Influencing Factors of Donations after Disasters: A Comparative Study of Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy

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Abstract
Material convergence is an issue faced by relief organizations leading disaster relief operations. The main source of material convergence are the in-kind donations sent to the disaster sites. In this talk, Dr. Amaya will discuss her findings on the factors influencing donations after disasters and provides insight into the role of the socio-economic characteristics of the donors. The analyses centers on donations received after Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy, which impacted the United States in 2005 and 2012, respectively. The data collected were used to estimate models that identify the socioeconomic characteristics of donors that influence donations after these events. The models suggest that distance negatively impacts the value of donations. However, donors such as Companies and Celebrities donate independently to their location with respect to the disaster site. Since not all donor types respond to disasters in the same manner, recommendations are also discussed to improve the operations run by relief organizations.

About the Speaker
Dr. Amaya is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Supply Chain Management at Iowa State University Ivy College of Business. She received her B.Sc. in Industrial Engineering from Universidad del Norte, Colombia. She got a M.Sc. in Industrial and Systems Engineering, from University of Florida and completed her PhD. in Transportation Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). Her research interests are disaster response logistics and sustainable urban freight transportation. In the area of disaster response logistics, she conducts empirical research to understand the complexity of disaster situations and the requirements to respond. She combines optimization techniques with economics and social sciences to model relief distribution while minimizing the social costs of the operations. In sustainable urban freight transportation, she analyzes the impacts of initiatives aimed to address issues from freight activity in urban areas. She is the recipient of multiple awards and scholarships.