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INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Hurricane Sandy: Youthful Energy and Idealism Tackles Real-World Disaster Response

The LLIS.gov team identified several innovative Whole Community ideas and practices to support preparedness, response, and recovery following Hurricane Sandy.

SUMMARY

Following Hurricane Sandy, several solar power companies partnered to deploy, install, and maintain 10-kilowatt mobile solar generators in some of the hardest hit communities in New York and New Jersey. These generators allowed survivors, volunteers, and relief workers to charge cell phones, power laptops, heat food, and power other critical electronic equipment.

DESCRIPTION

Hurricane Sandy

On Monday, October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy made landfall near Atlantic City, New Jersey, pushing a massive storm surge to shore and generating winds to up to 75 miles per hour. The National Hurricane Center downgraded Sandy to a post-tropical cyclone shortly after landfall. Sandy caused storm surge, record flooding, and wind damage. Nine days after the storm, a large nor'easter caused massive snowfall undermining response operations in the disaster-impacted areas.



Hurricane Sandy Image Captured by a NASA Satellite on October 28, 2012

As a result of these events, millions of people were left without power and hundreds were displaced along the East Coast from North Carolina to Maine. New York and New Jersey, two of the most populated states in the nation, were particularly impacted by the storm.

The Occupy Sandy Movement

The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement came together in late 2011 in New York City, with the occupation of a Manhattan public park. Approximately one year later, OWS retooled itself almost overnight as Hurricane Sandy approached the U.S. East Coast. Armed with 21st century internet technology and a passion for social media, OWS morphed into [Occupy Sandy](#) to provide assistance to Hurricane Sandy victims in the northeastern United States. Within 4 months, this grass-roots organization had expanded to 60,000 volunteers, which included



Occupy Sandy Facebook Page Logo

OWS members, other Occupy movement members, and non-Occupy volunteers.

Occupy Sandy volunteers leveraged social media and the internet extensively to conduct disaster relief efforts. Members used [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and other social media sites effectively to inform others on what supplies and assistance were needed in which affected areas. This extensive use of social media allowed the Occupy Sandy movement to collect nearly 1 million dollars in victim donations and distribute food, clothing, medical supplies, and construction materials to thousands of survivors in New York and New Jersey.



Occupy Sandy Volunteers at the Rockaway, NY (Source: FEMA)

Although traditional disaster response organizations, such as FEMA and the American Red Cross, are still trying to assess the real impact of Occupy Sandy's activities, some clear accomplishments include:

- Food distribution centers setup in two churches in Brooklyn, and other hubs such as Coney Island
- Online donation and volunteer social media sites setup through [InterOccupy](#) and Occupy Wall Street technical operations staff
- Nearly 10,000 meals a day served in the week after Sandy by 15,000 volunteers recruited via online social media sites
- Motor pool setup to transport construction teams and medical committees to survivors in the field
- "[Occupy Sandy's Wedding Registry](#)" that allowed people to donate goods and money for the purchase of listed critical items for survivors
- Nearly \$718,000 spent by the end of January 2013 on needed items through local business registries and delivered directly to construction crews and survivors from local businesses

REFERENCES

Amazon.com Occupy Sandy's Wedding Registry
<http://www.amazon.com/registry/wedding/32TAA123PJR42>

InterOccupy
<http://interoccupy.net/>

Occupy Sandy Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/OccupySandyReliefNyc>

Occupy Sandy Recovery
<http://interoccupy.net/occupysandy/>

Occupy Sandy Twitter account
<https://twitter.com/OccupySandy>

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