Crowdsourcing Your Organization’s Greatest Challenge in a Crunch

Standby Task Force – Disaster Help Desk project

NetHope Crisis Informatics Team, Webinar series, July 25, 2017
Per Aarvik, Standby Task Force
Standby Task Force

• 40+ activations since 2010
• 2000+ volunteer members
• 102 countries
• 175 Universities represented
• Collaborations with
  • UN OCHA, ACAPS
  • NetHope, BRC, MSF
  • QCRI, HHI, Research institutions
  • Google, Facebook, ESRI
Crisismapping, support to local communities
3W-reports; Nepal EQ, Refugee crisis, Equador EQ

Who, what, Where


http://simonbjohnson.github.io/europe-refugees-16-3w/
Coordination of online collaboration

Overall message counts were highest during the months of September, October, and November 2014, which correlates with peak disease transmission. The day with the highest individual message count was 24 October 2014: this was the day Ebola was declared in Mali.

Data collected on that day shows the round-the-clock nature of online collaboration, as well as the breadth of different organizations collaborating as digital humanitarians. On that day, 23 different organizations participated in information exchanges.
Mapping anti-corruption tools and initiatives

The collection of Projects distributed according to their geographical focus or their base of origin, colored by Topic. Click on the dots to access the data card for each project.

http://sbtf-u4-digitools.silk.co
Research collaborations: AI for Disaster response (AIDR) – QCRI-SBTF-OCHA

• Filtering batches of tweets for human tagging

http://qcri.org.qa/our-research/social-innovation/social-innovation-projects
Case: Peru floods 2017

• Govt. of Peru activated SBTF
• Ushahidi-based platform for citizen reporting via SMS
• Collaboration with local organizations
• Challenges: Workflows, verification, media monitoring
• SBTF- global volunteer team for monitoring, mapping, categorization and geolocation
Bienvenidos.

Este sitio permite compartir reportes para apoyar a los organismos de emergencia. En "Crear reporte", pueden enviar sus reportes acompañados de fotos, videos u otra información relevante. Los reportes serán procesados y entregados a las autoridades. #UnaSolaFuerza #Peru.

(Ver mapa en pantalla completa)

REPORTES E INCIDENCIAS

¿Cómo enviar una incidencia?

- Ingresando tu incidencia aquí
- En twitter, usando los hashtags: #SOSCOEN
- Enviando un SMS al 767 reportando la incidencia y enviando su ubicación.

http://emergencia.unasolafuerza.pe/
El Ejecutivo prorrogó el estado de emergencia en los departamentos de Tumbes y Lambayeque, a partir del 4 de julio y por un plazo de 60 días, para continuar con la ejecución de acciones y medidas de excepción inmediatas y necesarias de respuesta y rehabilitación que correspondan tras los desastres.
The challenges

• Local responders or authorities
  • May lack the routine of setting up and running help desk platforms
  • May be unaware of resources, tools and data that could make their responses more effective.

• Disaster responders
  • May lack the time to search for information

• The informal response sector
  • Mobilizes extremely fast but operates mostly outside of the internationally coordinated response.
The Disaster Help Desk concept

• Fast setup

• Enabling dialogue between responders
  • A space for individuals across organizations to ask questions

• A space for direct dialogue with
  • Affected communities
  • Local organizations
  • Diaspora communities

• A directory of online resources related to the disaster response
The Disaster Help Desk Concept

Existing structures:

**Formal Disaster Responders:**
- Collaboration and information sharing to a certain extent

**Collaborative tools:**
- HDX, Reliefweb, Digital Coll. Spaces
- Skype, Slack, Trello, G-docs...

**Online Communities:**
- DHN, HOT OSM, SBTF, HR
- Ad hoc groups

**Operating Team:**
- SBTF team, volunteers
- Partner NGOs

**DHD Concept:**

**Affected Communities:**
- Local NGOs, community leaders, informal responders, civil society
- Asks for information / provide answers

**Diaspora Communities:**
- Strong relation to crisis, Local language skills, Culture knowledge
- Asks for information / provide answers

**Disaster Help Desk**
- FAQ, Information Database, pointers to existing sources

**Q & A exchange:**
- Facebook, SMS, Twitter
The Disaster Help Desk will provide real time information sharing, a space for individuals across organizations to communicate, as well as maintain a directory of online resources related to the response.

Existing structure:
Disaster Help Desk

Central information-point using ticket-system and off-the-shelf software. (e.g. Freshdesk or similar)
Responders, diaspora and on-the-ground communities are users and contributors posting questions as well as answers. The information is accumulated in FAQ database.
Trained volunteers are operating the desk, verifying and categorizing information. They communicate responses via SMS, through social media or other relevant channels.
FAQ database:
• Accumulated, verified and categorized crisis specific information generated from the Disaster Help Desk
Knowledge base:
• Pointers to permanent info-sites such as HDX, Reliefweb etc.
• Pointers to crisis specific sites; Local media sites, trusted social media sources, govt sites etc.
• Pointers to crisis related work in progress such as maps, 3Ws etc.

(Optional) External knowledge base:
• Crisis specific information
• Worksheets on baseline data, infrastructure etc
• Lists of in country news sites, FB-groups, maps etc
• 2W / 3W / 4W datasets etc

Q: Is the Kwai bridge open?
A: We’ll find out!

Q: Which are the languages spoken there?
A: See this link: http://

Q: Which NGOs are present in city X?
A: NGO a, b and c!

Affected & Responding Communities
• Local NGOs
• Community leaders
• Key points of contacts
• Civil society
Ask for information and provide answers

Questions & answers exchange

Diaspora Communities
• Strong relation to crisis
• Local language skills
• Culture knowledge
Ask for information and provide answers
The Disaster Help Desk Platform

• Off-the-shelf tools to create the platform
  • FAQ database
    • The same piece of information needed by multiple stakeholders
  • Knowledge base
    • Pointers to existing datasets such as HDX, disaster-specific resources

• Facebook, Twitter (tweeting back), SMS to harvest/share information

• Close collaboration with responding organizations

• Coordination through existing channels (Slack, Skype)
The Disaster Help Desk operation team

- Setup, training and operation
  - Small team of staff
- In activation
  - Trained coordinators to cover 24/7
- Volunteers to perform predefined (micro) tasks
  - Search for answers to incoming information demands
  - Connecting with trusted sources
  - Monitoring online media for relevant information
  - Facilitate online collaboration
Who is behind the project

- SBTF Core Team
  - Nick Brown, engageSPARK, IOM, SBTF
  - Per Aarvik, SBTF
- Advisory group:
  - Boris Aristin, iMMAP
  - Kendra Dupuy, CMI/PRIO
  - Himanshu Ardawatia, Consultant
SBTF can not do this alone

• Seeking partner organizations
  • Co-developing the concept
  • Partners who could benefit from the project
  • Organization(s) and individuals to endorse the project
  • Organization(s) willing to offer tangible or intangible resources
  • Tech partners

• Pilot testing
  • Evaluation and adjustments
Summing up:

• Disaster Help Desk aims to:
  • Strengthen the dialogue between disaster responders
  • Include affected communities in the information loop
  • Include diaspora communities in online response

• Develop the skills of a worldwide community
• Provide a tool that can be rapidly set up for various types of disasters
Standby Task Force: Disaster Help Desk project

Further enquiries: per@standbytaskforce.com