

ELECTRONIC PREPAID SOLUTION

AN INNOVATIVE PAYMENT SOLUTION FOR DISASTER-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

By Oxfam

Project URL: policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2015/05/oxfam-and-visa-team-up-for-innovative-payment-solution-for-disaster-affected-communities

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Time is of the essence in disaster response, and supporting communities who have often lost all of their assets is essential. A major component of this response is access to ready cash and payment methods, and global electronic payments leader Visa has teamed up with humanitarian aid organisation Oxfam to do just that.

The Electronic Prepaid Solution (EPS) project was pioneered in the Philippines, during the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. The project between Visa and Oxfam aims to create the most efficient, simple process to transfer cash during emergencies.

Previously, support has only been possible with significant logistical investment and security risk, but through EPS, Visa has enabled Oxfam to prepare prepaid cards prior to scheduled distribution. These cards are then ready to use by the community immediately, when quick access to money is most important.

The community focus is key. Empowering those affected by disasters to help themselves is all-important, and EPS has seen the cards used to great effect. Between December 2014 and April 2015, almost \$190,000 (£125,000) was loaded onto 2,700 Visa cards to help vulnerable households. These cards have been used at cashpoints, as well as at partner merchant stores, where common purchases are reported to be water, food, sanitation items and medicine. Recipients reported a 100% success rate in using the cards, and often saved sums on the card to help with future emergencies.

Visa's mission is to provide financial access to everyone, everywhere, and teaming up with Oxfam has enabled the company to help those most in need of financial independence. Together, they're now looking at how to scale up EPS and provide other payment services to support community recovery post-disaster.

Image courtesy of Oxfam

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