Level of Awareness on Disaster Preparedness

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Abstract. This paper investigated the Level of Awareness on Disaster Preparedness of the residents of Mimbalot, Buru-un, Iligan City. Stakeholders, community, and the school focal people were involved in this project. Purok Enablers and Purok Presidents, who facilitated the survey, were subjected to orientation on how to conduct the survey. The collection of data started with the giving of the survey forms to the residents using the researcher–made a survey written in native language (Sinugbuanong Bisaya) for clear understanding. The processes of the project start from gathering, analyzing, and reporting the data gathered. After gathering and analyzing the data, result revealed that respondents are vulnerable to the presence of trees and more than half of them don’t have emergency exits, kits, and hotlines. With the result, respondents were given brochures and leaflets to be oriented and educated of the importance of being prepare during emergencies in addition to involving them in earthquake and fire drills, and meetings on disaster risk management in the school.

1. Introduction

The Philippines is home to many natural wonders of the world. It is an archipelago. The Philippines is situated along the basin of the Pacific Ring of Fire [1]. It is between the Eurasian and Pacific Plate where there is a large number of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The country is also along the Typhoon Belt near the equator. Vulnerable to almost all types of natural hazards because of its geographical locations [2]. Types of Disasters usually are typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunami, flood, landslides, drought, and human-induced hazards. From 1992 to 2012, the most destructive typhoons occurred in the 4th quarter – October to December [3]. Aside from this directing facts, disasters also derailed social and economic development since funds are re-allocated from on-going programs to finance relief and reconstruction assistance. The Philippine Risk Profile for Natural Disasters is also reflected in 2011 Global Assessment Report that the country places third out of 173 countries and ranked 3 with 27.98 risk percentage as to exposure to hazards such as cyclones, earthquakes, tsunami, floods, and landslides [4]. In Mindanao, particularly in Iligan City, experienced the most destructive typhoons, typhoon Sendong in December 2011 and typhoon Pablo in December 2012. Affected residents were resettled in different barangays of the city. Mimbalot is one of the areas identified for resettlement. This is the reason that Philippine Red Cross included this place as part of their project, “CONSENT DRR”, which the first stage of implementation is to obtain data on the level of awareness and preparedness of the people in Mimbalot where the school is located. Data gathered are processed and analyzed to provide the basis of the project to be implemented.
2. Literature Review

The survey on vulnerability to disasters was made to measure the level of awareness and preparedness of the people in Mimbalot on disasters, hazards, and vulnerability. It is important to measure the level of awareness and preparedness of the people considered as external stakeholders of the school. Awareness can be closely associated with one’s knowledge about a phenomenon brought about him/her legitimate sources of information and authorities [5]. Being informed or aware does not always guarantee that a particular person is prepared enough in times calamities and disasters come because logistics and infrastructures preparedness would significantly count in the cycle of preparation. The Philippine Red Cross-Iligan Chapter adheres to Republic Act No.10121 Section 3 (a) which to uphold the people’s constitutional rights to life and property by addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities to disasters, strengthening the country’s institutional capacity for disaster risk reduction and management, and building resilience of local communities to disasters including climate change [6]. Moreover, develop and strengthen the capacities of vulnerable and marginalized groups to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of disasters.

3. Preparation of the Project

School heads, DRRM coordinator, and focal persons were identified and subjected to attain orientation, training, and workshops on the process of conducting and implementing the project. Creation of different teams for emergency response, DRRM team, Red Cross Youth, School-Led Watching Team and Volunteer-Stakeholders were closely monitored and evaluated for their plans, programs, and projects that conformed to the disaster resiliency. A Gantt chart was given for schedule reference and guideline. Activities such as hazard mapping; identifying areas vulnerable to floods, landslides, earthquakes, and typhoons; creating Venn Diagrams for Stakeholders’ frequency of support; and physical inspection of the school to identify areas hazardous to the pupils.

4. Proposed Schedule (Gantt Chart)

Proposed schedule described in the Table 1 below.

| Activities                                      | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May |
|------------------------------------------------|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Training of Focal person, School Heads, Stakeholders, Community for Implementation Of the Project |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Gathering of Data and Mapping                  |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Processing of the responses of the stakeholders|      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Analyzing                                      |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Reporting                                      |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Implementation of the project                  |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Sustainability                                 |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

Table 1. Gantt Chart
This Gantt Chart is for the implementation of the project in the entire division of Iligan City. Green color signifies the conduct of the program and yellow color serves as allowable time or buffer. Different orientation programs were conducted as part of the preparation and awareness of those involved. Among the orientations were the “Pakighinabi sa Barangay” which means Meeting the People of the Barangay; Disaster Resilience Orientation; “Do No Harm Project”; and the “CONSENT DRR”. These were all conducted and initiated by the joint forces of Philippine Red Cross-Iligan Chapter, Red Cross International (German Red Cross), Iligan City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, KNOW Early Program, Bureau of Fire Protection, and Philippine National Police (for Human Induced Hazard). All these activities were done according to what was reflected in the chart.

5. Survey Questionnaires

Mimbalo Elementary School Administrators and teachers joined forces to come up this survey questionnaire targeted the following aspects: physical setting of the house, about the immediate environment, about the family’s involvement in the community, and about the family’s disaster preparedness and management.

5.1 Physical Setting

   a. Where is the house located? ___ along with the road ___ near the river or shore
      ___ on the slope of the mountain ___ in a village ___ in the slum

5.2 About the Immediate Environment

   b. What environmental problems are present in your community? What is being done to solve these problems?
   c. Is your neighborhood prone to floods?
   d. Were there cases when your house was affected by any disaster (e.g. typhoon, fire, and earthquake)? If yes, what were the damages and losses? How did you recover from them?

5.3 About the family’s involvement in the community

   e. Do you actively participate in community activities?
   f. Are you a leader or a member of any organization within and outside of the community?

5.4 About the family’s disaster preparedness and management

   g. Does your house have emergency exits or fire escapes? ___Yes ___ No
   h. Do you have emergency kits? ___Yes ___ No
   i. Do you have a list of emergency hotlines? ___Yes ___ No
   j. Do you regularly teach your children what to do before, during, and after a disaster? ___ Yes ___ No
   k. Have you prepared an evacuation plan for your family? ___Yes ___ No
   l. Do you know where the nearest evacuation center is? ___Yes ___ No
   m. Do you participate in community activities that aim to save the environment and reduce disaster risks?
Yes   No
o. Are you a member of an organization with the aim to save the environment and reduce disaster risks?
   Yes   No

The survey questionnaires were given to the enablers and purok (village) presidents which they distributed randomly according to the number of the respondents (sample population). Alongside, the school-led watching team also conducted the physical inspection of the different classrooms as part of the preparation to be an evacuation center during calamities. Responses of the questionnaires were tallied and analyzed. Results of the survey showed that their house is located near the road in a relocation site. Their immediate environment is vulnerable to the presence of big trees. Even though, their family actively participated in community activities, most of them are not a member of any organization within or outside of the community. More than half of the respondents didn’t have emergency exits or fire escapes, emergency kits, and a list of emergency hotlines. On the other hand, they regularly teach their children what to do before, during, and after a disaster; they have prepared an evacuation plan for their family; they knew the nearest evacuation center; and they participated in community activities that aim to save the environment and reduce disaster risks, however, they were not member of an organization with the same goal.

6. Conclusions

Effects of disasters are very tremendous, it can be loss of lives, loss of access, and the loss of services. The country’s vulnerability to natural hazards alone costs the Philippine government an average of 15 billion pesos annually [6]. Knowing the place where they live and hazards that they are prone to this can help the government and non-government organizations formulate programs and projects. To mitigate, prepare, and respond to their natural calamities- active involvement and concern of the stakeholders should be intensified. Involvement of parents in the conduct of earthquake and fire drills in the schools quarterly and every General PTA Assembly. Information dissemination regarding earthquake, tropical cyclone, floods, and landslides through giving of brochures or leaflets. Level of Awareness on Disaster Preparedness is given emphasis by the city government after experiencing the disastrous typhoons that hit in Iligan City. This study concludes with informative implications to residents in Mimbalot to be ready at all times and is recommended to sustain the practices on disaster preparedness as an effective strategy in handling situations during emergencies.

7. References

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