

**Typhoon Durian Humanitarian Response Programme**

**REAL TIME EVALUATION**

**Oxfam Philippines**

**15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2006**

Based on Field Visits and Direct Staff Interviews

In

Oxford, United Kingdom  
Manila and Legaspi, Philippines  
Bangkok, Thailand

Undertaken By

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With a special thanks to the openness and hospitality of the Typhoon Durian Response Team

## **1. General Findings**

In general the programme direction was good, whilst the supporting systems behind the programmatic response were weaker. Management did face difficulties - communication and overturn being two of these. The learning from this is that programmes can function at speed with weak/er systems, but the effort of systems staff to catch up to programme staff can be difficult and makes reporting and accountability that much more difficult. As accountability, up and down, to all is paramount, response strategies must follow best practice and established policies and procedures.

The understanding within Oxfam of 'lessons learned' needs to be shifted to 'lessons identified' and accountability mechanisms must be put in place to insure that lessons are indeed learned and built into programme designs, assessments, and importantly staff inductions.

Targeting of the intervention made perfect sense at the outset (in particular, identifying public health risks), but never did reach out to the broader affected community in the area, particularly to people not in the evacuation centres (people hosted and communities and those that remained in situ). While there are reasons this never happened programmatically (e.g. public health risks were in evacuation centres and not in the communities), there should have been a system for continuing the situation assessment as more and more families returned home (e.g. travelling to the affected communities to assess overall damage and/or assist those families that remained).

Integrated assessments are certainly best practice, both programmatically and in terms of maximising resources. However, fully integrated programmes should not always be the default position, as the public health target communities will not always be the target community of the EFS&L response. This caused some problems in the distribution of hygiene kits (NFIs) by the EFS&L Team rather than the PH Team, for instance.

Partnerships are the backbone to successful interventions and clarity with agreed MOUs, both between Oxfam management and partner management, but also, importantly, between Oxfam and partner field staff is critical.

The programme met its initial objectives and delivered what is said it would do. While the RTE does raise many inhibiting factors, this is aimed at learning and not meant to degrade either the impact of the intervention or the strategy behind it.

The second phase of the programme is not yet clearly defined, which is very normal in such situations. All too often we make commitments to undertake longer-term work prior to defining the short to medium term objectives of the emergency response. This puts Oxfam, and particularly fixed term staff, in a difficult position. It also raises expectations of Oxfam International affiliates (who are working with back donors) and donors, at a time when the context is changing and devising reconstruction plans in any detail is nearly impossible.

After drafting this RTE document, staff at all levels contributed further feedback and reactions, and this is summarised in annex 3.

## **2. Status of Programme at Week 7**

Typhoon Durian came ashore on November 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> 2007. The Red Cross damage assessment for the typhoon (note: multiple provinces) is:

Number of affected people:	1,992,387
Missing/Killed:	944
Partially damaged homes	124,354
Totally damaged homes	217,546

Oxfam's response focused on three highly affected municipalities in Albay Province, targeting 5,000 families (25,000) people. Internally, Oxfam classified this as a Category 2 response ('down graded' to Category 3 on January 5<sup>th</sup> with line management to revert back to the country after the

RTE). Oxfam's response, focused on victims from mud (a debris flow lahar) flows and wind or flood damaged homes.

To date, 60% of the 300 000 GBP allocated from the Catastrophe fund has been spent and 89% of the planned public health inputs have been given/built, although there has been a few supplier delays that would decrease this percentage (but as it is, for complimentary tippy taps and trash bins the completed percentage has not been reduced). The intended reach of the programme was 5 000 families (25 000 people). To date, 5 226 families have been reached (22,161 people).

The programme is currently working in 27 evacuation centres, 3 unofficial evacuation centres, and 2 transitional sites.

Presently there are 23 fulltime staff and 12 vacant positions.

### **3. Assessment Against Benchmarks**

The real time evaluation (RTE) is seen as a "snapshot in time" and is not intended to explore any issues in detail. This RTE is also not intended to be a detailed evaluation of the programme, as it is too early. It is also not intended to be seen as an external process to the programme. It is largely an internal review of the response and planning to date to contribute to a quality programme. This RTE is based on six key benchmarks, but did try to follow-up on related areas as appropriate and deemed relevant to the review and/or staff and partners who were interviewed. Due to the very short timeframe for review (four full days in Legaspi), it was agreed that the focus would be on enabling and inhibiting factors, and based on a bullet mark format. This derives from the Java RTE that was extensive narrative and the Lebanon RTE that was based on quoted staff commentary. However, while the RTE methodology for each of the latest RTE's, all have strived to draw out lessons identified in past evaluations.

An unplanned part of the methodology used came out via how the ToR was signed off and the team deployed. The team started at the field programme level and not at the strategic level of the country team, regional centre, or humanitarian department. For this reason the initial focus has been almost entirely from the lens of the field staff. This shows both actual and perceived enhancing and inhibiting factors from the perspective of the field team, which is extremely important and even more so, probably, than the more strategic perspective – as any learning is about improving effectiveness of delivery undertaken by the field teams. Additionally, the outputs of this RTE were envisioned to be focused on how to improve the programme from this snapshot evaluation, which this approach certainly maximises.

This RTE captures both facts and perceptions in real time and as such facts and peoples understanding of them may not always concur. Concomitantly, while objectivity has tried to be maintained, the perceptions of the evaluators has also fed into the process. The information contained in this report is based on staff interviews, e-mail communication, reports and sitreps, and minutes of meetings – all of which has been triangulated for accuracy as far as possible.

Where possible best and poor practice as highlighted in past evaluations is highlighted in brackets.

**Benchmark 1** *The emergency response has been timely relative to other actors (this includes speed of initial response, pace of programme delivery by us and partners).*

The speed and scale of the initial assessment and response was good and the intervention well defined. The speed could have been a bit faster, but procurement and transport took time to arrange. Public Health and FS&L activities could be initiated immediately and NFIs and water distribution went to scale on arrival of the goods.

Enhancers

- PDCC stated that Oxfam and UNICEF were the first organisations to respond (with assessments) after he called both offices to inform of the situation. This was made possible by a previously strong relationship with his office and the local government in Legaspi.

Oxfam's partner SAC-Legaspi has a good reputation in the province and was able to respond very quickly, by having both Oxfam and an Oxfam partner operational very quickly our speed of delivery was enhanced.

- Procurement from Manila was quick (roughly seven days before first delivery arrived, while the full team arrived after six days), both for NFIs and bottled water.
- Agreement on priority municipalities through trust in our partner, pre doing full assessments by the Oxfam teams (and then only slight refocusing was done afterwards). The trust in partner advice in rapid onset emergencies is not always done, with Oxfam wishing to independently assess the situation. This was good practice and shows the true value of partnerships as opposed to simply funding relationships [note: there was some disagreement as to the actual accuracy of this statement and if the locations were actually chosen independently of the partner assessment].
- Partner MOU enabled rapid distribution of NFIs (though there was some confusion on methodology).
- A decision was taken very quickly on who we were going to assist, how, and for how many people.
- The second phase is programmatically getting much more appropriate to the beneficiaries and the delay in the design should be considered with the change in the situation (a second minor emergency with the movement of displaced from EC, which redirected focus for about 10 days), which was well handled by the team and necessitated changes to both phases.

#### Inhibitors

- This Typhoon hit at the end of the government budget year, making the already overstretched DPPC and other government agencies completely under-funded to meet this challenge. Additionally, this came just prior to the election period when budget freezes occur.
- Drinking water was required immediately. There was other grey water available for bathing etc. There remain disagreements within the team on the utility of bottled water and to date there is still significant stock in the warehouse.
- Initially the assessment and response was very timely, though very quickly lost momentum as the holiday season approached. One staff member estimates that up to 70% of the staff departed at this time, quickly reducing the pace and effectiveness of the operation (apart from ongoing latrine and bathing unit construction) for 10 days or so.
- The MOU with the partner led to a lot of confusion on programme delivery – e.g. water was not included in the MOU nor was the cash grant programme while the partner by default ended up doing these as well. Exclusion of the cash grants was intentional as Oxfam wanted to do it directly as it was new and the partner also did not want to be directly involved so it was not included, Confusion with the MOU and its implementation were reiterated by all staff who were in contact with the partner and/or required to implement the MOU.
- Stopping water deliveries for several days at the beginning and refocusing our efforts on assessments was probably a sound operational judgement based on need, yet undermined our agreed (though not yet signed) collaboration with the partner. While the utility of this was discussed with the partner, it disrupted their plans. It must be remembered that while Oxfam sees discussions on priorities with partners as a negotiation, the partners often feel directed and unable to negotiate, so Oxfam's approach nearly always prevails.
- SAC felt the response was fast but could have been much faster, and that speed was affected by both internal and external factors (see above).
- Assessments were not utilised to their full extent to give the funding teams enough information to lobby donors effectively.
- The target of 25 000 people was appropriate. However, Oxfam realised early on that there were possibly up to an additional 110 000 people in urgent (though not lifesaving) need of assistance (though funding considerations probably had a lot to do with our ability to go to scale again).
- Composition of the NFI package was health and hygiene material, and for this reason should have been referred to as Hygiene Kits (rather than NFIs) so as to insure that the programme maximised their use and distribution for health and hygiene interventions (and impact).

- There were strong feelings that the consultation on programme design and writing of the initial proposal was weak, and did not take into account the results of the ongoing assessments due to time pressures. This was not corroborated by other staff who felt they did involve staff as best as possible given time constraints and programme pressures. The 14-month proposal took assessments into account. Key staff contributed in a significant and comprehensive manner.

#### Cash -Transfer Programme

The cash transfer response started the second week after the disaster and it has been one of the quickest EFSL responses to a rapid onset disaster. The team also considered the response timely, compared with their previous responses, such as Quezon (when the response happened after one month). On the other side, the EFSL and SAC partner team felt that the response should have been implemented faster if the objective was to cover people's immediate needs.

#### Enhancers

- Highly experienced staff were quickly deployed (EFSL Regional Adviser and two experienced national staff).
- The staff deployed had experience on cash-transfer programme and on grant responses in rapid-onset emergencies. This expertise allowed for the integration of previous learning in the response.
- A twofold approach, consisting of an integrated public health / EFSL team rapidly assessing the affected/needed areas and a second team implementing the response, enabled a quick response that was based on field-assessed needs. The assessment and analysis aspects, however, were then lost with the implementation of the programme.
- Information was shared amongst teams from different sectors.
- Beneficiaries found the grants distribution timely since "it happened just after the disaster in a period when people had high level of needs, could not work and didn't have money to buy basic stuff".

#### Inhibitors

- The EFSL team was understaffed and the implementation took longer than planned. The EFSL team was not able to take forward a more in depth assessment and analysis, or to efficiently use the "real time" monitoring to inform and adjust the response in terms of better targeting and needs.
- The staff absences during Christmas holidays affected the speed of the response.
- The hand-over between EFSL staff seemed too ambitious and lacked prioritisation considering the number of staff on the ground (e.g. the documentation was a long and complex to do list which created expectations and lacked prioritisation).
- The EFSL team should have a more on long-term vision (more than weekly plans) and be able to prioritise activities.
- The highly volatile situation in the EC and the evacuees moving in and out of the centres increased the time that EFSL staff had to spend on re-assessing needs (Daraga EC), and to validate lists of people staying in the centres.
- Time was needed to negotiate the cash grant response with partners, since it represented a new response for them.

**Benchmark 2** *Relief provided is appropriate to the context and the needs of beneficiaries, of a quality and scale that would be expected of Oxfam's capacity, and has proven adaptable according to changing circumstances. (Including – content, type and method of assistance, use of baselines and assessment reports, achievement against plans, measurement of impact, adherence to guidelines and standards).*

Initially, Oxfam could have possibly gone for a bigger programme, but the focus was correct at the outset, though envisioned growth (phase II) never occurred. In hindsight, possibly the targeting could have been more inclusive in terms of where the most vulnerable were located. Also, shifts in

programming could have occurred earlier, though much of the information on where to target was coming from the communities affected. [It is also important to note, that in a sense targeting was based on the response to one of many 'competing' emergencies, in this instance the target was focused on victims of the Lahar Flows around Mt Mayon and not at the broader typhoon(s) affected communities.]

Much of the above did cause a lot of time and energy to be spent on the internal classification of response for this programme; based on numbers affected, numbers being assisted, budget, pace, and scale. Internally, Oxfam never did come to a decision on what constituted an affected person, which played into the internal wrangling over numbers.

#### Enhancers

- Our local partner initially provided the context overlaid by our very experienced PRC from Manila.
- Targeting was focused on areas of perceived highest population numbers and on congested areas where public health needs were greatest.
- Once target areas were decided, the team focused on these got the supplies out.
- Oxfam did switch focus from evacuation centres to transitional sites, which showed flexibility, however actual villages have still not been targeted.
- Beneficiaries were very happy with the inputs, probably far surpassing their expectations, and in greater quantity than other actors.
- Beneficiaries were very happy with the cash grants.
- SPHERE and the IDP Guiding Principles both received considerable focus.
- Maximising the engagement of the Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) was an important success factor for the public health programme.
- Use of students to collect information is a good practice, but the RTE was unable to see the outputs of this work.

#### Inhibitors

- Public health work focused exclusively on the evacuations centres, when there were also others at risk (not public health risk) who remained *in situ* and/or who moved to host/relative families. Speed and target numbers could be met quickly due to evacuation centre focus, but the targeting could have been better by diversifying the programme sites. Evacuation centres were high public health risks areas, so in the immediate term the decision was correct to focus on these (also considering staff and logistics resources). However, commitment was made as early as December 11<sup>th</sup> to also focus on other at risk populations, but it was never done (most likely caused by continual management turnover and additionally not all staff were aware of this decision).
- Public health staff were not involved in the distribution of the NFIs (hygiene kits).
- Baseline assessments were only compiled after seven weeks (though were began earlier, however this was based on available data and had no real negative impact, as morbidity and mortality data was being collected by the government during the crisis). It is still not clear if these baseline reports will be useful to the programme or are relative to the objectives of the programme.
- Agreements made on holiday cover were not followed by many staff, some even leaving the programme over Christmas after they had agreed to stay. This did cause disruption, both in the programme, but also caused longer-term staff motivational issues.
- The decision on how to move forward with shelter was late in coming, and whilst ideas were put forward in the ECHO proposal, they do not seem to have fully lined up with the needs coming out of the ongoing assessments (e.g. household cleaning material vs. shelter material). There still has not been any programming delivery in shelter.
- Targeting for shelter assistance has been difficult. The approach used was do to roughly 7 000 individual questionnaires. Analysis of these will be very difficult, as well as tracking individual respondents. The idea was sound, but the practical implications not well thought through.

- Beneficiaries would have liked more notice of when relief goods were due to arrive; they cared less about what was arriving than when it was arriving. There are many practical examples of programmes being able to give enough advance warning without delaying programme delivery.

#### Cash-Transfer Programme

The project stakeholders and partners considered the cash grant response appropriate since it gave people flexibility and empowered them to make decisions on their needs; beneficiaries highly appreciated grant distributions because it gave them the possibility to cover a wider range of needs. The final monitoring findings show that 4-5 days from the distributions beneficiaries had used the 79% of the grants to purchase food (42%), school material (16%), shelter (11%), kitchen utensils (7%), medicines (6%) and clothing (5%). They expressed intention to spend the remaining 21% of the grants on food (35%), shelter (34%) and school materials (18%). The results show the high impact of the grant on supporting people's immediate needs.

The coverage and targeting was weak and it resulted in high levels of exclusion. The initial assumption that only most in need populations would have stayed in the evacuation centre, because of congestion and poor living conditions, was proved wrong. The limited evacuation centre capacity left a high number of the affected population outside the camps and with no relief aid. Oxfam and partner teams also felt that the grants distribution and other relief aid exclusively targeting evacuation centre may actually slow the decongestion of the centres.

#### Enhancers

- Information shared with the PH Team enabled the team to target additional communities (Penafrancia and Libod) (Daraga case). While this shows a certain degree of flexibility in trying to target households from outside the centres, in reality this was very limited due to lack of adequate analysis and staffing.
- The project assumption that markets were functioning and goods available, but people had no money to access immediate needs, was realistic. People were able to access the needed items in local markets.
- The amount of the grant was decided through discussions with communities' leaders and calculated on the cost of the local "food basket" and other immediate needs, like medicines etc. The project correctly assumed that people would use the grants to cover immediate needs (but importantly, did miss the costs required for sending children back to school).
- Targeting households but distributing grants to women was very appreciated by the beneficiaries. Targeting women was based on the knowledge that they were mostly in the evacuation centres and they usually manage the household budget; grants were thus mostly managed by women (85%). Generally women (44%) or both partners took decisions on the use of cash, and in only a few cases men (9%). This probably had positive effect on limiting the misuse of cash, even though beneficiaries confirmed few a cases of cash being used for cigarettes and other non-essential needs.
- The majority of grants distributed were used to cover immediate needs. The 21% of grants unspent is probably due to the fact that monitoring was conducted 4-5 days after the distribution. Only in a few cases (<1%) beneficiaries intended to save the grants.

#### Inhibitors

- A final analysis of the grant monitoring was available only on January 24<sup>th</sup>, and the initial information was based on two small samples that were not indicative of expenditure patterns as a whole. They implied that grants were being used for shelter and livelihood activities, rather than immediate needs, which has been proved incorrect after a more complete analysis of the monitoring data. This has led to inaccurate conclusions about beneficiary priorities at that time.
- The team felt understaffed to conduct assessment and analysis and to carry out verification of lists outside the evacuation centre, whilst at the same time than implementing the grants distributions.
- The lack of a real understanding and analysis of the local food security did not help with targeting the most vulnerable, even within the evacuation centre.

- The team and partners felt the need for more consultation between assessment teams and the implementation teams in the first phase of the response.
- The team felt that in some cases the integration with the PHP work in the evacuation centre has been a hindering factor to the adjustment of targeting outside the evacuation centre (e.g. they were doing hygiene kit distributions). The team felt that programme integration should happen when possible and not representing an obstacle to target flexibility.
- Partner staff expressed the need to improve communication and awareness on the criteria for targeting and the rationale behind the selection of evacuation centre.
- The evacuation centre beneficiaries felt that the project targeting had some error of exclusion within the centres. This could have been improved by including beneficiaries' representative in the validation and verification process, for example to clean the master lists. It seems that the beneficiaries' representative involvement happen at the beginning of the project but this practice was lost with the time.
- The beneficiaries and camp leaders complained about being informed only one day before about distributions, and some households were excluded because they were not present the day of the distribution. According to beneficiaries this created some conflict within the centres.
- Children headed households were left out, since grants were not distributed to minor than 18 years old, and mechanisms were not always sought to target their carers.

**Benchmark 3** *There is integration and coherence of the programme within the response itself and within the country and regional humanitarian and development strategies.*

All of the assessments were integrated, but some of the programmatic implementation was not. This mostly stemmed from where the shelter component would sit and which teams were responsible for NFI (hygiene kits) distributions. The regional strategy to bring in people from within the region is a good one, though documentation and handover as people came and went was not particularly good.

#### Enhancers

- All initial assessments were integrated assessments (PHE, PHP, and FS&L).
- Staff were deployed from the Manila Office, Catabato, and Leyte, as well as from the Regional Centre. This ensured that a wide range of people understanding all aspects of regional and country objectives were involved.
- An MOU was signed with SAC–Legaspi.
- Discussion and intent on accountability structures is good.
- Linkages to national and regional Oxfam strategies was good.

#### Inhibitors

- For accountability structures to work they need to be spread across the programme and built into both monitoring and delivery systems. Questionnaires are not the best way to insure accountability of targeting criteria in a rapid onset environment, because they take a long time to process and analyse, and because feeding back the results to those interviewed is incredibly difficult.
- Integrated assessments infer that logistics was involved and it is not clear if this was the case (e.g. logistics was involved in shelter planning for instance but did not attend field based assessments of evacuation centres).
- The partner MOU did not follow the standard Oxfam format. If standard formats had been used in the past, the negotiation of new agreements, along the same lines (e.g. financial reporting criteria), would have been easy and more transparent (and faster).
- The programme appears coherent, but this is overlaid by the fact that such high staff turnover had a detrimental effect on the overall coherence, as strategies tended to shift with staff changes – though it is hard to subjectively judge if this was also a result of contextual changes. This is certainly not unique to this programme and is a challenge that Oxfam has been struggling with more and more overtime.



- SPHERE was pushed strongly as an advocacy position, yet very few SPHERE manuals (they were ordered and are outstanding) are available in the office and staff were not trained (formally) on SPHERE [DEC evaluations continually highlight the importance of this].
- How to implement the shelter component was never explicit in a documented management decision until December 26<sup>th</sup>, and had been shifting from the public health team to livelihoods and back. Integration and ownership of the shelter component has been difficult.
- Many key field staff didn't understand the relationship between Oxfam and SAC and who was responsible for what, as the MOU was very unclear. The MOU was signed on December 12<sup>th</sup>, six days after the team arrived and one day before the first NFI distribution (though many staff still say that they have never seen/read the agreement).
- As with many partnerships, issues were raised by many on how much of this was a partnership and how much was logistical contracting. This is always an issue, but usually more so with new partnerships rather than old partnerships [Liberia 2003 also noted the difficulty with this, which indicates that Oxfam is struggling with this globally].
- When mentioning capacity building in partner MOUs, it must be explicit what this entails, how we intend to deliver and when. The MOU was only for one month to putting this in possible led to some expectation for a deliverable that would not be possible for us to undertake .
- There is still a lot of uncertainty at all levels on where the programme is heading, when it will end, etc. This is a very common occurrence with rapid scale-ups, but the effects should not be underestimated (this is currently being addressed).
- Communication up the line was much better than down the line to field staff, in a way the accountability was only upwards. All the first phase response staff interviewed at the programme level felt strongly that this was the case. As the team was so small it may have been better to have scheduled all staff meetings rather than management meetings (which was more the case in the very beginning than later). [Goma 2002 highlights the absolute importance of involvement of staff in programme planning meetings].

**Benchmark 4** *Effective management structures are in place, and providing clarity and well-communicated decision-making and direction. Due consideration is made of previous lesson learning.*

Category 2 declared and resources secured and initial staff deployed very quickly. Through continued management, logistics, finance, and human resource transition during the first four weeks of the programme did have an impact. Again the programme did function and did deliver, but there was considerable stress placed on staff with these transitions.

#### Enhancers

- Initial release of 300 000 from the Catastrophe Fund when Category 2 response was called.
- Deployment of the PRC on the second day followed by a team of Philippine Country staff (from various offices), RC staff, and HD Advisors on day six.
- Spending limits for budget line expenses for senior staff put at 2,000 GBP (authorised on December 18<sup>th</sup>, the policy requirement for this is seven days).
- An organogram was quickly put into place as well as a plan for required HR needs (though appears to have only gone up the line and not down, and only listed posts and not names).
- Sitreps and telecomms were well documented (though more detail in the sitreps on arrival dates of staff would have been useful). However, many first response programme staff said that these were not routinely shared with staff.
- Work and focus on accountability is an important programme attribute.

#### Inhibitors

- HSP availability for assessment and implementation phase for continuity and for longer periods than advisor availability would have been an advantage (but does cost to the programme).
- Delegated budget authority has not been documented and given to senior posts and functions in the office. Normally budget authority, either per budget line or set limits for certain posts,

greatly increases the speed of delivery of the response without significantly increasing risk, if at all.

- Inconsistent field level programme management in Legaspi (PRC who did initial assessment to RHC to PRC to PHE TA to HSP PM in one month) led to some confusion by staff as to approach and direction [the 2001 Gujarat evaluation highlighted the need for good quality and consistent management and as far back as the 1991 Iraq evaluation highlighted absolute need for improved consistency in management at the outset].
- Senior and experienced staff can and should be given higher budgetary release authority once budget and intervention is defined. With heavy coordination and representation responsibilities it is not always necessary, and slows the process, when the response manager has to sign all SR's. Additionally, when SRs and POs are signed, logistics should then not have to go back to the response manager to get a signature to release the funds, to hire transport to ship the goods, that have implicitly previously be approved.
- Management slip did not directly affect the ability to meet original targets but it did affect the ability of management to make programmatic decisions quickly based on changing context.
- Shelter support has slipped, due to both changing context (and our understanding of it) and difficulties in targeting and management decisions on the forward look. While the public health aspect has moved from emergency evacuation centres to transitional sites, gaps in speed at which shelter provision will occur as caused significant delay in this aspect of the programme. An international Shelter Coordinator is now on the team. It is hard to disentangle if this is based on lack of clarity around Oxfam's shelter policy, difficulties in targeting, or slow decision-making.
- A SR for shelter material sat in the regional centre for two weeks without comment or signature. In this case lack of action requires as much justification as action.
- Continued reference is made by staff to the programme focus on evacuation centres, while possibly the best rapid onset fall back position, a shift or split of focus onto people housed with host families or relatives should have occurred.
- Many staff did not have ToRs and some still do not (performance management and objective setting is underway).
- M&E and assessment questionnaires need to take into account how this data collection will be disseminated back to the communities, without careful consideration these types of 'accountability' mechanisms can backfire.

**Benchmark 5** *Key support functions (HR, logs, finance & systems) are sufficiently resourced for the scale of programme, and being effectively run.*

There are many more inhibitors than enablers listed below. However, even with system 'problems' the programme did function well and delivered what it set out to.

#### *Logistics*

##### Enhancers

- Oxfam negotiated a shared warehouse with SAC .
- Oxfam worked with SAC as its main distribution mechanism which streamlined the trucking aspect of the operation.
- Present logistics staff have good links both with the programme teams and have familiarity with all of the field locations.
- Capacity was brought in from several teams across the region and from the HSP pool.

##### Inhibitors

- Three logisticians in seven weeks have passed through the Legaspi Office (though best practice was achieved by all staff producing handover notes (though some much more relevant than others - handover notes of some of the departing logistics staff did not even address the

functions they performed in the field, etc.) [Lebanon RTE 2006 again highlighted the importance of getting the right number of logistics staff in place quickly].

- The initial two logistics set up parallel systems, the logistics function should keep common records and numbering systems even if the jobs are split.
- Logistics has been short staffed since programme inception. Past experience has shown us that it is usually better to err on the side of caution and to insure adequate logistics support is available at the start of a programme – in this case limited logistics support led to incomplete paper trails for purchasing (e.g. delivery notes for goods coming from Manila are absent, etc.).
- There are still no local logistics staff, had this been prioritised Oxfam would have been better able to understand the market in Legaspi.
- Oxfam negotiated a shared warehouse with SAC, however there was not a warehouse in place when the first shipments arrived. While they were not perishable goods, the water boxes did get wet and SAC had to spend additional time repackaging.
- Difficulty in sourcing accommodation and office space has had an effect on team morale (and ability to work to their full potential). This may not have been resolved, based on above recommendation due to market in Legaspi, but also may have. An example of a possible solution would have been to rent hotels in entirety rather than rooms in several hotels.
- Systems awareness in the warehouse by SAC – Legaspi was weak and too date we still cannot reconcile 'book' records with the physical stock count. Staff were allocated and paid for by Oxfam for this task, but it seems their work was not well monitored or recorded.
- Through the finance function logistics activity can be traced, but there is no independent logistics paper trail (a logistics administrator is presently being recruited).
- Logistics, a key implementation function, was not included on the list of authorised staff to incur expenses against specific budget lines. It is imperative that logistics have some budget holding authority in order for the operation to run smoothly.
- An asset register will need to be created.
- No SR forms or other documents came to the programme from Manila, these should be kept in stock for such an eventuality.

## Human Resources

### Enhancers

- Ability to mobilise qualified staff from across the region (Philippines, Indonesia, and the Regional Centre) was very good [this is in line with best practice identified from the Kosovo evaluation of 2000].
- Staff were deployed relatively quickly to the field.

### Inhibitors

- Organograms were not shared with staff or put in accessible locations. While management staff in HD, RC, and Manila had access these were not shared broadly. Additionally, organograms were based on posts and did not have names to them (this is still the case)
- HR files were not well maintained – ToRs not on file etc.
- Staff lists and record of staff on the programme were not well maintained (particularly staff that had no donor budget implications).
- Staff contracts for secondments were not altered to meet new conditions, e.g. excess of five days a week working (with no agreed days off). For the secondments, business cases (which are now pending) should have been made for additional compensation or separate secondment contract issued.
- Concerning the above, staff on secondments need a proper induction and briefing to explain the implications of the post, clear understanding of terms and conditions, and clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities.
- Staff accommodation has still not been sorted. The sitrep of 27 December stated that someone had been employed by the office to do this (though he failed to find any suitable locations). It is clear that this is not an easy process. However, it must be noted that from past RTEs and evaluations this has consistency been raised as a major concern for staff welfare, and is as well on this programme.

- Presently there is about 35% of all the staff posts unfilled; it is not necessary to explain the effects of this.
- Not all staff have ToRs or objectives (this is being addressed).
- Grading of posts is inconsistent, both with the country programme and within the region.
- Some expressions that the country office was slow to communicate about how and when posts were going to be filled, this led to ambiguity to seconded staff on how long they would be required to stay in post.
- There is no accurate staff list available in the field of the staff who have passed through the programme (particularly Manila based staff that had no budget implication for the programme).

#### *Finance*

##### Enhancers

- Signatory and budget holding responsibility was set for managers at 2,000 GBP, but many staff were not aware of this.
- RC support to Peoplesoft.
- Weekly budget monitoring was good and gave programme staff valuable real time information.

##### Inhibitors

- A bank account still has not been opened (though permission has now just been granted) despite the fact that a branch of the bank we use in Manila is present. This is partly due to some communication problems directly after the typhoon, but seven weeks is a very long time post event (note: a bank account in Lebanon was opened during the war, without valid country registration, very quickly).
- Some staff feel disappointed at levels of trust around budget authority levels. Oxfam has stated in the past that inability to accept risk has delayed many programmes. While it is hard to quantify risk, managers do need to be more acceptable of risk. Without taking some budgetary risk, we can very quickly isolate staff through lack of trust, which also delays programmes and impact of the programme.
- Postings from other expenditure sites (e.g. HSP or Advisor recharges) have been slow (or non-existent) and the programme team have had to use best guesses rather than actuals [this was highlighted as an organisation weakness in the 2003 Iraq Finance Review].

#### *IT and Systems*

##### Enhancers

- BGAN up and running quickly.
- Deployment of an IT specialist conforms to best practice.
- Wireless network is set up (since mid-December and working well, with many staff rapidly receiving Oxfam e-mail accounts).

##### Inhibitors

- Controlled access to BGAN during first few weeks due to limitations regarding temporary office location and staff housing in hotels
- VPN installation was delayed due to local lack of availability and management, meaning staff did not have access to Oxfam system tools (OPAL, CRIMSON, PeopleSoft, HRMIS, etc.) or the intranet.

#### *Safety and Security*

##### Enhancers

- Staff were very aware of security concerns and issues concerning the NPA, and did ask questions before venturing to areas.
- Seatbelts were used by rental drivers and staff.

##### Inhibitors

- Neither safety nor security guidelines were put in place (these were done the 21<sup>st</sup> January). However, this does not mean that security wasn't being managed it just wasn't documented.
- No Oxfam doctor or clinic has yet been identified.

#### Cash-Transfer Programme

The distributions and security measures were planned and conducted in tight collaboration and coordination between the finance office and the EFSL team. A set of security measures was put in place to minimise risks and this worked well.

#### Enhancers

- The verification process before and during the distribution was seen as positive and transparent.
- The good management of the distribution process allowed overcoming risks and reservations expressed by partner about possible confusions with cash distributed for political reasons during the election period.
- There was good collaboration between the finance and EFSL team. Only an experienced finance staff handled the cash and conducted distributions.
- Finance staff had previous field experience in handling and distributing cash grants and he effectively applied his previous experience to the programme.

#### Inhibitors

- No initial risk assessment was formally conducted although this was done verbally with the country team. The security measures were verbal and not written and a set of guidelines for the team was not available. Considering the high staff turnover there was the risk that the verbally agreed security measures and procedures went lost or not adequately followed.
- The master lists of beneficiaries sometime were not clear and the names were not correctly spelled. This increased load of work for the financial officer and created some confusion during the distributions. The presence of double names in the master lists often brought differences between the amount of cash carried and cash distributed and this could have created a possibility of fraud.
- There was time constraint for the finance officer to conduct all the operations. The project took the risk to rely only on one person for the distribution of cash.
- The finance officer expressed the need to consider insurance for the person carrying cash, in the case some of cash being lost or robbed.

**Benchmark 6** *Oxfam relationships (internally and externally) are productive, accountable to key stakeholders, and well coordinated. We are having a positive influence on others with well-targeted advocacy.*

#### Enhancers

- Partnerships with local organisations and relationships with local government play a significant role in Oxfam's ability to rapidly make assessments and to start implementation simultaneously [this was also highlighted as important in the 2003 Iraq RTE].
- Our main partner felt consulted and involved in the programme decisions.
- Our main partner felt as if the relationship was partnership based and not merely contractual.
- The use of the cluster system language and the setting up of sectoral coordination was good (though not using the standard cluster groupings).
- Oxfam immediately created international coordination forums, which later shifted through the creation of the GO-NGO Secretariat. The overall coordinator for this was our main partner SAC, with the DPDO representing government interest and Oxfam representing the international community.
- The GO-NGO Secretariat was 'approved' by the Governor of Albay which gave it credibility and it was ultimately also supported by the government through a secretary and a delegated coordination link with the governors office.
- Oxfam supported and will work closely with GO-NGO to work with the government in formulating a donor appeal that will be launched in Manila (sponsored by the Governor of Albay) to attempt to raise additional funds for the reconstruction phase.
- Advocacy on SPHERE was focused on local government, which also included a awareness raising session.
- Beneficiaries of all programmes have given very positive feedback.

## Inhibitors

- Many staff were not aware, and in some cases still not aware, of the partnership ways of working with SAC – Legaspi. This was primarily new hires, but importantly people who spent the majority of their time in the field. This lack of clarity probably limited the synergy that could have been created in the field sites.
- Oxfam approach on civil and military relations in times of response was probably misunderstood, particularly by the provincial authorities. This did not degrade our coordination with them or cause any lack of trust, however, confusion remains from the provincial side why we took such strong lines on the separation of civil and military actors involved in a response to natural disaster.
- Principled humanitarian action and coordination with the military are not always incompatible and messaging and understanding on the role of the military and civil defence mechanism in government emergency plans may not be well understood by the country team or regional centre.
- While the team was submitting sitreps, HD weekly meetings minutes, and telecomm minutes, it doesn't seem the media was utilised effectively. This is only based on limited analysis of Oxfam submissions to Relief Web, where three articles were submitted and only one of which contained any real information. While this is not the only outlet of import, it is an important outlet to let humanitarian 'watchers' know and understand the situation. This is superimposed on the fact that the programme was (and is) substantially under funded [Ethiopia 2000 highlighted the importance of maximising communication outlets].
- Advocacy on SPHERE standards was not matched by Oxfam meeting SPHERE standards in the field [note; Oxfam fully met the emergency standards]. Operationally the decisions on units constructed were sound, but these decisions did not link to a softening of our advocacy line, and this was not lost on the local government.
- If advocacy on SPHERE was the focus all Oxfam staff should have also been trained. Additionally, SPHERE handbooks should have been made available to all key staff.
- Having three leads (Oxfam, SAC, and PPDO) in the GO-NGO Secretariat may possibly have isolated some interested parties, in that while the secretariat was responsible for sharing information some parties were looking for direct reports from agencies and didn't utilise the structures put in place (e.g. PDCC).
- Oxfam's total contract with SAC was roughly 52,000 USD for distribution of essentially 5,000 NFI kits and water. This appears to be extraordinarily high costs for mobilisation for such a short operation.
- The shelter verification survey feedback will need to be closely monitored. More than 5,000 interviews were done, but it unclear how this will be fed back to the communities/people interviewed.
- External relations and representation needs to be cascading down to technical leads to make the links with local government and increase the effectiveness and reach of our messaging.
- When working through and with partners consideration must be given to their branding requirements as well as our own.

## Oxfam International Affiliates

- OI systems and expectations that were agreed to in January mean that we put ourselves in a situation to write a non-emergency section during an emergency when the environment and information was not existing.

## Cash-Transfer Programme

The partner found the relationship with the EFSL team positive but the overall feeling of partner's officers was that the cash grant programme was predetermined and there was not much room for thorough discussions and planning because of the lack of time. Oxfam staff engaged in the initial discussions were clear that decisions were not predetermined. The Oxfam team shared the concern that the relationship with the partner was not on a parity level, and there is need to increase trust, consultation and share information with local partners. This seems happened mainly

at field level and partner' officers were often not informed about why decisions were made and monitoring information not shared with them.

#### Enhancers

- SAC as a neutral agency helped in putting CG in proper perspective – not directly related to politics.
- SAC had an established network in the ground, including beneficiaries.
- Oxfam team had good organisation with the organised parish, Social Action (PSAC) and BSAC, and LGU.

#### Inhibitors

- SAC maintained low profile due to its worries that the grants could negatively affect its micro finance programme.
- Cash Grants was a new programme intervention in the areas and partners needed to be convinced on the appropriateness of the response and the absence of risks.
- Beneficiaries did not find relationship and coordination with local elected leaders always positive.

## 4. Recommendations

### Effectiveness of humanitarian response

- Time again we fail to prioritise logisticians on response programmes; the logistic, finance, and HR functions are just as critical at the PH or EFSL function. It is better to send too many and withdrawal them, then to spend an inordinate amount of time trying to catch up later.
- Programme managers need to take more calculated risk to increase delivery speed, e.g. delegation of authority for a broader range of areas.
- Clarity on implementation plans for the future will need to be communicated soon (this is already being addressed through work plans and possible exit strategies).
- There is an increased risk in slowing down programming if delegating fiscal responsibility is not done in pre-agreed programme implementation work plans (e.g. we must be willing to give experienced staff more responsibility and not less).
- Maps and graphics are a useful tool for sharing information on programme within the teams.
- To not get caught up in writing the longer term intervention plans until the medium term context and plans are understood and have begun to stabilise.
- Minimum processes or good practices for programme design and targeting should be developed, promoted, enforced and clear.
- As situational assessments in times of emergencies need to be manageable, multiple assessments (as against integrated assessments which worked well in this case) and “too in-depth” assessments (as against rapid assessment) should rarely be used. Clear mechanism should be set-up for the immediate feedback of assessment results to the implementation of the programme.
- Benchmarks should focus on speed of response against identified needs, not response time of other agencies (who may target differently, etc.).
- External relations and representation needs to be cascading down to technical leads to make the links with local government and increase the effectiveness and reach of our messaging.
- As emergency programmes progress, targeting should be reviewed periodically.
- Logistics preparedness — whether establishing bilateral agreements with other country programmes or initiating tie-up with local corporations — needs significant prioritisation in the Country Programme.
- Developing minimum processes at country level — in designing programmes, targeting, coordination and consultation both internally and externally — maybe in the form of guidelines. Note - Use and adapt “Guide to Mandatory Procedures and Good Practice”- to the Philippine context.

## Human Resources

- Staff turnover on this programme was extremely high, probably much higher than any previous response I am aware of it. Attempts should be made to second staff with agreed timeframes that are realistic and known to staff prior to departure.
- It should be clear that staff sent to conduct rapid assessment at the onset of an emergency are not necessarily the same staff to implement response. Duration of staff deployment (whether for assessment or response implementation) always has to be specified. Staff should also during inductions and performance objective development be briefed on what the organisation expects of them during an emergency and whether they are willing to commit to be deployed in an emergency. Staff should also be given a clear briefing by their managers on how long they are likely to be deployed to manage their personal lives.
- Full engagement with HR is required at the onset, even whilst conducting rapid assessments.
- The sharing of human resources with other country programmes that have different holiday seasons, such as Indonesia, was used effectively and should be studied further.
- Review HR policies (on personnel deployment, including support) on this but the general recommendation is that except in life-saving situations, emergency response programmes should temporarily halt during the Christmas season in the Philippines or that agreement is clearly reached with staff well in advance to stay during Christmas. This is to also give disaster survivors the chance to harness their spiritual coping mechanism (somehow also conveyed by SAC managers). However, expectations are different for non-Humanitarian Programme (HP) and HP staff (emergency response inherent to all HP posts). It should also be noted that everything else shuts down which impedes work.
- The hiring of the communications officer locally early on did have a beneficial impact on the programme and should be done again. Assigning and deploying a Communication Officer with exact Terms of Reference (on documentation, prompt circulation of information, coordination, etc) from the very onset of emergency response. This has to be someone who is already inside the organisation and very familiar with Oxfam GB's ways of working (as against external hiring). One position should incorporate in the ToR a documentor for internal decision making.

## Advocacy

- Coordination is an important area of advocacy for Oxfam and needs more analysis and guidance.
- SPHERE Standards – this was a good approach and should be continued, but continued to be softened as a policy approach rather than a non-negotiable stance. It is also important to continuously monitor adoption of negotiations made with the local government, for example, agreement to adhere to SPHERE standards.
- While fully exerting efforts on coordination with the local government, initially there was not enough push within the programme for actual representation of the communities affected (we were always speaking in behalf of the evacuees but could also be making them speak for themselves).
- IDP Guiding Principles – this was also a good way forward and should continue.
- Advocating from a position of programme presence or talking on behalf of communities based on assumed wishes and desires of the communities is dangerous ground. Oxfam faces this problem on all programmes, just because we have presence does not necessarily mean we have the information available to advocate on behalf of others.
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- Full training on SPHERE Standards for all key staff expected to always be involved in humanitarian response. Maybe also on cash transfer programming (including appropriateness to Philippine context, natural vs human-made disasters, etc) and UNGPID (on rights of internally displaced persons). Also for key humanitarian partners. For cash transfers it should be at the Manila level and the rest of the country team.



#### Programme forward look

- Robust integration of the Phase II plans with the planned DipECHO project planned for Albay Province. This also needs to be linked with a coherent exit of transition plan to the Phase II.
- Circulation of appropriate information (programme plans and directions, programme status and integration, partnership established, etc) always needs to be prioritised.
- Documentation of lessons learnt and decisions reached during an emergency response has to be constantly improved.

#### Partnerships

- Regardless of the feel of the partnership, partners do feel donor (Oxfam) led.
- Partners need to have significant involvement in designing response programmes from the very start.
- MOUs with partners should use agreed formats and not be created ad hoc.
- Partner capacity assessments are a mandatory procedure and should be followed prior to MOU signing as a preparatory activity– e.g. so as to see what capacity support to build into the MOU. This should be placed more within the context of capacity building of partners. An assessment was completed and agreed with partners to build capacity in DRM (CBDRM and EWS), not response. The response aspect of this arrangement will be re-considered.
- Even in emergencies some budget oversight and backstopping is required. For transport, the MOU budget allocates 20 000 pesos per truck per day while Oxfam rents the same trucks for 2500. This gap will need to be monitored closely in the final financial report.
- It is important to differentiate between “humanitarian contractor” and “partner” and clearly define what a specific programme needs.
- Details of partnerships, even parallel response activities of partners, should always be shared with all staff involved in the programme. For example, provisions in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between Oxfam GB and SAC should have been fully shared with all staff of both organisations (even SAC).
- With integrated assessments as among the best practice, results could also be shared with other service providers for coordination purposes.

#### Contingency planning

- Contingency plans should be adjusted in a way that would allow people not familiar with the country programme, or country staff with less experience, to implement the plans with limited guidance, e.g. they should also include operational guidance to compliment the policy and strategic recommendations. The Philippines programme has huge experience setting up and responding rapidly, the Enhanced Contingency Plan should be where all of this learning is held on how to set up programmes and systems rapidly [Ethiopia 2000 highlighted the importance of documenting for future planning]. Most importantly the plan will only be appropriate and usable when it becomes an operational plan and not a strategic plan.
- All of the lessons identified from this exercise needs to be considered for the next draft of the enhanced contingency plan (and can feed in to the planned evaluation).

#### Safety and Security Management

- At the minimum, in areas deemed to posed significant security risk, a short set of staff safety guidelines should be produced as soon as possible (this has now been addressed).

#### Brief Training Needs Assessment

- Training of staff on SPHERE, this is a weakness for a programme with a focus on a SPHERE advocacy to the GoP. It is recommended that a full day training for all staff be undertaken.
- If use of fixed term contracts for emergency deployments will continue in the Philippines, it would be good to add training onto to these to both increase our staff profiles but also to continue to ‘build our own’ and give back to staff who don’t have stability in their careers .

#### Cash-Transfer Programme Field Programme

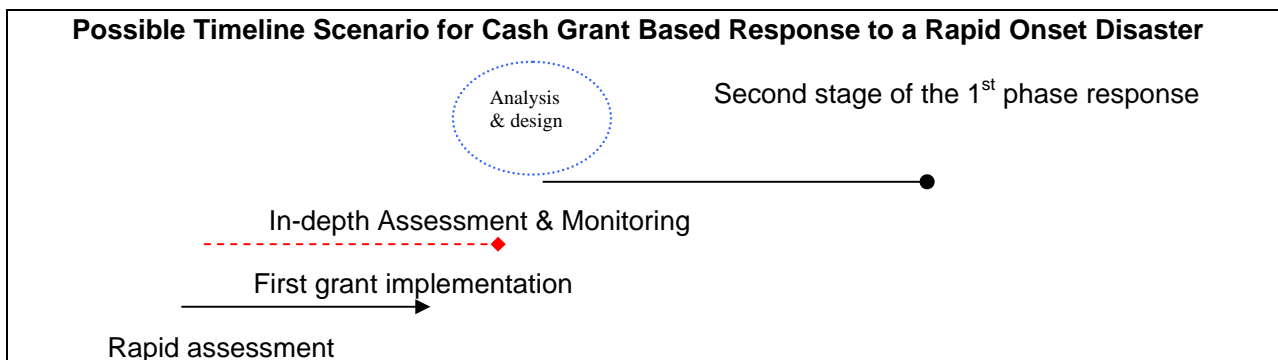
- It's recommended that the EFSL coordinator develop a clear activities plan until the end of the first phase to allow identifying priorities and give clear steer to the programme (done this week).
- Field visits and discussions with key informants and beneficiaries showed that different degrees of vulnerability exist in the centres and among the affected population. While some households are able to cope through remittances, temporarily migration, or have regained regular incomes, others have lost their sources of income and are relying on food aid, which is not provided on a regular basis. It is recommended that the unspent livelihood budget be used to target the hardship cases with additional grants. Key informants have identified households with no income and no remittances, households that have lost one of their members during the disaster, and women headed households, elderly families, and orphans as main hardship cases in the EC.
- The EFSL team needs to continue beneficiaries' involvement in the analysis of needs and implementation process. Beneficiaries recommended continuing communication directly with affected people in and outside the camps.
- Organise an awareness day on cash transfer programming for Oxfam team and partners / stakeholders to provide an insight on the rationale behind cash-transfer programmes.
- A food security assessment needs to be conducted in the following weeks to feed into the design of the rehabilitation phase. There is a lack of information about livelihood systems, vulnerability and how different livelihood groups have been affected by the disaster. Both WFP and FAO are planning to conduct rapid assessments, which provide an opportunity to integrate and coordinate efforts. At the same time the EFSL team needs to ensure that the assessment timing and methodology reflects Oxfam objective to design a second phase livelihood strategy. It is recommended that the assessment involve PHP and PHE teams.

#### Country Programme

- (HR) – Country Programme needs to provide clear communication about the length of staff deployments during the first phase of an emergency, (this was not clear for the EFSL team) and to ensure that deployed staff support the initial emergency phase for a longer period.
- Oxfam Philippines should organise trainings and awareness events on cash-transfer approach for long-term local partners and INGOs, both in Manila and in the field. This represents a contingency planning measure that would avoid spending time in clarification and negotiation during the first phase of an emergency because there is a general lack of awareness on cash programmes.

#### Regional Management Centre

- Develop a model for cash-transfer responses to a rapid onset emergency. Based on the learning from recent cash grant responses in the region (Indonesia and Philippines) it seems that a two-stage approach could be the most appropriate. This approach would include a first blanket grants distribution to quickly cover immediate people's needs after the disaster. A in-depth needs assessment, conducted concurrently with distributions, would shape the second grant disbursement and it would allow targeting the most in need, determining the grants value according to needs, and strengthening community's participation and organisation. A similar approach would require an additional team to conduct the need assessment during the first three/four weeks of the intervention. An indicative timeline is drafted below, but this is only an indication that should be adapted to specific contexts.



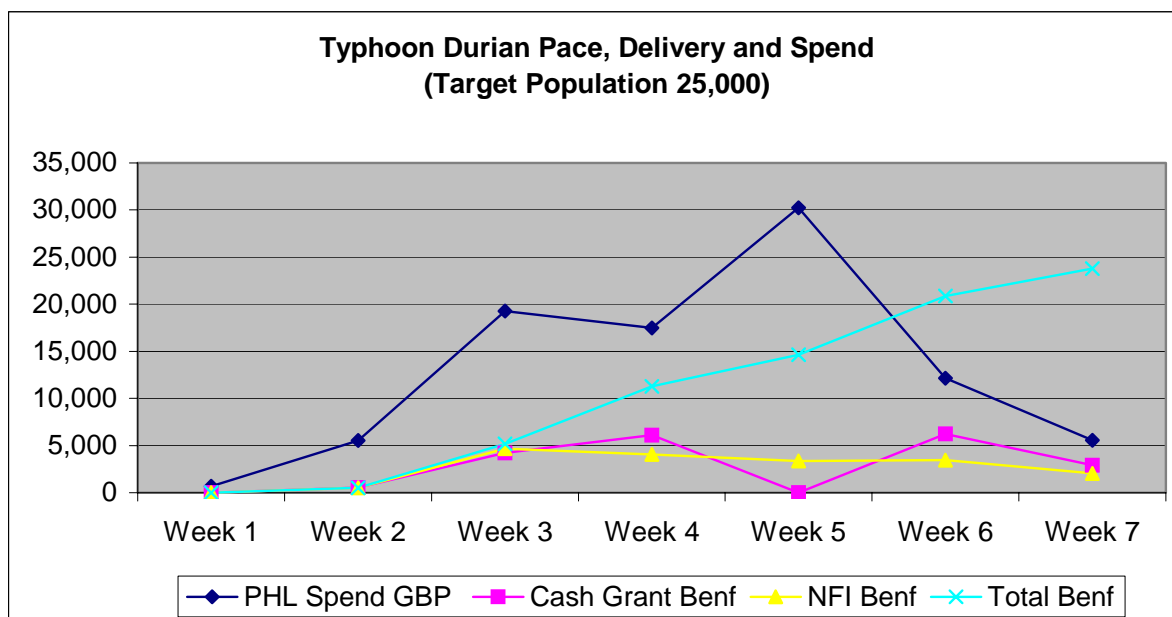
0 1 week 2 week 3 week 4 week 5 week 6 week 7 week 8 week – 12 week

#### Humanitarian Department

- HD PH/EFSL teams need to share a clear understanding of cash-transfer mechanisms (grants, CFW, vouchers) and their use; cash-transfers are mechanisms to achieve specific objectives rather than a type of EFSL programming. Cash-transfers interventions fall into ESFL programming when their aim is to either improve people' food security or protect/recover people livelihoods.
- Based on previous experiences the EFSL team needs to develop a HR strategy to kick start cash-transfers in quick onset emergencies.
- EFSL team need to develop "rough" guidelines to support field staff in the implementation of cash-transfer programmes
- The HD advisers should make available documentation (ex. guidance on measures to reduce risks), and standard formats in the first days of the response.

## ANNEX I - Timeline

This timeline is meant to represent the management decisions and then overlaid by the programme activities that occurred as a result. This can then hopefully show how management function relates to system function and then how that allows expense to incur to rapidly assist the population affected by Typhoon Durian. This is not an empirical process, but relationships between decisions and timeliness of impact can be inferred. (Please see Annex I for the narrative timeline).



\* This chart does not show the initial input (88,799 GBP) for NFIs and water in order to show the relation of field growth to population reached (pace)

\*\* Beneficiary numbers were recorded cumulatively, so it is difficult to recreate weekly totals (this figure is believed to be accurate within 300)

\*\*\* PHE inputs were recorded cumulatively so it was not possible to chart the speed of this portion of the programme

November 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> 2006

- Typhoon Durian (or its Philippine conventional name of Reming) makes landfall, causing damage from high winds, heavy rains, and lahar debris flows

2<sup>nd</sup> December

- First Oxfam staff arrived for rapid assessment, Mel Capistrano, PRC Manila. This assessment recommended working with SAC – Legaspi in five areas targeting 5,000 families with water and NFIs
- Oxfam HD and RC in touch with country teams

3<sup>rd</sup> December

- John levers (HPC) and Tim Wainwright (Deputy RD) described this as a Category 2 response. Also, stated in the sitrep released on this day
- GoP calls for international assistance
- HR requests made by the country team for support
- Sitreps shared with OI affiliates (OHK and Novib)
- Step aside agreed of acting CPM Margarita Hakobyan with RHC Jo Hutton as Response Manager and RPM Lan Mercado as Typhoon Durian Response Lead Manager (retaining RPM Andy Featherstone as Jo's substantive manager [Goma 2002 highlighted the importance of having absolute clarity around this before the crisis])
- Category 2 agreed with HD (Jane Cocking) and 50,000 GBP (grant) released from the CatFund

#### 4<sup>th</sup> December

- Initial Oxfam assessment states that only 30,000 people affected (though an agreement was never reached as to the definition of an affected person, which led to much confusion over time)
- A rapid onset project created on OPAL
- A reactive line was written and signed off. RHC Jo Hutton arrived in Manila to manage the response
- Procurement of NFIs and water begins in Manila
- Draft management responsibilities agreed in telecomm minutes. It was also agreed at this time that it is a Category 2 response
- Country team agrees Manila working groups to support the response
- Additional regional advisors mobilised
- ECHO contacted

#### 5<sup>th</sup> December

- RFM James Treasure-Jones arrived in Manila to help with proposals
- HR spreadsheets and require prepared
- OA and CAA requests information
- First discussion on possible RTE
- No firm funding commitments (apart from CatFund) yet
- 300,000 agreed from CatFund (but only 50,000 as a grant) due to low numbers of beneficiaries

#### 6<sup>th</sup> December

- Jo and team of five arrive in Legaspi and establish Oxfam presence on the ground, working from partners office. Team includes PH staff, photographer, logs/admin assistant, driver, Also, staff member who manages the partner relationship with SAC - Legaspi and will manage NFI
- Verbal agreement with partner to work with them, through their existing mechanisms as they are already responding with food distributions and have contacts. MOU proposed to formalise agreement
- Partner agrees to host Oxfam for a month and second staff
- Assessments begun by team of the situation in the five target areas proposed by our partner in the original assessment
- Greg Vas, Regional Logistics Coordinator, arrives in Manila (with a R-BGAN). RMAC (Mona) and Regional Livelihoods Advisor (Floor) also arrive
- Two staff released from the Indonesia Programme to support (finance and logistics)
- First concept note produced for 750,000 GBP
- CAA agreed to support with recruitments from their register (was never utilized)
- Finance Assistant (Jerome) from Leyte programme deployed
- First OI telecomm
- HSP PM (Sara Mchattie) identified to lead response

#### 7<sup>th</sup> December

- Concept note signed off and sent to ECHO and affiliates
- Water distribution started

#### 8<sup>th</sup> December

- Six (6) more staff arrive in Legaspi (including two HD Advisors)
- First Oxfam hosted NGO coordination meeting
- MOU with partner drafted
- Rapid onset project PHLB05 drafted to CatFund commitment of 300,000 GBP (but only 50,000 GBP as an outright grant)

#### 9<sup>th</sup> December

- Integrated (PH and EFS&L) assessments begun

- Additional staff requested by Jo
- Recommendation that IT support is required
- ECHO gives indication of funding for 500,000 Euro and needs proposal by the 12<sup>th</sup>
- Decision on three (3) target municipalities made

#### 10<sup>th</sup> December

- Meeting with partner to discuss the idea of cash grants and see whether they will accept. After initial reservations around creating dependency (and feelings that it may undermine their micro finance programme), they were interested and agreed to a trial in one location and a follow-up assessment to look at it before proceeding to more sites
- RPM (Lan) e-mails PHL CMT about staff requests and possible redeployments
- An additional MOO for cash distribution was discussed among team but found not to be necessary. After this cash meeting the meeting with partner continues to discuss our new plan to implement an integrated approach in three target locations first and plan distributions. This proves to be a very difficult meeting with SAC as they feel we have changed course, they see an impact upon them because the distributions are not going through their networks and they don't control them alone and we are targeting. Their policy is blanket distributions, no planning lists prepared and they allow the churches to decide on distribution. They also try to cover all areas evenly, even if this means that the amount distributed does not match need.
- Eventually SAC – Legaspi agree to our plan understanding that we need to be accountable and distributions without planned lists and targeting is problematic for us and that we believe we can have more impact if we implement an integrated programme rather than EFSL here, NFIs there, PH somewhere else. We also make clear that we can only programmatically and staff-wise support a targeted area. SAC question our priority order and indicate that Camalig is so close to Daraga that it should just go on geographic order which we agree to.
- Second typhoon passes by and team works in hotel on the plan and strategy – which is a critical meeting and decision point. Team decides to try and implement integrated programme NFI, EFS&L and decides to target Daraga, Guinobatan and Camalig initially, in that order, based on rapid assessments, using an agreed set of criteria. Agreement to focus initially in centres due to PH risks and needs but plan to get to community not in centres also through assessments. Agreement to implement a two-tiered approach. One team continuing on assessments and one team immediately beginning implementation to meet the immediate needs. Decision to also do an integrated PH/EFSL baseline survey (to be completed in four (4) days)
- Basic proposal for work also developed, emergency cash grants, latrines and bath houses, water analysis and treatment, PHP through Barangay health workers, continue work with partner.

#### 11<sup>th</sup> December

- Revised MOU with SAC signed
- Second assessment report submitted (Oxfam struggles with numbers and people affected)
- PHL CMT meeting and decisions on staff requests

#### 12<sup>th</sup> December

- Finance Assistant arrives
- PIP approved by IDD (Penny)
- OI pushing for 12 month proposal but field team feels it is too early

#### 13<sup>th</sup> December (about)

- First toilets begin to be constructed
- First NFIs begin to arrive
- PHLB05 authorised
- ECHO proposal for 730,000 Euro signed off (though previous ECHO commitment of only 600,000 Euro which Oxfam eventually received a contract for in mid-January). Many field staff commented that they felt that not enough assessment data and staff consultation went into the proposal

- HD SHC (Richard Luff) advises to re-categorise to Category 3 response based on beneficiary numbers in the ECHO proposal

14<sup>th</sup> December

- Tripartite agreement for GO-NGO coordination raised (PPDO, SAC, Oxfam)
- visit by RPM and key manila staff to review the progress and discuss the plan. Also HR talks to staff about their issues and each staff has a personal interview about their situation and plans for them to stay or go.
- Sensitisation of first communities for cash and NFIs undertaken
- First cash grants to beneficiaries distributed (it can be noted that this is historically very quick for Oxfam from start up to first distribution) along with NFIS. It was decided to do them jointly as same centres and target populations being targeted, maximises efficiency and safety for staff and also where PH work was to begin so as to retain a cohesive integrated approach
- Proposal made to scale back to Category 3 made in telecomm
- Team want to double target population but funding is the constraint
- HSP Logistician deployed
- Shelter issue and shelter procurement raised

15<sup>th</sup> December

- Cash grants reviewed and partner agrees that they are good and can continue to all target areas
- HD (Richard) confirms that up to 100,000 GBP outright CatFund money is available IF response is scaled up beyond the initial 5,000 family target

16<sup>th</sup> December

- First meeting on GO-NGO coordination idea and Jo drafts a TOR. Also meeting with Governor on this and proposal finalised to be put to NGOs

18<sup>th</sup> December

- Oxfam commits to dedicating staff resources to GO-NGO coordination group (secretariat)
- ECHO says it cannot make a decision until January 10<sup>th</sup>

19<sup>th</sup> December

- Jo Hutton leaves and hands over to Mel as interim PM
- Assessment of evacuation centres completed
- 1<sup>st</sup> draft of 14 month proposal produced
- Support roles of Manila Office agreed
- Delegation of signatory authority agreed in Legaspi
- State of Jersey commits 25,000 GBP
- Margarita Hakobyan, CPM, raises concerns about CPM role in the response

20<sup>th</sup> December

- 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of 14 month proposal
- RD (Tim) signs off on support roles for the response from the RC

21<sup>st</sup> December

- Key staff start to leave for holidays (at all levels) and handovers occur

22<sup>nd</sup> December

- Andy Featherstone (RPM) briefed on response in case additional support / cover is required
- Issue of schools reopening raised in sitreps and telecomm

26<sup>th</sup> December

- 116,560 GBP spent (39% of CatFund committed budget) – important note, by mid-January this has only increased to 54%

- 'Green light' given on way forward for shelter and SR for roughly 150k Euro submitted to RC for signature (though not signed until ~ 12<sup>th</sup> January)

30<sup>th</sup> December

- 3<sup>rd</sup> PM deployed to manage Legaspi programme, Sarah Mchattie (HSP)

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2007

- Worked started in first transitional centre

5<sup>th</sup> January

- 1<sup>st</sup> report of forced movements of IDPs (and therefore change in programme context)
- 1<sup>st</sup> telcomm mention of getting the RTE underway
- Legaspi programme formally called a Category 3 response (and shift of management back to the country team will be decided after the RTE)

6<sup>th</sup> January

- Proposal revised again in light of new circumstances

8<sup>th</sup> January

- Revised proposal sent to the HD for comment (and includes livelihoods scale-up)
- ECHO still waiting for revised single form
- Planned date for reopening schools, which were the cause of relocations of displaced people

9<sup>th</sup> January

- Jo asked to lead on RTE

11<sup>th</sup> January

- RTE team agreed

12<sup>th</sup> January

- Advocacy and talking points submitted by Sarah (PM)
- RTE ToR agreed

13<sup>th</sup> January

- RTE team deployed



## **ANNEX II - List of Informants**

### **Oxfam Philippines Country Team**

Margarita Hakobyan	CPM
John Ivers	HPC
Paul del Rosario	Systems Preparedness Officer
Lyra Magalang	Programme Officer for CBDM (via telephone)
Josephine Matriano	EFSL Project Officer (attending EFSL workshop in Legaspi)
Maria Aurora Urgel	EFSL Project Officer (attending EFSL workshop in Legaspi)

### **Oxfam Legaspi Response Team**

Sarah Mchattie	HSP PM
William Parmar	HSP Logistician
Hatariat Jirajariyavech (Kay)	Finance Manager (seconded from East Asia RC)
Jerome Bianco	Finance Assistant (seconded from Leyte office)
Elmira Bacatan	Communications
Lia Mayanti Sjam	HR/Admin Manager
Sharron Tejada Josan	Shelter Data Coordinator (two week contract only)
Darias Sanyatwe	EFSL HSP (redeployed from Vietnam)
Ting Gorgino	EFSL Project Officer
Bobet Sia	EFSL Project Officer
Norsalem Bago	EFSL Project Officer
Laurence Hamai	Shelter Coordinator (HSP)
Mimi Asibal	PHP Coordinator (seconded from Leyte office)
Moneth Solleza	PHP Officer (seconded from Leyte office)
Bulganen Lopes	PHP Officer (hired from PRC Regional Disaster Response Team)
Francesc Xavier	PHE Coordinator
Esther Bose Magdayo	PHE (seconded from Cotabato office)
Aeron Murilla	IT Assistant
Dari Taufun	IT (seconded from Aceh - Lamno Programme)

### **Oxfam Regional Centre**

Tim Wainright	Deputy RD
Lan Mercado	RPM
Jo Hutton	RHC (deployed to Legaspi as response manager)
Floor Grootenhuis	Regional EFS& Livelihood Adviser (via telephone)

### **Oxfam Humanitarian Department**

Richard Luff	SHC
Christina Schmalenbach	HDO
Vivien Walden	PH Technical Advisor (deployed to Legaspi)
Bibi Lamond	PHE Technical Advisor (deployed to Legaspi)
Ivan Scott	PAT Team Leader

### **Government of the Philippines**

Macario Pavla	Provincial Planning and Development Office
Cedric Daep	Provincial Disaster Coordination Council
Dr. Mendoza	Provincial Health Office

### **Partners and Other Organisations/Agencies**

Father Jovic	Social Action Centre (SAC) – Legaspi
John Abejuro	Social Action Centre (SAC) – Legaspi (operations)
Dr. Vega	Small Business Institute (former Oxfam partner)

### **Programme Sites Visited**

Banag in Daraga Municipality (788 people)
Libod in Camalig Municipality (1,180 people)

Balignang in Camalig Municipality (520 people)  
Sports Complex in Guinobatan (540 people)  
Bagumbayan Central School (1,992 people)  
Taysan (2,808 people)

**Meetings Attended/Called**

Legaspi all staff meeting to explain the objectives of the RTE  
Legaspi management team meeting (sitrep meeting)  
Legaspi livelihoods review meeting with partners  
Legaspi livelihoods review meeting with beneficiaries  
Oxfam Legaspi feedback meeting  
Oxfam Manila feedback meeting to staff (Simon Springett)  
Oxfam East Asia RC meeting with staff (Simon Springett)

## **ANNEX III – Specific Feedback from Programme Staff to the draft RTE document**

### **General**

Feedback was gathered from key Oxfam GB staff that had been involved extensively in the implementation of the programme. Learning, incorporation of recommendations to date, and action points are identified here for consideration in future response planning of the Country Programme. It was felt that a number of statements in the report appeared not to be supported by enough substantiation and justification within the document.

- Coordination is an important area that has been omitted from this evaluation.
- Probably because of time constraint, not all key staff (of both Oxfam GB, especially Manila staff, and external members e.g. the UN) that had been/still is involved in the implementation of the programme were interviewed for the RTE. As there was limited time to do the evaluation, wider-staff workshops could have been conducted. Furthermore, staff working when the programme was scaled-up could have been interviewed more extensively especially since the RTE raised staff turnover as among the main issues.

### **Human Resources**

#### **Assessment Staff**

- It is clear that the staff sent to conduct a rapid assessment at the onset of an emergency are not necessarily the same staff to implement response. The duration of staff deployment, whether for assessment or response implementation, always has to be specified. Furthermore, non-HP staff should not be subjected to the same HP policies. To facilitate this the full engagement of HR is required at the onset, even during the conduct of rapid assessment.
- Oxfam Manila does several assessments of disasters a year and few result in a programme. Therefore it is difficult to manage expectations when staff is sent out for an assessment.

#### **Staff Management**

- The high level of staff turnover was identified as a very significant inhibitor in the implementation of the programme. While changes in staffing did create some management problems it did not alone slow down implementation although some directions were no longer followed such as moving into community. Many staff are now spending a lot of time backtracking documentation.
- The turnover of staff during holidays had a dramatic effect on energy levels and morale. While programming might not have seemed to be directly affected, even with limited staff during the holiday season, the programme stopped temporarily on three days and no life-saving operations were ongoing during this period. The consequences of working with a skeleton crew should not be under-estimated as staff morale should be balanced with ensuring continuity.
- Inconsistent management is a significant issue in OGB emergencies where initial surge capacity is replaced and it should be noted that the PRC was only the initial assessment lead and later filling a gap before the longer term PM came in.
- While there were differences in opinion about whether there were enough logistics staff at the onset of the programme, problems arose from weakness of management, weakness of function, turnover and lack of centralised records. For example, an accurate logistics situation on the field was not fully shared to inform logistics actions in Manila.
- A risk assessment was conducted verbally. A plan to manage safety was developed from this. It was not written for safety reasons as the finance staff wanted the actual plans for safety around cash to remain known only by the EFSL TL and finance assistant. This only lasted for the first couple of distributions.

### **IT and comms**

- The limitations in access to the BGAN occurred because there had been nowhere to put it safely and securely where it could be left as Oxfam were in temporary offices in a basement and were living in a hotel.
- VPN access was not initially available. Once VPN access it became available, it was accessed immediately.

## **Relationships with Local Actors**

- Partners need to have significant involvement in designing response programmes from the very start. The local knowledge of Oxfam GB's partner, the Social Action Center (SAC) of Legaspi, was well used and applied. However it is felt that core competencies could have been better used for example, the radio station, micro-finance institution and baseline data.
- The country programme will continue to engage SAC in DRM and DRR, as this is more aligned with ASC and OGB programming, and will incorporate it more into the OI contingency plan of partners as a response strategy. This should be put more within the context of capacity building of partners, and not only of capacity assessment. An assessment was completed with the partner and an agreement reached to build capacity in DRM (CBDRM and EWS) but not response. The response aspect of this arrangement will be re-considered.
- Differences need to be made between "humanitarian contractor" and "partner" and clear definitions on specific programme needs. In this case, SAC is regarded as a partner but treated more like a contractor, for example, noting that SAC's position could be used in the second non-blanket distributions. It should be noted that the original MoU did not mention involvement with cash grants which was intentional as Oxfam wanted to do it directly as it was new and the partner also did not want to be directly involved so it was not included. The same families were being targeted so that livelihoods could piggyback onto hygiene kit distribution with no discussion with SAC. Hence the attempt to amend the MoU and that not all SAC and Oxfam staff involved in it knew the details of the MoU.
- Details of partnerships, even parallel response activities of partners, should always be shared with all staff involved in the programme. For example, provisions in the MOU signed between Oxfam GB and SAC should have been fully shared to all staff of both organisations. The financial implications in the MOU are not very clear, for instance on whether financial reporting should be against actual expenditures or just against activities. Since the accord involved funds, it would have been more appropriate to have a Letter of Agreement (LOA) instead.
- While fully exerting efforts on coordination with the local government, initially there was not enough push within the programme for actual representation of the communities affected. Staff were representing on behalf of evacuees but could also have had evacuees speak for themselves. This is being addressed.
- Need to continuously monitor adoption of negotiations made with the local government, for example, agreement to adhere to SPHERE standards.

## **Programme Design and Implementation**

- Assessment results were considered but management decided to prioritise timeliness over needs, hence the decision to initially focus on the population in evacuation centres with a higher public health risk than over those in host villages. This targeting took into account timeliness and internal capacity, for example in logistics requirements. As emergency programmes progress, targeting should be reviewed periodically.
- We could have examined why the distribution of NFIs (that are actually hygiene kits) became more attached to the EFSL Team rather than the PH Team (has more to do with logistics). It is acknowledged though that the hygiene kits should not have been referred to as NFIs in the first place.
- This statement on consultation on programme design and writing of the initial proposal being weak was too generalised and not entirely accurate. Also, it is not clear whether short-term or long-term proposals are being referred to as the process for developing the initial grant proposal was quite involved with all programme staff plus logs and finance involved in developing the logframe and developing key sections. However, it is fair to say that proposals were not fully circulated amongst all staff of Oxfam GB and SAC due to extremely short timeframes from the donor. It must be recognised, however, that the 14-month proposal took assessments into account. Key staff contributed in a significant and comprehensive manner.

- It is recognised that staff working at the onset stage need to complement their expertise with local knowledge and that local staff should be trained to be more aware of these issues.
- The circulation of appropriate information, such as programme plans and directions, programme status and integration and when a partnership is being established, always needs to be prioritised. General staff meetings (which was more the case in the very beginning than later), not just management meetings, and other venues need to be maximised.
- Documentation of lessons learnt and decisions reached during an emergency response has to be constantly improved.
- A more appropriate period to conceptualise long-term plans and proposals need to be identified paying close attention when the situation stabilises.
- Multiple assessments, as opposed to integrated assessments, and overly in-depth assessments, as opposed to rapid assessments, should rarely be used. A clear mechanism should be set-up for the immediate feedback of assessment results to the implementation of the programme.
- With integrated assessments recognized as best practice, results could also be shared with other service providers for coordination purposes.

#### **Action Points**

- Investigating the drafting of on-call emergency response staff available during holidays with the possible sharing of human resources with other country programmes that have different holiday seasons. Staff should also during inductions and performance objective development be briefed on what the organisation expects of them during an emergency and whether they are willing to commit to be deployed in an emergency.
- Review HR policies on personnel deployment. Life-saving situations excepted, emergency response programmes should temporarily be halted during the Christmas season. This to also give disaster survivors the chance to harness their spiritual coping mechanism. Also, the country work environment slows during this period. Staff should also be given a clearer briefing by their managers on how long they are likely to be deployed to manage their personal lives.
- Logistics preparedness needs to be significantly prioritised, either by establishing bilateral agreements with other country programmes or initiating tie-ups with local corporations.
- Develop minimum processes and guidelines in designing programmes, targeting, coordination and consultation both internally and externally such as the use and adaptation of “Guide to Mandatory Procedures and Good Practice” to the Philippine context.
- Deploying a Communication Officer with exact Terms of Reference from the onset of emergency response. This has to be someone very familiar with Oxfam GB’s ways of working. One position should incorporate in the ToR a documenter for internal decision-making.
- Full training for all key staff and humanitarian partners on SPHERE Standards, cash transfer programming, including appropriateness to Philippine context, and UNGPID.
- Update the current Contingency Plan to encapsulate lessons identified so far from this specific response. May include scenario planning in the coming months as the typhoon season is to start. A 1-day workshop to be held with Oxfam GB LEG Office in March 2007.
- If technical aspects of a programme are to be reviewed in an RTE then technical experts for all key programmatic fields need to be brought in.