



EAC CONRAD CARE CAMPAIGN

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Background

When people think of the Caribbean, they think of the natural beauty of sun, sea and sand, rhythmic music, world class athletes and warm, friendly, lively people. We are indeed all that and so much more! Yet this Caribbean Region which we love is made up of a complex environment that faces its fair share of challenges in every sphere of life, including environmental, social, political, economic, and cultural.

As Evangelicals, we feel ourselves not only called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ but to demonstrate this “good News” in response to the socioeconomic issues facing our peoples. The Evangelical Association of the Caribbean (EAC) is the recognised representative of evangelicals in the region and is uniquely positioned to help the church demonstrate God’s love not just to Christians but to people of every background. We accomplish this through the ground-breaking work of the EAC’s Commission on Relief and Development (CONRAD).

1. Volatile Environmental Conditions- The Need

1.1. Fractured Identity and Response

The Caribbean is home to approximately 45 million people, all influenced by slavery and colonialism, and all raised within the same fractured environmental terrain. In spite of our shared plight of natural and manmade disasters including hurricanes, earthquakes, oil spills, and volcanic eruptions, we have been so far been unable to come together to mitigate these hazards that face us so frequently. All in all, the region's many languages, cultures, religions and other traditions bound up in our varying colonial experiences, have perpetuated a deep sense of division among Caribbean citizens.

Unfortunately, this fractured identity and our insular responses have led to a lack of coordination even between Christian denominations and religious groups. The disharmony impacts collaboration between international and regional organizations working in the Caribbean, resulting in a waste of resources and inefficiencies.

1.2. Social and Administrative Issues

While natural disasters are common in the Caribbean, their impact is magnified because of our tumultuous history, our relatively brief experience with self-governance, political corruption and complicated cultural differences. These socio-economic issues result in an imbalance in how aid is distributed as well as the overall fairness and transparency of the process. There is a critical need for administrative expertise, coordination and shared, people-focussed development across the region.

1.3. The negative effect of aid from International Organizations

Frequently, when relief aid is received from international organizations intending to help - because they do not have an appreciation for the context of our environment - the process is impersonal and tends not

to portray true Christian compassion. The result is that aid is delivered in a way that creates more challenges than it solves, including corruption, dependency and destruction of local business capacity, all of which negatively affect the future economic growth and development of the receiving country.

2. Harmony in Diversity – EAC’s Unique Position

2.1. A Gospel-Centred Identity

The EAC provides a unique regional identity as the recognised representative of Evangelicals in the Caribbean. This identity is forged through our unity of faith and the strengthening of our National Alliances, which are the main conduits connecting local congregations into a national community. Each national community then connects with the Caribbean Regional Organisation, the EAC, to form a diverse but harmonised family ready to respond to disasters and other emergencies that impact our communities.

2.2. Networking for Gospel Demonstration through Disaster Relief

Our aim, as the Caribbean’s voice of Evangelicals, is to prepare the church to be the ‘first responders’ at the occurrence of a disaster, anywhere in the Region. The EAC connects the Caribbean church through a network which includes National Evangelical Alliances (NEA), Faith-Based Organizations (FBO), Christian Denominations and Community Churches and is positioned and empowered to respond to these challenges. As the EAC strengthens this network through training and capacity-building its work actively reduces and ultimately eliminates the social injustices that now plague our regional disaster response.

2.3. Caribbean People Helping the Caribbean

The EAC’s grand vision is of a Pan-Caribbean organization promoting Caribbean people helping the Caribbean. While our support includes supplies from our international partners, at the point of contact, the best-case scenario is for the victims of disasters to receive help from familiar faces who speak their language and understand their pain. The Evangelical Church in the Caribbean is represented within every territory and community and because of this relationship, we are in touch with the needs of our people. So, when there are natural disasters and crises, the church can be a powerful vehicle for aiding in support, counselling and relief.

3. A Church-Based Relief Network - Outcome

3.1. Outcome of a Gospel-centred Identity

Whereas there is a fractured Caribbean Identity and response to disasters, CONRAD’s strong, unified Evangelical thrust will help to bridge the divide caused by ethnicity, language, country, and denomination. Our peculiar unity of faith would act as a beacon and a rallying call to action whenever a disaster occurs within the Caribbean.

3.2. Outcome of the Networking for Gospel Demonstration through Disaster Relief

As a Christian Relief network, CONRAD ensures that the church is ready and able to respond quickly, knowledgeably and equitably to disasters, resulting in greater reach, range and recognition for the Kingdom of God. This unity of faith and love in action is a powerful and tangible demonstration of the Gospel. It creates opportunities for other evangelistic efforts in our region. The local evangelical church is no longer alone in its mission but has the power and capacity of the entire CONRAD network, assisting it to create greater Kingdom impact as it responds to the needs of its community.

3.3. Outcome of the Caribbean Helping the Caribbean

As CONRAD prepares Caribbean people for the tasks of fulfilling the relief needs of other Caribbean people, it ensures that the knowledge of our socio-economic context is considered and used in ways that safeguard the sustainability of economies after relief efforts and resources have ended. This approach not only benefits the Caribbean region but our international partners are assured that their generosity is addressing the real needs of the victims in a meaningful, effective way and not creating more regional harm.

4. CARE Campaign – Our Strategy

CONRAD leads the development and execution of the EAC’s campaign of response to natural disasters within the Caribbean. This campaign is referred to as the CARE (Caribbean Aid, Relief & Emergency) Campaign and has three key elements: 1) **CARE Facilities** which would initially be 3 storehouses of relief supplies located strategically in Antigua, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago; 2) **CARE Funds** which is an emergency fund to be perpetually funded by caring individuals, churches, and donor agencies. 3) **CARE Force** which is a cadre of trained disaster personnel ready for emergency deployment across the countries of the Caribbean and internationally.

4.1. CARE Focus

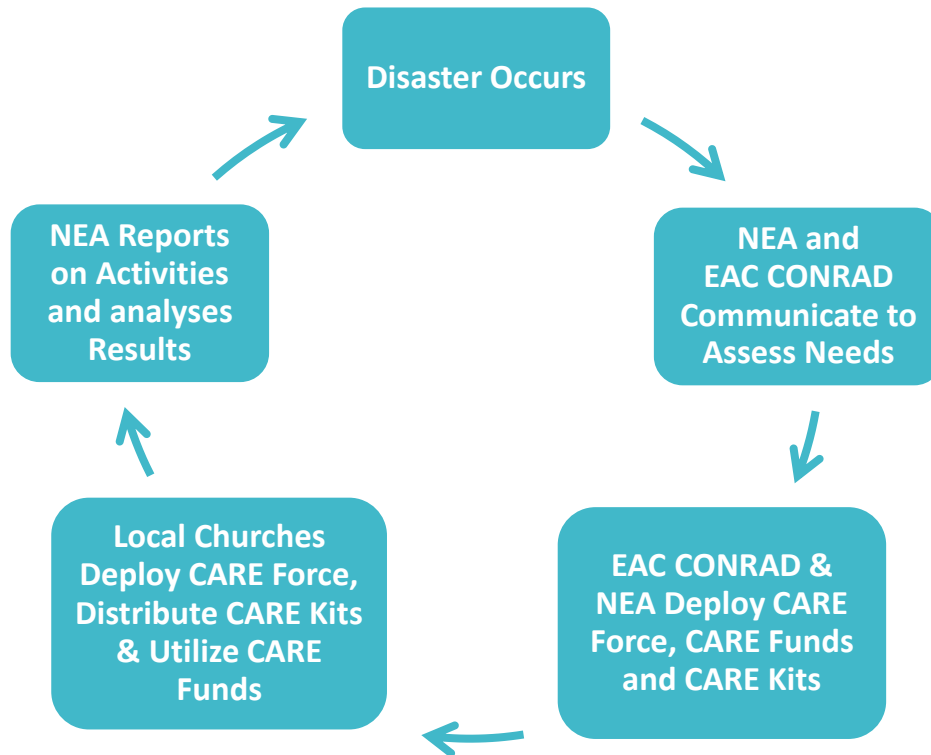
The CARE Campaign kicks off with the **CARE Focus**, which is an annual event geared towards building awareness of natural and manmade disasters and the Church’s role in helping bring relief, recruit volunteers, and raise support funds. This is held once a year in every EAC-affiliated church between the months of June and August. For congregational giving, churches are encouraged to have their members donate, with the donations shared at 3 levels: 25% remains with the local church to support their relief efforts; 25% goes to the National Alliance for the national relief effort, and 50% goes to the EAC for use in regional relief. We expect to raise US\$25,000 through this programme by the end of 2022.

4.2. CARE Activities

The following are some of what the CARE campaign entails:

- MOU’s with government agencies, NGOs & manufacturers to access resources
- CARE Facilities, continuously stocked with donated clothes, food & other non-perishable items
- Establishment of National and Local Church CARE Centres
- The packaging of CARE “Kits”
- Continuous recruitment and training of CARE Force volunteers
- Development of national and regional disaster procedure handbooks
- Ongoing sourcing of “CARE Funds” from individuals & institutions regionally & internationally
- Development of Policies for disbursement and reporting

5. Regional Disaster Relief Flow



1. When a disaster occurs, the NEA in that country and the EAC CONRAD team will communicate to assess the needs
2. The EAC CONRAD team and the NEA will deploy the CARE Force, whether it is locally or based on the size of the disaster and the availability of resources, regionally. Funds or CARE Kits that might be needed to deal with the size of the disaster are mobilised
3. The NEA will deploy the CARE Force in needed areas, distribute CARE Kits and utilize CARE Funds based on the need and through their network of churches
4. The project cycle is only complete when the NEA reports on the activities and results. This is very important to ensure that we learn from the crisis how we can improve, how many people were impacted and give an account of how the funds and other resources were utilized; our Christian stewardship and accountable to our donors and other partners is of paramount importance.