

Prince Harry Shines a Light on the Vital Work of MapAction Volunteers



MapAction has released a video of Prince Harry, it's Royal Patron, visiting its volunteer humanitarian mapping team at a major disaster simulation exercise in Norway.

The video shows Prince Harry surprising aid workers from around the world who were taking part in the international field exercise this autumn. There he was able to see first-hand how MapAction gathers crucial data at the scene of emergencies and translates it into maps, providing a common operational picture from which to plan and prioritise the response. This service underpins the delivery of emergency response by helping get the right aid to the right areas and people quickly, saving lives.

Prince Harry said: "MapAction brings order to chaos. Its unique mapping skills help all the other aid workers in a disaster or emergency. MapAction is helping more people in a shorter space of time and allowing other humanitarian organisations to get to the areas most affected to start saving lives as soon as possible."

MapAction has a team of over 70 trained volunteers who follow a well-practised deployment model, allowing them to respond within 24-48 hours of a rapid onset emergency. MapAction's first emergency deployment was to Sri Lanka in response to the Indian Ocean (Boxing Day) Tsunami of 2004. Since then the charity has undertaken 64 emergency missions, including responses to earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons and conflict-related crises.

In the past five years, volunteers have responded to humanitarian crises including Hurricane Matthew in Haiti (2016), conflict in Nigeria (2016), the Nepal earthquakes (2015), the Mediterranean refugee crisis (2015 - ongoing), and the West African Ebola outbreak (2014).

Since September alone, MapAction volunteers have responded to:

- A conflict-related crisis in Nigeria affecting as many as 14 million people
- Hurricane Matthew in Haiti, Jamaica and the Bahamas
- A conflict-related crisis in Iraq
- An earthquake in Tanzania
- As well as contributing to disaster preparedness activities in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan

MapAction's volunteers train year-round to ensure they can deliver the service at a moment's notice in even the most challenging of contexts. Prince Harry saw this for himself when he visited the training exercise in Norway, watching MapAction volunteers train alongside other field-based international organisations. The video shines a light on their valuable work.

Prince Harry said: "To see highly-skilled individuals give up their time like this is remarkable. Considering how few people there are, it is unbelievable how much they can achieve. It's the glue that binds everyone together. After being Patron for nearly ten years, I want more and more people to know what MapAction does."

MapAction has been granted a BBC Radio 4 Appeal on Christmas Day, which is being presented by the comedian, actor, singer and television presenter, Alexander Armstrong. Anyone wishing to support MapAction's vital work can do so by visiting www.mapaction.org/donate. The appeal will also be on the BBC Radio 4 website from 25 December.