



**AGIRE
BANGLADESH CYCLONE SIDR APPEAL
EVALUATION PROCESS**

FINAL REPORT

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1. Executive Summary and Methodology

Executive summary

This is the report, commissioned by AGIRE (Agenzia Italiana Risposta Emergenze), of the evaluation which took place one year after Cyclone Sidr struck the southern and costal areas of Bangladesh on 15th November 2007, causing untold damage and suffering to millions of people. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the response to Cyclone Sidr and to analyse the outcome/impact of relief programmes funded by AGIRE and undertaken by member agencies in Bangladesh.

After having presented the background of the cyclone and the overall emergency response, the evaluation report focuses on the response from AGIRE's member agencies, concentrating on the following issues: degree of preparedness, relevance & effectiveness, management & accountability, integration of lessons learnt and coordination. The reports ends with general and individual recommendations for AGIRE member agencies and AGIRE's secretariat.

The evaluation report argues that, overall, the degree of preparedness of AGIRE member agencies, except for WWF Italy, has been high given their established presence in the country (sometime longer than 30 years), their experience of implementing projects through local operational NGOs and, for VIS, given its established link with an international NGO, HOPE 87. AGIRE's members agencies were able to respond quickly and some did also prevention work. Action Aid and Save the Children, and to a slightly lesser extend TdH and VIS/HOPE 87, have an impressive network of committees and volunteers which were able to help communities evacuate on time. AGIRE's funds were used mainly during the 2nd phase of the emergency, i.e. starting two months after the cyclone struck. This is to say that the vast bulk of the funds allocated were used for recovery work rather than immediate relief activities.

It is important to state that all AGIRE member agencies intervened, with their own funds and from other grants, on a wide range of emergency response activities. Therefore AGIRE's funded activities can only be better understood within the wider picture and in link with other emergency response components.

All the five components of the emergency response funded by AGIRE - food and non-food items distribution (clothes, blankets, hygiene kits, educational kits), provision of shelters (including latrine- sanitation component), livelihoods regeneration (including cash-for-work activities), disaster preparedness/reduction training and environmental protection/conservation - were of relevance to the emergency effort. Even the last component, in a country so much exposed to climate change, is extremely relevant. Cyclone Sidr struck few weeks before the rice harvest, creating a dramatic lack of food. Food distribution was essential, together with provision of drinkable water. People lost animals and goods, therefore it was important to rebuild their livelihoods quickly. Cash-for-work projects have also been relevant. And more so because they have been linked, learning from past experience, to individual support. The combination of cash acquired through community work and the acquisition of individual income generating items (such as milking cows, seeds, boats, nets, etc..) has shown to be the best way to help people rebuild their livelihoods.

The question of relevance also applies to shelters. There is much debate in this area and no standard agreement has been reached. This has led to different types of shelters being built. The situation is one of high demand – it is estimated that only one quarter of shelters needed has been so far provided – and low supply. The NGO and donor community have split roughly into two camps: those, the great majority, which prioritise high demand and those, a very small minority, which focus on low supply. It is difficult to take sides in this debate. Both arguments are understandable. The evaluation report tends to take the view that permanent solutions, even if more expensive, are better. At least they will stand a chance of not getting washed away.

A sign of the effectiveness of activities carried out by AGIRE member agencies is the fact that the vast majority of beneficiaries interviewed seemed to be satisfied and active. They were not asking for more support.

Management of activities seems, overall, to have been satisfactory. Projects proposals were of good quality and reporting adequate for most of member agencies. Staff seemed professional and competent. Six issues are examined closely in the evaluation report: partnerships with local NGOs, timing of reports, timing of activities, changes in activities, visibility and accountability, beneficiaries' participation.

All AGIRE members agencies work with operational local NGOs/partners through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and sub-contracting agreements which make a solid base for good accountability. Adjustments and changes happened after further detailed assessments and always in consultation with local partners. Such flexibility is extremely positive and should be recommended in future.

All AGIRE member agencies provided information to beneficiaries by using different methods like, for instance, sign boards, individual shelter plates and also community consultations. This is a significant improvement from past disaster responses in Bangladesh. Overall, the evaluation report found strong evidence of good beneficiary participation in the selection process and in labour for shelter construction and livelihood activities. The gender component is particularly strong. The vast majority of house/shelter owners are women. Most of the beneficiaries from income-generating activities, such as distribution of milking cows, are also women. According to SPHERE standards, women and the elderly participated in cash-for-work activities with lighter, safe and appropriate jobs including providing child care, distributing water and manning first aid stations.

The evaluation report shows that a good number of lessons have been learned from previous experiences. For instance, It was the first time the UN cluster system has been used in Bangladesh and it was reasonably successful. AGIRE's members agencies participated in different cluster meetings at national and district levels. Providing livelihood rebuilding activities as quickly as possible was another good lesson. This has been taken into account by all the 5 member agencies, through a combination of community services supported by cash for work and of individual support. This combination of public and individual support is extremely important to give people appropriate means of quickly recreating their livelihoods. Quick regeneration of markets has also shown its importance in disaster response. By rebuilding embankments and roads access to local markets have been assured. The importance of disaster preparedness and risk reduction programmes has been taken into account by four member agencies which are planning to run such activities in future if funds are granted. Advocacy for landless people, as done by Action Aid, has also been learn from previous experiences and has shown to be effective. Another lesson learn is that emergency response activities need to be sustained by gradually switching to long-term development activities. All member agencies, apart from WWF and possibly VIS (but not its partner, HOPE 87), are planning to continue working in the area in future even if they were not exactly there in the first place but only knew partners there (with the notable exception of Save the Children).

Coordination among international donors and between them and the government seems to have been adequate and AGIRE member agencies participated to many coordination meetings. But coordination is more difficult among NGOs. It is seen mainly as geographical and sectoral division. There has never been a meeting of AGIRE members agencies. Only indirect contacts, apart from more substantial ones on shelter construction between Tdh and HOPE 87. This lack of coordination is regrettable given the geographical closeness of the areas covered by the activities. All AGIRE member agencies agreed that a better coordination among them is necessary and were happy to meet for the first time all together during the evaluation debriefing meeting held in Dhaka on 12th January 2009.

The country is a vulnerable and fragile one. Climatic changes will make things worse, and the sheer number of people will make future interventions even more challenging. An environmental component will have to be added to such interventions. AGIRE member agencies should also reflect more on the need to have more

permanent/durable activities, both in terms of structures (shelters, roads, embankments) than in term of long-term development activities. If the efforts done so fare are not to be wasted, there is a need to continue to support the NGOs working in the affected areas.

Methodology

One year later, the evaluation was to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the response to Cyclone Sidr and to analyse the outcome/impact of relief programmes funded by AGIRE and undertaken by member agencies in Bangladesh (*see Annex 1 : "Terms of reference of the evaluation process"*)

The scope of the evaluation was fivefold:

- To assess the overall appropriateness, coherence, timeliness and effectiveness of the on-going response of member agencies.
- To ascertain whether mechanisms of management, control and accountability requested to member agencies are in place and function correctly and to assess whether the financial and administrative handling of the projects is done according to set rules.
- To determine to what extent agencies are building on lessons learnt from similar humanitarian responses.
- To identify lessons learnt of possible relevance to other responses and joint appeals that have emerged in this Bangladesh response.
- To report to donors and wide audience on results achieved by member agencies and appropriate use of available resources.

The evaluation focused more on the strategic approaches rather than details of project implementation.

Because of time constraint and only one consultant, random checks were carried out during the field mission by interviewing a range of stakeholders, including beneficiaries, and by visiting the projects of all 5 member agencies, plus their national and district offices (*see Annex 2 " Schedule of evaluation"*). Before the field visit a desk review of relevant literature was undertaken. A final briefing sessions, sharing findings and recommendations, was held with member agencies in Dhaka (*see Annex 3 for contacts*).

Relevance, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability, management, transparency and preparedness issues where analysed by taking into account the following international documents:

- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in disaster relief.
- HAP 2007 Standards in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management
- SPHERE international standards in disaster relief.



2. Background on Cyclone Sidr and overall emergency response¹

A devastating category 4 super cyclone struck the southern and central coastal belts of Bangladesh on 15th November 2007 at approximately 18:45 hours local time. The strong inundation and wind speed of up to 240 kilometres per hour caused a tidal surge that exceeded 10 metres in certain areas. Coastal and river embankments were breached and low-lying lands were flooded causing extensive destruction. According to government figures the cyclone affected 30 out of 64 districts. Over 3,400 people were killed, 55,000 people injured, and more than 2 million families (approximately 8.9 million people) either lost their dwellings or sustained significant damages to their homes and livelihoods². The financial cost of the disaster was US\$1.7bn². The consequence of Sidr was mainly felt through the destruction of housing and the multiple sources of income that most people, especially the poor rely on for their livelihoods. In comparison to the 2004 Tsunami, the Bangladesh cyclone caused fewer deaths and casualties but crucially it affected a larger number of families³.

Despite increasing vulnerability to disasters, the population in general has faced fewer disasters than the rest of the country over the past three decades. Consequently there has been relatively less public investment in reducing exposure to disasters through, for example, the construction of cyclone shelters, creation of volunteers and community preparedness. People have also had less cause to adapt themselves and their livelihoods to disasters. Much of the affected area is also the most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change in comparison to the rest of the country because of rising sea-level and growing salinity – both of which will significantly increase livelihood vulnerability. The affected districts are highly rich in natural resources in comparisons to the rest of the country, particularly in timber and forest products, ocean fisheries, and export-oriented shrimp farming. But access to and control over resources are maintained by 'mafia-type' groups controlling the forests, cartels controlling ocean fishery, and rich businesses controlling shrimp farming.

There are generally fewer NGOs working in the affected areas than the rest of the country, although the number of international and national NGOs present in the country is, by any standard, very high. This civil society component continues to play an important role in emergency work and long-term development activities. The government remains the single most important institution in the region with an established civil administration at district and sub-district levels tied to national line-ministries and functioning locally elected governments.

Bangladesh has a relatively well established and experienced disaster response mechanism including an established protocol for assessing needs and damages following a disaster. Local government with support from the armed forces initiated search and rescue activities and clearing access to roads within hours of the cyclone and a complete needs assessment was completed within 6 days of the impact. The Disaster and Emergency Response (DER) subgroup of the Local Consultative Group (LCG) was activated by the Government to coordinate the international humanitarian relief and early recovery planning. A number of coordination meetings were held between the Government, NGOs and donors. Few days after the disaster the government allocated US\$ 25 millions to the affected areas and also a significant amount of food and non-food items. By the end of December 2007 the international community had already committed approximately US\$ 241 million. Overall, the government response, together with bilateral, multilateral and indirect assistance was appropriate and effective. The government and the armed forces played an important and effective role in managing and coordinating the relief operations. This helped reduce the normal secondary effects of such disasters such as disease and additional deaths. It also quickened the move from relief to recovery.

¹ Most of the information written in this chapter comes from Bangladeshi government sources, NGOs sources and the DEC evaluation carried out in May 2008

² Government of Bangladesh: Situation Report (Disaster Management Bureau, GoB), 31st December 2007

³ Two million families were touched by Cyclone Sidr while the 2004 Tsunami affected 1.7 million households.

3. The Response of AGIRE's Member Agencies

3.1 AGIRE member agencies' contribution

Five of the six existing member agencies of AGIRE contributed to the emergency response in the aftermath of Cyclone Sidr: Action Aid, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, VIS and WWF. The first three agencies contributed via their own field offices based in Dhaka. The last two intervened indirectly: VIS via an international NGO, HOPE 87, and WWF Italy through a local NGO, the Centre for Coastal Environmental Conservation (CCEC).

The response of AGIRE member agencies was focused on 5 components :

- food and non-food items distribution (clothes, blankets, hygiene kits, educational kits)
- provision of shelters (including latrine- sanitation component)
- livelihoods regeneration (including cash-for-work activities)
- disaster preparedness & risk reduction training
- environmental protection/conservation

Another small added component was water (VIS, through its international partner HOPE 87, built 5 tube wells). The provision of shelters was, financially speaking, the biggest component of them all.

The focus on some emergency response components was mainly dictated by financial constraints, given that the AGIRE funds allocated for this disaster amounted to € 612,000, divided more or less equally between the five member agencies. But while AGIRE funding was concentrated on certain emergency response components only, it is important to state that all AGIRE member agencies and their international and national partners intervened, with their own funds and with other grants, on a wide range of emergency response activities. Therefore AGIRE's funded activities can only be better understood within the wider picture and in link with other emergency response components. They can be taken out of the wider context for donor accountability only.

3.1.1 Action Aid

Action Aid (AA) is a rights-based international NHO which has been present in Bangladesh for over three decades, since 1983. The emergency response to cyclone Sidr has been funded by many donors, including DEC, AGIRE and Action Aid UK, and was carried out in with two national NGOs, JJS and Speed Trust. The major components of this multi-million emergency programme are: health, water & sanitation, agriculture, livelihoods, shelter, educational materials and policy advocacy for landless people.

The AGIRE-funded project has been focussed on two components only: provision of shelters and emergency food distribution. The areas of work have been Bhagerat and Potuakhali districts.

- 135 families received food support. Each family received a total of 25 kg of rice, 2 kg of pulses (lentils) and 2 litres of edible oil.
- 40 permanent individual shelters/houses are being built by end of January 2009.

In terms of priorities for the selection of shelter's owners, the following categories of people were taken into account: female-headed household, persons with disabilities, homeless and aged people. An important feature is that all shelters/houses have been officially handed over to women in order to better protect them if husbands leave or remarry.

Another interesting aspect of AA activities has been the advocacy work on behalf of landless people. Such a work is part of the wider emergency response programme even if it is not directly supported by AGIRE's funds. A total of 107 families in Potuakhali district were given land plots from the government after AA successful advocacy activities. 40 of them benefitted from AGIRE-funded shelters/houses.

Action Aid has taken the bold decision to build a new model of permanent shelters. Learning from past lessons Action Aid decided no previous individual shelter model was good enough. So they assembled a local team of experts in different fields to come up with a new design. The new house is made of cement, bricks, rods and stones, with wooden doors and windows. It is durable but expensive. It has a high-ground vault for valuables and foundations strong enough to add a second floor and to be extended laterally. No corrugated iron sheets are used, learning from past experience which showed that they are 'flying blades'. I saw evidence of this while visiting one village affected by Cyclone Sidr. Apart from the safe & security issues the case in favour of a permanent and strong shelter/house is based on the view that such a house is a durable asset and not a temporary solution. By giving such an asset to a family, you increase the dignity and self-respect of its members and, furthermore, you make them credit-worthy. People participated in the building of these permanent shelter/houses by clearing the site and providing hand labour.

Only 40 shelters out of the original 100 planned have been built because of a combination of higher costs (given the new durable model) and worse currency exchange. But another 100 are being built from DEC⁴ funds, so in total there will be 140 houses. Action Aid hopes that the new model will prove appropriate and popular and that it will set an example/model for future disaster responses.

I saw good evidence of houses accomplished or being built. And given to widows and disable-headed households.

3.1.2 Save the Children

Save the Children has been present in Bangladesh for more than 40 years (since 1972) and has been working in Borguna district since 2004. Their response to Cyclone Sidr has been huge, with a \$ 16 million programme (including food and non-food items distribution) under one management structure (Save the Children USA) and funded by 28 grants/donors. The major components of this programmes are: education and protection of children, emergency health and nutrition, rebuilding livelihoods, water and sanitation, disaster preparedness, and distribution of temporary shelter kits.

The funds provided by AGIRE covered only part of one component of this huge programme: rebuilding of livelihoods, including cash for work activities. The activities were focused on 10 villages in Borguna Sadar sub-district.

- 1,500 people, including 472 women, in 10 villages benefitted from cash from work activities, mainly the rebuilding of flood embankments/roads and installation of drainage channels. This provided a total of 3,351 households with improved access to tertiary roads. Such roads are extremely important for access to public services (health, education) and movement of agricultural produces to local markets. A total of 35 km of earthen roads have been repaired, 280 homesteads cleaned and 160 ponds cleaned or re-excavated.
- 150 female-headed households in 3 villages were provided with two dairy cows and stables with brick-flooring, plus fodder, veterinary care and training for 6 months. The distribution was carried out in Augusts, so the 6-months period will end in January 2009.

⁴ Disaster and Emergency Committee, the UK consortium equivalent to AGIRE

The majority of beneficiaries were extremely poor and vulnerable households that were living in weakly built houses outside village flood embankments. These households were affected by significant losses of agricultural crops. They are made up mostly of landless daily labourers, female-headed families and disabled-headed families. Positive discrimination involved as many women as possible.

I saw good evidence of the work done and was able to speak to beneficiaries who were satisfied with the support received. The repaired embankment that I visited did not seem very strong and, as in the case for shelters, there is an issue of durability vs temporary solution. This matter will be discussed later in the report.

Another issue concerns the distribution of cattle. The cows come from North of the country and sometimes find it difficult to accommodate to local conditions. This is the first time that something like this has been tried out in Borguna district. The choice was made in agreement with the local agricultural department. Northern cows were chosen because they are bigger and produce more milk (although milk only comes after laying down calves – and people seem to be upset about waiting so much). But they find it difficult to adapt to local fodder which has a higher salt content. Evidence suggests that owners of cows play an important role. I saw better looking cows when owners were more caring and taking time to help them adapt.

Need to closely monitor the project to see how beneficiaries will perform and livelihoods rebuilt, especially by end of January 2009, after the 6-month supporting period ends.

3.1.3 Terre des Hommes (Tdh)

Terre des Hommes Italy has been present in the country since 1996. Their main strategy is long-term human-rights based development activities in child protection and social education. But it also includes emergency response. This is why Tdh decided to intervene in partnership with a national NGO, Aparajeyo Bangladesh (AB), active in Bangladesh since 1995. Aparajeyo has a good knowledge of the territory and has now a strong presence in Borguna district.

The emergency response was focussed in Borguna Sadar upazila (sub-district). The project reached 33 villages of this sub-district. Two major activities were carried out: distribution of non-food items and reconstruction of shelters.

- 26,500 people, including 20,000 children, received warm clothes and blankets. By 20th January 2008 6,000 packets containing 1 blanket and 3 warm clothes and 500 packets containing 1 blankets and 4 warm clothes were distributed.
- By 15th March 150 houses had been reconstructed.

Impressive speed : the first assessment started the day following the disaster, on 16th November. From the beginning, they wanted only to intervene on first needs. Therefore they chose the supply of blankets/clothes and rapidly-built shelters. Non-food items distribution was completed within a little more than two months after the cyclone struck and before the coldest months of the year set in, thus given protection to vulnerable homeless people. This was impressive given flooded roads, the need of a second needs assessment (carried out from 13th to 15th December 2007), timing from receiving official agreement by sub-district authorities and procurement of goods.

The timing of shelter reconstruction was also impressive, achieved only 4 months after the cyclone struck. Tdh/AB chose a rapid structure built with local available materials, with possibility to move the structure to other areas and possibility of local repairs. But problem with corrugated iron sheets (CIS) car past lessons show that they could be deadly. But, despite Tdh refusal at the beginning, beneficiary like them, they are locally available, easier to transport than cement (and less heavy) and give good protection from heavy rain. Tdh/AB went for quality of CIS and accepted them only for roofing and not walls or fences. Some shelters

have now been transformed with additions: desire for people to differentiate themselves, to show their ownership and make shelters more familiar to them.

People chosen for the rebuilding of shelters were vulnerable people and, in some of cases, women coming from tribal areas/minorities (10 shelters were given to the Buddhist minority in the area). I saw good evidence of the work done and of the shelters which have been built.



3.1.4 VIS

VIS has no official presence in Bangladesh but they decided to intervene through an international NGO they were already collaborating with in other countries, HOPE 87. It is an Austrian NGO funded in 1987 with 10 branch offices around the world, 2 in Asia: Bangladesh and Pakistan. Its first mandate is the creation of employment opportunities for young people. A later mandate was emergency work, from 1998.

HOPE 87 presence in Bangladesh dates from 1991. Their major areas of work are: vocational training programmes, support to schools, promotion of self-employment and income generation for youth, individual help for small jobs, sustainable provision of save water and sanitation, health support to disable children. Six staff work from the central office in Dhaka, 70 field staff in 3 district offices and 40 volunteers. Specificity of these volunteers which can be called upon rapidly and who are only covered with transport, food and some clothing.

HOPE 87 works in partnership with 5 local NGOs that are responsible for the implementation of projects. Concerning the emergency response to Cyclone Sidr, on 18th November, 3 days after cyclone struck, they were already able to distribute food and non-food items. But got permission for AGIRE/VIS-funded project only on 25th February 2008.

The project activities focused in 2 upazila (sub-districts), Borguna Sadar and Amtali in Borguna District and in the sub-district of Saramkhala in Bagherat District. Originally 3 components: food and non-food items distribution and provision of shelters. Two other components were added after a second needs assessment carried out in May 2008: livelihoods and water.

- 341 families benefitted from food distribution starting from March until September 2008, though 6 rounds of distribution.
- Construction of 104 shelters and 102 latrines started in March 2008 and will end by 31st January 2009.
- 5 tube wells were dug by end of December 2008.
- 77 milking cows (together with a calf) were distributed by end of December 2008.
- A total of 472 hygiene kits were distributed by end of December 2008.
- A total of 524 education kits were distributed by end of December 2008.

I saw good evidence of fair selection of beneficiaries, coming from the most vulnerable groups, and especially women. I also saw good evidence of all the components mentioned above. The shelters being build by HOPE 87 are similar to those constructed by Tdh. People participated with the clearing of the site, the making of an elevated platform and hand labour.

To mention also the good initiative of HOPE 87 in organising a photography price and exhibition in order to raise awareness among all Bengalese. The "Disaster and Humanity" photo competition and exhibition (the latter took place at the Bangladesh National Art Gallery in Dhaka in December 2008) is a good example of wider awareness raising.



3.1.5 WWF

WWF has no official presence in Bangladesh. After cyclone Sidr struck, WWF Italy decided to intervene and, through the offices of WWF India, contacted the Centre for Coastal Environment Conservation (CCEC) for support. The CCEC is a local grass-root environmental NGO whose aim is the protection and sustainable management of coastal ecosystems in Bangladesh and particularly in the Sundarban area. It does that through the support of local initiatives and community participation. CCEC is a member of the World Conservation Union and other international environmental networks.

CCEC receives financial support through members (at present 80 of them), grants from government and other donors, and some local business activities. Activities which were greatly expanded via the emergency project with the creation of small and medium enterprises (SME) and cooperatives. The NGO employs 12 staff at the central office in Khulna and 5 staff in the Shyamnagar office.

The project includes the following components: emergency food aid distribution, provision of shelters, livelihood regeneration and disaster preparedness. Another environmental component, mangrove regeneration, was included in the project which started in April 2008 and ended in September 2008. 24 villages have been covered in Shyamnagar district.

- Food aid was distributed to 150 needed families.
- 50 semi-permanent shelters were built and 1 mosque and 1 temple rebuilt.
- A livelihood regeneration programme has included the following activities:
 - 20 fishermen received a boat, nets and ropes;
 - boat licence certificates (BLC) were distributed to 150 people;
 - one embankment construction was repaired through cash-for work;
 - the creation of 5 SME/cooperatives: Bouali (thatch cutters and builders) with 25 members, Mouali (honey harvesters) with 25 members, Jalley-Fish Collectors with 75 members, Jalley-Crab Collectors (including crab fattening) with 25 members and Sundarban Handicraft cooperative with 25 members. These enterprises have been established under the umbrella of the Sundarban Stakeholders Cooperative Society.
- Environmental conservation activities included:
 - Mangrove Regeneration and plantation through a Sundarban Mangrove Protection Society (SMPS) with 600 members. Activities include the setting up of mangrove seed nurseries, mangrove plantations and awareness training. 26 plantations and 4 nursery plots have been created. About 128,000 seeds were collected by the members. 93,611 seeds were germinated. 79,550 mangrove seedlings were transplanted in 26 plots in August-September 2008 but unusual high tides, water flooding and current flow damaged 49% of the seedlings. But other seeds were quickly collected and replanted.
 - Various environmental trainings to schools, communities and wider audiences (through a home-made film and an art group called Shudipti).
- Disaster Prevention & Preparedness activities through the creation of an executive committee and the training of 101 volunteers

The cyclone has given momentum to these isolated coastal communities to improve their lot. Formation of community-based SME/cooperatives is quite new in the area. One SME, the Shrimps Farming, is a joint public-private enterprise: a trader get 75% of the benefits (given the fact that he owns the land/ponds and the transport means) while 25% goes to the 25 members. CCEC believes in providing an initial investment/capital to create SME/cooperatives and that such capital should stay and be used by their members. Not believing in micro-credit because of the burden of repaying the loan from start.

I saw good evidence of mangrove plantations and nursery plots. I also saw good evidence of embankment construction and shelters built and strong evidence of SME/cooperatives. I was able to speak to various members who seemed satisfied by the support given. Most of them requested further support.

In my opinion, confirmed by an evaluation of the CCEC emergency programme carried out at the end of last year by Khulna University⁵, this is an NGO which is definitely in need of capacity building. CCEC had no previous link with WWF Italy. The contact between the two NGOs was made via WWF India as there is no WWF Bangladesh. The recommendation is that WWF Italy should continue to support CCEC, but mainly in capacity building and in supervision. In fact there is a need of supervising the use of items distributed (like boats and nets), the 5 Small enterprises created (my time was not sufficient for me to assess their current functioning) and the mangrove planting and regeneration projects which will take at least 5-6 years before getting the benefit of wood for the beneficiaries as this is how long the trees will have to grow before collecting twigs and branches.

For CCEC this was the first big emergency programme. They were not obliged to start these activities but they decided to do so in the wake of cyclone Sidr, taking the opportunity of donors' interest in the area. But without further support and long-term monitoring/supervision there is a risk that what has been achieved so far could be lost.



3.2 Degree of preparedness of AGIRE members' agencies

Three AGIRE member agencies (Action Aid, Save the Children and Terre des Hommes) had country offices in Bangladesh and, because of their presence and the acquired knowledge of the country, they were able to respond quickly. Some agencies did more than respond. Action Aid and Save the Children, and to a slightly lesser extent Tdh and VIS/HOPE 87, have an impressive network of committees and volunteers which were able to help communities evacuate on time.

⁵ Prof. Md Salequzzaman, "Review of the project on rehabilitation of Sidr affected Sundarban stakeholders", Environment Entrepreneurship Development, Khulna University, Bangladesh, 5th January 2009.

For instance Save the Children has been working since 2005 to prepare coastal communities for cyclones. Their Disaster Preparedness Programme recruited and trained over 1,000 emergency management and preparedness volunteers, created 66 community-based disaster management committees and prepositioned rescue boats and relief goods. They had been monitoring the path of cyclone Sidr for several days before it struck and began responding before it made landfall, working with communities to evacuate.

As for Action Aid, the International Emergency and Conflict Team (IECT) was able to intervene rapidly with a need assessment and the immediate provision of money for immediate food and non-food items distribution and drinking water provision through a revolving-fund system. The AA Bangladesh Disaster and Emergency Response (DER) team was able to meet a couple of hours before the cyclone struck in order to organise a swift response.

Concerning AGIRE's funds, only Action Aid, via a system of reimbursement from a previously established emergency revolving fund, was able to provide food distribution during the first month after cyclone Sidr struck. Terre des Hommes was also able to react quite quickly with a non-food item distribution (clothes and blankets) achieved within two month and a half from the disaster.

The other three member agencies distributed AGIRE's funds from March 2008 onwards. It means that AGIRE's money was mainly used 4 months after the cyclone hit the country. This is not to say that these agencies were slow to respond. All of them, except WWF local partner, CCEC, intervened immediately with their own funds or with grants received by quick-response donors such as ECHO and USAID.

Such delay in the emergency response is quite normal. The reason is threefold:

- AGIRE was able to disburse funds only in January 2008, only after the national appeal for funds in Italy was launched and the funds collected, something that takes normally one or two months.
- Member agencies needed some time to assess the situation in the field and to come up with appropriate requests.
- NGOs need official permission from district authorities on each project. These permissions take time to get even if the local bureaucracy seems, in general, quite efficient.

Difficulty for an NGO to be quickly operational because of all the rules, restrictions and agreements each project has to receive. Positive: better coordination and less risk of duplications. Negative: lower speed of intervention.

This is not to say that assessments were late. On the contrary, I was impressed to see how member agencies managed to do first rapid need assessments soon after the cyclone struck. Save the Children and Action Aid had already organised assessment teams even the day before the disaster, dispatching them from the capital or using local partners. The same can be said for Tdh main partner, Aparajeyo, and for VIS international partner, HOPE 87: both managed to carry out rapid need assessments starting the day after the disaster struck. This was truly an amazing feat and it shows the high degree of preparedness of AGIRE's member agencies.

The first rapid need assessments were followed by other assessments carried out 2-3 months after the disaster. These assessments were more appropriate and focussed. They were generally carried out by teams composed by AGIRE member agencies and their implementing partners in the field. Again, this is part of normal standard procedures. After the dust is settled from the first interventions in which all agencies try to do the best they can to alleviate immediate survival needs, the time is open to better coordination and focalisation on members' capacity and expertise. It was mainly on the basis of this second round of need assessments that projects proposals were prepared and submitted to AGIRE.

Taking into account the above mentioned reasons it is fair to state that, except for WWF Italy, the degree of preparedness of AGIRE member agencies has been high given their established presence in the country, their experience of implementing projects through local operational NGOs and, for VIS, given its established link with an international NGO.

AGIRE's funds were used mainly during the 2nd phase of the emergency, i.e. starting two months after the cyclone struck. Such 'delay' in emergency response is quite normal given the reasons stated above.



3.3 Relevance and effectiveness of response

All the five components of the emergency response funded by AGIRE - food and non-food items distribution (clothes, blankets, hygiene kits, educational kits), provision of shelters (including latrine- sanitation component), livelihoods regeneration (including cash-for-work activities), disaster preparedness/reduction training and environmental protection/conservation - were of relevance to the emergency effort. Even the last component, in a country so much exposed to climate change, is relevant.

All people and beneficiaries interviewed agreed on the importance of such components. Apart from food and non-food items distribution which is essential for survival in the first months after a disaster of such magnitude, beneficiaries interviewed during the evaluation seemed to agreed on the following need priorities:

- Provision of shelters
- Restoration of livelihoods and income-generating capacities
- Provision of good health services and drinking water

Cyclone Sidr struck few weeks before the rice harvest, creating a dramatic lack of food. Food distribution was essential, together with provision of drinkable water. People lost animals and goods, therefore it was important to rebuild their livelihoods.

Cash-for-work projects have also been relevant. And more so because they have been linked, learning from past experience, to individual support. The combination of cash acquired through community work and the acquisition of individual income generating items (such as milking cows, seeds, boats, nets, etc..) has shown to be the best way to help people rebuild their livelihoods.

The question of relevance also applies to shelters. There is much debate in this area and no standard agreement has been reached. This has led to different types of shelters being built. The situation is one of high demand – it is estimated that only one quarter of shelters needed has been so far provided – and low supply. The NGO and donor community have split roughly into two camps: those, the great majority, which prioritise high demand and those, a very small minority, which focus on low supply.

Most agencies decided to provide temporary or semi-permanent shelters even if, in the face of future floods and cyclones, such shelters will hardly stand. For instance, WWF/CCEC built a weak bamboo-structured shelter for only 7,500 TK⁶, without latrine, with corrugated iron sheets for the roof and mud walls). Tdh built a semi-permanent shelter costing approximately 36,000 TK, with corrugated iron sheet roof, wood structure, bamboo-leaves walls, but no latrine. As for VIS/HOPE 87 the semi-permanent shelter reached the cost of 46,000 TK, comprising the latrine, wood structure and corrugated iron sheets all around. Another non-AGIRE funded NGO, Caritas, build shelters for 75,000 TK with better wood, some concrete pillars, a veranda and a latrine. Saudi Arabia and Indian government shelters have also corrugated iron sheets all around, but they are more expensive.

The reasons behind the choice of temporary shelters are the following:

- Wider coverage of needed recipients, in practice a moral imperative to help as many as possible.
- Quicker speed in construction, covering as quickly as possible the need to protect beneficiaries.
- Pressure from local authorities to cover the many.
- Possibility of getting material in local markets; such materials also seem to be popular because they are easy transportable (less heavy than cement and iron rods), offer a good protection from heavy rains and are easy to repair by local workmen.
- Lack of information about the scale of future donors' response which pushes towards temporary and low-cost solutions.

Some people also argue that, in a country as vulnerable to floods and cyclones as Bangladesh, there is little point to built individual durable houses. For them it is better to build multi-purpose strong community shelters which have proven, with few exceptions, to work. In summary, emergency situations call for emergency – and therefore non-durable – solutions: shelters, in this case, but the same apply to the rebuilding of roads and embankments. A part from the issue weak structures there is also a problem with corrugated iron sheets (CIS) car past lessons have shown that they could be deadly.

To be fair I did see that permanent and semi-permanent shelters seemed to be quite popular among the beneficiaries. The problem of heat from CIS has been sometimes solved by building an internal low wooden ceiling for storage – and sometimes even for sleeping. All the shelters I saw underwent some kind of modification/enlargement by the owners who tend, as it is normal, to differentiate their houses from others'.

Save the Children, taking lesson from the Tsunami disaster, decided not to build shelters. However – but not with AGIRE's funds – they distributed 5,000 temporary house kits (corrugated iron sheets, plastics sheets, nuts & bolts, construction tools) for local people to use. Again, this is a temporary/emergency solution. Their experience shows that 90% have been used, the rest still waiting.

Only one NGO, Action Aid, has decided to look at the issue from the 'low supply' angle. Learning from past lessons AA decided no previous individual shelter was good. So they assembled a local team of experts in different fields to come up with a new design. The new house (or individual shelter, as AA calls it) is mainly made of cement, iron rods and stone. It has a high-ground vault for storing valuables (learning from past lessons which showed that some people died because they did not want to leave the house unattended for

⁶ € 1 = 92,50 TK (January 2008)

fear of robbers) and has foundations strong enough to build a second floor. It is durable but, at 250,000 TK, expensive if compared with temporary shelters.

The reasons behind this choice of durable shelter are the following:

- The house/shelter will withstand floods and cyclones.
- The house/shelter is seen as an asset and not a temporary solution only.
- It helps people to regain dignity and make them credit-worthy.

The example of the Burmese community in Fhalishatali village shows that their houses, standing on pillars, better withstood the cyclone. Should this not be replicated?

It is difficult to take sides in this debate. Both arguments are understandable. Personally I tend to take the view that permanent solutions, even if more expensive, are better. At least they will stand a chance of not getting washed away. Action Aid hopes that their shelter model will prove successful and popular, but only time will prove it.

A nice example I was told of is one coming from a beneficiary who decided to move his shelter, donated by Tdh, to replace its broken shop. Apart from the strong link between housing and livelihoods it also shows the high importance given by beneficiaries to income-generating activities.

Another sign of the effectiveness of activities carried out by AGIRE member agencies is the fact that the vast majority of beneficiaries interviewed seemed to be satisfied and active. They were not asking for more support.



3.4 Management and accountability

Management of activities seems, overall, to have been satisfactory. Projects proposals were of good quality and reporting adequate for most of agencies. Staff seemed professional and competent.

Six issues are examined here in more detail:

1. Partnerships with local NGOs
2. Timing of reports
3. Timing of activities
4. Changes in activities
5. Visibility and accountability
6. Beneficiaries' participation

Partnership with local NGOs

All international NGOs work with operational local NGOs/partners through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and sub-contracting agreements.

In the case of AGIRE-funded activities:

- Action Aid worked in partnership with 2 national NGOs: JJS (Jagrata Juba Shanga) and Speed Trust
- Save the Children worked in partnership with 2 local NGOs: JOBS and SANGRAM
- Terre des Hommes worked in partnership with 1 local NGO: Aparajeyo Bangladesh
- VIS/HOPE87 worked in partnership with 3 local NGOs: The Crupda, The Juba Academy and SMKK
- WWF worked in partnership with CCEC

Such partnerships are governed by MoUs which make a solid base for good accountability. International NGOs have accountants/financial officers who get full access to local NGO's financial books. For example Tdh has conducted a mission in mid December 2008, to check the project and has been satisfied with the results. Local NGOs seems to be well managed and to have a good degree of transparency even if this evaluation did not particularly look into this issue. The selection of beneficiaries seems to have been done properly by local NGOs in consultation with communities and government officials.

Timing of reports

In terms of reporting the situation is as follow:

- Action Aid has provided an interim report but so far has not provided a final narrative and financial report given the fact that an extension was granted until end of January 2009.
- Save the Children has produced an interim report and the final narrative and financial report in December 2008. No external audited report as yet.
- Terre des Hommes has produced a final narrative and financial report and an external audit (Ria & Partners, June 2008).
- VIS has produced an interim report but no final financial and narrative report (a part from a final list of beneficiaries) given that an extension to the project was granted until end of January 2009.
- WWF Italy has produced an interim report and the final narrative and financial report, but no external audit as yet.

I did see that accounts are externally audited many times: first in Bangladesh, then in Italy, then by AGIRE. Few other projects/activities in the private sector undergo such a series of audits.

Timing of activities

- Some of *Action Aid's* activities (food distribution) started immediately after the cyclone struck. On the other hand the provision of shelters/homes took longer than originally planned to execute. The deadline for the project was 15th November 2008. A first extension to end of December 2008 was granted and then a second one to end of January 2008 because of delays caused by the holding of national elections.
- *Save the Children* had planned to end the activities by 31st August 2008 but were granted an extension until end of November 2008.
- *Terre des Hommes* had a short-span project which ended, as planned, in March 2008. Good timing.
- *VIS/HOPE 87* requested an extension from 19th September 2008 until 31st January 2009 in order to finish shelters (and taking into account the fact that December was Eid festivities and elections month). HOPE 87 mentioned the problem of staff retention as a cause for the delay in the implementation of activities.
- *WWF/CCEC* ended the project within the expected timing, by end of September 2008. Good timing

All extensions were agreed before hand with AGIRE, following standard procedures.

Changes in activities

As it is usual in emergency response, the activities have undergone some changes and adjustments from the initial proposals. These changes happened after further need assessments and always in consultation with beneficiaries and AGIRE, following standard procedures.

For *Action Aid*, the major change has been in the reduction of the number of permanent shelters/houses being built, from 100 to 40. This is explained by the fact that AA went for a different and more expensive permanent shelter model, in addition to increases in the prices of building materials and a worse exchange rate. AA also decided to build the permanent shelter/houses only in Potuakhali district and not in Bagherat district as well, as originally planned.

In the original proposal *Save the Children* had planned to work also on mother & child nutrition and distribution of seeds to farmers but after further assessments decided, with AGIRE funds, to concentrate only on two components: cash for work and rebuilding of livelihoods. Similarly, in the original proposal *Save the Children* had the intention of concentrating its work in 4 districts (Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Bagherat and Borguna) but later decided to focus on Borguna district mainly because of facility in donor reporting and after all donor pledges were received.

As for *Terre des Hommes*, at the beginning they wanted to work on two upazilas (sub-districts) but then focussed only on one, Borguna Sadar, because the other, Antoli, after a further need assessment carried out from 13th to 15th December, was found to be supporter by another donor.

After a further assessment, *VIS/HOPE 87* asked to add two components: rebuilding of livelihoods by distribution of milking cows (instead of the originally planned distribution of tool kits and kitchen utensils) and the digging of tube wells.

As for *WWF/CCEC* the only change was the addition, with also additional funds, of the handicraft shop and workshop.

As stated above, adjustments and changes happened after further detailed assessments and always in consultation with local partners. Such flexibility is extremely positive and should be recommended in future. The first couple of months after an event like this are quite chaotic and everybody is striving to reach people and to assist in whichever way possible. But then the situation becomes clearer and a better coordination can be established. This means that locations, timings and activities can change.

Visibility and accountability

All AGIRE member agencies provided information to beneficiaries by using different methods like, for instance, sign boards, individual shelter plates and also community consultations. This is a significant improvement from past disaster responses in Bangladesh.

A question remains on the efficacy of individual plates (small sign boards) for shelters. The names of the implementing and funding agencies are already in the house title deed. Moreover the house owner knows such agencies. It seems therefore non efficient and costly (average of 120 TK each) to give them out even if it can be argued that house plates facilitate monitoring and follow up. Action Aid decided to put up individual house plates with the names of owners only, so as to emphasise that the house now belongs to the beneficiary/owner and not to the funding or the implementing agency. I do agree with such a decision.

Another question remains on big sign boards in English on major roads. They seem directed to donors only and not to beneficiaries. Are they really useful? Donors, including AGIRE, insist on them in terms of accountability to donors.

The best examples of donor and beneficiary's accountability which I did see are the sign-posts written in local language set up in villages to explain the quantities of activities/goods with the name of the funding and implementing agencies.



Beneficiaries' participation

Overall, I got strong evidence of good beneficiary participation in the selection process and then in labour for shelter construction and livelihood activities. I was particularly impressed by the use of local volunteers. I was also impressed by the amount of women's participation in all activities, including cash-for-work. According to SPHERE standards, women and the elderly participated in cash-for-work activities with lighter, safe and appropriate jobs including providing child care, distributing water and manning first aid stations.

3.5 Integration of lessons learnt



The situation in Bangladesh, when Cyclone Sidr struck, was better than the situation which existed in the Tsunami disaster, especially in Indonesia:

- Better political conditions (no civil war, so army available to help; technical Bangladeshi government quite capable).
- Resilience of people.
- More focus on rebuilding livelihoods (through cash-for-work and distribution of income-generating items such as cows, seeds, boats, nets, etc..).

What have been the major lessons learned?

- It was the first time the UN cluster system has been used in Bangladesh and it was reasonably successful. AGIRE's members agencies participated in different cluster meetings at national and district levels.
- Also lessons learned about shelters, following the Tsunami emergency response which was particularly messy in terms of shelter construction. This lessons resulted in two opposite choices: on one hand, Save the Children decided not to get involved in building shelters (although they distributed house kits and are thinking of revising their decision) while on the other hand Action Aid has decided to go for a completely different model of permanent shelter, as explained in point 3.3.

- Lesson of providing livelihood rebuilding activities as quickly as possible. This has been taken into account by all the 5 member agencies, through a combination of community services supported by cash for work and individual support. This combination of public and individual support is extremely important to give people the means of quickly recreating their livelihoods.
- Quick regeneration of markets has also shown its importance in disaster response. By rebuilding embankments and roads access to local markets have been assured.
- Importance of disaster preparedness and risk reduction programmes. Four agencies (Action Aid, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes and HOPE 87) are planning to run such activities if funds are granted.
- Advocacy for landless people, as done by Action Aid, has also been learn from previous experiences and has shown to be effective.
- Another lesson learn is that emergency response activities need to be sustained by gradually switching to long-term development activities. All member agencies, apart from WWF and possibly VIS (but not its partner, HOPE 87), are planning to continue working in the area in future even if they were not exactly there in the first place but only knew partners there (with the notable exception of Save the Children).

Future actions planned by AGIRE member agencies:

- Action Aid: Disaster Risk Reduction Programme + psycho-social study.
- Save the Children: they will continue to stay in Borguna district and implement livelihood activities plus health and education activities, at least until 2010 (livelihood rebuilding programme funded by USAID). But they are monitoring closely how Northern cattle is adapting before continuing distribution. They will also continue with an emergency capacity building (ECB) programme funded by the Bill Gates Foundation. Their health programme in Borguna has been extended until March 2009.
- Tdh: Disaster preparedness project which will probably start in April/May 2009 and will include one multi-purpose community shelter. They also would like to support a certain number of schools in the area.
- HOPE 87: focus of food security and livelihood programmes for farmers. They are also thinking of providing more shelters (in Borguna district only 5,000 shelters were constructed out of 20,000 needed). HOPE 87 is putting a proposal to ECHO in order to train people and volunteers in disaster preparedness with simulations, theatre dramas, etc.
- CCEC would like to create more SME/cooperatives in order to improve their livelihood generation programme. CCEC has signed a 7-year lease with the Water Development Board to work on anti-erosion and conservation activities on approximately 37 acres of land along a 9.4 km stretch of river bank. Need for more mangrove plantations.

3.6 Coordination issues

Coordination among international donors and between them and the government seems to be adequate and AGIRE member agencies participated to many coordination meetings. A DER (Disaster and Emergency Response) was set up with a lot of members, mainly UN and international NGOs. UN cluster groups at national and district levels were quite effective. It was the first time they were used in Bangladesh.

Good coordination among international NGOs, government and army. It was better than in other disasters. WFP coordinated food distribution. Reasonable job on coordination given the circumstances. Coordination is more difficult among NGOs. It is seen mainly as geographical and sectoral division. There are many NGOs (+/- 40,000 local NGOs of which one quarter are at national level), going from very big ones (BRAC has a yearly budget of approximately \$ 300 million) to small-scale ones. A lot of competition and little willingness to coordinate themselves.

There has never been a meeting of AGIRE members agencies. Only indirect contacts, apart from more substantial ones on shelter construction between Tdh and HOPE 87. This lack of coordination is regrettable given the geographical closeness of the areas covered by the activities.

Save the Children and Terre des Hommes concentrated on Borguna Sadar upazila, Borguna district.
Action Aid on Bagherat and Potuakhali districts.
VIS/HOPE 87 on Borguna Sadar and Amtali sub-districts in Borguna District and in the sub-district of Saramkhala in Bagherat District.
WWF/CCEC on Shyamnagar District.

All AGIRE member agencies agreed that a better coordination among them is necessary and were happy to meet for the first time all together during the evaluation debriefing meeting held in Dhaka on 12th January 2009.

Story of Ms Phool Baroo, Fhalishatali Village, Barguna Sadar Upazila (sub-district), Barguna District

When Cyclone Sidr struck, she was badly wounded at the right ankle by a flying corrugated iron sheet and was washed away by the tidal wave. She lost consciousness and when she woke up, she found herself a couple of kilometres away, cold and drenched. She spent more than one month recovering at a local hospital. Her son was found on the top of the mango tree near her house and, luckily, he survived. Of her family, all died except for one brother who was also badly wounded by a flying iron sheet. Now Phool Baroo has rebuilt her house with an initial help from Save the Children and food and non-food items from VIS/HOPE 87. When she recalls what happened to her family, she still feel very emotional and she cries. She says: " I am not asking for more help but for you to say a prayer".



4. Conclusions and recommendations

Cyclone Sidr struck one of the most vulnerable and poor parts of Bangladesh. Most of AGIRE member agencies were able to respond very quickly to alleviate immediate survival needs and then followed with relevant, appropriate and effective activities based on 5 components: food and non-food items distribution (clothes, blankets, hygiene kits, educational kits), provision of shelters (including latrine- sanitation component), livelihoods regeneration (including cash-for-work activities), disaster preparedness/reduction training and environmental protection/conservation.

It is important to state that all AGIRE member agencies intervened, with their own funds and from other grants, on a wide range of emergency response activities. Therefore AGIRE's funded activities can only be better understood within the wider picture and in link with other emergency response components.

First need assessments were done in the next few days after the disaster and further more detailed assessments formed the basis of AGIRE member agencies' emergency response activities.

The country is a vulnerable and fragile one. Climatic changes will make things worse, and the sheer number of people will make future interventions even more challenging. An environmental component will have to be added to such interventions. AGIRE member agencies should also reflect more on the need to have more permanent/durable activities, both in terms of structures (shelters, roads, embankments) than in term of long-term development activities. If the efforts done so far are not to be wasted, there is a need to continue to support the NGOs working in the affected areas.

4.1 Recommendations for member agencies

General recommendations:

- To link emergency with long-term development activities in order not to lose what has been achieved so far. AGIRE member agencies should continue to fund partners' programmes (although this would be more difficult for agencies which have no direct presence in the country: VIS and WWF).
- Use of more permanent roads, embankments and shelters in future emergency work.
- Current individual house plates are not necessary because the name of the funding and implementing agencies are already in the house title deed. It would be better to replace them with the owner's name so as to emphasise the fact that the shelter/house now belong to the beneficiary and not to the implementing or funding agency. What is more important in terms of accountability are signposts in villages which give the list of activities and items in local language.
- Need for more disaster preparedness & risk reduction programmes to be included in future activities
- Need for more coordination among AGIRE's funded agencies, especially when geographical closeness.
- Need for building an environmental protection component in future emergency activities given the country's vulnerability to climate change.
- Need for including a psycho-social component in future disaster responses (apart from AA which carried out phyco-social sessions for children, with drama + puppets support, for children to overcome the negative experience they lived).

Individual recommendations

Action Aid:

- Strong follow-up on permanent shelters to monitor their use and see if model is right, popular and can be replicated.

Save the Children:

- Monitoring of Northern imported cattle to see if it is going to work out successfully in the long-term.
- More permanent road/embankment rebuilding.

Terre des Hommes:

- Monitor shelter use and reflect on appropriateness.

VIS/HOPE 87:

- Monitor shelter use and reflect on appropriateness.
- Continue to support HOPE 87 for disaster preparedness & risk reduction activities.

WWF/CCEC:

- Monitor shelter use and reflect on appropriateness.
- Reflect on the opportunity to set up WWF in Bangladesh. Such a vulnerable country with such an important area like the Sundarban Mangrove Forest, the largest in the world and recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, deserves a strong WWF presence.
- Need of serious capacity building of CCEC in terms of structure, staff quality/training, financial transparency and project support.
- WWF Italy should continue to support CCEC and not be content of a one-off support, so as to make sure that what has been achieved so far will not be lost.
- Need to find national and international commercial outlets for Sundarban Handicraft production.

4.2 Recommendations for AGIRE

- Keep high flexibility in accepting reasonable changes/adjustments from original project proposals.
- Lots of audits and evaluation missions. Can they be grouped? If a programme is co-funded by DEC and other AGIRE-like founders, why not doing joint evaluation missions and joint audits? This applies for Action Aid and Save the Children, less for the other members.
- Visibility of activities: better when sign-posts with a list of activities and items are put in villages in local language. For individual shelters, better to give plates with owner's name and not funding/implementing agency name as the latter is already in the house title deed.
- Review the efficacy of funding different models of shelters (permanent, semi-permanent, transitional) especially in low supply/high demand situations.
- Review policy of spending funds within 1 year. Two out of 3 agencies requested reasonable extensions which went further than one year.
- In order to improve coordination in future emergency responses, create an AGIRE secretariat in the country covered by asking one of the member agencies to take a coordination lead.
- Possible, but not essential, evaluation in one year's time in order to monitor the continuum from emergency towards long-term development.
- Another issue for AGIRE is to reflect upon the way the distribution of funds is made. AGIRE has distributed the funds collected by the Cyclone Sidr Emergency Appeal more or less equally among the five member agencies. Although this is politically correct, should the distribution been driven more by beneficiary needs and capacity of intervention rather than member agencies? The Ethics Committee or a panel of experts should reflect on this issue and make recommendations.

5. Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of reference of the evaluation process

Background

On 15th November 2007, a Category 4 Cyclone, named Sidr, violently struck the South-western coastal areas of Bangladesh. Although the death and injury toll was considerably less severe than during previous disasters in the country (owing largely to the government's early warning and disaster preparedness program), almost 9 million people have been affected, whereas over 3,000 were killed and 3 millions left homeless. Also the damage caused by the disaster were extensive: winds and floods heavily compromised local agriculture and livestock industry and shattered roughly 600,000 buildings, including thousands of schools.

Two days after the Cyclone, AGIRE launched its first emergency appeal which has raised € 640,000. Member agencies managed to raise additional funds from their supporters, bringing the final income of the Bangladesh appeal to almost 1 million euro. AGIRE has allocated € 612,000 (96% of the income) to fund the emergency programs submitted by member agencies which took part to the appeal (namely ActionAid, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, VIS and WWF).

The AGIRE Secretariat, in accordance to the provisions of the Operational Handbook and after consultation with the Ethics Committee, has planned an external evaluation due to be completed by January 2009.

Purposes

The evaluation is expected to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the response and to analyse the outcome/impact of relief programs funded by AGIRE and undertaken by member agencies in Bangladesh. In addition, It shall promote accountability to donors and other stakeholder on the appropriate use of raised funds to reinforce participation, transparency and communication.

Scope

- To assess the overall appropriateness, coherence, timeliness and effectiveness of the on-going response of member agencies.
- To ascertain whether mechanisms of management, control and accountability requested to member agencies are in place and function correctly and to assess whether the financial and administrative handling of the projects is done according to set rules.
- To determine to what extent agencies are building on lessons learnt from similar humanitarian responses.
- To identify lessons learnt of possible relevance to other responses and joint appeals that have emerged in this Bangladesh response.
- To report to donors and wide audience on results achieved by member agencies and appropriate use of available resources.

The evaluation will focus more on the strategic approaches adopted by member agencies rather than details of project implementation. The exercise will draw on analysis and information collected by looking at the overall response of member agencies in Bangladesh, but it will primarily focus on the following programs funded by AGIRE:

Agency	Project	Date of conclusion
ActionAid	<i>Cyclone Sidr Recovery Program</i>	15 th November 2008
Save the Children	<i>Early Recovery and Disaster Risk Reduction from Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh 2007</i>	19 th August 2008
Terre des Hommes	<i>Emergency Response for Cyclone Sidr affected families in Barguna district</i>	31 st March 2008
VIS	<i>First emergency, rehabilitation and reconstruction for affected communities in Sharonkhola Upazila, Rayenda, South Khali, Boghi (Bagherhat district), and Amtali Upazilla, Borguna, Sadar (Borguna district).</i>	1st November 2008
WWF	<i>Rehabilitation of SIDR affected Sundarban stakeholders</i>	30 th September 2008

The evaluation will also look at the evaluation process planned by AGIRE in order to recommend different approaches and methodologies for future appeals.

Timing and duration

	November			December				January			
	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
<i>Briefing</i>											
<i>Desk review</i>											
<i>Field mission</i>											
<i>Draft report</i>											
<i>Final report</i>											

A final timeframe of the evaluation will be discussed with the consultant prior to appointment.

Methodology

The evaluation will be consultative and participative and will draw upon the views and perspective of member agencies personnel and local partners, selected representative of government authorities, technical agencies, donors, as well as local communities and intended beneficiaries.

After a **preliminary briefing** with AGIRE (by phone), the process will encompass a **desk review** with the purpose of: 1) analysing project proposals, mid term report and final audited reports of the 5 member agencies; 2) collating relevant policy documents, analytical tools and reports of previous evaluations and reviews of relevance; 3) contacting member agencies to clarify introductory issues and identify key respondents to the evaluation.

Preliminary meetings with senior representatives of all member agencies will be scheduled in Dhaka during the first days of the **field missions**. For those agencies not based in Dhaka, meetings will be held in the following days, prior to the field visit. During the preliminary meetings and the subsequent field work, member agencies are expected to enable the consultant to embark on a review exercise on the following issues:

- critical factors affecting speed and appropriateness of the agency response at country level;
- effectiveness of the early-warning system and preparedness measures in place;
- appropriateness of needs-assessment undertaken to design the response;
- inter-agency coordination (including reference to the UN Sidr Transitional Working-Groups) and coordination with governmental bodies;
- efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance, sustainability, coverage and coherence of the program;
- performance of the program in terms of quality standards, including application of Sphere standards and principles of the Red Cross Code of Conduct;
- involvement of affected communities and other local stakeholder in each stage of the project cycle;
- monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

A **first draft** of the report will be circulated to member agencies and subsequently discussed by the Ethics Committee and the Board of Directors.

The Ethics Committee may on this occasion (or at a later stage) approve recommendations to member agencies that take into account the findings of the report.

Outcome

A draft report in English, not exceeding 25 pages (including an executive summary of 2 pages, excluding annexes), is to be submitted to AGIRE Secretariat within two weeks after the return from the field visit.

The revised final report will be made available to member agencies and made publicly available.

Annex 2: Schedule of evaluation

Date	Preliminary briefing and desk review
20 th -30 th November 2008	Preliminary briefing with AGIRE Director and External Relations Officer
December 2008	Desk review : analysis of existing projects proposals and reports, contact with desk officers of the 5 members agencies involved, collections of relevant policy documents, analytical tools and reports of previous evaluations and reviews of relevance.
1 st -13 th January 2009	Field mission
1 st January 2009	Travel from Brussels to Dhaka
2 nd January 2009	Arrival in Dhaka Preliminary meeting with representatives of Terre des Hommes
3 rd January 2009	Preliminary meetings with representatives of VIS/HOPE87, Action Aid and Save the Children
4 th January 2009	Travel from Dhaka to Borguna via Barisal
5 th January 2009	Field visit to Terre des Hommes programmes in Borguna Sadar Sub-district (Choto Taaltoli village and Baro Baliatoli village) Field of VIS/HOPE 87 programmes in Borguna Sadar Sub-district (Kalirtabak village, Sonatalla village and Fhalishatali village)
6 th January 2009	Field visit to Save the Children programmes in Borguna District (Garjanbungia Gonokobor village and Gazi Mahmud North village) Travel to Khulna
7 th January 2009	Departure for Bagherat and field visit of Action Aid programmes in Bagherat District (Dhansagan Union in Rajapur village and Khuntakata village) Return to Khulna
8 th January 2009	Meeting with WWF/CCEC representatives in Khulna Travel to Shyamnagar and field visit of WWF/CCEC programmes in Shyamnagar District (Burigoalini village, Kalbari village and Munshiganj village)
9 th January 2009	Field visit of WWF/CCEC programmes in Shyamnagar District (Harinagar village, Mathurapur village, Gopalpur village) Return to Khulna
10 th January 2009	Travel from Khulna to Dhaka via Jessore
11 th January 2009	Preliminary report writing
12 th January 2009	Debriefing with representatives of member agencies in Dhaka Meeting with Italian Development Cooperation representative
13 th 14 th January 2009	Travel from Dhaka to Brussels
15 th January - 15 th February 2009	Debriefing and final report
15 th January 2009	Presentation of draft report to AGIRE member agencies
15 th February 2009	Final submission of report

Annex 3: List of main people contacted

(Many other people were met but it was impossible to get all the names and titles. Only the major contacts are listed below and apologize for all those I have missed out)

AGIRE Secretariat	Marco Bertotto, Director Maddalena Grechi, External Relations Officer
Action Aid	In Italy: Patricia Bozzetti, Programmes & Projects Reporting Officer In Bangladesh: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wahida Bashir Ahmed, Theme Leader, Risk Reduction - Munirul Islam, Associate Officer, Partnership Development - Meghla Sayda Asma Rashida, Programme Officer, Emergency - Chandan Kumar Saha, Programme Officer, Emergency - Sukanta Das, Finance Officer, Emergency - Amirul Kawser Dipu, Shelter Manager, Emergency - Kabir Uddin Mallik, Manager Documentation&Dissemination Partner JJS (Jagrata Juba Shangha) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zakir Hossain, Executive Director - Mohinddin Ahmad, Programme Manager - Shandha Nath, Finance Officer
Save the Children	In Italy: Chiara Segrado, Programme Officer In Bangladesh: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kelly Stevenson, Country Director, SC USA - Ali Mohammad, Finance Officer - Maruf Islam, Programme Manager, Barguna Office - Razaul Karim, Documentation Officer, Barguna Office
Terres des Hommes	In Italy: Massimo Lanciotti, Asia Programme Manager In Bangladesh: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sara Piazzano, Country Director - Manuela D'Andrea, Programme Officer - Atikur Rahman, Logistician Partner Aparajevo Bangladesh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hafizur Rahman, Administrator
VIS	In Italy: Riccardo Giannotta, Programme Officer Partner in Bangladesh: HOPE 87 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mohd Rezaul Karim, Branch Office Manager - Rafiqul Islam Faruki, Project Coordinator - Mr Ekramulla, Project Support Partner in Bangladesh: The Crupda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zia Uddin Molla Himu, Executive Director
WWF	In Italy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laura Ciacci, Head of International Cooperation Department - Sara Nardicchia, Programme Officer Partner in Bangladesh: Centre for Coastal Environmental Conservation (CCEC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mowdudur Rahman, Director - B.M. Asaduzzaman, Chairman - Sirajul, Programme Officer, Shyamnagar
Italian Development Cooperation	Vittorio Piovesan
Government and University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. Shah, Vice-Chancellor, Khulna University - Prof Md. Salequzzaman, Environment Studies, Khulna University - Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, Divisional Coordinator, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) - Ashra Fuzzaman, District Officer, Borguna Sadar

People present at the member agencies' debriefing meeting in Dhaka on 12th January 2009

Rafiqul Islam Faruki, Project Coordinator, HOPE 87
Hafizur Rahman, Administrator, Aparajeyo Bangladesh
Wahida Banu, Acting Director, Aparajeyo Bangladesh
Meghla Sayda Asma Rashida, Programme Officer, Action Aid
Amirul Kawser Dipu, Shelter Manager, Action Aid
Sara Piazzano, Country Director, Terre des Hommes
Manuela D'Andrea, Programme Officer, Terre des Hommes
Atikur Rahman, Logistician, Terre des Hommes
Mowdudur Rahman, Director, Centre for Coastal Environmental Conservation
Ali Mohammad, Finance Officer, Save the Children

Annex 4: Cyclone Sidr affected areas and path of the cyclone

