

# **Tearfund UK & Tear NL: Evaluation of DEC-funded Shelter Projects following the 2009 Indonesian Earthquake**

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## Executive Summary

Following the earthquake near Padang on September 30 2009, the UK Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launched an appeal which also covered other disasters which happened at the same time in East Asia. This is an evaluation of two relatively small shelter projects by two agencies, the CRWRC/GA<sup>1</sup> and WR, which were funded from this appeal, with the funding channelled through Tearfund and Tear NL. The evaluation was undertaken by Hugh Goyder, assisted by Paul Sharpe, a mining engineer resident in Padang with both fluent Bahasa and relevant technical experience in relation to earthquake-resistant construction techniques. The report reviews all the earthquake rehabilitation work of the two agencies, and not just that funded by Tearfund and Tear NL/DEC, and for comparison brief visits were also paid to similar projects being run by Caritas Suisse and CRS in the same area.

The report reviews the social, economic, institutional, and cultural context in the project areas, and notes several positive factors which have assisted project implementation including a strong rural infrastructure, the fact that the majority of those rebuilding their houses have sufficient land on which to rebuild, and the unique matrilineal and clan based Minang culture.

The beneficiaries' views of both projects were found to be strongly positive – though both agencies faced considerable initial difficulties and had to overcome skepticism about whether they would deliver what they promised. GA has tried a wide variety of methods (community labour, skilled local labour, skilled labour imported from Aceh) to get its core houses built, while WR's fixed contribution of Rph 3 million (\$300) had helped many households leverage other funding from their families to rebuild their houses.

A key factor in the success of both projects has been the support of community leaders who are already economically secure and have not tried to seek personal profit from the construction programmes. WR had to exclude around 330 households from its programme in Tapan Kandih which was limited to 343 beneficiaries, and the local leader was critical in drawing up selection criteria and ensuring that these criteria were accepted by the majority of the community.

While there were considerable delays in getting both projects started, both due to uncertainties around government compensation and confusion caused by other agencies working in the same areas, the projects have both achieved, and in some cases even exceeded, their original output objectives, and GA in particular has been able to mobilize further funding from the ACT Alliance. The more expensive standardized 'core house' model followed by GA has enabled them to

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<sup>1</sup> CRWRC works in Indonesia under the name of GenAssist. For brevity it is referred to as GA throughout this report.

achieve a more consistent quality of construction than WR's approach which involves the owner rebuilding his or her own house on the basis of an individually negotiated construction plan.

In relation to Tearfund standards, both projects lack formal feedback or complaints mechanisms, even though the current informal arrangements appear effective. For both projects, the project design is relatively inflexible, and in the case of WR, even the precise number of beneficiaries (343) was pre-determined. The evaluation recommends that in similar projects in the future, WR should try to retain some flexible funding so that it can meet new needs that arise during implementation. Both agencies could have given greater emphasis to DRR issues, and both have explicitly distanced themselves from two agencies which were allegedly undertaking evangelization after the earthquake.

In terms of resources, both projects appear rather cost effective, and both have achieved their outputs in a remarkably short time. GA has a larger number of staff than WR, and in any similar project in future WR should consider employing more technical supervisors, at least for a short period when construction plans have to be approved and monitored.

While both WR and GA have local partners in W. Sumatra, both have acted more like sub-contractors, and little investment has been made in these local agencies which will allow them to improve their response to any future disaster. In addition there is a danger that when the two projects close, both the key staff and the learning they have accumulated will be lost. Given that both projects were working in the same sector and shared a common donor, there should have been greater contact and co-operation between them.

The conclusion of the evaluation is that both projects represent an extremely appropriate use of DEC Appeal funds. In terms of lessons for the future, the major unresolved issue, at least at the time of this evaluation, was government compensation, and this issue requires concerted collective advocacy by all the NGOs and Shelter Cluster in the coming months. A second lesson, since much time has been lost in the last 10 months in debates about whether to build temporary or permanent shelter, is the need for the Shelter Cluster and Indonesian Government to agree their overall approach to shelter reconstruction **before** the next earthquake. Both these projects provide useful lessons for the future: the GA project shows that once land, materials, skilled labour, and sufficient funding is available core houses can be built in a relatively short time, while WR has shown that many people can reconstruct their houses with as little as \$300 and sound technical advice.

## 1. Introduction / Background

On September 30, 2009, a powerful earthquake struck off the western Sumatra coast in Indonesia, measuring 7.6 on the Richter Scale. The epicentre was in the sea, 45 kilometres to the northwest of the city of Padang. The earthquake, and related aftershocks, destabilized massive sections of earth and rock high on the mountain slopes, causing serious landslides in the rural high lands north and east of Padang. These landslides, rather than deaths in homes, were the major cause of the earthquake-related deaths in the rural areas. There was also major damage to many major buildings in Padang, especially banks, offices, and hotels, and it will be many years before all this damage is restored, with a relatively high probability of further earthquakes in the meantime.

This evaluation covers two relatively small interventions by two agencies, the CRWRC/GA<sup>2</sup> and WR. The funding route was relatively complex, with Tearfund UK passing on their allocation from DEC Appeal funds to Tear NL, which in turn passed them on to the two agencies. While it seemed to take rather a long time (almost two months) for these grants to be approved no major problems seem to have resulted from this arrangement.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Methodology

The evaluation began with a review of documents and phone interviews with those staff who we were not able to meet in Padang. With both projects the consultant held meetings with project staff, and met a wide range of beneficiaries in their homes. In addition meetings were held with community leaders, and the consultant was able to observe a meeting of the Shelter Working Group (the equivalent of the Shelter Cluster) in Padang.

The evaluation was most fortunate to have the input (on a 'pro bono' basis) of Paul Sharpe, a mining engineer resident in Padang with both fluent Bahasa and relevant technical experience in relation to earthquake-resistant construction techniques.

In relation to the scope of this evaluation, it might have been more cost effective for the DEC to commission a short follow-up study to its January Monitoring Mission which could have focused on the reconstruction work funded by a number of DEC agencies, including those funded via Tearfund and Tear NL. This would have increased both accountability and learning, as it would have allowed more comparison between the work of different DEC members.

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<sup>2</sup> CRWRC works in Indonesia under the name of GenAssist. For brevity it is referred to as GA throughout this report.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of WR a request was made for £70,000 from Tearfund on 20 October 2009 but was approved only on Dec 18<sup>th</sup>.

However this evaluation was able to review all the earthquake rehabilitation work of the two agencies, and not just that funded by Tearfund and Tear NL, and we also had brief discussions with Caritas Suisse, which is just starting a shelter programme in a neighbouring area to GA. We were also able to look at the shelter constructed by the large CRS programme near the area where WR works.

GA's core housing project has been very successful in attracting funding from a number of other donors, and it seemed most appropriate to assess the project as a whole. WR is different in that it has used the Tear funding in a distinct geographical area (Tapien Kandih), but it enriched the evaluation to include field visits to similar WR projects in other (both urban and suburban) areas funded by other donors. We also hope with this slight broadening of scope that the two agencies concerned will feel encouraged to share this evaluation with their other donors.

Since the WR project is closing at the end of July, and the GA project will finish in 2011, it would not be helpful to make very specific project-level recommendations. Rather the report tries to suggest more general lessons and issues which both agencies and their donors should consider in order to improve their responses to future disasters which are sadly likely to affect Indonesia in the future.

### 3. Context Analysis

**Economic & social context:** The area affected by the 2009 Earthquake included all of Padang city and suburbs, and surrounding rural areas: both WR and GA decided to work in the more remote rural areas as these tended to get less assistance. While there are poor people in these areas, and great inequalities of wealth, there is abundant rainfall and natural resources, especially palm oil – though there has been considerable deforestation in recent years. Health and education levels appear quite high, and the rural infrastructure is impressive, with most communities accessible by all-weather roads. In areas near these roads population density is also high, but the majority of people have enough land to allow them to rebuild near their damaged and destroyed houses: in a few cases where a potential beneficiary had no land suitable, both agencies have managed to negotiate with community leaders to ensure that land was made available for the construction of a core house or other type of shelter.

While the two project areas are similar, GA's area appears poorer than that of WR, perhaps because where WR works in Agam District more farmers are able to get a greater part of their income from selling palm oil. Many beneficiaries, especially in GA's areas, mentioned that their income had been badly affected by earthquake damage to the local irrigation system, and that markets had also been negatively affected, as people had used up their available money to try to organise temporary shelter and had little to spare for other goods.

**Institutional context:** At the time of the DEC Monitoring mission in January 2010 OCHA estimated that there were about 169 national and international NGOs operating in Padang (11 of which were DEC members.) The majority of these were only active in the initial emergency phase and have now withdrawn.

The primary actor during the current recovery phase has to be the Government of Indonesia (GoI). In January the GoI set up a Technical Support Team for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction known as TPT, and this team is meant to lead the reconstruction process. However this body does not have the same kind of powers as did the BRRO, the Tsunami Reconstruction Agency in Aceh, and so far its performance has been disappointing. One of the issues dominating discussions with all stakeholders in this evaluation is the question of government compensation. People have high hopes of receiving government compensation, based on initial Government of Indonesia (GoI) promises that up to \$600 million would be made available. This funding, which could be around RPH 15 million (\$US 1500) per household in the case of completely damaged homes, is important for the beneficiaries of both projects in that it would allow them to complete, or add on to, the shelters constructed so far. However some people in these areas have only just received compensation for the 2007 Earthquake, and there is considerable scepticism about whether this government compensation will really be forthcoming. We will return to this issue in the recommendations on advocacy below.

**Cultural context:** Both projects seem to have benefited from the unique Minang culture, which is matrilineal and strongly clan-based. Both WR and GA had to overcome initial suspicion about whether they would be able to deliver what they were promising, but once they were able to prove they were serious, both agencies have enjoyed an unusually high level of community co-operation. In particular, in the rural areas there is a tradition of collective working, called '*gotong royong*' by which people help each other out in major projects like house reconstruction: as GA has found, this system sometimes works too slowly and it does not work for agencies working in more urban areas. Minang people are also often skilled in carpentry, and are able to turn coconut trees into solid wooden struts using only a chain saw.

#### 4.1 Stakeholder Perspectives

In the case of GA beneficiaries were initially sceptical about whether GA would do anything useful at all in the light of the lack of external support, especially from the GoI, following the previous earthquake of 2007. From the outset GA put more stress than other agencies on the involvement of beneficiaries, but initially they found it hard to organise people as they have many pressures on their time. People were then sceptical about the value of having earthquake resistant houses, and usually wanted to retain their old houses even when they had been

damaged by the earthquake. They also expressed doubts about having to move from larger wood frame houses to smaller, core houses.

GA's approach is very participatory and its beneficiary selection process involved many hours of meetings. However the result is generally accepted as transparent. The collective labour or *gotong royong* system involves around 27 families in a larger group, divided into sub-groups of around 6 families in each. This can be a good way of getting houses built for poorer people, especially for women-headed households with no able-bodied men, but GA found that this system can be very slow and requires a lot of negotiation with communities. It has therefore diversified its approach, and now builds houses by different combinations of the beneficiaries' own labour, collective labour, and contracted skilled labour (both from the area and brought in from Aceh.)

People's perception of the GA project is largely positive, and they feel they have been able to gain a 'new knowledge' & a 'new way of working'. However the core houses constructed (21 square metres) are smaller than their traditional houses, and though they have been designed in such a way that they can be added to, for the majority of people the funding for this will have to come from the Government grant, about which there is continuing uncertainty.

In the case of WR, the major conclusion drawn from discussions with beneficiaries was that WR's contribution of Rph 3 million (\$300) had helped many households leverage other funding from their families to rebuild their houses. Many Minang people, especially the men, are working in Padang or in other parts of Indonesia, and are able to remit funds to help their extended families, after a disaster. But the relatively small WR donation, which is only paid in full once the house is completed to a design approved by WR, has helped unlock this money from relatives. Thus some beneficiaries had added between Rph 5 and 8 million of their own to improve their houses. In most cases people had also been able to contribute salvaged material from their old houses.

#### 4.2. Perceptions of community leaders & others

*'People have no choice; they have to accept what they are given'.*  
(Comment from community leader in GA project area)

In both project areas community leaders played a big role at first in trying to make sense of all the different donations coming in, and in the first few days after the earthquake, most of these donations were given without any proper assessment. The key traditional leader in Tapian Kandih, Pak Mora, an informal traditional leader, and educated person was very critical of the assessment done by another international NGO as he reported that their staff came and did their assessment the day after the earthquake, and only included in their assessment those houses which had already fallen down – making no allowance for damaged houses which could fall down later, or many which were standing but still

uninhabitable. When Pak Mora argued with CRS, they simply left for other areas, though they have now implemented a similar programme to that of WR in neighbouring villages.

The evaluation was told how leaders set up a 'base camp' to receive and pass on NFIs to those who needed them most. In this area Pak Mora, was critical in leading the selection of beneficiaries for WR. While surveys showed 678 houses had been damaged, WR's budget was strictly limited to reconstructing only 343 houses. This leader was able to sort out who were the most needy households without, apparently, causing much conflict, and the same system was repeated in the other project visited (not TF-funded) nearer Padang at Ambacang.

GA has also made good use of local structures, especially youth leaders. One we met described how he has been taught by GA to assess the quality of materials being delivered and to reject any that are sub-standard. He also mediates in cases where *'husbands cause problems'*. Group organisation is especially needed as some people are unable to prepare the timber from coconut trees as they do not have chain-saws, and in these cases the youth organiser goes back to other clan members for help: the clan system is very strong, and requests for help outside the clan system are not likely to succeed.

### 4.3 Output Perspectives

Both projects faced a variety of difficulties and delays in the first 6 months. GA was lucky to get permission from the *bupati* on November 5 2009 to build its core houses, but then ran into considerable problems due to a concern that beneficiaries who received core houses would then be ineligible for government compensation. Only in late April 2010 was it clarified that, at least in theory, government compensation would be paid out to all whose original houses are damaged, but at the time of the evaluation, the government was still talking about re-assessing people, and it was not clear either whether or when, this government compensation would be forthcoming. This uncertainty has meant that both agencies have taken longer than expected to mobilize the full co-operation of the community and local leaders.

Even once GA was in a position to start construction work; it found it hard to mobilize labour both unskilled and skilled, because of conflicting claims on people's time and other job opportunities. In addition it proved challenging to get materials delivered on time, and even when people and materials were finally on site, constant rain impeded construction. WR also found it took longer than expected to build relationships with the community and agree construction plans.

However in spite of these difficulties the evaluation found that both projects have both achieved, and in some cases even exceeded, their original output objectives. GA has been the more successful in mobilizing other resources to expand the number of houses built: it built 164 houses using DEC funds, and



now 200 have been completed & a further 100 are under construction. New funding through the ACT Alliance will enable GA to construct a total of 588 houses (source: data provided to UN).

As regards the quality of these houses, quality control is easier with Core House concept than with the WR approach of making grants for what are still called 'temporary' shelters, but most of which will become permanent houses by default: it must be emphasized that the 'core house' approach is also far more expensive. The GA team is very experienced both in procurement and in quality control and both some of the skilled labour, the supervisory staff, and the project manager have experience in similar projects in Aceh, where they constructed 526 houses. In addition their project sites are quite close together, allowing close technical supervision. Various combinations of local labour, own labour, & contracted labour have been tried and all have been found to have disadvantages and advantages. For example the use of one's own or family labour is good for beneficiary sense of ownership, but is slow as people have to do many other jobs to do; local labour has also been found to be very slow, and the imported skilled labour from Aceh has made a difference as they work far longer hours. Also centralised procurement of supplies & close supervision means that if there are surplus materials left on any site, they can be quickly be moved to where they are needed. One innovation is the use of coconut wood which is surprisingly robust, very cheap (almost free) and widely available.

WR has also achieved its output of 343 houses with DEC funding both according to its own records and our own observations. The disadvantage of the WR approach is that the houses built vary widely in the extent to which they are earthquake resistant. In a minority of cases it was clear that people had either not understood the training, or had understood it but did not have the funds to follow the advice given. The technical points emphasized in the training included reinforcing concrete pillars with 10mm steel rods; including bond beams to 'tie' the whole structure together and increase its earthquake resistance; and only building with brick up to about the first metre, and then building above this in wood so that there is less brickwork and masonry to fall if the structure is damaged by an earthquake. Our observations suggest that poorer families found it especially hard to follow this technical advice, and that they are often reluctant to stop living in their old houses even when these are damaged and would be unsafe in the case of further earthquakes.

However it may be worth reflecting rather more on the variety of risks faced by people in these areas. Ideally everyone should live in an earthquake resistant house, or at least one that does not cause death or injury at the time of an earthquake. In practice, people have to make choices between a wide variety of risks: for instance is it worth having an earthquake-resistant house if it means one has to increase one's debts or make other sacrifices? Given these trade-offs the WR seems to have a sound approach in that it aims to provide people all the advice, and technical supervision possible, but it does not penalize those who for

whatever reason, fail to follow this advice. Clearly, the greater the proportion of funds being contributed to a house by the owner, rather than the agency, the less leverage WR can exert if the construction plan is then not followed

## 4.4 Process Perspectives

### 4.4.1 Analysis of the Quality Standards

**Accountability to beneficiaries:** With both programmes there has been little scope for beneficiaries to change the programme design. In the case of GA, the evaluation found that, had they been given a choice, many beneficiaries would have preferred to use the same funding to repair or extend their original houses where these survived – along the lines of the WR project. With both projects we reviewed whether or not there are robust feedback or complaints mechanisms in place: in the case of GA we concluded that these mechanisms are probably insufficiently robust, as the ‘accountability officers’ tend to act more as community organizers, trying to chase up community contributions. There is no apparent alternative channel for complaints. There are no visible sign boards but the costs are very transparent, and beneficiaries have to sign a form showing both the total costs – around Rph 14.3million, and the beneficiary contribution of Rph 700,000 plus materials like timber. There is no complaints box, but people can communicate with the accountability officers by mobile phone.

The situation is very similar in WR, which has far less staff than GA (only 3 facilitators and 3 technical supervisors) and appears to have relied very heavily on a particular community leader, Pak Mora, who has been very supportive, and a major asset in the successful implementation of the programme. From a HAP perspective, there might be a concern about what would happen to a household which, for any reason, did not meet with the approval either of this leader or the rest of the community. **For future projects we would recommend both agencies introduce more formal complaints and feedback mechanisms.**

In terms of overall design the WR project appears somewhat inflexible in its approach, but they give as the reason for this the fixed budget from Tearfund which allowed them only to reconstruct 343 houses. In addition WR commissioned Rehana to build one core house per area, making 4 in total, and it was especially difficult to decide who would receive these core houses, and the rationale for building such a small number (as opposed to not building them at all, or building more) is not especially clear.

It is however worth questioning whether this whole approach is consistent with real accountability to beneficiaries. Though the amount of funding available for this disaster was much lower than in other better publicized disasters, most implementing agencies, including WR itself, normally look to combine funds from different donors in their projects so that the timescales and conditions of different donors can be accommodated. The whole point about the assessment phase is that the assessments should provide the rationale for the overall size and design

of each humanitarian intervention. If after its assessment an agency finds that the needs are greater than the funding it has available, then it has two choices – either to mobilize more funding, or to invite another agency to provide for those beneficiaries for whom it does not have sufficient resources.

In addition, once an agency is working in an area it is bound to discover new needs, and ‘accountability to beneficiaries’ implies that the agency retains some funding flexibility so that it can respond to these needs. One examples of such an unforeseen need was visible in the WR project in an urban area of Padang where one beneficiary, Ibu Anita, a woman with a sick husband was living in a badly damaged house, and had used up the Rph. 3 million to construct only the frame of a new shelter, but had no funding to continue.<sup>4</sup> Her case shows up the limitations of this project design, and the need to supplement it with some kind of welfare fund in order to assist the especially vulnerable: one problem faced by all agencies in shelter programmes is whether or not one can include in the programme those people whose houses were already damaged **before** the earthquake.

GA has in fact been able to expand the scope of its shelter project, using DEC funds for the first 164 core houses, and then mobilising around €500,000 from the ACT Alliance to allow a major expansion of the programme and a continuation into 2011.

In fairness to WR, it should be pointed out that with the help of a community leader who seems to enjoy widespread respect they were able to identify 343 beneficiary families without causing major conflict. In addition, CRS is running a very similar (but far larger) programme in nearby areas, so there has been little pressure for it to expand the scope of its work.

In terms of **Sphere standards**, both agencies are experienced in managing shelter projects, and are familiar with Sphere standards in respect of shelter. In relation to Sphere advice on the need for all interventions to take account of the needs of women, as already noted, in this matrilineal society gender issues differ from in many other post-disaster situations, and women have played a leading role in the implementation of both projects. For both projects the actual design process has followed the Sphere standard on construction, that *the construction approach is in accordance with safe local building practices and maximizes local livelihood opportunities*. As already noted there has been quite an effective use of local materials (e.g. coconut wood) and (to a more mixed extent) local labour. Both projects have been acutely aware of the need to rebuild houses to a higher standard of earthquake resistance.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>The work in this area was not, however funded by DEC: ‘*gotong royong*’ or collective labour which assisted vulnerable beneficiaries in the rural areas is harder to organise in an urban area where many people are going out to work.

<sup>5</sup> See Sphere standards for Shelter, p.224-5

On the issue of **Tearfund standards and the Red Cross Code of Conduct**, in relation to **DRR** there could be some missed opportunities, especially in relation to the need to make communities more aware of all the different risks they face apart from just earthquakes. WR said their staff did receive some DRR training, but that it came quite late. There was also a three-day training on DRR for community leaders, but there do not appear to have been the staff resources to follow up this training to see how effective it really was either in changing attitudes, or people's behaviour.

On the issue of the Red Cross Code of Conduct **impartiality** and **evangelization**, this has been an especially sensitive issue in this earthquake response, since the area is very largely Muslim, while the majority of the funding for both relief and recovery has come from Christian agencies, or from secular agencies based in western countries. In the aftermath of the earthquake, two international faith-based NGOs were accused of trying to undertake some evangelical activity, including the distribution of bibles. WR has been especially active in clarifying that this kind of activity should play no part in a humanitarian response.

In relation to **sustainability** building on capacities and participation (Tearfund quality standard 11 and the Red Cross Code of Conduct), the very high degree of participation by beneficiaries and other community members in both projects means that people will both take good care of, and continue to improve, the houses built with this funding in the years to come. This is partly due to the strong levels of interaction between the project staff, community leaders, and beneficiaries, and partly due to the fact that the majority of beneficiaries do have a source of income, either from their own labour or from remittances sent by family members working elsewhere.

Though both WR and GA have been active in 2009-10 in trying to ensure that INGO assistance to earthquake victims would not jeopardize their claims to government compensation, their long-term contribution to **advocacy** (Tearfund standard 12) is limited by the short duration of both projects, and both are winding up before it is clear whether or not the people who suffered losses in the 2009 earthquake will get the compensation they have been promised.

It was difficult to assess the extent to which these Tearfund standards drawn from the Red Cross Code of Conduct principles had been communicated to beneficiaries, but both agencies did communicate the importance of the maximum community involvement in the shelter programme, and the need to ensure that the new houses built were robust enough to withstand future earthquakes. These messages are the ones most likely to be remembered even after the two NGOs have wound up their operations.

## 4.5 Resource Perspectives

In relation to **financial resources**, GA has spent £144,710 of DEC resources out of £160,000 offered while WR has spent £75,000. In terms of the cost per house, on the basis of the DEC funding only, WR's costs are about £219 per house, while GA's costs are about £882. The 'core house' solution therefore works out at about four times more expensive than WR's 'temporary' shelter solution, but even though it is more expensive, it should still be considered as an option for future earthquake responses which is especially relevant for people who are too poor to be able to mobilize the kind of resources which some of WR's beneficiaries were able to mobilize for their shelters.

In terms of **timing**, after a delayed start, both projects have been able to achieve a remarkable amount in a very short time. The WR team has done a remarkable job in disbursing funding quickly, while the GA team have proved very flexible in trying out different approaches to construction, and have been able to mobilize skilled labourers from Aceh.

In terms of **staff**, the project models differ, and GA requires more staff as it employs a whole construction team, while WR relies mainly on family and community labour. Even so, in the case of WR project there was arguably a scarcity of technical skills given the fact that the programme had to be implemented in such a short time. **One lesson may be that at key stages of a programme like this relying on community labour it is worth employing more skilled supervisors, even for relatively short periods, to ensure the best possible quality of construction within the limited budgets available.** Once mistakes in construction are made, they can be quickly cemented over, and it is very difficult for project staff to demand that part of a new house be demolished even if it is unsafe (though they have asked for this in a few cases.) More generally, in the areas where WR works there is a wide variation in the extent to which builders are making buildings more earthquake resistant: for instance in one village we saw two mosques, quite close to one another, one built with bond beams, and the other without any such supports. In the latter case, the builders said that they were aware of the danger from future earthquakes, but they did not have the resources to build a stronger structure. This emphasizes the importance of employing a sufficient number of technical supervisors to ensure that all the houses built meet minimum safety standards.

In respect of **logistics**, the evaluation could not do an audit of the procurement systems, but logistics were never mentioned as a major constraint by either project staff or beneficiaries. However GA did point out the challenge of making large scale purchases of building materials in the local context in which it is customary for the vendor to offer 'sweeteners' or incentives to the purchaser. Often the costs of construction materials rise sharply after an earthquake, but for both projects, the cost per unit of output in this case appears very reasonable. The economy of Western Sumatra is dynamic, and while demand for building materials has certainly increased, there are also plenty of contractors interested in selling materials at competitive prices. Generally however, given that shelter

interventions are often very costly, what is striking is the amount that both projects have been able to achieve with only a modest budget. This was undoubtedly assisted by the fact that both projects were able to focus on a single intervention in a limited area, and therefore both were able to apply strong management control of their procurement systems.

#### 4.6 Organisational Capacity Perspectives

Both agencies have involved local NGO partners at different phases in their response and in particular activities. For instance GA relied on their local partner Totalitas in the initial assessment phase; WR uses Rebana, a local NGO, to provide training to community volunteers in how to build earthquake resistant houses, and it has also involved another NGO, Mitra Sejati, in training work at the community level. The relationship with these local NGOs appears more contractual than based on any real sense of longer term 'partnership'. GA has however employed three staff from Totalitas, and one from GKSBS, a local church from S.Sumatra.

The problem is that these local 'partners' tend to be very small organizations, with little or no humanitarian expertise. In addition, following the earthquake many skilled local NGO staff have joined INGOs. A further limitation on local NGO capacity building in West Sumatra is the strategic issue: WR sees the province as relatively more prosperous than many other parts of Indonesia, and therefore does not envisage supporting local partners working there in the longer term.

This does however leave a problem in relation to sustainability. The GA programme has been much strengthened by the fact that both its manager, other senior staff, and skilled construction workers have all worked together before in a very similar project in Aceh. This shows the value of continuity – though it was only by chance that the 2009 Padang earthquake happened just when the Aceh programmes were finally phasing out. But in the case of WR, the team will disperse at the end of July, in some cases to distant parts of Indonesia, taking with them considerable expertise not just in shelter programmes, but also in how to set up such programmes in the context of Minang culture. The same will happen with respect to GA when it completes its core housing programme in 2011.

Clearly in relation to capacity building there are limits to what two, relatively small, international NGOs can do. Ideally perhaps there might be joint funding from a number of donors for a few 'core' local NGOs in Padang which remain active in the Shelter cluster between emergencies and are able to scale up quickly at times of disaster. If this is not practical at the very least both WR and GA need to retain some kind of skeleton management staff within their agencies,

and to maintain contact to the extent possible with other qualified staff, so that they do not have to recruit from scratch following the next disaster. I would recommend that **the workshop being organized by Tear NL in August should discuss practical ways of ensuring that they retain in their agencies the learning gained through the implementation of the 2009-10 shelter programmes.**

#### 4.7 Co-ordination

Both agencies have maintained contact with the Shelter cluster, which is now referred to as the Shelter Working Group. However the lack of communication between WR and CRWRC/GA, both Integral members, and both implementing projects with a common donor, in the same sector and similar areas, is somewhat puzzling. The DEC Monitoring Mission noted that *'partners under the Tearfund alliance have had little or no contact between them. This prevented the agencies from building on each others' work and represents a failure of information-sharing on vital aspects of learning.'* One explanation could be that each agency was very focussed on its own implementation issues, with little time for any kind of co-ordination apart from attendance at occasional Shelter cluster meetings. A more co-operative approach between the two agencies might have been valuable for both programmes, and could have involved savings in costs.

### 5. Conclusions

The overall impact of both projects has been very positive, and the field visits confirmed that both have been successful at unlocking considerable local energies and expertise in relation to house reconstruction. After the considerable delays and confusions of the first three months following the earthquake, both the communities and their leaders were initially sceptical about whether the two agencies would deliver what they promised: once they were found to be serious there has been a surprisingly high degree of local participation, which can be measured by the amounts of own time, effort, and value of materials which people have contributed to both projects. This has allowed rather rapid implementation after a very slow start. Though not all the WR shelters have been completed to earthquake-resistant standards, they are more solid than what people had before, and the programme has been able to assist 343 families with shelter with a very modest budget. GA has gone for a basic core house, which while more expensive than the WR package, is still able to provide permanent earthquake-resistant shelter at a very modest cost.

Both projects have, over time, managed to build up strong relations with community leaders, and through them with beneficiaries, and both represent an extremely appropriate use of DEC Appeal funds.

## 6. Lessons

Agencies implementing post-earthquake shelter programmes face a contradictory situation. Donors, like the DEC, expect funding to be spent in a limited time period, but this evaluation shows that shelter responses, even those focusing on temporary shelter, can still get delayed while awaiting clearance from the shelter cluster. In the case of the Padang earthquake response, as the January DEC Monitoring Mission found, the initial response was delayed by *initial Gol requests to agencies to concentrate their resources on the reconstruction of permanent housing (P-Shelter) and to desist from embarking on building transitional shelter (T-Shelter). However, discussions regarding the earthquake-resistant design of P-Shelter delayed implementation of any shelter activities, leading many agencies to either forge ahead in implementing T-Shelter assistance without government approval, or risk losing funds by doing nothing (since the emergency funding period could end before shelter funds had been spent).*<sup>6</sup>

These uncertainties have continued for most of the first six months of this year, and have meant not only that many people whose houses were damaged or destroyed in the earthquake have had to wait far longer than they should to get even 'temporary' shelters rebuilt, but that, once agreements were finally in place, agencies like WR and GA have had to implement their programmes at a relatively fast pace: in fact GA, by relying on a letter of authority from the *bupati* has been able to implement its core housing scheme far earlier than many other agencies, which are only now starting.<sup>7</sup>

These delays would be perhaps defensible if earthquakes were a novel phenomenon in Indonesia, but they are rather inexplicable given the frequency with which they occur and the high probability of further earthquakes in the future.

It was beyond the scope of this evaluation to review what advocacy work is already going on in relation to the response to natural disasters in Indonesia, but the findings of this evaluation suggest an urgent need for NGOs in Indonesia to do more joint advocacy both with the Shelter cluster and the Indonesian Government to ensure that the technical debates which delayed the shelter response are not repeated in response to any future earthquake. The substance of such an advocacy campaign might include the following:

a) It should emphasise people's right to **prompt compensation** once the overall levels of compensation have been announced by the Gol. Delays in such compensation not only have a very negative impact on beneficiaries, especially the poorest, but also mean that the Shelter cluster and its members have to

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<sup>6</sup> DEC Monitoring Mission Draft Report – March 2010

<sup>7</sup> For instance Caritas Suisse has got no further than building a single demonstration house in an area close to where GA is working.



make plans in a strategic vacuum or in a fluid context in which GoI policy is constantly changing.

b) The shelter cluster should in future encourage agencies working on shelter **to take a common approach**, which could perhaps build on the WR model of providing cash grants to people in return for completing houses in accordance with agreed construction plans that generally allow improved earthquake resistance. Ideally this common approach should be agreed now, rather than after the next earthquake.

Finally it would be useful to simplify the language used in relation to post-disaster shelter. There is some confusion around the use of the term T-shelter, which is normally taken to mean both 'temporary' and 'transitional' shelter. In practice after an earthquake people themselves have no choice but to arrange some kind of 'T-shelter' normally using whatever materials they can identify. However many NGOs often prefer to commit themselves only to T-shelter as they fear that a commitment to permanent shelter (which is often people's major priority) will involve too much cost per head and will take too long a time to complete. The GA project providing a relatively low cost core house shows that once land, materials, skilled labour, and sufficient funding is available core houses can be built in a relatively short time. The WR houses were originally seen as 'temporary', but at least for the foreseeable future will become permanent, especially for the poorer households.

**Appendix 1: People met:**

**CRWRC/GA:** Mona Saroinsong – Programme Manager  
Mardi Sukri and Zulbadri Zas - Accountability Officers:  
Fandana Alnur - Reconstruction Project Manager:  
Sarifudin - Youth leader of Galoro village.

**WR:**

1. Cynthia Speckman, Program Manager (talked on Skype)
2. Gualbertus Musmulyadi, Assistant Program Manager
3. Yulfina Bakri, Office Manager
4. Indra Azmi, Project Coordinator
5. Els Seryant, Engineer
6. Boycke Ginting Suka, Engineer
7. Africho, Community Facilitator
8. Yohanes Ebang, Community Facilitator
9. Jhony Effendy, Community Facilitator Gualbertus Musmulyadi,

**Appendix 2: Itinerary**

July 11: Fly Birmingham-Dubai

July 12: Dubai-Jakarta

July 13: Arrive Padang: initial meetings with WR & CRWRC/GA

July 14: Field visits to CRWRC/GA project areas (Lareh Nan Pajung & Galoro)

July 15: Meeting with Mona; attend Shelter Working Group meeting

July 16: Further field visits to CRWRC/GA project areas

July 17/18: Planning meeting with WR and report writing.

July 19: Field visit to WR project areas in Padang Pariaman & Agam Districts: night  
Lubuk Basung

July 20: Further field visits and meeting with Walli Nagari (local administrator).

July 21/22: Visits to other WR project sites (not funded by DEC/Tear NL) near Padang,  
and meeting with WR staff.

July 22/23: Travel: Padang-Jakarta-Dubai-Birmingham