



## SHORT CHECKLIST FOR EFFECTIVE DISASTER RESPONSE:

*Insights for Wise Humanitarian Action*

Developed by [The Raqim Foundation](#) & [PhilanthropyNow](#)

**\*\* NOTE TO USERS: CONSIDER GIVING MONEY BEFORE GIVING SUPPLIES \*\***  
(See Section 1 of Full Checklist)

### **WHY THIS CHECKLIST?**

The new millennium has brought fresh consciousness of global interdependence and the widening disparities among peoples. Throughout the world, growing numbers of small community-based organizations are committing to action.

When a natural or man-made disaster strikes in another part of the world, the images flash across the media screens. Compassionate people want to respond. Small organizations, government agencies and businesses often possess the resources needed to meet the challenges. However, they often lack experience in humanitarian practice or disaster relief.

Many well-intentioned relief efforts are not only unproductive but may cause harm. Inappropriate items are donated. Items are shipped long distances when they could be acquired nearby. Un-needed supplies incur storage and disposal costs and divert time and energy. Shipments may not be timely enough to be useful or may fall into the wrong hands.

This Checklist helps organizations new to emergency response choose options for supporting disaster-affected people. It is informed by humanitarian principles and evidence-based practice in emergency response. It results from careful research, project debriefings, and review comments by experts.

The goal of the Checklist is more effective coordination among organizations to ensure that assistance meets needs and strengthens community resilience while building on local community-led solutions generated at the impact zone. The intended outcome is more positive measurable, tangible results for all concerned.

### **USING THIS CHECKLIST**

The Checklist is designed to help organizations consider, plan, or implement relief projects. It helps donors think through the variables inherent in emergency logistics. To determine needs, plan responses, communicate along the supply chain, manage risk, and establish an environment for success, it's necessary to work collaborate with partners. Considering every step enhances your ability to make an impact, saves lives, and uses resources wisely. The current economic climate makes it especially important to assure donors that their gifts are making a difference. It is our intent that this Checklist will enable nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and their local partners to build trust with donors and one another, while remaining ultimately accountable to beneficiaries in the crisis zone.

### **THE CHECKLIST IS NOT....**

- A replacement for working with seasoned intermediaries on the ground.
- An endorsement of particular organizations.
- A static tool but rather an evolving one.

### **The Raqim Foundation & PhilanthropyNow welcome your comments**

The Checklist will continue to evolve with reader input. Please send your comments and suggestions to [advocate@philanthropynow.com](mailto:advocate@philanthropynow.com)

# CHECKLIST FOR EFFECTIVE DISASTER RESPONSE: SHORT FORM

Developed by [The Ragim Foundation](#) & [PhilanthropyNow](#)

## Key Points

- Do your homework: Assess receiver needs and your capabilities.
- Don't act alone: Collaborate with proven on the ground partners.
- Mostly send money: Buy supplies near the disaster rather than ship.
- Create greater independence: Empower recipients for greater self-sufficiency.
- Minimize theft: Create a strong corruption mitigation plan.
- Debrief, acknowledge, publicize, celebrate: Learn from mistakes and successes.

### 1. ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

How do you know what is needed? How do you decide? How will you collaborate with people in disaster-affected areas? Will your giving do good or do unintentional harm? Will you give to meet immediate survival needs and/or for rebuilding infrastructure and/or self-sufficiency development and/or disaster preparedness?

### 2. PARTNERING, PLANNING AND MISSION CONSISTENCY

How does the project align with your organization's mission? How will you partner with other groups? Can United Nations agencies and international NGOs support your efforts?

### 3. SHIPPING OR ACQUIRING SUPPLIES LOCALLY

What specific items and equipment meet documented needs in ways that are suitable, durable, safe, and culturally appropriate? Which goods should you ship from outside the country and which should you buy in the region of the impact zone?

### 4. CHOOSING AND CONTRACTING VENDORS

How do you choose vendors of goods and of services such as logistics, finance, customs clearance, warehousing, security and transport? Are there guidelines for qualifying vendors' economic viability, experience, ethics, cultural sensitivity and adherence to equitable conflict resolution procedures?

### 5. MOVEMENT OF GOODS

How will goods be transported? What combination of boat, train, plane, truck and local options such as pack animals or human carriers, will get goods to those who need them? What routes will be used? What is your step-by-step logistics plan for ordering, shipping, payment, customs and security?

### 6. DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS IN THE IMPACT ZONE

How will local organizations in the impact zone distribute the goods to individuals? How will the goods be secured until they reach the hands of end users?

### 7. MONITORING AND COMMUNICATION

How will you monitor the transport of goods to their destination? How will partners along the route inform one another that goods have been received and reshipped? How will people in the field communicate with people at headquarters? How will you deal with loss, damage or corruption along the way?

### 8. CREATING INDEPENDENCE NOT DEPENDENCE

How will you involve beneficiaries in planning and implementation? How can your project move beyond charity to promote community self-sufficiency and empowerment?

**9. EVALUATION, LESSONS LEARNED AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

How will you gather stories about the process and the outcomes? How will you track both the good practices and failures of the project so everyone can learn from them? How will lessons learned be recycled in training for future projects?

**10. COMMUNICATION WITH DONORS, PARTNERS, AND THE MEDIA**

How will you publicize the project, celebrate completion and honor and re-engage participants? How will you collect stories about the process, results and impact?

**For complete Checklist, resources and background download a PDF from the developers websites:**

[www.raqimfoundation.org](http://www.raqimfoundation.org) and [www.philanthropy.com](http://www.philanthropy.com)

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