

Principles of Tzu Chi's International Relief Work

Directness

The Tzu Chi fact-finding team and volunteers travel to the disaster area to study the situation before they arrange for relief supplies according to the needs of the victims. The team draws up name lists of the households who truly need help. Volunteers then personally distribute relief supplies to the hands of the victims, at the same time giving them their care and blessings.

Priority

When the disaster areas are too widespread, Tzu Chi centers relief work on the most affected area or where outside aid is most scarce. In this way, limited resources are put to the most effective use where help is most needed.

Respect

Wherever Tzu Chi relief workers go to help, they must respect the local customs, lifestyle, religion and cultural traditions. They should help the victims as friends and avoid being condescending. The quality of the relief supplies such as clothing, food, medicine or shelters should be of good quality, as if they were for the volunteers' own use. Finally, the relief supplies should be handed to the victims with both hands and with gratitude toward them for letting the volunteers help.

Timeliness

Whenever a disaster arises, quick actions are taken to study the actual situation and collect the necessary information. After evaluation and preparation, relief supplies are distributed to the victims in the shortest time possible.

Practicality

Tzu Chi relief workers always study the situation of the disaster area beforehand, so that they can provide the help most needed. The relief actions should be practicable, prompt and effective, if not multipurpose. No relief effort should be wasted.