



Bidlisiw Foundation Inc.



Mga Kwento ng Katatagan

(“Stories of Resiliency”)



Photos from the ground



On **December 16, 2021**, Super Typhoon Odette (International Name: Rai) made landfall in the Philippines and brought strong winds, massive floods, and landslides affecting **11 out of the country's 17 regions** (UN OCHA, 2022).

PROVINCE OF CEBU



A total of **570,260 families** from **1,078 barangays** were affected in the whole province of Cebu.



The **strong winds and torrential rain** resulted in **389,331 damaged houses**, **70,748 of which were totally destroyed**.



The damages in the province includes **power outage, water interruption, downed communication lines, class suspension and damaged roads and bridges**.



Effects to the youth: Distress, anxiety, fear which affected their mental health and wellbeing.



Key interventions in Cebu province includes: shelter repair assistance, provision of solar lamps, MHPSS sessions with care kits, and child protection in emergencies (CPiE) training.

PROVINCE OF EASTERN SAMAR



A total of **1,276 families** were affected in the entire Borongan city.



Apart from physical and economic losses, the city is also confronted with protection risks involving children, women, and other vulnerable sectors.

The reported cases are as follows: **64 teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse. 63 physical/emotional/psychological abuse. 7 prostitution. 134 child abuse cases** reported in the city need appropriate intervention.



Key interventions in Borongan Eastern Samar includes: training of trainers for psychological first aid, IEC development and launch, rollout of MHPSS, referral for psychological intervention and enactment of child protection and MHPSS related legislations



Photos from the ground

WHY DID WE DO THESE?

The evaluation examined the extent to which the project has brought meaningful results for project beneficiaries and identified key areas that can be replicated in similar contexts.



1060

Boys and girls who participated in the child friendly space learning sessions



552

boys and girls who received psychosocial support



480

parents/caregivers participants can identify three protection risks and how to support children.



303

households who received shelter repair kits



411

community members who participated in child protection activities in their communities



205

barangays or areas with established/enhanced referral pathway

WHAT WE DID

1

Increased capacity of children to cope with distress and to identify and understand protection risks and what support systems are in their communities.



In the Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), children are provided with information on children's rights and child protection (including information on risks of abuse and exploitation and what they should do to help in protecting themselves), self-care and how to positively cope with negative experiences, what to do in case there is another disaster in the future, and where to go to report and seek support when needed. The CFS was also a venue for children to talk about their experiences during the disaster – what they thought and how they felt.



It is good to have this activity (MHPSS session) as it gives young people the opportunity to process the stresses they face, which I'm sure they are less able to share with their parents. It is true that sometimes, we would rather share to strangers than to our family members. I myself have had experiences before wherein after I tried sharing, I was told that I'm just being dramatic. It's invalidating."

- MHPSS Participant, Borongan City



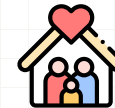
The project mobilized **25 community volunteers** in Cebu, with Peer Support Group (PSG) youth facilitators for MHPSS sessions, promoting children's rights awareness.



Meanwhile, a total of **70 CP/MHPSS advocates or Psychological First Aiders (PFA)** were mobilized within Borongan City (32 children and youth, and 20 fathers, and 28 mothers)

2

Strengthened capacity of parents/caregivers to support and protect their children.



To fully support and protect their children, parents/caregivers need to understand children's rights and child protection risks and their responsibilities in ensuring that their children are protected and that their rights are fulfilled. They need to understand what possible risks and threats to their children's safety and protection whether in the emergency context or not, and what they can do to prevent these from happening and to report to or seek support from the authorities.



I am happy because the MHPSS session helped our family. I can apply my learnings with my children, and was able to help them overcome their stresses from the pandemic, and the past typhoon."

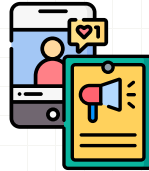
- MHPSS Participant, Borongan City



A total of **183 families with partially damaged houses**, and **102 with totally damaged houses** received assistance in the form of housing repair materials.

3 Established or strengthened community-based child protection mechanisms.

The existing community-based child protection mechanisms or community organisations have been mobilised to be involved in the awareness raising campaign on child protection in the communities. Children who have participated in the learning sessions can also be involved in the awareness-raising campaign should they wish to do so. Protecting them while participating was ensured through risk assessments and strict adherence to the child safeguarding policy and how this was applied in organising activities with children.



The Partner NGOs worked with local government units at the barangay (village) and city/municipal levels to discuss the community referral pathways, and this was communicated to the children and families, and other community members through the implemented learning sessions and awareness raising activities.

4 Proposed amendment in LGU Borongan's Children's Code and developed a Comprehensive Emergency Plan for Children.



CoPE worked closely with LGU Borongan through meetings and discussions to adopt the proposed children's code amendment and develop a comprehensive emergency plan for children.

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT?

✓ Increased Awareness about Mental Health and Child Protection in Emergencies

Through the MHPSS sessions and CPIE training, the project stakeholders have increased their awareness on mental health, especially in the context of child protection in emergencies.



Community volunteers, youth volunteers, children and parent advocates all shared that the experience they gained as volunteers and MHPSS facilitators, helping those who were affected by Super Typhoon Odette, was equally rewarding for them. They saw how important their role was and this encourages them to continue their work even beyond the project.

“The youth need the child rights advocates. The MHPSS strengthened our determination to help young people like us. It was the first time those children experienced it, and it helped in processing their “trauma” from Odette. The amount of happiness we saw among those children during the MHPSS, is the same amount of happiness they brought on to us.”

- Child Rights Advocate, Argao, Cebu

✓ Programs and Policy Changes

Aside from the progress in the amendment of the Borongan City Children's Code and the development of CEPC, one unintended result of the project is the enactment of the Borongan City Mental Health Program of 2022 (City Ordinance No. 244) on October 5, 2022. This is a significant milestone that sustains the gains of the project in Borongan City, thereby supporting CPIE efforts through MHPSS.



Barangays had also expressed their commitment to recognize and organize the trained MHPSS facilitators under the project to be part of the barangay's Psychological First Aid (PFA) team.

✓ Child and Youth Participation

Children and youth actively participated in mental health awareness advocacy through workshops, conferences, and local development planning. The first-ever Child Congress in Borongan City gathered over 500 children, influencing their representation in local development and investment planning. Bidlisiw Foundation in Cebu Province consulted PSG members on MHPSS sessions and care kits, while the Child Rights Advocate in Barangay Poblacion, Argao, implemented interventions such as housing repair assistance, solar lamp provision, and MHPSS sessions.



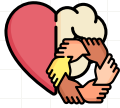
✔ Strengthen Child Protection in Emergencies and Disaster Risk Reduction

Disasters increase children's vulnerability, increasing risk of neglect, abandonment, abuse, exploitation, and violence. Future programs should focus on disaster preparedness, emergency planning, and family-level disaster preparedness. Children's rights should be upheld through child-centered DRR initiatives, representation in committees, and youth-led support.



✔ Scale up Community-based MHPSS

MHPSS is crucial for children's development and wellbeing during emergencies. It provides a child-friendly space for play, self-expression, and learning, promoting caregiver wellbeing. Project stakeholders recommend increasing involvement of children and parents, including those with disabilities and those at risk of conflict, and scaling up MHPSS sessions from communities to schools.



✔ Strengthen Disability Inclusion Mechanisms

Persons with disabilities, including children, are vulnerable and disproportionately affected by disasters and child protection risks. Volunteer facilitators and implementing partners need more disability-inclusive strategies for MHPSS sessions.



✔ Inclusion of Livelihood Support

Disasters significantly impact food security and livelihoods, increasing socio-economic vulnerability and limiting families' ability to meet survival and development needs. This can lead to parental distress and income shortages, making children more prone to abuse and exploitation. TdH NL in the Philippines should consider livelihoods programming and support for various contexts, including sudden onset disasters, slow onset or chronic disasters, and complex emergencies. Short-term strategies include emergency employment schemes and cash transfer mechanisms, while long-term strategies focus on ensuring sustainability of livelihoods and jobs through skill development and business networks.





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