Laying the Path, Setting a Future

CARE International in Myanmar's Cyclone Nargis Response 2008-2013





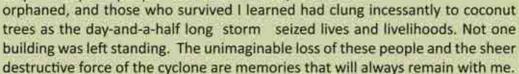
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Foreword

Brian Agland, Country Director

Not long after Cyclone Nargis struck, I visited what was left of a small village in Bogale Township in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta. This little village was almost wiped out from the map. Thirty-six people had been killed, 10 children



Yet despite their losses, despite their grief, I was struck by how these people reached out to others and went about the task of rebuilding their lives. Though many communities did not receive external help for days, it did not stop them from sharing what little rice they had, nor from sharing make-shift tents with strangers. This enormous and devastating cyclone had been unable to take this spirit from these people.

More than five years have passed since that time, and for the entire period CARE staff have been working to help the people in these communities cope with their losses, and to rebuild their lives. We reached over 288,000 people no small achievement.

CARE's sustained support over the years has focused heavily on rehabilitating community lives and livelihoods, strengthening community resilience, and reducing communities' vulnerabilities to future natural disasters.

CARE could not have done this work without forming or cementing close partnerships with the communities themselves, with many levels of Government, with national and international NGOs, and with the UN, donors and many others. As Myanmar has experienced a number of other emergencies since Nargis, including Cyclone Giri, the Shwe Bo earthquake, the conflict in Rakhine, CARE is committed to continuing it's support for affected communities through these difficult times.

Defending dignity.



CARE is an international development organisation fighting global poverty, with a special focus on working with women and girls to bring lasting changes to their communities. CARE works in partnership to achieve lasting results.



CARE in Myanmar

CARE International in Myanmar is actively engaged in programs across 10 states and regions, where it addresses locally defined needs such as food security, income generation, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention and care, water, sanitation and hygiene, emergency relief, and disaster risk reduction.

The organisation is committed to promoting women's empowerment, recognizing that it is a

critical pathway for achieving change in the lives of vulnerable and marginalized women, and in reducing poverty and social injustice.

CARE Myanmar harnesses the energies of a range of players to achieve impact at its program level through strengthening the capacity of implementing partners to lead quality development interventions; strengthening civil society in Myanmar; and developing new forms of partnership to support longer term program goals.

CARE works towards both development assistance and emergency response. In times of humanitarian crises, CARE provides food, water, sanitation and hygiene plus shelter relief. It focuses on those most affected by natural disasters, particularly women and girls and the most marginalised population groups, and works closely with government partners, local and international NGOs, and UN Agencies for a coordinated response. CARE is guided by the Sphere Minimum Standards for humanitarian response, and its own Humanitarian Accountability Framework.

CARE's Cyclone Nargis Response

Fighting poverty.

Vision

We seek a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. CARE International will be a global force and a partner of choice within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty. We will be known every-



where for our unshakable commitment to the dignity of people.

Mission

Our mission is to serve individuals and families in the poorest communities in the world. Drawing strength from our global diversity, resources and experience, we promote innovative solutions and are advocates for global responsibility. We facilitate lasting change by:

- Strengthening capacity for self-help
- Providing economic opportunity
- Delivering relief in emergencies
- Influencing policy decisions at all levels
- Addressing discrimination in all its forms



Cyclone Nargis at a glance . . .



140,000 lives lost

Severely affected 2.4 million

450,000 homes destroyed Damaged 350,000 shelters

The cyclone also destroyed;

162,000 hectares of summer paddy seed

storage of 251,000 metric tons

34,000 hectares of plantation

43 % of ponds

water sources for 1.8 million

75% of health facilities

50-60 % of schools

electricity for 4 million

38,000 hectares of forests

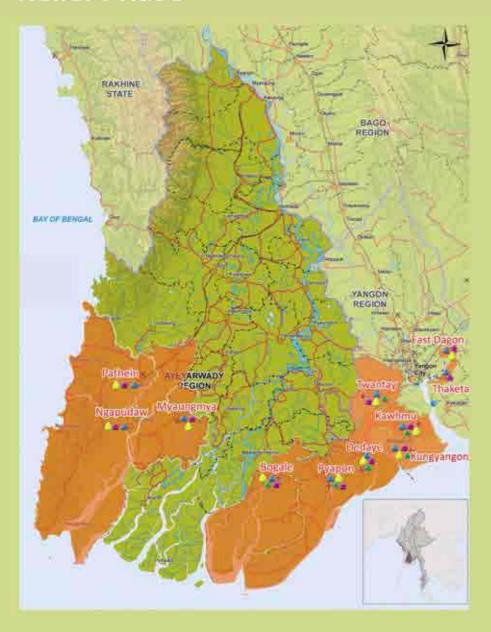
21% of the country's GDP (US\$4.5 bln)



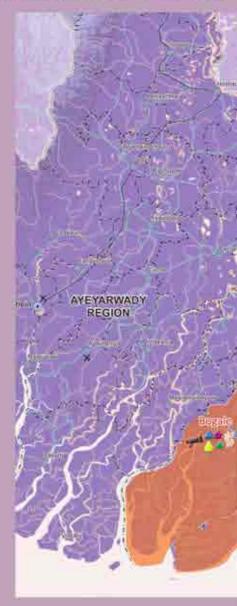
ARE's Cyclone Nargis Response

CARE's Response Program in Phases

Relief Phase

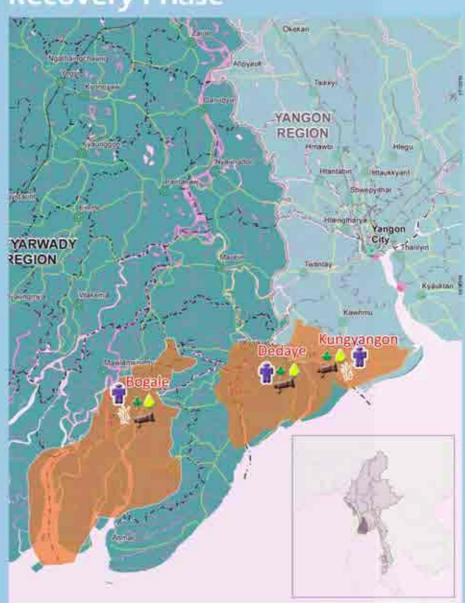


Transition Phase

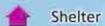


YANGON REGION

Recovery Phase



Food Distribution



Water

Livelihood

Hygiene Promotion

Disaster Risk Reduction

Capacity Building

Infrastructure

Food data to 153,269 households

27,143 households received emergency shelter assistance 170 ponds and 510 wells creamed

RELIEF PHASE

May - November 2008

Within days of the Cyclone, CARE began providing emergency assistance to tens of thousands of survivors across 11 townships in the Ayeyarwaddy and Yangon Regions through food distributions - to assist families in meeting their essential food requirements; family kits - to replace destroyed or lost basic household items; temporary shelter kits - to assist in repairing and building temporary shelters; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) - to create access to potable water and to reduce the risk of water borne illnesses; and agricultural assistance - to ensure a winter rice harvest. CARE partnered with Pyi Gyi Khin and Charity Oriented Myanmar in the initial three months of the emergency response, and over the entire six month emergency phase collectively addressed the needs of 288,469 cyclone-survivors.

CARE directly delivered food to the survivors and also served as the distribution partner for the World Food Programme in six targeted townships. In total, CARE distributed 3,780 metric tons (MT) of rice, 749 MT of beans, 255,695 liters of cooking oil, 43.8 MT of salt, and 13.3 MT of high-energy fortified biscuits.

To assist 40,000 families who had lost their homes and belongings, CARE distributed family kits that included clothing, hygiene items, cooking sets, tool kits, blankets and shelter materials, including bamboo and Nipa palm leaves (traditional roofing material) at the request of local residents.

In addition to ensure potable water access, a total of 680 ponds and wells were cleaned for 14,545 households; 147 ponds and wells were rehabilitated and hand-pumps constructed; six water purification plants were established and 17,638 jerry cans and more than 5,000 earthen jars were distributed.

Furthermore, CARE constructed 12,000 fly proof latrines, distributed 12,135 hygiene kits and conducted hygiene promotion for all targeted beneficiaries.

Finally, CARE's livelihoods activities in the relief phase included distribution of rice seeds, hand tractors and diesel fuel; restocking of lakes and rivers with fish and prawns, plus boats and nets for fishermen and women; and provision of small livestock.

Water for Life

Nwe Nwe, House-wife

"We had only coconut water to drink during the first few days," said Nwe Nwe, a 36 year old housewife from Than Di Ywar Ma village.

All three ponds that had provided drinking water for 70 households in her village had been contaminated with dead bodies. Than Chaung, an elderly member of Than Di Ywar's Village Development Committee recalled, "I can't remember how many bodies were drawn out of our ponds. I only remember that it took many days."

Even after the bodies had been removed, no one had wanted to use its water. So Nwe Nwe and other villagers sought water from neighbouring villages, at times going as far as Dedaye township — a three hour boat ride away.

"When we heard the first of the monsoon rains one night, we felt a huge sense of relief that we might finally collect rainwater. Then when we woke up in the morning, we saw that the

Nive Nive and her fellow villagers fetching drinking water from their village pond which is one of 680 ponds /well cleaned by CARE just after the cyclone

rain that had been collected was filthy, filled with sediment from the river when the tidal waters from Nargis came into our village. But we were so tired from collecting our water from far away places that we drank the rain water anyway," shared Nwe Nwe.

CARE was one of the first organizations to reach Than Di Ywar Ma village after the Cyclone. Upon seeing the needs, CARE began an emergency response that included provision of food, NFI and temporary shelter items, and WASH assistance which included distribution of water purification tablets, water storage jars, Jerry cans, and hygiene kits, plus cleaning of ponds and wells.

"CARE provided us a water pump and diesel to clean three ponds in our village," said Than Chaung.

"Everyone in the village volunteered to help. Once we finished, we were so relieved to not have to worry about clean water anymore." He finished, "before the cyclone came, we took clean water for granted. Now we understand how important it was for our survival." 13,000 Fly-proof latrines built 9,192 home garden seed kits provided 15,656 families received fishing assistance

TRANSITION TO RECOVERY PHASE

December 2008 to August 2009

During this phase, CARE consolidated its efforts to meet the pressing needs of 133,401 cyclone-affected people from Dedaye, Bogale and Pyapon townships in the Ayeyarwady Delta, as well as Kawhmu, Twantay, and Kungyangon townships in Yangon Region.

CARE's early recovery activities addressed WASH priorities for the Cyclone affected including: pond and well reconstruction and renovation; shallow tube well construction; fly-proof latrine construction; establishing water quality surveillance systems at the household level; and hygiene promotion. In addition, rehabilitation of critical infrastructure was addressed through cash for work including construction of footpaths, bridges and dykes, and shelter renovation using locally sourced traditional building materials.

Livelihood recovery activities included seed distribution plus fertilizer, threshers and fuel for paddy farmers; provision of fishing nets, crab traps and boats for fishermen and women; distribution of small livestock, including piglets and ducks for women-headed households; and technical trainings for all activities. Communities were mobilized to encourage active engagement of women and other vulnerable persons. Gender specific targeting criteria were put in place to ensure that appropriate support was provided to vulnerable individuals with limited livelihoods opportunities. Integrated throughout these activities was psychosocial support.

Finally, initial disaster mitigation activities began with the aim to equip households with the knowledge and means to protect their families in the event of another disaster.

REALIZING A DREAM

Daw Pwint, Grocer

"It was like a dream come true when CARE arrived," said Daw Pwint, a 54 year old and local grocer. She thought back to when CARE staff had visited her village in early 2009 to offer her livelihoods assistance. "They chose me to be a part of their project and gave me 100,000 kyat and training on how to start a small business. When the training finished, I opened a small grocery store in my home and began selling oil, salt and onions."

Daw Pwint lives in Tha Pyay Gone Village, Bogale Township, where the majority of households are landless, and most had worked as casual labourers before the Cyclone struck. "Even before the Cyclone I was the sole bread-

Daw Pwint seen at her grocery shop in 2010 which was set up with support from CARE's livelihoods program targeted at low-income and woman-led households.

Photo: CARE

winner for my family. My husband was physically too weak to work after he had been bitten by a snake several years before."

Daw Pwint worked in nearby rice and sunflower fields. "I earned about 1,000 kyat a day in the hot sun. It was really tiring. But the money wasn't enough, so I had to catch mice in the fields and sell them for extra money. I only earned 700-800 kyat per mouse, and sometimes I didn't catch any. I also tried making money buying vegetables from other women and selling them in nearby villages for a small profit. I did whatever I could to earn a living to feed my family, but there was no rest."

"Then Cyclone Nargis hit our village. My family lost almost everything, including our house, and I was separated from my children. I thought they were all dead. I cried so much when we were reunited. But even though we had each other, we had nothing to eat. We survived on food rations. We had no money to rebuild our life. It was a really difficult time – more difficult than before. I felt trapped and hopeless and didn't know what to do."

When Daw Pwint was selected by her Village Development Committee and CARE staff to receive a small business grant, she was overjoyed. "I vowed then to make my family's life better than before. And I did. I opened a grocery shop that now sells high value items like coffee sachets and special snacks. Where in the past I couldn't afford a lot of food for my family, now I buy meat and vegetables every day!"

Money generated from her grocery store was more than she had expected, and enough to enable her to invest in small livestock for breeding, including pigs, chickens and ducks. In turn, these livestock have brought Daw Pwint and her family an additional income that will ensure her children graduate from school - a dream she couldn't have imagined before.

98 VDCs formed and trained

1,223 farmers supported in Seed multiplication program

E W S established in 53 villages

RECOVERY PHASE

September 2009 - August 2012

CARE's recovery program began in September 2009 with the aim to address the medium-to-long term needs of selected vulnerable households in 98 target villages in Kungyangon, Dedaye and Bogale townships. Four projects were developed and implemented to address the gaps in agriculture, WASH, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and fisheries. During this phase, CARE implemented all activities with the support of the Village Development Committees (VDC) and their sub-committees, which were mobilized by CARE to enable communities to manage their own recovery.

An extensive livelihoods assessment conducted in mid 2010, in which community households were active participants, led to the design of a longer-term livelihoods project. Assistance was focused on farming households in 41 villages in Dedaye and Bogale townships that experienced the greatest losses during the Cyclone, and was implemented in partnership with the local organization Swe Tha Har.

During the project period, a total of 25,602 beneficiaries were provided with livelihoods assistance. A total of 1,223 farmers from 41 villages were involved in seed multiplication for improved production of high quality seeds. In addition, farming equipment, such as seeders, push roll weeders, threshers and dryers, were also provided based on identified needs.

To help re-establish the fisheries and livestock sectors, CARE restocked lakes and rivers with fish, prawns, and crabs; distributed local piglets and ducks and provided vaccinations; and supported home gardening with seeds, tools and fertilizer. All assistance was accompanied with livelihood-specific trainings, technical support and follow up.

To reconcile lack of safe water supply in communities, CARE hired local community members to construct rain water tanks and ponds for 67 villages, and towards reducing the disaster risks for communities, engaged local residents in planting wind-break trees and establishing Early Warning Systems in 53 project villages.

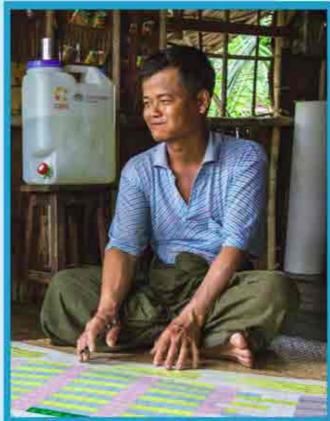
Seed of Hope

Than Htike, Farmer

"I look forward to producing quality [paddy] seeds, not just for my own use, but for wider market distribution," said Than Htike, a 43 year old farmer from Akhel Ywarma village in Dedaye Township.

Than Htike used to look for seeds from surrounding villages for twenty years before Cyclone Nargis struck in 2008. While he considered himself lucky that some of his seed stocks were spared during the storm, seawater intrusion to his paddy fields meant his paddy was completely destroyed that year.

Than Htike was selected to participate in CARE's Integrated Liveilhoods Program in late 2010. "We distributed seeds that were suitable for local farmers, plus fuel and fertilizer. Our hope was to ensure food security for our targeted households, even the whole region," said Ko Ko Hlaing, who worked for CARE's Nargis Response Program from 2010.



CARE's technical trainings have given Than Htike the skills and knowledge he needs to prepare for upcoming planting seasons.

Than Htike also received trainings with other farmers on systematic farming. "I draw up a calendar for every activity I have to do in one growing season. First, I test the soil condition to decide how much fertilizer I should use. Such a technique has never been used before in our area. To help us, CARE gave us the equipment we needed to test the soil. I also learned how to use fertilizer more effectively so that I buy less than before, but have a higher yield than before!" He added, "I'm also more careful with pesticide usage now. Before, I used pesticides whenever I found any pest in my field. Now I'm very deliberate in using pesticide. Instead I use a salt seeding practice, and my paddy field suffer less disease than before."

The application of new technologies extends from the selection of seed to postharvest management. Previously, Than Htike reaped his paddy based on its colour. He has since learned the different life-spans of various rice species, and selects the appropriate harvest time based on his knowledge of the life-span of each crop.

"It was CARE that supported us in establishing a village development fund too, which our community uses for development activities. Our community feels different now. It feels stronger, and not only within our community, but with other communities as well. We have a network with our neighbours that allows us to share across information. It makes us all feel we can manage ourselves now."

188,555,800 Kyats circulatied throug VDFs Over7,500 families accessed VDF Ioans

43,486 feet of village roads connected

Towards Development

September 2012 - June 2013

During the last nine months of the Nargis Response Programme, CARE focused on paving the way towards development in communities where it worked for five years since Nargis 2008. To do this, the organisation prioritized infrastructure development and institutionalization of existing village development mechanisms, such as the Village Development Committees and Village Development Funds.

During household visits and focus group discussions conducted by an independent End of Project evaluation team, all 100% of those interviewed reported they now have improved access to rural infrastructures, including bridges, dykes, and concrete roads. In addition, 89% reported having improved access to schools, markets and other public places.

The evaluation also highlighted that in all 98 project villages where VDCs were developed, 100% reported being committed to future development activities in their communities². Noting the importance of capturing community needs and the voices of all community members, one VDC member stated, "We have a strong collaboration with local level authorities and policy makers, but we have an even stronger collaboration with our own community members."

A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

Hla Than, Community Leader

A concrete bridge linking two mangrove covered banks can only been seen after travelling many hours along the small rivulets of the Delta. An engraving at one corner of the bridge reads "15.11.1374" – the Myanmar calendar equivalent to 26 March 2013. The bridge is a product of one of CARE's projects in the final phase of its five year Nargis response program. It's message: 'a bridge for the future.'

The bridge connects Aye Su Village with a primary school and rural health centre located on the opposite bank. "We are very happy to see students crossing the bridge to school, and doing so safely," said Hla Than, one of the village leaders. "And now we (the elderly) can easily access the monastery or health centre on the other side too."

"During the cyclone, the old wooden bridge was destroyed, and after some months we replaced it with a bamboo bridge. But it posed a great risk for children and older people to walk on" he added. "That's why when CARE came to our community to ask us what we needed, we unanimously said a bridge."



CARE capped its continous five-year Nargis response efforts for Hia Than's Aye Su village with a bridge to access health and education services.

"We weren't sure if words would be put into action because it was a big undertaking," said Myint Oo, secretary of Aye Su Village Development Committee. "That's why when CARE fulfilled its commitment to us, we were so thankful."

"If you approach any of seventy families in the village, you will hear and see the expression of thanks towards CARE," said Hla Than. "As the Myanmar saying goes, a good tree can provide shelter to a thousand birds. For us, CARE has been like that sheltering tree."

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Khin Soe Oo, VDC Chairperson



Khin Soe Oo's commitment leads her into a decision-making role in her community.

"I am the first woman to become a member of the villagelevel authority body in my village's 107 year history," said Khin Soe Oo, 51 year old petty grocer and the chairperson of CARE's VDC in Kat Tha Myin Village, Bogale. "In fact, it has only been about three years since women were even given a space to take part in village development activities."

Khin Soe Oo pointed out that the gender concepts introduced by CARE initiated women's engagement in the affairs of her village. CARE invited women to participate in a community meeting, in which she recalled village activities being defined, and with that, the importance of women's community participation.

"Women are well positioned to actively participate in and even lead village development activities, as men have to spend most of their time farming and fishing outside the village. There have always been so few men who participate in community meetings and activities, as they are always occupied with something else, " said Khin Soe Oo.

Women make up 70-80% of the community meeting participants. "We make a point of listening to women's voices; the more they voice their thoughts or ideas, the sooner they will take roles as decision makers in their households and communities," noted Myat Htet Aung Min, a CARE staff member responsible for Delta operations.

"More participation means more decisive power. Women can express what their families need in the meeting. Women can prioritize activities that would have a good impact on their children. For instance, we can help woman-led households with emergency loans for their children's education," added Khin Soe Oo.

Aye Mon Say, a mother of nine children from Kat Tha Myin village shared, "I approached one of the women members of the VDC to borrow money without reluctance. Previously, I would have left it to my husband to do that, but this time, instead of waiting I did it myself. I got a loan from the committee and I decided to buy some ducks, because I knew it would be profitable. I was right! I now earn about 1000 kyats per day selling duck eggs. Since it is an easy livestock to own, I still have time to care for my children at home."

"I realized I can do more than I thought I could do. I can lead my family. I can make decisions that will help my children's future, and show them that they can too." she smiled.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS' VOICES

Aye Lwin, VDC Treasurer Zee Phyu Gone, Dedaye Township

"Our village development fund increased to 10 million kyats. Funds were pooled by beneficiaries of CARE's livelihoods program. We used about 2 million kyats last year to extend the village roads initially built by CARE. The committee provided loans of 100,000 kyat each to all seventy three households in the village. The interest rate was set at 2% per month, which is very low if compared with the normal 10% per month rate of



other lenders. All information related to the loans is publicized on boards in the village. We plan to use the accumulated interest from the loans on village development activities next year, and won't need to use the main fund. We will ensure there is public consensus as to the village development activity that is chosen, whether to build a bridge or a jetty.

"Even though CARE's project has ended, the VDC will continue to exist. We will select new committee members every three years. The committee will always consult with the community whenever village development funds are to be used. It is the fund that is the key for the VDC's sustainability. "

Maung Nhit, VDC member Taung Gone Village, Kungyangone Township

"We lost four-thirds of our cattle during the Cyclone. Some farmers who couldn't afford to replace their cattle were prioritized by the VDC for loans from the village development fund to buy cattle or tractors to plough their fields. Through the repayment of loans, we were able to provide support to one school so that they



could get electricity and have a fence around the premises. We also renovated the pond and built a fence around it too, and repaired the village road through community volunteers.

CARE was one of the first organizations to arrive in our village and provided us with the help we needed after the Cyclone. We will always be thankful to them. They set the way for us to improve our futures."

Staff Mobilization

How CARE strengthened helping hands

Within 72 hours of the Cyclone, CARE dispatched 29 staff to the Delta from their project sites across the country. Having received training in emergency response, they initiated a full scale response. They worked together with hundreds of volunteers to distribute essential relief items, including water, food and household items, to the Cyclone survivors in five of the worst hit townships in the Delta.

Within the first month of CARE's Nargis emergency response program, the number of staff carrying out humanitarian assistance increased four fold to 115. This number continued to grow over the next year to 245 staff dedicated solely to CARE's emergency program.

Those who had begun as volunteers became full time staff. Their motivation was palpable, and was apparent in the hours they worked day after day, night after night, despite the fears expressed from their families for their well being. In seeing this level of commitment, as well as to ensure CARE could maintain the momentum in the transition phase, staff capacities were developed by CARE's technical specialists in WASH, Shelter and Quality and Accountability, who mentored the staff and helped develop their skills and knowledge in minimum standards for emergency response.

In addition, CARE's Gender and Psychosocial Advisor extended her technical expertise to staff, coaching them through the difficult tasks of helping communities cope with their losses, and to assist the staff in applying the same lessons to themselves.

The staff's dedication to the program illustrated the commitment to their people of Myanmar, and the unity that underlies the humanity of this beautiful country. Thus it can be said that while the Nargis program helped to rebuild the lives of those who survived the devastating Cyclone in 2008, it also helped to build a community within CARE that will forever transcend time, staying in the memories and hearts of all those who took part in the response.

Staff's Reflections



U Shwe Thein Program Manager (May 2008 - April 2009)

"I remember, even the CARE head office was affected by the storm. During the first two or three days, all the roads were blocked by fallen trees. So we opened a temporary office in CD's home. It allowed us to start relief operations within three days of the Cyclone. I'm really proud of what we achieved during that time for the cyclone-affected people."

Daw Cherry Aung HR Manager (May 2004 - Present)

"Our achievements in Nargis Response Program would not have been possible without the strong commitment of our staff, who readily and willingly accepted any task or assignment they were assigned to help the cyclone survivors. To me, that sums up CARE."



Ko Ko Hlaing

Field Office Coordinator (Feb 2010 - June 2013)

"Our interventions in WASH, food and shelter gave the Cyclone survivors the help they needed to survive the early days. Then through our Livelihoods support to communities, we were able to help people regain their food security. I think our programme was very effective, and helped pave the way for real development in the cyclone-affected areas."

Lin Tun, Community Facilitator

(June 2008 - September 2012)

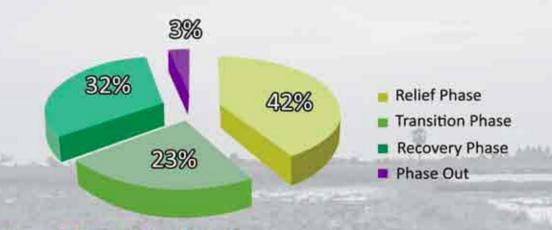
"During one of our field trips to the southern tip of the Delta in July 2008, we were stranded for one night in a rivulet due to the low tide. There was no human settlement around, so we had to eat dried instant noodle. We ended up sleeping on the small boat while waiting for the next high tide before starting our work.



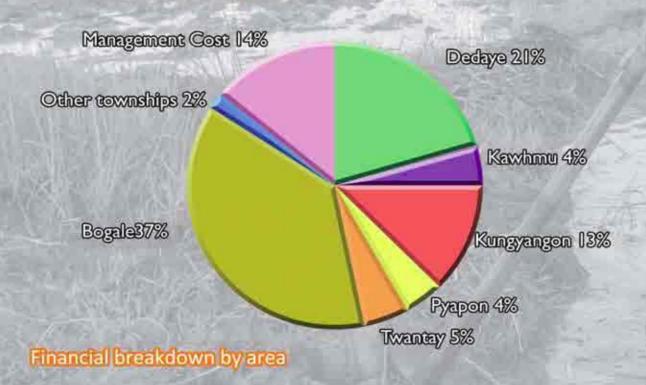
Financial Report

Total expenditure = US\$ 18,378,708

Total number of projects = 45



Financial breakdown by phases



Our Donors

CARE would like to thank its Donors for their generous contributions to the Cyclone Nargis Response Program. Without their assistance the achievements described in this report would not have been possible.

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