



**HelpAge  
International**

*age helps*

# Typhoon Haiyan one year on: older people key to recovery



*HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.*

*The Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) bases its mission on the tradition of respecting older people and supporting community-based programmes. COSE helps older people to continue living in and contributing to their communities.*

### **Typhoon Haiyan one year on: older people key to recovery**

Published by HelpAge International  
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Registered charity no. 288180

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

This report marks the one-year anniversary of the typhoon that struck the central region of the Philippines on the morning of 8 November 2013. Typhoon Haiyan, locally known as Yolanda, was one of the strongest typhoons ever recorded, with wind speeds reaching up to 195 miles per hour. The damage caused by Typhoon Haiyan was extensive, affecting many of the islands of the central Philippines. Over 1 million homes were damaged or completely destroyed, more than 6,000 people lost their lives and over 4 million people were displaced.

A significant proportion of those affected by the typhoon were older people. Around 1.27 million, or 8% of the reported 16 million affected people were aged 60 years or over.

Many older people lost relatives, shelter and livelihoods, leaving them displaced and traumatised. Many had to deal with existing vulnerabilities such as non-communicable diseases associated with poverty and poor nutrition. Poor access to information compromised their ability to receive help. For example, 75% of older people interviewed by HelpAge and UNHCR did not know that medical services were available free of charge.

About 65% of older people were working pre-Haiyan, but many were not included in post-Haiyan cash-for-work programmes.

HelpAge International (HelpAge) worked closely with the Coalition of the Services of the Elderly (COSE) to assess the level of damage and identify the immediate emergency support needs of the typhoon-impacted communities. Within days of the disaster, HelpAge International and COSE formed a joint response as HelpAge-COSE and began to provide essential relief support to people in the affected islands of Negros Occidental, North Cebu and West and East Leyte. There were two distinct phases in this emergency response. The initial relief phase covered a period of six months from November 2013 to April 2014 and supported older people households in particular but also included other households in the affected communities. The second, or recovery phase, from May 2014 onwards, addressed the particular longer term needs of older people for shelter, health and livelihood support, targeting the most vulnerable and poorer older person households.

A key strategy throughout has been to help older people help each other. Older people not only have particular needs during emergencies but can also contribute to meeting these needs. For example, HelpAge and COSE worked through Older People Organisations (OPOs) to enable older people to obtain ID cards so that they could



Joseito dela Cruz/HelpAge-COSE

claim entitlements such as discounts on medicines. They recruited and trained older volunteers to provide peer counselling to traumatised older people in hospital and relocation shelters.

Supporting existing and new OPOs continues to be a priority to make sure that responses to older people's need for a regular income, shelter, healthcare and access to rights and entitlements are appropriate and sustainable.

The relief phase focused on meeting the essential food and non-food needs of older people and the wider affected community. Counselling support was provided by trained older people volunteers to other older people, as many had suffered traumatic affects from the impacts of the typhoon. Access to appropriate medical care was limited, even before the disaster, in response to this, basic health check-up services were provided through the Rural Health Centres. Shelter support was provided to allow basic repairs as many homes were either damaged or destroyed. The relief support provided in the first six months reached a wider group of affected households, not only older people.

From May 2014 onwards, the second, or recovery phase saw a reduction in the number of communities that could be supported, as the recovery support would focus on sustaining impacts over a longer period, till the end of 2015. In this phase, recovery support would be aimed at older people, in particular, the most vulnerable poorer older person households would be targeted. The initial recovery support had focused on rebuilding typhoon damaged older people houses, training local carpenters on improved construction techniques, restoring lost livelihoods as a result of the typhoon and providing social welfare grants to the most vulnerable older person households. The longer term recovery support includes supporting protection and inclusion activities, healthcare support, livelihoods training and grants and increasing community resilience through Disaster Risk Reduction support. A key strategy is the direct involvement of community based Older People Organisations (OPOs). The OPOs are receiving training and support to promote the sustainability of these important services at the community level and beyond the current emergency.

## Relief support

The relief phase focused on meeting the essential needs of older people and others affected by Typhoon Haiyan. By April 2014, HelpAge-COSE had provided support to nearly 30,000 households in over 300 typhoon-affected communities, benefiting over 150,000 people.

Working with volunteers from the affected communities, HelpAge-COSE provided essential food and non-food items to nearly 8,000 households. As local markets began to recover and basic commodities became readily available, HelpAge-COSE started providing cash to over 10,000 affected households, enabling them to define and meet their own relief needs.

Rice seeds and fertilizer were provided to over 7,000 farmers and cash grants were distributed to those whose livelihoods were not dependent on farming.

Over 11,000 older people received cash grants for basic home repairs and basic shelter repair kits.

Healthcare was provided by doctors and nurses from the rural health centres to 1,645 older people. HelpAge-COSE, with support from Mercy Malaysia, trained volunteers from the Confederation of Older Persons' Associations of the Philippines (COPAP) to provide counselling to nearly 1,800 affected older people.

## Relief to recovery

As the relief phase of the emergency came to an end in April 2014, HelpAge-COSE focused on the recovery needs of fewer but highly-affected communities. This period marked a significant transition as recovery efforts would engage greater participation by community-based Older People's Organisations (OPOs). The recovery phase will be completed by December 2015. In this period, HelpAge-COSE will work with and eventually through community groups, such as OPOs and other local organisations and institutions.

From community-level assessments involving OPOs and other community members, HelpAge-COSE identified 110 typhoon-affected communities that would receive longer-term recovery support.

Over 300 older people's homes that were damaged by the typhoon will be rebuilt. HelpAge-COSE have trained more than 200 local carpenters in "Build Back Better" construction techniques, to ensure houses are more resilient.

HelpAge-COSE are helping older people to develop sustainable livelihoods by providing cash grants and technical support. This forms the initial part of a longer-term focus on promoting more age-friendly livelihood opportunities for older people. HelpAge-COSE has provided training to older farmers to promote the use of crop diversification techniques as well as grants to enable adoption of these new practices, since the typhoon destroyed millions of coconut trees that take years to start providing an income.

Healthcare professionals and community health workers are being trained to improve health services for older people. Pilot mobile health units are also being established.

Increasing older people's access to their rights and entitlements will continue and broaden. The "Protection and Inclusion" recovery activities HelpAge-COSE will promote awareness of older people's issues and their rights and improve access to social and welfare services provided by the Government of the Philippines. The Age and Disability Task Force (ADTF), established in early 2014, is providing training to other organisations on issues affecting older people and people with disabilities at the local and national level.

To help build community resilience to disasters, HelpAge-COSE will support the establishment of Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Management (CBDRRM) committees in early 2015. HelpAge-COSE will ensure that older people are included in these committees, with OPOs forming a core component of the CBDRRM structure in each supported community.

## Conclusion

From rebuilding destroyed houses to improving healthcare services and increasing community resilience, the direct involvement and participation of Older People's Organisations is a key and significant requirement. HelpAge-COSE will ensure that the recovery support provided will increasingly be taken on with and through OPOs, leading to more sustainable services that will continue to meet older people's needs beyond this emergency.

With the financial support already provided, HelpAge-COSE has been able to reach many households with immediate relief support. The recovery plans are currently well underway with longer-term support being provided. However, some gaps remain, particularly in shelter rebuilding, increasing and sustaining the capacities of the Older People's Organisations and advocating for the rights and entitlements of older people. It is hoped that the generous support received for this response will be further supported so that these typhoon-affected communities can continue to become stronger.

Older people not only have particular needs during emergencies but can also be effective contributors in meeting these needs. The experience HelpAge-COSE has had in providing relief and recovery support to Typhoon Haiyan-affected communities, points to this fact. It is working with and through older people and their organisations that will ensure longer-term impact.

# Introduction to the HelpAge-COSE partnership

The HelpAge International East Asia Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) based in Thailand has partnered with the Coalition of Services for the Elderly (COSE) for 25 years. This long-term partnership has focused on promoting and advocating for the rights and entitlements of older people in the Philippines. This partnership has also worked closely in previous recent emergency responses including Typhoon Ketsana in 2009 and the earthquake on the island of Bohol in 2013.

This partnership and recent emergency relief experience, provide a template to further develop the way HelpAge International engages with its country partners in the region.

The scope and scale of Typhoon Haiyan brought significant challenges. HelpAge International has been advocating for greater involvement and capacity development of local partners, not only in development initiatives but also during emergencies, which unfortunately are a frequent occurrence in the Philippines and other countries in the region.

In the Typhoon Haiyan Emergency Response, HelpAge International (EAPRO Office), with support from HelpAge International in London, established a direct partnership between HelpAge and COSE, forming a cooperative and integrated organisational response known as HelpAge-COSE. In this approach, HelpAge

International and COSE seconded experienced key staff to work jointly in driving and delivering the emergency relief support.

The HelpAge-COSE partnership was based on integrating the local knowledge and cultural understanding of COSE with the expertise and funding network of HelpAge International and its members. The predominant staff structure of HelpAge-COSE is based on COSE senior staff supported by a smaller number of highly qualified and experienced emergency and project management personnel. Each brought together complementary experiences, HelpAge with its systems, procedures and funding, and COSE with its local capacity, language, cultural sensitivity and, importantly, its previous local emergency experiences.

This robust partnership approach between HelpAge International and COSE (HelpAge-COSE) has formed the mechanism not only to deliver immediate relief support but also for the longer term more technical recovery support needed by those communities directly impacted by Typhoon Haiyan. The outcomes, achievements and recovery plans are a result of this unique partnership and should serve as a model, not only for HelpAge International in other supported locations, but also for other international NGOs.

Joselito dela Cruz/HelpAge-COSE



**When you give  
to older people**

**they give back**

# Emergency context



Joselito dela Cruz/HelpAge-COSE



On 8 November 2013, the strongest and largest typhoon ever recorded made six landfalls in the Philippines, causing massive death, displacement and destruction.

Typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Super Typhoon Yolanda) swept through the Visayas region from east to west, affecting more than sixteen million people in forty-four provinces of nine regions. The typhoon brought sustained winds of 315 kilometres per hour and gusts as strong as 380 kilometres per hour, heavy rain, flooding, and storm surges in coastal areas.<sup>1</sup>

It first struck the municipality of Guiuan in Samar in the early morning, delivering heavy rain and unleashing strong winds. The typhoon maintained its strength and caused storm surges more than five-feet high which inundated coastal areas of Eastern Visayas, throwing sea vessels from fishing boats to cargo ships inland, and engulfing large parts of Tacloban City, where the highest death toll and damages were recorded. It continued its path westward, moving across Iloilo and Busuanga, Palawan.

Despite its resilience and frequent experience of natural disasters, the Philippines was still left shocked after the wrath of Typhoon Haiyan. Filipinos in the affected regions had underestimated the extent of Haiyan's force and did not adequately understand the term 'storm surge'.

The utter destruction emerged as the water subsided and the sky calmed. Stunned survivors were brought to

evacuation centres in different regions; some fled from the affected areas to other parts of the country to escape the scenes of horror created by Typhoon Haiyan. There were also some who returned to their damaged houses and properties, and some who received temporary shelters.

Thousands of unidentified cadavers were laid out in the streets. Thousands of missing and injured people were recorded. As of 3 April 2014, the total reported death toll stood at 6,293, with a further 28,689 people injured, and 1,061 still missing.<sup>2</sup>

More than a million homes were either partially or completely destroyed, and the cost of damage to infrastructure and agriculture has been estimated at nearly 40 billion pesos (890 million USD). Roads were blocked, and airports and seaports were impaired. Water, power and communications were shut-off. Food and other goods were soaked in water and ruined. The health of typhoon-affected people deteriorated but treatment was unavailable due to inoperative health facilities in the communities and rapidly dwindling medical supplies.<sup>3</sup>

Typhoon Haiyan finally left Philippines territory on 9 November 2013 but its aftermath has remained longer than could ever have been imagined. To date, the restoration continues and HelpAge-COSE continues to work to help Haiyan-affected poor older people and their communities rebuild and recover.

1. *Prognostic Reasoning for Super Typhoon 31W (Haiyan) Nr 19*, Joint Typhoon Warning Center, November 2013.

2. *National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, NDRRMC Update SitRep No.108 Effects of Typhoon "YOLANDA" (HAIYAN)*, April 2014

3. *Philippines: Typhoon Haiyan Action Plan*, OCHA, November 2013

# Impacts on older people

When Typhoon Haiyan struck Eastern Visayas, around 1.27 million, or 8% of the reported 16 million affected people, were aged 60 years and over.<sup>4</sup> The three areas most severely affected by Haiyan have higher proportions of older people than the national average (6% aged over 60).

Eastern Visayas	7.8%
Western Visayas	8.6%
Central Visayas	8.2%

The older people in the Haiyan emergency area were displaced, traumatised, had lost family or relatives, shelter and livelihood, and had experienced health problems acquired in the disaster and related to ageing.

While older people have been recognised as one of the most vulnerable or potentially vulnerable groups in emergencies, their needs, unique capacities, and contributions to society and emergency responses are rarely recognised.

## *Some challenges facing older people affected by Haiyan:*

- Pre-disaster poverty levels<sup>5</sup> and malnutrition<sup>6</sup> rates in Leyte province were high. Data shows that older people are more likely to be poor, and 30% of older Filipinos are underweight.<sup>7</sup>
- During the Haiyan emergency, 75% of older people interviewed by HelpAge/UNHCR did not know that medical services were available free of charge.<sup>8</sup> Older people frequently have poor access to information which compromises their ability to receive help.
- Despite the fact that 65% of older people were working pre-Haiyan, agency reports demonstrate that many had not been included in post-Haiyan cash-for-work programmes.<sup>9</sup>

Older people face specific challenges in emergency situations, and often have to deal with both pre-existing conditions of extreme vulnerability which are exacerbated by the crisis, as well as coping with issues and risks resulting from the emergency itself.

After the typhoon, older people living alone were taken care of by concerned relatives living close to them. If they had no relatives nearby, these older people live and survive on their own. Those who had lost their livelihood, assets or tools to make a living were unable to get back what they had lost, and many needed to discontinue their previous work due to safety issues or poor health.

Others who stayed in evacuation centres raised concerns about the lack of information and the anguish that it created, and concerns about appropriate clothing or undergarments and receiving appropriate health care.

A UNHCR/HelpAge assessment<sup>10</sup> summarises the immediate needs of older people as: access to health services, information dissemination at household level, nutrition support, cash support to restart livelihoods, and shelter assistance.

Despite being disproportionately affected by the disaster, older people have faced limited access to services provided by other organisations for a number of reasons, including lack of awareness, lack of inclusive programmes that consider the specific needs of older people, and lack of adequate funding for addressing specific needs of older people. As a result, they do not receive basic relief services. This leads to increased marginalisation of extremely vulnerable older people.

Older people also received immediate relief including food assistance and temporary emergency shelter kit, but this did not always meet the nutritional needs of older people.

*“Canned goods are very oily. It is not good or healthy for a diabetic person to always eat oily foods.”  
– Alberto, 80<sup>11</sup>*

4. <http://www.helpage.org/newsroom/latest-news/older-people-disproportionately-affected-by-typhoon-haiyan>

5. [http://www.nscb.gov.ph/ru8/FactSheet/FS\\_on\\_Poverty.pdf](http://www.nscb.gov.ph/ru8/FactSheet/FS_on_Poverty.pdf)

6. HelpAge International Secondary Data Review – Cyclone Haiyan (Yolanda), 22 November 2013 (internal document)

7. Kristi Rahrig Jenkins, Nan E. Johnson, and Mary Beth Ofstedal, ‘Patterns and Association of Body Weight Among Older Adults in Two Asian Societies’, *Journal of Cross Cultural Gerontology* 22, no. 1 (2007): 83-99

8. Assessment of older people – Super Typhoon Yolanda, UNHCR/HelpAge International, December 2013

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. HelpAge-COSE, *Older people’s inclusion in the Typhoon Haiyan response*, 2014

With a few days after Typhoon Haiyan, HelpAge-COSE, with the Confederation of Older Persons' Associations of the Philippines (COPAP), conducted relief operations and provided psychosocial support to traumatised older people in the typhoon-ravaged communities in the Visayas region, particularly in Leyte.

Six months after Haiyan, HelpAge-COSE, together with older people volunteers, conducted a survey of 7,000 older people in the affected communities.<sup>12</sup> This identified that not all older people had received shelter assistance and those who had received reported that the shelter assistance had been insufficient.

Within this group of vulnerable older people, a subgroup of single older women was seen to be the most excluded from shelter assistance, thus, HelpAge-COSE gave priority to this most vulnerable group in further shelter support.

*“Although the wall is not finished yet, I’m very happy that my house has been repaired. I am sleeping comfortably now. I now have privacy from people passing by – they can’t see me anymore. And even if it rains, I am protected. Thank you. If not for you, my house wouldn’t be repaired now.” – Perpetua Tonio, 73, Medellin, Cebu*

The disaster had also greatly impacted on the health of many older people. The majority of older people surveyed said their health was affected by the typhoon while others shared that they had become ill during the emergency. Other health issues raised were difficulty in obtaining medicine and affording visits to a doctor.

*“The government health centre is nearby but the only service is checking blood pressure. There is no medication. Medication is available in the [village centre], but we can’t afford it. So, if we feel bad, we don’t bother going.”–Paulito, 80<sup>13</sup>*

There were also many responses from older people about livelihood assistance as one of their priorities in recovering from the disaster. A number of surveyed older people still work to support themselves. The damage done by Haiyan had affected their source of income and they needed help to get back on their feet.

*“My husband grows corn and has just replanted coconut seedlings. We had a coconut farm – two hectares of our own land. But the majority of trees were destroyed during Yolanda.”- Avelina Maningo, 66, Matag-ob, Leyte*

*“I do not wish to be rich. As long as I have enough to eat each day and have enough, I have no worries. I don’t like to think about all those worries because it causes me pain. If I have no money, I don’t sit down and think of money, I work. Until the end, I want to work. Work and work.”- Hilaria Capara, 84, Tacloban City, Leyte*

HelpAge-COSE recognised the capacity of older people in Leyte and the significant contributions they are making in their families and communities to assist with recovery and rebuilding. The older people have years of experience in dealing with similar situations and this knowledge is helping communities to recover faster.



Josecito dela Cruz/HelpAge-COSE

12. Older people’s inclusion in the Typhoon Haiyan response, HelpAge-COSE, April 2014

13. Ibid.

# HelpAge-COSE response

## Acute emergency relief phase (November 2013 – April 2014)

- Rapid assessments
- Establishment of coordination office
- Distribution of food and non-food items, hygiene kits, basic shelter kits
- Support to farmers: rice seeds and fertilizer
- Cash transfers: conditional shelter repair transfers, farm relief cash transfers and unconditional cash transfers
- Psychosocial support
- Health check-ups
- Advocacy and protection: the Age and Disability Task Force, solar-powered radios and radio broadcasts, senior citizen ID cards

## Recovery phase (April 2014 onwards)

- Technical transition
- Community level assessments
- Establishment of recovery priorities
- Focus on supported communities
- Capacity building
- Age-friendly livelihoods recovery
- Shelter construction: Build Back Better
- Health care, including psychosocial services and training
- Advocacy and protection
- Community-based disaster risk reduction management

## Acute emergency relief phase

HelpAge-COSE reached almost 30,000 households with older people in over 300 communities across three Typhoon Haiyan impacted islands of the Visayas Region of the Philippines during the emergency relief phase. HelpAge-COSE provided essential relief on Negros Occidental, North Cebu and in the western and eastern regions of Leyte Island.

This success was made possible by the participation of local volunteers working alongside HelpAge-COSE staff, providing important local information and delivering relief, particularly in the more remote areas that had not been reached by other agencies.

## Initial rapid assessments

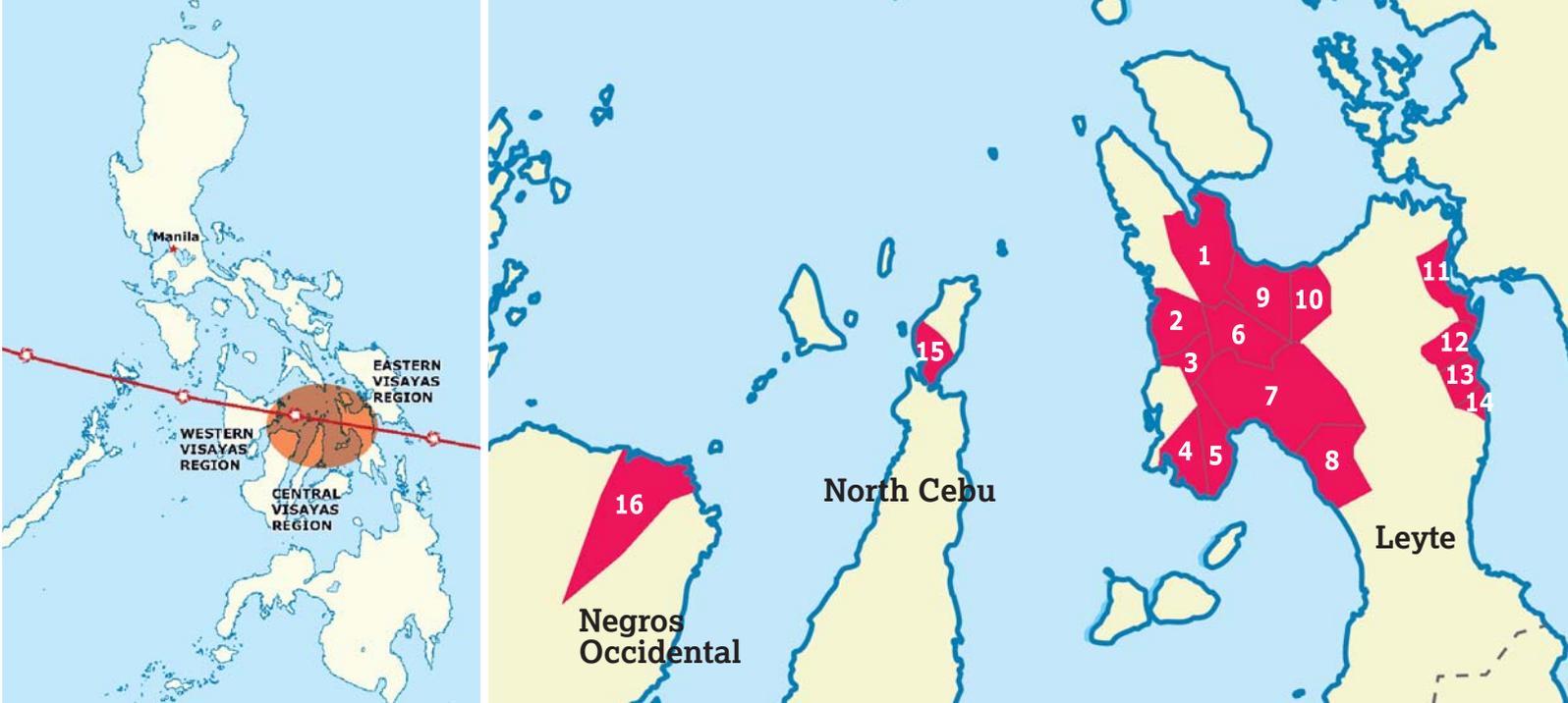
Within a week of Typhoon Haiyan, HelpAge-COSE, was able to undertake several rapid assessments of the impact the typhoon had on the affected communities.

These initial rapid assessments led HelpAge-COSE to focus immediate relief support in the impacted municipalities of the western part of Leyte Island. While eastern locations of Leyte and Samar were most heavily impacted in terms of death and main infrastructure damage, they were beginning to receive strong support from numerous local and international non-governmental organisations.

With HelpAge International's local partnership with COSE bringing local knowledge, cultural understanding and language, we were able to determine that affected communities in Western Leyte were not receiving sufficient relief support.



Agustinus Koli/HelpAge-COSE



Typhoon Haiyan was one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded, which devastated portions of Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines, on November 8, 2013. HelpAge-COSE provided essential relief on Negros Occidental, North Cebu and in the western and eastern regions of Leyte Island. The emergency response was delivered to 16 affected municipalities:

- |                |              |              |           |             |            |              |            |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. Leyte-Leyte | 2. Villaba   | 3. Matag-ob  | 4. Isabel | 5. Merida   | 6. Kananga | 7. Ormoc     | 8. Albuera |
| 9. Capocan     | 10. Carigara | 11. Tacloban | 12. Palo  | 13. Tanauan | 14. Tolosa | 15. Medellin | 16. Sagay  |

### Establishing a coordination office

With the level of infrastructure damage by Haiyan, banks, electricity and communication lines were severely disrupted in the areas of the relief operation. To ensure effective coordination of the relief response, HelpAge-COSE established a Coordination Office on Cebu Island, in the unaffected southern location of Cebu City. The Cebu Coordination Office ensured that there would be effective communication between HelpAge International EAPRO in Thailand, HelpAge International in London, and the relief operational offices in Western Leyte and North Cebu.

### Distribution of food and non-food items

Within days of the Haiyan devastation, HelpAge-COSE was able to respond and begin to meet the essential needs of thousands of households in typhoon-affected regions of West Leyte and North Cebu.

The emergency response from HelpAge-COSE during the first few weeks focused on reaching a large number of affected households with essential food and non-food items, including providing basic shelter materials. This initial rapid response ensured that households had access to essential relief goods that would allow them to cope until additional support was provided. The initial rapid response delivered blanket coverage, reaching not only poorer older people but also other affected households in the community.

HelpAge-COSE distributed essential food items, such as rice, fish, salt, and water, and basic household items, often referred to as a 'hygiene kit', containing plastic

buckets, toothbrushes and toothpaste, soap for personal hygiene, combs and detergent for clothes washing. In the first six weeks of the emergency, HelpAge-COSE delivered essential food packages and basic hygiene kits to 7,902 households.

In addition to these essential food and household items, with support with support from UK aid from the UK government, we were able to provide basic shelter kits containing a tarpaulin and rope to cover damaged roofs or provide some basic shelter from the elements. The basic shelter kits also included solar powered lighting, providing much needed light during the black-outs due to power cuts and the shortage of alternative lighting sources (kerosene fuel lamps or batteries for torches). These basic shelter kits were distributed to 4,000 households in the six municipalities of Western Leyte and Northern Cebu.

The direct distribution of relief items by HelpAge-COSE was essential in meeting the immediate needs of affected households as local supplies and general access to food and non-food-items had been impacted by Haiyan. While distributing direct relief items meets immediate needs, it has limitations in relations to costs, logistics and staffing needs.

During this initial rapid response, HelpAge-COSE was able to use its local connections to engage local volunteers to provide logistical and coordination support during the distributions. Working with the local volunteers was critical to our success in delivering immediate relief and it was an outcome of the partnership between HelpAge International and COSE.

### Support to farmers: rice seeds and fertilizer

With support from the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) and cooperation with the Philippines Department of Agriculture, HelpAge-COSE provided direct farm inputs of rice seeds and fertilizer to 7,760 farmers. The area supported by HelpAge-COSE for this relief initiative was in Western Leyte, in the municipalities of Ormoc, Kananga, Matag-ob, Albuera and Leyte-Leyte.

The support to farmers was an important initiative, as many basic crops which were about to be harvested before Haiyan were destroyed in the typhoon, affecting the availability of staple foods in the local markets. The support reached many farmers affected by the typhoon and included farmers under the age of 60. This relief support was part of a wider initiative involving local government agencies and International NGOs like Oxfam GB.

### Adoption of cash-based relief support: food security, shelter and livelihoods

During the distribution phase of emergency relief, HelpAge International's Emergency Response Team was able to undertake 'market' assessments in many of the supported locations. The findings indicated that many local markets were rapidly recovering and that basic essential food and non-food-items were becoming available. This presented an option for HelpAge-COSE to move away from direct physical distributions to a more flexible cash transfer mechanism.

During an emergency, organisations are required to ensure that the relief mechanisms adopted are the most appropriate. At one end of the relief scale, direct food distributions and provision of non-food-items generally present less choice, while cash distributions lessen dependencies and allow households to make choices to meet their own specific needs. Where possible, adopting a cash based approaches is the preferred option but only when conditions are appropriate, such as functioning markets, stable supplies, the absence of conflict or civil unrest, and existing money transfer agencies.

HelpAge-COSE introduced its first cash transfers to provide emergency relief on the island of Negros Occidental, in the municipality of Sagay, distributing cash directly to 375 affected households.

## Types of cash transfers

With respect to cash transfer types, these can be either 'Conditional Cash Transfers' (CCT), which limit how funds may be used, for example for shelter repairs only. This may be done to ensure specific recovery objectives can be met for that community. The second form is the more flexible 'Unconditional Cash Transfers' (UCT). This allows beneficiaries to determine how the funds will be used to meet immediate household needs.

In the Typhoon Haiyan response, HelpAge-COSE initially adopted both forms of cash transfers. UCT were provided to enable households to determine their own needs for food, medicine and to meet other essential needs. HelpAge-COSE also provided CCT to meet the basic shelter repair objective, to ensure funds would be used to protect household members from the elements.

However, based on beneficiary feedback and HelpAge-COSE monitoring visits, we requested our donors to allow the shelter-specific CCTs to be commuted into UCTs. Follow-up monitoring visits showed that many of the beneficiaries of the commuted shelter-specific CCTs had in fact used most of the funds to meet their shelter needs, however, some also purchased medicines, paid off debts or used the cash to meet school fees.



Aldrin Norio/HelpAge-COSE



Ajo Secuban/HelpAge-COSE



### Food security cash transfers

During the latter stages of the emergency phase, from late December into January 2014, HelpAge-COSE provided unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) to **10,104** older person households, benefiting approximately **50,000** individuals. These cash transfers enabled the households to meet their immediate needs.

With HelpAge-COSE's primary focus on older people, the majority of beneficiaries were aged 60 years or older, with 85% aged between 60 and 80. Female-headed households represented **60%** of the total recipients of the food security cash transfers.

Food security cash transfers were provided in 16 affected municipalities across three Haiyan-impacted islands from the west region, Negros Occidental (Sagay), North Cebu (Medellin), and on Leyte Island in western Leyte (Ormoc, Kananga, Albuera, Matag-ob, Merida, Leyte-Leyte, Isabel, Capocan and Carigara) and in some of the most impacted typhoon areas of East Leyte (Tacloban, Palo, Talosa and Tanauan).

Each household cash transfer was equivalent to US\$45 (local currency equal to 2,000 pesos), which would be sufficient to cover the immediate needs of the household for two to three weeks. Having access to cash gave older people a greater say on how the funds would be used and allowed them to make choices based on their personal household needs.

In HelpAge-COSE monitoring after the distribution of cash transfers, many beneficiaries indicated that the availability of cash had made a difference and had allowed them to meet basic needs and aid in the beginning of their household recovery.

### Basic shelter repair cash transfers

With funding support from UK aid from the UK government, DEC and the Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt), Germany, HelpAge-COSE was able

to provide direct cash transfers to the most vulnerable older person households whose house had either been damaged or was completely destroyed by Haiyan. The basic shelter repair cash transfers were distributed through existing commercial money transfer agents that are common and frequently used by people in the Philippines.

The need for shelter support far outstripped available funding so HelpAge-COSE adopted an approach to try and support as many vulnerable older people as possible. The basic shelter repair cash transfer would therefore not be sufficient to undertake substantial repairs or complete rebuilds, instead, the support would be taken as a contribution to meeting this need.

The basic shelter repair transfer was set at **US\$85** for partially damaged houses and **US\$115** for completely damaged houses. We were able to begin shelter cash transfers in late December 2013, reaching more than **4,000** households before the end of January 2014.

However, post distribution monitoring found that the shelter cash transfer provided was not allowing some households to undertake basic repairs. This was due to increases in the cost of local shelter materials and labour as a result of higher demand. With donor flexibility, HelpAge-COSE was able to respond to this situation and provided a second shelter cash transfer to the most vulnerable older person households. This additional support increased the total transfer received from US\$115 to **US\$240** for houses which had been completely damaged.

The initial shelter cash transfers were conditional (CCTs) but this was relaxed as many beneficiaries indicated that they had not only shelter needs that required support. With approval from donors, HelpAge-COSE made the shelter cash transfers unconditional, allowing households to determine how best to utilise these funds.

During the period, from late December 2013 to end of April 2014, HelpAge-COSE was able to distribute **7,406** basic shelter repair cash transfers, reaching more than 36,000<sup>14</sup> people with basic shelter support. Of the 7,406 households reached, **59%** were older female headed households.

### Supporting older farmers with cash transfers

During the early stages of the emergency, HelpAge-COSE had supported the Department of Agriculture with the distribution of rice seeds and fertilizer bags to 7,760 farmers in the Haiyan-impacted western municipalities of Leyte Island. Post-distribution monitoring by HelpAge-COSE identified that some older farmers had incurred debts so that they could purchase additional farm inputs. HelpAge-COSE was able to offer additional support to these farmers with direct cash transfers to alleviate some of this debt.

<sup>14</sup> Total beneficiaries reached includes family members based on average of 5 persons per household.

The cash transfers were unconditional and could be used to reduce incurred debts or meet more immediate household needs. HelpAge-COSE provided additional support to 291 older farmers. The amount of farm support was based on beneficiary farm size, with 1 hectare or less receiving US\$36, between 1 to 2 hectares US\$48 and farm sizes above 2 hectares received US\$60. The majority of the farmers receiving this type of support were small holdings of 2 hectares or less (68%).

### Early livelihood recovery cash transfers

In the transition from the emergency relief phase to the early recovery phase (April/May 2014), HelpAge-COSE provided cash support to enable households to re-establish livelihoods lost due to the impact of Haiyan. The support provided was limited to one of the most impacted locations on Leyte Island, the municipality of Tacloban.

The livelihood sectors included through this early recovery support include the sale of goods and services (mini-stores, food/fish vending and taxi services), agricultural production (rice and cash crops), animal husbandry (pig/poultry raising) and some fishery support.

HelpAge-COSE provided livelihood recovery cash transfers to **200** Haiyan-affected older person households in Tacloban. The majority of the transfers supported urban livelihoods, including 154 vending activities (77% of all transfers), of which 94 (61%) were to support older women. Overall older women were the majority (56%) of livelihood transfer beneficiaries. All livelihood transfer beneficiaries were older than 60 years of age, with 60% in the age range 60-69; 30% between 70-79 years, and 10% aged 80 and above. 65% of those over 80 were female.

HelpAge-COSE gained a lot of implementation experience in this process and will incorporate the successes and lessons into future livelihood support activities forming a significant part of the longer term recovery during the latter part of 2014 and into 2015.

### Psychosocial support

HelpAge-COSE recognised the need to address the social wellbeing needs of older people alongside their immediate material requirements, and launched a programme of psychosocial counselling to traumatised older people within four weeks of Haiyan's devastation.

Thirteen older people, all volunteer members of the Manila-based Confederation of Older Persons' Associations of the Philippines (COPAP), received basic training on psychosocial support from HelpAge-COSE and were mobilised to provide peer trauma counselling to **1,796** affected older people in relocation shelters and to patients reached by Mercy Malaysia's mobile medical services. The COPAP volunteers provided these counselling services for the two months of the emergency.

### Health check-ups

Many older people in the Haiyan-affected regions of the Philippines had pre-existing non-communicable diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes, associated with poverty and poor nutrition.

As a result of Haiyan, many older people found it difficult to obtain medicines due both to purchasing power and the availability of supplies in local pharmacies and health centres. Particularly in more remote communities, pre-existing poverty meant that many older people had not previously been able to access medical care, and had undiagnosed and untreated chronic health problems.

Results of a survey<sup>15</sup> conducted by HelpAge-COSE towards the end of January 2014 cited limited access to health care and medicines as one of the greatest unmet needs of older people that had become worse as a result of the typhoon.

In response to this unmet need, HelpAge-COSE launched a programme of health check-ups, with funding from the DEC and support by 12 municipality health centres on Leyte Island. The basic health check-ups were provided to **1,645** older people. All recipients were 60 years of age or older, and 62% were older women. Those receiving health check-ups were able to receive one month's supply of required medicine. Special cases needing additional support were referred for follow-up assessment at their local health centre.

Improving health care access and appropriate treatment for older people will form a central part of HelpAge-COSE's longer term recovery support. This will take the form of community homecare services and improving the knowledge of health professionals and community health workers on health issues relating to older people, with the focus on improving overall geriatric health care practice and services.



Ryan Ray Limos/HelpAge-COSE

15. HelpAge-COSE undertook a survey in January 2014 to ask older people how the Typhoon had impacted on them and what their priorities were for the recovery phase of the emergency. More than 7,000 older people were surveyed by older volunteers and the main findings were published in the HelpAge-COSE six month report in April 2014.

## Advocacy and protection

### The Age and Disability Task Force

HelpAge-COSE has also focused relief support to include protection, in order to reduce potential exploitation and neglect of vulnerable poor older people during and after a disaster. Part of HelpAge-COSE's efforts, at the beginning of the emergency, was to establish an Age and Disabilities Task Force (ADTF), formed from other organisations who were advocating for better inclusion and services for vulnerable groups in the Haiyan-affected locations. The ADTF role was to lobby and educate relief agencies and local authorities on the particular needs of vulnerable older people and people with disabilities.

The ADTF is presently composed of eight national and international age and disability focused agencies: HelpAge-COSE, Handicap International, CBM, Leonard Cheshire Disability Philippines Foundation, Rotary Club of Kagitingang Cubao, National Council on Disability Affairs, Philippine Coordinating Centre for Inclusive Development, Inc., and United Architects of the Philippines-Committee on Accessibility.

The ADTF will also continue to advocate the inclusion of vulnerable older people and persons with disabilities in future humanitarian responses.

### Solar-powered radios and radio broadcasts

Reliable access to a radio can help to keep older people connected and deliver vital information. In the communities supported by HelpAge-COSE, many vulnerable older people had limited or no access to relief support information. Many are in remote communities, with only limited access to electricity, if at all. Those who had radios could not afford to pay for batteries or had lost their radios during Haiyan.

With support from DEC and AARP, HelpAge-COSE were able to distribute solar and dynamo (wind-up) powered radios to **650** older person households in May/June 2014. The radios also have a built-in LED torch and can recharge mobile phones, which could be invaluable in future emergencies and supports an overall disaster risk reduction approach.

All beneficiaries were aged over 60 years, with the majority (61%) of those receiving a radio in the age range 60-69 years. 62% of radio recipients were women.

Some beneficiaries commented that having this support allowed them to connect with events and be better informed about issues in their region. Others also saw that such support would allow them to listen to music again and help to focus more on the recovery of their communities.

From March 2014, HelpAge-COSE began to support broadcasts of advocacy messages from three radio stations in Cebu, Ormoc and Tacloban cities. The messages were: the importance of older people and people with disabilities during an emergency, the contribution of older people and people with disabilities in society, and discussions on the existing laws for older people. Messages about healthy ageing and elder abuse were also shared in the radio broadcast. The work of HelpAge-COSE in the relief activities was discussed and the services available were promoted.

Between March and April 2014, HelpAge-COSE supported 21 separate radio broadcasts across the supported regions of Cebu and Leyte Island (Western and Eastern Regions).

### Senior citizen ID cards

HelpAge-COSE supported the recovery of lost or new Senior Citizen ID Cards for 209 older people. These cards allow older people to claim services from the Department of Social Welfare and Development and obtain discounts on essential items, like medicine. HelpAge-COSE worked closely with some Older People Organisations (OPOs), assisting in the legal and operational support needs to obtain the ID cards. The service is now integrated and expanded within the OPOs.

Provision of ID cards was supported in four of 13 municipalities. The majority of those reached were in the age range 60-69 (66%). HelpAge is continuing to secure ID cards and other legal documents for older people.

## *The three key objectives of the ADTF are:*

1. To develop and articulate a strategic and comprehensive approach to address the needs of older people, people with disabilities and those at risk of impairment who have been affected by Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda and future disasters;
2. To advocate for the rights and needs of older people and people with disabilities among local and international partners and through government and UN led clusters, and ultimately development programme coordination mechanisms; and
3. To raise awareness and develop capacity to respond to the needs of and challenges faced, by older people and people with disability in humanitarian response, relief and recovery activities.

## Recovery phase

For HelpAge-COSE, the relief phase and the longer term recovery focus overlapped in the months of April and May 2014. This transition period saw ongoing relief support still being provided, while at the same time early recovery activities for livelihoods were promoted.

For HelpAge-COSE, as well as for other organisations, there was a need to focus recovery support on fewer impacted communities. The relief phase sought to reach as many affected communities as possible within the given timeframe and funds available. However, the recovery phase required meeting deeper and longer term needs of the affected communities. To achieve this required more direct targeting and the need for HelpAge to identify the most impacted communities that have the least means to be able to recover alone.

## Technical transition

As the focus moved from meeting essential basic needs to more long-term and more technical recovery activities, HelpAge-COSE needed to grow and increase the number of staff to ensure we had the right technical support in place to meet these new challenges.

## Community level assessments

For effective recovery support, there is a need to undertake fuller consultations within communities, to better identify the long-term recovery needs of the most vulnerable older people in Haiyan-impacted communities. From monitoring reports, relief distribution data and information gathered from other relief support organisations, HelpAge-COSE was able to identify target communities for assessments.

In May and June 2014, HelpAge-COSE undertook 156 community-level assessments that would be used to determine the level of impact from Haiyan, the amount of support already received and whether the needs of older people are being addressed for the most vulnerable older person households in that community. From the assessments, HelpAge-COSE identified 110 communities for continued recovery support.

## Establishment of recovery priorities

HelpAge-COSE's overall recovery plan for the next 18 months has been shaped by community participation, particularly by older people and older people's organisations.

HelpAge-COSE engaged with older people and key stakeholders in the community through a series of focus group discussions with the wider Haiyan-affected community. This inclusive process allowed us to hear broader community needs and not just those affecting older people. From this, HelpAge-COSE was better able to explain what we do and our main focus on supporting vulnerable older people in the community.

We conducted one-to-one interviews, known as key informant interviews, with several older people in each of the 156 communities identified for possible ongoing recovery support.

HelpAge-COSE also undertook interviews with local community officials, to collect information on community demographics and any plans already committed by other relief agencies. This information allowed HelpAge-COSE to better determine and identify those communities that had the least support, at that time, and those with significant vulnerable older populations.

## Recovery priorities

From our consultations, HelpAge-COSE, in line with our capacities and mandate, was able to define the main recovery focus for the next 18 months:

- **Regular income:** This would be achieved through assisting older person households with livelihood recovery cash transfers that would be used to recover lost supplies and equipment. Support would also be provided to the most vulnerable older people living alone through social welfare grants for a period of six to nine months. HelpAge-COSE would also provide alternative livelihood opportunities that are more 'age-friendly' and avoid activities that are dangerous and physically demanding.
- **Shelter repairs:** HelpAge-COSE will again support older people households with further shelter repair cash transfers and this would be linked to training local carpenters, who would support repairs and rebuilding of HelpAge-COSE shelter beneficiaries.
- **Health support:** HelpAge-COSE will train health professionals and local community health workers in health care practices appropriate for older people (geriatric care). HelpAge-COSE will also, through Older People Organisations, support the availability of appropriate and affordable medicines at community pharmacies. To reach more remote communities, HelpAge-COSE will also work with the municipality health centres to set up a pilot mobile health service that will bring health care directly into the communities. This initiative is being supported through the funds received from the Disasters Emergency Committee.
- **Access to rights and entitlements:** HelpAge-COSE will support the local Older People Organisations and the municipality level Office for Senior Citizen Affairs (OSCA) with training and education on their entitlements. Support will be provided for basic legal services for older people to access legal documents and their Senior Citizen ID cards.

## **Focus on supported communities**

A challenge for HelpAge-COSE was to reduce the scale of the response and to provide support to fewer communities that were the most impacted and were not already receiving support from other organisations. While the number of communities supported decreased, the scope of the recovery support provided to communities increased.

The task of exiting previously supported communities was challenging on many levels and was managed carefully and responsibly. A critical part of the process was direct communication and meetings with communities that had not been identified for recovery support. HelpAge-COSE met with local officials and the community to explain why HelpAge-COSE would no longer be in their community.

After planning consultations with the 110 supported communities, HelpAge-COSE developed comprehensive community-based recovery plans beginning in May 2014 and continuing for the next 18 to 20 months until the end of 2015.

## **Capacity building – Older People Organisations and Offices of Senior Citizen Affairs**

HelpAge-COSE has a prime objective to develop older people's capacity and improve their social wellbeing, health and access to their rights and entitlements. The main mechanism used is support to community-based Older People Organisations (OPOs) where they exist, or help to establish them.

Engaging with and working through OPOs is important for sustainable outcomes in health, social inclusion and access to rights and entitlements. HelpAge-COSE will also work at the municipality level, supporting the Offices of Senior Citizen Affairs (OSCA), who are mandated by the Philippines Government to support community-based OPOs.

HelpAge-COSE aims to reach and develop the capacities of 110 OPOs and 11 OSCAs during the recovery phase and progressively increase their level of participation in the delivery of key recovery activities.

Since May 2014, HelpAge-COSE has completed detailed assessments on the status and operational capacity of OPOs in all of the 110 supported communities. From this assessment, fewer than half of the typhoon affected communities have an operational OPO. Those that do exist operate at varying capacities and many do not meet on a regular basis. The OPO assessment found that of the few existing OPOs, very few had been formed through consultation or elections. Many do not have operational documents or policies outlining their role in their communities or activities aimed at older people

Each of the 11 supported municipalities have a functional and operating OSCA. HelpAge-COSE has been liaising closely with the OSCAs throughout the

Typhoon Haiyan emergency. The OSCA older members have been able to link HelpAge-COSE with the affected communities and OPOs, where they exist.

## **Livelihood support**

HelpAge-COSE will support the formation of 110 OPO livelihood committees to channel livelihood grants to older people in their community. This will allow OPO members to learn how to manage grants that later may develop in to a revolving loan system, generating future income for the OPO. Training will be provided to livelihood grantees, focused on age-friendly livelihoods that are more appropriate and inclusive for older people. At least 1,000 older person households will receive direct livelihood support through the committees.

## **Home care and community pharmacies**

Each of 110 OPOs will also be trained to operate and manage community pharmacies that will stock common medicines for the community and NCDs such as diabetes and hypertension. OPOs will also be linked to rural health centres to provide referral services and monitoring support to older patients in the OPO communities.

## **OSCA helpdesks**

HelpAge-COSE will assist each of the 11 OSCAs to establish helpdesks to ensure older people can be heard, collect complaints and be informed of their rights and entitlements.

## **Social welfare support**

HelpAge-COSE has identified a vulnerable group of older people living alone and without immediate supporting family members. To provide support, HelpAge-COSE with OPOs, where they are operating, will target at least 400 of these most vulnerable older people with cash transfers so that they can meet their essential needs for the next six to nine months. These grants, where possible, will be managed through OPOs. The amount of the transfer will vary from US\$20 to US\$25 per month. This is higher than the Philippine Government Social Pension fund amount of around US\$12 per month.

## **OPO disaster risk reduction capacity**

HelpAge-COSE will also involve 110 OPOs and 11 OSCAs in community-based disaster risk reduction management training. Building community resilience against future disasters is pivotal to HelpAge-COSE's approach. Using strengthened OPOs and OSCAs, HelpAge-COSE will be able to support the wider community in undertaking hazard mapping, establishing disaster risk reduction committees that include older people, performing emergency drill exercises and developing contingency plans.

## Cash-For-Work

Cash-For-Work focuses on clearing or repairing damage caused by Haiyan. In all 110 supported communities, HelpAge-COSE informed the availability of the Cash-For-Work recovery support programme.

A proposal received from the Senior Citizens Association of Basper (Tacloban) has been approved to clear 640m of blocked storm surge channels that have caused subsequent flooding of the community. The team is composed of older supervisors and younger community members with older parents in their household. The storm drains will be cleared by the end of October 2014.

## Age-friendly livelihoods recovery

Many livelihoods, both agricultural and otherwise, were impacted as a result of Typhoon Haiyan. HelpAge-COSE will provide funding support to households with older people whose livelihoods have been lost as a result of the typhoon. We will focus on the most affected and those with the least means to recover their lost livelihood. We will support both urban and farm based livelihood activities. With funds allocated we hope to support more than 450 older person households with this more immediate recovery support. With additional funds we could reach more and are actively seeking support for this purpose.

HelpAge-COSE has received nearly 60 livelihood proposals that are mostly centred on vegetable growing cooperatives by a few established OPOs, and from individual older person households for animal raising and for the restocking of mini-stores.

## Crop diversification

A stable source of income for farmers prior to the Typhoon was coconut trees. Haiyan destroyed millions of coconut trees, resulting in the loss of important income for many farmers. Action to recover and replant destroyed coconut trees would take up to 10 years before the re-establishment of coconut incomes to pre-typhoon levels.

With limited crop diversification and dependency on coconut trees for income supplements, HelpAge-COSE has recognised the need to reduce future vulnerabilities and support more diversified and resilient crops within the region.

As part of the longer term recovery strategy, HelpAge-COSE will support 150 'model' farmers who will learn how to develop and grow more diversified crops. We will provide training and grants to enable them to adopt more resilient and diversified crops that can be harvested several times per year leading to increased household income levels.

These farmers will demonstrate and promote their new techniques to other local farmers in order to replicate and spread the initiative. HelpAge-COSE will also support more than 500 replication farmers with training and grants to enable them to adopt the new diversified farming practices. HelpAge-COSE will work with the district Office for Agriculture during the implementation of this activity.

Initial training was provided at the end of September 2014 to 30 'model' farmers, and will be expanded in the coming months. The training used both classroom instruction and practical sessions in the field.



Robyn Lacson/HelpAge-COSE



Hazel Ayne Garcia/HelpAge-COSE

Estelito Perez/HelpAge-COSE

### Shelter construction: Build Back Better

Around 1.1 million<sup>16</sup> houses were either damaged or destroyed as a result of Haiyan. During the first few weeks of the disaster, many received shelter support kits to undertake basic repairs or erect temporary shelter. Later, support was provided through direct materials and shelter repair cash grants.

Following shelter needs assessments, HelpAge-COSE has adapted the shelter strategy to support the complete rebuilding of older people's homes. HelpAge-COSE will directly oversee house reconstruction and provide trained carpenters to rebuild homes using the 'Build Back Better' construction methods.

### Training carpenters

HelpAge-COSE will identify and train 200 local carpenters in a 2-3 day training programme on 'Build Back Better' techniques, which is promoted by the Shelter Cluster Committee and other humanitarian organisations. By the end of September 2014, we had already identified and provided training to more than 180 local carpenters.

Trained carpenters will be linked to HelpAge-COSE shelter beneficiaries for complete rebuilding of houses destroyed by the typhoon. Agreements will be made to ensure the work is completed to the required standards, time and within the allocated budget. Shelter beneficiaries will be involved during this process, and in some cases, family members can contribute labour and time to support reconstruction efforts.

### Toolkits

As a result of the typhoon, many carpenters and other tradespeople have lost essential tools needed for their trade. This had an impact on the reconstruction efforts. In support of HelpAge-COSE's shelter reconstruction

plans and to aid wider community recovery, HelpAge-COSE will provide 200 carpentry tool kits to the 'Build Back Better' trained carpenters to ensure they have the right tools to undertake their work properly.

### Rebuilding houses

The new houses will use traditional designs and local construction materials, but the new construction methods reinforce the overall structure and joints. This should increase resilience to typhoons and storms. HelpAge-COSE recognises that the new buildings will not be 'typhoon-proof' but with the 'Build Back Better' approach they will be stronger than previous dwellings.

HelpAge-COSE will provide two sizes of core house, one suitable for a family of three or less, and one for four people or more. The estimated inclusive cost of the smaller house will be US\$900 to US\$1,000 and of the larger house US\$1,100 to US\$1,200. The new houses are 'core' houses, and meet immediate dwelling needs, but could easily be extended by the inhabitants as required.

HelpAge-COSE selected the municipality of Villaba to be the first location to receive shelter reconstruction support. This is where the first group of carpenters was trained in September 2014. Of the nine initial houses to be reconstructed, six were built as a first group to assess the construction time required, the materials used, and to check the design and the construction techniques.

HelpAge-COSE has approved and initiated the reconstruction of 66 complete rebuilds and 36 major house repairs in North Cebu (Medellin) and 25 total rebuilds in West Leyte (Matag-ob). Shelter planning for East Leyte (Tacloban area) is in process and rebuilding will commence in November 2014. As of October 2014, HelpAge-COSE has started the total reconstruction of 100 completely destroyed houses and is undertaking significant repairs to 36 partially damaged older person households.

16. DSWD DROMIC data, cited in Philippines: Typhoon Haiyan Situation Report No. 16, OCHA, November 2013

HelpAge-COSE's initial shelter needs assessments showed that there are between 800 and 1000 older person households who are least able to rebuild their houses. This number may increase as further evaluations are completed and validated in the coming months.

From current funds available for shelter, HelpAge-COSE will be able to support approximately 300 major repairs and total rebuilds across the three main locations of North Cebu (66 house total rebuilds and 36 major repairs), West Leyte (120 total rebuilds) and East Leyte (80 total rebuilds).

HelpAge-COSE is actively seeking additional funds for shelter reconstruction as current funds will support only a very a limited number of potential shelter beneficiaries. The number of rebuilt houses could easily be increased from 300 to over 600 if funds were available.

### Health care, including psychosocial services and training

HelpAge-COSE's work on health in the recovery phase and beyond focuses on promoting better geriatric care both in the community and at the main health centres. Community health workers (CHWs) will be linked to OPOs for older patient referrals and monitoring support.

From community consultations and a general impact survey conducted by HelpAge-COSE at the end of January 2014, older people indicated that accessing health care and medicines was a significant challenge and unmet need. Older people in the more remote communities reported that transport costs and unavailability of medicines at health centres were barriers to appropriate health care. Consequently HelpAge-COSE will implement a pilot project on reaching older people in remote communities through a mobile health care service.

### Age-friendly (geriatric) health care

To support improvements in the health care provided to older people in the typhoon-affected communities and municipalities, HelpAge-COSE will train up to 300 health professionals and more than 500 CHWs in age-friendly health care practices. Training will be provided in all of the 110 recovery supported communities. HelpAge-COSE will provide quarterly follow-up meetings with the CHWs and involve the OPOs to provide monitoring and feedback support.

Since July 2014, HelpAge-COSE has provided training in age-friendly health care practices to 390 health professionals and CHWs.

### Home care services

HelpAge-COSE will support up to 500 CHWs to receive training to provide basic health care support to older patients in their homes. This support will be provided in

all 110 communities and will involve the support and engagement of the OPOs. HelpAge-COSE will support the OPOs to implement a referral system that for older patients to access secondary care at the main health centres or hospitals if needed.

In addition to training provided to the CHWs and OPOs, HelpAge-COSE will also provide basic home care health equipment that can be used to monitor temperature and blood pressure. Each CHW trained will receive one of the homecare kits and OPOs will support the CHWs with battery replacements and maintenance for the kits.

### Community pharmacies

HelpAge-COSE, working through OPOs, will establish and stock 110 community pharmacies in the 11 supported Haiyan-affected municipalities. HelpAge-COSE will provide training to members of the OPO and provide the initial medicine stocks for the pharmacies.

HelpAge-COSE will coordinate this project with the District Health Offices and Department of Health to obtain appropriate agreements and follow required guidelines and procedures. HelpAge-COSE will ensure that the training and pharmacy management meets the requirements of the Department of Health and the expectations of the communities.

With the initial medicines stock provided by HelpAge-COSE and initial operating costs covered, the pharmacies will be self-sustaining through revenue from the sales of medicines, and managed through the local OPO, with support from the local Office for Senior Citizen Affairs.



### Mobile health care services

HelpAge-COSE has been in early discussions with five municipality health centres to establish their interest and possible participation mobile health care services for remote communities. Meetings have also been held with the District Health Offices to support this initiative and we are in the process of securing agreements on the modalities and operational requirements of the pilot project.

The project will support and provide funding for health professionals to visit remote communities and provide basic health care services to the community, and in particular to vulnerable older people. Training will be provided to selected health care professionals and linkages will be made with the home care trained CHWs.

HelpAge-COSE will provide transportation by suitable motorbikes, equipped to carry essential medical equipment and medicines. Operational costs will initially be supported by HelpAge-COSE and part of the pilot outcomes will be to develop sustainable approaches for the mobile health care services. It is expected that the pilot project will reach more than 2,000 older people.

As of October 2014, three municipality health centres, one from each of the three HelpAge-COSE supported locations, in North Cebu (Medellin), West Leyte (Isabel) and East Leyte (Tanauan) have agreed to participate in the pilot mobile health care service project. In the coming months, we expect to begin to deliver services in those communities.

### Psychosocial training and services

HelpAge-COSE has provided psychosocial training to 214 CHWs and volunteers, of whom 164 were women. HelpAge-COSE will continue to provide training to other CHWs in the coming months and will undertake quarterly support sessions with the trained CHWs and community volunteers.

Psychosocial support sessions have started but are in the early stages as the new skills of the CHWs need to be monitored and strengthened in the planned follow-up support sessions.

### Advocacy and protection

In the recovery phase, HelpAge-COSE will increase the capacity and knowledge on rights and entitlements of OPOs and OSCAs, develop publicity materials for advocacy campaigns including radio broadcasts, and further develop and support the growth and participation of the ADTF to act locally and at the national level.

### Access to rights and entitlements – OPOs and OSCAs

HelpAge-COSE will support each OSCA office to establish an information helpdesk. Each OSCA office will engage two helpdesk volunteers, 22 in total. The helpdesk volunteers will visit OPOs to provide information and feedback issues relating to older people in that community. HelpAge-COSE will provide initial funding to cover these volunteers' travel costs into the communities. The OSCAs and help-desk volunteers will receive training on the rights of older people and people with disabilities. The first OSCA helpdesk has already opened in Ormoc City, West Leyte.

The OSCAs will also provide basic legal services to support older people who have lost or are yet to obtain their senior citizen ID cards, which are required to access services and discounts.

### Community IEC on rights and entitlements

While certain laws and policies on the rights of older people exist, they are often unknown or partially implemented. To address this we must raise awareness and understanding in the community, and among commercial businesses and official bodies. HelpAge-COSE will support and work with OPOs and OSCAs to hold workshops, meetings, conduct media campaigns and produce publicity materials on the rights of older people in the Philippines.

HelpAge-COSE has supported and participated in 91 radio broadcasts since March 2014 in three locations covering Cebu, Ormoc and Tacloban. Advocacy messages centred on older people and people with disabilities. Older people have also been trained and now anchor the radio programmes.



Jeff Balistoy/HelpAge-COSE

### **The Age and Disability Task Force (ADTF)**

The ADTF is becoming more established, with policies, action plans, advocacy messages and materials developed and disseminated, and age and disability training provided to some humanitarian agencies supporting the relief and recovery efforts of Typhoon Haiyan. Funding support has been received from other ADTF members to support wider inclusion activities.

Building on these achievements, HelpAge-COSE will continue to fund the ADTF Coordinator position, and support the production of advocacy materials and dissemination workshops. The ADTF will develop greater technical capacity within its membership, with a view to offering consultative technical support and advice to other organisations. HelpAge-COSE will continue to support the ADTF throughout 2015 with a view to it becoming self-financing and operate independently from 2016.

### **Community-based disaster risk reduction management (CBDRRM)**

HelpAge-COSE takes an integrated community-based approach to building disaster resilience and works with key community members, local officials and importantly, OPOs and their supporting body, the Office for Senior Citizen Affairs.

Building more disaster resilient communities in the Philippines will form a significant part of ongoing recovery support in 2015. A critical part of HelpAge-COSE's strategy in CBDRRM is the direct involvement of members of OPOs. As previously noted, OPOs in many communities are either not established, or not fully functional and need urgent support to take on this and other planned initiatives.

With funding already received, HelpAge-COSE can implement the main elements of its CBDRRM approach, but with additional support more can be done to embed the practices at the local and municipal level. HelpAge-COSE will be seeking to secure additional funds to build on planned CBDRRM activities.

#### **OPO orientation workshops**

These workshops will sensitise older people and their OPOs to CBDRRM. They will identify potential community members to join CBDRRM committees.

#### **Establish CBDRRM committees**

HelpAge-COSE will support and train CBDRRM committees in each of the supported communities. Training will be provided on the role and functions of the committee, how to develop contingency plans for the community, how to identify specific local hazards (hazard maps) and how to undertake mock drills.



Aldrin Norio/HelpAge-COSE

### **Community hazard and vulnerability mapping**

The CBDRRM committee, with participation from other community members, will undertake a two day community hazard and vulnerability mapping exercise to identify likely emergencies (floods, landslides, earthquakes, typhoons) and identify potential hazards and threats to the community. The exercise will also identify those who will be most vulnerable and include them in contingency and support plans.

### **CBDRRM contingency plans**

The CBDRRM committee will develop action plans and mitigation strategies to respond to specific hazards. This includes evacuation plans, buddy systems, and stockpiles of essential supplies and equipment.

### **Community emergency exercises/mock drills**

Putting training and planning into action will be an important learning outcome. The mock drills will involve many members of the community to test the appropriateness of the contingency plans and identify gaps that may require further support.

### **Disaster risk reduction basic equipment**

Based on the identified hazards in each community, HelpAge-COSE will provide basic emergency equipment. This may be radio sets, tarpaulins, ropes, torches, signalling devices such as whistles, and other basic equipment. These basic disaster risk reduction kits will be provided to all 110 supported communities.

### **Disaster risk reduction awareness raising and messaging**

Communities will receive information about disaster risk reduction via pamphlets, local community awareness meetings and importantly, through the radio. HelpAge-COSE has already been delivering key information messages through radio broadcasts since March 2014. Additional radio broadcasts will cover disaster risk reduction topics and share news and alerts about possible emergencies like storms or typhoons.

# Funds used

HelpAge International was able to mobilise immediate relief funding through the HelpAge global network from America (HelpAge USA), Germany (HelpAge Deutschland), Spain (HelpAge España) and Korea (HelpAge Korea). In addition to this network of HelpAge members, significant support also came through the UK, with direct funding obtained from Age International and the Disasters Emergency Committee.

HelpAge-COSE secured £4.5 million to support the overall Typhoon Haiyan humanitarian response in the Philippines over two years.

Recognising the scale and magnitude of the destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan, additional emergency response capacity was made available from the Emergency Response Unit at HelpAge International in London. With this additional capacity, HelpAge-COSE was able to mount an immediate and comprehensive relief response in Western Leyte, North Cebu and to a limited extent on the Island of Negros Occidental.

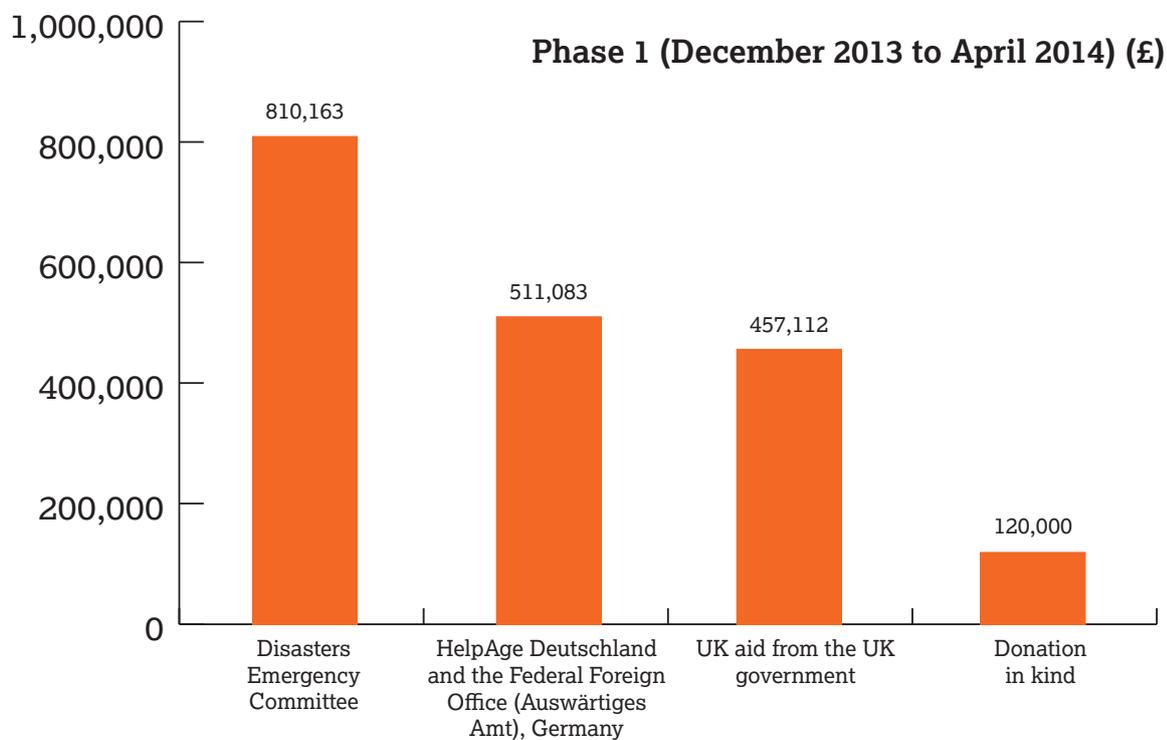
An initial immediate deployment of over 10 COSE staff and 10 resource people from HelpAge regional and London offices reached the affected areas within days.

A year later, HelpAge-COSE is operating through three offices in Cebu, Ormoc and Tacloban with more than 40 national staff and three international staff.

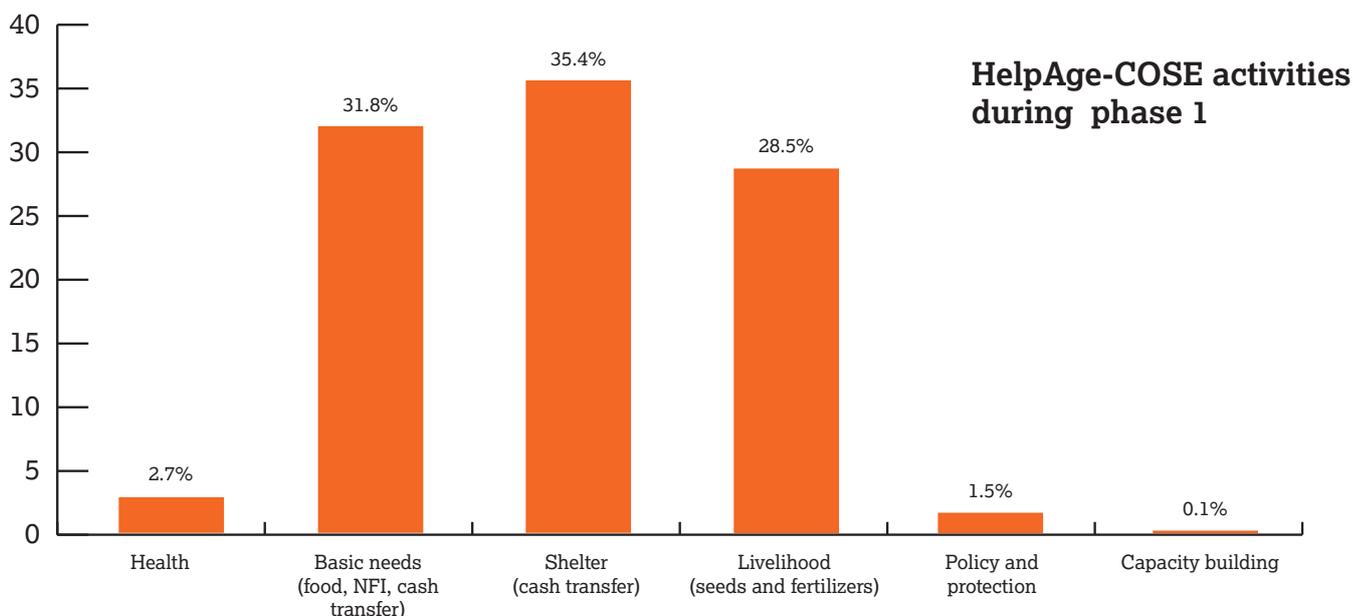
The emergency funds were raised in two stages, the first covering the needs for the first six months of the emergency relief effort. The amount of funds secured and expended for the relief effort was £1.9 million, and was used to support food and non-food-item distributions during the first few weeks of the emergency. Later, HelpAge-COSE adopted cost effective cash transfers, to allow households to prioritise and meet their own support needs. We also provided funds for basic shelter repairs and supported the beginning of livelihoods recovery in eastern Leyte Island.

Phase 1 involved three main donors:

- Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) (UK)
- HelpAge Deutschland (HAD) and the Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt), Germany
- UK aid from the UK government



**67% or over £1.2 million of the funds received for the emergency response directly reached the beneficiaries.**



Phase 2 of the relief operation started in April 2014. With support from Age International and other members of the HelpAge network (HelpAge USA and HelpAge Deutschland) and additional funds from the DEC, we have raised £2.6 million to be used for the longer term recovery support. Of this, 35% is from DEC, 22% from

Germany's Relief Coliation (Aktion Deutschland Hilft-ADH), 15% from Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, 15% from Age International and 13% from AARP Foundation. These funds will allow HelpAge-COSE to provide support until the end of 2015.

## Looking to the future: identifying gaps and needs remaining

In the early part of 2015, the Haiyan recovery programme will transition from a HelpAge-COSE partnership to sole COSE management, with support provided from the HelpAge International East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) based in Thailand.

The transition is expected to start in February 2015 with the closing of the Cebu Coordination Office, which will then be incorporated into the COSE office based in Manila. HelpAge International seconded staff will continue to provide support and guidance until the end of April 2015. At that time, COSE will have full responsibility for the recovery programme.

During the transition process, COSE will have to absorb additional staff in the Manila based office and will need to increase logistical and operational support in this process. This will require initial additional funding support that is not covered in the recovery response budget.

This report has highlighted gaps in support that could be met with additional funds. The need for shelter rebuilding is an important requirement. Additional funds for consolidating disaster risk reduction activities will also benefit from more funds. Developing the capacities of the OPOs and OSCAs and extending the

services that they could provide to older people could further be enhanced with extra funding.

With the current level of support, HelpAge-COSE can and will make a difference to older people's lives and help them recover from the impacts of Typhoon Haiyan. With more support this can be deepened and extended to more vulnerable older people.

### Funding gaps and request for additional support

There are huge needs still in the communities and more funds are needed to ensure greater protection and secure livelihoods for older people and their families. More specifically funds are needed for strengthening the OPOs and its sustainability and resiliency; building houses to Sphere standards to ensure better protection; increased advocacy and campaigns for inclusion of older people in humanitarian policies and programmes including rights and entitlements and finally to strengthen the financial and operational capacity of COSE to make them a strong national agency working with older people.

# Case studies

*Bonifacio Gonzaga is 65 years old, lives by himself in a small hut and has never married. He has been completely blind since he was 18 months old. His house is on a small piece of land which was given to him by his mother before she died. Bonifacio is one of the beneficiaries of the shelter and livelihood support.*

*He is a very positive person with an infectious smile. He has not allowed the fact he is blind to take away from his joy; a testimony to the difficulties he has faced in his life.*



Godfred Pau/HelpAge International

## Life before Typhoon Haiyan

For 30 years Bonifacio picked coconuts for a living. He was paid 5 pesos per tree, making about 75 pesos (USD2) a day. He taught himself to distinguish between the sounds of the ripe and unripe fruits by hitting them. His employers were happy with his work and it gave him a sense of worth. Sometimes Bonifacio still climbs coconut trees when he is bored.

Some people in the community had been warned about the oncoming typhoon before it hit and so Bonifacio's neighbour, took his family and Bonifacio to a nearby shelter where they were protected. Beneficio said "I cheated death".

## Impact of Typhoon Haiyan

His house had been completely destroyed by the typhoon when a coconut tree fell on it.

With the help of his nephew who lived nearby, he put up a temporary hut which became his home ever since.

Bonifacio is able to do everything by himself, including cooking his food. He does not have any income now and so depends on his sister. In return, he helps to weed her vegetable garden so that he does not feel like a burden. Bonifacio remains in good health because he has stayed physically active.

Bonifacio said "Most afternoons, when it is not raining, I like to sit in the shade of the bamboo grove. Sometimes my neighbours join me and we talk. We talk about the destruction caused by the typhoon and how we are trying to help one another recover".

He enjoys listening to the radio which his sister brings with her when she visits him. This is sometimes his only source of entertainment. Bonifacio said "I like listening to a romantic serial."

## HelpAge-COSE intervention

Bonifacio had received 2000 pesos from HelpAge COSE which makes sure he has food regularly. The HelpAge COSE team will be getting Bonifacio a government ID card so he can access the state pension.

He was a beneficiary of the Shelter programme with HelpAge-COSE and so is expected to have a new house by Christmas. He said "I am grateful for the support by being selected for the shelter assistance. Thank you."

HelpAge COSE provided Bonifacio with a new radio with rechargeable batteries which he was very happy with. He said "This is the one gift I will keep carefully. This is my companion who talks to me and gives me information about disasters. I love this. Thank you very much."



*Pelagia M. Ochea is a strong, vibrant person and still enjoys gardening at the age of 86. Her optimism and cheerfulness radiates on her face. She is absolutely content with her life no matter how simple it may seem.*

*She had six children but two of them have died. She lives with her teenage granddaughter in a small house that was built by HelpAge-COSE. Pelagia took custody of her orphaned grandchild after her daughter died. To reach Pelagia's village, one must cross three rivers that overflow when the heavy rains come.*

"Life in our village is simple. We get income from our root crops, backyard garden and coconut trees. I used to live in a house beside our village chapel before Typhoon Haiyan came and ruined everything we had. I was asked by the owners of the land to be the caretaker of their land where my house was located. I had to make sure that nobody used their land without the owner's permission. In return, I was allowed to build my house on the land. I lived alone but sometimes I would visit my children to ask for support. I understand that they have their own families though, so whenever I couldn't get assistance from them like food or money, I would just go to my garden and gather root crops such as cassava and sweet potato.

"We already heard about the strong typhoon that was coming in our areas so I evacuated to my daughter and son-in-law's house and waited until the typhoon was over. After the storm had passed, I immediately checked my house only to realize the extent of the damage that Typhoon Haiyan had left. The only things that remained from my old tiny haven were a few posts. The church beside it was also gone.

"The typhoon has changed my life because I am now living in a safer house in a new location. It's been like starting a new life. The previous land where my old house was located was subdivided so the land owner didn't need me as the caretaker anymore. I still continue the things I used to do before the Typhoon, like gardening and doing household chores, even if I have moved in to a new place.

"At first I was worried because I had lost my house and source of livelihood and food, but there are kind-hearted people who helped me get back on my feet again. I have a new house – thanks to HelpAge-COSE, on a new piece of land – thanks to the sibling of the landowner I used to work for.

"I am thankful that our barangay officials introduced HelpAge-COSE to me. I feel very happy and lucky because I was chosen to become a beneficiary of a typhoon-resilient house. I would not have a new, comfortable home with galvanized iron roof and plywood walls if I had not met them. My old house was quite different from this; its roof was made of coconut leaves and the walls and floors were made of bamboo and piled logs. HelpAge-COSE visited me again and said that they would also build a kitchen as an additional part of the house. It may be smaller than my previous home but it is perfectly fine with me because there is still plenty of space for me to move around with ease.

"I don't own the land but I can still claim this house as my own... once they finish building it, of course!

"I am not asking for anything that is grand. As an older person, food is the most important thing for me. Part of my daily routine is visiting my elevated garden in the backyard where I grow cassava, sweet potatoes and other edible plants. If my children cannot support me, my grandchildren help me have something to eat. If I don't receive anything from anyone, I just go to my garden and get food to eat from there. This is how I live and survive every day, so when they asked me what else I needed, I just answered, 'HelpAge-COSE has helped me start anew. I already have a house; all I can ask for are garden tools to help me grow plants for food.'

I am already old and I am easily pleased. I am content living simply, as long as I have a house to sleep in and protect me, and food to eat every day."

# Conclusion

Typhoon Haiyan was the strongest typhoon to hit the Philippines in recent years. It devastated the lives and economies in the already poor region in Visayas. With a high death toll and unimaginable financial damage, the local people have suffered a great deal and continue to struggle due to lack of adequate recovery and rehabilitation plans. Humanitarian agencies are doing all they can but there are still huge needs. Houses have still not been built for all those in need. In addition, many locations by the coast have been declared “No build zones” making it difficult for agencies to build houses for some of the poor people living in these locations. Livelihood recovery, access to health care and government services continue to be a challenge.

However, there is also a major change in the psychology of the people including older people. They are resilient, resourceful and eager to get back on their feet. This is a very encouraging phenomenon. Awareness in the communities on how to recover from such disasters, has grown significantly as a result of connectedness and better systems for information sharing in the country. Co-ordination among the humanitarian agencies has also been much better than in previous disasters, particularly for HelpAge-COSE. With a strong operational structure with a combination of new and experienced staff, this project will ensure the deliverables are of a high quality with a strong

sustainable aspect. The older people in these communities will become stronger and the lessons from their experience, will further strengthen the resilience of communities in the Philippines.

For HelpAge-COSE, this project has provided a major learning curve. The partnership model of working together is unique in many ways with an international organisation working with a national NGO as equals. The technical capacity of HelpAge in programmes, organisational systems and tools, financial and staff management is complemented by COSE with their high commitment, very strong community organising experience and the active involvement of their partner the Confederation of Older Persons' Associations of the Philippines (COPAP). In the past year, the project has mobilised older people in the communities and both COSE and COPAP will play a major role in building the capacities of the OPOs in Visayas further demonstrating the peer support among older people in the Philippines. When the HelpAge-COSE project ends, the OPOs established in the communities will continue to grow and address not only the issues of older and vulnerable people but will actively engage in the sustainable development of their communities.



Hazel Ayne Garcia/HelpAge-COSE



AGE  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEC MEMBER  
  
TOGETHER  
WE'RE  
STRONGER



Auswärtiges Amt



International e.V.



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