

Final report

Emergency responses in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam

EAPRDC, February 2010



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Background

HelpAge International along with local partners responded to the natural disasters in Indonesia (West Sumatra Earthquake), the Philippines and Vietnam (Typhoon Ketsana). All three disasters and responses overlapped at different points, which was a challenge for all involved. The following report is an overview of the response to each of these disasters.

Problem statement

Indonesia (West Sumatra Earthquake): Wednesday, 30 September 2009 an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter Scale struck the Indonesian Island of Sumatra. Padang Pariaman District (57 km north of Padang) was the district most affected by the disaster. Padang Pariaman consists of 17 sub-districts with a total population of 387,452. The older population (60+) totals approximately 7,395, most of them affected by the disaster. Damage to houses was large, 71,252 homes totally destroyed, 11,561 partially damaged and 4,334 slightly damaged, leaving many older people with no place to stay and their personal belongings also destroyed.

Philippines (Typhoon Ketsana): Saturday, 26 September 2009 Typhoon Ketsana hit the Philippines. This is probably among the worst tropical storms that ever struck Metro Manila and Luzon provinces, leaving hundreds of casualties and massive damages to houses, infrastructure and agricultural based livelihood. 4,125,237 people were affected by this disaster.

Vietnam (Typhoon Ketsana): Tuesday, 29 September 2009 Typhoon Ketsana, one of the strongest this year, struck central Vietnam causing widespread damage and flooding in 15 provinces. Reports on losses caused by Ketsana increased by the day, by 5 October over 170 people were reported dead, 24 missing and over 200 injured with over 600,000 people evacuated and around 3 million people affected. According to the Vietnam Association for the Elderly (VAE), it is estimated around 300,000 older people have been affected by the typhoon.

In addition to the loss of life, Ketsana has also caused huge economic and property losses in a region that is one of the poorest and most affected by the economic crisis. More than 20,000 houses have entirely collapsed and more than 180,000 homes and hundreds of school buildings have been damaged. Hundreds of thousands of hectares of farm lands and fish ponds have been flooded. By 1 October 2009 the 15 provincial disaster management committees estimated the economic loss due to Ketsana had increased to 800 million USD.



Methodology

Each of HelpAge's partners utilised similar methodologies and reported on these at the end of the project. Below are some examples of the methodologies utilised by various partners.

A. Rapid and market assessments

The following methodologies and sources of information were used in the needs assessment:

- Site and household visits at household and community levels
- One to one interviews (questionnaires) with affected population at community level
- In-depth case studies
- Focus group discussions at community level
- Provincial Population and Economic Reports
- Provincial Emergency Relief Reports
- UN cluster group reports

After the initial assessments were conducted in each country it was determined in coordination with local authorities what type of response was appropriate for each situation. In Vietnam and Indonesia, where local markets were working adequately; where food was available and affordable, cash transfers were given to beneficiaries. This helped to stimulate the local economy and gave older people the freedom to purchase what they deemed as their top priority. In the Philippines the local markets were either completely devastated by the disaster or were inaccessible to older people therefore specific food and non-food items were procured and distributed.

B. Development of beneficiary criteria

Beneficiaries were selected on the following general criteria: 1) must be 60 years old and above and 2) must be among the poor; does not have a stable income.

C. Relief Distribution

- **Cash transfers in Vietnam and Indonesia:** After selecting households with older people, funds were put in envelopes, each beneficiary received a coupon to exchange it with the cash transfers, on a specific date and time, and specific location signed by the local authority. The Social Affairs Department prepared a list of the beneficiaries based on the assessments, including name, gender, age and address (name of village). Beneficiaries signed their name or put their fingerprint next to their name. Distributions were witnessed by representatives of local authorities (head of village), Department of Social Affairs, HelpAge representative and local partner.



- **Distribution of food and non food items (NFI) in Philippines:** The list of relief aid recipients was first prepared and consolidated by the older people's associations (OPAs) in the community, together with local partner, Coalition of Services for the Elderly (COSE) staff. The team then prepared the relief items based on the list and identified number of aid recipients. COSE prepared identification cards with numbers and authorised signature on it to make sure that only the identified and pre-selected qualified recipients received relief aid. Those people with no stubs would no longer line-up during the relief operations. This process helped to make the on-site relief operations more systematic and peaceful.

D. Monitoring

In both Vietnam and Indonesia a survey was conducted with each cash transfers beneficiary to identify how the beneficiaries intended to use the funds. The results from the survey were not used to control what beneficiaries used the cash transfers for but rather to shed light on what older people in each community deemed as their top priority. This information can be used for a monitoring and analysis survey to confirm the type of expenditure carried out by the beneficiaries and see the coherence between intention and real expenditure.

HelpAge's partner in the Philippines, COSE, has developed monitoring ledgers or log sheets for the relief and rehabilitation programme for each OPA. The ledger is a management tool that helps to ensure accountability on the part of the OPA leaders or point persons who will release the pertinent relief assistance like rice and medicines. It is also intended to monitor the frequency and timeliness of releasing the relief assistance to the beneficiaries.

- E. Case Studies, Group Discussions and Surveys** were conducted by HelpAge staff and partners in all three countries for the purpose of learning more about how the disaster and the response affected older people. These results along with other data were used to determine the effectiveness of the response and what further action should be taken.

How HelpAge and partners responded

EAPRDC worked in close coordination with their partners in all three countries to effectively implement defined objectives. HelpAge staff and/or an external consultant traveled to the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia to assist HelpAge partners with the relief distribution and also with the documentation.

Relief distribution summary per country and partner

Country & Distribution Dates	Partner	Objective	Indicators	Total Achievements (final numbers: data)	Items Distributed and/or Services Provided
Indonesia Nov. 16 th - 25 th , 2009	Yayasan Emong Lansia (YEL)	To provide cash grants to 1,000 older persons (70+) in five villages affected by the Padang Earthquake. The cash grants will be used for non-food items of beneficiaries' choices.	1000 Emergency Cash Grants distributed to 1,000 beneficiaries by Nov. 25, 2009	1000 Emergency Cash Grants were distributed by 25 November 2009	Cash Grants of Rp 300,000 per person (\$ 32)
Vietnam Nov. 9 th -21 st , 2009	Vietnam Association for the Elderly (VAE) & Vietnam Women's Union (VWU)	To provide Emergency Cash Grants are provided to families affected by Ketsana disaster	Emergency Cash Grants distributed to 1,080 beneficiaries by Nov. 30, 2009	1,010 Emergency Cash Grants were distributed by 21 November 2009	Cash Grants of 500,000 VND per person (\$ 27)
Philippines Oct. 1 st – ongoing	Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)	(1) To provide food and non-food items to older persons affected by the typhoon. (1 sack of rice per beneficiary)	Provide relief assistance to 1,000 severely affected older persons Distribute rice to 1,500 affected older persons	Distributed relief goods to 3,156 affected older persons Distributed rice to 1,054 individual OP beneficiary (as of December 07, 2009)	Food and Non-food items: (e.g. rice, noodles, canned goods, toiletries, used clothing, biscuits & water)
Philippines Nov. 17 th – Ongoing	Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)	(2) To conduct medical outreach and provide medicines for older persons who became sick due to the disaster.	Distribute medicines to 500 older people	Distributed medicines to approximately 500 older people from different affected areas	Medical consultation & medicine (paracetamol, carbo, multivitamins)
Philippines Ongoing	Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)	(3) To provide assistance for housing repairs as long as resources are available.	Conducted initial assessments of candidate shelter beneficiaries. Finalized the list of qualified shelter beneficiaries; oriented the beneficiaries OPAs and leaders secured quotations from 3 different hardware / construction shops to make an estimate of the cost of shelter-related repairs.	Identified 85 shelter beneficiaries	

Effect of the disasters on older people and their communities

Indonesia: The survey's and interviews indicate that the communities have come together to support older people. Communities are comprised of people who are mostly related and/or have lived together in the same area for more than 30 years. Where older people lived alone before the earthquake neighbours stepped in after the disaster to provide temporary housing and some food. In the communities where cash transfers were implemented some, if not all, of the adult children of older people no longer lived in the community as they had moved away for education or employment. Therefore it seems very unlikely that a large proportion of older people will be able to rebuild their homes without outside support.

Vietnam: Older people in central Vietnam face particular threats from the increasing number of natural disasters, but are not often identified as a vulnerable group. Older people repeatedly ask to be 'seen, heard, and understood', to 'have equal access to essential support services' and to 'have their potential and contributions recognised, valued and supported' in both emergency as well as in non emergency situations. The assessment made in the affected communities has shown older people are among some of the most vulnerable groups affected by the Ketsana typhoon. Most of older people were excluded from credit, income-generation and food-for-work programmes, which exacerbated their loss of independence, status and dignity.

Philippines: The effects of the typhoon on the lives of older people varied. The major impact was the loss of their household materials and personal possessions. Many houses were also damaged. The disaster also affected negatively the health condition of older people. The OPAs themselves have noted that many older people in their communities contracted certain illnesses because of typhoon Ketsana (Ondoy). It has been noted by the OPAs that the health condition of some older people have actually worsened after the typhoon. Older people who have pre-existing health conditions were left vulnerable as a result of serious flooding in residential areas. Piles of garbage along waterways and riverbanks were left uncollected for weeks, which posed as potent health hazards to the health of communities.

Older people have appreciated the value of being organised and were grateful to be part of an organisation. They were grateful that they were able to depend on their respective groups for some assistance in times of calamities and disasters.

In all three countries: Older people have suffered from psycho-social trauma. For instance, some older people have developed phobias like fear of the rain or fear of another earthquake. In the Philippines older people experienced difficulty in sleeping when it's raining. While some older people are still at a point of crying when they were asked in interviews to tell their experience during the disaster. Older people are in need of special support to recover emotionally and increase their awareness and capacity to respond to emergencies.

On a more positive note values such as concern and volunteerism between and among older people grew stronger; the value of selflessness became apparent after the disaster. Some of the houses of older people who were not severely affected by the disaster became temporary shelters for other older people families.

The role of older people and older people's associations (OPAs) in the response

Indonesia: Older people in the earthquake affected area of Padang Pariaman, West Samatra expressed that there are currently no older people's associations (OPAs) established, but they consistently expressed their desire to assist in rebuilding their communities. Older people also indicated in both interviews and surveys how they would use the funds they received to assist others in their households. Older people in West Samatra seemed willing and ready to start an OPAs in their communities.

Vietnam: The Vietnam Association for the Elderly (VAE) at both the National and Provincial levels was involved in every aspect of the emergency cash grants intervention. The VAE assisted with the drafting of the proposal, the development of beneficiary selection criteria, selection of beneficiaries (1,080 households) and preparation/distribution of the cash grants.

Philippines: OPAs were actively involved in the relief and rehabilitation programme. They were involved in the assessments of damage, identification of severely affected elderly, development of the beneficiary selection criteria, preparation of relief items and monitoring/documentation of the rice distribution. Because of the active involvement of OPAs, their organisations were strengthened (i.e. the efforts of groups was consolidated). There was a deeper involvement of older people leaders and local older people community organisers; qualities like being responsible and trustworthy have been exemplified by most senior community leaders in overseeing the relief and rehabilitation programme. Some OPAs have realised the need to undergo disaster risk reduction (DRR) trainings. They realised the importance of being prepared to mitigate the impact of disasters.



The impact of the disaster response on the beneficiaries

Through the relief efforts of HelpAge and local partners over 6,720 older people received vital help needed to sustain them through the initial shock of the disaster.

Indonesia: All beneficiaries were grateful for the cash they received, because they can use it depending upon their specific needs. Based on the survey, most men will use the funds to repair or build a temporary shelter. While women will use it for food, medicine, pay school fees for grandkids or buy special clothing for religious activities.

Philippines: Older people stated that they received the relief assistance with respect and dignity. Because older people themselves and OPAs have been actively involved in the relief programme, they actually 'owned' the programme itself. They felt respected and their dignity has been valued because they were not just recipients, but also givers and providers.

"We are all thankful because we were able to receive help when we needed it the most. Even if we were not asking for any help, we're glad that we received assistance and many blessings. Some of our members even cried because they were touched by the act of kindness of some elderly who even brought relief assistance right at their doorsteps."

Rita Carpio
President of the United elderly Association
of Camarin Caloocan City, Philippines

Vietnam: In Vietnam when 1,080 beneficiaries of cash grants were asked what they expected to use the cash grant for the top four areas were food and cooking utensils, home repairs, the restarting of livelihoods and healthcare.

"The cash grant will help to reduce my concerns. Since now I have some money I can spend it on whatever I need, like buying medication."

Le Thi Sang, 92
Vietnam

Long term needs

Although over 6,720 older people have received initial emergency aid many of their long term needs remain unmet. HelpAge partners have conducted assessments and interviews to determine these long terms needs. Partners have expressed that without outside assistance many older people will not receive the assistance needed to rebuild their lives. The following are some long-term needs identified by HelpAge staff, consultants and local partners:

Indonesia: HelpAge's local partner, YEL, has reported that the recovery period for older persons will take a long time due to their dependence on others. Many older people were living alone before the earthquake as their children have migrated to bigger cities for economic reasons. Many of those that lived alone before the earthquake now live in temporary shelters where there are no family members or volunteers to assist them in their daily needs and physical activities. Some older people have been fortunate enough to move in with relatives whose homes were not too badly damaged by the earthquake, but in these households there can be up to 11, sometimes 15 members in one small house. Many older people are still traumatised, as they are hearing that the last earthquake was not 'the big one'. There is still a lot of confusing information among the community about what to do or what to expect.

Older persons prefer to stay in their own home, but now that their house is gone it is difficult for them to face the future. As can be expected, older people will not be able to rebuild their homes again without outside assistance because they have lost their income. During YEL's most recent visit to the earthquake affected region it was also noted that there is a need for wheelchairs and eye care.

YEL's director has also made the following recommendations to the Government:

- Raise awareness among the community about the vulnerability of older people
- Develop older people's associations (OPAs)
- Implement community-based home care for older people

Philippines: HelpAge's partner, COSE, has conducted follow up assessments after the initial relief distribution and determined that shelters and livelihood are the highest priorities for older people in the typhoon affected areas.

Shelter beneficiaries have been identified and the beneficiaries have been orientated. OPAs and local leaders have secured quotations from three different hardware/construction vendors to estimate the cost of shelter-related repairs. Assistance for housing repairs will be provided as long as resources are available. Beneficiaries for livelihood are being identified and discussions on type of activities are ongoing.

Vietnam: HelpAge regional staff along with local partners has determined the following long-term needs of older people in the typhoon affected areas:

- Increased awareness on disaster risk reduction (DRR)
- Increased inclusion and priority in disaster preparedness, response and rehabilitation
- Improved income security (social pension, loans, training and work opportunities)
- Improved access to health awareness and treatment
- Disaster-proof housing

Case studies

Indonesia

Kirodin, 83, widowed, has three daughters and two sons. He lived at an old person's institution until 2004. In February 2009 he moved back to his village because he was sick and wanted to be close to his extended family.

"When the earthquake happened I was at my relatives' house. For 15 days after the earthquake I would sit out on the street with a box and wait for charity. In 15 days I received about 30 USD from those in the community. I used it for food."

"I now live with my grandchildren, but their house is damaged as well. Some parts are ok so I can still stay there."

"I had a heart attack after the earthquake and now have trouble breathing. I was buying medicine from the institution but I can't afford it now. Every time I hear from others about the possibility of another earthquake I feel very scared and shake. My mind is very fragile. I have not received any counseling. Every times I feel scared I pray or I go to the local market to talk with the other elderly there. We talk and drink coffee together, this helps me."

"I am very thankful to HelpAge for the money I received; it is very useful for me. HelpAge understands our situation. I will use it for food and daily needs, but not sure how long it will last."



Philippines



Delfin, 68, and his wife Anita, 76, are members of New Life Neighborhood Association, one of older people's associations in Bagong Silangan.

"On August 26, 2009, we were actually having fun because we saw the water from the river rising up. The river was quite far from our place. While we were watching the river, my son asked permission to go to work.

"After 30 minutes, we saw the water rising up very fast. I held the hand of my wife and ran to our house trying to save some of our belongings in the house. We were still getting our things when the water entered our house and rose up very fast, up to our chest. I grabbed the hand of my wife and we walked outside the house. My wife was already panicking. I was trying to calm her down but the water continued to rise.

"We climbed to the roof of our house but again the water rose up very fast this time up to our necks. There was no rescue from our barangay (neighborhood). We were really panicking. Some of the young men saw us and they swam to save us. They were holding styrofoam so I let my wife hold it and the young men assisted my wife. Because I know how to swim, I swam from the roof of our house to another house, which was located in a higher place. We

thought we would be safe at the house we swam to because it was higher but the water continued rising up very, very fast and reached us again. That was the time that we really panicked because we thought we would die. The water was already up to my jaw and my wife was crying for help. We were also scared because while we were crying for help, we saw 2 big snakes trying to bite us but luckily I was able to grab a hose and used it to chase away the snakes.

"The young men tied a rope to another house and swam to the roof of the house that we were on. I asked them to save my wife first. They gave her a banana stalk and my wife sat on top of the banana stalk while grasping tightly the rope. The water continued to rise and I thought I would really die but somebody held my jaw up and put me on top of an airbed.

"This is the first time that I experienced such a scary situation in my whole life. I have had so many struggles in life, which is why I never gave up.

"Our house was washed away by the flood I only found 2 galvanized irons, 1 ply wood and some of our clothes after the flood. We were not able to save anything. We cannot leave this place because we have nowhere else to go. I will put up our shanty in the same place as before. Because we already experienced this kind of situation, whenever it rains very hard we now know what to do. When the rain is very strong and we cannot sleep we run to the barangay hall.

"No matter what happens I cannot leave this place because I am one of the leaders and have responsibility for others. Like for example, I am trying to look at the situation of the other victims especially the older people."

Vietnam

Le Thi Sang, 92, lost her 1,000 square meters of family rice crop when Typhoon Ketsana struck central Vietnam on 29 September. Her house was collapsed and many of her farm animals including pigs and chicken were washed away by the flood water. That means all sources of her old age income suddenly vanish.



"It was in the late afternoon, just before dinner time when the flood water started reaching my house. Water had been rising very fast and it continued to rise. I was very lucky to have my grandchildren rush to save my life.

"We spent few days cleaning up. Since my house was destroyed I have to move in with one of my grandchildren family."

She received relief food items including rice, instant noodles, fish cans, clothing, and blankets, from the authorities. Also the government provided 560 USD to her for house repairing.

Besides the support from the government, she also received emergency cash grant for 28 USD from HelpAge International.

"I will give the money from HelpAge to my grandchildren, to buy medication, and to save some for emergency use.

With the cash grant and the government monthly allowance for older people (7 USD), I feel more relief and secure in my life after the flooding."

Now, Le Thi Sang and her children and grandchildren have started rebuilding her house which is expected to be completed in the next two weeks.

HelpAge targets Quang Ngai and Quang Nam provinces and has distributed emergency cash grants to 478 families. By the end of November, HelpAge and its local partners plan to distribute emergency cash grant to 1,080 families affected by the Ketsana disaster.

Lessons learnt

- Redemption Coupons developed and provided to older people were an effective way to track and distribute to beneficiaries.
- OPAs in the Philippines are a strong community structure to carry out the relief and recovery efforts.
- The Vietnam Association for the Elderly (VAE) at national and provincial levels was very much involved in the emergency cash grants activity.
- The commitment of the local partners to emergency response is strength for HelpAge in the region to respond effectively to emergencies.
- For older people that are home-bound, aid was delivered door to door.
- Older people in these countries need assistance to rebuild their shelters and livelihoods.
- 98 per cent of all older people surveyed in Indonesia reported that they had received no emergency preparedness training before the earthquake.
- All of the distributions whether cash, food or Non- Food items (NFI), were delivered in a transparent and effective manner. However, full recovery of older people in all three countries will take a long time and will depend on the extent of external support.
- The total funding available was fairly small, so large numbers of affected households were excluded. Only those that were severely affected were selected.
- Older people organisations in the community are crucial in achieving a systematic, organised and efficient relief aid distribution.
- Complaints about the relief aid were few because it was the community themselves who agreed and finalised the list of recipients that received assistance.

Conclusion

Older people's recovery will take a long time. It will be hard for older people to have the same life they had before the disaster. It seems impossible that they can rebuild their lives without the support of others. For many the loss of family members, properties, and livelihoods has left them without support mechanisms to meet their basic needs. In particular, socially or physically isolated older people need to be identified and given targeted assistance to access their entitlement, rights and additional supports.

However, older people have also shown that they are stalwarts of resilience and they contribute to hold households and communities together through difficult times.