



## TYPHOON SENDONG RELIEF OPERATION UPDATES

Date of Report: February 1, 2012

Date of Disaster Occurrence: December 16-17, 2011

### GENERAL UPDATE:

1. Forty-five days after the tragic floods that hit several areas in southern Philippines, particularly Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities and destroyed scores of communities and thousands of houses, the people are slowly rebuilding their homes and their lives. With the help several groups – churches, Christian organizations, relief agencies, civic clubs, institutions, individuals and families, the government – communities and neighborhoods are back on their feet. Schools have reopened, small businesses are operating again, wage earners are back in their jobs.
2. However, thousands still live in tent camps and makeshift shelters in the two cities. Permanent houses in resettlement sites are still a long-way off. The government inaugurated the first two housing units at the Calaanan site in Cagayan de Oro five days ago. Progress has been much slower than previously hoped for.
3. There are at least four resettlement sites being prepared in Cagayan de Oro and another three in Iligan, but these could eventually accommodate only 1,500 to 2,000 houses, against the more than 11,000 totally destroyed houses in the two cities.
4. More than 25,000 families have partially destroyed houses (in CDO and Iligan). In Cagayan de Oro, per ocular inspection of some affected communities, majority still have not repaired or rebuilt their houses, and their previous occupants are also living in temporary shelters or in other houses, or are renting rooms.
5. The need for assistance is still very evident, especially for household wares – for cooking and eating, for drinking and washing, and for sleeping, and for medical clinics in isolated areas. Many tents set up could not carry heavy rains and leaked, prompting residents to request for tarpaulin or plastic sheets as additional cover. Water service from government taps has mostly been restored, except in totally destroyed communities along the riverbanks. A few water purifying systems and refilling stations were set up by the government and private groups.
6. **Food and clothing seem to be substantially provided for and no longer regarded as priority needs as of the present.** There has been no disease outbreak recorded.
7. Relief assistance has considerably slowed down as the government and professional humanitarian groups have mostly moved towards rehabilitation and recovery programs, like housing and livelihood assistance. Most other responding groups provided only one-time relief assistance.

#### PHILRADS OPERATIONS UPDATE:

1. PHILRADS is continuing its relief operations in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities. As earlier reported, we have provided emergency assistance to 1,345 families, with about half of them receiving food items like rice, canned goods and noodles, and the rest pots and pans, basins and pails or plastic containers for drinking water.
2. We have also responded to the needs of high school and elementary students as they go back to school, even as many of their families were displaced to evacuation center and temporary shelters. We have provided sets of **school supplies to 700 students** of the Consolacion Elementary School, CDO, in a distribution last January 28, 2012. Each set contains plastic envelopes with handles (serving as bags), writing pads, drawing papers, notebooks, crayons, ruler, pencils (or ballpens), eraser and sharpener. Kinder to Grade 3 students also receive slippers. Another **200 students** from Macanhan and Balulang elementary schools (also in CDO) receive writing pads and notebooks.
3. Our relief project also provided hot lunches to at least **300 students** of the Angeles Sisters High School in Consolacion (CDO) starting January 25, 2012. This will go on daily for 50 days (10 weeks) until the end of classes (for this school year) in March. The project provides for food ingredients as well cooking utensils (like gas stove, pots and pans) and fuel. Mothers and student volunteers cook the food while the teachers serve them. **This meals project was prompted by the concern of school officials of the heavy absenteeism among students, after the floods.** They said that part of the reason was the displacement of families to evacuation centers and the lack of lunch provision for the children (students). In ASHS, the school principal said only 421 students out of 690 were regularly attending school when classes resumed early in January. One week after the start of the meals program, about 550 students reported for school. Officials hoped that the number would increase in the next few days.
4. The meals and school supplies programs were coordinated with the **Kagay-an Evangelical Disaster Response Network (KEDRN)**. KEDRN and Victory Christian Fellowship of CDO also provided additional funds for the meals program to cover other students.
5. We have also received a large shipment of **248 sacks of relief goods** on January 27, 2012, mostly used clothing, plus noodles, canned goods and plastic wares. These came from our church partners in Metro Manila and other areas, as well as from DSWD. We are currently sorting out and repackaging these items, to be distributed through our local churches. We have allocated **200 packages** (clothing, plates and cups, canned goods and noodles), plus cooking pots, to be distributed in Macanhan and Acacia areas in Carmen, among the most devastated areas in CDO, within the week.
6. We are also coordinating with KEDRN and Iligan churches for a possible **medical assistance program**, as soon as funds for this purpose are available. The program calls for a medical team to be formed (from locally or Metro Manila) to serve patients in both cities, especially those in remote or less served areas.

## 7. Human Interest Story:

*George Ruaya is 14 years old and (still) a Grade 4 student of Consolacion Elementary School in Cagayan de Oro. He stayed with his uncle's family who were among the hundreds of families living in Isla de Oro, in the Cagayan River. The island was completely wiped out by the December flood. George (nicknamed Budoy) told his story:*

*Like other residents, they were fast asleep when the raging waters came to the island and carried with them everything in sight. Budoy, his uncle Henry Pontillas and the family members woke up when the water already reached the second level of their house. Already the house was pounded by the strong current with household belongings and even whole houses passing them by. People swam to their direction and mounted on the roof. As the waters almost drowned the house, Budoy grasped his 6-year old cousin John Nino and grabbed another, Z Gabriel, just before they were swept away. His uncle and aunt held other household members, Soon many people took refuge on their roof; but the house was also about to give way. Budoy, carrying his cousins, jumped to other rooftops until they settled on top of a strong concrete house. They were joined by several other survivors. He heard several cries for help and reach out to grab a man from the waters, and then a small child who turned out to be the man's child. He saved another woman. After that he could no longer see other people as the place was very dark. He just prayed.*

*Budoy said about two to three hours later, the flood began to subside, but they stayed on the roof, until six in the morning of December 17. By that time, the muddy water was knee-deep in the island. And all they could see were mud and debris all over. He thanked God for saving his entire household.*

*George or Budoy, a real hero, and his uncle's family now stay in an evacuation center. He was grateful for the school supplies given him, which encouraged him more to attend classes.*

Report by Soc Evangelista