instated. Separately, organisations wanting to provide relief and restoration efforts as part of the response had to apply to and be approved by NEMA to be registered as an NGO working on the response.³⁸ A list of approved domestic and international actors was published, but it is unclear the extent to which this was linked to the ability to access customs and VAT waivers.³⁹ Shipping companies were also able to apply to the Ministry of Finance to access exemptions and free shipping containers if importing relief aid to the affected islands.

Overall, the granting of legal facilities was not contingent upon meeting minimum quality standards in respect of in-kind aid and the process appears to have developed on an ad-hoc basis. A Key Informant from an import company commented that it would have been useful to have a specialised unit or 'One Stop Shop' to provide clarity, avoid miscommunications and expedite the clearance of in-kind aid. The idea of establishing a specialized unit for consolidating and expediting administrative arrangements concerning the entry of international disaster assistance, including goods and equipment is recommended under the *IDRL Checklist*.⁴⁰

³⁸ Russell, Stephen. Notice of Registered Partner Organizations, NEMA, 12 October 2019

³⁹ Russell, Stephen. List of Registered Partner Organizations, NEMA, 12 October 2019

⁴⁰ *IDRL Checklist*, Question 8, p. 17



Warehouse and volunteers in Nassau, Bahamas © Brad Zerivitz / IFRC

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING

The media's portrayal of a disaster plays a hugely significant role in framing the emergency needs. The way events are constructed in the media can amplify on the ground realities and create a social feedback loop. Herding behaviour, where individuals are influenced by others, can mean information about donations and needs are published and republished, leading to a reinforcing cycle which generates more and more support.⁴¹ Researchers also suggest that catastrophic events, where comprehensive and crippling impacts devastate an area, often lead to 'sustained world-wide attention' from the media. Hurricane Dorian falls into this catastrophic category and, whilst the media played an important role in disseminating relevant emergency information, it may have also contributed to a flow of supplies that was difficult to control.⁴²

Recognizing the multiplying effect that the media can have when it comes to the framing of emergency needs, it is thus critical that specific and accurate Needs Lists are communicated through them.

6.1 Current communications practices in the humanitarian sector

How humanitarian organisations communicate about unsolicited aid can similarly play a huge role in reducing or generating donations. The prevailing messaging, accepted and disseminated by many humanitarian organisations, centres around communicating that 'cash is best' – that is, financial donations are preferred to in-kind support. This messaging is positively framed to place focus on the benefits of cash rather than on the draw-backs of in-kind donations. Some of the most popular approaches include communicating that cash is a more efficient method of support as it avoids the logistical challenges and associated costs which come with sending physical aid. One Key Informant from a food-based NGO in The Bahamas mentioned that a key message for them centres around the fact that 25% of food donations can be lost during shipping, whereas a USD \$100 donation can be utilised entirely for the cause. Another common message is that cash donations to NGOs can be quickly invested into the local economy, helping businesses get back on their feet rather than being undercut by free shipments of aid. Other messaging underlines the speed and flexibility of cash donations in that they can reach beneficiaries quickly and empower people to direct their own recoveries.

A number of organisations are involved in trying to promote the 'cash is best' messaging around the world. In the Pacific, the Logistics Cluster – a co-ordination mechanism established by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and led by WFP – carried out a *#cashisbest* communications campaign throughout the Pacific Cyclone season in 2017-18. Working with NGOs, government and private sector partners, this social media-led campaign involved 187 communications activities and reached an estimated 4.9 million people.⁴³ WFP and the Logistics Cluster have also recently launched www.donateresponsibly.

⁴¹ Schweitzer, Frank., Mach, Robert. 2008. The Epidemics of Donations: Logistic Growth and Power-Laws." PLoS ONE 3(1).

⁴² Wachtendorf, Tricia., Brown, Bethany., Holguín-Veras, José. 2010. Catastrophe Characteristics and their Impact on Critical Supply Chains: Problematizing Materiel Convergence and Management Following Hurricane Katrina, University of Delaware and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

⁴³ Pacific Unsolicited Bilateral Donations Communications Project: 2017-18 Cyclone Season Activity Summary, Logistics Cluster, 2018

[org](#), a website dedicated to giving ‘people the facts and resources they need to decide what is the best way for them to donate responsibly and effectively.’ It is primarily directed towards Australians and New Zealanders and provides a creative and interactive approach to communicating about UBDs.⁴⁴

A major player in communicating about UBDs in the Americas is the Centre for International Disaster Information (CIDI), a branch of USAID which was established following Hurricane Gilbert in 1988 to ‘inform the public about the advantages of giving monetary donations to relief organizations and warn about the risks of donating unsolicited material goods.’⁴⁵ CIDI maintains a number of excellent resources on its website, including a Best Practices Toolkit containing guidelines, fact sheets and ready-made communications materials which can be adapted by organisations to suit their needs. One of their most popular resources is a Donations Calculator which compares the costs of shipping items from overseas against buying them locally, and CIDI even runs an annual ‘PSAid’ contest where students compete to design the most effective Public Service Announcement graphic or video on the theme of ‘cash is best’. Other guidance and resources can be found in the 2011 National Guidelines for Managing Donated Goods published by the Australian Government which contains a communications strategy covering before, during and after the event.⁴⁶ Other useful resources on communicating around UBDs come in the form of an ACFID brief containing key messages⁴⁷ and the OCHA Strategic Plan.

Additionally, the 2018 ACFID Study offers some insights into how the ‘cash is best’ messaging can be better communicated. The researchers found that simply saying ‘cash is best’ does not change existing beliefs because it does not explain why cash is best. The study found that public messaging needs to include new information that is binary in nature, meaning that it cannot be ‘interpreted in a way that can still support the false positive narrative that unrequested goods both reach and are useful to people affected by crises.’⁴⁸ After testing four messages with over 1,000 people in Australia, the message which resonated most was a communication that highlighted the fact that many shipped goods ended up in landfill. The results showed that the landfill messaging was more than twice as effective as the purely ‘cash is best’ messaging in decreasing the likelihood that respondents would donate goods in future (50.1% versus 23.4%).⁴⁹ This was the case because the new information told a better story as to why donating goods was problematic – the term ‘landfill’ was quickly recognised as an unambiguously negative outcome and people automatically visualised a mental picture of that landfill site, tapping into System 1 intuitivethinking.⁵⁰

6.2 Hurricane Dorian Communications

Key Informants widely commented that social media, TV news, media appearances, radio, WhatsApp and word of mouth were the most impactful in communicating, and generally the means by which they became aware of in-kind needs rather than through the official lists published through NEMA or other public authorities. Similarly, many organisations used feedback from within their own networks to decide what was needed, for example through church-church connections, NGO partners or individual friend or business connections.

The conclusions of the ACFID Behavioural Economics study, in particular the ‘landfill’ messaging, were tested with Key Informants. Whilst there was agreement that this messaging was likely to send a strong message, some suggested there would be a nervousness to use it due to the possibility of it generating bad press. An astute observation came in the idea that it is easier to take risks with more negative messaging when you are not the recipient of the aid yourself. Pointing to UBDs in landfill handled by other organisations or in abstraction, adds helpful distance to this messaging and should be borne in mind if using this approach. Similarly, many aid worker respondents expressed a discomfort when having

⁴⁴ www.donateresponsibly.org

⁴⁵ Centre for International Disaster Preparedness (CIDI) <https://www.cidi.org/about-usaid-cidi/>

⁴⁶ National guidelines for managing donated goods, Australian Government, August 2011

⁴⁷ Brief: Overseas Emergencies and Public Donations, ACFID, March 2015 https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/overseas-emergencies-and-public-donations.pdf

⁴⁸ ACFID, p.5

⁴⁹ *ibid*, p.15

⁵⁰ *ibid*, p.16

to refuse or dispose of donations for fear of offending or appearing ungrateful. This was often put down to the cultural specificities of a small island nation characterised by close-knit communities which places weight on supporting others. Consequently, it is unlikely that a recommendation to take a very hard stance, refusing all in-kind support, as has been attempted in responses in other regions, would be a successful communications approach.

Examining the communications activities of BRCS in a little more detail, like many organisations, BRCS certainly made use of a wide range of channels and networks to publicise messages on the best ways to support the response. Many media interviews with local, regional and international news stations took place which often ended with a space to give details on how to support BRCS. Messages were shared through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and supporters were encouraged to send financial donations or to provide needed in-kind items. Another innovative mechanism promoted by BRCS was the use of Amazon Wish Lists to contribute to the response. The Wish List was essentially a virtual shopping list comprising the registry of items that were needed as in-kind support. Persons were able to purchase those items online directly from Amazon, which would go towards the emergency response.

In contrast to NEMA, BRCS was typically dealing with donations of unsolicited aid from domestic sources (typically local residents and companies). Used clothing was the biggest UBD for BRCS and was never included on any needs lists. However, BRCS was hindered by the fact that the organisation does accept unsolicited aid during peacetime in their long-term social assistance programmes. Consequently, during the response, local residents associated BRCS with accepting unsolicited aid which undermined the communications activities soliciting only certain goods – that is, the messaging could not overcome pre-existing conceptions.

There were also a range of perspectives on whether UBDs had a net-negative or net-positive effect on the BRCS operation, leading to questions around the objective of the communications strategy. Whilst significant quantities of UBDs generated warehousing issues, some Key Informants were of the view that much of the donations, though unsolicited, still had an overall positive effect for BRCS. Nine out of ten times beneficiaries gave good feedback about the in-kind aid they received, and it provided a fantastic engagement opportunity for volunteers enlisted to help organise the aid.

Additionally, for BRCS, disposal of aid was seen as a last resort. Consequently, the preference was to communicate through networks and with partners to find a recipient for the unsolicited aid where possible. For example, BRCS worked with Water Mission to manage jerry cans, partnered with service organisations like Rotary, supported the Department of Social Services to assist those in storm shelters, and supplied bulk donations of food to local hospitals and restaurants. This resourcefulness is representative of the many formal and informal partnerships made between a great number of NGOs to manage in-kind aid during the response.



On the island of Grand Bahama, volunteers with the Bahamas Red Cross meals on wheels program deliver hot meals once a day to people impacted by COVID-19 and those impacted by Hurricane Dorian © American Red Cross

7. PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Disasters represent unique moments in time ‘in which the boundaries between organizational and collective behavior are blurred’.⁵¹ Put another way, in crisis environments the reactions of non-emergency response actors, like those in the private sector, loosely organised groups or members of the public can be just as significant as the actions of mandated humanitarian organisations. Many different actors develop formal and informal relationships to pursue common goals. This can produce substantial challenges in terms of management and co-ordination, but capacities can also be very much enhanced through the active involvement of these groups. The importance of broad collaboration and trust cannot be overemphasised when carrying out response operations.⁵²

Relevantly, Holguín-Veras et al compare the performance of different types of logistics operations following the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. The study differentiates between Agency Centric Efforts (ACE), which are foreign agencies utilising internal capacities, from Collaborative Aid Networks (CAN), which are local networks of groups and individuals, perhaps with religious or social connections, that are both impacted by the disaster and able to respond to it. The report concludes that in catastrophic disaster situations, the logistics of supplying in-kind aid to populations is made easier when Agency Centric Efforts are combined with ‘with large, resilient, and highly connected (internally and externally) pre-existing social networks.’ This permits the comparative strengths of both types of actors to be harnessed. ACEs can mobilise and transport supplies into a central hub, the least difficult link in the supply chain. Much more challenging is the local organisation and distribution of that aid, which takes up huge amounts of resources and time. CANs already have the legitimacy, connections and know-how to facilitate the faster distribution of aid and, with proper training and due diligence, can be an asset to established humanitarian actors.⁵³

7.1 Resources and impact

Many Key Informants noted the significant impact of the private sector and civil society groups on the overall response and in relation to in-kind aid specifically. Close-knit, well-connected and resourceful communities helped their fellow islanders in a spirit of loyalty and genuine warmth. As an example of the impact that these groups can have, in the first few days following the response, a number of individuals (which later became known as the Bahamas Strong Alliance) organically grouped together based out of Odyssey Aviation’s hangar at Nassau’s international airport. This group performed a wide range of functions and the hangar became a staging area and depository for hundreds of thousands of pounds of relief aid. In just the first two weeks of the response, Odyssey Aviation handled nearly 900 flight operations including 688 total landings by general aviation aircraft bringing in relief supplies

⁵¹ Kapucu, Naim. 2005. Interorganizational coordination in dynamic context: networks in emergency response management, *Connections* 26 (2), 33–48

⁵² *ibid*

⁵³ Holguín-Veras, Jose., Jaller, Miguel., Wachtendorf, Tricia. 2012. Comparative Performance of Alternative Humanitarian Logistic Structures after the Port-au-Prince Earthquake: ACEs, PIEs, and CANs. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 46(10): 1623-1640



Red Cross logistics delegates oversee the loading of food supplies and cooking kits on to a ship at the port in Nassau. This humanitarian relief was shipped to Abaco and Grand Bahama as part of the response to Hurricane Dorian. © Angela Hill/ IFRC

of more than 400,000 lbs (equivalent to 1,600 medium sized refrigerators). One local private charter carrier also completed over 280 round trip flights to Abaco alone.⁵⁴

Other examples of beneficial corporate involvement include a team of DHL logistics experts, organised through NEMA, who provided warehousing support to IFRC and WFP on a pro-bono basis. Rotary Clubs, many of whose members are business leaders, raised significant resources from clubs in Florida and Georgia. This was organised and distributed across affected islands by members of 14 Rotary Clubs in the Bahamas, coordinated via a Disaster Relief Committee. Shipping and customs companies also played a key facilitation role in the shipment of goods into the Bahamas and BRCS utilised strong links with customs clearance companies to facilitate the smooth import of aid.

Whilst private sector actors did achieve a lot during the response, coordination with public authorities was a weakness and a lack of communication meant groups worked in silos. Key Informants from Government highlighted the difficulty faced in trying to coordinate the plethora of actors. In Abaco, the uncontrolled airspace filled by dozens of private chartered aircraft entering an unsecured and damaged airport on a daily basis was chaotic and dangerous. On the other hand, some private sector Key Informants expressed the view that they did not trust the capacity of government authorities to respond effectively and felt they could act faster and more nimbly. This led to a lack of transparency with actors failing to take advantage of the comparative advantages of the other.

7.2 Involvement of multinationals and large corporations

Multi-national corporations play an increasing role in funding disaster responses today. Some go further, with companies like Amazon taking an active role in relief operations. In the Hurricane Dorian response, Amazon worked with the IFRC as an official partner and there were at least two other informal streams of engagement between Amazon and other parts of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This collaboration was primarily focussed on in-kind support, culminating in two relief flights from Florida arriving on 16th and 21st of September 2019.

Additionally, the use of Amazon Wish Lists as part of the response was viewed by many Key Informants as an excellent opportunity, yet a simple and effective way to harness the generosity of diaspora groups whose goodwill can be difficult to channel appropriately. Moreover, the huge range of items available on platforms like Amazon can permit culturally relevant items to be provided depending on each country or context.

Networking among large conglomerates also proved to have significant benefits. For example, an agreement between Amazon and Coca-Cola Bottling saved the IFRC an estimated USD 20,000 through providing approximately 20 trucks, forklifts and logistics equipment to unload the Amazon plane shipments. Coca-Cola also stored the goods for around 10 days free of charge.

Key Informants from several organisations expressed excitement about working with large corporates during the response and the potential benefits in exploring corporate advantages. However, as with any other great resource, such partnerships must be carefully coordinated between office and field teams, with clear identification and matching of needs. Otherwise, partnerships with large conglomerates run the risk of being a significant source of UBDs and can result in low-priority items being sent during the emergency phase or goods not meeting the minimum quality standards.

⁵⁴ Bahamas Strong Alliance, Hurricane Dorian, A private sector response through the lens of the first fourteen days, Bahamas Strong Alliance, 2020



Bahamas Red Cross volunteer cross checks information during a financial distribution at a destroyed school on Abaco Island.
© Angela Hill/ IFRC

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations outlined in this section were tested and evaluated during the investigation phase in interviews with Key Informants. Through this process, an initially long list was condensed into a shorter list of the most effective and achievable recommendations. These were endorsed by attendees of the virtual stakeholder workshop during the session itself as well as in a follow-up questionnaire.

8.1 The Policy Framework on UBDs

- The **National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan** should be updated and published on NEMA's website to better operationalise the DPRP 2006 around the process for welcoming offers of international assistance. In particular, clarity should be provided on which agency or department should have sole responsibility for developing and sharing of Needs Lists and how they should be shared. Given its mandate, this would most appropriately sit with NEMA and could benefit from the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to share through diplomatic channels.⁵⁵ The National Disaster and Preparedness and Response Plan should also be updated in alignment with CDEMA's Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) and should include the sharing of Needs Lists to CDEMA's established donor groups within the RRM. The key messages to be shared through official channels should flow from official Needs Lists and be approved by NEMA to maintain consistency in public communications and ensure talking-points reinforce, rather than undermine, approved Needs Lists.⁵⁶
- A **UBD policy** with a realistic chance of having a positive impact should be agreed. This could involve focussing on a cash is best approach (see messaging below) and only soliciting a limited and well-defined group of standard items which is in line with pre-positioned stocks that are likely to be needed in hurricane responses. It is recommended to avoid catch-all provisions which allow for the acceptance of items sent without a consignee or those which may be reasonably considered relief items. A timeframe for periodic review of the list (initially at least weekly) should be instated to ensure that Needs Lists accurately reflect the needs of the affected population as the emergency response evolves and needs change. Problematic items commonly received during the Dorian response (e.g. fresh food, poor quality clothing, medicines) may be expressly excluded. The policy may also recommend that donations should meet certain international standards of quality, alleviating perceived obligations to accept poor quality items. Sensitization of shipping companies and the aviation sector on the UBDs policy and the minimum standards to be adopted during an emergency response is also key to reducing the incidence of UBDs. Managing UBDs should be seen as an integral part of good preparedness planning and logistics staff and volunteers should be trained on their proper management.

⁵⁵ 24 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship, Good Humanitarian Donorship, June 2018

⁵⁶ In the USA, many NGOs are registered with the National VOAD (Voluntary Organisations Active in Disasters), a network which may be useful to engage with for directing UBD communications.

- Where **legal facilities** are offered to assisting actors, it is firstly recommended that these are published separately to the Needs Lists in order to avoid inconsistencies such as those created by the 'Declaration of Exigency' Order. Secondly, the process for accessing legal facilities such as the customs and VAT waivers should be based on well-defined eligibility criteria. This may include a demonstrated capacity to comply with domestic laws, compliance with humanitarian standards in disaster relief and fundamental humanitarian principles, possessing technical competencies in emergency operations and a genuine capacity for performing the type of work that is proposed to be carried out.⁵⁷ The list of approved organisations should be reviewed annually prior to the onset of the hurricane season. Whilst certain private sector organisations may comply with these requirements, a more efficient use of private sector resources could be to map capacities and resources needed to support the national response. For example, public-private partnerships could be agreed in certain key areas such as warehousing and logistics to build overall preparedness and fill gaps in national disaster response architecture.

8.2 Communications and messaging

- A clear and transparent **communications strategy** should be developed to inform all relevant groups on how best to assist the people and communities affected by disaster. This must recognise that UBDs need to be tackled through various communications channels, particularly through social media, and must be continually and consistently reinforced prior to and during disasters.⁵⁸ This strategy should harness the Communications Emergency Support Function in disaster preparedness to promote key messages across all islands. Representatives of key media companies should be brought to the table to share the communications approach and underscore the importance of proportionality in reporting on disasters. The aim of the communications strategy on reducing UBDs should be to:
 - o Encourage a cash is best approach (see below for best approaches at telling this story).
 - o Provide clear explanations of the problems caused by UBDs.
 - o Discourage UBDs in a sensitive and tactful way, changing attitudes but without offending or alienating donors.
 - o Provide alternative engagement opportunities for would-be donors.⁵⁹

Communications messaging tested with Key Informants which were deemed most applicable to The Bahamas include:

- Cash is best messaging resonated with many respondents when coupled with the justification that the local economy will be boosted through a cash injection.
 - o The NEMA website should be modernised to ensure financial donations can be processed directly through their webpage. This functionality currently does not exist and would simplify the process for donors wanting to follow 'cash is best' messaging.
- Emphasising the likelihood of wastage and spoilage if donations are shipped from overseas, whereas cash assistance can be fully utilised.
- Creating communications which illustrate the cost and time involved in managing the transport and subsequent distribution of donations from overseas sources, as donors generally do not consider this when donating.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ IDRL Checklist, Question 7 p.16

⁵⁸ Examples of templates and detailed guidance on creating social media content can be found in the [CIDI Toolkit](#), [APEC Communications Toolkit](#), [Donate Responsibly](#) and [Australian Government Guidelines](#).

⁵⁹ National guidelines for managing donated goods, Australian Government, August 2011

⁶⁰ [CIDI](#) and [Donate Responsibly](#) have donations calculators which calculate the difference in costs between buying locally and shipping from an external source.

- **Public Service Announcements (PSAs)** can be developed and displayed year-round. Creative engagements like the PSAid competition model administered by CIDI could be explored.

Whilst this study provides some cultural insights to messaging applicable to The Bahamas, it is limited in scope. A larger scale **communications study**, testing different messages with a representative sample of UBD donors across the Bahamas, USA and Caribbean would provide deeper understanding.



Supply chain delegate with the Red Cross logistics team, check the final documents as a truck load of food supplies and cooking kits is unloaded at the port in Nassau. This humanitarian relief was shipped to Abaco and Grand Bahama as part of the response to Hurricane Dorian, which hit the Bahamas. © Angela Hill / IFRC



A team of Red Cross delegates walks towards the base camp set up on the grounds of a destroyed school on Abaco Island.
© Angela Hill / IFRC

9. CONCLUSION

The response to Hurricane Dorian in 2019 was a clear example of the challenges faced by humanitarian operations as a result of an influx of UBDs. Grand Bahama received 100 containers worth of in-kind aid, 40% of which was unusable due to spoilage, and a neighbouring government sent 70 tonnes of kitchen sets, that were not needed by the affected population. Aside from causing congestion to the humanitarian supply-chain and not meeting the needs of affected persons, these goods were expensive to manage. As an example, one company's trucking costs for a year of transporting unsolicited aid between entry-points, warehouses and disposal sites were estimated to be between 12,000-15,000 USD. These costs had to be met by the Government of The Bahamas.

Highly motivated individuals, groups and companies, in particular in the USA, saw the devastation on social media and sprang into action. There was a surge of goodwill, and many people sought a simple and tangible way of responding. The images of devastation contributed to the idea that sending anything was better than nothing. This missed the nuance that the most populous island of The Bahamas was not directly affected and that many goods could, in fact, be supplied domestically. Additionally, Needs Lists shared by national authorities contained a wide array of goods with unspecified characteristics which were inconsistently communicated, setting a confusing picture for potential donors. The prosperity of The Bahamas, with well-connected and resourceful business leaders and second-home owners self-mobilising, also produced UBDs in substantial quantities.

To tackle these issues, it is recommended that government authorities define a comprehensive strategy for reducing and managing UBDs in advance of the next disaster. This report suggests developing a UBD policy which clarifies the development and communication of Needs Lists, reviews the conditions on which legal facilities are made available to assisting actors and focuses on sharing convincing 'cash is best' messaging. Culturally there is a reticence in The Bahamas to say 'no' to donations, which, for example, led to one organisation including unpopular food donations inside family parcels even though it was likely to be unwanted. UBD management must therefore be seen as an integral part of disaster planning and sensitive, positive messaging is likely to be the most effective and well-received approach. Specifically, 'cash is best' communications resonated most when coupled with stories which explain why this is the case – for example emphasising that cash can boost the local economy, highlighting the likelihood of wastage where in-kind aid is shipped from overseas and demonstrating the logistics challenges and costs of shipping.

Tools and resources on effective UBDs management can be accessed through CIDI and the Logistics Cluster with its Donate Responsibly initiative. organisations like GIVIT, an Australian non-profit which matches offers of in-kind aid to a live list of needs via a smart online platform, is bringing innovation to UBD management.⁶¹ At the regional level, CDEMA is already working with WFP in this area and is currently rolling out its Logistics and Relief Management Programme which includes a Donations Management

⁶¹ <https://www.givit.org.au/>

Policy.⁶² Additionally, BRCS can play a key role in this work, harnessing its position as an auxiliary to public authorities and IFRC's experience responding to disasters in the region and expertise with tools like the *IDRL Guidelines* can also be utilised.

As it relates to civil society and the private sector, there are many opportunities for collaboration in The Bahamas. The expansion of the ESF system across family islands can provide an opportunity to map capacities of NGOs and civil society organisations and build trust. In terms of the private sector, international conglomerates like Amazon will continue to play a role in future responses and in relation to in-kind aid, the humanitarian community can take advantage of significant logistics capacities whilst being careful to protect humanitarian principles and priorities. In The Bahamas, representatives from shipping, customs and aviation companies need to be more consistently brought into disaster planning processes.

Lastly, individuals, particularly Bahamians living in the USA, mobilised to support generously, something which should be expected and welcomed. As one respondent put it, 'diaspora groups are always going to be the most engaged, so it's about finding ways to collaborate, not ignore'. Ultimately, the sending of in-kind aid by any group is an expression of solidarity for the people suffering a terrible disaster. This feeling should not be discouraged, quite the contrary, it should be championed. However, the key is to ensure this goodwill is well directed and converted into response actions which will provide the best outcomes for affected people.



The Bahamas Red Cross continues to assist people as they return home and start the recovery process after Hurricane Dorian. During a distribution in Murphy Town, near Marsh Harbour on Abaco Island, residents were able to register with the Red Cross as well as receive items such as tarps, clean up kits, cooking supplies and heavy-duty garbage bags © Angela Hill/ IFRC

⁶² <https://www.cdema.org/news-centre/press-releases/2136-cdema-concludes-regional-logistics-and-relief-workshop-with-plans-for-national-policy>

10. REFERENCES

- 24 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship, Good Humanitarian Donorship, June 2018
- Agreement Establishing The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), CDEMA, 2008
- Boulet-Desbureau, Pierre. Unsolicited In-Kind Donations and Other Inappropriate Humanitarian Goods Strategic Plan, OCHA, May 2013
- Brief: Overseas Emergencies and Public Donations, ACFID, March 2015 https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/overseas-emergencies-and-public-donations.pdf
- Brown, Michelle. Plea for people to stop donating goods directly to 'overwhelmed' fire-affected communities, ABC Australia, 6 January 2020
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-07/unsolicited-donations-spark-problems-in-nsw-fire-affected-areas/11848180?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web
- Caribbean Disaster Management Agency (CDEMA) The Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) Booklet, CDEMA, 2016
- Centre for International Disaster Preparedness (CIDI) <https://www.cidi.org/about-usaid-cidi/>
- Disaster Preparedness and Response Act 2006, Government of The Bahamas, (No. 4 of 2006)
- Disaster Reconstruction Authority Act 2019, Government of The Bahamas, 29 November 2019
- Flint, Josie., Henty, Pip., Hurley, Brendan. The cost of good intentions in the Australian Bushfires – perspectives from the international humanitarian sector, Blog, 8 February 2020 <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/the-cost-of-good-intentions-in-the-australian-bushfires-perspectives-from-the-international-humanitarian-sector/>
- Holguin-Veras, Jose., Jaller, Miguel., Van Wassenhove, Luk N., Perez, Noel., Wachtendorf, Tricia. Material Convergence: An important and Understudied Disaster Phenomenon, Natural Hazards Review, 4 January 2012
- Holguín-Veras, Jose., Jaller, Miguel., Wachtendorf, Tricia. 2012. Comparative Performance of Alternative Humanitarian Logistic Structures after the Port-au-Prince Earthquake: ACEs, PIEs, and CANs. Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice 46(10): 1623-1640
- Hurricane Dorian, A private sector response through the lens of the first fourteen days, Bahamas Strong Alliance, 2020

Introduction to the Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance (IDRL), IFRC, 2017

Kahneman, Daniel. Thinking, Fast and Slow, 2011

Kapucu, Naim. 2005. Interorganizational coordination in dynamic context: networks in emergency response management, *Connections* 26 (2), 33–48

Logistics Sitrep Dominica Hurricane Relief Operation, IFRC, December 2017

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Preliminary Needs List, Government of The Bahamas, 04 September 2019

NEMA update: Death Toll Rises to 74 post-Hurricane Dorian, The Government of the Bahamas, February 28 2020

National guidelines for managing donated goods, Australian Government, August 2011

Newsweek, \$75 Million of Stuff, February 2002

<https://www.newsweek.com/75-million-stuff-148091>

Osman, Moustafa. In-kind donations: who benefits? *Humanitarian Exchange*, Number 49, January 2011

Ovalle, Víctor. Cruz Roja 'inundada' de donaciones absurdas, *El Herald*, 2011 <https://www.elheraldo.co/local/cruz-roja-inundada-de-donaciones-absurdas>

Pacific Unsolicited Bilateral Donations Communications Project: 2017-18 Cyclone Season Activity Summary, Logistics Cluster, 2018

Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance, International Federation of the Red Cross, 2013

Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy & Results Framework Summary 2014 – 2024, CDEMA, 2014

Russell, Stephen. List of Registered Partner Organizations, NEMA, 12 October 2019

Russell, Stephen. Notice of Registered Partner Organizations, NEMA, 12 October 2019

Saber Donar, Afiche #5, 2011. <http://www.saberdonar.info/materiales/Afiche05.pdf>

Schweitzer, Frank., Mach, Robert. 2008. The Epidemics of Donations: Logistic Growth and Power-Laws." *PLoS ONE* 3(1).

The Checklist on the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (The 'IDRL' Checklist), IFRC, November 2017

The Real Story Ends in Landfill, Australian Council for International Development and the Behavioural Architects, 2018

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Assessment of the effects and impacts of Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas, 2020

Unsolicited Bilateral Donations Pacific Project, Logistics Cluster, 2017

Wachtendorf, Tricia., Brown, Bethany., Holguín-Veras, José. 2010. Catastrophe Characteristics and their Impact on Critical Supply Chains: Problematizing Materiel Convergence and Management Following Hurricane Katrina, University of Delaware and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Young, Anna. The Challenges of Unsolicited Bilateral Donations in Pacific Humanitarian Responses, Australian Red Cross, December 2016

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

Follow us:

www.ifrc.org | twitter.com/ifrc | facebook.com/ifrc | instagram.com/ifrc | youtube.com/user/ifrc | tiktok.com/@ifrc