

# HELP.NGO ANNUAL REPORT 2023



# ABOUT HELP.NGO

Help.NGO is an International Non-Governmental Organization specializing in emergency response, preparedness, risk mitigation and prevention. Registered as a non-profit in the European Union with operations across the globe, Help.NGO leverages cutting-edge technological solutions and expertise to improve national and international disaster response mechanisms prior, during, and after emergencies.

Help.NGO focuses on increasing the capacity of national and international institutions through the provision of strategic guidance, technical expertise, and training. Drawing on a range of Subject Matter Experts, we help to enable local actors to respond efficiently and effectively across the entire humanitarian-development nexus – not only in the wake of an emergency but prior to and throughout the disaster life cycle.

Through the co-development of solutions with private and public sector leaders, we aim to optimize the use of time, resources, and funding in all aspects of our humanitarian and development operations. By providing experts-on-mission, deploying predefined service packages, delivering capacity-building assistance, and supporting sustainability, Help.NGO has spent over a decade working to reduce the effects of natural disasters, man-made conflicts, economic disparity, climate change, epidemics, and other public health emergencies through enduring humanitarian and development assistance.

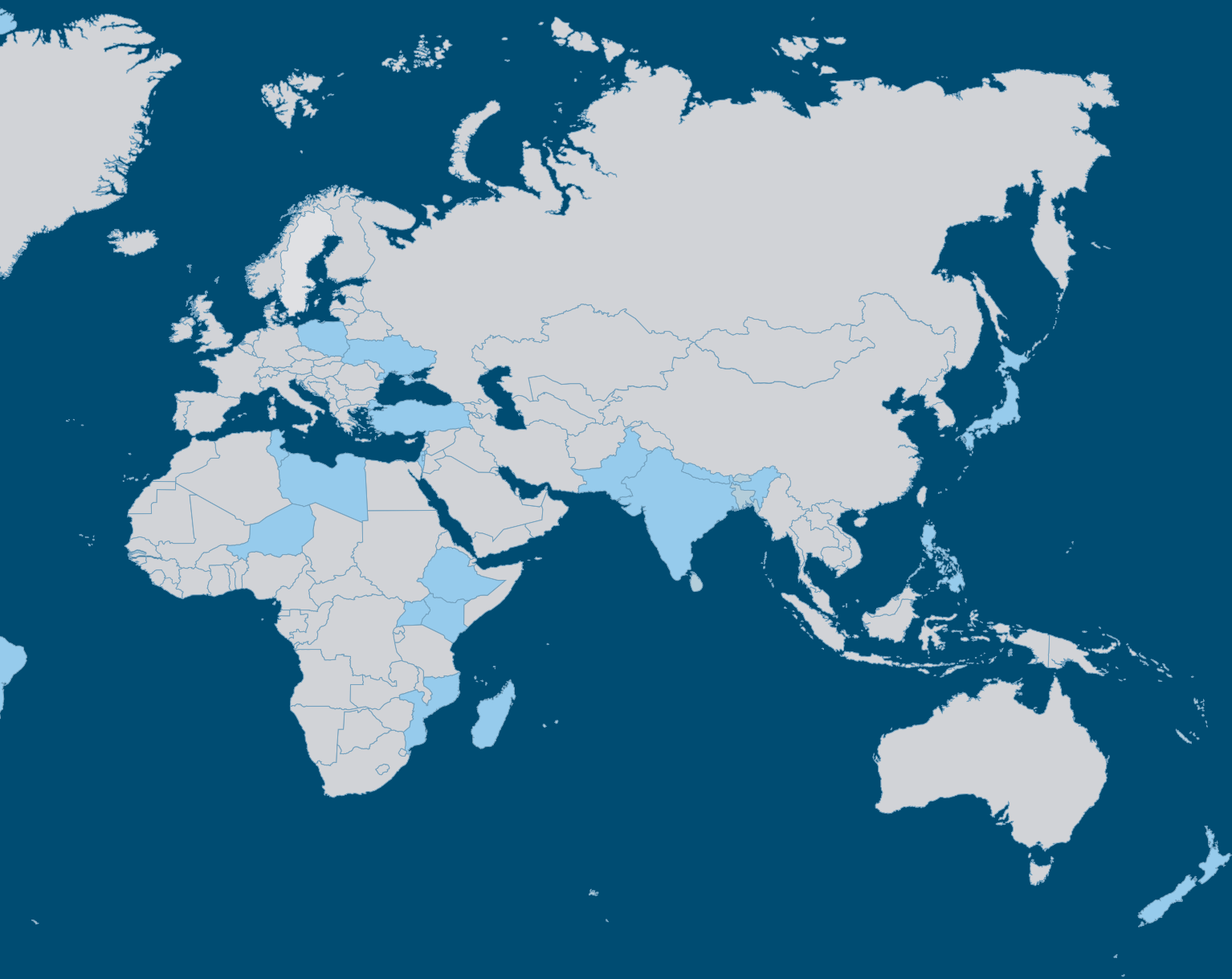


## United Nations

In 2019, Help.NGO became a Standby Partner of the United Nations. Holding this prestigious designation requires constant commitment to readiness and collaboration with UN agencies. During periods of crisis, Standby Partners stand prepared to promptly mobilize resources and expertise, thereby lending support to the UN.

**+363.000.000**

PEOPLE GLOBALLY NEEDED HUMANITARIAN AID IN 2023. HELP.NGO, FOCUSING ON INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION, ALWAYS TAILORS ASSISTANCE TO SPECIFIC NEEDS, OFTEN COLLABORATING WITH LOCAL PARTNERS.



Territories highlighted in blue are the countries where Help.NGO has been providing assistance in various capacities and with diverse personnel since its establishment in 2010. For more information, visit our website: [www.help.ngo](http://www.help.ngo).



**CONNECTIVITY**



**COMMUNICATIONS**



**UAS OPERATIONS**



**LOGISTICS**



**USAR SUPPORT**



**MEDICAL SUPPLIES**



**ICS COORDINATION**



**STRATEGIC CONSULTATION**





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# FOREWORD



**Brendan Harvey**  
Executive Director at Help.NGO

In an era marked by profound economic disparities, escalating climate change, and frequent natural disasters, the imperative for communities to develop robust crisis resilience and emergency response capabilities has never been greater. Against this backdrop, Help.NGO has continued its commitment to expanding technological access and fortifying emergency response mechanisms, ensuring that first responders are able to manage crises swiftly and effectively.

On behalf of the entire Help.NGO team, I am honored to present our work in 2023 in this annual report. This report highlights our efforts in addressing urgent emergencies and protracted crises and showcases the impacts of the generous support given to us by our donors and partners, all united in our shared mission to create a more resilient world. In 2023, our experts were at the forefront of crisis response in Ukraine, Haiti, Türkiye, Kenya, the Philippines, and Mexico, transforming our commitment into tangible actions.

Following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Help.NGO utilized its base of operations in Poland to offer crucial logistical and administrative support to the ongoing humanitarian initiatives, a commitment that continued throughout 2023. As a United Nations Standby Partner,

we contributed Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to the Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), enhancing their telecommunications infrastructure with essential situational awareness and redundancy. Moreover, as a member of the Standby Partnership Network, a coalition of 56 organizations aiding UN agencies in emergency responses, Help.NGO played a pivotal role in shaping partner engagement policies within the UN and served as the network's treasurer.

In Haiti, Help.NGO also significantly bolstered the UNDSS efforts. By deploying Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), our team played a pivotal role in augmenting the situational awareness of UN personnel. This strategic support enabled humanitarian workers to navigate safely and effectively, equipping with the latest, precise information about humanitarian routes.

Help.NGO also assisted UN operations in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Jerusalem. Through the provision of high-resolution satellite imagery, Help.NGO helped enhance the UN's capacity in planning efficient aid distribution and ensuring the safe evacuation of refugees.

Indeed, our 2023 operations were certainly global in scope. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Türkiye, Help.NGO experts were on-site within 24 hours thanks to the generous support from Amazon Web Services (AWS). Equipped with drones and satellite connectivity provided by Intelsat, our team supplied critical high-resolution imagery and connectivity to aid local officials in rescue operations, contributing valuable data for ongoing reconstruction efforts.

Following the devastating floods in East Africa, Help.NGO's specialists swiftly mobilized UAS capabilities to Northeast Kenya. This strategic deployment involved conducting flight operations and providing essential cloud processing resources where aerial assessment was critical. The team's efforts focused on generating detailed maps of vital infrastructure in the flood-affected regions, responding to the specific needs and requests of local authorities. This initiative was key in aiding effective response and recovery strategies in these hard-hit communities.

A similar service package was deployed in Mexico following Hurricane Otis, where Help.NGO experts worked closely with Guerrero State's Civil Protection authority, providing high-resolution imaging and connectivity. This partnership was instrumental in assisting the state's capacity to respond to the hurricane's aftermath. Our emphasis in 2023 was not only on reacting to crises, but also on risk prevention, resiliency, and crisis preparedness. Building on our crisis response initiatives, Help.NGO SMEs returned to Mexico to deliver a comprehensive capacity-building workshop. These sessions, aimed at six key government agencies, focused on the critical interplay between emergency response and various technological competencies. The training covered a range of topics, including the utilization of AWS cloud computing technologies, advanced data processing techniques, and the strategic application of drones for humanitarian assessment operations.

2023 was certainly not without challenges; however, it is only thanks to generous support from donors, partners, and volunteers that we have been able to navigate them. Whether it is assisting UN staff with high-level planning or low-level field operations, this report summarizes not only our accomplishments but also those who have so generously supported their time, money, and expertise. Particular thanks are due to Intelsat, AWS, and the Internet Society Foundation for their continued support for Help.NGO operations in 2023. This report is a testament to our collective achievements and a tribute to those who have invested their time, resource, and expertise.

In an era marked by geopolitical and environmental flux, where crises can seem relentless, ever present, or just over the horizon, there is no shortage of opportunities for making a meaningful impact. As we move into 2024, the entire Help.NGO team is resolutely focused on harnessing these opportunities and remains committed to making a profound and lasting difference in the world by leaving it a more resilient place.



# OPERATIONS IN UKRAINE

In the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Help.NGO swiftly activated a standby roster of deployable experts, strategically prepositioned equipment at logistics hubs, and launched comprehensive service packages to bolster humanitarian operations in Ukraine. Our support was multifaceted, encompassing secure connectivity, efficient fuel distribution, enhanced situational awareness, and robust logistical support.



THE ONGOING WAR IN UKRAINE POSES A CONSTANT THREAT TO BOTH THE POPULATION AND HUMANITARIAN WORKERS. RECENT INTENSIFIED DRONE AND MISSILE STRIKES HAVE INCREASED THE DANGER, TARGETING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAUSING FREQUENT POWER OUTAGES, BLACKOUTS, AND DISRUPTIONS TO COMMUNICATION.

# 17,600,000

# PEOPLE IN NEED OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

## UNITED NATIONS SUPPORT

Throughout 2023, these initiatives persisted. Help.NGO's experts maintained a strong collaboration with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), providing crucial support to UN operations. This included offering immediate solutions to fortify UNDSS's security telecommunications plan, adhering to the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster recommendations and the Telecommunications Security Standards {TESS+}. This included providing fixed and mobile connectivity, along with power supply backups, for UN offices and vehicles.

Our role in assisting UN operations extended to facilitating visits by high-level United Nations officials, including UN Secretary-General António Guterres' meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv; field visits by the Under-Secretary-General of UNDSS, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also supported critical missions such as IAEA inspection visits to strategically vital sites like the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and nuclear power facilities in Rivne, Chernobyl, and Yuzhnoukrainsk.

These engagements required meticulous coordination with UN officials to ensure seamless logistics and the overall safety of operations. Moreover, the team played a crucial role in establishing and maintaining effective communication channels between vehicles and personnel throughout these missions.



For USAID, our Poland-based Help.NGO team efficiently procured, packaged, and delivered 600 emergency survival kits to staff at the United States Embassy in Kyiv. These kits, designed for use in emergencies, provide essential support to embassy personnel, further exemplify our commitment not only to aiding those in urgent need but ensuring that those who play strategically crucial roles are equipped with the solutions they need.

## FOOD TRUCKS

Throughout the winter and spring of 2023, the Help.NGO Food Truck Project made a remarkable impact in towns ravaged by conflict, including Bucha, Irpin, Makariv, Borodyanka, Uman, Boryspil, and Vyshgorod. International chefs teamed up with passionate volunteers from across Ukraine, working tirelessly to successfully provide 2,000 daily portions of free meals, all freshly prepared with locally sourced ingredients.

But the influence of the project went far beyond just offering meals. They offered essential services like electricity and connectivity, enabling residents to contact friends and family. They became lively communal spaces, where children could play, interact, and find a sense of normalcy amidst the ongoing turmoil of conflict.





# RESPONSE IN TÜRKIYE

On February 6th, a catastrophic earthquake of 7.8 magnitude struck southeast Türkiye, quickly followed by another tremor of 7.7 magnitude. This calamity resonated across several nations, with Türkiye and Syria enduring the brunt of this tragedy. The earthquake resulted in the loss of over 57,300 lives, impacted 13.5 million people, caused 115,000 injuries, and displaced 2.7 million people.

The aftermath of the earthquake was marked by the widespread destruction of buildings and critical infrastructure. Blackouts plunged whole cities into darkness, and the lack of communication erected significant obstacles to the response effort. The scale of devastation demanded an immediate and comprehensive international humanitarian response to address the multifaceted crisis triggered by the earthquake.



**Location**  
N 37° 34' 31.08"  
E 36° 55' 22.08'

**Date**  
Feb 7, 2023

**Local Time**  
13:43:22



## DISASTER RESPONSE

### UAS HIGH-RESOLUTION MAPPING AND CONNECTIVITY

Help.NGO swiftly responded to Türkiye's call for assistance, deploying Help.NGO experts within 24 hours with support from Amazon Web Services (AWS). Equipped with drones and portable satellite connectivity from Intelsat, the team mapped critical locations such as Kahramanmaraş, Antakya, Elbistan, Sekeroba, Nurdagi, Islahiye, and Gokcedere. This data, uploaded in real-time to the AWS cloud using portable Snow devices, was distributed to first responders for use in search and rescue operations, damage assessment, and reconstruction planning.

Moreover, our team formed a strategic collaboration with the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOTOSM), utilizing open-source technology to meticulously identify structures in the earthquake-affected regions of Syria and Türkiye. This collaboration not only enhanced our mapping efforts but also significantly contributed to the broader international response to this unprecedented disaster.



### FUEL RELIEF FUND LOGISTICS SUPPORT

In collaboration with the Fuel Relief Fund (FRF), Help.NGO executed a critical logistics operation, distributing a substantial 280.1 tons of high-calorie coal to those internally displaced and living in shelters and tents. This vital initiative went beyond mere provision of resources; it was a comprehensive response addressing the urgent need for warmth and cooking facilities. Crucially, this effort also played a pivotal role in disease prevention, a significant concern in the earthquake's aftermath. The distribution of coal not only catered to basic necessities but also underscored our commitment to enhancing the well-being and resilience of communities in crisis.



IMMEDIATE RESPONSE  
WITHIN 24 HOURS



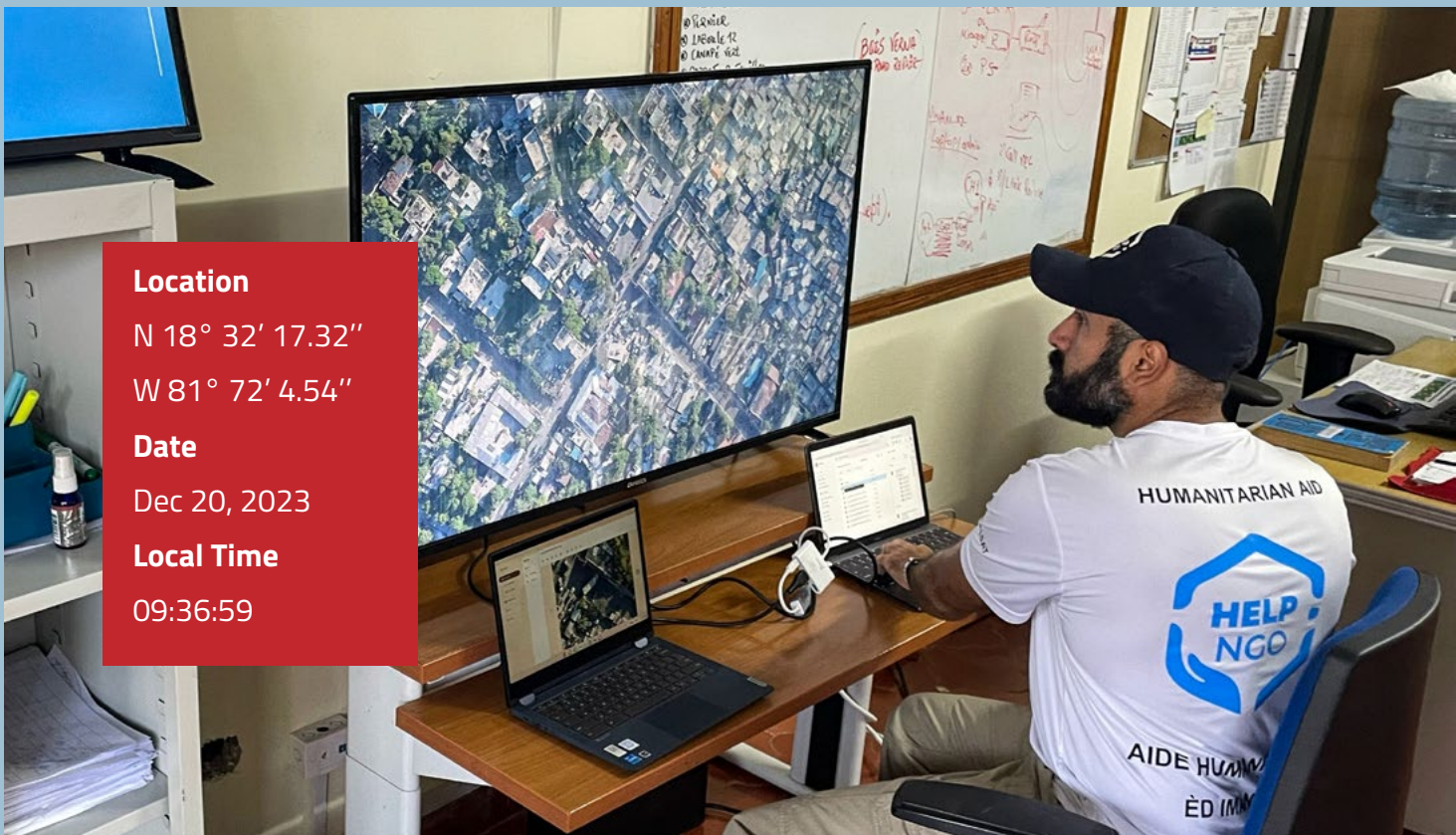
6300 PHOTOS



OVER 1150  
HECTARES MAPPED

# RESPONSE IN HAITI

Haiti confronts escalating humanitarian challenges, with almost half its population in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. A staggering 44% of Haitians experience crisis or emergency levels of funding. The country also has faced significant civil unrest and political instability over the past 24 months, which has only made the provision of aid more complex.



**Location**  
N 18° 32' 17.32"  
W 81° 72' 4.54"  
**Date**  
Dec 20, 2023  
**Local Time**  
09:36:59

HELP.NGO, ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED AS THE GLOBAL DISASTER IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TEAM (GLOBAL DIRT) IN THE WAKE OF THE 2010 PORT-AU-PRINCE EARTHQUAKE, HAS A DEEP-ROOTED CONNECTION TO HAITI. FROM ITS INCEPTION, HELP.NGO HAS MAINTAINED A CONTINUOUS PRESENCE IN HAITI, REFLECTING OUR ENDURING DEDICATION TO RESPONDING TO THE NATION'S EVOLVING HUMANITARIAN NEEDS.



## DISASTER RESPONSE

Despite these formidable challenges, Help.NGO has remained steadfast in its commitment to Haiti, a country we have been actively involved in since 2010. As a United Nations Standby Partner, we have deployed our expert personnel to Port-au-Prince to bolster the local UNDSS team's security awareness, a critical safeguarding mechanism for all UN operations.

Leveraging Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS), our experts have been instrumental in gathering essential data, regularly mapping and monitoring routes for humanitarian aid travel and delivery. This support enables UNDSS to ensure safe movement and more accessible delivery of aid to affected populations by UN organizations and INGO implementing partners.



Furthermore, our team supplied additional connectivity resources to fortify UN response strategies, crucial in overcoming connectivity challenges posed by fuel shortages. This includes offering mobile and fixed-location connectivity for organizations like UNICEF and UNDSS.







# RESPONSE IN MEXICO

In October 2023, the destructive force of Hurricane Otis, classified as a Category 5 tropical cyclone, struck near Acapulco in Guerrero State. This severe weather event brought devastating winds that caused significant destruction in Acapulco and neighboring regions, leading to landslides and widespread flooding.

The hurricane's impact was exacerbated by communication failures and power blackouts, which disrupted crucial services across the city. In response, the government of Guerrero swiftly mobilized military and civil resources for rescue and recovery. Otis claimed at least 50 lives, and incurred estimated damages in the billions of dollars.

## DISASTER RESPONSE

### DRONE MAPPING AND AWS CLOUD COMPUTING

Help.NGO drone pilots executed a series of flights over affected areas, aligning their focus with priorities identified by Guerrero State Civil Defense coordinators. This strategic approach facilitated a prompt assessment and prioritization of urgent needs in the aftermath of the disaster in areas around Acapulco.

Utilizing the advanced capabilities of AWS cloud computing technology, the team produced readily accessible maps and three-dimensional models. These resources have become essential tools for local emergency responders and government officials, aiding them in efficiently managing and addressing the challenges posed by the aftermath of the disaster.





# 1,000,000

# PEOPLE IN GUERRERO LEFT WITHOUT POWER

## CONNECTIVITY

Thanks to generous support from Intelsat, Help.NGO equipped local operations coordination centers of Civil Defense, the military, and Fire Departments with satellite connectivity, ensuring essential communication and effective coordination for ongoing relief efforts. This connectivity support was also extended to humanitarian organizations like World Central Kitchen, aiding their efforts in providing meals to those affected by the disaster.



## TRAINING

In December, Help.NGO Subject Matter Experts returned to conduct comprehensive five-day training sessions for 40 staff across six partner organizations on AWS cloud computing capabilities, data processing, drone mapping, and drone flight skills for local responders. These sessions aimed to enhance the technological capabilities of the Guerrero State Civil Defense, Fire Departments, and other organizations involved in disaster response and recovery.





# RESPONSE IN KENYA

In November, the Horn of Africa experienced severe rainfall that led to catastrophic flooding. In Kenya, the sudden and intense flash floods led to the tragic loss of 174 lives and displaced over half a million people within one month, the greatest impact seen in informal settlements. This crisis highlighted the acute vulnerability of Kenyan communities to extreme weather events, underlining the urgent need for immediate aid and the critical importance of implementing resilience strategies.

## DISASTER RESPONSE

### UAS HIGH-RESOLUTION MAPPING

Following the devastating floods, Help.NGO's Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) mobilized Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) operations and enhanced connectivity capabilities to Northeast Kenya, backed by support from AWS. This deployment encompassed drone flight operations and processing resources, crucial for aerial reconnaissance in affected areas. Additionally, at the behest of local authorities, the team undertook the mapping of essential infrastructure within the impacted regions, providing critical support for relief and recovery efforts.





## CONNECTIVITY

Help.NGO has also built upon existing relationships with local entities, notably the Kenyan chapter of the Internet Society, to enhance connectivity in affected areas. This initiative also involves empowering local partners with the necessary skills and resources to sustain and provide connectivity where it is most needed.

This effort was bolstered by the Internet Society Foundation's (ISOC) support. The partnership between Help.NGO and ISOC Kenya Chapter has made considerable strides in capacity-building activities that align technology with humanitarian efforts.

In accordance with the objectives of the ISOC CONNECT Grant, Help.NGO organized a series of webinars for Kenyan partners. These webinars highlighted the critical role of collaboration and coordination among various entities involved in emergency response.



Help.NGO's SMEs also played a vital role in the Digital Access Project (DAP) partners' workshop in Nairobi. The workshop, which included participation from UK Aid, GIZ, the Tony Blair Institute, ISOC Kenya Chapter, and other key players, focused on enhancing access to crucial technological solutions. Collaborative discussions with the Director of the ICT Authority of Kenya explored potential partnerships between Help.NGO and the ICT Authority to further advance digital access and inclusion initiatives.

Looking forward, Help.NGO remains committed to supporting the flood response efforts in North Kenya through 2024, continuing its impactful work in the region.

**IN NOVEMBER 2023, KENYA EXPERIENCED ABOVE-AVERAGE RAINFALL, ATTRIBUTED TO ONGOING EL NIÑO CONDITIONS ANTICIPATED TO PERSIST UNTIL EARLY 2024. THE PRECEDING PROLONGED DROUGHT EXACERBATED THE SITUATION, RENDERING THE SOIL IMPERMEABLE AFTER 3 DRY YEARS.**

# PHILIPPINES HACKATON

Building upon our commitment to advancing technology for social impact and leveraging its base of operations in Manila, Help.NGO organized a collaborative hackathon to help bridge the digital divide. Participants with diverse skills worked together to solve problems and rapidly design innovative solutions.

These events spur new ideas and advancements, especially at the intersection of technology and humanitarian efforts. With the support of Starlink, USAID BEACON, and the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA), the event focused on the use of cutting-edge technology in humanitarian contexts. Teams worked to develop prototype solutions to increase access to education and economic opportunities, integrating innovative creative tech to address critical needs.

70 participants in 20 groups crafted new and unique solutions to support PhilSA's mission to expand connectivity access using space technology. Winning innovations included PreSeasion's Fisheries Management System, Silangan's Social Equity Entrepreneurship Platform, and Kitamo's local product access.



A HACKATHON IS A COLLABORATIVE EVENT WHERE PARTICIPANTS WITH DIVERSE SKILLS WORK TOGETHER TO SOLVE PROBLEMS OR CREATE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS WITHIN A SHORT TIMEFRAME. THESE EVENTS SPUR NEW IDEAS AND ADVANCEMENTS, ESPECIALLY AT THE INTERSECTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS.

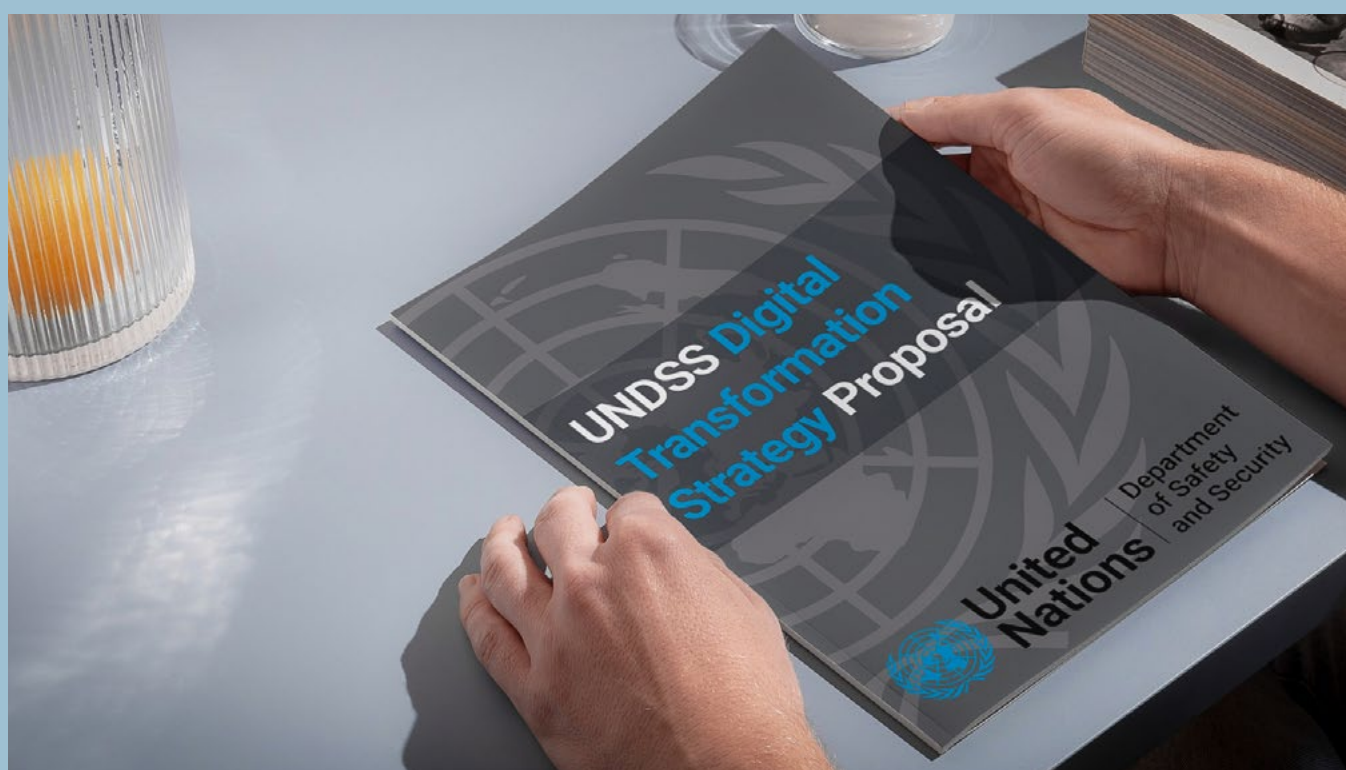


# UNDSS COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

Help.NGO takes great pride in its role as a Standby Partner of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). This collaboration encompasses a wide range of activities, extending from providing operational and technical support to contributing to external communications and strategic partnership engagement. The dedicated Communication Department of Help.NGO plays an essential role here by enhancing the outreach and impact of UNDSS's initiatives.

Recognizing the vital role of UNDSS in safeguarding the operations of UN agencies and programs, we engage in various critical activities. These include drafting persuasive appeals, assisting in the development of strategic frameworks, and contributing to the establishment of both internal and external regulations.

This partnership not only leverages Help.NGO's expertise in various domains but also underscores its commitment to supporting and amplifying the essential work of UNDSS in ensuring safe humanitarian operations across UN agencies and programs.



# HOTOSM

Continuing its trajectory from 2022, Help.NGO has further broadened its humanitarian initiatives through a partnership with Humanitarian OpenStreetMap (HOTOSM). In this collaboration, Help.NGO contributes high-resolution drone and satellite imagery to an open-source platform, particularly in response to crisis situations.



Organizations around the world utilize the Tasking Manager to develop mapping projects for regions globally where data is crucial for life-saving and life-improving initiatives. These maps, which are accessible in an open-source format at no cost, are particularly valuable for humanitarian organizations and other NGOs.

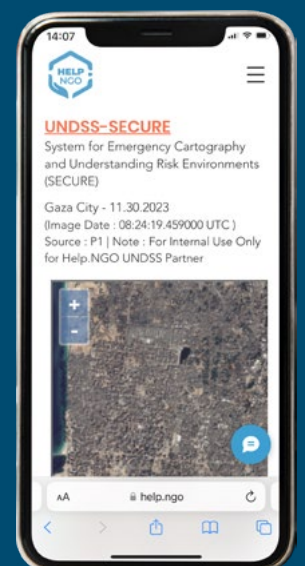
They provide key baseline data, including detailed damage assessments of buildings and the identification of vital infrastructure, facilitating more effective and targeted responses in various humanitarian scenarios.

## ISRAEL, THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, AND JERUSALEM (IOPTJ)

**Help.NGO remains committed to its partnership with United Nations, extending technical support to UN operations across IOPTJ including UNDSS and UN OCHA.**

Help.NGO in support of UNDSS, rapidly prototyped and deployed a cloud enabled solution for satellite imagery sourcing, hosting, visualization and analysis of critical sites across the Gaza Strip. This resource proved key in enabling risk analysis and route planning of humanitarian aid, the opening of the border to UN convoys, and protection of personnel.

Leveraging the AWS cloud and services, Help.NGO hosts imagery on demand, with new tasking on demand inside of four hours, providing secure access to high-resolution imagery for UN officials and technical analysis.





# OUR TEAM

**Founded in 2010 as Global DIRT (Disaster Immediate Response Team) by first responders in the aftermath of the 2010 Port-Au-Prince Earthquake, Help.NGO emerged out of the recognition that rapidly advancing technological solutions could significantly enhance the capabilities of international institutions in responding to crises and complex emergencies.**

By 2020, Help.NGO had firmly established its global presence, marking a significant milestone with the inauguration of its EU-based headquarters in Gdansk, Poland. Today, Help.NGO integrates administrative, technical, and project management expertise with practical operational proficiency on the ground.

Our mission encompasses the entire spectrum of the disaster response lifecycle, ranging from immediate response and recovery to long-term mitigation and preparedness. Our team of Subject Matter Experts is a diverse and global team, bringing together professionals from various public and private sector backgrounds. Central to our operational strategy is a dynamic pool of specialists and volunteers. This group is mobilized and deployed based on the specific needs of a situation, their unique skills, and the expertise they can provide.

What distinguishes Help.NGO is our combination of professionalism, deep-field capabilities, extensive knowledge, access to cutting-edge solutions, and in-depth understanding of the various mechanisms and institutions involved in humanitarian efforts. This combination of skills enables tailored responses to each unique challenge as we continue to leverage an array of capabilities and perspectives from across the globe.



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