

Report on

Support for Typhoon Victims in the Philippines



Autism Society Philippines (ASP)

Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD)

In Collaboration with ASEAN Autism Network (AAN)





Beneficiaries who received emergency assistance are now recovering from the effects of Typhoon Yolanda.

(Photo credits: National Council on Disability Affairs, Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine, Dr. Ferdiliza Dandah Garcia, Abner Manlapaz)

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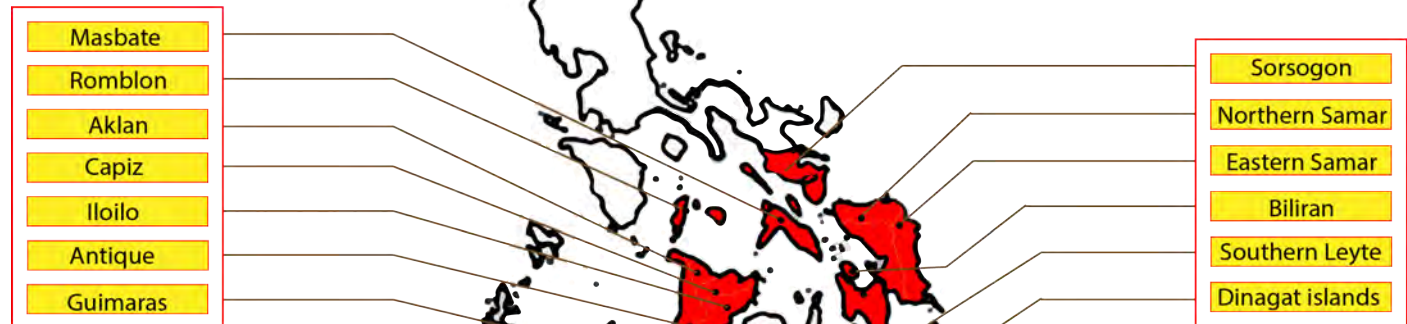
BACKGROUND

On the 8th of November 2013, typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan), the strongest typhoon ever recorded, hit the Visayas Region of the Philippines including the cities of Tacloban and Ormoc in Leyte. According to the Philippines' National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) as of 17 April 2014, the aftermath of the typhoon brought about 6,300 dead, 1,069 still missing, 28,689 injured, and thousands of families homeless. It destroyed billions of pesos of infrastructure and crops. In addition, it gravely affected persons with disabilities and their families especially those with autism who are usually left out in the rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts during disasters.

In response to the situation, a joint initiative on emergency support for typhoon victims was conceptualized and implemented by the Autism Society Philippines (ASP) and the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) in collaboration with the ASEAN Autism Network from January to March 2014. The initiative aimed to provide assistance to members of ASP Tacloban City, ASP Ormoc District I, and ASP District II Chapters that were affected by the typhoon.

The initiative had four components: technical support to help families with their basic needs after the typhoon, referral and networking, capacity building, and the collection of data on the needs of families through surveys and meetings. The information derived from the surveys and meetings were collated and used in the proposals for the immediate and long-term support of victims.

AREAS AFFECTED BY TYPHOON YOLANDA



(Source: National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council)

PARTNERS

Autism Society Philippines (ASP)



Autism Society Philippines (ASP) is a national, non-stock, non-profit organization dedicated to the well-being of persons with autism. It is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) as a Social Welfare and Development Agency.

It has 70 chapters nationwide with a membership of more than 10,000 comprising parents, professionals, students and institutions. The National Office is located in Quezon City, in Manila.

ASP seeks an environment that empowers persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder to become the best of their potential, self-reliant, independent, productive and socially accepted members of the community. ASP is committed to create and implement programs and services for persons with autism and their families.

Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD)



The Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) is a regional center on disability and development. APCD was established in Bangkok, Thailand as a legacy of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, with the joint collaboration of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Royal Thai Government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Government of Japan.

APCD was endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) as a regional cooperative base for its Biwako Millennium Framework for an inclusive society in the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012. ESCAP identified APCD as the regional center on disability for the Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real, 2013-2022.

ASEAN Autism Network (AAN)

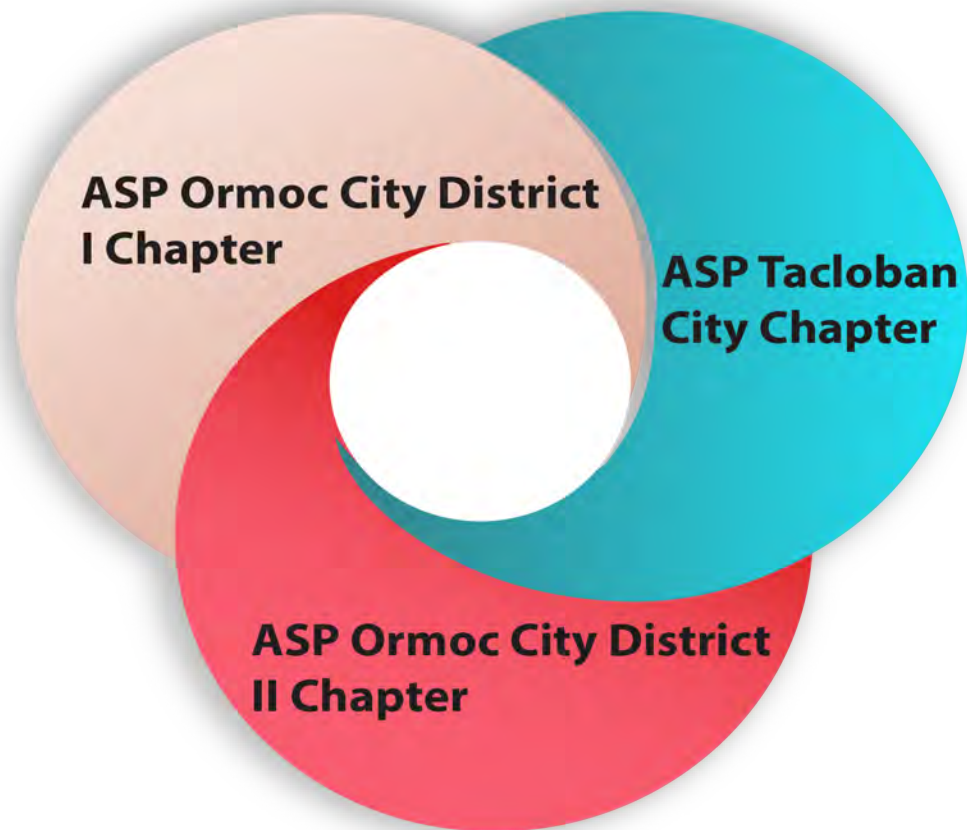


The ASEAN Autism Network (AAN) is a non-profit network established in Bangkok in 2010 through the initiative of the parents' organizations of persons with autism in the ASEAN region and the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

It was formally organized during the ASEAN Autism Workshop in Bangkok on 13 to 15 December 2010 by representatives from 9 countries, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

AAN envisions an inclusive, rights based, and autism friendly ASEAN community. It commits to support, assist, facilitate and enhance autism-related family support groups in collaboration with other stakeholders in the ASEAN region and globally.

BENEFICIARIES



POST DISASTER SITUATION OF THE FAMILIES AND THE CHILDREN

The following are the highlights of the situation of families and children in Tacloban City and Ormoc City based on the collated results of the survey on “Post Disaster Needs of the Family”.

1. Generally, families of children with disabilities especially those with autism were left behind during the search, rescue, relief, rehabilitation and rebuilding efforts of the government and other disaster response organizations.
2. Almost all of the families' houses were damaged. Some were totally destroyed by the typhoon prompting the families to evacuate into temporary shelters in Tacloban and Ormoc. Some families were adopted by their relatives in Cebu and Metro Manila.



Destroyed houses of the victims after the typhoon

3. Schooling and therapy of the children stopped since all of the special education (SPED) and therapy centers were damaged. Public SPED centers in Ormoc and Tacloban were seriously damaged including their equipment, furniture and learning resource materials.

4. Children with disabilities showed signs of regression since their regular intervention stopped. They exhibited tantrums and irregular sleep patterns because their routines were disrupted and some were unable to drink their maintenance medicines due to the closure of all the pharmacies in Leyte.

5. Some families relied on the food rationed by the government and private organizations, while some used their savings and support from relatives and friends to buy food and other needs for their daily subsistence.

6. Families, as well as children with disabilities, have not fully recovered from the shock and trauma brought about by the disaster. They still feel nervous, anxious and uneasy whenever there are strong winds and rains.



Damaged special education centers



BEFORE: Images of destruction in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda



AFTER: Communities try to rebuild their lives months after the typhoon

7. Almost all the families have a lack of knowledge on disaster emergency preparedness because of the absence of seminars and trainings about it.
8. Most parents lack knowledge and skills in handling their children with autism since they heavily relied on their children's caregivers, teachers and therapists.
9. Families are still waiting for help from the Department of Education, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Department of Health for educational, medical and therapy needs, and other social services.

IMPACTS

The impacts on the beneficiaries were based on the sharings of the families, the home visits, the formal meetings with the beneficiaries, the results of the evaluation of the two seminar-workshops conducted, and the messages of the beneficiaries. The following are the components of the joint efforts:



Destroyed houses of APCD's Emergency Support beneficiaries

1. Emergency Support

The emergency support from APCD was used by the families for the procurement of primary commodities such as food, water, clothes, blankets and basic cooking wares, acquire maintenance medicines and housing materials, and to access education and therapy services for the children.



Beneficiaries who are now recovering from the trauma of Typhoon Yolanda



A damaged SPED center (left) is now newly renovated (right).



First Aid Training sessions with Ormoc City District II Chapter held in cooperation with the Ormoc City Rescue Team.

2. Referral and Networking

a. The victims were referred to other groups like the Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicines, the La Sagesse Rehabilitation and Development Center, special schools and therapy centers, ASP Chapters and private individuals. Through these referrals and networks, the families were able to access technical support, relief goods, educational and therapy services. The initial contact with these groups and individuals may lead to possible long-term engagements.



Family support group sessions attended by parents of children with autism

b. Chapter leaders were given opportunities to directly connect with government agencies like the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), the Department of Education, the National Anti Poverty Commission, Persons with Disability Sector, and non-government organizations like the Philippine Association of Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines, the Philippine Coordinating Center on Inclusive Development, among others.

c. The principal of Ormoc City Special Education Center, who is a mother of a child with autism, was invited to participate in the Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Summit, which gave her the opportunity to push for the inclusion of issues and concerns of children with disabilities in disaster areas into the National DRRM Plan. The summit was a venue for her to bring the educational concerns of children with disabilities directly to the Department of Education.



Visits to the homes of family beneficiaries affected by the typhoon

3. Survey on the Post-Disaster Needs of the Family

The survey was done to determine the real needs of families after the disaster. The results will be used for future planning to come up with appropriate responses to the needs of families and children with disabilities.

4. Capacity Building

The survey results affirmed the need of parents and family members for knowledge and skills to address the education and therapy needs of their children while waiting for the reopening of special schools and therapy centers that were destroyed or damaged by the typhoon.

Two seminar-workshops, namely, the Home Management Program were conducted with 96 participants, and Speech, Language and Communication with 66 participants.

A Family Support Group session attended by 7 parents was conducted in Ormoc to provide opportunities for parents to share and express their emotions, and be given proper guidance.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND REALIZATIONS

As a result of the seminar-workshops, parents are now capable of teaching basic skills in handling the challenging behavior of their children. They are also developing their skills to advocate for the rights of their children.



Seminar-workshops on Home Management Program (left) and Speech, Language and Communication (right)

Chapter leaders were given ideas and guidance on how to approach government agencies, non-government organizations, and organizations of professionals for possible support and partnership.

Typhoon Yolanda brought the following positive outcomes and realizations that impacted parents to come up with concrete actions and solutions to their situations, and to advocate for the rights and welfare of their children:



Visit and meeting with a SPED administrator (left); Teaching session with children with autism (right)

1. The importance of belonging to an organization like Autism Society Philippines
2. The importance of registering one's child and having a disability identification card
3. The value of unity and working together
4. The importance of being equipped with knowledge and skills in handling a child with autism
5. The importance of networks and linkages
6. Discovering one's own and the group's capability and resources that can be utilized to effect change
7. The value of patience, perseverance and resiliency
8. The value and power of knowledge, of knowing the laws and the rights of children and persons with disabilities

9. The presence of individuals and organizations willing and capable to provide material, technical, moral and financial support
10. The importance of preparing families to be ready for disaster including children with autism.



A beneficiary at her bunkhouse and her variety store where she used APCD's assistance as additional capital

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