

Issue 14 | October 2015

Concern's
Knowledge
Quarterly
Review

KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

Humanitarian crises: experiences
and learning



CONCERN
worldwide

Any contributions, ideas or topics for future issues of knowledge matters. Contact the editorial team on email: knowledgematters@concern.net

The views expressed are the author's and do not necessarily coincide with those of Concern Worldwide or its partners.

Knowledge Matters basics

Knowledge Matters offers practice-relevant analysis relating to the development and humanitarian work of Concern Worldwide. It provides a forum for staff and partners to exchange ideas and experiences. The publication is committed to encouraging high quality analysis in the understanding of Concern's work. Concern staff and partners document their ideas and experiences through articles. Articles are very short – 500 – 1,000 words. Usually you only have space to make two or three interesting points. Here are some tips on writing a short feature article:

- Start by imagining your audience – a Concern colleague. Why are they interested – why do they want to read what you have to say? When you identify what your most important point is, say it straight away, in the title or first sentence.
- What can others learn from your story? Focus on this. Remember to back up your story with evidence. This can be got from evaluations.
- It's easier to get people reading if you start with the human perspective – mentioning real people and real-life events. (You don't have to give names).
- Use short sentences. Use Concern's style guide to help you.
- Keep paragraphs to a maximum of six lines long.
- Use clear language. Many of the readers of Knowledge Matters are non-native English speakers, so think carefully about using idioms or colloquial language that might not be easily understood by others.
- Always avoid assuming too high a level of knowledge of the topic you are writing about, on the part of the reader.
- Use active sentences ('we held a workshop' not 'a workshop was held by us')
- Use short and clear expressions.
- Keep your title short - no more than eight words.
- Where necessary use photos to accompany the narrative but ensure that you follow the Dochas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.

Cover image: Concern Worldwide's emergency relief operation to victims of Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in Igbon Bananguy, Conception, Panay, Philippines. Photographer: Steve de Neef, December 2013

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From the Issue Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of Knowledge Matters which focuses on Concern's response to humanitarian crisis. This is an area that is central to how we work as an organisation especially since the occurrence of humanitarian disasters does not seem to be abating. It is therefore timely that 14 editions into Knowledge Matters we have one that is dedicated to the lessons learnt from responding to humanitarian crisis.

In keeping with the spirit of organisational learning, the various articles in this collection highlight both the success and challenges we face when responding to humanitarian crisis. For example, the article by Per Andersson draws on the experiences from the Philippines and Nepal to examine how building back better happens in theory and practice. The piece by Peter Crichton highlights the centrality of security focal groups to humanitarian responses.

The diversity of issues addressed in this collection illustrates how inherently complex it can be when seeking to effectively respond to a humanitarian crisis. As I conclude, I want to thank all those who have made the current issue of Knowledge Matters a reality. I hope you enjoy reading the articles and that they give you a better insight into Concern's emergency response work.

Ros O'Sullivan

The Concern Response to Typhoon Haiyan... *what made it stand out*



By Ros O'Sullivan

Typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Yolanda), hit the Philippines on 8 November 2013. This was the strongest typhoon ever to make landfall and its power left a path of destruction across a large swathe of the country, affecting over 14 million people. Half a million homes were destroyed. Those working in the fisheries sector were badly affected, with 28,000 fishing boats destroyed. As a result, those working within the fishing sector saw their incomes and productive assets reduce by two-thirds¹.

Concern was one of the many international humanitarian organisations that responded to this major natural disaster. While we had no prior presence in the Philippines, our extensive experience of responding to this type of emergency served us well². This was especially true in the early days as we laboured to confirm the scale of the impact, establish our presence and build relationships, and develop our emergency response.

Many of our colleagues that engaged in the emergency response in the Philippines noted that this response really stood out for them, for a variety of reasons: the areas of focus and programme choices that were made; the quality/quantity of the programme components; the relationships that were forged with local authorities and affected communities and the sustainability and impact of the overall intervention as perceived by the beneficiary communities and local authorities and borne out in the post response evaluation³.



The photo shows Arturo J. Juanito, an official on the island of Baliguan in the Philippines with Ros O'Sullivan inspecting a damaged fishing boat. Photo: Aeri Wittenbourgh, 2013.



It was the high levels of commitment and participatory approach that truly made this emergency response standout

A large part of the success of the Concern Philippines response can be attributed to a number of critical factors:

- Experienced Filipino ex-Concern staff were available and joined the programme within days of the Typhoon and were instrumental in the early establishment of the programme.
- There was what can only be described as a super-conductive working environment: a cooperative local government with good capacity; a very engaged local community with a strong volunteering spirit that actively encouraged in-depth consultation; informed sound decision making which in turn led to a near accurate assessment of needs. The assessment informed the well-designed emergency and recovery interventions, especially with regard to the design of the emergency shelter/ non-food items (NFI) package and the design of the small scale fishing boats that were produced in large numbers.
- The generosity of the general public in Ireland, UK and US provided the programme with a solid financial resource base that enabled the programme to go to scale relatively quickly, and ensured the funding for a comprehensive array of high quality inputs and support.
- Resilience/ disaster risk reduction approaches and interventions were easily integrated into the programme from the outset due to the existence of national level Disaster Preparedness and a strong willingness on the part of government authorities to see these operationalised at a local level.
- The cluster coordination system worked extremely well from a logistical perspective. For example, an air-bridge was put in place that allowed large volumes of humanitarian assistance to be moved to multiple locations within reasonable timeframes. Unfortunately it worked less well with respect to other sectors, especially in the areas of shelter and non-food items.

In the end, this programme reached more than 114,000 direct programme participants with a combination of high impact quality initiatives. These included emergency shelter, schools rehabilitation, water provision, rehabilitation of interconnected island based water systems, aquaculture, coral rehabilitation and reforestation. The reforestation work was implemented to replace the hardwood trees that were used to provide hulls for boat production.



The last word(s) on this programme success can be left to various stakeholder groups which were consulted during the evaluation process. They described their engagement with the Concern programme (and staff) as going “...*the extra mile for beneficiaries*” and described components of the programme as “...*gold standard*” and the overall programme as “...*realistic, humble and professional*”. Finally, it was the high levels of commitment and participatory approach that truly made this emergency response stand out.

References and Content Notes

1. For more on this see the final evaluation of the programme
2. For more on this see the various emergency meta-evaluations
3. Evaluation of the Concern Worldwide Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda Emergency response and recovery Programme – Jo Goldsmith, February 2015

Build Back Better: Reflecting on Recent projects in the Philippines and Nepal



By Per Andersson, Senior Emergency Engineer

Introduction

Build Back Better (BBB) is not a new or revolutionary approach as such. Engineers and scientists have for centuries applied new technology and knowledge to improve on lessons learned from disasters.

In the area of humanitarian assistance, however, the application of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and the roll out of the Millennium Development Goals has had an impact on how Concern more systematically applies BBB and DRR. In the remainder of this article I will reflect on how Concern's work in the Philippines and Nepal has sought to embed the practice of BBB.

The Philippines experience

On average, the Philippines must contend with around 9 to 10 typhoons per year. Situated on the "Ring Of Fire", the Philippines is prone to an array of natural climatic events, including typhoons, landslides, earthquakes, tidal and storm surges, tsunamis, flash floods and volcanic eruptions.

On 7 November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan (local name Yolanda) made landfall with devastating power. Haiyan became a Category 5 storm on the Saffir-Simpson scale¹ and a Super-Typhoon in accordance with the Philippine classification. As Typhoon Haiyan swept across the Vizcayas and the tiny islands off the coast of Panay, island populations lost homes, assets and essential infrastructure. The typhoon destroyed countless homes and made a significant number of people homeless. Consequently, there was an urgent need to construct emergency evacuation centres. However, the islands are small, and with little or no land, it was not possible to build any dedicated evacuation centres. Instead, the option of rebuilding the damaged schools to function as emergency evacuation centres became the norm.

The task of designing and rebuilding schools became more challenging given the climatic conditions of the region. There was the need to engage with a diverse group of stakeholders, including geologists and specialist engineers. Additionally, a range of preliminary investigations consisting of soil mechanics, review of structural conditions, non-destructive tests and concrete core testing had to be conducted.

Typhoon Haiyan had a maximum wind speed of 316 km/h. This exceeded the existing Philippines building code of 250 km/h and therefore it was agreed that sustained winds of 300 km/h and gusts of 350 km/h would be applied as a major design parameter for the emergency evacuation centres. It is interesting to note that as the building classification of the schools now changed from low risk and low occupancy, to highest risk, importance and occupancy, the design safety factor also increased.

Earthquakes and sea wave loads are two other factors to consider when designing such facilities. The possibility that one of two of these would occur simultaneously with at least high impact sea wave loads was taken as the worst case scenario. Detailed design work that examined the following was undertaken:

- Replacing the glass panes in the louvered windows (windows with shutters) with panes of acrylic plastic;
- Addressing the potential risk of corrosion due to galvanism (electricity produced by chemical action) ;
- Using special elastomeric “bushings” between higher grade and lower grade steel.

For some people, the above might be seen as unnecessary; however, you must remember the importance of the facilities as evacuation centres and their dangerous proximity to the sea.



The primary school on the island of Salvacion before it had been reconstructed, Philippines. Photo by Per Anderson, 2013



The school after it had been reconstructed, Philippines. Photo by Per Anderson, 2014



The fact that the buildings were constructed using materials such as mudbricks or brunt bricks made them vulnerable to climatic episodes

The Nepal experience

Sitting at the edge of where the Eurasia tectonic plate meets with India plate, Nepal is in a part of the world that is prone to earthquakes. The terrain is regularly subjected to high levels of snow, high wind speeds, and landslides.

On the 25th of April 2015, Nepal was struck by a magnitude 7.8 earthquake, followed by an aftershock on the 12th May of magnitude 7.3. Both events caused significant damage, especially to the assets of the rural poor. For example, the buildings inhabited by the rural poor were completely destroyed. The fact that the buildings were constructed using materials such as mudbricks or brunt bricks made them vulnerable to climatic episodes.



Traditional house built of stones, mudbricks, wood and slate stones for roof cover, Nepal.
Photo by Per Andersson, 2015

The majority of houses are two storey buildings, with the ground floor used for domestic purposes, including storage for crops and shelter for animals. The structures are very heavy, with thick walls to keep the cold out in the winter, and to keep the house cool in the summer.

Looking back now, Concern's ability to build back better in Nepal was stymied by a number of factors:

- The mountainous terrain made it difficult to get the necessary logistics on site;
- Lack of skilled labour available for constructing earthquake resistant facilities;
- The unavailability of state of the art construction materials;
- A limited pool of donor funding.

The above factors hampered our efforts to construct truly earthquake resistant buildings. In the end only minor modifications, such as light weight structures and gable tops, could be applied to the buildings that were constructed. This was undertaken using self-help groups and with limited artisan supervision.

To conclude, whilst it is imperative to build back better after catastrophic events such as earthquakes, the reality on the ground can impinge on our ability to achieve this worthy goal. Our experience in Nepal reinforces this message. On the other hand our experience in the Philippines indicates that it is possible to build back better even when working under challenging climactic conditions. The key to this I believe is engaging with a diverse pool of stakeholders when seeking to build back better from a disaster.

References and Content Notes

1. Category 1 – 119 – 152 km/h maximum wind speed; Category 2 – 154 – 177 km/h; Category 3 – 178 – 208 km/h; Category 4 – 209 – 251 km/h; Category 5 \geq 252 km/h

Reflecting on Concern's shelter work in South Sudan



By Tom Dobbin

Introduction

Concern is working within the walls of a UN base in Bentiu, South Sudan, which provides safety to people seeking protection from the ongoing conflict. In less than 12 months, the population of the camp expanded from 47,000 to 120,000 today, making it the largest displacement camp within South Sudan.

When the seasonal rains arrived last year, they sparked widespread flooding in the camp that collapsed latrines and forced families to wade through knee-deep open sewage. Concern took on a massive redevelopment of the site to improve living conditions.

As part of this project, Concern embarked on an ambitious initiative to create a new, sturdier shelter to replace the damaged tents and worn-out plastic sheeting that families were living under. Camp residents were involved in every step of the design process, from participating in focus groups to collecting local construction materials.

The result was a home that can withstand rain, strong winds, high temperature and termites – all hazards that Bentiu residents face throughout the year. The structure combines standard shelter kit items such as timber, bamboo and rubber rope with outer walls and roofing made from elephant grass, which grows locally.



Materials for use in constructing shelter facilities, Bentiu Camp, South Sudan. Photo by Tom Dobbins, 2015.

Relationships matter

We found that success of the shelter project was heavily reliant on a number of key relationships as follows:

- **National Shelter Cluster personnel:** By building on interpersonal relationships with the cluster lead, we had quick and easy access to relevant and useful information. The cluster lead quickly recognised our technical competency and ability to deliver a response quickly and efficiently. This greatly enhanced Concern's reputation in South Sudan.
- **National and District Shelter Cluster meetings:** Our experience is that it is essential to have a technically competent person to attend the regular meetings, rather than a "seat warmer" who is simply there to take notes. This approach enabled us to report accurately, offer advice and influence the direction of the meetings. It is worth noting that attendance records are kept of these meetings, and these impact the allocation of emergency funds.
- **National Technical Working Groups:** These working groups are set up to decide on technical specifications for implementation. It is best to have competent representation on these. It is better still, where possible, to be co-lead on these groups. This gives access to information on upcoming calls for proposals and allows for early preparation of the technical content.
- **The beneficiary community:** It was vital that our technical coordinator could build up a rapport with the community leaders, and was aware of the community needs, their cultural practices and their physical skills before trying moving from an acute emergency response into a more durable solution. This involved lots of community participation, construction of prototypes, evaluations and feedback sessions from all groups. It was particularly important to include women who are primarily the home builder and responsible for its maintenance. We focused on ensuring the shelters were easy to build using traditional skills and materials; this made the units more acceptable to the beneficiary. This process can be tiresome and frustrating, but it is well worth the effort before construction starts. We used local elephant grass as a key material component of the shelters - this was harvested and collected by local women who were paid for their work. This created acceptance and buy-in to the project, and also let the beneficiaries participate in the construction as much as possible.
- **SURGE Logistical team:** It was key to have logistics staff to evaluate the constraints on the ground, propose solutions and help with implementation. This support proved vital for us to complete the initial 8,000 robust emergency shelters; the materials had to be procured, transported, stored, prepared and constructed in a three month period, with implementation peaking at 1,000 per week.



It was particularly important to include women who are primarily the home builder and responsible for its maintenance

Show humanitarian leadership

There were a number of other activities we found to be key to our success. By holding a preparation workshop and training operators to use electric saws and equipment, we minimised wastage and facilitated rapid construction when the complete kits were despatched to the blocks.



The photo shows Children playing outside a newly constructed Robust Emergency Shelter in the extension area, Benitu Camp, South Sudan. Photo by Colm Moloney, June 2015.

By operating the Logistics hub 'MSU' (5+ outdoor storage for 3,000m³ of lumber) for the Shelter Cluster, the team had complete control of the operation right through from procurement to the handover of the shelter to the beneficiary. This was reminiscent of when Concern did similar projects in the 1990s.

Experience gained by the shelter team has enabled the construction of a further 3,050 RES and 2,000 emergency shelters. On top of this was a planned distribution of light shelter kits to a further 4,000 families. In total in 2015, we will provide shelter to 13,777 families – a minimum of 110,216 individuals¹.

Conclusion

Without the key relationships and activities outlined above, it would not have been possible to undertake the shelter project successfully. It involved a significant number of SURGE, systems and managerial personnel to provide a wide range of support. This included both expat staff and local staff, all working under very difficult and arduous conditions. The building and maintaining of key relationships ensured the successful completion of the first part of the shelter project; it continues to expand today as more beneficiaries continue to arrive into the camp.

References and Content Notes

1. This figure is calculated as follows 13,777 *8. Eight persons is the minimum family size.

Quick, run, it's an earthquake...!!



By Dom Hunt

What is an earthquake?

An earthquake is caused by a sudden slip on a fault. Tectonic plates are always slowly moving, but they get stuck at their edges – where the fault lines are – due to friction. When the stress on the edge overcomes the friction, there is a sudden slip; which releases energy in waves that travel through the earth and cause the shaking that we feel.

Earthquakes are normally measured using the Moment Magnitude scale. Each unit increase of magnitude is roughly equivalent to 30 times more energy released (i.e. an M7 releases 30 times more energy than an M6 earthquake), but how this converts into the amount of shake we feel is dependent on the depth, distance, rock/soil type and so on. Generally speaking, the higher the magnitude the higher the risk of damages, but a small shallow earthquake directly under you can cause significant damage.

Earthquake impacts

Earthquakes can be extremely destructive; especially damaging to our built environment, knocking down buildings and other infrastructure that are not designed to withstand shaking. Earthquakes can also trigger other hazards – such as further earthquakes (aftershocks), landslides, tsunamis and fires.

Obviously, buildings falling down cause death and injury, and loss of the assets stored inside the buildings. Water supply or electricity systems can be damaged and stop working. Roads can get covered in rubble, health systems get overloaded, and those that have lost their homes find themselves without shelter. Agricultural lands can be damaged from landslides; irrigation systems crack... and so on.

Those of you who have experienced a large earthquake would also know how terrifying they are – psychological trauma is also a common feature following earthquakes.



Damage to buildings in Charikot, the capital of Dolakha district in Nepal. Dolakha was badly hit by the 7.3 magnitude earthquake which hit Nepal on May 12th, causing almost total destruction of houses in some areas. Photo by Kieran McConville, June 2015.

Earthquake vulnerability

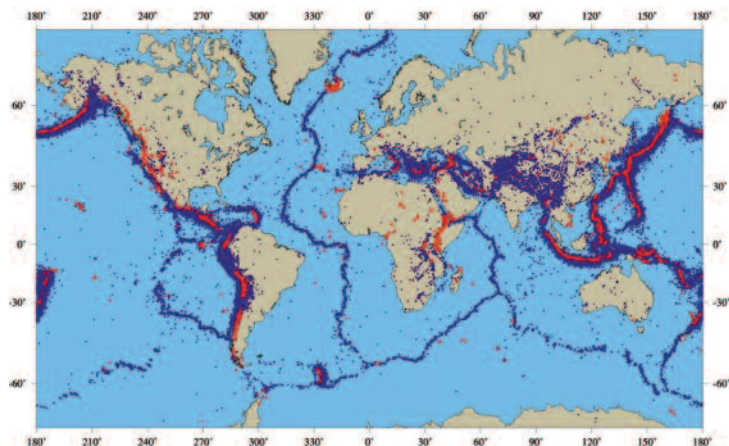
Of course it doesn't have to be this way; it depends on how prepared one is for earthquakes. Compare the Haiti earthquake in 2010 with the Chile earthquake later on in the same year: The 2010 Haiti earthquake was a magnitude 7 earthquake which killed around 230,000 people and affected 3.7 million people¹ the economic cost of this event is estimated at \$7.8 billion USD, a staggering 120 percent of Haiti's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)² – clearly exceeding Haiti's capacity to recover without assistance. Soon after that Chile received an 8.8 magnitude earthquake – approaching 1000 times more energy released than the Haiti earthquake, and costing \$ 30 billion USD (around 14 percent of their GDP) - but which only killed 562 people.

There are many reasons why the Haiti earthquake was so much more devastating than the Chilean one. But perhaps the biggest reason is investment in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and preparedness. Chile is on a very seismically active zone and repeatedly suffers from earthquakes. In contrast the last damaging earthquake in Haiti was in 1842 – long before living memory. This is part of the reason why Haiti has not invested in earthquake tolerant infrastructure, as Chile has done; but perhaps the more important reason is one of political stability and economic wealth. Chile is a stable middle income country that can afford to invest in DRR, whereas Haiti suffers from endemic weak governance and high levels of extreme poverty, a heavily degraded environment, with densely populated inner city informal settlements, poorly built on steep slopes. When the earthquake hit, the country was ill-prepared for it.

Earthquakes and Concern

The map below shows where earthquakes (blue dots) and volcanoes (red dots) occur – these largely correspond to the edges of the tectonic plates. From the map one can clearly see the areas that are in seismic active zones.

Figure 1: A map indicating where earthquakes and volcanoes occur



By examining the map one can also discern which countries carry earthquake risk. Going from East to West, Concern's countries of operation which carry significant earthquake risks are the Philippines, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Turkey/Syria, and Haiti.

Some of these countries have not had a big earthquake in living memory – Lebanon for example. This doesn't mean that it won't get an earthquake – it will – but the stress has to build up enough in the fault before it slips. It can take years, decades or even centuries for the stress to overcome friction and result in an earthquake.

Seismologists can roughly work out how long it takes for the stress to build up, and therefore can give us an idea of when a fault becomes dangerously close to slipping. Unfortunately, there is no way of predicting exactly when or where an earthquake will actually happen.



In spite of not being able to predict earthquakes, once a main shock has happened, the pattern of aftershocks is much more predictable

When large earthquakes with significant damages occur in countries that are unable to cope without assistance, Concern responds under our humanitarian mandate. We have responded to earthquakes in Afghanistan (Takhar, 1998), India (Gujarat, 2001), Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka (Sumatran earthquake and South East Asian tsunami, 2004), Pakistan (Kashmir 2005), Haiti (Port au Prince, 2010) and most recently Nepal (Gorkha, 2015).

What to do in an earthquake?

If you can³, run outside, making sure your colleagues and friends are running with you. Keep away from walls, telegraph poles, electricity cables and so on. If you are in bed it is probably better to roll off your bed onto the floor.

Expect aftershocks – stay outside. Expect mobile communications to become overloaded quickly, as everyone will be trying to see if their loved ones are OK.

Being in a country that carries a high risk of earthquakes means you should learn where the stronger places in buildings are located. Load bearing walls are usually less likely of collapse, whereas stairs and fill-in walls tend to be more likely to collapse. Windows can shatter and cupboards can topple, so keep away from them.

The aftershock

In spite of not being able to predict earthquakes, once a main shock has happened, the pattern of aftershocks is much more predictable and allows us to forecast aftershocks with a degree of certainty. In this regard Concern is partnering with the University of Ulster, who are developing a tool that can assess the probabilities of aftershocks of certain magnitudes in a given timeframe, as well as point out where the areas are that are most seismically active – and therefore most likely to suffer aftershocks. Concern is working on how this information can be used in an emergency operation.

The above information proved to be extremely useful in Nepal. We knew, for example, that the most risky area was in Dolakha and Sindhupalchowk, where we had our operations, and what the probabilities of aftershocks were. In the initial stages the probabilities were high – we were faced with a 25 percent chance of getting an aftershock larger than M7. This would have been highly destructive, and indeed, the May 12th aftershock fit into this pattern. We used this information primarily to develop our safety guidelines, which included prohibiting Concern staff from entering buildings in these districts, and encouraging our partner staff to purchase tents and other sleeping items so they could stay outside. We were also advising earthquake survivors not to return to their houses (the ones that were still standing) for fear that they would be increasing their risk.

References and Content Notes

1. Haiti country profile on www.em-dat.be
2. Financing Disaster Risk Reduction, Kellett and Caravani, ODI 2013
<http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/7452-climate-finance-disaster-risk-reduction>
3. not always possible – you may be upstairs, asleep, or knocked off your feet

Security Focal Groups Matter!



By Peter Crichton

Introduction

“Anticipation”, I consistently repeat at the more than seventy five security training events I have conducted for Concern, “is the key to good security management.”

We do not want to be in the position of consistently playing catch-up or only responding to threats after they have happened to ourselves or other organisations. We want to be pro-active in identifying emerging threats, new patterns of criminal activities and other events that can impact on the security of our staff and our ability to deliver good quality humanitarian and development programmes.

The principle mechanism we use to anticipate potential changes to our security environment is the requirement that every location where we have staff based must have a Security Focal Group in place. I would go as far to say that it is not possible to have good security management practice without having well-functioning security focal groups that understand their roles and responsibilities.

Cultivate a diverse membership

Membership of the group should reflect the nature of our programmes, the ethnicity, gender and other relevant personal traits of our staff and must include support staff. We particularly encourage the participation of senior drivers and guards, where we employ our own. In larger offices each member of the group is effectively representing a constituency such as other members of the WASH team or the drivers.



The enhanced contextual understanding of national staff coupled with their community and family contacts help us in anticipating change

The broad and diverse membership of the group contributes to shared ownership of security management and captures the knowledge, understanding and concerns of all staff. This is especially important since culture, power relationships and changing allegiances and agendas can have an adverse impact on our security.

The enhanced contextual understanding of national staff coupled with their community and family contacts help us in anticipating change. This helps ensure that our security practices and measures are commensurate with the risk profile in each location. I was intrigued to learn on a recent visit to Afghanistan that one of our contacts in Taloqan is the local honey dealer. This person is in constant contact with a large number of beekeepers who are often located in remote rural locations. The beekeepers are an invaluable source of information since they can quickly let us know if there is suspicious movement of strangers in areas we have to travel through.

We have invested over the last ten years or so in the training of our security focal groups. This focuses on ensuring that they are familiar with simple analytical tools that include indicators of change, identification of potential threats and those that pose them, judging the likelihood of an event happening and its impact on us and our programmes if it does. A recently introduced practice by the Security Focal Group in Mogadishu has been to prepare annual work plans for themselves. These plans detail the level of analysis done at different times, reviewing of and recommending changes to the measures in place and scenario planning for future events. This looks like a very promising initiative and one that I am encouraging other countries to follow.

We are responsible for security

While individual members of the security focal group have additional responsibilities for contributing to security, our approach requires that every staff member has an obligation to ensure that their personal behaviour does not put themselves or their colleagues at greater risk. Also, staff members must follow any security measures that have been put in place.

Though in this short article I have focussed on the importance of having security focal groups in place and working well, it needs to be stressed that while these are a key security mechanism the delivery of high quality programmes is what underpins our security in any location. This includes appropriate and timely delivery, ensuring that we are transparent about beneficiary selection, have complaints response mechanisms in place and are following our own internal guidelines on staff recruitment, purchase of supplies and protection of programme participants.

Conclusion

Our policy and practice dictates that we cannot have programming without security in place but equally true is that we cannot have security without programming. In essence, you can't have one without the other.

Why all the fuss about Humanitarian Coordination?



By Kirk Prichard

Introduction

During a major flood, one village, close to a road, receives 50 Kilogram (kg) of rice, vegetable oil, sleeping mats, tarps, torches, and cash. Another village 10 Kilometer (km) away receives a 5 kg bag of rice and nothing else.

During a disease outbreak a child receives the same vaccine twice. After an earthquake, a family provided with tools and supplies, rebuilds their collapsed house in the exact same manner as before. During a war, donor funding is diverted to a powerful general's hometown to prevent him from attacking civilians.

Hopefully all of us would agree that the examples above are very bad practices. It is not fair that one village receives more assistance than another if the needs are the same; it is not safe if one child receives the same vaccine multiple times; it is bad disaster preparedness and mitigation if a house is rebuilt using the same poor construction methodology, and it is against humanitarian principles to use funding for political and military aims. What is shocking is that every single one of these examples takes place within the aid sector on a regular basis; and they all highlight why humanitarian coordination is so important.

Getting to grips with humanitarian coordination

At its most basic, humanitarian coordination is about saying who is doing what, when and where for affected populations. For example, Concern is providing water and sanitation services to Internally Displaced Person (IDPs) in Bentiu, South Sudan whilst on the other hand Mercy Corps might be giving food vouchers outside of Juba. There are formalized mechanisms which you might have participated in (the 'who, what, when, where' and Cluster Approach) that can help with coordination. But humanitarian coordination is much more than just saying who is doing what, it gets to our core identity as a Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) and helps us become more accountable to those we strive to serve. Through humanitarian coordination and leadership, standards and guidelines can be designed to ensure fairness and gaps in programming can be addressed, advocacy for programming can be undertaken, and funding can be principled and targeted.

Concern's experience with humanitarian coordination

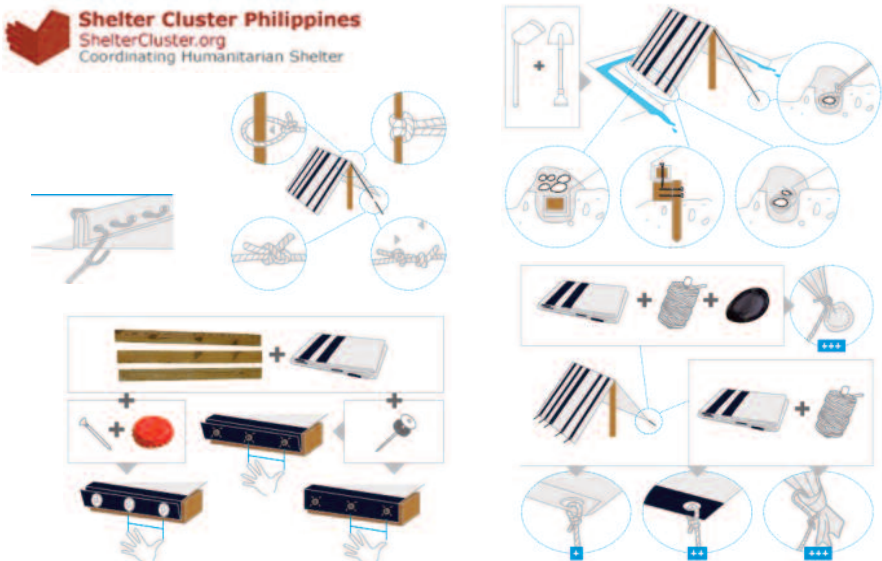
One recent emergency, Typhoon Haiyan, highlights many of the positives which can occur through humanitarian coordination. Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in November of 2013 and was one of the strongest storms to ever make landfall. When all was said and done, Typhoon Haiyan damaged or destroyed over 1.1 million households, made 4.1 million people homeless and affected a total of 14.1 million people. Naturally there was a large outpouring of support from the world community and numerous NGOs, militaries and governments all wanted to respond in order to provide assistance. While this level of response was needed and greatly appreciated, a high functioning coordination system was similarly necessary to avoid the abovementioned pitfalls - and to a large extent the system worked.



If Concern wants to become a leader in the humanitarian field, it will need to start taking leadership roles within coordination structures

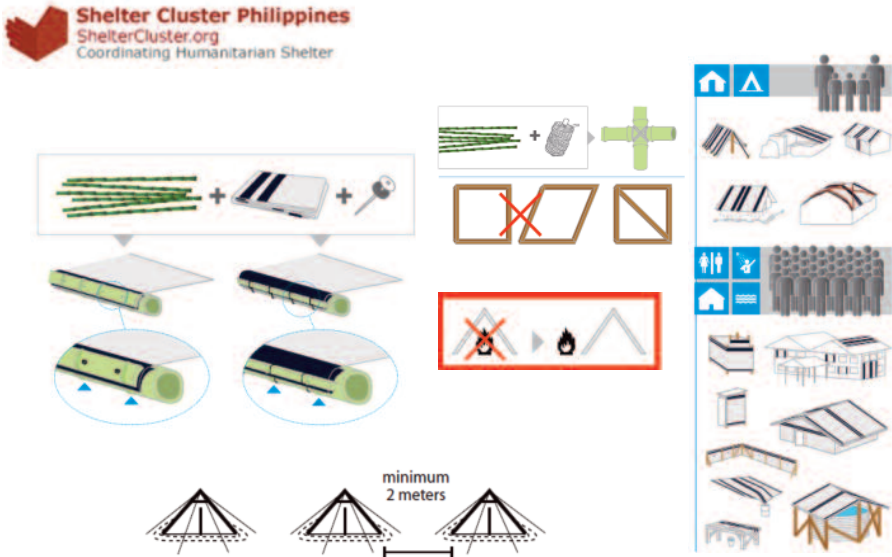
Regional hubs were set up throughout the Philippines to coordinate who was doing what, where. Maps were produced which showed unmet needs versus areas which were already covered. Through the logistics cluster, private resources such as planes were mobilized to help transport relief materials to affected communities. Concern itself saved over half a million dollars by utilizing these transport options.

Figure 1: Informational cartoons designed by the shelter cluster in the Philippines



Another great example of good humanitarian coordination in action relates to some of the work done by the shelter cluster. The shelter cluster designed informational cartoons which showed how to safely and effectively construct emergency shelter. In addition to improving the protection provided by these shelters, the simple techniques demonstrated in the cartoons greatly improved the lifespan of tarpaulins -- in some cases double or triple the life of a tarp.

Figure 2: Informational cartoons designed by the shelter cluster in the Philippines



Inversely, the recent response in Nepal demonstrated the pitfalls of an ineffective system that required multiple layers of reporting and huge amounts of bureaucracy and government interference which contributed to a delayed response and poor accountability. In my view this is an example of a dysfunctional humanitarian coordination system.

Despite these problems, humanitarian coordination is going to become an increasingly important component of our humanitarian programming. For instance donor governments are beginning to require evidence of coordination before funding, whilst some governments are requiring it for registration as well. Furthermore, if Concern wants to become a leader in the humanitarian field, it will need to start taking a leadership role within coordination structures, for example co-leading a cluster or sitting on the Humanitarian Country Team.

Conclusion

In conclusion, if you would like to learn more about some of the terms used in this article or how to become more involved with the International Humanitarian Architecture, I encourage you to check out our online learning tool, called Building a Better Response (www.buildingabetterresponse.org).

This tool was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and developed by Concern, International Medical Corps, and Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. The tool will give you an in-depth understanding of humanitarian coordination. I strongly urge you whether you are a humanitarian guru or novice to check out the tool. It is available in English, French and Arabic, and if you complete all five modules you receive a certificate from the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, one of the premier programmes in the world. If you have any specific questions about humanitarian coordination, please do not hesitate to get in touch

The importance of global pre-positioned emergency stocks



By Martin Dalton

Introduction

Concern first started to pre-position emergency stocks at a global level in 1994 after the Great Lakes emergency¹. This large scale emergency highlighted ours and other agencies deficiencies in pre-positioning and other areas of emergency response preparedness. Since then Concern has always maintained emergency stocks of some level although sourcing and storage strategies for these have evolved over the years.

Initially Concern's emergency stocks were pre-positioned in a leased warehousing facility in Rotterdam, Holland. At the time this made sense as charter flights during the initial stage of emergencies tended to depart from various airports around Europe. However, European departure points for emergency charters became more expensive and competitive due to a number of factors including increases in flight and storage costs and the introduction of European Union (EU) restrictions on certain aircraft types which happened to be those that were most suited to our cargo movements. Additionally, the types of Non-food Items (NFI's) to be pre-positioned were now almost exclusively manufactured in Asian countries and shipping these items to Holland was an expensive option.

Rotterdam as a storage location was significantly scaled down and as a cost cutting exercise, large volumes of NFI's were held with suppliers on a consignment stocking arrangement where no storage fees applied. However this decentralised strategy was not ideal and a better solution was sought.

Partnering with the World Food Programme

In 2009 Concern approached the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) with a view to partnering with them on their United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) initiative. At the time the UNHRD was made up of 5 large warehousing complexes strategically located in areas prone to emergencies. These hubs are located in Brindisi (Italy), Dubai (United Arab Emirates), Accra (Ghana), Subang (Malaysia) and Panama. A more recent hub has since been opened in Las Palmas in the Canary Islands just off the coast of West Africa.

Concern's application to join the UNHRD was accepted and we have been a partner ever since. As a partner we are entitled to free storage in any of the hubs. We also have the option of borrowing or sharing our stocks with other agencies. For this reason one of the strict requirements is that none of the stocks stored in any of the hubs can be branded. There are currently 68 organisations using the services of the UNHRD including NGO's, International organisations and the various UN organisations. Some donors such as Irish Aid are also supporting and prepositioning stocks within the UNHRD network. Concern currently, by choice pre-positions its stocks in the Dubai UNHRD warehouse.



The photo shows some of Concern's stocks in the UNHRD Dubai. Photo by Martin Dalton, 2015.

Contextual relevance of supplies pivotal

While these pre-positioned stocks are primarily there to help reduce the amount of time it takes to get urgently required stocks in to a sudden on-set emergency we must be confident that local or regional sources of supplies cannot meet our immediate needs. We will also never 'push' these supplies in to an emergency until we are sure the items are appropriate for the needs identified on the ground. The whole idea is to reinforce contextual relevance and appropriateness of supplies.



Currently our stock in Dubai has a vast array of items that can be quickly distributed in the event of an emergency

The presence of pre-positioned stocks is only one element of our emergency supply strategy. The amount we keep in stock will normally only be sufficient to kick-start a response. In the initial stages these supplies will be complimented by goods that can be sourced locally and by stocks released to us from the UNHRD stores by donors such as Irish Aid or other UNHRD partners.

Volume of stocks pre-positioned

Table 1: Stocks currently held in the Dubai hub

Item	Quantity
Plastic tarps	2,000
Construction rope	2,000
Fleece blankets	4,000
Sleeping mats	4,000
Hygiene kits	2,000
Kitchen sets	2,000
Jerry Cans	2,000

Equally important to our emergency supply strategy is to maintain good supplier relationships in terms of knowing who can supply what and from which locations. These relationships with suppliers must be built up prior to any emergency so that we can engage in supply contracts with the minimum amount of fuss and in the hope of getting preferential treatment over those customers that have not maintained such relationships.



The photo shows the UNHRD Warehouses in Dubai. Photo by Martin Dalton, 2015.

As an organisation Concern currently holds a variety of NFI's that when combined may typically provide a very comprehensive shelter and household pack to 2000 families or 10,000 people. Currently our stock in Dubai has a vast array of items that can be quickly distributed in the event of an emergency, see table one. The volume of these items should just about fit into a charter flight typically used in emergencies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our emergency supplies have been used effectively in many different emergencies over the last number of years. We have been complimented on numerous occasions on the comprehensiveness of our kits and the quality standards that we adhere to. Finally, for all our NFI's where relevant we ensure that they comply with the standards set by such bodies as: The SPHERE Project -Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response², the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies³, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees⁴.

References and Content Notes

1. For more on the Great Lakes Emergency see, **Refugees Magazine Issue 110 (Crisis in the Great Lakes)**. Available here: <http://www.unhcr.org/3b6925384.html>
2. See: <http://www.sphereproject.org/>
3. See: <https://www.ifrc.org/>
4. See: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/txis/vtx/home>

French-language abstracts

L'intervention de Concern face au Typhon Haiyan... ce qui a fait la différence



Par Ros O'Sullivan

Le typhon Haiyan (connu localement sous le nom de Yolanda) a touché les Philippines le 8 novembre 2013. Il s'agissait du Typhon le plus puissant à s'être jamais abattu sur le pays et sa force a semé la destruction dans son sillage, sur une large portion du territoire, touchant 14 millions de personnes. Concern a été l'une des nombreuses organisations humanitaires à intervenir face à cette catastrophe naturelle de grande ampleur.

Un thème récurrent a émergé, parmi nos nombreux collègues ayant engagé leurs efforts dans cette situation d'urgence : le fait qu'à leurs yeux, cette intervention s'est démarquée – que ce soit en termes de zones où les efforts se sont concentrés ou de décisions prises vis-à-vis du programme ; elle s'est démarquée tant en termes de qualité que de quantité des différentes composantes du programme ; elle s'est encore démarquée en termes relationnels, par les liens créés avec les autorités locales comme avec les personnes des communautés touchées. Cette intervention s'est aussi démarquée en termes de durabilité et d'impact global, tant du point de vue des communautés bénéficiaires que des autorités locales, ce qu'a confirmé l'évaluation faite après l'intervention.

Reconstruire en mieux (Build Back Better) : Réflexions sur les projets récemment menés aux Philippines et au Népal



Par Per Andersson

Reconstruire en mieux (Build Back Better - BBB -), cela n'a, en soi, rien de nouveau ; ingénieurs et scientifiques ont, pendant des siècles, appliqué de nouvelles technologies et connaissances pour l'amélioration des leçons tirées de catastrophes naturelles. Dans le domaine de l'aide humanitaire, cependant, l'application de la Réduction des risques de catastrophes (Disaster Risk Reduction - DRR -) et le déploiement des Objectifs du millénaire pour le développement ont eu un impact sur la manière dont Concern applique de façon plus systématique le DBB et la DRR. Même si reconstruire en mieux est impératif après des évènements catastrophiques tels que des tremblements de terre, la réalité sur le terrain peut

affecter notre capacité à concrétiser ce louable objectif. Notre expérience au Népal renforce l'importance de ce message. Dans le reste du présent article, je ferai part de mes réflexions sur la manière dont Concern, dans son travail aux Philippines et au Népal, a cherché à intégrer la pratique du BBB.

Mener une réflexion vis-à-vis du travail de Concern au Soudan du Sud dans le domaine des abris

 Par Tom Dobbin

Concern travaille dans l'enceinte d'une base des Nations Unies, à Bentiu, au Soudan du Sud, ce qui assure la sécurité des personnes qui cherchent à se protéger du conflit actuel. En moins de 12 mois, la population du camp a augmenté, passant de 47 000 à 120 000 personnes l'heure actuelle, ce qui en fait le plus grand camp de déplacés du Soudan du Sud.

L'arrivée des pluies saisonnières, l'année dernière, a provoqué d'importantes inondations dans le camp, détruisant les latrines et contraignant les familles à se frayer un chemin à travers des égouts à ciel ouvert, les eaux usées leur arrivant jusqu'aux genoux. Concern entreprend un réaménagement d'envergure du site, dans l'objectif d'améliorer les conditions de vie.

Dans le cadre de ce projet, Concern se lança dans une initiative ambitieuse de création d'un nouvel abri plus solide, pour remplacer les tentes endommagées et les bâches en plastique complètement usées sous lesquelles vivaient les familles. Les résidents du camp ont été impliqués dans chacune des étapes de conception, que ce soit de par leur participation aux groupes focaux ou par le ramassage de matériaux de construction.

Le résultat, c'est une maison qui résiste aux pluies, aux vents violents, aux températures élevées et aux termites – des dangers que tous les résidents de Bentiu doivent affronter toute l'année. La structure combine des éléments conventionnels de kits d'abris, tels que du bois, du bambou et de la corde en caoutchouc, avec des murs extérieurs et une toiture fabriqués à partir d'herbe à éléphant, qu'on trouve sur place.

Vite, fuyez, c'est un tremblement de terre... !!

 Par Dom Hunt

Un tremblement de terre est causé par un glissement soudain sur une faille. Le mouvement des plaques tectoniques est toujours lent, mais leurs bords se coincent (là où se trouvent les lignes de faille) en raison du frottement. Quand la pression exercée sur les bords est supérieure au frottement, un glissement soudain se produit, ce qui libère de l'énergie par vagues qui parcourent la terre et provoquent les secousses que nous pouvons ressentir.

Les tremblements de terre sont habituellement mesurés en employant l'échelle de Richter. Chaque unité d'augmentation de magnitude est à peu près équivalente à une quantité 30 fois plus importante d'énergie libérée (c'est-à-dire qu'un tremblement de terre de magnitude 7 (M7) libère 30 fois plus d'énergie qu'un tremblement de terre de M6). Mais la façon dont ces

mesures se convertissent en une quantité de secousses perceptibles dépend de la profondeur, de la distance, du type de roche/de sol, etc. D'une façon générale, plus la magnitude est élevée, plus risques de dommages le sont également, mais un petit tremblement de terre superficiel qui a lieu directement en dessous de vous peut causer des dégâts significatifs.

Les groupes focaux de sécurité comptent !

 Par Peter Crichton

« L'anticipation », comme je l'ai constamment répété au cours de plus de soixante-quinze formations relatives à la sécurité que j'ai organisées pour Concern, « est la clé de toute bonne gestion de la sécurité. » Nous ne voulons pas nous trouver constamment en situation de rattrapage ou dans une position où nous n'intervenons pour gérer les menaces qu'une fois qu'elles sont arrivées, que ce soit dans notre cas ou dans celui d'autres organisations. Ce que nous voulons, c'est nous montrer proactifs dans l'identification des menaces émergentes, des nouveaux modes d'activités criminelles et dans celle d'autres événements susceptibles d'avoir un impact sur la sécurité de nos équipes, ainsi que sur notre capacité à produire des programmes humanitaires et de développement de bonne qualité.

Le mécanisme principal que nous employons pour anticiper les changements pouvant potentiellement se produire dans notre environnement de sécurité, c'est l'exigence d'avoir, dans chacun des lieux où sont basés des membres de nos équipes, un Groupe focal de sécurité en place. J'irais même jusqu'à affirmer qu'une pratique satisfaisante de la gestion de la sécurité n'est pas possible sans groupes focaux de sécurité au fonctionnement correct, qui ont une bonne compréhension leurs rôles ainsi que leurs responsabilités.

Mais pourquoi parle-t-on autant de la coordination des opérations humanitaire ?

 Par Kirk Prichard

À son niveau le plus basique, la coordination humanitaire, c'est dire qui fait quoi, où et quand pour les populations touchées. Par exemple, Concern donne accès d'un côté à des services d'eau et d'assainissement aux personnes déplacées à l'intérieur de leur propre pays (Internally Displaced Person - IDP -), à Bentiu, Soudan du Sud, tandis que, de l'autre, Mercy Corps peut donner des coupons alimentaires en dehors de la ville de Juba, Soudan du Sud. Il existe même des mécanismes officiels auxquels vous avez peut-être participé (le « qui, quoi, quand, comment » et l'approche Cluster - par responsabilité sectorielle -) qui peuvent contribuer favorablement à la coordination. Mais la coordination humanitaire, c'est beaucoup plus que se borner à dire qui fait quoi, cela touche notre identité profonde en tant qu'ONG et nous aide à nous rendre plus responsabilisés vis-à-vis de ceux que nous nous efforçons de servir. Par le biais de la coordination et de l'encadrement humanitaires, les normes et directives peuvent être conçues afin de s'assurer de satisfaire aux exigences d'équité et de remédier aux manques, que les démarches de sensibilisation à la programmation puissent se faire, et que le financement puisse être raisonné et ciblé.

L'importance des stocks d'urgence mondiaux positionnés à l'avance

 Par Martin Dalton

Concern a commencé pour la première fois à positionner à l'avance des stocks d'urgence en 1994 après l'état d'urgence des Grands Lacs. Cet état d'urgence à grande échelle a mis en relief nos propres manques ainsi que ceux d'autres agences en termes de positionnement effectué à l'avance, ainsi que dans d'autres domaines de préparation aux interventions en situation d'urgence. Depuis, Concern a constamment gardé une certaine quantité de stocks d'urgence, même si les stratégies d'approvisionnement et d'entreposage de ces stocks ont connu des évolutions avec les années.

Nos provisions d'urgence ont été efficacement utilisées au cours de nombreuses situations d'urgence ces dernières années. Nous avons reçu à plusieurs reprises des compliments pour le caractère très complet de nos trousseaux d'urgence, ainsi que pour la qualité des normes de qualités auxquelles nous adhérons. Enfin, nous nous assurons que nos produits non alimentaires dans leur ensemble soient bien conformes aux normes définies par des organisations telles que : Le Projet SPHERE - Charte humanitaire et Normes minimales pour les interventions en cas de catastrophe, la Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge et le Haut-Commissariat des Nations unies pour les réfugiés.

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For whom is the publication

All staff involved in designing, implementing, managing, monitoring, evaluating and communicating Concern's work. This publication should also be shared with partners.

What this publication includes

- Promising practice
- Organisational learning
- Promotion of multi-sectoral and integrated approaches to programming
- Links to full reports

What it doesn't include

- Targeted recommendations
- Additional evidence not included in the papers cited
- Detailed descriptions of interventions or their implementation

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