

**Documentation and Learning:
Rapid Emergency Assistance to
Typhoon Ruby (Hagupit) Affected Communities
in the Province of Samar, Philippines
April 2015**

Documented and Written for Christian Aid and Partners

By

Honorio B. de Dios

Independent Consultant

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BC	Barangay Council
CA	Christian Aid
CARRAT	Christian Aid Rapid Response and Assessment Team
CCI	Coastal Core, Inc
CERD	Center for Empowerment and Resource Development, Inc.
CGI	Corrugated Galvanized Iron
CTP	Cash Transfer Programming
DANA	Damage and Needs Assessment
DFID	Department for International Development
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness ECHO (European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection)
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
ESK	Emergency Shelter Kit
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
LGU	Local Government Unit
MGLC	Mapanas, Gamay, Lapinig and Catarman
NDRRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PDM	Post-distribution Monitoring
RRF	Rapid Response Facility
SPPI	Sentro ha Pagpauswag ha Panginabuhi (Center for Local Economy Development)
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfer

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
I. Humanitarian Situation	6
II. Process and Purpose of Documentation and Learning Objectives	7
III. Rapid Emergency Assistance to Typhoon Ruby Affected Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Project reach</i> • <i>Risk Analysis</i> • <i>Project Objectives and Modalities</i> • <i>Considerations in Selecting Modalities</i> 	8-10
IV. Response Strategies: Issues and Lessons from the Typhoon Ruby Experience	
A. Unconditional Cash Transfer As Modality	10
B. Combination of Modalities: UCT and Commodity Vouchers for Emergency Shelter Kit (ESK)	16
C. Technical Assistance on Shelter Repair and Disaster Resilient Housing	19
D. Project Management Systems	
1. Assessment and Targeting	22
2. Programme Designing	24
3. Cross-cutting issues	26
V. Conclusion	28
List of References	30

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The documentation and learning study identifies good practices and lessons from the implementation of the **Rapid Emergency Assistance to Typhoon Ruby (Hagupit) Affected Communities in the Province of Samar** by Christian Aid (CA) and its local NGO partners - Coastal Core Incorporated (CCI), Center for Empowerment and Resource Development, Inc. (CERD), SPPI (Sentro ha Pagpauswag ha Panginabuhi, Inc or Center for Local Economy Development) and TAO-Pilipinas. It identifies key factors that contributed to project quality, relevance and timeliness, as well as learnings towards improving strategies and modalities of future humanitarian responses of CA and the partners.

The emergency response project reached total of 4,028 households or approximately 20,140 individuals in 84 hard to reach island and coastal barangays from seven (7) municipalities. The main modalities employed were unconditional cash transfer (UCT) and the combined UCT and commodity voucher for emergency shelter kits (ESK). The project was aimed to increase the beneficiaries' access to most essential non-food items (NFIs), emergency shelter, and emergency shelter technology; and to promote their sense of safety and dignity.

Focus of the Documentation and Learning

Unconditional Cash Transfer

The project provided cash grant of 9,000 PHP to households with totally damaged houses, while for households with partially damaged houses, 5,000 PHP was provided. Majority of the beneficiaries agreed that the UCT enabled them to address multiple priorities and needs for survival. The key strength of the UCT modality rests on its ability to allow the individual recipient to manage the cash according to their household priority. In terms of management, the UCT modality significantly reduces the logistical requirements and cost of the emergency operations.

The experience of using UCT highlights the need to determine the amount that is appropriate to the current context of the market and needs of the disaster-affected people. It is also important to incorporate elements of risk reduction in the UCT design especially if it was assumed that shelter repair would be one of the key expenses where the assistance would be spent.

Combination of modalities: UCT and Commodity Voucher for Emergency Shelter Kit (ESK)

This component provided households (totally damaged houses) with 5,000 PhP worth of ESK (tarpaulin/"canvass" for roofing, plywood, nails of different sizes and one piece hammer) and 4,000 PHP cash grant.

A key strength of this modality is its ability to provide the beneficiaries with immediate relief and security through the shelter materials, while at the same time allowing beneficiaries immediate access to essential items through the cash assistance. This modality highlights the need to prepare a database of suppliers for both cash transfer service provider and hardware/grocery stores in consideration of the geographical location and security issues facing the target communities.

Technical Assistance on Shelter Repair and Disaster Resilient Housing

This approach enhances knowledge and skills of local carpenters. But, the experience also showed that it could be an effective means to promote citizen participation in rebuilding the community and promoting a culture of preparedness and resiliency. This could be achieved if the training were made to be more inclusive in terms of its target group. Concretely, training participants should not only involve local carpenters but also other key members of the community like barangay officials, youth, etc.

Project Management Systems

Assessment and Targeting

Among the key challenges in assessment and targeting is concerned with addressing the perception of bias by some members of the community on the process of selecting beneficiaries. The study suggests that there should be increased community participation in the assessment and listing of beneficiary in order to promote transparency and inclusiveness, which hopefully would reduce negative perceptions from among the disaster-affected people. Over-all there is a need to improve the assessment skills of the partners to further enhance the speed of the assessment and quality of information being gathered.

Program designing

The study found that CA and partners should identify and develop internal organizational mechanisms that would facilitate quick and informed decision making during emergencies. There is also a need to sharpen the understanding of CA and its partners on the technical aspects and principles of the response sector that is being implemented, which in this case is cash transfer programming.

Cross-cutting issues of partnership, accountability and gender and protection

Partnership in this project is promoted through the project management team mechanism which is formed to manage the implementation of the Ruby response. However, there is also recognition that the PMT can still be improved especially in terms of ensuring effective and speedy flow of information from the leadership to the implementing field staff and the importance of conducting regular updating among the members of the PMT.

In terms of accountability, gathering feedback from members of the community is supported through mobile phone and social media technology. Partner staff also ensure that feedback and comments sent by members of the community are properly addressed. An area for improvement is dedicating a staff to handle and monitor feedback and complaints from the community members.

In terms of accountability to the donor, there is a plan to upgrade the CARRAT training to include increasing the partners' capacity to respond to RRF conditionality and mechanics. Gender and protection is seen as one of the weakest components of the response hence, the plan to maximize existing gender-audit tools.

I. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

- 6 -

Typhoon Ruby (international code name Hagupit) made its first landfall in the province of Eastern Samar on 06 December 2014 with maximum sustained winds of 175 km/h and gusts of up to 210 km/h. It was a slow-moving typhoon that affected several more provinces in the Visayas and Luzon. The typhoon made a second landfall in Masbate province on 07 December until it finally exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility on 10 December 2014 (NDRRMC 2014).

Around 944,249 families or approximately 4.1 million men, women, boys and girls from nine (9) regions were affected by the typhoon. The assessment report from the NDRRMC identified Region VIII or Eastern Visayas as the most badly hit region with almost two million (2 million) persons affected from around 3,418 barangays or villages (Table 1).

Table 1: Population affected by Typhoon Ruby as of 19 December 2014

Region	Families	Persons	Barangays
1. National Capital Region	5,976	25,040	64
2. III – Central Luzon	551	1,899	11
3. IV- A (CALABARZON)	30,417	132,016	545
4. IV- B (MIMAROPA)	60,118	247,896	713
5. V (Bicol)	223,878	995,248	2,039
6. VI (Western Visayas)	115,730	460,944	1,312
7. VII (Central Visayas)	41,973	174,503	353
8. VIII (Eastern Visayas)	437,281	1,996,396	3,418
9. CARAGA	28,325	115,542	292
Total	944,249	4,149,484	8,747

Source: NDRRMC Sitrep No. 27 19 December 2014

Targeting Poor and Underserved Communities

Christian Aid (CA) and its local partner non-government organizations (NGOs) conducted emergency assessments in several provinces but decided to focus its humanitarian response in Region 8 which was the most badly hit region in terms of population and damage to shelter. Table 2 below shows that 256,407 houses in Eastern Visayas were reported damaged, representing 88% of total number of damaged houses in seven (7) regions.

While many INGOs remained operational in Region VII months after Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda's massive devastation in December 2013, they prioritized areas where Ruby was expected to first hit which was mainly in Eastern Samar province. This prompted CA and its partners to focus further assessments and response in Northern and Western Samar which were not receiving attention despite being devastated by Ruby.

Table 2: Damage to shelter due to Typhoon Ruby as of 19 December 2014

Region	Totally Damaged	Partially Damaged	Total
1. IV- A (CALABARZON)	5	17	22
2. IV- B (MIMAROPA)	20	245	265
3. V (Bicol)	1,487	26,821	28,308
4. VI (Western Visayas)	214	2,143	2,357
5. VII (Central Visayas)	360	2,711	3,071
6. VIII (Eastern Visayas)	40,333	216,074	256,407
7. CARAGA	47	193	240
Total	42,466	248,204	290,670

Source: NDRRMC Sitrep No. 27 19 December 2014

The areas for assessment were selected based on their level of vulnerability as indicated by the following factors:

- Exposure to hazards or those areas affected by strong winds accompanied by heavy rainfall resulting in heavy flooding and flash floods
- High level of poverty incidence
- Where partners have previously implemented DIPECHO disaster risk reduction preparedness and development programmes

The Rapid Emergency Assistance to Typhoon Ruby Affected Communities in the Province of Samar, Philippines was supported through DFID's Rapid Response Facility (RRF) and was implemented from 15 December 2014 to 16 March 2015.

II. PROCESS AND PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENTATION AND LEARNING STUDY

This documentation presents good practices and enabling factors that contributed to project quality, relevance and timeliness of the Ruby response. It also identifies gaps and issues and recommended measures towards better and more appropriate humanitarian programming of CA and its partners.

The documentation coincided with the post-distribution monitoring (PDM) activity conducted by Ca and partners from 25 to 28 of February in Daram, Samar and 04-09 March in Mapanas-Lapinig-Gamay areas (MGL). FGD for the learning study in Catarman was not carried out due to conflict in schedule with the PDM activity in Catarman. Table 3 below shows the areas where the learning study was conducted.

Table 3: Areas visited for the Documentation and Learning Paper

Daram, Samar	Gamay, NS	Mapanas, NS	Lapinig, NS	Mondragon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barangay Sugud ▪ Barangay Guindapunan ▪ Barangay Manduyucan ▪ Barangay Parasan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baybay ▪ Burabon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Del Norte ▪ Ubasan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alang-alang ▪ Palanas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barangay Bugko
The FGDs for Gamay and Mapanas were conducted jointly.				

Feedback gathering methods

The documentation used focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII) to gather feedback from the beneficiaries, barangay officials and a few non-beneficiaries. FGDs with the field staff and leaders of partner organizations were likewise conducted.

It is important to note here that both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries participated in the PDM-FGD activities that gave the PDM team the opportunity to listen to the perception and experiences of both groups about the project. As the participants were encouraged to freely express their thinking and experience of the project implementation, some non-beneficiaries raised questions and criticism about beneficiary selection, which were addressed by the CA and partners' staff.

Learning workshop

The key findings in this report were presented and validated by CA and partners in a workshop held on 08 April 2015. Partners from Mindoro and Marinduque who implemented Ruby response projects (but not within the RRF mechanism) participated in the said learning workshop. Key additional learning points resulting from the learning workshop were added into this version of the document.

III. RAPID EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO TYPHOON RUBY AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Project reach

The project reached a total of 4,028 households or approximately 20,140 women and men and boys and girls in hard to reach island and coastal municipalities in Samar and Northern Samar provinces. A total of 84 barangays in seven (7) municipalities were covered. Table 4 below shows the reach of Typhoon Ruby response implemented by CA and its partners.

Table 4: Project coverage in terms of geographical areas and type of damage on homes

PROVINCE	MUNICIPALITY	NO. OF Brgys.	TD HHs	PD HHs	Total
Northern Samar	1. Mondragon	14		435	435
	2. Catarman	2	205		205
	3. Mapanas	9	291	309	600
	4. Gamay	9	254	301	555
	5. Lapinig	12	497	307	804
Samar (Western Samar)	6. Daram	27	910		910
	7. Zumarraga	11	519		519
Totals		84	2676	1352	4028

Bgys – Barangays; TD- totally destroyed; PD- partially destroyed; HH – household

Poor and underserved families were prioritized for the emergency assistance. Residents and beneficiaries in the project areas consider Typhoon Ruby as the strongest storm to hit their community in years. They belong to families who are highly vulnerable to disasters due to low and irregular income and high exposure to multiple hazards such as typhoon, landslide and storm surge owing to the location of their homes and livelihood. Many of the houses prior to the typhoon were made of nipa and other light materials.

The beneficiaries derive their income mainly from farming (copra, rice and root crops) and fishing, but fish catch is also intended for household consumption. Many of them combine farming and fishing to increase their income level but despite such effort many still consider their livelihood as insufficient and described it as “hand to mouth”. Livelihood is also a major concern for those who derive income from copra farming. Many of them were actually expecting to harvest in July 2015, but Typhoons Haiyan and Glenda affected coconut plantations in these communities. Typhoon Ruby on the other hand stayed longer than usual, causing sea water to be sprayed over coconut farms and other vegetation areas. Technicians from the local Department of Agriculture confirmed that a lot of the coconut trees are expected to either die or not bear fruit for at least 2 years.

On the other hand, many fishers lost their fishing equipment and gear to strong waves created by Typhoon Ruby. Prior to the arrival of typhoon Ruby, the fishers were already struggling with diminishing fish catch since it was the *amihan* season (North Eastern monsoon winds) when fishing in the Pacific seaboard becomes extremely difficult because of strong waves. Decrease in fish catch is also due to overfishing brought about by commercial, illegal and “irresponsible” fishing methods (Dator-Bercilla, Magtolis et al, ND).

Risk analysis

Based on assessment data and considering that Ruby was a Category 4 typhoon, CA and partners identified damage to shelter and livelihoods, immediate need for food and essential non-food items (cooking and eating utensils) as major survival issues arising from Ruby’s impact.

Key risks were identified as the following:

- Exposure to health risks due to widespread shelter damage
- Risk of hunger over the next few months as there were no food stocks for immediate food needs and affected population would need to wait for the next cropping season
- Loss of planted crops and food stocks increases the vulnerability of poor households as the affected areas are considered high-poverty incidence provinces.
- Anticipated increase in protection issues including resorting to negative coping mechanisms

Project objectives and modalities

In an inception meeting with the partners on 16 December 2014, priority sectors for the project were identified as shelter and non-food items (NFIs), and protection. The project was aimed to help the target beneficiaries increase their access to most essential NFIs and emergency shelter, access to emergency shelter technology and promote their sense of safety and dignity.

The following modalities of assistance were identified:

- a. Unconditional cash transfer (UCT) was provided to households with totally and partially damaged houses.
 - For households with totally damaged houses, cash grant of 9,000 PhP was provided
 - For households with partially damaged houses, cash grant of 5,000 PhP was provided.
- b. Combination of UCT and commodity voucher for emergency shelter kit (ESK)
 - For households with totally damaged houses, provided were 5,000 PhP worth of ESK (tarpaulin/“canvass” for roofing, plywood, nails of different sizes and one piece hammer) and 4,000 PhP cash grant.
- c. Technical assistance on shelter repair and disaster resilient housing.
 - This component was part of the UCT and ESK, and mainly provided technical training to local carpenters on DRR and disaster resilient house construction techniques. The trained local carpenters were tasked to assist vulnerable households who could not rebuild or repair their damaged homes on their own, i.e., single/women-headed households, households with elderly members, etc.. The local carpenters were paid labor fees for every household assisted for a maximum of five working days.

Considerations in selecting modalities

- 10 -

Competing immediate needs. The typhoon created multiple needs which if not addressed will contribute to further deterioration of the survivors' condition. CA and partners recognized that on top of shelter needs, the disaster-affected population faced competing immediate needs such as food, clothing, essential non-food items and livelihoods and thus, realized that giving cash would provide the beneficiaries with flexibility in meeting those needs.

Limited number of humanitarian actors in Ruby areas. Very few humanitarian agencies operated in Samar and Northern Samar, thus the limited opportunity for complementation of services and assistance. This situation required the need to assist the beneficiaries in addressing their most urgent but multiple needs in order to support their survival.

Haiyan experience. Also considered in the choice of modality were the various difficulties and problems encountered in materials distribution during Haiyan response with regards to procurement and actual delivery of goods to affected communities. Since markets in the Ruby affected municipalities were functioning and there was no sharp increase in prices of prime commodities, CA and partners opted to use cash transfer programming to lessen the logistical requirements to a manageable minimum.

Accessibility issues. Most of the target areas are island municipalities and remote coastal barangays along the Pacific seaboard. There was recognition of the immense logistical challenges posed by their geographical location when transporting and distributing in-kind materials while at the same time ensuring safety and convenience for the recipients.

Donor preference. Designing the response programme was also influenced by the priority sectors in the RRF call by the donor, which were shelter/NFIs, WASH and protection. There was also an expressed preference for cash transfer programming (CTP). The RRF call had to be balanced with the identified needs of the disaster-affected population.

IV. RESPONSE STRATEGIES: ISSUES AND LESSONS FROM THE TYPHOON RUBY RESPONSE

A. UNCONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER AS MODALITY

This portion presents the positive effects, enabling factors and learning from the implementation of UCT in Daram island municipality. Daram is a 3rd class municipality in the province of Samar (Western Samar) in Region VIII. It is an island municipality about 24 km north-east of the provincial capital City of Catbalogan. Areas served in the municipality are accessible mainly through boat rides and "habal-habal".



Figure 1 Map of Daram, Samar.

UCT worth PHP 9,000 was provided to 910 households with totally damaged houses in 27 barangays of Daram.

1. Positive effects of UCT

- 11 -

Relevant and appropriate to the priority needs of beneficiaries. During FGDs, the participants were asked to provide an estimate of how the PHP9,000 UCT was spent and majority said that around 60% of the amount was spent on repairing their shelter, while 40% was spent mainly to buy food (rice) and other necessities. Below are the different items where the cash assistance was spent by the beneficiaries in order of priority:

- Shelter repair/construction materials – corrugated galvanized iron (CGI) sheets for roofing, lumber, plywood, nails,
- Labor for shelter construction/repair
- Food – mainly rice (many of them immediately purchased one sack of rice)
- Medicine – maintenance medicine for pre-existing illness and emergency medication costs including hospitalization
- School allowance for children
- Pay debts

The beneficiaries considered the UCT as very relevant to their needs and situation at the time they received it (Alnap 2006)¹. According to them:

- The cash assistance was very timely as it came when they most needed it, and that many of them would be unable to rebuild their houses immediately because the typhoon severely affected their sources of income.
- If not for the UCT, they would have resorted to “payag-payag” or makeshift shelter made of debris materials; some would have resorted to loans, or look for sources of income outside of their barangay and municipality (usually as domestic helpers, nanny, store keepers, etc.) just to be able to repair their houses.
- The UCT also supported household preference to build sturdier houses. Majority of the beneficiaries said that many of them now have CGI sheets for roofing and plywood for walling.
- The cash assistance greatly relieved them of the heavy burden of repairing or rebuilding their shelter which in turn allowed them to resume their livelihood activities (See beneficiary story 1).
- The amount received enabled them to address the multiple needs created by the impact of Typhoon Ruby and to manage the cash according to their priority (See beneficiary story 2).

¹ Project relevance in this documentation is assessed by looking into the ways by which the project has been responsive to local needs and priorities resulting from the impact of the typhoon. See Alnap 2006.



Figure 2. Supriano and wife Editha of Manduyucan, Daram.

Beneficiary Story 1: Elderly beneficiary

Supriano Lopez, 65 lives with his wife, Editha, 60 and a 13 year old grandson. His house is along the coast and was swept away by Ruby. Supriano has five children, all grown-up and staying in Manila, but he has not heard from them for a long time. Editha doesn't speak much and Supriano says that she is ill but he's not very sure what her illness is. *"I am very thankful for the PHP 9,000, because I was able to rebuild a stronger house."* Then he goes to show us that he used good lumber for the posts and CGI sheets for the roof (see Figure 2). *"At least, we feel safer now. And I can now focus on my livelihood so I can buy food for us."* Typhoon Ruby washed away his fishing boat so he now joins other fishermen to be able to fish. How much do you earn? *"The last time I went out to fish, they gave me 40 pesos as my share. Just enough to buy rice."*

Beneficiary story 2: Livelihood is priority

Donito Peñalosa, 27 years old has four children. Using a small paddle boat Donito's income from fishing ranges from 500-1000 PHP a week. *"From this amount, we get everything- food, school allowance for my kids, electricity and water. It's not enough,"* he says. Donito used to farm but he stopped because according to him typhoons are becoming more frequent.

Typhoon Ruby destroyed their house. *"It was a total wreck. The roof was blown away by strong winds."* When they received the PHP 9,000, Donito asked his wife, Jessica what would be their priority. Jessica said to prioritize the construction of the house but he convinced her to also consider buying a motor engine for his fishing boat. *"I told her, what will happen if we have a house but we don't have anything to eat because my fish catch using paddle boat is so small. But, if we bought a motor engine, I could go farther in the ocean and we could increase my fish catch."* Donito said that Jessica agreed, but only if they also started buying materials for the house like CGI and plywood. In the end, they were able to buy a motor engine, 3 pieces of CGI sheets, 4 pieces of plywood, and rice. *"Now, I am slowly rebuilding my house partly with my income from fishing. And I am not worried because as I build our house, I am also able to buy food from my daily income."*



Figure 3. Donito, Jessica and youngest kid of Parasan, Daram.

It is important to note that there are similar cases in MGLC areas in Northern Samar that show disaster-affected households having different ways of assessing and prioritizing risks and needs and that through UCT, households are better assisted to effectively address their needs.

2. Enabling factors for UCT as modality.

Functioning and accessible markets and stores. Local market and grocery stores remained functional in Catbalogan and Catarman ensuring the UCT recipients' access to basic commodities like food (especially rice), eating and cooking utensils, medicines, various household items and shelter construction materials (except for *nipa*). There was also no sharp increase in prices of goods. Means of transportation especially passenger boats immediately normalized after the typhoon.

Money transfer service providers: accessibility, capacity, flexibility. In assessing money transfer service providers, the following factors were found to have facilitated the generally smooth distribution of cash in Daram:

- Local branches of Palawan Express (the service provider) in Catbalogan made the UCT accessible to the recipients.
- Service provider had the capacity to accommodate the surge in amount of cash to be transferred on agreed day and time (except for one incident when the local branch ran out of cash for distribution).
- Service provider agreed to acknowledge recipients based only on the claim card issued by CERD (as many of the beneficiaries were without identification card).
- Service provider charged comparatively lower service fees than the other service providers.

Effective security management. The distance between the barangays and the money transfer providers was considered as key source of risk- the farther the distance, the more exposure to risk of robbery, loss etc.. That the beneficiaries had to travel by boat to get to the distribution site and back was another major security consideration. Key security measures were implemented by CERD to address security risks and ensure the safety and convenience of beneficiaries when claiming their cash assistance. The following were the security protocols and strategies installed by the partners:

- CERD implemented the standard security protocol of not announcing details about the cash distribution except for the day, time and place of distribution.
- CERD conducted "scenario building" where the safety or security of the beneficiaries may be compromised and identified steps or measures that could be taken to effectively address such situation. Examples of measures taken were the implementation of the buddy system among beneficiaries, and discouraging the beneficiaries from congregating into large groups to avoid getting unnecessary attention to the cash distribution activity.
- Barangay council officials and *tanods* (village safety officers) were mobilized to provide security to the beneficiaries as well as assistance to vulnerable groups like the elderly and women when claiming their cash or in transporting goods back to the village. Barangay officials also led the mobilization of the members of the community, community resources (e.g., use of barangay hall, tables, chairs, etc), and crowd management.
- The beneficiaries organized themselves and accompanied each other in either going back home or going straight to hardware stores or the market. In Barangay Sugod in Daram, the beneficiaries said that transporting the shelter materials became a lot easier and safer because they organized boats that will bring their purchases from Catbalogan back to their village.

3. Learning from UCT as response modality

Reduced logistical requirements and cost. The UCT modality has significantly reduced logistical requirements compared to in-kind distribution i.e., it did not involve activities such as canvassing, purchasing, warehousing and hauling of materials. An initial comparison of costs of UCT and in-kind distribution done by CCI in MGL areas, there is a difference of PHP 127 per individual beneficiary or more than PHP 134,000 for 1,057 beneficiaries. This does not include costs of transportation and food for staff and volunteers who may be involved in in-kind distribution.

Determining the appropriate UCT amount. The UCT amount that was pegged at PHP 9,000 was based on the amount recommended by the Shelter Cluster for house repairs using nipa and bamboo². It was also anticipated that aside from rebuilding their damaged shelter, the UCT will be used by the recipient to address other pressing needs such as food and essential non-food items. However, during assessment, it was found out that there was insufficient supply of good quality nipa as typhoon Ruby also destroyed nipa plantations. The UCT amount was not adjusted, thus, when people started buying sturdier but more expensive materials, the amount was of course no longer sufficient. As many beneficiaries noted, some of them reduced the size of their homes just so the UCT amount could fit into the needed budget, while there were those who were unable to finish the repairs and reconstructions due to the limited budget.

What could have been a better alternative if nipa was no longer an option? If people were to buy sturdier materials, what was the more appropriate amount so that people will be able to build safer shelters? How could CA and the partners have provided guidance to people in building back their homes?

In a humanitarian response where the identified priority need is shelter, technical assessment of damages to houses should inform the components and modalities of the response, and should determine a more appropriate amount for the UCT. The PHP 9,000 which was used in Pablo and Haiyan responses could have been further assessed for its applicability to the Ruby context. The technical assessment could include the following basic elements:

- categorization of the various degrees of damages on houses (destroyed, severely and partially damaged, etc)
- the level of repairs or reconstruction needed per category
- type and quantity of materials that would be appropriate (including alternatives in case some materials are not locally available)

If the modality chosen was UCT, the technical assessment could easily provide a more realistic amount depending on the type of shelter assistance to be provided i.e., how much is appropriate for emergency shelter, for transitional/permanent shelter, and considering the project assumption that people will be facing competing life-saving needs.

Incorporating risk reduction in UCT. CTP is seen by the humanitarian community as an innovative way of promoting the dignity and right of disaster affected people to self-determination. As shown in the positive effects of the UCT in this project, receiving cash enabled the beneficiaries to address their needs based on how they determine their priorities.

² In Typhoon Bopha/Pablo and Typhoon Haiyan/ Yolanda responses. Based on the said recommendation, the value of the bamboo and nipa shelter repair kit is from PHP 5,000 to PHP 10,000.

But, as it has been earlier raised, the UCT amount provided was insufficient that resulted to incomplete house repairs and reconstruction at the time of the PDM. It was also observed that the beneficiaries repaired and rebuilt their houses *in situ*- areas that are prone to landslides and sea surges. Thus, in a situation where the identified priority need is shelter and there was anticipation that people would be focusing on shelter repair and reconstruction, this project teaches us to ask the following:

- How could the project- the cash itself- have been utilized to guide people towards building safer homes?
- What strategies could have been employed to ensure that the project did not further contribute to the risks faced by the disaster-affected population?
- Why was the technical assistance on disaster-resistant construction techniques done in Northern Samar but not in Daram, especially after it became obvious that people were purchasing materials for shelter repair?

Experiences from Haiyan and emergencies from other countries abound with examples of ways to integrate DRR to CTP like the following (Julliard and Opu 2015):

- requiring beneficiaries to attend a DRR orientation where basics of risk and risk reduction and management are discussed
- requiring beneficiaries to complete a series of training on construction techniques
- providing technical assistance on disaster-resistant construction techniques
- forming groups to work together on repair or rebuilding their homes using disaster resilient construction techniques
- advocacy in the community to promote DRR

In a way, it is being suggested to make the UCT “conditional” – not in terms of how the recipients will use the money, but what they need to do to receive the cash assistance.

Strengthen security and accessibility provisions in agreement with money transfer service provider. There were no reported robbery and other security related incidents associated with the UCT. Majority of the beneficiaries who participated in the PDM-FGDs said that they did not encounter difficulties or problems when they claimed their UCT. Clearly this can be attributed to the efforts exerted by CERD and CA in designing an effective distribution plan and ensuring that the agreement with the money transfer service provider covered the beneficiaries’ convenient and safe access to the UCT.

However, the partners identified certain aspects of engagement with money transfer service providers that could still be improved to better ensure the recipients’ safe and easy access to UCTs. They are the following:

- Clarify and strengthen coordination between the service provider’s main office and local branches.
- The service provider should ensure that the staff at their local branches are fully informed and instructed to implement the agreed provisions in the memorandum of agreement.
- A point person at the local branch would also help ease coordination between provider and client during distributions.
- Avoid or minimize inconsistencies in the list to achieve speedy and safe release of UCTs. There should be pre-agreed steps with the provider on how to resolve “glitches” and

inconsistencies in the recipients' list to avoid delaying the process of distribution e.g., identified person from the NGO or community who could authorize or vouch for the recipient. - 16 -

- Ensure dedicated window and teller for UCT transaction. In some instances, it was observed that the bulk of UCT transactions overwhelmed the lone transaction teller, who also had to deal with their regular clients. This resulted to delays and inconvenience to both UCT beneficiaries and the regular clientele.

B. COMBINATION OF MODALITIES: UCT AND COMMODITY VOUCHERS FOR EMERGENCY SHELTER KIT (ESK)

The combined modalities of UCT and ESK was implemented in Mapanas, Gamay, Lapinig and Catarman municipalities of Northern Samar, covering 1,247 households with totally damaged houses in a total of 32 barangays. The ESK included one (1) piece of tarpaulin (locally known as “lona”, four (4) pieces of plywood, one (1) piece hammer and 1 ½ kg of assorted size nails. This was combined with PHP 4,000 cash meant to allow them access to food and essential non-food items.

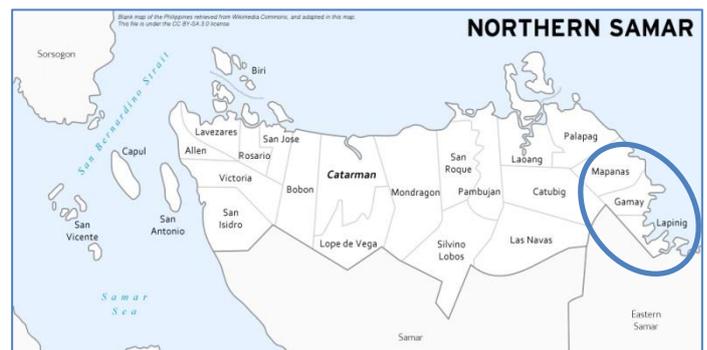


Figure 4. Mapanas, Gamay, Lapinig in Northern Samar.

This study focuses on the implementation in Mapanas, Gamay and Lapinig (MGL) municipalities. The MGL towns are found along the eastern side of Northern Samar, directly facing the Philippine Sea in the Pacific Ocean (see Figure 4). Mapanas and Lapinig are both 5th class municipalities while Gamay is considered 4th class municipality. Coming from Catarman City, the areas in these three municipalities are accessible through boat rides, tricycle and vans for hire.

It is important to note that the original plan of distributing commodity vouchers to the beneficiaries did not materialize after CCI and SPPI failed to get firm commitments from the suppliers in Gamay and Lapinig to make the ESK materials available in two weeks' time from canvassing. The suppliers claimed that they could only provide the goods in three weeks to one month, depending on how fast the goods can be transported from Cebu City. Given the limited time frame of the project, the partners had to drop the commodity voucher scheme and instead purchase the materials themselves in Catarman and Sorsogon (for the tarpaulin) and distribute them in-kind to the beneficiaries.

1. Positive effects of combining UCT and ESK

According to the beneficiaries, the shelter materials were very relevant and timely as it provided them and especially their children immediate security and protection from the elements. The following are their assessment points:

- ESK provides immediate relief and protection. Having temporary protection from the rain allowed them to sleep comfortably at night. As Roselin Picardal said: *“After the typhoon, we would sleep under payag-payag (makeshift) shelter and our children would be awoken in the*

middle of the night because rain and wind would come from outside. Now, we could sleep peacefully because we are already protected from the rain.”

- *“It’s like a heavy burden has been lifted from our shoulders,”* Nenita Labina, 34 added.
- The shelter materials are of good quality. *“These types of products cannot be purchased locally,”* They said referring to the good quality of materials in the ESK.
- The UCT allows beneficiaries immediate access to essential items.
- The UCT supports the way beneficiaries self-determine what they need in order to cope and recover from a disaster.
- The UCT assured them access to food in a context where many families lost their main source of income due to Typhoon Ruby.
- The UCT has helped them regain that dignity. Some of the beneficiaries shared that they felt losing their dignity because they had to wait for food relief to be able to feed their children. *“Nakadagdag sa pagkatao,”* said one FGD participant from Gamay and Mapanas, referring to the UCT. Upon receipt of the UCT, many recipients reportedly purchased a sack of rice per family.
- Combination of UCT and ESK addresses multiple sectoral needs: it can provide immediate relief and protection from the elements while the use of the cash can be phased to address household priority needs (See beneficiary story 3).



Figure 5. Roselin Picardal (left) and Nenita Labina of Alang-alang, Lapinig.



Figure 6. Victoria Tedranes of Alang-alang, Lapinig in front of her house that was repaired through the UCT and ESK.

Beneficiary story 3: multiple benefits of combined modality. Victoria Tedranes, 68 years

old of Alang-alang, Lapinig sells rice cakes and other foodstuff for her daily income. She is a widow and lives with her 14 year old grandson in her house which was destroyed by Typhoon Ruby. “The typhoon ripped off the walls and roof of my house. And it was really a burden because I could not sell rice cakes after the typhoon. I had no money to cook rice cakes and my neighbors did not have money to buy. I took a loan so I could buy food for me and my grandson.” Victoria says she did not know what to do to survive the devastation caused by Ruby to her house and livelihood. Her other children also had their houses destroyed so she really could not rely on them for support. “I

really could not thank UK Aid enough. The tarp and plywood saved our lives. I didn’t know where to get the money to repair my house and start my livelihood again.” Victoria added that she used her UCT to pay for two pieces of coconut lumber to serve as frame for the tarp, settle her loan and buy a sack of flour so she could cook and sell rice cakes again. *“It’s a new start for me and my apo (grandchild). I don’t have a loan to think about and I was able to sell rice cakes again.”*

2. Enabling factors for combination of modalities

Functioning markets and an alternative money transfer service provider. In MGL, one of the main challenges faced in implementing the UCT was finding the appropriate money transfer service provider who can serve in remotely located barangays and operate in a context where there is high prevalence of robbery and hold-up incidence.

A local multi-purpose cooperative, the Northern Samar Multi-purpose Cooperative based in Gamay agreed to manage the cash distribution in the target areas. It was selected because of the following factors:

- Its presence in Gamay which significantly reduced the time needed in transporting.
- The cooperative agreed to transport the cash up to the municipal town center which was close enough for the intended beneficiaries to reach.
- The cooperative agreed to install measures that will promote the safety and convenience of the beneficiaries.
- Markets in MGLC and Laoang areas were functional, there was no significant rise in prices of basic commodities, and water and land transportation services were also operational.

Managing security risks. As mentioned earlier, safety was a major concern in the MGL area due to the remote location of the target barangays and the reported incidence of hold-up/robbery which were mostly targeted local business owners and small traders i.e., fish vendors. Security measures taken by the partners included the following:

- Implementation of the standard security protocol of non-disclosure of the scheduled cash distribution. Beneficiaries were told that they would be receiving ESK.
- Involvement of barangay officials in maintaining the organized distribution of cash and materials and security of staff and beneficiaries. In Barangay Palanas, Lapinig for instance, the barangay council hired a truck that transported the materials from the port to the town center.
- The army was also mobilized upon the request of the beneficiaries to provide security during distribution. The beneficiaries added that the army also assisted beneficiaries in carrying the shelter materials, especially women and elderly.
- Floor planning that enhanced traffic of people, cash and goods. CCI/SPPI formulated a floor plan where they carefully laid-out the entrance/exit route, the location of shelter materials for distribution and the place where to distribute the cash assistance.
- Beneficiaries organized themselves into *bayanihan* to help each other in transporting the goods. This is especially significant for the women and elderly who had difficulty lifting the materials and transporting them back to their villages. Aside from the barangay council officials and the army, local carpenters also joined in transporting the ESK.

3. Learning from combining modalities

Mapping of suppliers and service providers. Given the choice, and as long as markets are functional and accessible, SPPI would prefer to use the UCT modality in future responses, as it is more supportive of the way disaster-affected people determine the way they would spend on goods and services they need the most. This modality is also very appropriate in the context of hard to reach island and coastal barangays.

However, the Ruby response in MGL showed that there may be limited service providers in a remotely located municipality, especially money transfer services that could cater to the requirements of a CTP modality. Pre-disaster mapping and assessment of existing suppliers and various service providers can be done as part of the partners' preparedness planning, especially in disaster prone areas like Northern Samar. If possible, framework agreements detailing the quantity and quality standards of particular items must also be established with preferred suppliers. Information about the suppliers should go into the database and regularly updated as to contents, prices, and whether or not these suppliers are still functioning.

Quality of ESK materials. One local carpenter who participated in the FGD mentioned that in his observation, some of the contents of the ESK were not of good quality. He mentioned that the outer layer of some of the plywood was already peeling off while some tarps showed signs of tearing when they used it during the demonstration/training on construction techniques. This was also the observation of TAO Pilipinas who conducted the shelter technical assistance training. This can be addressed by having a return/replacement provision in the agreement with the supplier where goods found to be defective upon delivery can be replaced right away.

In addition, while CCI and SPPI installed feedback mechanism in the project sites i.e., phone numbers which beneficiaries can call for their feedback and complaints, beneficiaries should be encouraged to send feedback about quality and quantity so that issues can be immediately and properly addressed.

Consider capacity of recipient when finalizing the plan for distribution of in-kind materials. For in-kind distribution especially of bulky and heavy shelter materials, listing of women and elderly should be considered carefully as they may have difficulty bringing and transporting the goods back to their villages. Individual recipients should be asked if they want to nominate relatives or neighbors to assist them. Also, a support group of local carpenters and volunteers who can assist vulnerable households can be organized as we have learned from Daram and MGLC experiences.

C. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON SHELTER REPAIR AND DISASTER RESILIENT HOUSING

The technical assistance component was aimed to train local carpenters on resilient house construction techniques, who in turn were tasked to assist vulnerable households who could not rebuild or repair their homes on their own. An NGO specializing on shelter, TAO Pilipinas was commissioned to design and implement the training module.

A total of 40 local carpenters from the MGL area were trained on the following:

- Basics of DRRM
- Disaster resilient design and construction
- Technical input on the use of plastic sheeting/tarpaulin
- Technical input on nipa thatching for emergency shelter
- Designing prototypes, making cost estimates, and actual demonstration of shelter construction.

1. Positive effects

The carpenter-participants said that the training helped them gain new perspective on certain aspects of construction that they have already been practicing. The following are insights from a group of carpenters who participated in the training:

- Bracing, positioning, hazard/land assessment. A training participant, Ruben Moldes, 40 from Alang-alang, Lapinig said that he was able to refresh his knowledge about the importance of proper bracing, only this time, he will give more attention on the “proper” part. *“We have already been doing it (bracing), but I didn’t know there is a proper way of bracing.”* Moldes added that positioning and land assessment are very important additional knowledge for him. *“Especially that many barangays here are located along the coast. Now I can advice clients on the proper positioning of their house to reduce the impact of strong wind on the structure.”*
- The carpenters mentioned that they now appreciate why it is important to encourage people to build their houses out of danger zone areas. *“As builders, we should be the first one to advice people on the proper positioning of their houses. We are now aware that they should be building houses away from hazardous areas like the coastal areas. Dapat malayo sa dagat,”* said a group of carpenters during their FGD in Gamay.
- Promoting responsibility to others. The trained local carpenters shared that they appreciate the fact that they are able to assist neighbors and households in rebuilding their houses which according to them is their way of contributing to the rebuilding of their community.
- Promotion of humanitarian protection. Vulnerable households were targeted to be assisted by the newly trained local carpenters in repairing or rebuilding their homes. This component of the technical assistance not only promotes the concept of resiliency and DRR but also ensures that vulnerable and marginalized households in the community receive the assistance they rightfully deserve.



Figure 7. Ruben Moldes of Alang-alang, Lapinig

2. What can be learned from the technical assistance?

Stronger DRR messaging through training and demonstration. The technical assistance component, particularly its training aspect is a potential tool not only in terms of upgrading the skills and knowledge of local carpenters, but towards advocating for a culture of safety in the community. However, there should be a clear demonstration of the concept of resiliency or risk reduction during the training if we want better understanding and appreciation from among the local carpenters. A few gaps in the methodology was identified by the carpenters:

- 21 -

- Linking the concept of resiliency and risk reduction with construction technique was not achieved because they only used tarpaulin as roofing material during the demonstration, instead sturdier materials like CGI sheets and lumber. During the design making exercise, TAO Pilipinas staff observed that the carpenters hesitated in using the tarp in the prototype design.
- Some of the techniques discussed would be difficult to implement in the community. An example they gave is the preference for *cuatro aguas* (roof with four sides) which the carpenters said would be more expensive and unaffordable for poor households. TAO Pilipinas likewise observed that some of the carpenters were already aware of some of the techniques being discussed but their experience showed that those techniques are seldom utilized as they would entail additional expense.
- The participation of shelter practitioners like TAO Pilipinas should include providing technical guidance in designing the shelter aspect of the response, especially in determining the quantity and quality of the ESK and how to link this to the aspect of shelter technical assistance and training. TAO Pilipinas also admitted not having enough time to conduct a thorough physical assessment of the damages, assess the skills level of the local carpenters (not all participants were master carpenters as they were initially told), availability of debris materials, location of houses etc, because they joined the response only in January.
- DRR should be targeted to the whole community, not only to local carpenters. One becomes vulnerable because of the combined effects of several factors in the community -- level of income, location of settlements, materials used in shelter construction, ideologies, cultural practices, etc.. Thus, making a community less vulnerable should involve everyone in the community.
- Concretely, the technical training could be a venue to develop local DRR champions. Aside from the local carpenters, others members of the community could be invited to the training like barangay officials, young people and other volunteers who can help promote the idea and concept of disaster resilience in their respective barangays.
- Some suggestions of making DRR community-based in an emergency response context are the following:
 - DRR orientation to beneficiary as condition for CTP
 - DRR orientation to beneficiaries as part of exit strategy
 - Making technical training (e.g., disaster resilient construction techniques) more inclusive like involving other key people- barangay officials, women leaders, youth. In future responses, these additional participants can act as “monitoring group” who will make sure the principles are being complied with and help disseminate key information and skills obtained from the training
 - Making DRR messaging more simplified and popularized – see “foundations, bracing, connections, roofing”, a four-point information, communications and training (ICT) catchphrase used by CARE from the technical guidance of the Shelter Cluster in Haiyan response (Maynard and Barritt 2015).

D. PROJECT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

This section will look at the processes and mechanisms employed in managing the Typhoon Ruby response, with focus on the following aspects:

- assessment and targeting
- program designing
- cross-cutting issues on partnership, accountability and gender and protection

It presents enabling factors, gaps and issues and learning points that were gathered from the FGDs with partners during the PDM and input from CA and all Ruby response partners including those from Mindoro and Marinduque during the validation and learning workshop held last 08 April 2015.

1. Assessment and Targeting

Assessments were done mainly by staff from partners, together with local volunteers who were mobilized from the target barangays. Municipalities and barangays are identified through the LGU's DANA report that usually indicates the degree of damages sustained by the different barangays and their poverty level i.e., belonging to 4th or 5th class municipality. At the barangay level, assessment reports are obtained from the Barangay Council (where available) particularly the listing of residents categorized into groups of households with totally and partially damaged houses. The list then becomes the basis for deciding whether to focus on households with partially or totally damaged houses i.e., if a barangay has more number of houses that were totally damaged, households belonging to this category becomes the target for assistance.

From house to house visual assessment and interviews with survivors an initial list of beneficiaries is drawn. Community meetings are held to present the list of beneficiaries together with the selection criteria and where participants are encouraged to validate the names in the list and whether or not those in the list fit the criteria. In many cases, the residents themselves as well as the barangay officials help in explaining the criteria for beneficiary selection to the members of the community especially to those not selected as beneficiaries.

CA and partners used the following criteria for selecting beneficiaries:

- Households with completely or partially destroyed houses
- Low income households
- Households with big number of family members
- Households with vulnerable members (single headed, people with disability, widow, elderly, sick)
- Assistance received from other agencies

Enabling factors:

- The partners' proximity to the affected areas contributed to the fast mobilization of assessment teams.
- Familiarity of the local staff and volunteers with the affected areas facilitated coordination with local officials which in turn enhanced the conduct of assessment.
- Connectivity and availability of handheld radios (in Mindoro and Marinduque areas) aided fast communication and verification of assessment data.

- Availability of community profiles of partner's organizing areas (Mindoro and Marinduque areas) that contributed in data gathering for emergencies assessment

Challenges and gaps in conducting rapid assessments for the Ruby response:

- Lack of data/inaccurate data from LGUs (municipal and barangay levels)
- Perception of bias with the assessment team especially if composed mainly of the staff, local volunteers and barangay officials; this leads to some non-beneficiaries questioning the validity of the list
- Some barangay officials take the "hands-off" stance to avoid accusations from residents that they are "politicizing" the assistance
- Varying interpretation of criteria used for selecting beneficiaries; the common sentiment was that the typhoon affected everyone and assistance should be extended to all families
- For CA, there was no emergency officer deployed to assist partners in the assessment
- For the partner NGOs, lack of rapid assessment skills among staff

Learning from assessment and targeting

Community participation in assessment. There are various levels of addressing the challenges in assessment and targeting encountered in the Ruby response project. One level is to address the perception of bias by increasing the participation of key sectors in the community in the assessment, validation and beneficiary listing stages. A community assessment team composed of local officials and residents who are respected by the community can be formed as part of the mechanism that promotes transparency and inclusiveness in the response process.

Improving emergency assessment skills. Another level is by improving the emergency assessment skills of partner staff in order to further enhance the speed of the assessment and quality of information being gathered. This includes enhancing the way assessment procedures, selection criteria and processes are understood by the staff and volunteers and devising methods to clearly communicate or explain the criteria and processes to the disaster-affected people and local officials.

The selection criteria should also include social capital indicators like other sources of income, alternative livelihoods, other forms of support like pension or remittances from abroad, etc.. The use of this set of criteria should be standardized among partners to minimize, if not totally prevent exclusion of deserving households.

Gearing partners towards RRF-type of responses. Improved assessment skills will greatly enhance the local partners' participation in designing the response programme. This should include building the partners' awareness of the procedures and requirements of RRF-type proposals.

Incorporating technical aspects in emergency assessment. There is also a need to incorporate technical inquiries or information into the emergency assessment especially when dealing with a technical response sector such as shelter. The role of TAO Pilipinas in the response could have been broadened by utilizing their technical expertise in evaluating degrees of damages to homes, assessing the required levels of repair or construction, and determining the materials needed for repair and construction, including specifications, quality and quantity.

2. Programme designing

Enabling factors

The Rapid Emergency Assistance to Typhoon Ruby is CA's (Philippines) second engagement with DFID through the RRF mechanism. The RRF is a "rapid humanitarian funding" aimed at providing life-saving response and can be made available to its partners (e.g., CA) within 72 hours. In order to comply with the RRF conditionality, it was CA who largely designed the response programme using the data gathered by the local partners.

- CA's familiarity with the RRF greatly enhanced the drafting and submission of the emergency proposal that is compliant with the RRF requirements and conditionality.
- Despite taking on the lead role, the partners still felt that CA remained very flexible and consultative in designing the response which led to quick agreements on the response modalities.
- The inception meeting with the partners held in Cebu on 16 December 2014 provided the venue for the following:
 - developing response strategies
 - identifying targets and modalities
 - forming the response machinery
 - deciding on the focus area/municipality of each NGO partner
 - formation of teams within each NGO
 - agreeing on the support accompaniment to be provided by CA

Challenges and gaps in programme designing

On the other hand, the challenge to CA in designing the response was the need to take into account the varying levels of humanitarian response capacity of the partners, especially that their mandates remain to be as development organizations. For instance, the deployment of staff to Ruby response was a point of negotiation with the partners since most of their staff with humanitarian experience were still deployed in Yolanda areas, and that they all have regular development programmes to manage. CA's major consideration was whether engaging the partner to another response would have negative impact on its absorptive capacity.

Learning from program designing

Enhancing decision-making through clear internal policies and parameters. Questions about their capacity to manage and implement the chosen modalities and how these interventions would match the needs on the ground were raised by partner and CA staff themselves. There was also a long discussion during the inception meeting on whether the response should cover 100% of affected population in one area, or should CA and partners cover more number of barangays thus achieving wider geographical reach. Some partners also expressed "regret" and "guilt" that they were not able to serve heavily affected barangays but were even more difficult to access due to geographical location and security issues. What would guide the organizations in making informed decision on responding to a humanitarian crisis?

The first step is clearly for each organization to formulate their contingency plans where the organization's framework, policies, and operational procedures in responding to an emergency are articulated, rehearsed and regularly updated. - 25 -

For CA, contingency planning may coincide with their plan to:

- revisit the terms of reference (TOR) of the Emergency Programme Officer and reiterate the 10% allotment of its time to humanitarian work
- identify triggers for staff deployment
- develop staff and partner capacity to manage RRF mechanism and conditionality
- define levels of surge capacity needed from within CA
- upgrading the CARRAT module

For the local partners, they might want to consider undergoing strategic review process to determine their level of engagement in future humanitarian responses. CERD has expressed the need to adapt to the "new normal" (extreme weather events and more frequent disasters) at an institutional level, while SPPI considers humanitarian work as "an exciting area to explore". This review process is especially important considering that being development NGOs humanitarian response is not part of their official mandate. As relatively new players in humanitarianism, they also have limited capacity and experience in emergency response, and thus organizationally, they may not have the mechanism to help them transition effectively to humanitarian mode during emergencies. A contingency plan may help them transition the organization's focus and its resources effectively during emergencies.

Increase understanding of CTP modalities. During the inception meeting, a few partners expressed reservations in using UCT as a modality as there were perceptions that cash interventions in emergencies could create dependency and may promote anti-social activities like gambling and drinking. To allay fears among partners it was agreed that the reason and purpose of the cash assistance needed to be clearly "communicated" to the beneficiaries- that the *assistance* was intended to help them address their most immediate needs like shelter and safety. To be sure, the emergency staff of partners said that the term cash was never used in the explanations as the modality was not disclosed to the beneficiaries. However, it is the opinion of this consultant that explaining to the recipients the purpose of the assistance may have influenced the choices of beneficiaries, and hence, it is now difficult to establish whether the decision to use the UCT to build sturdier houses was really the recipients' choice.

The learning here is that there should be better understanding of the concept and practice of CTP within each organization and between CA and the partners to help improve its implementation. The choice of modality should be based on clear identification of needs and context analysis of the disaster-affected population and it is very important not to lose sight of the principles in using a particular modality, which in this case, the principle of self-determination through "unconditional" cash transfer. CA and partners also need to level off on some technical knowledge towards better cash transfer programming like market assessment and what are appropriate mechanisms for monitoring a specific modality.

Strengthening humanitarian response capability. Over-all the local partners have varying levels of capacity in humanitarian response. CA observed that the skills obtained in CARRAT training were not effectively downloaded to the rest of the institution thus the different levels of capacity among the staff. The staff for their part admitted being overwhelmed by the huge amount of work that

needed to be accomplished in short periods of time, while at the same time complying with operational procedures and standards (e.g., explaining criteria for selecting beneficiaries to stakeholders, canvassing of materials, dealing with suppliers, submitting data and other information to CA, etc).

Reflecting on past humanitarian engagements and providing the partners with emergencies management training can help standardize the level of response capacity of the partners.

3. Cross-cutting issues

Partnership

The Typhoon Ruby response was designed and implemented together with local NGOs operating in typhoon affected communities in Western and Northern Samar. Coastal Core Incorporated (CCI) and the Center for Empowerment and Resource Development, Inc. (CERD) are both CA's long term partners in disaster resiliency and development programs in some of the poorest regions in the country. CCI and CERD are also CA's current partners in implementing Typhoon Haiyan Response project. Since CCI has limited presence and experience of working in Northern Samar communities, it decided to work with Sentro ha Pagpauswag ha Panginabuhi (SPPI or Center for Local Economy Development) - a Samar-based NGO that has been doing local economy development among poor communities in Northern Samar since 2008.

As mentioned, all three partners are development NGOs with varying levels of experience and training on humanitarian work. CERD have had experience in Typhoon Pablo and Haiyan responses, while CCI had been doing humanitarian work since 2005 and was trained on emergency response by CA in 2007. The Typhoon Ruby response was SPPI's very first humanitarian response work.

A fourth NGO, TAO Pilipinas, a service organization with particular expertise on shelter construction was also commissioned to provide technical advice particularly in the conduct of the DRR and resilient construction techniques with local carpenters.

On the ground, the partner NGOs mobilized local volunteers to assist in implementing various project activities such as data gathering and validation, organizing and conducting community meetings, and organizing distribution activities.

The partners appreciated the support provided by CA staff i.e., training on Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, accompaniment during assessment and beneficiary selection, monitoring. Despite limited or lack of experience in humanitarian work, the staff and volunteers showed dedication and commitment in implementing the response which further enabled and facilitated the effective implementation of the project. Camaraderie was easily established by their common motivation to help the typhoon survivors and owing to the fact that many of the staff and volunteers come from the affected municipalities and provinces.

Expanding the role of the PMT

The project management team (PMT) composed of executive directors and senior staff of each NGO and CA was credited for promoting respect for the individual organization, in recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of each one and in providing direction with regards the implementation of

the Ruby response. However, the following aspects of partnership can still be improved in future responses that may involve the formation of a PMT:

- Communicating agreements from the PMT level to field staff for better direction in implementation, including dissemination of important documents like approved/final proposals, logframe, designs, report templates, etc..
- Consistent and clear protocols in deploying CA staff for partner accompaniment for better coordination and working relations
- Regular updating among members of the PMT on the status of the implementation, providing venue for sharing of difficulties and challenges encountered in the field and mobilization of support from the PMT members

CA also suggested making reflection and assessment a part of the implementation design which could be in terms of debriefing, psychosocial activities or mini- rest and recreation activity which would help implementers to recharge.

Accountability

Over-all, downward accountability (accountability to the beneficiaries) was promoted through feedback mechanism installed by the partners. This included consultations with the beneficiaries and local officials especially about their complaints and concerns on the response and by utilizing mobile phone and social media to receive feedback from beneficiaries and residents. The partners also ensured that feedback and complaints from beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike were properly and immediately responded to and addressed.

Participants of PDM-FGD also mentioned that they found the staff and volunteers who implemented the project as very polite and easy to work with.

One area for improvement is to delegate a staff whose main responsibility is to ensure that feedback and complaints from the community are monitored, documented and adequately addressed.

On upward accountability (accountability to the donor), gearing the CARRAT training towards RRF-types of responses will contribute towards more effective compliance with donor conditionality. The partners in particular also suggested that CA should assist them in familiarizing with the donor's reporting guidelines and schedule so that they could be more proactive in submitting the needed information and data.

Incorporate gender and protection components in assessment and design of the response programme

One of the challenges confronting humanitarian workers is how to better understand the different ways a disaster affects women, men, boys and girls and identifying ways to effectively respond to their practical and strategic needs. Ensuring gender equality in humanitarian assistance becomes especially crucial in using the UCT modality as the possession of cash may have an impact on pre-existing unequal gender relations within the household and the community.

One area that CA and partners may need to review or develop is how to identify gender and protection issues in emergencies and what are strategies to effectively address these issues. If we say that gender and protection are mainstreamed into the design, we still need to identify the strategies that will help identify differential needs of men and women affected by disasters, which of

the multiple needs will be prioritized and how these priority gender needs will be addressed in the response.

A concrete, albeit very simple example from this response: some women and elderly found it difficult to lift and transport the ESK from distribution site to their community. How could this situation have been anticipated and addressed? In relation, when determining the content of the ESK, was privacy of women and girls considered in the quantity and quality of the content of the ESK? When planning for UCT, what are protection measures installed considering that there may be old people, pregnant women and PWDs who have been listed as recipients and had to travel far to get to the distribution site?

Husbands and wives who attended the FGDs claimed that they both discussed and agreed on how the money will be spent and there were no reports of couples getting into conflict because of the UCT. But, to really find out and learn how UCT made an impact on gender dynamics inside the household and community will have to be properly done through monitoring and evaluation. Over-all there is observation among CA and partners that the gender and protection components of the Ruby response are generally weak, both in the aspects of assessment, analysis and monitoring and evaluation systems.

A response to this is for CA to maximize existing gender and protection resources in the organization like revisiting the gender-audit tools used in Yolanda and making it a programme-wide tool and incorporating gender and protection in CARRAT training.

E. CONCLUSION

Over-all, the Rapid Emergency Assistance to Typhoon Ruby Affected Communities in Samar is a very relevant response project and considered by majority of its beneficiaries as very responsive to their needs and priorities. As an emergency response intervention, the ESK components have provided the beneficiaries with shelter materials that gave them immediate protection from the elements, while the UCT was found to be very effective in enabling them to address competing post-disaster survival needs especially shelter, food and other essential non-food items.

The project contributed in promoting the dignity of the beneficiaries by allowing them to exercise freedom in budgeting and spending their cash assistance based on their priorities. As the beneficiaries said, they were happy receiving cash because they were able to decide on how to budget the amount. On the other hand, the ESK items were needed and useful in repairing their shelter. Receiving the assistance gave them peace of mind- "like a heavy burden being lifted off from our shoulders".

Security and safety were managed effectively and there were no reported incidence of theft, gender-based violence and other similar incidences directly or indirectly related to the assistance given, especially the UCT.

One of the key strengths of the project is that the implementing staff and volunteers remained steadfast in reaching the most vulnerable sectors in the affected community through the different stages of targeting, listing and validating beneficiaries. Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries confirmed that the project only catered to the "*walang kakayanan*" or those with no capacity to recover.

A lot of learning points have been identified and discussed at length in the main body of the report, but below is a list of the learning and recommendations from the experience of designing and implementing the ***Rapid Emergency Assistance to Typhoon Ruby Affected Communities in Samar***.

A. Unconditional Cash Transfer

- Improve understanding of CTP/UCT as response modalities, especially in terms of determining the amount that is appropriate to the needs being addressed.
- Incorporate risk reduction in CTP/UCT design.
- Strengthen security and accessibility provisions in the agreement with money transfer service provider.

B. Combined UCT and Commodity Voucher for Emergency Shelter Kit

- Mapping of suppliers and service providers, including alternative providers that can cater to humanitarian needs in hard to reach areas.
- Incorporate shelter technical assessment in determining quality and quantity of ESK materials.
- Consider capacity or recipient, especially of women and the elderly in distribution planning for in-kind materials, as well as for UCT distribution.

C. Technical Assistance on Shelter Repair

- Stronger DRR messaging through training and demonstration.
- Targeting the whole community for DRR activities.

D. Project Management Systems

- Increasing community participation in assessment.
- Improving partners' emergency assessment skills
- Enhancing decision-making through clear internal policies and parameters
- Increase understanding of CTP modalities
- Strengthening humanitarian response capability
- Expanding the role of the PMT
- Maintain accountability mechanisms
- Incorporating gender and protection components in assessment and designing of the response programme

ENDS

List of References

- 30 -

- Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), *“Evaluating Humanitarian Action Using the OECD –DAC Criteria, An ALNAP Guide for Humanitarian Agencies”*, (London: Overseas Development Institute, March 2006). Web. <www.alnap.org>
- Dator-Bercilla, Jessica, Prof. Carlos Magtolis et al. *Saving Visayas: issues, initiatives, and innovations in environmental management*. Social Watch. ND. Web. <socialwatch.org>
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *Rebuilding lives with shelter grants*. ND. Web. <www.ifrc.org>
- Juillard, Helene and Mainul Islam Opu. *Scoping Study, Emergency cash transfer programming in the WASH and Shelter sectors*. The Cash Learning Partnership, Decmber 2014. Web. 22 March 2015. <<http://www.cashlearning.org>>
- National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. *NDRRMC Update Sitrep No. 27 re effects of Typhoon Ruby (Ruby)*.19 December 2014. Web. 23 February 2015. <<http://www.ndrrmc.gov.ph>>