

**Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**  
**Best Practice Checklist for private foundations making grants in disasters**

*Source: [Philanthropic Grantmaking for Disasters: Lessons Learned at the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation](#)*

**Transparency**

1. Be truthful to your mission, values, vision and competencies, and honest and transparent.
2. Ensure reporting of your contributions in aid tracking systems.

**Knowledge**

3. Research and understand the context for your philanthropy, using existing expertise.
4. Listen carefully to your partners to respond to their needs, including by adjusting your own.
5. Support learning for effective and efficient implementation.
6. Be prepared to take risks and accept some failures.

**Respect**

7. Respect cultural differences and diversity, and local knowledge and accomplishments.
8. Be modest about what you know and can accomplish.
9. Build long term relationships with your partners, thus understanding and trust.
10. Be reasonable in your requirements from your grantees, proportionate to your support and mindful of their capacity.
11. Ensure your grantees adequately involve beneficiaries in design, management, monitoring and evaluation and that they portray them with dignity.

**Cooperation and coordination**

12. Recognize that international work calls for strong collaboration among funders and with many other actors, to maximize synergies and creativity.
13. Recognize and support coordination so that the entire effort acts in concert.
14. Respect the mandate of the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent, and the UN's role in providing leadership and coordination of international humanitarian action.
15. Make fair choices between implementing agencies, between northern NGOs and southern civil society organizations.
16. Ensure timely funding and ensure that funding in high profile crises is not at the expense of 'forgotten' ones.

**Accountability**

17. Be seen by your peers in private philanthropy as accountable to the standards of the sector as a whole.
18. Require your grantees to abide by accounting standards accepted in their own country or internationally, spell out how your resources will be used and report simply afterwards how they were used, seeking to clarify—or even correct misuse—when necessary.
19. Ensure your grantees adhere to recognized good practice and promote accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

20. Assess your impact together with your peers, grantees and partners.
21. Plan for sustainability and commit for long enough to be effective. Consider three stages: relief, recovery and disaster risk reduction.

### **Respecting humanitarian principles**

22. Support objectives of humanitarian action that are defined by the government of the country.
23. Ensure respect for international humanitarian law, including the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977.
24. Ensure that the humanitarian imperative comes first and that core humanitarian principles of humanity and impartiality are respected—giving aid regardless of race, creed, nationality or any adverse distinction, on the basis of need alone.
25. Affirm the primary position of civilian organizations in implementing humanitarian action.
26. Avoid the use of disaster relief to further a particular political, religious or other standpoint that is not about relief itself, maintaining neutrality in relation to local conflicts or disputes.

### **Recovery and prevention**

27. Attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
28. Address recovery, return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development activities.
29. Invest in disaster risk reduction to prevent or reduce the extent of future disasters.