



guide

Corporate *Disaster Relief* Guide

Being prepared to support communities



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Corporate disaster relief programs are essential for all organisations that are able to support communities. Over the last decade, nearly 4,000 natural disasters have impacted 2 billion people and cost \$1.7 billion in damages.

Disasters pose as much of a threat to social and economic development in the developing world as some major diseases, such as tuberculosis.

The frequency with which communities face these disasters is likely to increase, with the past ten years seeing a 41% increase in disasters related to changing temperatures, precipitation, sea levels, and other factors related to climate.

It's important to remember that disasters affect the entire community, including your employees within the community. Organisations need to be increasingly prepared to respond to these crises quickly and effectively—through thorough corporate disaster relief programs.



What is *Disaster Relief*?

Disaster relief refers to the process of providing aid to persons and communities who have suffered from some form of catastrophe. This relief comes in the form of cash donations or services and is typically used to provide support after events like hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, drought, riots, and pandemics.

Disaster relief responses require ample planning, and pass through four key disaster management phases:

1. Mitigation

The first phase of corporate disaster relief focuses on attempting to stop disaster from developing in the first place. Mitigative measures can be structural, such as flood-levees and tech, and non-structural, such as legislation and insurance.

Organisations can support their community before disaster strikes by helping to fund preventative measures and by following and pushing for protective legislation.

2. Preparedness

In the second phase, emergency managers develop plans of action for when disaster strikes. This includes making efforts to communicate the plan effectively to everyone involved, as well as ensuring efficient cooperation between engaged parties. In an organisation, this looks like clear communication and sufficient briefing

3. Response

Phase three involves mobilising the plans created in phase two. The response should address immediate threats presented by the disaster, such as food shortages, housing issues, and any other humanitarian need.

Those involved in the response phase should know their role before disaster strikes. Partnerships will mobilise on the pre-made plans to act during a crisis.

4. Recovery

The final phase of corporate disaster relief involves restoring the local community to a sense of normalcy. The recovery phase focuses on the needs of the community following the immediate response, such as rebuilding destroyed property, re-employment, and re-housing.

Recovery begins when the immediate threat to human life has subsided and shows the community that your organisation is invested in the community's long-term recovery.

While phase one aims to avoid and limit disasters, phase two ensures there's a plan of action prepared for if they do. Phase three and four focus on how to react after disaster strikes.

All phases of the disaster response management cycle are essential for developing corporate disaster relief programs, and focusing on the long-term helps companies when it comes to short-term disaster relief.

Companies often scramble to help after a disaster. However, during a disaster is not the time to be attempting to organise helpful partnerships. Preparing all aspects of the disaster management cycle puts your organisation in an ideal position to provide relief when communities need it most.



“Even while focusing on immediate needs, remember that it will take some time for the full range of needs to emerge. Power loss, transportation outages, and flood-damaged homes may be top of mind, but it takes a while to truly understand the impact that the disaster has had on people’s lives. Be patient in planning for disaster funding. Recovery will take a long time, and flexible funding will be needed throughout.”



CENTER FOR DISASTER PHILANTHROPY

Why is *disaster relief* important?

Catastrophic events are happening more and more frequently, and traditional sources such as governments and nonprofits—are unable to keep up. More and more people are being affected by disasters every year, and the aid provided by organizations is essential for adequately supporting communities in the aftermath.

In 1990, less than 20% of the 500 largest US companies donated funds to disaster relief. By 2014, this number had increased to 95% of companies, and the average donation had

With disasters on the rise and nonprofits struggling to keep up, corporations have an important step in to provide relief and aid.

What are *some examples* of disaster relief?

Droughts, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and tsunamis have all devastated communities over the years. Corporations have been instrumental in the efforts following these disasters, but the ways in which they can help varies from one organization to another.

Here are some examples of how companies have supported communities following a catastrophe.



AT&T *waives fees* following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines

Typhoon Haiyan was one of the most powerful tropical cyclones ever recorded. The aftermath saw damages amounting to \$2.2 billion and upwards of 6000 casualties across the Philippines, Vietnam, China, and Taiwan.

Following the catastrophe, AT&T offered their wireless customers unlimited calls and minutes to the Philippines. This allowed people to contact their loved ones free of charge and provided many suffering the much-needed chance to speak to their loved ones.

P&G provides *essential products* following Hurricane Isaac

During the 2012 hurricane season, the US state of Louisiana was hit by a category one hurricane. It affected the Lesser Antilles, Greater Antilles, Gulf of Mexico, and the southwest coast of the United States.

Mass flooding in New Orleans left many without essential items. Procter and Gamble responded in New Orleans and the surrounding areas by sending water purifier packets, batteries, and hygiene products from their vast product portfolio. They also acted similarly following other disasters, such as Hurricane Sandy and the Assam flood in India.



Dell teamed up with HP and Microsoft to *donate products* after Fukushima

Following the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, Dell and HP teamed up to facilitate communication in the area. A total of 250 long-life laptops were sent to the area alongside 100 laptops equipped with Microsoft's free internet access to enable volunteers to communicate.

Employees also traveled to Japan to help the cleanup efforts, bringing with them the necessary supplies to help the community.

These are just a few examples of how organisations have mobilised their corporate disaster relief programs. Find out more about how Alaya has helped companies step up during the Covid-19 pandemic [here](#).

How can *companies support* disaster relief?

As evident by the support given above, each organisation has different ways to support communities other than financially. Providing support in areas where none is available is always beneficial during the aftermath of any crisis.

When building your disaster relief plan, it's important to consider a wide array of options via which your organisation can help following a disaster.

It's important to consider the following:

1. *Impact*

How can you best help communities in need during times of crisis?

2. *Involvement*

How do you get everyone involved efficiently and effectively?

3. *Capabilities*

What are you in a unique position to help with?

Answering the above questions will help inform your disaster relief program and help your organisation best serve in-need communities.

What types of disaster relief are most helpful?

When it comes to disaster relief, every organisation can help in different ways. The quickest aid is usually financial aid, and this is a great starting point for any organisation. However, there are other ways in which organisations can aim to help.

“One of the biggest needs after a disaster is logistics—getting food, water, medicine, and other supplies to the affected region.”



EDUARDO MARTÍNEZ
UPS FOUNDATION
SOURCE

The best way to ensure your organisation is able to help is by building a thorough disaster relief plan by the following points.

1. Working all *year round*

How can you best help communities in need during times of crisis?

2. Get everyone *involved*

Engaging employees in relief efforts foster a sense of purpose. Volunteering opportunities and grants are a great way to involve employees in corporate disaster relief plans. Manage and track employee engagement using a CSR platform, like [Benevity](#).

3. Build *connections*

Being able to leverage connections with nonprofit partners is essential for hitting the ground running in the days and weeks following a disaster.

4. Focus on *capabilities*

Having the tech infrastructure and partners necessary to ensure rapid mobilisation and coordination is essential when dealing with disaster relief. Finding the right nonprofit partners is key and some providers can support, for example, Alaya has a network of over 1.5 million nonprofits around the world.

How to *kick off* a disaster relief campaign

Now we've considered the ins and outs of disaster relief programs; it's time to consider how best to communicate your involvement with stakeholders. It's important to ensure everyone's on the same page and ready to engage. Just like any other campaign, there are certain stages and steps to follow.

1. Define the campaign

Before employees can get involved, it's important to define the campaign's aims and objectives. This includes deciding how best to help, identifying a partner to aid with implementation, and organising a way to track progress.

Once the campaign is defined, it's important to get stakeholder buy-in.

2. Involve stakeholders

To get buy-in from stakeholders, you'll need to prepare a proposal explaining why and how you're going to implement the corporate relief program. This is where you provide all the details and options available, as well as highlight the benefits to the organisation and employees.

Be thorough in your explanation, and make sure to prepare answers to any questions you think you might need to answer. Provide information on implementation, such as who's on the ground, what they'll be doing, and how they'll achieve the corporate relief goal.

3. Prepare communications

Once everyone's on board, it's time to communicate how your organisation plans to support communities. For this, you need to prepare both internal and external communications. We've prepared two templates to help you do this.

First is internal communications, where you encourage employees to cooperate with the disaster relief program. Some help strategies are best coming from your organisation, but other smaller ways are accessible to employees.

This is also a great place to highlight their access to a CSR platform, which is extremely beneficial when organising and implementing corporate disaster relief. Here's how you could approach internal communications:

External communications tell the outside world what your organisation is doing to help in the aftermath of a crisis. It's not only a great way to highlight your company values and your commitment to the crisis but also a great way to encourage others to support too.

Disaster relief *external communications* template

We're extremely saddened to hear about the effect of [crisis] on [community/place], and we want to do everything we can to help those affected. For this reason, we're taking steps to help by:

- Providing [product/service] to those affected, free of charge.
- Working with [nonprofit] to provide financial support where needed.
- Engaging employees with disaster relief opportunities.

We want to do our bit, and we encourage you to do yours. Stay up to date with our efforts via social media and get in touch with anything that can help us help those in need right now.



External communications tell the outside world what your organisation is doing to help in the aftermath of a crisis. It's not only a great way to highlight your company values and your commitment to the crisis but also a great way to encourage others to support too.

Leading by example is key, and sharing your efforts with the external environment helps promote cooperation. Here's how you could approach external communications.

It's essential to effectively communicate your disaster relief program campaign both internally and externally. The goal is always to help those affected, and that's what you want to communicate and encourage.

Disaster relief *internal communications* template

Subject Line: Supporting Communities through Disaster at [Company Name].

After having seen the devastating effects that [event] has had on [place], [Company Name] is focusing on supporting communities throughout the aftermath. We're doing this in a number of ways and would truly appreciate your support where possible.

We're encouraging all employees to engage with [CSR platform]. There you'll be able to donate to nonprofits, volunteer where possible, share updates, and engage with other [departments/offices] on our efforts.

Donations made to this cause will be supported by a 5x match by [Company Name].

Throughout the next few weeks, we'll also be holding in-house opportunities to support the ongoing crisis in [place], so look out for your chance to take part.

We look forward to working together to support communities in need,

[Name].



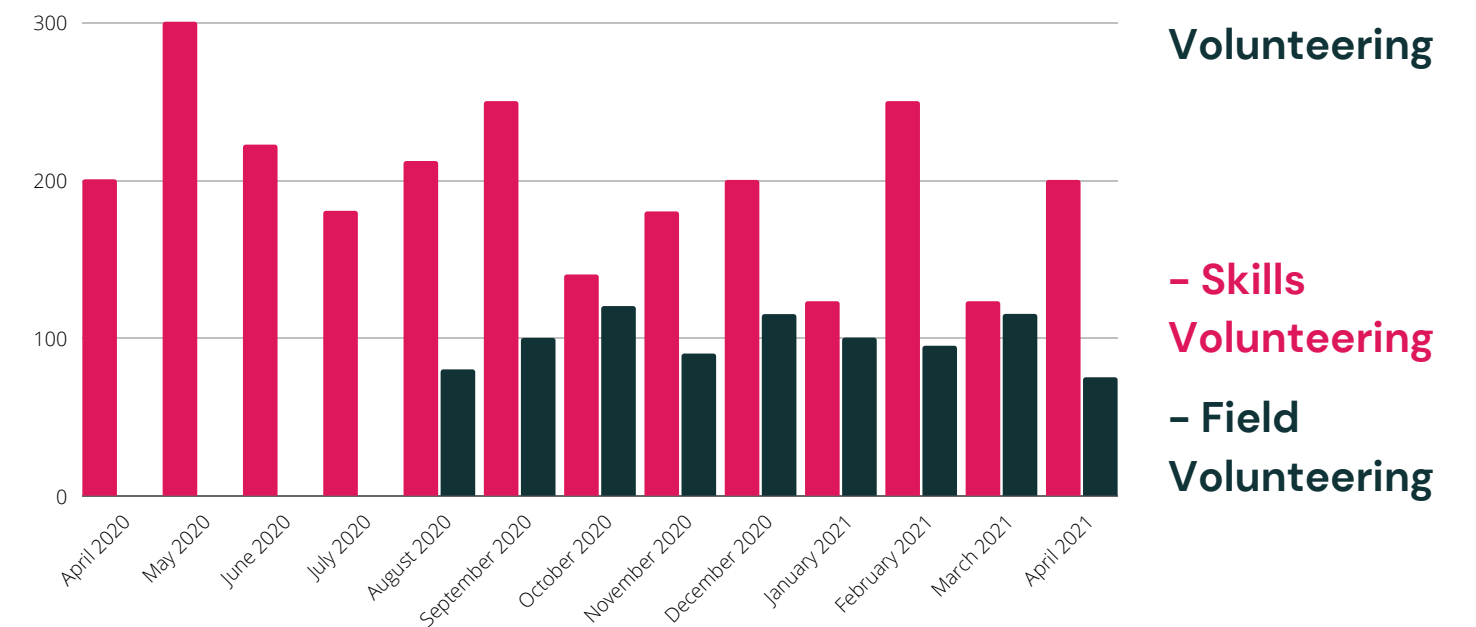
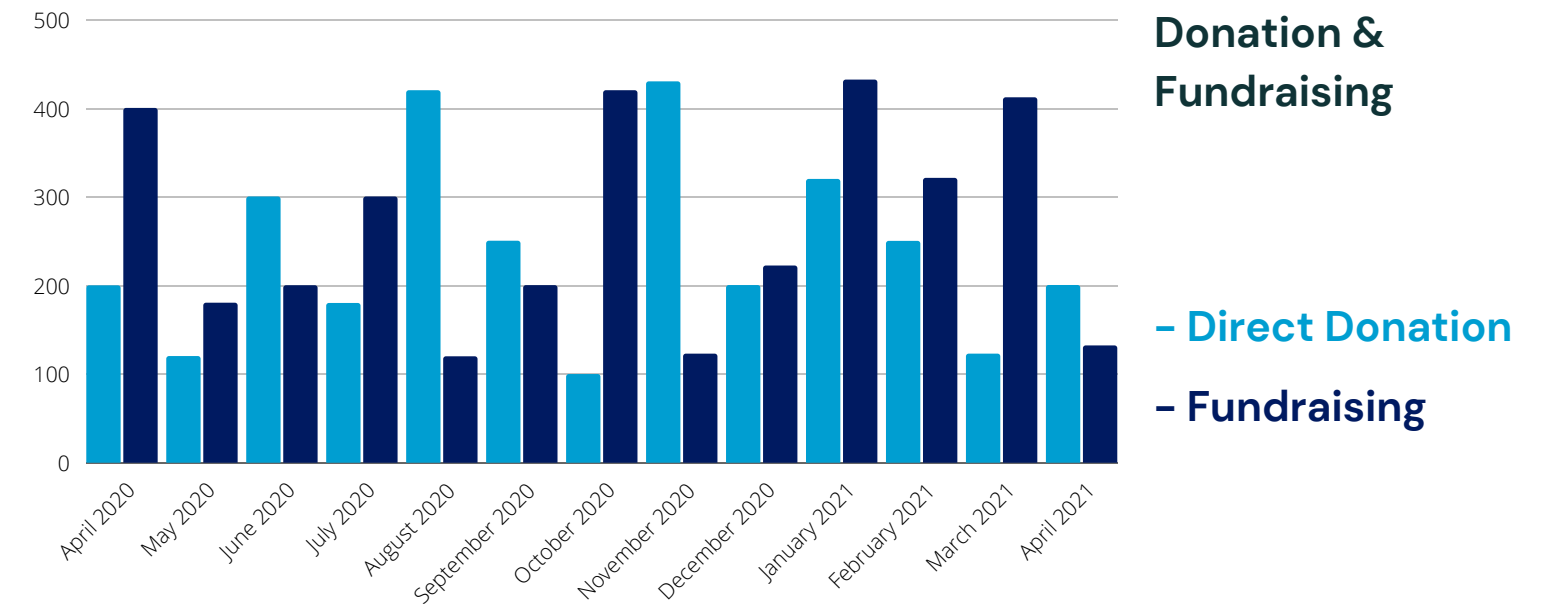
4. Track your impact

It's rewarding for your business and your employees to see the impact your efforts have had on the community. There are many ways to analyze this. Here are a few KPIs to report on:

- How many employees engaged with the initiative?
- How much money/goods did you raise?
- Which departments were most engaged?
- What aspects were most successful?

It's also a good idea to invite feedback from employees surrounding the disaster relief response. By doing so, you'll be able to optimize your disaster relief program for the future and qualitatively report on your success with employee stories.

This feedback is also great information to share with your online community. Presenting the facts surrounding your organisation's impact shows your commitment to genuinely supporting communities. It's not enough for a company to say they want to help—they need to put the work in to make it happen and report on it after.



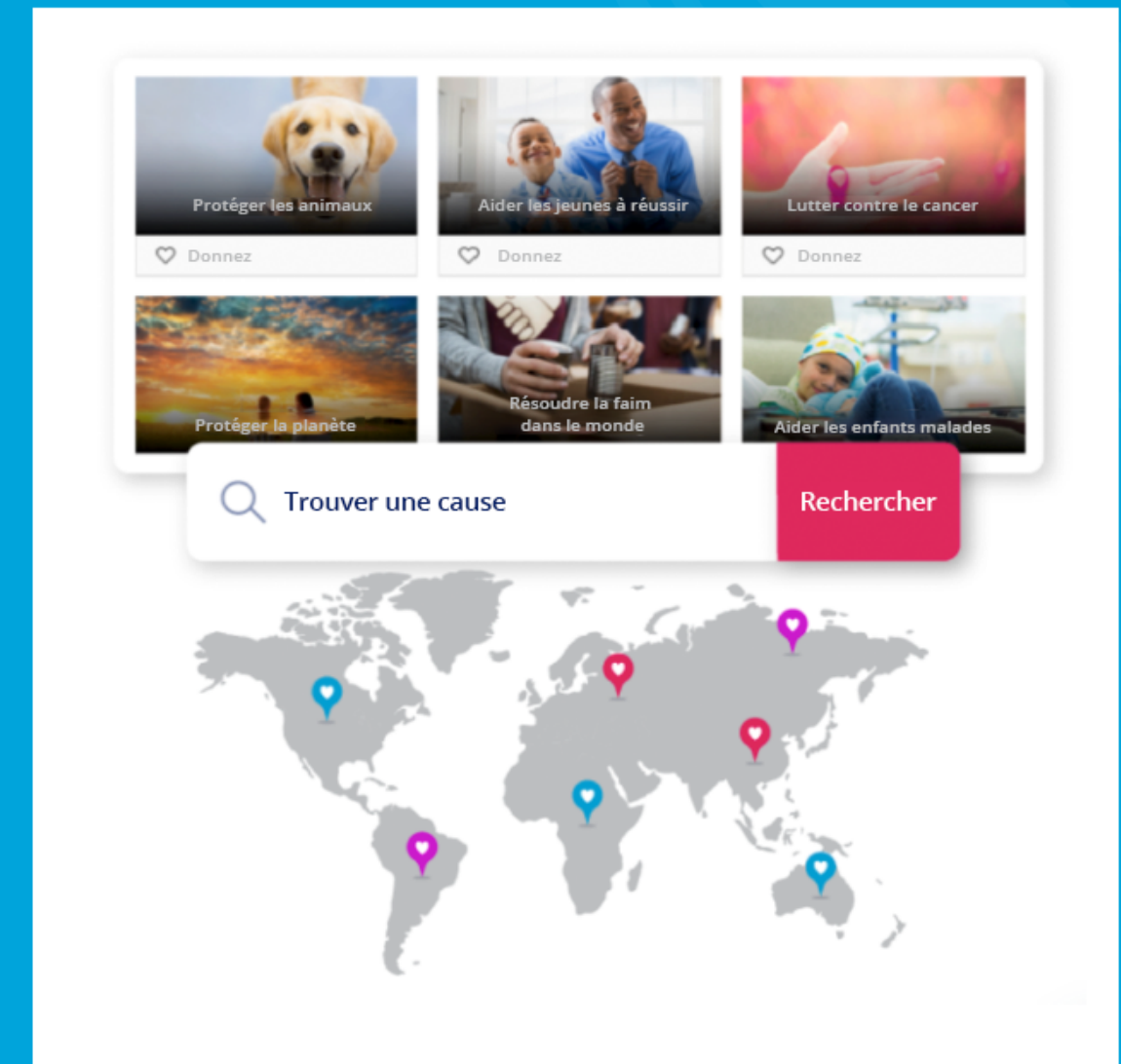
Make life easier by *combining platform and partner*

Having a partner to help with carrying out disaster relief programs makes life a lot easier. Especially when that partner has a dedicated platform to make your corporate disaster relief solutions a reality.

With Benevity, employees can engage with helpful initiatives from the mobile app, and you can easily track their impact on the crisis at hand. Here's how Alaya can help your organisation's disaster relief program:

- Offer employees the chance to donate to a number of different nonprofits
- Host activities and events for employees to engage with
- Track participation and engagement to better measure relief impact
- Collect and share photos and personal stories with your internal and external network

Employees can also use the platform to contribute to issues they care about normally, not just unexpected crises and disasters. For more information on how Alaya can help you help communities, [get in touch](#).



Have questions?
We're here to help

Get a Demo



Benevity, a certified B Corporation, is the leader in global corporate purpose software, providing the only integrated suite of community investment and employee, customer and nonprofit engagement solutions. Recognized as one of Fortune's Impact 20, Benevity offers cloud solutions that power purpose for many iconic brands in ways that better attract, retain and engage today's diverse workforce, embed social action into their customer experiences and positively impact their communities. With software that is available in 22 languages, Benevity has processed more than \$10 billion in donations and 46 million hours of volunteering time to support 326,000 nonprofits worldwide. The company's solutions have also facilitated 770,000 positive actions and awarded 1.2 million grants worth \$12 billion. For more information, visit [benevity.com](https://www.benevity.com).