

Foundation Supports Disaster Management Through Innovative Philanthropy

The devastating consequences of disaster touch the PMI global community regardless of geography, even as disaster management is undeniably pivotal before, during and after a crisis occurs. For these reasons, the PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF) has examined how best it can support the disaster management sector by leveraging project management for social good.

PMIEF initiated these efforts in 2012, chartering a global task team composed of PMI volunteers to help. In 2013, the foundation and task team invited representatives of agencies, colleges and universities, and research institutions working in disaster management to Washington, D.C., USA to identify key functions and capabilities that are critical to success, yet frequently problematic in their formulation, execution and sustainability. The goal was to deepen an understanding of the sector and to begin to ideate how to pragmatically support it.

A second meeting with a broader range of actors and professional communities in London, England in 2014 further probed these topics, resulting in the development of PMIEF's Disaster Management Grants Initiative (DMGI) the following year. Through DMGI, the foundation invited a select cadre of agencies to apply for funding to receive project management fundamentals training as well as to thoughtfully apply

that training to the unique challenges each identified in its grant proposal. The task team helped to review and to vet proposals, with more than US\$300,000 in grants awarded to three agencies: American Red Cross, CARE USA, and Plan International.

Each grantee implemented its grant-funded initiative while remaining committed to building and exchanging knowledge with one another. In addition, PMIEF engaged a technical adviser and an external evaluator to support grantees' application of their project management training and to collect data about their experience doing so.

In 2016, PMIEF hosted "Project Management in the Disaster Management Sector: Integration,

Capacity, Supports and Sustainability" in Copenhagen, Denmark. At this meeting, influential disaster management practitioners and experts gathered in a two-day roundtable that fostered an interactive exchange about applying project management in diverse hazard contexts and disaster settings. This included preparedness, relief and response, recovery and rehabilitation. The roundtable permitted an examination of DMGI—including lessons learned and their implications—from the perspectives of participating agencies, PMIEF, the technical adviser and the external evaluator. It also promoted meaningful dialogue among these and other attendees to generate

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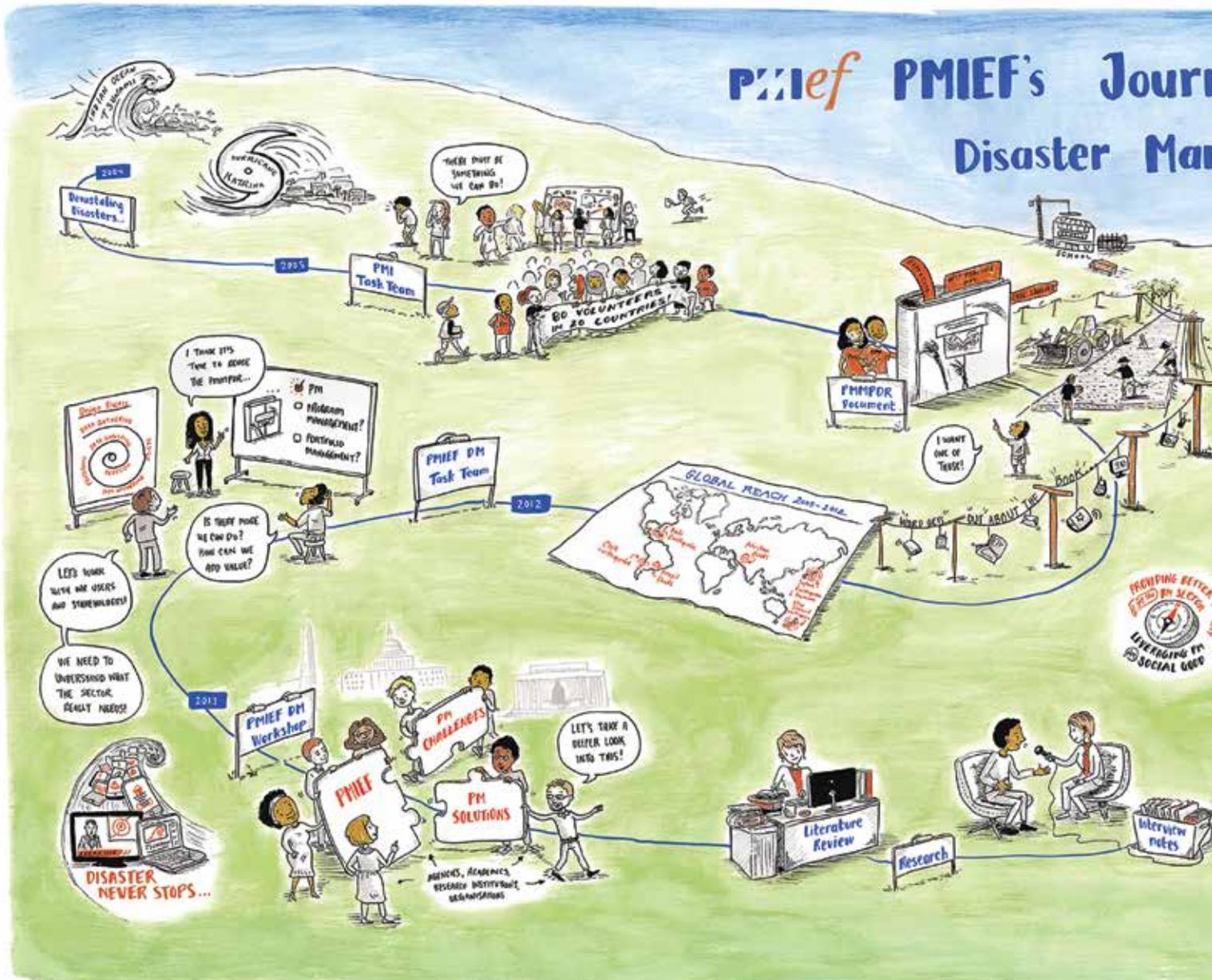
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new ways of thinking on how project management can continue to add value to the disaster management sector. In addition to DMGI agencies, roundtable participants included representatives of the African Centre for Disaster Studies, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center,

Columbia University's National Center on Disaster Preparedness, Harvard University's Humanitarian Initiative and Inter-American Development Bank.

According to early evaluation findings, DMGI grantees find that project management better enables their

strategic planning and is a legitimate, leadership-approved framework for project work. Furthermore, they report that DMGI provided training that is imperative, yet not typically grant-funded. Of particular importance was also the realization that disasters create



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disruptions in this unique sector that challenge the adoption, adaptation and application of project management agency-wide.

The illustration below showcases PMIEF's timeline of disaster management

activities since 2012. In addition, PMIEF will soon release a case study about each grantee's initiative. The foundation will feature these on **pmief.org** in the coming weeks while continuing to examine DMGI's outcomes.

