

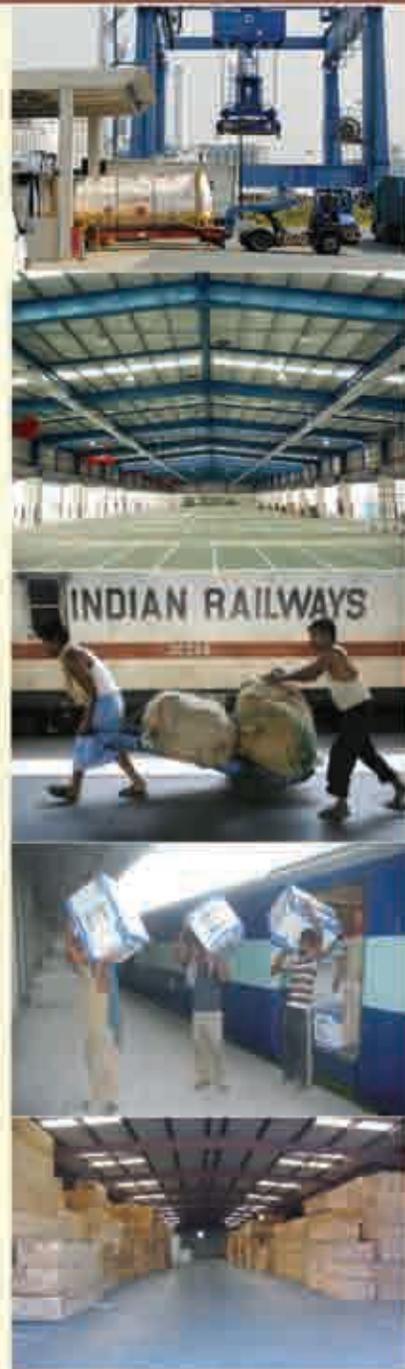
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Corporate join hands for humanitarian logistics

- Walter Glass

This is a real life example of thinking out-of-the-box! This international efficiency is a demonstration of how informal yet professional commercial logistics networks can be pulled together in a short span of time to provide a cohesive response in emergencies. It is a very gripping story of how Logicians' from different parts of the world formed a humanitarian chain to help out the cyclone hit people of Vanuatu.

As category five Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu on 13 March 2015, with sustained wind gusts of 250 kph, I watched the weather reports from the distant safety of our New Zealand living room, firstly in awe of the power of Mother Nature, and then in astonishment at the sheer scale of devastation across this small neighbouring country.

In the wake of Pam, 75,000 people of Vanuatu were left homeless, 95% of crops were destroyed, and the country was effectively flattened. Worst hit were the remote outer islands that were totally cut off and left with inadequate life support – no water, no food, no shelter, no shade – for the poorest people in one of the world's poorest nations.

When a humanitarian disaster of this magnitude and devastation occurs, natural or otherwise, there is an unusual determination to assist, no matter how small or large our individual contributions might be.

This resolve is reinforced when the disaster is close to one's own backyard, as was the case for Vanuatu, hence the significant initial New Zealand and Australian

aid and military uplift preparations and responses. The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) of the Vanuatu government was also well aware of the impending disaster, and other parties such as Red Cross, the UN and Aus-Aid also worked on their respective planned responses, mainly via Port Vila.

Disaster relief via superyachts

Amongst these parties was a private donor consortium under Samaritan's Purse, a reasonably large US faith-based Non-Government Organisation (NGO) that was given the demanding role of servicing the outer Vanuatu islands with water, shelter and medical services.

This group of parties included LIFT Non-Profit Logistics, a disaster relief NGO logistics provider founded by Michael Rettig and based in Atlanta, USA; YachtAid Global (YAG), another US-based NGO founded by Captain Mark Drewelow, which coordinates the delivery of donated educational, medical and clothing supplies to remote communities via a megayacht fleet it manages; and Kalera Yachting Services (KYS), a local Vanuatu firm owned by ex-pat Kiwis Sam and Jess Bell.

YAG found New Zealand to be an excellent logistics



'Last mile' humanitarian logistics – if goods cannot be moved by helicopter, access for the last mile is most likely to be on foot

centre of gravity for its requirements, and called upon two of its fleet to respond: M/Y Dragonfly and M/Y Umbra. The 73.3 m Dragonfly was the first to respond to a general request for assistance put out by YAG. Dragonfly's owner had generously authorised his captain and crew to load medical supplies and other aid items onboard in New Zealand following Cyclone Pam. Dragonfly further welcomed aboard medical personnel and search-and-rescue teams, whose tasks included heading to the outer islands of Vanuatu to assess the situation.

The 50.6 m M/Y Umbra was called upon to act as a support vessel and one of its first tasks was to organise much-needed supplies of water. While berthed in Auckland, a factory produced several thousand 10-litre water containers that were loaded aboard the Umbra prior to her departure from New Zealand.

En route to the islands, Umbra made freshwater while underway, filling the containers, and upon arrival in Aneityum, Vanuatu, immediately delivered the water to the remote villages on multiple islands via helicopter. The Umbra was invaluable with its support vessel configuration and capabilities.

'Last Mile' Humanitarian



Disaster relief aid landed by M/Y Dragonfly, one of a mega-yacht fleet coordinated by YachtAid Global (YAG) which delivers donations to remote communities

Logistics

Not long after the Vanuatu aid response began, I was contacted by Steve Keats of Kestrel Liner Agencies in Florida. My company, Corporate Logistics, had worked with Kestrel back in 2007 and 2008 when I was asked to fix some significant logistics problems with the delivery of stadium seating to all the venues for the ICC (International Cricket Council) World Cup across six West Indian countries. Major changes in strategy saved the day and the ICC was exceedingly happy.

Steve Keats explained that he now gives time to assist his colleague, Michael Rettig of LIFT, and was working with the well-respected Samaritan's Purse. They needed a New Zealand 'contact' to help get some roof-shelter product to Vanuatu urgently. Could I help? My answer was naturally 'yes' inasmuch as I could achieve.

In a call to Michael Rettig, he explained how LIFT was working with YAG in order to get water, food and medical support to the outer islands.

We coined the term and concept of 'last mile humanitarian logistics' during the project to cover the inherent problems in dealing with remote disasters, especially on

islands, where access is very limited and the underpinning infrastructure is such that the availability of land-based equipment is unlikely.

Consequently, if goods cannot be removed by helicopter, access for the last mile is most likely to be on foot. This severely constrains the dimensions and weight of the goods to those which one person can comfortably carry in each trip, and in workable volumes that can be managed by the people given the circumstances.

For example, we figured that one person could manage one hammer, one shovel, one roll of roofing material, one bag of rice, and one 5-litre bottle of water.

Transportation Links

Captain Mark Drewelow was in charge of coordinating efforts with Dragonfly and Umbra. Fortunately, Mark was in New Zealand, so I took the opportunity to meet with him before he returned to San Diego and was impressed with his pragmatic approach and genuine determination to help those in need.

I then contacted Mark Rayner of Ardex New Zealand at their Christchurch headquarters and found they had donated a 40 ft container of Butynol, a butyl rubber membrane used here in New Zealand for roofing and waterproofing, to Samaritan's Purse, but needed to get transport sorted to Vanuatu. Butynol is far superior to plastic sheeting and ideal for the outer island housing rebuild.

As a 'last mile' option, this product was perfect as it could easily be carried by an individual in its rolled form. It was also durable, had a long life if installed correctly, and could be used for a myriad of applications.

The main problem was transporting the Butynol from Christchurch across

Cook Strait to Auckland or Tauranga for export, then to Vanuatu, then to the remote outer islands, without incurring exorbitant freight costs which would make the project non-workable.

I reached out far and wide to my logistics contacts network for assistance, and I was astonished and humbled by the offers of assistance – proof that the logistics sector has a big heart.

This was also a ‘virtual’ contact network – ultimately, there were dozens of people working in several countries, each giving freely of their time, organisational skills and physical resources, yet each only saw the names of the few people with whom they were in direct contact.

Interestingly, I physically met with only two people during the course of this entire project, and sadly would walk past nearly all of these great

people in the street and not know them, such is the ‘below the radar’ nature of logistics.

Donators of transport

Ardex’s transport provider, Toll, donated the cost of trucking from Christ Church to the North Island port of export. This was a significant effort as there were a few changes to shipping schedules, but the product sailed on time. The generosity of the team at Swire Shipping in New Zealand and Australia was also staggering.

Swire covered all FEU (40 ft container) costs free of charge (FOC) and the company has since provided further assistance to the aid effort with over 80 TEUs (20 ft containers) shipped as either FOC or at concessional freight rates. A truly generous corporate response! I am especially grateful to Brodie Stevens, Tony Spelman, Jan-Hendrik Hintz, Natasha Ball and the other Swire staff involved.

Swire came to the party on day one. I got a call from Jan-Hendrik who simply said, “Brodie told me to call you. What do you need?” I explained the situation and he promptly delivered.

A huge thank you

I’ve since heard from the team at Samaritan’s Purse and Sam Bell that some of the rolls of Butynol are being used to re-roof schools and a church in the Shepherd Islands between the islands of Epi and Éfaté in Vanuatu. Other rolls were transferred to the island of Tanna where they are now being used in the construction of 220 single-family homes.

I consider this to have been a very worth while project. Every participant stretched each dollar of goodwill so as to create two, and used their collective commercial logistics savvy, donor kindness and related expertise to do a massive job while also proving the ‘last mile humanitarian logistics’ concept.

Schemes to Enhance Freight Movement by IR

Indian Railways have introduced certain freight marketing schemes for procurement of wagons/ rakes by inviting private investment to enhance existing fleet of wagons (freight carrier) with a view to generate more revenue through higher movement of freight. This information was given by the Minister of State for Railways, Shri Manoj Sinha in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha.

These schemes are:

Special Freight Train Operator (SFTO): For high capacity and special purpose wagons for transportation of selected commodity. Proposals have been received from two parties for procurement of three rakes by each party.

Automobile Freight Train Operator (AFTO): For transportation of automobiles traffic with suitable

design and higher throughput. Proposals have been received for procurement of 12 rakes from two parties. Out of which, 6 rakes have been inducted and running on Indian Railways system.

Railways have introduced an Automatic Freight Rebate : For traffic loaded in traditional empty flow directions w.e.f. 25.06.2014 wherein all rakes loaded in notified empty flow directions are charged at Class LR1 for

trainload traffic and at Class 100 for wagonload traffic subject to certain terms and conditions.

Container Train Operators Policy: Where Private Container Train Operators are allowed to operate container trains for movement of both domestic containers as well as EXIM (Export-Import) containers. While these rakes are owned by Container Train Operators (CTOs), Indian Railways hauls their rakes and realizes haulage charges. At present, there are 387 container rakes owned by Container Corporation of India Limited (CONCOR) and 16 other Container Train Operators (CTOs) who have obtained licenses to operate. During last financial year, container traffic loading on Indian Railways was 48.83 million tonnes registering a growth of 12% over 2013-2014.



A Logistics Park in the offing

Container Corporation of India (CONCOR) and UP Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) are on the verge of finalizing an MoU for the development of a multi-modal logistics park on

the country's longest expressway between Agra and Lucknow.

Once developed, it would be first of its kind logistics park in Uttar Pradesh to be developed with the state-of-the-art facility costing ₹ 4,500 cr will come up on a stretch of 150 acres near Firozabad, which has good rail and air connectivity. Being situated on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway, it would give a huge impetus to the economic activities in the 10 districts of UP that it will cover. The proposed logistics park would expose the traders and farmers of the state to international markets and fetch them handsome prices for their products. The 302-km expressway, a pet project of chief minister Akhilesh Yadav, would be having Mandis, Smart cities, Film cities on its both sides and is likely to be completed by October 2016.



Women break into Logistics

The first meeting of the women's wing of CILT India – WiLAT (Women in Logistics and Transport) was held on 12th June 2015 at CSOI, Chanakypuri, New Delhi after the formation of the new National Committee. This wing is headed by Mrs. Ragini Yechury, Executive Director at Railway Board, New Delhi. Certain decisions were taken for the way forward:

⇒ To improve the visibility more meetings, seminars and

conferences need to be organized.

- ⇒ An effort should be made to have an understanding with some larger body such as UIC, FIA Foundation or the UN.
- ⇒ There is need to increase the membership by involving women from all spheres of Logistics and Transport.
- ⇒ WiLAT can work hand in hand with the Education sub-committee to look for avenues for Training.

The meeting was attended by Mrs. Ragini Yechury (Head WiLAT), Mrs. Rashmi Chaudhary (Rail Bhavan), Mrs. Lily Pandya (Railway Board), Mrs. Suman Chopra (Journalist), Dr. Veni Mathur (Educationist), Mrs. Usha Maurya (Service), Mr. Vinod Asthana (Treasurer CILT India) and Mr. Shanti Narain (Chairman, CILT India). However, Mrs. Divya Jain (MD, Safeducate) and Miss Hena Kausar (DGM, Maruti Training School) could not attend due to unavoidable circumstances.

