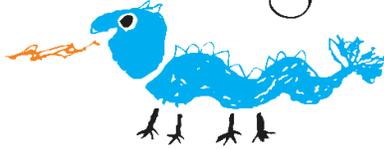


2022

**blue dragon**



CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

# Blue Dragon Report to Freedom in Disasters

FEBRUARY 2022



## Key findings related to the prevention of human trafficking through disaster relief

### Background to the evaluation

The storms and historic floods in October & November 2020 in the central region, including Thua Thien-Hue province, caused enormous damage, and seriously affected people's daily lives, especially households with difficult circumstances. Blue Dragon responded and raised almost \$200,000 US of flood relief funds to assist seriously affected households recover. One of the primary purposes of the flood relief was to ensure that the economic impacts of the floods did not push families further into poverty and drive child or adult trafficking in the region.

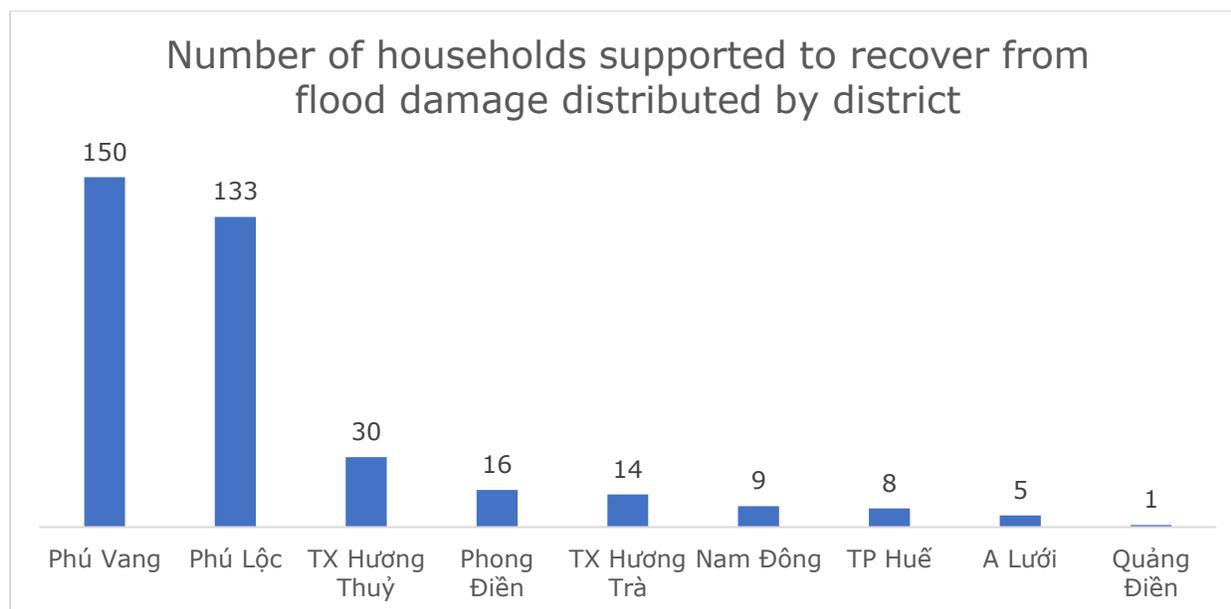


*Water engulfed houses, roads and other infrastructure throughout Central Vietnam in late 2020*

In September, October 2021 Blue Dragon conducted an evaluation of the relief effort. The evaluation team conducted interviews with 111/366 households who received flood relief in 12 communes/wards of 5 districts and towns in Thua Thien-Hue province, and 16 in-depth interviews with officials of the Women's Union at provincial, district and commune levels, the Vice Chairman of the commune in charge of socio-economic affairs, and the principal of one supported school.

This short report includes key results, particularly pertaining to the prevention of human trafficking in a post-disaster context, that has been prepared specifically for Freedom from Disasters. Following that is the executive summary from the Evaluation Report, which provides an overview of all the findings and recommendations.

**Chart 1. Number of households who received flood relief, by district/town/city**



**Table 1. Number of households interviewed in the evaluation**

| District                   | Commune   | Number of households interviewed |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Huong Thuy (10 households) | Thuy Chau | 10                               |
| Huong Tra (10 households)  | Huong Van | 40                               |
| Nam Dong (8 households)    | Huong Son | 8                                |
| Phu Loc (37 households)    | Jiang Hai | 6                                |
|                            | Loc Bon   | 10                               |
|                            | Loc Tien  | 9                                |
|                            | Loc Tri   | 12                               |
| Phu Vang (46 households)   | Phu An    | 9                                |
|                            | Phu Da    | 12                               |
|                            | Phu Dien  | 10                               |
|                            | Phu Mau   | 9                                |
|                            | Vinh An   | 6                                |
| <b>Total</b>               |           | <b>111 households</b>            |

### Keeping children in school to prevent child trafficking and child labour

Blue Dragon was particularly concerned that following the floods, children would face pressure to leave school and find work to help their family's economic situation. Some government and school representatives said that the situation of children working far away, especially in the 14- to 15-year-old group, still poses many risks although it has been reduced in recent years. Blue Dragon has not had to rescue a child from Hue from labour exploitation since 2019 – but we were concerned that this disaster could change this situation.

Blue Dragon supported 64 children with school fees, and 44 with bicycles to make it easier for children to travel to school. In addition, priority was given to families who had school aged children, so most families who benefited from the flood relief received some form of support to benefit their children.

At the time of the needs assessment in September 2021, 21% of households said that they would have to pull their children out of school if there was no timely and adequate support to recover from the floods. Families in Phong Dien district, Huong Thuy town and Phu Vang district were particularly concerned.



*Nhi received a desk, equipment and school fees to ensure her study was not interrupted by the disaster.*

However, a year later in the evaluation interviews all households said that no children had to leave school due to the direct causes of floods and storms. Most of the 111 households interviewed responded that their children were currently attending school fully, almost never having to miss school, even when the floods affected the area. In Phu Dien commune, information from a representative of the Women's Union said that the support to overcome storms and floods from Blue Dragon, especially timely support for tuition fees and school

supplies and bicycles for children, has contributed to a reduction in the rate of children dropping out of school from 8% to 2% in the past year.

*"Cu Lai Bac village has two households with young children who are going to school but planned to drop out of school to work. The project, the government and the Women's Union supported donations of school fees and school supplies for the family, and successfully mobilized the children to go back to school." (Vice Chairman of Phu Hai Commune, Phu Vang District)*

*"The project has helped children get the support they need to ensure their learning. If there are families who intend to send their children to help support the family, the project staff and the Women's Union have successfully advocated for the children to return to school. For example, there are girls whose single mother is ill, and the family is poor but they studied well and won the second prize in the Provincial Literature competition. Some families want their children to leave school to work and earn money, but when they have a stable home, they continue to send their children to school. Support has a big impact on single mothers. Since realizing they don't let their children go to work anymore." (Chairman of the Women's Union of Loc Bon commune, Phu Loc district)*

A total of 12 out of 111 households surveyed in September and October 2021 (accounting for 11%) had children absent from school. Children were absent from school due to difficult family circumstances, weak academic performance, or health reasons. At the time of the survey several the schools were temporarily closed due to the COVID -19 epidemic, and children had to study online. Some children were unable to study due to lack of appropriate conditions at home or equipment for online learning.

*"Supporting school supplies for children is very relevant and effective for their schooling. The project has supported school costs, helping children to go to school without having to worry about tuition fees and earn money to help their parents." (Chairman of the Women's Union of Loc Bon commune, Phu Loc district)*

### Livelihoods development for long term resilience

While the emergency relief was important for families to survive the immediate aftermath of the floods, both households and local officials stressed the importance of livelihoods support (and to a lesser extent house improvements) for the longer-term resilience of households and to ensure they could cope with future natural disasters.

In this area, households are still heavily dependent on crop production, with 29% of households interviewed. The main activities are rice production, mushroom cultivation, cash crops such as green beans, peanuts, vegetables, and fruit trees such as bananas. Some households living in mountainous areas grow industrial crops such as rubber or grow acacia for timber. More than a quarter of the interviewed households raise pigs, chickens, or ducks, for eggs and meat, with a small number of better-off households raising cows. About 13% of families are involved in fishing and aquaculture (shrimp, fish, shellfish). In addition, nearly 20% of households have small household businesses. Specifically, selling groceries, flowers, street food, making and selling noodles, or running a barber shop or waste collection facility.

Around one in five of the interviewed households has a member with a full-time or part-time paid job, mainly as labourers, office workers, civil servants or motorbike taxi rider. Nearly 40% of households also take seasonal jobs to increase income. Some households do casual wage labour in agriculture or fishing, domestic work, and babysitting. Some other families weave bamboo mats or hats or collect frogs or other forest produce to sell.

A total of 50 of 111 surveyed households (45%) have two or more income-generating jobs. Agricultural livelihood jobs such as farming and animal husbandry provide unstable income, so family members find other jobs, mainly seasonal, to increase income.



*All the mushroom growing facilities were washed away by the flood – but with support from Blue Dragon families were able to rebuild and sell a crop within 3 months.*

As part of the flood relief, Blue Dragon supported livelihoods for more than 220 households. Families received diverse livelihood support such as raising chickens, ducks, pigs, cows, rabbits, growing mushrooms, and raising fish or shellfish. Most of this support was provided

after April 2021, so at the time of evaluation families had been conducting their new livelihoods activities for only a short time.

According to the representative of the Provincial Women's Union, the livelihood support has achieved initial but admirable results. For those families receiving livestock, most animals are growing well. Only a few animals were not healthy due to breed or disease. Some animals died, but in insignificantly small numbers. Poultry raising households have been able to sell them for meat, eggs, and re-stocked. Pigs need a longer development period, usually 4 to 5 months before being sold, but most are growing well. At the time of flood support the COVID-19 epidemic greatly affected people's sales, but the sale price was higher, so the income of livestock households was still reasonable.

Some families reported difficulties in knowing which kind of livelihoods assistance to receive, and in the skills to raise livestock or grow trees or mushrooms. This suggests a need for more guidance in choosing an appropriate livelihood, and skills training to ensure success. In addition, the COVID-19 restrictions limited the ability for families to sell their produce or operate small businesses such as street food stalls. However, overall, most families were very satisfied with the support they received.

*"With support, the family changed the breed of fish, increasing the scale of production. Because of the livestock support, families know how to raise livestock and develop more economy and income. Thanks to that, families' living conditions are also better than before." (Household in Vinh An commune, Phu Vang district)*

In the category of livelihood support, more than three-quarters of the respondents rate the support as very effective, 18% rate the effectiveness as effective and only 5% rate it as ineffective. 100% of households receiving support for building/repairing houses, household items, books, school supplies, school fees or children's bicycles rated it at a very effective level. The percentage of respondents who rated emergency assistance such as rice, necessities, and clothing as very effective was 94%, and 6% rate it as being effective.



*Blue Dragon's Program Coordinator delivering emergency food assistance in the immediate aftermath of the floods.*

## Conclusions

Blue Dragon's work in Thua Thien-Hue Province has always focussed on preventing child trafficking. We have been successful in this, with no children rescued since 2019. Prior to 2020/2021, we had not conducted a large-scale disaster relief project such as this.

This initial evaluation indicates that having a strong focus on preventing human trafficking, particularly child trafficking, and ensuring long term resilience against vulnerability to trafficking, has been a successful way to provide disaster relief assistance. The focus on trafficking prevention has meant that Blue Dragon and our partners targeted assistance to those families who demonstrate vulnerability to human trafficking and child labour; families with school aged children, living in poverty, with other vulnerabilities such as single parent families, or households with members who have disabilities or chronic health problems. It also meant that we prioritised support to ensure the wellbeing and education of children, as we know that keeping children in school is one of the most effective means of preventing child trafficking and exploitation.

The second focus for the support was in restoring and improving household livelihoods so they could overcome poverty and disadvantage and be more resilient in the future to natural disasters as well as other forms of exploitation such as human trafficking.

The lesson from this project to assist families to recover from a natural disaster such as a flood, is that incorporating a human trafficking prevention lens to targeting the beneficiaries, as well as the type of support provided, is effective and can thus achieve multiple goals at the same time; preventing human trafficking, recovery from disaster, and longer term resilience to future disasters.



# Evaluation report

## FLOOD RELIEF ACTIVITIES IN THỪA THIÊN HUẾ PROVINCE 2020-2021



Mr Pham Son Tung, MEL Coordinator, Blue Dragon Children's Foundation

January 2022

## Executive Summary

Within the framework of the project "Preventing children from migrating for child labour and exploitation in Thua Thien Hue province", Blue Dragon Children's Foundation (hereinafter referred to as Blue Dragon) has coordinated with Hue Women's Union at all levels and local authorities in 42 communes/wards/towns in 9 districts to implement direct support activities for households affected by storms and floods in 2020-2021. The Women's Unions at all levels and Blue Dragon immediately coordinated with commune authorities to organize emergency support for necessities and medical care. Following that, the parties implemented long-term support to help people restore their lives and livelihoods. The activities particularly focussed on helping children return to school, reducing the risk of children becoming ill, or leaving school and seeking work.

In September and October 2021, Blue Dragon conducted assessments, collecting information from households, staff of the Women's Union, local authorities, and schools. The assessment provided the basis for targeting support, as well as the process for implementation and the roles of the parties involved.

The activities included:

- Support activities to overcome flood damage was provided to more than 1,000 households in total, including 366 households who received long-term support to recover from storms and floods. Most of the support has been completed, except for a few home construction/renovation projects still underway at the time of the assessment.
- Emergency support activities reached affected people almost immediately, helping them to meet their immediate needs such as medical and living expenses.
- 111 households were supported to build and repair their houses and/or toilets and 144 households were supported to replace household furniture such as beds, wardrobes, and kitchen equipment. As a result, hundreds of households who previously had to worry about leaking roofs, damp, mouldy walls, and a lack of furniture for dining and resting, now feel more secure, healthier, cleaner and safer.
- 44 children were supported with bicycles to go to school, contributing to an increase in the proportion of children with bicycles in the interviewed group to 85%. Over 100 children were supported with tuition fees and/or study equipment such as desks, books, lamps. As a result, the children had the means to go to school, equipment for study, and their families had fewer worries about paying school fees.
- None of the interviewed households had to keep their children home from school due to the immediate impact of the floods. All households said that their children all returned to school soon after the disaster and are now attending school diligently. Although there is no concrete evidence of a direct link, the results of the assessment recognized that support for children's education has contributed to reducing the rate of children dropping out of school in some locations.
- In terms of livelihoods, the project supported more than 220 households with 2,180 seedlings, 3,640kg of fertilizer, 13,426 breeding animals, and 18,750kg of animal feed. In addition, the project supported the production costs for home-based agriculture such as raising livestock (chickens, ducks, pigs, cows, rabbits, fish shellfish), and growing mushrooms or trees (for oil and timber). The households are very happy because they not only received material support according to their needs, but also guidance on production techniques. Many families said that they would not have been able to restore their livelihoods without the project's support.

- Households said that the production efficiency for livelihood restoration was generally high, only a few households lost livestock due to disease or weather. However, as most households only received the livelihoods support a maximum of six months before the evaluation, and due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, only 20% of the interviewed households had increased their production scale compared to prior to the floods. Most households require more time to rebuild their livelihoods and increase their incomes. A positive indication is that all households already have good productivity with their new livelihoods. Many have been able to sell offspring or produce already and earned some income.
- Impact results show that 29% of the interviewed households currently have income from farming, 26% from livestock, 19% from small business and 13% from fishing and aquaculture produce. Households also expressed their plans to expand their current production and wished to receive support in terms of capital (55%), livestock and plant varieties (9%), technical guidance (8%), and other support.
- In general, the support was assessed by the Women's Union, local authorities, schools as well as households as timely, effective, adequate, and appropriate to the needs of people because of the needs assessment survey and because the deployment of support was carried out according to the agreed process. 77% of interviewed households responded that the livelihood support provided by the project is very effective, while at least 94% rated other categories such as emergency support, construction, essential equipment, and learning support for children as very efficient.

To ensure effectiveness of future projects and to ensure impact for the affected families, the evaluation report makes a number of recommendations for stakeholders:

**For Blue Dragon:**

- Continue to maintain close coordination with the Women's Union at all levels and local authorities to understand the situation and needs of the people. Replicate the effective activities for other disadvantaged households, especially those with children at risk of having to drop out of school.
- Improve information sharing with the Women's Union and the locality and provide more timely support. Improve flexibility of funds advances, simplify payment and settlement procedures, while still complying with financial regulations and good practice.
- Strengthen local support and assist schools to organize practical and evidence-based flood prevention training courses for community members and students and teach children swimming skills.
- Continue to support the construction and renovation of houses and provide equipment/furniture for families in need.
- Focus on supporting livelihood restoration for households. For example, develop appropriate models for each region and each type of household. Assess and support people to build low-capital, quick-profit livelihood models such as household-scale livestock and poultry farming. Maintain a variety of forms of livelihood support, with priority to providing capital, seeds, agricultural materials, and hygienic production options such as biogas. Connect households with local experts to provide technical support to improve people's knowledge, production, and business skills, especially for women.
- Maintain necessary and timely support for children's studies in the context of natural disasters and the COVID-19 epidemic. Specifically, provide tuition support for children from disadvantaged families, along with desks, learning tools, bicycles, and devices

and training for online learning. Maintain life skills improvement activities, and career preparation for children to confidently develop in the future.

**For authorities and agencies at provincial, district and commune levels:**

- Strengthen measures to prevent and respond to floods and storms in terms of infrastructure, storm-proof housing, as well as coordinate all support and ensure safety for people when storms come.
- Provide training and awareness raising to ensure people have appropriate knowledge and skills for flood and storm prevention.
- Appoint construction professionals to participate in home improvement support activities to properly assess the needs and effectively monitor the implementation process.
- Develop a long-term livelihood development strategy for each region, promoting local endemic products with potential for replication. When implementing externally funded projects, ensure the participation of professional staff to guide people in enterprise selection and production.

**For schools:**

- Ensure all schools have specific and proactive plans for annual flood and storm prevention. Coordinate with projects and sponsors to organize activities to support students with tuition fees, books and supplies, and learning facilities.
- Coordinate with donors to organize flood prevention activities for school students in a child-friendly manner, encouraging them to also share with their parents.
- Educate parents about the importance of their children's education, encourage families maintain children's studies in the face of storms, floods, and epidemics.