Policy Brief

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E-Net Philippines

Issue 3   **September 2018**

Risk Reduction and Resiliency in Education
*"Restoring Access and Ensuring Quality, Inclusive, Equitable
and Safe Learning Environment for Disaster-Prone Schools in the Visayas".*

Context

Disaster-Prone Visayas

The Philippines is among the world's most disaster-prone country because of its location along the path of typhoons and monsoons and being in the Pacific Ring of Fire. It was fourth in the world among countries hit by the highest number of disasters over the past 20 years, according to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. In the country, the Visayas, especially areas in Eastern Visayas are the areas highly at risk to the occurrence of tropical depressions, tropical storms, typhoons and super typhoons according to the Center for Environmental Geomatics' Mapping Philippine Vulnerability to Environmental Disasters.

A research study completed in 2013 (before Yolanda happened) cited Leyte and Southern Leyte as being the "Philippine's disaster capital". The Visayas State University (VSU) recorded that Leyte Island had the "worst landslide history in the Philippines." (Jadina B.C., 2010)

Another study done by the Eastern Visayas State University (EVSU) showed Tacloban is "disaster prone". Before the 7.2 magnitude earthquake shook Bohol and neighboring islands and before Yolanda cut a wide swath of destruction in many Visayan islands, the study revealed that more than 6,000 people have died in catastrophic calamities that hit Leyte and Southern Leyte over the past two decades.

These recurring hazards cause extensive damages to infrastructures, properties and worst loss of lives. In times of disaster and emergency situations, children are the most vulnerable. Opportunities that meet their needs and even their most basic rights are often significantly disrupted when disaster strikes, such as right to quality education. When school buildings are destroyed or are used as emergency and evacuation shelters, when families are forced to flee their homes for safer places to stay, children's education is one aspect that is heavily affected. Children miss out on education for a period of time and restoring normalcy in affected schools becomes a daunting task, such as in the case of Yolanda-affected areas.

Photo Credit: Save the Children

- A massive flashflood occurred in Ormoc City in November 1991, which killed more than 5,000 people. The heavy rainfall that triggered the flashflood in the city was the highest in 100 years;

- Another massive landslide took place in Barangay Guinsaugon, St. Bernard, Southern Leyte on Dec. 17, 2006, during which more than 1,000 people perished;

- About 200 people died in an earlier landslide on Panaon Island, Southern Leyte on Dec. 19, 2003.
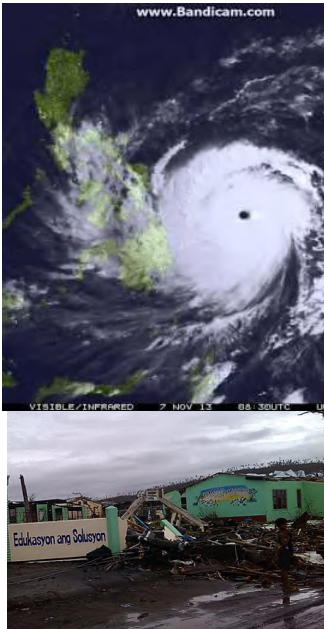
www.samarnews.net

Disaster Impact on Education

In total, there are over 46,000 primary schools and 12,000 secondary schools in the country, with over 20 million students enrolled in both public and private schools. With the country experiencing so many disasters each year, education is often severely disrupted. According to the Department of Education's Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS) between SY2009-2010 and SY2013-2014, the top 3 hazard exposures of schools are: tropical cyclones, flood and earthquake which could be the deadliest and costliest of hazards. In some cases, schools experience more than one hazard at one point in time. Take note that schools are as well exposed to human induced hazards like armed conflict as in the recently concluded war in Marawi.

A month after Yolanda, DepEd reported that 90% of school infrastructures in Tacloban City were damaged. The Regional office in Region VIII, Division offices in Tacloban, Leyte and Ormoc were damaged as well.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Education

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework), offers the guiding principles and practical means for achieving disaster resilience. Particular to school safety, among the most significant contributions is the development and promotion of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF).

In concurrence to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and its successor instrument, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Philippine government has adopted policies toward disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response, notably, the Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729) and the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 or RA 10121. Both laws acknowledge the need to *"adopt a disaster risk reduction and management approach that is holistic, comprehensive, integrated and proactive in lessening the socio-economic and environmental impacts of disasters including climate change, and promote the participation of all sectors and all stakeholders at all levels, especially the local community."*

In the education sector, the DepEd has created the Comprehensive DRRM in Basic Education Framework (DO No. 37, s. 2015), which underscores the three intersecting pillars which make up a comprehensive approach for school safety namely, Pillar 1: On Safe School Facilities; Pillar 2: School Disaster Management; and Pillar 3: Risk Reduction and Resilience Education.

The ongoing implementation of these pillars is aligned with DepEd's commitment to the four thematic areas of RA 10121 - Prevention and Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Rehabilitation.

Pursuant to the Comprehensive DRRM in Basic Education Framework, DepEd has developed the School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (SDRRM) Manual to serve as a common template for localization, contextualization and adaptation at the sub-national levels. The Manual explains the framework and identifies the tools to be used by the schools, with a particular focus on School Disaster Management (Pillar 2).

Issues, Gaps and Challenges

The regularity of disasters the country experiences and interventions made by government including legislation and institutional programs should have already raised our government's and people's capacity to deal with such and address it efficiently and effectively. Concretely however, local actors have uneven capacities in handling disaster situations, with some even unable to come up with ways to map out lasting solutions to the education sector's woes in times of disaster/emergencies such as the use of schools as evacuation centers, building durable classroom structures, getting teachers and children ready for emergencies among other concerns.

The operationalization of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework for a disaster resilient education sector pose challenges. Below is a list of issues, gaps and challenges identified thru consultations with different stakeholders facilitated by the Civil Society Network for Education Reforms (E-Net Philippines), specifically done in the Visayas region.

A Child-centered disaster risk reduction and management is vital in sustaining child safety and improving disaster resiliency.

INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

Pillar 1 Safe Learning Facilities	Pillar 2 School Disaster Management	Pillar 3 Risk Reduction and Resilience Education (RRRE)
• Participation of stakeholders (students, teachers, community leaders, etc.) missing/lacking in Site Selection and Monitoring of infrastructure from construction to maintenance of facilities; • Hazard Assessment for site selection of schools and Safety Assessments on existing school buildings and facilities lacking – some schools are still in the danger zone; new schools built still not resilient, sub-standard materials used; • Lack of coordination among agencies/institutions (including private) involved in site selection, construction, maintenance of facilities; • Lack of safety signage in school facilities; • No training of builders on resilient school building standards; • Problem in the acquisition of lands for school buildings.	• Not all schools have localized and contextualized DRR Manuals and corresponding implementation plan; • No school disaster management council or may be present but not functioning or lack of knowledge of school management on disaster management; • Standards of drills are questionable; • No conscious documentation of local disasters/experiences to contextualize the plan; • Dissemination of disaster related plans not done; • No knowledge management mechanism (records keeping); • No convergence among National Government Agencies (NGAs) on DRR and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CCAM);	• Inadequate trainings on DRR in subject area curriculum for teaching personnel (especially in private schools); • Incapacitated community on RRRE; - Need to build a DRR culture/ consciousness; - Need for a culturally and locally contextualized DRR; • Lack of psychosocial support especially to the learners/ givers; • No appropriate learning materials on DRR/CCAM or lack of sufficient materials on DRR; INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

Recommendations – *"Restoring Access and Ensuring Quality, Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Learning Environment for Disaster-Prone Schools in the Visayas".*

Ensuring access to and continuity of education of persons affected by disasters require addressing the issues in the provision of education in disaster-prone areas and the challenge posed in the operationalization of Comprehensive School Safety Framework. Providing sustained and targeted rights-based education programs for displaced children and youth in the context of disaster risk reduction in education is necessary. **Long-term Resilience of the Education System (especially in disaster-prone areas) should be the all-encompassing objective.** The following should be included in government's targeted outcomes:

Pillar 1 Safe Learning Facilities	Pillar 2 School Disaster Management	Pillar 3 RRRE
• Prioritize allotment and acquisition of land/property for school buildings in safe areas; • Ensure the construction of all new schools including schools that are part of the long term provincial development plan uses disaster-resistant designs and standards; • Conduct a participatory vulnerability capacity assessment for site selection and construction and have a basic checklist for resilient schools; • Ensure all schools in risk-prone areas have first aid kits, pre-stocked emergency life-support supplies and transportation vehicles for dual purpose – for school transportation especially of children residing in far-flung barrios and for evacuation purposes; • Promote the establishment of a school-wide early warning mechanism; • Put up functioning Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) health facilities; • Conduct periodic monitoring and regular assessment on safety of school sites, buildings and facilities;	• Ensure that schools have active Disaster Management Plans (updated annually) and ensure participation of teachers, managers and learners in the design of the school plan; • Ensure schools have designated and trained DRRM focal point and management committee/team and safety officer in each school (trained/ experienced); • Communications Plan for roll out of DRR Manual in schools; • In cooperation with local communities, pre-designate safe temporary learning spaces or alternative school locations and communicate them to all schools; • Clear policies, procedures and guidelines in addressing safety, security and sanitation in schools, temporary learning centers and evacuation centers; • Embed gender concerns in disaster management and create response mechanisms for persons with disabilities; • Add additional teaching staff in situation of emergencies and ensure safety of teachers in disaster risk areas; Policy on the safety of teachers when performing their tasks and clear-cut policy in hazard pay/hardship pay for teachers;	• Integrate disaster risk prevention, mitigation and preparedness in all capacity development undertakings – for education administrators and teachers, learners, parents, representatives of civil society organizations and community-based organizations; • Promote the development of disaster risk reduction education materials that can be used in schools and communities for all age groups, in both formal and non-formal settings, while making use of local knowledge, practices and culture; Provide technical and budgetary assistance where appropriate; • Encourage and support both school-based and community-led DRR initiatives with a view to sustain awareness of disaster risks, including health-related risks, to take action to mitigate hazard impacts and prevent disasters; • Maximize use of social media to educate the general public on DRR; - Documentation of every experience for knowledge management and sharing and experiential teaching and learning approach for DRR;