Using the EDUARDO platform to get humanitarian aid to disaster zones faster

The EDUARDO platform – developed by Logistics Emergency Team partners Agility and UPS – uses big data and supply chain strategy to help emergency aid reach disaster zones, including areas of Turkey and Syria hit recently by earthquakes.

In 2023, an estimated 340 million people will need humanitarian assistance. When a region suffers a humanitarian crisis, an urgent race begins to transport emergency supplies to the area: around 70% of the humanitarian spend is on logistics. Getting the right people and the right supplies to disaster zones requires supply chain strategy, data, and collaboration.

The air capacity challenge
The task is daunting, but the Logistics Emergency Team (LET) – Agility, UPS, Maersk, and DP World – works to ensure humanitarian supplies get to communities in need, leveraging their collective networks of partners, equipment, and people. However, one of the constant challenges faced by humanitarian logisticians is identifying available air cargo capacity.

Historically, this has been a time-consuming, manual process, with logisticians researching individual destinations, carriers, and schedules; and making separate phone calls to confirm availability and flight details, then logging the information into documents and spreadsheets. At a time when speed is critical, this process is slow, and it became increasingly difficult to maintain during the rapid developments and daily fluctuations of any humanitarian operation. This proved even more daunting during the pandemic when countries were closing borders, carriers were cancelling flights, and humanitarian needs were growing.

Enter EDUARDO
To solve this pandemic and ongoing humanitarian operations issue, the Logistics cluster led by the World Food Programme needed a single data source through which its many humanitarian partners could quickly and easily view confirmed flight plans and assess options with minimal effort.

That’s where EDUARDO comes in. Named for a former president of The UPS Foundation, it was developed by Agility and UPS with data provided by Google Flights. EDUARDO is a sophisticated tracker that produces an accurate shortlist of possible flights based on cargo requirements and makes alternative routes easier to identify.

The EDUARDO dashboard allows humanitarian logisticians and planners to spend less time calling airlines and carriers. They can more easily plan and organize the flow of critically
required humanitarian aid. Crucially, it means that essential resources like medical supplies, food, and shelter can get to disaster zones quicker.

Before EDUARDO, humanitarian logisticians might typically spend several hours communicating with logistics services providers or air carriers to identify an appropriate air freight option before booking a flight. That time can be cut to minutes by using EDUARDO. Today, humanitarian logisticians have narrow search parameters which speed up the process of delivering aid all across the world.

When it first launched around 15 months ago, EDUARDO was considered a successful proof of concept, and since then the UPS and Logistics Cluster team have continued to make improvements in how the platform operates. Now, in the wake of the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria – and in response to the drought-induced famines in Madagascar – EDUARDO is coming into its own. UN agencies and humanitarian organizations are actively using the site to identify the next available air freight routes and to rapidly identify the fastest ways to reach the communities that urgently need help.

Frank Clary, Agility's Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility, says: "Demands continually change in the field. Situations are dynamic and primary needs might quickly shift from shelter, to food, to healthcare or other humanitarian priorities. Challenges are constantly being compounded, disrupted and discovered. Humanitarians constantly struggle with upstream and downstream visibility, so having an air cargo planning tool like EDUARDO makes a huge difference in humanitarian communities being able to plan the next 24 hours, 48 hours, 72 hours of crisis response."

**Collaboration in the face of crisis**

EDUARDO demonstrates the huge value of big data and the application of supply chain strategy in managing the intense demands of humanitarian operations. Being able to closely track physical assets – including transportation – enables crisis response teams to deliver supplies to where they are needed most quickly and efficiently as possible.

EDUARDO shows how powerful on-demand, public-private partnerships, and collaboration can be to improve humanitarian crises response build strength and resilience into the humanitarian system. The massive challenges that emerge in the wake of a disaster are too large and complex for one organization to address independently. These kinds of global challenges require shared values, cooperation, and technical expertise to solve. As major players in the global community, the world's largest companies should continue to use their knowledge, reach, and resources in these kinds of collaborations to have a profound and positive impact on the world around them.

The Logistics Emergency Team partnership demonstrates the value of this kind of engagement, and the UPS + Agility + Logistics Cluster's EDUARDO tool proves the case. This free tool enables informed decision-making around humanitarians’ operational choices, allowing them to move aid relief more quickly to reach needy people.