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SERIAL####**



**BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT, FLOOD
RESPONSE 2020**
FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
Cambodia

Prepared for Save the Children International by

Primary authors

1. Mrs. Bun Peuvchenda, consultant team leader
2. Two national consultant members
3. Ms. Tamara Curtis, report editor

Other Contributors

1. Dr. Khun Sithon, Head of Evidence and Learning, Save the Children International in Cambodia
2. Mr. Ros Chanborith, Humanitarian and DRR/CCA Manager, Save the Children International in Cambodia

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Organisation name: Save the Children in Cambodia

Organisation address: #5, Street 242 Sangkat Chaktomuk, Khan Daun Penh Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Email: info.cambodia@savethechildren.org

Website: <https://cambodia.savethechildren.net/>

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Mrs. Bun Peuvchenda

Consultant team leader

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About the assessment

Save the Children, funded by ECHO, Save the Children Korea and Children's Emergency Seed Fund in partnership with World Vision (WV), Hagar International and Komar Rikreay Association implemented this multi-sectoral project to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to 3,667 households in the worst-hit province of Battambang from November 2020 to March 2021.

Following the emergency response, the external consultant team engaged 142 respondents (56% female) to: 1) Identify best practices and lessons learnt in the emergency response, with a particular focus on the innovations used (Interactive Voice Response/IVR and apps for cash assistance in particular); 2) Examine the emergency response strategies applying OECD-DAC evaluation criteria; and 3) Make recommendations to improve future emergency response work.

Key findings

The overall project results below were achieved based on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, with summary descriptions as follows:



Relevance and coherence: The project was relevant, and responsive to the immediate needs of flood affected households. In particular, the unconditional cash and WASH components provided life-saving support to poor flood-affected households and boys and girls who faced negative effects from flooding, loss of income sources, and damage to water and sanitation facilities. The project was well aligned with strategies of the government, UN-OCHA, HRF, along with Save the Children and World Vision and was also partially relevant to Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International' strategies.

Effectiveness: Although the implementation timeframe of the project was tight, at the time of assessment at least 88% of the target beneficiaries (3,253 HHs of the 3,667 HHs) successfully received and were satisfied with the Unconditional Cash Transfer support.

Borehole rehabilitation and WASH kit distribution successfully reached 100% of target households while the safe learning environment component was still in progress. The project's simple design alongside strong partnership across a range of stakeholders, contributed to a high level of success in the innovative digitalised cash transfer and WASH components while acknowledging some challenges in using digital technology as well as Covid-19 school closure and capacity of school support committee in implementing the safe learning environment component.

Efficiency: As the assessment was conducted prior to the project's final financial report due date¹, it was not possible to analyse the cost efficiency for the whole project. However, it is likely that the \$50 unconditional cash allocation and WASH intervention costs alone demonstrated efficiency as the amount allocated per household was sufficient to support the target households with their basic needs for between one month (cash transfers) to three months (WASH kits). Notably, the institutional capacity of Hagar International and Komar Rikreay Association in emergency response had some effects on efficiency and effectiveness as digitalised cash transfers and school safety were new to them.

Impact: As an emergency response, with a short implementation period, it was not possible to measure any long-term impacts of project interventions on target beneficiaries. Therefore, the assessment only addressed whether the project met the objectives and immediate outcome "Flood-affected children and families are provided with immediate life-saving assistance".

The assessment team concluded that the project not only responded well to cover the basic, life-saving needs of the flood affected beneficiaries but also observed unexpected positive outcomes for those households who used the cash assistance to develop their livelihood activities, notably chicken raising, growing vegetables, and rice production as well as partially or fully repaying their debts.

However, in a small number of cases some concerns were highlighted whereby support to households contributed to, or exacerbated, pre-existing tensions and jealousies among beneficiaries and non-beneficiary households in the target villages.

Sustainability: Although it was difficult to measure sustainability of the emergency response project, the

¹ Project final narrative and financial reports are due to the Save the Children Norway at the end of April 2021 while the assessment was conducted Feb18-24, 2021.

consultant team found that active government involvement from the district to the commune and village leaders strengthened commitment and ownership of project implementation. These stakeholders expressed they had a good opportunity to learn from the project and to adapt it for future emergencies.

Partner organizations Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International confirmed that they will be able to adopt the innovative process of cash transfers with some contextual modifications in future emergency response work. WV can be a strategic partner to deliver WASH in future emergencies.

Conclusion

The project achieved the expected results under the Unconditional Cash Transfer and WASH components, but not under the safe learning environment component due to school closure as result of Covid-19 outbreak and limited knowledge and skills on the comprehensive school safety framework among the school support committees.

The \$50 cash transfer as well as WASH support were widely recognised as highly relevant to meet immediate, life-saving needs of the flood-affected households. Cash assistance was viewed to be delivered at an appropriate time, and filled the gap between urgent emergency assistance and recovery.

The innovative cash transfer approach through Wing to Wing accounts and Wing to Phone numbers is a very good start-up initiated by Save the Children to reach beneficiaries at scale in a short period (88% success rate). Further testing and learning specific to the errors identified will ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the system in future responses.

WASH assistance in the form of WASH kits and rehabilitation of contaminated and partially damaged boreholes was confirmed as relevant to the needs of communities. Restoration of a safe learning environment could not be verified due to delays in project implementation.

Strategic partnership and close collaboration with relevant key stakeholders created a strong sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders and contributed to project success and sustainability.

The project established and practiced different levels in its Accountability and Complaint Mechanism, and the post-distribution monitoring together with the development of inclusive selection criteria and household screening and spot checks demonstrated good

application of humanitarian standards.

Lessons Learnt

Introducing different methods of innovative digitalized cash transfer: It was acknowledged that Save the Children took good initiative introducing different methods of innovative digitalized cash transfer for this emergency response during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, the introduction of this approach in such a short time-period, without a strong understanding of community feasibility created some confusion among stakeholders, including beneficiaries.

Wing to Phone number: This method was not well suited for some specific groups such as elders, households without mobile phones, and low-tech users because many of them could not read the message and understand the process sufficiently in order to receive the required code while other persons need to use their relative's phone. Wing to Phone number approach is more suited to the urban context with a population more adept at mobile phone usage.

Sensitization messages: Using the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) as a method for community sensitization was suitable for the younger generation, and high-tech users as they tended to listen to the IVR from start to finish. However, it was not appropriate to elder users as they believed the IVR message was a scam and/or telemarketing and cut the IVR message.

Real-time reporting: Service provider Wing could not provide real-time tracking reports to the support team to resolve errors (changes in phone numbers, expired passcodes, and digital glitches) for beneficiaries promptly.

Accountability and Complaint Mechanism: In the implementation of the innovative digitalized cash transfers at the larger scale under the project, Save the Children country office and its partners faced multiple errors and complaints, and the existing staff and structures of the Accountability and Complaint Mechanism could not handle and resolve the multiple cases simultaneously.

Community perception and nepotism: With community meetings were not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions², the lack of communication around beneficiary selection, including the selection criteria and complaints mechanism at the village level resulted in a less transparent process. As such, perceptions among community members of nepotism in beneficiary selection

² The Covid-19 community outbreak of 28 November 2020 limited community gatherings. As such, the beneficiary selection processes and the complaints

mechanism were not systematically applied at the village level and no open meeting was conducted with the community which is good practice.

could not be avoided, particularly in the communities with pre-existing tensions.

Communication and messaging: When there are two projects³ with similar interventions in the same target areas and communities at the same time, there is high potential for confusion through inconsistent messaging and unclear communication among stakeholders and the community. For example, in Thmar Kaul district it was communicated that there was more than one cash transfer, although this was not the case.

Visibility of Save the Children at local level:

Although Save the Children's role in the emergency response project was well communicated with stakeholders the evaluation team found that if name is too long or used both English and Khmer and or too difficult to pronounce, it is hard for people to remember.

Staffing: To implement the emergency response project with the high budget within a very short timeframe required responsible staff (Save the Children and partners) working very hard without time off. It affected work-life balance for individual staff members who were responsible for this project.

Best Practices

Beneficiary Selection: Jointly developed beneficiary selection criteria and complaint mechanism engaging relevant local authorities in all processes created a strong sense of ownership among local authorities and ensured inclusion of the most vulnerable households for relief assistance.

Accountability: The project established an inclusive selection criterion and complaints mechanism, and undertook beneficiary screening and verification, random spot checks of between 5-10% of target households and Post Distribution Monitoring for cash assistance.

Partnership and collaboration: The project team collaborated closely with partners, as well as district and commune authorities, and this generated a strong sense of ownership and commitment from all stakeholders and a good project result.

Unconditional Cash Transfer: The unconditional \$50 was extremely helpful for those families who were struggling to survive, and in general was used for food, keeping children in school, and for medical and health treatment for at least one-month.

Innovative digitalized cash transfer: Save the Children's partnership in partnering with a micro-finance organization to deliver an innovative digitalized cash

transfer via Wing to Wing Account and Wing to Phone Number had a success rate of 88% and error rate of around 12%. These methods are considered effective and scalable for a larger response.

Wing to Wing account: It appeared to work quite well, especially for elders, those without phones and low-tech users and is suitable in a small-scale response or development work. Acknowledging some issues are important, particularly related to the ID card, requirement for deposit and travel, slow processing in Wing account set-up, requirement of having a phone number associated with Wing account, and requirement for face-to-face sensitization.

Electronic Cash Transfer Standard Operating Procedures: Save the Children has developed Standard Operation Procedures which was very helpful to guide implementation of the Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) to support vulnerable, flood affected households, and cover their basic needs.

Linking Relief to Recovery and Development: The cash program contributed to Linking Relief to Recovery and Development. This assistance came at the critical period of livelihood recovery transition, with a number of households from the FGDs describing how they used part of the cash to recover their livelihoods, reactivating the local market after the flood.

Recommendations

- **Open community meeting for beneficiary selection at the village level:** To ensure a transparent process in beneficiary selection, the selection process and criteria should be understood by village leaders and villagers and informed to the community. It is good practice to conduct an open community meeting for beneficiary selection at the village level with participation of target and non-target households.
- **Accountability and complaints mechanism at different levels:** It was understood that Save the Children has an existing accountability and complaint mechanism, including a complaint hotline. In an emergency context with potential overwhelming complaints and feedback, this mechanism should be better structured with clear roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders at different levels to ensure sufficient resources to handle multiple complaints simultaneously.

³The Family Care First (FCF) project for the COVID-19 response was also providing more than one cash transfer in the same areas.

- **Identify suitable innovative digital cash transfer method before the next emergency:** Save the Children should continue to test the innovative digital cash transfer methods or other methods before the next emergency. If possible continued testing should be done in the form of a project outside of an emergency to allow a broader learning perspective in different contexts.
- **Explore the best option of innovative digital cash transfer to align with the existing government system:** Save the Children should explore the possibility of aligning future cash responses with the government's equity card system as this would save time and resources, and build on existing user knowledge.
- **Replicate the suitable innovative digital cash transfer method at the country level:** Save the Children should work alongside the Food Security Sector Co-lead in HRF to share learnings and identify appropriate innovative digital cash transfer methods which can be replicated at a country level before the next emergency.
- **Integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in WASH infrastructure:** Save the Children to systematically integrate DRR in each component of the emergency response. In the case of WASH, this would include risk-proofing intervention to reduce the risk of future disasters.
- **Increase visibility of Save the Children at a local level:** Save the Children should agree to use one name either in Khmer or English. Both Save the Children and partners should equally promote visibility of Save the Children and partners.
- **Staff management in emergency response:** 1) Save the Children should increase numbers of members of the Country Emergency Roster Team (can be out sourced to experts) so that the team can immediately deploy in any large-scale emergency response, 2) Project budgets should have some allocation for dedicated/responsible staff in partner organizations. This project would have benefited from dedicated/responsible staff to support the project throughout the entire period of implementation.
- **Strengthen partner capacity on Emergency Preparedness and Response:** Save the Children should identify potential partners and build their capacity on Emergency Preparedness and Response so that these organizations can have a timely response to any future emergencies.



CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	3
Executive summary.....	4
Contents	8
List of Tables.....	9
Acronyms.....	10
I. Introduction and aims.....	11
1.1. Assessment aims and purpose	11
1.2. Project background	11
II. Assessment Framework.....	12
2.1. Assessment questions	12
2.2. Assessment scope.....	13
2.3. Stakeholders.....	14
2.4. Governance.....	14
III. Assessment methods	14
3.1. Methods	14
3.2. Sampling.....	15
IV. Ethical considerations	16
4.1. Contextual sensitivities.....	16
4.2. Ethics approval.....	16
4.3. Consent.....	16
V. Limitations	16
VI. Findings.....	17
6.1. Overall Findings.....	17
6.2. Relevance and Coherence	18
6.3. Effectiveness	22
6.4. Efficiency.....	27
6.5. Impact	28
6.6. Sustainability.....	29
VII. Conclusion.....	31
7.1. Interpretation of results	31
7.2. Lessons learnt.....	31
7.3. Best practices.....	32
IIX. Recommendations	34
References	36
APpendices	37
Appendix A: Case stories	37
Appendix B: Assessment Plan	37
Appendix C: Raw Data.....	37

Appendix D: List of assessment participants.....	37
Appendix E: Consent forms.....	37
Appendix F: Evidence to Action Brief in English.....	37
Appendix G: Evidence to Action Brief in Khmer.....	37
Appendix H: Executive Summary in Khmer.....	37
Figure 1: Target geography of Thmar Kaul and Moug Reussei district, Battambang.....	11
Figure 2: Overall satisfaction with the cash assistance.....	22
Figure 3: Relief Curve.....	26
Figure 4: Cash spent by category.....	26

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Project locations, and partners.....	12
Table 2: Assessment Matrix.....	12
Table 3: Target locations for the assessment.....	13
Table 4: Detailed methodology.....	14
Table 5: Summary of KIIs and FGDs.....	16
Table 6: Measure the project achievements against the five evaluation criteria.....	17
Table 7: Unconditional Cash Transfer beneficiaries' selection process.....	19
Table 8: Analysis of digitalized cash transfer methods.....	23

ACRONYMS

ACM	Accountability and Complaint Mechanism
CC	Commune Council
CCWC	Commune Committee for Women and Children
CSF	Children's Emergency Seed Fund (CSF)
DoE	District Office of Education
DRR/CCA	Disaster Risk Reduction/Climate Change Adaptation
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EPP	Emergency Preparedness Plan
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FCP	Flood Contingency Plan
HHs	Households
HRF	Humanitarian Response Forum
ID	Identity Document
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KMR	Komar Rikreay Association
LRRD	Linking Relief, Recovery and Development
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MPC	Multi-Purpose Cash
NCDM	National Committee for Disaster Management
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PPT	PowerPoint
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SCI	Save the Children International
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfer
WSUG	Water and Sanitation User Group
WFP	World Food Program
WV	World Vision

I. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

I.1. Assessment aims and purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to identify and document best practices and lessons learnt for the emergency response to flood-affected households in Battambang province, Cambodia. Importantly, the assessment aims to identify the effectiveness of the emergency response strategies and lessons that could be learnt to improve future emergency responses. Detailed objectives of the assignment are as follows:

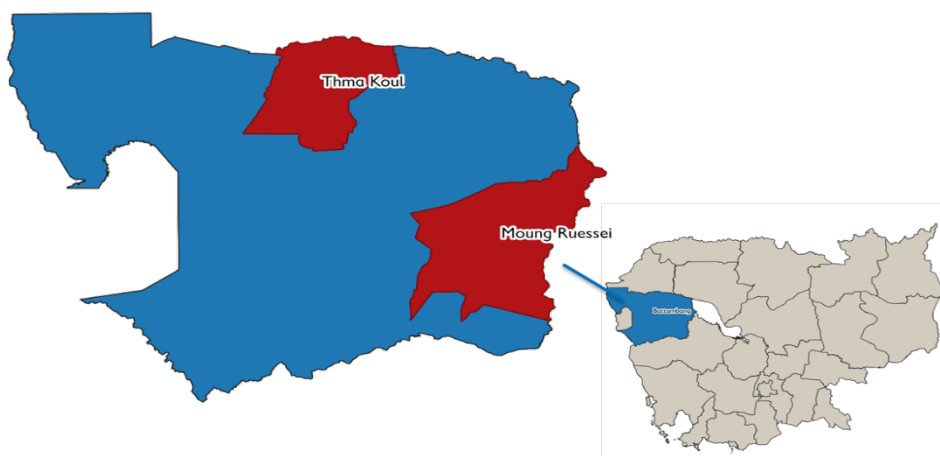
- Examine project interventions based on OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria (Relevance and Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability).
- Identify best practices and lessons learnt for the emergency response, with a particular focus on the innovations used (in particular Interactive Voice Response or IVR and apps under the cash assistance).
- Make recommendations to improve future emergency response work.

I.2. Project background

Save the Children International is the world's largest independent child rights organization, working in more than 120 countries, including Cambodia. Save the Children in Cambodia implements its programs in partnership with government, civil society, and relevant research organizations. Save the Children works with communities, local NGOs and community-based organizations to deliver projects that help ensure children are protected, healthy, and educated. Save the Children works with the Royal Government of Cambodia at the national and sub-national levels and also with civil society to ensure that development efforts are sustainable. Save the Children in Cambodia works across the whole spectrum of child development through five programmes: Education, Child Protection, Child Rights Governance, Health & Nutrition, and Child Poverty. Save the Children works in both development and emergency contexts, ensuring that cross-cutting areas such as gender, disability, resilience, and remoteness are key considerations to achieve immediate and lasting change for the most marginalized and most disadvantaged.

In response to the devastating floods and heavy rainfall experienced in Cambodia in late September 2020, caused by tropical storms Nangka and Saudel, Save the Children, funded by ECHO, has implemented a multi-sectoral project in the worst-hit province of Battambang, with World Vision (WV) and two Save the Children partners: Hagar International and Komar Rikreay Association. Besides ECHO funding, Save the Children also utilized its humanitarian Fund (CSF) to implement the additional cash transfer program and the pooled fund from Save the Children Korea to implement additional education in emergency intervention. The project aimed to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to 3,667 households, through Unconditional Cash Transfers, improved access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as re-establishment of a decent, clean, and safe learning environment for boys and girls.

Figure 1: Target areas of Thmar Kaul and Moung Ruessei district, Battambang



Save the Children has implemented the project with partners to ensure maximum coverage and technical expertise so that the most affected households receive quality and immediate life-saving support. Throughout the Action, Save the Children and project partners have integrated Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), COVID-19 Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), and child protection messaging through awareness-raising and community outreach to mitigate the risks of COVID-19, child protection issues and mental distress. Hagar International and Komar Rikreay Association, who have extensive child protection, safeguarding, and case management expertise, were expected to ensure that any identified child protection and safeguarding cases were well managed and addressed, in coordination with local authorities.

- Principle objective: Flood-affected children and families are provided with immediate life-saving assistance
- Specific objective: Targeted flood-affected children and families have access to Unconditional Cash Transfers to cover basic needs, WASH services and materials, and the learning environment is re-established
- Beneficiaries: 3,667 households (3,008 households supported with ECHO-funding, and 659 households with SCI Children’s Emergency Seed Fund)
- Location: Battambang province, Thmar Kaul and Moug Reusei districts
- Duration: 4 months from 10th November 2020 – 11 March 2021
- Donors: The project combines funding provided by ECHO, Save the Children International, and Save the Children Korea.

Table 1: Project locations, and partners

District	Communes			Project partners
Moug Reusei	Reusei Kraing	Prey Touch	Kakaoh	World Vision and Komar Rikreay Association
Thmar Kaul	Anlong Run	Kouk Khmum	Bansay Traeng	World Vision and Hagar International

Source: Project proposal

II. ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

2.1. Assessment questions

The assessment addressed key questions linked to the learning objectives using a variety of data collection methods, as shown in the following table.

Table 2: Assessment Matrix

Learning objectives	Key Questions to Address
Examine Relevance and Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability of the project interventions.	Relevance and Coherence
	1. How relevant is the project to the needs and priorities of the flood affected population, especially the most vulnerable households?
	2. Internal coherence– where/how were these interventions linked to Save the Children’s policies and priorities?
	3. External coherence–where/how were these interventions aligned to government/partner policies and priorities?
	Effectiveness
	4. Were the planned objectives and outcomes in the project document achieved? What are the results achieved beyond the project logframe?
5. Were activities implemented on time? How did any encountered delays impact on project implementation?	
6. What direct and indirect evidence is available about the project interventions in response to the flood in the community?	

	<p>Efficiency</p> <p>7. Were the resources and inputs converted to outputs in a timely and cost-effective manner?</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>8. Were the project goals attained? If not, what changes need to be made to meet goals in the future?</p> <p>9. What are positive impacts of the project? What are the negative impacts?</p> <p>Sustainability:</p> <p>10. What are the long-term benefits of the project? What are the main factors that may challenge sustainability perspectives?</p> <p>11. Was strengthening implementation partners' capacity appropriate and realistic enough to achieve long-term sustainability?</p>
Identify best practices and lessons learnt for the Emergency Response, with a particular focus on innovations used in the cash assistance	<p>Best Practices and Lessons Learnt</p> <p>12. What was done well? What are the contributing factors towards the success of project interventions? Are there any new "best practices" you can derive from this project, in particular related to the innovations used for cash transfers, e.g. IVR, use of apps.</p> <p>13. What didn't go so well? What factors contributed to the weaknesses of project interventions? What did you learn?</p>
Make recommendations to improve future emergency response work	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>14. What suggestions/recommendations would you make to improve the emergency response in the future?</p>

Source: Assessment Plan

2.2. Assessment scope

The assignment was mainly focused on identifying the best practices and lesson learnt from the flood response project. Although it is not a full evaluation of the project, the assessment team was advised to utilize OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria (Relevance and Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability) to guide the assessment, data collection and reporting.

With time constraints and limitations on gathering in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the consultant team was deployed to the field for data collection from 18-24 February 2021. The consultant team conducted the assessment in the 10 villages of the 6 target communes in Thmar Kaul and Moug Reussei districts, Battambang Province, Cambodia.

In each district Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) took place with the government authorities at the district level. In each commune there were separate KIIs with the Chief of Commune, Commune Councils (CCs) and the CCWC focal point. At the village level KIIs were undertaken with village leaders, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with target beneficiaries of cash assistance, non-target beneficiaries and WASH kits, and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with four selected target households for case story documentation. The consultant team also conducted KIIs and FGDs with the three partners and Save the Children to gather more information and validate the key findings.

Table 3: Target locations for the assessment

District	Communes	Villages
Moug Reussei	Prey Touch	1. Prey Touch 2. Prey Nil
	Kakaoh	3. Romchek 4. Sre Ou
	Reussei Kraing	5. Yoeun Mean
Thmar Kaul	Anlong Run,	6. Kruos 7. Chab Kab

		8. Char
	Bansay Traeng	9. Bansay Traeng
	Kouk Khmum	10. Kien Kesh 2

Source: Assessment Plan

2.3. Stakeholders

Save the Children hired the consultant team to conduct the assessment to identify the best practices and lessons learnt in the flood response in Battambang Province 2020.

The target audience for this report is Save the Children colleagues and project partners so that they can learn from the assessment report to improve the future emergency response work. The assessment report will be shared in the national dissemination workshop which will be organized by Save the Children.

2.4. Governance

The assessment was conducted by a team consisting of three national consultants, supported by an international consultant (UK-based) as editor. The consultant team was responsible for developing the assessment plan, undertaking field data collection, data analysis and reporting. Save the Children and three partners were responsible for arranging the meetings with respondents in the field. Save the Children colleagues also provided feedback on the draft report.

III. ASSESSMENT METHODS

3.1. Methods

Based on the requirements of the *Terms of Reference*, the consultant team undertook a desk review, and used a variety of qualitative data collection methods with project stakeholders for KIIs, FGDs and IDIs including case story collection. Qualitative data was then tabulated, synthesised, and analysed before drawing conclusions. This methodology was particularly productive to corroborate findings and to ensure that data analysis was rigorous and took into consideration comprehensive elements against the key questions being addressed. Primarily, the methodology was as follows:



Table 4: Detailed methodology

Desk Review	<p>The consultant team reviewed the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project log-frame and proposal • Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) Report⁴ • Project information board • Sensitization message • Summary findings: Joint Rapid Need Assessment • Save the Children Country Strategic Plan 2019-2021 • Cash Transfer Value calculation by WFP and food security sector • Innovative process in Humanitarian Response • OCHA Flood Response Plan 2020 • Hagar International's strategy 2017-2019 • Komar Rikreay Association's strategic plan 2016-2018 • HRF's Contingency Plan 2017 • RGC's NCDM Flood contingency plan 2020 • SC's Electronic Cash Transfer Standard Operating Procedures
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⁴Save the Children (February 2021), *Post Distribution Monitoring Report*. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Assessment Plan Development	The Assessment Plan was developed which included the detailed methodology, questionnaires and field visit schedule following the desk review along with an orientation meeting with Save the Children staff. See Annex 2 for the Assessment Plan.
Field Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGDs with target households (cash transfer and WASH kits) • IDIs with target households for case story development • FGDs with Commune Councils and village leaders in two communes (Along Run and Bansay Traeng) • KIIs with two non-beneficiaries • KIIs with 8 village leaders • KIIs with 5 CCWCs • KIIs with WV and Save the Children staff • FGDs with 3 staff of Hagar International • KII with Komar Rikreay Association’s Executive Director and project manager • KII with district authority from Moug Reussei • FGDs with district authority from Thmar Kaul • KII with one teacher • KII with DoE from Thmar Kaul district • Field observation
Data analysis	<p>The consultant team used triangulation methods⁵ for data collection and analysis to ensure consistency of findings generated across different data collection methods. To do so, the responses were classified and similar responses were grouped to identify the key issues and themes of concern related to the key questions in the Assessment Matrix in Table 2.</p> <p>Based on the results from the data analysis, the initial report was sent to Save the Children before the debriefing meeting.</p>
Reporting	<p>Debriefing meeting: The key findings were shared with Save the Children through a presentation (PPT) on 25th February. Key findings from the assessment were presented for the purpose of mutual exchange and review/adjustment of recommendations as required. This was an important step as recommendations must be adapted, feasible and acceptable. The debriefing was conducted in the presence of the project focal points, Evidence and Learning team and Strategic Program Development Impact Director.</p> <p>Finalization of the report: Based on the results from the debriefing, the pre-final version of the report was shared for final feedback and suggestions. The report included all reporting requirements including Evidence to Action Brief in English and Khmer language, and Khmer version of the executive summary.</p>

Source: Assessment Plan

3.2. Sampling

The flood response project was implemented in six target communes in two districts (Thmar Kaul and Moug Reussei districts), Battambang Province in Cambodia. The total target households were 3,667 households.

Given the limited time available, the consultant team applied the purposive sampling technique to select a total of 10 villages in the six target communes in Thmar Kaul and Moug Reussei districts. Selection of the villages was based on comparisons between implementation sites where there were considered to be clear successes and also challenges. The selected villages in both Thmar Kaul and Moug Reussei districts were visited. As the assessment focused on the qualitative data, the consultant team conducted the assessment with 142 people (56% female) using Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews, and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) to develop case stories. Participants included

⁵ Triangulation methods: This involved using more than one method to collect data on the same topic. This method facilitated validation of data through cross verification from multiple sources (target HHs, village leaders, CCWC, partners and SC staff).

district, commune, and village authorities; school teachers; district office of education; representatives of Village Health Support Groups and Water Sanitation User Groups; target and non-target beneficiaries, and Save the Children and partner staff.

Table 5: Summary of KIIs and FGDs

Summary	
Key Informant Interview (KIIs) and IDIs	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
24 interviews	19 FGDs
28 persons interviewed	114 participants
TOTAL RESPONDENTS 142	
Females 56% Males 44%	

Source: Data Analysis

IV. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1. Contextual sensitivities

The consultant team adhered to Save the Children's terms, conditions and ethical measures. Security of personal and sensitive data at all stages of the activity were clearly discussed with Save the Children and partners during field work. The consultant team respected human and child rights.

4.2. Ethics approval

The assessment plan with all detailed methods and key informants was approved by Save the Children's Head of Evidence and Learning.

4.3. Consent

The consultant team asked support from the Save the Children staff and partners in completion of the consent forms. The consultant team sought permission from relevant stakeholders before meetings started and sought permission and had consent forms signed by parents/caregivers and key informants for the case stories.

V. LIMITATIONS

➤ **Time constraints:** With the pressure of a short timeframe, the assessment used a purposive method to collect qualitative information from relevant stakeholders.

Mitigation measures: The consultant team consisting of three consultants conducted the assessment over seven days, and included travel to the field. The team undertook FGDs, KIIs, case story collection and observation simultaneously to reach as many people as possible in the short time available. Also, the team conducted spot checks with a few non-beneficiaries, the partners and Save the Children focal points to verify some of the findings.

➤ **COVID-19 community outbreak:** People in the communities were fearful of outsiders coming into their villages following the 20th February, 2021 outbreak of COVID-19 in Phnom Penh city in the last few days of the assessment.

Mitigation measures: The consultant team practiced prevention measures including wearing face masks, using hand sanitizer, and maintaining social distancing with all the research participants. In addition, it was agreed to have less than 10 people in the group discussions.

➤ **A final project report is not yet available:** At the time of the assessment, the project final report including financial report and project progress report from partners was not available (as it is a short-term project, there is only a one-off report required from partners and the donor). As such, it was hard to measure the effectiveness,

efficiency, impact and sustainability for all the project activities following the OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria.

Mitigation measures: The consultant team applied different methods to gather data but more importantly to verify the information from key relevant stakeholders to measure the extent of the project's relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

VI. FINDINGS

6.1. Overall Findings

This table provides indicative scores and summary remarks against the five evaluation criteria.

Table 6: Project achievements against the five evaluation criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Score	Remarks
RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE	4	The project was relevant and useful in responding well to the beneficiary needs after the flood. In particular, the Unconditional Cash Transfer and WASH components provided life-saving assistance for the poor flood-affected households and boys and girls who faced negative effects from flood, loss of income sources, and damage to water and sanitation facilities. The project was well aligned with the government, UN-OCHA, HRF, and Save the Children and WV strategies and also partially relevant to Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International' strategies.
EFFECTIVENESS	4	Although the project was challenged with a tight timeframe for implementation, at least 88% of target beneficiaries (3,253 HHs of the 3,667 HHs) successfully received and were satisfied with the Unconditional Cash Transfer. Borehole rehabilitation and WASH kits distribution reached 100% of target households successfully. The only exception in reaching targets was the safe learning environment component. The simple design of the project and strong partnership across stakeholders enabled a high rate of success for the innovative digitalised cash transfer and WASH component while recognizing some challenges in using digital technology. Capacity of partners in implementing the safe learning environment component needs improvement.
EFFICIENCY	3	As the project's financial report was not yet available at the time of the assessment, it was not possible to analyse cost efficiency for the whole project. However, it is likely that the amount of \$50 unconditional cash and WASH intervention costs alone demonstrated efficiency as the amount allocated per household was sufficient to support the target households with their basic needs for between one month (cash transfers) to three months (WASH kits). The institutional capacity of the two partners Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International in emergency response had some effect on efficiency and effectiveness.
IMPACT	3	It was difficult to measure the long-term impacts of the emergency project interventions on the target beneficiaries. Therefore, the assessment only looked into whether the project met the objectives and immediate outcome "Flood-affected children and families are provided with immediate life-saving assistance". The assessment found that the project not only responded well to cover the basic, life-saving needs of the flood affected beneficiaries but also observed unexpected positive outcomes for those households who used

		<p>the cash assistance to develop their livelihood activities, notably chicken raising, growing vegetables, rice production and paid part of their debts.</p> <p>However, in a small number of cases some concerns were highlighted whereby support to households contributed to, or exacerbated, some pre-existing tensions and jealousies among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the target villages.</p>
SUSTAINABILITY	3	<p>Although it was difficult to measure sustainability of this emergency response project, the consultant team found that active government involvement from the district to the commune and village leaders strengthened commitment and ownership of project implementation. Stakeholders expressed they had a good opportunity to learn from the project and to adapt it for future emergencies.</p> <p>Partner organizations Komar Rikrey Association and Hagar International confirmed that they will be able to adopt the innovative process of cash transfers with some modifications according to the specific context in any future emergency responses. WV can be a strategic partner to deliver WASH in future emergencies.</p> <p>In addition, the cash transfer component was designed to meet basic needs, but anecdotally also contributed in many cases to household economic improvement/livelihoods, debt reduction, and education.</p>
<p>Score: 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high & 5 = very high</p>		

Source: Data Analysis

6.2. Relevance and Coherence

62.1. How relevant is the project to the needs and priorities of flood-affected populations especially the most vulnerable people?

There were three components of the project: Unconditional Cash Transfer, WASH (borehole cleaning/repair and WASH kit distribution), and safe learning environment. The assessment found that the project interventions were responsive to the needs and priorities of flood-affected populations, especially the most vulnerable people in general. Among all of the interventions, the cash transfer, followed by borehole cleaning and repair and hygiene kits distribution were ranked as the most appropriate interventions to respond to the priority needs of the flood-affected population although renovation of classrooms and school infrastructure was still in progress.

Photo 1: Courtesy of Mr. Kum Sokun, Prey Touch Commune, Moug Reusse District



Unconditional Cash Transfer: Although cash transfers were received by the target households in early January 2021, some two months after the flood, feedback from beneficiary households and other stakeholders indicated this was good timing for poor households who were struggling to earn income after the relief items from other donors

had finished in December 2020. As such, the \$50 cash injection into these households was considered to be extremely helpful to fill the gap and support the survival of these households.

Borehole rehabilitation (cleaning and repair): The intervention was implemented from January to February 2021 which was at the right time as the boreholes were contaminated during the flood and required urgent cleaning and minor repairs in some cases so that the flood-affected people could access safe water for drinking and household consumption. However, it would be more helpful if it could be done earlier once the flood water subsided.

Safe learning environment: As some school facilities and infrastructure were damaged by flood waters, it was an appropriate time to renovate them and build safer learning environments for the students. At the time of the assessment, the preparatory work had been undertaken in the respective schools to restore the damaged classrooms and school infrastructure but renovation activities had not yet started.

WASH kits: The majority of beneficiaries revealed that the hygiene kits were very helpful, meeting their basic health and personal hygiene needs following the flooding, as well as for COVID-19 prevention measures. In regard to the provision of bottled drinking water, the majority of persons mentioned that it responded to their needs as it helped to reduce their expenditure but it would be more helpful if it was distributed earlier during the flood season when households were facing difficulties in accessing clean water and most relief assistance was focused on food distribution. *(Refer to 6.3.2 for the detailed analysis)*

In general, support of water, sanitation and hygiene was deemed highly relevant considering the lack of water and sanitation experienced by households in Battambang as the worst hit province affected by two waves of significant flooding.

6.2.2. How were the target areas and beneficiaries selected?

- **Target area selection:** The assessment found that the project selected two districts in Battambang based on the results of the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment, which was carried out as part of the Humanitarian Response Forum (HRF), co-led by the NCDM and Save the Children.

The process of selecting target communes was as follows: Following the selection of the two target districts, Save the Children and partner World Vision, along with Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International consulted with the district offices to select the most vulnerable communes. In Moug Reussei, the three target communes were the most flood-affected. In Thmar Kaul, the limited level of relief assistance was added as one criterion for selection. Specifically, Kouk Khmum commune in Thmar Kaul district was selected because it received limited relief assistance even though this commune was not among the most vulnerable areas (as compared to Ou Taki commune which was the most affected commune, receiving a good level of relief assistance).

- **Target beneficiaries' selection:** It is noted that Save the Children has developed a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure for Cash Transfers, of which the selection processes of beneficiary households is clearly outlined and these processes were followed by the local authorities. However, it was not so clear in the SOP if this needs an open community meeting during pre-selecting households. Below outlines the selection process undertaken in this response based on the consultation with local authorities:

Table 7: Unconditional Cash Transfer beneficiaries' selection process

Steps	Process followed
Step 1. Key stakeholder engagement	The partners (Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International) conducted consultation meetings with district offices to select the target communes.
Step 2. Criteria Development	11 criteria to select the target households were developed jointly through consultation with the district, CCWC/commune and village leaders.
Step 3. Orientation meeting	Based on the set criteria, the commune councils (CC) and CCWC conducted an orientation meeting with all village leaders and community representatives (elders) to train on how to select the target households.
Step 4. Development of beneficiary lists	Village leaders and their committees registered the name of target households into the list of beneficiaries based on their list of ID poor and added some more households based on the 11 defined criteria.

Step 5. Screening and scoring by CC	Based on the lists of beneficiaries from village leaders, CC and CCWC reviewed scores of the list of beneficiaries and selected those with the highest scores. Some names were dropped if they did not meet the criteria.
Step 6. Spot check by partners	Based on the lists from CCWC, Save the Children advised partners to conduct random checks and home visits for 5-10%.
Step 7. Enter lists of beneficiaries in the system	After spot checks, partners entered all lists of beneficiaries into the computer system and printed out the final lists for village leaders.
Step 8. Selection by Save the Children	Based on the lists from partners, Save the Children validated the final lists of beneficiaries based on a scoring system with some random spot checks through phone calls.

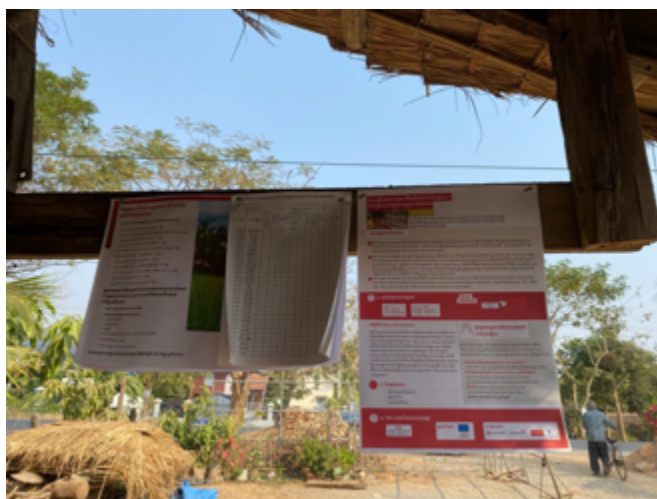
Source: Consultation with assessment participants and project documents

It was noted that the II criteria were found to be inclusive and helpful to cover the most vulnerable households and those most in need. The criteria were able to cover those who were missed out during the COVID-19 social protection equity fund process. Furthermore, the II criteria were well known by the district, commune, and village leaders but not by target households and communities.

Given COVID-19 community transmission outbreak limited community gathering alongside the time constraints for the assessment all interviewed village leaders confirmed that the Commune Councils and CCWC called them for a meeting at the Commune Office to discuss the II criteria then they pre-selected target households for Unconditional Cash Transfers and gave the lists to the implementing partners. There was no open community meeting with all villagers for the beneficiary selection.

The assessment found the same selection process took place in all target villages in both districts. The village leaders from Thmar Kaul district posted the lists of target households, Accountability and Complaint Mechanism at their houses, community meeting places, or pagoda. Some FGD participants from the target households revealed that they did not know why they were selected. Some of them came to know about the reason for selection only when they received sensitization text messages and during the face to face meeting with village leaders after the beneficiaries' lists were already finalized. In Moug Reusseï district, lists of beneficiaries and accountability mechanism posters were noted to be posted at the commune offices but there was no evidence that the village leaders posted the lists of target HHs and Accountability and Complaint Mechanism in the villages. One village leader mentioned that if he could hang the selection criteria at his house it would help him to avoid a lot of the jealousy.

Photo 2: At the village leader's house in Bansay Traeng village, Bansay Traeng commune, Thmar Kaul district.



WASH kits beneficiary selection: As the number of WASH kits distributed was less than the number of Unconditional Cash Transfer beneficiaries (1,420 target households out of 3,667 HHs), WV (as partner implementing WASH in the two target districts) was advised to select the highest scoring households from the cash transfer lists of beneficiaries for WASH kits distribution. This appeared to be a coherent approach as WV also conducted random home visits to the target households to verify the WASH kit beneficiaries prior to kit distribution.

Accountability and complaints mechanism: Accountability and complaints mechanisms in projects are considered good practice for promoting accountability in humanitarian responses. It is also aligned with the Core Humanitarian Standards which adds value to, and increases the quality of response. During field data collection, stakeholders expressed their support to, and appreciation of the complaint mechanisms in place, describing them as helpful for the local authorities and target households to contact the responsible person should they have any problems. However, it was clear that the accountability and complaints mechanisms were well known to the level of district and

commune leaders and CCWCs, as well as village leaders but this was not the case for people in the community/village. Specifically, in Moug Reussei district, there was no evidence to prove that information about the Accountability and Complaint Mechanism was posted at the village level while it was evident that in all visited villages in Thmar Kaul all relevant documents were posted at the village leaders' home, pagoda or community meeting places. Many FGD members argued that the accountability complaints mechanism could not handle all the issues arising at the same time, given that Save the Children has two hotline phone numbers (one for direct call and another one for leaving a recorded message). Some households who did not receive cash commented that they called the Save the Children hotline numbers, and were asked for details about their issue and advised that the issue would be addressed. A few other households commented that they were unable to reach anybody on the hotline.

6.2.3. Internal coherence – where/how these interventions linked to Save the Children's policies and priorities?

Strategic goal number 6 of Save the Children Cambodia's strategic plan 2019-2023 highlights vulnerability to natural disaster as one of the key factors to be addressed in order to address child poverty. Mitigating the effects of shocks and disaster through increasing partnership and funding is the proposed way to address the identified gap. As such, the three components of the project: unconditional cash transfer, WASH (borehole repair, cleaning and WASH kits distribution), and safe learning environment that leveraged donor funding (ECHO), through partnership with WV, Hagar International and Komar Rikreay Association were coherent with Save the Children Strategic priorities.

As a child focussed organisation, children continued to be a key focus under the project, including in the targeting of households. Three of 11 criteria to be selected as the target households for cash transfer and WASH kits were households with children below five years old, those with pregnant women and single household head with two or more children. It is recognized that Save the Children has included their strategic focus on children below five years old for cash transfer and WASH kits components. For children above five years old, Save the Children included the safe learning environment interventions in this project to contribute to their continued access to education post-flooding, that is safe and delivered in a child-friendly learning environment. Given that Save the Children is co-lead of the Education in Emergencies cluster globally and in Cambodia, the project interventions have a direct link to the Save the Children country and global mandates.

Specifically, the innovative digitalized cash transfer via Wing account and phone number methods could reach a few thousand households in a short period of time. This element is well aligned with the need for innovation which is one of the three theories of change of Save the Children's global work plan 2019 -2021 and Save the Children Cambodia's strategic plan 2019-2021. At all levels, Save the Children is changing its approach to fit into a rapidly changing world. The organization is committed to adapt and evolve its working approach where innovative partnership is one of the core focuses for any breakthrough that produces greater impacts for children.

6.2.4. External coherence—where/how these interventions aligned to government/partner's policies and priorities?

Coherence with the priorities and strategies of Cambodia Humanitarian Response Forum (HRF): The HRF is the largest humanitarian network in the country that works on emergency management. The network is currently co-chaired by the WFP together with Danish Church Aid (DCA), and members include UN agencies and all the INGOs working in the humanitarian sector. According to the current version of the HRF's Contingency Plan, the principle objective is to support the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) in responding to the immediate needs of the most affected people. Central to this objective, life-saving interventions and fulfilling basic needs such as food and WASH, along with education is stated among the humanitarian sectors. The provision of cash transfer is also well captured under the plan.

Coherence with the Royal Government of Cambodia's humanitarian emergency management: The Flood Contingency Plan 2020 (FCP 2020) of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) highlights the need for a timely and effective response to fulfil the basic needs of affected populations during and in the aftermath of flooding. Food, education, WASH, and basic health care are amongst the key priority sectors stated in the plan (section 4). During the actual response in October to November 2020 that was coordinated by the Royal Government of Cambodia's NCDM; the provision of cash was among the interventions. For cash assistance in a humanitarian emergency, according to the sub-decree number 3021 issued by the Royal Government of Cambodia on the establishment of a food reserve system for emergency response and recovery, the sub-decree prioritized the importance of reserving food stock and seeds partially in the form of cash (Article 4, Chapter 1), to allow greater room for flexibility of interventions.

Project partners: The project interventions on WASH are well aligned with World Vision mandates and priorities as WV is a co-lead of WASH in the emergency sector in the HRF in Cambodia. WV is considered an expert on WASH which makes it a good partner for this project. In regard to partners, Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International, their support to cash transfers and the safe learning environment, is partially aligned with their priorities to support children in the most needed situation. However, emergency response is not well captured in their respective Country Strategic Plans. It is also noted that both partners do not have updated strategic plans in place.

6.3. Effectiveness

6.3.1. Were the planned objectives and outcomes in the project document achieved? What are the results achieved beyond the project logframe? And were activities implemented on time? How did encountered delays prevent from proper implementation of the project

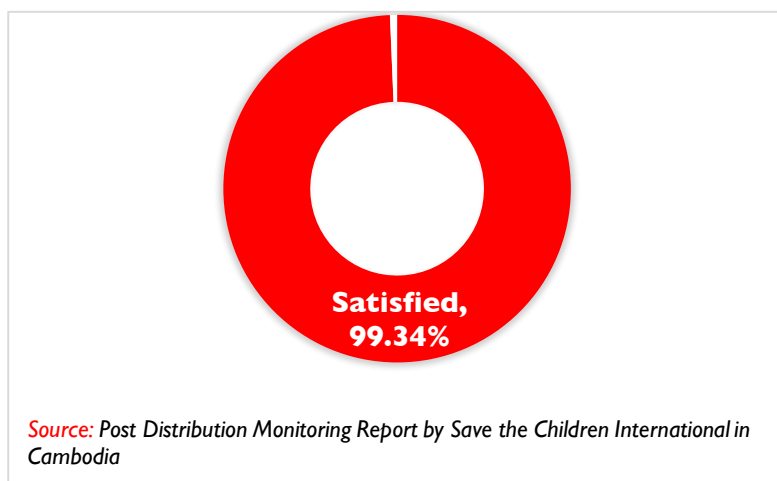
The project was originally planned to start from 10 November 2020 but the actual approval was in late November, practically giving a three-month implementation period despite the four-month project time-frame. At the time of assessment, the project component on the Safe Learning Environment was not yet completely finished. Therefore, it was difficult to determine overall project effectiveness. However, the assessment used the available secondary data and qualitative information collected from FGDs and KIIs to draw a likely-level of effectiveness.

Cash transfer: Unconditional cash transfers in both districts were achieved with a success rate of 88% when considering 3,253 households out of the planned 3,667 households received these transfers successfully and without compromising safety of the households (according to the latest data from Save the Children staff during the assessment period). The project design of innovative digitalized cash transfer via Wing to mobile phone and Wing to Wing Account transfers ensured the \$50 cash payment could reach the above households in a short time period⁶ in which Save the Children covered all administration and transfer fees for all beneficiaries.

100% of the households (from among the 88% of households who received the cash successfully) engaged in the FGDs confirmed that the \$50 helped them to address their basic needs for at least a month. Considering this, the approach was found to be very effective and well aligned with the objectives of Multipurpose Cash Transfer⁷ (MPC) from the Electronic Cash Transfer Operating Standard under the SOP of Save the Children Cambodia.

Target households that successfully received the \$50 cash (HHs from among the 3,253 HHs who received the cash transfer) expressed that they were happy with the cash transfer process as it was easy for them and they think it is a safer method than distribution of money in the communities. Save the Children’s Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) report found that 99.34% out of 88% who received the cash considered the distribution method was the most effective, safe, accessible accountable and participatory. The assistance could tremendously help poor households to support their livelihoods and children’s learning (see efficiency 6.4.1). The respondents confirmed that the passcode to access the cash they received directly was genuine with no hidden fees. (please refer to 6.2.1. and 6.3.2 for the detailed analysis)

Figure 2: Overall satisfaction with the cash assistance



⁶ Wing is a Cambodia’s leading mobile phone banking service provider. It can apply Wing to Wing account transfers, along with Wing to phone transfers.

⁷ **Multipurpose Cash Transfers (MPC):** Transfers (either periodic or one-off) corresponding to the amount of money required to cover, fully or partially, a household’s basic and/or recovery needs. The term refers to cash transfers designed to address multiple needs, with the transfer value calculated accordingly. MPC transfer values are often indexed to expenditure gaps based on a Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB), or other monetized calculation of the amount required to cover basic needs. All MPC are unrestricted in terms of use as they can be spent as the recipient chooses. This concept may also be referred to as Multipurpose Cash Grants (MPG), or Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA).

In addition, this transfer has been highly appreciated by the district and commune authorities, and implementing partners while acknowledging that each transfer method has its own challenges.

The challenges: The issues faced by the 12% of households who experienced errors via both Wing to Wing and Wing to Phone transfers were being investigated by Save the Children, its partners and local authorities. At the time of assessment, Save the Children and its partners were addressing the issue for the target households to receive their cash payments where possible including through alternative transfer modalities. The latest solution provided by Save the Children and advised to partners, was for CCWC/village leaders to verify phone numbers of the remaining error beneficiaries and Save the Children will then provide the code to CCWCs so that they can call beneficiaries to record the code to withdraw the cash.

The consultant team acknowledged that the major issues that caused 12% of the target households to not yet receive the cash were: 1) Around 50% of target households were elderly (based on the data confirmed by CCWCs) and they do not know how to use the mobile phone technologies, 2) From the FGDs, around 50% of target households who registered to get the cash through Wing to phone number turned off the incoming IVR call as they thought it was a scam and or telemarketing, but listening to this IVR sensitization message in full was required before the code is sent to the phone, 3) Some other people could not read the codes required to collect the cash that were already sent to their mobile phone, even if some of them used smart phone with Khmer Font, 4) A few target households lost their phone numbers and/or their phones were broken, 5) A few target households did not have a phone so they put the numbers of their relatives, 6) A few target households confirmed that they received the code but when they withdrew the money from Wing agent, there was no money (they were told the code was expired after two weeks and the money was rolled back to Wing), 7) A few target households had provided the wrong numbers. During the assessment, the team found two cases in Reusse Kraing commune where the codes were sent to the wrongly provided phone numbers which were outside Battambang province and the persons got the money from the Wing agent already (Komar Rikreay Association and Save the Children resolved these problems already).

It is worth understanding the overall process of cash transfers. In the case of Wing to Account method, initially the target households were advised to bring their ID card or family book to set up a Wing account at the commune office which did not require a phone number. However, to create the Wing Account, Wing requires a phone number associated for first time account activation. Both partners supported the account set-up process providing a phone number to activate these accounts where numbers had not been provided. Around 10% of the cash transfer target households (384 out of 3,667 households) obtained Wing accounts (SC data) while the rest had accounts issued using their ID card, or family book. Also, the overall process for Wing Account set up took at least one week for 1,000 accounts. Later, the project team realised that not every beneficiary has an ID card and processing a Wing account takes longer in those cases. Therefore, the project team advised the remaining target beneficiaries to provide a phone number so that the process could reach more households quickly and at the same time, the sensitization message could be done via phone through IVR. It is understood that the beneficiaries were not given options to choose which method they were comfortable with, nor were instructions clear but they were asked to follow the recommended method in order to meet the timeframe. The majority of FGDs members confirmed that their main communication about the project was mainly channelled through village leaders.

Table 8: Analysis of digitalized cash transfer methods

Transfer method	Advantage	Disadvantage
Wing to Wing account HHs need an ID card or family book to set up Wing Account at the commune office. HHs use the Wing card to withdraw money from the nearest Wing agent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HHs have Wing account for future use • HHs can use Wing for other business purposes • Institutional and strategic • Suitable for elder beneficiaries • The right target HHs could receive the cash assistance easily • No risks of fraud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult for HHs who have no ID card nor family book to set up Wing account • Requires a deposit of 6,000 Riels in account to set-up • Time to travel and difficult for poor HHs with no transport, and risk during floods • Set up Wing account requires processing time and phone number to activate the newly opened account • SC needs to facilitate newly opened Wing Account and pay transfer fee for beneficiaries

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not COVID-19 sensitive, need to do face to face sensitization message as mentioned above • In case the HHs lost the passcode of the Wing account, it will be difficult to get new activation
<p>Wing to phone number HHs need to give the correct phone number to the village leader. HHs need to receive the call and listen to a complete sensitization voice message via IVR and then receive a code. If message is interrupted, code is not given.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HHs can listen to sensitization voice messages via IVR • HHs are only required to give the correct phone number • Requires limited time to register • HHs don't need to travel, which is a benefit due to Covid-19 risks • Fast to register and opportunity for scale-up • Fast receiving code and cash transfer • Easy for younger/smartphone beneficiaries • No deposit is required, unlike Wing to Account method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult for elders/low tech users or those with no phone or phone pre-set English language • Quite high error and risk if the wrong number given • Users did not follow instructions well, specifically listening through phone voice message via IVR • From the FGDs, only 50% phone users listened to voice message IVR till the end and remembered messages • Still need to do face to face sensitization to understand the purpose of cash transfer and how it works • Risk of fraud or loss if a wrong phone number (or another person's phone number) is given although the consent has been done with thumbprint by the beneficiary

Source: Data Analysis

Based on the analysis in Table 8, cash transfers from Wing to Wing Account were found to be more applicable for elders/low tech users and small-scale response while Wing to phone method is more applicable for younger/high tech users and/or in an urban context and can be easily scaled up to reach a large number of households in a short time period. During the assessment, it was observed that only a few beneficiaries in FGDs listened to phone sensitization voice message (IVR) until the end while many others switched off their phone when they heard an automated voice message because they suspected some kind of scam or telemarketing nuisance call. Although each method of transfer has its merits, it is essential to investigate the specific challenges and ensure all receivers understand instructions and have clear communication on how each cash transfer method works. It is noted that the importance of Phone together with IVR is inclusive of cash transfer and sensitization messages. The phone sensitization voice messages (IVR) cover project objectives, II selection criteria, purpose of cash transfer, information about the project donor and implementers, instructions for the Wing code and complaint mechanisms including two hotline numbers.

WASH components met 100% of targets, and was successfully completed. The WASH activities were implemented by World Vision as the project partner of Save the Children. Based on the discussion with WV staff there were delays in starting to implement the project activities due to the late completion of the partnership agreement between Save the Children and WV. However, WV managed to implement activities within the project timeframe as they mobilized the WASH expert from another province to support the implementation of the flood response project.

WASH under the project had two components: WASH kits distribution and borehole rehabilitation. **WASH kits⁸** were distributed to 1,420 households in the two target districts, distributed from 16-26 February 2021, in the period overlapping the assessment.

Photo 3: Borehole rehabilitation Popeal khae village, Otaki commune, Thmar Kaul district

⁸ **WASH kits included 12 items:** 10 boxes of body soap, 12 boxes of washing soap, 4 boxes of shampoo, 10 boxes of sanitary pads, 6 toothbrushes for adults and 10 for children, 6 boxes of toothpastes, 4 nail scissors, 5 water bottles (20 L water per bottle), 1 small water tank, and fabric and P&G powder to treat the water.

The target households who received the WASH kits were the most vulnerable households (highest score based on 11 criteria under the cash transfer beneficiaries' selection) who were selected from among the \$50 cash transfer beneficiary households. Based on the results of FGDs with the WASH kits' beneficiaries, the consultant team found that they are the right people who should receive the WASH kits support as the majority of them were elderly persons who had faced difficulties in accessing safe water and sanitation during and after the flood. Target households expressed that it is their first time to receive a comprehensive package like these WASH kits and all the products were of good quality. They mentioned that their children practice personal hygiene such as hand washing and brushing their teeth more often than before. Some of them also mentioned that they shared kit contents with their relatives also, as there was a lot of things in the kits and more than they could use. *(please refer to 6.3.2 for further analysis)*



Borehole rehabilitation (cleaning and repair) was completed by the last week of February 2021, except for the visibility installation that was still pending at the time of assessment. In total, 108 contaminated and partially damaged boreholes (72 in Moug Reusseï and 36 in Thmar Kaul) were again in use by 2,700 target beneficiaries (25 households per one borehole). In accordance with government standards, each borehole has a Water and Sanitation User Group (WSUGs) responsible for borehole maintenance. FGDs with WSUGs in two villages confirmed that they have observed an

increased amount of water from the borehole and the hand pump mechanism was also smoother and lighter than before.

The most important thing is that the water has been tested and confirmed as safe for consumption after the rehabilitation, as confirmed by WV focal staff interviewed. However, the assessment observed that the boreholes can be flooded again in the next rainy season as the borehole cleaning and repair did not elevate or upgrade the level of borehole foundation from the floodwater.

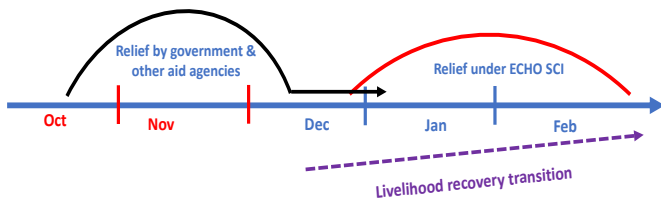
Safe Learning environment – It is too early to determine the effectiveness of Safe Learning Environment as at the time of the assessment, the schools just completed the damage assessment. School renovation plans have just been submitted to Hagar International staff as the education partner under the project. Key factors that hindered the implementation of the safe learning environment activities were school closure due to the 28 November Covid-19 outbreak event⁹ and lack of knowledge and skills on the school safety framework among school support committees who required training in assessing safe learning environment included school damage assessment and planning. Therefore, Save the Children needed to spend time to coordinate with MoEYS Disaster Management Secretariat to provide training on school safety framework, particularly Pillar I (CSS Assessment). The training and demonstration were conducted from 12-13 January 2021 to the school support committees and District of Education (DOE) in Thmar Kaul and Moug Reusseï districts. All school support committees led by DOE then conducted their school damage assessment, developed renovation and budget planning and consulted on the results with the district authorities for approval before they submitted renovation and budget plans of the two districts to Hagar International as the education partner.

In summary, after donor approval, this project had a three-month emergency response timeframe with many interventions. Some activities were not completely finished and some data was not available at the time of assessment. However, certain drivers that contributed to project effectiveness were identified and include: Simple project design, strong partnership with NGO partners, alongside close collaboration with district, commune, and village authorities. Key challenges related to time constraints, lack of communication and clear instruction about cash transfer modalities among beneficiary households at the early stage, and lack of human resources for partners on the safe learning environment component.

⁹ The 28th November COVID-19 outbreak event resulted in school closure from 28 November 2020 to 10 January 2021 due to local transmission risks.

6.3.2. What direct and indirect evidence is available about the project interventions to respond to the flood in the community?

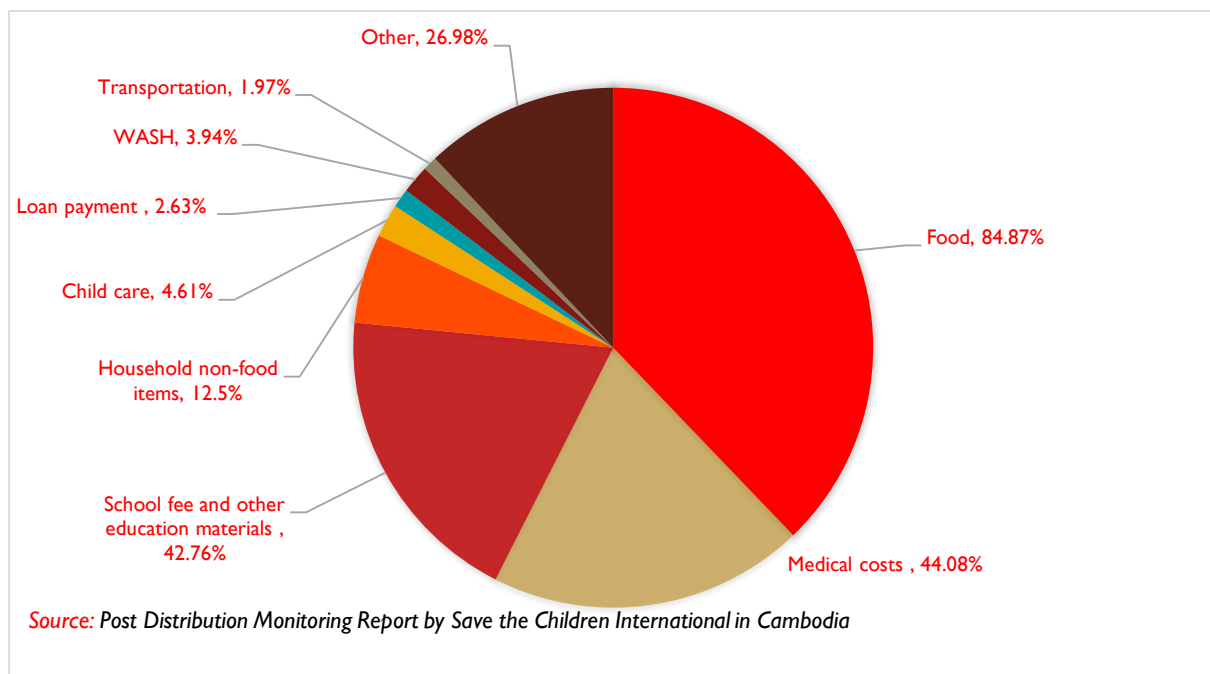
Figure 3: Relief Curve



It was confirmed that batch 1 of cash transfers was transferred late December 2020 but batch 2 (with those beneficiaries who had duplicate phone numbers with other beneficiaries through Wing to phone number) was just transferred in January 2021. During the process of cash transfer to the target households, several transfers were made because of the challenges as mentioned in 6.3.1. All the cash transfers came after the flood but it was still at the right time for the most vulnerable households as the emergency assistance from the Government of Cambodia, individual donors, and others had finished in December 2020. Although it was received some time after the flooding, the \$50 cash helped to fill the gaps for responding to the basic needs of households such as rice, purchasing of medicine and/or health care, and sending children back to school. Further, several

households described that the cash assistance supported in repayment of outstanding debts with local moneylenders which had been taken out before receiving the cash assistance. The cash assistance filled the gap during the period where local livelihoods affected by the flooding had not yet returned to normal, coupled with the continual disruptions and uncertainties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The one-off, unconditional \$50 USD transfer was really helpful for the most vulnerable HHs to survive the food shortages after the flash flood and chronic COVID-19 pandemic situation. However, it is very little to support them to build their resilience for the next emergencies. Longer-term recovery interventions are needed for building their resilience and to prepare them for any future emergency.

Figure 4: Cash spent by category



According to the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) Report undertaken by Save the Children, 100% of respondents viewed cash transfers as a positive intervention and used this money for their household’s daily food requirements, health needs, children’s education, WASH, and other prioritised needs.

Figure 4 shows that the majority of the cash was spent on daily food consumption (84.87%), followed by medical costs (44.08% including fees for doctors or medication), and school and education supplies (42.76%). Approximately 26.98%

of respondents used it for other purposes, which varied by households and included such things as utilities, purchase of toddler milk powder, supplementary nutritional foods, sweets, dessert for sales in the community, as well as chicken food, materials for animals, fertilizers, clothes, and education supplies. Other examples included use of cash to pay for bike repair, buy a new bike for their children to go to school, purchase housing equipment, savings for birth delivery, and purchase of personal protective equipment such as facemasks. Additionally, they spent on their daily non-food items and other religious affairs for their wellbeing and gave to their parents.

WASH kits included 12 items: 10 boxes of body soap, 12 boxes of washing soap, 4 boxes of shampoo, 10 boxes of sanitary pads, 6 toothbrushes for adults and 10 for children, 6 boxes of toothpastes, 4 nail scissors, 5 water bottles (20 L water per bottle), 1 small water tank, and fabric to filter water and P&G powder to treat the water. The majority of beneficiaries mentioned that the hygiene kits contents like soap were very helpful and met their needs and they can use it for COVID-19 prevention measures also. During the distribution of WASH kits, World Vision as a project partner also gave awareness key messages on COVID-19 protection and prevention measures, in particular the promotion of hand washing practices among the target HHs. It was found to be a good approach to link the hygiene kits distribution together with the COVID-19 prevention measures at the right time which the majority of target households confirmed to practice at home. However, for the five water bottles as drinking water, the majority of the target HHs mentioned that it still responded to their needs as it helped to reduce their expenditure but it would have been more helpful if it could be distributed during the flood season because they had difficulty accessing clean water during that time. Also, most relief assistance at that time was focused on food distribution.

Borehole rehabilitation (cleaning and repair): World Vision contracted a company to clean and repair/rehabilitate the boreholes between January and February 2021. All of the target households mentioned that the interventions were at the right time as the boreholes were contaminated during the flood and required urgent cleaning after this, so that the flood-affected people could access safe water for drinking and household consumption. However, households were of the view that it would be helpful if it was done earlier after the flood water had subsided. Community members were satisfied with the water from the boreholes after cleaning. For proper management, there are 25 families under the WSUGs formed for each borehole.

Safe learning environment: At the time of the assessment, the schools just completed the damage assessment. The school renovation plans including school environmental clean-up from the two districts have been submitted to Hagar International staff. It is still in the preparation stage.

6.4. Efficiency

6.4.1. Were the resources and inputs converted to outputs in a timely and cost-effective manner?

Cost efficiency for the entire project cannot be commented on without the financial report, which was not available to the consultant team at the time of assessment in February 2021¹⁰. However, the consultant team analysed efficiency of the project interventions received by the target beneficiaries, and concluded that in general, the project interventions were cost efficient assisting the target HHs to survive for between one month (cash transfer) to three months (for WASH kits).

Cash amount rationale: Before deciding the amount of cash for the transfers, Save the Children organised discussions and consultations with relevant stakeholders to understand the rationale/ considerations/ parameters of the transfer value, ensuring the amount fits with the government's cash transfer program and other initiatives. Based on consultation with the co-lead of the Food Security sector and WFP, it was recommended that the cash transfer value (food) is \$36 per month for a family of five. Based on this recommendation, Save the Children allocated \$50 for the Unconditional Cash Transfer interventions which was expected to help the target households for one month. During the assessment, it was found that the \$50 allocation helped the households for around one month to meet their food and other requirements, and this aligned with the PDM findings that indicated that the cash amount of \$50 was appropriate and could meet 70-80% of HH needs for a month, depending on how many members were present in each household.

Borehole rehabilitation (cleaning and repair): The project supported cleaning of 108 boreholes in the two districts: 72 in Moug Roussei and 36 in Thmar Kaul, with each well benefiting approximately 25 HHs. As such, the

¹⁰ The project final reports including financial report will be available in April 2021 while the assessment was undertaken February 18-24, 2021.

project has spent \$21 per household to support them to access clean water. This is cost efficient as they can access clean water for more than a year provided there will be no flood in the next rainy season.

WASH kits: 1,420 target households received WASH kits in both districts. The WASH kits have 12 items at a cost of \$60.95 per HH. This was considered cost efficient based on the discussion with target HHs, who reported they can use the kits for around three to four months, depending on the number of members per HH.

Staffing: While the project had a number of achievements, limited staff directly responsible for this project was a challenge. Both the Executive Director of Komar Rikreay Association and the Manager of Hagar International allocated their times to be project focal points with a lot of responsibility in addition to their routine work. In the case of WV, the WASH specialist from Takeo province was assigned with responsibility for the WASH interventions in Thmar Kaul district. All of these persons confirmed that they did not have any days off since they started to implement the project. They were working throughout the day and even very late at night. Save the Children staff also experienced work pressure supporting the project partners in implementation, and in particular resolving issues specific to the cash transfer component.

Visibility of Save the Children at local level: It was acknowledged that Save the Children has worked through different partners in Battambang since 2013. Through flood response project implementation, Save the Children provided support to the three partners to implement the visibility guidelines of ECHO. The three partners have applied the visibility guidelines of ECHO and promoted Save the Children visibility equally with their logos. However, only the target households who listened to the IVR sensitization messages were found to know the name of Save the Children and ECHO as donor while other key informants rarely or hardly mentioned the name of Save the Children in English or in Khmer.

6.5. Impact

6.5.1. *Were the project goals attained? If not, what changes need to be made to meet goals in the future?*

The consultant team acknowledged this is an emergency response project to address and cover a short-term basic need of the flood-affected households. It is difficult to measure the effects of the intervention on the beneficiaries if they have a positive, negative, expected, and unexpected impact. However, it is important to assess if the project meets its objectives: "Flood-affected children and families are provided with immediate life-saving assistance". As mentioned above, by the time of assessment, most of the project interventions were completed except re-establishing the safe learning environment. The delay of safe learning environment activities was due to school closure as result of the 28 November COVID-19 outbreak event and limited knowledge and skill on the school safety framework among those school support committees.

6.5.2. *What are the positive impacts of the project? What are the negative impacts?*

As mentioned above, it is hard to measure the long-term impacts of the project as the nature of the project was designed for the emergency response for a short period of time. However, the consultant team identified some positive immediate impacts related to the project supporting affected households with immediate life-saving assistance in line with the project objectives. The following are **positive immediate impacts** observed:

- ❖ **Lifesaving** - child poverty, children's education, meeting basic needs in the gap period. All FGDs with selected households confirmed that the one-off unconditional cash transfer and WASH kits allowed the poor households to cover basic needs for between one to three months and supported children to continue education as well as improving access to drinking water more broadly. Without the \$50 cash, they would badly struggle for survival.
- ❖ **Economic reactivation in the community** – according to FGDs with the target households, most used the \$50 cash to buy food and medicines from the local market which contributed to reactivating local markets during and after the flood. If all food and NFIs are provided on such a large scale, local markets are affected.

❖ **Linking relief, recovery, and development** – the consultant team also found an unexpected impact that some households used the \$50 cash for agricultural activities including animal husbandry such as raising chickens; for the purchase of pesticides and herbicides for rice production, and for growing vegetables.

Photo 4: Mr. Douk used some of his \$50 to re-establish his vegetable garden for household consumption and selling in Thmar Kaul district



❖ **Building strategic partnership for emergency response** – the project provided good opportunities for partners and Save the Children to work and learn together through a cycle of disaster management. Partners have gained knowledge, experience, and aspirations through this flood response. They feel confident that their organization can undertake future responses. It is important to reflect on how the partnership worked and build capacity on emergency preparedness for any future response.

Negative impacts: The FGDs with village leaders and beneficiaries in both Moug Reusseï and Thmar Kaul revealed that there were more than five occasions relief assistance were provided by individual donors and the government to their villages during the flood of 2020 in addition to the COVID-19 support fund to ID poor households. The village leaders observed that relief assistance has created some tensions and dependency in their villages. It was felt that some poor households were likely to stay home and not find work because they are accessing the monthly COVID-19 equity fund from June 2020-March 2021.

It was also noted that there was some confusion around messaging from the project implementing partner to local authorities that more than one cash transfer was to be provided in the Thmar Kaul district. Moreover, concerns were also expressed that the project interventions might have partially added to tensions in their villages. It was likely that the confusion caused by inconsistent messages and communication of the two projects on cash transfers which were being implemented by Hagar International at the same time and in the same place: 1) Family Care First project¹¹ and 2) Flood Emergency Response project in Thmar Kaul district. Family Care First has supported more than one cash transfer to the target vulnerable families with child protection issues affected by COVID-19 from December 2020 to July 2021, while the flood response project provided only one-off of unconditional cash transfer of \$50 for the flood affected households for life-saving assistance in the same district. The FGDs with commune councils, CCWCs and households revealed they were told by the partner staff that the target households may receive \$50 per month for four to five months. This confusion was also informed to Save the Children staff who did a field visit to correct the message since early February and asked the project partner to continue to inform the target households. However, confusion amongst the target households was still remaining and leaving a tension between some households and commune authorities during the period of assessment.

6.6. Sustainability

6.6.1. What are the long-term benefits of the project? What are the main factors that may challenge sustainability perspectives?

¹¹ Family Care First (FCF) project was a COVID-19 response running in the same areas, supporting HHs with more than one-cash transfer.

Generally, it was challenging to measure sustainability of the intervention. Despite this, some signs of possible sustainability of the intervention were observed. Among some beneficiaries that received cash transfer, the cash was not just used as a means to fulfil a basic need but beyond that, it was partially used to initiate and establish livelihood/income generation activities such as chicken raising and home gardening. Given that it is not possible to measure the result of this in this short period, it is assumed that this could continue after the end of the project particularly as this was purely initiated and owned by the beneficiaries.

For the WASH kits distribution, the Water and Sanitation User Groups (WSUGs) have been established per borehole and trained on how to maintain the borehole. This group will be continued in the target villages even after the project ends. For the Safe Learning Environment, it is too early to measure the sustainability of the project interventions as the actual implementation has not yet started.

On project design, it was advised by authorities at different levels, that having an accountability and complaint mechanism in place in such emergency response operations is key to reducing tensions in the local community and reducing pressures on local authorities too. They confirmed that this kind of useful and practical model should be encouraged in the future with other partners that they will be working with. Along these lines, the II selection criteria that were developed through a consultative process was also practical to “leave no one behind”.

Partner organizations Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International confirmed that they will be able to adopt the innovative process of cash transfers with some modifications according to the specific context in future emergency responses.

The main factor hindering sustainability was mainly the short project period and the nature of the project in the context of an emergency response. There is opportunity to explore greater integration of Disaster Risk Reduction in borehole rehabilitation that will ensure sustainable use of water even during future flood events.

6.6.2. Is strengthening implementation partners’ capacity appropriate and realistic enough to achieve long-term sustainability?

Save the Children selected WV as a project partner to implement the WASH component. This was found to be a strategic decision as WV was co-chair of the WASH sector in emergency of HRF in Cambodia, but also one of the actors closely and strategically engaged during the rapid assessment. WV staff had technical capacity to deliver the WASH components with very good results. Save the Children provided support to WV on the donor’s visibility which was a very good approach to ensure ECHO visibility was widespread and known to the target beneficiaries. Experiences and lesson learnt on partnership between Save the Children and WV in this project will also contribute to improvement of WASH in Emergency Preparedness Plan of HRF in Cambodia in the future. In addition, with the current capacity of WV staff and experience in this project implementation, WV can continue to deliver similar WASH in emergency interventions in the future.

For Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International, they were selected because they are Save the Children’s partners on the Family Care First project. This was the first time both Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International had implemented emergency response projects with a large numbers of cash transfers, which was different to their previous experience on just food relief assistance. They required a lot of guidance and instruction from Save the Children. Save the Children used the approach of “learning by doing” with them so that they could implement the project activities on time, but more importantly to promote learning along the way. Within this short period, Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International have learnt a lot from Save the Children on how to respond to emergencies especially the innovative digital cash transfer methods which they can use for other projects in the future. However, in order to deliver a professional emergency response, and to be well-regarded partners for future emergencies, Komar Rikreay Association and Hagar International need comprehensive capacity development support from Save the Children.

Photo 5: Samnang used some of the \$50 cash to buy chickens for raising in Moug Reusse district



VII. CONCLUSION

7.1. Interpretation of results

- The objective of the ECHO, SCK and CSF funded emergency response was to ensure that flood-affected children and families were provided with immediate life-saving assistance, primarily through access to Unconditional Cash Transfers to cover basic needs. It was too early to conclude whether the project completely met all of its objectives by the time of the assessment. However, during the assessment, the interviewed stakeholders confirmed that target households received the \$50 cash and WASH support, and the assistance supported to meet at least one-month of survival needs and to keep their children at school. All beneficiaries expressed that without this cash assistance, it was very likely they would fall into more accumulated debt as their income sources were still not fully recovered after the flood, further challenged by the continual Covid-19 outbreak. This validated the findings of the Post Distribution Monitoring conducted by Save the Children Cambodia.
- Although the cash transfer took some time to disburse, it proved to be good timing to fulfil basic needs and gaps of most affected vulnerable households as the peak for most of the aid by aid agencies and government was mid-November up to the end of December 2020 declining after this period, leaving a gap for beneficiaries. This cash assistance arrived at an appropriate time to fill this gap.
- The introduced innovative approach through digitalized cash transfer is a very good start-up initiated by Save the Children to reach beneficiaries at scale in a short period (success rate 88%). There are certain identified best practices and lessons to be learnt that can be built on to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the system introduced in this initiative.
- Save the Children has started a good initiative in using the digitalized cash transfer via Wing to Wing Account and Phone number, which could work well for future emergency responses while acknowledging some challenges. This is a good foundation for further learning and/or testing other options as part of preparedness to be ready for future response.
- The provision of WASH assistance in the form of WASH kit distribution and rehabilitating contaminated and partially damaged boreholes was confirmed as relevant to the needs of communities.
- The consultant team could not verify the implication of improved safe learning environment interventions given the delays in implementation. Building a strategic partnership and close collaboration with relevant key stakeholders created a strong sense of ownership and strengthened commitment among stakeholders that contributed to project success and sustainability.
- Of note, the project established and practiced different levels of accountability – through accountability and complaints mechanisms, post-distribution monitoring and together with the development of inclusive selection criteria and household screening and spot checks demonstrated good application of humanitarian standards.
- The project interventions proved to be highly relevant to the needs of flood-affected households and the innovative digitalized cash transfer methods have been a considerably important and effective approach for a scalable emergency.

7.2. Lessons learnt

7.2.1. *What didn't go that well? What are the contributing factors towards the weaknesses of project interventions? What did you learn?*

The project interventions were considered as highly relevant and effective and generated some best practices. However, it also recognised some of the challenges and lessons learnt drawing from the project as follows:

Introducing different methods of innovative digitalized cash transfer: It was acknowledged that Save the Children took good initiative introducing different methods of innovative digitalized cash transfer for this emergency response during COVID-19 outbreak. However, the introduction of this approach in such a short time-period, without a strong understanding of community feasibility created some confusion among stakeholders, including beneficiaries.

2	Wing to Phone number: This method was not well suited for some specific groups such as elders, households without mobile phones, and low-tech users because many of them could not read the message and understand the process sufficiently in order to receive the required code while other persons need to use their relative's phone. The Wing to Phone number approach is more suitable for the urban context with a population more adept at mobile phone usage.
3	Sensitization Messages: Using the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) as a method for community sensitization was suitable for the younger generation, and high-tech users as they tended to listen to the IVR from start until finish. However, it was not appropriate for the elder users as they believed the IVR message was a scam and/or telemarketing and cut the IVR message.
4	Real-time reporting: Service provider Wing could not provide real-time tracking reports to the support team to resolve errors (changes in phone numbers, expired passcodes, and digital glitches) for beneficiaries promptly.
5	Accountability and Complaint Mechanism: In the implementation of the innovative digitalized cash transfers at the larger scale under the project, Save the Children country office and its partners faced multiple errors and complaints, and the existing staff and structures of the Accountability and Complaint Mechanism could not handle and resolve the multiple cases simultaneously.
6	Community perception and nepotism: With community meetings were not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions ¹² , the lack of communication around beneficiary selection, including the selection criteria and complaints mechanism at the village level resulted in a less transparent process. As such, perceptions among community members of nepotism in beneficiary selection could not be avoided, particularly in the communities with pre-existing tensions.
7	Communication and messaging: When there are two projects ¹³ with similar interventions in the same target areas and communities at the same time, there is high potential for confusion through inconsistent messaging and unclear communication among stakeholders and the community. For example, in Thmar Kaul district it was communicated that there was more than one cash transfer, although this was not the case.
8	Visibility of Save the Children at local level: Although Save the Children's role in the emergency response project was well communicated with stakeholders the evaluation team found that if name is too long or used both English and Khmer and or too difficult to pronounce, it is hard for people to remember.
9	Staffing: To implement the emergency response project with the high budget within a very short timeframe required responsible staff (Save the Children and partners) working very hard without time off. It affected work-life balance for individual staff members who were responsible for this project.

7.3. Best practices

7.3.1. What was done well? What are the contributing factors towards the success of project interventions? Are there any new "best practices" you can derive from this project, in particular related to the innovations used (IVR, app) for cash transfer?

1	Beneficiary Selection: Jointly developed beneficiary selection criteria and complaint mechanism engaging relevant local authorities in all processes created a strong sense of ownership among local authorities and ensured inclusion of the most vulnerable households for relief assistance.
2	Accountability: The project established an inclusive selection criterion and complaints mechanism, and undertook beneficiary screening and verification, random spot checks of between 5-10% of target households and Post Distribution Monitoring for cash assistance. Save the Children has Accountability and Complaint Mechanism in place for the general development

¹² The Covid-19 community outbreak of 28 November 2020 limited community gatherings. As such, the beneficiary selection processes and the complaints mechanism were not systematically applied at the village level and no open meeting was conducted with the community which is good practice.

¹³ There is another project, Family Care First (FCF) for the COVID-19 response with more than one-cash transfer in the same areas.

	<p>programs in Cambodia. Save the Children has adapted the existing Accountability and Complaint Mechanism for the flood emergency response project which practiced different levels of accountability as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive selection criteria and setup of an Accountability and Complaints Mechanism from the district to commune and village leader level. • Beneficiary screening and verification by CCWC/CC, partner organizations, and Save the Children. • Random spot checks by remote calling and visiting 5-10% of beneficiary households. The partner did the same for WASH kits' beneficiaries. • Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) and final assessment to document best practices and lessons learnt. • Save the Children staff confirmed that it was the first time that the hotline received so many phone calls: In February, up to 200 calls per day were coming in from the community members asking why they have not received the passcode¹⁴. It means that the complaints mechanism had reached target HHs, including those who did not receive the cash transfer, and specifically from Thmar Kaul district where there were also confusions around the number of cash transfers HHs would receive.
3	<p>Partnership and collaboration: The project team collaborated closely with partners, as well as district and commune authorities, and this generated a strong sense of ownership and commitment from all stakeholders and a good project result.</p>
4	<p>Unconditional Cash Transfer: The unconditional \$50 was extremely helpful for those families who were struggling to survive, and in general was used for food, keeping children in school, and for medical and health treatment for at least one-month.</p>
5	<p>Innovative digitalized cash transfer: It was worth cooperating with micro-finance institutions such as the company Wing to test different methods of innovative digitalized cash transfer. Save the Children's partnership in partnering with a micro-finance organization to deliver an innovative digitalized cash transfer via Wing to Wing Account and Wing to Phone Number had a success rate of 88% and error rate of around 12%. These methods are considered effective and scalable for a larger response.</p> <p>Note that Save the Children and the WFP and DCA as co-lead of the food security in emergencies sector in Cambodia have tested similar approaches for cash transfers in flood response.</p>
6	<p>Wing to Wing account: It appeared to work quite well, especially for elders, those without phones and low-tech users and is suitable in a small-scale response or development work. Acknowledging some issues are important, particularly related to the ID card, requirement for deposit and travel, slow processing in Wing account set-up, requirement of having a phone number associated with Wing account, and requirement for face-to-face sensitization.</p>
7	<p>Electronic Cash Transfer Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): For the emergency response to the flood-affected population in Battambang province, Save the Children has developed its SOP which was approved on the 28th December 2020. The SOP was very helpful to guide project implementation for the Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) and included detailed information on the objectives of cash transfers, selected delivery mechanisms (Wing as financial service provider), beneficiary targeting, registration and verification, distribution of Multi-Purpose Cash Transfer (MPC) through Wing, accountability to beneficiaries, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting, and Closure and Archiving.</p>
8	<p>Linking Relief to Recovery and Development: The cash program contributed to Linking Relief to Recovery and Development. This assistance came at the critical period of livelihood recovery transition, with a number of households from the FGDs describing how they used part of the cash to recover their livelihoods, reactivating the local market after the flood.</p>

¹⁴ They could not receive the passcode due to a digital glitch.

IIX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the OECD-DAC Evaluation criteria, best practices, and lessons learnt from the project interventions. Below are the key recommendations:

ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLAINT MECHANISM	
1	<p>Open community meeting for beneficiary selection at the village level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The beneficiary selection process needs to be well documented and introduced to the partner. It is a good practice to conduct an open community meeting for beneficiary selection so that selection criteria and complaint mechanisms are well understood by both leaders and villagers (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) to minimize conflicts, bias, and tensions in the community. ➤ Open community meetings during the beneficiary selection that engage both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries ensure transparency in the process, and helps to alleviate concerns among the community members about 'fairness' and nepotism by the village leaders.
2	<p>Accountability and Complaints Mechanisms at different levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The roles, composition/name and responsibilities of Accountability and Complaint Mechanism committees at the different levels should be clearly documented and circulated widely in the community and in the village via different methods. It should be accessible to both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike. It is good to use different methods to share it such as open community meeting, a campaign or a video presentation. It should be shared during the beneficiary selection process. ➤ The Accountability and Complaints Mechanism should be clearly structured with defined roles and responsibilities with different stakeholders at different levels and ensure sufficient resources to handle multiple complaints simultaneously.
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS	
3	<p>Identify the suitable innovative digital cash transfer method before the next emergency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The project creates a good level of sensitization and momentum in using innovative digital technology through digitalized cash transfers for emergency response. Save the Children should continue to test the innovative digital cash transfer methods before the next emergency. Where possible this proposed continued testing should be done in the form of a project before an emergency to allow a broader learning perspective in different contexts, but more importantly to avoid potential risks if testing it in an actual emergency. ➤ Continued testing may also include a further feasibility study, partner capacity building, and strong real-time report tracking, communication flow/feedback between different players, etc. ➤ Institutionalize the innovative digital cash transfer method and the newly developed SOP into Save the Children Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP).
4	<p>Explore the best option of innovative digital cash transfer to align with the existing government system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A majority of target households for cash transfer have the government's Equity Card (ID poor¹⁵) and receive a monthly Covid-19 support fund via Wing Agent. Exploring the possibility to align future cash responses with the government's equity card system would save time and resources, and build on existing user knowledge.
5	<p>Replicate the suitable innovative digital cash transfer method at the country level</p>

¹⁵ Transfer through ID Card required access to the Wing portal. The Wing portal was under development at the time of this project, and is only now ready for rolling. Thus, this modality was not feasible during the project's implementation but can be applied in the future.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Based on experiences from this project, Save the Children should work alongside the Food Security Sector Co-lead in HRF to share learnings and identify appropriate innovative digital cash transfer methods which can be replicated at a country level before the next emergency.
6	<p>Integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in WASH infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Save the Children to systematically integrate DRR in each component of the emergency response. In the case of WASH, this would include risk-proofing the intervention to reduce the risk of future disasters.
SAVE THE CHILDREN VISIBILITY	
7	<p>Increase visibility of Save the Children at local level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Save the Children should agree to use one name either in Khmer or English. Both Save the Children and partners should equally promote of the visibility of Save the Children and partners.
STAFF MANAGEMENT IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE	
8	<p>Disaggregated of duties between emergency response and development projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ As part of the EPP process and mechanism, Save the Children should increase numbers of members in the Country Emergency Roster Team (potentially outsource to some experts) so that the team can immediately deploy in the case of any large-scale emergency response. Adding work onto existing staff alongside their current roles created a heavy workload on the responsible staff which affected staff welfare. ➤ Within the scope of the large budget and short timeframe, the project should allocate budget to recruit the responsible staff for partners specifically for this project so that he/she will be responsible throughout the project implementation period.
PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION	
9	<p>Strengthen partner capacity on Emergency Preparedness and Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Save the Children should identify potential partners and build their capacity on Emergency Preparedness and Response so that these organizations can have a timely response to any future emergencies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Case stories

Appendix B: Assessment Plan

Appendix C: Raw Data

Appendix D: List of assessment participants

Appendix E: Consent forms

Appendix F: Evidence to Action Brief in English

Appendix G: Evidence to Action Brief in Khmer

Appendix H: Executive Summary in Khmer