

# Better Funding Practices:



## Providing Emergency Grants to Partners

### INTRODUCTION

The climate crisis is driving increasingly frequent and severe disasters: floods, drought-related crop failures, extreme heatwaves, landslides, hurricanes, and typhoons. These events disproportionately affect the communities that have contributed least to the crisis. The climate justice framework underscores this imbalance — those least responsible often bear the greatest burden.

In the absence of timely support, community-based organizations are often forced to act as first responders, stepping in to protect lives and livelihoods with limited resources. For philanthropic funders, this presents both a responsibility and an opportunity: to stand with partners in moments of acute need by offering emergency grants.



# Why Provide Emergency Grants?



Emergency grants are a critical lifeline when unexpected crises threaten partners' survival and disrupt their work, immediately and into the future. These funds:

Offer flexibility in a rapidly changing context.

Enable partners to maintain stability and serve their communities effectively.

Help meet urgent needs (e.g., food, shelter, water, medical care).

To be most effective, emergency grants must be  
**fast, flexible, and largely unrestricted.**

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# How to Provide Emergency Grants Effectively



Here are key practices we've found effective when supporting partners during crises:

## Create a Clear Emergency Grant Policy

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Develop an internal policy that outlines:

- Roles and responsibilities.
- Criteria for support.
- Pre-allocated or earmarked funding.

## Ensure Partners Are Aware

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Communicate proactively with partners so they know:

- That emergency funding is available.
- How and when they can access it.

## Simplify the Request Process

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During a crisis, capacity is limited — allow requests to be submitted via:

- Email or even messaging platforms (e.g. WhatsApp).
- A short, clear format focused on essential information.

## Respond Rapidly

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- Aim to review and respond within 24 hours.
- Keep follow-up questions minimal and relevant.

## Minimize Reporting Burdens

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- Streamline reporting requirements.
- Focus on essential accountability without overburdening partners.

# How to Provide Emergency Grants Effectively



Here are key practices we've found effective when supporting partners during crises:

- 6 Allow Flexible Use of Existing Funds**
- Permit reallocation of current grants when needed to meet urgent demands.

- 7 Support Recovery and Resilience**
- Understand that disasters unfold in phases: immediate response, recovery, and long-term resilience.
  - Continue support as partners rebuild, adapt, and plan for future risks.
  - Assist in developing sustainable funding and capacity-building strategies post-crisis.

- 8 Disburse Funds Quickly**
- Transfer funds within 24–48 hours of approval.

- 9 Sustain Support Beyond the Headlines**
- Recognize that funding often peaks in the immediate aftermath of a crisis, then sharply declines. Yet, the path to recovery is long. Continued investment is crucial for long-term impact.



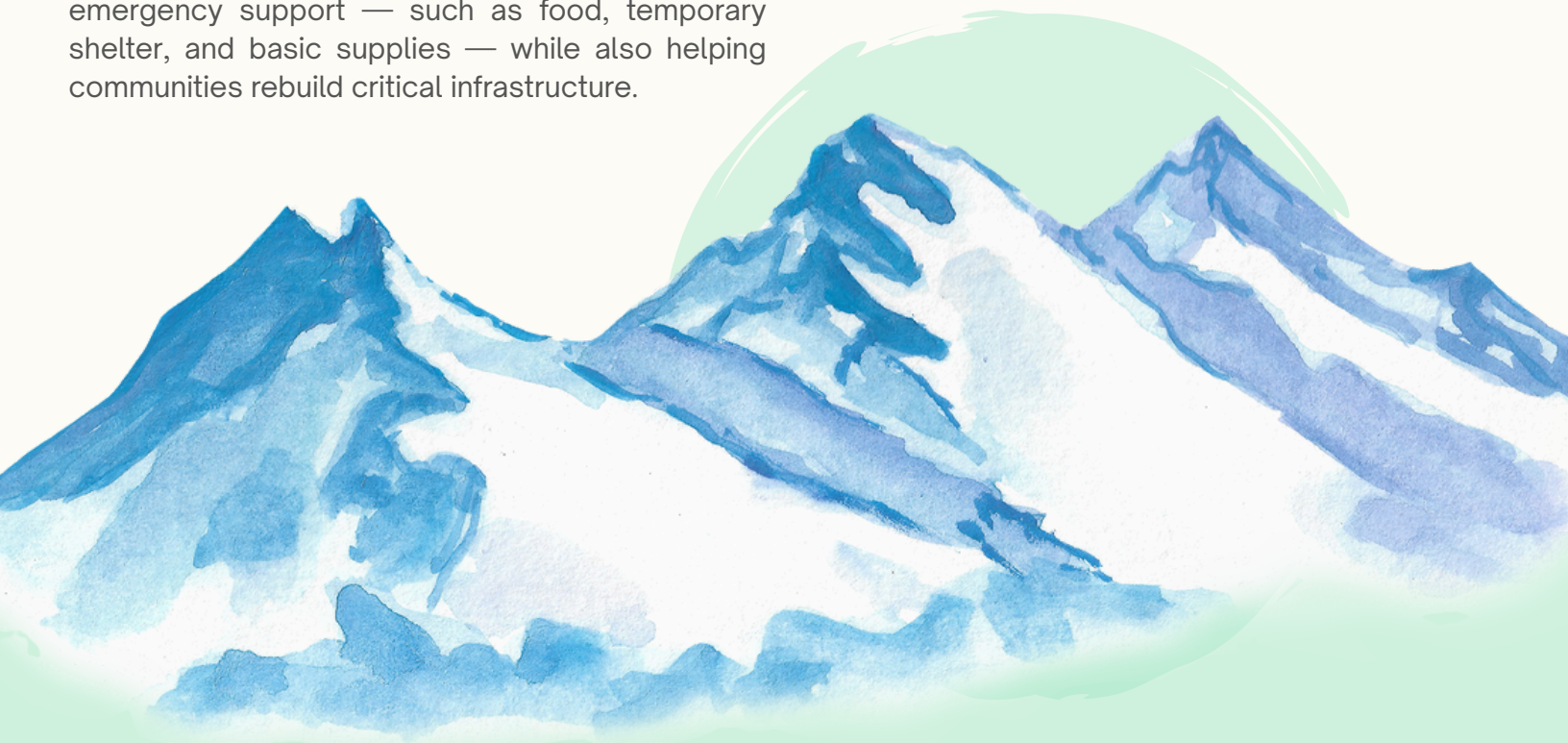
# What Does This Look Like in Practice?



Nepal is among the countries most vulnerable to climate-related disasters. In the remote Himalayan regions where **PHASE Nepal** operates, landslides and floods — especially during the monsoon season — pose an ongoing threat to lives, homes, farmland, schools, and health facilities.

PHASE Nepal is often the only NGO present in these hard-to-reach areas. This makes them a de facto **first responder**, delivering immediate emergency support — such as food, temporary shelter, and basic supplies — while also helping communities rebuild critical infrastructure.

Between 2020 and 2023, GoPhilanthropic Foundation provided PHASE Nepal with over USD \$32,000 through six emergency grants. While relatively modest in size, these grants were issued within 24–48 hours of receiving a request — demonstrating the power of **agile, responsive funding** in crisis situations.



Despite receiving support from larger institutional donors, PHASE reported that very few funders were able — or willing — to act quickly when emergencies struck. GoPhilanthropic's decision to continue its Rapid Response Fund (originally launched during the COVID-19 pandemic) ensured that PHASE — and other grassroots partners — had reliable, flexible funding when they needed it most.

This case highlights the vital role of unrestricted, rapid-response funding in climate-affected regions. Even small grants, when delivered quickly and without red tape, can be the difference between delayed aid and immediate relief; helping communities survive and recover from disasters with dignity and resilience.



# Final Thoughts

As we navigate a more volatile climate landscape, emergency grantmaking is no longer a peripheral activity — it's a core element of equitable, responsive philanthropy.

We would love to hear from you:

As a funder, what are your best practices for supporting partners in times of crisis?

As a community-based organization, what are the best ways funders can support you?

**Share your experiences: what has worked, and what hasn't?  
Let's learn together and strengthen the field.**

