[Note: The paper is a contribution to ISDR’s call on good practices in disaster risk education and school safety. The UNICEF Philippine country office is presenting its share on the subject although still on the implementing phase of its “Building Safe Learning Environment: Safe School Project” currently piloted in the Southern Luzon region battered by the 2006 typhoons and lahar flow. It is worthy to note that UNICEF project took off from the ISDR global campaign entitled “Disaster risk reduction begins at school”.

Inspired by the many rich materials from international experiences combined with dynamic and cohesive DRM players in the country, UNICEF’s core commitment for children in emergencies is giving flesh to proactive and developmental approach to disaster response. With its call “Leave no child behind” and “Children First” the delivery of humanitarian response in times of emergencies proceeds with long term goal of securing disaster resilient communities and safer environment for children and their families.

The paper will highlight UNICEF’s humanitarian intervention for families and children who took shelter in schools during the 2006 Typhoons in the Philippines, and a snap shot of the on-going project of the Education in emergencies as mentioned above.]

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**Good Practices - Education and School Safety**

**EAPRO - Philippines**

<table>
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<th>Project Brief</th>
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| - Position the good practice/project within the national context with historical, political, social, economic background, *if relevant*, and useful statistics.  
-What are the emergency response projects about? |

In late 2006, the Philippines suffered widespread devastation wrought by the series of strong typhoons, with the Southern Luzon region of the country bearing the full brunt of the damages. The typhoons destroyed some 7,000 public elementary & secondary school buildings and more than 600 day care centres, affecting about 470,000 school children and 21,500 pre-schoolers, respectively. In Albay province alone, 523 schools and 191,000 students were affected. With damages reaching to PhP2.134Billion or US$43Million, recovery and rehabilitation cost practically wiped out the budget intended to reduce classroom backlogs.

Adding pressure to the sorry state of school facilities, public schools across the country are mandated by law to be used as evacuation centres. During the recent disaster, 112,000 people sought refuge in schools which also sustained heavy damages. Cramped in every available dry space inside school buildings the evacuees still opted to stay for a week or two as the typhoon season was still on its peak. Others whose homes were swept away or their communities wiped out by the rampaging flash floods and lahar flow have no choice but to seek temporary shelter within the school premises.

To respond to the emergency situation of school children and the evacuees living inside and around the school premises, UNICEF, together with the rest of the UN family launched an emergency appeal for the typhoon victims. Immediately, additional assistance was received from the Mercury Fund and from the governments of Sweden (thru SIDA), Australia (thru AusAID) and the Netherlands. The initial emergency response packaged by UNICEF included the distribution of tents for temporary classrooms, immediate repair of 10 priority schools in Albay province with provisions for school supplies and educational packages. Major attention was also given to improvement of water and sanitation facilities in schools with the construction and installation of hundreds of toilets and water wells with hand pumps.]
UNICEF also embarked on the Building Safe Learning Environment for Children Project (BSLE) having two Sub-Projects: 1) Safe Schools Project- a structural and non-structural intervention for public schools, and 2) Emergency Assistance to Day Care Centres. Both sub-projects involve repair and construction work.

The general objective of the BSLE Project is to help improve the teaching-learning environment of children and teachers and enhance their capacity on disaster preparedness and risk management. Specifically, the project hopes to achieve the following:

1. Complement the government’s repair works of damaged day care centers and schools to help restore access of children to education;
2. Ensure the structural integrity of schools-cum-evacuation centers to make them safe for use as refuge/evacuation or holding center in cases of subsequent disasters;
3. Enhance teachers and other service provider’s knowledge, skills and attitudes on emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction measures;
4. Teach children emergency preparedness measures and involve them in disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives as school projects such as tree planting or other environmental protection activities, evacuation drills and other doable disaster response plan (e.g. first aid, swimming lesson, etc.).

How does it work?

1. Under the structural component, the repair and new construction works will incorporate hazard-resistant feature especially against typhoons. The new construction works will build both standard classroom design as well as new school building meant for schools designated as evacuation centers and which will have flexible facets to accommodate large number of people (e.g. accordion-type partition walls, beams or hooks for hanging hammocks, improve/additional sanitation facilities- toilets, bath/washing areas, water points, cooking and waste disposal areas.
   - The construction implementation managed by the Department of Education (DepED) will adopt the Principal-Led School Building Program (PSBP) approach, wherein principal or school heads takes charge of the implementation management of the repair and or construction and assisted by a DepED Project Engineer. This approach allows active involvement of the school heads, together with the Parent Teacher & Community Association (PTCA) and other stakeholders in the community. This same approach was adopted in the AusAID-assisted school repair project that immediately preceded the BSLE.
   - In addition, a non-government organization, the Habitat for Humanity Philippines (HFH), will be tapped to help in school building construction using a new technology but following the DepED specifications and standards. HFH is an international grassroots movement involved in housing programs for poor or low income families and school construction.
   - Recipient schools will come up with an Operation & Maintenance Plan for community ownership and sustainability.
2. Non-structural components includes the delivery of school supplies and educational packages for children and teachers (provision of 100-book library sets and ECCD-in-a-box learning materials), production of multi-media educational packages on disaster preparedness, training on disaster preparedness with active engagement of children and communities in disaster risk reduction initiatives. To be piloted is the engagement
of children and communities in disaster risk assessment, formulation of a school-community preparedness plan and evacuation/drill plan.

It shall support, complement and harmonize a number of the Department of Education’s on-going programs on disaster management and preparedness, namely;

a. Disaster preparedness through educational multi-media (DP-EM-Media);
b. School mapping exercise;
c. Assessment of school buildings structural integrity and stability (ASSIST);
d. Schools water and electrical facilities assessment (SWEAP);
e. Mainstreaming risk reduction measures in the development policy, planning and programs/projects implementation;
*includes mainstreaming DRR measures in the secondary school curriculum
f. Preparation of an operations manual on disaster preparedness; and
g. Advocacy campaigns: Disaster awareness & prevention month in July.

Who are the implementing partners and what are their roles?

Dept. of Education – implementing partner in the construction of public schools and implementation of non-structural components on disaster preparedness in schools;

Dept. of Social Welfare & Development – implementing partner in the repair/construction of day care centres

Other Child-focused INGO/NGOs or cluster members – Resource sharing and dissemination of materials (e.g. Plan International-Philippines, Save the Children Alliance, World Vision Phil, CARE Phil., Center for Disaster Preparedness, PNRC)

Habitat for Humanity Philippines – school construction;

Local Government Unit (Provincial, Municipal, Barangay level) – Support schools and communities to conduct disaster safety/preparedness trainings.

- Who are the beneficiaries?

Approximately 60,280 school children in 72 public elementary and secondary schools, with about 1,500 teachers and 72 school-wide Parent Teacher & Community Association

- Where and when is the project being implemented?

  • The project will be implemented in areas covered by the BSLE project, the non-structural component or the DRR initiatives in schools will be piloted in a municipality in Albay which is under the provincial school division.

  • One (1) School Year 2007-2008 (June 14 – March 2008)
### Results Achieved

- **Why is this project a success?**

  Based on the recently completed AusAID-supported school repair works, the DepED’s Principal-Led School Building Program (PSBP) approach not only ensured the successful and timely completion of the project, it likewise empowered the school community to manage and eventually own and sustain the project.

  However, as earlier mentioned, the BSLE-SSP will start to take off this month of August and initial results can be assessed by the October 2007 (where at least 40% of the construction work are completed and DRR trainings for teachers and school children are underway). The full extent of the results can also be observed after a 3-month implementation of doable disaster risk reduction projects in schools or communities participated/initiated by the school children themselves.

- **What are the benefits of this project/initiative within the national context?**
  - Promoting awareness on school safety;
  - Integrating disaster management into school curricula;
  - Training and capacity building of school teachers, students and staffs on basic life saving skills; and
  - Building school facilities resilient to disaster impacts in order to protect children in the event of a natural hazard.

- **How many people have benefited from it and how? Give specific examples of achievement or statistics if possible.**

  - Of the just completed AusAID-assisted school repairs, the 40 classrooms in the 10 recipient schools were again made functional and safe. The project benefited 1,800 students. Together with the school packs and educational packages provided, the emergency assistance helped restore normalcy to the schooling of the children and enabled the schools to provide unhampered educational services.

  Under the BSLE Project, the following are expected to benefit:
  - Approx. 60,280 school children in 72 public elementary and secondary schools
  - 1500 teachers and academic & non-academic staff
  - 127 school/day care centre level Parent Teacher & Community Association and Day Care Parents Association
  - 1,375 day care learners
  - 55 day care workers (licensed by the D/MSWD)
  - Approx. 254 barangays or immediate surrounding communities

### Challenges

- **What have been the major challenges of this project?**
  - Consolidated data on the number of damaged schools were not immediately available
  - The immediate relocation of IDP’s in crowded and congested schools was not done due to no-availability of suitable lands for relocation – this remains a challenge to date
  - Cooperation or participation of the stakeholders (other donors and community leaders) in the implementation of the project
- How were they overcome (if they were)?
  - Through the activation of the UN cluster approach, the Education in Emergency Cluster was formed both at the national and local levels, UNICEF as the lead agency together with government counterpart, Dept. of Education, coordinated all the above intervention to ensure that assistance/programs and services reached a wider coverage, avoid duplication and ensure accountability.

Lessons Learned

- What is (are) the key lesson(s) learned from this project?
  - Emergency humanitarian response must closely link with early recovery or long term development objective/work
  - Facilities (e.g. schools, day care and health centres) providing basic services should be improved, strengthened/retrofitted against hazards and maintained
  - The need to equip first responders (e.g. community members & leaders, teachers, student government representatives, youth organizations, PTCA) on disaster risk management, emergency preparedness and risk reduction measures

- How to improve similar projects in the future?
  - Ensure close coordination with appropriate/responsible government counterpart agencies both at the national and local level
  - Maintain a pool of experts/engineers ready to be deployed/dispatched for assessment, technical advice, etc.

- How easy would it be to replicate this good practice elsewhere?
  - Come up with user-friendly manuals, modules and locally produces materials for other communities to use and serve as guide
  - Continuous sharing of information, experience, and updating of emerging trends in DRR among cluster members and partners.

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PHOTO GALLERY

MERGENCY Fund-assisted – Provision of Emergency School Tents

Upper photos: (R-L) Tents being used as temporary schools in a relocation site in Taysan Transit Site, Legazpi City, Albay
Damaged schools in Sto. Domingo, Albay
Another tent school in an evacuation center, the Travesia Sports Oval, Guinobatan, Albay
[Photos taken by UNICEF-Emergency Response Team (ERT) December 2006-January 2007 ]
UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

Upper photo: Water wells with hand pump in Tagas Elementary School, Legazpi City (Nik-UNICEF Educ in Emer)
Temporary classrooms in Taysan Transit site, Leagzpi City (UNICEF-ERT)

AusAID-assisted – Provision of basic school supplies

Upper Photos (R-L): Students pose with their teacher in front of their newly completed classroom in Bongalon Elementary School in Daraga, Albay under the AusAID-supported emergency response project; Grade IV students from Bongalon Elementary School give their sweetest smiles; High School students inside their newly repaired classroom in Malobago National High School, Daraga, Albay

[Photo taken by Nikki De Vera-UNICEF Education in Emergencies, 27 July 2007]
AusAID-assisted -- Provision of educational and learning packages

Photos taken in the same two schools, students enjoying the 100-book library set provided by UNICEF

[Photo taken by Nikki De Vera-UNICEF Education in Emergencies, 27 July 2007]

AusAID-assisted School Repairs for Ten Schools

Before    After
Malabog National High School, Daraga, Albay

Bongalon Elementary School, Daraga, Albay

(Photos taken by the Philippine Department of Education)