

LEARNING TOUR BRIEF #2

Strategically Managing Community's Response Before and After a Disaster

OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The October 2007 wildfires comprised one of the largest natural disasters in California's history. The fires scorched more than 575 square miles in San Diego County – destroying over 1,600 homes and impacting thousands of residents countywide. Recovering and rebuilding after such a disaster presents an overwhelming task involving complex issues such as insurance settlements, construction permits, allocation of donated resources and provision of mental health services, to name a few. Post-disaster coordination requires working with numerous federal, state, and local government emergency management agencies as well as local citizen-led community recovery groups, faith-based and social service agencies, and various county and city departments.

In San Diego alone, more than 100 organizations immediately engaged in disaster assistance after the fires. The San Diego Regional Disaster Fund, a supporting organization of the local community foundation (The San Diego Foundation), responded by commissioning a disaster-wide community needs assessment, which was published approximately 45 days after the fires in December 2007. From this assessment emerged a five-point grantmaking strategy: Community Infrastructure for Recovery (Community Recovery Teams); Recovering Lives; Rebuilding Homes; Restoring the Environment; and Preparing for Future Wildfire Disasters. The Disaster Fund partnered with many other philanthropic organizations, such as local and national family/private foundations, corporate foundations, other community foundations, and regional associations of grantmakers to coordinate a regional recovery that took nearly four years to complete.

The San Diego Regional Disaster Fund was established ten years ago in 2003 to prepare for and respond to regional crises. Following a natural or manmade disaster in the San Diego region, it accepts charitable donations and makes grants that support disaster response, recovery, rebuilding, and preparedness activities. The San Diego Regional Disaster Fund serves as a resource for survivors, community members, nonprofit organizations, government entities, and donors needing information on disaster impact and recovery.

As you participate in this learning tour, you'll have a chance to learn:

- Best practices and critical lessons in preparation, response, recovery, and rebuilding
- The ecosystem of these four components with a lens on partnering across sectors
- What you can do in your community foundation to prepare and be prepared for disaster

LEARNING TOUR AGENDA

Part I: Welcome and Setting the Stage

Part II: Round Robin of four discussion groups: Preparedness, Response, Recovery & Rebuilding, and Tour of the American Red Cross's State-of-the-Art Disaster Operations Center

Part III: Lunch and Conversation with Disaster Experts

ISSUE STATEMENT

"A disaster is a situation or event, which overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request to national or international level for external assistance; an unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction and human suffering."

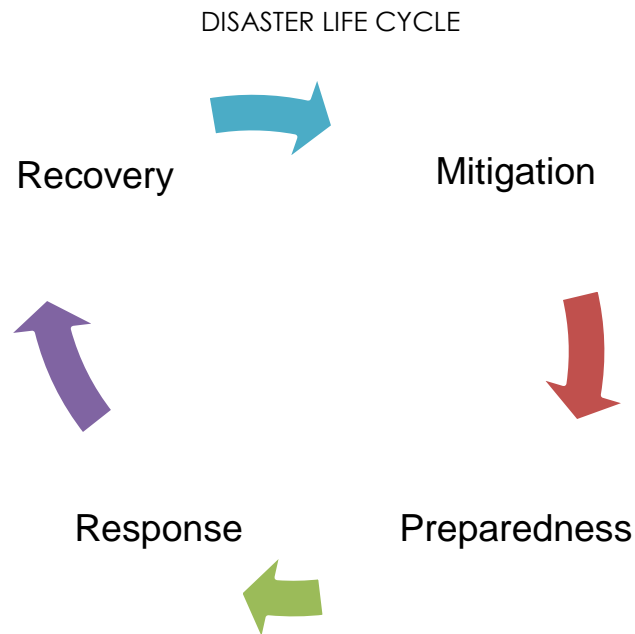
-The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters



No person or place is immune to disasters or disaster-related losses. Infectious disease outbreaks, acts of terrorism, social unrest, financial disasters, and natural hazards can lead to large-scale consequences for the nation and its communities. Communities and the nation thus face difficult fiscal, social, cultural, and environmental choices about the best ways to ensure basic security and quality of life against hazards, deliberate attacks, and disasters. One way to reduce the impact of disasters is to invest in enhancing resilience – the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from and more successfully adapt to adverse events. Enhanced resilience allows better anticipation of disasters and better planning to reduce disaster losses, rather than waiting for an event to occur and paying for it afterward.

NATIONAL TRENDS

While natural or man-made disasters are impossible to predict precisely, the disaster response community has a variety of tools it employs to reduce their negative consequences. The “disaster life cycle” includes work from prevention efforts to long-term recovery.



- *Mitigation.* Directly preventing future emergencies and/or minimizing their negative effects. It requires hazard risk analysis and implementation of strategies to reduce the likelihood that hazards will become disasters, such as flood-proofing homes or buying insurance. The key to mitigation is understanding community vulnerabilities and taking steps to minimize their impact.
- *Preparedness:* Plans or contingencies made in advance of an emergency can help individuals and communities get ready. These preparations might include stocking food and water, conducting evacuation drills, or pre-identifying and screening prospective disaster volunteers.
- *Response:* Any actions taken in the midst of or immediately following an emergency, including efforts to save lives and prevent property damage. Ideally, disaster response involves implementing already established disaster plans. This phase of the disaster life cycle usually draws the most attention.
- *Recovery:* Recovery begins after damages have been assessed and involves returning the affected community to its pre-disaster state *or better*. This is an important opportunity to make the community less vulnerable to future risk. While it is key to understand the nature of the hazards, it may be more important to understand the nature of the vulnerabilities. For example, given that scientists predict a continued escalation of 100-year storms making landfall on coastal communities, should public resources be expended to rebuild? Recovery efforts involve difficult conversations that are crucial to communities’ future well-being.

Most people give immediately after a crisis, in response to heavy media coverage, emotional appeals, and the convenience of new technologies. Yet donors who allocate funds across the disaster life cycle have an opportunity to help ensure that each dollar given reaches its full potential.

National Disaster Recovery Framework

The National Disaster Recovery Framework, released by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in September 2011, offers a flexible structure that enables disaster recovery managers to operate in a unified and collaborative manner.

The Framework:

- Defines core recovery principles: Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery
- Outlines various roles and responsibilities for recovery coordinators and other stakeholders
- Offers a coordinating structure for planning across the disaster life cycle
- Establishes an overall process “by which communities can capitalize on opportunities to rebuild stronger, smarter, and safer”

The Framework demonstrates that the federal government values what the private community brings to the table and encourages innovation from the private sector in meeting the needs of affected communities.

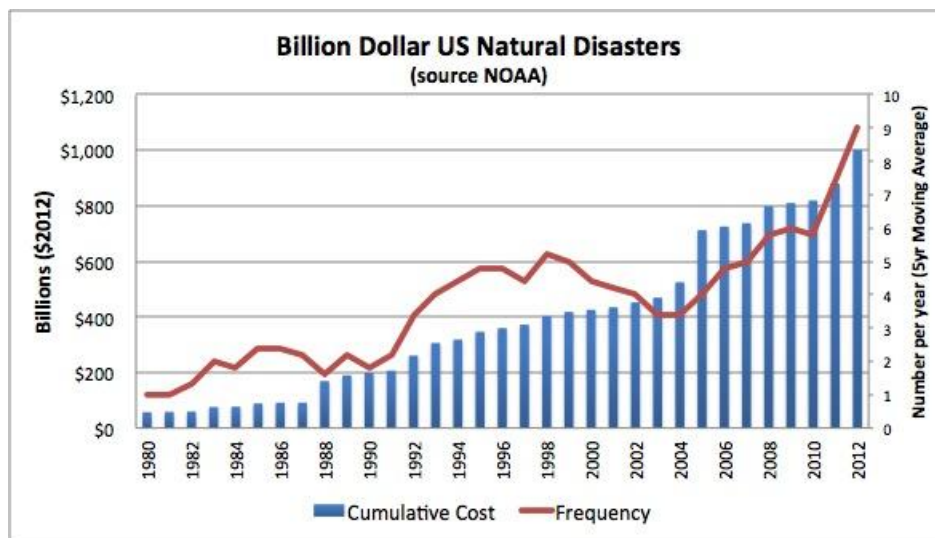
Things to know about FEMA:

- *FEMA cannot work alone.* The agency works best as a public-private partnership, with shared best practices, established protocols, joint training and preparation, shared situational analysis, and the full awareness of area resources. Assistance also must be given to non-governmental agencies that work with marginalized populations to ensure, for example, those who would need portable oxygen in the case of an incident are identified and cared for, or the number of people in a certain area that might need public transportation is accurately known.
- *State governors must officially request help from FEMA.* The governor may request disaster relief for individuals, for the restoration of public systems and facilities, or for matching mitigation funds to reduce the area’s future vulnerability. In most disasters, communities will likely need assistance before government resources can be deployed.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

According to Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, the global impact of disasters in 2012 was:

- 310 natural disasters resulting in over \$180 billion in damages
- 9,930 deaths related to natural disasters
- 106 million people across 115 countries victimized by natural disasters
- 63% of economic losses occurred in the Americas, mainly due to Hurricane Sandy that hit the Eastern seaboard of the United States in October 2012, causing over \$50 billion in damages and a drought that affected 62% of the contiguous United States, which caused \$20 billion in damages



[Cost US Natural Disasters](#)



HOW IS THE SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE?

The San Diego Regional Disaster Fund commissioned two comprehensive community needs assessment reports – one immediately after the 2007 fires and a second a year later – that describe the areas of need and the Disaster Fund’s strategies for addressing them. Five major areas of focus emerged and systematically guided the distribution of the Disaster Fund from 2007 through 2011. Below are the areas and dollars allocated:

1. Community Recovery Teams - \$1,845,497
2. Recovering Lives - \$3,225,567
3. Rebuilding Homes - \$3,124,207
4. Restoring the Environment - \$622,295
5. Preparing for Future Wildfires - \$1,287,630

Furthermore, The San Diego Foundation encourages ongoing disaster funding through its *BetterGiving* tool that now has a special section related to Disaster Programs. (*BetterGiving* is a Donor Edge product that builds upon the Guidestar framework to provide in-depth information on nonprofits serving the San Diego region.) In their online portraits, organizations can describe, in advance of any disaster, their previous disaster response experience and what they intend to provide to the public following future disasters. The *BetterGiving* database also enables donors in the San Diego community to learn about organizations that participate in disaster recovery and donate directly to their programs.

The County of San Diego also has an informative web site designed to inform residents about all kinds of disaster preparedness: www.ReadySanDiego.org.

Finally, many private and corporate foundations in the region provide grants to nonprofits inside and outside of the County for disaster preparedness and recovery programs. The regional grantmaking association, San Diego Grantmakers, has provided workshops for local grantmakers on disaster grantmaking and funder collaboration following a disaster, and the local American Red Cross is launching a new preparedness initiative, Prepare San Diego, aimed at preparing one million San Diegans for disaster in our region.

ARE THERE MORE RESOURCES I CAN ACCESS ON THIS?

Disaster giving considerations:

- Private dollars are generally more agile than public funds for disaster relief.
- Foundations can complement FEMA efforts through the following strategies:
 - *Support inclusive planning efforts.* Offer grants for disaster-preparedness training and programs that specifically incorporate plans for vulnerable populations and work across sectors.
 - *Build the capacity of intermediary agencies such as healthcare providers and food banks that already work with vulnerable populations.* Shoring up their ability to meet needs before a disaster will help reduce exacerbation of those needs when disaster strikes.
 - *Be a connector.* Create opportunities for private and public representatives to form relationships and share resources, ideas, skills, and capacities before a disaster hits.
 - *Provide post-disaster expedited loans and grants for small businesses.* Currently, federal loans to help small businesses recover from disasters are capped at \$1.5 million. That may not be enough—and it may take too long for that assistance to arrive to be most effective in stimulating recovery.
 - *Fund public awareness and other campaigns.* Educate and convene conversations at the community level about available services, limitations, and preparedness to overcome distrust of government assistance
- Effective disaster response requires ongoing planning and preparedness. Foundations can help support the entire disaster life cycle.
 - *Fund the entire disaster life cycle, from preparedness through recovery.* Strategic, long-range planning streamlines efforts and better meets community needs.
 - *Fund efforts to “build back better.”* In addition to the restoration of communities to their pre-disaster status, seek opportunities to reduce further disaster risk.
 - *Foster conversations between key players.* Gather representatives from across the community—including both government and non-government sectors—to discuss options, strategies, resources, and potential shared initiatives.



- *Invest in studies and pilot programs that explore the benefits of disaster preparedness and mitigation.* Pilot programs must be adequately staffed and technically supported, and those involved must have access to accurate and complete information that is grounded in the local context. The publication and dissemination of best practices can help raise awareness of what's working, what's not, and what's needed.
- *Support inclusive planning efforts/innovative strategies in disaster preparedness.* Seek opportunities to shore up agencies that work with special needs populations so that if and when disaster strikes, a plan already will be in place for minimizing harm and for coordinating relief and recovery efforts. Understand the importance of creating culturally appropriate conditions for recovery, such as shelters that are staffed by persons who understand diverse cultures and are stocked with culturally appropriate food and medicine.

ARE THERE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES I CAN ACCESS?

[Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters](#)
[Council on Foundations - Providing Relief in Times of Disaster](#)
[FEMA's Emergency Support Function](#)
[FEMA Recovery Framework](#)
[Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force Releases Rebuilding Strategy](#)
[San Diego Disaster Fund 2010 Report](#)
[The Disaster Life Cycle | Disaster Relief | Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#)

REFERENCES:

[Creating Order From Chaos: Roles for Philanthropy in Disaster Planning and Response](#)
[Disaster Grantmaking - Council on Foundations](#)
[FEMA - National Mitigation Framework](#)
[RAND Study](#)
[San Diego Regional Disaster Fund](#)
[The Disaster Life Cycle - Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#)
[The Role of FEMA in Disasters - Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#)
[Disaster Resilience](#), Committee on Increasing National Resilience to Hazards and Disasters; Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy ([COSEPUP](#)); Policy and Global Affairs ([PGA](#)); The National Academies

