



ROTARY CLUB GUIDE

Restarting the Local Economy After a Disaster

Assess • Restart • Fund • Hand Over

GUILLAUME BOURGOGNE

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Guillaume Bourgogne

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Rotary Club Guide: Restarting the Local Economy After a Disaster

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contact@blackbirdpress.us

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The Rotary Foundation rules cited in this book are those of the documents in force in October 2026 (the grant terms and conditions of July 2026, the Codes of Policies of October 2026, and the community economic development policy statement and guidelines of April 2024). They may change: always check the current version on My Rotary before setting up a project.

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Introduction

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake devastated Port-au-Prince and southern Haiti. In the countryside of the South-East department, around Jacmel, live women whom Haitians call the *madam sara*, after a migratory bird that looks for food wherever it goes. In normal times, they buy crops near home and carry them to the larger markets or all the way to Port-au-Prince. Most of them move their goods on foot, or on the back of a donkey or a mule. They come home empty-handed, because the city, where the money circulates, is where they turn over their small capital.

According to the observations of a field report written three months later, two days after the earthquake the *madam sara* were already coming down from the mountains toward Pétion-Ville, in the hills above the capital. On the third day, the markets of Pétion-Ville were working. The prices of local products had not gone up.

The team that wrote the report, tasked with analyzing agricultural markets in the South-East, heard one complaint from farmers over and over: in the city, demand had collapsed. The report explains why. The nongovernmental organizations, the foreign armies, and the organizations that had come to save the survivors decided not to buy locally and to import food instead. What could have been a moment of strong demand for rural produce became, according to the report, a crisis of a different kind: a crisis of the domestic market and of local production.

Nobody meant to harm the *madam sara*. Everyone wanted to help. But the economy of these women, of their farmer suppliers, and of their urban customers had started up again before the aid arrived, and the aid bypassed it instead of building on it.

The thesis of this book

This book argues for a simple idea, one that is not self-evident:

After a disaster, what decides whether a community recovers or empties out is not the amount of aid it receives, but how fast its own incomes, markets, and businesses start running again. A Rotary club serves recovery when it reconnects that existing economy, not when it replaces it.

This idea runs against a generous reflex. When an area is hit, we want to give: food, supplies, tools, a new building. That reflex has its place in the first days. But it has a cost as soon as markets restart, and they often restart faster than people think. The pages that follow use real cases to show what that reflex costs when it lasts, and what works in its place.

Why this book

This book is the third in a trilogy written for Rotary clubs and districts.

The first, *Rotary Club Guide: Autonomous Disaster Response*, which we will call the **disaster guide** here, covers before and during: getting ready, then acting in the first hours, the first days, the first weeks. It devotes one chapter to the shift from response to recovery. That chapter makes up about 2% of the book.

The second, *Rotary Club Guide: Community Economic Development*, which we will call the **CED guide**, covers economic development in normal times: microfinance, vocational training, value chains, cooperatives, local development. Its outline leaves post-disaster recovery to the disaster guide, its "twin book," which gives it only that one chapter.

This book fills that gap. It covers the *after*: the moment when relief ends and the question is no longer how to survive, but how to earn a living again. That moment lasts a long time, two or three years at least, and it is when clubs are often least equipped. Disaster guides stop when relief ends; economic development guides start in calm times. Between the two, there is a hole. This book tries to fill it.

It also answers a need in the network. According to the president of the Rotary Action Group for Community Economic Development, RAGCED, who wrote about it in September 2026, the Rotary Foundation has reportedly given this group two new missions: helping to restart the economy of disaster-affected regions, and training communities before disasters, leaving immediate relief to others. No public document describes this mandate yet. RAGCED wants to build a training program on these two missions; this book is offered to carry its "after" part.

Recovery is never just a phase

People often picture the aftermath of a disaster as a line: first relief, then reconstruction, then development. International organizations have dropped that picture. The guidance note of the Global Cluster for Early Recovery, published in 2016, says it bluntly: "Early Recovery is never just a 'phase'." Recovery, the note goes on, is a process that begins in the very first days of the humanitarian response.

For your club, the consequence is concrete. You cannot wait for relief to end before thinking about the economy. From the first week, someone has to look at who lost their workshop, their boat, their stock, their job; which markets are still running; what the ongoing aid is doing to local merchants. You may not act yet. But you will be preparing what you do next, and you will avoid the mistakes that get made in complete good faith in the first weeks.

Why a Rotary club

A Rotary club brings together business owners, merchants, bankers, doctors, engineers, lawyers, and teachers. For economic recovery, that is an asset few organizations have.

Your members know the economy of their area from the inside. They know who sold what, to whom, along which roads. They speak the language of affected business owners, because they are their peers. They know the bankers, the insurers, the elected officials, the suppliers. They stay: a club is not an organization that arrives with the disaster and leaves with the cameras. Yet the disaster hits the club too: some members are affected, others leave the region along with part of the population. And members belong to a global network that can mobilize partner clubs, districts, action groups, and the Rotary Foundation.

This book does not ask you to become a humanitarian agency, a bank, or a construction company. It asks you to do what your club knows how to do: know, connect, fund with rigor, verify, and stay.

What you will find in this book

The book follows a club's path, from the end of relief to preparing for the next disaster, in five parts.

Part	What it establishes
I. Understand	why the economy decides recovery, who does what over time, how to assess economic damage
II. Make the Shift	when and how to move from emergency to recovery, and how to do no harm
III. Restart	the four levers (money, skills, markets, places) and their order over time
IV. Fund and Organize	Rotary Foundation rules, club and district organization, coordination with other actors
V. Make It Last	monitor and prove, exit and hand over, prepare for the next one

Each chapter opens with a real case: a Japanese port, a Haitian microfinance institution, a New Zealand city center, a fishers' cooperative, an American chamber of commerce. These cases are all documented; their sources appear in Appendix C and in the references at the end of each chapter. We added nothing to make them more vivid. When a figure comes from a single source, or from the organization that ran the project, we say so. When an example is not real but built to explain a method, we flag it as a sample case. We do not name private individuals: you will read "a market woman," "the president of a cooperative," never their names.

After the case, each chapter explains the mechanism at work, the principle that international standards and documented experience draw from it, what your club can do in practice, and the pitfalls to avoid. It ends with a checklist.

Each chapter also adds a piece to what we call your club's **recovery file**: an assessment, a shift decision, a "do no harm" filter, the choice of levers, a funding plan, an organization, a monitoring plan, an exit plan, a preparedness plan. Appendix B gathers these pieces into a template you can fill in. This file will help you decide, convince your district and your partners, and put together a global grant application if your project needs one.

What this book does not do

It does not cover immediate relief. The first hours and the first weeks belong to the disaster guide, the emergency services, and specialized organizations.

It does not rewrite the CED guide. When a tool of normal-times economic development is useful after a disaster, this book says what changes, and refers you to the CED guide for the rest.

It does not treat reconstruction as an engineering problem. Buildings, roads, and utility networks appear only for what they do to the local economy: the jobs they create, the purchases they trigger, the shops they allow to reopen.

The Rotary Foundation rules

The Rotary Foundation's rules change. This book cites the documents in force when it was written: the terms and conditions for global grants, district grants, and disaster response grants in their July 2026 version, the *Rotary Foundation Code of Policies* in its October 2026 version, and the areas of focus policy statement and the community economic development guidelines of April 2024. Every figure is given with its date. Before setting up a project, check the current version; Appendix E tells you where to find these documents.

This book is independent. It is neither approved nor endorsed by Rotary International or by the Rotary Foundation. When it proposes a way of doing things that is not an official rule, for example how two action groups could hand over to each other, it presents it as a proposal.

A word on vocabulary

We use "recovery" in its standard humanitarian sense: restoring, and where possible improving, the livelihoods, activities, and assets of a community hit by a disaster. *Early recovery* is the part of that work that starts while relief is still under way. The glossary in Appendix D defines these terms.

*

The *madam sara* of the South-East waited for no one to get their economy running again. They needed customers, not competitors. Understanding why the economy decides the fate of a disaster-affected community, and what it demands of those who want to help, is the subject of the first chapter.

Part I: Understand

When a disaster strikes your club's area, the reflex is to act right away. That is the right reflex for relief. For economic recovery, you first need to understand three things, and that is what this first part is about.

Why the economy decides. A community recovers or empties out depending on how fast its incomes, its markets, and its businesses start running again. Chapter 1 draws on documented cases from Kobe, New Orleans, Puerto Rico, and Haiti to show what makes a shop reopen and what dooms it, and why a Rotary club is well placed to help without taking over.

Who does what, and when. Recovery is not a phase that follows relief: it starts during the emergency and lasts for years. The authorities lead it, the humanitarian system and the donors fit into it, and Rotary has its own organization. Chapter 2 maps these actors and shows where your club fits.

How to assess. Before deciding anything, you need to know what the disaster broke: the assets destroyed, the income lost, what it would take to restart. Chapter 3 gives an assessment method sized for a club.

By the end of this part, your club will have laid the first two pieces of its recovery file: the "who does what" map of its area and its economic assessment form. The following parts build on them.

Chapter 1: Why the Economy Decides Recovery

On January 17, 1995, at 5:46 a.m., a magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck the Kobe region of Japan. It killed 6,434 people and destroyed more than 200,000 homes.

In Nagata ward, on the coast, small workshops making synthetic leather shoes had long been clustered together. According to the Japanese sources cited by a study from the research institute of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), they formed an industrial district: about 450 manufacturers, some 1,680 related businesses, 15,000 jobs. The earthquake destroyed 90% of these businesses in whole or in part. Some of the losses came from the fires that followed the shaking: these workshops worked with products like paint thinner, which is highly flammable. The sector's losses were estimated at 300 billion yen.

One year later, according to a case study published by UN-Habitat, the city had already repaired a great deal. The three rail lines were running, the expressway and the bridges were back, the large industries had resumed, and the port was operating at 70 to 80% of its former capacity. The small manufacturing businesses, on the other hand, were still producing only half of what they had produced before the earthquake. Three years later, Nagata had lost more than 30% of its residents.

By 2004, Kobe had regained its pre-disaster population. Its output too. Seen from above, the city had recovered.

Nagata had not. The city's industrial employment never returned to its former level, and the drop was steepest in this ward. In 2010, according to the shoe industry association cited by the same JICA study, member companies sold about 45 billion yen worth of goods, against 70 billion before. They employed fewer than 3,000 people, against 6,500.

The city got its residents back. The neighborhood did not get its industry back.

What the scene teaches

The author of the JICA study draws an observation from Kobe that any business owner understands without explanation. After a disaster, he writes, some residents leave, settle elsewhere, and find work there; their children change schools; and the more time passes, the less likely they are to come back. "Here, the job is the key to people's movement," he goes on:

in the medium- and long-term reconstruction phase, work decides where people go. "Jobs give income for people to spend, and then local stores can start to sell products." Without these two cogs, he says, no economy succeeds in its recovery.

Three lessons follow for your club.

First: an average can hide a dying neighborhood. Kobe regained its population and its output in nine years. A review report that stopped at those two curves would call it a success. Yet in one ward of the same city, a fabric of small workshops lost more than half its jobs. Recovery is judged at the level where people live: a street, a market, a trade.

Second: rebuilding the buildings is not enough to bring the activity back. Nagata's workshops did not just lose machines. They lost customers, workers who had settled elsewhere, subcontractors who had closed. A workshop rebuilt on an empty street is still a workshop with no orders.

Third: time works against the small ones. One year after the earthquake, the large industries had resumed; the small businesses were running at half speed. Every month of shutdown drains a small workshop's cash, scatters its workers, and pushes its customers toward other suppliers. A large company often has the reserves to wait; a small workshop rarely does.

These three lessons make up the thesis of this book. After a disaster, what decides whether a community recovers or empties out is not the amount of aid it receives, but how fast its own incomes, markets, and businesses start running again. The rest of this chapter shows why, based on what studies and international standards have established.

Incomes first: why a community stays or leaves

The official guide on employment in post-disaster needs assessments (PDNA, Volume B) states the principle bluntly: "Rapid economic reactivation is the best way to create genuine jobs, getting people out of relief as soon as possible." The same guide points out that for a household, labor is "arguably its most important asset."

When work does not come back, people leave. After the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, the International Labour Organization (ILO) office in the country wrote that without the restoration of livelihoods, migration would become families' main survival strategy. In Christchurch, New Zealand, about 65,000 people, or 17% of the population, left the city after the earthquake of February 22, 2011, most of them temporarily according to the

authors; the researchers who observed the first month saw a direct risk to retail and service businesses. In Türkiye, after the February 2023 earthquakes, the official assessment counted nearly two million people who had left the region and reported it to the authorities.

Every resident who leaves is one less customer for the bakery and one less worker for the workshop, and every shop that closes gives the remaining residents one more reason to leave. That is the mechanism your club is trying to stop.

Losses last longer than damage

In Kobe, the damage suffered by industry was estimated at about 5 trillion yen. Half of it was direct damage to premises and equipment; the other half was indirect damage such as business closures. In other words, what the disaster prevented from being produced and sold weighed as much as what it had broken.

Chapter 3 gives this distinction its vocabulary (damage, losses, needs) and its method. For now, keep the essentials in mind: a machine can be replaced in a few weeks if you have the money; a lost customer base, a supplier gone out of business, or know-how that left with its workers takes years to rebuild, when it rebuilds at all.

Who loses first

Losses do not fall at random. They hit first those who have no guaranteed wage, no reserves, and no insurance.

- **The self-employed and the informal sector.** In Haiti, the 2010 official assessment notes that independent artisans, 44% of the production sector, were the hardest hit. In Türkiye, in 2023, undeclared employment accounted for about 39% of employment in the affected region; the official assessment estimated that about 700,000 undeclared workers in the five hardest-hit provinces could remain out of work for two quarters, beyond the reach of job protection measures.
- **The smallest businesses and women.** In Beira, Mozambique, after Cyclone Idai in 2019, a study of manufacturing businesses found that microenterprises, women-owned businesses, and tailors were among the hardest hit, while construction businesses saw no significant drop in revenue.
- **Small neighborhood shops.** They live off customers who live within walking distance. When the neighborhood empties, they lose their market before they have even been able to reopen.

Chapter 3 explains how to find these people in your area. Here, one consequence is enough: a club that helps "the local economy" in general will mostly help those who already know how to ask for help. The others have no storefront sign and no address in any register.

People restart before the aid arrives

One common belief that the sources contradict concerns the affected people themselves. We picture them waiting for aid. Many do not wait.

The official damage and needs assessment carried out in Haiti after the earthquake of January 12, 2010 says it in so many words about trade and small-scale craft production, "made up of a myriad of self-employed workers who, because of the meager means with which they normally operate, were in a position to restart their activities after a stoppage of a few days" (our translation). The introduction to this book showed the market women coming back down to the capital's markets in the very first days. The focus groups later organized by Fonkoze, the country's leading microfinance institution, report the same thing: many clients had already restarted a small business in the days and weeks that followed, because they urgently needed income (Chapter 6).

International standards draw a rule from this. The 2008 guidance note on early recovery, published by the working group of humanitarian agencies, gives recovery three objectives; the second is to "support spontaneous recovery initiatives by affected communities."

For your club, the consequence is practical. Before designing a project, look at what has already restarted, and ask what is keeping the rest from following. The most useful aid supports momentum that already exists; the most harmful short-circuits it, for example by handing out for free what the merchants who have reopened are trying to sell (Chapter 5).

What closes a shop: its surroundings

When a shop does not reopen, people first think of the destroyed premises. The surveys say something else: often, what surrounds the shop is what keeps it from working.

In Puerto Rico, after Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York surveyed small businesses from March to May 2018. Among those that had suffered losses, 51% named the lack of electricity among their main difficulties. Most had resumed: 73% were fully operating, 25% had closed temporarily, 2% permanently. And among those that had closed, temporarily or not, 71% had done so for lack of electricity, water, or

transportation; damage to the building came next (42%), then a lack of customers (38%). The bank itself acknowledges a limit: businesses that disappeared rarely answer surveys, so its results very likely understate the impact of the hurricanes.

In Christchurch, the university team that observed the first month after the earthquake of February 22, 2011 found the same thing. More than forty roads, road sections, and bridges stayed closed for more than two weeks; access to some coastal neighborhoods was restricted to residents, "making it impossible for many customers to reach businesses that were attempting to remain open." Very few small businesses were equipped to cope with power outages; where the power was out for several days, cafés, restaurants, and corner stores threw away thousands of dollars' worth of stock. Hair salons, with no water, could not serve their customers.

The lesson is simple to state. For a shop, the first asset lost is sometimes a service: power, water, the road, the customer who can no longer get there. A grant does not fix a power outage. Chapter 3 teaches your club to record, for each business visited, "the main obstacle"; Chapter 9 shows what a club can do when that obstacle is collective.

One caveat is in order. Puerto Rico, Christchurch, New Orleans, and Japan are formal economies, widely insured, with a strong state. Their surveys are the most precise we have, but their figures do not transfer as is to a Port-au-Prince slum or a village in Sindh. The mechanism, however, does transfer: no one reopens a shop that nobody can reach.

A business reopens if its neighbors reopen

The most useful finding for a club comes from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. A team of researchers recorded every week, for a year, the status of 673 businesses along three major streets in the city: closed, open, partially open, relocated. They were thus able to measure the effect of the neighbors' decisions on each business's own decision.

The effect is clear. In the first three months, each foot of water (about 30 centimeters) in the premises reduced the probability that a business would reopen by 4.8%. But, the authors write, "if you had a foot of flooding and none of your neighbours had reopened, the probability that you will decide to reopen decreases not by 4.8% but by 7.8%." The decisions of merchants on the same street are not independent. Each one watches what the others do.

The same study finds that sole proprietorships, often family businesses, were 16% more likely to reopen in the first three months than national chains, and that they raised their neighbors' probability by about 10%: a total effect of about 26%. The authors explain it by family labor, pride, and the fact that the business is often the family's only income. After twelve months, 478 of the 673 businesses had reopened.

A second study, of 1,358 businesses in the same city, confirms the phenomenon and sums it up in a phrase: "Do what your neighbors do" appears to be a decisive factor in the decision to reopen, especially during the first nine months. Its authors recall why: after a disaster, businesses suffer from fewer customers because people are displaced, from lower purchasing power, and from a shortage of labor. They draw a recommendation from it: business assistance policies must take into account both this neighborhood effect and the return of residents. Chapter 3 comes back to the time window this study brings out.

Japan offers the same lesson in one sentence. About the shopping streets destroyed by the 2011 tsunami, the JICA study on Kobe notes: "There is no point in opening a store that is isolated from other stores."

For your club, this changes how you choose whom to help. Helping ten shops scattered across ten neighborhoods has less effect than helping ten shops on the same street, which send customers to one another. Reopening the first shops on a street sends the others a signal their owners are waiting for. Chapter 9 turns this observation into a method.

When reconstruction becomes the economy

One last dynamic often traps disaster-affected communities. Reconstruction itself creates activity: building sites, hiring, purchases of materials. For two or three years, it can create the illusion of recovery. Then it stops.

In December 2007, three years after the tsunami, the Multi Donor Fund for Aceh and Nias, in Indonesia, warned in its progress report that the economy of the two regions risked stagnating, and unemployment rising, once reconstruction was no longer driving it, unless economic recovery received strong support right away. Chapter 14 cites this warning and shows what it means for a project's exit. For now, remember that a building site is temporary activity, which must leave behind businesses, skills, and markets able to run on their own.

The principle: restarting incomes on three tracks

International organizations have put these findings into a framework. The most useful one for a club is the **three-track model**, designed originally by the United Nations for post-conflict employment, then carried over to disasters by the ILO in its Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), adopted on June 16, 2017. Paragraph 8 of its official text asks Member States to adopt strategies that include:

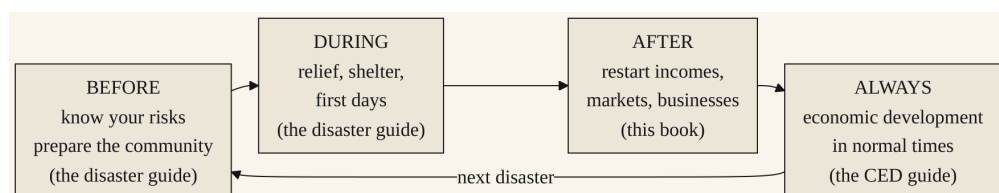
- "(a) stabilizing livelihoods and income through immediate social protection and employment measures";

- "(b) promoting local economic recovery for employment and decent work opportunities and socio-economic reintegration";
- "(c) promoting sustainable employment and decent work, social protection and social inclusion, sustainable development, the creation of sustainable enterprises, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, the transition from the informal to the formal economy."

Stabilize incomes, restart the local economy, build lasting employment: the three tracks start together, but their intensity shifts over time. Chapter 2 shows how, and who carries each one.

Two clarifications prevent misunderstandings. First, the Recommendation is addressed to states; it creates no obligation for a club. It provides a common framework in which your project can fit and be understood by the authorities and the agencies. Second, the framework is young for disasters: in 2016, the ILO still acknowledged that the United Nations system had no common framework for post-disaster employment comparable to the one that existed for post-conflict settings. The 2017 Recommendation partly fills that gap.

A club almost never acts on the third track, which belongs to national policy. It can contribute to the first, through partners (Chapters 6 and 7). Its real place is in the second: recovery of the local economy, at the scale of a neighborhood, a trade, a town. That is the subject of Part III.



This diagram places this book within the trilogy. The disaster guide covers before and during; the CED guide covers economic development in normal times; this book covers the after, from the end of relief to two or three years later. The return arrow matters: a club that practices economic development in calm times already knows the merchants, lenders, and cooperatives it will need the day everything stops (Chapter 15).

What the club does: why a Rotary club is well placed

After Katrina, a 2008 survey of small businesses in New Orleans and Biloxi asked their owners which organization had had a positive effect on their recovery. The most frequent answer, 47%, was "none." 13% named an association or a charity, 8% the Federal Emergency

Management Agency, and public bodies at all levels together accounted for 32% of responses. Three years after the disaster, in one of the richest countries in the world, nearly half of small business owners saw no one who had helped them.

There is a place here, and a Rotary club has what it takes to fill it.

Club asset	What it makes possible after the disaster
Network of business owners and professionals	knowing who sold what, to whom, before
Management skills	reading accounts, judging a restart plan
Knowledge of the area	spotting forgotten streets, trades, and people
Lasting presence	staying when the agencies leave
Access to Rotary	district, Rotary Foundation, action groups

The last asset is not the least. An international humanitarian organization arrives with the disaster and leaves when its funding ends. The club was there before and will be there after, even if the disaster hits it too: some of its members are affected, others leave along with part of the population. The club is the one that can sustain a project over two or three years, provided it organizes itself to get through the annual change of club president (Chapter 11).

International standards also explicitly open the door to this kind of actor. ILO Recommendation 205, in Paragraph 25, asks states to recognize the role of employers’ and workers’ organizations in crisis response, in particular in helping sustainable enterprises, especially small and medium-sized ones, to plan business continuity and get through the crisis through training, advice, and material support, and in facilitating their access to finance (clause (a)). A Rotary club is not an employers’ organization in the sense of the text. But it brings employers together, and the role described is exactly the one it can play locally. In Christchurch, it was the Canterbury Employers’ Chamber of Commerce that appointed a coordinator to find vacant commercial premises and help businesses relocate.

What the club is not

Knowing your strengths means knowing your limits. Three confusions are costly.

- **The club is not a bank.** It does not lend itself. It funds, checks, and supports a professional lender who knows its clients (Chapter 6; this is already the rule in the CED guide).
- **The club is not a humanitarian agency.** It does not run relief, which belongs to the emergency services and specialized organizations; the disaster guide covers what your club does during that period.

- **The club is not the reconstruction authority.** It decides neither urban plans nor public aid. It fits into what the authorities lead (Chapter 2).

What the club is, on the other hand, comes down to one verb: it *reconnects*. It puts a merchant back in touch with a supplier, a cooperative with a buyer, a seamstress with a lender, a street with its customers. It does not replace the existing economy; it helps it get moving again.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Judging recovery by citywide averages	overall figures are published first	look at streets, trades, neighborhoods
Rebuilding premises without restarting activity	the building is visible, the customers are not	check customers, suppliers, workers, services
Helping scattered shops	requests are answered one by one	concentrate aid on one street or trade
Ignoring what has already restarted	you arrive with a ready-made project	start from the existing momentum
Forgetting the informal sector and women	they appear in no register	look for them on the ground (Chapter 3)
Mistaking the building site for an economy	reconstruction hires and buys	prepare what will remain after (Chapter 14)
Transferring a rich-country figure	the big surveys come from insured countries	keep the mechanism, not the figure
Replacing instead of reconnecting	giving seems faster	first ask who did it before

A subtler pitfall lies in vocabulary. A club will readily say it "helps disaster survivors rebuild." That phrase puts the club at the center and the survivors in a waiting position. The cases in this chapter show the opposite: people restart on their own, merchants watch one another, and aid matters when it arrives in the right place, at the right time, to remove what is blocking.

What your club takes away

This chapter does not yet add a piece to the recovery file: it sets out the reason the file exists. Every piece that follows, from the assessment form to the exit plan, serves a single goal: that the incomes, markets, and businesses of your area start running again fast enough for people to stay.

Nagata was rebuilt. Its workshops did not regain their place, and Kobe recovered without them. For things to go differently where you are, you first need to know who does what, and when, among the relief services, the authorities, the agencies, and your club: that is the question of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ The club knows what has already restarted in its area, and what is keeping the rest from following
- ☐ Collective obstacles (electricity, water, access, customers) have been distinguished from each business's own needs
- ☐ The self-employed, the informal sector, women, and the smallest businesses have been sought out, not waited for
- ☐ The planned aid is concentrated on one street, market, or trade rather than scattered
- ☐ The club has checked that it is not replacing an existing local actor
- ☐ The club has identified what its members bring (network, management, knowledge of the area, staying power)
- ☐ The club has written down what it will not do (lend itself, run relief, lead reconstruction)
- ☐ The project is planned over two or three years, beyond the end of the building work

Further reading

- International Labour Organization, *Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205)*, Geneva, 2017.
- International Labour Organization, *Employment and Decent Work in Situations of Fragility, Conflict and Disaster: Guide*, Geneva, 2016.
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- Federal Reserve Bank of New York, *Puerto Rico Small Businesses and the 2017 Hurricanes: Evidence from the 2018 New York Fed Survey*, 2018.
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- The CED guide, for the economic development of your area in normal times.

Chapter 2: The Four Phases and Who Does What

On April 25, 2015, an earthquake strikes Nepal. A second quake follows on May 12.

Eight months after the earthquake, as the emergency response winds down and the shelter coordination group pulls out, the government formally creates the National Reconstruction Authority. Its strategy fits in one sentence: let families rebuild permanent homes themselves, with cash grants paid out under conditions. The country lacks the skilled workers to rebuild on that scale, so training construction workers becomes a priority.

On March 31, 2016, the Authority publishes its guidelines for mobilizing NGOs. It asks them to focus on socio-technical support: inform, train, accompany. The state will pay the grants. In mid-April, the Authority starts signing grant agreements with households.

In remote areas, a humanitarian organization and its partner, a Nepali NGO, sign a tripartite agreement with the Authority. Beneficiaries are chosen from the list approved by the Authority, and the final list goes to the government's information services to avoid duplicates. The grant, about \$3,000 (300,000 rupees), follows public policy: \$500 at signing, 1,500 when the plinth is finished, 1,000 when the roof and a latrine are complete. Families organize in groups of ten, and each group must finish every member's house before the next installment is released. Before the second and third installments, government engineers check compliance with the national building code, using a checklist drawn up by the state.

The project lost nearly five months waiting for the guidelines, with the monsoon approaching. It enables 1,797 households to rebuild. Then, when the Authority allows NGOs to provide only technical support, the organization changes its method: it lets the state pay the grants and devotes itself to technical assistance, door to door. In about nine months, it reaches 7,000 more households.

In its lessons learned, it notes that by focusing on technical support from the start, it would have reached a much larger group, for a longer time.

What the scene teaches

The Nepal case is about housing, not the economy. But it shows how roles are distributed after a disaster, and what it costs to ignore them.

Public authorities lead, even when they arrive late. The reconstruction authority was created eight months after the earthquake; its rules for NGOs came out nearly a year after. In the meantime, organizations were preparing their own programs. When the rules arrived, they set the grant amount, its installments, the inspections and the beneficiary list, including for the organizations allowed to pay out the money themselves.

Those who fit into the public system reach further. The organization helped 1,797 households by paying out the money itself; it reached 7,000 more, in nine months, by letting the state pay and bringing what the state lacked: technicians who go from house to house. Its most useful contribution was skill more than money.

Recovery does not start on a fixed date. In Nepal, the emergency, the preparation of reconstruction and the first building sites overlapped for months. There was no day when "relief" stopped and "recovery" began.

Your club will find itself in the same position as this organization, on a smaller scale. It will need to know who leads, which rules apply, where the people who act meet, and what it can bring that no one else brings. This chapter gives it the map.

Recovery is never just a phase

For a long time, disaster aid was thought of as a sequence: first relief, then rehabilitation, then development. Specialists called this model the "continuum."

The guidance note on early recovery published in 2016 by the global group in charge of the field (the Global Cluster for Early Recovery) explicitly abandons it. It observes that the reality of responses, "particularly conflict related emergencies," requires humanitarian, recovery and development interventions that are "non-linear and simultaneous." Specialists now speak of a "contiguum." And the note sets out the sentence, already quoted in the introduction, that serves as this chapter's compass:

"Early Recovery is never just a 'phase'. It is a multidimensional process of recovery that begins in the early days of a humanitarian response."

The 2008 note that preceded it already said that early recovery "begins in a humanitarian setting."

One nuance matters for you. The 2016 text is aimed first at conflict-related crises, where relief and development run side by side for years. For sudden disasters, the International Labour Organization (ILO), in its 2016 guide on employment in situations of fragility, conflict and disaster, makes the same observation in its own words: when a disaster strikes suddenly, relief and development programs "often co-exist."

The practical consequence is simple. Your club does not have to wait for the official end of relief to think about the economy. From the first week, it can note which trades, shops and value chains have been hit. It will not necessarily act right away (Chapter 4 says when to make the shift), but it will not discover the subject in the sixth month.

The trilogy's four phases

This book belongs to a trilogy, and the trilogy divides the time of a disaster into four. Chapter 1 gave the diagram; here is what each phase asks of your club.

Phase	What is at stake	Where to find it
Before	knowing your risks, preparing the community and its incomes	the disaster guide; Chapter 15
During	saving lives, sheltering, feeding in the first days	the disaster guide
After	restarting incomes, markets and businesses, over two or three years	this book
Always	economic development of the area in normal times	the CED guide

This division is a tool of the trilogy, not an international standard. It does not contradict the "contiguum": the during and the after overlap. It serves to divide the work among the books, and to remind the club that the after always prepares a new before.

From relief to recovery: what changes

Between the during and the after, almost everything changes, except the people. A club that handled the emergency well risks repeating in the sixth month the moves that worked in the first week. The following table sums up what must change.

Dimension	During relief	During recovery
Goal	keep people alive	help them get their lives back
Tools	distribute, shelter, treat	assess, fund, train, reconnect markets
Money	emergency funds, disaster grant	district and global grants, partners

Dimension	During relief	During recovery
Skills	logistics, first aid, coordination	management, credit, trade, crafts
Pace	hours and days	months and years
Measure of success	vital needs covered	incomes and activities picking up

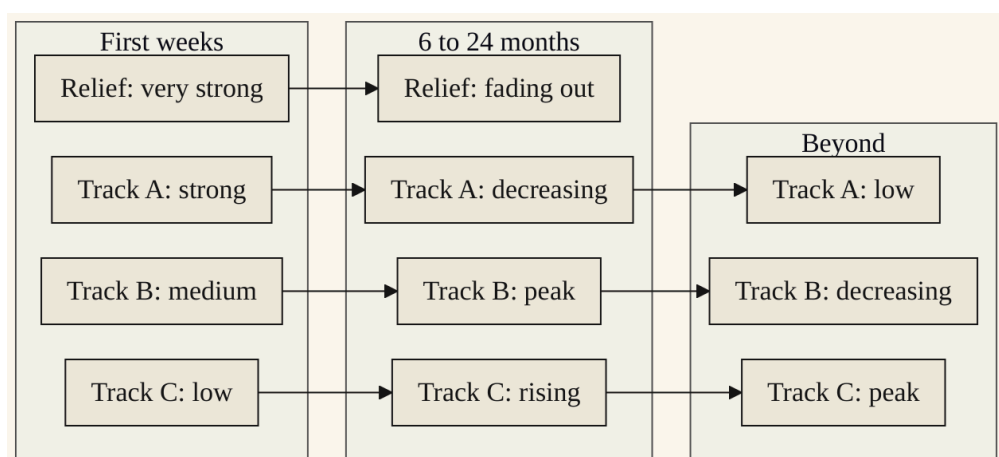
The "money" row has its counterpart in the rules of the Rotary Foundation. Under the *Terms and Conditions* in force in July 2026, the Disaster Response Grant funds "relief and recovery efforts" in areas affected by a natural disaster within the previous six months, and it is awarded only to districts in the affected area. It is a bridge for the first months, not a multiyear tool. Chapter 10 details the Foundation's three tools and how they hand off over time.

The three tracks over time

Chapter 1 presented the three-track model that the ILO carried over to disasters in its Recommendation No. 205 of 2017: stabilize incomes, restart the local economy, establish sustainable employment. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 2022 guidance note on livelihoods and economic recovery, specifies how their intensity changes:

- **Track A** (stabilizing livelihoods) has "a higher intensity at the onset of a crisis," then decreases in the medium and long term;
- **Track B** (local economic recovery) starts at medium intensity, rises in the medium term, then decreases;
- **Track C** (sustainable employment and inclusive growth) is low at first and grows gradually to its peak in the long term.

The 2013 summary of the UNDP guide adds that the three tracks should start early and, ideally, at the same time. They overlap; they do not follow one another.



This diagram is indicative: the periods at the top of each column are a proposal of this book to fix ideas, not a calendar taken from the sources. It reveals the club's ground. Track B, local economic recovery, peaks just as relief fades out and humanitarian agencies start to leave. That is the moment when your club, which stays, can be most useful.

How long recovery lasts

No international source sets a duration for recovery, and the most serious ones say so. The 2008 guidance note presents an illustrative eighteen-month calendar, drawn from a post-conflict context, and immediately warns: "it is much harder to set a firm time line for early recovery."

Yet the available benchmarks point to years, not months.

- UNDP, in its 2013 note on emergency employment, indicates that these programs generally last up to six months after a small disaster, at least a year after a large one. It is an order of magnitude, not a rule.
- An independent evaluation of UNDP economic recovery programs run from 2009 to 2012, published in 2014, finds that two- to three-year programs are too short to be sustainable, and recommends that donor support be secured "for at least a five-year time frame."
- The disaster guide proposes a working timeline that runs from the disaster to the closing of a global grant in two to three years. It is a planning estimate, to be presented as such.

A Rotary case illustrates this. In the Philippines, Welsh clubs and the Rotary club of Iloilo handed over 55 fishing boats to a fishermen's association in Anilao at the end of 2018, five years after Typhoon Haiyan (Chapter 14).

The rule this book proposes: count on at least two to three years, and prepare from the start what will continue beyond. For a club whose presidency changes every year, that means a recovery project will span at least three presidencies. Chapter 11 shows how to organize so the project survives these handovers.

Who leads recovery

The government and local authorities

All the sources read agree on one point: recovery belongs to the affected country. The 2008 note puts it at the top of its coordination principles, "First and foremost, early recovery should be owned and led by national actors," and specifies that government structures should lead coordination. The 2016 note adds that successful early recovery requires a rapid shift from a response driven by international actors to one "led and managed by national authorities."

This leadership takes several concrete forms.

- **The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA).** It is carried out at the government's request, with support from the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank; its guide specifies that international agencies have no mandate to conduct it without that request (Chapter 3).
- **Reconstruction authorities.** Nepal created its own eight months after the earthquake. In Indonesia, after the 2004 tsunami, the government agency for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Aceh and Nias coordinated the effort until it closed in April 2009.
- **The rules of the game.** Public grant amounts, beneficiary lists, building standards, guidelines for NGOs: in Nepal, they set what each organization could do.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted in 2015, says the same thing for reconstruction. Its paragraph 33(i) calls for promoting cooperation among the institutions, authorities and stakeholders concerned, "including affected communities and business," given the complex and costly nature of reconstruction, "under the coordination of national authorities." Communities and businesses have their place; coordination falls to national authorities.

The humanitarian system

During relief, UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross coordinate through **clusters**: shelter, water, health, logistics and others. The system was created in 2005 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee; among the first nine clusters was an "early recovery" cluster, led at the

global level by UNDP.

This picture has changed since then: the disaster guide, which describes an "early recovery" cluster led by UNDP, gives the state of things in 2008. Since the 2016 note, early recovery runs first through coordination among the existing clusters. The note is categorical: "Creating a new coordination body for early recovery is never advised." National actors must be brought into the leadership of coordination. Depending on the country, recovery will therefore be discussed in the existing clusters, in a dedicated working group whose name varies, or directly with the national or municipal reconstruction authority. Chapter 12 explains how your club finds its place there.

Donors

Rebuilding a region costs far more than what humanitarian agencies mobilize. Major donors (World Bank, European Union, bilateral cooperation agencies, regional development banks) fund multiyear public programs. In Aceh, the Indonesian government and the international community created a multi-donor fund as early as May 2005, aligned with the government's reconstruction master plan; by the end of 2007, more than 80% of its funds were being implemented by national government agencies.

Your club will not negotiate with these donors. But it needs to know which major programs exist in its area, for two reasons: so as not to fund what a public program will fund anyway, and to spot the gaps these programs leave, often at the scale of a street or a value chain.

Rotary's place

Rotary has its own organization, which fits into this picture. The *Rotary Foundation Code of Policies*, in its October 2026 version, sets out the doctrine: "The role of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation is to be a resource and to assist in long term disaster recovery."

Level	Role during recovery	See
Club	knows the area, carries the project on site, stays	Chapter 11
District	coordinates clubs, holds disaster and district grants	disaster guide, ch. 18; Chapter 10
Rotary Foundation	funds under its current rules; technical advisers	disaster guide, ch. 19; Chapter 10
Action groups	advise, connect, train	Chapter 11

Rotary Action Groups deserve a clarification, because their role is often misunderstood. The *Rotary Code of Policies*, in its October 2026 version, says that an action group "is not an agency of RI" and cannot act on behalf of Rotary International. It does not direct clubs or districts, and it can contact a club only with the express permission of the district governor, renewed each year. In practice, then, it is up to the club or the district to call on it.

Two action groups matter especially for a disaster.

- **DNA-RAG** (Disaster Network of Assistance Rotary Action Group) defines its mission as mitigating the effects of disasters by strengthening preparedness, providing emergency response and "supporting long-term recovery." The Foundation's Code names it in its disaster policy.
- **RAGCED** (Rotary Action Group for Community Economic Development) defines its mission as being a source of knowledge and expertise to help Rotarians plan, implement and manage sustainable economic development projects. According to its chair, the Rotary Foundation has reportedly given it a mandate for the economic recovery of disaster areas and for training communities before disasters, excluding immediate relief. To date, this mandate is known only through that correspondence; no public document read mentions it.

No document today describes a division of roles between these two groups. *This book proposes* a simple split, to be agreed between them: DNA-RAG supports the response and the coordination of the network; as soon as the question becomes "how will people get their livelihoods back?", the club and the district bring RAGCED into the design of the economic recovery. Chapter 11 details this proposal phase by phase.

Build back better, but to the scale of the place

One phrase comes up in every reconstruction plan: "build back better." It has an official definition, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2017 on the basis of report A/71/644:

"The use of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and communities through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalization of livelihoods, economies and the environment."

Note that the definition explicitly mentions livelihoods and the economy: building back better is not only about buildings. The PDNA guidelines on employment say so too: it means building back better infrastructure, "and also better livelihoods (better skills, wider

access to markets, better compliance with labour regulations, and so on)."

The definition also has an official limit, and it protects your club from overly ambitious projects. The same PDNA guidelines specify: "Building back better does not imply a fundamental change in the preexisting economic and social development level of the disaster-affected area, but it does address some of its deficiencies through proposing improvements that are compatible with - and sustainable - under the existing level of development in the area."

For a club, the rule translates like this: improve what existed, do not invent a new economy. A fishing cooperative that starts again with better boats and better management is building back better. An industrial value chain imported into a fishing village is not.

What the club does: the "who does what" map

Before designing a project, your club maps the actors in its area. This is a first version: it will be completed in Chapter 12, when the club joins the coordination.

Step 1: find out who leads. Who is running the reconstruction: the city hall, a regional authority, a national authority created for the occasion? What rules has it published (public grants, beneficiary lists, guidelines for organizations)? Is a PDNA under way or published?

Step 2: find out where coordination happens. Which meeting brings together the actors working on livelihoods and the economy? Who convenes it? Chapter 12 details what your club does there.

Step 3: know who is already present. For each sector of interest to the club (retail, agriculture, fishing, crafts, credit, training), who is already active, where, and with what resources?

Step 4: locate Rotary. Is the district mobilized? Has it applied for a disaster grant? Has the governor been asked to bring in the action groups? Have partner clubs abroad come forward?

Step 5: spot the gaps. What no one is doing is often where your club will be useful: a street of small shops forgotten by the big programs, a local value chain threatened by in-kind aid, artisans who appear on no list.

The map fits in one table, updated every month in the early period.

Actor	What it does here	Contact and meeting	What it expects from the club
Reconstruction authority	strategy, public grants, lists	office name, meeting date	field information, compliance with rules

Actor	What it does here	Contact and meeting	What it expects from the club
City hall	permits, markets, roads	elected official or lead office	liaison with shopkeepers
Humanitarian coordination	who does what, where	coordination meeting	reporting its activities
Chamber of commerce, associations	relations with businesses	designated contact	data, members, partnership
Lenders and microfinance institutions	credit, rescheduling	local branch	referred clients, cofunding
Rotary district	grants, club coordination	district disaster committee	file, reports, follow-up
Action groups	advice, connections	through the governor	a specific request from the club

This map is the first version of one piece of your club's recovery file. It will feed the assessment (Chapter 3), the shift decision (Chapter 4) and the coordination plan (Chapter 12).

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Waiting for the "end of relief" to think about the economy	phases are assumed to be sequential	note affected activities from the first week
Setting up your own aid scheme	wanting to move fast	fit into public rules, even late ones
Paying out money where the state already pays	the gesture feels more concrete	bring what is missing: skills, follow-up, network
Creating one more coordination body	existing meetings seem slow	join the ones that exist
Planning a one-year project	pace of presidencies and budgets	think two to three years, and beyond
Promising to "build everything back better"	the phrase is appealing	improve what existed, to the scale of the place

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Presenting an action group as a decision maker	confusion about its role	the club or district calls on it and decides

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has a **"who does what" map** of its area: who leads the reconstruction, where coordination happens, who is already active in each sector, where Rotary stands, and what no one is doing. It knows that recovery does not start on a fixed date, that it will last several years, and that its own place is in the recovery of the local economy, alongside the authorities and not in their place.

In Nepal, the organization reached far more families the day it stopped paying out money itself and brought what the state lacked. To know where your area needs your club, you now have to look at what the disaster broke in its economy: that is the subject of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ The club knows which authority leads the reconstruction and what rules it has published
- ☐ The club knows whether a PDNA is under way or published, and has read it
- ☐ The relevant coordination meeting for the economy and livelihoods is identified
- ☐ The actors already present are known, by sector and by area
- ☐ The district is informed and mobilized; the option of a disaster grant is known
- ☐ The action groups have been approached through the governor, with a specific request
- ☐ The gaps no one covers are listed
- ☐ The project is planned over at least two to three years, beyond a single presidency
- ☐ The project improves what exists without claiming to transform the local economy
- ☐ The "who does what" map is written and dated, with an update date

Further reading

- Global Cluster for Early Recovery, *Guidance Note on Inter-Cluster Early Recovery*, January 2016.
- IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery, *Guidance Note on Early Recovery*, April 2008.

- United Nations Development Programme, *Guidance Note: Building Resilience through Livelihoods and Economic Recovery*, 2022.
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- Global Shelter Cluster, *Shelter Projects 2017-2018*, case study A.18, "Nepal 2016-2017, Earthquake."
- Rotary International, *Rotary Code of Policies*, and The Rotary Foundation, *Rotary Foundation Code of Policies*, current versions, on My Rotary.

Chapter 3: Assessing the Economic Damage

On May 22, 2011, an EF-5 tornado, the strongest on the scale, tears through the south of Joplin, a city in Missouri. It cuts a path about a mile wide. It kills 161 people and demolishes 8,000 buildings, a third of the city. Among them are 530 workplaces.

In the week that follows, the staff of the regional chamber of commerce go out into the streets. They walk from one destroyed business to the next to find the owners, comfort them, and tell them one thing: the chamber will organize help to restart. They go around the destroyed area again every day. Within three weeks, they have spoken to all 530 employers.

Many of these owners are too shell-shocked to say whether they will stay or leave. They have no plans to share. But, notes the practitioners' handbook that tells the story, they appreciate the effort: knowing that they are not alone, that someone cares and that someone is leading a recovery plan makes them more willing to rebuild. The chamber then opens a one-stop shop for businesses in its own offices. It invites the government agencies that handle disaster assistance. It helps business owners put together their loan applications, and it steers them away from financial products they do not need.

Two years after the tornado, about 449 of these businesses, or 85%, have reopened.

A chamber of commerce is a network of business leaders who know their town. So is your club.

What the scene teaches

The Joplin episode upsets a common assumption: assessing economic damage does not start with a spreadsheet. It starts with being there. The chamber's staff did not yet know what each business had lost. They knew who these 530 employers were, where to find them, and how to talk to them. The numbers came later.

Three lessons follow for your club.

First: an area's economy is made of people you can count. A stricken town does not have "an affected economy." It has bakers, mechanics, women selling vegetables, fishermen, sewing workshops, employees and day laborers. Each has lost something specific, and each will make

a specific decision: reopen, wait or leave. Assessing means knowing these decisions before they are made.

Second: the timing of the assessment matters as much as its method. The Joplin owners said they were more willing to rebuild because someone came to see them early. A study published on New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, covering 1,358 businesses, finds that aid to small businesses has the most effect in the first six to nine months, and that neighbors reopening weighs on each owner's decision during that same period. An assessment that arrives in the tenth month measures closures already decided.

Third: you do not assess to know, you assess to decide. The Joplin chamber turned its visits into a one-stop shop, then into financing advice. An assessment that leads to no decision has wasted disaster survivors' time for nothing.

This chapter gives you the method to do, at your club's scale, what the Joplin chamber did at the scale of its city: find out quickly, and accurately enough, what the disaster broke in your area's economy, and what it would take to get it going again.

Three words so you forget nothing: damage, losses, needs

All official assessment methods rest on a distinction developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), applied in the region since 1972, then adopted by the World Bank and by the joint European Union, United Nations and World Bank guide for the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). It comes down to two words, to which you need only add a third.

- **Damage** is the total or partial destruction of physical assets: the premises, the machines, the stock, the boat, the herd, the orchard. It is valued at replacement cost, at pre-disaster prices.
- **Losses** are the changes in economic flows caused by the disaster: the revenue that no longer comes in, the costs that rise (more expensive transport, debris clearing, renting temporary premises), the wages no longer paid. They last until full recovery, sometimes several years.
- **Needs** are what it takes to restart. The official method says it clearly: the value of damage is used to estimate reconstruction needs; the value of losses is used to estimate economic recovery needs.

For a club, the distinction is anything but academic. A collapsed workshop is damage. The weeks without customers, the suppliers who have vanished, the credit that no longer comes are losses. And it is the losses, far more often than the damage, that decide whether the

workshop will reopen.

Losses can exceed damage

The official assessment carried out in Nepal after the earthquakes of April and May 2015 gives a striking illustration. In tourism, damage came to 18,863 million Nepali rupees: hotels, trails, sites damaged. Losses, on the other hand, reached 62,379 million: more than three times as much. Tourists stopped coming, even where nothing was destroyed. In the financial sector, the gap was even wider: 5,015 million in damage, 26,890 million in losses, more than five times as much. The same report puts the number of lost workdays at 94.8 million, and the number of home-based workplaces destroyed for good at about 74,500.

Some losses last much longer than the disaster itself. The official guide on agriculture points out that a coconut palm takes about eight years, and a coffee plant at least five, before producing again. The destroyed orchard is one day's damage; the missing harvest is a loss of five or eight years. In Grenada, after Hurricane Beryl in July 2024, the official assessment notes that building a traditional boat takes several months. For a fisherman in Carriacou, the loss is measured not by the price of the boat, but by the months without going to sea.

What losses hide: who loses first

The official guide on employment and livelihoods, written for post-disaster assessments, makes three observations that any business owner grasps at once.

First, *the self-employed and day laborers lose first*. An employee of a large company may go on being paid for a while. The self-employed worker or the laborer hired by the day loses income that very day.

Next, *a loss can occur without any damage*. The guide gives the example of the hairdresser: the salon is intact, but no one gets a haircut in the weeks that follow. A power cut, a closed road or a vanished supplier has the same effect.

Finally, *small establishments often suffer proportionally more than large ones*. The guide considers this likely in some cases, floods for instance, without making it a rule: they use more labor for the same revenue, and they are often housed in more fragile premises. The guide cites small-scale fishing boats, "built of weaker materials and often moored in more exposed locations."

One table for each activity

The distinction translates into a simple grid, which your team fills in for each activity visited. Take a typical example: a four-person carpentry workshop in a flooded neighborhood.

Heading	What you note	Typical example
Damage	assets destroyed or damaged, at prior prices	two machines, the wood stock, the shop door
Losses	what no longer comes in, what costs more	eight weeks without orders, two unpaid wages, pricier wood
Needs	what it takes to restart	repair one machine, a month of stock, working capital
Main obstacle	what is blocking things today	no electricity on the street

One methodological precaution, which the World Bank points out in its assessment guide: do not count twice. The workshop's losses already include the wages it no longer pays; if you then add "the lost income of the workshop's employees," you have counted the same money twice.

Who is already assessing, and what is left for your club

Three weeks after a major disaster, your club will not be the only one asking questions. Several assessments overlap, and you need to be able to recognize them.

Assessment	Who conducts it	When	What it gives the club
Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA)	humanitarian system and government	the first two weeks	an overview of needs, by area
Rapid Assessment for Markets (RAM)	Red Cross and Red Crescent	the first days	the state of the main markets
Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA)	field NGOs	from about two weeks on	analysis of two or three key markets
Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)	government, with the EU, UN, World Bank	from one or two weeks on, for at least three to six weeks	damage and losses by sector, at national level

The PDNA is the heaviest. It is conducted at the government's request, and the official guide is explicit: international agencies have no mandate to conduct it without that request. In Nepal, in 2015, it mobilized 23 sector teams and more than 250 national and foreign experts, in less than a month. It produces figures by sector, useful for situating your area, but it is designed for a government, not for a neighborhood.

The blind spot your club can fill

The official methods themselves acknowledge their weakness. The PDNA guide writes that the informal economy, subsistence agriculture and unpaid family work remain "a challenge" to measure, even though they often represent "a large share of the affected economy." The Nepal PDNA counts 174,823 microenterprises in the fourteen hardest-hit districts, most of them informal, and notes that about half of home-based microenterprises suffered damage to premises, tools or equipment.

This is where your club brings something no one else has. Your members know the market traders, the street's artisans, the nearby cooperatives, the suppliers, the local bankers. They know who sold what, and to whom, before the disaster. A national team will never know that in such detail.

Rotary's rule: collaborate, don't duplicate

Rotary states the rule itself in its guide *Conducting Community Assessments* (July 2024 edition): "Collaborate, don't duplicate." Local governments, NGOs or neighboring clubs may already be studying the community; your assessment, and the projects that come out of it, must not duplicate theirs. The guide recommends finding out whether collaboration would strengthen an existing assessment or initiative.

For disasters, the same guide lists the people to talk to: those directly affected, first responders and emergency management institutions, organizations specializing in preparedness, relief and recovery, the relevant ministries and government offices, and the managers of large public spaces.

The rule is not just common sense: it protects disaster survivors. All the international guides warn against "assessment fatigue." The PDNA guide calls for coordinating visits to avoid repeated passes by teams and increased fatigue "amongst key informants and affected communities." The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) asks that communities not be overburdened with multiple assessments and that joint assessments be favored. The livelihoods guidelines of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) say the same: do not redo what exists, do not take up people's time needlessly.

Why the Foundation will ask you for this assessment

If your recovery project is to go through a Rotary Foundation global grant (Chapter 10), the assessment is not optional. The global grant terms in force in July 2026 require projects to respond to the findings of a community needs assessment and to be designed with the

community. The Foundation's community economic development guidelines, in their April 2024 version, are even more direct: "The Foundation will not consider projects without a community assessment."

In other words, the work in this chapter is also the first piece of your future funding application.

A warning Rotary publishes itself

Rotary's assessment guide tells a story that deserves to be read by any club tempted to act before it has looked.

In 2020, during the pandemic, many clubs in Romagna, Italy, want to help hospitals and patients. They react quickly. They send hospitals medical supplies, including oximeters and thermometers. The donations pile up. The hospitals, already overwhelmed, find themselves cluttered with supplies they did not ask for and must sort through generous donations they do not need or cannot use.

The clubs realize their approach is creating more problems than it solves. With the district's support, more than a dozen Romagna clubs form a task force with health experts and public officials, and consult doctors, nurses, health managers and residents. The assessment reveals a need no one had seen: chronic heart patients have lost access to monitoring of their devices because of the lockdown. The clubs then set up a project, with telemedicine companies and the health authorities, that connects these patients to monitoring systems. According to the guide, the data showed a 74% drop in heart attacks and deaths over two years thanks to the system.

The pandemic is not a natural disaster, and this project is not an economic one. But the mechanism is the one that threatens a club after a flood or an earthquake: the desire to help pushes you to give what you imagine is useful, before you know what is missing. Chapter 5 comes back to what such donations do to local markets.

The club's method in six steps

Your club has neither the mandate nor the resources for a national assessment. It does not need them. The tools designed for field organizations claim a modest ambition: EMMA, the emergency market mapping and analysis guide published in 2010 by Oxfam, the International Rescue Committee and Practical Action, aims for an analysis that is "rapid, rough and ready, good-enough," and says it is designed for generalists with no experience in

economic analysis. The Red Cross Rapid Assessment for Markets (RAM) is explicitly aimed at practitioners with little expertise and little time. The method that follows draws on these two tools, on the PDNA guide on employment and on the Joplin experience.

Step 1: gather what already exists

Before any visit, your team takes stock of what is known.

- **What you knew before the disaster.** If your club did the economic diagnosis of its area in calm times (the CED guide and module 1 of the RAGCED training program describe it), you start from a baseline. The Pre-Crisis Market Analysis (PCMA) guide, published by the IRC, Oxfam and USAID, draws the conclusion: with a baseline, a full market assessment is no longer necessary, only a quick update of a few key indicators. That is the strongest argument for doing this work beforehand (Chapter 15).
- **What others have already found.** Ask the city hall, civil protection, the local Red Cross or United Nations office whether a MIRA, a PDNA or a sector assessment exists, and get the results.
- **What public data say.** Census, business registers, chamber of commerce lists, merchants' associations.

At this stage, also ask the question that the Canadian economic recovery handbook calls the "so what": what will the deliverable be, and what decision will it serve? If your team cannot answer, it is not ready to go out.

Step 2: choose two or three activities, not all of them

No one assesses an entire economy. EMMA asks you to choose a few "critical markets" and proposes six criteria for selecting them:

1. their importance for the lives and incomes of the affected women and men;
2. what the authorities and the large organizations are already doing;
3. the hardest-hit markets;
4. the fit with your organization's mandate and skills;
5. timing and season;
6. the existence of realistic response options.

The fourth criterion is yours. A club of business owners, bankers and artisans will choose shops, workshops and local credit; a club rooted in a farming region will choose seeds, storage and crop sales.

EMMA adds a valuable piece of advice: do not assume that critical markets are only those for survival. It distinguishes three families: markets that supply what families need to live, those that supply what they need to work (tools, seeds, fertilizer, nets, boats, transport, credit), and those that give them an income (crops sold, livestock, fish, day labor, reconstruction work). After Cyclone Nargis, in 2008 in Myanmar, rice farmers in the Irrawaddy delta considered seeds and tools more urgent than repairing their houses. For a club working on economic recovery, the last two families are often the most important.

For each activity selected, frame a key question that the assessment must answer. EMMA gives examples, such as this one from Myanmar in 2008: what are the main constraints preventing subsistence fishermen in the delta from buying back nets? A good key question calls for a decision.

Step 3: form the team and set the schedule

Pairs. RAM assumes that a team of two people assesses one marketplace in one day. EMMA, in its light version, takes about ten days with one experienced person and one or two local colleagues; with a full team, allow four weeks. For a club, a team of four to six members, organized in pairs, over one to two weeks, is a realistic order of magnitude. This is a proposal of this book, to be adapted to the size of the disaster.

A time allocation. EMMA proposes dividing interview hours as follows: about 15% with households, 30% with local traders and employers, 30% with wholesalers and large buyers, 15% with key informants (elected officials, government offices, chamber of commerce), and 10% held in reserve for follow-ups. This allocation is a reminder: to understand an economy, you mostly need to talk to those who keep it running.

The right moment. EMMA is not used in the very first days: survival needs must be covered and traders must have had time to do their own accounts. At the earliest, that is around the second week, often later. That is roughly when the shift indicators in Chapter 4 start turning green. But nothing stops you, from the first days, from doing what the Joplin chamber did: going to see people, in person, to tell them you are there.

Step 4: go and see, and listen

Rotary's assessment guide sets out the right attitude in a few sentences. Go to the community, where people live and work, rather than making them come to you. Listen without judging, without assuming you know what is good for them. Ask open questions, such as "Tell me about..." or "How is ... going?", and follow up.

The Canadian economic recovery handbook adds a warning that Joplin illustrates: sending questionnaires to distressed business owners the day after a disaster can come across as callous. It recommends in-person visits or focus groups, and notes that businesses respond more readily to people they know and trust. That is a club's advantage: your members are often those people.

Surveying a whole area quickly. When your team cannot see all the businesses in an area in time, the Canadian handbook describes a short business survey, conducted through the channels that still work: telephone, email, website, town hall meetings, recovery center, door-to-door canvassing. In 2016, in Wood Buffalo, Canada, a recovery hotline invited businesses to register and answer a short survey; the data were passed to the municipality every day, allowing it to spot trends and priority needs. This survey complements the visit without replacing it, for the reasons the handbook has just given. Plan from this point on to report back to those who responded, as described in Step 6. Appendix A gives the questions to ask an entrepreneur (A3), the follow-up sheet for each trader (A7) and the feedback checklist (A11).

Durations. EMMA allows 20 to 30 minutes for an interview with a household, 20 to 40 minutes with a small trader or local employer (including roadside conversations), half an hour with a large actor, up to an hour with a key informant. RAM counts 30 to 40 minutes per trader.

The questions. The PDNA guide on employment offers, in an annex, three short lists of questions: for key informants, for entrepreneurs and small businesses, and for community leaders and households. EMMA details questionnaires for households, traders and employers. Appendix A of this book offers a translated selection. For a trader, the EMMA questions fall under six headings:

- **the business:** how trade is going, what stock is held compared with usual;
- **customers:** how many there are today, what the selling price is now, and what it was at the same time last year;
- **credit:** did the trader give customers credit before the disaster, do suppliers still give the trader credit, how much is the trader owed;
- **suppliers:** who they are, where they are, and how quickly the trader could supply as much as before, twice as much, three times as much if demand came back;
- **costs:** what the crisis has changed;
- **the future:** the main problems, and what could solve them.

The question about the capacity to supply more is decisive: it will tell you in Chapter 5 whether your club can help families with cash rather than goods, because local traders could meet the demand.

The voices you do not hear. Interview women separately if possible: EMMA, the PDNA guide and the IFRC all recommend it. Rotary's assessment guide calls for a representative sample of the community (by gender, age, background, income or occupation, among other criteria) and reminds you not to interview children without the consent of the person responsible for them; before any exchange with minors, it refers to Rotary's statement of conduct for working with youth. Do not forget home-based workers and informal vendors, whom the Nepal PDNA found so hard hit: they have neither a sign nor an address in the registers.

Step 5: count accurately, but not too much

Your club will not produce national statistics, and it must not pretend to. EMMA embraces what it calls "appropriate imprecision." It gives the measure of it: with twenty people interviewed, an average represents the population only to within plus or minus 10%, at best; with ten, to within plus or minus 30%. It draws the rule: write a range rather than a precise figure. And it adds that understanding the trend matters as much as getting precise figures.

For each trader or employer, a small three-column sheet is enough: the baseline (before), the current situation, the trend. The rows cover sales volume, purchase cost, selling price, stock. In the example given by EMMA, a village shop's bean sales had fallen to about 30% of normal, with very low stocks for the season. It is rough information, and it is the information you need.

When you want an order of magnitude for a whole neighborhood, the PDNA guide on employment gives simple formulas:

- **workdays lost** = number of workers before the disaster × days worked per year × percentage drop in activity;
- **income lost by employees** = workers affected × average wage × estimated time without work;
- **income lost by the self-employed** = microenterprises affected × people per microenterprise × average income per person × percentage drop × duration of the drop.

The same guide accepts shortcuts when data are missing: the proportion of homes destroyed can serve as an indicator of business destruction, provided you recognize that it is the least reliable approximation, to be used only for lack of anything else. And it asks you to cross-check sources to reach a reasonable consensus estimate.

Beware of figures that circulate. One claim comes up in many presentations: "40% of businesses never reopen after a disaster, according to the US Federal Emergency Management Agency." No one has found the original study. Do not use it. The available data say something else, and they are more useful. In the New Orleans study, a telephone survey that does a poor job of reaching businesses that have disappeared, 1,190 of the 1,358 businesses tracked had reopened by October 2007, more than two years after Katrina; 168 remained closed. But the smallest reopened less often than the large ones, and the depth of water in the premises was, along with size, the best predictor. In Nepal, seventeen months after the earthquakes, independent monitoring by The Asia Foundation found that more than 90% of affected business owners saw their situation improving in most districts. Small traders who had lost their premises and their goods, however, were still struggling, especially the poorest and women who had opened a small shop or a small restaurant on credit, in rented premises.

The lesson for your assessment: do not look for an overall survival rate. Look for *who* is at risk of not reopening, and why.

Step 6: report back, share, decide

Promise nothing. Rotary's assessment guide asks you to "manage expectations": make it clear that the assessment is exploratory and does not commit the club to tackling a problem defined in advance. The IFRC guidelines are just as clear: make no promises, either in the report or orally. A report by the humanitarian analysis organization ACAPS on the Syria crisis, a different context but a transferable lesson, observes that in Jordan assessment fatigue led a significant number of refugees to refuse to take part, especially where the assessing organization had provided no visible aid. It advises saying from the outset that aid is not guaranteed.

Report the results. The IFRC asks you to present the analysis to the affected communities to check your assumptions, and to gather their views before any decision. The Core Humanitarian Standard, in its 2024 version, opens with a commitment framed from the point of view of affected people: they can exercise their rights and participate in actions and decisions that affect them. The people interviewed must also be able to give critical feedback without fear of losing aid; the 2014 version of the standard already made this point.

Share the data. Pass your results to the other actors (city hall, humanitarian coordination, chamber of commerce) so they do not have to redo your interviews. This is the corollary of the rule "collaborate, don't duplicate."

Decide. For each activity assessed, your team concludes in one line: nothing to do (the activity is restarting on its own); an obstacle to remove (electricity, the road, a supplier) that falls to another actor, which you will flag; or a need the club could meet, alone or with a

partner. These last lines will feed Chapters 6 to 9.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Launching a large household survey in the first weeks	wanting solid figures	short, targeted interviews; the IFRC advises against large surveys too early
Sending a questionnaire to stricken business owners	it is faster	in-person visits, by members they know
Assessing a solution instead of a need	the club already has a project in mind	distinguish, as Rotary's guide does, feasibility study from needs assessment
Promising aid to get answers	wanting a warm welcome	state up front that the assessment commits to nothing
Adding business losses and lost wages	the two columns seem separate	count each sum only once
Forgetting the informal sector, women, home-based work	they appear in no register	separate interviews, walking the streets, focus groups
Keeping the results to yourself	it does not occur to you	report back to those interviewed and share with other actors
Quoting unsourced figures	they circulate everywhere	the "40%" has no source: quote only what you can source

One last pitfall concerns timing. Assessment is not a one-time act. The Canadian handbook speaks of a constant trade-off between speed and accuracy: the longer you wait, the more reliable the data, but the more business decisions have already been made. Its solution works for your club: a quick first report, then updates. If your club later distributes cash or goods, it will also track the prices of a few products on the local market every week; Chapter 5 explains how, and why.

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has an **economic assessment sheet** for its area: for two or three critical activities, what was destroyed, what no longer comes in, what it would take to restart, and what is blocking things today. It knows who else is assessing, and it has shared what it found. This is the first piece of the recovery file, the one on which all the others will rest; Appendix A gives its outline.

The Joplin chamber of commerce did not save 449 businesses. Their owners decided to reopen. But the chamber went to see them while they were still hesitating. It remains to be seen when your club can stop thinking in terms of relief and start thinking in terms of recovery: that is the question of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ Existing assessments (MIRA, PDNA, sector assessments) have been sought out and read
- ☐ Pre-disaster data have been gathered (club diagnosis, registers, chamber of commerce)
- ☐ The decision the assessment must inform is written down
- ☐ Two or three critical activities have been chosen using EMMA's six criteria
- ☐ A key question is framed for each one
- ☐ The team is organized in pairs, with a one- to two-week schedule
- ☐ Interviews are done in person, by members the interviewees know
- ☐ Women, home-based workers and informal vendors have been heard
- ☐ Each activity has its damage, losses, needs, obstacle grid
- ☐ Results are given as ranges, without double counting
- ☐ No promise has been made to the people interviewed
- ☐ Results have been reported back to those interviewed and shared with other actors
- ☐ For each activity, a decision is written: nothing to do, obstacle to flag, or need to address

Further reading

- Rotary International, *Conducting Community Assessments* (community needs assessment tools), July 2024 edition, on My Rotary.
- European Union, United Nations Development Group and World Bank, *Post-Disaster Needs Assessments Guidelines*, Volume A (2013), and Volume B, chapter *Employment, Livelihoods and Social Protection*.
- World Bank, *Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment: Guidance Notes*, Volume 2 (2010).
- Mike Albu, *The Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Toolkit* (EMMA), Practical Action Publishing, 2010.
- ICRC and IFRC, *Rapid Assessment for Markets: Guidelines for an Initial Emergency Market Assessment*, 2014.

- IFRC, *IFRC Guidelines for Livelihoods Programming*, Geneva, 2010.
- Economic Developers Alberta, *Community Toolkit for Economic Recovery and Resiliency*, Canadian edition, 2019.
- The CED guide, chapters on the area diagnosis and the community needs assessment.

Part II: Make the Shift

Your club now knows why the economy decides recovery, who leads what and when, and what the disaster broke in your area. What remains is to change jobs.

During relief, good action is fast, visible, and direct: hand out, shelter, feed. During recovery, good action is often indirect: it goes through a shopkeeper, a lender, an employer, a cooperative. What saved lives in week three can delay the restart in month three. A free distribution that runs too long competes with the grocer who just reopened.

This part covers the two decisions that shape all the others.

The first is a question of timing. When does your club stop thinking in terms of relief and start thinking in terms of recovery, and how does it decide? Chapter 4 gives the signals to watch, the way to set in advance the stopping criterion for each emergency activity, and what to prepare in the first weeks so the funding follows.

The second is a question of method. How do you help without damaging what is left? Chapter 5 shows, with documented cases, how generous donations harmed the very markets they meant to revive, what the international standards say, and the filter your club will apply to every project idea.

By the end of this part, your recovery file holds two more pieces: the shift decision, with the list of what the club stops and what it starts, and the "do no harm" filter.

Chapter 4: From Relief to Recovery, When and How

On April 14, 2011, a little over a month after the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, a tuna longliner sails into the port of Shiogama, in Miyagi Prefecture. It comes from Oita, in western Japan. It is the first fishing vessel to dock there since the port resumed operations. It unloads fresh tuna caught in the Pacific: albacore, yellowfin, bigeye.

The fish market is not intact. But about a third of its facilities escaped destruction, and the cold storage warehouses are still usable. After weeks of repairs, auctions could be held there again. On April 18, a second vessel arrives, from Tokushima. A third is expected by the end of the month.

On April 19, the president of the Japan Fisheries Association stops in Shiogama to hand the mayor the donations collected across the industry. As he hands them over, he praises a city that showed an early sign of recovery, "as seen in the case of landings of tuna at its port soon after the disaster." The mayor then tells him about the longliner's arrival, and immediately draws a program from it: start from what held. Since the cold rooms work, he wants the fish market to serve the seafood processing companies too, not just the fishermen.

The same day, the delegation goes to Ishinomaki, the neighboring city. There, the fish market, the processing plants, and the aquaculture facilities were destroyed, and more than 4,000 jobs disappeared. The president of the fish market asks that reconstruction treat fishing, the market, and processing together, because in a fishing port these three trades grew up in very close linkage.

A boat, a fish market, a cold room. In Shiogama, on that April 14, the chain started turning again.

What the scene teaches

Nobody in Shiogama declared the emergency over. On the road to Ishinomaki that April 19, the association's delegation is caught in a long line of Self-Defense Forces vehicles that had come for the relief effort, and of trucks bringing emergency goods from all over Japan. But a

specific economic signal had just appeared: a buyer, a seller, and a place of exchange had found each other again. The mayor read it as such and made it a foothold.

Three lessons follow for your club.

The shift is not a switch. Recovery does not start the day relief stops. The two overlap for weeks, sometimes months, and they do not overlap the same way from one neighborhood to the next. Shiogama was restarting while Ishinomaki was counting its losses. Chapter 2 showed that international texts have said so since 2008. This chapter draws the practical consequences.

The best signal is economic. You can find out whether the roads are open and the water is running. It is even more useful to know whether trade is resuming: a shop that reopens, a fish market that sells, a workshop that gets an order. These signals say the local economy can once again absorb aid, and so the form of the aid must change.

Recovery starts from what held. The mayor of Shiogama did not ask for a new fish market. He asked that the one still standing serve more people. That is the logic of this whole book: find what still works, or works again, and reconnect it, rather than replace everything. Chapter 8 returns to this way of looking for the missing link in a chain.

The principle: decide on signals, not on a date

There is no international list

Your club may look for a standard that says: "recovery begins when this indicator reaches this threshold." It does not exist. The international early recovery frameworks, published by the United Nations cluster in 2008 and again in 2016, speak of exit criteria set in advance and of market conditions, not of a universal list of thresholds. The 2008 note illustrates its point with an eighteen-month timeline, then warns that in reality it is much harder to set a firm timeline for early recovery, whose length always depends heavily on context.

What does exist are orders of magnitude. The *Market Analysis Guidance* of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation (MAG, 2014) covers the period from two weeks to one year after the shock. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) observes that emergency employment programs generally last up to six months after a small disaster, and at least a year after a large one. These benchmarks describe what has been seen. They do not tell you when to shift.

The five indicators of the disaster guide

The disaster guide, the first book in this trilogy, offers in Chapter 23 five indicators for recognizing the moment a community leaves the emergency. They are a tool specific to the trilogy: compatible with the international frameworks, not drawn from them.

Indicator	What it means
No more rescues needed	searches are over, everyone trapped has been located
Vital needs covered	water, food, and emergency shelter are available to all
Access restored	main roads are passable, outside supply is possible
Area declared safe	the authorities confirm there is no immediate danger
Civil authorities in charge	crisis management is back with the normal civil authorities

The guide says that when these five indicators are met, even partially, it is time to change mode: from "saving lives" to "rebuilding lives." It also says who decides: the club's disaster coordinator, with the district disaster lead and the civil authorities. Never alone.

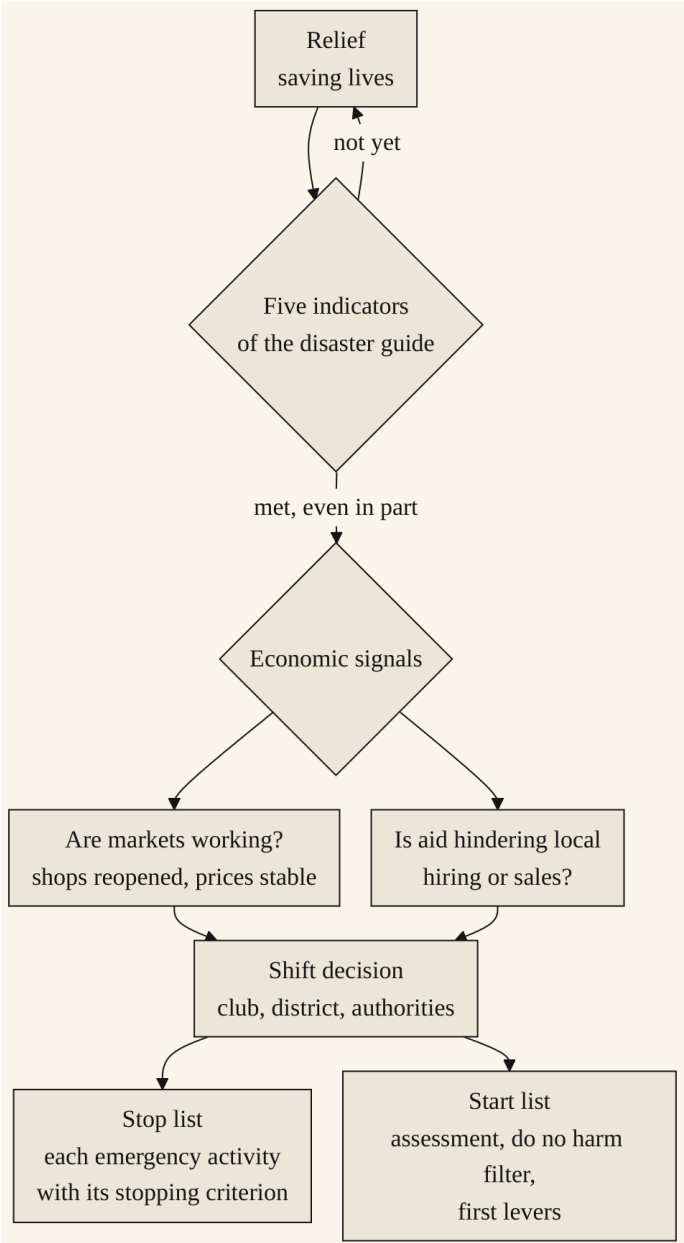
Two economic signals to add

These five indicators say the life-threatening emergency is over. They do not say whether the local economy can restart. The economic recovery sources add two questions your club will ask at the same time.

Are markets working again? UNDP, in its 2013 note on emergency employment and enterprise recovery, calls for reducing restart support as soon as markets begin to revive, and for stopping it completely once they are functioning normally again, except for a few very poor households. A cash for work procedure written for Iraq in 2022, a post-conflict setting whose method carries over to a disaster, sets the reverse rule at the start: this work paid in cash only makes sense where markets function, since without goods to buy, money is useless. The market is therefore both the condition for cash and the signal that aid should end.

Is the aid getting in the way of local hiring? The same procedure says that if local businesses struggle to hire because cash for work competes with them, you reduce the number of participants, the number of days, or the wages. The International Labour Organization (ILO) sums up the stakes in its guidelines on local economic recovery: the longer relief lasts, the more its distorting effects on markets are felt in the medium and long term.

The Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS), companions to the Sphere Handbook, add a sequencing condition your club should keep in mind: as a general rule, a population must have stabilized and be able to cover its most basic needs before organizations begin replacing lost productive assets. Replacing a boat, a machine, or a stock comes after, not during.



What the shift changes in the aid

Shifting does not mean you stop helping. It means you change the form of the help, as the local economy can once again carry part of it.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent guidelines on cash transfers (2007) say so about money. When the market is badly disrupted and the need is urgent, in-kind goods are the right call; but, they add, "it will often be possible to phase in cash distributions as the market begins to recover." Chapter 5 explains why that transition matters so much.

The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) guidelines on employment describe the same progression for work. In the early stage, regular employment can be supplemented by short-term jobs linked to relief. This kind of employment, entirely dependent on relief resources, must gradually give way to jobs linked to reconstruction and economic recovery, still supported by outside aid. Finally, when reconstruction ends, the employment structure must once again reflect the local economy, meaning ordinary supply and demand. The same document states as a principle: "Rapid economic reactivation is the best way to create genuine jobs, getting people out of relief as soon as possible."

Three stages, then, for jobs as for goods: aid that replaces, aid that accompanies, then the ordinary economy. The shift in this chapter is the move from the first to the second.

Set the exit at the entry

The most consistent rule in the international texts fits in one sentence: you decide when an activity ends at the moment you start it. The 2008 note of the early recovery cluster asks every coordination mechanism to define, from the day it is created, when and under what conditions it will close and hand over. It adds that clear exit criteria must be defined from the start for each recovery program. The 2016 note picks up the idea: exit strategies are prepared early, by stating which conditions must be met to end the emergency or move to ordinary development activities.

The disaster guide applies this rule to the community kitchen, in Chapter 14. It closes the kitchen as soon as two of these three criteria are met:

- at least 80% of food shops in the area have reopened;
- the cost of a kitchen meal exceeds the price of an equivalent meal bought at the local market;
- attendance has fallen below 20% of the peak, three days in a row.

These thresholds are the guide's, not an international standard. But the logic is right, and it is economic: two of the three criteria look at the market. A kitchen that keeps running after the grocery stores reopen competes with the grocers.

A date can help

If the shift is not a switch, a date can still serve a purpose. After the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, the government set March 31, 2006, as "the end of relief" and the start of the transition to recovery and development. Coordination of remaining relief for displaced people continued, but overall coordination passed to a transition cell in charge of recovery. According to the 2008 note that reports the episode, this date proved useful for shifting minds from the short term to the long term.

The authorities are the ones who set such a date, and the 2016 note points out that successful recovery requires an early shift from a response led by international actors to one led by national authorities. If a date exists, your club aligns with it and announces it to its donors. If none exists, the club sets itself a review date: for example, a shift checkpoint discussed at a meeting at one month, then at three months. This is a proposal of this book.

Announce the end from the start

In Tacloban, in the Philippines, after Typhoon Haiyan of November 8, 2013, a program funded by UNICEF and delivered by Action Against Hunger paid \$100 a month for six months, from February to July 2014, to 10,000 vulnerable families in the city and five neighboring municipalities. A study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) followed these families before, during, and after the program.

Its findings fit in a few lines. The recipients knew from the outset that the aid would last six months. Many hoped for an extension, but all knew the end date, and some of them prepared for it by putting part of the money into a small business: raising pigs, selling food, manicure services. When the payments stopped, incomes fell by the same amount, except among those who had started a business. The authors note that a single lump sum would have given more capital to enterprising households, and that six months was not enough for everyone to recover.

What your club takes from this: announcing the end from the start, however harsh it seems, lets people get organized. And the moment a transfer stops is often the moment when support for a business, for those who want to start one, is worth the most. Chapter 6 covers that support, Chapter 14 covers exit in general.

The opposite mistake is documented in Haiti. After the January 2010 earthquake, rubble removal programs paid by the day employed a large number of residents. The independent evaluation commissioned by UNDP in 2014 judges that this cash for work was a good approach, but that it "lasted too long" and took time to evolve into a more constructive form, payment by the volume of rubble removed. Chapter 7 tells the story of that evolution.

What the club does

Think about the economy from the first week

Your club does not have to wait for the shift to look at the economy. The first of the MERS standards on enterprise and market systems is titled "Send market systems staff immediately after a crisis": send people in charge of markets alongside the first responders, from the start of the crisis, so that relief limits its negative effects on markets and livelihoods. The same standard asks you to look, from the relief phase onward, for chances to rely on existing local suppliers and businesses. The 2008 note on early recovery lists among its three objectives that of supporting spontaneous recovery initiatives by affected communities.

At club scale, the translation is simple, and it is a proposal of this book: while most members are taken up by relief, designate one or two members who stay out of it, and whose only job is to watch the economy. Which shops reopened this week? Which wholesaler resumed deliveries? Have prices of basic goods moved? Can the club's relief purchases be made from a local shopkeeper rather than far away? They are the ones who, when the time comes, will bring to the shift decision the evidence the five indicators do not give.

Who decides

The shift decision is not made by the club's board alone. It is made with three circles.

Who	What they bring	What the club asks them
Local authorities	the official date, priorities, zones	which emergency activities are still needed, and until when
District	the big picture, grants, the link to the Foundation	agreement on next steps, a possible grant application
Humanitarian coordination	who does what, agreed wage rates and amounts	where the club's aid gets in the way, where it is missing

Your club, for its part, brings what the others do not have: its members know which shops have reopened, which wholesaler has resumed deliveries, which bank is lending again. The assessment form from Chapter 3 serves here as evidence.

The "stop" list

For each activity the club runs during the emergency, write down three things: the criterion that will say it must stop, who observes it, and what takes over. The disaster guide gives the first lines in Chapter 23. The table completes them with the two economic signals.

Emergency activity	Stopping criterion	What takes over
Daily food distribution	food shops reopened, prices stable	local market, transfers by a partner if needed
Community kitchen	two of the disaster guide's three criteria	local shops and restaurants, social services
Collecting goods in the club's country	local shopkeepers able to supply	local purchases or cash (Chapter 5)
Cash for work rubble clearing	local employers struggling to hire	reconstruction jobs, training (Chapter 7)
Group shelter	family shelters available	temporary family shelters
Daily coordination meetings	situation stabilized	twice a week, then weekly

Announce each stop a few days in advance, refer vulnerable people to permanent services, then close and report. The disaster guide details this procedure for the community kitchen.

The "start" list

Opposite it, the list of what the club starts. It does not contain projects yet. It contains preparatory work.

- **The economic assessment** from Chapter 3, if it has not been done, or its update.
- **The "do no harm" filter** from Chapter 5, applied to every idea already circulating in the club.
- **Lasting needs**, distinguished from emergency needs: which trades, which shops, which chains are blocked, and by what.
- **Partners**: local lender, chamber of commerce, cooperative, training center, Rotary Action Group. This book proposes that at this point the club and the district invite the Rotary Action Group for Community Economic Development (RAGCED) into the design of economic recovery, alongside the action group devoted to disasters, the Disaster Network

of Assistance Rotary Action Group (DNA-RAG). This division of roles is still to be agreed between the two groups (Chapter 11).

- **The funding file**, started right away, for the reason that follows.

Prepare the funding during the emergency

Two rules of the Rotary Foundation, in their July 2026 version, set the calendar.

The disaster grant is short. The Disaster Response Grant supports, under its July 2026 terms, relief *and* recovery efforts in areas affected by a natural disaster within the past six months. It is awarded only to districts in the affected area, up to \$25,000, and can cover, among other things, water, food, food vouchers, medicine, clothing, and building materials. The district reports on its use within six months of receiving payment. It can therefore serve as a bridge during the shift, provided the district applies in time.

The global grant pays for nothing that came before. The Global Grants terms in force in July 2026 exclude expenses incurred, and activities in progress or already completed, before the grant is approved. What your club funds out of its own pocket during the emergency will not be reimbursed by a later global grant. If recovery is to go through one, you must build the application while the emergency continues, so the money arrives when recovery begins.

The Foundation's Code sums up the doctrine: the role of Rotary International and the Foundation is to be a resource and to assist in long-term disaster recovery. Chapter 10 details the three tools, their amounts, and how they fit together. Always check the Terms and Conditions in force on My Rotary before building a budget.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Continuing distributions out of habit	they are visible and appreciated	a written stopping criterion for each activity
Shifting too early	the club is tired, attention drops	check the five indicators with the authorities
Waiting for an official date that never comes	looking for a standard that does not exist	set review dates at one and three months
Deciding alone	the club wants to move fast	decide with the district, authorities, coordination
Stopping without warning	assuming everyone knows	announce the end from the start, then a few days before

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Spending before building the application	the emergency is pressing	no global grant reimburses past costs
Replacing productive assets too early	wanting to show a result	wait until the population has stabilized

One last pitfall has to do with geography. The shift does not happen everywhere at once: one neighborhood restarts while the next is still devastated, like Shiogama and Ishinomaki on the same day. Your decision applies to one area, not the whole region, and it gets revised.

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has its **shift decision**: the date on which it found, with the district and the authorities, that the indicators and market signals were met; the "stop" list, with a stopping criterion and a handover for each emergency activity; the "start" list, with the preparatory work and the funding file under way. This is the second piece of the recovery file, after the assessment form from Chapter 3.

The mayor of Shiogama did not wait for the whole coast to be rebuilt before leaning on a longliner and a cold room. He saw what was restarting, and he wanted it to serve more people. The remaining question is how to help what is restarting without crushing it: that is the subject of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ The disaster guide's five indicators have been checked with the authorities and the district
- ☐ The two economic signals have been examined: markets working, aid hindering hiring or sales
- ☐ The official end date of relief, if there is one, is known; if not, review dates are set
- ☐ Each emergency activity has a written stopping criterion, a person responsible for observing it, and a handover
- ☐ Stops are announced in advance to recipients and partners
- ☐ Remaining vulnerable people are referred to permanent services
- ☐ The "start" list is written: assessment, filter, lasting needs, partners
- ☐ Lasting needs are distinguished from emergency needs
- ☐ The district is informed of the possible need for a global grant

- ☐ The funding file is started before any expense you would want funded
- ☐ The disaster grant report is being prepared, if the district received one
- ☐ The shift decision is written and filed in the recovery file

Further reading

- IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery, *Guidance Note on Early Recovery*, April 2008.
- Global Cluster for Early Recovery, *Guidance Note on Inter-Cluster Early Recovery*, January 2016.
- UNDP, *Guidance Note: Emergency Employment and Enterprise Recovery*, 2013.
- SEEP Network, *Minimum Economic Recovery Standards*, third edition, Practical Action Publishing, 2017.
- ICRC and IFRC, *Market Analysis Guidance*, Geneva, 2014.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Disaster Response Grants* and *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Global Grants*, July 2026 versions, on My Rotary.
- The disaster guide, Chapter 14 (stabilization, closing the community kitchen) and Chapter 23 (from response to recovery).

Chapter 5: Do No Harm After a Disaster

Colombo, June 21, 2005. Six months after the tsunami of December 26, 2004, which killed more than 31,000 people in Sri Lanka and left nearly a million homeless, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Sri Lanka's Ministry of Fisheries issue a joint warning. According to government estimates, 54% of the country's fishing fleet was destroyed or made unusable by the wave. Since then, boat donations have poured in. The statement lists the donors: local and international NGOs, aid agencies, companies, groups, individuals from the country and abroad, in unprecedented numbers.

Data from the coordination mechanism the FAO and the ministry set up suggest that in seven coastal districts, more boats are already being replaced than were lost. The statement does the math: if all the pledges of NGOs and donors are honored, coastal fishing could end up with more than 2,000 traditional craft and 2,200 fiberglass boats more than before the tsunami.

Yet, the director general of the Department of Fisheries points out, the fleet was already too large before the disaster. An FAO-supported study in 2003 showed that, outside the north and east of the country, coastal fishing output had gone from 130,000 tons in 1989 to 142,000 tons in 2002, while the number of fishermen nearly doubled. Fishermen were already using nets with ever finer mesh to catch ever scarcer fish.

The statement asks all actors to join the coordination mechanism. It notes that a few organizations have already sharply cut back their donations of new boats, and it names two: Sewa Lanka and the British Red Cross.

Nobody in this story meant to do harm. Every boat was given so that a fisherman could go back to sea.

What the scene teaches

What came next is documented by the FAO itself. In November 2006, in the review it presents to its Committee on Fisheries, it writes that "the avalanche of well-intentioned, but not always well targeted, assistance" from NGOs to replace boats and fishing gear sometimes increased fishing capacity, with too many small boats, often poorly built and unsafe. It points

out that many skilled boat builders were among the tsunami's victims. And it adds that it is ironic that so many fishermen, having survived the tsunami, must go to sea in boats that put their lives at risk.

The figures that follow are of different kinds, and they must be read as such:

- in participatory workshops reported by the FAO in 2007, fishermen in Galle estimate the boat surplus at between 77 and 315%, those in Hambantota at between 50 and 275%: these are perceptions put into numbers, not a census;
- Sri Lanka's public reconstruction agency estimated in 2007, according to the humanitarian news agency IRIN, that more than 3,000 small craft had been donated in excess;
- an FAO survey, cited in the same dispatch, found that 18.9% of new boats were not seaworthy, that 63% of replaced or repaired boats had no fishing gear, and that more than 7,100 of the 13,000 boats distributed by early 2006 were in the hands of people who did not own a boat before the tsunami.

The FAO is also self-critical. The emphasis it placed everywhere on physical assets, it writes, gave a visible sign of its presence, but at the expense of technical assistance. And it states the principle that would have avoided a good part of the problem: "fishers generally know what type of boat and gear they should use."

This story deserves a fair reading. The FAO acknowledges that it cannot clearly establish the link between this surplus and overfishing, in a fishery that was already overexploited. The synthesis of the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (2006) notes that in Sri Lanka more than 80% of damaged fish markets, boats, and fishing equipment were quickly restored. But it draws the overall lesson bluntly: "The concentration on distribution of assets, especially boats, demonstrated a failure to understand and support diversified and sustainable livelihoods and communities." At best, it writes, the international response restored the situation that existed before; at worst, it strengthened the better-off, such as fishermen who owned boats, and marginalized those with few assets, notably women and the poorest.

The ministry eventually responded: its April 2006 strategy entrusted boat replacement to a single agency, on the basis of entitlement certificates issued to fishermen who had lost theirs, without exceeding the pre-tsunami number. Chapter 12 returns to this coordination mechanism.

Three lessons for your club.

Aid is measured against what existed before. A donated boat is useful only in relation to the number of boats before, the number of fishermen, the fish stock, the nets, the boat builders, the fish buyers. Nobody can judge a donation in isolation.

Affected people know what they need. The FAO's sentence about fishermen applies to shopkeepers, artisans, and farmers. A club that chooses the item to give in place of the people who will work with it runs the risk of choosing the wrong item.

The harm is not limited to the market. Poorly targeted aid also creates winners and losers. Boat-owning fishermen received boats; fish sellers, day laborers and women were forgotten.

The principle: all aid touches a market

What the standards say

The Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS), published by the SEEP Network in their third edition in 2017 and recognized as a companion standard to the Sphere Handbook, set out, in the very first standard of their chapter on enterprise and markets, an instruction your club can post on the wall: "Recognize that all relief affects markets."

They draw three rules from it:

- **Work through existing markets.** "Utilize existing market mechanisms, unless there is a compelling reason not to."
- **Do not take the place of local actors.** The MERS define market distortions as any unintended effect that harms a market, from extreme price swings to the physical destruction of a market, and they specify that it is up to those who intervene to make sure their action does not replace local products and local actors.
- **Do not become a market actor.** "Implementers should not take on market functions": whoever helps must not become the seller, the lender, or the supplier.

Their fourth core standard is simply titled "Do no harm": the design and implementation of economic recovery actions must avoid or reduce possible harm, and must not worsen economic inequality, conflict, or risks to people.

The Sphere Handbook (2018) restates the same requirement through the Core Humanitarian Standard. It asks that programs promote an early recovery that benefits the local economy, that they examine market conditions before choosing between cash, vouchers, and in-kind aid, that they "Buy goods and services locally when possible," and that they reduce their negative effects on the market as much as possible. For agricultural livelihoods, Sphere asks that cash or vouchers be preferred where markets function or can be helped to recover.

The 2016 note of the Global Cluster for Early Recovery says it in one sentence: "External assistance is never neutral, and becomes part of the context in which it is delivered."

Where the phrase "do no harm" comes from

The *Do No Harm* framework was designed for armed conflict by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. Its 2004 handbook presents itself as a descriptive tool, not a prescription. It shows that aid acts through its transfers of resources, and it distinguishes several effects, including market effects: "Assistance affects prices, wages, and profits." The MERS carry this framework over to crises in general. Your club does not need to apply the full method, designed for war zones. It keeps the starting question: whom does my aid benefit, and whom does it harm without meaning to?

What Rotary says

The Rotary Foundation says the same thing in its own texts. The Global Grants terms in force in July 2026 require that projects "cause no harm." Its disaster policy, written into the Foundation's Code by a decision of August 2018, notes that the immediate need of affected districts is generally cash, and adds: "The Foundation discourages donations of goods, unless requested by a local committee."

The Foundation's community economic development guidelines, in their April 2024 version, go further. Distribution of items such as wheelchairs or sewing machines must remain a small share of a project's budget, and you must explain how the community took part in choosing the items. "Projects that only seek to donate equipment" are not eligible.

What in-kind aid does to markets

Port-au-Prince rice

After the earthquake of January 12, 2010, in Haiti, an Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) was carried out from February 5 to 12 by a team from several organizations, including Oxfam GB and the International Rescue Committee. It describes the rice chain before the earthquake: 6 importers in Port-au-Prince brought in about 70% of imported rice; they sold to 8 large wholesalers, who handled 1,000 bags a day, then to about 200 small wholesalers at 100 bags a day, who supplied 10,000 market women and small retailers in the capital.

The hardest-hit link is not the one you would expect. It is the small wholesalers: 80% of them lost their storage space and cannot get back into the market, for lack of capital or credit. The study adds, conditionally, that the announcement of a massive rice distribution by the agencies may have discouraged importers from resuming their trade.

Its recommendations changed the response. Whereas the World Food Programme (WFP) at first had to import rice massively, bypassing local channels, the analysis showed that after the initial shock it was possible to work through local importers, and that working with markets rather than alongside them made cash preferable to in-kind distributions. WFP removed beans from its ration after the local harvest, so that families would buy Haitian beans. The MERS cite another action in Haiti that points the same way: repairing small storage depots allowed wholesalers to buy in bulk again, lowered the price of staple foods for poor consumers, and raised the wholesalers' profits.

Remember the move: the link to help was not the most visible one. It was the small wholesaler without a warehouse.

What the standards tell

The MERS report several examples without naming a country, which should be read as typical cases:

- a government widely distributes free seed after a crisis; seed prices collapse in the shops, the incomes of producers, importers, wholesalers, transporters, and retailers fall, and importers order less for the following season, so that new drought-resistant varieties become scarce;
- after an earthquake, free agricultural inputs weaken the farmers and traders outside the affected area who used to sell them, because the market analysis had stopped at the edge of the area;
- in contrast, a program buys hoes and wheelbarrows from a local wholesaler to replace tools lost in a flood: the order gives the wholesaler the cash flow needed to restock, and all the farmers in the area benefit.

The same item, bought locally or imported, can revive a market or smother it. The MERS sum it up: a wide distribution of items bought outside can weaken local suppliers of those same products.

One nuance, which the researchers themselves make: the effect of food aid on local prices is debated in the literature. A synthesis by the Overseas Development Institute (2007) notes that it can lower prices, which helps poor buyers and hurts producers. So do not say that all in-kind aid drives prices down. Say that it can, and check.

Chapter 3 told how the clubs of Romagna swamped hospitals with donations those hospitals had not asked for. The mechanism is the same: giving what you imagine is useful before knowing what is missing.

Cash rather than goods

A change of scale

Where markets function, cash has become the default in humanitarian aid, no longer the exception. According to the CALP Network's report on the state of cash transfers worldwide, 2023 edition, cash and voucher assistance accounted in 2022 for about \$10 billion of programming, of which 7.9 billion was transferred to affected people, or about 21% of international humanitarian aid (preliminary data at that date).

In 2015, the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, convened by the Overseas Development Institute and the Center for Global Development, framed the question every organization should ask: "Why not cash? If not now, when?" The Panel concludes that in most contexts, local markets responded to cash injections without inflation, with positive effects on local economies. The Red Cross and Red Crescent guidelines (2007) already presented the unconditional cash transfer as the default option when goods are available in markets, the risk of inflation is low, and security allows it.

The strongest evidence comes from a development setting, not a disaster: in Kenya, a randomized experiment paid about \$1,000 to more than 10,500 poor households in 653 villages, a shock larger than 15% of local output; measured average inflation was 0.1%. It shows that functioning markets absorb a lot of money without overheating. It does not show what happens when the warehouses are destroyed.

The limits of cash

The Panel itself acknowledges it: giving cash is not always the best option. When markets are too weak or supply cannot keep up, cash is not appropriate and can push prices up. It adds that these situations are rare and often temporary, and that they must not serve as an excuse to continue in-kind aid long after they have ended.

This is where the assessment from Chapter 3 comes in. The question put to shopkeepers about their ability to supply two or three times more if demand returned tells you whether the cash will find goods to buy.

Symmetrical risks

The *Market Analysis Guidance* of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation (MAG, 2014) gives the most useful rule in this chapter. The larger the intervention relative to the local economy, the more a cash transfer risks causing inflation,

and the more in-kind aid risks causing deflation. Good local availability reduces the inflation risk of cash, but increases the deflation risk of in-kind aid. And the guidance warns that no threshold allows you to predict it.

In other words, cash is not risk-free: its risks are simply on the other side.

Poorly calibrated cash also does harm

Cash for work wages

The MERS report that after the Indian Ocean tsunami, many cash for work programs paid daily wages well above what farmers earned in their usual work. Many households stopped farming or producing to take advantage of them, at the expense of local production. After Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, wages set above the market to speed up reconstruction prevented farmers from hiring for the harvest. In Sri Lanka, according to a 2007 synthesis, farmers reportedly bought machines to replace the workers who had left for these programs.

The MERS also give the remedy, with the example of Haiti in 2010: rather than each setting its own rate, the agencies established with the government a local daily wage that did not draw workers away from their usual jobs while still covering the needs of the hardest hit, then adjusted it by area. Chapter 12 will tell how, in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan, rates aligned across organizations protected regular employment, and what happened with those that paid much more.

Cut-rate credit

After the tsunami, a Sri Lankan microfinance institution in the districts of Galle, Matara, and Hambantota, recapitalized by donors, had to lend to victims at a subsidized rate of 6%, when its nominal annual rate was around 37%. An econometric study published in 2012 then observes an abnormal rise in defaults among borrowers who had *not* been affected. The authors put forward two possible explanations, strategic default or contagion, and the hypothesis that the subsidy may have pushed some borrowers to declare themselves victims to get better terms. It is one institution, and a hypothesis; but it shows that a generous rate decided from outside can damage the repayment discipline the lender will need after the donors leave.

The MERS draw two rules from this: subsidies are not sustainable, they must be time-bound and used selectively; and financial products must not create over-indebtedness. Chapter 6 details what your club can do, and not do, with a lender.

The gift that weakens people's own effort

The MERS add a subtler warning. If households and businesses are already investing on their own to replace their assets, it is better to complement their efforts than to provide assets directly, which could weaken their own coping strategies. People often restart before aid arrives (Chapter 1). Aid that comes afterward must build on that momentum, not replace it.

The recipient's contribution

An asset is worth more to the person who receives it when they feel like its owner rather than the recipient of a gift. The MERS therefore recommend asking for a co-contribution: a share of the cost, a contribution in kind or in labor, or repayment spread over time. A fifty-fifty split is a common starting point, but it must be adjusted to risk: the lower the risk the recipient bears, the higher their contribution can be. And the contribution must not commit them beyond their means.

The MERS tell of an example in northern Uganda: six community warehouses awarded through a competition, with the group's contribution simply making the application "more interesting" to the judges. One winning group told the evaluators that most residents knew only about the NGO's technical support, not its funding: "We told them that we did it ourselves."

One Foundation rule to keep in mind: under the July 2026 terms, no funds should ever be collected, in a global grant, from the people who benefit from the funded activities, and no cash contribution can come from them. If your project plans a contribution from recipients, in the form of labor, in-kind input, or repayment to a partner, check with the Foundation's regional grants officer which form is allowed.

Track prices

Aid that touches a market is monitored in that market. The MERS call for regularly tracking the prices of key goods, not just those being distributed or purchased, so a program can be stopped or adjusted as soon as a sign of inflation appears.

The MARKit price monitoring guide, published in 2015, offers a method within reach of a club:

- in each market, choose three to five traders, always the same ones, taking care not to wear them out;
- record prices every week, or at least every month, on the same day and at the same time;
- note the most common price, not the average, and weigh the local unit yourself;

- look into it if the price moves by more than 7.5% from one week to the next, 15% over two weeks, or 30% from one month to the next.

These thresholds are starting points suggested by the guide, not standards. A weekly record of a few products, kept by a club member in a spreadsheet, is often enough to see the problem coming before it costs someone dearly.

What the club does: the five-question filter

Everything above comes down to a filter your club will apply to every project idea, before committing its money or its name. It is a proposal of this book, which takes the CED guide's filter for normal times and adapts it to recovery.

Question	What you check	Warning sign
Are we competing with a local seller, trainer, or lender?	who supplied it before, who supplies it today	the club gives what a shopkeeper sells
Are we creating debt people cannot carry?	amount, rate, repayment capacity	subsidized loan outside a professional lender
Who decides: affected people or the club?	who asked, who chose the item	the club chose before asking
What happens when we leave?	who maintains, repairs, takes over the activity	no one to take over, no end date
Who is excluded, and who could capture the aid?	women, informal sector, non-owners, the poorest	recipient list not published, no complaint channel

For each idea, the team concludes in one word: go, redesign, or drop. An idea that fails a question is not necessarily abandoned: often, it changes form. The boat donation becomes a purchase from local boat builders, based on the list of fishermen who lost one; the food distribution becomes vouchers at neighborhood grocers; the club's zero-interest loan becomes a credit line entrusted to an institution that knows its clients.

The reflexes that go with it

- **Before buying anything, ask who sold it here before the disaster.** Then ask whether they can sell it again.
- **Buy locally**, even at a slightly higher price, if the market can supply without prices rising for everyone else.
- **Go through those whose trade it is:** a payment provider for cash, a microfinance institution for credit, shopkeepers for vouchers. The MERS ask that you not recreate a

payment mechanism when an institution or a market actor already knows how to do it.

- **Align your amounts and wages** with those agreed in local coordination (Chapter 12).
- **Make selection criteria visible** and open a complaint channel, as the MERS require.
- **Check the Foundation's rules** before promising money: a global grant does not fund unrestricted cash donations to a person or an organization (July 2026 terms). If your project involves cash transfers, entrust them to a partner whose trade it is, and check with the regional grants officer what the Foundation can fund.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Collecting goods in the club's country and shipping them	it is concrete and rallies people	buy locally or use cash
Giving everyone the same item	"equal" seems fair	start from each person's trade; the MERS note that equal is not always fair
Choosing the item for the recipients	the club thinks it knows	ask those who will work with it
Paying more than the local rate	wanting to be generous	align wages through coordination
Lending at a cut rate	wanting to help fast	go through a lender, fund what it cannot fund alone
Not tracking prices	thinking the aid is too small	three to five traders, every week
Forgetting suppliers outside the area	the assessment stops at the disaster's edge	follow the chain back to its suppliers
Counting only owners	they are visible and organized	ask market women, day laborers, the informal sector

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has its **"do no harm" filter**: five questions, applied in writing to every project idea, with the decision that comes out of it (go, redesign, drop), and a price record for projects that inject cash or goods. This is the third piece of the recovery file. It conditions all the ones that follow: none of the levers in Chapters 6 to 9 should be activated without passing through it.

The boats of 2005 were given by people who wanted to do good, to communities that needed them. What was missing was one question asked before the donation: how many were there before, and what do the fishermen say? It remains to see how cash, the first of the four levers, can restart an economy without putting it in debt: that is the subject of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ For each project idea, the club knows who supplied this good or service before the disaster
- ☐ The club has checked whether local shopkeepers can supply again, and in what quantity
- ☐ Cash was considered before any in-kind distribution ("Why not cash?")
- ☐ Needed goods are bought locally when the market can keep up
- ☐ Affected people chose for themselves the goods intended for them
- ☐ No loan is made by the club itself; credit goes through a professional lender
- ☐ Wages and amounts are aligned with those agreed in local coordination
- ☐ A recipient contribution is planned, proportionate to their risk
- ☐ Selection criteria are published and a complaint channel is open
- ☐ Women, informal workers, and non-owners have been taken into account
- ☐ A weekly price record is kept for any project that injects cash or goods
- ☐ The Foundation's current rules have been checked for any cash payment
- ☐ Each idea has received its decision in writing: go, redesign, drop

Further reading

- SEEP Network, *Minimum Economic Recovery Standards*, third edition, Practical Action Publishing, 2017.
- Sphere Association, *The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, fourth edition, Geneva, 2018.
- High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, *Doing Cash Differently: How Cash Transfers Can Transform Humanitarian Aid*, ODI and Center for Global Development, 2015.
- ICRC and IFRC, *Market Analysis Guidance*, Geneva, 2014.
- CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, *The Do No Harm Handbook*, 2004 revision.

- FAO, Committee on Fisheries, *Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Livelihoods in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector in Countries Affected by the Tsunami in 2004*, COFI/2007/3, 2006.
- Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis Report*, 2006.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Community Economic Development Guidelines Global Grant Funding*, April 2024, on My Rotary; the CED guide, chapter on principles and ethics.

Part III: Restart

Your club has assessed what the disaster broke in your area's economy (Chapter 3). It has decided when to shift from relief to recovery (Chapter 4). It has a filter to avoid doing harm (Chapter 5). One question remains, the one every member asks at the first meeting: *what do we actually do?*

This part answers with four levers. A local economy holds together through the money that circulates, the skills of the people who work, the markets where people buy and sell, and the places where all of this happens. A disaster breaks all four at once. Recovery means setting them back in motion, with the people who ran them before.

Four levers, five families

The CED guide describes five families of community economic development action: microfinance, vocational training, value chains, cooperatives, and integrated local development. This book takes them up and transposes them to the aftermath of a disaster, combining value chains and cooperatives, which play out in the same markets.

Lever	Chapter	What it sets back in motion	CED guide family
Money	6	savings, credit, grants to businesses	microfinance
Skills	7	paid work, training, reconstruction trades	vocational training
Markets	8	farming, fishing, value chains, cooperatives	value chains and cooperatives
Places	9	shops, marketplaces, streets, the local area	integrated local development

The CED guide remains the reference for normal times. Each of the four chapters that follow deals only with what changes after a disaster.

What changes after a disaster

Four things change, whatever the lever.

What exists comes before what you create. The shopkeeper, the lender, the cooperative, the training center that were working before the disaster know their customers, and they will still be there when your club has finished. The independent evaluation of an International Labour

Organization (ILO) project after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines reached this judgment: rebuilding existing businesses was "highly cost effective"; creating new businesses required long preparation and, according to the evaluators, had no place in a twelve-month recovery project.

Debt becomes dangerous. Incomes have dropped at the very moment people need to borrow. A loan that is reasonable in normal times can become a trap.

The market can be damaged by aid itself. Chapter 5 showed it: a gift that competes with a local seller delays the recovery it was meant to serve.

Timing rules. Seed that arrives after planting time is wasted. A street that reopens in the tenth month has lost its customers. Building trades training that starts when the construction sites are closing leads nowhere.

The order in time

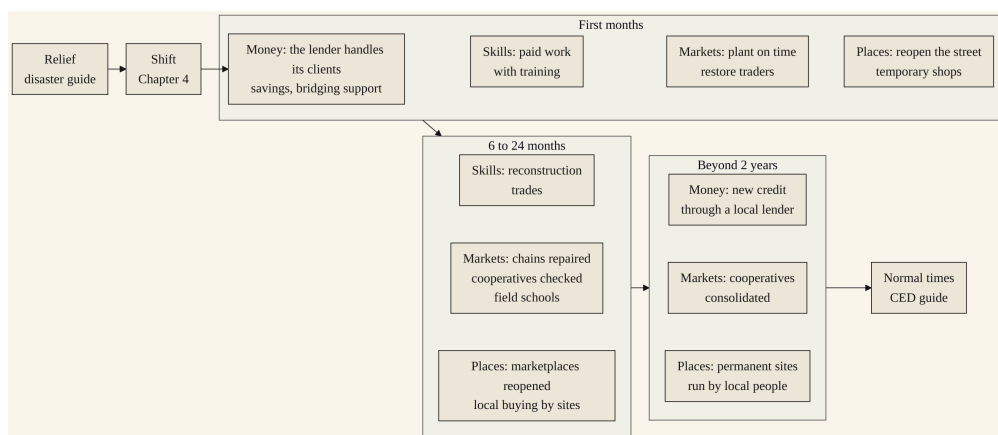
The four levers do not start together, and that is the main difference from normal times. No international standard sets their order. This book proposes a sequence, based on three documented findings.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) describes employment recovery in three tracks that all start early but do not have the same intensity over time (Chapters 1 and 2): stabilizing incomes, very intense at first and then declining; local economic recovery, which rises in the medium term; and sustainable employment, low at the start and growing afterward. The ILO's Recommendation 205, adopted in 2017, takes up this phased approach for disasters.

The FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, writes in its 2017 guidance document that farmer field schools "are not the first point of intervention" (our translation) after a disaster: they can be launched once communities begin to settle and adapt to the post-disaster reality.

In Nepal, after the earthquake of April 25, 2015, a recovery microcredit program run through small farmers' cooperatives disbursed its loans between July 2016 and October 2017, fifteen to thirty months after the shock. New credit, even well designed, arrives late.

From these findings, this book draws three windows. The durations are orders of magnitude, to be adjusted to each disaster.



The first months belong to what already exists. The local lender handles its own clients, savings become accessible again, bridging support flows through financial partners, and paid work puts income back into households and, where possible, a skill. Farmers need to plant on time; traders need a street where customers come back.

From six to twenty-four months, reconstruction is in full swing. This is the window for building trades training, for value chains repaired link by link, for cooperatives whose accounts have been checked, for reopened marketplaces.

Beyond two years come the things that take time and trust: new credit through a local lender, consolidated cooperatives, permanent sites run by people from the area. Then recovery merges into ordinary economic development, the kind covered in the CED guide.

How to read this part

Each chapter follows the same path as the earlier ones: a real scene, what it teaches, what the standards say, what the club does, the pitfalls. Each one adds a section to your club's recovery file: money, skills, markets, places. Chapter 9 ends with the timeline of the four levers, which brings these sections together.

You will probably not pull all four. A club of bankers and shopkeepers will choose money and places; a club rooted in a farming region will choose markets. The assessment from Chapter 3 and the filter from Chapter 5 decide. This part gives you what you need to choose, and in what order.

Chapter 6: Money: Savings, Credit, and Grants After the Shock

On January 12, 2010, the earthquake that strikes Haiti does not spare Fonkoze, the country's leading microfinance institution. Ten of its forty-one branches collapse or are badly damaged. Five of its employees are killed; more than 450 of them see their homes badly damaged or destroyed. Its clients are mostly *ti machann*, market women. More than 19,000 of them see their home, their business or their marketplace swept away by the quake, or collapsing in the days that follow.

In the focus groups the institution organizes afterward, one finding keeps coming back: many clients had already restarted a small business in the days and weeks after the earthquake, because they urgently needed an income. A client from Bizoton, a member of a solidarity group, sums up what those weeks were like: "My credit agent was the first person to come looking for me after the earthquake. When I saw him, I had hope, because I knew Fonkoze had not abandoned me."

Fonkoze had just evaluated its lending program after the 2008 hurricanes and was preparing a permanent catastrophe insurance product for its clients. It decides to act as if that insurance already existed. Every affected client, meaning every client who lost a home, a business or both, receives the package planned under the contract in preparation: a one-time payment of 5,000 gourdes, about \$125; cancellation of the balance on the loan taken out before the earthquake; and a new loan to restart the business, if the client is ready after a careful assessment of their capacity, and agrees to pay a retroactive fee of 2% of the loan amount. The fee is there to say one thing: insurance has a price. According to the institution's report, 19,811 affected clients receive this package, and 9,637 families hosting disaster survivors receive the same 5,000-gourde payment.

Here, the gift brings credit back to the clients.

What the scene teaches

Three things, which organize this whole chapter.

First: the money that matters most after a disaster flows through institutions that existed before. The Bizoton credit agent knew where his client lived, what he sold, how much he owed. No organization that arrived after the earthquake knew any of that. A local lender who knows its clients can act within a few weeks; a Rotary club trying to rebuild that knowledge would take months.

Second: wiping out a debt is not a trivial gesture. Fonkoze canceled the loan balances of nearly 20,000 affected clients, but not out of improvised charity. Using money from outside partners, it carried out an insurance contract it had been preparing, paired with a fee and a new loan granted after assessment. It even designed a post-disaster assessment form to check that each client could carry new debt; the Smart Campaign, an international initiative for client protection in microfinance, cited it as a model. A write-off that is planned and funded does not have the effects of a general write-off, which makes people believe loans no longer need to be repaid.

Third: disaster survivors need capital, and they know what to do with it. After the payments, Fonkoze surveyed 274 affected clients in four of the hardest-hit branches. According to this follow-up, 76% had invested at least part of the 5,000 gourdes in their business, 28% all of it; 95% had taken out a new loan; and the repayment rate on these new loans reached 97% as of December 31, 2010. These are the institution's own figures, and the report cautiously says these repayments "may indicate" sound credit management; Chapter 13 will come back to what figures like these prove.

Your club is not a bank. It knows the banks. This chapter explains what it can do with that knowledge.

What happens to money in the weeks that follow

For clients

The 1998 floods in Bangladesh are the best documented. According to a press article cited in the first practitioners' guide, more than 90% of the clients of microfinance institutions (MFIs) had to suspend their usual business for more than three weeks, and the loan recovery rate fell from 92% to 43%. The same article reports that about 65% of clients suffered losses or damage to their business assets.

A field study of these floods makes an observation every banker in your club will understand: the flood did not hit everyone the same way. Some were hit hard, others moderately, others not at all, and some even benefited, such as those who ferried passengers by boat. This is the central argument against any uniform measure.

For lenders

The practitioners' guide published in 1999 by the Microenterprise Best Practices project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), describes four simultaneous behaviors: some clients stop repaying, others stop saving, others want to withdraw their savings, others ask for emergency loans. "All of these behaviors reinforce one another to create a drain on the MFI's liquidity": money flows out of the institution just as it stops flowing in. And donor money generally takes several weeks to arrive.

The Bangladesh figures show the scale of the problem. Small MFIs had to limit withdrawals of compulsory savings to 50 or 75% of balances. The national body that refinances MFIs, PKSF, estimated its partners' needs at 9,200 million taka; it disbursed 1,000 million.

Fifteen years later, in the Philippines, the MFI CEVI drew the same lesson from Typhoon Haiyan: "liquidity played a bigger part and so was more important than capital." It also notes something few donors know: "Relief funding in disasters is generally not available to fund lending." Hence a perverse chain of events: lenders cut back their lending, and if repayments exceed new loans, money flows out of the affected communities just when they need it most.

People's own money

Before any aid arrives, disaster survivors draw on what they have. In Sri Lanka, after the December 2004 tsunami, a study of damaged small businesses shows that in the first three months, 51% of the money spent to repair or replace their equipment came from their own savings, 15% from loans from family and friends, and only 2% from MFIs. In Haiti, seven weeks after the earthquake, a survey in five camps in Port-au-Prince found that 40% of residents had received informal help, most often money sent by family living abroad.

The first money of recovery is therefore that of the survivors, their relatives and their usual lenders. A club's role is not to replace it, but to help these three sources hold up.

What money spent locally does around it

A dollar paid to a disaster survivor goes to the grocer, who pays his supplier and his helper, who in turn buy things. That is the multiplier effect. Two studies put a number on it, and neither concerns a natural disaster.

The first is the Kenya experiment that Chapter 5 cited on prices: about \$1,000 paid in a single transfer to more than 10,500 poor households in 653 villages, outside any disaster. The National Bureau of Economic Research researchers estimate the local multiplier at 2.4: each dollar transferred added about \$2.4 to the area's output, the average of two methods (2.5 and 2.3). Households that received nothing benefit too: eighteen months after the payments

began, their consumer spending is 13% higher, and their income rises mainly through the wages paid by local businesses, whose sales have increased. The average inflation measured is 0.1%. The paper states its limits: the estimate is imprecise, the hypothesis of a multiplier below 1 is rejected only at a marginal significance level, and one of the authors cofounded the NGO that paid out the money.

The second comes from Lebanon, in the winter of 2013-2014. A program run by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners pays \$575 by bank card to 87,700 Syrian refugee families, for heating. This is a refugee crisis, not a natural disaster. The evaluation commissioned by the International Rescue Committee finds no notable price increase across some fifty products; the money is spent in local shops. It estimates that each dollar spent by recipients generates \$2.13 of GDP for the Lebanese economy. This figure is not measured: it is calculated with a formula, using the propensity to consume estimated for Jordan, for lack of a Lebanese figure, and the evaluators describe it as conservative.

Neither study says what happens to the effect when shops are destroyed or supplies come from far away. In Kenya, the authors link it to a largely closed local economy: a dollar spent outside the area no longer circulates there. For your club, the consequence is practical: when a project buys materials, services or labor, buy and pay locally whenever the local market can supply (see Chapter 8).

The principle: reschedule, case by case

A long-standing consensus

Since Hurricane Mitch and the Bangladesh floods in 1998, practitioners' guides have said the same thing. Loan rescheduling must be done right after the disaster and only in hard-hit areas. It is decided client by client, or borrower group by borrower group, rather than through a blanket measure. The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) put it in writing in February 2005, after the tsunami, in a note addressed to MFIs and their donors: donors "should encourage microfinance institutions to restructure, rather than forgive, loans." And it gives the reason: encouraging them to forgive loans or act as social safety nets will make it harder for them to operate sustainably, and so to reach more people once reconstruction comes.

The Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS), published in 2017 by the SEEP Network, restate this doctrine almost word for word: "Writing off loans should always be a last resort as it can reduce the financial institution's capital and worsen credit repayment culture." The MERS also set out the exceptions: institutions must be ready to write off loans

that cannot be recovered because of the borrower's death, permanent disability or disappearance. The other exception is the one in the opening scene: a write-off planned in advance through an insurance contract.

What rescheduling costs, and what not rescheduling costs

The Bangladesh figures speak for themselves. On a loan of 3,000 taka (\$60) rescheduled by two months during the flood, the only cost to the MFI, measured in May 1999, was 2 to \$3 in lost earnings. By contrast, in September 1998, a survey of more than 500 affected clients of the MFI BRAC who had not yet been granted rescheduling found that fewer than 20% managed to repay out of business income. Nearly half were borrowing from family or moneylenders, at rates of 120 to 140%, to stay current and keep access to BRAC's services. And 15 to 20% were selling assets or relief goods, withdrawing their savings or eating less.

In other words, an installment kept on schedule costs the borrower far more than a postponed installment costs the lender.

How to reschedule

The 1999 guide describes three forms: postpone principal only; postpone principal and interest while letting interest accrue; or postpone both and stop the clock. To catch up on missed installments, you lengthen the loan term, increase the remaining installments, or accept a lump-sum repayment after a specific event, "such as when the water recedes or after a harvest."

Case by case does not mean arbitrary. The guide recommends a written policy that gives loan officers parameters and a few model schedules. The MERS call for meeting each borrower to assess their repayment capacity after the disaster.

Durations vary: in Bangladesh in 1998, from three to ten weeks depending on the client; after Mitch, up to nine months, with the most vulnerable recovering more slowly.

The group trap

In Nicaragua after Mitch, the MFI ProMujer rescheduled the loans of groups of thirty women. In each group, about two thirds recovered quickly and repaid on the original schedule; one third followed the slower schedule. But the rule required all thirty to finish repaying before any new loan: the whole group was stuck. The lesson is direct: rescheduling must also adapt the rules for access to the next loan.

The order of money: transfers, savings, then credit

The MERS give a simple sequence: "organizations should prioritize inward remittances and cash transfers immediately following a crisis. Next, they should work with FSPs to increase access to savings and insurance. During a reconstruction or recovery phase, FSPs can reintroduce (or expand) loan products based on client demand for access to finance." FSPs are financial service providers. The Part III opener placed this sequence in the overall timeline of the levers; here is what it means for each form of money.

Migrant remittances

In countries with many emigrants, diaspora money arrives before aid. A 2010 World Bank paper shows that remittances increase after disasters where emigrants make up a large share of the population, substantially in about half of the countries studied, and recommends restoring money transfer services quickly.

After Mitch, the transfer service from the United States run by a Salvadoran federation of savings and credit cooperatives saw the number of transfers triple in the month after the hurricane.

A club in a country of emigration has a role here that no agency has: it can press the authorities and operators to reopen transfer points quickly, and make safe, low-cost channels known to the diaspora.

Savings

CGAP asks MFIs to lift compulsory savings requirements temporarily in affected branches "until the emergency stage has passed and clients have begun reconstruction," and to open withdrawals according to their liquidity. The 1999 guide suggests making compulsory savings available as a loan, with a date for rebuilding the balance set according to the scale of the disaster, on which access to future loans will depend.

Compulsory savings offer little protection. In Bangladesh, according to Grameen Bank, 95% of the compulsory savings of affected clients was withdrawn, and these balances, built from deposits of a few taka, counted for little against losses of about 10,000 taka per household. Voluntary savings protect better: MFIs that already offered voluntary savings with open access suffered less from liquidity crises than those that had to release compulsory savings in an emergency.

During the flood, a credit officer from the MFI ASA visited her members every other day with two options: withdraw their savings, or take a consumption loan of 1,000 taka. In one group, ten withdrew, ten borrowed, three did both. Those who borrowed knew the loan cost

more; they wanted to keep their savings intact.

And aid money flows back into savings. According to the MERS, MFIs in the tsunami-affected areas of Sri Lanka reported higher savings balances in March 2005 than in March 2004, and in Batticaloa district, about 35% of the cash grants and cash-for-work wages received were deposited in MFIs.

Savings groups

Savings groups (Village Savings and Loan Associations, self-help groups) are often presented as the resilience solution par excellence. Let us be clear: the research gathered for this book found no rigorous impact study of savings groups after a sudden-onset disaster. In Dar es Salaam, households with a member in a group recover faster from floods, but that is a correlation, not proof. The social fund of these groups works like a small insurance scheme, with a limit the authors themselves spell out: "a community-based insurance mechanism will not be viable if all community members are affected by the same event." In Ethiopia, during the 2015 and 2016 drought, older groups held up better than groups created less than a year earlier.

The consequence for your club: support the groups that exist rather than hastily creating new ones after the disaster. When no financial institution guarantees a lasting presence, the MERS recommend working with community-based financial services, owned and run by their members, "such as ROSCAs and savings groups." The CED guide and Module 3 of the CED training program describe how they work in normal times.

Recovery credit

When credit comes back, it comes back first in its simplest form. The 1999 guide reports that Bangladeshi MFIs consider the best recovery product to be "the standard microfinance short-term working capital loan": the ordinary working capital loan. The reconstruction loan, for its part, raises a debt problem. CGAP says it bluntly: "The amounts of many such 'asset replacement' loans require the borrower to also go through three or four income generation loans to earn enough income to service these reconstruction loans." It recommends granting them only after the emergency stage, when MFI staff can assess each client's damage and creditworthiness.

Three experiences show what well-run recovery credit achieves, and its limits.

- **Poland, 1997.** After the floods, the MFI Fundusz Mikro opens a temporary window under a separate brand: a 24-month loan at 10%, with six months' grace. On-time repayment reaches 93%. The product is limited to six months, which, according to the World Bank, preserved credit discipline.

- **Philippines, after Haiyan (November 2013).** CEVI does the opposite of its competitors: it lends more. Its recovery loan is disbursed within one to two weeks, with a schedule matched to each borrower's cash flow. According to the lender and its funder, 4,889 loans averaging \$430 were repaid better than the institution's average. This is a self-assessment, without a control group.
- **Nepal, after the earthquake of April 25, 2015.** A grant from the Asian Development Bank finances, through an agricultural development bank and 53 small farmers' cooperatives, recovery loans at 5% a year over three years, including six months' grace. According to the Asian Development Bank's report, 15,700 households benefit, with women making up 76% of borrowers, and in July 2018 the on-time repayment rate among recipients reaches 99%. But the loans were disbursed from July 2016 to October 2017: fifteen to thirty months after the earthquake.

That last figure matters as much as the repayment rate. Recovery credit arrives late. In the months before, something else is needed. And it does not suit everyone: the MERS point out that lending "is not an appropriate intervention for individuals who are not economically active."

Chapter 5 showed the other risk: the subsidized rate. In Sri Lanka, loans to victims at 6% were followed by abnormal defaults among borrowers who had not been affected by the disaster. The interest rate is the lender's decision, made with full knowledge, not a club's.

Keep relief and credit apart

One rule runs through all the sources. CGAP: "MFIs are not relief agencies." Donors should separate emergency aid and microfinance as soon as possible: "Clients should not perceive mixed messages, so that the credit culture is not damaged." An MFI that temporarily provides relief should signal it with visible signs and keep separate accounts.

In Aceh, after the tsunami, an expert who evaluated microfinance in 2008 draws a harsh conclusion: about 400 donor organizations, poorly coordinated; of 1,502 officially registered financial cooperatives, 85 active. He draws two rules from it: "Grants and loans must not be provided by the same institution lest both staff and recipients will be confused, and any emerging, or pre-existing, credit culture will be undermined," and "Disbursement does not equal effectiveness." He recommends starting by mapping the financial landscape, local rotating savings groups included.

CGAP draws an instruction for funders from this: avoid setting MFIs numerical targets for clients served, because this can push them to lend to clients who will not be able to repay. Your club will therefore never measure its success by the number of loans granted.

Grants to small businesses

Between the emergency and the return of credit, there is a gap of several months that direct grants to small businesses can fill. Two randomized studies, the only ones found for this book after a disaster in a developing country, show what they are worth.

Sri Lanka, 2005. Researchers from the World Bank and two universities follow very small businesses with no employees in the districts of Kalutara, Galle and Matara. One hundred twenty of them, drawn by lot, receive 10,000 or 20,000 rupees (about 100 or \$200), in cash or in equipment chosen by the owner. Result: for retail businesses, each 100 rupees received raises monthly profit by 19.6 rupees, a return of 19.6% a month. For manufacturing, the effect is zero on average. The authors conclude that after the tsunami, lack of capital was not the main obstacle for manufacturers. They suggest likely reasons: coconut fiber production was waiting for the retting lagoons to be cleared, lace making was waiting for the tourists. They support cash grants, "but only in limited cases," and observe that aid to businesses was "not well correlated with reported damage."

Beira, 2019. Seven months after Cyclone Idai, researchers from UNU-WIDER send 6,000 meticaís (about \$100) by phone to 121 small manufacturers drawn by lot, in Beira, a very hard-hit city, and in Chimoio, less affected. The amount matches the median annual investment of a Beira microenterprise before the cyclone. The effect is significant in Beira only. It is concentrated in one trade: "Treated carpenters stand out as their income increased by 102 per cent compared to the remaining firms." No measurable effect among tailors, blacksmiths or food producers. The authors explain it by the demand for repairs and furniture after the cyclone.

The two studies agree on one point: the same amount does not produce the same effect from one trade to another. A grant restarts a business whose customers and suppliers have come back; it replaces neither missing inputs nor vanished demand.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 2013 guidance note on emergency employment, adds three rules: the restart grant is one-time only, and announced as such; preferably, it is not paid by the institution that lends; it stops when markets pick up again. The International Labour Organization (ILO) warns along the same lines: any grant can weaken the local financial sector and create dependency on aid.

What the club does

A financial partner, not a teller window

The CED guide sets the rule for normal times: your club does not lend itself; it prepares borrowers, connects them with a professional lender and tracks the results. After a disaster, the rule becomes stricter, because the risk of over-indebtedness rises just as incomes fall.

Need	Who handles it	What the club does
Current loans that can't be repaid	the lender, case by case	pay nothing on borrowers' behalf; talk to the lender
Lender liquidity	the lender and its refinancers	look for funders; check the lender
Savings frozen or lost	MFI, cooperative, savings group	support existing groups
Diaspora money	transfer operators, authorities	press for transfer points to reopen
Capital to reopen	a partner separate from the lender	fund targeted grants, if the rules allow
Recovery credit	a registered lender	prepare and support borrowers

Before touching anything that concerns existing loans, talk to the lender. Paying borrowers' installments from outside can break the repayment discipline on which all future credit in your area depends.

Funding a lender: the DAI manual method

The guide closest to the situation of a club or district is a manual published in 2007 by the firm DAI for funders that support MFIs with grants after a crisis. It proposes four steps.

1. **Check three conditions:** minimal political stability, enough cash-based economic activity, and a stable population. For this last point, it uses at least 18 months, the length of time "commonly recognized as the minimum period of time required for MFIs to make and recover their loans." Without these three conditions, "Providing grant support to MFIs should not be considered."
2. **Check your own capacity:** access to a microfinance specialist, and a funding commitment of at least three years, coordinated with other donors.
3. **Choose the type of support,** from simplest to most demanding: equipment and materials (a destroyed branch to re-equip), short-term technical assistance, capitalization

of the loan portfolio, operating costs. Capitalization "Provides critical liquidity," but requires a more thorough assessment.

4. **Assess the institution** (governance, interest rates that cover costs, low arrears, accounts audited every year), then disburse in tranches, against performance benchmarks. Module 3 of the CED training program lists the documents to request.

The Rotary Foundation's rules

The rules below are those in the documents in force in July 2026. Check them against the current Terms and Conditions on My Rotary before any application.

Microcredit is eligible. The April 2024 policy statement for the community economic development area of focus lists access to financial services for poor communities, "including microcredit, mobile banking, savings, and insurance," among the activities of the area of focus.

In a global grant, microcredit is tightly regulated. The July 2026 Terms and Conditions require a registered MFI that has been operating for at least three years; capital lent out at least twice, over at least 18 months; an annual interest rate no higher than the lower of two caps, ten points below the national average or 36%; training for recipients that goes beyond loan management; a midterm visit by the Cadre of Technical Advisers; and a final report with a baseline and an exit plan. The April 2024 CED guidelines add an additional review for any microloan project.

A district grant can fund microcredit activities with a registered MFI that has been operating for at least three years.

Two prohibitions matter for recovery money. Neither the Disaster Response Grant nor the global grant funds cash donations not earmarked for a person or a cooperating organization, nor loan guarantee schemes. If your club is considering grants to small businesses on the Sri Lanka or Beira model, how to fit them into a Foundation grant is not settled by the documents read for this book: ask the regional grants officer before building the project.

Timing. A global grant pays for nothing committed before its approval. We conclude from this that it cannot provide liquidity to a lender in the first weeks: other sources are needed, club and district funds, the lender's partners, donors. Fonkoze itself was funded in two stages, a test with 500 clients and then an expansion; Chapter 10 details how this was put together.

Insurance, finally, is not decided after the disaster. It is prepared beforehand, at the level of the lender or the group: that is the subject of Chapter 15.

Pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Paying affected borrowers' installments	you want to bring quick relief	talk to the lender; rescheduling costs little
Funding a general write-off	the gesture seems generous	write-offs only if planned, targeted or insured
Lending yourself, or lending to everyone	the club has money and goodwill	a registered lender that assesses each borrower
Lending to rebuild before restarting business	the house seems the priority	working capital first, for active people
Creating savings groups to receive aid	it is quick and visible	support existing groups
Same grant for every trade	it is simple and seems fair	check what is blocking: capital, inputs or customers
Giving and lending under the same banner	one partner is more convenient	keep the windows separate
Counting success in number of loans	it is easy to report	measure repayment and business recovery

What your club now has in hand

Your recovery file now gets its **"money" section**: the local financial partner chosen and checked, the form of support selected (lender liquidity, restart grants, support for savings, remittances) and the safeguards against over-indebtedness.

The Bizoton credit agent had no global grant and no recovery plan. He had a list of clients and he knew where to find them. That knowledge is what your club must help keep standing. But money only restarts those who already know how to work, and reconstruction will call for trades the area does not have in sufficient numbers: that is the question of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ The lenders in the area (MFIs, cooperatives, banks) have been listed and contacted
- ☐ No installment has been paid on a borrower's behalf without the lender's agreement
- ☐ The club knows whether lenders reschedule case by case, and under what rules

- ☐ The lenders' liquidity needs and their refinancers are known
- ☐ Money transfer points have reopened, or the club has pressed for them to reopen
- ☐ Existing savings groups have been identified
- ☐ For each trade targeted by a grant, the main obstacle (capital, inputs, customers) is known
- ☐ Any grants are one-time, announced as such, and paid by someone other than the lender
- ☐ The partner lender has been checked (accounts, arrears, audit, at least three years of operation)
- ☐ The current Foundation rules have been checked on My Rotary with the district Rotary Foundation committee chair (DRFC)
- ☐ The indicators chosen measure repayment and business recovery, not the number of loans
- ☐ The "money" section of the recovery file is written

Further reading

- The SEEP Network, *Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS)*, third edition, 2017, chapter on financial services.
- CGAP, *Sustaining Microfinance in Post-Disaster Asia: Guidance for MFIs and Donors*, February 2005 note (French and English versions; French title *Soutenir les activités de microfinance en Asie après le tsunami*).
- Emre Ersenkal, *Field Manual: Supporting Microfinance through Grants in Post-Crisis Settings*, DAI, August 2007.
- Suresh de Mel, David McKenzie and Christopher Woodruff, *Enterprise Recovery Following Natural Disasters*, World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper 5269, 2010.
- UNU-WIDER, Working Paper 2021/87 on cash grants to businesses in Beira and Chimoio after Cyclone Idai.
- Rotary International, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Global Grants*, July 2026, section 11 (microcredit), on My Rotary.
- Dennis Egger, Johannes Haushofer, Edward Miguel, Paul Niehaus and Michael W. Walker, *General Equilibrium Effects of Cash Transfers: Experimental Evidence from Kenya*, NBER Working Paper 26600, 2019, revised 2021.
- International Rescue Committee, *Emergency Economies: The Impact of Cash Assistance in Lebanon*, September 2014.

Chapter 7: Skills: Paid Work, Training, and Reconstruction Trades

In December 2015, eight months after the April 25 earthquake, a Japanese cooperation project working with Nepal's National Reconstruction Authority begins training masons. The trainees are chosen with care: working masons with at least one year of experience, put forward by their village development committee and then selected after an interview and a practical test. There are about thirty per session, with expenses covered and meals provided. They are taught the rules of earthquake-resistant construction, first in theory and then in the field. The course was supposed to last six days; that proved too short, and it was extended to seven. Over 72 sessions, the project trains 2,157 masons, 19 of them women. It also trains more than 6,500 homeowners.

In March 2017, the project takes stock in ten village development committees. Minimum standards are in place, homeowners and masons have been trained, engineers have been prepared to carry out inspections. And yet the reconstruction start rate is only 21.3%.

The project changes its approach. It helps each village form a reconstruction committee, and it sends "mobile masons" into the field: trained masons, paid by the project, who work free of charge on families' building sites while training other masons and laborers. Each one follows about a hundred beneficiaries. At the peak, there are 548 of them.

Elsewhere in Nepal, another organization trained 3,140 masons and construction workers between May and July 2016, in seven days, using a course designed by the government. Its review, published in a collection of case studies from the Global Shelter Cluster, contains this sentence: "Masons had limited employment prospects after the project ended."

Training two thousand masons is not enough to get houses rebuilt. You also need a building site, someone to pay for it, and a trade that outlives the site.

What the scene teaches

A skill is not a job. The masons trained in Nepal knew how to build to standard, but families were not starting their building projects; the project attributed this delay to a lack of mutual support within the communities. Its answer was to take the training onto the building site

itself, alongside the families.

The second project shows the other half of the problem. Reconstruction creates a sudden demand for labor, and then it stops. Its own authors acknowledge that they did no labor market study and had no plan for livelihoods beyond reconstruction. They trained for a spike in demand, not for a trade.

This chapter deals with both halves: the paid work of the first months, which puts money in people's pockets and clears the streets; training, which gives local residents the jobs of reconstruction; and the move to the employment that will remain once the cranes have left.

Reconstruction, a sudden and temporary demand

How big the job is

The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) after the Nepal earthquake, carried out by the government with its partners, puts the labor needed for housing alone at 352 million workdays over five years. Its main concern is skilled workers: 46% of needs according to the housing chapter, 40% according to the employment chapter, which means more than 20,000 masons according to the first, 17,500 according to the second. The gap shows how uncertain these estimates are; the order of magnitude is clear. The same assessment expects demand to push masonry wages up, and it warns: "it is critical that suppliers of manufactured goods are supported to take advantage of the increased demand in the construction sector. Otherwise, the reconstruction efforts will contribute to greater imports of such goods, mainly from China and India, and thus, a subdued impact on job creation in manufacturing."

The message holds for a club of business owners: reconstruction money only sustains the local economy if the workers, craftspeople and suppliers are local. Otherwise, it just passes through.

What the disaster does to the labor market

The PDNA guidelines on employment describe what happened in Bangladesh after Cyclone Sidr, in 2007. Many fishermen had lost their boats. In the weeks that followed, they and family members who did not usually work went looking for jobs; field interviews estimate that for each boat destroyed, there was half an extra worker per family on the market. Wages in some occupations fell. At the same time, in the same area, electricians and carpenters saw their work and pay rise, driven by reconstruction demand.

So the disaster creates two markets at once: a surplus of unskilled labor, which needs income right away, and a shortage of skilled labor, which needs to be trained fast. Paid work answers the first; training answers the second.

The same guidelines describe the sequence that should follow: employment that depends entirely on relief should gradually give way to employment linked to reconstruction and economic recovery; then, as reconstruction comes to an end, the structure of employment should return to that of the economy. This is the logic of the three employment tracks presented in Chapter 1: stabilizing incomes, local economic recovery, sustainable employment.

Paid work in the first months

What it is

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 2013 guidance note on emergency employment, defines cash for work as paying a wage in exchange for short-term work: repairing irrigation canals, dikes, tracks, marketplaces, schools; clearing debris; preparing land. These programs generally last up to six months after a limited disaster, and at least a year after a major one. That is an order of magnitude, not a rule.

The rules the sources agree on

Rule	What the sources say	What the club checks
Wage	at minimum wage level, sometimes slightly below market	the rate set with the other actors
Selection	clear criteria, agreed with the community and authorities	who chooses, and on what criteria
Exit	planned from the start, gradual	the date, and what comes next for workers
Payment	on time, every two weeks or monthly	the actual delay between work and pay
Safety	equipment, insurance, no children	one adult per household

Wages. UNDP asks for a wage "commensurate to the minimum wage," possibly slightly below the market rate to attract the poorest. It accepts higher wages right after a major crisis, temporarily, but not over time, because they pull workers away from other activities and create tensions. No gap between men and women for work of equal value; higher wages for skilled workers. There is no universal rate: in its recommendations for the Philippines after

Haiyan, the World Bank notes that global practice is to pay 5 to 10% below the minimum wage, while, according to the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO) recommends the full minimum wage. Chapter 5 showed what excessive wages cost farmers and employers; Chapter 12 will show how actors in the same area align. The rule for your club is simple: it never sets its rate alone.

Selection. UNDP finds that emergency employment works better when affected groups and local authorities agree on the criteria and take part in the selection, and it warns against capture by local elites. In the Philippines, the government program hired only one person per household, above the legal working age, to keep families from sending their children.

Exit. Every project needs a clear exit strategy, with a gradual phase-out, so that the beneficiaries do not all find themselves out of work on the same day. UNDP cites one bridge: withholding part of the wage and paying it into a bank account at the end of the work period, as in Burundi.

Payment. "Failure to pay workers on time can lead to discontent, conflict and negative media coverage," UNDP writes. The evaluation of an ILO project in Leyte, in the Philippines, after Haiyan, shows what happens otherwise: because of the government's normal procedures, payments arrived one to two months after the work was done. "Such delays in payment defeats the purpose of the initiative," the evaluator concludes, and they create tensions between local governments and their residents.

Haiti: from daily wage to cubic meter

After the January 2010 earthquake, UNDP employs, among others, 1,000 residents of six neighborhoods of Bel Air, in Port-au-Prince, to clear rubble-choked streets and clean out canals. In the debris removal program, teams work two to four weeks, six days a week, at the minimum wage, and rotate so that more families benefit. In 2011, UNDP switches to *cash for production*: payment is by the cubic meter of debris removed, counted in trucks, wheelbarrows or containers. According to UNDP, workers were able to increase their income, sometimes significantly; but the transition was poorly understood and contested by workers used to a daily wage.

The independent evaluation of UNDP's programs draws the lesson: cash for work was a sound approach, but it "lasted too long and took time to evolve into a more constructive modality." It goes further for the programs as a whole: when the emphasis is on handing out money rather than on the results of the work, cash for work becomes a simple cash transfer.

Kobe: hiring cannot be decreed

In March 1995, two months after the Kobe earthquake, the Japanese government requires public works sites in the affected area to reserve up to 40% of their workforce for disaster survivors who had lost their jobs. According to the World Bank, a year later, only 30 people had been hired under this rule. Companies kept recruiting on the basis of profitability and efficiency, and no penalty was provided for.

An obligation does not create a skill. If disaster survivors do not have the trade a company is looking for, it hires elsewhere.

Aceh: training so the jobs stay local

For the Philippines after Haiyan, the World Bank summarized the lessons it had drawn from Aceh after the 2004 tsunami. Once reconstruction needs have been estimated, you need to calculate how many construction jobs they will create and check the labor available locally. In Aceh, some workers came from other regions of Indonesia; elsewhere, residents were trained "so the jobs could go to local people." Bringing in labor is sometimes necessary, "but it does create social jealousy." The other lessons in the box fit in two lines: organize training, guidance and job placement for jobseekers, especially in construction; and move quickly from paid work to restoring people's original livelihoods.

Training the craftspeople of reconstruction

What experience says

The World Bank handbook on post-disaster housing reconstruction (*Safer Homes, Stronger Communities*, 2010) devotes a chapter to training. It opens with this sentence: "Training is the intervention that most determines whether the housing reconstructed after a disaster is an improvement over what people had before". Its rules are the ones a business owner would apply:

- **Simple and concrete.** The simpler the instructions, the better; a worker with modest skills can learn the basic requirements in a few days.
- **On the building site.** On-the-job training is essential, and follow-up is needed throughout reconstruction.
- **Fast.** "The more time that passes after the disaster, the greater the probability that people will begin to rebuild without any guidance or supervision."
- **With local resources.** Check what exists in terms of institutes, trade associations and certifications; international experts must not crowd out local experts and builders.

- **Without overpromising.** Do not build demonstration buildings that raise hopes of a quality the available aid cannot pay for.

Pakistan: a skill that outlives the building site

After the earthquake of October 8, 2005, Pakistan opts for owner-driven reconstruction, with grants paid in tranches according to progress and compliance with standards, and training centers. How many people were trained? The Asian Development Bank's project completion report gives 783,314 people trained in the reconstruction authority's centers; the same report mentions elsewhere 25,000 master trainers who trained more than 200,000 homeowners; an expert report claimed more than 250,000 people trained. The scopes are not defined, and the three figures cannot be compared.

The most interesting result lies elsewhere. According to the reconstruction authority's social impact study, as reported by the Asian Development Bank, in 2009, 72% of the houses built since the earthquake *without any grant* used earthquake-resistant techniques. The know-how stayed in the hands of masons and homeowners after the payments ended. The same report notes a limit: homeowners waited on average more than a month for corrective instructions, and often had neither the time nor the means to wait.

Certification

The Nepal PDNA recommends, in the medium term, training based on actual labor market demand, and adds that it is essential for the certificates issued to be recognized by the national vocational training institution. A recognized certificate follows the mason to the next building site; a project attendance certificate stays in a drawer.

What turns training into a job

Start from the employer

The CED guide sets the rule for normal times: you do not train people for trades the market does not need. After a disaster, the most obvious employer is reconstruction itself, but it is not the only one. The ILO's rapid assessment manual asks, before any training: Is the training based on a market assessment? Does what is offered match the needs of the labor market? Is there on-the-job training?

The evaluation of the ILO project in Leyte illustrates this. The training offered covered carpentry, food processing, and bamboo and woven-grass handicrafts. Few people earned an income from it. The evaluator notes that handicrafts require the support of an entire value

chain, impossible within a relief program, and concludes that the trades taught should be those "with a clear demand within trainees' own neighborhood."

An example on a club's scale

This example comes from Lebanon, after the 2006 war: a post-conflict setting that this book does not cover, but whose method carries over to a disaster. Two nongovernmental organizations train displaced people returning home in plumbing and electrical installation. The course lasts ten weeks: five of theory, five of practice in houses in their own villages, under the guidance of working craftspeople, who themselves received four days of training of trainers. The trainees keep their tools. Of 42 enrolled, 37 finish, and 28 had found a job by the end of the course.

Everything that makes this small program work is within a club's reach: working craftspeople as trainers, a trade needed for reconstruction but useful after it, practice in the neighborhood, and tools that stay.

A Rotary project: Khokana

In Khokana, a Newar village of about 7,000 people nine kilometers from Kathmandu, the 2015 earthquake completely destroyed about 550 houses and damaged 307 others, out of 900 households. The Rotary Club of Mississauga-Meadowvale (Canada), with the Rotary Club of Patan (Nepal) as host club, puts together a community economic development global grant with two objectives: strengthening the local women's awareness association of Khokana, and giving about 150 women affected by the earthquake income-generating skills, close to home. According to the district page reporting on it, the sewing and straw-weaving courses are finished, the cooking course nearly so, and the trainees are doing their practical training; two more sessions are planned, but in July and August the women are busy transplanting rice. According to *Rotary Great Britain and Ireland*, dozens of women had already been trained in productive activities, management, marketing and building their links with markets.

According to the same page, the project runs from May 15, 2017 to December 31, 2018, so it started two years after the earthquake, and it costs \$42,263. The Rotary sources give no income results. It still shows two things: a global grant can carry a skills project after a disaster, and it works through a local association that will stay. The farming calendar, for its part, is a reminder that training fits around people's lives, not the other way around.

After the building site

Demand for masons will fall. We recommend choosing, where possible, trades that are also useful in normal times (electrical work, plumbing, carpentry, repair), and preparing access to savings or credit during training for those who will set up on their own (Chapter 6). The Beira trial, presented in the same chapter, points the same way: after the cyclone, it was the carpenters, whose services reconstruction was demanding, that a small grant helped most.

Employment services matter too. ILO Recommendation 205, adopted in 2017, asks states to restore and strengthen public employment services, including emergency employment services; the 2021 ILO-UNDP guide describes them as bridges between jobseekers and vacancies when supply and demand are changing fast. A club can offer its employer members to these services, or organize its own job board for the building sites in its area.

Decent work, even in an emergency

Recommendation 205 sets benchmarks your club should know, even though they are addressed to states.

- **Safety.** It calls for "safe and decent working conditions, including the provision of personal protective equipment and medical assistance for all workers, including those engaged in rescue and rehabilitation activities." Its references to safety and health "apply equally to persons in volunteer work participating in crisis response": we conclude that they apply to your club's volunteers.
- **Women.** It calls for measures to ensure that women who have been employed during the crisis "are not replaced against their will when the male workforce returns."
- **Children.** The PDNA guidelines accept that some labor law requirements may be suspended during the emergency, but never the standards on the worst forms of child labor or slavery.
- **Businesses.** The Recommendation asks employers' organizations to "assist sustainable enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, to undertake business continuity planning to recover from crises by means of training, advice and material support." A club of business owners is not an employers' organization, but it has the skills of one.

What the club does

The roles

Your club does not run a paid work program itself: the rules on wages, selection, insurance and payment require an organization few clubs have. It does not train masons itself. It connects.

Action	Who leads it	What the club does
Paid work	local government, NGO, agency	cofunds, checks rates and pay delays, provides equipment
Building trades training	recognized center, master craftspeople	finds the sites and working trainers
Apprenticeship	local businesses	mobilizes its employer members
Job placement	employment service, placement committee	sets up a committee before the course ends
Reconstruction purchasing	project owners	asks for local craftspeople and suppliers
Self-employment	lender, savings group	connects graduates with a financial partner

When your club funds a building project itself, it can write into the specifications the hiring of craftspeople and suppliers from the area. After Haiyan, the World Bank proposed requiring reconstruction contractors to hire unskilled workers from affected communities and using public works as an opportunity to train them in construction trades.

The Rotary Foundation's rules

The Foundation's CED guidelines, in their April 2024 version, require that training not be a one-off: "It shouldn't be a standalone course or one-time intervention." For an existing training program, the project must improve its quality or reach: "Simply improving the physical facility or replacing existing equipment doesn't meet the requirements for a global grant." Any major equipment requires a three- to five-year financial plan. Global grants can also fund vocational training teams, groups of professionals who travel abroad to train local professionals. They pay for nothing prior to their approval; Chapter 10 draws the consequences for the timeline. Check these rules against the current Terms and Conditions on My Rotary.

Pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Training with no site or employer	training is easy to organize	link each session to real building sites
Training only for the reconstruction peak	demand is visible and urgent	trades useful afterward, recognized certificate
Paying above market for work	you want to help more	rate set with the other actors
Paying late	the partner's usual procedures	check pay delays before cofunding
Letting paid work drag on	it is popular and visible	exit date and bridge from the start
Decreeing hiring quotas	it seems simple	train for the trades businesses seek
Handicraft training with no outlet	the project seems suited to women	trades in demand in the neighborhood itself
Bringing in skilled labor	it is faster	train local residents from the start

What your club now has in hand

Your recovery file now gets its **"skills" section**: the trades targeted, with the demand that justifies them; the employers and building sites committed; the training partner and the certification; and what will become of the people trained once reconstruction is over.

In Nepal, training masons was not enough; they had to be sent to the building sites, alongside the families. A skill is only worth something when it is linked to demand. And demand, for farmers, fishers and traders, runs through markets and chains in which one link has often broken: that is the subject of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ Reconstruction labor demand has been estimated, by trade
- ☐ The club knows who runs paid work in its area, and at what rate
- ☐ No wage rate is set by the club alone
- ☐ The actual delay between work and payment has been checked with each partner
- ☐ Workers are selected with the community and local authorities, on public criteria
- ☐ The exit from paid work is dated from the start, with a bridge
- ☐ Each training course is linked to identified building sites or employers

- ☐ The trainers are working craftspeople, and the training ends on the building site
- ☐ The certificate is recognized by the national vocational training body
- ☐ The trades chosen will be useful after reconstruction
- ☐ A placement committee is set up before the course ends
- ☐ Protective equipment and insurance for workers and volunteers are planned
- ☐ The "skills" section of the recovery file is written

Further reading

- United Nations Development Programme, *Guidance Note: Emergency Employment and Enterprise Recovery*, 2013.
- Abhas K. Jha et al., *Safer Homes, Stronger Communities: A Handbook for Reconstructing after Natural Disasters*, World Bank, 2010, Chapter 16 on training.
- International Labour Organization, *Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205)*.
- European Union, United Nations Development Group and World Bank, *Post-Disaster Needs Assessments Guidelines*, Volume B, chapter *Employment, Livelihoods and Social Protection*.
- Government of Nepal, *Post Disaster Needs Assessment*, Volume B, 2015, housing and employment chapters.
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), final report of the project to support housing reconstruction in Nepal, February 2019.
- Asian Development Bank, technical assistance completion report on housing reconstruction after the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Community Economic Development Guidelines: Global Grant Funding*, April 2024, on My Rotary.

Chapter 8: Markets: Agriculture, Value Chains, and Cooperatives

Before March 11, 2011, the Omoe fishing cooperative in Miyako, on the coast of Iwate Prefecture in Japan, prided itself on the country's largest harvest of farmed wakame seaweed and wild abalone. Its members also fished for salmon and kelp.

The tsunami swept away 798 of the cooperative's 814 boats. The facilities where the seaweed was grown and processed were completely destroyed.

Three days after the earthquake, the head of the cooperative set up a crisis team. Its goal fit on one line: get back to fishing as fast as possible. The cooperative bought used boats on the Sea of Japan coast, which the tsunami had not touched. It repaired the boats left stuck in the debris or stranded on high ground by the wave. In May, seventy boats went out to harvest wild wakame.

Seventy boats, for a fleet that once had 814: not nearly enough. So the cooperative invented a rule. Fishers formed groups of four or five that shared the available boats, and until the fleet was rebuilt, the catch was split equally among the members of each group. In 2012, as the number of boats neared normal, the organization gradually returned to its original form.

The Japanese Reconstruction Agency sums up the result in one sentence: fishers who had lost their boats were able to resume fishing early "without incurring any personal debt."

Japan is a wealthy country, and the government subsidized the cooperatives to buy back boats and nets. The sharing rule, though, required no purchase at all. It rested on an organization that existed before the wave, knew its members, and had their trust.

What the scene teaches

The Omoe cooperative did not wait for someone to hand it a new fleet. It looked for what was missing to get the chain moving again: boats, any boats, right away. Three lessons come out of this for your club.

First: a market is a chain, and a disaster breaks one specific link. What kept the Omoe fishers from working was the boats. They knew how to fish, and the fishing grounds were still there. Elsewhere, it will be a wholesaler's warehouse, a buyer's credit, a road, a cold room. Before you act, find that link.

Second: you repair the chain with the people who held it. The cooperative already existed, with its rules, its members, its cash, its relationships with the government. It was the channel the government used for its subsidies, and it was the one that could impose sharing. An organization created after the disaster to receive aid would have had neither that authority nor that trust.

Third: the calendar is in charge. Wild wakame is harvested in spring. A new fleet delivered in September would have missed the season. In farming as in fishing, nature sets the deadline, not the project.

This chapter covers the markets where people sell what they produce, the chains that link them to buyers, and the cooperatives that help restart them. Physical places, streets and market halls, are the subject of Chapter 9.

What disasters cost agriculture

In 2023, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) published its most complete estimate. Over the past thirty years, from 1991 to 2021, disasters are estimated to have cost about \$3,800 billion in agricultural production, or 123 billion a year on average, 5% of global agricultural gross domestic product. The figure covers only crops and livestock; fisheries and forestry are left out for lack of data.

The same study reviewed 88 Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) carried out between 2007 and 2022 in 60 countries. On average, agriculture accounts for 23% of damage and losses across all sectors, and more than 65% for droughts. The FAO itself points out the limit: these assessments are conducted only after a small number of disasters, in countries with relatively less capacity to cope.

In a rural area, the lost harvest is only the start: the next crop still has to be planted, sold, and bought by someone.

The principle: restore market actors, do not replace them

Chapter 5 set out the rule of the Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS, third edition, 2017): all aid affects markets, and those who deliver it must not take on a market function themselves. This chapter draws the practical consequences.

The MERS chapter on enterprise and market systems captures the spirit in the title of its fourth standard, "Work with existing market actors and use facilitation approaches." Three recommendations from that chapter apply directly to a club.

Do not forget the intermediaries. The MERS observe that project teams do not always understand that intermediaries, "wholesalers and middlemen," play an important role in the market. The collector who buys in the village and resells in town is often the only link between the producer and the customer.

Buy local, even at a slightly higher price. When in-kind aid is justified, the MERS recommend buying it from local private actors "despite higher costs, where feasible." An order placed with the wholesaler in the next town gives back the cash that will let him restock.

Look at the whole chain, including outside the affected area. Chapter 5 cited the example, reported by the MERS, of farm inputs handed out free after an earthquake: the market analysis "had not extended to the suppliers in the market chain," and suppliers based outside the area lost their customers. So follow the chain all the way to the suppliers, wherever they are.

The MERS add a warning useful to any club that wants to help a business: beware the "relief boom," when some businesses are viable only as long as aid money and aid workers are part of the local economy. Before helping a business, ask yourself who its customers will be once the humanitarians have left.

Finding the broken link

A value chain is the full set of steps that take a product from the producer to the end customer: inputs, production, storage, processing, transport, sale, with people and money at every step. The CED guide gives the method for normal times. After a disaster, the question becomes: *which link broke, and who held it?*

The documented cases show that the answer is rarely the one you expect.

- **An intermediary's storage.** In Port-au-Prince, after the 2010 earthquake, the hardest-hit link in the rice chain was the small wholesalers, who had lost their warehouses (Chapter 5).
- **A buyer's credit.** In the state of Odisha, India, two cyclones destroyed the maize crop in 2013 and 2015. The large buyers, who used to advance seeds and inputs to farmers, stopped doing so after losing the money from unpaid harvests. The MERS conclude: "When credit for seeds and other inputs stopped, farmers stopped growing maize." The broken link was not a physical one.

- **A place to sell.** In Shiogama, one month after the 2011 tsunami, a tuna boat was the first vessel to enter the port after activities resumed, and the fish market, a third of which was left intact, was able to hold its auctions (Chapter 4).
- **Equipment no one can pay for alone.** In Kesennuma, in the completely devastated Shishiori district, 17 seafood processing companies hit by the disaster founded a cooperative in August 2012 to build, together, a large refrigeration facility and a seawater sterilization facility. According to the Reconstruction Agency, joint ownership sharply cut the investment cost for each one.

Link	Question to ask	Sign it is broken
Inputs	are seeds, nets, animal feed on sale?	shops closed, abnormal prices
Credit	who advanced the money before, and do they still?	buyers or suppliers who demand cash
Production	do producers have land, tools, boats, labor?	fields not planted, boats tied up
Storage and cold	where did products wait before being sold?	post-harvest losses, forced sales
Transport	are the road, truck, boat working?	collectors gone, village and town prices drifting apart
Buyers	who used to buy, and do they still?	unsold stock, falling farm-gate prices

The broken link is often in the middle of the chain, with an actor that distributions ignore. Your club can target a single link, provided the analysis has been done, by the club or by others (Chapter 3). The MERS point out that at the start of the response, a rough analysis is acceptable, because "good enough" analysis is better than "analysis paralysis." But each later assessment must go deeper than the last.

Agriculture: plant on time, with what the market offers

The problem is often access, not seed

After a disaster, the first reflex is to send seeds. The two reference handbooks on seeds in emergencies warn against it. The FAO's 2010 technical handbook observes that after a disaster, "seed is often available but farmers do not have the resources to buy it." The handbook published in 2002 by CRS, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) goes further: absolute seed unavailability "rarely happens," and humanitarian agencies "often mis-diagnose

the problem as lack of availability." These two handbooks come from the same network of authors, so their agreement is not independent confirmation, but it is the sector's reference position.

Before buying anything, your team therefore asks the three questions of seed security:

1. **Availability:** within a reasonable distance and before planting time, are there enough seeds of suitable crops?
2. **Access:** do families have the money or goods to buy or trade for them?
3. **Quality:** are the available seeds healthy, and of varieties farmers want?

If the answer to the first question is yes, the problem is access, and the right response is not to import seeds. The FAO handbook says so plainly: seed aid must work with the national seed system and not damage it through excessive imports.

Six possible responses

The FAO sorts responses by the problem they address.

Response	For which problem
Direct distribution of seeds and tools	real unavailability, lost harvest, long displacement
Local purchase, then distribution	localized shortage
Seed protection food ration	the family may eat its seeds
Credit to small grain traders	availability, where farmers buy at market
Vouchers or cash to farmers	access, where markets work
Seed fairs	access, often with vouchers

The fourth response comes closest to this book's rule. The FAO writes that small grain traders "provide a crucial source of seed for farmers, especially in emergencies": credit to these traders would let them source from farther away, in better varieties, and store more. Here again is the idea of restoring traders rather than replacing them.

The seed fair with vouchers

The principle is simple. Instead of free seeds, farmers receive vouchers that they exchange, at a fair organized for the occasion, for the seeds of their choice, sold by seed companies, local producers, and traders. The farmer chooses the crops, varieties, and quantities, and judges the quality; the money stays in the local economy.

In late 2000, in eastern Kenya, hit by successive droughts, CRS and its partners organized fourteen fairs in three weeks for more than 8,000 families, with 275 grain traders, over 75% of them women. Families got up to 14 kg of seed for an 8-dollar voucher, which would have bought only 4 kg of commercial maize seed. The agencies that had ordered commercial seed did not receive it in time to plant. These figures are reported by the organization that carried out the work, with no comparison group, and drought is not a sudden-onset disaster: take away the method more than the results.

The 2002 handbook sets out the safeguards:

- **watch prices:** the organizer must step in if fair prices run more than 50% above those of the ordinary market;
- **serve everyone in one day:** if the fair lasts two days, some recipients may resell the next day what they bought the day before;
- **register the sellers** and explain to recipients what their voucher is worth;
- **start with a pilot fair**, with few recipients.

Your club can fund a fair, observe it, bring in traders it knows; an agricultural partner runs it.

Planting dates are not negotiable

After Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, the FAO noted in May 2019 that seeds had to be in the ground "by end of April" to allow a possible winter harvest. In Nepal, the FAO's assessment of agricultural livelihoods, carried out one month after the 2015 earthquake, found that the rice planting window was almost closed, but that there was still time for millet and vegetables. The same assessment noted that farm input shops were gradually reopening, and drew the conclusion: this was the moment to use cash or vouchers.

In Dadu district, Pakistan, after the 2022 floods, an early recovery project by Save the Children and the national NGO National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) gave 40,000 rupees to each smallholder to buy seeds and tools and prepare the land, and 20,000 rupees to women for a kitchen garden. Average household income rose from 216,000 to 303,241 rupees, below the target of 336,000; the final evaluation, commissioned by the organization, attributes this to poor rainfall and new flooding. Cash delivered on time does not protect against a bad season.

Finally, the agriculture guide for recovery published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports two lessons from Aceh after the 2004 tsunami, drawn from a study it cites. The seeds, fertilizer, equipment, and credit handed out had come too early, "because basic infrastructure was not yet ready to allow these inputs to be used." And the

successful initiatives rested on firm commitments to buy the first year's harvest and help sell it: "The farmers' risks were thus underwritten." Before funding production, find out who will buy it.

Rebuild less, but better

The FAO learned this lesson on a large scale after the 2004 tsunami. Its Asia-Pacific office, after reviewing more than a hundred studies on Indonesia and Sri Lanka, wrote that fisheries suffered first from earlier overexploitation: rehabilitation "needs to focus not on the effects of the tsunami, but on addressing pre-existing trends." Chapter 5 told the rest: too many boats, badly built, sometimes given to people who were not fishers. Nine years later, after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the FAO made it one of its priorities to ensure that "pre-typhoon fishing capacity is not exceeded."

Shizugawa Bay: from over a thousand rafts to three hundred

In Shizugawa Bay, in Miyagi Prefecture, oysters have been farmed for more than a century. Before 2011, more than a thousand rafts were installed there, with, according to the body that now certifies the farm, often poor productivity and growth. The tsunami destroyed most of the installations; many oyster farmers left the trade.

Those who stayed, members of the local branch of the Miyagi fishing cooperative, joined a three-year pilot program, guided by WWF Japan and a government grant. They cut the number of rafts to 300, managed by 32 producers. Five years after the tsunami, the farm became the first in Japan certified by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). The certifying body puts forward a figure for a sharp rise in income that this book does not repeat: it comes from the body itself, and no independent source confirms it. What to keep from its account is that the reduction was led by the producers themselves, organized in a cooperative.

Watari: strawberries a meter off the ground

Before the earthquake, the Miyagi Watari agricultural cooperative was the leading strawberry-producing area in Tohoku: 96 hectares, 380 farms, 3,600 metric tons sold. The tsunami hit 96% of the land.

By October 2011, abandoned plots inland had been found to replace the lost fields. Tunnel greenhouses went up on them with a national subsidy, and production resumed in November on 20% of the former area. In September 2013, 51 households moved into new

greenhouse complexes, where the strawberry plants grow in troughs set about one meter off the ground and fed with a nutrient solution. In 2018, shipments exceeded the pre-earthquake level.

Seven years and several government subsidies: a club will not reproduce that scale. What it can take away is the method, a partial and fast restart on replacement land, which kept the producers in the business.

Rebuild as before	Rebuild better
replace every lost boat	do not exceed prior capacity, or the authorized boat type
restore the same plots	use the redevelopment to consolidate or enlarge
restart the same crop	diversify if the single crop lost everything
donors decide	organized producers decide

Cooperatives: a tool, not a proof

The Omoe cooperative did what no donor could have done: share scarce boats among fishers who knew one another, under an accepted rule. The Japanese cases show the cooperative in three roles:

- **organizer of sharing** for scarce tools (Omoe);
- **temporary employer**: the Ofunato fishing cooperative used public programs to hire its own members to clear the fishing grounds, which freed up the port and gave an income to fishers hit by the disaster;
- **owner of shared equipment** too expensive for a single business (Kesenuma).

The Japanese Reconstruction Agency draws three lessons, which it phrases this way: "Implement fishing boat sharing to quickly resume fishing"; "Build on union connections to heighten member solidarity"; and, for small processors, organize "under a collaborative arrangement or by establishing a cooperative."

What the research does not say

A claim circulates: cooperatives are said to withstand disasters better. It usually rests on two reports from the International Labour Office (ILO), from 2009 and 2013. But these reports deal with the 2007-2008 financial crisis, not natural disasters. The research done for this book found no study showing that cooperatives withstand an earthquake or a flood better, and no study on auditing or recapitalizing savings and credit cooperatives damaged by a disaster. What we have are cases, mostly Japanese, in a wealthy country with a strong state.

The second of these reports does contain a warning, written for financial cooperatives, that also holds after a disaster: setting up primary cooperatives alone, without the structures that support them, "will just lead to problems that later on will be difficult to put right." The CED guide describes the same risk: the "shell" cooperative, registered with no democratic life or real activity, often created to capture grants.

Checking a damaged cooperative

A cooperative that existed before may have lost members, stock, premises, cash. Before putting money into it, your club visits and checks what a model accounting manual for Ugandan savings and credit cooperatives expects of a well-governed cooperative: a general assembly that approves the budget and appoints the auditor, two signatories on every account, a register of members, a reserve fund, grants kept separate from members' shares, the latest audit and, for a savings and credit cooperative, the list of overdue loans.

Add two questions specific to the post-disaster period: how many members are still there and active, and what is left of the cash and stock? A cooperative that has lost half its members no longer stands on the same base. And read its results without the grants: a surplus that comes mainly from aid means it cannot yet stand on its own.

What the Rotary Foundation funds, and what it refuses

If your project goes through a global grant (Chapter 10), two current rules bear directly on this chapter.

What is possible. The global grant terms and conditions in force in July 2026 allow a project to include building infrastructure such as "storage units, fences and security systems, water or irrigation systems, or greenhouses." That is the kind of link a farm chain loses. A project that uses groundwater must include a hydrogeological study, which the grant budget can pay for.

What is refused. As Chapter 5 noted, the Foundation's community economic development guidelines (April 2024) make ineligible any project that only donates equipment. The area of focus policy statement, of the same date, also excludes infrastructure or equipment projects with no direct economic result or with no operation and maintenance plan.

In other words, a project that comes down to handing out boats or seeds will not pass. A project that funds an existing cooperative's warehouse, with its rules of use, training, and an identified buyer, can. Check every point in the documents in force at the time of your application; Appendix E shows where to find them.

What the club does

Your club is not a buyer, a seed company, or a cooperative. It facilitates: it knows the traders, transporters, and bankers of its area, and knows how to bring them together.

Step	What the club does	With whom
Choose one or two sectors	based on the Chapter 3 assessment	farmer members, traders
Map the chain	one link per row, before and now	cooperative, collectors, farm service
Find the broken link	name it, with its former holder	traders, buyers
Check access before availability	the three seed questions	extension, grain traders
Choose the response	voucher, local order, trader credit, shared equipment	farm partner, local lender
Identify the buyer	before funding production	buyers, processors
Work through the existing cooperative	after checking its accounts	cooperative, authorities
Keep to the calendar	planting date or season	producers

Three roles suit a club of business owners especially well.

Connect the buyer and the producers. The successful initiatives in Aceh guaranteed that the harvest would be bought. Your club can find that buyer among its members or in its network: a processor, a distributor, a school cafeteria, a local government. It does not become the buyer; it helps negotiate who carries which risk.

Fund shared equipment, for an organization that exists. A cold room, a dryer, a warehouse, a shared boat: for an existing cooperative or producer group, with written sharing rules, as in Omoe or Kesennuma.

Order from local traders. When buying goods is justified, place the order with the regional wholesaler, as in the example of the hoes and wheelbarrows in Chapter 5: your members know these suppliers.

Two precautions apply to all of these actions. Do not pay people to attend training: the MERS advise against attendance allowances. And if you ask recipients for a contribution, follow Chapter 5, which points out that a global grant forbids collecting funds from them.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Handing out seeds from elsewhere	access is confused with availability	ask the three questions; vouchers at local traders
Arriving after planting time	the project follows its own calendar	align the project with the crop calendar
Replacing more boats than there were	each donor counts its own gifts	ask fisheries services or the cooperative for the prior number
Funding production with no buyer	thinking production, not sales	identify the buyer before any funding
Creating a cooperative to receive aid	funders ask for a structure	work with an organization that already existed
Presenting cooperatives as proven resilient	an ILO study is miscited	say the post-disaster proof does not exist
Helping a business that lives on aid	the relief boom looks lasting	check it will survive the humanitarians leaving

One last pitfall is the numbers. The results published for seed fairs, FAO distributions, or the Japanese cases are almost always reported by those who carried out the work, with no comparison group. Do not promise your donors more, and plan your own measurement from the start (Chapter 13).

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has the **"markets" section** of its recovery file: the chain or chains selected, the broken link and the actor who held it, the chosen response, the identified buyer, the cooperative or producer group that will carry the action, and the date the season imposes.

The Omoe fishers did not get new boats in May 2011. They got a sharing rule, a cooperative that enforced it, and the wakame season. What remains are the places where things are sold: the street, the market hall, the marketplace, without which no chain reaches the customer. That is the subject of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ One or two sectors have been chosen based on the Chapter 3 assessment

- ☐ The chain is mapped, link by link, before and after the disaster
- ☐ The broken link is named, along with the actor who held it
- ☐ The chain has been followed to suppliers located outside the affected area
- ☐ For seeds, availability, access, and quality were checked before any purchase
- ☐ The chosen response works through local traders (vouchers, local order, credit)
- ☐ The deadline set by the season is written down and met
- ☐ The prior number of boats, rafts, or tools is known and will not be exceeded
- ☐ A buyer is identified before production is funded
- ☐ The partner cooperative or producer group existed before the disaster
- ☐ Its accounts and governance were checked during a visit
- ☐ No attendance allowance is paid, and any contribution from recipients respects rule 6.I of the global grants: no funds collected from them
- ☐ The Foundation's current rules have been checked if a global grant is planned
- ☐ The "markets" section of the recovery file is written

Further reading

- SEEP Network, *Minimum Economic Recovery Standards*, third edition, Practical Action Publishing, 2017, chapter "Enterprise and Market Systems Development."
- FAO, *Seeds in Emergencies: A Technical Handbook*, FAO Plant Production and Protection Paper 202, Rome, 2010.
- CRS, ICRISAT, and ODI, *Seed Vouchers and Fairs: A Manual for Seed-Based Agricultural Recovery after Disaster in Africa*, Nairobi, 2002.
- FAO, *The Impact of Disasters on Agriculture and Food Security 2023*, Rome, 2023.
- C. Brady (Oxfam GB and IRC), *An Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Study: Changing Responses to the Haiti Earthquake*, Humanitarian Practice Network, ODI, 2012.
- Reconstruction Agency (Japan), *Great East Japan Earthquake Lessons Learned*, chapter "Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries."
- Rotary International, *Community Economic Development Guidelines: Global Grant Funding*, April 2024, on My Rotary.
- The CED guide, chapters on value chains and cooperatives.

Chapter 9: Places: Shops, Marketplaces, and Local Development

On February 22, 2011, an earthquake struck Christchurch, New Zealand. The city center was cordoned off; it soon became known as the red zone. The shops still standing were behind the barriers.

Very quickly, a committee of downtown retailers and property owners got together. Their assessment was simple: many small businesses were looking for a solution, none could afford to move into a mall, and many were dying. The committee also rejected an idea gaining ground in the city, that Christchurch could do without a center.

In March, they had an idea. They presented it to the minister responsible for the Canterbury recovery, who announced it publicly with them the following month: a temporary shopping center built from shipping containers. Containers keep goods secure, go up fast, and hold up in earthquakes. The committee set itself a deadline, the last week of October, before the big annual show and the Christmas shopping.

The construction company found 64 containers in China. The committee, which had meanwhile become a trust, Re:START the Heart Trust, had to sign the purchase before the money was raised. "We signed it before we had a dollar in the bank," its chair would later say. The money came afterward: an interest-free loan of 3.36 million New Zealand dollars from the earthquake appeal trust, a grant from a bank, and later government funds. The construction company and the architect at first worked for free. The containers arrived at the port of Lyttelton in August, sixty-one days before opening.

On Saturday, October 29, 2011, eight months after the earthquake, the Re:START mall opened in Cashel Mall, its containers painted in bright colors. The local magazine that covered the day speaks of tears of joy among residents who had thought they would never be able to come back downtown. The department store next door reopened the same day.

Re:START was supposed to be temporary. It would last more than six years, and its closing would be part of its success: Chapter 14 tells that story.

What the scene teaches

A local economy shows in its streets. As long as downtown Christchurch was closed, the city had retailers, customers, and money, but nowhere to bring them together. Re:START did not create businesses: it gave a place back to businesses that existed.

Retailers did it. Not an agency, not an international program: a committee of retailers and property owners who knew their street, their customers, and the retail calendar. Your club looks much more like that committee than like a humanitarian organization.

The date came from retail, not from the project. The committee aimed for the week before the show and the Christmas shopping, because that is when a share of the year's sales is made. A place that opens after the season has lost its reason for being.

Temporary was the plan. Containers, not walls. A project that did not claim to rebuild the city, only to hold on until the city was rebuilt.

We do not know everything. No independent evaluation of Re:START was found: no sales figures, no business survival rate, not even their exact number. According to an official 2014 press release, most of the retailers there had been there since opening day. That is all we can say.

Why a street reopens, or does not

Chapter 1 showed that a business reopens if its neighbors reopen, and that power, water, access, and customers matter more than damage to the premises. This chapter draws the practical consequence: the right level of action for restarting retail is the street or the market, not the isolated business.

A chapter on Kobe in a study by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) puts it in one sentence, though about a different disaster, the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in eastern Japan, and its shopping streets: "There is no point in opening a store that is isolated from other stores."

The 2021 guide on employment after a disaster from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) lists what the restart of business activity depends on: how fast debris is cleared and roads are repaired; the return of electricity, water, gas, and telecommunications, even through temporary networks; and the rebuilding of market selling areas, warehouses, and the physical assets of businesses. Only the last point falls under business support. The first two belong to the authorities, and your club can flag them, track them, and sometimes help fill the gaps.

In Beirut, after the port explosion of August 4, 2020, a Near East Foundation team toured four neighborhoods near the port from August 11 to 14. A butcher in Quarantina showed what he had lost: his security cameras, a meat refrigerator that cost about \$5,000, two cars, cracked walls. The grocery next door had lost its refrigerator. But the assessment noted something else: jobs in the neighborhood depended on the port, the warehouses, and the factories, almost everything had stopped, and there were fewer people to keep the shops going. Asked about tradespeople who could repair their homes, residents answered unanimously that there were none in the neighborhood.

The shopkeeper lost a refrigerator; the street lost its customers, and the neighborhood its repairers. Aid can buy back the refrigerator. The customers depend on jobs at the port and the warehouses.

What is missing	Who is responsible	What the club can do
Access, debris clearing, roads	authorities, public works firms	flag, relay retailers' needs
Electricity, water, telecoms	utilities, authorities	flag; shared generator if the rules allow
Premises, stock, equipment	the retailer, its insurers, its lenders	connect to a lender or funder (Chapter 6)
Customers	local jobs, residents coming back	reopen together, bring customers back
Repair tradespeople	labor market	training, matchmaking (Chapter 7)

The principle: restart a place, not scattered businesses

The ILO formalized this approach under the name **local economic recovery**. Its 2010 guidelines, written for post-conflict situations and extended to disasters in 2016, define it as an area-based approach that stimulates both supply and demand in the affected markets: in the short term, it gradually reduces dependence on aid through temporary jobs and income; in the long term, it recreates the conditions for the local economy to restart on its own. It is time-bound, results-oriented, and favors local purchasing of goods and services.

Among the principles specific to this approach, two concern your club directly.

"Minimize Market Distortions." The ILO observes that food distributions and other donations can prevent surpluses produced in unaffected regions from being sold, with effects on prices and on farmers' incomes, and that grants and free loans, if not limited in scope and time, distort the perceived cost of capital.

"Maximize the Use of Local Resources." The ILO says it bluntly: "In certain cases, local procurement might be less cost-efficient than importing goods and services. However, it creates opportunities for local businesses and stimulates the local economy."

The same guidelines call for involving at least one representative of local government in decisions from the start. And they set the horizon: in the long run, local economic recovery should evolve into ordinary local economic development. Here is the boundary between this book and the CED guide.

Temporary places to keep retailers

Re:START is not an isolated case. Wherever premises are destroyed, temporary places have served to keep retailers in the area while waiting for permanent walls.

Sanriku: thirty shops and bracelets

After the 2011 tsunami, the town of Minamisanriku, in Miyagi Prefecture, opened a temporary shopping village of thirty shops, with support from the small and medium-sized enterprise program of Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Some shops sold souvenirs made by residents, mostly women. In the same Sanriku region, another project, run by a nonprofit alliance of media companies, had women make a braided bracelet from fishing net materials.

That bracelet points to a blind spot. Fishers hit by the disaster had found work in an emergency employment program of the Fisheries Agency, clearing the ports. Their wives, who had worked in seafood processing before, were left without jobs. The project paid them about half of sales; as of February 29, 2012, according to the project's website as cited by the World Bank, 298 women producers had received up to 83 million yen. These are figures reported by the project. The lesson holds without them: a sales outlet can put to work the people other programs forget.

Hassa: a business park with four actors

After the earthquakes of February 6, 2023, in Turkey, the municipality of Hassa, in Hatay province, set up prefabricated shops in a business park so that retailers who had lost their premises could start again and the local supply chain could get moving. With few resources, it looked for a partner to help these retailers rebuild their stock and equipment.

The program that followed, run from May to September 2023, rested on four actors who split the work.

Actor	Role
Municipality	provides the site, then training
Chamber of craftsmen and tradesmen	certifies pre-earthquake business registration
Turkish NGO YSYD	contacts retailers, follows up, monitors
International NGO CORE	pays the grants, staffs the registration desks

Retailers whose shops had been destroyed were notified by text message using the chamber's register. Three registration desks received them in the park. Only businesses that existed before the earthquake, were registered with the chamber, and were damaged were eligible. Each submitted a business plan. The grant was paid in two equal installments, the second after a monitoring visit and presentation of invoices for stock and equipment purchases. Fifty-eight businesses in the park received support.

One figure shows the limit: retailers asked for 159,236 Turkish lira on average; they received 35,000 lira on average, about 22% of the average request (the program's brief says 35%, a figure inconsistent with its own averages). The grant helps reopen; it does not replace what was lost. And secondhand purchases, being cheaper, often came without an invoice, which delayed the second installment. What the program achieved, and what its evaluation does or does not prove, is the subject of the scene in Chapter 13.

This four-actor model can be transferred: a public site, a business register, a local monitoring organization, a funder. A club can play the funder, or the organization that knows the retailers, provided it accepts the kinds of proof the local market can provide.

Reopening a market

The Iron Market of Port-au-Prince, two red and green halls opened in 1891, had been a hub of the city's trade for more than a century. A fire gutted the north hall in May 2008. The earthquake of January 12, 2010, did the rest: a concrete slab added decades earlier collapsed onto the south hall.

The rebuilding was funded by a private donor, about \$12 million, and entrusted to architects with a deadline of less than a year. The market reopened on January 11, 2011, the day before the first anniversary of the earthquake. It was designed to hold 800 vendors.

A year later, a reporter from the architecture press found hundreds of vendors and customers from the neighborhood there. But a souvenir seller told him that tourists "don't come that often." Around the market: tents, run-down buildings, crowded streets.

The building was rebuilt. The neighborhood was not, and part of the clientele did not come back. The sources read say nothing about how the market was managed after it reopened, or about vendors' income. For your club, the lesson is twofold: a symbolic place matters, it tells the city it is coming back; but a market lives on its customers, and the customers depend on everything around it.

Rebuilding in a way that puts the local economy to work

Rebuilding homes, schools, and public buildings is not the subject of this book. But it is the biggest job after a disaster, and the way it is done decides who benefits.

In Bhachau, in Kutch district, Gujarat, India, the earthquake of January 26, 2001, brought down 93% of the houses in this town of about 35,000 people. The State of Gujarat chose to have owners rebuild themselves, with aid paid in three installments: 40% at the start, a second at completion of the walls, the remaining 20% at the end. Government engineers certified each stage before the next installment. Families hauled the materials themselves and supplied the unskilled labor; masons trained in earthquake-resistant rules built alongside them. The local organization that supported families excluded for lack of land title sums up the value of the method in two phrases: it "Strengthens local economy" and "Promotes local artisanal participation."

An Overseas Development Institute (ODI) survey of 434 households in late 2004 and early 2005 compared the approaches. Satisfaction with housing quality reached 93.3% for owner-driven reconstruction, against 22.8% for houses built by contractors on a new site, which had nonetheless received more: aid of 124,000 rupees per housing unit on average, against 40,000 to 90,000. The same survey notes limits: aid calculated on what had been lost rather than on need, and, according to some, small payments to speed up disbursements.

The World Bank's 2010 handbook on housing reconstruction explains the mechanism. Owner-driven reconstruction "tends to involve local building industry, thereby contributing to restoration of local economy and livelihoods." Local materials, unlike imported ones, "support the local economy and livelihoods."

The 2021 ILO-UNDP guide adds an idea that a club of business owners grasps immediately: in a disaster area, few local businesses are organized enough to bid on public reconstruction tenders; the rules may need adapting so they can compete, alone or in partnership with larger firms.

What your club can take from this when it funds or sponsors a construction project: require in the specifications the use of local tradespeople and suppliers; help small local businesses team up to bid; pay in installments, against a verified stage, as in Gujarat or Hassa.

The empty building trap

The costliest risk in this chapter is simple to describe: a new building, inaugurated, photographed, and empty a year later. The research done for this book found no study devoted to rebuilt markets left empty after a disaster, nor on the management of rebuilt markets in low-income countries. But the signs are there: the Iron Market without its tourists, and in Kobe, after 1995, housing built to attract working people that stayed vacant, "a market that failed to materialize," according to a UN-Habitat study. That case is about housing, not a retail market; we cite it because the mechanism is the same, supply built for demand that does not come.

The only case documented with its governance comes from a wealthy country. In Cedar Rapids, in the United States, after the 2008 flood, a public market opened in 2012 in a flooded and rehabilitated industrial building. The idea came from local women. Vendors were selected, 24 out of more than 300 applicants; rents were below market; the market supports its retailers like an incubator. According to the Canadian toolkit that reports the case, a neighboring retailer says the market doubled his weekend business; the same toolkit places the market within a neighborhood revitalization plan carried by several actors. Keep the method, not the scale.

One rule already holds in normal times, and this book adopts it: a facility is a service, not a building. After a disaster, it becomes mandatory. Before any construction, your club requires written answers to five questions:

1. Who owns the site?
2. Who runs it day to day?
3. Who collects the rents or stall fees, and at what level?
4. Who pays for maintenance, and from what budget?
5. Which retailers will move in, and will customers come?

No ribbon-cutting without these answers.

What the Rotary Foundation funds, and what it does not

The rule has direct consequences for this chapter. The global grant terms and conditions in force in July 2026 exclude "New construction of, or additions to, any structure in which people live, work, or engage in any gainful activity," with examples that include schools, homes, shelters, and hospitals, but also "containers, and mobile homes." They add: "If the project depends on the construction of such a structure, it must be paid for by funds other than global grant funds." They also exclude the purchase of land or buildings.

In other words, neither Re:START, nor the Hassa park, nor a new market hall could be paid for with a global grant. The rules do not, however, prohibit repair or renovation, which the *Rotary Foundation Code of Policies* mentions; but the line between repair and reconstruction should be confirmed with the regional grants officer before you build a project on it.

The consequence for your club fits in one rule of conduct: **separate the walls from the activity**. The walls (a market hall, temporary shops, a workshop) are funded elsewhere: local government, the state, donors, foundations, interest-free loans like the one that launched Re:START. The activity (retailers' equipment, training, access to credit through a lender, coaching) can fall under a global grant, subject to its conditions. Chapter 10 details this setup.

What the club does

Step	What the club does	With whom
Choose the place	a street, a market, a neighborhood, not scattered businesses	Chapter 3 assessment
Bring retailers together	a committee of retailers, owners, elected officials	retailers' association, chamber
List what is blocking	access, services, premises, customers, tradespeople	authorities, utilities
Decide temporary or permanent	temporary first, with an end date	municipality
Write the operating plan	owner, operator, revenue, maintenance	committee, municipality
Separate walls and activity	look for wall funders elsewhere	local government, donors, foundations
Buy and hire local	construction specifications	local businesses
Pay in installments	against a verified stage	local monitoring organization

Your club can take the initiative to form the committee, or become one member among others. In Christchurch, retailers designed everything; in Hassa, a municipality. In both cases, someone brought the people who held the street around one table. That is often what a club does best.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Helping isolated businesses on a dead street	you help those who ask	choose a place, reopen together
Rebuilding a building with no operator	construction is visible	five written questions before any construction
Confusing a reopened building with returning customers	the opening makes the news	track foot traffic and sales
Opening after the retail season	the project follows its own calendar	set the date by the retail calendar
Temporary with no planned end	temporary becomes permanent	set from the start when and how to close
Seeking a global grant for walls	the rule is little known	separate walls and activity
Demanding invoices the market cannot provide	normal-time rules are applied	plan suitable proof, as in Hassa
Forgetting those with no shop	registers do not see them	street vendors, home-based work, as in Sanriku

Ordering the four levers over time

This chapter closes Part III. The four levers have been described; what remains is to put them in order, for your area and your disaster. The diagram on the part opening page proposes a sequence; this book restates it here as a calendar for your club to fill in. The windows are orders of magnitude, and the sequence is a proposal, not a standard.

Lever	First months	6 to 24 months	Beyond 2 years
Money (Ch. 6)	lender manages its clients; savings; bridge support	small business grants via partners	new credit through a local lender
Skills (Ch. 7)	paid work with training	reconstruction trades	lasting trades after the building work
Markets (Ch. 8)	plant on time; restore traders	repaired chains; checked cooperatives	consolidated cooperatives
Places (Ch. 9)	reopen the street; temporary places	reopened markets; local buying for building work	permanent places run by local people

Three documented markers support this sequence. An independent ILO evaluation in the Philippines, after Typhoon Haiyan, judged the restart of existing businesses "highly cost effective" and advised against creating new businesses in a twelve-month project. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) places farmer field schools after the first relief, once communities are starting to settle again. In Nepal, recovery credit channeled through cooperatives arrived fifteen to thirty months after the earthquake. The rest is judgment: yours, informed by the Chapter 3 assessment.

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has the **"places" section** of its recovery file: the chosen place, what keeps it from coming back to life and who is responsible, the committee that carries it, the operating plan for any building considered, and the separation between what funds the walls and what funds the activity. It also has the **four-lever calendar**, which brings together the sections from Chapters 6 to 9 and says, for each one, when it starts and when it hands over.

The Christchurch committee signed for its containers before it had a dollar in the bank. It knew what it wanted to reopen, for whom, and by when; the money followed. What remains is to find out where yours will come from, and in what order: that is the question of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ The place for action is chosen: a street, a market, a neighborhood
- ☐ A committee brings together retailers, owners, and local government
- ☐ What blocks reopening is listed, along with who is responsible
- ☐ Needs that fall to the authorities (access, electricity, water) have been reported to them
- ☐ The choice between temporary and permanent is made, with an end date for anything temporary
- ☐ Every building considered has a written owner, operator, revenue, and maintenance budget
- ☐ The walls and the activity have separate funding
- ☐ Specifications for funded construction call for local tradespeople and suppliers
- ☐ Payments are made in installments, against a verified stage, with proof suited to the local market

- ☐ Vendors without shops and women left out of other programs have been taken into account
- ☐ The four-lever calendar is filled in for your area
- ☐ The "places" section of the recovery file is written

Further reading

- ILO, *Local Economic Recovery in Post-Conflict: Guidelines*, Geneva, 2010; and ILO, *Employment and Decent Work in Situations of Fragility, Conflict and Disaster: Guide*, 2016.
- ILO and UNDP, *Employment, Livelihoods and Social Protection: Guide for Recovery Implementation*, 2021.
- A. K. Jha et al., *Safer Homes, Stronger Communities: A Handbook for Reconstructing after Natural Disasters*, World Bank and GFDRR, 2010.
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- CORE and YSYD, *Learning Brief: Empowering Communities: Post-Earthquake Small Business Recovery in Hatay, Turkey*, April 2024, published by the CALP Network.
- Rotary International, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Global Grants*, July 2026 version, on My Rotary.
- Economic Developers Alberta, *Community Toolkit for Economic Recovery and Resiliency*, Canadian edition, 2019.
- The CED guide, chapter on integrated local development.

Part IV: Fund and Organize

In its disaster policy, the Rotary Foundation Code of Policies gives Rotary a precise role: "to be a resource and to assist in long term disaster recovery." Not to replace relief. Not to pay for everything.

The earlier parts established what your club wants to restart: an assessment (Chapter 3), a decision to shift (Chapter 4), a filter against harm (Chapter 5), levers chosen and sequenced over time (Chapters 6 to 9). This part answers the two questions that decide whether the project will really exist: with what money, and with whom.

Chapter 10 deals with money. The Foundation's three grants differ in purpose, in who applies and in timing; their rules are given as they stand in July 2026, and Appendix E tells you where to check them. The club's own money, donors' money and outside partners' money complete the funding package.

Chapter 11 deals with how Rotary organizes itself: the host club, the partner club, the district, the action groups. A recovery project lasts longer than a presidency. It needs a structure that survives the handovers.

Chapter 12 looks beyond Rotary: the authorities, the humanitarian system, the other organizations working on the ground.

One remark before you start. These chapters cannot be read on their own. A funding plan without an assessment has nothing to fund, and the Foundation itself refuses to review it.

Chapter 10: Funding the Recovery

On August 4, 2020, 2,750 metric tons of ammonium nitrate exploded in a warehouse in the port of Beirut. More than 200 people died, more than 6,000 were injured, 300,000 lost their homes. The Karantina public hospital, 900 meters from the epicenter, was badly damaged.

Within days, a Rotary club in London opened a donation page and got in touch with a club in Beirut. The Lebanese club, which would be the local sponsor, was already in contact with a Canadian club, which would become the international sponsor. The project targeted the hospital, and the London club became the rallying point for fundraising across Great Britain and Ireland. It set up a single channel to pool donations from clubs and districts and keep transfer fees down. Rotarians organized a classic car rally from one end of Great Britain to the other, a Lebanese picnic, a street collection.

By mid-February 2021, the target of about \$400,000 had been reached. The global grant application, for \$391,000, was submitted on February 20, 2021, to equip a pediatric and neonatal operating room and a pediatric ward. The Rotary Foundation approved it on March 30, 2021. In Great Britain and Ireland, 116 Rotary clubs, 2 Inner Wheel clubs and 4 districts contributed; worldwide, more than 150 clubs and districts in seven countries.

The destroyed pediatric ward itself was rebuilt with help from the Swiss government. The global grant does not pay for the walls. It pays for what goes inside them.

This is not an economic recovery project: it is a hospital. But it is a real timeline and a real funding package, published by Rotary's magazine in Great Britain and Ireland, and they tell you what your club needs to know before it promises anything.

What the scene teaches

The first lesson is about time. From the explosion to approval, almost eight months went by. And this was a well-run project, carried by a network mobilized from the first days, for an obvious need. A global grant is not an emergency tool. If your club waits until relief is over to start building its application, it will add those eight months to the ones it has already lost.

The second is about separating the walls from the activity. The building was paid for by a foreign government; the equipment, by Rotarians and the Foundation. That split applies a Foundation rule, and the rule weighs heavily after a disaster, when half the visible needs are buildings.

The third is about where the money comes from. The \$391,000 did not come from one donor. They were pooled by more than 150 clubs and districts in seven countries, in a single application the Foundation approved. The article does not break down how much came from district funds and how much from the World Fund; but knowing who can put in what, and in what order, is a skill.

This chapter gives you that skill: the right source of money for the right period.

The principle: every source of money has its purpose and its timing

The Foundation Code sets the general doctrine: the role of Rotary International and the Foundation is "to be a resource and to assist in long term disaster recovery." The same text specifies that donors eager to give for a disaster should be directed to an established local relief committee, "not The Rotary Foundation," to avoid delays and processing costs. And it adds: "Noting that the immediate need for districts impacted by disasters is typically cash, The Foundation discourages donations of goods, unless requested by a local committee."

In other words, the Foundation positions itself for the long term, and it prefers money to goods. Beyond that, it offers three tools. All the figures that follow are those of the *Terms and Conditions* in force in July 2026; the Foundation reserves the right to change them at any time, and Appendix E shows where to check the current version.

Tool	Who applies	Period	Amount (July 2026)
Disaster Response Grant (DRG)	the affected district only	six months after the disaster	up to \$25,000
District grant	the district, once a year	Rotary year	up to 50% of the SHARE allocation
Global grant (GG)	a local sponsor and a foreign sponsor	after approval, over several years	budget of at least \$30,000

The Disaster Response Grant: the bridge for the first six months

Under its July 2026 terms, the **Disaster Response Grant (DRG)** funds "relief and recovery efforts in areas that have been affected by natural disasters within the past six months." Grants go up to \$25,000, paid by the Foundation "to districts located in the affected area only."

What it can pay for: water, food, food vouchers, medicine, clothing and construction materials. Food vouchers and construction materials did not appear in the 2019 version. For a club focused on recovery, those are the two lines that matter: vouchers spent with local merchants, materials bought from suppliers in the area.

What it does not pay for, among other things: purchase of land or buildings, loan guarantee schemes, cash donations not assigned to a person or an organization, "continuous or excessive" support to the same person or community, and any expense incurred before approval.

The operating rules:

- **The applicant** is a committee of at least three Rotarians, including the district governor and the district Rotary Foundation committee chair (DRFC). This committee is responsible for working with the affected community to identify its needs.
- **The district must be qualified.** The funds can neither be used by another district nor sent to another district.
- **Payment** goes to a bank account controlled by the district, with two signatories. No payment to a club; the district pays suppliers directly.
- **Internal caps:** up to 20% for contingencies, up to 3% for administrative costs.
- **The waiting line:** if the disaster fund is empty, the application waits until money comes back in, at most until six months after the disaster.
- **The report** is due within six months of receiving payment. A district can apply for a new Disaster Response Grant only after reporting on the previous one.

For a disaster of magnitude, the October 2026 Foundation Code provides an exception. The Trustee chair can approve the creation of a fund specific to that disaster, with Disaster Response Grants of up to \$50,000 and at most two open grants per affected district for one year. The disaster must meet three of four criteria: be natural; affect at least one million people; receive worldwide media coverage; exceed the economic capacity of the area. Rotary must also have enough presence on site to manage and monitor the grants. The district does not request it itself: the creation must be recommended by a current Foundation trustee, a member of the Rotary International Board or the general secretary (Foundation Code, article 21.010). The district can alert one of these people; the decision belongs to the Trustee chair.

Keep the essentials in mind: the Disaster Response Grant is short, district-level and capped. It does not fund a two-year economic recovery program. It carries the first six months and can kick off the transition (Chapter 4).

The district grant: the small, flexible tool

Under its July 2026 terms, the **district grant** funds "small-scale, short-term activities." It is funded only from District Designated Funds (DDF), and a district can devote up to 50% of its SHARE allocation to it, for a single grant per Rotary year.

Three of its eligible activities bear directly on recovery: community assessments; construction and renovation; microcredit with a microfinance institution that is registered and has been operating for at least three years.

It is the only Foundation tool that can pay for both an economic assessment ahead of a global grant and a small renovation. But its calendar is rigid:

- the application must be made no later than May 15 of the Rotary year in question;
- payment requirements must be met before May 31, or the grant is canceled;
- the previous year's grant must be closed before any new payment;
- the final report is due within twelve months of payment, or within two months of the funds being fully spent if that comes first;
- activities must be completed within 24 months of the funds being transferred to the club or the beneficiary.

The practical consequence: when disaster strikes, this year's district grant may already be committed to other projects. Ask your DRFC in the first week.

The global grant: the recovery tool

The **global grant** (Global Grant) is the tool that carries a real recovery project. Its July 2026 terms first set out what a project must be:

- respond to the findings of a community assessment and be designed with the host community;
- be sustainable, in the precise sense the Foundation gives the word: "Sustainability is the capacity for outcomes to be maintained locally and to serve the community's continuing priorities";
- be measurable, using the standard measures of the monitoring and evaluation supplement, an April 2015 document referred to by the 2026 terms: check its current version with the regional grants officer (Chapter 13);
- be carried by two primary sponsors, a club or district in the project country and a club or district in another country;
- cause no harm.

They then set the funding:

- **Minimum budget of \$30,000**, maximum World Fund contribution of \$400,000.
- **80% match on District Designated Funds:** every dollar of DDF committed brings in 0.80 dollar from the World Fund.
- **Cash is not matched**, whether it comes from Rotarians or not. Paid to the Foundation, it carries a 5% surcharge for processing costs.
- **At least 15% of contributions** to a humanitarian grant must come from outside the project country.
- **Cannot contribute cash:** a cooperating organization, a vendor, a person who benefits from the grant. The text adds: "Funds should never be collected from the people who will benefit from the grant-funded activities."
- **Financing can no longer be changed** once the grant is approved.

Take a typical example. Your district commits \$20,000 of DDF; the World Fund adds \$16,000. The foreign partner club and its neighbors contribute \$10,000 in cash, which is not matched. The budget reaches \$46,000: it exceeds the minimum, and the foreign share can be checked line by line. The figures are fictitious; the calculation rules are those of July 2026.

Three budget items are capped separately, each at 10% of the total: contingencies, project management (which can include a project manager and a cooperating organization's project-specific administrative costs), and measuring results. The *2025 Guide to Global Grants* can be read as a 10% cap for all three together; the *Terms and Conditions* are what count.

Review depends on the amount requested from the World Fund. Up to \$50,000, the application is reviewed by Rotary's general secretary. From 50,001 to \$200,000, a subject-matter expert analyzes it and the project receives a mid-project visit from the Cadre of Technical Advisers. From 200,001 to \$400,000, the Trustees review it on fixed dates, with a prior visit and an audit or mid-project visit. Above \$50,000, payment is made in installments, each one after a progress report and a Cadre visit.

Reports are made by both sponsors. The first progress report is due within twelve months of the first payment, then every twelve months; the final report, within two months of the end of activities. Records are kept for at least five years. And one rule should be posted in every district: "The Foundation won't approve new grant applications from grant sponsors that have any overdue reports for any Foundation grant."

What the global grant does not pay for

For a recovery project, five prohibitions in the July 2026 terms decide almost everything.

Prohibition	What it means after a disaster
Expenses before approval	what the club did during the emergency will not be reimbursed
Purchase of land or buildings	the covered market cannot be bought with the grant
New construction or additions to a place of living or work	no workshop, school, shelter, container or mobile home
Completion of a never-occupied building	the site halted by the disaster is not finished with it
Activities run mainly by another organization	the project must be initiated, controlled and managed by Rotarians

The construction rule is worded without ambiguity: "New construction of, or additions to, any structure in which people live, work, or engage in any gainful activity, such as buildings (schools, homes, low-cost shelters, or hospitals), containers, and mobile homes." It adds that if the project depends on such construction, it must be paid for with other funds.

The Foundation Code keeps a more open wording on construction "in conjunction with strategic partners." Do not rely on it: the *Terms and Conditions* are the operating rule. Repair and renovation, on the other hand, are not among the 2026 prohibitions; the line between repairing and rebuilding should be discussed with the regional grants officer before you write a single line of budget.

The same text adds other prohibitions: no unassigned cash donations (Chapter 5 returns to this), no goods that would become the property of the club, the district or a member, no unrelated activities bundled into one application.

Programs of Scale: out of reach for a club alone

For the record, the Foundation Code provides each year for a single grant of \$2 million, Programs of Scale, for a three- to five-year program carried by a club or a district with outside partners, who must contribute at least \$500,000 in cash. Selection is by competition, in two stages. A disaster-hit club will not compete for it alone; a district or a group of districts, several years after a major disaster, perhaps.

What the economic development policy makes possible

Economic recovery has an explicit place in the Foundation. The policy for the community economic development area of focus (April 2024) lists among its goals: "Strengthening communities' economic resilience and adaptive capacity in response to environmental and

climate-related hazards and natural disasters." Microcredit, entrepreneurship and vocational training, small businesses, cooperatives, income-generating activities and smallholder agriculture all fall within its scope.

The guidelines for this area of focus, in their April 2024 version, set five requirements that shape a recovery project.

1. **No assessment, no review.** "The Foundation will not consider projects without a community assessment." The same guidelines call for collecting baseline data before the project. Your assessment form (Chapter 3) is the first piece of the file.
2. **A costed sustainability plan.** The application describes "a two- to four-year plan for how the community will replenish funds after the global grant is complete." About funding that other actors plan to raise, the text adds in parentheses: "The Rotary Foundation and clubs cannot provide indefinite support."
3. **Training that is not a one-off course.** It "shouldn't be a standalone course or one-time intervention." Any major equipment requires a three- to five-year financial plan.
4. **Goods as a small share.** Distribution of items such as wheelchairs or sewing machines must remain "a small part of a project's budget."
5. **Ineligible projects.** Among others: "Projects that only seek to donate equipment," infrastructure with no direct economic outcome or no operation and maintenance plan, rehabilitation of community centers, projects initiated by vendors who want to sell their products, and small scattered activities bundled into one application.

The consequence is clear for a club that would like to hand out "restart kits" to disaster-hit merchants. Funded by a global grant, that project has to become a training, credit or cooperative project, in which the goods handed out are only a small share, with a baseline and a plan for what comes next. A pure equipment donation is ineligible.

Microcredit is eligible, under the conditions of section 11 of the *Terms and Conditions*: a microfinance institution registered and operating for at least three years, capital lent out at least twice over at least eighteen months, a capped interest rate, training that goes beyond managing the loan, and no guarantee scheme. Any application that includes microcredit goes through an additional area-of-focus review, whatever its size. Chapter 6 details these rules; remember here that your club does not lend itself, it funds and checks a lender.

Rotary's *Six Steps to Sustainability* sheet sums up the spirit of it all in six headings: know the community, encourage local engagement, provide learning opportunities, buy local, find local funding, measure your success.

A real project, at its own scale

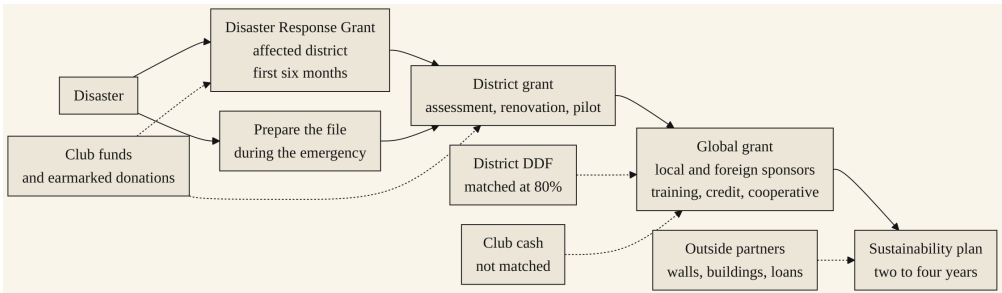
The Khokana project in Nepal, told in Chapter 7, gives a sense of scale. A Nepali club and a Canadian club put together an economic development global grant to train about 150 women affected by the 2015 earthquakes in income-generating activities. The Canadian district's page lists a cost of \$42,263, a start on May 15, 2017, and a planned end on December 31, 2018.

Two years between the earthquake and the start, a modest budget, a local partner who stays: that is the realistic scale of a recovery global grant carried by clubs. The sources are Rotary publications, with no assessment of incomes.

Handing off between the three grants

The three tools do not compete: they hand off to one another. This book proposes chaining them as follows, adapting to each disaster.

Period	Main tool	What it funds for recovery
First six months	Disaster Response Grant	vouchers with merchants, materials bought locally
Current or next Rotary year	district grant	community assessment, small renovation, pilot project
After approval, over two to four years	global grant	training, credit, cooperative, equipment, monitoring



The diagram expresses a simple rule: you prepare the file during the emergency, because the global grant reimburses nothing that comes before its approval.

The real timeline

The July 2026 terms frame the timeline with four cancellation deadlines: an open application must be submitted within twelve months; a submitted application must be completed and approved within six months; payment requirements must be met within six months of approval; activities must start within twelve months of payment.

In Beirut, a mobilized network took a little under eight months from disaster to approval. In Khokana, the project started two years after the earthquake. The disaster guide suggests, without citing a source, a rough order of two to three years between the disaster and the closing of a global grant; that is a planning estimate, not a Foundation rule. These three reference points are enough to tell disaster survivors one thing: your club promises nothing for next month.

Two technical points need checking with the DRFC. The 2025 *Guide to Global Grants*, which is neither the July 2026 terms nor the October 2026 Code, states that committed DDF is drawn from the year in which the application is approved; check this point with the regional grants officer as well. And the Foundation Code refers to a three-year SHARE cycle without describing how it works in the passages read: do not assume that this year's donations will be available this year.

Money outside the Foundation

The Foundation is only part of the plan. The rest comes from four sources.

Club and district funds. An exceptional budget voted at a meeting, the district disaster fund if there is one. These are the only funds available right away, and the only ones that can pay for what the Foundation excludes.

Donations received. The disaster guide sets a rule that matters here more than anywhere: money given "for the emergency" does not go to reconstruction without the donor's consent. Tell donors, from the start of the fundraising, what their money will be used for and over what period. A campaign announced as "economic recovery over three years" can be managed without renegotiation.

Funds held by an action group. The October 2026 Rotary Code of Policies allows an action group to collect donations for a club or district project and to hold up to \$100,000 of them, more with the general secretary's approval. The Rotary Action Group for Community Economic Development (RAGCED), for its part, presents itself as a complement to the Foundation for projects that do not fit its grant models; the legal structure behind this offer changed between its two websites, and it needs to be confirmed with the group (Chapter 11).

Outside partners. Local governments, the national government, donors, foundations, businesses, banks. They are the ones who pay for the walls, like the Swiss government in Beirut. Two documented arrangements deserve a club’s attention:

- **The interest-free loan.** In Christchurch, after the February 2011 earthquake, the trust that grew out of a merchants’ committee funded the temporary shipping-container mall with an interest-free loan of 3.36 million New Zealand dollars from the earthquake appeal trust, supplemented by a bank grant, then by a public grant of 1.27 million for its relocation in 2014 (Chapter 9).
- **Test, then scale up.** In Haiti, after the 2010 earthquake, the microfinance institution Fonkoze first received more than \$174,000 from Mercy Corps to test its program with 500 clients, then \$8 million from the American Red Cross to extend it to 18,000 borrowers, according to the specialized press of the time (Chapter 6). A small grant that proves, a large one that scales: your club can play the first role.

Beneficiary contribution

The Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS) observe that livelihood assets have more value for people when they feel ownership of them, and cite as a frequent starting point an equal cost share, to be adjusted according to the risk borne by the beneficiary. The MERS describe it as common practice, without making it a rule.

In a global grant, this runs into a Foundation rule: money is never collected from beneficiaries. The contribution can take other forms: labor, with the explicit consent of those involved, which the terms require; repayment of a loan to a microfinance institution, within the microcredit rules; a contribution paid outside the grant budget, into a community fund provided for by the sustainability plan, an option this book proposes and no Foundation text provides for. Have the chosen form validated by the regional grants officer before you write it into the application.

Separating the walls from the activity

This is the rule that comes back in every chapter of Part III, and it gets decided when you build the funding plan. For each need, ask two questions: is it a building, or what happens inside it? And who pays for each of the two?

Need	Who can pay for the walls	What the global grant can pay for
Destroyed covered market	local government, national government, donor	merchant training, credit, management committee

Need	Who can pay for the walls	What the global grant can pay for
Vocational training workshop	local government, business, other donor	trainers, curriculum, tools as a small share
Cooperative warehouse	cooperative, donor	governance, accounting; storage eligible case by case
Small renovation of a shared space	district grant, club funds	nothing, if the renovation is the sole purpose

A note on the third row: the July 2026 terms list among possible infrastructure "storage units, fences and security systems, water or irrigation systems, or greenhouses." A storage facility is therefore not automatically excluded, but the line with a building where people work should be discussed before submission.

In Turkey, in 2023, the affected districts applied this separation without naming it: the container city was to be funded by cash donations collected in the district, and global grants were to cover its health, education and hygiene needs (Chapter 11).

Controlling money, yours and other people's

After a disaster, money arrives fast, from many hands, and passes through people in a hurry. The July 2026 terms provide a framework that your club can also apply to its own funds.

A dedicated account. The sponsors of a global grant keep a bank account used only for Foundation funds, without mixing in fundraising proceeds, dues or governor's funds; one account per grant if possible, otherwise separate bookkeeping for each. The signatories are members of the sponsor clubs or districts. The Disaster Response Grant account requires two signatures for every transaction.

Pay against proof. Nothing is paid to a vendor, a cooperating organization or a beneficiary before the expense is incurred or the service delivered, and the organization reimbursed hands over the original invoice or receipt. Receipts and bank statements are kept for at least five years. The Foundation can at any time review a grant, audit it or suspend payments; a sponsor that breaks the rules returns all the funds and can be barred from grants for up to five years.

Conflicts of interest. Section 10 of the terms speaks directly to a club that buys local. Every conflict, actual or perceived, is disclosed in the application. Members of a selection committee disclose their personal, family or business ties before selection begins. A vendor

who is a club member, or whose business is owned or managed by a member, is chosen only after a fair and transparent bidding process showing that it offers the best product at a fair price. The terms for district grants and Disaster Response Grants repeat these rules.

Listen to beneficiaries. The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), in its 2024 edition, calls for safe and accessible ways for all groups in a community to raise a concern or file a complaint, and for every complaint to be handled. It also calls for identifying, preventing and managing the risks of corruption, fraud, misuse of resources and conflicts of interest. We propose translating this simply: a phone number or an address known to all beneficiaries, read by a member who does not manage the project.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Building the global grant after the emergency	there are not enough hands during relief	assign two members to prepare the file from the second week
Budgeting a building in a global grant	it is the most visible need	separate walls and activity; find another payer for the walls
Promising survivors a date	you want to reassure	give an order of magnitude, not a date
Assuming the district grant is available	nobody checked	ask the DRFC in the first week
Letting a report go overdue	the presidential handover made people forget	one person in charge of reports, appointed for the whole duration
Recycling emergency donations into reconstruction	the money is sitting in the account	ask donors for consent, or announce the purpose when fundraising
Reusing figures from an old guide	they circulate in presentations	check the <i>Terms and Conditions</i> in force and date every figure
Collecting money from beneficiaries	you think it builds their ownership	a contribution in labor or by repayment, validated by the Foundation

The seventh pitfall deserves a word. The disaster guide itself contains Foundation figures that the 2026 texts have replaced: a Disaster Response Grant progress report at least every twelve months where the 2026 terms require a report within six months, records kept for seven years where the terms say at least five, a district fund match presented in several contradictory forms. No book, this one included, replaces reading the texts in force.

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has a **funding plan**: for each part of the project, the source of money, what it pays and does not pay for, the timing of each application, and who pays for the walls when there are any. It is the piece of the recovery file that Appendix B places after the choice of levers.

In Beirut, the money was found because more than 150 clubs and districts each knew what they could put in, and where. What remains is to know who, in your club and your district, will carry this package for three years, when the presidents have changed three times: that is the question of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ The DRFC was contacted in the first week; you know whether the district is qualified and whether any report is overdue
- ☐ You know whether this year's district grant is already committed
- ☐ The Disaster Response Grant, if the district applies, funds purchases from local merchants and suppliers
- ☐ The global grant file is being prepared during the emergency
- ☐ The community assessment and its baseline data are ready (Chapter 3)
- ☐ An international sponsor is identified, and the foreign share of at least 15% is planned
- ☐ Every building in the project has a payer other than the global grant
- ☐ Goods handed out remain a small share of the budget
- ☐ The sustainability plan covers two to four years after the grant
- ☐ Donations received are used as announced to donors
- ☐ No money is collected from beneficiaries
- ☐ The project account is dedicated, every conflict of interest is disclosed, and beneficiaries know where to file a complaint
- ☐ Every Foundation figure in the file is dated and checked against the *Terms and Conditions* in force (Appendix E)

Further reading

- The Rotary Foundation, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Global Grants*, July 2026 version, on My Rotary.

- The Rotary Foundation, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation District Grants*, July 2026 version, on My Rotary.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Disaster Response Grants*, July 2026 version, on My Rotary.
- The Rotary Foundation, *The Rotary Foundation Code of Policies*, October 2026 edition, especially article 33.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Community Economic Development Guidelines Global Grant Funding*, April 2024, and *Areas of Focus Policy Statements*, April 2024.
- Rotary International, *A Guide to Global Grants*, 2025 edition, and the *Six Steps to Sustainability* sheet.
- SEEP Network, *Minimum Economic Recovery Standards*, third edition, Practical Action Publishing, 2017.
- The disaster guide, Chapters 18, 19 and 23; the CED guide, chapter on the Foundation and economic development global grants.

Chapter 11: The Club, the District, and the Action Groups

On February 6, 2023, at around 4 a.m., a magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck southeastern Turkey. In the afternoon, a second earthquake, which the governor of Rotary District 2430 described as distinct from an aftershock, reached 7.5. That same day, the governor wrote to Rotarians around the world: ten cities were hit, hospitals and buildings had collapsed, roads were cut, the main gas line had ruptured, and in the bitter cold electricity and heating were the first problem. The three Turkish districts were applying to the Foundation's disaster fund, but, he wrote, more would be needed to recover.

Eleven days later, on February 17, the district Rotary Foundation committee chair of District 2430 sent an appeal to Rotarians worldwide. Rotarians from Districts 2420, 2430 and 2440 had been working in the hardest-hit areas "since the first hours." They had settled on a three-pillar strategy. The first: urgent needs; more than fifty truckloads of supplies distributed, construction machinery sent, tents put up, food provided. The second: a container city, funded by cash donations collected in the district, a job that would not be finished in the short term. The third: donations from around the world, meant to cover, through several global grants, the container city's health, education and hygiene needs.

And an organization. The three districts coordinated everything together; since the earthquake had hit mainly the territory of District 2430, that district took the lead. The three districts set up a joint committee, "who is evaluating the long term recovery project proposals, collecting information."

On February 28, a Belgian district posted these messages on its website and offered its clubs the chance to match, with its own district funds, a global grant prepared by a Turkish district.

Three weeks after the earthquake, long-term recovery already had a committee, a lead district and foreign partners. The sources are messages from Rotarians involved in the response; reports published later could not be read for this book, and no results are cited here.

What the scene teaches

One district leads, the others line up. Three affected districts could have run three responses. They designated a lead, the hardest hit, and a joint committee. This is not a Rotary rule: it is an organizational decision, made early.

The long term is prepared during the emergency. The joint committee was studying recovery projects while the trucks were still rolling. This is the practical consequence of the rule seen in Chapter 10: a global grant reimburses nothing that comes before its approval.

Each source of money got its role. Urgent needs: the first donations and the application to the Foundation's disaster fund. The container city, which a global grant cannot pay for: the district's cash donations. What happens inside the city: global grants. The Turkish districts applied the separation of walls and activity.

Foreign partners came through the network. A Belgian district relays the appeal and offers its funds. That is how the foreign share of a global grant gets built.

Your club may never live through a disaster of this size. But the question is the same at every scale: who in Rotary carries what, and for how long?

The principle: only clubs and districts carry projects

The October 2026 Foundation Code settles it in one sentence: "Global grants are only to be awarded to clubs and/or districts." No action group, no ad hoc committee, no partner organization receives a grant. Clubs and districts apply, receive, report, and answer for the funds.

The rest of Rotary advises, connects, checks. The same Code says of action groups that they "may act as consultants, advisers, and strategic partners for clubs and districts." And the Rotary Code of Policies specifies that an action group is not an agency of Rotary International and cannot act on its behalf.

This division gives your club a responsibility it cannot delegate to anyone: it is the project holder. The others help.

Who does what in Rotary during recovery

Actor	Role in a recovery project	What it does not do
Host club	assesses, designs with the community, supervises on site	lend, build, act alone

Actor	Role in a recovery project	What it does not do
Foreign partner club	co-funds, co-designs, co-signs reports, visits	decide in place of the host club
District	qualifies, signs, commits its district funds, applies for disaster and district grants	replace the club on the ground
Cadre of Technical Advisers	reviews, advises, visits Foundation projects	build the file for you
Regional grants officer	checks the eligibility of an idea before submission	decide on approval alone
Action groups	advise, connect, train	submit an application, write to clubs without the governor's consent

The host club

This is the club in the affected area. It carries out the assessment (Chapter 3), designs the project with the community, chooses local partners, supervises implementation, keeps the records. The July 2026 global grant terms require it, as they do the partner club, to set up a grant committee of three members. Among others, board members or employees of a cooperating or beneficiary organization cannot sit on it: the rule protects the club against conflicts of interest.

The foreign partner club

This is the international sponsor, without which there is no global grant. It contributes part of the money, and the rule that 15% of contributions come from outside the country rests in practice on it and its district. It co-signs the progress reports and the final report. Its members often bring skills the host club lacks. The disaster guide and the CED guide describe how to find one in normal times; after a disaster, one often comes forward on its own, like the Belgian district in 2023. Choose it for its ability to last three years, not for the speed of its first transfer.

The district

The district holds the qualification, without which nothing happens. It is the only one that can apply for a Disaster Response Grant and a district grant. It commits its District Designated Funds (DDF) to global grants.

Three functions intersect there:

- **The district governor**, who changes every year. The governor provides one of the two signatures that authorize the use of DDF and sits on the committee that applies for a Disaster Response Grant.
- **The district Rotary Foundation committee chair (DRFC)**, who provides the other signature, confirms that global grant applications are complete and that sponsor clubs are qualified, and monitors the district's qualification. The sitting governor cannot be DRFC.
- **The grants subcommittee**, which follows project progress with the DRFC, and, if there is one, the district disaster committee, which the disaster guide describes in detail (Chapter 18 of the disaster guide).

The Cadre and the regional grants officer

The **Cadre of Technical Advisers** brings together volunteer Rotarians who, according to the Foundation Code, review, monitor and evaluate funded projects, and advise Rotarians who ask on the design of their projects. For a global grant with more than \$50,000 of World Fund contribution, a Cadre member will make a mid-project visit (Chapter 10). Better to know them beforehand.

The **regional grants officer** is part of Rotary's grants staff. The *2025 Guide to Global Grants*, which is not part of the July 2026 terms or the October 2026 Code, states that the officer can evaluate an idea's eligibility before you start the application; confirm this with the officer at first contact. After a disaster, that is the call that saves three months of work on an ineligible project.

How a district organizes itself: the District 3292 plan

In August 2015, four months after the April 25 earthquake in Nepal, District 3292 (Nepal and Bhutan) published the summary of its relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation program. It is a plan, not a report: what follows describes a planned organization, not its results.

Before the earthquake, the district already had a relief fund committee written into its bylaws. On that committee's recommendation, it created a special steering committee made up of a past governor as chair, the sitting governor, the immediate past governor, the governor-elect, the governor-nominee, a treasurer and a secretary. This committee was to complement "the sitting District Governor every year": it was built to outlast the handovers.

Under it, seven subcommittees: technical design, finance and administration, preparation of global grant applications, procurement and construction monitoring, support to schools, website and publications, emergency relief. A permanent implementation unit, with

technical and administrative staff, handled day-to-day work. A dedicated bank account received the funds. Two audit firms were planned, one international for Rotary, the other Nepali for the government. Clubs took part in choosing villages and in social surveys, and could take charge of one or more clusters of villages.

The program spanned five Rotary years and focused mainly on housing and schools, that is, on construction. It provided for an agreement with the national federation of chambers of commerce: the federation would build the schools, the district would provide water, toilets, furniture and computers, "mainly through Global Grant." The separation of walls and equipment was already written in.

Three elements carry over to a district of any size, whatever the project: a steering committee whose members span several governor years; a unit dedicated to grant applications; separate, audited financial management.

Qualification, and what losing it costs

Qualification is, according to the Foundation Code, the process that ensures districts and their clubs have "the appropriate legal, financial, and stewardship controls in place." A district signs a memorandum of understanding and applies its financial requirements; a club does the same, and at least one of its members must attend the district grant management seminar each year.

Three consequences weigh on a recovery project:

- **Disaster Response Grants and district grants require only the district's qualification;** global grants also require that of the sponsor clubs. A non-qualified club can take part in the first two, not carry the third.
- **One overdue report blocks everything.** Under the July 2026 terms, the Foundation approves no new application from a sponsor that has an overdue report "for any Foundation grant." For the Disaster Response Grant, a district can apply for a new one only after reporting on the previous one.
- **The district answers for the club.** If a sponsor club is suspended, loses its qualification or can no longer carry the grant, the district becomes financially responsible to the Foundation. In case of serious misconduct, the funds must be repaid and the sponsors can be barred from grants for up to five years.

Qualification is prepared in calm times. On the day of the disaster, it is too late to discover that last year's report was never sent.

Lasting three years with one-year presidents

The disaster guide states the problem frankly: a global grant usually spans three presidencies, the one that launches it, the one that runs it, the one that closes it. If the project's memory rests on the president of the year, the project loses coherence at every handover.

The Foundation has solved this problem for itself. Its Code requires the DRFC to be appointed for three years, on the grounds that the district Rotary Foundation committee "must have continuity of leadership," and it recommends three-year terms for subcommittee chairs. The District 3292 steering committee followed the same logic.

This book recommends applying the same rule to the recovery project, at the club level:

- **a project coordinator appointed for the whole duration**, separate from the president, whom the disaster guide calls a multi-year disaster coordinator;
- **a person in charge of reports**, who keeps the Foundation's calendar and does not change at the handover;
- **a project committee of three to five members**, with overlapping terms;
- **three habits** taken from the disaster guide: a quarterly project review on the club's standing calendar, a two-page report to donors every six months even when there is "nothing new," an annual field visit by a club member.

Take a typical example, for a project launched in year 1.

Role	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Club president	launches	runs	closes
Project coordinator	same person	same person	same person
Reports lead	same person	same person	same person
Project committee	three members appointed	one member replaced	one member replaced

This is the organization chart your recovery file must contain: names, roles and durations, written down before the first handover.

The action groups

The October 2026 Rotary Code of Policies defines a **Rotary Action Group (RAG)** as an international group with expertise in a field, whose purpose is to help clubs and districts "in planning and implementing large-scale, community development and humanitarian service projects." Four rules in the same Code matter to you.

1. **An action group does not act on Rotary's behalf.** "A Rotary Action Group is not an agency of RI." It must be financially and administratively independent and, under article 42.020.2, cannot be used to promote a partisan cause or another organization.
2. **It can write to clubs only with the governor's consent.** It can contact governors, governors-elect and district international service chairs; it contacts clubs "only when a district governor grants express permission," and that permission must be renewed each year. The practical consequence: it is up to your club or your district to call it.
3. **It must support real projects.** To keep its status, an action group supports at least three multi-club or district humanitarian projects each year, and demonstrates its ability to connect clubs and organizations in its field.
4. **It can hold funds for your project.** Up to \$100,000 in donations for a club or district project, more with the approval of Rotary's general secretary.

DNA-RAG

The **Disaster Network of Assistance Rotary Action Group** (DNA-RAG) is the action group devoted to disasters. Its full name is the one its website uses; the Foundation Code, which still writes "Rotarian Action Group," cites it in its disaster policy and encourages it to publish the list of Rotarians experienced in disaster response and the list of organizations that work with Rotary. It is the only mention of an action group in that policy.

Its public mission: "The DNA-RAG works to mitigate the effects of disasters worldwide through strengthening global preparedness, providing emergency response, and supporting long-term recovery." It offers training in preparedness, response and recovery, and announces manuals in preparation. Its vision hopes that coordination among Rotary groups will reduce duplication.

RAGCED

The **Rotary Action Group for Community Economic Development** (RAGCED) has the mission of being "a source of knowledge and expertise" to help Rotarians design, implement and manage sustainable economic development projects. Its stated areas include strengthening entrepreneurs through training, microcredit, mentoring and networks, and, under the heading "Disaster Preparedness," two sentences that echo almost word for word the goals of the Foundation's economic development policy on disaster resilience. It offers a project assistance request form.

Two institutional links tie it to the Foundation. The April 2024 economic development guidelines list it among the resources to consult "early during your planning." And its July 2026 bylaws require its technical lead to be a member of the Cadre of Technical Advisers and

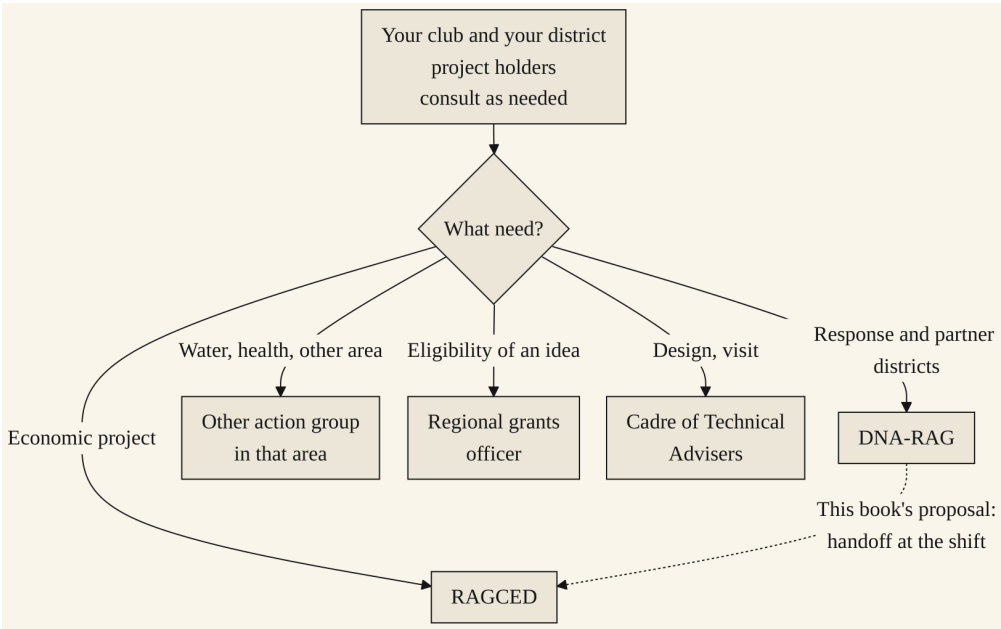
to serve as liaison with it.

According to its chair, in an email of September 16, 2026, the Rotary Foundation has given RAGCED new mandates: developing projects aimed at restarting the economy of disaster-hit regions and training communities before disasters, without taking part in immediate relief. No public document read for this book mentions this mandate; it is reported here as its chair worded it.

The handoff between the two groups: a proposal

No public text describes a division of roles between DNA-RAG and RAGCED. This book proposes one, based on their public missions and on the sequence of recovery. It remains to be agreed between the two groups, and your club can perfectly well call both from the start.

Phase	Lead group	What it brings the club
Relief and stabilization	DNA-RAG	contacts, partner districts, response experience
Shift to recovery	both together	economic assessment, first project ideas
Economic recovery	RAGCED	project design, microfinance, training, cooperatives
Normal times and preparedness	RAGCED, with DNA-RAG	local development, economic preparedness



The diagram says the essential thing: every arrow leads back to the club. The handoff between action groups, shown dotted, is a proposal of this book, not an established practice. What carries the project from one phase to the next is the local club, which was there before and will be there after.

Academic and professional partners

The July 2026 grant terms list educational institutions among possible cooperating organizations, alongside governmental and nongovernmental organizations, provided they take part in implementing the project or in the soundness of its finances. A written agreement, signed by both sponsors and the organization, must establish that the project is "initiated, controlled, and managed by Rotary members" and list each party's responsibilities.

A local university can bring what neither the club nor the field organization has: management training for beneficiaries, data monitoring, continuity after donors leave. In Anilao, in the Philippines, after Typhoon Haiyan, a university in the province provided expertise and management training to the fishers' association that received boats funded by clubs (Chapter 14).

The members of your club are professional partners too: accountants, bankers, engineers, lawyers. The CED guide points out the limit. A member who is a certified accountant can help a partner cooperative keep its books; that member is not its auditor.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Entrusting the project's memory to the president of the year	it is the club's custom	a coordinator and a reports lead for the whole duration
Waiting for an action group to come forward	you assume it will come on its own	call it: it cannot write to clubs without consent
Assuming an action group submits the application	it knows the rules better	the club and the district remain the only project holders
Launching three responses for three affected districts	each one manages its own territory	one lead district and a joint committee
Discovering lost qualification at submission	nobody was tracking reports	check qualification and reports in calm times
Presenting the DNA-RAG to RAGCED handoff as settled	it is convenient to say so	present it as a proposal to be agreed

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Choosing the fastest foreign partner	the emergency pushes you to accept	choose the one that will last three years

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has the **project’s three-year organization chart**: who carries what, from one presidency to the next, in the club, the partner club and the district, with the action groups to call and when. It is the piece of the recovery file that follows the funding plan.

The Turkish districts had a joint committee three weeks after the earthquake, because recovery was already being prepared during relief. But Rotary is never alone in a disaster-hit area: authorities, agencies and humanitarian organizations work there too, with their own coordination rules. That is the subject of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ The host club and the foreign partner club each have a three-member grant committee free of conflicts of interest
- ☐ The qualification of the district and the club is checked; no report is overdue
- ☐ The DRFC, the grants subcommittee and, if there is one, the district disaster committee are informed
- ☐ If several districts are affected, a lead district and a joint committee are designated
- ☐ A project coordinator and a reports lead are appointed for the whole duration
- ☐ The project committee has terms that overlap from one year to the next
- ☐ The quarterly review, the six-month report to donors and the annual visit are on the calendar
- ☐ The regional grants officer has been consulted on the eligibility of the idea
- ☐ DNA-RAG and RAGCED have been contacted by the club or the district, with the governor’s consent if needed
- ☐ Academic or professional partners have a written agreement listing each party’s responsibilities
- ☐ The three-year organization chart is written into the recovery file

Further reading

- Rotary International, *Rotary Code of Policies*, October 2026 edition, article 42.020 (Rotary Action Groups).
- The Rotary Foundation, *The Rotary Foundation Code of Policies*, October 2026 edition, articles 25.010 (district Rotary Foundation committee), 33.080 (qualification), 33.120 (disaster policy) and 34.030 (Cadre of Technical Advisers).
- The Rotary Foundation, *District Qualification Memorandum of Understanding*, in force as of July 1, 2024, on My Rotary.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Global Grants*, July 2026 version, sections 3, 4 and 8.
- Rotary International District 3292, *Nepal Earthquake Relief, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program (ERRRP), Executive Summary*, August 2015.
- DNA-RAG, dna-rag.com; RAGCED, ragced.org.
- The disaster guide, Chapters 18 (the district) and 20 (action groups); the CED guide, chapters on the district and on RAGCED.

Chapter 12: Working with Humanitarian Actors

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, which Filipinos call Yolanda, crosses the Visayas. It kills more than six thousand people. According to the review carried out the following spring for two coalitions of humanitarian organizations, the Disasters Emergency Committee and the Humanitarian Coalition, it damages some 33 million coconut trees and about 30,000 fishing boats.

In the focus groups the evaluators bring together, women explain what has become of work. With no boat, many men and women hire themselves out as farmhands on nearby farms, for about 80 pesos a day. The minimum wage, depending on location, ranges from 260 to 327 pesos.

Very early in the response, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) appoints a coordinator for the cash working group. The organizations that pay residents to clear roads, unclog drains, or repair boats then align on comparable daily wages, pegged to the minimum wage: 260 to 327 pesos depending on location, for members of the two coalitions. A few organizations outside these networks pay much more. The review notes that this distorted those cash for work programs and, according to the accounts it gathered, drew people away from their regular jobs.

In Concepcion, in Iloilo province, the NGO Concern works with the mayor to find land for a boatyard. With fishermen, fisherwomen, and boat builders, it sets up a temporary boat-building production line. The beneficiaries are the people who lost their boats, and they finish the boats themselves: they sand them, paint them to their own taste, fit the bamboo outriggers. A quality check follows the work. Those who lost their nets, lines, or outboard motors receive them too.

Two acts of coordination, one at the scale of a region, the other at the scale of a town, and both focused on the local economy: the price of labor, the fishermen's trade.

What the scene teaches

Coordinating starts with setting prices. A wage paid by an aid organization is a price on the local labor market. When farmhands earn about 80 pesos a day, a program that pays far above the minimum wage pulls in workers, including those who still had a job, and that job will still exist when the program is over. The Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS) describe this risk: cash for work wages must take the local market into account to avoid "poaching," luring workers away from lower-paid but more lasting employment. The same reasoning applies to the value of a cash transfer or the interest rate on a loan.

Coordination works when someone is put in charge early. According to the review, OCHA's early appointment of a coordinator whose job it was helped organizations harmonize their practices just as programs were starting. The excessive wages came from organizations outside the two coalitions studied.

The right level is often the town. In Concepcion, the boatyard starts with a conversation with the mayor. The same review reports that on the island of Samar, organizations found the large coordination meetings remote and preferred to coordinate at the municipal level; one of them asked a mayor to host these meetings in his town, "that is where the action is." Mayors, for their part, valued cluster meetings as a chance to meet NGOs and present their requests.

Coordinate without taking over. Rather than delivering ready-made boats, the Concepcion line puts boat builders to work and leaves it to the fishermen to finish their own tool. Chapter 5 showed what boats handed out without counting cost in Sri Lanka; Chapter 8, how to restore a value chain rather than replace it.

Your club is not a humanitarian agency. It often arrives after them, and it stays after them. In between, it works alongside them: this chapter explains how.

The principle: the authority leads, the others fit in

Authorities first

Every source agrees on one point. The MERS put it plainly: "It is the primary role and responsibility of the government of the affected state to respond to and coordinate humanitarian responses from assisting organizations." The guidance note of the interagency working group on early recovery stated as early as 2008 that state structures must lead the coordination of recovery, and that recovery must be "owned and led by national actors." The Philippines review makes this its ninth recommendation: coordinate "with and through government at all levels from the beginning."

In practice, the leader is a person and an office your club can identify. In Nepal in 2015, the government created a National Reconstruction Authority (Chapter 2); the recovery program that Rotary District 3292 drafted in August 2015 cites it, along with the shelter cluster and a recovery and reconstruction working group led by UN-Habitat, whose purpose was to give organizations a space to discuss the housing reconstruction program with the government. Elsewhere, it will be a prefecture, a town hall, a national disaster management agency. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) itself is only carried out at the government's request (Chapter 3).

The humanitarian system as it works today

Alongside the authorities, the international humanitarian system is organized by sector groups, the **clusters**. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) created nine of them in 2005, each entrusted to a lead agency; early recovery was one of them, led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

If your club has read in older documents that there is an early recovery cluster led by UNDP everywhere, that description is out of date. Since the global cluster's 2016 guidance note, early recovery has been built into the work of all clusters, and the main mechanism for coordinating it is coordination among those clusters. The note is categorical: "Creating a new coordination body for early recovery is never advised." A dedicated group is created only case by case, when needs remain unmet, and its name varies from country to country. In the Philippines in 2013, the review mentions an "early recovery and livelihood" cluster.

Two details of this review are of direct interest to a club. First, the chamber of commerce co-chaired the livelihoods cluster, a notable exception in a response where the private sector carried little weight in the clusters: a business network can have its seat at the table. Second, the cash working groups, like the one that aligned wages, are where the prices of aid are set.

The common tool: who does what, where

The tool you will run into everywhere is called the **3W**, for "Who does What Where." OCHA describes it this way: it serves to show "the operational presence by sector and location within an emergency," to identify possible partners and, roughly, duplications and gaps. Each cluster keeps its own detailed table; OCHA compiles the shared information. Some versions add a fourth question, "when": the MERS speak of "4Ws (who, what, when, where)."

The table is only as good as what organizations report in it. An organization that is not in it does not exist for the others, and it cannot know who is already working in the village where it plans to act.

What the standards require

The MERS devote their second core standard to coordination. Its key actions and indicators come down to three verbs. *Take part*, from the outset, in existing coordination meetings, "and avoid creating new structures where possible." *Inform* coordination bodies of your mandate and programs. *Report your gaps*: organizations that cannot meet an identified need "make gaps known, so that others may assist."

The standard's other indicators are precise: no duplication between organizations in the same sector or area; transfers and distributions "coordinated, sequenced, and aligned with the local economy to avoid responses undermining each other." The standard gives an example of what happens without this: organizations that, in the same area, give grants and loans to the same people for the same purpose, but at different rates and on different terms. For a club that funds credit (Chapter 6), the warning is direct.

The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), in its 2024 edition, frames its sixth commitment from the point of view of affected people: they have access to "coordinated and complementary support." The first requirement of this commitment asks that an organization's work be coordinated with, and complementary to, actions carried out locally and by the community. A note on wording: the standard allows any organization to write "We are working towards the application of the CHS"; any other claim of compliance requires recognized verification. Your club can draw on the CHS and say so in those terms; it does not write that it "applies" or "complies with" the standard.

On the Rotary side, the rule fits in three words, already seen in Chapter 3: "Collaborate, don't duplicate."

A precedent: one agency, certificates

Chapter 5 told the story of the surplus boats in Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami. The answer the Ministry of Fisheries eventually wrote, in its 2006 strategy prepared with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is a coordination rule. It calls for coordination by district and information sharing between boat suppliers and fisheries services, so that the pre-tsunami number of boats is not exceeded. And it sets two conditions: boat replacement is handled by a single agency, and it depends on entitlement certificates issued to the fishermen who lost theirs.

The lesson goes beyond fishing. When a productive asset is replaced by several donors at once, you need a single register of those entitled and a single point of contact. That register is almost never kept by an NGO or a club: it belongs to the authority.

What the club does

Map the actors

The first task is to know who is there. The table below gives the outline of the map your club will keep up to date; adapt the rows to your area.

Actor	What it does	What the club asks of it	What the club brings it
Town hall, reconstruction authority	leads, authorizes, keeps the lists	priorities, zones, local rules	knowledge of businesses, outreach
Humanitarian coordination (OCHA, clusters)	meetings, 3W table	who does what, where	reporting your activities
Cash working group	sets wages and values	the agreed rates	your alignment
Red Cross, Red Crescent	relief, transfers, assessments	market assessments	list of merchants
Local and international NGOs	field programs	partnership, know-how	targeted funding, employers
Chamber of commerce, trade associations	represent businesses	data, access to owners	network, lasting presence
Local lenders (banks, microfinance)	credit, savings	state of their clients	liquidity funding (Chapter 6)
District, Rotary Action Groups	support, funding	advice, outreach (Chapter 11)	field information

For each row, note a job title, a phone number, and the date of last contact. This map is the first version of the piece this chapter adds to the file.

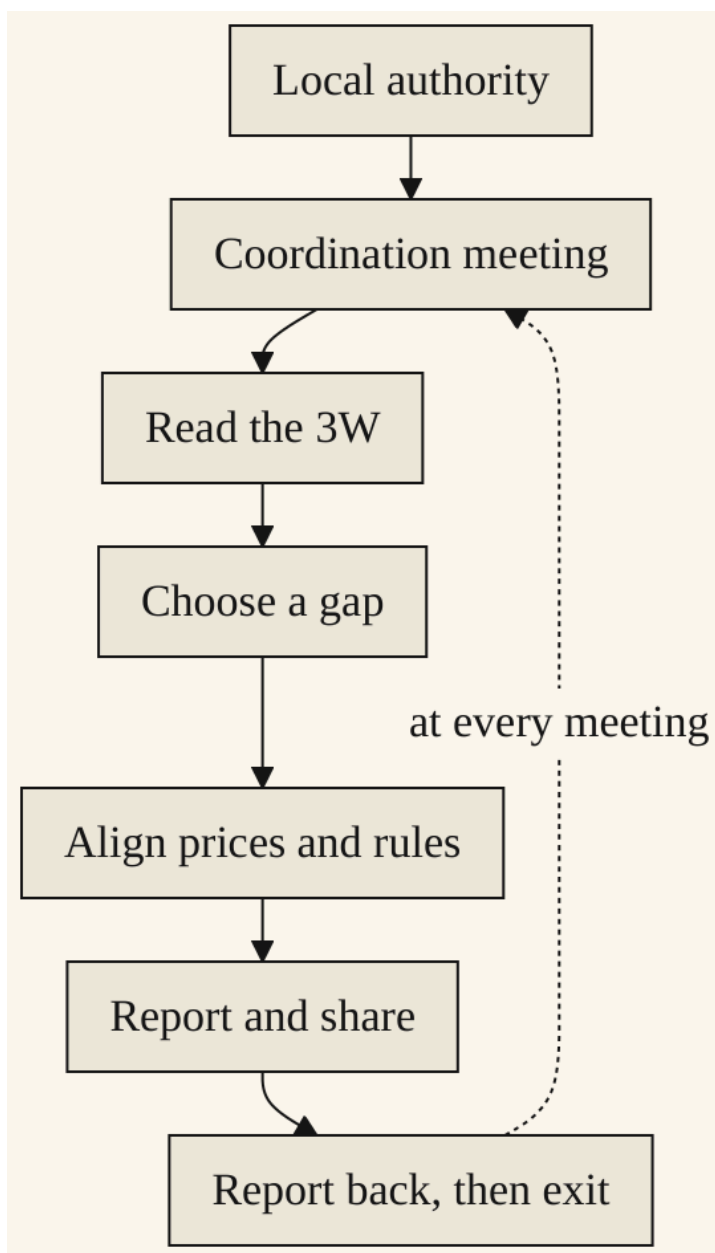
Joining coordination in nine steps

No official procedure describes how a small civil society organization fits into the coordination of a recovery. The method below is a synthesis proposed by this book, drawing on the guidance notes on early recovery, the MERS, the CHS, Rotary's assessment guide, and the Philippines review.

1. **Introduce yourself to the authority** leading the recovery, before launching anything: who you are, what you know how to do, what you do not know how to do.
2. **Find the right meeting.** Depending on the country, a cluster, an inter-cluster group, a livelihoods working group, or a cash working group. For a local project, the municipal

meeting is often the most useful.

3. **Read the 3W** before choosing a village or a sector. Adjust the project to fill a gap rather than duplicate an actor.
4. **Report your activities** in the format in use, even modest ones.
5. **Align your prices:** daily wages, transfer values, loan rates and terms. Ask for the agreed rates before setting one.
6. **Share your assessment data** (Chapter 3) to spare disaster survivors repeated interviews.
7. **Report your gaps.** The MERS give an example: an organization finds strong demand for credit and savings that it cannot meet; it introduces staff from a local microfinance institution to community leaders and flags the demand to other organizations. A club plays this matchmaker role well.
8. **Fit the project into the local plan.** For an emergency preparedness project, the Rotary Foundation's community economic development guidelines (April 2024) even require approval from the relevant local or national authorities.
9. **Report regularly,** including on your exit. A map that is not updated misleads the others.



What the disaster guide taught you, and what changes

Chapter 22 of the disaster guide gave five actions for the first days: make yourself known, declare your capacities, ask for a zone or a role rather than taking one, attend the meetings, report within the common framework. It also offered a daily "who does what where" sheet, a

field version of the 3W, and recalled that Rotary complements, supports, and funds, but does not direct operations. These principles are confirmed by the MERS and by the guidance notes on early recovery.

Three things change with recovery. The pace, first: the daily meetings of the acute phase give way to less frequent meetings, often at the town level. The counterparts, next: relief services move to the background, while the town hall's economic services, the chamber of commerce, the lenders, and the livelihoods groups move to the front. The subject, finally: you no longer coordinate distributions but prices, beneficiary lists, and timetables.

Chapter 20 of the CED guide, for its part, covers the internal coordination of a project in normal times: steering committee, project meeting, dashboard, decision log, shared directory. These tools remain valid after a disaster. What gets added is the external coordination described here: your project is no longer alone in its area.

What your club brings to humanitarian

Humanitarian organizations have the experience, the logistics, the methods. They often lack two things your club has. Detailed knowledge of the local economy, first: who sold what to whom, which suppliers survived, which lender knows its clients (Chapter 3). Staying power, second: humanitarian organizations leave, your club stays.

In practice, a club can offer the organizations present a list of local merchants and artisans, employers ready to take on apprentices (Chapter 7), a meeting room, contacts in local banks, and a memory of the projects once the international teams have left. The Philippines review also reports that a network of Philippine NGOs criticized international organizations for arriving with responses decided in advance, often in other countries, before any discussion with local organizations. Its eighth recommendation is to discuss recovery plans with all actors and share them locally, with this question: "whose disaster is it?" Your club, rooted in the area, stands with those to whom the disaster belongs. If it is a foreign partner club, the question is aimed at it.

Working with an NGO in a global grant

A partnership with an NGO can be part of a Rotary Foundation global grant, under specific conditions. The Terms and Conditions in force in July 2026 define **cooperating organizations** as reputable governmental or nongovernmental organizations, or educational institutions, that take part in carrying out a project or make sure its goals are met and its finances sustainable. An agreement signed by both sponsors and the organization must include verification that the grant is "initiated, controlled, and managed by Rotary members," and an implementation plan that sets out each party's responsibilities.

Two limits follow. The grant does not fund "activities primarily carried out by an organization other than Rotary": your club cannot simply pass money on to an NGO. And a cooperating organization cannot make a cash contribution to the grant budget. Chapter 10 covers the rest; always check the Terms and Conditions in force on My Rotary.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Creating your own coordination meeting	you want to keep control	join what exists; a new body is "never advised"
Paying a wage other than the agreed rate	you want to be generous	ask the cash working group for the rate
Bypassing the town hall to go straight to neighborhoods	it is faster	go through the authority; in the Philippines, towns complained
Going where the others already go	familiar places and main roads are easier	read the 3W; target forgotten areas
Delivering goods outside coordination	members want to give	no distribution without a place in the 3W (Chapter 5)
Deciding the project from the foreign partner club	the money comes from far away	decide on site, with local actors
Writing that the club "applies" the CHS	the phrase sounds reassuring	"we are working towards its application"
Not announcing your exit	you leave quietly	announce the end at the meeting, update the 3W

The fourth pitfall has a name in the Philippines review: the "Tacloban effect," the widespread belief that villages far from the main intervention sites received aid later; a local partner sums it up: "Most NGOs focus on popular areas." The review notes in counterpoint that several organizations worked to reach more isolated communities, for example on islands in northern Panay. The fifth is not theoretical either: the same review describes lines of trucks loaded with donations, several kilometers long, at a ferry terminal, and the doubts raised about the transparency of aid delivered this way.

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has an **actor map** of its area and a short list of **coordination commitments**: report yourself, align with the agreed prices, share your data, report your gaps, report back, announce your exit. This is the piece this chapter adds to the recovery file, next to the organization chart from Chapter 11; Appendix B gives the template.

After Haiyan, the wages that did not climb and the land found with the mayor of Concepcion take up a few lines in the review. Successful coordination leaves few traces; it gets noticed mostly when it is missing. Yet reporting to the other actors means knowing what you did and what it changed. Measuring, without wearing out the people you help, is the subject of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ The authority leading the recovery is identified, and the club has introduced itself
- ☐ The relevant coordination meeting or meetings are known, with a designated representative
- ☐ The 3W table was read before choosing the location and the target group
- ☐ The club's activities are reported in the format in use
- ☐ Wages, transfer values, and loan rates are aligned with those agreed
- ☐ The club's assessment data has been shared
- ☐ Needs the club cannot cover have been flagged
- ☐ Every distribution of goods has its place in the coordination
- ☐ The project is part of the local plan, with the authority's approval when required
- ☐ Any partnership with an NGO follows the rules for cooperating organizations
- ☐ No club communication claims compliance with the CHS
- ☐ The actor map is dated and updated at every meeting
- ☐ The exit date is announced to the other actors

Further reading

- SEEP Network, *Minimum Economic Recovery Standards*, 3rd edition, Practical Action Publishing, 2017, core standard 2 (coordination).
- Global Cluster for Early Recovery, *Guidance Note on Inter-Cluster Early Recovery*, January 2016.

- IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery, *Guidance Note on Early Recovery*, April 2008.
- CHS Alliance, Groupe URD, and Sphere, *Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability*, 2024 edition.
- OCHA, *IM Toolbox*, "Who does What Where (3W)" page.
- Disasters Emergency Committee and Humanitarian Coalition, *Philippines Typhoon Haiyan Response Review*, April 2014.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Global Grants*, July 2026 version, section 4 (cooperating organizations), on My Rotary.
- The disaster guide, Chapter 22 (coordinating in the field); the CED guide, Chapter 20 (coordinating in the field).

Part V: Make It Last

A recovery project is not judged on the day it opens. It is judged a year later, when someone goes back to see whether the workshop is still running, whether the market has kept its vendors, whether the lender has been repaid. It is judged again three years later, when the club that launched it no longer puts money into it.

The first four parts took your club from assessment to funding: understanding what the disaster broke, making the shift at the right time without doing harm, choosing the levers, raising the money, and organizing the work with the district, the action groups, and the humanitarian actors. This last part deals with what allows a project to leave something behind.

It has three chapters. Chapter 13 shows how to monitor a project without wearing out the people it serves, and how to say honestly what it changed, no more and no less. Chapter 14 deals with the exit: preparing it from day one, choosing who to hand over to, and knowing what becomes of a local club when the project ends, since the club itself does not leave. Chapter 15 closes the loop of the trilogy: after one disaster comes the time before the next, and it is in calm times that an economy is prepared to hold up better.

The *Rotary Foundation Code of Policies* asks that a project include a measurement plan that confirms significant improvement, "ideally for three or more years." Three years: that is the horizon of this part. It adds the last three pieces to the recovery file: the monitoring plan, the exit plan, and the preparedness plan.

Chapter 13: Monitoring and Proving Results

September 2023, Hassa, in Hatay province, in southern Turkey. Seven months earlier, the earthquakes of February 6 devastated the south of the country. The municipality set up prefabricated shops in a business park for merchants who lost theirs; Chapter 9 told how. An international NGO, CORE, paid 58 of them a grant in two installments. A Turkish NGO, YSYD, collected the data. The program ends on September 30.

Then comes the final evaluation. In March, the baseline survey was done in person. This time, the merchants are called on the phone. Fifteen out of fifty-eight answer.

The results are encouraging. 86% of respondents say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the aid they received. In their households, the share of unemployed people fell from 67% at enrollment to 14% at the end of the program. The reported spending is all business purchases, stock and equipment, in line with the business plans. 93% say they had access to a way to make a suggestion or a complaint, and none says they were asked for anything in return for the aid.

The report published in April 2024 does not stop there. It states that the final sample represents only 26% of beneficiaries. That the baseline survey covered only 4 of the 12 domains of the self-reliance index used, so that the start and the end "were generally not comparable." That most of the work found again in households is temporary or irregular. That over such a short period, income only stopped falling. And that no local monitoring officer was in post at the start, which delayed the baseline survey. It presents its own results as "a descriptive approximation."

A report that says what it does not know is rarer, and more useful, than a report that shows off percentages.

What the scene teaches

Let us go back over the Hassa figures, separating what they establish from what they suggest.

What they establish. The money was spent as planned: invoices and monitoring visits confirm it. The fifteen respondents are satisfied. A complaint channel existed and people knew about it. These are *management* results, and they count: a donor, a foundation, a

municipality first want to know that the money went where it was supposed to go.

What they suggest without proving it. The drop in household unemployment is real for those fifteen. But nothing shows it came from the grant: other factors may have played a part at the same time, and the survey has no comparison group. Nothing shows either that the 43 merchants who did not answer are doing as well; other surveys, as we will see, take a number that no longer answers as a sign of closure. And nothing shows that the shops will hold out another year.

What they teach for next time. Nearly all the weaknesses of the Hassa monitoring were born at the start: an incomplete baseline survey, no monitoring officer at launch, delays piling up. The report draws the lesson itself: bring in a local monitoring specialist from the launch. Monitoring is won or lost in the first month.

Your club will not do better than CORE with fewer resources. It can be just as honest, and plan earlier.

Why measure, and for whom

You measure first for the affected people. The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), in its 2024 edition, presents itself as a tool that lets people and communities hold those who help them to account. Its commitments are written from their point of view: they must be able to give their opinion, complain without risk, and learn what was drawn from their answers.

You measure next for the Rotary Foundation and for donors. The global grant terms in force in July 2026 require a project to be **measurable**: sponsors choose standard measures from the Foundation's monitoring and evaluation supplement, and may add others.

Finally, you measure to decide. The Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS) make monitoring a quality condition throughout the program: data collected regularly, reviewed in meetings, and a program adjusted when the market changes. Monitoring that leads to no decision has only served to fill a report.

Measure little, measure well

The temptation for a club discovering monitoring is to measure everything. You need to do the opposite.

The MERS recommend not waiting for annual evaluations and collecting monitoring data regularly, and they specify: "Lean data can be used to collect a small amount of information relatively frequently." The CHS 2024 asks for disaggregated data (women and men, ages,

circumstances) to be collected "in ways that minimise demands on them": without weighing on people. Chapter 3 already described assessment fatigue; heavy monitoring prolongs it.

A clarification about the MERS, because a confusion is going around. Their "key indicators" are not income or job indicators to reuse in your project. The standard defines them itself: "Key indicators are 'signals' that show whether a minimum standard has been met." They serve to judge the quality of a program (is it market-aware, coordinated, monitored?), not to measure what merchants earn. For outcome indicators, you have to look elsewhere.

The baseline after a disaster

The **baseline** is the snapshot taken before the project starts, against which everything that follows will be compared. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) livelihoods guidelines of 2010 define it as the set of conditions existing at the start of a program. They add two useful points.

First, the initial assessment is not enough: it does not always provide data precise enough to measure an effect, and the baseline must be measured separately, usually after the assessment and before the project starts. Your assessment form from Chapter 3 serves to choose the project; the baseline serves to judge it.

Second, after a disaster, the baseline has two parts: the original situation and the effects of the disaster. You measure today's situation, and you record what people remember from before. In Hassa, the report thus compares income in 2022 with income in the month following the earthquake.

The IFRC gives, in a table, examples of baseline indicators for livelihoods programs. Among them, the ones that best serve an economic recovery:

- the number of people who have been able to resume their pre-disaster activity;
- the number of people who have access to credit to replace lost assets;
- the number of people selling their main productive assets;
- the level of debt;
- the number of family members who have work;
- the number of people relying on relatives to get by.

The MERS add a warning, in the form of an example with no location: a baseline taken in a year with a very good harvest said nothing about a normal year, and the organization had to look for other data when drought came. After a disaster, the risk runs the other way: a baseline taken at the worst moment makes any return to normal look spectacular.

The Foundation, for its part, leaves no choice. The monitoring and evaluation supplement makes the baseline the fourth of its seven steps, and the community economic development guidelines (April 2024) ask for starting data to be collected before the project so results can be measured. One practical detail follows: a global grant pays for nothing that comes before its approval (Chapter 10). Plan who will do the baseline, and with what money, between approval and the first payment to beneficiaries.

Indicators that have worked elsewhere

No international framework provides a single, quantified list of economic recovery indicators. Real evaluations use a few, always the same ones. The table covers five families.

Indicator	Real example	What to know
Businesses reopened at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months	Katrina: 441 cumulative reopenings by late September 2005, 1,190 in October 2007	easy to count on foot; says nothing about income
On-time repayment	Nepal: 99% in July 2018, recovery credit	the lender's figure; cross-check with arrears
Employment at end of training	construction trades training (Chapter 7)	also measure six months later
Reported income, before and after	Haiyan, CARE program	self-reported; ask for a range
Coping strategies	Hassa: savings drawn down, borrowing, asset sales	easier to collect than income

The last row deserves a closer look. Asking a merchant how much they earn is delicate, and the answer is often wrong. Asking whether they had to draw down their savings, borrow outside the family, sell a tool, or take a child out of school is simpler, and more telling. In Hassa, the merchants' households report having dipped into their savings (48%) or borrowed from people outside the family for basic needs (28%). The IFRC lists the sale of productive assets among its baseline indicators, and the World Food Programme and FAO use coping strategy indices of the same kind.

Here, to give an order of magnitude, is what a final program evaluation can produce with these tools. After Haiyan, the evaluation of CARE's program in the Philippines, carried out in 2016 by a Philippine university center, finds that 73% of households receiving transfers earn an income, with an average monthly net income of 2,785.15 pesos against 2,000 before.

But it also notes that debt repayment and savings remain "not improved or not yet met" for a significant share of households. The figures come from beneficiaries' own statements, with no comparison group.

Contribution, not attribution

When there is no way to compare with people who were not helped, honesty means speaking of *contribution*. The CARE evaluation gives the wording. Noting that households had reduced their coping strategies, it writes: "As CARE was the major implementer of livelihoods in each Barangay, it is reasonable to assume that CARE's intervention contributed to this reduction." Not "caused," not "thanks to": *contributed*, and because the organization was the main actor on the ground. Your club can write its reports the same way.

Survivorship bias

Business surveys after a disaster share a flaw that their best authors acknowledge: they interview the businesses that still exist. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York says so about its survey of small businesses in Puerto Rico after the 2017 hurricanes: businesses that disappeared are not systematically included, and its results "most likely understate the adverse impact of the hurricanes." In New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast, a 2008 survey uses disconnected phone numbers as a sign of closure, and finds nearly one in four among Black-owned businesses.

For your club, the consequence is practical. Keep the complete list of starting beneficiaries, and try to find out what became of those who no longer answer. In Hassa, that is 43 merchants out of 58.

One last example, already seen in Chapter 6: Fonkoze, in Haiti, interviewed 274 of its affected clients a few months after the 2010 earthquake, with an assessment tool that existed before the disaster. Its figures are the institution's own, and it says so. A tool ready before the shock is what makes monitoring possible afterward.

What the Rotary Foundation requires

The rules below are those of the documents in force in July 2026; check them in the Terms and Conditions in force on My Rotary before submitting an application (Appendix E).

The monitoring plan. The Foundation's monitoring and evaluation supplement, dated April 2015 and still in use, describes seven steps: set clear goals, choose the standard measures, add project-specific measures, establish the baseline and collection methods, submit the plan

with the application, collect data during the project, then evaluate and report the results. It adds two instructions: avoid double counting, and do not simply report all the residents of a community or region as beneficiaries.

The standard measures for community economic development are six: the total number of direct beneficiaries, the number of entrepreneurs supported, the number of businesses supported, the number of people trained, the number of jobs created (measured through employer surveys), and the number of young people employed in income-generating activities. Since the supplement is old, check in the Grant Center that no more recent version exists.

The budget. Global grant sponsors can devote up to 10% of the budget to measuring results. That is the line that will pay for your baseline, your surveys, and a local partner's time.

The duration. The Foundation's Code lists monitoring among the six dimensions of sustainability, and asks for a measurement plan that confirms significant improvement, "ideally for three or more years." This is a recommendation, not an obligation; but it goes beyond the length of most projects.

The reports. Deadlines differ by grant.

Grant	Reports required in July 2026
Disaster Response Grant	report within six months of payment to the district
District grant	final report within 12 months of payment, or 2 months after full disbursement if earlier
Global grant	first progress report within 12 months of the first payment, then each within 12 months of acceptance of the previous report
Global grant	final report within two months of the end of activities

A global grant report must in particular account for the measures chosen and the data collected, and explain how the results will be sustained over time. Receipts and bank statements are kept for at least five years. Finally, a rule that affects the whole district: the Foundation approves no new application from sponsors who have an overdue report, for any grant whatsoever. A forgotten report on a small project can block the big one (Chapter 11).

Listen, give back, document

Listen. The CHS 2024 calls for safe, accessible, and appropriate means so that all groups in a community can give feedback and file a complaint (requirement 5.1). In Hassa, 79% of respondents preferred a combination of channels, such as leaflets and SMS, to a single channel. For a club, this can be a phone number held by a member who did not select the beneficiaries, and a regular visit on site.

Give back. The same standard calls for sharing the analysis and lessons drawn from feedback and monitoring with the people and communities supported (requirement 7.4). The merchants who gave you their figures are entitled to the summary, presented simply, with what the club concluded from it.

Document. The disaster guide already set the rule: no identifiable photo without consent, and for children, permission from the person responsible for them. The CHS 2024 extends it to data: safe, ethical, and effective management of information, to limit risks to people (requirement 4.3). A list of beneficiaries with their debts and incomes is sensitive data; it does not circulate in a club messaging group.

Share failures. The Hassa report is public, with its limits. The MERS ask, at the end of a program, to check whether the initial assessment actually guided the program. Chapter 14 will say that exit strategies are rarely evaluated; failures, even less. A club that publishes what did not work does the next club a service.

What the club does: the monitoring plan

The monitoring plan fits on one page. It names five to eight indicators, no more, chosen from the Foundation’s standard measures and from the outcome indicators described above. For each one, it states the question asked, who asks it, when, and to whom.

Take a typical example: your club funds, with a local lender, restart grants for forty small businesses on a flooded street, with management training.

Indicator	Question or source	Who collects	When
Businesses supported (standard)	project records	project treasurer	at each payment
Businesses open	walk down the street	club pair	3, 6, 12 months, then yearly
Prior activity resumed	"Have you restarted your business?"	local partner	start, 6 and 12 months

Indicator	Question or source	Who collects	When
Coping strategies	savings drawn down, borrowing, tool sold	local partner	start, 6 and 12 months
On-time repayment	lender data	lender	every quarter
People trained (standard)	attendance sheets	trainer	end of training
Jobs created (standard)	survey of merchants	local partner	12 months
Complaints received and handled	complaints register	designated member	every month

Three rules go with this table. *The baseline comes before the first payment*: without it, none of the later figures will prove anything. *The local partner collects*: a 2005 guide on exit strategies, published by the C-SAFE consortium, recommends handing data collection to local partners as much as possible, to build their capacity and lighten the sponsor's workload. *Monitoring outlives the project*: if the Foundation's Code talks about three years, someone must still be counting open businesses when the grant is closed. Chapter 14 will say who.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Counting all residents as beneficiaries	the number impresses	the Foundation forbids it; count direct beneficiaries
Taking the baseline after the first payments	the emergency presses	budget the baseline before the first payment
Measuring twenty indicators	you want to know everything	five to eight, tied to the goals
Asking for exact income	it is the obvious indicator	coping strategies, ranges
Interviewing only those who answer	it is easier	follow the full list, look for the missing
Writing "thanks to the club"	you want to thank donors	speak of contribution
Citing MERS indicators as income	confusion of vocabulary	the MERS judge program quality
Forgetting a report to the Foundation	change of president	report calendar kept by the district

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Keeping results within the club	it does not occur to you	give them back to the people interviewed

What your club now has in hand

At the end of this work, your club has a **monitoring plan**: five to eight indicators, a baseline taken before the first payment, a three-year schedule, a person or organization responsible for each data collection, a complaint channel, and a date for reporting back to beneficiaries. This is the piece this chapter adds to the recovery file; Appendix B gives the template.

The Hassa report did not prove that its grants had saved 58 businesses. It showed what was known and what was not, and it said why. That is all you can ask of honest monitoring. One question remains that this plan raises without resolving: who will still be counting the open shops when the project is over? Preparing for that moment from day one is the subject of the next chapter.

Checklist

- ☐ The project's goals are written before the indicators are chosen
- ☐ The applicable Foundation standard measures are chosen
- ☐ Five to eight indicators at most, each tied to a goal
- ☐ The baseline is taken before the first payment, with recall of the pre-disaster situation
- ☐ The budget for measuring results is planned, within the 10% limit
- ☐ Each indicator has its source, its collector, and its schedule
- ☐ The local partner is trained and involved in data collection from the start
- ☐ The complete list of beneficiaries is kept so those who no longer answer can be followed too
- ☐ An accessible complaint channel exists, held by a person who did not select the beneficiaries
- ☐ Photos and personal data are collected with consent and protected
- ☐ Reports to the Foundation are on the club's and the district's calendar
- ☐ Results, failures included, are given back to beneficiaries and shared
- ☐ Monitoring beyond the end of the project is planned, ideally over three years

Further reading

- SEEP Network, *Minimum Economic Recovery Standards*, 3rd edition, Practical Action Publishing, 2017, assessment and analysis standard 6 (monitoring and evaluation).
- IFRC, *IFRC Guidelines for Livelihoods Programming*, Geneva, 2010, section 5 (baseline, table 1).
- CHS Alliance, Groupe URD, and Sphere, *Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability*, 2024 edition.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Global Grant Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Supplement*, April 2015, on My Rotary.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Global Grants*, July 2026 version, section 8 (reporting).
- CORE and YSYD, *Empowering Communities: Post-Earthquake Small Business Recovery in Hatay, Turkey*, Learning Brief, April 2024 (published by the CALP Network).
- Center of Resources for Innovation and Development, University of San Agustin, *Typhoon Haiyan Response Program: Summative Evaluation Report* (CARE Philippines), 2017.
- Federal Reserve Bank of New York, *Puerto Rico Small Businesses and the 2017 Hurricanes*, 2018.

Chapter 14: Exiting and Handing Over

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, which Filipinos call Yolanda, crosses the archipelago. On the island of Panay, about two hours' drive from Iloilo City, the community of Santa Rita, in the municipality of Anilao, has some 300 households. Most lived from small-scale fishing near the coast: enough to eat, and a little money from the surplus sold at a nearby market. The typhoon swept the boats away.

Clubs in South Wales, tied to the region by an old Group Study Exchange, decide to help with their Philippine partners. With Inner Wheel and Rotaract, they raise about \$100,000 once matching funds from the district and the Rotary Foundation are counted. The Rotary Club of Iloilo becomes the host club. Together, they choose to fund boats, engines, and sets of nets for some fifty families, about 17% of the community.

The plan does not stop at the boats. It calls for reviving the cooperative, which will own the boats and will have to make enough profit to repair and replace them, perhaps add more, and fund a few school scholarships. The Iloilo club teams up with the University of San Agustin, which brings business expertise and training. The municipality and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources advise the project from start to finish.

At the end of 2018, five years after the typhoon, the 55 boats are officially handed over to the Santa Rita fisherfolk association, with Rotarians from both countries present. One of the beneficiaries sums up the wait: "Typhoon Yolanda took away everything nearly six years ago. It's only now that we are able to go fishing daily again because of the Rotary project." Another talks about the training they received, which taught them to make their activity sustainable, "so that we don't only work for today, but for the coming years."

On handover day, the project does not end. It changes owners.

What the scene teaches

The article that tells the Anilao story is a firsthand account, written by a Rotarian from the sponsoring club in the magazine of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland. It gives no catch or income figures, and no evaluation of the project was found for this book. So we do not know whether the cooperative repaired its boats. But the way the project is built teaches three things, each verifiable in the source.

The exit was written into the project. As the article describes it, the project said who would own the boats (the cooperative), who would pay for their upkeep (the fishing profits), who would train the managers (the university), and who would advise (the municipality and the fisheries administration). Four questions, four answers, and none of them is called "Rotary."

Ownership is the heart of the exit. What a grant transfers is assets, accounts, responsibilities, far more than some abstract skill. In Anilao, the official handover covers boats, to a named association. Note, too, that the source speaks of the cooperative in the plan and of the fishermen's association on handover day, without saying whether they are the same body. That vagueness is exactly the question an exit plan must settle in writing.

Recovery is long. Five years between the typhoon and the handover of the boats. An exit strategy that assumes a twelve-month project does not describe the reality of an economic recovery; it describes a budget cycle.

The principle: the exit is prepared on day one

Three ways to exit

Among the humanitarian references on exit strategies is a practical guide published in 2005 by C-SAFE, a consortium of three international NGOs, including CARE and World Vision, backed by USAID, which itself builds on a 2004 technical note from the FANTA project. It defines exit as the withdrawal of all externally provided resources from a program area, and the exit strategy as the plan that organizes this withdrawal without compromising the goals achieved, so that progress continues. It adds a point that heads off a misreading: "The purpose of an exit strategy is not to hasten the exit." Exit has no value in itself; it serves to make results last.

The guide distinguishes three approaches, which this book renders as follows.

Approach	What it means	When it fits
Phase down	fewer resources, taken over by local organizations	a step before the other two
Phase out	leave without handing the activity to anyone	when the aid was not meant to last
Phase over	hand the activity to a local institution	the rule for a recovery project

For a club, phasing out outright is the exception: a one-time cash transfer, a single distribution. Anything that must outlive the project (a credit fund, a cooperative, a marketplace, a training center) calls for phasing over, often preceded by phasing down.

Set the criteria at the start

The sources agree on timing. The April 2008 guidance note of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) calls for clear exit criteria to be defined "at the beginning" for each recovery program. The C-SAFE guide puts it more bluntly, as a lesson drawn by its participants: a detailed exit plan "really should be developed at the 'Entry' point." The Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS) call for designing activities so that exit is "a natural and clear transition," and specify that grants must be time-limited.

The C-SAFE guide gives a benchmark, specific to the US food aid programs it studies: for a one-year recovery program, write the exit strategy within the first six weeks; for a five-year program, within the first six months. This is neither a general standard nor a Rotary rule, but the order of magnitude is useful: the exit is written at the start, not in the last quarter.

Three families of criteria

When to exit? The guide proposes three families of criteria, which can be combined.

- **A time limit.** Every program, whether relief, recovery, or development, has a duration set by its funding.
- **Results achieved.** The impact indicators of the monitoring plan (Chapter 13) can serve as exit criteria. A footnote in the guide flags the perverse effect: beneficiaries have sometimes avoided acquiring assets so as to stay on distribution lists. A badly chosen exit criterion rewards dependency.
- **Benchmarks.** Measurable steps in the handover: a management committee trained, an account opened in the cooperative's name, a first financial year closed without support, a maintenance contract signed.

The guide also warns that funding cycles do not always match needs. Its example: the harvest would be the right time to exit, but the donor's fiscal year does not allow it. A club knows this constraint by another name: the Rotary year. A president changes every July 1; a fishing season or a harvest does not. The livelihoods guidelines of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) draw a direct instruction from this: do not design an exit strategy that ignores seasonal factors.

Budget the exit, and what comes after

An exit costs money. The C-SAFE guide asks you to draw up the budget for the exit strategy, including the cost of each exit activity and of monitoring, and points out that these activities often require funding to strengthen local partners and to monitor after the project ends. It

recommends exiting in stages, site by site, to apply the lessons of the first sites to the next ones, and keeping in touch with communities after the handover.

Finally, it makes an admission: since funding almost never provides for coming back after the end, exit strategies are "rarely evaluated." To find out whether an exit succeeded, it proposes three questions, to be asked a year or two later: have the effects been sustained or expanded? Do the activities continue, in the same form or another? Do the systems put in place still work? A club that budgets a follow-up visit two years after the handover will be able to answer. Most projects will never know.

When reconstruction stops

A recovery project is not the only thing that ends. Reconstruction itself ends, and with it a whole economy.

In Aceh, after the December 2004 tsunami, the government reconstruction agency operated until April 2009. As early as 2007, the multi-donor fund that financed a large part of the effort found that the restoration of productive sectors had focused mainly on physical assets, and warned: "Once the reconstruction is no longer driving the economy, the economy in both regions is likely to stagnate and further drive up unemployment, unless economic recovery and development receives strong support now."

Construction sites employ masons, carpenters, haulers; they keep materials suppliers, canteens, and equipment rental firms busy. The day the last site closes, that demand disappears. In Nepal, an organization that had trained masons for reconstruction acknowledged afterward that they had few job prospects once the project was over, because livelihoods beyond reconstruction had not been planned (Chapter 7). In the Philippines, in Tacloban, families that received monthly transfers from February to July 2014 saw their income fall back by the same amount at the end of the program, except those that had started a business (Chapter 4).

The lesson applies to your own project: the end of your funding is, for the beneficiaries, a small end of reconstruction. What must replace it is prepared while it lasts.

A successful closure: Re:START

In Christchurch, the container mall on Cashel Street (Chapter 9) was never designed to last. It opened on October 29, 2011, eight months after the earthquake, run by a trust that grew out of a committee of merchants and property owners. In 2014, its northern part moved

across the street to make room for construction, with a public grant. On January 31, 2018, after 2,000 days in operation, far longer than planned, it closed to make way for what some call its natural successor, a covered market.

No independent evaluation says how many Re:START merchants survived, and this book gives no figure for it. But the shape of the exit is instructive. The closing date was not set in advance: it followed a criterion, the availability of a permanent site to take over. That is the difference between an exit set by a calendar and an exit set by a result. In a recovery, the second is almost always the right one, provided the criterion was written down from the opening.

What does not survive, and why

Evaluations describe exit failures more often than successes. Three mechanisms keep coming back.

The asset with no owner. The C-SAFE guide notes that many community facilities built under *food for work* programs were later left to fall apart, because the community did not feel enough ownership to maintain them. It distinguishes the activity from the exit strategy: in Zimbabwe, World Vision rehabilitated fifteen cattle dip tanks with 360 workers; the rehabilitation was the activity, while training the management committees and supporting local veterinary services formed the exit strategy. Building or buying is not exiting.

The artificial collective. In Leyte province, after Haiyan, a project of the International Labour Organization (ILO) entrusted farmer associations with farming contour-planted plots. The independent evaluator judged that group farming was unlikely to continue after support ended, and that the sites would be abandoned. But on half of the 24 sites, progressive farmers were already applying the technique on their own land. What survives is what people adopt for themselves, not what the project organized for its own sake.

Support that leaves with the project. The final evaluation of CARE's program after Haiyan, which restarted hundreds of collective enterprises and women's businesses, rates sustainability as "expected," anticipated rather than measured. It warns that technical, marketing, and financial support to businesses "is projected to diminish without the support of facilitating partners," and recommends multiplying local business support providers. It names the possible relays: the Department of Social Welfare and Development and its livelihoods programs, the Department of Trade and Industry's one-stop business support centers, local cooperatives.

A reference study on sustainability after exit, carried out by Tufts University for the FANTA project and published in 2015, could not be consulted for this book (the review that cites it refers to a 2016 summary). Its framework is known here only secondhand, through a 2025 review devoted to health programs: four components to sustain after exit, motivation, resources, capacity, and linkages. This book says no more about it and cites none of its results.

What the Rotary Foundation requires

The Rotary Foundation has made sustainability an eligibility condition. The global grant Terms and Conditions, in their July 2026 version, define it this way: "Sustainability is the capacity for outcomes to be maintained locally and to serve the community's continuing priorities." The *Six Steps to Sustainability* sheet uses the same definition and breaks it into six headings: know the community, encourage local ownership, provide opportunities to learn, buy local, find local funding, measure your results.

The Foundation's Code (October 2026 edition, section 33.070) spells out what projects must cover. Two of its six dimensions bear directly on exit: funding, since communities must be able to keep the project going "without ongoing financial support from The Rotary Foundation or other Rotary sources"; and motivation, since they must take ownership of the project when it is completed. The same section recommends monitoring that confirms the improvement, "ideally for three or more years."

The community economic development area of focus guidelines (April 2024) are more direct: "The Foundation won't consider projects without a clear plan for sustainability." They ask for a two- to four-year plan showing how the community will replenish funds after the grant, and add in parentheses a sentence every club should reread: "The Rotary Foundation and clubs cannot provide indefinite support."

Three rules in the July 2026 Terms and Conditions make exit concrete:

- **Nothing belongs to Rotary.** The grant cannot fund items that would then be owned by a district, a club, or a member (2.KK). In Anilao, the boats went to the fishermen's association, not to the clubs.
- **The final report says how results will last.** It must explain how the results will be sustained over time (8.Q).
- **Microcredit requires a written exit plan.** The final report of a microcredit project must contain the baseline data, the end data, and "an explanation of the exit plan" (11.N).

These rules can change: check them in the Terms and Conditions in force on My Rotary; Appendix E shows where to find them.

What the club does

Who to hand over to

The successor depends on what the project created. The table below brings together the cases covered in this book; it does not claim to be exhaustive.

Successor	What it takes over	What to check
Producer cooperative or association	boats, equipment, shared stock	bylaws, accounts, upkeep funded by the activity
Local government or administration	a market, a training center	line in the budget, ownership in writing
Microfinance institution	a credit fund, clients	crisis plan, credit kept separate from relief
Merchants' association	a temporary site, a common fund	closing date and criterion
Local business support provider	advice, training, networking	business model without grants

For a microfinance institution, the MERS give the selection criterion: prefer those with the capacity, scale, and resilience to keep serving their clients in times of crisis, and with procedures to separate their regular financial services from relief activities. For a local government, the C-SAFE guide cites an account from the World Food Programme: in Namibia, after a drought in 1989, the government created an emergency management unit with WFP support, and WFP then closed its office; according to a WFP representative interviewed in 2005, the unit was still functioning.

Six questions before handing over

The C-SAFE guide lists six questions to consider before any phase-over:

1. How strong is the community's sense of ownership/commitment to continue program activities?
2. To what extent does the community value program activities? What is the level of demand for the "phased over" services?
3. Do community members, groups and service providers have the knowledge and skills needed to implement the program activities?
4. Do the local organizations implementing the phased over activities have sufficient institutional and human resource capacity?

5. Are the organizations responsible for implementing phased over programs resilient to shocks and changes in the political and social environment?
6. Is there a viable plan to generate the consumable supplies (such as the food or agricultural inputs) that are required to implement activities?

The fifth question takes on special meaning after a disaster. The cooperative that takes over your boats, the credit union that takes over your credit fund, live in an exposed area. They will face the next typhoon, the next flood. A solid exit also prepares the successor for the next disaster, which is the subject of Chapter 15.

The IFRC checklist

The IFRC livelihoods guidelines (2010) sum up the stance in three don'ts: do not let the population believe you will stay forever; do not assume you will achieve sustainable livelihoods in a short intervention; do not design an exit that ignores the seasons. Their checklist has ten questions. Five are especially useful to a club:

- how long do the groups created by the program need to become self-reliant?
- does the exit timetable take the seasons into account?
- are clear benchmarks set before activities are handed to partners?
- who needs to be informed of the exit strategy, and when?
- who owns which assets once you have left? The checklist takes the example of a rebuilt market: does it belong to the municipality, the local Red Cross, or the community?

That last question is the Anilao question. Ask it for every asset your project funds, and get the answer written down.

The local club does not leave

The vocabulary of exit was written for organizations that leave a country. Your situation is different. The international partner club exits: its funds stop, its visits grow less frequent. The local club stays put, and its members will run into the beneficiaries at the market for years. This book proposes distinguishing three roles.

- **What the local club stops doing:** managing the project's money, deciding in the successor's place, signing for it, paying for repairs out of its own pocket.
- **What it keeps doing:** visiting, listening, connecting people with bankers, suppliers, buyers; this is the "continued contact" the C-SAFE guide recommends after the handover.
- **What it keeps hold of:** the project file, from one club president to the next, and the monitoring of a few indicators for at least three years, as the Foundation's Code recommends.

The danger for a local club is twofold: leaving too early, like an NGO whose contract is ending, or never leaving, staying on as the unofficial manager of a project that no longer belongs to it. The C-SAFE guide names a third trap, one clubs know well: covering a lack of sustainability by simply finding a new donor to pay for inputs. A second grant to replace worn-out nets is not an exit strategy; it is the admission that there was none.

The pitfalls

Pitfall	Why it happens	Remedy
Writing the exit in the last quarter	you think about starting first	criteria and successor in the grant application
Exiting on the funding end date	the Rotary year and the budget require it	benchmarks and seasons; build in a margin
Leaving ownership unclear	it seems obvious	a written handover deed, asset by asset
Creating a group for the project's needs	it is easier to manage	strengthen a structure that existed before
Funding a new donor for inputs	you want to save the project	a model where the activity pays for upkeep
Never going back to check	nothing is budgeted after the end	a follow-up visit planned and funded
Staying in control after the handover	habit, attachment	written roles: what the club stops, continues, keeps

What your club now has in hand

This chapter adds the **exit plan** to the recovery file: the exit criteria and how they combine (time, results, benchmarks), the target date and its seasonal margin, the successor for each activity and each asset, the handover deed, the transfer budget, and the monitoring planned after the end, with the name of whoever will do it.

Heading	Question	Typical example
Criteria	what must be true before leaving?	cooperative closes a financial year without support
Successor	who takes over each activity?	fishermen's cooperative; municipality for the shed

Heading	Question	Typical example
Assets	who owns each piece of equipment?	boats in the cooperative's name
Timetable	when, and in which season?	after the fishing season, withdrawal over six months
Follow-up	who comes back to check, when, with what budget?	club visit at one year and two years

In Anilao, the boats were handed over five years after the typhoon, to a named association, with a university and an administration that had followed the project from the start. We do not yet know what became of those boats; what we do know is that they had an owner. One last question remains, and it closes the loop of this book: once it has exited, what does your club do so that the next disaster finds your area better prepared?

Checklist

- ☐ The exit strategy is in the grant application, from the design stage
- ☐ The approach is chosen for each activity: phase down, phase out, or phase over
- ☐ The exit criteria combine time, results, and measurable benchmarks
- ☐ The exit timetable takes the seasons into account, not just the Rotary year
- ☐ A successor is named for each activity, and the six C-SAFE questions have been put to it
- ☐ Ownership of each funded asset is in writing, and none belongs to the club, the district, or a member
- ☐ The budget covers the transfer, the successor's training, and monitoring after the end
- ☐ Beneficiaries know from the start that the project has an end, and when
- ☐ The final report explains how the results will be sustained
- ☐ The local club has written down what it stops, what it continues, and what it keeps
- ☐ A follow-up visit is planned a year or two after the handover, with the three exit evaluation questions

Further reading

- Alison Gardner, Kara Greenblott, and Erika Joubert, *What We Know About Exit Strategies: Practical Guidance for Developing Exit Strategies in the Field*, C-SAFE Regional Learning Spaces, September 2005.

- IFRC, *IFRC Guidelines for Livelihoods Programming*, Geneva, 2010, section on exit strategies and checklist.
- SEEP Network, *Minimum Economic Recovery Standards*, 3rd edition, Practical Action Publishing, 2017.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Global Grants*, July 2026 version, and *Six Steps to Sustainability*, on My Rotary.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Community Economic Development Guidelines: Global Grant Funding*, April 2024.
- IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER), *Guidance Note on Early Recovery*, April 2008.
- The CED guide, Chapters 21 (from project to sustainability) and 24 (scaling up); the disaster guide, Chapter 25 (debriefing and improving).

Chapter 15: Preparing for the Next One

On June 25, 2020, in Bangladesh, the Red Crescent activates its early action protocol. Forecasts call for a flood of the Jamuna among the worst in decades. The National Society's model combines the expected river flow at the Bahadurabad station, the likely number of days above danger level, and the damage done by past floods. It points to the unions, the country's smallest rural administrative units, where the water will do the most harm. There are more of them than the available resources can cover. The Red Crescent selects ten, in three districts: the ones that will be hit hardest.

In these unions, each household gets a vulnerability score based on five criteria: how solid the house is, the water depth in earlier floods, the number of children, elderly or disabled people, the makeup of the family, and the main source of income. The 3,789 households selected each receive 4,500 taka, about \$53, roughly two weeks of food spending. The money arrives between 48 and 24 hours before the first flood peak, which comes between June 30 and July 3. A second peak follows from July 14.

Six months later, a team surveys 444 households. Half received the money. The other half, just as vulnerable and just as flooded, did not, because the resources ran out. On one point the results are clear. Among the households that got cash, 51% lost or saw damage to their work tools, farm or fishing equipment, against 72% of the others. They borrowed less often to cope: 44% against 56%. They lost fewer cows and calves: 9% against 22%.

On another point the results are just as clear, and disappointing. The money did not help families get back to work any sooner. In both groups, households went an average of 46 days unable to work. The study's authors say so plainly: the intervention was not effective in reducing the flood's impact on the beneficiaries' earning potential.

Preparing protects what people own. It does not spare you the work of restarting what they earn.

What the scene teaches

Its authors present the Bangladesh study as one of the few rigorous evaluations of anticipatory action: a quasi-experimental comparison, covering a single event and 444 households. It tells a club three useful things.

The money arrived on time because everything had been decided beforehand. The trigger threshold, the priority areas, the household selection criteria, the amount, the payment partners: none of that can be improvised in 48 hours.

What preparation protects is exactly what recovery would otherwise have to rebuild. Work tools intact, a herd saved, a debt avoided: these are the productive assets and the indebtedness that Chapters 6 and 8 discuss.

Preparation does not replace recovery. Forty-six days without work in both groups: the flood cut off the income of the families who got help just as it did for the others. The authors offer one possible explanation: the households that received cash may have spent that time repairing their homes or caring for their relatives. Whatever the reason, once the water recedes, someone still has to put people back to work, reopen the markets, and restart credit.

This is where the trilogy comes full circle. The disaster guide covers the before and the during, the CED guide covers normal times, and this book covers the after. But the after of one disaster is the before of the next.

The principle: prepare the recovery before the disaster

What the Sendai Framework says

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, devotes its fourth priority to "Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to 'Build Back Better' in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction." Its paragraph 32 calls for action "in anticipation of events" and points out that the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase "needs to be prepared ahead of a disaster."

Three other passages bear directly on the local economy. Paragraph 4 notes that small, recurring disasters and slow-onset disasters hit communities, households, and small and medium-sized enterprises especially hard, and account for a high share of all losses. Paragraphs 30(j) and 31(g) call for linking social safety nets to programs that strengthen livelihoods. And paragraph 36(c) speaks to businesses, professional associations and philanthropic foundations: it asks them to build disaster risk management, business continuity included, into their business models and practices, "especially in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises."

This book suggests reading that paragraph as addressed to your club: an association of business owners and professionals, backed by a philanthropic foundation. Sendai does not name Rotary.

What the Rotary Foundation allows

Preparedness falls within the community economic development area of focus. Among its goals, the April 2024 area of focus policy statement lists strengthening the economic resilience of communities in the face of natural disasters, and developing community emergency preparedness services "to improve economic resilience." Among eligible activities, it lists training and basic resources for preparedness initiatives, and access for poor communities to financial services, savings and insurance included.

The April 2024 CED guidelines spell out what a preparedness project must provide: an assessment describing the emergencies of the past three to five years, how the authorities responded, the populations most affected and the economic losses suffered; where the project fits in the existing preparedness plan, with the approval of the relevant local or national authorities; and how it is integrated into existing municipal systems. In other words, the Foundation does not fund parallel preparedness. It funds a complement to what the authorities have already planned. Check these conditions in the current documents on My Rotary.

Five areas of work for a better-prepared economy

1. Business continuity for small businesses

A business continuity plan describes how a business responds, resumes and returns to a defined level of activity after a disruption. Large companies often have one; small ones rarely do. The 2020 report on small and medium-sized enterprises from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) gathers a few figures. In Japan, fewer than 10% of SMEs have such a plan: about 34% of companies with 101 to 300 employees, but about 2% of those with fewer than 20. In the Philippines, according to a survey by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) cited by UNDRR, 75% of micro-enterprises had none, often because they did not know what one was or could not afford to write one.

The same report adds two nuances your club needs to know. First, having a plan is not enough. In Dominica and the British Virgin Islands, after Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, 67% of the businesses surveyed had a continuity plan or procedures, yet the surveys found little integration of risk management. The report notes that the international definition of a continuity plan does not cover prevention: a plan says how to restart, not how to avoid being destroyed. Second, preparation seems to pay off. In Japan, only 8% of prepared SMEs had not regained their pre-disaster sales level, against 19% of unprepared SMEs. That is a correlation, not proof: the businesses that prepare may also be the best managed.

The most useful figure for a club lies elsewhere. In Japan, among companies with more than 20 employees, 68% put a plan in place when their direct customers encouraged them to, against 8% without such a request. Small businesses prepare when the people they work with ask them to. Club members are customers, suppliers, bankers, contractors. They can put the question to their own suppliers, and help them answer it. The Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS) recommend the same in general terms: help market actors prepare for shocks, including through financial and organizational planning.

2. Savings, and their limits

A literature review published in 2021 for the Mastercard Foundation's Savings Learning Lab, with the SEEP Network, concludes that savings, often through savings groups, frequently help people withstand shocks without selling their assets or cutting back on meals. After the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, households in informal savings groups coped better than others, even though only 23% of households reported using their savings: the benefit came mostly from the group's social support. In western Leyte, a year after Haiyan, a study commissioned by Mercy Corps found that informal savings had helped recovery and formal savings had not, probably because banks were out of reach right after the typhoon.

The same review sets the limit: personal savings may not be enough in the face of a severe or repeated shock, and savings groups struggle to pay out to all their members when a disaster hits everyone at once. Encourage savings groups; never present them as insurance against disaster.

3. Insurance, and whom to insure

In Haiti, after the 2010 earthquake, Fonkoze treated its affected clients as if they had already been paying for catastrophe micro-insurance: a cash payment, the loan balance canceled, a new loan available (Chapter 6). It turned this into a permanent product, officially launched on January 12, 2011, one year to the day after the earthquake. By 2012, according to the institution, it was mandatory for its 60,000 microcredit clients, with a premium of about 3% of the loan for most of them. When a claim is accepted, Fonkoze cancels the loan balance, grants a new loan and pays out about \$125.

A study on a small sample, after the October 2011 rains in Les Cayes, shows what this covers and what it does not. The cancellation and the payout together came to about half of the policyholders' total losses, and the average time to payment ranged from about a month and a half to nearly two months depending on the measure. Most of the uncovered losses were indirect: the profits lost while the business was closed.

For farmers' insurance, the evidence is more disappointing. A synthesis of randomized trials published in 2016 by the Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI) shows that at market price, agricultural index insurance (triggered by a measure such as rainfall, rather than by assessing each loss) attracts about 16% of farmers, and only 38% with a 50% subsidy. The synthesis judges these products not commercially viable on their own, and sees more promise in insuring institutions or groups that already pool their members' risks.

The lesson for your club is twofold. Your club does not sell insurance. But the lender it will work with after a disaster (Chapter 6) is best chosen beforehand. MERS recommends that financial institutions have written crisis procedures reviewed every year, off-site data backup, and liquidity management, because in a crisis clients save less, withdraw their savings and miss payments. A partner that has all this, and insures its portfolio, will be better placed to do what Fonkoze did.

4. Building on social protection

On September 18, 2017, Hurricane Maria strikes Dominica. According to the government's Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, it leaves 31 dead and 37 missing, directly affects 65,000 people, and causes damage and losses equal to 226% of 2016 gross domestic product. For the first few weeks, aid comes in kind. From mid-October, as markets gradually revive, the Ministry of Social Services prepares the switch to cash with the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF.

The emergency cash transfer program starts in early December 2017 and reaches nearly 25,000 people, including 6,000 children: \$90 per household per month, plus \$50 per child for up to three children, in three payments. It does not build a new channel. It runs through the existing public assistance program, whose beneficiaries receive a top-up, and temporarily extends it to newly and severely affected households. In most villages, a five-person committee (the village council chair or secretary, community leaders, respected residents) lists the households and proposes the beneficiaries; the village councils hand out the payments. The setup has its limit: households that were not already in the public program did not receive their first payment until January or March 2018, four to six months after the hurricane.

A toolkit published in 2018 by Oxford Policy Management describes five ways to use social protection when a shock hits an entire population: adjust program design; piggyback on one element of an existing program (a list, a payment channel) for a separate response; temporarily increase benefits for existing beneficiaries (vertical expansion); temporarily add beneficiaries (horizontal expansion); align humanitarian and government interventions. It observes that in the successful examples, horizontal expansion had been built into the program design, not added after the disaster.

A club will not expand a public program. But alignment is within its reach. This book recommends that, in calm times, you know which public or Red Cross program exists in your area, who runs it, how it pays and on what criteria. After the disaster, if your club funds transfers or grants, aligning its amounts and criteria with those programs avoids gaps between neighbors and makes the handover easier (Chapter 14).

5. Knowing the anticipatory action in your area

Forecast-based financing, as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) describes it, uses weather forecasts and risk data to define early actions, funded automatically as soon as a threshold agreed in advance is reached. It rests on a "no regret" principle: communities benefit from the actions even if the forecast hazard does not happen. Setting it up takes time: twelve to thirty-six months, according to the IFRC.

In Mozambique, during the 2023-2024 El Niño drought, the national anticipatory action plan was activated in nine districts, implemented by the national social action institute as part of the public social protection program. A qualitative WFP study based on thirty interviews shows both sides of the result. The indicators measured at the end of the program were better than at the start, but they had also improved among non-beneficiaries, and the people interviewed felt that the aid had mostly filled a three-month gap in their harvests rather than softened the drought. They asked for farm inputs: hoes, fertilizer, hardier seeds, irrigation.

The agencies that fund anticipatory action publish return figures, for example "up to" seven dollars in avoided losses and benefits for every dollar invested, according to a ten-country study cited in 2025 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and WFP. These figures come from very different methods and from an advocacy brochure: do not add them up, and do not present them as an average. The Bangladesh study states more soberly what we know: anticipatory action protects assets and prevents debt; in that case, it did not speed up the return to work.

For your club, the conclusion is the same as for social protection. Do not create a parallel system. Find out whether the Red Cross, WFP, FAO or the government has a protocol in your area, and look for what it does not cover: in Mozambique, the farm inputs the beneficiaries were asking for.

What the club does in calm times

None of the documents read for this book describes an economic preparedness program run by a Rotary club. What follows is therefore a proposal of this book, built from the sources of this chapter and the earlier ones.

Area	What the club does	Where the book covers it
Know your economy	area diagnosis, analysis of key markets	Chapter 3; CED guide, ch. 3
Know your merchants	list of businesses, contacts, associations	Chapter 3 (Joplin)
Choose your financial partners	lender with a crisis plan, savings groups	Chapter 6
Push business continuity	ask your suppliers, help them write a plan	this chapter
Know the public programs	social protection, early action protocols	this chapter
Keep the district ready	qualification, reports up to date, disaster committee	Chapters 10 and 11
Keep the recovery file	lessons from the last disaster, contacts	Appendix B

Know your economy beforehand. The Pre-Crisis Market Analysis (PCMA) guide, published by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Oxfam and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), puts it in one sentence: with a description of markets in normal times, there is no need to redo a full assessment after the shock, only a quick update of a few key indicators. The same guide recommends collecting data in the season when disasters strike, and counts the relationship built with merchants among its goals. This is the work the CED guide describes as the area diagnosis, done with an eye on risk.

Know your merchants. The Joplin Chamber of Commerce, which had a disaster plan in place, visited the 530 affected employers in three weeks (Chapter 3). In the case study devoted to it in the Canadian economic recovery toolkit, its president recommends, among other things, collecting local business owners' cell phone numbers in advance, since the usual networks may go down. An up-to-date list of the businesses in your area, their managers, and how to reach them when the usual networks fail is the first tool of a rapid assessment.

Keep the district ready. The July 2026 global grant Terms and Conditions are clear: the Foundation approves no new application from a sponsor that has an overdue report on any grant. A district that is not qualified, or one of whose clubs is late with a report, loses months just when they matter most. In Nepal in 2015, District 3292 already had a relief fund

committee under its bylaws, and built its program on it. The disaster guide (Chapters 7, 9 and 11) describes the inventory of the club's assets, the activation of its networks, and its emergency fund.

Keep the memory. The next disaster may find a different president, a different governor, different members. The recovery file this book has built, chapter by chapter, is also your club's memory: what worked, what failed, who helped, at what cost. The disaster guide (Chapter 25) describes how to debrief; this chapter asks you to keep the result where the next committee will find it.

The traps

Trap	Why it happens	Countermeasure
Thinking preparation replaces recovery	early money seems enough	plan for both; Bangladesh: 46 days without work
Confusing a continuity plan with prevention	the plan is reassuring	add risk reduction to the plan
Presenting savings as insurance	the groups are useful	state the limit when a shock hits everyone
Creating a parallel system	the club wants a visible Rotary project	align, fund what others do not cover
Adding up anticipation returns	the figures get passed around	cite the source and the words "up to"
Leaving preparation to the disaster committee alone	it is their topic	involve members who run businesses or banks
Forgetting the lessons of last time	presidents change	a file handed from one presidency to the next

What your club now has in hand

This chapter adds the last piece to the recovery file: the club's **economic preparedness plan**. It states which activities and markets your area cannot afford to lose, who the merchants are and how to reach them, which financial partner will step in and whether it has a crisis plan, which public or humanitarian programs exist and how your club will align with them, where the district stands (qualification, reports, committee), and where the memory of the last disaster is kept. Appendix B gives the template.

In Bangladesh, in 2020, a few dozen dollars paid two days before the water saved tools and herds, but not the weeks of lost work. What those families kept, they kept because someone had prepared everything long before. What they lost had to be restarted afterward. Your club is built for both: preparing during the calm and, when disaster comes, getting the local economy moving again with the people who live in it.

Checklist

- ☐ The area's critical activities and markets are described in normal times, in the disaster season
- ☐ A list of businesses, their managers and their contacts is kept up to date
- ☐ Club members have asked their suppliers whether they have a continuity plan, and offered to help
- ☐ The continuity plans the club supports include a prevention component, not just restarting
- ☐ Savings groups are encouraged, without being presented as insurance against disaster
- ☐ A local financial partner is identified, with written crisis procedures
- ☐ The area's public social protection programs and early action protocols are known, with their criteria and payment channels
- ☐ The district is qualified, has no overdue reports, and has an active disaster committee
- ☐ The recovery file from the last disaster is stored where the next committee will find it
- ☐ Every grant-funded preparedness project has the approval of the relevant authorities

Further reading

- United Nations, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2015, Priority 4 and paragraph 36.
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), *Reducing Risk and Building Resilience of SMEs to Disasters*, 2020.
- Oxford Policy Management, *Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Toolkit*, January 2018.
- Clemens Gros and coauthors, "Effects of anticipatory humanitarian cash assistance to households forecasted to experience extreme flooding: evidence from Bangladesh," *Hydrology Research*, vol. 54, no. 11, 2023.
- IRC, Oxfam and USAID, *Pre-Crisis Market Analysis (PCMA)*, revised edition, February 2016.

- SEEP Network, *Minimum Economic Recovery Standards*, 3rd edition, 2017, chapter on financial services.
- The Rotary Foundation, *Areas of Focus Policy Statements and Community Economic Development Guidelines: Global Grant Funding*, April 2024.
- The disaster guide, part on preparedness (Chapters 3, 7, 9, 10 and 11); the CED guide, Chapter 3 (economic diagnosis of your area).

Conclusion

Two cities opened and closed this book.

In Kobe, in 1995, the city recovered and the Nagata district never did. The roads, the port and the big factories were back within a year; the population came back within nine. The small shoe workshops, meanwhile, lost their workers, their subcontractors and part of their customers while they waited to be allowed to rebuild. Public choices weighed on this: to widen the streets, permanent reconstruction was prohibited in about half of the hardest-hit areas, and public effort went first to large infrastructure. Time did the rest, and it worked against the smallest.

In Christchurch, in 2011, downtown merchants refused to wait. Eight months after the earthquake, with the city center still cordoned off, they opened shops in painted shipping containers, bought before they had the money to pay for them. They knew what they wanted to reopen, for whom and by when. The site was never meant to last. Yet it held for about 2,000 days, far longer than planned, then closed to make room for the permanent market.

Between these two stories, the difference does not come down to resources first: the Christchurch project also received an interest-free loan, a grant from a bank and public funds. It comes down to speed and method. In Christchurch, the people who made up the street's economy were at the center of the recovery, instead of waiting for it to end.

The thesis, one last time

This book has argued one idea: after a disaster, what decides whether a community recovers or empties out is not the amount of aid it receives, but how fast its own incomes, markets and businesses start turning again. A Rotary club serves recovery when it reconnects that existing economy, not when it replaces it.

The cases in the fifteen chapters have shown this from every angle. Two days after the earthquake, Haiti's market women were already walking down to Pétion-Ville, whose markets were working by the third day; then they watched their customers being fed with imports. Sri Lanka's fishers received more boats than the sea could support. The fishers of Omoe, in Japan, went back to sea several to a boat, sharing the catch, without going into debt. The

Joplin Chamber of Commerce visited 530 employers in three weeks. A Haitian microfinance institution found its clients before anyone else did, because it knew where they lived. Each time, what worked built on what already existed; what failed duplicated it.

Four decisions that matter

If your club keeps only four decisions from this book, make it these.

Look before you give. An assessment of a few days, done in person by members the merchants know, avoids most of the mistakes described in these pages (Chapter 3). The most useful question fits on one line: who used to sell this here before the disaster?

Shift on signals, and say so. Recovery does not start on a date; it starts when markets pick up again. Your club stops what no longer has a reason to exist, starts what prepares what comes next, and writes it down (Chapter 4). The five-question filter in Chapter 5 goes with every project idea.

Connect rather than do. Your club is not a bank, a training center, a cooperative or a construction company. It knows bankers, employers, buyers and elected officials. The four levers of Part III run through them, in an order set by the season and the markets.

Plan the end from the start. A recovery project lasts two or three years, spans three club presidencies, and must leave behind activities that keep running without the club. The funding plan, the organization chart, the monitoring plan and the exit plan are decided at the outset, not at the finish line (Part IV and Part V).

The trilogy, complete

This book completes a trilogy. The disaster guide covers the before and the during: preparing, then acting in the first hours and weeks. The CED guide covers economic development in normal times. This book covers the after, that long and poorly equipped stretch when people have to earn their lives back.

The three books describe a single movement. A club that practices economic development in calm times knows the merchants, lenders and cooperatives in its area; on the day of the disaster, it knows whom to call. A club that has led a recovery knows what was missing; it prepares better for the next disaster. Chapter 15 showed it: the after becomes the before again.

What we do not know yet

An honest book also states its limits.

Rotary cases of economic recovery are rare in public sources, and none has been independently evaluated. The boats of Anilao, the training of the women of Khokana, the organization of the Nepali district, the commission of the Turkish districts are documented by Rotary's own publications, without any measure of the income or jobs created. We have presented them as such.

The best studies on small businesses reopening come from wealthy countries with widespread insurance and strong governments. Their mechanisms carry over; their figures do not. We still know very little about how micro-enterprises survive two or three years after a disaster in a low-income country, what happens to damaged savings and credit cooperatives, or what becomes of trained craftworkers when the construction sites close.

These gaps are an invitation. Every club that leads a recovery project can help fill them: by taking a baseline before starting, measuring a few indicators for three years, writing down what worked and what failed, and sharing it with its district, with the action groups and with the Foundation. The next club hit by a disaster will not have to learn everything again.

The last word

A disaster destroys in a few minutes what a community took years to build. It does not destroy what the people who live there know how to do: the market woman who knows her suppliers, the fisher who knows which boat suits his coast, the shopkeeper who knows why his customers came. Recovery starts with them, and often before anyone else.

Your club can join them, as long as it arrives as a neighbor rather than a savior: go and see, listen, connect, fund rigorously, measure, and leave cleanly when the time comes.

Appendix A: Rapid Economic Assessment Form

This form goes with Chapter 3. It gathers, ready to photocopy, the questions and grids your team will take into the field. The questions are drawn from published guides, with the source given for each block; they are adapted and sometimes shortened. Fit them to your area, to the language of the people you interview and to the disaster. Do not read them out like a questionnaire: they are conversation starters.

A1. Before going into the field

To fill in at a team meeting, before the first visit. Acronyms: MIRA, Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment; PDNA, Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (see Chapter 3).

Question	Team's answer
Does an official assessment (MIRA, PDNA, sector assessment) already exist? Who is leading it? Do we have its results?	
What pre-disaster data do we have (club diagnosis, registries, chamber of commerce, census)?	
What decision should this assessment inform?	
Which two or three activities or markets are we selecting?	
What is the key question for each?	
Who is on the team? Which pairs? Which dates?	
How do we introduce the assessment without promising anything?	
To whom will we report the results, and when?	

The six criteria for choosing an activity (based on the Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis toolkit, EMMA, 2010):

- ☐ Importance for the lives and incomes of the affected women and men
- ☐ What the authorities and the major organizations are already doing
- ☐ How badly the disaster hit it

- ☐ Fit with your club's skills and network
- ☐ Timing and season (harvest, tourist season, holidays)
- ☐ Whether a realistic response exists

Suggested introduction: "We are members of the Rotary club of [town]. We are meeting the merchants and craftspeople of the neighborhood to understand what the disaster has changed for their business. This visit does not entitle anyone to aid and commits us to nothing; it helps us find out where we could be useful, and we will tell you what we have learned. Would you be willing to talk with us for about twenty minutes?"

A2. Key informants

Elected officials, municipal departments, chamber of commerce, merchants' or craftspeople's associations, neighborhood leaders. Length: up to one hour. Source: PDNA Guidelines, Volume B, chapter on employment, livelihoods and social protection, Annex 3.

1. What are the main ways in which people make a living in this area?
2. Do women do different things to make a living than men? Which ones?
3. Which are the most vulnerable groups, where are they located, and what is their relationship to those making a living in the area?
4. Which groups have been most affected, and why?
5. What has been the general impact of the disaster on how people make a living? (Keep in mind the proportion of shops or businesses closed or collapsed, of fields flooded or damaged, roads closed, marketplaces.)
6. What are people doing to cope? What are they likely to do?
7. What are the immediate priorities to support?
8. What can be expected from the government agencies and organizations present?
9. What changes are required for lasting recovery and for being less vulnerable to the next disaster?

A3. Entrepreneurs and small business owners

Length: 20 to 40 minutes, on site, in person. Sources: PDNA employment guidelines, Annex 3; EMMA, boxes 4.5 and 4.7; World Bank damage and loss assessment method.

Situation

1. Did your business close after the disaster? If so, for how long? Has it reopened?

2. What are the estimated damages, at replacement cost, to your premises, equipment and machines, raw materials and finished goods?
3. Have your costs gone up (more expensive materials and transport, cleaning, demolition, repairs)?
4. Has your turnover dropped (fewer customers, canceled contracts)?
5. Is your business held back by a lack of workers (employees gone, injured, busy with their own families)?

Customers and suppliers

6. How many customers do you have these days? At what price do you sell now, and at what price at the same time last year?
7. Who are your suppliers, and where are they? Are they still delivering to you?
8. If your customers came back, how fast could you supply as much as before? Twice as much? Three times as much?

Credit and cash flow

9. Did you sell to your customers on credit before the disaster? How much are you owed today?
10. Do your suppliers still give you credit?
11. Do you have an outstanding loan? With whom? Can you repay it on the planned schedule?

Outlook

12. What are your main problems in working today?
13. What could solve them? What would allow you to start up again?
14. Do you plan to stay here, leave, or do you not know yet?

The World Bank guide also asks owners about the difficulties they foresee: financing and credit needs, availability of goods to sell, availability of labor.

A4. Community leaders and households

Length: 20 to 30 minutes; interview women separately if possible. Sources: PDNA employment guidelines, Annex 3; EMMA, box 4.4.

1. How did people make a living before the disaster? What were your main sources of income at this time of year (wage or day labor, selling crops or livestock, petty trade, money sent by family)?

2. What skills exist in the community and in households?
3. What damage did the disaster cause? What effect has it had on your livelihoods?
4. Which activities have stopped, and why (crops or livestock lost, roads cut, buildings collapsed, no more goods)?
5. If you lived from day labor: do you find as much work as before? At the same wage?
6. If you lived from selling your products: do you sell as much? At the same price?
7. How is your family getting by? What have you changed to cope? (Watch for answers that signal the sale of tools, livestock or work vehicles, debt, or children taken out of school.)
8. Have any organizations already stepped in?
9. If you received money rather than goods, what would you buy first? Where?
10. What would enable people and businesses to resume their activity?
11. What were daily wages, skilled and unskilled, before the disaster? And today?

A5. The marketplace

Length: one interview with a market representative or key informant, then a day for two people to go around the traders (30 to 40 minutes per trader). Source: Rapid Assessment for Markets (RAM) of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, 2014, Tool 8.

Heading	To note
Identification	name, location, market day, contacts and their phone numbers
Physical damage	stalls, market hall, warehouses, access, water, electricity
Demand	have customers come back? which ones are missing?
Supply	number of wholesalers and retailers before and now
Capacity	could traders increase their sales by half, or double them?
Supply chain	where goods come from, by which roads, which links are cut
Prices	current prices of four or five key products, and usual prices this season
Contacts	merchants' association, market manager, chamber of commerce

A6. Damage, losses, needs grid

One column per business or activity visited.

Heading	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3
Damage			
Losses			
Needs to restart			
Main obstacle			

Reminder: **damage** is the assets destroyed, at pre-disaster prices; **losses** are what no longer comes in or now costs more; **needs** are what it takes to restart. Do not count twice: a business's losses include the wages it no longer pays.

A7. Monitoring sheet per trader

Source: EMMA, box 4.10. As the toolkit points out, understanding the trend matters as much as having precise figures.

Trader:	Before (baseline)	Now	Trend
Sales volume			
Purchase price			
Selling price			
Stock			
Credit given and received			

A8. Order-of-magnitude calculations

Source: PDNA employment guidelines. Always give a range, and cross-check two sources when you can.

- **Workdays lost** in an activity = number of workers before the disaster × days worked per year × percentage drop in activity.
- **Income lost by employees** = number of employees affected × average wage × estimated time without work.
- **Income lost by the self-employed** = number of micro-enterprises affected × people per micro-enterprise × average income per person × percentage drop × duration of the drop.

Accuracy benchmark from EMMA: with twenty people interviewed, an average is at best accurate to within plus or minus 10%; with ten, to within plus or minus 30%.

A9. Price monitoring

To set up if your club distributes cash, vouchers or goods (Chapter 5). Source: MARKit, 2015.

- Three to five traders per market, always the same ones, taking care not to wear them out; in a small market with three or four retailers, all of them.
- The same day and time each week; market day if the market is weekly. At least once a month.
- For each product, the most common price, not the average; weigh local units.
- Indicative thresholds suggested by the source as a cue to ask questions: a change of 7.5% from one week to the next, 15% over two weeks, 30% from one month to the next.

Week	Product 1	Product 2	Product 3
1			
2			
3			
4			

A10. Organizing the team

- Pairs; one marketplace per pair per day (RAM).
- Indicative split of interview hours (EMMA): households 15%, traders and local employers 30%, wholesalers and large buyers 30%, key informants 15%, reserve for follow-ups 10%.
- Every evening: update the market map, summarize the interviews, complete the forms, review the next day's schedule (EMMA, box 5.1).
- In-person visits, by members the interviewees know; no questionnaire sent to business owners hit by the disaster.

A11. Feedback and participation

- ☐ The results have been presented to the people interviewed before any decision

- ☐ Women, young people, people with disabilities and the poorest have been heard, separately if necessary
- ☐ People know how to give feedback without fear of losing aid
- ☐ No promise has been made
- ☐ The data has been shared with the town hall, the humanitarian coordination and the chamber of commerce
- ☐ Personal data is protected (consent, limited access)

A12. Last questions before concluding

Based on the checklist in the livelihoods guidelines of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, 2010):

- ☐ Do we understand the main ways people make a living in the area?
- ☐ Do we know how households and businesses are coping?
- ☐ Do we know who is least able to cope?
- ☐ Do we know what ideas the affected people have to speed up their recovery?
- ☐ Do we know what the main obstacles to recovery are?
- ☐ Have we considered the market opportunities and constraints for each activity?
- ☐ Do we know what other projects are planned or under way, and whether the affected people can access them?

A13. Conclusion by activity

Activity	Conclusion	Who acts
	nothing to do / obstacle to report / need to address	

Appendix B: Recovery File Template

This appendix brings together the pieces each chapter has added to your club's recovery file. Filled in, it runs to about twenty pages. It serves three purposes: making decisions within the club, convincing the district and partners, and, if the project needs it, preparing a global grant application to the Rotary Foundation, several of whose questions are taken up in the headings below.

You fill it in following the order of the book, but it is a living document: the assessment form will be updated, the funding plan revised, the organization chart completed at every handover. Date each piece and keep the successive versions. Name one person who keeps the file from one presidency to the next (Chapter 11).

Piece 0: Project identity

Heading	To fill in
Disaster	type, date, affected area
Project area	municipality, neighborhood, sector
Host club	name, president, project coordinator
District	number, governor, district Rotary Foundation committee chair
International partner club	if one already exists
Date the file was opened	
Person who keeps the file	name, role, length of commitment

Piece 1: "Who does what" map (Chapter 2)

Question	Answer
Who leads the reconstruction (national authority, town hall)?	
Where are coordination meetings held, and when?	

Question	Answer
Who is already active, by sector (livelihoods, shelter, water, education)?	
Where does Rotary fit (club, district, action groups)?	
What no one is doing	

First version in Chapter 2; Piece 8 completes it.

Piece 2: Economic assessment form (Chapter 3, Appendix A)

- Existing assessments consulted (MIRA, PDNA, sector assessments): which ones, results retained.
- Two or three critical activities selected, with the criteria that justified the choice.
- For each activity: the damage, losses, needs, main obstacle grid.
- The people and groups heard, including women, the informal sector and home-based workers.
- The date results were reported back to the people interviewed, and to whom the data was passed on.
- For each activity, the conclusion: nothing to do, obstacle to report, or need to address.

Piece 3: Shift decision (Chapter 4)

Heading	To fill in
Date of the finding	and who made it (club, district, authorities)
Disaster guide indicators	met, partly, not met, with the evidence
Market signals	are markets working? is aid getting in the way of local hiring?
Next review	date the decision will be reexamined

"Stop" list: for each emergency activity the club runs, the criterion for stopping and the handoff (who will take over for the people who still need it).

"Start" list: the preparatory work launched and the funding file opened.

Piece 4: "Do no harm" filter (Chapter 5)

For each project idea, the written answers to the five questions in Chapter 5, then the decision.

Project idea	Answers to the five questions	Decision
		go / redesign / do not launch

For any project that injects cash or goods: the planned weekly price survey (products, traders, day, person in charge; Appendix A, block A9).

Piece 5: The four levers and their timeline (Chapters 6 to 9)

"Money" component (Chapter 6)

Heading	To fill in
Local financial partner	name, legal status, years in operation
Checks done	accounts, portfolio, audit, rescheduling policy
Form of support	lender liquidity, restart grants, savings, transfers
Safeguards against over-indebtedness	who assesses, how

"Skills" component (Chapter 7)

Heading	To fill in
Target trades	and the demand that justifies them
Employers and sites committed	names, number of jobs or apprentices
Training partner	and certification awarded
After the reconstruction	what will become of the people trained

"Markets" component (Chapter 8)

Heading	To fill in
Value chain selected	product, area
Broken link	and the actor who held it before

Heading	To fill in
Response chosen	and why it restores rather than replaces
Buyer identified	
Lead group	cooperative, association, producer group
Date set by the season	planting, harvest, fishing season

"Places" component (Chapter 9)

Heading	To fill in
Place chosen	street, market, market hall, business park
What keeps it from coming back to life	and who is responsible for it
Lead committee	merchants, owners, municipality
Operating plan	for any building considered: owner, management, maintenance, closure
Walls and activity	who funds each

Timeline of the four levers

Lever	Start	Handover	To whom
Money			
Skills			
Markets			
Places			

Piece 6: Funding plan (Chapter 10)

Component	Source	What it pays for, and does not	Application date
	club funds		
	disaster grant (district)		
	district grant		

Component	Source	What it pays for, and does not	Application date
	global grant		
	other funders		

To check before applying: the current version of the Foundation's conditions (Appendix E); the eligibility of each expense; who pays for the walls when there are any; the use of donations received "for the emergency."

Piece 7: Three-year organization chart (Chapter 11)

Role	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Host club president			
Project coordinator			
Project finance lead			
Monitoring lead			
Contact at the partner club			
Contact at the district			

Add: the action groups to consult and when; the academic and professional partners; the date of each handover and what is passed on.

Piece 8: Map of actors and coordination commitments (Chapter 12)

Actor	What it does	Contact	What we exchange
Reconstruction authority			
Town hall			
Humanitarian coordination			
NGOs in the same sector			
Chamber of commerce			

The club's commitments: register with the coordination; align with the agreed prices and wages; share its data; state its gaps; report back; announce its exit.

Piece 9: Monitoring plan (Chapter 13)

Indicator	Baseline	Frequency	Who collects

Add: five to eight indicators at most; the baseline date, before the first payment; the three-year timeline; the complaint channel open to beneficiaries; the date results will be reported back; the standard measures the Foundation requires if the project goes through a global grant.

Piece 10: Exit plan (Chapter 14)

Heading	To fill in
Exit criteria	what must be true to leave (time, results, milestones)
Target date	and its seasonal margin
Successor for each activity	
Owner of each asset	and deed of transfer
Transfer budget	
Follow-up after the end	who, when, with what resources

Piece 11: Economic preparedness plan (Chapter 15)

- The activities and markets your area cannot afford to lose.
- The list of merchants and employers, and how to reach them when networks are down.
- The financial partner that will step in, and its crisis plan.
- The existing public or humanitarian programs, and how your club will align with them.
- The state of the district: qualification, reports up to date, disaster committee.
- Where the memory of the last disaster is kept, including this file.

Before submitting a global grant application

If your project goes through a global grant, check that the file meets the requirements recalled in Chapter 10, in the current version of the conditions:

- ☐ the community needs assessment is done and the project follows from it (Piece 2);

- ☐ the community took part in the design, and its role in the project is described;
- ☐ the two sponsors are identified, one in the project country, the other outside it (Pieces 0 and 7);
- ☐ the budget contains no ineligible expense and no expense incurred before approval (Piece 6);
- ☐ the monitoring plan uses the standard measures and includes a baseline (Piece 9);
- ☐ sustainability is demonstrated: who will keep the results going after the end (Piece 10);
- ☐ the district is qualified and has no overdue report (Piece 11).

Appendix C: Index of Cases

This book draws on real cases. This appendix gathers them in chronological order of the disaster, with the chapter where each is told, what it teaches, and the type of source behind it. It does not tell them a second time.

The "Source" column gives the type of document and how reliable it is: **evaluation** (evaluation report or published study), **official** (document from a government or an international organization), **institution** (figures published by the organization that ran the project, with no outside check), **Rotary** (Rotary publication, with no independent evaluation), **press** (newspaper or magazine article), **testimony** (account by someone involved, reported by a third party). Full references are in Appendix E.

The opening cases

Case	Chapter	What it teaches	Source
Kobe (Japan), 1995 earthquake: the shoe workshops of Nagata	1, 7	the city recovers, the neighborhood does not; time works against the small players	official, secondhand figures
Haiti, 2010 earthquake: the <i>madam sara</i> and the markets of Pétion-Ville	introduction	markets restart before aid arrives, and imported aid competes with them	field report, single source
Haiti, 2010 earthquake: Fonkoze, one-time grant, debt canceled, new loan	1, 6, 10, 13, 15	a lender that knows its clients acts within weeks	institution
Sri Lanka, 2004 tsunami: the Colombo warning about too many boats (2005)	5, 12	a productive asset handed out without counting what already existed ruins the people you mean to help	official (FAO, ministry)
Joplin (United States), 2011 tornado: 530 employers visited in three weeks	3, 15	assessment starts with showing up, peer to peer	testimony reported in a practitioners' manual

Case	Chapter	What it teaches	Source
Shiogama (Japan), 2011 tsunami: the first tuna boat returns to the fish auction	4, 8	the day a value chain runs again is a signal for the shift	testimony published by a trade organization
Omoe (Japan), 2011 tsunami: the cooperative shares its boats	8	a collective rule restarts fishing without debt	official (reconstruction agency)
Christchurch (New Zealand), 2011 earthquake: the Re:START temporary mall	9, 14	organized merchants reopen a place before reconstruction	official and press, no evaluation
Philippines, Typhoon Haiyan in 2013: aligned wages and the Concepcion boatyard	12	coordination protects local labor markets	evaluation
Nepal, 2015 earthquakes: the National Reconstruction Authority and the NGOs	2, 7, 12	government leads, everyone else fits in	evaluation (collection of case studies)
Nepal, 2015-2017: trained masons, mobile masons	7, 14	a skill is only worth something when tied to demand	evaluation
Bangladesh, 2020 Jamuna flood: cash paid before the water	15	acting early protects work tools, not necessarily income	evaluation (comparative study)
Beirut (Lebanon), 2020 explosion: a global grant for the Karantina hospital	10	the real timeline of a global grant; separate walls from equipment	Rotary
Türkiye, 2023 earthquakes: the three-pillar strategy of three districts	11	a district organizes for recovery during the relief phase	Rotary (appeal from a district leader)
Hassa (Türkiye), 2023: the phone survey of the business park	13	what honest monitoring proves and does not prove	evaluation (project report)
Anilao (Philippines), Typhoon Haiyan: 55 boats handed to the fishers' association in late 2018	2, 11, 14	prepare the handover and the ownership of assets	Rotary, single source

The other cases

Case	Chapters	What it teaches	Source
Namibia, 1989 drought: a government emergency management unit, backed by WFP	14	hand over to an institution that stays	testimony (WFP representative, reported in a practical guide)
Bangladesh, 1998 floods: microfinance clients and rescheduling	6	reschedule case by case rather than write off	evaluation
Gujarat (India), 2001 earthquake: owner-driven reconstruction	9	aid paid in installments and local craftsmen put the local economy to work	evaluation and NGO
Aceh (Indonesia), 2004 tsunami: reconstruction as an economy that stops	1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 14	prepare what will replace the construction boom	official (multi-donor fund)
Zimbabwe, food aid program described in 2005: fifteen cattle dip tanks rehabilitated with 360 workers	14	the activity is not the exit; train the people who will maintain it	NGO, reported in a practical guide, single source
Sri Lanka, 2005: grants to microenterprises allocated by lottery	6	the same amount does not have the same effect in every trade	evaluation (randomized trial)
Sri Lanka, 2005: subsidized loans at 6%	5	cut-price credit can drive defaults up	evaluation
Pakistan, 2005 earthquake: an end date for relief; training craftsmen	4, 7	a political date helps change modes; a skill can outlive the construction work	official
New Orleans (United States), Katrina in 2005: businesses reopening	1, 3, 13	a business reopens if its neighbors reopen	evaluation (published studies)
Lebanon, 2006, after the war: a method carried over (vocational training and employment)	7	start from the employer	evaluation
Haiti, 2010-2011: paid rubble clearing, then payment by the cubic meter	4, 7	paid work must announce how it will change and end	official (UNDP)

Case	Chapters	What it teaches	Source
Port-au-Prince, 2010: rice and the small wholesalers	5, 8	in-kind aid depresses local markets; find the broken link	evaluation (market analysis)
Les Cayes (Haiti), October 2011 rains: Fonkoze's catastrophe microinsurance	15	the cancellation and the payout covered about half the losses; the rest was mostly indirect	evaluation (small sample)
Port-au-Prince, 2011: the Iron Market reopens	9	a reopened place does not bring its customers back on its own	press
Christchurch, 2011: the first month for small businesses	1	the surroundings (access, power, water) close businesses	evaluation
Minamisanriku (Japan), 2011: temporary shops	9	keep the merchants in place	official
Shizugawa Bay and Watari (Japan), 2011: rebuild less, but better	8	a disaster can change the way people produce, if the producers decide	official and certification body
Philippines, Typhoon Haiyan in 2013: final evaluation of the CARE program	13, 14	73% of assisted households earn an income, 2,785.15 pesos a month against 2,000; speak of contribution; sustainability expected, not measured	evaluation
Tacloban (Philippines), 2014: planned end of cash transfers	4, 14	announce the end from the start	evaluation
Leyte (Philippines), 2014: International Labour Organization programs	7, 14	restart what exists rather than create; what does not survive	evaluation
Nepal, 2015 earthquake: recovery loans funded by an Asian Development Bank grant	6, 13	99% repayment at maturity in July 2018, but loans disbursed fifteen to thirty months after the earthquake	institution (funder's report)
Khokana (Nepal), 2017-2018: training women through a global grant	7, 10	the realistic scale of a club project	Rotary
Nepal, 2015: the District 3292 plan	11, 12, 15	how a district organizes itself	Rotary (plan, not results)
Puerto Rico, 2017 hurricanes: small businesses without power	1, 13	a lost service closes a business; survivorship bias	official (Federal Reserve)

Case	Chapters	What it teaches	Source
Dominica, Hurricane Maria in 2017: social protection as a channel	15	build on an existing public system	evaluation
Beira (Mozambique), Cyclone Idai in 2019: grants to microenterprises	6	small sums restart some trades, not all	evaluation (randomized trial)
Beirut, 2020: rapid assessment of businesses	9	assess in a few days, business by business	NGO
Dadu (Pakistan), 2022 floods: planting support	8	farm aid must arrive before planting time	evaluation
Hassa (Türkiye), 2023: prefabricated business park	9	four players for one temporary place	evaluation (project report)
Mozambique, El Niño drought in 2023-2024: anticipatory action in nine districts	15	indicators also improve among non-beneficiaries; look for what the system does not cover	evaluation (WFP qualitative study, thirty interviews)
Romagna (Italy), 2020, during the pandemic: an example of assessment method, not a disaster; from donations to hospitals to assessment	3, 5	assess before you give	Rotary

What this index shows

Two things, which the book also says in its chapters.

First, Rotary cases of economic recovery are few in public sources, and none has had an independent evaluation. They are documented by Rotary's own publications.

Second, the most precise studies come from wealthy countries (United States, Japan, New Zealand) or from programs run by large organizations. Their mechanisms hold elsewhere; their figures do not.

If your club runs a recovery project, document it: baseline, indicators, results, failures. It could appear in a future edition of this index.

Appendix D: Glossary

This glossary gathers the Rotary, humanitarian and economic terms used in the book. Each definition follows the one given in the chapter shown in parentheses, which explains the term in detail. Rotary Foundation amounts, caps, rates and deadlines are not included: Chapter 10 and Appendix E give them, with the date of the document that sets them. Organization acronyms are listed at the end of this appendix.

Numbers

3W, 4W (*Who does What Where*): a table of which organizations are present, by sector and by location, kept by each cluster and compiled by OCHA; the 4W variant adds "when" (Chapter 12).

A

Anticipatory action: action taken before a forecast hazard strikes, based on forecasts and on criteria agreed in advance. In Bangladesh in 2020, it protected tools and livestock without speeding up the return to work (Chapter 15).

B

Baseline: a snapshot of the situation taken before the project; after a disaster, it also records what people remember of the time before (Chapter 13).

Build back better: using the post-disaster phases to increase resilience, livelihoods included (United Nations, 2017). Its limit, according to the PDNA guidelines: it brings no fundamental change in the area's level of development (Chapter 2).

Business continuity plan: a plan that describes how a business resumes after an interruption; it says how to restart, not how to avoid being destroyed (Chapter 15).

C

Cadre of Technical Advisers: volunteer Rotarians who review, monitor and evaluate Foundation-funded projects and, on request, advise on their design. One of its members visits some global grants while the project is under way (Chapters 6, 10, and 11).

CALP Network: an international network devoted to cash and voucher assistance, author of *The State of the World's Cash 2023* (Chapter 5).

Cash for production: cash for work paid by the volume of work done, for example by the cubic meter of rubble in Port-au-Prince in 2011 (Chapter 7).

Cash for work: wages paid for short work of public benefit, at a rate agreed among the organizations involved, with an exit planned from the start (Chapters 4 and 7).

Cash transfers: aid paid in cash; the default option when markets work, with risks opposite to those of in-kind aid (Chapter 5).

Cash Working Group: the forum where organizations align daily wages and transfer values (Chapter 12).

Catastrophe microinsurance: small-value insurance tied to an MFI's loans, like the one Fonkoze launched after the 2010 earthquake (Chapters 6 and 15).

CED (*community economic development*): a Foundation area of focus governed by a policy statement and guidelines dated April 2024; the subject of the CED guide (Chapters 5 and 10).

CHS (*Core Humanitarian Standard*): a quality and accountability standard (2024 edition) whose commitments are written from the point of view of the people affected. Without recognized verification, an organization may only write "We are working towards the application of the CHS" (Chapters 3, 12, and 13).

Cluster: humanitarian coordination by sector, created in 2005 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The early recovery cluster led everywhere by UNDP is outdated: since 2016, recovery has run through coordination among clusters (Chapters 2 and 12).

Code of Policies (*The Rotary Foundation Code of Policies, Rotary Code of Policies*): the collected policies of the Foundation Trustees and of the Rotary International Board, cited in their October 2026 versions (Chapters 2, 10, and 11).

Community assessment: a study of a community's needs, carried out with the community; without one, the Foundation does not consider an economic development project (Chapters 3 and 10).

Contiguuum: humanitarian, recovery and development interventions running at the same time, as opposed to the "continuum," where they follow one another (Chapter 2).

Contribution (not attribution): the honest way to state a result when there is no comparison with people who were not helped: the project "contributed" to the change (Chapter 13).

Cooperating organization: a governmental or nongovernmental organization, or an educational institution, that takes part in a global grant project, which must remain "initiated, controlled, and managed by Rotary members" (Chapters 11 and 12).

Cooperative: a business owned and governed by its members. The Japanese cases show it organizing the sharing of scarce tools or owning shared equipment; no study proves that it withstands disasters better (Chapter 8).

Core Humanitarian Standard: see CHS.

D

DaLA (*Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment*): the World Bank's method for assessing damage, losses and needs (2010), based on the ECLAC distinction that the PDNA also uses (Chapter 3).

Damage: total or partial destruction of physical assets, valued at replacement cost at pre-disaster prices (Chapter 3).

DDF (*District Designated Fund*): the share of Annual Fund contributions that the SHARE system makes available to the district. It funds the district grant and can be committed to a global grant, matched by the World Fund (Chapters 10 and 11).

Disaster guide, CED guide: the first books of the trilogy, *Rotary Club Guide: Autonomous Disaster Response* and *Rotary Club Guide: Community Economic Development* (Introduction).

Disaster Response Grant (DRG): a Foundation grant for relief and recovery after a recent natural disaster, requested only by the districts in the affected area; a bridge during the shift (Chapters 4 and 10).

District: all the clubs in a region, led by a governor who changes every year; the district holds the qualification and is the only one that can request disaster response grants and district grants (Chapters 2 and 11).

District grant: a Foundation grant funded by DDF, for small, short activities, such as a community assessment or a renovation (Chapter 10).

DNA-RAG (*Disaster Network of Assistance Rotary Action Group*): a Rotary Action Group devoted to disasters, cited by the Foundation Code. Its public mission runs from preparedness to support for long-term recovery (Chapters 2 and 11).

Do No Harm: a framework designed for conflicts by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2004), the fourth core standard of the MERS. The five-question filter in Chapter 5 is a proposal of this book (Chapter 5).

DRFC (*district Rotary Foundation chair*): chair of the district Rotary Foundation committee. The DRFC co-signs the use of DDF and confirms that global grant applications are complete and that clubs are qualified; the sitting governor cannot hold the role. Not to be confused with the grants subcommittee (Chapters 10 and 11).

E

Early recovery: an approach that meets the recovery needs that arise during the humanitarian phase, with mechanisms aligned with development. "Early Recovery is never just a 'phase'" (Chapter 2).

EMMA (*Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis*): a toolkit from Oxfam, the IRC and Practical Action (2010) for a "rapid, rough and ready, good-enough" analysis of a few critical markets (Chapters 3 and 5).

Exit strategy: a plan that organizes the withdrawal of outside resources without compromising the results: phase down, phase out, or phase over (Chapter 14).

F

Farmer field schools: a training method for groups of farmers promoted by the FAO, which notes that they are not the first point of intervention after a disaster (Part III).

Forecast-based financing: according to the IFRC, early actions funded automatically as soon as a threshold set in advance is reached (Chapter 15).

Four phases: before, during, after, always; a breakdown specific to the trilogy (Chapters 1 and 2).

G

Global grant: the Foundation's main tool for a recovery project, carried by two sponsors. It pays for no expense incurred before its approval and for no new construction of a place where people live or work (Chapter 10).

H

Host club: the club in the affected area, local sponsor of a global grant; it assesses, designs the project with the community, and oversees implementation (Chapter 11).

I

Index insurance: farm insurance triggered by a measurement, such as rainfall, rather than by assessing each loss; little demand at market price, according to a 2016 review (Chapter 15).

International sponsor: a club or district in another country, the second primary sponsor of a global grant; it co-funds the grant and co-signs the reports (Chapters 10 and 11).

L

Levers: money, skills, markets and places, the four means of restarting the economy in Part III (Chapters 6 to 9).

Link: a stage in a value chain and the player who holds it; the broken link is often in the middle of the chain (Chapter 8).

Local economic recovery: an ILO approach (2010) that restarts an area through supply and demand and favors local purchasing (Chapter 9).

Losses: changes in economic flows (lost income, higher costs). They last until full recovery and can exceed the damage, or occur with no damage at all (Chapter 3).

M

MAG (*Market Analysis Guidance*): an ICRC and IFRC guide (2014): the larger the intervention, the more cash risks inflation and in-kind aid risks deflation (Chapters 4 and 5).

MARKit: a price monitoring guide (2015) based on a few traders surveyed each week (Chapter 5).

MERS (*Minimum Economic Recovery Standards*): the SEEP Network standards (third edition, 2017), companions to Sphere. Their "key indicators" judge the quality of a program, not incomes (Chapters 5 and 13).

MFI, microfinance institution: a professional lender of small sums, often also a collector of savings. The club does not lend itself: it funds and checks an MFI that knows its clients (Chapter 6).

MIRA (*Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment*): an overview of needs by area, in the first weeks (Chapter 3).

N

Needs: what it takes to restart. The value of damage is used to estimate reconstruction needs, the value of losses to estimate economic recovery needs (Chapter 3).

P

PCMA (*Pre-Crisis Market Analysis*): a guide from the IRC, Oxfam and USAID (2016); with a baseline built in normal times, an update is enough after the shock (Chapters 3 and 15).

PDNA (*Post-Disaster Needs Assessment*): an assessment by sector, carried out at the government's request with the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank (Chapters 2 and 3).

Productive assets: goods used to earn a living (boat, nets, machine, tools, stock, livestock). The MERS call for replacing them only once the population has stabilized (Chapters 4, 5, and 8).

Programs of Scale: a single grant awarded each year by competition to a multiyear program with outside partners; out of reach for a club on its own (Chapter 10).

Q

Qualification: the process that ensures that districts and clubs have "the appropriate legal, financial, and stewardship controls in place." One late report blocks any new application (Chapter 11).

R

RAG: see Rotary Action Group.

RAGCED (*Rotary Action Group for Community Economic Development*): the Rotary Action Group for community economic development. The recovery mandate its chair reports is described in no public document, and the handoff from DNA-RAG to RAGCED is a proposal of this book (Chapters 2 and 11).

RAM (*Rapid Assessment for Markets*): ICRC and IFRC guidelines (2014) for practitioners who have little time (Chapter 3).

Recommendation 205: the ILO Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (2017), addressed to governments (Chapters 1 and 7).

Recovery: the restoration, and where possible the improvement, of the livelihoods, activities and assets of a disaster-affected community (Introduction and Chapter 2).

Recovery file: the pieces the club builds chapter by chapter, from the assessment form to the preparedness plan (Introduction and Appendix B).

Regional grants officer: a member of Rotary staff in charge of grants, who can assess whether an idea is eligible before the application (Chapters 10 and 11).

Remittances: money sent by emigrants to their families, which often arrives before aid (Chapter 6).

Rescheduling: rearranging a loan's repayment schedule after the shock, case by case, preferred to writing it off (Chapter 6).

Rotary Action Group (RAG): an international group with expertise that helps clubs and districts carry out projects. It "is not an agency of RI" and contacts clubs only with the governor's express permission: it is up to the club to call it (Chapters 2 and 11).

S

Savings group: a group whose members save together and lend to one another (village associations, rotating savings groups). Its social fund does not hold when everyone is hit at once (Chapters 6 and 15).

Seed fair: a fair where farmers exchange their vouchers for the seeds of their choice (Chapter 8).

Sendai Framework: the United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which calls for preparing recovery before the disaster (Chapters 2 and 15).

Service Project Center: a Rotary resource that *A Guide to Global Grants* (2025) lists among the forms of support for preparing a project (Appendix E).

SHARE: the system that splits Annual Fund contributions between the District Designated Fund and the World Fund (Chapter 10).

Shift: the move, decided with the district and the authorities, from "saving lives" to "rebuilding lives." This book bases it on the five indicators of the disaster guide, a tool specific to the trilogy, and on two economic signals; no international list exists (Chapter 4).

Shock-responsive social protection: using a public social protection program in the face of a shock, by increasing benefits (vertical expansion) or the number of beneficiaries (horizontal expansion) (Chapter 15).

Sphere: the Sphere Association handbook (2018), which brings together the Humanitarian Charter, the Core Humanitarian Standard and minimum standards (Chapter 5).

Standard measures: the indicators in the Foundation's monitoring and evaluation supplement (April 2015), including businesses supported, people trained and jobs created (Chapter 13).

Start-up grant: capital paid once to an entrepreneur; one-time, announced as such, preferably not by the lender (Chapter 6).

Survivorship bias: the flaw of surveys that question only businesses still alive, and so underestimate closures (Chapters 1 and 13).

T

Terms and Conditions: the conditions specific to each Foundation grant, cited in their July 2026 versions; operational rules that can change at any time (Chapter 10).

Three employment tracks: stabilize incomes, restart the local economy, establish lasting employment; a model carried over to disasters by Recommendation 205 (Chapters 1 and 2).

V

Value chain: the stages that take a product from producer to customer (inputs, production, storage, processing, transport, sale), each with its people and its money (Chapter 8).

Vouchers: coupons exchanged with merchants or at a fair for goods chosen by the person receiving aid (Chapters 5 and 8).

W

World Fund: the share of SHARE contributions managed by the Foundation, which matches DDF committed to global grants (Chapter 10).

Organization acronyms

Acronym	Organization
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CGAP	Consultative Group to Assist the Poor
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organization; also its secretariat, the International Labour Office
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

Appendix E: Sources and Rule Verification

This appendix tells your club where to check the Rotary Foundation's rules, which change, then lists the book's main sources chapter by chapter, so you can go back to the original.

Checking the Rotary Foundation's rules

Every Foundation rule cited in this book was read in the official documents in force on October 2, 2026. Each of these documents makes the same point: the Foundation can change them at any time. A figure in this book is therefore a starting point, never a guarantee.

The documents read, and their version

Document	Version read	What it governs	Chapters
<i>Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Global Grants</i>	July 2026	global grants: conditions, funding, prohibitions, reports, microcredit	4 to 15
<i>Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation District Grants</i>	July 2026	district grants	6, 10, 13
<i>Terms and Conditions for Rotary Foundation Disaster Response Grants</i>	July 2026	disaster response grants	2, 4, 10, 13
<i>The Rotary Foundation Code of Policies</i>	October 2026	disaster policy, qualification, sustainability, matching, Programs of Scale	2, 10, 11, 13, 14
<i>Rotary Code of Policies</i>	October 2026	Rotary Action Groups	2, 10, 11
<i>Areas of Focus Policy Statements</i>	April 2024	community economic development area of focus	6, 8, 10, 15
<i>Community Economic Development Guidelines Global Grant Funding</i>	April 2024	requirements for economic projects	3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15
<i>A Guide to Global Grants</i>	2025 edition	preparation advice, resources	10, 11

Document	Version read	What it governs	Chapters
<i>Global Grant Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Supplement</i>	April 2015	monitoring, standard measures	13
<i>Six Steps to Sustainability</i>	fact sheet, PDF of March 2025	six sustainability principles	10, 14
<i>Conducting Community Assessments</i>	July 2024	community needs assessment	3, 12
<i>District Qualification Memorandum of Understanding</i>	in force as of July 1, 2024	district qualification, record keeping	11

Two remarks. The monitoring supplement dates from 2015, but it is the version the Rotary website was still serving in October 2026. And where the Foundation Code, the *Guide to Global Grants* and the *Terms and Conditions* differ, this book goes with the *Terms and Conditions*: Chapter 10 gives two examples (construction, the 10% caps). Ask your regional grants officer to confirm.

Where to find them

Foundation documents are published on **My Rotary** (my.rotary.org), the Rotary members' site. Global grant applications are made online, in the My Rotary **Grant Center**; check there as well that the monitoring supplement has not been replaced (Chapter 13).

As of October 2, 2026, the following addresses led directly to the official document:

- Global grant Terms and Conditions: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/terms-and-conditions-rotary-foundation-global-grants>
- District grant Terms and Conditions: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/terms-and-conditions-rotary-foundation-district-grants>
- Disaster response grant Terms and Conditions: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/terms-and-conditions-rotary-disaster-response-grants>
- Foundation Code: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/rotary-foundation-code-policies>
- Rotary Code: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/rotary-code-policies>
- Areas of focus policy statements: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/areas-focus-policy-statements>
- CED guidelines: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/community-economic-development-guidelines-global-grant-funding>
- Guide to Global Grants: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/guide-global-grants>

- Monitoring and evaluation supplement: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/global-grant-monitoring-and-evaluation-plan-supplement>
- Six Steps to Sustainability: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/six-steps-sustainability>
- Conducting Community Assessments: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/community-assessment-tools>
- District qualification memorandum: <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/district-qualification-memorandum-understanding>

If an address no longer works, search for the exact title in the My Rotary document library.

Whom to ask

- **The district Rotary Foundation committee chair (DRFC)**, in the first week: the district's qualification, overdue reports, available district funds, whether this year's district grant is already committed (Chapters 10 and 11).
- **The regional grants officer**, on Rotary staff: the 2025 *Guide to Global Grants* states that this officer can assess whether an idea is eligible before you start the application. This is the person this book sends you to for the questions the documents do not settle (see below).
- **A member of the Cadre of Technical Advisers** who specializes in community economic development, to review the project design.
- **The RAGCED action group** and **the district international service chair**, whom the April 2024 CED guidelines list, along with the two previous contacts, among the resources to consult "early during your planning."

The *Guide to Global Grants* also lists, among Rotary's forms of support, the Service Project Center, the district Rotary Foundation committee and the district resource network.

The numerical rules cited in this book

The following tables gather the book's numerical rules, with the article that sets each one. They hold for the versions shown; check them before any submission.

Disaster response grant (*Terms and Conditions*, July 2026)

Rule	Value	Article	Chapters
Disasters covered	natural, occurring within the previous six months	p. 1	2, 4, 10
Amount	up to \$25,000, to the districts in the affected area	5.B	4, 10

Rule	Value	Article	Chapters
Applying committee	at least three Rotarians, including governor and DRFC	3.A	10
Contingency and administration	at most 20% and 3%	3.K, 3.L	10
Report	within six months of receiving payment	7.C	4, 10, 13

Large-scale disaster (Foundation Code, October 2026): disaster response grants of up to \$50,000, at most two open per affected district for one year, by decision of the chair of the Trustees (art. 21.010); the disaster must meet three of the following four criteria, none of them mandatory: be a natural disaster, affect at least one million people, receive global media coverage, require outside assistance because the economic capacity of the affected area is not enough for stabilization and short-term relief (art. 33.120.1.2); Chapter 10.

District grant (*Terms and Conditions*, July 2026, and Foundation Code)

Rule	Value	Article	Chapters
Funding	up to 50% of the SHARE allocation, one per Rotary year	6.A, 6.B; Code 33.020.1	10
Application	by May 15 at the latest	3.A	10
Payment conditions	met before May 31	7.F	10
Final report	12 months after payment, or 2 months after full use if sooner	8.H	10, 13
End of activities	within 24 months of the transfer of funds	8.J	10
Microcredit	registered MFI, active for at least three years	1.B.11	6, 10

Global grant (*Terms and Conditions*, July 2026)

Rule	Value	Article	Chapters
Budget and contribution	budget of at least \$30,000; World Fund up to 400,000	6.A	10
Matching	80% of the district funds committed	6.C; Code 33.050.2.3	10
Cash	not matched; 5% surcharge if paid to the Foundation	6.F, 6.H	10

Rule	Value	Article	Chapters
Foreign share	at least 15% of contributions from outside the project country	6.J	10, 11
Capped items	contingency, project management, measuring results: 10% each	3.I, 3.J, 3.K	10, 13
Grant committee	three members per primary sponsor club	3.B	11
Review levels	thresholds of 50,000 and \$200,000 of World Fund contribution	3.Q	10
Payment in installments	above \$50,000 of World Fund contribution	7.I	10
Progress reports	within 12 months of the first payment, then within 12 months of acceptance of the previous report	8.J	10, 13
Final report	within 2 months of the end of activities	8.K	10, 13
Record keeping	at least five years	8.H	10, 13
Cancellation deadlines	12 months to submit, 6 to approve, 6 to pay, 12 to start	9.A to 9.D	10
Serious misconduct	exclusion from grants for up to five years	8.I	11
Microcredit	MFI of at least three years; capital lent twice over 18 months	11.B, 11.E	6, 10
Microcredit interest rate	at most the lower of the national average minus 10 points and 36%	11.G	6

Other documents

Rule	Value	Document	Chapters
Programs of Scale	\$2 million a year, program of 3 to 5 years	Foundation Code, 33.140	10
Partner contribution	at least \$500,000 in cash	Foundation Code, 33.140	10
DRFC term	three years	Foundation Code, 25.010.4	11
Monitoring results	"ideally for three or more years"	Foundation Code, 33.070	13, 14
Funds held by an action group	up to \$100,000 per project	Rotary Code, 42.020.14	10, 11

Rule	Value	Document	Chapters
Action group activity	at least three multiclub or district projects a year	Rotary Code, 42.020.6	11
Sustainability plan	over two to four years	CED guidelines, p. 4	10, 14
Major equipment	financial plan over three to five years	CED guidelines, p. 7	7, 10
Preparedness project	emergencies of the last three to five years	CED guidelines, p. 15	15
Monitoring plan	seven steps; six economic standard measures	Monitoring supplement, April 2015	13

What the documents do not settle

The documents read do not cover everything. The book refers the first four points to the DRFC or the regional grants officer, the last to RAGCED:

- the line between repair, renovation and reconstruction, since new construction is excluded from global grants (Chapters 9 and 10);
- the acceptable form of a beneficiary contribution, since no funds may be collected from beneficiaries (Chapters 5 and 10);
- how to fit grants to small businesses into a Foundation grant (Chapter 6);
- how the three-year SHARE cycle mentioned in the Code works, and so the year in which donations become available (Chapter 10);
- the economic recovery mandate that the RAGCED chair attributes to the Foundation, known only through his correspondence (Chapters 2 and 11).

Outdated figures still in circulation

Old figures still circulate, even in the disaster guide: a disaster response grant report every twelve months (May 2019 version; six months today); records kept for seven years (at least five today); district funds matched one for one, or 100% for district funds and 50% for cash (80% of district funds today, and cash is not matched). Date every figure in your file, and check it against the version in force.

Sources by chapter

The Foundation documents are listed above. Addresses for the other sources are not reproduced: they change, and every title can be found by searching for it.

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Conclusion and appendixes

The conclusion brings no new fact. Appendix A draws on the guides in Chapter 3 (PDNA, EMMA, RAM, MARKit); Appendixes B and C draw on the chapters.

Method

The research for this book was carried out in nine thematic files, from the international recovery framework to real cases. It entered 275 sources in a single register: 100 read in full, 132 in part, and 43 that could not be obtained, each with the reason for the failure. The same register includes four sources from the research for the CED guide, read in full, for a total of 279 rows. Primary sources were preferred: official texts, evaluations, published studies. Press articles, Rotary publications and figures reported by the organization that ran a project are flagged as such in the text.

Every sensitive figure, quotation or rule was logged as a **sensitive point**, with its level of certainty and a drafting instruction: 382 points, of which 165 established, 151 probable, 42 unverified and 24 contested. An unverified or contested point does not go into the text, or goes in with its caveat. That is how the figure of "40% of businesses never reopen" was set aside: no original source could be found.

The manuscript was then checked in four passes, against the text of the sources themselves: 886 statements checked, including all the Foundation's rules.

Limits remain, and the text states them where they apply. Several cases rest on a single source: the *madam sara* of the introduction, Anilao, the Beirut timeline, the Fonkoze figures, the press dispatch on the Sri Lanka boats. No Rotary case of economic recovery has had an independent evaluation. A few documents could not be read, including the Rogers and Coates review (2015) on sustainability after exit. RAGCED's recovery mandate is known only through its chair's correspondence.

The research files, the source register and the list of sensitive points are kept with the manuscript.

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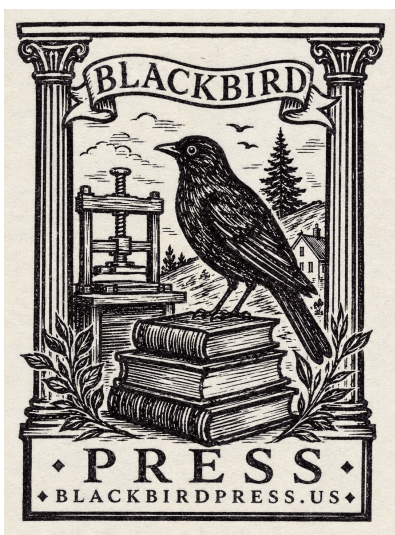
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Two days after the 2010 earthquake, Haiti's market women were already walking down to the markets of Pétiion-Ville. The organizations that came to help chose to import food instead.

After a disaster, whether a community recovers or empties out depends on how fast its own incomes, markets, and businesses start running again. A Rotary club serves recovery when it reconnects that economy, not when it replaces it.

This guide picks up where relief ends. Drawing on more than forty documented real cases, from Christchurch to Joplin, from Haiti to Sri Lanka, it turns international recovery standards into decisions a club can make. With it, your club will be able to:

- Assess the economic damage in a few days
- Run every project through a “do no harm” filter
- Restart money, skills, markets, and places
- Fund projects under 2026 Rotary Foundation rules
- Plan monitoring, exit, and handover from day one

“Who used to sell this here before the disaster?”