

INTERNATIONAL DISASTER FUND

REACT

Amount requested: £449,550

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Purpose of grant request: Constructing a community room in the Barbican Library.

Type of cost: Capital

Ward(s) benefitting: Likely to benefit wards in the Northwest of the City, but the room will be available to any City community group.

The Applicant

REACT is a humanitarian rapid response charity helping vulnerable communities survive and recover in the event of a disaster in the UK and internationally. The Charity are wholly inclusive in its approach and will deploy anywhere in the world where it believes vulnerable communities are suffering and where it can make a difference.

The Charity acts the moment there's a crisis, by rapidly deploying volunteer Response Teams to humanitarian emergencies within six hours in the UK and 24-48 hours internationally. REACT Responders are trained by REACT to identify and meet critical unmet needs at pace to prevent communities being overwhelmed by sudden or unexpected events, such as floods, wildfires, terrorist attacks, pandemics, earthquakes, and tropical storms. The Charities mission is to provide interim support until the affected communities can recover.

Background and detail of proposal

The scale and complexity of crises affecting communities are escalating worldwide. The intensifying effects of climate change are driving more frequent and severe natural disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, and wildfires, which strain local and national response capacities. At the same time, ongoing conflict and economic instability are compounding vulnerabilities, leaving millions in need of urgent assistance. In many cases, governments and international organisations are overwhelmed or unable to respond swiftly enough. It is increasingly small dynamic charities like REACT that are making the biggest difference.

REACT Responder Teams specialise in high tempo, dynamic and complex crises; plugging gaps and bolstering critical infrastructure during the chaotic and volatile early phase of an emergency, until conventional relief organisations are able to respond at scale. It is an integral part of the international humanitarian ecosystem, aligned with International and UK agencies including: British Red Cross, UNOCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, DEFRA (Dept for Environment,

Food & Rural Affairs), NET (National Emergencies Trust), VCS(EP) Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership.

REACT are set up to make decisions quickly. For International disasters they look to respond within 24-38 hours. REACT carefully select, trains and upskills military and blue light veterans and civilian volunteers who demonstrate the desire and aptitude to become first rate rapid responders. Responder's skills and experience enable them to provide a broad range of support and constantly adapt to ever changing conditions. Responders typically:

- Lead in crisis: bringing order to chaos through experienced leadership and initial coordination.
- Protect the vulnerable: ensuring people are removed from immediate danger
- Source and coordinate aid: providing shelter, sanitation, food, water, and medical assistance
- Strengthen capacity: enhancing international preparedness through community resilience and training.
- Work in partnership: Collaborating with local communities, agencies and Partners to maximise impact

From discussion with REACT it is clear that they provide a critical service at the very start of an emergency, deploying quickly and supporting other humanitarian organisations as they arrive. REACT generally respond to most humanitarian disasters and are happy to focus CoLC funding on natural humanitarian disasters.

Financial Information

REACT have a turnover of £3 Million with income being split across donations, legacies, partnerships and trading activities. REACT look to keep operational costs down as much as possible. 72% of its annual budget is spent on staff responsible for engaging Responders, building local networks and partnerships, monitoring and evaluation and technical expertise. REACT anticipate that 80p of every pound donated goes directly towards our humanitarian activity

Recommendation

From discussions with REACT they provide response at pace to humanitarian disasters both in the UK and internationally. They are a smaller aid organisation to most allowing for flexibility in decisions making. Funding through the International Disaster Fund would support REACT in its work, with a specific focus on international humanitarian disasters. Funding will support the Charity to increase its capacity and ensure that our International Funding is delivered quickly to areas that need it most. Funding is therefore recommended as follows:

£75,000 over two financial years (2024/25 £50,000; 2025/26 £25,000) to REACT to support with the costs of responding to International Humanitarian Disasters.