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Promoting Appropriate Donations in APEC - Communications Toolkit

Submitted by: United States



**Workshop on Operationalizing APEC Guidelines
on Appropriate Donations – Best Practice
Approaches and Strategies
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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PROMOTING APPROPRIATE DONATIONS IN APEC

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

October 2016

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PROMOTING APPROPRIATE DONATIONS IN APEC

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DISCLAIMER

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INTRODUCTION

When natural disasters strike—close to home or across an ocean, in an APEC economy or in another corner of the globe—compassionate people are driven to help. However, well-meaning donations frequently go to waste because they do not meet the actual needs of disaster survivors and instead create disruptions in the flow of needed goods and services to affected areas. Without well-executed outreach efforts clarifying what types of donations are most effective in disaster situations, receiving communities who are already struggling to address catastrophic situations must also address an influx of unrequested, unneeded goods and often bear the costs of disposing of spoiled, expired, or inappropriate items.



*Photo of donations following Hurricane Katrina, April 9, 2004
Credit: Barret Anspach*

Public donations in support of disaster relief usually take one of three forms: monetary (cash) donations to relief organizations working in the disaster-affected area, unsolicited material donations, or offers of volunteer assistance. Monetary donations are always the most effective because they allow relief organizations and government agencies to respond to urgent needs, can facilitate programs that material donations cannot (such as search and rescue operations), and enable the local purchase of supplies that are culturally appropriate and which help the local economy to recover. Unsolicited material donations—including used clothing, food, bottled water, and other household items—are most often unsuitable for disaster operations. Volunteers who work through established disaster response organizations provide needed expertise; however, those who arrive without previous coordination create problems for professional responders.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC MESSAGING CAMPAIGNS

Public education campaigns that encourage monetary support and discourage unsolicited material donations reduce the volume of inappropriate items sent to disaster sites. Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the international community did not conduct a widespread public communications campaign emphasizing the preference for monetary donations. As a result, the primary operational port in Haiti quickly filled with unsolicited goods, forcing international donors and the Haitian government to receive emergency supplies in the Dominican Republic and incur additional expenses to drive them over land into Haiti.

In contrast, the response to Typhoon Haiyan (known as Yolanda in the Philippines) in 2013 featured active public information campaigns and coordinated messaging emphasizing that “cash is best.”

USAID Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) began a public messaging campaign on donations before Haiyan made landfall, and coordinated with the Ad Council (a nongovernmental organization [NGO] based in the United States that promotes outreach campaigns that improve everyday lives) on a public service announcement (PSA) campaign with “cash-is-best” messaging after the typhoon struck. As a result, USAID’s staff reported that while some unsolicited donations were received from the United States, it was a manageable amount. Based on this experience, there appears to be a plausible association between unified messaging from trusted sources and a reduction in unusable donations.

APEC COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE APPROPRIATE DONATIONS

In 2011, APEC disaster officials committed to “educate the public, business, and government leaders on best practices for effective and appropriate donations to minimize the disruptions that unsolicited donations can have on disaster response efforts” at the High Level Policy Dialogue on Disaster Resiliency. In the 2014 Leaders’ Declaration, APEC leaders encouraged “...further cooperation of member economies in disaster preparedness, risk reduction, response and post-disaster recovery, and cooperation in search and rescue, including through more robust networking among disaster management departments.” In 2014, the Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG) endorsed the *APEC Guidelines for Appropriate Donations in Times of Disaster*, which stress four principles:

- Monetary contributions to established relief agencies or formal disaster appeals are always the most productive public response to disasters;
- Before items other than cash are collected, donors should confirm that there is a need;
- Transportation is expensive and requires preplanning; and
- Public volunteer opportunities are extremely limited and therefore those looking to volunteer should closely coordinate with relief agencies assisting with the response.



Graphic showing the bottleneck that can result from donations of unsolicited material goods following a disaster.

The endorsement of the *Guidelines* was only the first step. The US-APEC Technical Assistance to Advance Regional Integration (US-ATAARI) project worked with the EPWG to develop a set of case studies as well as this communications toolkit to promote best practices in conducting outreach on appropriate donations across the APEC region.

APPROPRIATE DONATIONS CASE STUDIES

“Promoting Appropriate Donations in APEC: Case Studies and Lessons Learned from Across the APEC Region,” was developed to inform and supplement this communications toolkit. US-ATAARI worked with counterparts in four APEC economies—China, the Philippines, Mexico, and the United States—to develop case studies about their experiences and approaches to communications strategies and public messaging on appropriate donations. These case studies share knowledge and provide practical examples of how different economies have approached this issue, e.g., through development of policy, implementation of communications campaigns, and use of cash transfer disaster relief at the community level. The case studies also identified a number of key themes and best practices consistent across the four economies, such as the need to have communications tools available before a disaster strikes and to use a range of media outlets to communicate regarding appropriate donations.

ORIGIN OF THE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

This communications toolkit is a means of operationalizing the *APEC Guidelines for Appropriate Donations in Times of Disaster* and promoting appropriate donations across the APEC region. The toolkit is informed by input gathered through the case studies, as described above, and draws from the useful communications resources developed by USAID through the CIDI Smart Compassion Toolkit and the Ad Council Toolkit, as well as other disaster relief communications initiatives. The CIDI Web site, available at www.cidi.org, hosts a number of tools and templates that are complementary to those included in this toolkit. An image of the Web site for the CIDI toolkits is shown below.

SMART COMPASSION TOOLKIT



Credit: Center for International Disaster Information

The APEC Appropriate Donations Communications Toolkit builds off these efforts. The outreach strategies and messaging tips and tools included in this toolkit are designed to help the user clearly communicate the benefits of monetary contributions in the wake of a disaster, and educate potential donors that monetary donations of any size can make a big difference in the relief effort.

STRUCTURE OF THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit contains tips on how to communicate effectively with the media and a range of audiences as well as customizable tools that can be modified with details for a specific:

- Situation
- Disaster
- Target audience
- Region

The toolkit provides guidance on a range of practical issues on how to conduct media outreach and develop an appropriate donations communications strategy, how to leverage social media in your outreach, and techniques for working with local media to release PSAs. The toolkit also includes customizable outreach materials (fact sheets, outreach emails, radio PSAs, letters to the editor, reports, and visual resources) that organizations and government agencies can use during and after disasters that emphasize the benefits of monetary contributions—and instructions on how to use them. In the aftermath of a disaster it is crucial to provide the public and the media with clear and consistent research-based messages.

01 HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Congratulations for taking the first step in implementing a communications strategy on promoting appropriate donations in the wake of disasters! This APEC Appropriate Donations Communications Toolkit is designed to help your organization or government agency raise public awareness on appropriate donations through publicity and media coverage. The toolkit includes background information, key messages, frequently asked questions, a guide to traditional and social media outreach, fill-in-the-blank media materials, customizable Web site banner ads and printable posters, social media visual materials, and other tools. These materials are intended to save you time and make your outreach easier before, during, and after a disaster strikes.



These materials emphasize that monetary donations:

- Can be stretched further when spent locally by disaster relief organizations with bulk purchasing power;
- Can be used to purchase the materials that are most urgently needed and most appropriate;
- Allow for flexibility and can be used to respond to changing needs as people migrate to safety or resettle;
- Can be used to meet immediate needs, and prepare the way for long-term recovery; and
- Are easy, effective, and versatile.

If you will be creating unique materials to encourage potential donors to provide monetary donations in the wake of a disaster, it will be important to communicate these benefits to the public.

As you customize the materials and/or develop other outreach pieces, please refer to the various media tips included in the toolkit.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT MATERIALS

LIST OF TOOLS IN THE TOOLKIT

DEVELOP AN APPROPRIATE DONATIONS COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

HOW TO USE TOOLKIT MATERIALS

The toolkit contains customizable outreach materials to use during and after disasters that emphasize the benefits of monetary contributions—with instructions on how to use them. Relief organizations and government agencies can also develop their own outreach materials based on the guidance provided in the toolkit on how best to frame disaster relief messaging that is focused on the need for monetary donations.

- Materials including sample news releases, emails, PSAs, and social media posts on effective giving are provided in this communications toolkit and can be customized and deployed in the aftermath of a disaster.
- To use the customizable materials in the toolbox, you must add your organization or agency’s specific information such as call to action, URL, and clear directions on where to send monetary donations. You may choose to include information that describes the disaster and explains how your organization is bringing relief to survivors.
- Step-by-step instructions on how to customize the materials are provided in the toolkit.

LIST OF TOOLS IN THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit includes two main sections, the main body of the report, which provides tips and suggestions on how to implement an appropriate donations communications campaign, and a set of customizable tools and templates to be used in the course of such a campaign. The main body of the report includes the following sections:

- 01 How to Use this Toolkit (this section)
- 02 Media Outreach and Promotion Overview and Tips
- 03 Social Media Tips
- 04 Tips for Sharing Public Service Announcements with Local Media
- 05 Frequently Asked Questions
- 06 Glossary

The customizable tools in annex to this report include:

- 07T Fact Sheet
- 08T Media Outreach Email Template and Instructions
- 09T Organization Outreach Email Template and Instructions
- 10T Radio PSA Scripts and Instructions
- 11T Media Advisory Template and Instructions
- 12T Letter to the Editor Template and Instructions
- 13T Reporting-Out Template (template to provide snapshot on use of funds)
- 14T Visual Resources and Instructions

Please note that the items marked with a “T” are customizable templates.

DEVELOP AN APPROPRIATE DONATIONS COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The materials in this toolkit, and other resources you can find on the Internet and elsewhere, are only as good as the processes you have in place before a disaster strikes. Raising awareness of the importance of disaster relief appropriate donations and getting the media to cover your donation appeals—in your region and more broadly—requires a good strategy. This appropriate donations communications strategy need not be elaborate but the strategy should correspond with your community and/or economy's general disaster relief planning efforts and should establish:

- **Objectives:** Set objectives that ensure your communications strategy is aligned with your organizational objectives (i.e., how are communications efforts going to help you ensure the majority of donations are monetary rather than commodities?).
- **Audiences:** Identify those audiences with whom you need to communicate to achieve your objectives.
- **Messages:** Once audiences are identified and understood, develop messages that resonate with those audiences and move the objectives forward. Strategic targeting and consistency are essential. Remember that communications is about storytelling.
- **Channels and messengers:** How will the messages be delivered and who will deliver them?
- **Timeline:** When will the messages be developed and delivered?
- **Methods and materials:** What are the means by which the messages will be delivered (printed materials such as posters? printed news articles? online social media? word of mouth?)?
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Data collected before, during, and after the implementation process can be used to monitor and evaluate the success of the communication activities, which in turn can be used to fine-tune and revise the messages, methods, or materials as needed.

Consider including the tasks on the checklist below in building your strategy and use the resources in the toolkit to help you implement the strategy.

Communications Strategy Checklist

Before

- ✓ Develop and maintain relationships with local TV and radio stations and newspapers (and develop a list of media outlets and reporters you could contact before and after a disaster).
- ✓ Develop and maintain relationships with non-profit international disaster relief organizations.
- ✓ Ensure that disaster response plans include both internal and external communications.
- ✓ Ensure that disaster response communications plans encourage appropriate donations.
- ✓ Clearly define roles and responsibilities (both internally and with regard to communicating with media, partners, NGOs).
- ✓ Know where to direct people to make monetary donations (i.e., which NGOs, which branch of government) to the extent possible.
- ✓ Decide on and set up social media hashtags, handles, site names, etc. to the extent possible.
- ✓ Create all other outreach materials and have on hand and ready to go (with minor edits) when disaster strikes.
- ✓ Decide on a set of metrics to assess success (see suggestions below).
- ✓ Build trust with constituents.

During

- ✓ Confirm roles, responsibilities, plans.
- ✓ Confirm protocols with media and disaster relief partners.
- ✓ Update local/designated Web sites with correct information.
- ✓ Customize the PSAs, press releases, Web banners, social media posts, etc.—and distribute!
- ✓ Continue to blog/post regularly to keep messages current and targeted.
- ✓ Share statistics describing the disaster.
- ✓ Refer to and focus on research-based messaging re: monetary donations.
- ✓ Dispel/counter “misinformation” that may be circulating.

After

- ✓ Track social media using “social listening” tools.
- ✓ Aspire for transparency re: monetary donations.
- ✓ Post information detailing the quantity of monetary donations received and how it was spent.
- ✓ Conduct a debrief and share lessons learned with others.
- ✓ Collect other data/metrics to evaluate what was successful and what was not.

HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

In order to evaluate the success of disaster relief donations communications efforts, information should be gathered during the crisis and used to evaluate how well the outreach accomplished the stated objectives—and if the desired outcomes were achieved. Evaluation should be an embedded part of communications efforts, rather than undertaken as an afterthought, and can help recalibrate plans as needed during the crisis. This evaluation can identify lessons learned that can improve protocols and processes for the next crisis, and be shared with communities so they may benefit as well.

Consider tracking the effectiveness of your outreach efforts using the following metrics:

- Donations: Shift in the proportion of goods donations in the aftermath of disasters, in relation to monetary donations.
- Social media “hits”: Facebook: number of likes, friends, post views, post likes and comments; Twitter: Follower growth, audience reach, retweets and mentions, hash tag use.
- Press coverage partner/member communications: Number of constituents that received outreach letters and/or that received/opened outreach email.
- Web site traffic: Visits to the organization URL included in all of the outreach materials.
- Radio: Number of placements, monetary value of placements, impressions.
- Web banners: Monetary value of placements, impressions, click-through rate if available from site.
- Poster placements and potential viewers.

It is also important to gather data on collected donations and how they were used to enable agencies and disaster relief organizations to be as transparent as possible with donors and to the public. Customize the [I3T Reporting-Out Template](#) to help assemble information describing donations collected and how the donations were used and other metrics relevant to your situation and/or organization.

02 MEDIA OUTREACH AND PROMOTION OVERVIEW AND TIPS

This section of the toolkit provides guidance to help you and your team work with broadcast, print and online media to promote the importance of monetary donations in disaster relief. Working effectively with media outlets will help to raise awareness and educate people in your region and around the globe on the role that appropriate donations play in providing efficient, effective disaster relief. The information that follows is intended to augment the tools in the toolkit. Please note that this information provided is based primarily with how media outreach is conducted in the United States but was designed to be customizable for other economies as well.



Credit: Ulrich Lange, Dunedin, New Zealand

DEVELOP A MEDIA PLAN

TIPS ON DEVELOPING A MEDIA LIST AND IDENTIFYING MEDIA CONTACTS

KEY MESSAGES

PUBLIC RELATIONS TIPS

LETTER TO THE EDITOR TIPS

MEDIA ADVISORY AND NEWS RELEASE TIPS

DEVELOP A MEDIA PLAN

Getting the media to cover your disaster and to promote appropriate donation appeals—in your region and more broadly—requires a good strategy, and developing a media plan should be your first step. Media planning generally entails researching the reporters and media outlets that would cover a disaster, developing relationships with those reporters, and providing information to the media outlets and social media platforms most suitable for broadcasting your disaster relief donations messages. It differs from a communications strategy in that a media plan is specifically focused on sharing information with media outlets, whereas a communications strategy provides a more broad-brush approach for what, how, when, and with whom you will communicate. The media plan should correspond with, or otherwise be incorporated into, your community and/or economy's general disaster relief planning efforts. Key elements of the plan include:

- Developing a list of media contacts,
- Establishing clear messages,
- Identifying communication channels,

- Developing and finalizing outreach materials (such as those discussed in this toolkit), and
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities among staff and partners.

Following are tips to develop and implement your disaster relief donations media plan.

TIPS ON DEVELOPING A MEDIA LIST AND IDENTIFYING MEDIA CONTACTS

Before you begin to reach out to media outlets, first confirm whether someone in your organization or agency's public information office already has a local media list. If not, you can start the process by identifying news outlets in your community and region that cover general news or specific stories related to weather, disasters, and emergency preparedness. Think about the newspapers and television and radio stations, as well as community news organizations, Web sites, or blogs that could promote your news.

After you have made a list of the news organizations you would like to contact in your community, research their Web sites to find the following information:

- The name and type of media outlet (print, radio, television, and online/new media) and the outlet's main phone number and Web site address.
- Names, phone numbers, and email addresses of reporters who cover general news, city/town issues, weather, disasters, or emergency preparedness.
- Names, phone numbers, and email addresses for news desks, producers, or editors of television or radio programs you think would be a good fit for your story, or specific newspaper sections or columns that would similarly provide a good fit.

Once you have created a list of local news organizations, you can begin contacting the media.

- It is worthwhile to send an email or make phone calls as an introduction. Doing this before the disaster strikes will help your local media contacts become familiar with you and your organization. A short, basic introduction is sufficient.
- Ask your media contacts how they prefer to receive media releases and other communications (e.g., via email, by phone). It is also a good idea to monitor the news outlets and specific reporters you are hoping to work with on social media to see what these outlets and reporters are covering.
- It is important to be persistent with the media while being respectful of their time so do check in again after a few days.
- When sending emails, make sure your contacts understand what you are writing about. Avoid using vague subject lines and get right to the point in the body of the email. If you are sending a media release or media advisory, be sure to paste the information into the body of the email so that it is immediately accessible to the reporter.

KEY MESSAGES¹

In publicity terms, a message is simply a clear, basic explanation of the issue or event you want to communicate to the public and the media. It is essential to establish two or three key messages that resonate for your audiences and to ensure that outreach materials remain consistent. When you have a well-defined message, members within your organization can effectively communicate about the disaster, and the media will have more clarity on what you are doing.

The following are general messages and designed to be the basis for all communications. Use these messages in part, or in their entirety, when developing talking points, news releases, social media posts and other outreach materials to ensure a consistent message throughout all your communications.

SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES

- Cash donations are the best donations.
- Time is critical after a disaster, and cash donations can be directed quickly and efficiently to victims that need immediate help.
- Money is easy—and cheap—to transport. Moving a container of donated goods can cost more than the value of the items inside. Supplies can usually be purchased locally at the disaster site, and at a lower cost.
- Cash contributions boost local economies by buying needed items from local vendors who have also likely been affected by the disaster.
- [X%] of each [LOCAL CURRENCY] that we receive goes directly toward the disaster relief effort in [REGION]. [NAME OF RELIEF ORGANIZATION/APEC ECONOMY] prides itself on being a responsible steward of the public's money and has a track record of dispersing monetary contributions wisely and efficiently.
- Cash donations can be made by [visiting URL, texting XX, or calling YY].

SUPPORTING MESSAGES

The following are additional messages that can support your outreach and communications.

- When disaster strikes, compassionate people want to help. While donations of clothing, food, bottled water, or toys may feel more personal than a monetary donation, the truth is that even a small financial contribution can do more good for more people, with greater speed and sensitivity.
- Cash donations provide medical and other life-saving services now, and rebuild infrastructure later. It doesn't take much to make a big difference.
- A donation of just [INSERT AMOUNT] can do so much to help. For example, [PROVIDE EXAMPLE(S)] *Note: It is your prerogative to ask for a specific dollar amount.*

[NAME OF RELIEF ORGANIZATION/APEC ECONOMY] partners with [NAMES OF RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS] to ensure a coordinated response to people most in need.

¹ Some of these messages are adapted from USAID Center for Disaster Information (CIDI) materials.

The above examples of key messages should serve as a starting place. You may want to adapt or write your own messages based on what might be most effective in your economy. As you are customizing these messages, we encourage you to consider the following suggestions when incorporating “donate responsibly” into your outreach messages and materials:

- Keep messages positive.
- Show appreciation and gratitude to donors.
- Keep donor priorities in mind.
- Provide simple examples.
- Be transparent on how the donation will be used.
- Extend communications beyond the request for donations; share stories describing what is happening.
- Highlight the positive impact of donations on the victims of a disaster.

TIPS TO ENGAGE REPORTERS

- **Make a reporter’s life easy.** Reporters are always on a deadline. Think about images, footage, or hard data you can provide to make their job easier. They will often welcome this information.
- **Monitor Twitter.** Watch Twitter for what is trending and pitch a story supported by social media interest.
- **Local comes first.** Local affiliates want to be seen as local news focused on local people.
- **Controversy can be beneficial.** Do not be afraid to mention controversy when you speak to a reporter.
- **Nourish media relationships.** Send an occasional email to your contacts. Tell them you retweeted their story or send a link to an existing story and suggest how to rework it from a different perspective.

As your media campaign continues, you may consider adapting or changing your key messages slightly, based on which messages seem to be most effective, or most repeated in the press.

PUBLIC RELATIONS TIPS

Managing public relations during a disaster can be difficult. Agencies and organizations involved in disaster relief are responding to a multitude of demands and emergencies, and often do not have the time or capacity to put in place proactive strategies for communicating with the public and promoting appropriate donations. This stress can be relieved by having a few key pieces in place before a disaster hits. Below are a few suggestions to help your organization get on the right track:

- **Develop a crisis communications team**
 - Identify an internal and possibly external crisis communications team—this team will be on call 24/7 during the crisis.
- **Develop FAQs**
 - Develop a disaster-specific list of potential questions with approved responses to ensure that everyone on your communications team (including community managers) is using consistent messaging. Use this to augment the FAQs provided in this toolkit (see [05 Frequently Asked Questions](#)).

- **Share resources/messaging with other relief organizations**
 - Communicate and share resources with other organizations or local government agencies conducting relief efforts—social media community managers and crisis communicators should be in contact and everyone should be communicating the same statistics.
- **Be transparent**
 - Show people where their money is going and what your organization is doing in real time as much as possible.
 - Use the [I3T Reporting-Out Template](#) in this toolkit to help with this.
- **Develop infographics**
 - Create simple infographics that demonstrate the impact of the disaster to share on Web sites and social channels.
 - Develop them so they can be shared easily on social media.
 - An infographic could also be developed to show the specific benefits of donating money.
 - Following is a sample infographic that visually depicts the differences in material donations and cash:



Infographic demonstrating the costs associated with transportation and distribution of in-kind disaster donations.

Credit: Stephanie McNicol, Arizona State University. Submitted as part of the 2015 PSAid contest sponsored by CIDI.

- **Share B-roll**
 - Have B-roll (video footage that will help reporters produce their story) available of your organization's warehouses, supply chain, disaster response logistics in action, and of the disaster if possible. Share the B-roll with TV stations. Consider producing 10-second clips that can be shared via social media.
- **Incentivize donating/sharing**
 - Create ways for people to encourage their friends and others to donate online such as by designing a Web badge or emblem to share on their social media pages saying that they have donated; consider working with a corporate partner who could potentially match donations for the number of shares.
- **Q&As with experts**
 - Consider organizing teleconference calls (where reporters can ask your experts questions) and/or managing an online Q&A session (via Twitter Chats or Facebook) with your spokespeople where the press and public can ask questions about the disaster relief efforts.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR TIPS

A letter to the editor is an easy way to make a big impact. Editors do not publish every letter they receive, but they do pay attention—especially to letters that are well written or connected to an article they just published. Below are a few helpful tips (see [12T Letter to the Editor Template](#) in this toolkit).

Writing Your Letter to the Editor

- **Make it relevant.** Relate your letter to the specific natural disaster for which your organization is managing disaster relief and soliciting cash donations.
- **Be concise.** The first sentence should summarize your position and reason for writing. One of the biggest mistakes people make in writing letters to the editor is using the first paragraph (or the entire letter) to build to the point. Most editors read two to three sentences before making a decision.
- **Mind your word count.** Check the guidelines for the publication you are targeting. If they give a word count, follow it. If they do not, 200 to 300 words are generally considered the maximum length. Many publications will not consider letters that exceed this word count.

Submitting Your Letter to the Editor

- **Follow the guidelines.** Many publications have specific formatting requirements and rules, so check the publication's Web site before submitting your letter. Always include full contact information for the author(s). Spell everything correctly and pay close attention to grammar—letters are not usually edited; publications select well-written letters that meet their guidelines. Email your letter to ensure timeliness by pasting the text into the body of the email.
- Do not send your letter as an attachment.
- **Follow up.** Once you have submitted your letter, follow up with a phone call 24 hours later to find out if it will be printed.

MEDIA ADVISORY AND NEWS RELEASE TIPS

A media advisory (also called a “media alert”) is used to alert reporters to an event, a news conference, a photo opportunity, an opportunity to interview subject matter experts, etc. News releases (or press releases) are effective when you have some news or an announcement you want the media to report to its audience. Below are some tips to making these newsworthy and attention grabbing.

A media advisory is usually one page and identifies the “Five W’s” of your media opportunity:

- a) **Who** is involved
- b) **What** is the purpose
- c) **Where** and **when** it is being held
- d) **Why** this [event, announcement, etc.] is important to your audience/community

Press releases should include the following information:

- a) Up-to-date information on the current disaster and need for relief
- b) Description of the organization or government agency’s disaster relief effort and how monetary donations will be utilized
- c) Quotation from the organization or government official expressing gratitude for the generosity and support of the public
- d) Information for how and where to donate
- e) Your own contact information (email, work telephone, and mobile number)

Sample news releases that include the recommended information are included in the toolkit materials (see [IIT Media Advisory Template](#)).

03 SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

Use your social media channels to promote, document, and start a conversation on making cash contributions in the wake of a natural disaster. You can also use these same networks and platforms to raise awareness of the importance of monetary donations before disaster strikes. Spread the word through Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, WhatsApp, and other social media sites and blogs and encourage your colleagues, friends, family, and community to “retweet,” “share” and “like” your posts.



Strategies and ideas on how to promote appropriate donations are below. You will find general tips as well as sample tweets, Facebook posts, Instagram suggestions, and more that you can quickly use via your selected channels.

GETTING STARTED

GENERAL TIPS

BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

ANATOMY OF A SOCIAL MEDIA POST

MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA DURING DISASTER

SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSE GUIDE

CONDUCT SOCIAL LISTENING

TIPS ON SPECIFIC SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

GETTING STARTED

As you are developing a social media plan for your organization to promote appropriate donations, consider the goals you want to achieve and define the audience you are trying to reach. Based on your goals and intended audience you should identify which social media platforms to use (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn), and the content you will need to develop. Below see a list of key questions to help you get started.

Key Questions

What are your major social media goals?
What audience(s) do you want to reach?
What content will you develop for them?
What social media platforms will be most effective in reaching your intended audience?
Does your organization already have all the social media accounts required to conduct this campaign (including bios and handles)?
Who on your staff will manage and monitor your social outreach?
Who will be responsible for creating content?
Does your organization have protocols in place to interact with its followers?
Who will be responsible for approving/posting content?
How will your online and offline campaigns support one another?
Do you have a set of messages ready to send out related to appropriate donations before a disaster to establish credibility and gain followers on social media?
Do you have a set of messages ready to send out related to appropriate donations after a disaster strikes?

Another suggestion as you get started: Create social media accounts (including bios and handles) for your relief organization now, before disaster strikes, and send out occasional posts regarding appropriate donations along with other disaster preparedness information so you establish credibility and gain loyal followers.

GENERAL TIPS

If you are not already using social media, it can be confusing and overwhelming to know where to start. Below are some general tips that will help you to engage with your intended audiences effectively.

- Respond to questions directed to your organization promptly and provide necessary information as requested, even if you have to repeat it often.
- Add images and videos to your messages that tell a story or highlight what your organization is doing related to disaster relief. Images can be more engaging than words.
- Share information on appropriate donations at least once a month to keep the dialogue fresh. Try focusing your content around themes throughout the year; for example, you could promote appropriate donations during hurricane season.
- Encourage your followers to use images on social media sites like Instagram and Twitter and to use your organization's hashtag to show that they are donating cash (e.g., a screenshot of Web "receipt" they received after donating). People can get inspired and motivated and will see how easy it is to make a monetary donation if their others show them how.
- Use Bitly or similar Web-based tools to shorten URLs.
- Be concise when using social media. Here are some examples of succinct ways to emphasize the importance of monetary donations. Use these examples, or create your own.
 - Cash is best.

- Give smarter: Cash donations are the quickest and most effective way to help when disaster hits.
- In the wake of a disaster, monetary donations help the most: Your money can help save lives.
- Make the biggest impact: Cut out the middleman. Send money.
- In the aftermath of a disaster, even a small monetary donation will make a big difference.
- Connect before you collect—confirm there is a need.
- It is simple: Save lives, save money—send cash.
- Save money. Save lives. Save the planet. Give green.

These tips will help you to get started in communicating about appropriate donations, but it is important for your team to learn from your experiences as well and note what works best in your economy.

BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Having a large and diverse network of followers before a disaster happens will help you get your message out quickly when a disaster hits. Below are some tips to help you to create or to expand your network of followers:

- Build your network of supporters and followers by including your organization’s URL and Twitter handle on all your outreach materials. Make it easy for media outlets, community groups and partner organizations to “like” you on Facebook and “follow” you on Twitter.
- Conversely, start following influential voices on Twitter and Facebook, such as CIDI, the International Committee of the Red Cross in your region, trusted regional weather agencies, and local government agencies, meteorologists, and community leaders. Join and post to LinkedIn groups that focus on disaster relief and appropriate donations.
- Incorporate your organization’s hashtag into your promotional and media materials as a call to action. For example, “follow us on Twitter at [INSERT HASHTAG]” or “Like us on Facebook.”
- Thank new followers and those who comment or add positively to the conversation.
- Tailor your messages so they are relevant to local stakeholders and reflect local disaster needs.
- Post interesting disaster relief facts and stories and how monetary donations have made a difference. Share them on Trivia Tuesdays, Wisdom Wednesdays, and Throwback Thursdays across different media platforms.

ANATOMY OF A SOCIAL MEDIA POST

Preparing content for social media is a matter of gathering and packaging the essential elements of every social media post. While each platform is unique, the basic elements of every social media post are the same:



A short, compelling update. Facts, announcements, quotes, and questions work well.

An eye-catching visual—could be a photo, video, or infographic.

A link to more information. Ideally, the landing page would be mobile-friendly.

Platform engagement elements like hashtags or mentions.

From here, it is a matter of experimenting in order to get the most out of every post. The following guidelines are a starting point for experimentation. Each practice can be implemented and measured, keeping in mind that an effective practice for one organization may not be the right practice for another.

MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA DURING A DISASTER

Your organization or government agency's social media strategy will be put to the test when a disaster occurs. During these times of crisis, it is important to respond quickly and at the same time ensure the accuracy and clarity of the information being communicated. Some general tips to help your organization successfully manage social media communications during a disaster include:

- Respond quickly via social media, acknowledging the crisis and communicating that your organization is monitoring the situation.
- Share real stories from the affected region and people.
- Update information every couple of hours immediately following a disaster to keep the dialogue fresh.
- End each message with a simple call to action. For example, "Join me in helping the victims of [NAME] disaster. Go to [INSERT URL] to donate cash today."

SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSE GUIDE

Monitoring and coordinating responses to social media users is critical. Consider appointing someone on your staff—before disaster strikes—to fulfil the role of the social media manager. This person will oversee all your social media outreach and activity and coordinate closely with the director of communications to ensure your organization or government agency's messaging is consistent across all social and traditional media platforms. This section provides guidelines for responding to various types of social media posts. These suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive of all potential social media response scenarios, but they do provide a framework for when and how posts will be responded to, and who will do the responding.

Target Response Time

Social media users have high expectations when it comes to response time. Generally, it should take less than 24 hours from the time a post is identified to the time the post receives a response.

Time	Type of Post
12–24 Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive topics • Technical topics • Negative posts
4–12 Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template responses, or pre-written messages, that can be posted to answer inquiries, address negative posts, or respond to any number of specific circumstances that you might anticipate • Responses to positive posts
1–4 Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posts that breach policy should be removed as quickly as possible

Response Process

Communications specialists in the responding organizations or agencies are encouraged to follow these steps when responding to a post:

- Step 1: Make sure you are the right person and are authorized to respond. If not, work with the right person to formulate and post the response (e.g., project officer or subject matter expert).
- Step 2: Respond publicly on the social media site where the original post was found.

Step 3: Follow the response considerations (listed below). Note: Work with your organization's director of communications to develop template responses that are ready to go when needed.

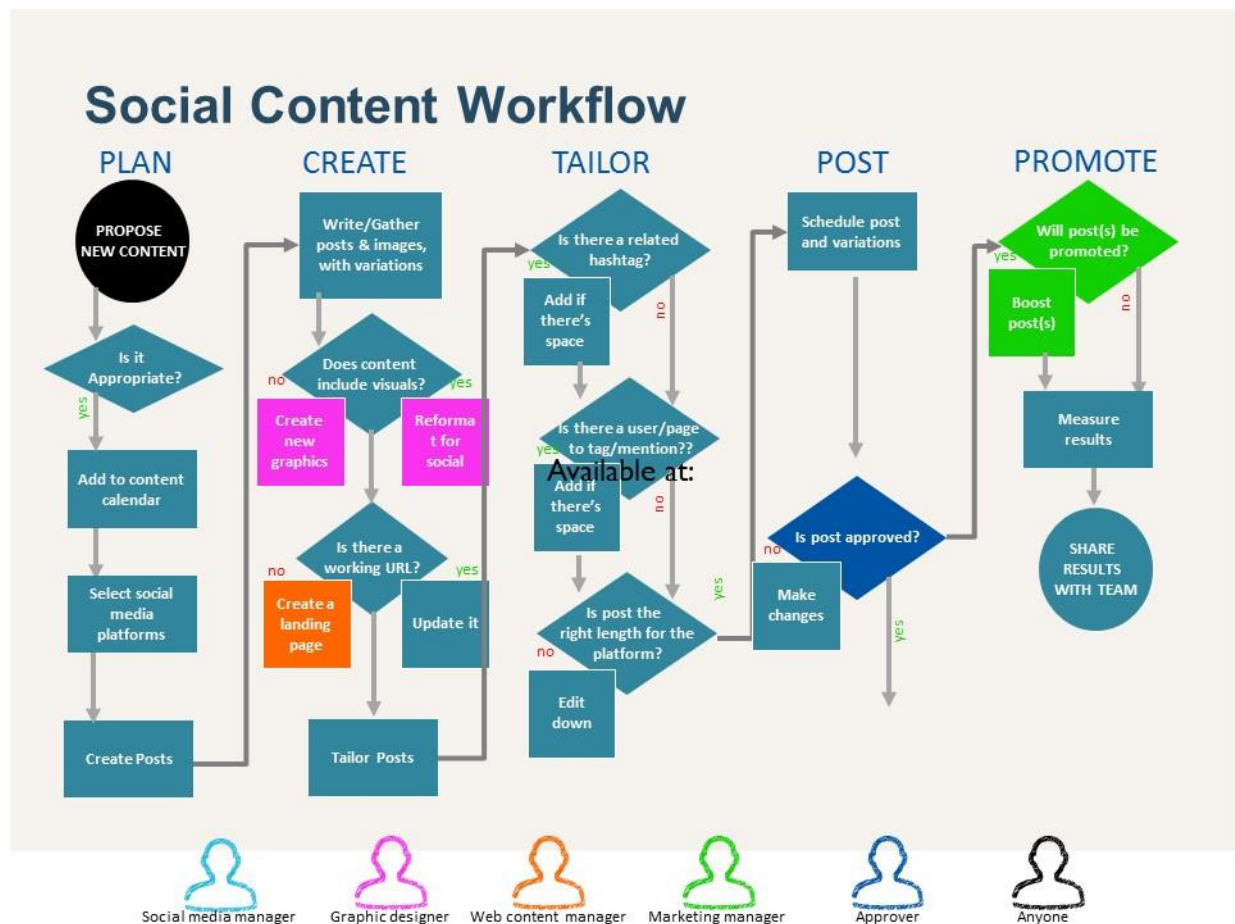
Step 4: Continue to monitor the site for at least two business days after you respond.

Response Considerations

During the response process, these considerations should be kept in mind, in conjunction with your organization's social media policy:

- **Transparency:** Disclose your role in the organization.
- **Sourcing:** Reinforce your response by citing sources such as URLs and articles.
- **Timeline:** Do not rush. Take time to craft an accurate and relevant response.
- **Tone:** Respond in a tone that positively reflects your organization and its mission.
- **Influence:** Focus on responding to the most active and relevant social media sites.

Social Media Content Flow



In order for content to evolve, a strong team and framework for operation must be agreed upon and recognized. An established social media content workflow may seem like extra work, but it can reduce development time and confusion. The following framework can be used from start-to-finish to share your information.

CONDUCT SOCIAL LISTENING

Social listening refers to monitoring the online conversations on social media channels, blogs, online news sites, message boards/community forums. You can conduct social listening throughout the entire crisis response using tools such as Crimson Hexagon, Sysomos, Hootsuite, Social Mention, and others. These tools can help gather metrics to gauge the success of your social media outreach efforts. Use these social listening tools to assess and redirect “miscommunication” that may be happening, as well as to monitor and evaluate “on target” messaging.

TIPS ON SPECIFIC SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

There are many social media platforms suitable to help your organization or government agency distribute information on disaster donations, including Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Pinterest, and others. Below are sample tips related to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest that can be applied to other platforms as well.

Twitter

Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read 140-character messages called “tweets.” These messages can contain images, videos, and links to Web sites. Twitter users have a “handle” or name that starts with the symbol @. Social media messaging should always be tailored to fit the unique platform it is published on—Twitter is no exception. Keep these practices in mind when creating new content:

General Tips

- Hire or secure the volunteer services of someone who is experienced with social media.
- Twitter.com provides basic how-to instructions and tips.
- Include your organization or government agency URL in your Twitter bio, not just the URL field, so mobile users can access it easily.
- Try to keep tweets short (100 characters instead of the 140 max) to allow people to add commentary when they retweet.
- Structure your tweets like this to increase “click-throughs” by viewers KEY MESSAGE – LINK/URL #HASHTAG SHORT FOLLOW-UP (e.g., Give smarter – <https://www.oxfam.org/> #cashisbest Thank you).
- If you want everyone to see your Tweet, do not start it with the @ symbol.
- Use hashtags (#) to join relevant conversations and make your tweets easy to find.
- Do not overuse #hashtags in your tweets. Limit yourself to 1–3 hashtags per Tweet.
- Do not send auto-DMs (direct messages that are instantly sent to your new followers) If you do, people will unfollow you.

Time and Frequency

Twitter engagement rates are 17 percent higher on Saturday and Sunday.² Tweets during “busy hours” (8 a.m. to 7 p.m.) receive 30 percent more engagement.³ General suggested post frequency is 4–10 tweets a day.

Platform-Specific Features

- Reply, RT, MT, Like: (h/t or HT: hat tip).
- Specifically asking your followers to “retweet” results in a retweet rate that is 23 times higher than average.⁸
- Tag photos with relevant accounts to “share.”

Other Tips to Increase Twitter Engagement

- Share images in your tweets to increase engagement, since images now appear inline on Twitter.
- Engage with others and show appreciation for their tweets by using the favorite button as a “like.”
- Be responsive: if someone asks you a question on Twitter, answer it!
- If someone regularly retweets or replies to you, add him or her to a list so you can return the favor.
- Twitter is a two-way conversation: Tweet questions to encourage your followers to interact with you.
- Nobody has to share your content on Twitter, so if someone significant retweets you, thank them.
- Run Twitter contests using hashtags to increase engagement quickly.

TWITTER CONTENT CONSIDERATIONS

Tweets that have fewer than 100 characters can get you up to 17 percent higher engagement.⁴

Tweets containing these words and phrases are most likely to be retweeted: “you,” “retweet,” “follow,” “please,” “social media,” “check it out,” “new blog post,” “how to,” and “great.”⁵

The following content types *can* boost retweets, on average:⁶

- Photos—35% boost in retweets
- Videos—28% boost in retweets
- Quotes—19% boost in retweets
- Numbers or statistics—17% boost in retweets
- Hashtags (no more than two per Tweet)—16% boost in retweets

Tweets that contain links have an 86% higher retweet rate.⁷

² Buddy Media, “Strategies for Effective Tweeting: A Statistical Review” (Buddy Media, 2013), Available at: http://www.slideshare.net/truthdefender/strategies-for-effective-tweeting-a-statistical-review?qid=288fd407-aff1-4aa9-919a-da2a7fc7ecbb&v=qf1&b=&from_search=8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Leo Widrich, “A Scientific Guide to Writing Great Headlines on Twitter, Facebook, and Your Blog” (Content Marketing, 2013), Available at: <https://blog.bufferapp.com/a-scientific-guide-to-writing-great-headlines-on-twitter-facebook-and-your-blog>.

⁶ Simon Rogers, “What Fuels a Tweet’s Engagement” (Twitter, 2014), Available at: <https://blog.twitter.com/2014/what-fuels-a-tweets-engagement>.

⁷ Buddy Media.

⁸ Ibid.

Optimizing Your Twitter Stream

- Use landscape-oriented images on Twitter, using approximately a 2:1 dimension, for the best appearance on the Twitter feed.
- Try to incorporate an image into every three to four tweets so they are more prominent in a user's feed.
- Track which tweets get more replies, retweets, favorites, and clicks. Use this data to influence future tweets.
- Organize the people you follow into Twitter lists.
- It is OK to Tweet the same thing multiple times: Share important tweets four times throughout the day using different angles to cover all time zones and generate more traffic.

Sample Tweets	
Let people know where to go for info and where to donate.	<p>Follow @[INSERT ORG HANDLE] today to learn more about how you can help the survivors of #[DISASTER]</p> <p>Donate cash to help [DISASTER] SURVIVORS [URL OF ORG ACCEPTING DONATIONS] #CASHISBEST</p>
Thank donors in general, or choose specific donors to highlight.	RT @XXXXX: Some video on challenges of kids in the aftermath of #[REGION]. Check them out [LINK]
Give examples of what a cash donation can accomplish. Focus on what just a small amount can achieve, or show how a small donation can be an important part of the larger relief effort.	<p>Thanks @XXXXX for sharing pics from #[REGION]. Together, we can make a difference [LINK]</p> <p>Just [currency amount] bought [amount] for affected people in [region]. Donate now [URL] #cashisbest</p>
Incorporate the tagline and Coalition or toolkit images to reinforce the message.	Thanks to all for the support. Just picked up [# and type of supplies] all for [\$X]. We are making those dollars stretch. #[CUSTOMHASHTAG]
Make sure that some Tweets during the week do not include a direct ask for donation.	Remember - When you're ready to help, we're ready to go #[CUSTOMHASHTAG] #[REGION] [Link to donation site or form]

Tips for Effective Twitter Chats

What is a Twitter Chat? Twitter chats are planned virtual gatherings hosted in real time on Twitter. They are normally moderated, or guided, by one user to start a conversation on a certain topic. The chat is given a hashtag, such as [INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S HASHTAG], to make it easy for anyone to identify the chat and participate. Consider hosting a Twitter chat to share your disaster relief expertise and build excitement around engaging the community's support. Here is how to get started:

Choose a topic. Start by defining a topic that is most relevant to the disaster your area is experiencing. Next, determine who you want to participate in the conversation. For example, you may want to invite your director, employees and community leaders to join the chat. Think about specific topic areas to focus on.

Know your audience. Is your intended audience active enough on Twitter to carry on a lively discussion? If so, develop some questions they would find interesting to best engage them. If your audience is not active on Twitter, it may be best to participate in other Twitter chats rather than host your own.

Pick a date and time. What date and time is your target audience most likely to participate? If your audience works a 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. job, then lunchtime or early to mid-evening may be the best time.

Promote your Twitter Chat. Publicize your chat to increase participation. Publish the details on your Web site and social media channels. Be sure to include the date, time, topics, and hashtag.

Set the format and moderate. Think of your Twitter chat as a guided conversation with you as the guide. As the moderator, you can help structure the discussion by asking specific questions on a topic. Number the questions as Q1, Q2, etc. Ask participants to reply with answers using A1, A2, etc.

Each question gets 15 minutes on average, and chats usually last approximately one hour. Decide on your Twitter chat topic and questions in advance so that you can promote them beforehand.

THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR IN A TWITTER CHAT

The moderator guides the conversation. As the moderator, you should have specific tweets and topics available to post during any lulls in the chat.

PICK A TOOL FOR MODERATION

Use HootSuite, TweetDeck, or another Twitter dashboard that allows you to publish tweets and follow the discussion by monitoring the #[INSERT NAME OF HASHTAG].

ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE TWITTER CHATS

- Send invitations via Twitter direct message or email.
- Include the hashtag in your email signature block.
- Ask Twitter followers to retweet the invite.
- Advertise on other channels (e.g., Facebook, blog, Web site).
- Promote in traditional places (e.g., office lobby).
- Always include the time, date, and hashtag!

Use the [INSERT ORGANIZATION'S HASHTAG]. If you host a Twitter chat, use your hashtag as part of your branding.

Announce chat guidelines. Every Twitter chat has its own rules. The start of a chat is a good time to establish guidelines and the chat format discussed above. For instance, you might say:

- This [HASHTAG] chat is a time to discuss monetary donations and how we can support victims in our community. Please refrain from offensive language and product promotion.
- We have four questions: Q1–Q4. Answer questions using A1–A4. Do not forget to add [HASHTAG] to your tweets to be part of the chat.

Follow up after the chat. Thank everyone for their participation. Follow up with a summary of the conversation for those who were unable to join.

Evaluate and learn. Evaluate the success of your chat by the number of participants and tweets (include retweets, mentions, and favorites). Also, look at the total reach and impressions of your chat. At the end of your chat, ask: What would you like to see next time? Now, use that feedback in the next chat you host or participate in.

We want to hear what you have to say. Please share any results or feedback at [INSERT EMAIL].

Facebook

Facebook is a free online social networking service that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and wider networks of followers.

General Tips

- Make sure you are using a Facebook page for your organization; it is against Facebook guidelines for any organization to use a personal profile.
- Design or use an engaging cover image.
- Complete the “about” section.
- Use images for most posts. Images are the most liked and shared form of post, especially when they tell a story.
- When posting Web site links, upload a photo directly into Facebook, and then share it with the link to the content.
- Keep updates short. People on Facebook are skimmers—the shorter, the better.
- Mix it up: say things differently each time even if you are conveying the same general message: cash is best.
- Use “calls to action” to encourage sharing. Your audience will engage with you if you ask.
- Share real stories from the affected region and people.
- Try ads and promoted posts for more leverage. A promoted post is when you pay Facebook to essentially “show” a particular post from your timeline to more of your current Facebook friends. Your updates are not seen by all of your friends all the time when they read their newsfeeds. A promoted post essentially “supercharges” your post and shows it to more of your followers.

Content Considerations

- Statuses that are no more than 80 characters increase engagement by 23 percent.⁹
- Posts between 100 and 250 characters (i.e., three lines of text or fewer) receive 60 percent more likes, comments, and shares.¹⁰
- Quotes get 26 percent more likes and 19 percent more shares.¹¹
- Photos get 53 percent more likes.¹²
- Use of emoticons in your status updates increases comments by 33 percent.¹³
- Use of short call-to-action messages can increase interaction (e.g., click here, share this, like this post, and take this quiz).¹⁴
- Questions get 100 percent more comments.¹⁵

Time and Frequency

- Generally, around 1 p.m. gets the most shares and 3 p.m. gets the most clicks.¹⁶
- General recommendations suggest posting every other day.
- Engagement rates are 18 percent higher on Thursday and Friday.¹⁷
- The most effective posting schedule can be determined by testing posts at different times and on different days.

Platform-Specific Features

- Tag photos with the users who are featured.
- @mention relevant users to encourage sharing and dialogue.
- Use relevant hashtags.

Content Theme and Word Usage Considerations

- There are three types of headlines that resonate with Facebook users and consistently receive high levels of engagement: those that are conversational and descriptive, focused on personal experience, and honest.¹⁸

⁹ Buddy Media.

¹⁰ Facebook Business, “10 Tips to Creating Engaging Page Posts” (Facebook, 2014), Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/business/a/online-sales/page-post-tips>.

¹¹ Neil Patel, “How to Increase Your Facebook Engagement by 275%” (Quicksprout, 2014), Available at: <http://www.quicksprout.com/2014/01/10/how-to-increase-your-facebook-engagement-by-275>.

¹² Rebecca Corliss, “Photos on Facebook Generate 53% More Likes Than the Average Post” (Hubspot, 2012), Available at: <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33800/Photos-on-Facebook-Generate-53-More-Likes-Than-the-Average-Post-NEW-DATA.aspx#sm.0001quohfx6sekvy6qlzg1bjl8kl>.

¹³ Patel.

¹⁴ Facebook Studio, “Page Publishing That Drives Engagement Facebook Internal Study” (Facebook, 2012), Available at: <https://www.facebook-studio.com/news/item/page-publishing-that-drives-engagement>.

¹⁵ Patel.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ash Read, “There’s No Perfect Headline: Why We Need to Write Multiple Headlines for Every Article” (Content Marketing, 2016), Available at: <https://blog.bufferapp.com/how-to-write-a-headline>.

- Most sharable title words: “Facebook,” “why,” “most,” “world,” “how,” “health,” “big,” “says,” “best.”¹⁹
- According to a *New York Times* study on “The Psychology of Sharing”:²⁰
 - Ninety-four percent of people share information they think will help others.
 - Sixty-nine percent of people share information to feel more involved in the world.

¹⁹ Patel.

²⁰ *The New York Times*. “The Psychology of Sharing: Why Do People Share Online?” (n.d.). Available at: <http://nytmktg.whsites.net/mediakit/pos/>.

Sample Facebook Posts	
Include a picture of child and a clear link to where people can help.	<i>This is X [HYPERLINKED]. He [story of child – e.g., cannot make it to classes today because the earthquake ruined most of the buildings in his town including the local school]. Here's how you can help him: [URL LINK].</i>
Thank donors in general, or choose specific donors to highlight. Include photo of relief effort making the donor feel directly involved.	<i>Thanks to all of your generous support, we have raised [X IN LOCAL CURRENCY], allowing us to bring [# AND TYPE OF SUPPLIES] to [REGION].</i>
Give examples of what a cash donation can accomplish. Focus on what just a small amount can achieve, or show how a small donation can be an important part of the larger relief effort.	<i>How much do you usually pay for a [INSERT EXAMPLE OF INEXPENSIVE HOUSEHOLD ITEM]? That same [X IN LOCAL CURRENCY] that gets you one [HOUSEHOLD ITEM] can be used to get five [HOUSEHOLD ITEM]s in [REGION]! Help by sending monetary donations and let us stretch those funds.</i>
Engage your followers by asking for submissions – stories about the disaster or relief effort, how they feel as a donor, etc. Link to organization donation/support page.	<i>Have you [participated in a fundraising event or promoted the Toolkit]? Each action you take to help encourage people to make monetary donations allows us to help move at a faster pace. Click the link below to find out what you can do to participate, then tell us what you plan to do in the comments.</i>
Be sure to include posts that do not include a direct request for donations (but still link to the relief organizations' donation/support pages).	<i>Want to find out why monetary donations are best? Go to [ORGANIZATION URL] to read how donating cash is most effective AND helps the local economy.</i>

Instagram

Instagram is a social networking platform that operates through a smart phone application. It lets you take a picture or use one you already have on your phone, apply filters to improve the photo, and share it with followers. You can also post photos directly to Facebook and Twitter to easily share with your network. It is still unclear whether Instagram is or will become useful for advocacy and improving donations metrics, but it is a powerful tool for visual storytelling so if you have a story to tell and photos to tell it with, add Instagram to your toolbox.

General Tips

- **Use your best photos.** Every picture should help to tell the story you are telling and contribute to the overall feel of your feed. The images should be relevant but they should also be attention getting.
- **Use hashtags.** Like Twitter and other social media, Instagram uses hashtags to group images together and people sometime search Instagram using specific hashtags. So, make your feed more discoverable by using relevant hashtags. You can start by tying your content to bigger Instagram trends by using popular hashtags like #tbt (tell the history of your issue and organization with photos from the past); #selfie (e.g., take a picture of your executive director being interviewed on TV or of your organization's name in the press); or #regram (like retweeting).
- **Instigate.** Some of the best Instagram feeds ask followers to engage, and then engage back. So, for example, when encouraging monetary donations in the wake of a disaster, use advocacy or "spread the word" requests that people can share on Instagram.
- **Show them who you are.** Since followers are "hearing" your story through your lens, let them see who you are every once in a while (you, the person doing the posting and/or visuals that represent your organization). Use #fromwhereistand to share what your work looks like from where you stand. What is the view of *your* boots on the ground?
- **Look and listen.** Search common hashtags associated with your disaster relief initiative, appropriate donations, and the given disaster you are working on. Check out what people are posting, what they like, and comment on, and use the ideas you come across to drive your own content and deepen engagements. Instagram can provide great insight into how others already visualize and talk about your issue. Use those insights to guide your own content creation. Since donating to help with disaster relief is a motivating fundraising request and followers have to engage in the request by either donating offline (e.g., by writing a check) or online by clicking on an aid organization's Web site, put a link on your image or in your profile, and track the results.
- **Include links.** Be sure to include your Twitter handle (@____) and your organization URL, where followers can go to find out more information on how to donate.

Pinterest

Pinterest is a virtual pinboard that allows you to “pin” images, videos, and Web sites that you like and want to share or refer back to later. You can create categories or boards that allow you to organize images, Web sites, and more. You can browse Pinboards created by others to find new ideas, discover new things, and get inspiration.

General Tips

- **Create an “Appropriate Donations” board** (or something customized to your disaster relief situation) on Pinterest and tell your followers to do the same. This Pinterest board could include Pins and photos of how cash donations have been or are being used in the affected community.
- **Everything you pin is clickable**, which means that you can link to your Web site or to a site where potential donors can make cash contributions.
- **Pinterest is a social network**, so do interact with followers by repining or commenting on their Pins.
- **Pinterest is a tool for collecting and organizing things** so use it to its advantage and compile information (through images that best showcase this information) that is helpful for people looking to find updates on the disaster, how to donate, and why donating cash is the most effective.
- **Pinterest is an image platform** is to highlight your initiative through imagery so pin compelling photos from your Web site or other disaster relief Web sites that draw people in and tell a story.
- **Share your knowledge** on the disaster and why cash donations are the most effective.

Blogs

General Tips

- **Optimize your blog post titles** so when people Tweet them, they are catchy enough for people to click on the links.
- **Add social sharing buttons to your blog** to make each post easy for readers to share via other media platforms.
- **Shorten your blog post URL** using a Web-based tool like Bitly.

04 TIPS FOR SHARING PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS WITH LOCAL MEDIA

A PSA is a message or advertisement that media outlets can disseminate free of charge because the message serves the community interests. Newspapers and TV and radio stations are often agreeable to disseminating PSAs following a disaster and, in fact, will frequently produce their own PSAs.



In this toolkit, you will find several tools that can be used for PSAs (see both [IOT Radio PSA Scripts](#) and [I4T Visual Resources](#)) that you can customize given the current needs.

The section below provides some guidance on how to ensure your PSA is used and reaches your intended audience.

- Appeal directly to media outlets' community affairs and news directors
 - Meet with them personally to develop a relationship, or leverage an existing relationship you may have. *Do this before a disaster strikes.* Once these relationships are established, the media outlets may be more receptive to your messaging in the wake of a disaster.
 - Maintain contact with them to reinforce the importance of the issue (i.e., sending news articles or information as appropriate, checking in at key time periods, or offering to be an issue expert for their next show/interview). They may even reach out to you first for an interview or comment on-the-record.
- Demonstrate the issue's importance to the local community
 - Share statistics describing the disaster (i.e., number of people affected). Include statistics that have local relevance whenever possible.
 - Talk about events taking place in your area to collect monetary donations for the relief effort.
 - Provide information on your local organization's activities and how the community can participate.
- If applicable, offer your expertise as a resource to the media
 - Be available for interviews.
 - Provide information for their news station Web page.
- Initiate contact with the PSA Director

The first time you contact (by phone, email or letter) the media in your community, try to set up a meeting. You will find that community affairs and news directors are generally people concerned with the community and do their best to make time to see you.

In the initial phone call, introduce yourself and explain that you would like to meet to discuss your organization's role in the community and the importance of their support of disaster relief. Be prepared to suggest a date and time and several alternatives.

Once you locate the right person, contact them with basic information on the PSAs you have to offer.

- Tell them why you are writing or calling. (*I would like to meet with you. Will you broadcast these PSAs?*)
- Give them two or three vital statistics pertinent to the disaster.
- Inform them of any recent news stories that focus on the effectiveness of how your organization has utilized monetary donations to assist with the relief effort.
- Briefly explain the goal of your PSAs and how they will benefit their viewers, listeners or readers.
- Personalize the issue for the community affairs and news directors (frame the issue around a local event or the media outlet's programming).
- Outline next steps (set a meeting date, send your PSA).
- Provide your contact information.
- Prepare a toolkit packet to bring to your meeting. The packet can include:
 - Media Outreach Email
 - Fact Sheet
 - PSAs (customized with the disaster and your organization name/logo)
- Meet in-person, if possible

When you meet with the media, be clear on what you want them to do, and what you are trying to accomplish. It will be important to be armed with information on the specific disaster that has taken place, the benefit of monetary donations for the disaster relief effort, and how your organization is equipped to provide efficient and effective relief to those in need. Come prepared with specific requests as to how you would like the media to integrate the message and clear directions for how the media can easily utilize the PSAs and other materials.

- Be prepared for questions and challenges
 - ***Why do we need your materials? We produce our own station materials.***
 Your response might be: *Let's work together. We can support and enhance your public service initiatives by providing up-to-date information and research as well as local resources (i.e., toll-free phone numbers, Web sites, etc.). We can be a resource for you.*
 - ***We have a policy against supporting any PSAs.***
 Try to find out why. This policy may be based on a misconception. Mention that the PSA materials were developed based on extensive research with the target audience.

– ***This is not an important issue to our community.***

Discuss the issue on a local level when applicable. Share statistics and results that you have seen on the amount of funds raised for the disaster relief effort. Provide examples of how disaster relief victims have been helped by the monetary donations collected by your organization.

- Follow up
 - After your meeting or phone call, send a thank you note to your contact.
 - Provide any follow up materials that you promised.
- Develop a list of targets

Concentrate on the local TV stations that you watch, the radio stations that you listen to, the newspapers that you read, cable providers, etc. These companies make up the media in your community. The table on the next page provides some suggestions.

Media Type	Description	Who to Contact
Television Broadcast affiliates Independent stations	These stations produce their own local news and also sell advertising to local businesses. Many of these local/regional stations are affiliates of a larger networks.	Public Affairs Director Community Affairs Director General Manager
Cable Television	Call the company listed on your cable bill, and try to contact all the cable systems in your area. <i>Note: Cable systems often have more time available to broadcast PSAs.</i>	Advertising Director Marketing Director General Manager
Radio	Contact the radio stations that reach your target audience. Radio stations are formatted for very specific audiences.	Public Affairs Director Community Affairs Director General Manager
Newspapers	Newspapers are the most difficult medium in which to place PSAs in their print editions because they can print only the number of pages needed to fit the articles and paid advertisements for that day. Instead, provide newspapers with banner ads for their Web sites.	Director of Advertising Editor-in-Chief

05 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

These FAQs are intended for APEC economy disaster relief agencies and NGO staff and volunteers, and not the general public. Some of the information included in these FAQs has been adapted from the Center for International Disaster Information.

Q1. Why is APEC interested in promoting appropriate donations?

A1. APEC's 21 member economies account for approximately 55 percent of the world's GDP, 52 percent of the earth's surface area and 59 percent of the world's population—yet they experience a majority of the world's natural disasters. In 2011, APEC disaster officials committed to “educate the public, business and government leaders on best practices for effective and appropriate donations to minimize the disruptions that unsolicited donations can have on disaster response efforts” at the High Level Policy Dialogue on Disaster Resiliency. In order to support effective public donations practices, efficient supply chain and relief operations, and speedier economic recovery in disaster-affected areas, the EPWVG has endorsed “APEC Guidelines for Appropriate Donations in Times of Disaster” on the most effective ways to support international disaster relief efforts.

APEC's endorsement of these guidelines, which are based on international best practices such as USAID's CIDI Guidelines for Appropriate Donations, ensures a common acceptance of these best practices and recognition by APEC member economies that responses and capacity building should align with these best practice principles. The guidelines that have been endorsed are, in summary:

1. Monetary contributions to established relief agencies and/or to formal disaster appeals are always the most productive public response to disasters.
2. Before items other than cash are collected, confirm that there is a need.
3. Transportation is expensive and requires planning.
4. Volunteer opportunities are extremely limited.

The **APEC Appropriate Donations Communications Toolkit** is a means of operationalizing these guidelines.

Q2. Who developed the resources in the toolkit?

A2. All of the guidance and customizable materials included in the toolkit were developed under the US-ATAARI activity; several of the tools were based on materials in the CIDI toolkits.

Q3. How do we best use the toolkit?

A3. The toolkit contains customizable outreach materials to use during and after disasters that emphasize the benefits of monetary contributions—and instructions on how to use them. These materials and guidelines were developed to save you time, whether you are an experienced communications professional or newly assigned to coordinate media outreach for your organization.

Relief organizations and government agencies can also use the information in this toolkit to develop their own outreach materials and PSAs.

Q4. Are all the materials in this toolkit based on the premise that cash donations are best?

A4. Yes. The messaging throughout the toolkit consistently promotes cash donations as the preferred donations. As a disaster expert, you understand there are three basic reasons why *cash is best*.

1. Professional relief agencies use monetary contributions to purchase exactly what is needed by disaster victims. Staff for the organizations and government agencies work directly with the victims at the disaster site and are in the best position to know not only what is immediately needed, but also when and where it is most needed. In addition, relief workers' experience enables the conversion of cash donations into items attuned to cultural and religious sensitivities. Cash is also flexible, which allows relief workers to meet the evolving priority needs of the disaster victims.
2. Money is easy to transport. Moving a container of donated goods can cost more than the value of the items inside. Getting a donated commodity into containers and onto a ship, across the sea to the disaster site, through the port costs and the customs' tariffs, checked and sorted, and organized into warehouses, requires payment at each step. Supplies can usually be purchased locally at the disaster site and provide savings in multiple ways.
3. Money used to purchase items locally offers multiple advantages. Cash contributions can be used immediately to support local economies by buying needed items from local vendors who may have been affected by the disaster.

Q5. When potential donors ask why they should give cash instead of other material donations, what are some simple responses?

A5. A cash donation:

- Makes it possible to purchase goods locally, thereby decreasing the environmental impact of relief efforts.
- Stimulates local economies.
- Provides employment and generates cash flow.
- Does not compete with goods from the local market.
- Does not require transportation/shipping costs.

- Helps relief organizations and government agencies respond in a flexible, timely, and cost-efficient manner—ultimately providing greater help to those in need.

For these reasons, cash contributions to established and legitimate relief agencies are always significantly more beneficial than the donation of commodities.

Q6. Where should we direct potential donors to send money?

A6. Each disaster is different, but it is advisable to work with other relief organizations and agencies to establish one Web site where all donors can be directed to make a contribution. If you do not already have a Web site, create a short URL that is easy to remember. Publicize this Web site and include the Web link in all your communications. Share it with newspapers, and TV and radio stations so that it can be broadcast widely to their readers, viewers, and listeners. You can also provide it to other government agencies (local, regional, federal) and partners to promote on their Web sites and on social media platforms for their constituents.

Q7. How do we convey that donors can trust these agencies to use their money to really help disaster victims?

A7. Direct donors to trustworthy organizations that have a proven (e.g., documented) track record of spending contributions wisely and efficiently. If you are an organization that collects contributions and is responsible for dispersing funds to disaster victims, then it is your responsibility to establish this trust with the public. This trust does not happen overnight—it takes time. Work with your organization's leadership to create a strategy that showcases your protocols for responsible spending. For example:

- Apply for validation from an accredited third party.
- Find and promote testimonials by past recipients and showcase their stories on your Web site and in the news.
- Make your annual financial report available to the public and the media.
- Be transparent and accountable when asked questions from donors and reporters on spending practices, including administrative costs and what percentage of every donation serves the disaster victims.

Consider creating a one-page fact sheet that provides details on how your organization receives, processes, and distributes donations to disaster victims, and make this publicly available.

Q8. What is the appropriate percentage of overhead costs that relief agencies should cover from donations?

A8. Some relief agencies operate with very low overhead rates because of the nature of their work. A logistics organization, for example, may incur lower overhead costs because it need fewer people “on the ground” than an organization that sends medical personnel to a disaster site, or professionals to administer the transportation and distribution of commodities and manage longer-term relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction programs.

Encourage donors to read your organization's annual financial report to understand what percentage of donations is spent on programs and services and on administrative fees. For a list of agencies involved in responding to major crises, with information describing activities each agency is undertaking and links to information on overhead costs, visit InterAction's Web site: www.interaction.org.

Q9. Donors still want to send material help to survivors, not just cash. How should we handle this?

A9. The truth is that every disaster is unique—both in the manner in which people are affected, and the response that is evoked. A common misunderstanding about disaster relief is that household items such as used clothing, canned food, and bottled water are urgently needed after every disaster. In fact, any needed items can usually be purchased locally. And local procurement supports merchants and economies that are also hard-hit by disasters, and provides supplies that are fresh, familiar, and culturally, nutritionally, and environmentally appropriate. Unrequested, unneeded material donations clog supply chains, take up space required to stage life-saving relief supplies for distribution, and divert relief workers' time.

- Material donations should only be considered in light of an official needs assessment made by a relief agency working in the affected area.
- People who insist on donating material goods should identify a recipient in the affected economy and arrange transportation in advance, including customs and other fees.
- Any call for material donations must meet these criteria or risk burdening the relief effort it seeks to support:
 - A credible relief organization has identified an unmet need for items being requested;
 - An organization is prepared to receive, manage and distribute the items;
 - Costs of transportation, shipping, warehousing, and distribution are covered;
 - Management of customs tariffs, fees and other cross-border requirements; and
 - Quality assurance requirements from the host government and the recipient are met and are available for disclosure.

Q10. How can we track the effectiveness of our outreach efforts after a disaster?

A10. You can track the effectiveness of your outreach efforts in a number of ways, such as:

- Monetary donations: Track the amount of money donated and compare it to the last disaster (or a recent disaster of similar size and scope); if possible, track who is donating (corporations, individual citizens, local governments, etc.)
- Material donations: Compare the amount of goods donations in the aftermath of disasters, in relation to monetary donations; compare the material donations to the last disaster.
- Social media “hits”: Facebook: number of likes, friends, post views, post likes and tone of comments (positive, negative, neutral); Twitter: Follower growth, audience reach, retweets and mentions, hash tag use.

- Media coverage: Number and quality of stories promoting the “cash-is-best” message and mention of your organization’s Web site; media interviews with your organization’s experts; and potential impressions.
- Public Service Announcements: Number of placements, monetary value of placements (if available), and potential impressions.
- Community organizations: Number of community organizations, businesses, houses of worship, etc. that agree to share your materials and promote your message to their members, constituents, people they serve and potential viewers.
- Website traffic: Number of visits and unique visitors to the organization URL that was included in all of the outreach materials.
- Web banners: Monetary value of placements, impressions, click-through rate if available from the Web site.

06 GLOSSARY

This section of the toolkit provides definitions²¹ to many common social media terms, many of which are used throughout this toolkit.

Term	Definition
Caption	A brief description that appears underneath an Instagram photo.
Engagement	Social media engagement refers to the acts of talking to, messaging or otherwise interacting with other people on social networks. This broad term encompasses a several different types of actions on social media, from commenting on Facebook posts to participating in Twitter chats. At its simplest, social media engagement is any interaction you have with other users. For that reason, it is now the center of every social media strategy. Your followers expect you to interact with them.
Favorite	An indication that someone likes your Tweet, given by clicking the star icon.
Feed	The social media data format that provides users with a steady stream of updates and information.
Follower	A Twitter user who has subscribed to your Twitter account so they can receive your Tweets in their Home feed.
Follows	The number of accounts that are following a Twitter handle.
Friend	A person that you connect with on Facebook or another social network. Unlike a follower, a friend is a two-way connection; both you and your friend have to endorse the relationship.
Handle	Handle is another way of saying your account name. USAID's Twitter handle is @USAID, for example. It is important that you try to maintain consistent handles on all of your social network profiles, since people who follow you on Twitter might want to find you on Instagram or Pinterest. A consistent handle helps people find you.
Hashtag	The hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by the “#” sign. Hashtags are a simple way to mark the topic (or topics) of social media messages and make them discoverable to people with shared interests. On most social networks, clicking a hashtag will reveal all the public and recently published messages that also contain that hashtag. Hashtags first emerged on Twitter as a user-created phenomenon and are now used on almost every other social media platform, including Facebook, Google+, Instagram, Vine and Pinterest.
Hat Tip (H/T)	The act of thanking someone or giving credit where credit is due.
Instagram	A free online photo sharing app that allows for the addition of several filters, editing, and sharing options.
Like	Derived from the dictionary-approved meaning (e.g., children like ice cream), to like something on social media is a Facebook invention that's evolved into an understood expression of support for content. Along with shares, comments, and favorites, “likes” can be tracked as proof of engagement. Facebook's algorithm adjusts individual content feeds based on like patterns.
Live Tweet	To post comments and participate in Twitter conversations while an event or situation is happening.

²¹ Information provided by Hootsuite. Available at: <http://blog.hootsuite.com/the-2015-social-media-glossary-207-essential-definitions/#L>.

Term	Definition
Mention	The act of tagging another user's handle or account name in a social media mention. Mentions typically trigger a notification for that user and are a key part of what makes social media "social." When properly formatted (for example, as an @mention on Twitter or +mention on Google+), a mention also allows your audience to click-through to the mentioned user's profile.
Modified Tweet (MT)	The act of changing someone's original Tweet when he/she retweets it.
Notification	A message or update sharing new social media activity. For example, if somebody Likes one of your Instagram photos you can receive a notification on your phone that lets you know this happened.
Pins	Favorite links stored on Pinterest are called Pins. Each Pin is made up of a picture and a description given by the user; when clicked, Pins direct users to the image source page. Pins can be liked or re-Pinned by other users. Users can also organize Pins by theme or event into visual collections called Pinboards.
Pinterest	Pinterest is a visual organizer for saving and sharing links to webpages and other media that you like—otherwise known as Pins. Pins are represented by a picture and a description of your choosing. They can be organized into collections called Pinboards. Pinterest users can share their Pins with others, or re-Pin pictures they liked from other users. Think of Pinterest as a virtual scrapbook, or a bookmarks page with pictures.
Post	A Facebook status update, or an item on a blog or forum.
Retweet (RT)	A Tweet that is re-shared to the followers of another user's Twitter account. There are two kinds of retweet: the classic "manual" retweet and the now-standard "Web retweet." In a manual retweet, you simply type "RT" before the @username and content of somebody else's Tweet. This used to be the only way you could retweet, and it is the still only way to add your own comment to a Tweet when you pass it along. A "Web retweet" is what happens when you click the official retweet button: the full Tweet appears in your timeline in its original form, complete with the author's name and avatar. Since a Web retweet allows your followers to easily retweet or favorite the original Tweet, it's generally considered good etiquette to use this method unless you have something valuable to add through a manual RT.
Share	When content is reposted on a social media site through another user's channel.
Tag	A keyword added to a social media post with the original purpose of categorizing related content. A tag can also refer to the act of tagging someone in a post, which creates a link to his/her social media profile and associates him/her with the content.
Thread	A strand of messages that represent a conversation or part of a conversation. Threads are essential to most forms of online communication, including social media, Web forums, and email. Without them, it is incredibly difficult to put messages into context or keep track of ongoing conversations. Anyone who used email before Gmail revolutionized the medium with threaded conversations can attest to that. Threads begin with an initial message and then continue as a series of replies or comments.
Throwback Thursday (#tbt)	A weekly social media tradition in which people make Instagram a little less instant. Although Throwback Thursday wasn't invented on Instagram, the term has been widely popularized by the platform. Essentially, every Thursday users post either an old

Term	Definition
	photograph of themselves (as a child, in high school, etc.) or a saved photo they took more recently but want to share because it's good.
Trend(ing)	A topic or hashtag that is popular on social media at a given moment. Trends are highlighted by social networks such as Twitter and Facebook to encourage discussion and engagement among their users. The “trending” concept was first popularized by Twitter and has since been adopted by Facebook, Google+, and other networks. The trends that you see on Twitter and Facebook are personalized for you, based on your location as well as who you follow or what pages you like.
Troll	A social media user who makes deliberately offensive or annoying postings with the sole aim of provoking another user or group of users.
Tweet	A social network and media platform that enables users to publish 140-character messages along with photos, videos, and other content. Twitter is famous for its real time and emergent discussions on breaking news stories and trends.
Unfollow	The action of unsubscribing from another Twitter user's account.
Unfriend	The action of removing someone from a list of social media contacts.

PROMOTING APPROPRIATE DONATIONS TEMPLATES

07T FACT SHEET TEMPLATE

08T MEDIA OUTREACH EMAIL TEMPLATE

09T ORGANIZATIONAL OUTREACH EMAIL TEMPLATE

10T RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT TEMPLATE

11T MEDIA ADVISORY PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

12T LETTER TO THE EDITOR TEMPLATE

13T REPORTING-OUT TEMPLATE

14T VISUAL RESOURCES

07T FACT SHEET

Fact sheets can be a powerful supplement to any outreach effort. They can provide relevant statistics that strengthen your organization's message.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Use the first page of this fact sheet as a stand-alone piece, or as a starting point to create your own fact sheet.
 2. Include information describing your organization, your economy/region, disasters most relevant to your area and, when applicable, the current disaster and how your organization is responding. Include citations whenever possible.
-

CASH DONATIONS ARE THE BEST DONATIONS

Cash can be used immediately in response to a crisis. Cash allows disaster relief organizations and government agencies to purchase exactly what is needed, when it is needed, and to procure supplies near the affected area. Disaster situations evolve quickly and cash contributions enable relief agencies to respond to new requirements as they arise. Monetary donations are easy, effective, and versatile.

Unlike material donations, cash donations entail no transportation costs, no delays, no customs and other fees, no carbon footprint and they do not divert relief workers' time. Cash donations allow relief supplies to be purchased in markets close to the disaster site, which stimulates local economies by stabilizing employment and generating cash flow. Cash donations ensure that commodities are fresh and familiar to survivors, that supplies arrive expeditiously and that goods are culturally, nutritionally and environmentally appropriate. Few material donations have this highly beneficial, four-fold impact. Finally, cash donations can be as personal and rewarding as giving goods.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON DISASTER DONATIONS

- People around the world show tremendous concern and generosity when disasters occur in their own economy or abroad.
- Unfortunately, even the best intentions can have a negative impact on disaster relief operations.
- Unsolicited donations of household items—such as used clothing, canned food and bottled water—can do more harm than good.
- The intent of this project is to provide a set of recommendations tailored for aid organizations and government agencies who aim to raise financial donations in the wake of a disaster.

ABOUT THE REGION

- APEC's 21 member economies account for approximately 55 percent of the world's GDP, 52 percent of the earth's surface area and 59 percent of the world's population—yet they experience a majority of the world's natural disasters.
- [LIST RECENT, DEVASTATING DISASTERS IN THE LAST 10 YEARS. INCLUDE ECONOMIC IMPACT, IF AVAILABLE. FOR ONE POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION, SEE THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF DISASTERS (CRED) (<http://www.emdat.be/>) FOR STATISTICS BY ECONOMY.]

08T MEDIA OUTREACH EMAIL TEMPLATE

The audience for this email template is local and regional radio and television media outlets whose help you are soliciting to spread the word on appropriate disaster relief donations.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write the email using this template. Customize the email below by filling in details describing your organization and information on the current/pending disaster.
2. Personalize each email by including a specific, targeted point of contact at each media outlet you are attempting to reach.
3. Attach the PSAs for dissemination and other materials from the toolkit that would be helpful.
4. Be sure to provide your contact information.
5. Send the emails and be sure to follow up on any subsequent queries.

EMAIL

Subject: Encouraging monetary donations to help with disaster relief

Dear [MEDIA CONTACT]:

[INTRODUCTION OF RECENT DISASTER AND LIVES AFFECTED.] We are writing because we at [ORGANIZATION] are working to provide relief for survivors of this disaster. [BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIZATION.]

In response to the [DISASTER], we are conducting relief operations to ensure disaster victims receive the resources that are needed most. In order to accomplish this urgent mission efficiently and effectively, we are relying on the generous monetary donations of the [ECONOMY] public. Attached please find [public service announcements, etc.] that we hope you will consider [airing, publishing, posting on your Web site, etc.] to encourage your [viewers, listeners, readers, followers, etc.] to provide monetary donations (rather than material donations) in support of relief efforts currently underway. Monetary donations can be applied quickly to purchase exactly what people need when they need it, and may be used to address changing needs as the situation evolves.

The [ATTACHED/BELOW] materials illustrate how even a small monetary donation can do so much to help. Your commitment to air these PSAs can make a significant difference in improving the lives affected by [DISASTER], and allow [ORGANIZATION] to provide the most effective support. On behalf of the victims in [REGION], we greatly appreciate your generosity and support.

Thank you,

[NAME OF WRITER AND WRITER'S TITLE]

[WRITER'S ORGANIZATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION]

09T ORGANIZATIONAL OUTREACH EMAIL TEMPLATE

The audiences for this email template include other organizations and agencies with whom you want to partner or whose help you are soliciting to spread the word on appropriate disaster relief donations. This email is worded to be sent just after a disaster hits, but could be sent before a disaster with some revisions.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write the email using this template. Customize the email below by filling in details describing your organization and information on the current/pending disaster.
2. Personalize each email by addressing it to a specific point of contact at each organization to whom you are writing.
3. Be sure to provide your contact information.
4. Send the emails and be sure to follow up on any subsequent queries.

EMAIL

Subject: Encouraging monetary donations to help with disaster relief

Dear [ORGANIZATION CONTACT]:

[INTRODUCTION OF RECENT DISASTER AND LIVES AFFECTED.] We are reaching out to accomplished partners like you who are dedicated to effective support of emergency relief efforts. As you know, monetary donations are critically important in the aftermath of all disasters because they can be used quickly to purchase exactly what is needed to support affected people and strengthen the recovery effort.

This is why we are contacting you now to ask you to explore this communications toolkit, in which you will find a number of resources that will help communicate the benefits of monetary donations in support of [NAME OF REGION OR DISASTER] disaster relief efforts.

Included in the toolkit are background information on appropriate donations and instructions on how to use the toolkit; social media tips and examples; and tips for reaching out to media contacts. Outreach materials that can be customized by local organizations and shared with the media are also included. The toolkit is easy to use and contains helpful guidance to deliver effective messages that encourage appropriate donations.

We appreciate your support in this effort. Together, we can make a huge difference in the lives of people affected by the [INSERT NAME OF DISASTER].

Thank you,

[NAME OF WRITER AND WRITER'S TITLE]

[WRITER'S ORGANIZATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION]

10T RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SAMPLE LIVE RADIO SCRIPTS

Share these PSA scripts with your local radio stations and ask that announcers read them during their broadcasts. The longer scripts can be read during programming focused on community events or other disaster relief efforts. The 15-second scripts can easily follow a weather or traffic report.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Call or email your local radio stations and ask to speak with person responsible for programming or community relations. Find out the station's rules and preferences regarding PSAs and ask whether the station's announcers will read your scripts.
2. Customize these scripts to "speak to" your intended audience, and include your organization information and details on the disaster for which you are helping to provide relief.
3. Choose which script(s) to use, customize it, and then email, text, fax, or physically deliver the announcements you want to be read on the air.
4. Follow up with your point of contact and thank him/her for helping with disaster relief efforts.

60-SECOND SCRIPT SAMPLE

[ORGANIZATION NAME] is helping provide relief for the [NAME OF DISASTER] and we are asking listeners to visit [URL] to make a donation and help the families in need. Relief workers are on site ensuring that disaster victims receive the resources that are needed most. To accomplish this important and urgent mission efficiently and effectively, they are relying on the generous monetary donations of the [ECONOMY] public. Please consider making a monetary contribution. Monetary donations allow relief workers to direct the funds where they are needed most quickly and effectively. Your cash contribution can make a significant difference in helping [ORGANIZATION] improve the lives affected by [DISASTER], and allow [ORGANIZATION] to provide relief and comfort to families in need. Please go to [URL] or call [FILL IN HERE] to donate now. Even a small amount can make a huge impact. Again, go to [URL] to make a donation today.

30-SECOND SCRIPT SAMPLES

The recent [NAME OF DISASTER] has affected [REALISTIC NUMBERS] of people in [LOCATION]. As [ORGANIZATION] provides relief to disaster victims, it is relying on your generous monetary donations—which are the quickest and most effective way to help when a disaster like this occurs. Cash donations will be used to quickly purchase exactly what is needed the

most at this time, allowing relief organizations and agencies to provide relief efficiently. Go to [URL] to donate now. Even a small amount can make a huge impact. Again, that's [URL].

The recent [NAME] disaster has affected [REALISTIC NUMBERS] of people in [LOCATION]. In the wake of a disaster like this, monetary donations help relief operations and ensure that disaster victims receive the resources that are needed most. Your money can help save lives. Go to [URL] to donate now. Even a small amount can make a huge impact. Again, that's [URL]

The recent [NAME OF DISASTER] has affected [REALISTIC NUMBERS] of people in [LOCATION]. When you donate cash you save time, money, and allow aid workers to purchase materials needed by disaster victims. Not only can monetary donations help alleviate the immediate situation, but over time they enable long-term recovery in [REGION]. Make the biggest impact. Remove the middleman. Go to [URL] to donate now. Even a small amount can make a huge impact.

15-SECOND SCRIPT SAMPLES

People affected by the recent [NAME] disaster need your help. In the wake of a disaster like this, cash donations help relief operations to ensure that disaster victims receive the resources that are needed most. Go to [URL] to donate now. Even a small amount can have a huge impact.

People affected by the recent [NAME of disaster] need your help. Cash donations are the quickest and most effective way to contribute when disaster strikes. Go to [URL] to donate now. Even a small amount can have a huge impact.

People affected by the recent [NAME OF DISASTER] need your help. When you donate cash you save time, money, and allow aid workers to purchase materials urgently needed by disaster victims. Make the biggest impact. Remove the middleman. Go to [URL] to donate now. Even a small amount can make a huge difference.

IIT MEDIA ADVISORY AND PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATES

The audiences for these templates are local and regional media outlets through which you want to communicate about appropriate disaster relief donations. **Media advisories** (or “alerts”) are used to alert reporters to an upcoming event, a news conference, a photo opportunity, an opportunity to interview subject matter experts, etc. A media advisory is used when you want to engage reporters on a specific date/time. **News releases** (or press releases) are effective when you have some news or an announcement you want the media to report to its audience. Sometimes an organization will use both. For example, the organization will send reporters a media advisory inviting them to participate in a news conference. Then at the news conference, the organization will provide reporters with a news release about the announcement they are making that day.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write the media advisory or press release using one of the templates provided.
 2. Follow the media outlet’s guidelines for formatting and publication. (These may be available on the media outlet’s Web site.)
 3. Customize the templates by filling in details on your organization and information on the current or pending disaster.
 4. Be sure to check spelling and grammar.
 5. Send the media advisory or press release to a specific point of contact at each media outlet.
 6. Be sure to include your own contact information.
 7. Email your media advisory or press release to ensure timely delivery. To do this, paste the text into the body of an email. Do not send it as an attachment.
 8. Follow up to make sure it was received and will be printed, and to respond to any additional queries.
-

MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE

For Immediate Release: [TODAY'S DATE] **Contact:** [POC's NAME/EMAIL/TELEPHONE]

MEDIA ADVISORY

[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] PROVIDES HELP TO VICTIMS OF
[NAME OF DISASTER]

[CITY, PROVINCE/STATE, ECONOMY] – [ORGANIZATION NAME] is helping to provide relief for the [NAME OF DISASTER].

[NAME AND TITLE OF SPOKESPERSON #1, ORGANIZATION X] and
[NAME AND TITLE OF SPOKESPERSON #2, ORGANIZATION Y] are
available for LIVE and TAPED interviews via satellite on [DATE] from [TIME]
– [TIME] EDT

[Insert information on the disaster] [INSERT INFORMATION DESCRIBING YOUR ORGANIZATION, THE RELIEF EFFORTS, RESOURCES NEEDED, ETC.] For more information, visit [INSERT URL].

Spokespeople will be available for interviews to discuss:

- The current disaster and its impacts on the community
- Where families can go to get help
- What [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] is doing to support the victims

###

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

For Immediate Release: [TODAY'S DATE] **Contact:** [POC's NAME/EMAIL/TELEPHONE]

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] provides help in wake of [NAME OF DISASTER]

*[CITY, PROVINCE/STATE, ECONOMY] – [ORGANIZATION NAME] is helping to provide relief for the
[NAME OF DISASTER].*

[CITY] – [BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION.] In response to disasters, one of [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s jobs is to conduct relief operations that ensure that disaster victims receive the resources that are most needed. In order to accomplish this important and urgent mission efficiently and effectively, it is relying on the generosity of the [NAME OF REGION/AUDIENCE] people to provide monetary donations because they can be used to purchase exactly what people need when they need it, and may be used to quickly address changing needs as the situation evolves.

[INSERT QUOTE FROM EMERGENCY MANAGER OR AID ORGANIZATION]

While donations of clothing, food, bottled water, or toys may feel more personal than a monetary donation, the truth is that even a small financial contribution can do more good, with greater speed and sensitivity. Cash donations provide medical and other life-saving services now, and can help to rebuild infrastructure later.

[INSERT MORE DETAILS DESCRIBING THE DISASTER.] [INSERT QUOTE FROM LOCAL SPOKESPERSON.]

Cash donations are the quickest and most effective way to help the people affected by [DISASTER]. Easy ways to help now:

- [CUSTOMIZE APPROPRIATELY].
- Visit [URL] and click [i.e., Donate Now, Help Now] to make a donation.
- Text [XX] to [INSERT NUMBER] on your Smartphone to make a [i.e., \$10 USD] donation.

Time is critical after a disaster, and cash donations can be directed quickly and efficiently to victims that need immediate help. Professional relief agencies use monetary contributions to purchase exactly what disaster victims need. These organizations work directly with the victims at the disaster site and are in the best position to know not only what is immediately needed, but also when and where it is most needed.

[NAME OF RELIEF ORGANIZATION/APEC ECONOMY] is collaborating with [NAMES OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS] to ensure a coordinated response to people and locations most in need.

###

12T LETTER TO THE EDITOR TEMPLATE

A letter to the editor of a newspaper or other publication is an easy way to make a big impact. Editors do not publish every letter they receive, but they do pay attention – especially to letters that are well written or connected to an article that was just published.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write your letter using this template. Make it relevant. Be concise. Mind your word count.
2. If you are responding to articles or editorials by the media outlet, use the first sentence to reference the title of the article, the name of the publication, and the date it appeared.
3. Follow the publication's guidelines. Many publications have specific formatting requirements, so check the publication's Web site before submitting your letter.
4. Always include full contact information for the author(s). Follow the publication's rules regarding letters to the editor.
5. Spell everything correctly and pay close attention to grammar.
6. Submit your letter to the editor of appropriate media outlets (e.g., newspapers and other print and online publications. Email your letter to ensure timely delivery. To do this, paste the text into the body of an email. Do not send your letter as an attachment.
7. Follow up. Once you have submitted your letter, follow up with a phone call 24 hours later to find out if it will be printed/posted.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR TEMPLATE

[NAME OF MEDIA OUTLET OR PUBLICATION]

Attention: [NAME OF EDITOR]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY], [PROVINCE/STATE] [POSTAL CODE]

[DATE]

Dear Editor,

[STATE YOUR REASON FOR WRITING. IF YOU ARE RESPONDING TO ARTICLES OR EDITORIALS BY THE MEDIA OUTLET, USE THE FIRST SENTENCE TO REFERENCE THE TITLE OF THE ARTICLE, THE NAME OF THE PUBLICATION, AND THE DATE IT APPEARED.]

I am writing in response to the article, "[ARTICLE HEADLINE]," [SECTION], [DATE]. It is clear that many people have been affected by this disaster and that additional help is urgently needed. It is heartening to see the compassion people are showing for those affected by this disaster.

[STATE YOUR CASE; HIGHLIGHT FACTS, REFERENCES, OR RESEARCH TO ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY.]

The most effective donations respond to survivors' needs, which can change every day as disaster situations evolve. Monetary donations allow aid organizations and government agencies to execute relief efforts efficiently and effectively, and can be used quickly to purchase exactly what is needed.

Collecting clothing, food, bottled water, toys and other household items may feel more meaningful for donors than monetary donations but even small financial contributions can do more good for more people more efficiently than unsolicited material donations. For example, financial donations can support critical health and family reunification programs now, and help with rebuilding later. Donated cash can facilitate local purchases, which help the local economy while serving more people because of charitable organizations' bulk buying power.

In contrast, uninvited material donations can clog supply chains, take up space needed for life-saving relief supplies and divert relief workers' time. Managing piles of unsolicited items adds to the cost of emergency response by forcing changes to distribution plans and requiring disposal at further expense.

[MAKE A CALL TO ACTION, ASKING READERS TO FOLLOW UP WITH ACTIVITY]

By giving responsibly, [name of economy's people] can provide the most beneficial support to survivors and to disaster relief efforts. Monetary contributions to trusted relief agencies already on the ground in affected areas ensure that people receive exactly what they need, when they need it. Cash donations allow relief agencies to purchase supplies that are fresh and familiar to survivors, and that are culturally, nutritionally, and environmentally appropriate.

[INSERT TARGETED BEST-SUITED MESSAGE HERE, SUCH AS: Make the biggest impact. Cut out the middleman. When you donate cash you save time, money, and allow aid workers to purchase necessary materials for disaster victims.]

I urge the [NAME OF PAPER] and its readers to make a cash donation now to help the people of [NAME OF ECONOMY]. For a list of established relief agencies already on the ground in [REGION] and for more information on how to help, please visit: [FILL IN WITH WEB SITES OF ORGANIZATIONS ACCEPTING DONATIONS FOR THIS DISASTER RELIEF EFFORT.]

Sincerely,

[WRITER'S SIGNATURE]

[NAME OF WRITER]

[WRITER'S TITLE]

[WRITER'S ORGANIZATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION]

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Here is a sample letter written in response to a specific news story from the Center for International Disaster Information at www.cidi.org.

[DATE]

Ms. Toby Collodora

Executive Editor

wcconewstips@wcco.com.

Dear Ms. Collodora,

Regarding the article, “Charities, Somali Community Send Food to Somalia,” NEWS Section, August 12, 2011, I wanted to provide some information that your readers may find useful. Americans show tremendous concern for people affected by disasters. When disaster strikes overseas, individuals, groups and communities in the U.S. are quick to organize support for saving lives and reducing human suffering. The goal is always to help as many people as possible, as quickly as possible.

The most effective donations respond to population needs, which can change every day in the early stages of recovery. Collecting clothing, food, bottled water, toys and other household items may feel more emotionally satisfying than monetary donations. But the truth is that even small financial contributions can do more good for more people more quickly and with greater efficiency than unsolicited material donations. For example, financial donations can support critical health and sanitation programs now, and help rebuild infrastructure later. Also, charitable organizations’ bulk buying power greatly enlarges the good that small donations can do. A \$2 donation can often feed more people than sending canned food worth \$2, especially when transportation costs and other fees are added.

By giving responsibly, Americans can provide the most beneficial support to survivors and to international disaster relief efforts. Monetary contributions to credible, established relief agencies already on the ground in affected areas ensure that people receive exactly what they need, when they need it. Cash donations allow relief agencies to quickly purchase, organize, and deliver supplies that are fresh and familiar to survivors, and that are culturally, nutritionally, and environmentally appropriate. No unsolicited material donation conveys all these benefits at such low cost.

People who do the most good practice smart compassion. For a list of established relief agencies already on the ground in Somalia and for more information on how to help, please visit:

www.cidi.org.

Sincerely,

Juanita Rilling

Director

Center for International Disaster Information

I3T REPORTING-OUT TEMPLATE

It is crucial for governments and disaster relief agencies to communicate immediately after a disaster to share information on the needs of the affected population, and to continue communicating how donations are being utilized so the public has confidence that donated funds are being used effectively and efficiently. This may require that the organization or government agency assign a person wholly dedicated to collect and organize this information, but the benefits are many. With regular proactive communication by government, public service, and charitable organizations on their use of donations received to date, the public will be more informed about how to effectively support those organizations, trust that their donations are being put to good use, and more inclined to continue to donate.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Carefully document donations pledged and received by your NGOs or government agencies.
2. Consider assembling the following information on donations collected and how the donations were used, or other metrics relevant to your situation and/or agency.
3. Post the information to an appropriate Web site to make it available to those interested. You can also post this information via social media so potential donors can see how contributions are being used.
4. Consider making visually accessible graphics, such as pie charts, and post these online or to social media to show donors how their money was used.

Donations Pledged and Received

Contributions Pledged	As of [date]	Contributions Received	As of [date]
Total foreign aid pledged to [agency]:		Total foreign aid received:	
Total foreign cash pledged to [agency]:		Total foreign cash received by [agency]:	
Total foreign non-cash pledged to [agency]:		Total foreign non-cash received by [agency]:	
Total domestic aid pledged to [agency]:		Total domestic aid received by [agency]:	
Total domestic cash pledged to [agency]:		Total domestic cash received by [agency]:	
Total domestic non-cash pledged to [agency]:		Total domestic non-cash received by [agency]:	
Add other relevant metrics here		Add other relevant metrics here	
Add other relevant metrics here		Add other relevant metrics here	
Add other relevant metrics here		Add other relevant metrics here	
Add other relevant metrics here		Add other relevant metrics here	

How Donations Have Been Used

How Contributions Were Used for [Disaster Event]	Documented Donation Details	Notes
Of the non-cash donations you received, were they distributed? If so, where and how?		
– Provide an inventory of what unsolicited, non-cash donations you received		
– Document the staff and number of hours they dedicated to managing these donations		
– Document the other direct costs (non-labor) you incurred to transport, organize, store and dispose of these donations		
– Provide an analysis of how much total time and resources were dedicated to handling inappropriate donations		
Percent of cash donations used to cover administrative expenses		
Percent of cash donations used for direct aid relief		
Of direct aid relief, how was the cash spent (e.g., number of tents purchased locally, liters of water purchased, etc.)?		List actual amounts and percentages of what was collected and include how it was used
Number of affected people helped by cash donations		
Number of affected people helped by non-cash donations		
Number of local and/or regional businesses that supplies were purchased from		
How much donated cash was spent locally? Regionally?		
Additional metrics here		Include additional metrics and results pertinent to your specific situation

I4T VISUAL RESOURCES

The CIDI has a selection of customizable visual templates that anyone can use free of charge. These announcements use subtle humor to reinforce the primary message that material donations are often not needed and inappropriate. The call to action emphasized in these materials is to visit CIDI's Web site at <http://www.cidi.org> to learn how to make an appropriate donation.

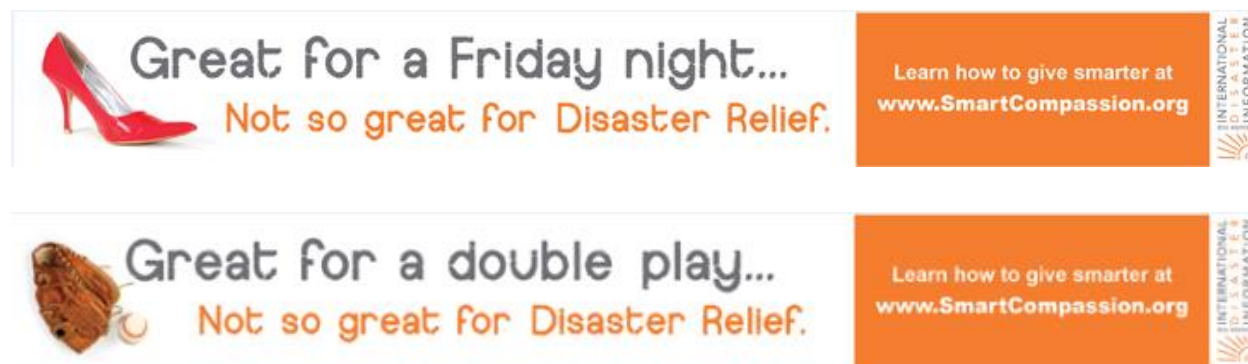
GUIDANCE ON USING CIDI RESOURCES

These resources are clever and visually appealing, and CIDI has provided multiple examples for printing or online use. If these images are appropriate for your economy, region, or community, download the file(s) and incorporate them into your communications materials. You can:

- Post a banner ad on your Web site.
- Share the graphics on your social media platforms and encourage your followers to “like” and “share” them.
- Display the posters in your office cafeteria and the bulletin boards at local coffee shops, grocery stores and libraries.
- Distribute the posters to your community partners for them share with their constituents.

Some examples of the customizable resources are included below and on the following pages.

Website Banner Ads:



Full Page Ads:

Great for mowing the lawn...



Not so great for Disaster Relief

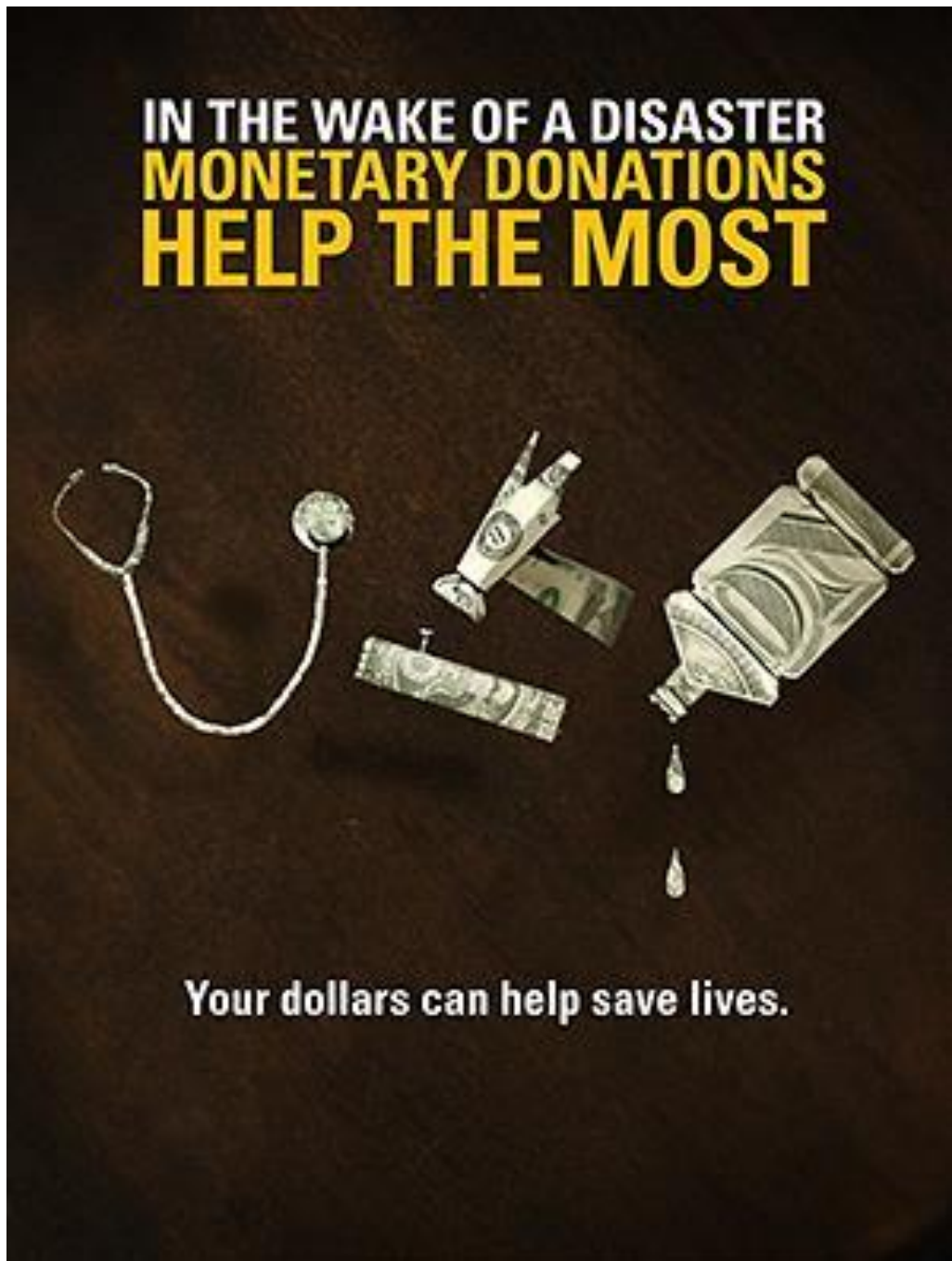
When disaster strikes, compassionate people want to help. While donations of clothing, food, bottled water or toys may feel more personal than a monetary donation, the truth is that even a small financial contribution can do more good for more people, with greater speed and sensitivity. Cash donations provide medical and other life-saving services now, and rebuild infrastructure later. It doesn't take much to make a big difference.

LEARN ABOUT DONATIONS THAT MAKE THE CUT.

Check out the guidelines at www.smartcompassion.org.



Credit: Center for International Disaster Information



Credit: Ad Council and Center for International Disaster Information Toolkit

GUIDANCE ON CUSTOMIZING CIDI RESOURCES

CIDI provides a number of these designs as customizable print ads or posters. Visit <http://www.cidi.org> to download the “editable” files and insert your organization’s logo and URL.

These posters can be an effective supplement to a long-term education campaign to teach the general public what is – and what is not – needed after a disaster.

The designs are eye-catching and intended to motive people to learn how they can be helpful after a disaster. The call to action is to visit <http://www.cidi.org> where people can browse through a number of informative fact sheets, donation guidelines and outreach materials.



Use this space to insert your organization name or URL as a secondary and/or local resource.

GUIDANCE ON MODIFYING THE CIDI VISUALS TO FIT YOUR AUDIENCE

The CIDI designs may not work for every economy or culture, but the creative concept can be expanded for “global” appeal. With some simple modifications, such as different imagery that may be more familiar in other regions of the world (e.g., a football/soccer ball rather than a baseball glove) these materials can be useful for a wide array of audiences. The visual materials can be easily adapted to work as postcards, posters, Web site banners or badges, print ads, and social media posts.

Some simple modifications are described below:

Replace the image with a football or soccer ball – a global icon for men, women and children of all ages and cultures.

Text can be translated and/or edited for your economy and audience.

The principal message of “cash is best” is prominent. And the call-to-action is front and center.

Space to promote your organization’s social media platforms.

**Great for a corner kick...
Not so great for disaster relief.**

Even a small financial contribution can do more good, with greater speed and sensitivity than donations of clothing, bottled water, or sports equipment. In the wake of a disaster, cash donations help disaster victims receive the resources that are needed most.



Giving wisely is good sportsmanship.

Cash is best. Make your donation here:
[Insert #hashtag website URL, Twitter handle]

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO USE VISUALS

Another way to solicit monetary donations and drive people to your Web site to make a donation is to include a banner or badge in your email signature. The email signature banner and badges link directly to your organization's Web site for the purpose of soliciting monetary donations. Simply download the banner and/or badges from the CIDI Web site, open the file, and copy and paste them into your email signature. Adding this visual to your email signature line is an easy, eye-catching way to promote the cash-is-best message and drive visitors to your Web site. Hyperlink the email signature to your Web site and share the email signature with your staff and partner organizations so that everyone is promoting a unified message on all communications. An example of how you might do this is shown below.

Example Signature

Susie Smith

Community Disaster Response

1234 Main Avenue

Anywhereville, State, Economy

00-12-123-1234

ssmith@crd.org

IN THE WAKE OF A DISASTER
MONETARY DONATIONS HELP THE MOST.

