

Disasters, Waste and Debris

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The Challenges

- ▶ Disasters can generate a lot of debris
- ▶ Waste can be a problem after disasters
- ▶ Waste and Debris are not the same thing
- ▶ There is no Waste and Debris Cluster
- ▶ Waste management systems pre-disaster are not always top-of-the-line
- ▶ Normal waste management can involve formal and informal systems and legal and less than legal operations
- ▶ Bad waste and debris management can harm disaster survivors

Concepts

- ▶ Have as little waste and debris as possible
- ▶ In general, 90% of waste and debris does not need to go into *long term storage*
- ▶ Use and build on existing systems
- ▶ Think long term
- ▶ Waste and Debris are have value (\$\$\$)

Practices

- ▶ Reduce
- ▶ Reuse
- ▶ Repurpose
- ▶ Recycle
- ▶ Long Term Storage

Reduce

- ▶ **Only send what is needed** based on assessments
- ▶ Carefully consider cash and use of local markets, and impact on the environment and markets
- ▶ Use debris instead of “relief” supplies
- ▶ Packaging
 - ▶ Pretty is not a requirement for relief supplies – no triple packing
 - ▶ Plain and simple – you are not going to sell the contents
 - ▶ Bulk verses individual
 - ▶ Limit repackaging

Reuse

- ▶ Reuse debris for relief and recovery (but don't forget the ownership issue)
- ▶ Think ahead:
 - ▶ Is there a 2nd or 3rd use for the relief item or packaging provided?
 - ▶ Plan for reuse
- ▶ Consider the local reuse economy – pot fixers, tent menders, etc.
- ▶ If there is money to be made, someone is probably already finding some way to reuse waste or debris

Repurpose

- ▶ Like reuse but doing something quite different than initially intended.
- ▶ Difference between using tent frames for an upgraded shelter and using tent frames for baby strollers
- ▶ New livelihoods and business opportunities, but may not be sustainable if supplies or demand are not long term in nature

Recycle

- ▶ Going back into the production cycle
- ▶ Circular economy
- ▶ **Hard for relief agencies to manage:**
 - ▶ Long term systems development required
 - ▶ **Due diligence – the Haiti Cholera problem**
 - ▶ Ownership
 - ▶ Funding
 - ▶ **Mandate and funding:** Likely NOT a Flash Appeal or HNRP project
- ▶ WREC resource of waste recyclers (see Resource slide)
- ▶ But **it can work** – recycling of batteries and other vehicle items by MSF in Haiti

Long Term Storage

- ▶ A resource not used today can be used tomorrow
- ▶ *Safe and sanitary* storage
- ▶ Respect human and land rights
- ▶ Prior informed consent
- ▶ Likely beyond the scope of humanitarian organizations, but such projects have been funded by Japan and may be options under development programming

Words of Caution

- ▶ Call it “waste” and the Basel Convention applies
- ▶ Informal economies are often central to waste and debris management but can have significant social, health and human rights issues
- ▶ A lack of planning makes for a mess

Words of Opportunity

- ▶ Livelihoods
- ▶ More often than not, it is **better to not refer to waste management** or even debris management but cast these efforts as *livelihoods support*

Resources

- ▶ **Global Shelter Cluster Green Team**
- ▶ **Joint Environment Unit Environmental Emergencies Centre**
(<https://eecentre.org/>)
- ▶ **The WREC Project: Environmental Sustainability in Humanitarian Logistics** (<https://logcluster.org/en/blog/wrec-project>)
- ▶ **Joint Initiative on Sustainable Humanitarian Assistance Packaging Waste Management** (<https://eecentre.org/2019/07/15/https-www-eecentre-org-2019-07-15-sustainable-humanitarian-packaging-waste-management/>)
- ▶ **Disaster Waste Management Guidelines**
(https://resources.eecentre.org/resources/disaster-waste-management-guidelines-dwmg-online/?_gl=1%2Akvabn8%2A_ga%2ANzg3ODAwNzczLjE3MTU1MDgxNzg.%2A_ga_E60ZNX2F68%2AMTcyNDcxNDc2OC44LjEuMTcyNDcxNDc4My40NS4wLjA)
- ▶ **Options for Humanitarian Packaging Reuse, Repurposing and Recycling** (<https://eecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Options-for-Humanitarian-Packaging-Reuse-Repurposing-and-Recycling.pdf>)



And experts!



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