



Palestinians inspect the damage following an Israeli airstrike on the El-Remal area in Gaza City
Photo credit: Wikimedia

We are pleased to bring you the eighth issue of Beyond Relief!.

In our **Feature Article**, Ms Jenny Torner discusses the need for responsible humanitarian logistics in the South Pacific Islands.

This issue's **On the Ground** features some of the relief and fundraising efforts that Singaporean humanitarian organisations - Singapore Red Cross, World Vision - have undertaken as part of their response to humanitarian crises such as the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the earthquakes in Herat, Afghanistan. It also features initiatives and projects our members have been a part of over the past year.

Our members from the academic community have also been keeping themselves busy. This issue includes several reports and journal articles, covering a diverse range of topics including displacement, climate security and post-disaster activities.

In the Spotlight features ongoing humanitarian campaigns by World Vision International.

Finally, we welcome your ideas, feedback and input and look forward to supporting joint efforts in research, networking and knowledge sharing. Do get in touch with either Nanthini (isnanthini@ntu.edu.sg) or Al (iscook@ntu.edu.sg).



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CHAMPIONING INTENTIONAL AND RESPONSIBLE HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS

By Jenny Torner

Humanitarian Programs Manager, Asia & the Pacific - Airlink

On March 13, 2015, Cyclone Pam made landfall on Efate, Vanuatu's most populous island. In the days and weeks that followed, in-kind donations came in from around the globe, including 70 shipping containers of unrequested goods. The contents of these shipments were often poorly labeled and packaged, and more than 440 tons of such supplies were left uncollected at the port. Ultimately, it cost the Government of Vanuatu more than 2.5 million USD to store and eventually destroy these goods.

Island nations, particularly in the South Pacific, face some of the highest impacts from disasters and climate change, making it vital for the humanitarian community to understand how to support these communities properly.

So, let's talk logistics.

Here are a few key points on how to implement this.

Local leadership and local implementation

This first point should not come as a surprise to anyone who has been around the sector in the last few years - local leadership.

Local leadership and local implementation are essential for understanding the actual on-the-ground needs of communities affected by disasters and how to distribute relief items appropriately. There are limited storage options on islands, so everything that is sent that is not needed is taking away space that could be used for critical items. Ensure you are only sending items requested by local partners and local governments with distribution plans already in place. Always check if needs have been met before responding to what may be an outdated request for aid.

Understand the landscape and capabilities for local procurement

Island nations may have less capacity for local procurement than other countries, but that doesn't mean this option should be discounted. People often forget local vendors are not only victims of disasters but also first responders, as they are already on the ground with supplies.

Supporting local businesses, farmers, service



Relief Supplies used during Cyclone Winston
Photo credit: Wikimedia

providers, and craftspeople where possible not only revives the local economy but also ensures the items you are distributing are culturally appropriate for that community.

Consider the prepositioning of relief supplies where possible. Transportation between and within the Pacific Islands is slow. There are limited air freight options, and sea freight is not as timely - and both are costly. Creating local partnerships ahead of a disaster allows for the potential for the prepositioning of supplies, which alleviates some of the rush to move items in the immediate aftermath of a crisis.

Educating your network

Those in the humanitarian field must continue to educate donors, organizations, and individuals on the importance of and consequences of not ensuring the right aid is sent at the right time and appropriately distributed. Cash is king and should always be the first option for anyone looking to assist - especially for local organisations.

There are already local organisations spearheading solutions to many of these challenges. For example, the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO) has launched the Facility Aiding Locally-led Engagement (FALE) program, which creates hubs throughout the Pacific Island nations to pre-stage disaster response materials managed by local non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Another local NGO, Respond Global, manages a response vessel that provides last-mile

support throughout the islands of Vanuatu, transporting aid materials and medical supplies and trained providers in solar energy, telecommunications, and health care.

It is a natural instinct for humans to want to help one another in the wake of a crisis and humanitarians are no exception. However, good intentions do not always lead to good outcomes. In fact, in a world facing disasters of increasing frequency and intensity, it is critical that the humanitarian sector plays its part in responsible and intentional emergency response - and guides the public to do the same.

Airlink leverages private sector partnerships to provide a network of 200+ worldwide humanitarian response NGOs with cargo and personnel deployment assistance. Airlink has provided logistics support and solutions for locally-led disaster response and recovery programs in Vanuatu, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Guam, and Hawai'i. In 2023, Airlink's responses in Asia & the Pacific supported 38 NGOs in 13 countries, deploying 168 trained responders and delivering 75 metric tons of aid. If you would like to be part of a responsible humanitarian response, please contact Jennifer Torner, Humanitarian Programs Manager for Asia and the Pacific: jtorner@airlinkflight.org and Claire Leow, Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, claireleow@airlinkflight.org.

ON THE GROUND

World Vision's Emergency Response to Earthquakes in Herat, Afghanistan

Communities in western Afghanistan were affected by a series of earthquakes that began on 7 October 2023. The largest, at a magnitude of 6.3, had its epicentre less than 25 miles from Herat City. An estimated 275,000 people, 60% of them children, were affected in more than 380 villages. Among the dead and injured, 60–70% were estimated to be women and children. Over 21,500 homes were completely destroyed due to the earthquakes, resulting in significant displacements. Prior to the earthquakes, over 29.2 million Afghans had already been in need of humanitarian assistance due to climate change-related shocks, such as drought, and a struggling economy after decades of conflict and political instability.

World Vision launched an emergency appeal to provide earthquake-affected communities with life-saving services. World Vision's Rapid Response Operation prioritised exigencies pertaining to maternal and child health and nutrition, psychosocial and child protection



Herat Earthquake of 2023: Ruins from an area of Zende Jan Town
Photo credit: Wikimedia

vulnerabilities, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene. With the support of local and international donors, World Vision has been able to help over 59,000 individuals as of early December 2023. This includes the provision of essential non-food items (such as blankets and clothing), hygiene kits, maternity services for pregnant women, treatment for malnourished children, outpatient medical care, psychosocial support services, and multi-purpose cash assistance. World Vision

also established Child Friendly Spaces and child protection help desks to receive and monitor unaccompanied children who had been separated from their families or whose caregivers had died during the earthquakes.

Click [here](#) to watch the story of one child survivor.

Contributed by World Vision International (Singapore)

Singapore Red Cross Supports Relief Efforts for Affected Communities in Gaza

In response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, the Singapore Red Cross (SRC) is sending USD 200,000 worth of relief supplies to provide crucial assistance to the affected. This tranche of support will primarily comprise essential items to address basic and critical needs, including medical supplies such as medication, medical consumables and equipment, wheelchairs, as well as hygiene kits, clean water, and vital food provisions.

SRC has been working closely with the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC), which has been pivotal in coordinating numerous humanitarian aid into Gaza through the Rafah Border Crossing and is ramping up its efforts to channel in more humanitarian assistance. Last week, SRC deployed one of its staff members to Cairo, Egypt. Working with ERC, he is tasked with helping to identify the immediate and critical needs in Gaza and to facilitate the delivery of relief supplies to Gaza in the coming days.

"We are deeply concerned about the suffering and anguish experienced by the people in Gaza. Families, children, women and the elderly are enduring unimaginable hardships. Many have to walk for kilometres



Photo by Singapore Red Cross

to reach safe areas, often with no access to shelter, water, or the most basic necessities. Damaged infrastructure, the lack of information, and communication paralysis exacerbate the crisis, leaving people disconnected from the outside world," said Mr Benjamin William, Secretary General/CEO of the Singapore Red Cross.

"We continue to urge all parties involved to uphold their responsibilities as outlined in international humanitarian law, and prioritise the protection of civilians. It is important that

civilian lives are protected, as well as hospitals, doctors, nurses and humanitarian workers. It is essential that all parties recognise and enable unhindered critical humanitarian aid into Gaza for all the affected communities, including those who have been displaced."

In the Palestinian Territories, the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has significantly deteriorated, with limited humanitarian aid reaching affected communities. Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) teams are working diligently under challenging conditions to

deliver emergency assistance, including ambulance and healthcare services.

Meanwhile, there are severe shortages of essential necessities, such as fuel, water, and food, while medical supplies are depleting rapidly. While some humanitarian aid has arrived in Gaza, with support from the Egyptian Red Crescent and Palestine Red

Crescent Society, it remains insufficient to meet the extensive needs.

Earlier on 16 October, SRC had launched its public fundraising appeal for the relief and recovery efforts of our Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Partners who have been on the ground responding to the immediate needs of civilians affected by the crisis. The

SRC continues to be in close contact with our Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Partners and stands ready to deliver humanitarian assistance to communities with the most pressing needs.

Contributed by Singapore Red Cross

Asia and the Pacific Regional Logistics Training Workshop

In accordance with the Airlink Regional Response Framework, this event brought together regional players from NGOs, coordinating agencies, and airlines to enable Airlink to hear local and regional actors in the field of humanitarian aid response working in Asia and the Pacific. NGOs that have experience responding to disasters in the region also joined to share their valuable insights.

The training event provided a high level of engagement, both planned and unplanned, as our Airlink NGO partners held informal meetings to share ideas. This had the benefit of strengthening the Airlink network within the region, which features remote communities in hard-to-reach archipelagoes and raising Airlink's credibility and profile. The event also shed light on available resources and approaches in the Philippines, one of Airlink's priority countries for 2023.

The event yielded valuable connections and learnings, which provide some insightful calls to action outlined below: better information sharing through communication and technology platforms to overcome time



Photo by Airlink (Asia-Pacific)

differences and information gaps; sharing of network resources to avoid duplication; better contextualization of local laws and regulations, cultural context and government regulations by leaning on local partners and regional networks. Many partners also saw Airlink not just as a provider of air transport and logistics solutions but also as a coordinating agency with the ability to educate and disseminate information critical

to effective response, including the key 10-point guide.

Contributed by Airlink (Asia-Pacific)

Executive Course for Evaluation Leaders

One of the most challenging aspects of program management and public policy is to evaluate the results and longer term impacts. For the last two years, as part of a global effort towards fostering a culture of evaluation, Dr Caroline Brassard and Dr Marina Kaneti and others have been collaborating with UNICEF and the executive education team at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy on developing government officials capacities and fostering conducive environments for policy and program evaluations globally. So far, 58 country delegations representing 45 countries have participated in the two-week programme, for a total of nearly 120 participants. For more information please contact Caroline at: sppcaro@nus.edu.sg



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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

News Articles, Commentaries and Reports

Navigating the Climate Emergency: The Crucial Role of Adaptive Decision Support Systems in ASEAN's Disaster Management

Keith Paolo Catibog Landicho
IDSS Paper
18 October 2023

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Rising Storms: Climate Impacts on Conflict, Community Tensions, and Hunger

World Vision International
November 2023

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Partnerships in disaster relief – What is Southeast Asia Expecting?

Lina Gong
The Korean Times
22 November 2023

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Elevating Regional Status Through Disaster Relief: China's Approach and Challenges

Lina Gong
Centre of Asia and Globalisation
29 November 2023

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Climate Change and Its Impact on Peace and Security in Southeast Asia

Mely Caballero-Anthony, Julius Cesar Trajano, Alistair D. B. Cook, Nanthini D/O T Sambanthan, Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros, Keith Paolo Landicho, and Danielle Lynn Goh
Policy Report
January 2024

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2023 In Review: Airlink in Asia and the Pacific

Airlink
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Journal Articles / Chapters

"Status-seeking through Disaster Relief Cooperation: China and India in Southeast Asia" in Contemporary Southeast Asia, Vol.45, No. 2, 2023, pp. 246-281

Lina Gong, and Dhanasree Jayaram

Click [here](#) to read more.

"What can AI see? The image of the 'migrant' in the era of AI post-visualization" in Journal of Global Ethics, Vol 19, No. 3, pp 307-322

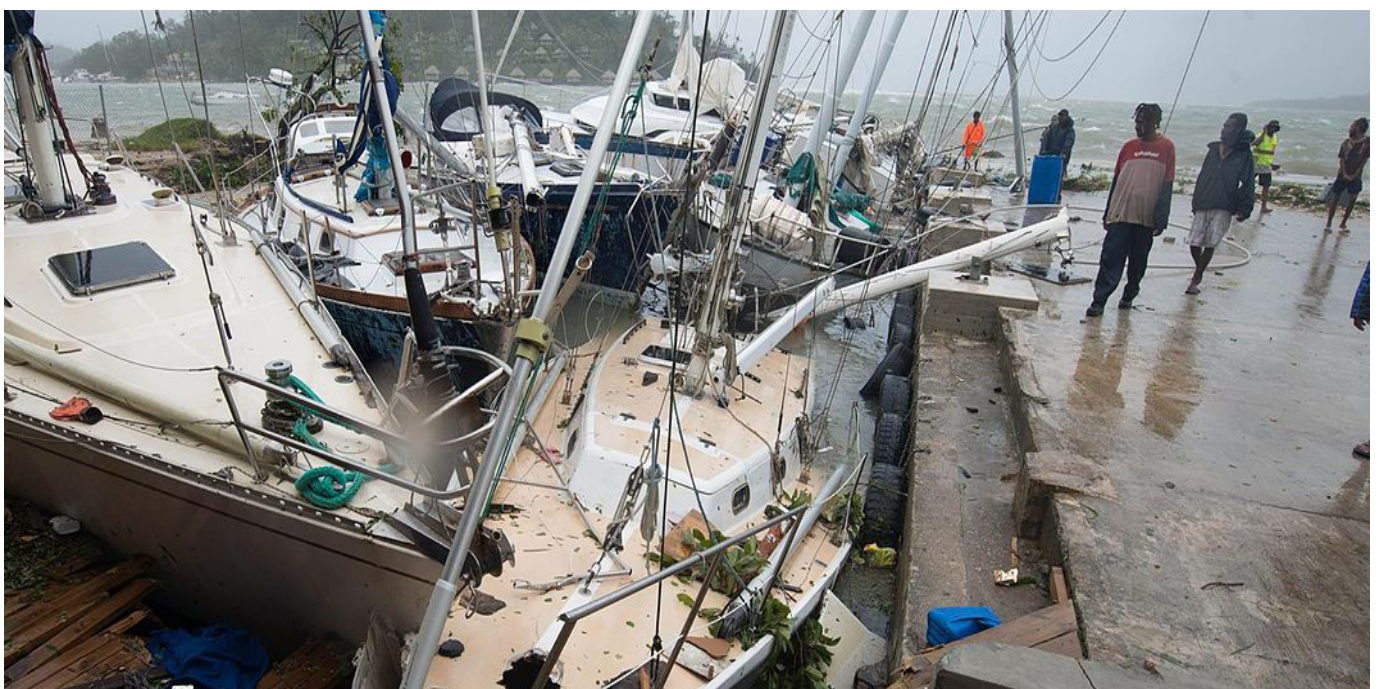
Marina Kaneti

Click [here](#) to read more.

International Humanitarianism in East Asia in S. Roth, B. Purkayastha and T. Denskus (eds) , Handbook on Humanitarianism and Inequality. UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2024, pp. 411 - 425

Alistair D. B. Cook, Lina Gong, and Oscar Gómez

Click [here](#) to read more.



Destruction after Cyclone Pam
Photo credit: Wikimedia

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Photo by World Vision International (Singapore)

World Vision's Global Hunger Response

Tens of millions of children and their families around the world are currently confronted with the real-life impacts of acute hunger, including starvation and other long-term health issues. In 2021, World Vision launched Phase 1 of a Global Hunger Response to respond to the needs of over 25 million of the most vulnerable people, including more than 14 million children, facing unprecedented hunger in 28 countries.

Tragically, global acute food insecurity continues to be aggravated by multiple issues, including conflict and organised violence, the rising cost of living, and both rapid-onset and slow-onset disasters driven

by climate change, all of which are further exacerbated by the uneven socio-economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Protracted armed conflict and violence continues to affect the largest proportion of people experiencing acute hunger. The number of countries experiencing the most severe levels of food insecurity (IPC 4+) has grown to 58 countries in 2023, up from 53 in 2021. These rapidly escalating humanitarian needs have meant that families are being forced to make difficult and dangerous choices that have far-reaching consequences on children's immediate and long-term well-being. The effects include rising levels of acute malnutrition, begging, child labour, dropping out of school, neglect and domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and child marriage.

For these reasons, World Vision has announced Phase II of the Global Hunger Response alongside the organisation's global hunger and malnutrition campaign, ENOUGH. During Phase II, which runs through September 2025, World Vision aims to reach 30 million of the most vulnerable people experiencing hunger and the threat of famine in 28 countries, with a focus on providing integrated solutions across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to sustainably address the drivers of food insecurity and acute malnutrition.

More details are available [here](#).