



REAL-TIME EVALUATION

of World Vision Honduras' response
to Hurricanes Eta & Iota

April 2021

World Vision



Executive summary

Background

On 3 October 2020, Eta entered Honduras bringing winds of up to 275 km/h and 635mm of torrential rains during its slow three-day trip; all departments were under Red Alert. On 5 November the Standing Committee on Contingencies (COPECO) declared a national emergency and requested humanitarian assistance at the global level. On 7 November, World Vision declared a category 2 national response in Honduras and Category 1 in Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador. On October 18 hurricane Iota struck Honduras and the next day World Vision scaled up the national responses to category 3 in Honduras, category 2 in Nicaragua and Guatemala, while the response in El Salvador remained in category 1.

In Honduras, COPECO estimated that more than 4.7 million people were affected, 2.8 million people were in need, 98 people died, 562,274 people evacuated, and 93,988 people, including 11,700 children, were located in 994 shelters. Approximately 85% of affected

households have children. These needs resulting from Hurricanes Eta and Iota were in addition to the humanitarian needs of COVID-19, a dengue epidemic, and forced displacement in an already complex context.

The goal of WV Honduras' response was to save lives and alleviate human suffering for those affected by Hurricanes Eta and Iota and to reduce the impact on the most vulnerable girls, boys and families. It aimed to reach 630,000 affected people with assistance in WASH, food assistance, child protection, education and health.

The Real Time Evaluation of WV Honduras' response to Hurricanes Eta and Iota was planned in January and February and implemented in March and April of 2021. The purpose was to assess the response against four criteria (organisational efficiency, relevance, coordination and influence, and programme effectiveness) and culminated in a workshop comprising World Vision staff and partners. Participants validated the findings, refined and prioritised recommendations, and developed action plans for the five prioritised recommendations for immediate improvement.



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Top results

Organisational efficiency

The Category 3 emergency declaration was timely and relevant and supported by the Support Offices (SOs) and the Global Centre (GC). However, it was difficult to understand the impact of the hurricane due to the lack of information from municipalities and the National Risk Management System (SINAGER) and the need to organise information at the sub-regional level with the other affected countries.

The response committee was organised and coordinated well with the departments of the National Office (NO) and area programmes. The response team, maintained fluid and constant communication that allowed timely decision-making, targeting, clear guidelines, speed in implementation and relevance of the response. However, certain information, such as the details of the response plan, was handled only at the management level. Effective and timely support was provided by Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office, GC and SO to the field through face-to-face and virtual technical advice, operational guidelines, awareness raising, release of funds, and resource acquisition, among others. Likewise, World Vision (WV) Honduras provided constant relevant contextual information and maintained agile communication. However, it was difficult to find information on WV's intranet about the current situation.

Administration worked agilely and effectively with the other departments of the NO to train staff in protocols, policies and tools related to beneficiary registration, deliveries, and budget control.

A six-month purchasing policy was initiated to facilitate the use of non-certified vendors and make purchases with a single quote. In

general, the Supply Chain team was considered to have been agile and timely; it facilitated logistics, supplies, biosecurity equipment, and international purchases. In addition, the availability of strategically located pre-positioned stocks helped respond to the emergency. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the emergency some purchases were delayed due to lack of supply, hoarding of products and increased costs by suppliers in the market.

Staff were trained and properly equipped, highly engaged, enthusiastic, organised, and willing to work in the risky context. Responding to the two hurricanes and COVID-19 allowed WV Honduras to consolidate equipment, to generate timely responses on strategic decisions at different levels, as well as to provide products and services in a timely manner. However, staff were overburdened, as they were learning how to respond to second emergency in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. At first, relief plans and protective material were not effective in preventing transmission of the virus, and 25% of WV Honduras staff were infected with COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic. All infected personnel were monitored and have since recovered.

Finance planned, organised, contracted staff, and allocated 10% of the FY 2021 budget quickly with the approval of the SOs. However, at first, there were no Finance staff exclusively dedicated to the response, and recruiting staff took time.

Different digital tools were used to collect and manage information and communication, including Kobo, PowerBi, Zoom, MS Teams, and Google Meet. The design, monitoring and evaluation team designed and implemented the processes and tools for data management during the emergency while IT ensured connectivity so data could be transmitted. However, there were times when communications were difficult because of lack of telephone connectivity or electrical power.

Relevance

In the years prior to the hurricanes, WV Honduras developed a preparedness plan, risk analysis, and warehouse prepositioning, as well as leadership training and simulations. Also, WV Honduras' permanent presence in the communities, trusting relationships with partners, response to COVID-19 and onsite presence two days after both hurricanes, made it possible to make a visible impact in a timely manner and to add partners to implement a more robust response. All of this contributed to WV Honduras' good positioning in the response; however, the staff were strained, because they were also responding to COVID-19. To mitigate this stress factor, the response was supported by staff from other regions of Honduras other than the Valle de Sula – the epicentre of the response. In addition, the response team did not take full advantage of lessons learned from other emergencies such as Hurricane Mitch. Although the national response committee had undergone simulations within the previous two years, field staff were not involved. Thus field staff had not rehearsed response-specific actions and were unable to manifest them during the hurricane response.

On the other hand, damage and needs assessments were strengthened by the digital data capabilities developed by WV Honduras.

The sectors prioritised in WV Honduras' response plan (WASH, food security, economic and productive recovery, child protection, health, psychological and biosecurity support) were based on international standards, aligned to the national strategy, and grounded on a rapid, gender-sensitive needs assessment. Therefore, the response was aligned and relevant to community needs, despite the closure of shelters and the return of families to their homes faster than newly won grants could be implemented. In addition, some donations received by private companies or individuals did not suit the unique needs of individuals (e.g., unsuitable sizes).

The damage was multi-faceted, and it was impossible to cover all the needs of affected families. The focus of the response was oriented to the most vulnerable people (in communities and shelters). Identification of these persons was done through a data-collection tool developed by the Humanitarian Network that determines the vulnerabilities of families to food insecurity;



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this was adapted by WV Honduras to identify other vulnerabilities as well. Timely, accurate data was collected by community leaders, child welfare volunteers, and faith leaders. Sometimes targeting the most vulnerable was not achieved because local leaders prioritised family members, and WV Honduras prioritised sponsored communities. A lack of coordination with other organisations led to duplication in targeted beneficiaries. Despite communicating the targeting criteria to affected families, it was not clear to everyone, resulting in discomfort and jealousy amongst some of the families that were not selected.

WV Honduras and its partners established mechanisms for affected communities to provide feedback through complaint boxes, hotline, and social media. However, there is scope to strengthen the knowledge and use of accountability mechanisms by community leaders, faith leaders, and families.

Although the assistance provided by WV Honduras was aligned to international humanitarian standards, there are still

opportunities to strengthen the technical team and community leaders on the application of humanitarian standards.

Coordination and influence

WV Honduras has had strong working relationships with a wide variety of partners – among them, communities, churches, local leaders, government, the United Nations (UN) system, the private sector and a large national volunteer network – at all levels of the response, especially in the selection, verification and registration of affected populations.

WV Honduras actively participated in interagency humanitarian groups (sector clusters and coordination working groups). This enabled WV Honduras to contribute to sector plans and positioned WV Honduras as an experienced organisation with valid opinions on emergency responses. However, there is scope for WV Honduras to advocate beyond participation in these spaces, that is, to advocate for budget allocations with decision-makers for the welfare of the affected populations.

In the country context there is an institutional disinterest in promoting actions, policies or regulations aimed at guaranteeing and protecting rights. In the emergency situation organisations focused their efforts on providing an immediate humanitarian response and reducing advocacy actions. When the emergency occurred, WV Honduras did not implement a country-level advocacy strategy to position the demands of the affected populations with the government. However, WV Honduras' broad reach at the national level and its close relationship cultivated over years with community structures – community-based organisations and faith-based organisations – as well as donors enabled a prompt, effective and comprehensive response. It should be noted that issues of child vulnerabilities were promoted in the cross-sectoral spaces where WV Honduras participates, including the Child Protection Bureau, and the National Bureau of Education.

Overall, WV Honduras was well positioned as a humanitarian aid organisation and its external communication improved considerably, relative to recent years, mainly through generating high-quality content on social media. The timely use of these communication materials and platforms globally helped position WV and effectively communicated to the general population the main contributions made by the response.

Programme effectiveness

WV Honduras' response supported approximately 162,789 affected people (25.8% of the target). In addition, WV Honduras earned US \$6,847,289 (62.2% of the target) through April 14, 2021. Strong Grant Acquisition and Management, Communications, and Administrative Management teams leveraged solid relationships and donor campaigns to gain visibility, credibility, and funding. Subsequently, proposals were adjusted based on new realities, which improved the response in shelters and communities. However, humanitarian needs continue to exceed the available resources for the emergency response.

All WV actors, communities, partners and staff believe WV Honduras declared and implemented its response quickly and effectively with transparent resource management, and that it addressed immediate needs, especially in food assistance, WASH, protection, as well as cash and voucher programming. The response has begun to address medium-term needs, specifically in community rehabilitation, agriculture and livelihoods.



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Existing data from secondary sources was used with clusters and local emergency committees to estimate needs and damage and to inform the response plan. In many cases monitoring assistance activities were not completed during distribution, and this required subsequent data processing to reconcile humanitarian aid delivery data.

Data collection used Kobo Collect; the data was cleaned for the PowerBi dashboard and the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 345W platform to make the organisation's response visible, make decisions, and inform partners. Sometimes this data was out of date by the time it was reported.

WV Honduras was guided by strong leadership and a response plan with clear sectoral goals aligned with community needs. WV Honduras also supported strategy development for Honduras' Humanitarian Network.

Prioritised recommendations

Workshop participants prioritised the following five recommendations:

1. Expand livelihood, education, protection and other recovery projects.
2. Continue to train staff in the proper use of Kobo Collect, GPS tools, PowerBi and streamline tools to avoid duplication of effort in rapid data collection and to keep dashboards up to date.
3. Explore grant opportunities for early recovery, income, and jobs with the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP) and other donors.
4. Establish coordination mechanisms to share decision-making information with partners and, as far as possible, standardise measurement criteria, and frequency.
5. Support the establishment of local Humanitarian Network coordination teams in affected communities.