A.25 Philippines – 2013 – Typhoon Haiyan

Case study

Keywords: Cash / vouchers; Advocacy / legal; Training.

Emergency:	Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda), Philippines.
Date:	8th November 2013.
Damage:	1.12 million houses damaged.
People affected:	Approximately 14 million affected, 4.1 million displaced.
Project location:	Tanauan and Tacloban, Eastern Leyte.
Beneficiaries:	35,000 - 45,000 people.
Outputs:	6,615 shelters (3,277 completed as of September 2014).
Ocupancy rate:	100%.
Shelter size:	Average of 12.5m² depending on household inputs. Engineers make recommendations based upon *Sphere*.
Cost per shelter:	The organisation provides US$ 450, with beneficiaries' self-recovery efforts valued at around US$ 250.

Project description:

The main organisation, in collaboration with a local implementing partner, supported the self-recovery of those affected by Haiyan through the provision of direct cash grants, vouchers for quality-controlled materials, and training and guidance in DRR techniques.

The two organisations lobbied the government to allow assistance to families waiting to be relocated who were living in the "No Build Zone" (NBZ). Relocation is likely to take 1-2 years.

Emergency timeline:

[a] 8 November 2013: Typhoon Haiyan hits. **[b]** Heavy rains affect those in makeshift shelters. **[c]** July: Typhoon Glenda. Some evacuations in Tacloban.

Project timeline [number of months]:

[1-3] March 2014: strategy development and community consultation in Tanauan.
[3] Implementation in Tanauan; assessment in Tacloban.
[4] Beneficiary selection. Gov. approves light-material assistance in NBZ.
[4-9] Conditional cash grant payment.
[6] Land-use problems resolved in Tacloban.
[5-11] Voucher redemption. Project forecast to end February 2015.

Strengths

- ✓ The project provides choice, rather than imposing one shelter solution on all beneficiaries.
- ✓ Price and quality control components ensure value for money and safety, with vouchers reducing the potential for corruption.
- ✓ Material assistance is delivered with minimal transportation costs by mobile hardware stores.
- ✓ The local economy has been stimulated, and local suppliers have been keen to provide good quality products and service to their local customers.
- ✓ The relocation process away from the NBZ takes time, and the main organisation, following the lead of its local partner, successfully advocated for the government to allow light material assistance to those still waiting in the NBZ.

Weaknesses

- × The voucher system can end up causing delays since small traders have limited capacity and are unfamiliar with the process.
- × The cash-on-delivery procurement mechanism does not suit small traders who need cash up-front to buy in stock. Revising the procurement procedures to resolve this issue delayed the project implementation.

Observations

- Sourcing quality materials from small suppliers has proved to be problematic.

Situation before the disaster

The Municipality of Tanauan's economic activity is based around fishing and farming, whilst Tacloban City is a large urban area. Poor families, whether living in urban or rural areas, were mostly living in one-room shelters made of coco lumber with bamboo or plywood walling and CGI sheet or 'nipa' shingles (leaves from the nipa tree sewn together over bamboo sticks) for roofing.

In urban areas foundations were more likely to be made with concrete, but in general shelters were poorly constructed, because of limited financial resources and because skilled craftsmen with good technical knowledge tended to work in larger cities.

Demonstration of prototype collapsible transitional shelter. While the design is in development, beneficiaries are assisted through the standard voucher modality. Photo: Oxfam.

Situation after the disaster

Six months after Typhoon Haiyan struck, shelter remained the highest priority need, with only 22% coverage out of 1.12 million affected houses across the Philippines by the end of April 2014, when the project was just beginning.

The city of Tacloban presented complex challenges due to the high level of damage and the large urban population. Those that began recovery in "safe zones" were often re-building their shelters to an even lower standard than before the typhoon, due to limited financial resources and poor quality materials. In April 2014 heavy rains caused flooding, especially in Tacloban and in July Typhoon Glenda hit, which resulted in some families being evacuated for up to two weeks.

Shelter strategy

A Damage Loss and Need Assessment (DaLA) led by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and supported by the Shelter Cluster, was completed in December 2013. The conclusions recommended supporting a self-recovery approach for rapid recovery.

A "No Build Zone" (NBZ) was announced by the President a few weeks after the Typhoon hit, and humanitarian agencies were prevented from providing non-emergency assistance in the NBZ whilst people were moved to temporary shelters away from the NBZ (tent cities or bunkhouses) in preparation for permanent relocation.

Government relocation plans involve the moving of 200,000 households in total, with 10,000 households being relocated from parts of Tacloban City. While waiting for relocation to take place, some families have lived in tents and makeshift shelters for nearly a year and the relocation process continues at a slow pace.

For the first six months, no shelter assistance to these families was permitted, apart from the distribution of tarpaulins.

Humanitarian organisations, including efforts made by the project's local partner, advocated for the provision of more substantial shelter support in the NBZ.

In March 2014, the NBZ was re-classified as a No Dwelling Zone (NDZ) by the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery, in order to allow work to begin on the reconstruction of buildings for tourism and other livelihoods activities. However, local government authorities retained the power to take final decisions on policy, and the impact of the decision was not immediately felt.

After further advocacy by humanitarian organisations, it was accepted by the local government that light materials assistance could be provided in the original NBZ. Whilst the authorities in Tanauan allowed assistance to families on the site they were currently living in, authorities in Tacloban wanted all potential plots where temporary shelter would be provided to be officially accepted. This meant that a number of alternative plots had to be identified by the project, delaying the response until August 2014.

As of end of October 2014 , 325 IDPs living in tents have been assisted by helping them to move to a safe lot, signing an agreement with the lot owner to pay a rent of US$ 2 per month.

Project implementation

Prior to beneficiary selection, several community consultation sessions were conducted in Tanauan, in order to provide feedback on the proposed strategy. Following the meetings, several adjustments to the plan were made, including replacing tools with additional money for roofing materials, and adjustments to beneficiary criteria to include financial considerations and the need for extra construction support for the most vulnerable (they were given additional money to pay for four days' worth of unskilled labour).

Build Back Safer Committees (BBSC) were formed, with their membership including representatives from local government, community leaders, beneficiary representatives,

Left: A mobile hardware store in operation, with items delivered by truck and checks made by the organisation. Right: Full-size frames erected showing correct and incorrect bracing for training purposes. Left photo: Francisco Montiero. Right photo: Oxfam.

grassroots organisations, women's representatives and representatives of religious groups. This community participation mechanism played a crucial role in the transparency and effectiveness of the project.

Following beneficiary selection, beneficiaries were grouped into clusters of 25-30 households, with each cluster choosing a representative who became a member of the BBSC.

There were three main components of the assistance programme, described below:

1) Technical assistance

Prior to the cash and voucher distribution, the two organisations provide training in DRR techniques with on-site demonstrations, educational material and scale models. The quality of salvaged materials is validated, and support is given to the families to identify their specific needs and recommend how to best utilise the cash and voucher to recover the shelter.

2) Conditional cash grant

The organisations link local suppliers to the community, with the leader of each group of beneficiary households being supported to produce a procurement order. Suppliers agree standard prices and quality levels with the organisations. The grant is paid through the Philippine Post Office once the beneficiary cluster has completed the training.

3) Cash voucher for roofing materials

Vouchers are distributed once the structures are complete, and can be redeemed at mobile hardware stores, with a master-list of available materials printed on the beneficiary's registration card.

The materials are quality-controlled by a team made up of BBSC members, staff from the main organisation and its local partner, and local government representatives. A certificate of satisfaction is signed by the team once the quality of the materials presented by the supplier on distribution day has been validated and cross-checked against previous warehouse joint visits.

The implementation of key DRR messages is monitored during the project, with checks made before the next phase of support is provided. The project records all information on materials-use and DRR techniques implemented in a database, to facilitate a final evaluation.

Beneficiary selection

The Disaster Assistance Family Access Card (DAFAC) database and Local Government Unit (LGU) damage assessment were used as initial data to triangulate beneficiary needs and avoid duplication of responses.

Due to many people's identity documents being destroyed in the typhoon, assistance has been based on pre-issued tokens combined with the detailed beneficiary databases. Vulnerability criteria are then used to select households, whose needs are validated by a home visit. Criteria include prioritising female-headed households, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

The BBSCs have an important role to play, helping to resolve problems and ensure that beneficiary lists are correct. Beneficiary lists are made public (through notice boards or committee meetings) for two days, to allow time for beneficiary feedback through help desks and complaints boxes. After following up feedback (in the presence of the BBSC, to ensure the process is transparent) the final list is posted, along with written responses to complaints.

Coordination

The organisations were actively involved in the Shelter Cluster, which operated at national, regional, provincial and LGU levels, done in order to prevent duplication. The organisations also cooperate closely with the local government. In order to reduce the potential for conflict and tensions in the communities, the organisations within the Cluster agree to make sure that their assistance packages do not greatly differ in value.

The main organisation's partnership with the local partner, who had led the advocacy for a change in policy on the NBZ, added a great deal of local knowledge and understanding

Amakan being attached to a shelter. Photo: Green Mindanao

of context when planning and implementing the project.

The project also plans to work with Philippine university academics to test a prototype collapsible shelter for structural integrity and social acceptance to see if it is a viable sheltering solution for communities living with disasters.

Technical solutions

As part of the project, a prototype collapsible shelter has been developed and is currently being tested. In the meantime, the project's standard shelter response is being implemented in Tacloban.

To deal with the restrictions on rebuilding in the NBZ, the project engineering team designed the prototype shelter so that it would be easy to dismantle and re-locate. The design is extendable and can be upgraded if sited in a safe area.

The purpose of the design was to initiate more productive discussions with the Tacloban authorities on what kind of assistance could be provided in the NBZ in order to support families who had been waiting to be relocated for months, and a model shelter was erected in Tacloban in July 2014. However, the organisations would prefer to provide more flexible shelter assistance to beneficiaries in these problem areas.

Following a detailed field survey which included discussions with craftsman and households, the shelter size was designed to be a minimum of 12.5m^2 for an average family of five people. Beneficiaries can modify the design to enlarge it using additional materials which they provide themselves.

The survey also indicated that the communities were able to provide around a third of the cost of the shelter in terms of providing unskilled labour and salvaged materials.

The final collapsible shelter design can be dismantled in 2-3 hours, making it possible to completely collapse the shelter if there is advance warning of an extreme typhoon. The dismantling requires no skilled labour and the shelter itself is made from local materials.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

The Build Back Safer techniques include:

- Using hurricane strapping to tie down the frame and roofing.
- Assessing the quality of salvaged materials.
- Elevating structures in flood-prone areas.

At the beginning of the project, an international training organisation organised and ran the Training of Trainers sessions for the staff of the main organisation and its local partner in order to establish a model for training the household clusters.

Each household cluster participated in a half-day construction training. This involved on-site demonstrations with models and training material identifying ten key points for typhoon-resistant construction.

A separate four-day training workshop, targeted only at specific villages in Tacloban, comprised of practising emergency evacuation drills and developing contingency plans for the most vulnerable areas. The BBSCs also received preparedness training in order for them to become rescue teams in an emergency.

A disaster preparedness campaign was launched, with educational material developed and distributed in collaboration with local government. The wall and roof frames are built with coco lumber and wall screens are made from either plywood or weaved bamboo mats locally known as 'amakan'. Roof options include cladding with leaf mats, locally known as nipa shingles, or corrugated iron sheets.

By providing materials through local suppliers using mobile hardware stores, the organisation avoids the overheads of centralised procurement, warehousing and transport costs.

Wider project impacts

The project voucher approach has influenced the national government to review their own roofing material distribution process, changing from in-kind distribution to vouchers in order to increase beneficiaries' choice and reduce supply chain problems.

The project approach has resulted in the injection of direct and indirect cash payments worth US$ 2.5 million into the local economy of the specific target municipalities.

The certified training of 200 women carpenters is linked with long-term gender programmes in the area.