



START 1.2.3.4

EMERGENCY RESPONSE
THE START WAY
2016-17

Knowledge Management Series: 2018/01

START 1-2-3-4

EMERGENCY RESPONSE- THE START WAY

2016-17

About Caritas India

Caritas India, founded in 1962, is the official development arm (registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI 1860 (the Punjab Amendment Act 1957) of the Catholic Church in India. Over the years, Caritas India has diversified her interventions in the areas of Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptative Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihood, Anti-Human Trafficking, Peace-Building and Community Health. With a network of more than 200 partners across India, Caritas India reaches out to the most marginalised through humanitarian and development programmes.

Acknowledgements

Caritas India is indebted to the community volunteers, PRI members the disaster affected people, for allowing us to support them in the hour of great trouble, and trusting us with their needs.

Sincere appreciations to the seamless coordination with Inter Agency Groups, Government officials at different levels, other START Fund winners namely Christian Aid, CARE, OXFAM, CRS and Save the Children. This helped us to closely work out the geographies and share information while responding to the disasters.

Caritas India places her heartfelt appreciations for the faithful solidarity and support from her counterparts, CAFOD and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), through whom Caritas India could bid for the START Fund. Last but not the least, Caritas India is grateful to its diocesan partners for their solidarity and support in different ways in carrying out relief activities.

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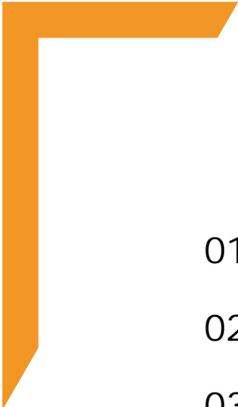
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Fr. Frederick D'Souza
Executive Director

Director's Message

'Leave no one behind', the clarion call given by the 2030 Agenda accentuated the need to address climate change and disaster risks. The Sendai Framework for Action 2015-30, adopted around the period of SDGs, recognised the faster increase in exposure of people and assets around the world to disaster risks than the decrease in vulnerability. These risks are bred out of and consequences of worrisome levels of inequality induced poverty within and among nations. A nation cannot achieve disaster resilience if much of poorest population continued to live in hazard prone regions owing to poor income levels and social and environmental threats; multifaceted exclusions; and lack of disaster awareness and preparedness.

Every disaster exposes new challenges, socio-cultural, political and communal dynamics on ground zero, given the multifaceted diversity in India. These encounters and learnings continue to shape the response protocols of Caritas India. Over five decade experiences and capacities to respond to crises enabled Caritas India to access START Funds, a unique pool of resource, to respond to Bihar floods, Vardah Cyclone in Chennai and Assam floods in 2016 and 2017

I am also glad to share with you the START Fund Spot Check Assessment (Alert #180 – Flooding; Bihar + Uttar Pradesh) rated Caritas India/CAFOD response as 'exceeds commitment'. This has been the result of constant learning and adaptation processes to making humanitarian response relevant and dignified for the vulnerable people.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all who made START Network a meaning experience of bringing smiles to the humanity.



Fr. Paul Moonely
Asst. Executive Director

How to read the document...?

Caritas India has been responding to humanitarian crises from the time of its inception in 1965. Over the time, frequency and intensity of disasters have accelerated. The complex realities on the ground, rising inequality, poverty, marginalisation and resulting trauma, have made the nature of humanitarian responses undergo a sea of change. These factors continue to challenge the community of humanitarian aid practitioners globally.

The back to back encounters with disasters have left behind many learnings with Caritas India. She has formulated a Policy on Social Inclusion, and adopted strategies of Psychosocial education and integration of vulnerable communities, with the objective of leaving no one behind.

The objective of the document, 'START 1-2-3-4', is to highlight the learnings from the START Fund responses of Caritas India in 2016 and 17. START's uniqueness lies in its nature of operation, making it mandatory for the response to be kick started within seven days, and completed on 45th day, adhering to the global humanitarian standards, ensuring inclusion of vulnerable population, and coordination with different stakeholders. START Fund enabled greater multi-stakeholder coordination and accountability at all levels.

We are happy to present this learning documentation to our readers, to enhance their appreciation and commitment to humanitarian concerns. These and other humanitarian responses have left behind a great repository of knowledge with Caritas India, and we are happy to share them with you.



DISASTERS 2016 & 2017

India had a major chunk of casualties recorded in overall South Asia floods, concurrently ripping apart the neighbouring countries of Nepal and Bangladesh, killing 1,200 and shutting of 1.8 million children out of school¹. Millions were left homeless, stranded in helplessness without livelihood. The poorest of the poor, often those on the margins of the society were hit the hardest.

The monsoons of 2016 and 17 bear a mark of deadly flooding, cyclone, landslides and earthquakes, in different regions of India. States of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim, West Bengal and Assam were left overwhelmed by the torrential rainfall, causing the country's rivers to dangerously circumvent danger levels. This caused mass destruction, in terms of crop loss, damage to houses and assets, and death of humans and livestock. National Disaster Response Forces and other measures were pressed into rescue and relief operations by the Government, but deaths could not be avoided.

A report of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Disaster Management Division, claimed about 480 deaths in rain and flood related incidents since the start of 2016 monsoon in June (Davies, 2016). The sheer scale of these disasters, propelled the concerned humanitarian organisations to come together and raise funding alerts to the START Network. Funding alerts were activated, and grants awarded for Bihar floods, Cyclone Vardah, and floods in Assam and Uttar Pradesh to different humanitarian organisations, including Caritas India with CAFOD and CRS. Caritas India bid for Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Assam, and became a four time in-a-row winner of the START Fund.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/30/mumbai-paralysed-by-floods-as-india-and-region-hit-by-worst-monsoon-rains-in-years>

The START Network

A network of 42 national and international humanitarian organisations from five continents, based in the United Kingdom, constitute the international START Network². The START Fund, instituted by the network, is to enable humanitarian organisations to kick start the relief response in disasters within 7 days, while the organisations may mobilise additional resources in the meantime for a broader response.

START Fund Criteria

Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, with emphasis on inclusion form the basis of project selection. Along these determinants, the Project Selection Committee (PSC) assesses the vulnerable groups identified, lifesaving nature of the relief proposed; capacity to secure relief materials and starting field operations within 7 days; presence /teams deployed in the field for relief distribution; and coordination with the state and local administration, and other organisations. Thus, the process remains transparent, diverse, decentralised and collaborative.

START Fund Process

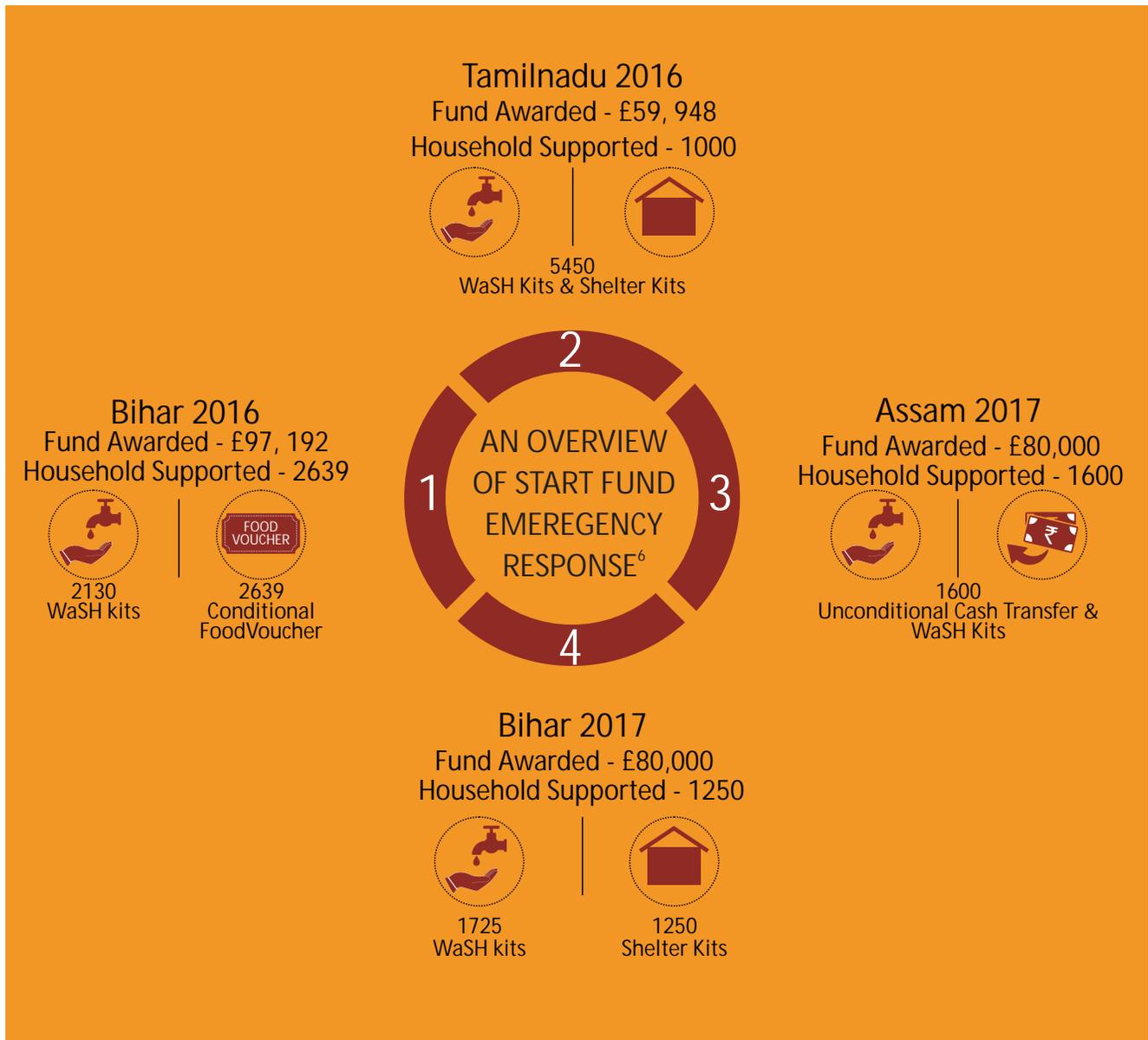
- Start Fund Alerts are raised by the member organisations in view of Situation Reports (Sitrep) from the field, and reports from the authorities on a disaster situation.
- Upon activation of the START Fund Alert, members of the START Network in India submit proposals.
- The PSC is convened comprising representatives from the Start member organisations in the country, who peer review and select projects collectively.
- The decisions for awarding the fund are based on aggregated scoring by project selection members (excluding chairperson) as humanitarian experts, keeping aside their respective organisational hats, along the set criteria for selection.
- On the same day of the proposal review, results are declared by the PSC Chairperson to the START Fund Coordinator, who observes and guides the review process.
- START sends the communication to the awardees, and the next day is the first day of response.
- The teams have to be in the field within 7 days of fund approval, and complete relief work by 45th day.

(View process for Bihar Flood 2017 on page 11)

² Learn more on www.startnetwork.org

Caritas India START Fund Responses

Caritas India was the winner of START Fund four times in a row, through CAFOD and CRS for Bihar floods (2016 & 2017), Cyclone Vardah in Tamil Nadu (2016) and Assam flood (2017). The Fund enabled Caritas India to address critical needs of the affected population, complimenting the Government's relief efforts.



⁶The figures are exclusively for START Fund responses, leaving out sectors and households reached through other donors and funding, like the HCL Foundation, Emergency Appeal of Caritas Internationalis and private donors

Reaching the Unreached

Vulnerability is determined by the lack of capacity to withstand and bounce back from a disaster. A look into the official statistics of communities figuring at the tail end of all development and wellbeing indices (health, education, income, food security, political participation etc.), will guide one to the religious minorities, caste and ethnic groups marginalised by various societal processes, like Muslims, Scheduled castes and Tribal. The conditions in which they live makes them vulnerable to numerous day-to-day risks, and disasters. Given that disasters widen the inequity gap and pushed people to poverty, Caritas India targeted these communities that were found to be worst hit by these disasters. Among them, the needs of women and adolescent girls, and children were given special considerations.

Lifesaving Needs

Rapid needs assessments and information on relief provided by the Government helped prioritise lifesaving needs, food, hygiene and sanitation and shelter, for the target population. These were provided through Conditional Food Voucher³, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) kits and awareness⁴, Shelter Kits⁵ and Unconditional Cash support, in line with the Sphere Standards, for the delivery of quality humanitarian response.

Conditional Food Voucher (CFV): The food items on the CFV supported the affected families with one month of food assistance, given that the sole income source for the beneficiaries were daily wage labour, agricultural labour, and seasonally migration, all of which were badly affected. The families lacked food stocks to sustain them until the situation got normal.

WaSH kits: The contents of the kit were intended to address the menstrual hygiene needs of the women and adolescent girls, and general sanitation requirements of other members of the families. The selection criterion for WaSH kit beneficiaries, therefore, was families with females in their reproductive age, considered that such needs get side-lined during disasters, exposing them to serious health risks. Hygiene promotion activities enabled a dialogue with the community on hygiene matters.

Shelter kits: Privacy and safety particularly of women and girls, and children and elderly gets compromised after they get temporarily displaced from their dwellings during disasters. Forced to share in the available safe spaces at schools with all affected people, and camped on the roadside, during floods and cyclones, the Shelter kit contained materials to help every family set up its own temporary personal shelters in safe locations.

Unconditional Cash Support: The cash support of Rs. 2000 (in Assam) enabled the beneficiaries to complement food requirements. Cash support also helped them to purchase fodder for their livestock, meet medical needs and purchase food grains to last until they resumed work.

³Food items identified in consultation with affected people are already paid for to the local vendor, and can be obtained upon producing the signed voucher to the vendor.

⁴Menstrual hygiene needs of women and adolescent girls get compromised in disaster times over other immediate concerns of food and safe shelter. Hence, WaSH remains constant in all disaster responses.

⁵Lack of designated shelter in disasters has revealed security threats to women and girls, and basic shelter thus serves as safe space for women.

START



BIHAR FLOOD 2016

Bihar is frequented by flood annually, and 73% per cent of the total land area in Bihar is vulnerable to flooding (BSDMA), a state accounting for 32% of the rural population living below poverty line. By 16 August 2016, the State Government reported 16 districts were impacted massive floods, owing to overflowing rivers from Nepal, breaching the embankment at various places, and torrential rains. 72 deaths were reported in the affected districts. The cost of damage was estimated to be INR 22,342 lakhs (2.2 Million) across 14 districts, 78 blocks, 580 panchayats and 2361 villages. 3783 houses were reportedly damaged; livelihoods were badly affected with the submergence of paddy fields and granaries leading to acute food shortage. Due to rapid submergence in many affected areas, people had to move to safe places, which were mostly schools, roads, embankments. A total of 464 relief camps were functioning in the flood-hit areas, giving shelter to 386,450 people (ACAPS Briefing note 09/08/16).



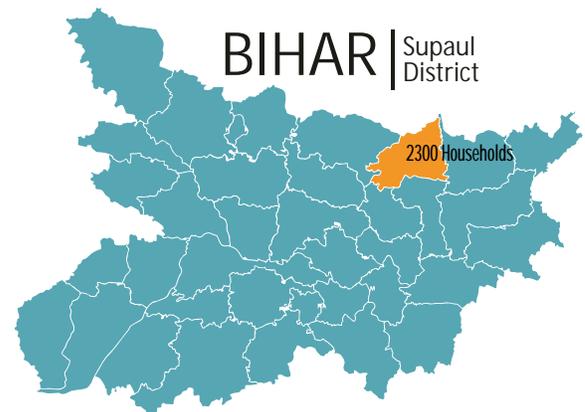
Coverage

Caritas India together with CAFOD, provided emergency relief to 2300 households across 13 villages, from Kishanpur and Saraigarh blocks of Supaul district. Dalits, Mahadalits and Muslims were found to be worst affected.

Rapid assessments by Caritas India/CAFOD revealed lack of access to safe drinking water for about 80% households, and approximately 75-80% water sources were either completely submerged or contaminated. Food shortage; water borne diseases; and need for sanitary napkins for adolescent girls and women were found to be the immediate lifesaving needs.

Caritas India/CAFOD provided Conditional Food Vouchers and WaSH kits to meet the food requirements and menstrual hygiene needs, respectively, to last for one to three months, till the situation got normal.

Disaster Impact



33 Lakh People affected by flood

13783 Houses damaged

Source: Disaster Management Department flood update as on 5/8/16

Sector Support



WaSH Kits



Conditional Food Voucher



START

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CYCLONE VARDHAH, TAMIL NADU 2016

A much underestimated severe cyclonic storm Vardah crossed the Bay of Bengal and made landfall on the afternoon of December 12, 2016 in Tamil Nadu, with wind speeds up to 140 km per hour. 18 deaths were official reported by the State Government by December 13. Tamil Nadu is vulnerable to frequent cyclones and flooding in the coastal districts. Damage in Chennai due to Vardah included damaged houses, especially makeshift and poorly constructed ones, and infrastructure; uprooted trees, downed power lines, and blocked roads. Water supplies were cut, and government provision of water was minimal, creating shortage of water for consumption and hygiene purposes. All the ground water sources (hand pumps, bore wells) were submerged during the floods, thereby contaminating the water and making it unsuitable for domestic purpose.



Coverage

Caritas India in partnership with CRS responded jointly in Chennai City Municipality and four administrative blocks of Ellapuram, Gummidipoondi, Kadambathur and Puzha in Tiruvallur district, covering 1000 households.

The assessments had confirmed that the local slum dwellers, mostly the Scheduled castes engaged in wage labour, and fishing community, were worst affected.

Caritas India/CRS provided Shelter kits and WaSH kits to help families take care of their immediate requirements.

Disaster Impact TAMILNADU

Tiruvallur District
Chennai City Municipality



20,000 People evacuated

10 Deaths reported

Source: NDTV, Dated: 13/12/16

Sector Support



WaSH Kits



Shelter Kits



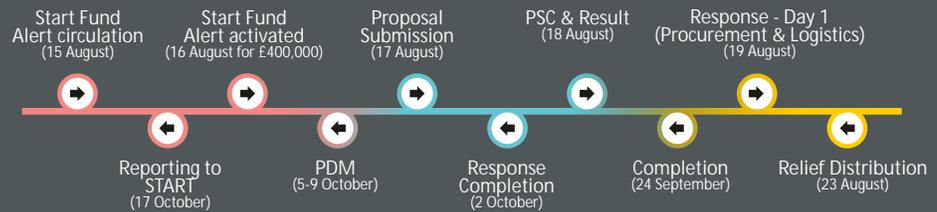
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BIHAR FLOOD 2017

Bihar's annual floods have been restricted to settlements along the state's great rivers — the Ganga, Gandak, and Kosi. Monsoon rains, overflowing rivers from Nepal, breaching the embankment at various places have always been the reason for annual flooding of Bihar. In 2017 too, the unprecedented flooding engulfed 16 districts of Bihar, of which Kishanganj, Araria, Katihar and Purnia were worst affected districts. 72 deaths were officially reported by disaster management department, by August 16, 2017.

START FUND TIME-LINE



Coverage

Caritas India with CAFOD supported 1250 households across 13 villages in Araria and Forbesganj blocks of the Araria district. In Araria district alone, 7.5 lakhs people were affected and 20 deaths had been reported by the Disaster Management Department, highest in comparison with other districts.

Overall, the district accounted for 20% deaths in 2017, a leap from 14% in 2016 . The village selection happened in coordination with the Additional District Magistrate of Araria and Bihar Inter Agency Group.

Based on the assessments, WaSH and Shelter kits were provided to the community.

Disaster Impact



98 Lakh People affected by flood

Over **150** Deaths reported

Source: The Indian Express, Dated: 19/08/17

Sector Support



START

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ASSAM FLOOD 2017

Assam, in the North East, is another prey to annual flooding owing to the overflowing Brahmaputra river in the monsoons. The flood in 2017 was the worst in 29 years in the State. Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Biswanath, Sonitpur, Majoli, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Morigaon, Cachar, Karimganj and Dhuburi districts are susceptible to annual inundation. Floods had submerged more than 993 villages spread across 14 districts, affecting more than 397,583 people; rendering 22,641 homeless; immersing 31,666 hectares of agriculture land; and claiming 3 lives (ASDMA, July 2016). Successive waves of floods were being predicted by the Central Water Commission warning a rise in the Brahmaputra, while its tributaries Dhansiri and Jiabharali were already flowing above the danger mark.



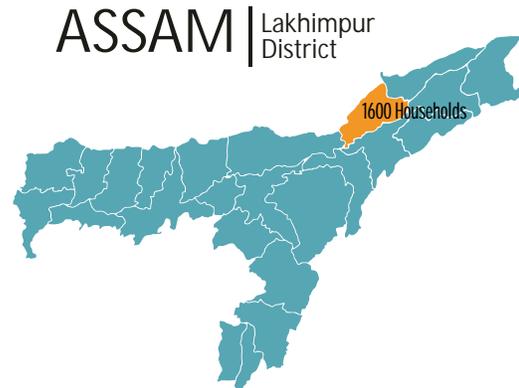
Coverage

Caritas India with CAFOD provided humanitarian assistance to 1600 households, comprising mainly the Mishing tribe, Muslim and Adivasi communities of Nowboicha circle, Lakhimpur District. 81,671 people from 137 villages were affected in Lakhimpur district alone, having the Government to open 11 relief camps. The deluge only exacerbated the misery of the people who had been facing recurring floods due to the breach in the dyke of the Singara river.

Needs assessment revealed high shortage of food. Moreover, floods had escalated the risks of water borne diseases, besides the neglect of menstrual hygiene requirements of women and girls. This led to the provision of WaSH kits and Unconditional Cash support⁷ of Rs. 2000 to the beneficiaries.

⁷Unconditional Cash support is direct cash handed over to the women of the house, after a thorough assessment of the working of local markets. This empowers women to decide expenditures as per their family needs.

Disaster Impact



17.4 Lakh People affected by flood

4050 Houses damaged

Source: Joint Needs Assessment Report, IAG Assam, Relief Web, Dated: 02/08/17

Sector Support



WaSH Kits



Unconditional Cash Transfer



The Process

Caritas India adheres to its Standard Operating Procedures in responding to emergencies. With START Fund Response, some of the procedures were fast tracked to accomplish emergency lifesaving aid within 45 days. These processes broadly include:

Coordination with Humanitarian Organisations: Beginning from the selection of partners, who are START Fund Members, to bid for the fund, Caritas India reaches out to the sister organisations CAFOD and CRS to know about their willingness to respond to the disaster. Accordingly, contracts are initiated with them, and joint emergency appeal and proposal submitted to START. Concurrently, Caritas India representative in the respective states participates in the Inter-Agency Group (IAG) meetings to share about the relief plans, determine the nature of aid pledged by others, for a collaborative response, avoiding geographical overlaps between organisations.

Involvement of local administration: The local administration, especially the district collectors and magistrates, are kept informed about the response plan, and relief distribution. The village head, and other Panchayat members are included in beneficiary selection and relief distribution processes.

Participation of target population: The involvement of the target population is ensured at all stages of response, viz., needs assessment, beneficiary selection, relief distribution and complaints redressal. Volunteers hold Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) separately with both men and women, and participate in relief distribution. One-on-one interactions are held with affected members living in relief camps/other locations such as schools.

Beneficiary Selection: The list of beneficiaries drawn up by the CRC is displayed obtrusively in the accessible locations where people are sheltered. The community members get two-days to flag any concerns and disagreements about the beneficiary selection before finalising the list with everyone's consensus.

Community Relief Committee (CRC): The CRC consists of the community representatives, including men and women, under the leadership of the Village Head/Mukhiya. Formation of CRC in the villages is accompanied with the simultaneous activation of Procurement Committee and logistics coordination at Caritas India headquarters.

Complaints and Feedback Mechanism: Complaints and Feedback box is placed in the community, wherein the beneficiaries are encouraged to drop in their feedback and grievances relating to any aspect of the response. These grievances are locally resolved, and in cases where dissatisfaction is expressed, and requires intervention of serious nature, the complaints get escalated to Caritas India point person.

Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM): Caritas India requires compulsory PDM of its emergency response to assess the effectiveness, by receiving feedback from beneficiaries on the quality, usability, awareness on relief items provided, and overall operation. To maintain objectivity, the team is composed of personnel who are not involved in relief distribution. FGDs and individual interviews are conducted with a sample population. The findings and recommendations are reported and shared with the Management and Manager-Emergency & Disaster Risk Reduction for further actions.



THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Many valuable learnings and insights were gathered during these responses, some of which are as below:

TRAINED LOCAL VOLUNTEERS: The presence of trained local volunteers under a European Union supported Humanitarian Aid programme- PEACH, and partners' network in the flood affected areas helped in mobilising first-hand information during floods. This proved that investing in the training of local people and volunteers in Emergency Response makes it easy to receive information about the ground situation when affected community start trusting the local volunteers. This further helps in designing tailored response as per needs on the ground, enabling faster relief to the communities.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND INTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Having participation of Panchayat and community members in in Beneficiary Selection, Community Relief Committees, Complaint and Feedback Committees, and Post Distribution Monitoring, have helped keeping the process community driven. Even in cases of dissatisfaction among the beneficiaries, it was possible to diffuse tensions by way of face-to-face interaction with the concerned persons. The Community Relief Committees at Panchayat levels demonstrated active ownership of the process of relief distribution. Involvement of children parliament members, youth, SHGs (in Tamil Nadu) and other volunteers made the relief process participatory.

EMPOWERING TO VOICE OUT: Humanitarian aid is a right of the disaster survivors, and not charity. Setting up grievance systems, and ensuring participation of community members along the stages,

demonstrated the real empowerment that was taking place in them. Letting people know the contents of the relief package before distribution, made women and men bring to aid worker's attention if anything article was missing, and comment on the quality of aid. It was spectacular during Bihar response, where the beneficiaries felt comfortable in flagging any concerns or demanding what was left out due to oversight, because they were informed of what to expect. This enhanced accountability of the aid workers and vendor, by strengthening layers of quality checks right from where the goods were sourced.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION: Coordination with local administration, at different levels and humanitarian agencies, helped in effective and efficient utilisation of available resources, by avoiding geographical overlaps. The local administration too felt part of the plan, and guided to areas where Caritas could focus in order to complement their efforts. The mutual trust developed among multi-stakeholders enabled information sharing, collective planning and cooperation in reaching the neediest. Stronger coordination was achieved with Village Council, Ward member, Revenue Circle officers, District Collector, State Inter Agency Groups, START FUND member organisations, State Disaster Management Authorities and Sphere India.

STEPPING UP: Training and dialogues with Caritas India Partners on Disaster Risk Reduction helped in initiating relief action on the ground swiftly, particularly. Engagements and orientation related to inclusion had enabled the partners to decipher the neediest and most vulnerable among the affected. To sustain this, and as a step forward, Caritas India would explore START Fund anticipation alerts in future to help with disaster preparedness.

UNCONDITIONAL CASH SUPPORT AND CONDITIONAL FOOD VOUCHER- In the respective contexts, in Assam and Bihar, Unconditional Cash support and Conditional Food Vouchers proved beneficial to the communities. This gave them the discretion to decide on their priority needs and plan expenditure accordingly. The unconditional cash support was provided to affected families especially the women, which gave them the freedom and dignity to purchase their immediate needs. During the PDM it was observed that most beneficiaries utilised the cash for purchasing food items, medicine and educational materials for their children. This was purely a result of having rested the cash in the hands of the women, who ensured the family needs were met.

WaSH TAILORED PROGRAMMING: The PDM findings led to the realisation that WaSH campaign, including one-on-one and smaller group interactions with women and adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene and personal hygiene, are most effective in inculcating a behavioral change. Besides, it is important to establish community driven initiative alongside the hygiene awareness campaigning, i.e. encouraging the community to clean the sources of water -public wells and handpumps, for greater positive impact on the affected population.

STRONG TEAM SPIRIT: Humanitarian situations lead to burn outs among team members due to excessive pressure while deployed in hard to reach areas, tasked with ensuring relief distribution in a safe and protective environment, paying special attention to socially excluded and vulnerable groups, handle sensitive situations in the community, during different stages of response. A strong team spirit, developed by the humanitarian response team leader in each state, by way of regular debriefing and sharing of challenges, provides space for venting out the stress, and collectively finding solutions, preparing for next steps.

Conclusion

Timeliness, Relevance, Efficiency and Effectiveness are continuous pursuits towards which every humanitarian response is geared. The START Fund Spot Check (Alert #180 – Flooding; Bihar + Uttar Pradesh) rated Caritas India/CAFOD's emergency response as 'exceeds commitment'. The criteria for assessment were namely, Project Delivery/Ability to Deliver, Governance and controls; Financial Stability and Supply Chain; and Downstream Partners (partnership between Caritas India and CAFOD). This has not just validated Caritas India's humanitarian approach and responses, but motivated her to actively associate with humanitarian stakeholders, community, and sister organisations like CAFOD and CRS, through which Caritas India has been able to bid for START Fund, for future responses as well.

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“I will use this money for the admission of my daughter in school and reconstruct my house”

Ranju Sharma, a widow from Dezoo Chapori Village, Lakhimpur, ASSAM

Ranju was standing beside the school wall watching people queue to receive their relief but her name was not in the list. At an age of 26 she had become widow with a mother of one-and-a-half-year-old daughter. She only thinks about her daughter's future.

Her house was washed away in the flood and now the mother and child lives with her husband's relative at Dezoo Chapori village in North Lakhimpur, Assam. She helps in house work but always worried as anytime they can ask her leave the house.

“We wanted to raise our daughter by giving her quality education but our dreams remained as dream”, exclaimed Ranju. She used to stay happily with her husband Madhav Prasad Sharma and daughter in their house close to the river but never thought that the same river will take their house one day.

“Madhav had a medical shop which was their only source of livelihood. After his death, the shop is closed and whatever income used to come has stopped,” narrated Ranju with tearful eyes.

Every one affected by flood has their own story of pain which only brings back the moments of deprivation, confusion, hurt, loss and psychological trauma.

Ranju came to know about the complaint box installed at the distribution point for grievance redressal, so she dropped her application in the box mentioning her case for support. The village committee along with Caritas India personnel reflected on the application and considering her vulnerability had decided to extend emergency relief support to her.

“I will use this money for the admission of my daughter in school and reconstruct my house” said Ranju. She further plans to reestablish her husband's closed medical shop to become independent so she can provide good education to her daughter.

The complaint redressal mechanism of Caritas India during emergency is an effective step to invite community to submit their confusion, complains and feedback for redressal and improvement. It not only creates space for community to express their views but also brings accountability, transparency and participation.

Every day after distribution of relief materials, the village committee and Caritas India personnel sits with the community and open the complaint box to hear the issues and unanimously decide for its redressal.



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