

BANGLADESH: CYCLONE ONE BRAVO

8 July 1998

appeal no. 11/97

situation report no. 7 (final report)

period covered: 21 May 1997 - 19 April 1998

Almost ten thousand vulnerable families, left destitute by Cyclone Bravo when it struck the Bangladesh coast in May last year, were provided with food, first aid shelter and roofing material, while 1,000 families were helped to build specially designed wind resistant homes. The 11 month operation ended in April..

The context

Cyclone One Bravo hit the South Eastern coast of Bangladesh on 19 May 1997. Approximately one million people took refuge in cyclone shelters, thereby significantly reducing loss of life. The cyclone left a trail of devastation along the coastal belt between Chittagong and Teknaf, at the southern tip of Bangladesh. Official reports confirmed that 111 people lost their lives and approximately 10,000 people were injured. 250,000 homes were reportedly totally destroyed and over 100,000 were badly damaged by the cyclone. Crops and livestock were also seriously affected.

Casualties and injuries were remarkably low because the cyclone hit at low tide and landfall took place in the daytime and because of good warning, evacuation and preparedness measures taken by Bangladesh Red Crescent Society's (BDRCS) Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) volunteers and staff. The dedication of the CPP volunteers was well illustrated by the bravery of one volunteer who was drowned during the cyclone in the turbulent sea in a vain rescue attempt of five fishermen.

The Appeal

BDRCS, with support from the Federation which included a CHF 200,000 advance from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), mobilised resources to carry out an immediate relief operation. Later, based upon reports from BDRCS/Federation aerial surveys, reports received through the CPP network, information provided by BDRCS/Federation mobile assessment teams and the Plan of Action (PoA), the Federation Secretariat in Geneva launched a preliminary Appeal on 21 May for CHF 3,000,000 to assist 10,000 most vulnerable families of those affected by the disaster. Later, the budget was increased to CHF 3,452,112 to meet the real needs of the operation. The Federation received CHF 1,824,066 (55.3% of the appeal) and, as a consequence, the operation had to be reduced in scale, as shown in the table below:

BANGLADESH CYCLONE "BRAVO ONE"

ITEM	APPEAL AMOUNT (CHF)	RECEIVED AMOUNT (CHF)
First Aid Material	11,437	11,437
Food	86,057	86,057
C. I. Sheet including other roofing materials (i.e. tarpaulin, plastic sheeting)	633,257	613,374
Hut (shelter)	2,721,361	1,113,198
Total :	3,452,112	1,824,066

The Operation

In view of the large scale damage to housing, the POA was designed to assist the most vulnerable 10,000 families by providing food, first aid, roofing material and housing. Due to fund constraints this figure was reduced.

The operation was implemented in three phases and lasted for 11 months, from 20 May 1997 to 19 April 1998. It was divided into 3 phases, namely, (1) Emergency Phase (2) Phase -1 and (3) Phase -2.

Objectives:

The objectives for the **Emergency Phase** were to provide immediate medical assistance, emergency food rations and temporary roofing materials (i.e. tarpaulins and plastic sheeting) .

The objectives of **Phase-1** were:

- { To provide roofing materials for families with destroyed houses
- { To provide food rations to the most affected and vulnerable families

The objective of **Phase-2** was:

- { To provide permanent, wind-resistant low-cost huts to the most affected and vulnerable families in the high risk areas.

Area of operation •

BDRCS focused its assistance on the two most affected districts: Cox's Bazar area, Chittagong District and Chittagong City with the following thanas (sub-districts):

Cox's Bazar District: Moheshkhali, Kutubdia, Chokoria, Cox's Bazar Sadar and Teknaf thanas

Chittagong District : Banshkhali, Boalkhali, Anowara, Chandanaish, Patiya, Sitakunda, Sandwip and Mirasharai thanas

Chittagong City: Bakalia, Laldier Char and other most affected areas

Needs Assessment •

On 19 May 1997, the BDRCS/Federation despatched three teams to the affected areas as part of the assessment. On 20 May, BDRCS/Federation chartered a plane in order to conduct an aerial survey of the coastal belt between Chittagong and Teknaf. The information obtained from the survey, together

with the reports issued through the CPP volunteer and radio network and the details provided by the BDRCS/Federation mobile teams formed the basis of the damage assessment and provided information on the immediate needs of the affected population. The most vulnerable among the half million affected people were in need of emergency medical assistance, short term food ration and temporary shelter. Since an approximate 250,000 homes were totally destroyed and over 100,000 were partially destroyed, reconstruction was identified as the highest priority.

Beneficiary Selection •

The selection of beneficiaries was done as per the guidelines set forth in the BDRCS Disaster Field Manual (DFM) by way of individual observations followed by a door to door survey. Later, lists submitted by the Project Implementation Sub-Committees were checked by BDRCS staff and Red Cross Youth (RCY)/volunteers squads. Volunteers/RCY were utilised to the maximum extent before approval by the BDRCS District Unit (Branch) Executive Committees (UEC). The approved lists were then randomly checked by the Federation field teams and further changes were made prior to distribution.

The beneficiaries were selected from among those left homeless, who were also:

- { elderly without any supporting family
- { families with no support and where the head of the family was handicapped or suffering from a chronic disease
- { widowers and divorced women living with children
- { daily labourers/persons who have only a homestead but no agricultural land.

Emergency Phase : 20 May 1997 - 31 May 1997 •

Under the emergency phase, medical assistance and first aid were given by two medical teams provided by BDRCS HQ in Banshkhali and Kutubdia thana in Cox's Bazar district. CPP trained and equipped male and female volunteers provided first aid service during the post disaster period. Emergency food rations consisting of ready-to-eat compressed rice and molasses were distributed to approximately 1,000 families. In addition, 400 tarpaulins, 20 rolls of plastic sheeting, 100 jerry cans, 500 aluminium plates, 500 mugs, 500 items of crockery and 5,000 pieces of used clothing were distributed to the same families. 4,000 emergency food rations, each consisting of 15 kg of rice, 2.5 kg of lentil, 1 litre of cooking oil and 0.5 kg of salt, were distributed to 4,000 families in Cox's Bazar District.

Phase One: 6 July 1997 - 22 September 1997

Phase One consisted of two parts:

Part One: 6th July 1997 - 15th July 1997

Food required for a 10-day ration was distributed in the affected areas. The supplementary food ration, organised for a family of five (average) for a period of 10 days, consisted of 15 kg of rice, 2.5 kg of dhal (lentils) and 1 litre of cooking oil. In addition milk powder, flour and dates received in kind were distributed. The estimated calorie content per family member of the ration was approximately 1,900 calories. The food was distributed in the most affected 14 thanas in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts among approximately 7,000 families (35,000 people).

Relief Items Distributed

COMMODITY	RATION	AMOUNT	AREA
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Rice	6,188 families x 15 kg (Chittagong city: 650, Chittagong district: 3,188 and Cox's Bazar: 2,350 families)	92,820 kg	Chittagong District: Banskhali, Sitakunda, Sandwip, Chandanaish, Patiya, Boalkhali, Mirasharai, Anowara and Chittagong city Cox's Bazar District : Cox's Bazar Sadar, Moheshkhali, Kutubdia, Chokoria and Teknaf
Dal (lentils)	6,188 families x 2.5 kg (Chittagong city: 650, Chittagong district: 3,188 and Cox's Bazar: 2,350 families)	15,470 kg	do
Cooking Oil	6,188 families x 1 kg (Chittagong city: 650, Chittagong district: 3,188 and Cox's Bazar: 2,350 families)	6,188 kg	do
Full cream milk	1,800 families x 1 kg (Chittagong city: 200, Chittagong district: 900 and Cox's Bazar: 700 families)	100 : 6 pcs. crtns = 1,800 kg	do
Flour	7,900 families x 2.5 kg (Chittagong city - 800, Chittagong district - 4,000 and Cox's Bazar - 3,100 families)	19,750 kg	do
Dates	7,000 families x 3 kg (Chittagong city - 500, Chittagong district - 4,000 and Cox's Bazar - 2,500 families)	21,000 kg	do

Part Two: 16 July 1997 - 22 September 1997

4,400 bundles (12 sheets of 7 ft x 2.5 ft.) of corrugated iron (CI) sheets were distributed to the most vulnerable families (12 sheets per family) who had lost their house roofing in 14 severely affected thanas. The procurement of 352 tons of CI sheets (each with an EU sticker) was made jointly by the BDRCS and the Federation, and the distribution was completed by the end of August. Part two of the operation was funded by ECHO.

Distribution report on ECHO Corrugated Iron Sheet

Name of the place	No. of family	Qty. distributed
Chittagong city Branch	500	6,000
Chandanaish	300	3,600

Sitakunda	275	3,300
Anwara	400	4,800
Mirsharai	275	3,300
Patiya	150	1,800
Banshkali	350	4,200
Boalkhali	250	3,000
Sandwip	250	3,000
Cox's Bazar Sadar	300	3,600
Teknaf	300	3,600
Moheshkali	350	4,200
Kutubdia	350	4,200
Chokoria	350	4,200
Total :	4,440	52,800

Phase Two : 16 August 1997 - 19 April 1998

This part focused on the planned construction of 3,000 wind resistant huts as projected in the Appeal in an effort to reduce the future vulnerability of the families who lost their homes during the cyclone. The general selection criteria for beneficiaries were applied in this Phase. One thousand huts were built, reflecting the level of support from donors for this operation. The hut construction was started in late October 1997 and concluded on 19 April 1998.

The huts, designed to resist winds of up to 250 kilometres per hour, were built with prefabricated local materials and erected by the beneficiaries themselves, with assistance from community CPP volunteers. The huts, 3m x 3.6m in size, are roofed with corrugated iron sheets strongly fixed to a braced steel and concrete structure. with bamboo fencing anchored in an earthen foundation. One of the special features of these huts is that all conceptual structural engineering calculations were verified by computers, ensuring minimum cost and maximum structural strength. A detailed description of the wind resistant hut is available on request from BDRCS or the Federation Secretariat.

Distribution of Wind Resistant Huts

AREA	No. of HUTS
Moheskhali	250
Kutubdia	250
Chokoria	250
Banshkhali	250
Total :	1,000

The Delegation •

The Federation Delegation consisting of a Head of Delegation, a Relief Delegate, a DP Delegate, a Logistics Delegate, a Construction Delegate, a Finance/Admin. Delegate and local programme officers, gave its full support to achieving the goals of this operation. The delegates worked closely with the BDRCS officers throughout the operation, from initial needs assessment to final reporting. The operation was continuously monitored by the Delegation.

Participation of Operating National Society •

The overall operation was carried out by the BDRCS with personnel assigned from its NHQ and ongoing field programmes. BDRCS carried out the operation through its District Branches of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar, the local Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme, the Cyclone Preparedness Programme staff and volunteers. There were three Project Implementation Committees (PIC) formed: one in each of the district units of Chittagong District, Chittagong City and Cox's Bazar District. The PICs maintained liaison with subcommittees at thana level. The Field Co-ordinators provided operational support and co-ordination with the BDRCS staff from the NHQ and the Units, CPP and other programmes. Their role was also to keep the NHQ updated on the progress made at field level as well as on the changes that occurred during the implementation of the operation.

Mode of Implementation •

In the NHQ Dhaka, a Central Project Implementation Committee (CPIC) was formed and headed by the Senior Director (Relief). Members included the Director (Relief), Director CPP (Admin.), CFD or his representative, a Project Engineer and representatives from the Estate and Construction Department. In each district, a Project Implementation Committee (PIC) was established, headed by the Vice-Chairman of the UEC, consisting of the BDRCS Field Co-ordinator, the BDRCS CPP Zonal Officer and the Unit level Officer. All units worked out their Plans of Action, stating in detail the responsibilities of local staff as well as volunteers/RCY, using the DFM procedures. The Field Co-ordinator worked closely with the units in order to achieve successful implementation of the operation. Each thana established a Project Implementation Sub-Committee (PISC), composed of one member deputised from the UEC, a BDRCS (CBDP and/or CPP) officer, and a Thana Team Leader from CPP.

Procurement •

Procurement of food items and all housing materials as well as contracting of services were carried out by the Federation and the BDRCS jointly. Where local procurement was required, it was carried out by the BDRCS Field Co-ordinators using the budget allocated for the particular purpose. Goods and services were selected on the specifications laid down by the Federation Delegation and the BDRCS jointly. Materials and services were paid directly to suppliers and contractors by the Federation Delegation after due verification.

Quality Control •

The quality of all items provided to beneficiaries was ensured through appropriate quality checking methods and techniques, applied from central level down to the beneficiaries level. The Federation Delegation assisted BDRCS in monitoring quality control and volunteer training. The Field Co-ordinator and the Federation Delegation in the field were jointly responsible to ensure receipt of materials of standard quality and to make sure that the beneficiaries received quality materials.

Storage/Warehousing •

The food rations were delivered to the central storage at NHQ and then sent to different districts. The CI sheets and other centrally procured material were delivered to the BDRCS warehouses in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. From there they were further delivered to the Thana centre by the PIC and, thereafter, the handling responsibility was with the Thana PISC committee.

Hut materials were delivered to Thana level centres by the contractors and from there to the site by the beneficiaries with the help of volunteers and using local transport.

Mode of Distribution •

Distribution was made over a large area, including offshore islands. The Field Co-ordinators were responsible for distribution and reporting. Volunteers and RCY assisted in distribution. Muster-rolls were well prepared and each beneficiary received the scheduled item.

Communication •

The Field Co-ordinators ensured proper communication on a weekly basis to the Senior Director (Relief) on the progress of the operation. The CPP radio network made a valuable contribution to the overall operation.

Financial Control •

The financial management of this operation at NHQ level was done on a working advance basis. Based upon the approved budget, the Finance Department at NHQ requested working advances from the Federation Delegation. On completion of each phase, the Finance Department submitted the bills, invoices and vouchers to the Federation Delegation.

Monitoring and Evaluation •

Monitoring of the beneficiary selection as well as distribution was carried out by the BDRCS/Federation Delegation. Situation reports were sent on time to the Federation Secretariat in Geneva to share with the donors in accordance with the standard procedures.

Co-operation with Authorities and with Other Agencies

The Government co-ordinated the activities of all organisations responding to the disaster. Other organisations who were involved in reconstruction and emergency feeding programmes also co-ordinated their activities with the BDRCS, to avoid duplication of work. The Acting Secretary General of the BDRCS regularly attended the meetings of the Inter-Ministerial Disaster Management and Co-ordination Committee. The Field Co-ordinator and the respective Units were responsible for keeping the local authorities/administration informed of the implementation of the programme and ensuring that duplication did not take place. The BDRCS/Federation participated in all the co-ordination meetings of UNDP and in the NGO Disaster Forum Meetings, where it actively followed the relief work of NGOs and International Organisations. Some ten NGOs worked on housing projects in the cyclone affected area and six carried out emergency health activities. BDRCS ensured co-ordination with all of them.

Media Coverage: Bangladesh TV and Radio covered the relief distributions of food and CI sheets. News reports on BDRCS medical assistance as well as construction of wind resistant huts were published in both English and Bangla languages. Press coverage has been extensive. The ECHO funded CI sheets were distributed with EU stickers on them to guarantee its visibility.

To promote the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and raise public awareness, Red Crescent flags as well as Red Crescent banners were displayed in all distribution sites .

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The operation proved again that the BDRCS is well able to organise, manage and implement an integrated response to a disaster of this magnitude. However, some shortcomings and problems were encountered:

{ During the time for selecting beneficiaries, proper selection by using a very democratic participatory process of sub-district committees took longer time than expected due to local political and other influences. The time available from verbal commitment by donors and the completion of contracts made this bottom-up system possible. However, in the case of immediate emergency relief, beneficiary selection followed the normal procedures, whereby selection and distribution were practically combined.

{ In three cases, hut construction was delayed by land disputes with the beneficiaries concerned at the time of final verification. In those cases, PISC had to redo the whole process which meant to re-select the same number of new beneficiaries from the same area (Kutubdia and Chokoria). It took two weeks in April 1998 to solve the problem.

{ Better co-ordination between the BDRCS District Relief Co-ordinator and the BDRCS CPP would have been beneficial, especially during the hut construction period. The formation of BDRCS CPP volunteers teams took longer time than expected due to disagreements between the BDRCS District Relief Co-ordinator and the CPP volunteers.

Despite the above comments, the operation was successful. A maximum number of beneficiaries were assisted with the resources made available. The active participation of the beneficiaries and volunteers, especially in building the wind-resistant huts, was greatly appreciated by the local communities, and this participatory process should be encouraged in future relief operations in Bangladesh since it will certainly help to build up the capacity of the BDRCS and the population at the community level. Finally, the development, construction and erection of the wind resistant huts proved to be a valuable and appropriate response, providing long term benefits for the affected families, and serving as an innovative model for others in high risk area throughout the coastal belt.

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