

Healthcare Logistics

# Emergency relief

## Keeping humanitarian supply chains moving in times of crisis



# Rising to the challenge

By Sayid Kunhipurayil,  
Emergency & Relief  
Development Manager,  
in Dubai



The case for humanitarian aid has never been stronger. In 2024, the European Commission published figures indicating that risks to human life have increased over the last 10 years. Climate change, political instability and conflict were all contributing factors.

This year alone, the Global Humanitarian Overview posed equally concerning stats. By June 2025, almost 300 million people needed humanitarian aid. This is

where logistics partnerships play a pivotal role. At Kuehne+Nagel, we have spent 40 years delivering high-quality healthcare on behalf of emergency relief teams.

We offer fourth-party logistics (4PL) to government agencies, partnering with freight forwarders and shipping lines. Additionally, the non-profit Kuehne Foundation was established in 1976 to facilitate global logistics, personalised medicine and climate action.

# A history of global humanitarian aid



## 1960s

Humanitarian aid systematised.



## 1970 onwards

Many Western countries, as well as Arab states and Japan, allocated 0.7% of their gross national income to overseas development.



## 1990s

Professionalisation of humanitarian aid peaked and, in 1998, the United Nations authorised multiple agencies to adopt the same standardised approach.





# Humanitarian supply chains for global crisis response

Kuehne+Nagel works with humanitarian agencies to deliver life-saving aid by road, sea or air. Our logistics services are both reactive and proactive: each sector is analysed to predict what might happen and how we can support it.

In practice, this involves strategically located facilities worldwide. For example, our warehouse in Dubai supports the storage, replenishment and distribution of emergency kits,

working throughout the UAE and Europe. Meanwhile, facilities in South Sudan move goods across Africa.

Global control towers with around-the-clock visibility enable us to partner with pharma and healthcare colleagues, as well as air freight, sea freight, and project logistics companies. Every emergency response has a method, supported by local customs knowledge and experts on the ground 24/7.

# Keeping supply chains moving with tech



## Control towers

Dedicated control towers in Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East provide real-time situational updates and plan routes with logistics teams, government departments and other partners.



## Cold chain

Advanced temperature-controlled environments from warehousing to reefer containers. Flexible storage capabilities for specific treatments, including temperature ranges of +8-10°, +15-25°, and -10-20°C.



## myKN

Total shipment visibility across air, sea and road in one digital platform. Helps all stakeholders to collaborate, plan routes and track journeys.



## Seaexplorer

Supply chain planning for sea freight enables agencies to monitor and navigate shipments effectively. Access to crucial replenishment updates as well as risk mitigation for sustainable, faster routing.

# Spotlight: Interagency emergency health kits (IEHKs)

Since the 1990s, standardised commodities have helped to save millions more lives. Where organisations may have sent unsuitable products in the past, today interagency emergency health kits (IEHKs) and ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTFs) ensure aid is appropriate and effective.

We gauge regular agency feedback to improve kit quality and save more lives. The World Health Organisation-approved kits contain anything from basic paracetamol and PPE to specialist malaria or Ebola medicine. Each varies in size, calculated based on community need and the

distribution network. In some cases, a camp of 90,000 people can be served with just 10 kits.

By creating a kitting component list and tagging items with specific labels before assigning pallet numbers, we ensure the efficient transport of the maximum number of pallets to serve as many beneficiaries as possible. In some cases, IEHKs are preventative, rather than reactive. For example, we might plan for a suspected cholera outbreak, with kits that contain innovative products such as 'PlumpyNut' RUTFs, offering high-calorie protein with a long shelf life.



# Conclusion

Thanks to innovative planning and logistics solutions, we're able to deliver high-quality medicine and IEHKs around the world. This combines both reactive shipping and proactive planning, leaning on technology with the help of human expertise.

It's important not to overlook the human impact, however. Access to tailor-made IEHKs helps our clients address unique healthcare conditions. Faster developmental responses help economies recover and restore families. Sustainable routes help reduce the impact of carbon emissions, contributing to a more sustainable future.

In an ideal world, there would be no need for humanitarian aid. In a challenging environment, we use our expertise, partnerships and technology to help our clients save more lives.

For more information about the [Kuehne Foundation](#), visit the website.



# About us

Kuehne+Nagel is about making logistics work smarter for our customers. With a global network and deep industry expertise, we help businesses navigate complexity and unlock growth through reliable, digital services, advanced technologies and data-driven insights.

As the logistics partner of choice for companies worldwide, we deliver tailored, end-to-end supply chain solutions across Air, Sea, Road, and Contract Logistics.

Discover the future of logistics. Visit us at  
→ [kuehne-nagel.com](http://kuehne-nagel.com)