

VIETNAM RED CROSS

**REPORT
ASSESSMENT OF HOUSEHOLD KITS
IN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS BY VIETNAM RED CROSS**

Hanoi, December 2014

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ABRIVIATIONS

IFRC:	International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Movement:	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
PNS:	Partner National Societies
HH Kit:	Household Kit

I. INTRODUCTION

Providing HH kits with essential items: blankets, mosquito net, pots, pans, kettle, small bucket, water container, is partially met the minimum needs of the households affected by disasters during emergency phase; especially for families whose house burned, completely collapsed or washed away the entire properties, etc.

To develop structure, form and quality of relief items in the HH kit, Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) had reference the HH kit of IFRC and some Partner National Societies (PNS) such Swiss Red Cross, South Korea Red Cross, Thailand Red Cross, as conducted research and experiment a model of HH kit to use in its disaster reliefs based on the main types of disasters (storms, floods, fires) in Vietnam.

VNRC has been officially using HH kit in its relief operations since 1999 and has been using in large quantity in the recent years. The use HH kit in relief activities by VNRC has obtained multifaceted results, appreciated by the community, government, organizations, and partners at home and abroad. This is a traditional activity of VNRC at all levels and it becomes a familiar image of Red Cross to the people and on mass media over the past years.

However, the content, form, shape and quality of essential items, distribution method of HH kit still face some limits such as: lack of essential items, unsuitable for each type of disaster or each geographical region; preservation, management and monitoring HH kit also do not meet the standards and not scientific; distribution was slow; form of HH kit and image are monotonous. These issues need to consider, evaluate and adapt in order to increase the effectiveness of the provision HH kit by VNRC in conducting emergency reliefs in disaster response and adaptation to climate change in the new development context.

In recent times, there are four assessment reports concerning the use of HH kit by VNRC in relief operations (by experts from the Swiss Red Cross and Asian Management and Development Institute); however these assessments are not complete and comprehensive, as well as recommendations have not been officially considered and adjusted by the competent authorities.

The "Assessment of the effectiveness of using HH kit in relief activities of the VNRC" aims to:

1. Assess the effectiveness of HH kit used by VNRC in relief activities in recent years, which focus on assessing the relevance of the relief items in the HH kit and distribution method.
2. Propose adjustments for using HH kit in the relief activities by VNRC in Vietnam in the near future, which define the structure and form of relief items, HH kit container and distribution method.

II. OVERALL SITUATIONS

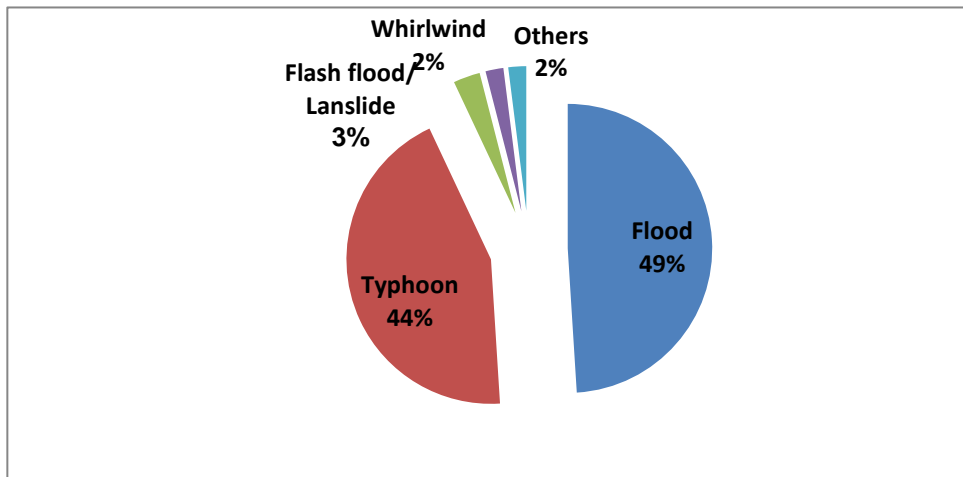
2.1. Disaster situations in the world and in Vietnam

The World is still facing great challenges due to consequences caused by disasters. Located in tropical climate monsoon region, Vietnam is one of the countries most affected by natural disasters in the Asia Pacific region. According to the World Disaster Report 2014 by IFRC, in the past 20 years, there were 4.4 billion people affected by natural disasters, in which 1.3 million people died, material losses amounted to 1.9 trillion dollars. In 2013, there were 100 million people affected by natural disasters, of which 87% live in Asia.

Vietnam is one of the 10 countries most severely affected by storms, floods and global climate change. Every year, Vietnam suffered from 10 to 15 typhoons, floods which severely affected 50% of total land area and 70% of the population. Only in 2013, there were 14 storms and floods occurred in Vietnam, the number of people affected up to 4.13 million, the highest amount in the most recent 10 years. Meanwhile, the number of disasters and the number of people affected by natural disasters worldwide in 2013 were the lowest in a decade. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)'s Vietnam Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Scenarios, it is predicted that the climate change and sea level rise in Vietnam will be severe: by mid-21st century sea level in Vietnam could rise about 30cm and by the end of the 21st century sea levels could rise by about 75cm in comparison with the period from 1980 - 1999. If the sea level rises of 1 m, about 40% of the Mekong delta, 11% area of the Red River Delta and 3% of the other provinces in the coastal areas will be flooded. In particular, Ho Chi Minh City will be flooded over 20% of its total area; 10-12% of Vietnam's population will be directly affected and will cause losses of about 10% of the country's GDP.

According to the Report of the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC), in recent years, there were some major storms caused large damages, such as: Typhoon No. 5 (international name Linda) dated 11 February 1997 has swept through the coastal areas in the South and landed in Ca Mau - Kien Giang caused about 3,000 people dead and missing, tens of thousands of ships wrecked; The Flood in 1999 caused massive flooding in 10 provinces in the Central, cause 595 deaths, damaged 41,846 houses and 570 schools; Typhoon No. 6 (Xangsane) in 2006 killed 72 people, four people missing, 532 wounded; Typhoon No. 5 (Lekima) in 2007 and the impact after the storm claimed 88 lives, 8 people missing, injured 180 people and damage trillion VND; Ketsana typhoon in 2009 Mirinae typhoon in 2009 caused 303 people dead and missing, 1,507 injured and damaged 12,612 houses, economic losses equivalent to 1,3% GDP in 2009; floods and storms in 2013 caused 264 deaths and missing, 800 injured, damaged 12,000 houses and more than 300,000 ha of rice and crops, total economic loss was 28,000 billion VND.

According to CCFSC statistics, in the past 20 years, the loss caused by flood was the highest (49%), following by typhoon (44%), flash flood/landslide and whirlwind (3% and 2%).



Graph 1: Percentage of popular disasters in Vietnam in the past 20 years

2.2. Disaster preparedness and responses by Vietnam Red Cross

The Law on Red Cross Activities identifies that Emergency and humanitarian assistance and Disaster preparedness and response are 2 in 7 key tasks of Red Cross activities; on this basis, VNRC has identified the preparedness and response (including emergency relief) is one of the central tasks of its strategic activities. The VNRC Central Standing Committee has issued and implemented a Resolution on "Improving performance in disaster preparedness and response of VNRC in the new situation" to its all levels in order to make big changes in opinion, perception and quality of performance in VNRC's disaster preparedness and response and adaptation to climate change, which will ensure timely, effective and right target responses and make a bold Red Cross image.

Under the guidance of the VNRC's HQs, four Red Cross levels (from the central to the communes) focus on communication, awareness raising and dissemination of knowledge, skills development for its officials, staff, members, youth RC volunteers and people; organize forces, media and other physical conditions to conduct disaster preparedness and response; participate in evacuation, relocation and protection of the people, search and rescue; organize emergency relief operations using cash, goods, medicines, clean water and sanitation in emergencies; participate in rehabilitation, reconstruction after natural disasters by supporting seeds, capital for production; effectively implement the Appeal, programs, international projects to support the people of Vietnam to overcome the consequences of natural disasters; annually VNRC performs approximately 30 international projects, worth \$140-200 billion (7-10 million US dollars); plant and maintain 24,000 hectares of mangrove forest and watershed forests in 11 provinces; continue its operation of the 44 disaster preparedness centres, 26 emergency response stations; construct 27,500 Red

Cross houses (of which there are about 1/5 safety houses to typhoon and flood); organize relief warehouse in the North, Central and South; train hundreds of trainers, VCA facilitators, Community Disaster Response Team (CADRE), community-based disaster risk management based (CBDRM), water and sanitation in emergencies (WATSAN), community-based health care and first aid (CBHFA) in the country.

2.3. Emergency operations by Vietnam Red Cross

Emergency relief is one of VNRC's disaster preparedness and response activities; Emergency relief includes 3 main types:

- Provision of HH kit;
- Cash support (unconditional and conditional);
- Provision of food and non-food items.

2.3.1. Provision of HH kit:

Annually disasters cause significant damages to communities, especially for families with difficult economic conditions, families with old and disabled people, and families with women as breadwinners. Thus, the demand for relief assistance of essential items is essential and urgent. HH kit was studied and put into use by VNRC HQs and IFRC since 1997 – 1998. HH kit was officially put into use since 1999 to respond to the biggest flood in the history had occurred in the central provinces of Vietnam (the worst in Thua Thien Hue Province); the relief activities of the Red Cross in Vietnam with the support of international partners had become more professional. The support activities were carried out based on the needs of the community in which the HH kits were assessed by beneficiaries as suitable for most types of natural disasters in the locality; HH kit has been in use in emergency relief Vietnam Red Cross conducted since then.

The items in the HH kit have not changed since the first time it was put into use. At the beginning, the HH kit was packed in a cardboard box but it was not suitable to protect the items so it was replaced by plastic box of 40 litres to protect the items and can be used as an HH item- the water container. At first, the HH kits were purchased by packed at central level and then transported directly to the provincial chapters to respond to disasters. Since 2002, the HH kits were purchased and stockpiled at HQs store and stores in HCMC, since 2005, another store in Quang Tri was use.

Through effective practices, HH kit is considered as appropriate relief package, thus VNRC has received funding and technical support from IFRC and some PNSs (Spanish Red Cross, French Red Cross, German Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross, etc.) and Save the Children to develop this relief package over the past some years. In 2009 Save the Children supported Quang Tri province with 11,000 HH kits used VNRC's HH kit model and added some items such as personal hygiene (toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, detergent, tampons, children

diaper, condoms) and one mat and 40 kg of rice. Many Provincial Red Cross Chapters (Quang Tri, Yen Bai, etc.) have taken initiative to stockpile HH kits using Chapters' budget; particularly some disaster prone districts in Yen Bai Province (Van Yen and Luc Yen) have signed a framework contract with suppliers before the disaster season in order to timely provide VNRC's HH kit after disaster.

Table 1: Quantity of HH kits distributed by VNRC in recent years

Id.	Provincial Chapters	Quantity of HH kits
1	Lào Cai	2,900
2	Tuyên Quang	70
3	Hà Giang	115
4	Ninh Bình	500
5	Thanh Hóa	2,000
6	Nghệ An	3,200
7	Hà Tĩnh	1,673
8	Quảng Bình	3,200
9	Quảng Trị	4,100
10	Thừa Thiên Huế	6,020
11	Đà Nẵng	1,250
12	Quảng Nam	900
13	Quảng Ngãi	3,900
14	Bình Định	5,900
15	Phú Yên	9,100
16	Ninh Thuận	500
17	Đắk Lắk	400
18	Kon Tum	3,530
19	Gia Lai	1,000
20	Lâm Đồng	200
21	Khánh Hòa	1,000
22	Đồng Tháp	2,431
23	Long An	1,000
24	An Giang	3,572
25	Kiên Giang	500
26	Sóc Trăng	400
27	Bến Tre	200
	Total number of HH kits	59,561
	Value in billion VND	29,780

Along with the use of more HH kits in the relief operations, warehouse systems the VNRC HQs was given proper attention including repairing, upgrading and construction of new one in three main areas: a warehouse in

Hanoi (it is a standard warehouse with support from IFRC and PNSs to serve relief operations in the provinces of the North and the North Central); a warehouse in the Ho Chi Minh City (as VNRC's representative agency in the South to serve relief operations in the Mekong Delta provinces and the South Central); a warehouse in Da Nang (under construction) and a warehouse located in Quang Tri Province to serve for relief operations in the Central provinces of Vietnam; some provincial chapters have arranged room for storing relief items. However, VNRC warehouse systems still lack of transportation machinery, staff technical skills are limited, lack of fire safety equipment (in Quang Tri the warehouse is also the office).

2.3.2. Cash program (unconditional and conditional):

The use of cash in the emergency response and recovery was applied by VNRC in recent years. However, the form of visits, encouragement and support of burial of dead people, the cost of treatment for injured people by disasters, was carried by VNRC at all levels in many years. Since 2009, with support from the American Red Cross, VNRC deployed unconditional cash program for the first time in four provinces affected by the typhoon No. 9 (Ketsana). Total fund of 6.9 billion VND in cash was given to 9,000 families. Since then, VNRC has used cash relief in many diverse forms such as: relief cash to meet basic needs, cash for livelihood, cash for home repairs, etc.

Cash program is considered as appropriate type of relief in emergency response due to the dynamism of use, and compact in management and distribution. In certain conditions, the distribution of cash can be a better alternative form of the distribution of relief goods and help people recover soon as the market has returned to normal operation.

2.3.3. Other food and non-food items relief support:

Rice is the main food categories used in Vietnam. All those affected, including those from ethnic minority groups are using rice in the daily diet. These households whose crops or grain reserves were damaged by typhoons need to buy rice if they were not supported with rice from relief organizations. VNRC has been used rice in its emergency relief over the years. In response to Typhoon 9 (Ketsana) and Typhoon 11 (Mirinae) in 2009, relief support in the form of rice was carried by VNRC at the largest scale ever. According to the report by Asian Management and Development Institute to assess emergency supports to typhoons Ketsana and Mirinae, VNRC HQs distributed 5815 tons of rice to 115,115 households in Quang Tri, Da Nang, Quang Ngai, Phu Yen, and Gia Lai, equivalent to 0.014% of the total production and 0.09% of total export of rice of Vietnam in 2009¹.

¹ In 2009, Vietnam produced about 39 tons of rice and was the 2nd largest export country in the world, about 6 tons of rice (source VNINFO¹).

In addition to rice, noodles, cooking oil, fish sauce, seasoning and other non-food items are also being used by VNRC to support people in the community over the years. In 2014, the VNRC HQs and Provincial Chapters together with IFRC and PNSs prepared cash and goods for disaster response, including 48 billion VND in cash, 9,188 HH kits, more than 2 million disinfection tablets, 8 water purification machines, 850 water filters, 1,061 home repair kits, 1000 tarpaulins, 94 tents, 30 portable toilets, 4396 woollen blankets and some other goods, equipment for the operation of emergency relief when disasters occur which caused serious consequences in Vietnam.

2.4. SPHERE Standards in humanitarian response

The Sphere Project (Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Relief) was launched in 1997 by non-governmental organizations and humanitarian action and International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The Sphere Project has defined a set of minimum standards for the 4 activities (to help the population affected by the disaster to survive and recover in a stable condition and to guaranty the rights) including: i) Providing clean water and sanitation services and hygiene practices encouraged; ii) Food security and nutrition; iii) Shelter, settlements, and non-food items; iv) Medical assistance.

VNRC's HH kit is part of the Section 2, non-food items, including clothing, blankets and household items (under the content of minimum standards for shelter, settlement and non-food items). Specifically, according to the Standard 2 on non-food items including clothing, blankets (page 284) should clearly identify the need for blankets of affected populations, and they are entitled to receive blankets, mosquito nets for keep warming and not been beaten by mosquito; standard mosquito net must be insecticide impregnated; for blankets must be able to keep the heat (depending on weather conditions, climate).

The Standard 3 on non-food items, including cooking utensils and dining (page 285) in relief operations, it must be culturally fit, must fit with local processing, storage and cooking practices by women, and must conform to the vulnerable people (elderly, disabled, children, etc.) These items made of plastic materials must have good quality (buckets, bowls, jerry can, water containers, etc.) and the metal objects (spoons, forks, plates, etc.) must be made of stainless steel or glaze.

The fact shows that clothing, blanket, mat, cooking utensils are to meet the human's needs against weather, ensure their health and privacy. Populations affected by disaster require goods, basic items in their home to be able to cook, eat, heat, and personal hygiene. The relief operations to populations affected by disasters - whether they return to the previous place, or stay at other homes or in the shelters, provision of non-food items remains necessary. For populations less affected by disasters, such as host families received some families suffered

heavily losses from disaster can also be given non-food items to offset their costs to affected families or to compensate their damages; especially those items are not likely to buy on the local market after a disaster. These items are usually non-food items are commonly used every day (blankets, mosquito net, pot, pan, etc.) so that they are required to have information how to use; however, other materials such as materials to repair houses, house repair kit should have specific guidelines in order to improve the efficiency of the tools.

Although relief support in the form of non-food items is popular, it also should consider other relief forms such as cash or voucher so that affected households could make their own decision what to purchase if the market is still working.

2.5. Assessments of household kits in emergency operations implemented by Vietnam Red Cross

2.5.1. Assessment by Swiss Red Cross

An expert on logistics from the Swiss Red Cross conducted a study in two weeks (from 29/10 to 11/08/2012) on how to achieve high efficiency and towards Red Cross standards in emergency relief items, especially the HH kit and the house repair kit. Findings of this study on HH kits included:

- HH kit of the Vietnam Red Cross is a relief package including basic household items and non-food items are packaged in a hard plastic container, red cone shape, with a volume of 40 litres. The packaging container was considered as innovative and efficient for logistics which was successfully applied by VNRC for conducting relief operations within 6-7 years; so far, HH kit maintains as the top relief package of VNRC.

- HH kit consists of 3 main groups of household items:

- + A water container set includes: 1 water container with capacity of 40 litres with a cap, 1 small water container with a cap (capacity of 14 litter), 1 water dipper (all in red colour and made of HDPE plastic)

- + Blanket set include 2 blankets (synthetic material) and 1 mosquito net

- + A cooking set includes: 1 pot - size 22cm, 1 pan - size 18cm, and 1 kettle (all made of aluminium)

- One HH kit has a value of 25 USD, weight of 6 kg, and size: small diameter: 15.5cm, big diameter: 18.5cm and height: 44.5cm, with capacity: 40.3 litres (0.004 m³).



Picture 1

Figure 1: Items in a HH kit

Despite the HH kit being used by VNRC in relief operations for many years with a number of advantages such as: reasonable quality, low cost, lightweight, easy to purchase and produce, easy to carry and transport, etc.; the lessons experienced from recent operations, including direct reflection of the beneficiaries and the relief workers, the HH kit has shown some inefficiency in meeting the needs of beneficiaries. Specifically as follows:

- The problem with conic-shape plastic container:
 - + Having a cylinder or conic shape makes the HH kit so bulky and spacious which consumes a lot of spaces for transport and storage, causing high cost and can be dangerous during emergency operations.
 - + The illustration shows that a current HH kit takes at least 22 litres of volume to store in the truck or warehouse; or wastes 35% of transport and storage cost.

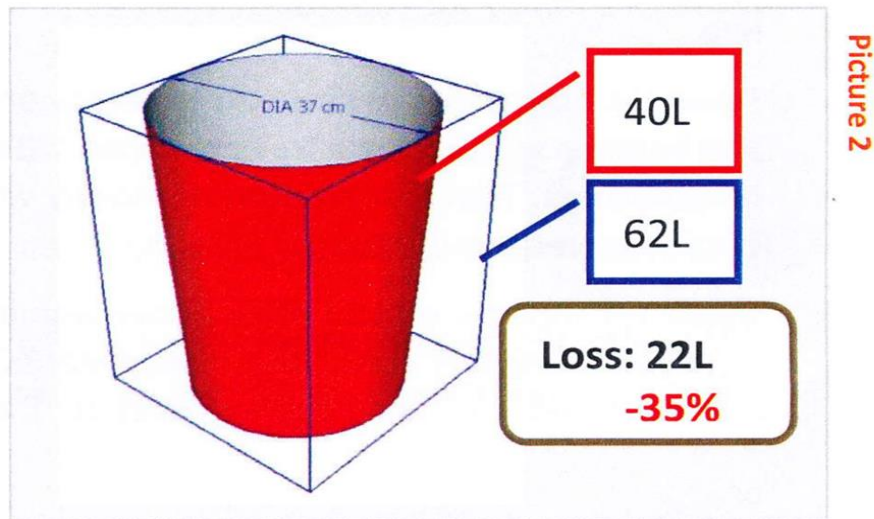


Figure 2: Waste of storage area when using conic bin HH kit

- Pile HH kits into the warehouse:
 - + The storage and arrangement of conic bins in the warehouse cause a problem of balance which requires using two adjacent walls to support the piles.
 - + To avoid the HH kits not being felt down in the warehouse, it must use a pyramidal arrangement with 3 layers or more; however, this arrangement is not solid.
- The problem of HH kit's cover:
 - + The cover does not really fit with the HH kit's container; it can turn out at any time which causes difficulties in processing and transport as well as storage.
 - + During storage in the warehouse, the HH kits are not tight so it is open to mice, cockroaches, bedbugs and other insects.
 - + Design of the cover with a smooth surface and having an arc on the top does not allow putting one HH kit on top of the other.



Picture 3

Figure 3: Stockpile of HH kit in warehouse

- Low value of the HH kit:
 - + Shipping costs: VNRC should be fully aware of cost-effectiveness of shipping HH kits by truck in Vietnam. The loading HH kits onto trucks and the percentage "of goods on truck / loading cost", have been maintained under a rate that may be acceptable. However, VNRC's three priorities for HH kits: light weight, not too bulky and low value (25 USD / HH kit) do not achieve maximum value from the amount used in the transport budget line.
 - + The output of the activity or impact: relating to output or impact of relief activity, 35% of the transport volume and the money loss in the transport budget, cause the deficit of the amount of support that beneficiaries should receive; the amount of loss that may purchase additional relief goods or HH kits.
 - + Cost-effectiveness: should consider the issue of dispatching one relief worker to deliver only one HH kit to one family affected by the disaster with a value of only 25 USD in comparison with the total cost of personnel, indirect costs, administrative costs, logistics costs...
- The composition of HH kit:
 - + Procurement and production: Items of the HH kit are purchased separately in the local market. However, not all items are manufactured in Vietnam; the suppliers transport relief goods to the warehouse of the VNRC HQs in Hanoi; and then VNRC hire workers to pack the HH kits in the warehouse.

+ Quality standards: all items in the HH kit are of low quality; it may be appropriate to the local standards but irrelevant to the standard of International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

+ The number of items and composition: the number of each item in a HH kit is not match with the standards of the Movement; only 2 blankets for a 4-5 person household which is inappropriate. The cooking set composes of 1 pot, 1 frying pan, 1 kettle (aluminium), but has no cups, bowls, chopsticks or cutlery.

+ The HH kit lacks of hygiene/sanitation items and special items for children's use.

- Monitoring and evaluation: monitoring and evaluation has not been done to ensure that the emergency operations fully meet the beneficiaries' needs in the past years; and there is no monitoring and evaluation carried to assess the outcomes / impacts of HH kit distributions.

- Opportunities to improve HH kit in the future:

+ Should change to HH kit having rectangular shape as possible to maximize the space and efficiency.

+ Increase the value of the HH kit in accordance with the Movement's standards; estimate the value of new HH kit (both quantity and quality) is about 80 USD / HH kit.

+ If VNRC can purchase goods in Vietnam, it should comply with the Movement standards and / or at least correspond to the international standards.

+ In the meantime, VNRC can continue to use the existing HH kits in stock in its warehouse until they are being used up; Swiss Red Cross will contribute to VNRC in piloting new HH kit.

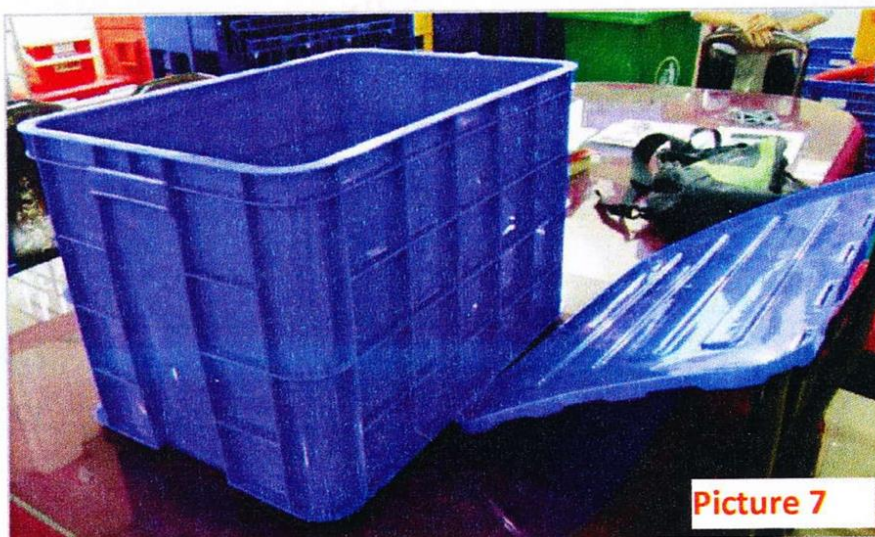


Figure 4: New share of proposed future HH kit

According to the UNHRD, a logistics organization of the United Nations based in Malaysia, it has adopted the HH kit with the standards proposed by Swiss Red Cross for emergency operations in the South East Asia. Thus, if VNRC soon upgrades the standards of its HH kit in accordance with the Swiss Red Cross's standards, VNRC will be on track and synchronized with the Southeast Asian countries to harmonize the quality and standards of the relief items.

2.5.2. Assessment by Asian Management and Development Institute:

An independent evaluation on the Wutip Typhoon Emergency Operations by VNRC in 2013 carried out by the consultants from the Asian Management and Development Institute from 03 July and 28 August 2014, has assessed the use and effectiveness of HH kits by VNRC as below:

- VNRC distributed 2,800 household kits in the early days of the disaster (in October 2013) which has brought “mental” effect for beneficiaries, particularly for the elderly affected by disaster. Provision of household kits was considered effective with households who lost household tools, had collapsed or washed away houses.

- However, the effectiveness of using commodities in household kits remained limited such as the usefulness of goods in the kits; demand of using goods in the kits should have been considered and assessed closely to actual needs as well as socio-economic conditions in beneficiary areas.

- In addition, the cost and benefit of household kits provision should have also been considered when the number of household kits over a project site was small (sometimes 3 to 10 kits per commune), required storage before a storm and transportation to affected areas on far and dangerous roadways in the early days of the storm; as well as associated cost is still higher than the actual value; the quality of HH kits has gone down compared with the previous years, and deteriorating by the time in the store; some quality concerns with some items in the household kits, such as discoloured water container, thin and easy to be broken material.

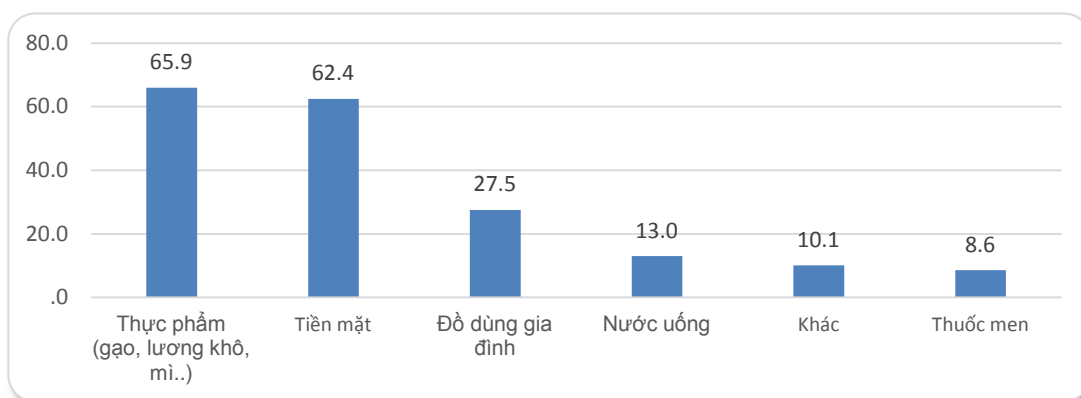
- In the case that the scale and intensity of disasters in affected areas were not too large and serious (damaged areas were isolated in short time (1 to 2 days) and in narrow areas (some villages/hamlets) together with an open market mechanism where goods and services would be re-operated right after water level decreased, therefore household kits were no longer immediate needs of the majority of households. Moreover, not all commodities in household kits were used by beneficiaries.

- VNRC should consider and assess the effectiveness and adjust the type and quality of goods and distribution organization so that household kit support will bring higher effects to communities in future.

- The value of household kit of VND 500,000 should be evaluated because this amount was established long time ago. Presently with high inflation rate, this amount of support is low, which partially affects the quality of goods as well as beneficiaries' demand of these items.

- Instant noodle, tarpaulin, household kits, water disinfection tablets, water containers and water filters are relief items most needed in emergency phase lasting few days to 4 weeks and these emergencies caused by long and wide spread flooding or devastating typhoons. The distribution of above items will not be appropriate when the disaster turns to recovery period. VNRC and International Federation partners should only consider and distribute these items if they can timely mobilize them consistent with immediate needs; cash can be a good alternative to the goods during the period of relief or early recovery if the market conditions are met.

- In terms of the most needed support of the people after the disasters, the most commonly answers were food and cash (65.9% and 62.4%). In addition, some households also expected to receive support in the forms of household kit or water but with a small percentage.



Graph 2: Preferred forms of support after typhoon

Another two independent assessment reports done by Asian Management and Development Institute on the Emergency Operations to Wutip typhoon (in 2013), also evaluated that:

Evaluation Report (implemented in 2012) evaluated the emergency operations and rehabilitation after the flooding in the Mekong River Delta in 2011, said that 1,500 HH kits were allocated to the three provinces of An Giang, Dong Thap and Long An. In each province, four communes were selected for distribution, and each commune received 70-130 HH kits (accounting for 15% of the population as targeted in the appeal). Despite the HH kits were respectfully received by the affected households, but these HH kits did not help them much in reducing the impact of floods, did not help create economic opportunities, especially for those households whose physical assets or livelihood were not damaged by the flood. Overall, HH kit did not address the actual needs due to

the nature of the slow on-set flooding in which the households did not lose their household items. However, the 40 liter container was useful because it provided families with storage of water, contributed to the reduction of health risk; if provided separately, it would be more cost effective.

- Evaluation Report (implemented in 2010) evaluated the response activities to typhoon Ketsana and Mirinae in 2009 said that items in the HH kit were relevant to the need of affected households and could to meet urgent needs in the first days after the disaster; however, is not a priority of households in the recovery phase. The evaluations team observed HH kits totally not used, some households only use few items in the HH kit because they did not lose any items; the people were able to collect all utensils, dried and re-used them after the storm and flood.

III. ASSESSMENT SUBJECTS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Assessment subjects

Assessment subjects include 5 groups:

- + Households received HH kit;
 - + VNRC staff at 4 levels (from central to commune);
 - + Officials, officers and staff of commune authorities and mass organizations (Communist Party Secretary, Chairman of People's Committee, Fatherland Front, Women Union, Farmers Association, Veterans Association, Youth Union, etc.) and officers from departments at provincial level;
 - + Communications Officer and journalists (provincial and central levels);
 - + Professionals, partners in and outside the Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, PNSs).
- Number of participants:
- + 83 households received HH kit;
 - + 50 Red Cross staff and officers from district and commune departments and offices;
 - + 30 Red Cross staff and departments at provincial level;
 - + 20 VNRC HQs staff from relevant departments: Disaster Preparedness and Response, Social Work, Communications and Resource Development, Health, External Relations and Development, Office and members of the National Disaster Response Team (NDRT);
 - + 10 experts, partners in and outside the Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, PNSs, AMDI).
- In addition, the VNRC HQs has sent a Correspondence to provincial Red Cross Chapters of 63 provinces to collect data by completing a questionnaire of 20 questions.

3.2. Assessment location

3.2.1. Local level

-3 provinces representative for 3 regions with different context of natural hazards and received HH kits in the most recent years, including Yen Bai in 2012, Quang Tri in 2013, and An Giang in 2011 were selected to conduct the field survey.

-In each province, the assessment team conducted survey at 3 levels: province, district and commune to collect data by using focus group discussion and in-depth interviews.

-In total, there were 3 provinces, 6 districts and 9 communes were selected for conducting this assessment.

Table 2: Assessment locations

Province	District	Commune
Quang Tri	Vinh Linh	Vinh Thanh
	Hai Lang	Hai Duong
		Hai Vinh
Yen Bai	Van Yen	Dong An
	Luc Yen	Lam Thuong
		Phuc Loi
An Giang	Cho Moi	Kien An
	Chau Phu	Bui Huu Canh
		Binh Thuy

3.2.2. As central level:

+ At VNRC HQs: collected secondary information, conducted workshop and in-depth interviews with the members of the Central Steering Committee, leaders and officials of relevant departments and offices.

+ IFRC, PNSs: collected secondary information, conducted workshop with representative / technical staff who experienced in supporting VNRC in relief program used HH kit.

3.3. Assessment team

3.3.1. At provincial level:

Table 3: VNRC staff and officials joined the assessment

Full name	Position, Organization	Role
Le Huu Minh	Deputy-head, Social Work Department Quang Tri Provincial RC Chapter	Member
	Yen Bai Provincial RC Chapter	Member
Nguyen Van Thanh	Head, Social Work Department An Giang Provincial RC Chapter	Member

3.3.2. At Central level

Table 4: Officials and Staff of VNRC HQs joined the assessment

Full name	Position, Organization	Role
Dang Minh Chau	Vice General Secretary	Team Leader
Tran Quoc Hung	Director, Disaster Management Department	Deputy Team Leader, Focal point
Ha Thai Binh	Deputy-Director, Disaster Management Department	Deputy Team Leader
Vu Ngoc Kien	Officer, Disaster Management Department	Secretary
Tran Thu Hang	Deputy Director, HRD and Communication Department	Member
Pham Thi Thanh My	Officer, Disaster Management Department	Member
Tran Sy Pha	Officer, Disaster Management Department	Member
Nguyen Trung Nghia	Officer, HRD and Communication Department	Member

3.4. Assessment tools

- Developed and completed 04 questionnaires to use in group discussions and in-depth interviews, including:

+ The questionnaire to use with commune authorities and mass organization;

+ The questionnaire to use with beneficiaries;

+ The questionnaire to use with provincial Red Cross officials and government departments;

+ The questionnaires to use with VNRC officials, IFRC and PNS representatives.

- The mail survey questionnaires with 20 questions to gather information from the provincial Red Cross Chapters about the use of HH kit in relief operations.

3.5. Assessment method

- Qualitative Research Methods, Rapid Assessment and Response through:

+ Collect secondary data (Secondary Data Collection): from VNRC HQs, 63 provincial Red Cross Chapters, IFRC and PNSs;

+ Conduct Focus Group Discussion;

+ Conduct In-depth Interview with a number of subjects who already participated in focus group discussion (selection of key informants to get more information);

+ Conduct Roundtable Discussion with the Central Steering Committee of VNRC, leaders and staff of relevant departments and office of VNRC, representatives of IFRC and PNSs, AMDI.

- Used a representative sampling method to select three provinces representing for three regions, selected six districts (2 district / province) and 9 communes (3 commune / province) for this assessment.

- Qualitative data analysis: data triangulation method (Triangulation).

3.6. Assessment timeline

- Developed a research framework and questionnaires: Aug-Sept 2014.

- Sent mail survey to Provincial Red Cross Chapters on the use of HH kit in relief operations at local levels; processed obtained data: Nov-Dec 2014.

- Conducted field surveys in Quang Tri 26-28 November 2014, in Yen Bai from 03-5 December 2014, in An Giang from 13-15 December 2014.

- Conducted Roundtable: 22 December 2014.

- Completed report: 30 December 2014.

IV. ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Based on the results of field survey in 3 provinces and the mail survey from provincial chapters; consultation with experts, IFRC, and workshop at VNRC HQs, we come up with the below findings:

“HH kits are quite easily broken. Usually 30-40 out of 1,000 HH kits (accounted for 3-4%) were broken when transported by train or truck from Hanoi to Quang Tri warehouse. Should replace the HH kit with rectangular shape, specially designed with VNRC logo” – Chairman Quang Tri Provincial Chapter.

4.1. The actual use of HH kits in emergency operations by VNRC in the part years

4.1.1. Relevance of the items in the blanket set of the water container kit:

- HH kit container cum water container with capacity of 40 liters:

+ The container stores items of HH kit and water; it can store rice, clothes or other items in the household; relatively useful and suitable for all households after the disasters.

“Should not place VNRC logo in such a temporarily way, it was broken or removed shortly after delivered; should order from the producer the container with logo printed from the factory in order to ensure the quality and image of VNRC for long time” - Comments from provincial RC Chapter of Tuyen Quang

+ The design with round shape and red colour is relatively relevant; resistance and elastic level is medium; however, most of the comments that if

the container is square or rectangle shape, will facilitate the carrying and transportation, take least space in store and reduce the risk of breakage during storage in warehouse and transportation.

VNRC officials said that the quality of label and logo is limited, broken or removed after using in a short time; should explore appropriate ways, such as using a good quality sticker, or print directly VNRC's logos on the container.

“The height of the mosquito net is not high enough; the household usually keeps the net hanged all day and night around the year, they need a net with longer height so that during the daytime, they can just simply put the net on instead of taking it down to keep the house looking good” – A household in Vinh Thanh commune, Vinh Linh district, Quang Tri province.

+ Containers with average quality due to big size, thin, brittle and hard plastic, so it is prone to breakage during transport and use. Therefore, to improve the quality of container using plastic quality, thicker and flexible plastic, and certainly should have strong handles to grasp and can be lockable for transportation while or when storing relief items, keeping water or other items.

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- Water container with capacity of 14 litres:

+ It is suitable to carry water from rivers, streams and pools to pour into a large water tank, or it can be used in domestic work and daily personal hygiene; it can also be used for purification tablets; however, some households said that it is not necessarily to have this item in the container because they can use the container 40 liter for water storage.

+ Form, conic shape with red colour is suitable; good elasticity; there is no need to change the design of this water container and should continue having this item.

+ The quality of water container is average – better than the HH kit container (40 litres); however, after 1-2 years of regular use, most bucket handles were broken and fracture.

- Water dipper:

+ Form, cylinder shape with red colour of the water dipper is suitable; plastic quality is acceptable, thick enough; it is not need to change if continued use as one item in the HH kit.

+ Some comments that water dipper is not necessary because of its low value; it takes much of space in the HH kit; and after the disaster, the households can use many different materials to draw water.

4.1.2. Relevance of the items in the blanket set of the HH kit:

- Blanket:

+ It is relevant in case of providing support to people affected by house fire, house collapsed by storm, or house swept away entirely by flood; it is not

suitable in case of prolonged flooding where people living with floods (in the Mekong Delta), or in the Northern Mountains (because they need thicker blanket).

+ Design and form of the blanket are not really suitable for a variety of beneficiaries; 2 blankets are single, needs a double blanket for two people, or can replace with a double blanket large and warm enough (if funding of the HH kit is limited); however, a household usually consist of from 3 to 5 people, and by gender factors, it may be necessary to maintain supply 2 blankets as currently.

+ Quality two blankets is at average level according to community assessment, especially the thin blanket (two types of blanket are thin, more fluffy, fur is hypoallergenic for young children and sick people with respiratory, etc.).

4.1.3. The relevance of the cooking set:

- Pot:

+ Relevance: It is relevant in case of providing support to people affected by house fire, house collapsed by storm, or house swept away entirely by flood; it is not suitable in case of prolonged flooding where people living with floods (in the Mekong Delta).

+ Form, design, quality: Form and quality of aluminium pot are relevant, thick and good quality aluminium.

- Pan:

+ Relevance: It is relevant in case of providing support to people affected by house fire, house collapsed by storm, or house swept away entirely by flood; it is not suitable in case of prolonged flooding where people living with floods (in the Mekong Delta).

+ Form, design, quality: Form and quality of aluminium pan are relevant, thick and good quality aluminium; however, the majority opinions suggested replacing the pan with another aluminium pot which will use have more diverse using purpose.

- Kettle:

+ Relevance: It is relevant in case of providing support to people affected by house fire, house collapsed by storm, or house swept away entirely by flood; it is not suitable in case of prolonged flooding where people living with floods (in the Mekong Delta).

+ Form, design, quality: Form and quality of aluminium pan are relevant, thick and good quality aluminium; however, people said that can also use aluminium pot to boil water, and the money for kettle can be used for other essential commodities.

4.1.4. The relevance of HH kit distribution method:

Over the years, the selection of beneficiary households and distribution of HH kits were organized by following steps:

- Conducted a village meeting to select beneficiaries or chose only families whose houses were destroyed or breakdown, or had serious damage of property.

- Invited household representatives to Commune People Committee's office to receive HH kit.

The process of selecting beneficiaries and distribution of HH kit are still suitable for emergency relief operations because it is fast and delivered to the hands of the beneficiary. Nearly all provincial Chapters suggested in a written proposal that VNRC should continue complying current guidelines issued by HQs. However, HQs should inform Chapters sooner and shorten the distribution time of HH kit after a disaster. During field studies, the assessment team found that the shortest distribution time to beneficiaries was 3 days (in case of communes in Quang Tri Province because there is a HQs warehouses located here) and longest was 20 days (in An Giang Province).

To improve the reception and distribution of HH kit, Provincial Chapters, relevant departments, local government agencies and people suggested:

- The provinces located in the disaster-prone areas, the local Red Cross should proactively reserve some HH kits with their own funding (some Provincial Chapters such as Quang Tri, Yen Bai, etc. has already stockpiled it).

- Stockpile HH kits in district Red Cross office or in the appropriate place or proactively sign contracts with suppliers to provide HH kit from locally (for example, Luc Yen, Van Yen district in Yen Bai province has done this).

- The administrative procedures need to be faster, reducing the number of reporting templates in order to reduce the distribution time of HH kit to affected people after a disaster, such as approved by phone, email if it was in an emergency situation; select and make a list of relief through the damage assessment, etc.

“The HH kit distribution method guided by VNRC HQs is suitable, clear, fair and highly effective; however, with some special cases, Red Cross will distribute HH kit directly to their houses instead of asking them to a distribution point” –
Comment from Quang Binh Provincial Chapter

- VNRC HQs should sign a framework contract with suppliers/vendors and request them to directly delivery the HH kit to the distribution points; should not store HH kits for a long time in warehoused because it can cause damage, reduce the quality of goods, or some provinces do not have warehouses. It is also possible for some Provincial Chapters to purchase HH kit items, which will save shipping cost and can be faster in providing relief support, more timely and efficient (most provincial Chapters commented that all items can be purchased locally because of the market availability).

“When conducting emergency relief, should only need assessment of the PDRT with the Provincial Chapter and local authorities, based on the poverty list (which is regularly updated and well managed) and target whose houses were badly damaged or swept away, not the other households (based on the priority)” –
Comment from survey of the Quang Binh Provincial Chapter.

4.2. Suggestion to add some essential items in HH kit and an emergency relief package in VNRC emergency operations:

4.2.1. Suggestion to add some essential items in HH kit:

Below are some essential items to add into the current HH kit that most of the informants proposed and recommended by the assessment team:

- Emergency light/lamp use Dynamo energy or solar: to provide lighting in all limited conditions.
- Personal hygiene package: women napkins (essential items for women during flood; pay more attention to women/gender in emergency situations); razor for men; towel, tooth brush and tooth paste.
- The plastic sheet, hammock and rope: can be used with hammock and covered with plastic sheets. Plastic sheet is used for other purposes: cover the leaking roof of the house, use as a mat on bed, handling dead bodies in a bad situation; the rope can also be used for many other purposes.

4.2.2. Suggestion to add other emergency aid package together with HH kit:

Through the field research, the local authorities, people and researchers propose to add an emergency package (food, drugs and medical supplies and some essential items) for use in parallel with the HH kit in order to solve part of the required "Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Aid", emergency relief needs of the households in a disaster in Vietnam, and the actual capacity of the Red Cross at all levels.

- The reason for using emergency aid package:

+ The food items, drugs and medical supplies are short-life items, need to preserve with the standard conditions; therefore we cannot add these items into the current HH kit because its items can be stored for at least 3 years with little loss of quality.

+ Use of a separate emergency package helps reduce weight and cost of the HH kit, but still meet the basic needs of the affected people immediately after the disaster.

+ In addition to the essential items and plastic bags which were prepared before the disaster season (because it can be preserved within 2-3 years with little loss of quality), the other items are packed at local level by Red Cross Chapter's staff immediately after the disaster, and can provide HH kits in the first days to ensure flexibility and meet emergency needs.

- Emergency aid package includes:

+ Food: noodles, fried foods, packaged fried rice, etc.

+ Water and sanitation: bottled drinking water, water purification tablets and water disinfection tablets, etc.

+ Essential drugs and medical supplies: bandages, gauze, antiseptic, palm oil, eye drops, anti-diarrhoea, hand sanitizer, etc.

+ The essential items: emergency light using Dynamo and solar energy; women's sanitary napkins; plastic sheet, rope and hammock (like the proposed additional items in HH kit).

- Aid package should be designed with bag or container suitable for each region to ensure that the relief items can be used conveniently in the disasters, namely:

+ Plastic bag, waterproof, with an inflatable part, can be floated in flooded conditions, or be dropped from helicopters when the area is isolated.

+ Can be packed in a cardboard box to provide relief aid in the short-time flooded areas (such as natural disasters in the northern mountainous region, the Central Highlands, etc.).

V. DISCUSSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

By conducting a qualitative research, technical evaluation and rapid appraisal (desk reviews, field survey and analysis of mail survey with provincial chapters, opinions from the VNRC HQs, IFRC and PNS), direct participation of 193 people in interviews / focus group discussion, 63 provinces mail survey forms, the assessment team would like to propose these recommendations:

5.1. Reality and proposals, proposal content, form and quality of goods in the HH kit to be used in relief activities by VNRC:

5.1.1. HH kit is IFRC, PNSs and VNRC's traditional products with efficient communication image and familiar in the relief activities of VNRC for the past 15 years. HH kit is relevant in supporting the victims of specific disasters such as: house fire, houses collapsed by storms, entire property of the house swept away by flood. HH kit is not suitable for the type of prolonged flooding; the flood level is not high where the people prefer to live with floods (in the Mekong delta).

5.1.2. HH kit with three main groups of household items: The HH kit includes 3 main sets of household items: *Water containing set made of plastic including one 40-liter water tank with one cap, 1 small 14 liter water container with one cap, lone plastic mug; Blanket set including 2 blankets (synthetic materials) and one mosquito nets; Cooking set made of aluminium including: 1 pot: 22cm, 1 pan: 18cm, 1 kettle, is still relatively relevant with the relief needs. However, VNRC needs to add some essential items such as: lights use Dynamo and solar energy; women's sanitary napkins, razors for men, towels, tooth brush and tooth paste; plastic sheet, rope and hammocks; need to replace 2 single blanket with 2 double blankets; mosquito net with higher size; replace pot of 18cm by a pan of 18 cm; replace the current cylinder plastic container of 40 litres by a rectangular shape container with bevelled bottom.*

5.1.3. Along with the use of HH kit, should provide additional "emergency package" with 3 groups: Food: noodles, dried foods, packaged and ready-to-eat; Water and sanitation: bottled drinking water, water purification tablets and water disinfection tablets; Essential medical drugs and supplies: bandages, gauze, antiseptic, palm oil (hot), eye drops, anti-diarrhoea medication, hand sanitizer, along with some essential items already proposed above. This is an additional relief package, so it does not need to stockpile, VNRC should only purchase and distribute immediately when a disaster occurs and there is a need of the affected people and based on the available resources of VNRC at all levels.

5.1.4. Plastic and waterproof bags with an inflatable part, can be floated in flooded conditions, or can be dropped from helicopters in terms of geographical isolation; need to design and test a specific form of emergency relief bags and rectangular shape HH kit container with bevelled bottom before putting them into use; need to design all HH kit and plastic bag with sustained and solid VNRC's logo; all HH kits and main items must have 3 main colours of the Red Cross including: Red (for plastic items); white (for aluminium items and hygiene pack) and Blue (for blanket, net, hammock and other items).

5.1.5. Based on geographical and disaster context as well as relief time to choose decide on relief items of HH kit, family emergency bag or other forms of relief support such as cash, food and non-food items.

5.2. The solution to ensure relief operations of HH kit and family emergency package more quickly and effectively:

5.2.1. VNRC should consider providing HH kits in emergency phase to households whose houses were burned, collapsed or swept away due to flood and lost all items.

5.2.2. Do not need to conduct beneficiary selection meeting for those special cases in order to conduct timely response for mass media right after the disaster happened; or need to conduct beneficiary selection meeting (where the households partly affected by disaster) during the time of shipping HH kit from the warehouse to affected place.

5.2.3. VNRC HQs need to transport HH kit to the regional warehouse or to a number of disaster-prone provinces having sufficient storage conditions. Allocate to provincial chapters to stockpile and purchase a certain amount of HH kit ready in their area (depending on local storage conditions and level of disaster).

5.2.4. Use agents with sufficient capacity to supply HH kits (already signed annual framework contracts) to ship HH kits directly to the affected areas.

5.2.5. The provincial chapters proactively develop plan and implement the PDRT to assess damage and needs with quality information in order to shorten the assessment time (no later than 3 days after the natural disasters occurred) and report promptly to the VNRC HQs. The provision and distribution of HH kits should take place within 10 days after the disaster occurred.

5.3. The next steps to be taken

- Design new HH kit, test (packing and transport...), and report to VNRC HQs to put into production plan and use (since mid-2015). Would like to request IFRC to continue supporting VNRC in this task.

- Increase the value of current HH kit to 150% equivalent to 750,000 VND/HH kit. For emergency package: design a package with items valued of 500.000 - 750.000 VND/package.

- Instruct and monitor VNRC HQs relevant departments and Provincial Chapters to implement measures set by VNRC HQs in using HH kit in emergency operations most effectively.

VI. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- The questionnaire used at commune level;

- The questionnaire used with beneficiaries;

- Correspondence and summary of mail surveys from 63 provincial Red Cross Chapters.