



Plan International
Thailand

May 15, 2008 to June 30, 2009

Cyclone Nargis Disaster Response Project Myanmar Comprehensive Report



Cyclone Nargis: Disaster Response Project Myanmar Comprehensive Report

Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar's Ayeyarwady delta region on May 2, 2008 leaving a trail of unimaginable destruction in its wake. It's a scene familiar to all of us by now. Over 84,500 lives lost, hundreds of thousands left homeless, untold numbers injured and millions of people adversely affected. Crops, homes and infrastructure decimated in one of the worst natural disasters to strike Asia in modern times.

Children were among some of the hardest hit. Fatality statistics according to age are not available but child deaths were believed to be substantial. An estimated 50-60% of public schools were destroyed or damaged and the estimated total loss related to education services is \$1.16 billion. Thousands of children have been orphaned and many more have been psychologically traumatised by the disaster. Crops and agricultural systems were wiped out by cyclone Nargis, leaving already vulnerable children with very little food to sustain their basic daily needs.

Plan's initial response to Cyclone Nargis was swift. Having no established presence in Myanmar, Plan entered into partnerships with local NGOs on the ground to provide immediate relief to those affected. Within days Plan supported emergency relief efforts, including the distribution of food and essential non-food items as well as the provision of trauma counselling.

All across the world, individuals, corporations and groups chose Plan to express their caring and concern for those affected by Cyclone Nargis. \$2.95 million USD was mobilised to support survivors in Myanmar for a three year period. Through its local partnerships, Plan's post-Nargis recovery and rehabilitation efforts have been focussed on the construction and renovation of schools and early childhood care and development (ECCD) centres, the provision of psychosocial support and trauma healing services, as well as disaster risk reduction planning.

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Plan's work has concentrated on the villages in the townships of Myaungmya, Lebutta, Mawlamyinyun, and Bogale in the Ayeyarwady delta region. We are currently working with three local partners – Bridge Asia Japan, Metta Foundation, and Yinthway Foundation – as well as having partnered with UNESCO to work on disaster risk reduction interventions.



A collapsed primary school

Summary of Budget and Expenditure: 3 years project period (May 2008 – May 2011)

Total GAD Commitment:	\$ 2,953,106
Total income to date:	\$ 2,960,670
Total expenditure:	\$ 1,763,650 (59.6%)
Actual expenditure as per general ledger report:	\$ 1,395,798 (47.1%)



Bon Ti Lut school after renovation



Children in Paitchet School after renovation

Plan partner progress report as of June 30, 2009

Partner: Foundation for Education and Development

Budget: \$50,754

Status: Completed

Foundation for Education and Development (FED) is a Thailand-based NGO working mostly with Burmese migrant workers in southern Thailand. Within a few days of the cyclone hitting, FED reached out to those affected in the Lebutta area in the Ayeyarwady delta region.

Details of emergency relief provided:

- a. Supported a target population of 10,245 through 2 temporary camps covering 16 villages in the townships of Lebutta, Twantay, Hlaing Pyapon and Piyansulu in addition to 2 monasteries (Won and Okkalapa) through 59 local volunteers.
- b. 1712 families were provided with 3,000 women's and 1,260 men's loungeys (local dress) 2,880 blankets, and 650 mosquito nets besides distribution of clothes to 150 families, 2304kgs rice for 181 families, noodles for 2,000 people living in temporary shelters in addition to tarpaulin sheets for 2,000 families. 245 students were provided with text books, stationery, food and shelter in monasteries.

Partner: Bridge Asia Japan

Budget: \$639,062

Status: 90% work completed

Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ) is an international NGO based in Tokyo, Japan and has been involved in education sector activities for the past 10 years through its local office in Myanmar. Plan has supported BAJ in establishing temporary schools immediately following the disaster as well as renovating schools that were damaged and constructing new schools. This work is being conducted in the Myaungmya and Mawlamyingyun townships of the delta region and is expected to be completed in July/August 2009.



The library of Hlee Toelo school

Details of the project achievements:

- a. Renovation/construction of 23 temporary schools (2 schools added out of savings of the 2nd phase budget). These schools have enrolment of 6,901 students from 8,154 families (population 33,921). All schools were supplied with basic school furniture, supplies besides water/sanitation, latrine facilities.
- b. Construction work at 9 disaster resilient schools has been completed. These schools have an enrolment of 2,154 students (likely to increase during the next school session starting in July 09) from 4,595 families (population 18,479). These disaster resilient schools will serve as community centres when needed and each centre can accommodate 400-600 persons at the time of disaster/emergency. All newly constructed schools have been supplied with basic school furniture, supplies besides water, sanitation/latrine facilities. All these centres will have adequate safety provisions to address emergency needs (medical kits, megaphones, etc). These schools are also included in disaster risk reduction training being organised by UNESCO with support from Plan.
- c. Out of the total 32 schools completed, 3 schools (MyinKaKone, Ka thahMyin and Hlee Toelo) have been provided with library facilities to help students to share books and enhance their educational knowledge. These schools are located in remote areas.
- d. A teacher training in improved teaching methods has been organised in collaboration with UNICEF and the Township Education Office. Refresher courses will continue in the coming months. Teachers along with Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members will participate in disaster risk reduction training being organised by UNESCO with support from Plan.
- e. All the completed schools have been handed over to respective local communities (PTAs and Education Authorities). Community participation such as the transport of construction materials from river jetty to the school site, unskilled labour, etc. during the project implementation was very encouraging and helped ensure that the project was completed on time.
- f. 313 youths from local communities received training in construction skills to help them in getting local employment opportunities.
- g. During the course of project implementation, some activities at schools were hampered by the lack of construction materials, difficulties in transporting construction materials to the sites and the lack of fresh water for mixing cement.

Future work: The next phase of project implementation for the construction of 6 new disaster resilient schools with BAJ is being negotiated with an expected budget of \$350,840.

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Partner: Metta Foundation (Nov 2008 – Aug 2009)

Budget: \$410,430

Status: 90% work completed

Status: 90% work completed

Metta Foundation is a Myanmar-based local NGO involved in rural community development (with a special focus on improvements to education) and sustainable agriculture programming. Plan has supported Metta Foundation to establish community based early childhood care and development (ECCD) programmes for children under the age of 5. Plan and Metta Foundation partnered in November 2008 and continue to work on ECCD activities in the most remote and hardest-hit areas of Piyansulu and Hlaing.

Metta Foundation aims to become a pioneering institution in promoting ECCD programmes and building capacity in early childhood care in other areas of Myanmar as well. Plan is supporting Metta Foundation to reach this objective.



A temporary ECCD centre in Mingalar Thauung Tan village



Children learning at a temporary ECCD centre in A Yardwa village

Details of the project achievements:

- a. Construction work at 4 disaster resilient ECCD centres in the remote areas of Aung Hlaing, MThaung Tan, A Yardwa and Lae YingQuinn (85% work completed). All these centres have been supplied with necessary furniture/material/equipment and have water, sanitation/hygiene facilities. These 4 ECCD centres will serve as community centres when needed and will accommodate 1,500- 1,600 persons during emergency. All these centres are equipped with necessary materials and supplies to be used during emergency or disaster. These centres will accommodate 647 children (0-5 years) from 1, 475 households at present and this number is expected to grow as more people return to the area.

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- b. Renovation of 14 ECCD centres damaged during the disaster has been done and ECCD training organised for 28 community leaders. 1,756 children (0-5 years) enrolled presently from 4,407 households and likely to increase.
- c. 39 teachers trained in the management of the 23 ECCD centres (including 9 teachers at 4 disaster resilient ECCD centres).
- d. Implementation of construction activities was hampered to some extent by the lack of construction materials, difficulties in transporting construction materials to the sites, the lack of fresh water for mixing cement, and poor soil conditions near the ocean front.

Future work: The next phase of activities for 3 disaster resilient ECCD centres is being negotiated.

Partner: Yinthway Foundation (Jan 2009 - Jan 2010)

Budget: \$162,798

Status: 54% completed

Yinthway Foundation is a local NGO involved in ECCD programmes and in the capacity building of local community-based organisations. Yinthway Foundation is delivering and supporting psychosocial counselling and trauma healing and assisting communities in disaster risk reduction planning. Plan has supported Yinthway to create safe and secure environments for pre-school children and parents and the restoration of quality early caring and education facilities in 13 villages through local village associations



An ECCD centre in ThaeKone village, Wakema Township, supported by Plan and built by Yithway



Inside a newly built ECCD centre in MaeDaLine Village

Details of the project achievements:

- a. Out of a total of 13 ECCD centres to be renovated or constructed, 5 have been completed, 5 are still in progress and work on the remaining 3 has yet to start. The ECCD centre construction and management is being done through respective Village Associations. 400 children (0-5 years) from 2,924 households will benefit from the ECCD centres in 4 townships in the delta region. These centres are being equipped with necessary supplies and materials. 17 ECCD teachers have been provided training in the management of the centres and in early childhood care.
- b. A 3 day workshop was organised for 20 ECCD trainers to prepare them to address the issues related to psychosocial and trauma healing of children, teachers, care-givers, parents and others. These trainers were provided with the necessary referral materials.
- c. 90 pre-school teachers and parent education facilitators were trained in psychosocial support to promote the resumption of quality child care activities during recovery. These trainers have been provided with materials for traumatised young children and caregivers.
- d. 30 community volunteers attended training on child care services for 2 weeks including practical training at ECCD centres in the villages. These volunteers were provided with materials related to the child care services including disaster risk reduction.

Information and education communication materials related to disaster risk reduction have been developed and are being used to educate children, caregivers, parents, and community leaders for preventing and facing future disasters and emergencies



Children from KanTharKone village, Wakema Township

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Partner: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
(March 2009 – March 2011)

Budget: \$600,000

Status: 15% completed

Plan's partnership with UNESCO was negotiated to support psychosocial and trauma healing and disaster risk reduction interventions in the Ayeyarwady delta region. Plan and UNESCO's partnership is for a period of 3 years. The UNESCO and Plan partnership agreement was delayed due to some unforeseen bureaucratic problems encountered by UNESCO with the Myanmar Government. After the initial delay, the actual implementation of disaster risk reduction interventions started in March 2009.

The core group for disaster risk reduction in Myanmar includes members from the Department of Basic Education, UNESCO, Plan International, UNICEF, Save the Children, French Red Cross, World Vision, Action Aid, UNDP and Pyinnya Tazaung (local NGO).

Following are the project interventions identified jointly by Plan and UNESCO in relation to the Myanmar Education Recovery programme. The programme component aims to promote awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction as an integral part of sustainable development with the objective of reducing human, social, economic and environmental losses due to natural hazards and environmental disasters.

Details of the project achievements:

- a. Training was organised for 150 township education officials/administrators to build capacity in disaster preparedness through educational planning and management (using Inter Agency Network of Emergencies (INEE) models). Experts/consultants have been identified to develop training materials and organise trainings by mid July 2009.
- b. First set of training were organised for 2,000 school principals in administration, management and planning skills to strengthen the disaster resilience of schools, teachers, students and communities (using INEE models). Trainees were provided with resource packs that contain material related to disaster management and planning (relief, emergency response plan, etc.) to help schools, communities to systematically prepare building resilience to emergencies and hazards. The second set of resource packs and training will be done in July/August 2009.
- c. Two day workshop was organised for 148 education department officials on the use of disaster preparedness resources planning to develop capacity in community based education in emergencies and disaster risk reduction.
- d. Over 3,000 school teachers have received training in the use of resource packs to help them in emergencies and disasters to follow the required/desired actions to ensure that all children and communities realize their right to education, protection and participation in post emergency context through improved planning, implementation, coordination, support and supervision of education authorities.

Future work: Low spending due to initial late start of UNESCO interventions in Myanmar. UNESCO is expected to resume re-enforced process of delivery of planned activities in the coming months especially the training of students, communities and education department officials in DRR planning and management in the field (7 townships in delta region). UNESCO agreement will end in May 2011. Based on the results in terms of creating impact and availability of resources, future collaboration with UNESCO will be determined.

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The current situation in Myanmar

Presently, Myanmar is an extremely difficult area to operate in effectively due to logistics problems and at times non-availability of construction materials and its transport to project sites (can take 22 hours by boat from Yangon through windy and narrow rivers and streams) made worse by increasing costs and the lack of fresh water (salty water not good for construction). Most of the construction work needed to be completed before the onset of the rainy season.

The working environment is also not very conducive since there is limited access to the worst affected areas and getting visa/permits to freely travel can be difficult. Although visa and travel restrictions were relaxed in the beginning of Plan's work, more strict rules are being imposed and making it difficult to travel to Myanmar. However, during the recent visits by the Project Manager Prem Shukla, unlimited access to the affected areas was provided without any questioning at checkpoints or any verification hardships.

Further, the community organisation and their participation in the project implementation process is found to be highly encouraging. Community commitment to send the children to schools (especially girls) is commendable and Plan has found that the ratio of boys to girls attending most schools is equal. In general, Plan's support to NGO interventions in the education sector linked with disaster risk management, psychosocial and trauma healing interventions have been well appreciated not only by Government authorities but by the population in general. It's noteworthy that Plan has been awarded 6 Certificates of Appreciation for its support to disaster resilient construction of schools (through BAJ) by local community organisations (PTAs) and local Education Department authorities in the delta region within a period of one year.

Future rehabilitation work in Myanmar

In July 2008, it was officially determined that more than a billion dollars in relief would be necessary for reconstruction and relief for rebuilding houses, schools and other infrastructure (Post-Nargis Joint Assessment conducted by Tri-partite Core Group – ASEAN, United Nations and Government of Myanmar). During the initial post-Nargis rehabilitation phase, the Myanmar government appeared to be opening up to the outside world in terms of relaxing travel and authorisations for relief workers. Unfortunately, over the past three months visa and travel restrictions have increased, making it difficult for Plan staff to travel to Myanmar. In the beginning the government was keen on working with credible international organisations to support cyclone Nargis recovery efforts but this openness on the part of the government is also recently declining. However, Plan has made significant inroads into relationship building with the Myanmar government and both the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Basic Education both have expressed keen interest in signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Plan International.

Despite numerous challenges, Plan and its partners are making real progress and have made meaningful improvements in the lives of children and their families. Plan's work is well-recognised and appreciated by both the communities in which we work and the Myanmar government.

Finally, considering the need, more resources would be helpful to assist these children in a most difficult situation. We will make efforts to mobilise resources to help facilitate post-Nargis recovery initiatives in the education sector and disaster risk reduction.