

# Executive Summary

The evaluation was conducted in August and September 2010, almost one year after the exceptionally heavy rainstorm Ketsana flooded large parts of Metro-Manila, affecting at least 373,675 families. The lead evaluator completed a comprehensive desk review, Skype and phone interviews with UK staff and a survey with sixteen respondents from partners and Christian Aid. In addition, ten days of field visits were conducted by the two person field team, with focus group discussions, semi-formal interviews and participative observation the dominant methodologies. Although communities differed in context, there was considerable convergence in findings. Christian Aid's response to the September 2009 Typhoon Ketsana is currently growing into the country programme. This evaluation covers the first year of the response, including both relief and early recovery interventions. These interventions were funded by the DEC, ACT, HEKS and Embassy of Japan.

Manila is at risk from many significant hazards, especially storms and earthquakes. It is densely populated with large differences between the rich and the poor, amongst which are at least 4.7 million living in informal settlements, on land which is not their own. Land tenure and the ability to make a decent living, with aspirations to the minimum wage, are the priorities of those met during the evaluation. Ketsana has changed attitudes of people and institutions towards flooding, opening up a window of opportunity to address underlying causes of risk. However, despite a long-awaited change in the Philippines disaster management law, this opportunity has not as yet translated into action.

Christian Aid's relief and early recovery programme was largely service delivery orientated in design and had an impact on about 2.3% of families affected. Considering logistical costs, almost half of the money was spend on food and non-food item distributions, one-quarter on livelihoods (including cash-for-work activities) and one-fifth on providing materials for shelter repairs. Of these activities, the long-term livelihoods and cash-for-work activities were most valued by communities, partners and Christian Aid. The food distribution was least valued.

Interventions were not life-saving, but did help in asset replacement and thus recovery. The food and non-food item distribution provided 8,697 families with assets-in-kind to a value of almost 13% of the minimum monthly wage or about half a week's income at the minimum wage. 1,140

families received vouchers or materials for repairing shelters equivalent to a little more than half of the minimum monthly wage. These interventions were useful and effective as well as being well-targeted through on-site distribution and the use of development partners.

Livelihoods interventions were slow, but effective and highly valued by all. Cash-for-work activities provided people with up to one month's income at the minimum wage, money which was used for a diverse array of family priorities from school fees to shelter reconstruction, in addition to the actual clean-up work done. Cash-for-work naturally targeted those who did not have other sources of employment and in this Philippine context built on the communities' inherent resilience – their ability to organise, work together in solidarity and make changes themselves. In some cases, the cash-for-work clean-up activities led to further action targeting institutions and households contributing to the build-up of rubbish along flood-ways and rivers. At the time of the evaluation, longer-term livelihood solutions were under development or in their initial stages of implementation. The evaluation notes that they are highly appropriate and should have a significant impact but are too early in their cycle to evaluate.

Communities felt that Christian Aid's interventions differed significantly from other actors in that the programme provided a more comprehensive distribution package, worked on-site with people's organisations as opposed to through evacuation centres, and was monitored and more systematic. However, communities also felt that we were later than other actors.

Christian Aid's programme is evolving a focus on advocacy and community-based disaster risk reduction. The advocacy components, along with partners' aspirations of replicating models of change to address vulnerabilities are critical for wider impact. This recognises the scale of the challenges in terms of sheer numbers of people as well as the key stakeholders which can make a change at the appropriate scale – for example, people through owner-driven replicable housing, livelihood or CBDRM programmes; government through regulation; the science community through evidence generation; and the church through outreach and the wielding of political influence.

As of the time of the evaluation, the programme has not significantly reduced the risk against future shocks and threats. The shelter programme was not designed to increase the resilience of structures against earthquakes or flooding and does not address the key vulnerability of land tenure and location within high risk areas. Livelihood activities, mostly short-term cash-for-work

and asset replacement grants, contributed to early recovery but not to reducing risk. However, the next phase of programming is designed to address community-based disaster risk reduction issues including supporting advocacy on land tenure, advocacy on mitigation initiatives, micro-mitigation intervention, early-warning systems and more.

Communities were more involved in the management of the relief and rehabilitation (early recovery) programmes than its planning. Communities were not involved in key decisions regards how the money should be spent – rather the decision to distribute goods and other approaches was validated with communities. Communities were far more involved in the management of the programmes when compared with peer institutions (other INGO, government or foundations). This was in part due to the choice of development actors as partners and the decision to implement through people's organisations on site rather than in chaotic evacuation centres. This resulted in building on the inherent resilience of communities, better targeting, more appropriate interventions and a solid basis for downward accountability. Before the interventions, people's organisations, mostly home-owners associations, revolved more around issues than tangible actions. The programme's interventions increased the credibility of these organisations by providing tangible along with intangible outcomes. The structure of the organisations meant that in most cases the leader of the organisation, who received support and training, became a 'gatekeeper' to decisions. This is more a reflection of the people's organisations than Christian Aid's transient programmes. This gatekeeper did come under significant pressure based on the programme's decisions, primarily with regards to the beneficiary list. In all communities, there was a very strong emphasis that all members receive equal distribution style assistance, regardless of selection criteria.

The programme found that the targeting criteria were not developed with the communities, which is recommended in the complex urban setting. The criteria are more akin to international guides on targeting. The criteria which resonated most with communities were those which were based on income or tangible household damage. Other criteria focusing on disability, age, single parent households and gender based-criteria resonated less with communities and did not always equate with vulnerability.

The household survey was extensive and useful, increasing the programme's understanding of the context and providing an opportunity to pre-profile those most vulnerable in future disasters. The programme used it for validation and information. The targeting decisions that decided who

received benefit included the decision to target urban poor, choice of geographic locations and implementation through largely home-owners associations. In this urban context the limits of a community were defined by this association, and ownership rights (to the building) rather than the physical limits of a village which are found in rural settings.

The programme had limited success in having a systematic and effective information and complaint mechanism for use in the programme and to ensure this aspect of downward accountability. It is noted that this is a major challenge in a dense urban context with development partners. The programme's choice of people's organisations and implementing partners did provide a significant degree of downward accountability, albeit informal, where partners know and communicated with communities. A systematic complaint or information systems is not in line with normal working practices of these issue, faith or volunteer organisations. The benefits of a systematic approach need to be stressed for future emergencies, to reduce pressures on gatekeepers, support developmental gains as well as provide a robust and open system to learn and communicate with those we serve to ensure good appropriate programming.

The range and coherence of the work was in line with the appeal document. Partners used adapted developmental systems which significantly contributed to quality. The systems are geared for different speeds than those normally required for humanitarian work. This resulted in delays and highlighted limited capacities, both institutional and human. Recruitment and getting the right people in the right place at the right time is critical to the success of humanitarian action. This was slow during the response where non-emergency systems were used to try and recruit people, locally advertising in newspapers as opposed to pre-planning or fast recruitment in humanitarian networks. Similarly the demands of humanitarian action placed a strain on the partners' volunteer system.

Timeliness was an issue, and although the programmes were slow they remained relevant. Reasons for delays included slow recruitment and not fully comprehending the workload of activities. In addition, pre-disaster planning amongst partners for early recovery is needed to increase timeliness with a concentration on approaches and the capacity needed to implement these approaches. Structures like CARRAT did play a positive role and can be built upon.

The evaluation found that both men and women played a significant role in the programme. The evaluation interviewed almost three times as many women than men, as interviews were carried out during working hours, as women play a more significant family and social role and as the programme targeted women. The evaluation spoke to twice as many women community leaders than men and women were more vocal than men during the interviews. The programme noted that some gender-specific items such as panties and sanitary napkins were lacking for women. However, significant and successful efforts were made to incorporate women and men into all aspects of the programme's decision-making and outputs.

In the initial phase, Christian Aid did support the partners in scaling-up and managing programmes, mainly through an introduction to humanitarian action type training and support from its programme officers in livelihoods. In addition, structures such as CARRAT provided much-needed initial guidance. The use of COPE as the main implementing partners had a limited effect with recruitment difficulties and challenges in adapting to the urban environment. The evaluation could not find evidence to repeat this second layer of management. Similarly, the evaluation cannot find evidence to suggest repeating of the direct procurement of good by Christian Aid but evidence supports the use of voucher or cash-based approaches in similar contexts.

Christian Aid Manila made significant efforts towards transitioning the programme towards the country plan. This involved a complex analysis and array of actors. This transition has significant potential and required significant amount of time to build thrust and align strategies with and amongst partners. It was too early to evaluate the transition, but it is the evaluator's opinion that this will lead to an impactful programme. However, some livelihood activities were unnecessarily delayed during this process and should have been decoupled earlier from the process.

Communications between Christian Aid Manila and UK were good in the first month in a large part due to the secondment and support visits of UK staff to Manila. As the programme progressed, communication, along with support to the field, was less effective and regular but was needed to ensure a transition. In addition, the priorities of the UK and Manila offices diverged, with the UK office focusing on programme progression and Manila on transitioning towards the country programme. The evaluator feels that as this progressed, the frameworks for discussion were different – one remained in relief and recovery framework and the other moved to a developmental framework.

The evaluation has identified the following: -

### **Lessons identified for learning**

1. House-to-house surveys are more useful as a pre-disaster planning tool (pre-profiling) than a targeting tool if implementation is through home-owners associations.
2. Pre-profiling a community with the church and government is an opportunity.
3. Investing in knowing communities can create more opportunities to reduce vulnerabilities than money. Efficient systems use local resources and allow people to make decisions.
4. Cash-based recovery approaches worked best.
5. Engaging the local government and promoting good governance is necessary in the urban setting.
6. Working in an urban environment provides specific challenges, including working with government, private sector and utilities.
7. Investing in community leadership and resilience is critical.
8. Medical services are provided by medical teams and drugs should only be distributed in coordination with these teams, if at all.

### **Good practice for replication**

1. Using development partners and their skills was a good practice which should be repeated.
2. Working through and building on community organizations provided a natural partner and good entry point.
3. Working in communities not chaotic evacuation centres, provided space to start recovery programmes, reduced dependency and challenges relating to targeting.
4. Cash-for-work should remain at the minimum wage.

### **Recommendations for Christian Aid UK**

1. Establish a sharing mechanism between similar socio-economic cities to share experiences and possible resources for recovery in urban settings.
2. Promote cash programming in urban settings, focusing on rapid recovery rather than relief.
3. Promote, support and resource systems for programme strategy development such as Real Time Evaluations (R.T.E.), analysis and support to transition through a second surge and After Action Reviews (A.A.R.).

4. Multiple donors require additional resources.

### **Recommendations for Christian Aid Philippines**

1. Develop and decide with partners on an approach for urban recovery.
2. Develop and decide with partners a process for targeting after urban disasters.
3. Support and develop the possible role of the church in terms of pre-identifying or profiling the most vulnerable people in highly vulnerable communities.
4. Establish a post for an emergency officer to concentrate on contingency planning, partner learning and policy developments.
5. Continue to invest and expand learning and capacity building processes including CARRAT; Social/power mapping; After Action Reviews; Real time evaluations; Fireside discussions between disasters; and Disaster risk reduction learning circles, as well as linkage to other such circles.
6. Consider engaging in the development of models of good governance for recovery focusing on the role of the church, people's organizations and the additional finance and institutions which could be created by the new disaster management law.
7. Undertake a pre-disaster planning activity with partners before each typhoon season.
8. Invest in designing and developing with partners appropriate information, concerns and complaint systems before a disaster.
9. Invest in early warning systems rather than environmental monitoring systems as part of the Community Based Disaster Risk Management initiatives.
10. Continue to work through people's organisations and support gatekeepers in decision making.

### **Recommendations for Partners**

1. Plan now on how to structure your organization during relief and recovery – contingency plan.
2. Plan now for the next disaster, focusing on community organization or community development work.
3. In future operations, consider focusing on early recovery processes, through people's organizations.
4. Invest in models of change addressing vulnerabilities and plan to promote these models after a disaster where attitude change creates an opportunity.

5. Development models for good governance with regard to recovery (and development work).
6. Include and build capacities in relation to disaster risk reduction in all aspects of your work, from the perspective that disasters will most likely retard any developmental or advocacy gains made.
7. In future relief and recovery operations consider starting with a power or social mapping and focus on community resilience building and leadership capacity of people's organizations especially institutional rather than individual decision-making.