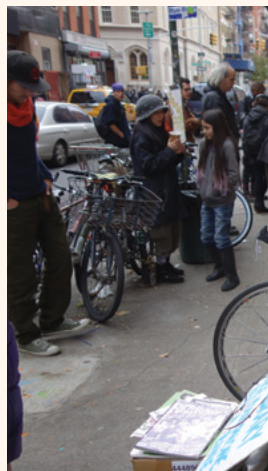


Spontaneous Volunteers

AROUND THE WORLD

When a disaster – natural or man-made – strikes a community, specific emergency-management and non-governmental organisations automatically respond according to pre-established plans. Each of these designated organisations has a specific role to play in delivering responses to effectively mitigate the disaster’s devastation. However, spontaneous and unaffiliated volunteers – neighbours and ordinary citizens – can also be decisive and provide significant contribution to the recovery process. **Carolina Landulfo**, Student Fellow from the Centre for Liveable Cities, shows some examples of such community heroes in this photo essay.





Free Bike-powered Phone Chargers



Thousands of New Yorkers left without power after the first full day of partial blackout, caused by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, received an unusual form of help from grassroots environmental group, Time's Up! Relying on very basic resources – bicycles and eager volunteers – the group set up a bicycle-powered energy station. Volunteers pedalled all day to generate electricity to charge battery-operated devices. This free service was made available until power was restored to all of Lower Manhattan. Bicycles were also used to pump water out of the Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space's basement, power lighting for a downtown bike-repair class, and provide juice to residents of the East Village.



SG Haze Rescue



Amidst the serious haze that affected Singapore in 2013, the result of forest fires in Indonesia, a community of Singaporeans – mainly students – created the Facebook page “SG Haze Rescue” calling for people to donate N95 masks (rated as being able to filter out 95% of airborne particles) to those who were unable to procure any due to shortages, or lack of mobility or funds. The group received donations from all over the world and distributed thousands of masks and other resources to the areas of Singapore that needed most help, such as neighbourhoods with ageing populations. The group also appealed for do-gooders to open up their houses and provide relief for those who did not have air-conditioning at home.





Brisbane Sandbaggers



In the beginning of January 2011, flood emergencies erupted in the Australian states of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, where thousands of people were forced to flee their homes after torrential rains. In order to prepare for potential flooding in the following weeks, hundreds of residents volunteered, helping to fill and distribute sandbags throughout their communities. Sandbags were used to divert stormwater away from entering homes. Members of the community also helped with cleaning debris, filling up potholes caused by the wild weather, and manning the government's call centre.



Colouring a
Grey City



Seeking to improve Egyptians' social responsibility and awareness towards the cleanliness of their own neighbourhoods, a group of five graduates from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Helwan University launched a campaign in 2014 to inject bright colours across the streets of Cairo. They painted many areas, such as the steps of 15 May Bridge, Ghamra's footbridges, and the walls in front of North Giza Court in the neighbourhood of Kit Kat. The project, which started through Facebook, has already gained hundreds of supporters, as well as requests from residents for volunteers to rejuvenate their districts. The group's next project focuses on colouring slum areas in Cairo and Giza.

A devastating earthquake of magnitude 8.8 struck the coast of south-central Chile killing more than 700 people and destroying around 1.5 million houses on 27 February 2010. The seismic activity triggered a tsunami that reverberated through the entire Pacific Ocean, exacerbating damage to the coastal regions. In order to aid the coastal towns in dire need of help, the Curicó community collected clothes and plastic bottles to be filled with drinking water for delivery.



Water and Clothes for Coastal Towns

