20 years of DHL GoHelp: Transforming humanitarian logistics and shaping its future

- Over 77 disaster deployments and 70,000 tons of life-saving aid handled by humanitarian logistics initiative in partnership with UN OCHA
- More than 1,000 trained volunteers in four regional units worldwide, ready to deploy within 72 hours
- Launch of the DHL Academy of Humanitarian Logistics to enhance local capabilities

Bonn, August 19, 2025: GoHelp, the disaster management program of DHL Group, looks back on 20 years of delivering crucial support when and where it matters most to people in need. Since its inception, the initiative has responded to 77 disasters, moving around 70,000 tons of life-saving aid at airports in collaboration with leading humanitarian organizations. GoHelp has evolved and solidified its position as a trusted logistics partner in the humanitarian sector.

“Our work has shaped the way logistics is integrated into global emergency response efforts,” said Thomas Ogilvie, CHRO and Labor Director of DHL Group. “Our compass for the operations is our business purpose: connecting people, improving lives. We focus our offerings on our core competence and only do what we do best: organizing logistics services in every environment.”

Established in 2005, GoHelp sought to elevate humanitarian aid logistics to commercial benchmark levels to facilitate and accelerate disaster response efforts on a truly global scale. This initiative arose in response to the increasing frequency and severity of humanitarian crises, highlighting the critical need for coordinated logistics solutions in emergency situations where every second counts.

At the heart of GoHelp's operations are the "Disaster Response Teams" (DRT) and the "Get Airports Ready for Disaster" (GARD) initiative, which together form a foundation for disaster management in partnership with UN agencies. As the longest-standing private sector partner of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), GoHelp has earned a reputation for reliability, speed, and innovation in humanitarian logistics.

First deployments

The journey began with a pilot program in December 2004, when DHL’s DRT facilitated the logistics of humanitarian aid at Colombo airport in Sri Lanka following the Indian Ocean tsunami. Using its logistical expertise, the DRT sorted and distributed over 7,000 tons of relief supplies, laying the groundwork for the official launch of the Disaster Management Program in 2005. Recognizing a

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disconnect between the logistics and humanitarian communities, Kim Melville, VP Humanitarian Affairs and Sustainable Aviation, said: “By working with UN agencies standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the world’s leading humanitarian organizations, we developed solutions to support disaster relief. Relief supplies arriving from all over the world need to be handled at the airport in critical situations and their logistics have to be coordinated. That’s what we do.”

The first official DRT deployment came shortly after, in response to the devastating earthquake in Pakistan on October 8, 2005, where the team ensured swift and efficient transfer of international aid to the affected areas. The GARD initiative, launched in 2009 and aimed at increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of disaster response at airports, became crucial during the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti in January 2010 for the first time.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, DHL Group played a pivotal role as a logistics expert, delivering two billion vaccine doses to over 175 countries in 2021 and 2022. DHL reinforced the importance of logistics in public health responses. In Costa Rica, the DRT and local volunteers from DHL Global Forwarding provided early support in 2020 by training local people, supporting the establishment of a center for COVID-19 relief supplies and ensuring the efficient distribution of critical relief supplies.

Adapting to global challenges

As global natural disasters rise and the humanitarian sector faces financial constraints, the approach to humanitarian aid is evolving. “With the escalating effects of climate change, the demand for rapid, efficient, and effective disaster response is at an all-time high. Well-trained personnel are essential to the success of any humanitarian initiative,” said Mayyada Ansari, Global Head of GoHelp.

Building on years of experience, GoHelp has introduced a third pillar this year – alongside DRT and GARD. Preparedness and enablement are the goals of the “DHL Academy of Humanitarian Logistics”. It equips humanitarian organizations with the necessary skills to better manage and execute aid deliveries. The academy includes online training and practical workshops, logistics assessments, expert consulting, and digital learning modules aimed at enhancing logistics competencies so that people can receive assistance more quickly and effectively in emergencies.

DHL employees can get involved, too. Ansari said: “Together, we are building a future where every response is faster, smarter, and more effective, ensuring that when disaster strikes, communities are ready – and resilience is already in motion.”

Factsheet

The GoHelp program consists of three pillars:

1. Response to acute disasters with "**Disaster Response Teams**"
2. Preparation for upcoming disasters with "**Get Airports Ready for Disaster**" since 2009
3. Capacity building & training with "**DHL Academy of Humanitarian Logistics**" since 2025

Key Achievements:

- **Disaster Deployments:** 77 global disaster deployments, delivering urgent aid to countries in crisis.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** Over 70,000 tons of life-saving cargo handled, ensuring timely delivery to those in need.
- **Volunteer Force:** More than 1,000 trained Disaster Response Team (DRT) volunteers ready to deploy within 72 hours of a disaster.
- **Training Initiatives:** Approximately 2,000 airport personnel trained through the GARD (Global Airport Resilience Delivery) workshops in 30 countries.
- **Airport Preparedness:** Get Airports Ready for Disaster (GARD) program has prepared 60 airports in 30 countries for emergencies.
- **Regional Hubs:** Active regional hubs on 5 continents: Singapore, Panama, Dubai, Johannesburg, and Bonn, with 11 dedicated colleagues managing GoHelp operations.

Partnerships:

- **UN OCHA:** 20 years of collaboration
- **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):** 15 years of partnership
- **World Food Programme (WFP):** Collaboration since 2020
- **International Organization for Migration (IOM):** Partnership established in 2024

– End –

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DHL Group is home to two strong brands: DHL offers a comprehensive range of parcel, express, freight transport, and supply chain management services as well as e-commerce logistics solutions. Deutsche Post is the largest postal service provider in Europe and the market leader in the German mail market. DHL Group employs approximately 602,000 employees in over 220 countries and territories worldwide. The Group generated revenues of approximately 84.2 billion Euros in 2024.

The logistics company for the world.