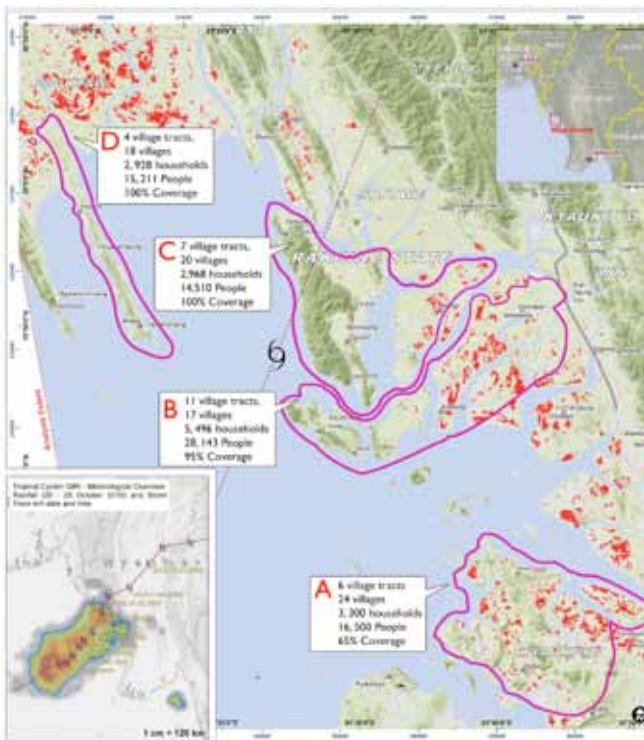




Overview

Cyclone Giri struck Rakhine State during the night of 22nd/23rd October 2011 with wind gusts of up to 200 kph. The Government reported at least 45 people dead or missing and at least 20,380 houses completely destroyed. 260,000 people (52,000 households) were affected and 17,500 acres of agricultural land and nearly 50,000 acres of aquaculture ponds were destroyed. With the cyclone coming immediately prior to the paddy harvest, the end of the monsoon and the mid-point of the school year, there was maximum destruction of rice fields, little prospect of rain water collection for drinking and disruption to children's education was high.



Village tracts supported by Save the Children

Save the Children in Myanmar launched an immediate response, sending assessment and relief teams to the affected area and working closely with the civil society coalition, Paung Ku. A six month multi-sector response plan was quickly developed, aiming to reach 74,000 people in 79 villages in some of the most severely affected village tracts, including the hard-hit islands of southern Myebon and the thin peninsulas of Pauktaw. Within the first few weeks of the response, Save the Children and Paung Ku partners reached 135,000 people with short term relief. More substantial assistance quickly followed including:

- 70,000 people assisted through the provision of emergency WASH kits
- 53,000 people assisted with two months food ration
- 52,000 people assisted with full, child-friendly, Non Food Item (NFI) relief kits
- 7,300 people provided with continuous drinking water supply (through to 2011 monsoon)
- 5,300 children assisted back into school
- 3,000 children provided with Child Friendly Space facilities
- 22,500 people (5,240 households) targeted for livelihoods assistance (cash for work, asset replacement)

To manage the operation, Save the Children established an operational presence in four new field offices in Myebon, Pauktaw and Kyaukphyu townships, and coordinated closely with other agencies, donors and UN, co-chairing the Education Cluster, and participating in the CERF appeal. Six months after the cyclone, Save the Children has secured GBP 4.5 million for its response (USD 7.2 million).

Cyclone Giri swept over Rakhine State two and a half years after Cyclone Nargis devastated the Ayeyarwady Delta. Although Nargis affected around ten times the number of people (around 2.4 million), the death toll resulting from Cyclone Giri was only a fraction of that experienced during Nargis, partly a result of better early warning, and



A family in a make-shift shelter following Cyclone Giri

prompt action by the authorities and Red Cross to move people away from high risk areas. Save the Children's emergency programme in Rakhine has been shaped by the experience and capacity gained from the Nargis response, including:

- Rapid (first 24 hours) deployment of the trained in-country Emergency Response Team
- Immediate support to civil society/CBO response, including through the Paung Ku consortium
- Well developed staff safety protocols, including for open water travel
- Accountability mechanisms for community feedback built in from the start of the response
- The inclusion of 'safer construction methods' in school construction and repair
- Advocacy on infant and young child feeding
- Rapid agreement with local authorities on access to affected populations.

Operational challenges have been considerable, with veterans of the Nargis response saying that issues such as travel times between sites, language barriers, requirements of open water boat travel and its attendant risks make for an even more testing response environment than the Delta. This underlies the importance and advantages of supporting the work of local agencies.

Six months on from Cyclone Giri, township centres have recovered remarkably quickly from the Cyclone. In contrast to the scenes of devastation



Semi-permanent school constructed by Save the Children

at the end of October, the small towns of Myebon, Pauktaw and Kyaukpyu have been cleaned up and the fabric of the towns largely repaired. In the surrounding village tracts, particularly the islands and coastal areas the picture is more mixed. Structural damage varies greatly between and even within villages with some communities still sheltering in the ruins of their destroyed homes. With over 50,000 homes damaged or destroyed and very limited means for self repair, shelter recovery is slow in the worst affected areas, and exacerbated by the destruction of livelihoods and incomes due to the loss of fishing and agricultural assets.

As with the response to Cyclone Nargis it is important to register the experience of the last 6 months has again demonstrated that despite the challenges of working in Myanmar, large scale humanitarian assistance can be provided effectively and independently. There has been enough political and humanitarian space to allow for Save the Children's response to be designed and delivered according to its own principles, and to the priorities of the communities with which it has worked.



School destroyed by Cyclone Giri



Distribution of food support

Non Food Items (NFI) and Shelter Supplies

Over 100,000 people were left homeless by Cyclone Giri and at least 20,380 houses were completely destroyed. With cooler night temperatures in early 2011, periods of strong winds and unseasonably heavy rains, shelter assistance has remained a crucial part of the overall response.

Working closely with the Paung Ku team and distributing short term food and non food relief assistance throughout the period of assessment and initial set up, Save the Children was able to provide assistance, albeit often limited, to 135,000 affected people, including an estimated 54,000 children.



Distribution of non-food items

Following that, and based on both the experience of Cyclone Nargis and consultation with the affected communities, comprehensive Non Food Item (NFI)/Shelter kits were assembled in Yangon. Items included mosquito nets, tarpaulin and shelter supplies (ropes, hammer), blankets, kitchen sets, and a number of hygiene and sanitation items. Learning from the relief distributions undertaken in response to Cyclone Nargis, the NFI kits also contained items for children, including sandals, longyis, t-shirts, tiffin carrier, soft toy and other recreational items.

The transportation of large numbers of bulky NFI/ Shelter kits was very challenging with a lack of proper jetties, rocky waters and extended supply lines. Save the Children set up warehousing capacity in Taungup to facilitate transport and

distribution and established a forward base in the heart of the affected southern Myebon Islands at Nga Thwin Oo Chaing, where a purpose built jetty was constructed alongside a Rub-Hall which was relocated from the Delta.

52,000 beneficiaries were reached with the full NFI kits. These and the initial relief distribution were funded by UNHCR (CERF), AusAID, CIDA, DANIDA, OFDA and Save the Children.

Save the Children has developed practical ways to ensure accountability in our response, based on the experience piloted in Nargis and our agency commitment to HAP Standards. The Giri response teams have included dedicated accountability officers who manage information centres, generally alongside food and NFI distribution points, to ensure a centralized, staffed space to receive and respond to questions and complaints. This system enables children and their families to give suggestions and feedback and provides a structured way for Save the Children to listen and answer questions. In order to ensure both children and adults are able to provide feedback, children were also encouraged to colour pictures on feedback cards representing their concerns, requests or thoughts. Community feedback was used to alter the content of the NFI kits in the early stages of the response, in particular to increase children's recreation items.



Distribution of non-food items

Food Assistance & Livelihoods

With support from WFP Save the Children reached 53,000 people (11,952 households) in 72 villages with a two month food distribution between mid November and mid January.

Damage to livelihoods was widespread with 77% of paddy fields affected, 105 miles of embankment destroyed, 27,558 cattle and buffalo lost, and an average of 44% of villages' boats destroyed. Households already suffering from outstanding debt quickly found themselves deeper in debt. The established cycle of borrowing and repayment has certainly been disrupted as a result of Cyclone Giri leaving households at high risk of entering into a spiraling level of indebtedness if they cannot restore their production and income generation capacity in the short term.

Not only did the storm destroy the 2010 paddy harvest and the seeds and income that were tied up in that, it also extensively damaged the high mud embankments ("curries") which traditionally protect the low lying paddy fields from high tides. The repair of these embankments has been a crucial step in re-establishing rice growing, and to a lesser extent prawn farming. Unlike the Ayeyarwady Delta, rice cultivation in coastal Rakhine is characterized by family based land holding, in which several families will own, or have tenure to, the plots of land enclosed by one, or several, curries.

Funding for livelihoods recovery did not become available until February 2011. Save the Children targeted 22,500 people (5,240 households) for livelihoods assistance, primarily cash for work for the embankment repair, and fishing and agricultural asset replacement. The livelihoods response has been implemented alongside the Kyaukpyu Youth Group, a civil society organization introduced to Save the Children through the Paung Ku Team.

The cash for work target is to provide 125,181 GBP to 5,451 persons (60% male and 40% female) in order to rehabilitate 94,000 feet of embankment that will protect 8,750 Acres of agricultural land.

Up to the 31st March 2011 a total of 111,000



GBP has been paid to 5,673 people participating in the cash for work scheme and 280,000 feet of embankment has been rehabilitated protecting 7,510 acres of agricultural land. This represents remarkable progress in a short time period, and means that the currie repair has been achieved before seasonal high tides and the monsoon make this activity impossible.

Conditional cash grants will be distributed to 2,153 cyclone affected small scale farming households that will allow them to get the required inputs to cultivate 3 acres of paddy land per farmer. So far beneficiaries have been selected and procurement committees organized and the suppliers that can provide beneficiary farmers with the inputs they need have been identified. During the second half of April the procurement of inputs takes place so that beneficiary farmers can start cultivating their fields. Further cash grants will be distributed to 504 fishing households for the procurement of fishing nets and boats, with the beneficiaries able to select the right inputs and equipment for their particular requirements. Beneficiaries, procurement committees and suppliers have been identified and the procurement is scheduled for late April. It has been interesting to note the role of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation and private sector fish wholesalers who have also been providing replacement fishing equipment to affected communities.

Save the Children's livelihoods response has been funded by DFID. Further livelihoods funding is currently being sought from ECHO.

Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

Cyclone Giri destroyed communal water sources and household water storage capacity. In an area that suffers chronic water shortages the timing of the disaster, just as the 2010 rains had finished, has made WASH a particularly crucial focus for the response.

Save the children has reached over 70,000 people through the distribution of household WASH and cleaning kits, the repair of contaminated and damaged water sources, and the distribution of drinking water.

The early focus of the Save the Children response was on water provision to villages where water sources (generally ponds or wells) were washed out or otherwise damaged during the storm. The primary target has been 7,300 people in six villages in south-eastern Myebon islands which, unlike most of the other coastal areas, are entirely flat and therefore have no spring source. Drinking water delivery to this population will continue through until the onset of the monsoon. In December, in a remarkable feat of ingenuity and determination, Save the Children staff and local volunteers constructed a four-metre high concrete dam on the island of Ngwe Twin Tu. The dam stored water from a vigorous spring source, and a gravity-fed 1km long pipe channeled this to a shore-side storage and distribution site, where four bladders (ex Nargis) trans-shipped the water into smaller



Dam construction enabling water distribution of 30,000 litres per day

bladders on waiting boats, from where it has been transported to the target villages. The team was able to distribute 30,000 litres of water per day, ensuring the SPHERE minimum standard of 3 litres/person/day was met or exceeded. When this water source dried up in February, an alternative (more remote) year round source was identified and distribution has continued from there. To the end of March 2.3 million litres of water have been distributed. The water distribution has been largely funded by DFID.

In addition: 13,930 household WASH kits were distributed in 67 villages, reaching up to 70,000 people. Kits include jerry cans, ceramic water filter, mosquito net, soap. 79 WASH Committees formed to manage distribution, hygiene promotion and source repair. 25 ponds and 25 wells have been repaired, and 18 spring sources protected for improved water provision. In an ongoing and major logistical exercise 8,500 water storage barrels (200 litre capacity) are being distributed to replace and improve household storage capacity.

Sanitation is very poor in most of the village tracts, only 11% of rural households have their own latrines, and public health promotion through training of the volunteer WASH committees has been important, in particular in ensuring effective use of ceramic water filters.

As a result of careful management of remaining water sources, support from aid agencies, and the unusual rains that fell in early 2011, it appears that a major water crisis has been avoided. Most communities have expressed that if their ponds and wells are repaired this year, next year should see a return to normal patterns of storage and consumption. It would be anticipated that the combination of improved household storage capacity and effective use of water filters would actually increase quality of household supply. However, as in the Delta, the chronic year on year shortages mean that there is still the requirement for continued investment and support in improving access to water. The WASH Cluster assessment found that 78 out of 112 villages surveyed routinely run out of water.

Save the Children's WASH response has been funded by DFID, OFDA, Japan Platform, CIDA and a private foundation.

Health & Nutrition

Infant feeding following disasters can often be disrupted as a result of stress, lack of time available, and misconceptions. Feeding practices such as non exclusive breastfeeding become far more dangerous as a result of unsanitary conditions. The consequences of non exclusive breastfeeding and inadequate complementary feeding are an increased risk of infection, morbidity, malnutrition and mortality amongst infants and young children. Ensuring infants under six months old are exclusively breast-fed, particularly important during this time of increased vulnerability, is a life saving intervention and was a key response of the nutrition sector.

In the aftermath of cyclone Giri 30,000 children under the age of five and 12,000 pregnant or lactating women were at immediate risk in the event of a decline in nutrition status. Rapid assessments conducted post-Giri indicated vulnerability and highlighted the importance of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYFC) practices, where data showed low exclusive breast feeding



Children kit distribution

rates ranging from 3.7% to 11% in Pauktaw, Myebon and Kyaukphyu. Save the Children led the Infant Feeding in Emergencies (IFE) response; providing IFE support directly to mothers of young children and awareness raising to the wider community of the importance of protecting Infant feeding in Giri-affected communities. Save the Children worked in partnership with the Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Association (MNMA) in Pauktaw, Myebon and Kyaukpyu; providing training to mothers groups, conducting one to one assessments to identify breastfeeding mothers who require counselling and establishing breastfeeding spaces. Breastfeeding spaces were designed to give mothers a space where they could breastfeed away from distractions, an essential requirement in overcoming common stress related difficulties in an emergency setting.

Infant Feeding Support Kits were distributed to 200 pregnant and lactating women. 1759 pregnant and lactating women attended the Infant Feeding Support Sessions. The intervention was funded by UNICEF (CERF), Dean and Deluca, and Save the Children.



Provision of ceramic water filter and buckets for drinking water



Food distribution managed by Save the Children

Child Protection

Following the cyclone, children were left vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation, or their situation of vulnerability was exacerbated, and they were in great need of psychosocial support. Child protection activities began in Pauktaw and Myebon townships in late November, where even before the cyclone there was extensive exploitation of the most marginalized children.



Books explaining mandate & background of Save the Children

volunteer workers have been trained by Save the Children and are actively involved in each community. These spaces provide children with protected environments in which they participate in organized activities to play, socialize, learn, and express themselves as they rebuild their lives and regain a sense of normality.

Save the Children also conducted child protection awareness raising workshops for children and adults, where over 1,000 children and 1,500 adults participated in the 70 sessions held. Advocacy workshops with village elders from each community were held as a means of galvanizing greater community support for initiatives. Moreover, on an informal basis, community volunteers, CFS committee members and staff of Save the Children have been raising awareness about child protection and rights through informal dialogue and discussion with others, and through community mobilisation activities. In order to provide emergency support for children who are affected by cyclone Giri, Save the Children has provided 523 children and their families with support funds for education, emergency health problems and to support the small businesses of parents as a means of preventing their children from dropping out of school completely and working in dangerous situations to contribute to their households income.

The Child Protection intervention has been supported by AusAID.

Save the Children's response includes the provision of immediate psychosocial support and recovery for children undergoing distress due to displacement, loss of homes and other infrastructure, and the creation of structures and mechanisms which aid in the recovery and coping in the aftermath of Cyclone Giri. Save the Children set up 20 child-friendly spaces (CFS), where children and adults are actively involved in developing, implementing and monitoring activities through the foundation of locally led CFS committees. Approximately 3,000 children have been attending the CFS on a regular basis, and 222 community members have joined the CFS committees. In addition, CFS

Education

Returning to school and resuming a regular routine, is a critical step in the process of recovery following an emergency. The Education Sector Assessment undertaken by the Ministry of Education and partners showed that 56% of schools in the four most affected townships of Myebon, Pauktaw, Kyaukphyu, and Minbya were completely destroyed or severely damaged, a total of 362 of the 673 schools in these townships, accounting for around 45,000 children. Community and monastic schools were not included in the list of affected schools assessed and government officials and NGO partners estimate that more than 40 monastic and community schools were also severely affected by the cyclone. Save the Children undertook to focus on community and monastic schools, reaching over 5,000 children in 44 communities, while UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education to support repair of government schools. Schools constructed by Save the Children were built using safer techniques and equipped with durable furniture to ensure long-lasting learning centres. The incorporation of safer construction methods is an effective DRR measure, strengthening the buildings to withstand future storms.

Since the cyclone, Save the Children has constructed 20 semi-permanent schools using safer building techniques, created 24 temporary learning spaces/schools, provided 45 school kits and 5,289 student kits, provided 74 teachers with honorarium and allowances, and trained 228 parents in psychosocial support methods. The education response has been funded by Sida, Danida, UNICEF (CERF), and Novo.

Payment of honorarium for teachers is an important part of the response. In many of the community and monastic schools it is the community itself that hires the teacher(s). With livelihoods and incomes ruined by the storm, it is difficult for the community members to retain the teachers, so supporting these costs for a few months after the emergency allows teachers to remain in the schools and temporary learning spaces.

Nine communities were selected for the introduction of Child Led Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities, which included awareness raising on risks and small grant funding for risk mitigation action plans. The actions included small bridge and jetty repair to improve transport and communications.



Semi-permanent school constructed by Save the Children

Outlook

Using the experience and capacity gained from Cyclone Nargis, Save the Children responded rapidly and at scale to the Giri emergency. Donor response was initially slow but eventually swung behind the programme, although some sectors were poorly funded, including education and protection. The combination of chronic pre-existing poverty and the additional vulnerability resulting from the cyclone means that there is the need, and also the opportunity, to continue programmes in the affected townships.

- Child Friendly Spaces present a good platform for longer term community protection work.
- The Education Sector Recovery Action plan outlines the interventions required to restore access to education, as well as promoting better DRR awareness.
- Action on infant and child feeding could dramatically improve nutrition for younger children, and the planned May 2011 nutrition survey will form a good starting point for that.
- Investments in water quality and access and improved sanitation will reduce the time and disease burden on water management and public health, as the dramatic improvements in the Delta have shown over the past three years.

According to the Joint Assessment of Shelter/Housing Situation In Cyclone Girl Affected Areas, as of January 2011, an estimated 104,000 people are still living with host families in the four worst affected townships. Without additional support, nearly 60% of the affected houses will not be repaired or rebuilt before the next rainy season, increasing the risk of another humanitarian crisis. Further support to livelihoods will pay dividends in assisting recovery from the cyclone, restoring social and financial capital of vulnerable groups that are currently at further risk of losing their livelihoods and will allow communities to become more food secure and resilient to future shocks.

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Funding Overview

Since Cyclone Giri struck in October, Save the Children have raised a total of £4.57m (US\$ 7.4m) to provide emergency and early recovery support to families worst affected by the cyclone. This funding has been provided by a range of donors as outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Save the Children Myanmar Funding Allocation by donor (GBP)

Donor	Overall Funding (GBP)
DFID (WASH & Livelihoods)	£1,474,183
WFP (including GIK)	£948,460
UN CERF	£515,428
Private Foundation	£347,358
AusAID	£277,897
OFDA	£159,909
SC CEF	£148,630
DANIDA	£147,518
CIDA	£147,248
Oxfam HK	£127,349
SIDA	£91,206
Other	£190,599
Total	£4,575,784

This funding has been allocated to a range of interventions as detailed in Figure 1 below. The sectors that have received the largest amount of financial support are Food (26%), WASH (26%), Non-Food Items (19%) and Livelihoods (15%). As of the 31st March 2011, Save the Children had utilised a total of GBP £3,180,000. The remaining funds contributed will be utilised in the next 4-5 months up until the end of September 2011.

Figure 1: Save the Children Myanmar Funding Allocation by sector (%)

