



Preparing for Disaster in Haiti & Nepal

AT A GLANCE

Organization
American Red Cross

Industry
International Development

Use Case
Disaster Preparedness

Results

- Simplified data collection
- Scalability across countries
- Spatial analysis

backstory.

The American Red Cross has a long history of using data collection, mapping, and visualization tools. Within the organization's International Division, a new movement has been afoot to identify creative uses of open data and modern applications that can empower Red Cross societies all around the world to more effectively prepare for and respond to disasters of all types --manmade and natural alike. Tools like [Open Street Map](#), often described as the 'Wikipedia of Maps', increasingly offer the Red Cross the ability to identify vulnerabilities to disaster, coordinate assistance, and share critical information when and where it is needed most. The International Division works closely with national Red Cross societies globally to train, coordinate, and share these tools and lessons worldwide.

challenge.

Preparing for and responding to disasters presents a range of non-trivial challenges --particularly with an organization like the Red Cross which relies heavily on people in locations as various as New York City and rural Uganda. When operating with that level of variability and at that scale, it's critical to focus on those technologies that are easy to understand and implement no matter the language, no matter the technical infrastructure, and no matter the level of human capital available.

Data collection that relies on tools like iPhones or web surveys simply don't make sense in places with no internet connectivity or where smartphones are too expensive for use, just as pen and paper collection might not make sense in the middle of New Orleans.

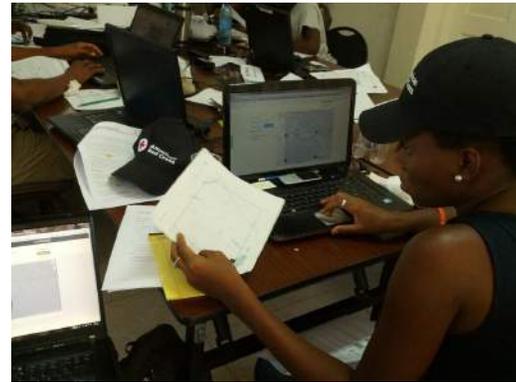
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solution.

The Red Cross chose to use First Mile Geo as a tool that would bend to the lowest common denominator and up again to visualizations. Even from its early prototype form (then called CaerusGEO) the Red Cross International Division was able to bend technology to real-world capacity of their national societies in places like Nepal and Haiti.

Local teams were trained to collect data through pen and paper, map the results, and share insights between local societies and their partners in Washington.



“What’s great about First Mile Geo is that we were able to deliver mapping capabilities to national Red Cross societies without their staff knowing a thing about GIS.”



Robert Banick
GIS Officer, International Division

Learn More.

1-855-466-9494

Hello@FirstMileGeo.com

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