



**BURMA
CYCLONE EMERGENCY RESPONSE
AND RECOVERY (CERR)**

FINAL REPORT

1 July 2008 - 31 March 2009

For

**THE UNITED STATES AGENCY
FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

GRANT NO. DFD-G-00-08-00227-00

Submitted by:

**World Concern Development Organization
19303 Fremont Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98133
206-546-7201**

30 June 2009

FINAL RESULTS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: July 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009

GENERAL REFERENCE:

- A. NAME OF PVO:** World Concern Development Organization (WCDO)
19303 Fremont Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98133
- B. HQ/FIELD CONTACT PERSON:** Merry Fitzpatrick
TELEPHONE: 206-289-7787
FAX: 206-546-7269
EMAIL ADDRESS: merryf@worldconcern.org
- C. AID AGREEMENT NO:** DFD-G-00-08-00227-00
- D. DATE OF THIS REPORT:** June 30, 2009

Program Goal: To prevent further loss of life by addressing urgent survival and early recovery needs of Cyclone Nargis survivors.

Number/Type of Beneficiaries targeted: Initially the number of beneficiaries targeted was **50,000**; however, in consultation with OFDA, this target figure was revised to **26,567** individuals in order to accurately reflect the beneficiary numbers in the villages where OFDA activities took place. Agricultural activities and inputs were not implemented in all villages, as in some it was deemed more appropriate to supply fishing boats and nets, in line with pre-Nargis livelihood practices.

Final results: A total of 23,768 beneficiaries were reached, of which 17,420 beneficiaries received agricultural inputs and 6,348 individuals benefitted from Cash For Work activities.

Dollar Amount Requested from OFDA: \$499,975

Dollar Amount Used from OFDA: \$ 461,640

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Nargis Response Overview

Cyclone Nargis was the worst natural disaster in Burma's history and the third worst in recorded history¹, with more than 130,000 children, men and women killed², 2.4 million affected³ and hundreds of villages in a key food-producing vulnerable region left in ruins.

¹ EM-DAT Emergency Events Database. Available via <http://www.emdat.be/Database/DisasterProfile/profiles.php>.

² Death toll estimates vary widely. Official figures estimate tens of thousands still missing. These figures have been added here among the death toll.

³ UN OCHA: Cyclone Nargis; Situation Report No. 24; May 29, 2008.

Launched within days of the disaster, WCDO's Cyclone Emergency Response and Recovery (CERR) project has helped prevent further loss of life in the hardest-hit cyclone areas and has supported more than 58,000 families⁴ (239,400 children, men and women) in the delta region, who were battling for survival in the wake of the storm, to return to stability and self-sufficiency (this figure represents the total scope of WCDO's intervention, including those reached through the OFDA grant).

In the first three months after the disaster, WCDO supported emergency response both directly and through INGO, NGO and local partners, distributing food, non-food items, plastic sheeting, mosquito nets, blankets, clothing, buckets, cook sets and hygiene items, construction materials, medical care, and counseling services to more than 33,797 families (161,197 children, men and women) in 20 townships in Ayeyarwaddy and Yangon Divisions.

In July, after access to the delta was granted, WCDO began direct implementation of an integrated multi-sectoral effort in a 33 village area in the Labutta Township, helping facilitate early recovery and restore immediate access to food, water, shelter, income, healthcare and essential household items.

OFDA supported inputs and outcomes

With support from OFDA, WCDO has been able to revitalize paddy farming and support landless populations to have access to income through cash for work, both of which have been highlights of the whole response. Through OFDA funding, WCDO was able to help 991 farm families salvage the planting season during the monsoons in the months just following the disaster. Nearly 4,000 hectares of rice was planted that would otherwise have gone unsown without WCDO's assistance.

The use of power tillers made a quick and significant contribution. Just after the cyclone, there was a feeling of hopelessness, since homes, land and animals had been devastated. The power tillers enabled farmers to prepare their land in a timely fashion. Re-establishing livelihoods in this way allowed communities to regain some semblance of their former daily routine plus vital income and food security as early as possible.

Additionally, WCDO provided vitamin and anti-biotic injections (as needed) to 531 surviving draft animals of the farming target groups in Labutta, helping to strengthen the animals for the upcoming planting seasons.

WCDO's agriculture response was well-adapted to the local environment, utilizing salt-resistant seed, locally procured, that germinated well in the salt-water logged fields and adapting power tillers with longer paddles sufficient to navigate the soil conditions of the deep delta.

⁴ NFI distribution (including the Joint Procurement Initiative) accounts for 50% of the population reached; Small grants to local partners for emergency response and early recovery Quick Impact Projects accounts for more than 30% of the population reached; with the remaining population reached through the core CERR WCDO direct implementation programming in Labutta and Bogale.

Working with a roster of 1,587 persons from among the landless poor, including men and women, the Cash For Work (CFW) program has injected \$111,743 into the economies of 33 villages in the Labutta Township. CFW has also been vital to the implementation of other sector programs, such as supporting the water and sanitation program to clean ponds and construct community infrastructure that will provide long-term benefits to the communities – including construction of roads, small bridges, canals and playgrounds, among other things. These are significant not only in that they improve quality of life but, being built by the community for the community, a sense of ownership is established.

While many CFW participants rely on the money for food and water and other basic needs, the cash assistance has also been crucial to helping some landless families revitalize their long-term livelihoods. Some participants have noted that they have been able to put aside a little of the money received through the CFW program for small businesses (i.e. a small grocery store) that they hope to build up in the future.

In addition to these highlights, the development of rainwater harvesting systems with the communities and the cleaning of community ponds meant that hundreds of families in the core target area had improved access to water during the monsoon season and that the ponds that had been pumped of saltwater could begin to refill before the monsoons ended in September.

Recent developments

The final quarter of grant activity (January through March 2009) covered both the rice harvest and the establishment of rice banks. The harvest yield proved to be about 60% of a normal/good year due to saline contamination and damage to the land. However, this is 50% more than would have been possible without support and was a great encouragement to the farmers. WCDO supported farmers to hire 1,587 landless Cash for Work participants as casual labor, which effectively met two objectives through one activity. Also, by giving the farmers the responsibility of hiring, WCDO helped to maintain the normal casual labor structure that takes place at harvest time.

Following the groundwork carried out by staff agronomists and farmers in the previous reporting period, six rice banks were constructed in the last quarter. These will provide seed to approximately 5,386 households: both farmers who received seed previously (who deposited some of the seed as a sort of “repayment”), as well as additional farmers for the 2009 paddy rice season.

This final quarter also saw the approach of the coming monsoon season, with communities becoming visibly anxious at the prospect of storms and the very real possibility of further cyclones. In addition to further work on village infrastructure, Cash For Work activities saw the completion of four manmade mounds, which offer an area of higher ground for communities on which to seek refuge. This activity was paired with the digging of new ponds, with the excavated soil used for the mounds.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE UPDATE:

This program covers two sectors: Agriculture and Food Security, and Economy and Market Systems.

I. Agriculture and Food Security

Objective: Increase the ability of farmers to resume their primary livelihood strategies.

Revised geographic area of activity: Ayeyarwady Division: Labutta Townships⁵

Revised # of Beneficiaries Targeted: 26,567 individuals (6,425 families)

Number of Beneficiaries Reached: 17,420⁶ (4,355 families)

Amount Requested for the Objective: \$326,062

Sub-Sector: Seed Systems and Agricultural Inputs

Indicators:

- 800 hectares planted with distributed inputs by 1,000 families (just under 1 hectare each)
- 1,200 families able to farm with water from ponds
- Zero deaths due to water-borne diseases in households with access to rainwater catchment systems

Achievements

- **991 farming households in 22 villages** in three village tracts in Labutta township received agriculture assistance **to plant rice** in the 2008 monsoon season.
- 3,936 hectares of rice were planted.
- Farmers were trained in the use and maintenance of power tillers and in seed selection.
- 3,817 families⁷ now have restored access to water from community ponds for farming (and other household uses). However, it should be noted that salinity from ponds remains high, thus additional repairs and construction are needed to improve water quality.

⁵ It was originally planned that the target area covered by the entire CERR programme would include Labutta, Bogale and Kyaiklat Townships; Yangon Division: Kungyangon, Twantay and Dala Townships. However, due to the extreme needs in Labutta, it was decided to revise this target and focus only on certain village tracts in Labutta Township, rather than spread ourselves too thinly across too wide an area. Other agency activities and coverage were also taken into account when making this decision.

⁶ The reason this figure is lower than targeted # is because Merlin, an INGO working in Labutta, was carrying out pond cleaning and rehabilitation in Da Ni Seik village tract, thus reducing the number of villages for this input.

⁷ The OFDA partnership supported approximately half of the community pond rehabilitation efforts with the rest being accomplished through matching funds. Thus, out of 3,817 families with restored access to water, it is estimated that approximately **1,600 of these families have restored access as a direct result of OFDA funding – 125% of the target indicator.**

- There were no deaths due to water-borne diseases in households with access to rainwater catchment systems.

The inputs provided to achieve this objective include:

- 991 agriculture toolkits (small hand-tools, i.e. rake, hoe and paddy knife)
- 50 power tillers procured, adapted with paddles for the delta soil, and distributed; 400 families were able to access the tillers to use in the planting season.
- 5,100 gallons of diesel delivered in two 55 gallon drums and 2 gallons of engine oil and a quart of gear oil along with the power tillers
- Baseline and monitoring household economic surveys completed; germination surveys completed
- Training was given to 500 farmers in power tiller use and maintenance, and initial planning for rice and seed bank storage.
- 552 community toolkits distributed for cleaning ponds and the environment; toolkits included hoes, shovels, rakes, pit saws, axes, machetes, concrete drainage pipes, etc. Using these tools, 54 community ponds were cleared and pumped.
- 600 Household Rainwater Catchment Systems – including 150 gallon clay pots, gutter systems and rubber lids through OFDA funding; 3,020 rainwater catchment systems in total were provided through the overall CERR (OFDA and matching funding) in the reporting period.

Seed distributions (supported by another partner) began in early July and within one month, the rice seeds were procured from the government storehouses and distributed to 991 families. Each farmer received enough seed to plant an average of 10 acres or 4 hectares of land. General post-germination agricultural surveys indicate 90 to 95% germination rate in the field.

Before Nargis, farmers were entirely reliant on draft animals to plough the paddies. During the cyclone, 500 of the 1,000 farmers lost their animals and needed help to plant their fields. WCDO gathered farmers in groups of ten, and trained them in maintenance and community principles to share each power tiller. As a result, 3,936 hectares of rice were harvested, with each acre yielding on average 30 baskets of rice. This is approximately 315 baskets of rice, averaging 2,240 kgs per family. An average family needs a maximum of 2,000 kgs per year for consumption, so some rice was left over for sale, therefore significantly improving food security. The initial power tiller training received by the farmers was crucial to ensure sustainable use of the machines, however, some farming groups encountered further problems with maintaining the tillers in the reporting period, thus necessitating further training which will be carried out in Phase II. This will focus on reinforcing initial learning based on the mechanics of the tiller, and further instruction in harrowing and plowing.

While on the whole, tillers proved to be a highly efficient and successful solution to the lack of draft animals, in some cases it was found that the lug-wheels were too small to cope with the soft Delta soil. As a solution, some of the tillers were adapted with paddles, which were more suited to the wet soil. In Phase II, bigger, locally produced wheels will be provided where necessary for the tillers.

Pond cleaning was also problematic in some instances, with some of the ponds remaining saline even after multiple cleanings and pumpings. The Nargis storm surge contaminated not only the water in the ponds, but in some areas the water table beneath the ponds also, thus making cleaning futile. The rainy season will help in flushing out the saline water, but for certain villages, the only solution is to build new ponds, or reline current ones to prevent saline contamination from the ground water. In Phase II of CERR, a further 19 ponds will be rehabilitated, seven new ponds constructed and a further five lined with bricks.

In contrast with the complications with pond cleaning, the provision of the rain water catchment systems was a simple and effective input. With the use of the traditional large clay pot, families were again able to start collecting and storing rainwater, providing an essential source for drinking and cooking. In order to utilize local knowledge as much as possible, the gutter systems were designed by a local engineer with community input.

II. Economy and Market Systems

Objective: Increase economic recovery through reviving local agricultural livelihood systems

Geographic areas of activity: Ayeyarwady Division: Labutta Township

Number of Beneficiaries Targeted: 10,000 individuals (2,000 families)

Number of Beneficiaries Reached: 6,348 individuals (1,587 families)

Amount Requested for this Objective: \$173,913

Indicators:

- Cash for Work (Cross-Cutting Theme): 2,000 participants receive an average of \$81 in wages

Achievements

1,587 families were provided with access to income through Cash for Work activities.

During the last quarter of grant activities (January – March 2009), a further 254 landless persons (representing 1,016 individuals in their households) from 33 villages participated in the Cash for Work program. This is up from 1,333 in the last quarter. The total of 1,587 (representing 6,348 individuals) accounts for 79% of the targeted 2,000 participants. Community activities completed through CFW projects include:

- 6,443 acres of rice paddy harvested (602 farmers aided with the rice harvest)

- 21 villages had their roads cleared of debris
- 33 roads rehabilitated
- 5 communication roads constructed
- 15 playgrounds established
- 2 sport fields being established⁸
- 12 jetties constructed
- 6 bridges built
- 26 drinking water ponds cleaned
- 48 ponds fenced
- 4 man-made mounds completed

\$130,989 in Cash for Work Assistance was provided to 33 villages in two village tracts in the Labutta Township.

1,587 people participated in projects earning a total \$83 per laborer/family.

Cash for Work activities have proven to be one of the most useful activities to fully engage the landless poor who have been unable to directly benefit from most of our livelihoods interventions which focus primarily on fishing and agriculture. In addition to infusing much needed cash into the local economy and helping **1,587 families** have access to income to meet their daily needs, the CFW projects also resulted in community-wide benefits, as discussed in the first section of this report. Added to this, participants are visibly proud of the changes they have made in their community, and aside from the very practical implications of this work (e.g. jetties promote the transportation of goods to and from markets, bridges and roads provide routes for evacuation in future storms), there are strong psychological benefits arising from the removal of the physical reminders of the cyclone's destruction.

Cross-Cutting Themes:

Cash-for-Work (see above)

Infrastructure Rehabilitation

Initial Indicators:

- 100 ponds constructed or repaired/rehabilitated
- 30 shallow and tube wells (water points) constructed or repaired/rehabilitated

⁸ In the last report, it was stated that land had been leveled for the construction of 25 sports recreation fields. Sports fields finally were not built due to other Cash for Work priorities such as infrastructural activities.

- 300 rainwater catchment systems constructed or repaired/rehabilitated

Revised Indicators:

- OFDA provided community tools for pond and environmental cleaning/construction that enabled 54 ponds to be constructed or cleaned/rehabilitated
- One shallow and no tube wells (water points) constructed or repaired/rehabilitated through OFDA grant funding
- 600 rainwater catchment systems constructed or repaired/rehabilitated

Achievements:

The infrastructure outputs of this objective were completed during the first quarter, though remaining unused man-days remained. These were used to do additional work on pond rehabilitation during the dry season to improve or further repair them in preparation for the next monsoon season. The initial plan to rehabilitate 100 ponds was modified after consultation with communities revealed that villagers preferred community ponds to smaller family ones. This therefore reduced the number of ponds required in the target area, as initially 40 of the planned ponds were of the smaller variety.

Likewise, the number of shallow and tube wells was reduced from 30 to 10 because many of them were either too saline or had been repaired by another INGO. Tube wells are rare in the area and the quality of water in them is poor. Only one shallow well was rehabilitated using OFDA funding; the other nine were done through the support of another partner.

The target for provision of rainwater catchment systems was also achieved during the first quarter, but was built upon during the last quarter of grant activity. While 600 systems were provided using OFDA funding, the system put in place by this grant allowed complementary funding to furnish an additional 2,420 systems for a total of 3,020 rainwater catchment systems. The distribution of all rainwater catchment systems has now been completed.

Additional activities to those named above are listed in Objective 2 above.

Livelihoods/Income Generation (Please See First Objective)

Indicators:

- 50,000 people (10,000 families) assisted with livelihoods interventions

Please see the initial section regarding adjustments to the target population figures.

Coordination

Each of the CERR sector leaders co-ordinated with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare on a local and national level, in order to implement WCDO's program within Government guidelines. All sectors also participated in their respective UN or INGO-agency hosted cluster meetings (Livelihoods, Shelter, Wash, Health, etc.), which took place in the township capitals. There are currently 38 NGOs working in the Labutta Township, most of whom participate in the meetings. This greatly aids co-ordination and helps reduce duplication. It is also an important forum to share and learn new information and compare implementation experience.

Monitoring & Evaluation

WCDO's monitoring mechanisms include multi-level reporting systems from the field-level to the headquarters office of WCDO. This includes sector data and reports (weekly at field-level within sector, monthly to program leader), project site visit reports, beneficiary feedback reports, reports from the local partners to WCDO's relief team in Burma, monthly reports from the CERR leadership to the regional office, and regional office reports to funding partners and WCDO headquarters.

WCDO's external evaluation report is now available upon request.

Program Constraints

In the first month of the field implementation (July), expatriate relief personnel with the needed expertise were not permitted to spend the night in the target villages. With travel to the villages taking 4-8 hours one way, and the expatriates required to go to the villages and return in one day, time in the villages to implement the program was extremely limited at best.

In August, after building rapport with the local authorities, expatriates received first-time permission to spend the night in the target villages, as long as the paperwork was authorized by the appropriate government authority AND the teams did not deviate from the itinerary. If this allowance had not been made for the expatriate team members to spend the night in the villages, launching and implementing the program may have proved nearly impossible.⁹

Despite having permission to now spend the night in the villages, the travel times to the program locations continued to cause significant delays. In response, WCDO put a fleet of four (4) zodiac-type, rubber speedboats into operation in September. The use of the speedboats cut the travel times to the villages in half. This has enabled WCDO to have more thorough coverage of villages than was previously possible, and has greatly increased the team's output and efficiency.

⁹ At present, the rapport with the government has developed to the extent that expatriate staff members with WCDO are no longer required to get signed documentation for each trip from the Labutta field base to the village. However, external visitors to the project still must receive this documentation and not deviate from the planned itinerary.

An added benefit is that it has helped the project save on the costs of hiring local boats (for personnel travel; local boats are still hired for goods transport).

Transport remains expensive however, with fuel, boat servicing, boat hire (for program goods) and vehicle rental costs of the project exceptionally high, due to remote river context, the amount of goods being shipped and the number of staff supported by the transport.

To help mitigate this, WCDO has established forward bases, bases of operation in the village areas, where staff can stay overnight and where goods can be stored. With the completion of the forward bases, staff will be able to stay in the villages for a longer time on each trip, cutting back on the wear and tear on and the fuel consumption of the speedboats, currently being used for more frequent back and forth trips from the field offices to the villages.

Beneficiary Story: Planting anew

Ko Aye Lwin and Po Land are two farmers from Aung Hlaing Gone village in southern Labutta Township. When Nargis struck last May, the village, which had grown up and developed over 40 years, was wiped out in just one night.

Like many farmers across the delta, Ko Aye Lwin and Po Land lost the buffalo they had used to plough their paddy fields during the cyclone. Their land also suffered from contamination by the salt water during the storm surge, and the rice seed for the 2008 planting season was washed away. For Po Land, who has five acres of paddy field, regaining his livelihood as a farmer has been vital for the survival of his extensive family: “I have nine children and five of them are married with children. All of them rely on our paddy for rice.”

Po Land and Ko Aye Lwin were amongst the 1,000 farmers who received rice seed from WCDO for the 2008 harvest. They also formed part of one of the committees set up to share the use of power tillers, which helped replace the lost buffalo. “The power tiller works very well in the soil in this part of the delta...it’s very sandy, and the tiller is efficient in these conditions. I was able to sow five acres of land which thankfully yielded a very high 150 baskets¹⁰ of rice. This is enough to feed all my family including my grandchildren.”

Ko Aye Lwin did not experience such a high yield from his nine acres, but having a far smaller family, he has sufficient amounts to feed all members with 20% left over to sell. Both farmers also contributed 2-3 bags of rice seed per acre to a rice bank that WCDO has helped set up in their village. The rice bank is run by a rice bank committee, especially formed to manage both the construction of the physical structure and the functioning of the bank once this is complete. In this way, the bank provides communities with storage for rice grain and seed, and thus greater

¹⁰ 150 baskets of rice is approximately 1,575 bags of rice, averaging 11,182.5 kgs. An average family of 4/5 people needs a maximum of 2,000 kgs per year.

food security, as well as increasing the capacity of communities in the functioning of a revolving fund.

“The rice bank is a very good idea”, says Ko Aye Lw. “Already we are seeing the benefits - seven farmers have taken loans to help them with the 2009 planting season. It gives us a much greater sense of security.”