



MISSION TO THE PHILIPPINES

30 March – 3 April, 2009

Brief Notes from 5-Day Mission

Background

Natural Disasters

The Philippines, comprised of 7107 islands and islets, is vulnerable to some of the worst manifestations of climate change, exposed to both geophysical and hydro disasters. In 2006, from September to December, the Philippines was hit by four typhoons which triggered landslides, flash floods, mudslides, widespread flooding and together with high winds, caused widespread destruction and damage. Out of the four, Typhoon Reming was the most destructive, affecting multiple provinces including Albay, in Southern Luzon. Most of the severely affected areas were municipalities and towns located around the border of Mount Mayon Volcano, one of twenty-two active volcanoes in the Philippines.

The country's vulnerability to severe weather events will worsen the existing disproportion of living standards between the rich and the poor. In fact, certain provinces and regions identified by the Manila Observatory as areas most at risk to climate and weather-related changes, are also high in the Poverty Incidence Rating due to the escalating rate of the human population, demand on resources, and unsustainable development.

Netherlands-funded programme

Funding was allocated to the Philippines from the Netherlands-funded Education in Emergencies and Post Crisis Transition programme which was mostly utilised to address the situation in the province of Albay where 4,677 damaged classrooms and more than 300 damaged daycare centers resulted in a total of 55,584 children affected.

The Funds were applied to the Building Safe Learning Environments Safe School Project with an aim to: Enhance the capacity of the school system for disaster risk prevention; help restore access of disaster-affected children to safe and functional facilities; enhance teachers' and other service providers' KSA on emergency preparedness & DRR measures; and engage children and community members in emergency preparedness and DRR initiatives¹. Not only were many classrooms in the province of Albay constructed but 12 schools were designated as future evacuation centres and built to be transformed into multi-purpose halls, with kitchens and toilets². The construction was funded by UNICEF and effected in partnership with the Department of Education and the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Habitat for Humanity Philippines and the concerned local government units (LGU).

Objective of the Mission

- ❖ To observe the strategies implemented to build national and local capacity to achieve safety and resilience at the local level.
- ❖ To learn about the work of the Philippines' Education in Emergencies cluster
- ❖ To provide inputs from a global perspective on the planning process of the Training on Complex Emergencies

¹ Netherlands Donor Progress Report 2008

² 2008 Country Office Annual Report



Mayon Volcano

FIELD TRIP TO BICOL REGION, PROVINCE OF ALBAY

Colin Davis, UNICEF’s Deputy Representative in the Philippines, Sonia Sukdeo, Education Officer in UNICEF NYHQ and Arnaldo Arcadio, an Education consultant in the Philippines Country Office, were joined in the province of Albay, Bicol Region, Luzon, by Elmer Texon, a consultant with Woodfields Consultant, INC.

In order to observe the strategies implemented to build national and local capacity to achieve safety and resilience at the local level, the agenda of the trip entailed visits to 2 High Schools (Marcial O. Rañola Memorial and San Francisco), 3 Elementary Schools (Guinobatan East Central, Malobago, and Banadero) and 3 Day Care Centres (Minto, Ilawod and Malilipot)



➤ Day Care Centres

The Philippines Government mandated every Barangay (village) to have one day care centre. Since there are approximately 45, 000 Barangays in the Philippines, it would surely take some time before that mandate is met and would be dependent on available funding. The first stop was at Ilawod Day Care Centre which was in the construction phase. The floor line was elevated to avoid flooding, and the roof was made of concrete roof slab to resist strong winds/typhoons. Toilets, one each for boys and girls, and a sink were being built into the classroom. The Deputy Representative explained that toilets in the classroom are usually better maintained to avoid unpleasant odours in the classroom. The building was being built as a two-story complex with the first level designated for the day care students. Two shifts of 30 students are being planned. The second level would be designated office space for health workers and the day care workers. Besides offering their services to the community, the health workers will hold occasional workshops for parents of the day care students.



Ilawod Day Care Centre (DCC)



Toilets in Malilipot DCC



Toilets in Minto DCC

One of the other centres visited, Minto Day Care Centre, was quite remote and access was over a narrow wooden make-shift bridge which was assembled after the concrete bridge was washed away during the typhoon. The Centre had been destroyed by the typhoon and the water had risen to roof-level. The construction materials had to be carried piece by piece over the wooden bridge. The Centre was built with two age-appropriate toilets in the classroom, an age-appropriate sink, and the floor line elevated. The roof had galvanized iron sheets instead of concrete slabs which were confirmed by Elmer as strong enough to withstand high winds. However, if the area was flooded, the school would be affected again. The classroom needed tables for the students, which would be received soon, and at least one more coat of paint. The entire community worked together, from parents (the mothers sanded the walls) to the Barangay Council members, to complete the Centre. The students (30) sang and danced for the visiting group. At this young, pre-school age they were also engaged in evacuation drills.



Make-shift bridge to Minto DCC



Day Care student singing at Minto DCC



Minto DCC

Through a program with WASH, many school children have access to sanitary toilets and clean water in their schools. The Malilipot day care students demonstrated their hand-washing routine at lunch time where they rose from their seats and proceeded to the sink in their classroom at an orderly pace to wash their hands and returned in a similar fashion.

➤ **School Rehabilitation/Retrofitting)**

UNICEF helped the local community educational authorities to fund the repair of classrooms. A number of innovations were possible in terms of influencing standard setting and building codes. For example, buildings were constructed structurally safe from heavy winds (250 kph) and floods with elevated finish floor lines, concrete roof slabs or galvanized iron roofing, steel doors with steel frames, and even access ramps for the disabled. Students' chairs, teacher's table and chair, and concave-styled chalkboards were provided. The classrooms were well-lit and aerated.

UNICEF provided the funding for the Department of Education and Habitat for Humanity-Philippines to design and construct cost-effective classrooms and LAPUS (Learning and Public Use School) buildings. Elmer, the consultant with Woodfields Consultant, INC., was hired by the UNICEF Philippines Country Office for quality assurance during the construction of the buildings. As a result, there was a presence in every stage of the Department of Education's construction process allowing for critical inputs from design to completion.

12 schools in the region are designated as evacuation centre and have LAPUS-styled buildings. One of the schools visited, Guinobatan East Central School, had a LAPUS building which contained two classrooms (9m x 7m), a kitchen and additional toilets which were the standard features of the evacuation centre, The classrooms were separated by accordion-type dividing walls.



Guinobatan East Central School



Classroom with furniture & concave chalkboard

- **Elementary schools and high schools**
- **DRR Workshop**

Child Friendly Schools (CFS) models promote quality education which includes a strategy to prevent and mitigate disaster impacts on children, their schools and communities. Schools that have safe buildings, an emergency preparedness plan and teach children the necessary skills to cope and survive during a natural disaster ensures a child’s right to a safe, protective and healthy school environment.³

This right is being recognised in the province of Albay, the most disaster-prone area of the country, where UNICEF engaged a local NGO, Tarabang Para sa Bicol, Inc (TABI), on a project titled, “Enhancing School-Community Disaster Preparedness of Selected At-Risk Schools in Albay Province” to work on enhancing the capacity of pre-school and school-age children, day care workers and teachers, which is part of UNICEF’s Building Safe Learning Environments Safe School Project.

Members of the Parents-Teachers-Community Association, School Disaster Management Councils, Barangay Councils and students from the 2 high schools (MORMS and San Francisco), and 1 of the 3 elementary schools visited (Banadero) had participated in workshops. Over 1,000 school children and 60+ teachers were engaged in disaster risk reduction and preparedness while school heads and Parent-Teacher-Coordination Association officers were oriented on the Child Friendly School System (CFSS) approach and how to maintain the school buildings⁴. The students learned about the basic concept of disaster risk reduction and were involved in interactive play and art on school safety concepts, risk identification within and exterior of the school environment.⁵ First aid trainings were also carried out in the two high schools at the request of the Principals.



MORMS High School meeting



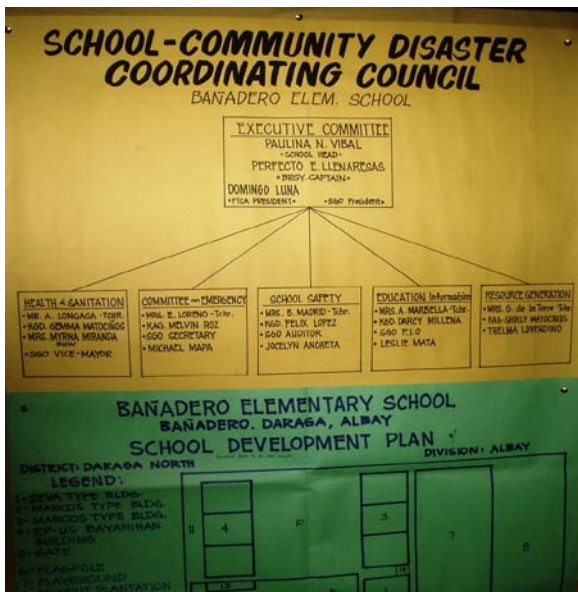
MORMS High School

As a result of the workshops, these schools have developed School Emergency Action Plans/Disaster Management Plans, a School Disaster Management Structure with wide representation including students, and School Hazard Maps. The Principals of the schools shared the Action Plans from the hazard mapping which outlined planned activities, time frame, focal points, and identified resources.

³ Child Friendly School manual

⁴ 2008 Country Office Annual Report

⁵ “Helping Bicolanos Help Themselves,” TABI, 2009



Action Plan on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction

Objectives (Layunin)	Activities (Mga gagawin)	Time Frame (Araw)	Responsible Resources Support (Org. Person Agency)
Sa Bahay Magkaroon ng malusog at masayang pamilya.	Pre-Disaster 1. Mag-imbak ng pagkain, malinis na tubig, flashlight, etc. 2. Sumunod sa mga utos ng magulang.	Buong taon	mag- arak ama ina mga anak UNICEF Sagip Kapamilya CIBLA CSOP
Sa Barangay Makipagtutungan sa pagpapanting malinis ng buong barangay.	During Disaster 1. Makipagtutungan sa paglilinis ng mga estero, kalsada, at buong kapaligiran. 2. Iwasan / Hugang mag-tapat ng patay na hayop, etc. sa ilag. Post Disaster 1. Sikaping maibalik ang maayos at ligtas na kapaligiran sa buong bigy. 2. Maisagawa ang mga maibahaging kaalaman sa 2008 Summer Camp	Bago Pagkatapos ang kalamidad o disaster Pagkatapos ng disaster Agosto 2008	PPCC MBC LGU NSND Rapid Simbahan Bago-Dis- kaster mag- anak mag- anak mag- anak mag- anak UNICEF Sagip Kapamilya CIBLA CSOP
Sa Paaralan Maibahagi ang mga natutunan sa 2008 Summer Camp			mag- anak mag- anak mag- anak mag- anak SFG GPTA Bany Council

Banadero Elementary School's Disaster Coordinating council members, Development Plan & School Action Plan

At 3 of the 5 schools visited, the team had discussions with TABI (the local NGO), the Barangay Captain, Parent-Teacher representatives, parents, the Principal, facilitators, and students. The students mentioned how the training exercise had helped them to realise their capabilities, and felt safer with the knowledge acquired. They are aware of the early warning system in place and know what to do in an evacuation when they hear the warning signal. Most schools conduct evacuation drills twice a year with community members and the fire department. The Principals are aware of the heavy importance of both safe school structures and DRR education in the curriculum.

➤ **Provision of Basic Supplies**

Recovery supplies for the damaged schools included school supplies for students and teachers, musical instruments, 100-book library sets, gardening tools, rescue equipment, first-aid supplies, high-resonance bells for early warning, carpentry tools for repair and maintenance of school infrastructures. The Principals from these schools thanked UNICEF for these essential supplies. Banadero Elementary School has a 300-square meter school vegetable garden which is tended by the students and is an added food source (cucumber, radish, cassava, coconut, peppers, etc). In fact, food reaped from the garden was served at the DRR workshop in December 2008. The team was treated to a musical performance by the students with the donated lyres, drums and bugle instruments with which they had won second-place in a municipal-wide competition after years of competing.



Banadero Elementary School garden



Banadero Students

➤ Relocation Centres

Funded by UNICEF and built by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Anislag Resettlement Site provided temporary homes for people who were affected by the Mayon volcano. It has a day care centre, elementary schools and a livelihood centre which was utilised by the women and contained many products made from the fibre of the Abaca plant. The men travelled daily from the relocation centres to their farms at the foot of the Mayon volcano to continue their farming on the rich volcanic soil. The team stopped to look at a day care centre which was recently constructed and the Livelihood centre.



Temporary homes



Livelihood shop



On the way to the relocation centre, the team passed through an area where women were weaving the fibre from their homes. They are paid 350 Philippine Pesos for each bundle and it takes 3 days to complete.

MEETINGS WITH THE NATIONAL EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES CLUSTER AND ON THE TRAINING ON COMPLEX EMERGENCIES, MANILA

➤ Conflict in Mindanao

Peace talks between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) fell apart in August 2008 and the conflict in Mindanao escalated to the point where the number of IDPs reached half a million in September. The protracted armed conflict has created difficulties in implementing programme activities in the area and high numbers of children are missing out on an education. 50 *child-friendly spaces* have been set up and used to provide psychosocial assistance to affected children. Many day care centres and schools have been used as evacuation centres. Access to potable water is limited. There is insufficient sanitary and hygiene facilities and inadequate human and solid waste management. Action is also needed to address undernourishment and micronutrient deficiency among children and pregnant and lactating women. Unfortunately, children have been recruited in armed conflict.

➤ **Education in Emergencies Cluster meeting**

Maria Lourdes de Vera, Chief of Education, Arnaldo Arcadio, consultant in the Philippines Country Office and Sonia Sukdeo, Education Officer in UNICEF NYHQ met with Miramel Laxa, Social Welfare Officer and ECCD focal person, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Juliet Harras, Basic Education Specialist for Save the Children, Philippines, to continue discussions on the Education in Emergencies Cluster's annual workplan and the Training on Complex Emergencies.

Some of the discussions evolved around finding solutions to the situation in Mindanao in particular the problem of the occupied schools. Asking the adults to vacate the classroom during the day and return at night would be dependent on each case. Another option could be to place a time limit on the use of schools as refuge centres and discuss with the Camp Management Cluster the possibility of moving the evacuees to transition sites. The Emergency Cluster could prepare and provide basic guidelines to the LGU workers and volunteers during a natural disaster or conflict on the use and availability of child friendly spaces. A rapid assessment of damaged school buildings and classrooms and the tracking of affected children need to be completed as soon as possible. An idea was to provide a rapid assessment template/tool to the District Supervisor to complete and submit to the Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council (MDCC) on a regular basis during disasters or conflicts. The past two rapid assessments did not include education.

A family and community disaster preparedness manual is being developed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development with UNICEF. Planned CFSS in-training and pre-service trainings will include DRR elements.

➤ **Brainstorm sessions with HQ & the Education team in the UNICEF Country Office on planning of the Training on Complex Emergencies**

The 5-day training, linked to APSSC regional efforts and to be facilitated by Gary Ovington, Senior Education Emergency Specialist, EAPRO, would aim at building capacity at the local and national level addressing critical issues such as psychosocial support for returning students, safe learning spaces for students in evacuation centres, out of school children and re-integration of child soldiers. The tentative outline for each day and the expected outcomes were discussed.

A list of potential participants was reviewed and it was agreed to include members of the local community in Mindanao as well as the District Supervisors, Municipalities, and NGOs active in the province. At the national level, invitations should be extended to include participants from the Department of Education, other relevant Ministries, the social arm of the MILF and members of relevant Emergency Clusters.

In regards to psychosocial activities, a suggestion was made to look at the approach used in Gaza where UNICEF was the child protection and psychosocial sector lead and included a Mental Health and Psychosocial (MHPSS) Working Group. One of the strategies used was to immerse the students in psychosocial activities in the classroom for one month before commencing with the normal curriculum. Another suggestion made was for the Education team in the UNICEF Country Office to meet and discuss the training exercise with Amanda Melville, Child Protection Specialist in Psychosocial Support, NYHQ, who was scheduled to visit Manila and Mindanao in April.



Banadero Elementary School students