



NATIONAL HUMANITARIAN STAKEHOLDERS' SUMMIT

*Strengthening Preparedness
Towards Coordinated Response*



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WHAT IS THE PHILIPPINE PREPAREDNESS PARTNERSHIP?



Three years this May from the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the ever-growing call for localization of humanitarian response remains strong and alive in many different parts of the world. In the context of Asia, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) with support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) has addressed such call way back in August 2016. ADPC made a push for the improvement of the capacity of local humanitarian actors to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters in select Asian countries through a program on 'Strengthening Capacity of Government, Local Humanitarian Organizations and the Private Sector on Preparedness for Response in Asia'.

In line with the program, the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) was established covering six countries namely, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. The partnerships in the covered countries spurred and ignited the collaboration of the government, local civil society organizations, and the private sector networks. The APP strives to improve the interface and partnership between government, local civil society and humanitarian organizations, and the private sector for enhancing capacities through partnerships, knowledge resources and South-South exchange, training, and networking opportunities.

To this end, the Philippines has formed the Philippine Preparedness Partnership (PhilPrep), consisting of major actors in the three sectors led by the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) for the government, the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) for the local civil society and humanitarian organizations, and the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) for the private sector.

Being one of the world's most disaster affected countries, there is a strong recognition of the local stakeholders' capacity in the development sector including various groups and networks that have varied levels of experience in emergency preparedness and response as a result of responding to different calamities. These became the driving force for localization agenda to gain quick ground from among stakeholders who are willing to move it forward.



Source: REUTERS/Romeo Ranoco



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Case Stories

STORIES OF SUCCESS & RESILIENCE





Effectiveness of the Incident Command System in Maintaining Unity of Command: THE CASE OF ASEAN 2017 OPERATIONS

The Incident Command System (ICS) was initially introduced during the 1st ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management Meeting in 2003 and later on adopted by the ASEAN-US Cooperation on Disaster Management Program. The system provides appropriate and suitable framework for on-scene disaster response and management that can be used in various incidents or events.

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD), as the lead of systems in the national level, introduced the ICS as an intended solution to challenges and inconsistencies that were identified when disaster response and management involve agencies with different backgrounds, perspectives, and goals that will work together towards meeting a common goal. This on-scene disaster management tool was proven to be an effective model and has been operationalized in different parts of the world.

Since disasters are rampant in the Philippines, various measures are continuously implemented and updated to manage the ill effects to Filipino communities. Situated in the Pacific Ring of Fire and the Typhoon Belt, earthquakes, typhoons, and landslides are just some of the calamities the country faces every year. Human-induced hazards add more to the widespread threats given the growing complexities of human relationships: war, crimes, and terrorism are just a few.

Because of these, a need to have a standardized, effective, and efficient response system for the management of disasters in the country was realized. The Republic Act 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 calls upon the institutionalization of the ICS as an on-scene disaster management system that aims to integrate inter-agency structures involved in disaster, incidents, and planned events operations working towards a common set of objectives. ICS operates with the following management characteristics: a.) management of objectives, b.) common terminology, c.) modular organization, d.) manageable span of control, e.) chain of command, f.) unity of command, g.) incident action planning, h.) incident action planning, i.) incident facilities and locations, j.) comprehensive resource management, k.) integrated communications, l.) establishment and transfer of command, m.) unified command, n.) accountability, and o.) dispatch and deployment. Each of these management characteristics contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency of the whole system.

The ICS together and the Cluster Approach System (CAS) has been proven to be effective strategies in managing disasters for these help enhance the management of human and non-human resources, communication systems, promotion of responders' safety, and meeting the objectives of disaster management and response including planned high-density population gatherings. The ICS consists of Incident Management Teams (IMT) headed by an Incident Commander who is responsible for all the activities including the planning, development, and utilization of operations and resources needed for the incident. It also includes Command and General Staff personnel consisting of a Public Information Officer, a Safety Officer, a Liaison Officer, an Operations Section Chief, a Planning Section Chief, a Logistics Section Chief, and a Finance/Admin Section Chief. Preferably, the members of the IMT must have completed the requirements of the ICS

training programs. However, in most cases, available responders in the area are limited and are not trained in ICS. This may now cause the disruption of the principle of unity of command, which is an integral characteristic of the ICS.

In 2017, the Philippines had the privilege of hosting the 31st ASEAN Summit. Leaders from twenty (20) countries have gathered to in a series of meetings and other activities held from November 10-14. With the theme “Partnering for Change, Engaging the World”, leaders of the member countries, chaired by President Rodrigo Duterte, discussed the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the way forward. The event also covered talks on the appointment of new ASEAN Secretary-General, and other important issues in the region and in the world. Because the ICS was employed during the ASEAN 2017 operations, there is now a need to evaluate if the ICS training programs have influenced the effective maintenance of the unity of command. By reviewing the profiles of selected ICS members and identifying whether they have attended any ICS training program, evaluation on whether there was a successful maintenance of the unity of command will be attained.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the ICS command and control yielded very effective ratings in terms of its Function as Integrated Management Organization, Agencies’ Contribution, Management of Agency Responsibilities, and Overall Command and Control. Participants of the FGD also responded positively on the execution of command and control by the ICS.

Developing new models for the ICS is a venture the OCD can look into. As part of PhilPrep, effective coordination mechanism with private sector and local civil society and humanitarian organizations may be explored. Being benchmarked by certain countries in the region, the Office of the Civil Defense has the opportunity to create models for other countries to follow.

National MSME Resilience Core Group

PDRF's Business Continuity Program, focuses on providing capacity-building interventions aimed at developing knowledge on business and service continuity management. The program targets micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) clients that form the supply chain of its corporate members and partner organizations. The overarching goal is to build resilient economic lifeline supply chains and fence line communities in order to ensure their ability to continue the delivery of services and products, and to establish their capacity to immediately recover from disasters. This is in line with the objective of PhilPrep to promote sustainable development and disaster resilience of local communities.

These efforts are aligned with objectives of the National MSME Resilience Core Group (RCG). It was established in 2016 wherein PDRF is one of its founding members together with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Office of Civil Defense (OCD), Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), and Philippine Exporters Federation (PHILEXPORT). The membership of the RCG has expanded to include other government agencies, private sector representatives, and civil society organizations that are also in line with the group's advocacy. The RCG's advocacy on MSME disaster resilience and development is promoted through the SME Resilience Roadmap and Action Plan that focuses on the four (4) thematic areas of: (i) enhancing SME general and disaster risk data; (ii) disaster risk reduction and management and business continuity management awareness and training; (iii) tailored disaster-risk financing for SMEs; and (iv) SME inclusion in disaster risk reduction and management, climate change adaptation policies, planning, and local institutions.

Through the regional business forums conducted in different regions in the Philippines, MSMEs themselves are given the opportunity to work on their own action plans based on these thematic areas. To date, business forums have been conducted in 14 regions in the country covering almost 3,000 enterprise owners, business leaders, and national government agency representatives.

PDRF Response Operations for the Magnitude 6.1 Earthquake in Porac, Pampanga

On April 22, the Philippine private sector—led by Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) and its member companies—immediately extended help to save survivors buried alive under the rubble of the collapsed Chuzon Supermarket in Porac, Pampanga.

The PDRF Emergency Operations Center raised its alert level to red, activating its eight member company clusters: Food and Non-Food; Water & Sanitation; Power, Fuel, & Energy; Finance & Insurance; Search & Rescue / Medical; Logistics; Information, Communications, & Technology; and Infrastructure.

Several PDRF member companies and partners from the network provided resources and services to respond to the immediate and critical needs for search and rescue, medical assistance, food and water distribution. Support also came in for power restoration, emergency telecommunications, and logistics.

The efforts of the private sector have been recognized by the provincial government as it was evident in the overwhelming support of the member companies and partners of PDRF. This has reinforced the importance of pre-agreements and strong coordination mechanisms especially during times of disasters.

Readiness is Preparedness: Driving Community Resilience in Balangiga

With Haiyan experience still vivid in their memories, this ‘never again’ experience that had traumatized some of their fellow community members inspired and drove them to do something for their local communities. The Basic Training on Rights-Based Humanitarian Response came as a response to their hearts’ restlessness to help others. These twenty local leaders who were raring to go forward from the municipalities of Lawaan, Balangiga, Quinapondan and Salcedo became the select local leaders who were trained to become trainers after going through intensive Training of Trainers on Rights-Based Humanitarian Response as part of the Adaptive Livelihoods and Emergency Readiness and Timely Response (ALERT Project) by CDP.


Barangay Captain Rommel Hilaria of San Miguel, Balangiga was one of these concerned local leaders who really saw the timeliness and appropriateness of the training so they could review and enhance their local preparedness and emergency response plan for his locality. Barangay San Miguel was one of the high-risk barangays to flooding most especially during rainy season and typhoon periods. Despite this, there was only one recorded casualty in his area at the time of Typhoon Urduja in 2017 and this was due to drowning. Armed with the knowledge and skills from the training, he readily scheduled the review of their barangay’s early warning system (EWS) as a key step towards enhancing their local preparedness and response plan. To achieve effective complementation and implementation, the EW review was undertaken in a participatory manner engaging the marginalized and most vulnerable sectors of their barangay.

All the villages (*puroks*) in their barangays and the People's Organizations-Civil Society Organization were able to send representatives to the EWS workshop. Most were women and those from vulnerable sectors itself including older persons, persons with disability, and young people. Inclusion of persons with disability has been realized through CDP's ELEVATE Project. Mr. Hilaria explained in the workshops the importance for each community member to be familiar with their early warning system as it could save their lives and ensure an orderly evacuation of the community population whenever the situation calls for it.

He highlighted the need for a common understanding even on the technical terms that are being used like 'preemptive evacuation'. In such manner, they would be guided on what steps to take should there be an immediate need for evacuation even as the evidence of flood water may not be present yet.

In the course of the modules development and conduct of workshop processes, improvements were undertaken in the system with the assistance of CDP in partnership with PhilPrep. These include advisories from the weather agency like PAGASA and how the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer (MDRRMO) could provide warning information on Alert Levels. The description of the weather condition and physical condition of the waves were thoroughly discussed for the community members to understand how to react to it and the steps that they may undertake.


The whole barangay became a lively training ground as various villages cascaded the results of the workshop into their own village level constituents. The system enhancement and its impact on preparedness and response plan became concrete in varied contexts of the villages. They were able to identify additional vulnerable sectors in the preemptive evacuation plan particularly the pregnant women and those with babies. For Alert level 2, forced evacuation of residents in high risk areas was included together with the needed early action of families. At the Maximum Alert Level, they agreed to utilize the siren as a warning signal and changed the color signal from green to blue, to be consistent with the municipalities' warning



system. It must be noted that all the Council members of the barangay committed to do regular checking of the evacuation centers' condition as part of their preparedness activity in line with typhoons and flooding.

How inspiring are the simple acts of community leaders like Mr. Hilaria. Surely, the other leaders are taking their own steps in their own barangays and municipalities as well. Come to think of it, the humanitarian practitioners' commitment is not too difficult to practice if the leaders are serious with it, culling from the experience of Balangiga and other municipalities. We can put to heart this commitment and practice it: *'communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlement, they just need to have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them'*.

What difference could it make if communities work together for their own resilience and empowerment? Definitely, we would have **DISASTER-READY COMMUNITIES**. With knowledge and skills imparted and shared, wonderful minds and bodies bloom and multiply, and local communities achieve resilience.



TIPS FOR COLLABORATION

(Duty Bearer, Stakeholders, and Community)

1. Know your rights and responsibilities in DRR.
2. With great power come great responsibilities:
POSITION=RESPONSIBILITIES.
3. Join in all the steps of the community-based disaster risk reduction and management (CBDRRM) process—risk assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.
4. Respect local context.
5. Teamwork can accomplish greater task with lighter load.
6. Be team players.
7. Do no harm.
8. Delegate but work together. All committees must have a counterpart not only in the barangay level, but also in purok level.
9. Make sure that stakeholders have their own roles in preparedness and emergency response.

10. Complement DRR efforts of communities before, during, and after disaster.
11. Language is a means to communicate. Teach it, simplify it. Risk communication is crucial in educating community members with technical terms encountered in disasters.
12. Most hazards come with warning. Study them well and involve locals especially those highly at risk.
13. Involve the vulnerable and diverse stakeholders in the community. Community-based Early Warning System (EWS) should be done in a participatory manner involving stakeholders not only to ensure awareness, but also to consider other aspects like gender, age, or disability of the constituents.
14. Test your plans. Conduct drills on contingency plans.
15. Do risk assessment regularly to be updated with your local context.
16. With resilience as a common goal, never get tired to collaborate until complementation is achieved.

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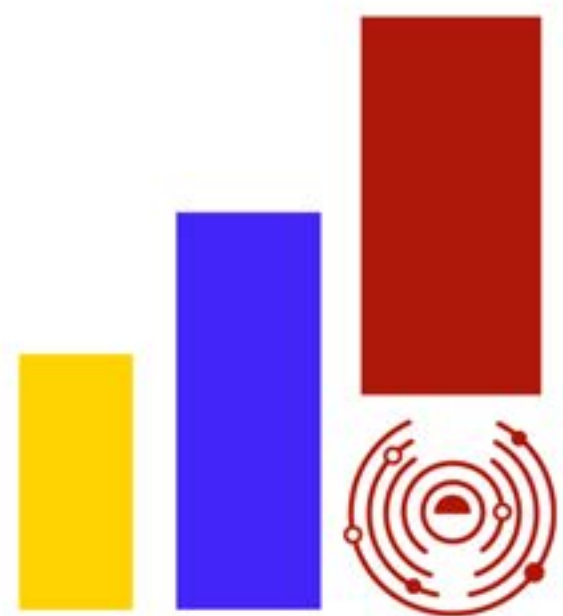
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