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EVALUATING CHANGE IN THE PHILIPPINES - A NEW APPROACH

On November 8, 2013 Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest typhoons ever recorded, swept through the central Philippines, bringing with it winds of 315km/h and storm surges over 5m high. Around 6,300 people were killed, 4.1m made homeless and 1.1m houses were destroyed or damaged. There was a huge aid response – the Disasters Emergency Committee alone raised £95 million.

As part of the DEC's evaluation of the Philippines disaster response, it has piloted a new evaluation method called "Contribution to Change". Developed by Oxfam and the University of East Anglia, this is the first time the Contribution to Change (CtC) method has been used to assess a disaster response across a network of organisations.

Rather than singling out any one DEC member agency, or looking to see whether an agency's planned outcomes were met, it instead establishes the overall collective contribution of humanitarian aid to the recovery of the affected population.

CtC will give the DEC agencies an in-depth and unbiased report on how their work helped selected Filipino communities recover from the disaster of Typhoon Haiyan.

METHODOLOGY



Conventional humanitarian evaluations of a disaster tend to examine an individual agency's programmes and outcomes. Contribution to Change takes a much broader view: rather than looking at the work of one particular agency, it attempts to paint a fuller picture of how the lives of those affected by the disaster have changed. CtC looks at the overall effects of the interventions in one sample area, covering the activities of external bodies including aid agencies, local organisations and local and national government. It also acknowledges the role individuals play in their own recovery.

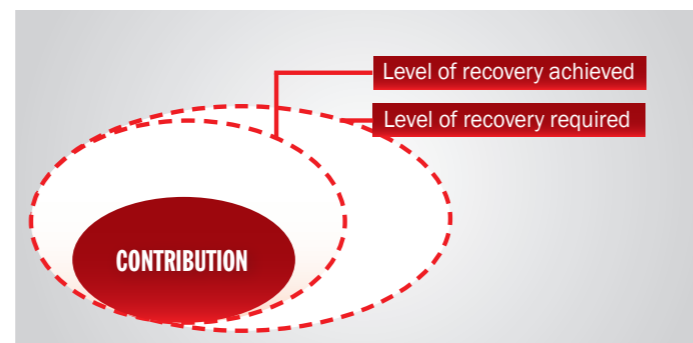
CtC is an attempt to capture the complexities of a disaster intervention, where the overall context is affected by many organisations working on the ground, as well as broader social, political and economic issues. Evaluations that use the CtC methodology should strive to include the actions and attitudes of the affected populations themselves as they are a vital part of the recovery process.

CtC works at a household level as this is the most manageable way to assess changes in well-being, and attempts to build a picture of the situation for households before and after the disaster.

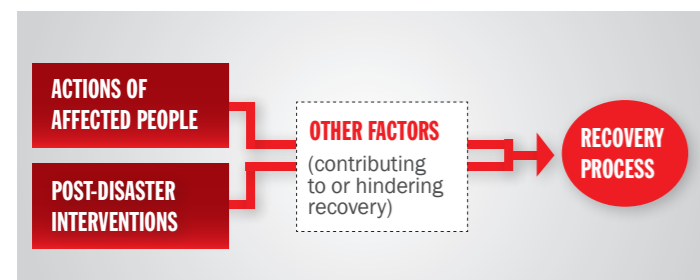
Through a series of household surveys, key informant interviews and focus group discussions the CtC evaluation focuses on two key questions: Have households' resources, livelihoods, dwellings and well-being recovered or even improved since the disaster? And what role have the interventions played in the recovery process?

This data collection is carried out late in the post-disaster phase, after the recovery work has been going on for some time. CtC is not designed to assess the emergency, life-saving relief part of the response, but rather the medium-term post-disaster recovery period. Unlike a typical evaluation process, CtC does not rely on baseline data collected at the time of the disaster, which is often difficult to gather in a chaotic emergency when providing life-saving assistance may be more appropriate. Instead the data is collected afterwards and compares the household situation at three time points – before the disaster, just after and up to 12 months later. The researchers must attempt to triangulate the recipients' memories with other sources, including written information and data if possible.

ACHIEVEMENTS VERSUS PROGRESS



WHAT IS THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF INTERVENTIONS IN RECOVERY?



WHY THE PHILIPPINES?

The CtC method is designed for:

- Rapid-onset disasters from natural hazards
- Assessing medium-term recovery
- Working with communities that are not (currently) displaced
- Evaluating contribution and looking at the contribution to recovery in general

It can also be adapted to address slow-onset natural hazards, disaster risk-reduction activity and equity in interventions.

The launch of the CtC methodology coincided with the DEC's Philippines Typhoon Appeal in late 2013. The post-Typhoon Haiyan response met the criteria above, with the additional factors that all DEC agencies responded and the context was favourable, with good

communications, a supportive government and no security issues.

Because CtC is about assessing any changes over time, choosing a starting point is key. Rapid onset disasters make choosing the initial time frame (T0 in diagram below) much more straightforward.

The DEC chose Ateneo de Manila University School of Government (Ateneo) to carry out the study. As a Filipino institution its cultural knowledge would give the qualitative work more insight and sensitivity, and its name would be recognised and respected by many of the key informants. Methodology authors (Oxfam and the University of East Anglia) closely supported the Filipino academics, this being the first time the methodology has been used across an extensive network of aid responders.

CONCEPTUAL TIMEFRAME FOR A RAPID-ONSET DISASTER



THE AREAS STUDIED

The study examined two municipalities in the affected area, Dulag and Tanauan. Both bore the brunt of Typhoon Haiyan and have many similarities: they are coastal regions and the populations rely on farming and fishing, two industries worst hit by the typhoon. However Dulag is a more rural area, whilst Tanauan is peri-urban (i.e. an area that is an interface between town and countryside with mix of urban and rural characteristics). These two municipalities gave a good rural/urban and inland/coastal split. Nine of the DEC's thirteen member agencies work in one or both of these two areas, running a number of diverse projects.

A working group of DEC members in the UK and the Philippines decided upon the key themes and questions. The study would look at livelihoods and housing, two of the principal long-term issues facing the disaster-affected populations in Dulag and Tanauan.

The study team then did quantitative data gathering with household surveys, and qualitative data gathering with key informant interviews, household interviews and focus groups. There were 427 household surveys and 84 household interviews – the latter in-depth discussions on post-disaster life. These were carefully split between rural and urban areas. Key informant interviews took place with community leaders, and focus groups had a carefully selected mix of age, gender and socio-economic status.



RESULTS

Both Dulag and Tanauan suffered from loss of livelihoods and severely damaged housing.

Coconut farmers were extremely hard hit. Coconut farming is one of the main industries in both Dulag and Tanauan, and almost all the trees were destroyed. This is a serious long-term problem because coconut trees take five to ten years before they will bear fruit.

Around 22% of households surveyed said they had received livelihood assistance. This was generally in the form of:

- cash grants for restarting businesses
- raw materials and livestock, for example seeds, net-making gear and piglets
- boats, fishing gear, pedicabs (cycle rickshaws), motorbikes and other equipment

Most assets were destroyed in the typhoon but the research showed that in general households have recouped those losses.

Households reported some problems with the livelihoods assistance. They often received the same vegetable seeds, leading to oversupply in the markets and a drop in prices.

Some boats given to fishermen were too small for the large Pacific swells found off the Leyte coast. When fishermen were given materials and help to build their own boats, they built bigger craft. Even when boats were suitable, post-Haiyan fish catches are smaller as the

typhoon destroyed much marine life, which will take years to recover.

Generally, household income has returned to its previous, pre-disaster levels, although for the majority of households this means living on less than \$2.30 per day. However many households feel that their livelihood situation is worse than before. This is partly due to increases in the cost of food and transport, and because many households took out loans for house repairs, to restart small businesses, or simply to fund day-to-day living.

All the households interviewed had damaged houses, with 80% of them being totally damaged. They all received some housing assistance from local and international NGOs, private organisations and local or national government. Many people also used their own money, resources and social networks to rebuild.

Most respondents said housing assistance was very timely and appropriate. The intervention has led to improvement in household materials (especially the use of galvanised iron roofing). Some agencies have improved the sanitation in houses, whilst others have enabled households to move out of shared homes. Everyone found that rebuilding or repairing their home helped them return to a normal life.

However most households have yet to finish their repairs. The cost of carpenters has nearly doubled and materials are also more expensive. Homes which were originally built from concrete but damaged in the disaster have not yet been repaired. Aid agencies prioritised totally destroyed houses which tended to be built from lighter materials.

CONCLUSION, LESSONS AND NEXT STEPS

The study revealed that in general the interventions (including but not limited to work by DEC member agencies) contributed to fairly positive change in household well-being. House building and restoration was the more successful invention, with most households finding it helpful, even though repairs are usually still incomplete.

The situation with livelihoods is more mixed. Some coconut farmers did not plant the imported seedlings which were given to them, citing concerns about fruit yields, and some of the boats distributed were not of the appropriate size. People also reported having insufficient access to cash in some instances. However, vegetable growing and restoring small businesses have been very helpful, and fishing families have found the interventions of some help in getting them back to work.

As a new evaluation method, Contribution to Change threw up some interesting practical challenges and lessons.

One key learning was that a sufficient lead-in time is required (the research team recommend six months) to prepare for the study and to ensure that it can take place within the recommended timeframe (up to one year after the disaster). Administrative issues with the university, technological challenges and working across different time zones caused delays, reducing the time available for drafting and signing-off survey and interview questions.

The research team stressed the need to be precise about exactly what information is needed and advised narrowing the focus of the survey to just two key areas that will really demonstrate change. The household interviews can then have a slightly broader focus to ensure any other factors that could influence recovery are captured. With hindsight, they felt that greater attention should have been placed on people's own role in their recovery.

Working with a recognised local academic institution has helped to establish credibility with both Filipino authorities and households. Being both local and unattached to an aid agency also lowered expectations that household interviews would lead to further aid.

The researchers found working with the DEC network was a useful way to introduce the new methodology and its aims, to get buy-in at all levels and to obtain a clear steer on the themes and issues to cover. Despite this, in debriefings agency staff were still keen to know if interviewees had cited particular agencies' activities, suggesting more work is required with field staff on the distinctive CtC approach. The Ateneo team also stressed the usefulness of having support from the authors of the methodology to keep sight of the differences between CtC and more traditional evaluation methods. Future use of the methodology could equally benefit from expert support.

Next steps

The household perceptions' of the aid delivered gives an insight into the positive and negative aspects of the response and provides an evidence base for determining the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to restoring livelihoods and rebuilding homes. It is hoped that the findings of the study will provide a useful overview of the aid response to Haiyan, which will complement other more internally focussed evaluations carried out by aid organisations.

The full evaluation report will shortly be made available on ALNAP's website (<http://www.alnap.org/resources/contribution-to-change-philippines>). The DEC welcomes any feedback on the methodology and is happy to discuss its experience with any organisation or network considering using the approach. To get in touch please email fcrowley@dec.org.uk