

Two young girls next to rubble and debris

# HALO

2015 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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2015

## DRONES THAT RESPOND QUICKLY TO DISASTER SITUATIONS

*By Linking The World*

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- Health
- Physical Computing

Since 1990, natural disasters have affected 217 million people worldwide every single year, and 160 countries hold more than a quarter of their populations in regions of high risk from one or more natural disasters. When things go wrong, the situational information available to first responders in the aftermath of a catastrophe can be the difference between life and death.

HALO, which stands for Help and Locate Operations, is a programme created by an NGO called Linking The World. HALO uses unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and remote sensing platforms to gather aerial images of disaster zones. The UAVs provide aid organisations and emergency services with crucial data on the scale of the disaster and the areas that require immediate attention. This allows responders to coordinate relief efforts and deploy aid effectively. Access to this information helps significantly improve responsiveness to disasters, natural and humanitarian.

HALO can be first on the scene, accessing areas that might be difficult or dangerous to access, and collecting high-resolution imagery of the emergency areas. The UAVs can be used to locate survivors and they can also carry a small payload, which could include radios, medicines, water and communications hot spots. Being able to get these things to people in trouble could be a huge help.

In the near future, the UAVs could be used to create temporary high-bandwidth communication networks within the first 24 hours of a disaster, to keep survivors and emergency services connected.

HALO's project director Charles Devaney won the 2014 Drone Social Innovation Award for the company's work in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, where HALO was first used.

*Image 'SG Visits the Philippines' courtesy of United Nations Photo.*

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