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**The role of global logistics companies  
in disaster relief efforts:  
An investigation into benefits,  
challenges and critical success factors  
of cross-sector collaborations**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Logistics and Supply Chain  
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**Jan Maether**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the benefits and opportunities, as well as the challenges and risks cross-sector collaborations in humanitarian aid and disaster relief generate. The study also points out the major critical success factors that commercial logistics companies and humanitarian aid organisations require in order to build efficient partnerships. Additionally, guiding recommendations that support the development of successful collaborative efforts are presented.

The study is based on an extensive literature review discussing the complexities of humanitarian aid logistics and reveals the differences between commercial and disaster relief supply chains. Different types of corporate-humanitarian collaborations and cross-learning potential are highlighted. The literature review also deals with the possibility of establishing partnerships within the framework of corporate social responsibility (CSR). A questionnaire investigates the respondents' point of view about the strengths, opportunities, and risks of cross-sector collaborations as well as requirements for successful partnerships. Case studies are also included in this thesis in order to discuss strengths and weaknesses and to pinpoint lessons learned from model partnerships.

Research finds that corporate-humanitarian collaborations, when successfully established, provide their partners with mutual benefits such as knowledge transfer, sharing of resources and best practices. Also, the improvement of a company's public image and awareness can be achieved. Humanitarian aid organisations profit from the building of capacity in between disasters, including staff training and the provision of readily accessible resources from the partnering company. The findings also demonstrate that such collaborations are expected to show a moderate development in the future but need to be built on clear partnership agreements determining the scope of involvement as well as each partner's goals and objectives.

Research is solely based on collaborations between commercial logistics companies and humanitarian aid agencies focusing on relief operations after sudden-onset natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes). Further research is needed especially in the field of risk assessment and risk management of collaborations, the influence of such partnerships on employees' overall performance, as well as the development of specific key performance indicators (KPIs).

This thesis provides logistics companies and humanitarian relief professionals as well as researchers and readers interested in this particular topic, an overview of the current state of development of cross-sector collaborations. Furthermore, the main critical success factors the logistics industry and the humanitarian aid sector believe are necessary to establish successful partnerships are highlighted.

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## List of Abbreviations

%	percent
&	and
€	Euro (Currency)
AET	Airport Emergency Team
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEP	Courier Express and Parcel Services
COMPAS	Commodity Movement Processing and Analysis System
CRM	Cause Related Marketing
CSF	Critical Success Factor
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DHL	Dalsey Hillblom Lynn
DO	Development Operation
DPWN	Deutsche Post World Net
DRN	Disaster Response Network
DRT	Disaster Response Team
e.g.	exempli gratia
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EMOP	Emergency Operation
etc.	et cetera
EUR	Euro (Currency)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GARD	Get Airports Ready for Disasters
HIV	Human immune-deficiency virus
HRN	Humanitarian Response Network
HtK	Help the Kids
i.e.	id est
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	Internally displaced persons
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFBS	International Federation of Blue Shield
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

km	Kilometre
km/h	Kilometres per hour
kton	Kiloton
LET	Logistics Emergency Team
MA	Medical Aid
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
n.d.	not dated
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
p.	page
p.a.	per annum
PASW	Predictive Analysis SoftWare
PRISM	Public Relations in the Service of Mankind
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SO	Special Operation
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SQL	Structured Query Language
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TEU	Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit
TNT	Thomas Nationwide Transport
TPG	Texas Pacific Group
UCF	United for the Children's Future
UCL	University College London
UN	United Nations
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPS	United Parcel Service
US	United States
US\$	United States Dollar (Currency)
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Programme