



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

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

July 1 – September 30, 2008

For

**THE UNITED STATES AGENCY
FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

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

Submitted by:

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ANNUAL PROGRAM UPDATE REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: July 1 – September 30, 2008 (OFDA funding began July 1, 2008)

GENERAL REFERENCE:

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- D. DATE OF THIS REPORT: January 15, 2009**

Program Goal: To prevent further loss of life by addressing urgent survival and early recovery needs of 50,000 survivors of Cyclone Nargis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report covers the work completed by WCDO on behalf of Cyclone Nargis victims in the Ayeyarwady Delta of Burma.

In the period covered by this report and *including the support from all funding partners*, the CERR assisted 33,103 families (estimated 165,515 persons) to have improved access to food, water, shelter, income and essential personal and household items. Early recovery programming was likewise launched in 79 villages (six village tracts)¹ in Labutta and Bogalay townships.

The highlights of the impact of partnership with OFDA during this reporting period include:

- 991 farm families (6,848 individuals) in 20 villages were able to salvage the monsoon planting season; planting rice that will be harvested in 2009 and will help minimize the impact of the widespread food shortages that had been predicted post-cyclone.
- Debris was cleared and salt-water pumped from 54 community ponds, with 12 of these ponds rehabilitated, allowing the monsoon rains to refill the ponds and provide natural desalination. This activity restored access to the critical dry season water sources for 15,095 children, men and women. The community water ponds are typically the only source of water for drinking and cooking during the dry season.

¹ Thirty-seven (37) of the villages in Labutta township, representing 6,625 households / 27,536 people in three village tracts, are core CERR villages, with a concentration of multi-sectoral programming. The remaining 42 villages, in Bogalay township, are targeted for increasing access to health care and hygiene promotion support, based on gaps in the health sector support available to those communities from other emergency responders.

- \$22,751 in Cash For Work wages was paid to laborers from 780 landless families (representing 3,120 children, men and women). Families who are landless are primarily crab fisherfolk who supplement their livelihoods through labor, small livestock, household gardening and cottage industries. In the wake of the cyclone, with livelihoods destroyed and/or disrupted, the CFW programs provide a critical source of income for the family and inject cash into the local economy.

Despite the fact that Cyclone Nargis was indeed a catastrophic disaster, the humanitarian community was barred access from the country and from the affected areas for weeks after the storm. WCDO gained full and sustained access to the target areas only in July 2008, two months after the disaster. Thus, program designs, developed after only brief exposure to the affected areas, naturally required some revision upon being granted full access to the field locations. This is true for the OFDA program design as well.

The changes to the program design include the following:

1. The overall CERR target area was adjusted to focus on Labutta and Bogalay townships only, with OFDA assistance focusing on 27 villages in the Labutta Township. The target population in the 27 OFDA village area is **6,425 households/26,567 individuals**. This targeting was based on the identification of critical gaps, authorizations received from the government and coordination with other I/NGOs.
2. Some adjustments to the funding allocations within the scope of the initial program, shifting funding from the purchase of animal inputs to additional agricultural equipment and toolkits. This was due to the fact that upon further assessment, it was determined that the animal inputs required were in fact veterinarian medicines. As that activity would have been outside of the parameters of the OFDA partnership, the adjustments as noted above were made. *These changes were discussed and agreed with OFDA representatives in September 2008, in Myanmar.*
3. Lastly, as noted below in the content of the report the numbers related to certain targets was increased or decreased based on the reality of costings per activity and the nature of the activity as determined by the local communities, as WCDO gained access to do the work.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE UPDATE:

This program covers three sectors: Agriculture and Food Security, Infrastructure and Rehabilitation and Economy and Market Systems.

I. Agriculture and Food Security

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

Geographic areas of activity: Ayeyarwady Division: Labutta, Bogale and Kyaiklat Townships; Yangon Division: Kungyangon, Twantay and Dala Townships (*Please see revised geographic areas of activity, detailed in the Executive Summary section above*).

Initial Number of Beneficiaries Targeted: Approximately 40,000 individuals (8,000 families)

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

Amount Requested for the Objective: \$326,055

Estimated costs per beneficiary: \$14.29

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

- 3,986 hectares of rice were planted with distributed inputs by 991 farm families.
- 3,817 families² able access water from community ponds for farming (and other household uses). However, it should be noted that salinity from ponds remains high, thus the coming monsoon season will be crucial for further flushing the ponds to improve water quality.
- Zero deaths due to water-borne diseases in households with access to rainwater catchment systems.

The inputs provided to achieve this objective include:

- Fifty (50) power tillers
- 5,100 gallons of diesel fuel
- 991 farming toolkits (each include a hoe, sickle and knife)
- 25 community ponds were cleared and pumped through OFDA funding; 54 community ponds in total for the CERR project, with 12 of these ponds rehabilitated.
- 552 community toolkits were distributed for cleaning ponds and the environment; toolkits have included hoes, shovels, rakes, pit saws, axes, machetes, concrete drainage pipes, etc.
- 600 Household Rainwater Catchment Systems – including 150 gallon clay pots, gutter systems and rubber lids through OFDA funding; these catchment systems help ensure families have access to approximately 2L of water per day during the rainy season; 2,653 rainwater catchment systems in total were provided through the overall CERR (OFDA and non-OFDA funding) in the reporting period.

² The OFDA partnership supported approximately half of the community pond rehabilitation efforts. 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.**

In addition to this, *using funding support from other partners*, veterinary care was provided to 360 oxen (draft animals) and nearly 160 metric tons of salt-resistant rice seed was provided.

Each power tiller provided through the project, which were branded with the USAID logo, are owned by a group of 10 farmers, who share the tiller on a rotating basis. The tiller was first given to the farmers with the smallest parcels of land, the others then went in rank order by size of land parcels. Each farmer could only plow up to five acres before he had to pass the tiller on to the next farmer. Then once the first five acres were plowed, the circuit repeated, each time with less people until all the possible land was plowed.

The farmers groups have received training in power tiller maintenance, though follow-up training and support will be needed. Diesel was provided through the planting season and WCDO will continue to work with the farming groups to help them develop schemes for financing purchase of diesel in future planting seasons.

While most farm families in the delta utilized draft animals (oxen) for planting prior to the cyclone, with the monsoon season waning and significant logistics and government obstacles to the rapid procurement and transport of draft animals in the wake of the disaster, the power tillers were selected as the most viable option to enable farmers to salvage the planting season.

Other stakeholders likewise provided power tillers to farmers. However, WCDO beneficiaries have reported back that the power tillers from the government were of low quality, and were not accompanied by any training or maintenance instructions. WCDO decided it would be prudent to purchase the higher quality tiller. Also the paddy conditions in the lower part of the delta are less solid since it received more of the silt from the Ayeyarwaddy River during the flooding. This land is not strong enough to support the weight of the power tiller fitted with the standard paddle, resulting in it sinking deeper into the mud. Special paddle wheels are therefore needed for that area, so the WCDO power tillers included this. After this distribution of Deep Paddle Power Tillers, the farmers were able to plow about three acres per day.

As noted above, in addition to the inputs provided through OFDA, WCDO also provided rice seed (and later, pulse and vegetable seeds). Once the paddy land was plowed, the rice seed was spread using a manual broadcast method, just as it has been done for generations. This manual method was used because it is faster to implement, required less time, and was possible even as the monsoon rains began. WCDO purchased rice from the stock of a reputable dealer and the rice seed came with an explanation and certificate of the germination rate. The raw germination rate was 95% but the better measure of germination in the field of 90% is more significant. Although not all the land owned by every farmer was planted, because of the distance or road conditions, every farmer received seed and experienced good results from this seed on his/her property. It should be noted that paddy seed is not normally measured in 50 kilo bags, but in baskets or tins in Burma. A basket/tin is about 21 kilos. Each acre needed two tins of seeds because the manual broadcast method was used to spread the seed due to late planting. Therefore, each farmer was able to plant up to eight acres.

WCDO ensured that households headed by women, some of whom were widows, received the rice and participated in the tiller distribution as well. Households headed by children in the area participated if there were adults that were responsible for them. Currently, the fields are green and turning gold as the kernels are maturing.

II. Economy and Market Systems

Objective: Increase economic recovery through reviving local agricultural livelihood systems

Geographic areas of activity: Ayeyarwady Division: Labutta, Bogale and Kyaiklat Townships; Yangon Division: Hungyangon, Twantay, Kawhmy and Dala Townships. *(Please see revised geographic areas of activity, detailed in the Executive Summary section above).*

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

Amount Requested for this Objective: \$173,913

Estimated costs per beneficiary: \$17.39

Indicators:

- (Cash for Work CCT) 2,000 participants receive an average of \$81 in wages

Achievements

During the reporting period, 780 landless persons (representing 3,120 individuals in their households) participated in the Cash For Work program. This is 39% of the targeted 2,000 in the proposal. The CFW program is designed to give 2,000 people employment at approximately \$2/day for 45 days. The majority of the CFW programs commenced following the reporting period and will be covered in the next report.

In the early weeks of direct work in the target villages, the communities showed a high level of volunteerism. However, the desire to protect and encourage that spirit and participation, balanced with the reality that cash is needed in the local economies, led to some weighing of the CFW potential impacts before beginning implementation. Since July, personnel have been hired to manage CFW programs, which began at the end of August.

These were slightly delayed however because of Government of Myanmar restrictions which do not allow cash for work for any purpose other than harvesting during the harvest season. This was based on Government fears that workers usually used for collecting the harvest would be lured away to other work. WCDO has not been significantly delayed by this as most of our CFW projects were aimed at supporting the harvest collection at this time, and so have Government approval. The flexibility of the CFW program has allowed us to do many very beneficial projects, and many of our CFW projects have been designed by the community and of course implemented by them.

All levels of remuneration were decided upon by the CFW working group under the guidance of the agriculture cluster organised by the FAO at 2,000 kyat (\$1.81) per day. All attempts were made to only do CFW activities when regular activities in the community such as planting were not needed. Beneficiary selection is also a self-selective process. If some people can make more money doing other activities they will naturally choose that. All payments are made in the village leaders' houses and payment to all is made with the presence of a WCDO financial officer and a landless support officer staff member. All projects are geared towards improving food security whether the project itself is used to facilitate better access to markets or the cash itself can be used to purchase necessary food.

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
- 300 rainwater catchment systems constructed or repaired/rehabilitated

Please note, the targets for this section were adjusted after WCDO gained access to the target area and was able to conduct baseline surveys in July 2008. The subsequent changes were then discussed with OFDA representatives in Myanmar in September 2008. The revised indicators are as follows:

Revised Indicators:

- 25 ponds constructed or repaired/rehabilitated through OFDA grant (50 total for CERR)
- 0 shallow and tube wells (water points) constructed or repaired/rehabilitated through OFDA grant funding
- 600 rainwater catchment systems constructed or repaired/rehabilitated

The primary reasons for the changes include:

- WCDO is rehabilitating nearly all of the community ponds for which WCDO has access and authority to rehabilitate in the selected target area; thus the target is more accurately 50 than the 100 ponds estimated prior to final targeting process in July 2008.
- Similarly, pond rehabilitation costs closer to \$800 per pond, approximately 4x higher per pond than the initial budget estimate for the activity; thus the target number needed to be scaled back based on the existing budget.
- After the assessments, the community infrastructure critical needs were primarily the community ponds and the household rainwater catchment systems, with much less urgency of need related to shallow and tube-wells. The latter are in some cases, less prevalent in the target area, impact water access for a fewer number of people compared to community ponds

and in other cases critical community tube wells were found to be functional even after the disaster. WCDO is doing some rehabilitation of shallow/tube wells in the target area, but on generally a very small scale.

- Lastly, in addition to the assessments revealing the import of focus on community ponds, likewise the need for household rainwater catchment systems was further determined and the target was increased accordingly.

Pond Cleaning / Rehabilitation

As of September 30, 54 ponds had been cleaned, 25 of which were funded through the OFDA partnership. Therefore the target is 100% complete, as revised. In order to clean the ponds, WCDO drained the ponds, cleaned them of any organic or human debris and then allowed them to fill up again. Many of the ponds had a damaged bed, either from the cyclone or from years of use. Many did not have a suitable liner to improve the retention rate or the infiltration of saline residue from the seawater contamination. Once the ponds were cleaned, they then had to fill up again with rainwater to be available for usage. However in many cases these ponds had to be re-drained and allowed to refill with rainwater because of leeching of salt from the saturated ground. This process has been repeated on a number of pond locations.

Related to this target is the provision of community tool kits for cleaning community ponds and the environment. The purchase of materials for irrigation channels, as originally intended for the repair of irrigation points, was not, in the end, required by the communities as the irrigation channels are earthen canals, most of which were repaired manually by laborers. In the far south areas of the delta ultimately targeted by the CERR, advanced irrigation systems, such that might require cement or other construction materials, do not exist.

The rice crop in the region is rain-fed only, not primarily irrigation fed. This means that the farmers in the region plant one rice crop per year, instead of two crops, that would be made possible through advance irrigation. However, the more complex irrigation systems are likely not feasible in the target areas, due to the high water table. Thus, the advanced irrigation systems seen elsewhere in the delta during the early assessments were ultimately found to be not relevant to the final target area.

Materials such as tool kits for the pond and environment cleaning were, however, still relevant and needed. OFDA funding sufficient to support an estimated 1,000 such toolkits at \$23 per kit was earmarked for this purpose. During the reporting period, 552 community toolkits for cleaning ponds and the environment were provided. The toolkits have included various tools, depending on the community needs, hoes, shovels, rakes, pit saws, axes, machetes and concrete drainage pipes.

Household Rainwater Catchment Systems

The target for provision of rainwater catchment systems has also been reached 100% based on the revised indicators. Six-hundred household rainwater catchment systems were provided through OFDA support during the reporting period. A total of 2,653 rainwater catchment

systems have been provided, in total, through the overall CERR (OFDA and non-OFDA funding).

The rainwater collection system consists of a 6-meter (20') PVC pipe cut in half to form a gutter. At the end of the gutter is a funnel to catch the water and then direct it into a hose that will drop it into a clay pot. The clay pot will then fill up and provide a clean source of water that needs only to be covered with a rubber lid to keep 600 litres or (150 gallons) stored.

Branding of the harvesting systems was only partially successful, with 200 USAID stickers applied to the clay pots, but some of these stickers washed away in the heavy monsoon rains.

Other Non-OFDA Funded Activities in the CERR Related to the Water Quality & Water Access Objective

In order to improve the water quality, WCDO is providing cut coconut wood from fallen trees for fencing, using non-OFDA funding. This fencing will keep out the larger stock animals as well as cut down on other debris blowing or falling into the pond. So far, five ponds have been fenced.

WCDO is also growing trees in a nursery in one community which can be planted along the pond boundaries to reduce the amount of water lost to the environmental forces of sun and wind. At the time of writing, 300 trees have been planted on the banks of the ponds in seven villages.

Water testing conducted indicates good clarity of the water and reduced salinity in many ponds. Some contamination is present but this reduces when fencing is installed. A KAP survey has confirmed that 77% of the population use latrines and, in total, 4,501 households (15,095 individuals) in 15 villages have restored access to cleaned community ponds, and thus a dry season water source. Water shortage throughout the dry season remains the communities' biggest concern and for this reason WCDO has put together comprehensive plans to ensure water is readily available throughout the dry season.

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.

Constraints

In addition to the initial denials of access to the affected areas and the usual challenges of operating in this type of restricted context, logistical challenges of working both in Burma and in the delta in particular, have been WCDO's greatest constraint.

It is important to note that the only access to the target areas is by boat. As the delta region is a vast area of low-lying, paddy-field islands, ribboned by wide and narrow confluences that flow into the turbulent Bay of Bengal, reaching the target villages can be a challenge. The only means of travel – by boat – can be treacherous, particularly in the monsoon season.

The sudden onset of storms can make the rivers impassable, and the tidal shifts can mean that even knowledgeable boat captains may not be able to easily predict whether the rivers will be impassable due to strong wind and high waves or the opposite extreme--low tides. Several days during the reporting period, travel to the villages was not possible due to winds over 25 mph. Likewise, staff members were forced, on several occasions, to either unexpectedly overnight in villages rather than returning to base or abandon ships that were either too small or too big to manage the weather and river conditions.

Therefore, the travel conditions have, in addition to posing a security risk to the staff, caused delays at times in transport of relief personnel and relief goods to the affected areas. But even more broadly, access and logistical challenges caused significant delays in the setting up of the entire program in the early months – completing assessments to be able to finalize the initial program designs, establishing offices, hiring of personnel, getting management in-country to help support and transition the relief program started by the existing WCDO team in Burma to the longer term structures.

Staff turnover has been a challenge as we compete with other INGOs and NGOs who can afford higher salaries. Related to this, gaps in key leadership positions in WCDO in the regional, country office and relief team during the reporting period likewise created added and significant obstacles to the program. This has required that the existing staff over-extend themselves to cover multiple positions, for long durations. One practical impact of this has been less real-time communication possible from relief team leadership on changes emerging in the program, to ensure that all funding partners and stakeholders at all levels are aware of shifts and developments as they happen. Out of necessity, the focus has been on ensuring that internally, within the relief team and with the affected communities, that the program is aligned and moving to meet needs and boost recovery as quickly and effective as possible, in accordance with the budget and program design.

These factors were unfolding amidst the not-uncommon context of continuously changing procedures on issues such as visas, work plans, and movement approvals, coming from competing government ministries who, likewise, were struggling to respond to the scale-of the disaster. Also beginning within this reporting period, was the sharp decline of other currencies against the US dollar. While this did not affect the OFDA grant, the majority of the CERR funding is from foreign agencies, thus during the reporting period the value of the pledged grants began to tumble, while the need for increased support for operations costs (like an increased staffing size, higher number of expatriate staff, more boats, more fuel, etc.) rose due to the logistical challenges noted above.

Beneficiary story

Da Ayai Lwin had six acres of rice to plant. He had started the tiller process and was half way finished when I, Josh Folkema, WCDO's Livelihood coordinator, met with him on the porch of the house in a village in Labutta Township. His land is separated in two plots by some distance and the second area is too far to plant and he'll have to wait until the next season crop is prepared. Had it not been for the new power tiller that he now owns together with nine other farmers, he might not have been able to grow any rice at all this year.

Preparing paddy rice fields is very intensive work, and without buffaloes almost impossible. His buffalo died during Nargis. Besides that, the new rice seed that was distributed by the project is also very important, since all the rice seed that he collected from last year's harvest was washed away by Nargis. He has two children and didn't lose any loved ones in the storm but he is now living in a temporary house. He was able to keep his land survey form from the government safe from the storm so he still has good records of his land tenure. Before the storm, he would sell his coconut harvest in Yangon. He could sell the fruit for 160–200 Kyats (\$0.14-\$0.18) and it cost about 50 Kyats (\$0.05) for him to transport it. Some coconut trees were blown over by the storm, but others are still standing.

Because of the power tiller and the rice seed provided by WCDO he will now be able to harvest his rice. He also plans to participate in the pulses distribution, which he will be able to plant because of the power tillers that will help with soil preparation. He understands that WCDO, with OFDA support, is also going to assist with Cash for Work during harvest time. This will be of significant importance to him, since he doesn't have money to hire labourers himself, and without that, he would be unable to harvest his promising rice crop.