

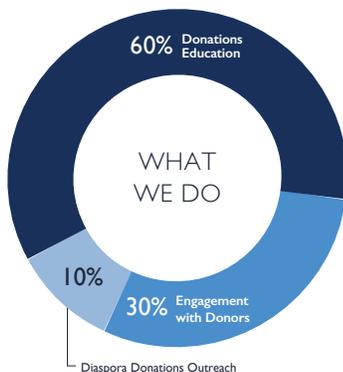
# USAID DONATIONS OUTREACH

FACT SHEET 2021

## USAID DONATIONS HISTORY

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) created the Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) in 1988, one month after Hurricane Gilbert made landfall as a Category 5 storm affecting 10 countries. An outpouring of unsolicited donations to those countries took up space needed to stage and deliver life-saving relief supplies, and USAID and other responders spent valuable time managing unneeded clothing, expired medicine, and other non-critical items. USAID established CIDI to inform the public about the advantages of giving monetary donations to relief organizations and the risks of donating unsolicited material goods. CIDI also provides guidance to volunteers interested in responding to disasters so that they understand the resources, training, cultural sensitivity, and effort required from their end to be a useful and valuable participant in relief efforts.

CIDI's work is focused on donations education and responding to queries from the public, including those directed to the Center by USAID and other U.S. government agencies. In recent years, CIDI has expanded donations outreach to diaspora groups, which are important stakeholders in supporting relief efforts in their home countries.



Unsolicited donations delivered to Samoa after the 2009 earthquake and tsunami took up space needed by relief organizations to sort and deliver life-saving emergency supplies. Financially strapped local governments bear the costs of disposing of spoiled, expired, or inappropriate items.

## IMPACT ON DONATIONS AND VOLUNTEERING

CIDI's outreach is amplified during high-profile emergencies when it responds to an increased number of inquiries from the public about donating and volunteering. CIDI works closely with USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to manage inquiries about unsolicited donations or volunteers.

During major disasters, CIDI responds to referrals from federal agencies, including USAID, the Departments of State and Defense, and the White House. USAID/BHA also calls on CIDI to serve on its Response Management Teams (RMTs) and directs CIDI to activate a call center and recruit volunteers to answer donations and volunteering inquiries when necessary. CIDI also maintains a website, [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org), to share best practices on how the public can help people affected by ongoing disasters around the world. The website also lists and links to response organizations working on the ground to save lives.

## DONATIONS CAMPAIGNS

To inform Americans about the effectiveness of monetary donations to relief organizations, CIDI launched or assisted in the creation of several national education campaigns, some in partnership with the Ad Council.



### PSAID CONTEST

CIDI's Annual PSAid Competition invites college students to create "Cash is Best" video, print, and digital public service announcements (PSAs). Winning entries have:

- Attracted more than one billion television and cable audience impressions according to Nielsen data
- Aired in the top 10 U.S. media markets and on shows including NFL Football, Dateline NBC, Jimmy Kimmel Live, Two and a Half Men, The Bachelor, The Grammy Awards, Major League Baseball World Series, and Modern Family
- Been featured (or printed) in national publications, including Forbes, Scientific American, Essence, and Rolling Stone



### NEPAL EARTHQUAKE CAMPAIGN

CIDI partnered with the Ad Council to create a PSA to help direct monetary contributions to NGOs involved in international and domestic relief following the devastating earthquake in Nepal. From April to December 2015:

- The PSA was broadcast more than 14,000 times on dozens of TV stations and cable outlets nationwide.
- More than 3.8 million people visited CIDI's Nepal Relief webpage designed to guide public donations to organizations providing disaster relief.
- The campaign was widely displayed online, generating nearly 880 million digital impressions. Advertisements placed in newspapers and magazines had a total circulation of 864,000.



### FAMINE, WAR, DROUGHT CAMPAIGN

In July 2011, CIDI was instrumental in facilitating a relationship between USAID and the Ad Council to launch a public awareness campaign about the Horn of Africa drought, which won a national media award in 2013. The campaign's PSAs netted:

- 19,000 broadcasts on network TV, including during the NFL Pro Bowl and AFC Championship Game
- 49 million Facebook mentions
- 68.5 million Twitter mentions

## SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

CIDI uses Twitter and Facebook to communicate the benefits of donating responsibly to a variety of individuals and groups outside the humanitarian sphere.

### f CIDI OUTREACH

CIDI maintains a Facebook and Twitter presence to reach a wide social media audience.

### 🐦 @CIDIOUTREACH

CIDI Twitter followers include:

- UNICEF
- UNHCR
- Nelson Mandela Foundation
- TED News
- American Red Cross
- PBS NewsHour
- Ad Council
- UN Economic and Social Council President

## DID YOU KNOW?

CIDI coined the phrase "Cash is Best" in 1988. For more than 30 years, this tagline has been used by domestic and international relief agencies, UN organizations, the White House, and federal agencies to promote effective public support of disaster relief.

## CIDI DONATIONS NETWORK & PARTNERSHIPS

CIDI plays a key role in mobilizing national and international organizations to collectively and strategically promote effective donations. CIDI partnered with the Ad Council, InterAction, and National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster—among other groups—to design and broadcast a national public service announcement campaign in support of Hurricane Sandy relief. The effectiveness of these partnerships demonstrates CIDI's expertise on donations matters and amplifies the message of responsible giving.



globalgiving



NATIONAL  
VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS  
ACTIVE IN DISASTER



# DIASPORA DONATIONS OUTREACH

## OVERVIEW

As disasters unfold, CIDI uses a mix of research and targeted outreach to provide information and guidance to diaspora members, businesses, and diplomatic communities across the United States on donations best practices. In more than 30 years, CIDI has worked with thousands of members of diaspora communities in the U.S. to facilitate cash donations – instead of material goods – to countries impacted by disasters.

## SNAPSHOT

- Through events and targeted outreach, CIDI engaged with thousands of members of diaspora groups to provide donations guidance in light of concurrent crises in Syria, Iraq, the Lake Chad Basin, the Horn of Africa, and Yemen.
- During the 2016 Hurricane Matthew response, CIDI was at the forefront of U.S. government engagement with the Haitian diaspora. CIDI organized a call with diaspora leaders and the USAID Hurricane Matthew RMT, answering questions and providing guidance on how best to support the humanitarian effort.
- CIDI participated in several events for domestic and international diaspora groups to discuss the problem of unsolicited material donations. Events were hosted at the White House, U.S. State Department, and embassies.

## SPOTLIGHT: EBOLA EPIDEMIC

- To support the U.S. response to the West Africa Ebola outbreak, CIDI compiled a list of 65 NGOs working on the ground in Ebola-affected countries, as well as a health-sector volunteer database that housed a registry of nearly 6,000 health volunteers.
- CIDI staff also served on the USAID Ebola Response Management Team to educate donors on the impact of unsolicited material donations to West Africa and encourage cash donations.
- At the height of the Ebola crisis, www.cidi.org received more than 22,300 visitors in a single day to learn more about the CIDI's "Cash is Best" messaging.
- CIDI was invited to speak at the National Ebola Summit in Washington, D.C., where staff spoke to 500 West African attendees—including representatives from 55 diaspora NGOs—about how West African diaspora in the U.S. can support international humanitarian organizations working on the ground.

## CIDI RESPONSE OPTIONS

-  **Call Center:** After major disasters and at the direction of USAID/BHA, CIDI can activate a hotline service to answer questions from the public and give guidance on how to donate effectively.
-  **Response Management Teams (RMTs):** CIDI can serve on USAID RMTs, coordinating donations requests and providing guidance to USAID's humanitarian response team on diaspora outreach.
-  **Diaspora Outreach:** Throughout the year, CIDI builds networks and relationships with diaspora communities across the U.S. to help direct their post-disaster donations efforts to ensure they are timely, organized, and effective.
-  **Donations Messaging:** For approximately 30 years, CIDI has promoted its "Cash is Best" tagline across the U.S. and around the world to diaspora groups, international conferences, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
-  **Managing Queries:** CIDI responds to donations questions from the public, NGOs, and diaspora communities before, during, and after disasters.

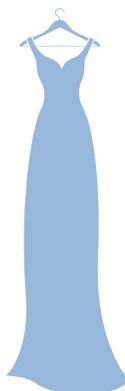
## INAPPROPRIATE DONATIONS INCLUDE...



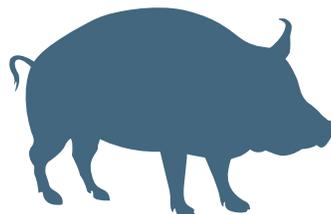
**WEIGHT LOSS DRINKS**  
Rwanda, 1994



**CHANDELIERS**  
Rwanda, 1994



**PROM GOWNS**  
Honduras, 1998



**PORK (LABELED AS BEEF)**  
Afghanistan, 2002



**FERTILITY DRUGS**  
Haiti, 2010

## DONATIONS POLL

To better understand how and why Americans donate, CIDI initiated a nationwide survey in 2013. Harris Interactive conducted the CIDI donations poll using online interviews with 2,020 adults throughout the United States. Among the findings:

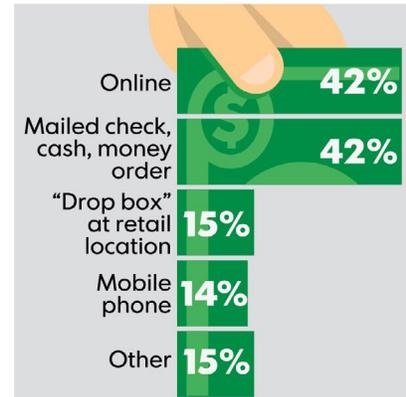
- A majority of those polled (63%) have made donations to relief organizations in the aftermath of a natural disaster in the last five years.
- 41% donated money.
- One-third (33%) who have donated nothing to a relief organization in the past five years indicated they would donate money to a relief organization if a natural disaster occurred somewhere in the world tomorrow.
- 79% of those polled understand that relief organizations prefer monetary donations unless organizations specifically ask otherwise.

The findings indicate that many Americans understand that monetary donations to reputable organizations are the most effective way to help survivors of disaster events. The results of this survey enable CIDI to gauge the effectiveness of donations messaging and adapt the way in which outreach is done. Since the findings were released in December 2013, organizations such as *USA Today* have used the information to report on donations trends.

## USA SNAPSHOTS®

### Helping disaster victims

How donors in the past five years gave money to relief organizations:



Source USAID Center for International Disaster Information survey of 824 adults  
ANNE CAREY AND ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ, USA TODAY

## MEDIA SNAPSHOT ON DONATIONS

### The New York Times

*The New York Times* published an article on October 2, 2018, sharing CIDI's "Guidelines for Giving" as a resource on how to help people affected by the Indonesia earthquake.

### BUSINESS INSIDER

*Business Insider* mentioned CIDI as an authority on disaster donations in a November 12, 2018 article on helping the survivors of the California wildfires.

### Forbes

*Forbes* featured a full-page CIDI "Cash is Best" Public Service Announcement (PSA) in its August 2018 issue. The PSA featured a tagline that said, "Clothes are not one size fits all. Cash is."



*CBS Sunday Morning* ran a story on April 24, 2016, that featured Juanita Rilling talking about the "second disaster" of unsolicited material donations that can follow in the wake of a high-profile crisis.



*USA Today* printed a front page infographic about donations trends in its Christmas 2013 issue from research sponsored by CIDI.



*CTV News* conducted a live interview with former CIDI Director Juanita Rilling on May 11, 2016, about unsolicited material donations in the wake of Canada's wildfires.

## AWARDS

CIDI creative assets have been recognized for substance and artistic quality by TV Access, the Webby Awards and WorldFest Houston.



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