



See me, ask me, hear me: children's recommendations for recovery three months after Typhoon Haiyan



**Save the Children**

# ABOUT SAVE THE CHILDREN

Save the Children is the world's leading independent children's rights organisation, with members in 29 countries and operational programs in more than 120. We fight for children's rights and deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

Save the Children was established in the Philippines in 1981 and today reaches more than 1 million children making it one of the largest child-rights organisations in the country.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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## THREE MONTHS AFTER TYPHOON HAIYAN – CAN WE BUILD BETTER, FAIRER, STRONGER COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN?

Typhoon Haiyan, known locally in the Philippines as Typhoon Yolanda, was the deadliest rapid-onset disaster globally in 2013. Nearly 6 million children have been affected, 4.1 million people remain displaced and over 6,000 people lost their lives.

Three months since Typhoon Haiyan made landfall will be marked on 8 February 2014. Already many families have started to return home, businesses are reopening and communities are picking up the pieces.

However, for many people there are still urgent needs.

- In Tacloban approximately 5,000 people are still displaced, living in eight evacuation centres established in school buildings.<sup>1</sup>
- Children still cannot return to school in some areas due to damage to buildings, or due to fear of being separated from family, especially due to the heavy rain and winds which continue to have a psychological effect. In Tacloban City, fewer than 29% of secondary school students were able to return to school in January 2014 after the school holidays.<sup>2</sup> Many children have been supported to attend classes either in temporary learning spaces set up by local and international agencies or in school buildings that have been temporarily repaired. In North Cebu and Estancia children go to school part time, with classes held in the morning. In the afternoon children and others spend time cleaning and repairing schools. While school supplies have been distributed in many areas, some children say they need more paper and crayons. The disruption of electricity makes it hard to study or play in the evening.
- There are 1,000 births expected daily during the first quarter of 2014 in affected areas. Pregnant women require reproductive health-care, and the impact of a large population of newborns in affected areas must be planned for especially to prevent childhood diseases

- Child protection risks remain high. Child protection is an important life-saving intervention that mitigates the serious risks to and vulnerabilities of children that occur in disasters. These include children migrating to cities in search of work, exposure to sexual and gender-based violence, loss of educational opportunities and unaddressed psychosocial needs which can lead to anger, depression as well as anxiety about returning to school.

Save the Children is working with communities, families and children to provide health, nutrition, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, child protection and livelihood assistance. As part of this, Save the Children has consulted with children about how well they think aid agencies have provided assistance to date, and on their hopes for the future.



Christine, six-years-old, washes her hands at the newly installed water taps at Binon school, Panay. Photo: Susan Warner/Save the Children



## RIGHT NOW, DECISIONS ARE BEING MADE THAT WILL AFFECT THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

The Government of the Philippines' Reconstruction Assistance on Yolanda (RAY) is a three-year roadmap for rebuilding houses, roads and business. Through it, the Government has committed \$8 billion to help communities to build back better. The Government is currently consulting on how it can implement this plan and aims to restore education, health, social services, employment, infrastructure and productivity to their pre-typhoon levels and to build a higher level of disaster resilience.<sup>3</sup>

Boys and girls that Save the Children has consulted identified recovery from Typhoon Haiyan as an opportunity to leave communities better, fairer and stronger than they were prior to the typhoon.

Children in the Philippines, more than anywhere else in the world, are experienced in and concerned with disaster management. They developed and adopted the Children's Charter on Disaster Risk Reduction along with children from other countries.<sup>4</sup> They have spoken powerfully within the

Philippines at global events on reducing disaster risks and on their role on the front line of many emergencies.<sup>5</sup> Children have been outspoken and it is worthwhile involving them in decisions about reconstruction. They demand that things do not simply return to their pre-typhoon conditions.

As attention shifts to long-term recovery, Save the Children is asking the Government of the Philippines and aid agencies: are we listening to these children?

To children, building back better does not simply mean building new and improved infrastructure such as disaster-proof schools and houses. It also means building their knowledge, safety and skills for their future in one of the most disaster-prone countries on earth. This resilience can be achieved through investment in quality education, healthcare, robust child protection systems, community-led early warning mechanisms and better food security. It means investing in new job pathways.

*"We need help to rebuild and to rise from this disaster. We need education so that we are ready for when disasters come to our country. We don't just want money and gifts. We need you to help us to stand again on our own feet."*

15-year-old Sofia

Photo: Mark Kaye/Save the Children

These investments need to be based on an assessment of the pre-existing risks and will mitigate the causes of disaster vulnerability: poverty and inequality. The response to Typhoon Haiyan is an opportunity to begin to address the high rates of childhood malnutrition, low school enrolment, low access to maternal and child health services and high rates of trafficking that existed in the affected areas prior to the disaster.

A key lesson from the international responses to the 2004 Tsunami in Aceh, Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in 2008, and the 2010 Haiti earthquake was the need for all agencies to have a shared vision of what “build back better” means in practice.<sup>6</sup> Save the Children is calling on the Government of the Philippines to build back better for children by investing in the community systems and services that they need, not only in improved infrastructure.

### Pre-disaster inequalities for children in areas affected by Typhoon Haiyan

POVERTY*	CHILD MORTALITY*	FOOD SECURITY & HEALTH*	MALNUTRITION*	SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & CHILD TRAFFICKING*	EDUCATION^
High rates of poverty incidence were found in 2012 in Eastern Samar (63.7% of the total population), Northern Samar (50.2%), Negros Oriental (50.1%) and Western Samar Provinces (50%).	Eastern Visayas had one of the highest rates of child mortality in the Philippines, ranking below the national average in immunisation coverage, skilled birth attendance, and access to skilled antenatal care. It also had some of the worst health outcomes, including a higher than average incidence of diarrhoea and fever among children.	Pre-disaster data from 2011 indicated a high prevalence of nutritionally at-risk pregnant women in Regions IV-B Mimaropa (43.6%) and VI Western Visayas (33.2%). Access to food was a concern in Northern Cebu, Panay, and in the inland areas of Leyte.	Stunted growth in children was high in Western (43.7%) and Eastern (41.1%) Visayas and Mimaropa (37.1%) regions prior to the typhoon, and wasting among infants aged 0-5 years old was considered serious in Mimaropa (9.64%).	Government institutions and NGOs have reported trafficking as a major concern, particularly because areas heavily impacted by the typhoon, like Samar and Leyte, were known hot-spots for trafficking of women and girls prior to the current disaster. Previous emergencies in the Philippines have resulted in increased incidents of gender-based violence that are specifically linked to economic vulnerability, such as trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse.	The region of Eastern Visayas lags behind the rest of the Philippines in school cohort survival and completion rates. School leaver rates, that combine public and private elementary schools are amongst the highest at 8%, while the national average is 2.9%.

\*Source: ACAPS, *Secondary data review Philippines Typhoon Haiyan*, January 2014.<sup>7</sup>

^Source: *Government of Philippines, Reconstruction Assistance Yolanda*, 2013, p.4.<sup>8</sup>

## LISTENING TO CHILDREN

Children have borne a great deal of the brunt of this disaster – caring for siblings and parents, scrounging for food and foregoing school.

The Government of the Philippines, communities and NGOs must see, listen to and ask children for their inputs in times of disaster. It is their future, and children have much of value to contribute to its planning.

Save the Children spoke with children about their experiences during the typhoon, and their recommendations and priorities for response and assistance. It is clear from our consultations that children did not feel adequately prepared for Typhoon Haiyan, experienced confusion over the language of warning systems, and “did not expect such big waves”. This is despite the fact that the Philippines is a disaster-prone country, experiencing around 20 typhoons each year. Children aged eight to 15 told us:

- “During the storm I was worried and scared that we would not survive. I saw coconut trees falling to the ground and the water in the house was rising. In a few minutes it was already waist-deep.”
- “The water in our house came up to my neck. I held on to my little sister, afraid that the strong current would separate us. I was scared.”
- “We were holding on to the grills of our windows so that the sea would not take us away.”
- “I panicked when I saw our kitchen about to collapse. I heard our neighbour saying “evacuate the water is already deep”. There was no place for us to go, so we just stayed, holding on to the post of the house.”
- “My mother was trapped in two coconut trees; my father lifted her out of the trees. I offered help but my father did not allow me to help. I was scared seeing my mother in that situation.”
- “I heard strong winds coming in our direction. I closed my eyes. It was scary. I could not see anything outside. I was looking for my other members of the family, I thought they left without me, but then I realised we were all inside the house waiting for the typhoon to calm down. Our small house was lost to floods.”
- “Right after the typhoon I saw people going out surveying their immediate surroundings. I went out with some of my friends. I could not even recognise my surroundings, the typhoon changed instantly the physical make up of my community. I went to my school and saw that it was gone.”
- “Now more than one month after Haiyan I heard that both children and older people flag vehicles and beg from passengers. This only tells us one thing: that people need food and are still hungry.”
- “I heard people shouting and praying, I also heard children crying particularly those who have been drenched in water for hours. I was thinking whether some of them survived especially the babies.”
- “We bought plastic bags, flashlights, candles, matches, food and water and we stored it in cabinets on the upper floors. We were taught to do that by our neighbours and relatives.”
- “My mother – her colleagues told her that she needed to evacuate, so we went to the San Fernando School.”

Save the Children, World Vision, Plan International and UNICEF recognised that children's voices had not been heard in the early days after the typhoon and produced a summary report of children's recommendations: *After Yolanda: what children think, need and recommend*.<sup>9</sup> This consultation showed that it is possible to rapidly consult with a broad range of children after a disaster. Three months on, it's time for all actors to systematise consultations with children in disaster response.

The findings from this report show that boys' and girls' analysis of needs and their roles in disaster are distinct to other people's. What is clear is that both boys and girls want their voices heard in planning and implementing community-based projects and humanitarian programs.

Children and adolescents in Panay and Leyte said they want the following to be prioritised in the coming months:

## EDUCATION

- "Schools should be re-established so that we don't fall behind, also because there is no school sometimes we go out on the fishing boats to help our parents and we stay out for three or four days where we cannot study."
  - "Educational materials should be delivered so that we can recommence school, especially pens, backpacks and notepads, because we don't have any of these left."
  - "Ballpoint pens, school backpacks and plastic containers are needed so that we can keep school materials safe during the rainy season and the floods – it is hard to find dry places at home to keep our books."
  - "New classes to teach life skills such as building shelters, science of environment, fishing, and swimming."
  - "More sanitary towels for girls in school kits, this will make it easier to go to child friendly spaces, as it is embarrassing when you don't have them."
- "Youth clubs so that we can have a place to meet and talk after school."
  - "By coming back to school we are given comfort, advice, support, stress debriefing, school supplies and clothing."
  - "We do not want our evacuation centres to be in our schools because it disrupts our space and classroom time."

## HEALTH

- "We should have mosquito nets to protect us while we are at home, so we can play safely and not worry about getting dengue during the day."
- "Additional food that is both tasty and nutritious in the food packages: sardines don't taste nice."
- "More medicines for sick people; there are not enough medicines in the health centre and families cannot afford to buy them from far away."



Botongon school was torn apart by Typhoon Haiyan. Save the Children have set up a Child Friendly Space for children unable to attend this school. Photo: Mark Kaye/Save the Children

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND PREPAREDNESS

- “Younger children should be given more information about typhoons and how to prepare for them, and about how to tell adults that you are afraid but also want to help.”
- “We are still scared and we want more information about the storm, and what to do, we need adults and authorities to talk to us.”
- “We want a safe evacuation centre that can protect us from future typhoons. It would also be good to have some emergency kits for all families and rubber boats for communities.”
- “We want our buildings to be strong like those in New York and Japan, more modern and organised.”

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOWN PLANNING

- “The airport should be relocated; as it was completely flooded and destroyed and the aid couldn't come in. It needs to be in another location further away from the coast.”

- “The hospitals should have solar panels on them and more backup generators so that the hospitals can continue running even after a disaster and to help the wounded, sick and pregnant people.”
- “Water pumps need to be put closer to home so that we don't have to go so far to fetch it, adults' legs are longer so it is less far for them, but children collect the water.”

## SAFETY AND CHILD PROTECTION

- “In the evacuation centres someone needs to help us, there are cases of men who drink alcohol and fight, the fighting makes us worried and scared, sometimes we had to share tents with people who have been drinking.”
- “The girls need more privacy in the evacuation centre, there is no privacy to change clothes and it is really hard to take a bath in restrooms as there is no privacy.”
- “We want more friendly spaces for children to meet so that we can share feelings and put our minds at ease.”
- “For the barangay [district] organisation to maintain security and keep us safe.”

*“If I could rebuild this city, my priority would be to build hospitals, strong homes and strong evacuation centres. We want better public transportation with railways and improved technology here.”*

*I 6-year-old Rolanne*

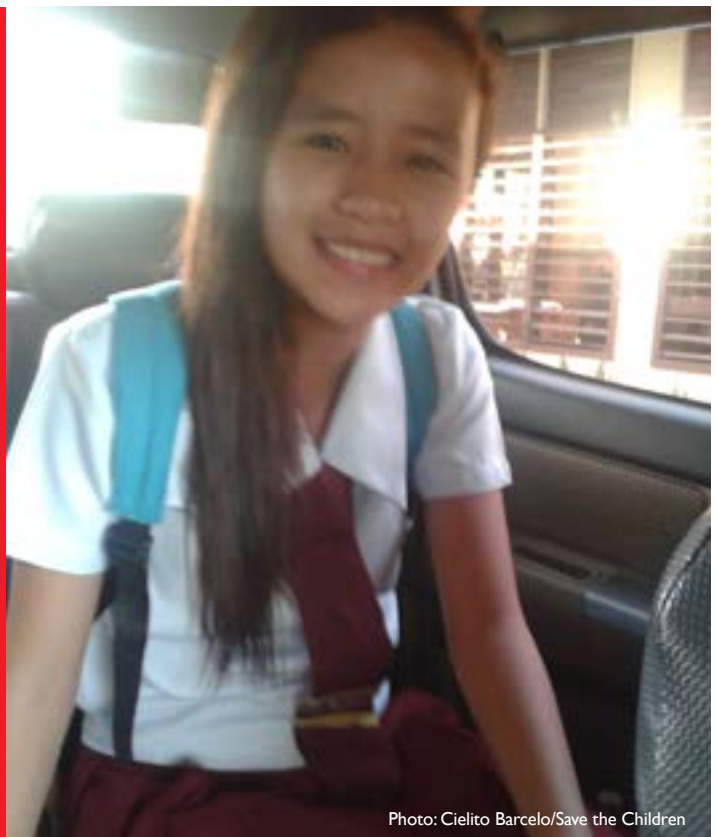


Photo: Cielito Barcelo/Save the Children





Boat builders work to construct new fishing boats to replace those destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan on Panay Island. Photo: Mark Kaye/Save the Children

## LIVELIHOODS

- “More tools and some chainsaws should be given to our parents so they can cut the fallen coconut trees into lumber to build new houses.”
- “Seeds for coconut crops – we need these soon so that we can regrow trees and families can have their livelihoods back.”
- “Some jobs for older children while they wait for school to resume and so they can help out their families.”
- “Immediate assistance to help repair fishing boats and nets.”

## TECHNOLOGY

- “Better phones with good cell coverage so that we can find out what is going on more easily.”
- “Free wi-fi or computer clubs so that we can go on the internet and get news fast.”
- “We used our cell phone radio and text messages to find out what happened a few days after the storm.”

In times of emergency, children also noted that they take on new roles and chores to support their families. They need to be supported to ensure that new work that they take on is age-appropriate. They explicitly wanted more information about disaster risk reduction, and how they can be involved in such programs.

## BUILDING BACK BETTER WITH CHILDREN IN MIND

Building on Save the Children's experience consulting and programming based on children's needs we are asking the Government of the Philippines to work with civil society organisations to identify what better services for children will look like.

Children have told us what building back better means to them:

- "Building back better is our guide and a motto for us to get back on our feet and make life better. Then we can stand for our country, our environment, our neighbours and ourselves."
- "They need to ask people how to make a better future."
- "We need help to rebuild and to rise from this disaster. We need education so that we are ready for when

disasters come to our country. We don't just want money and gifts. We need you to help us stand again on our own feet."

- "I think everyone was so sad after the typhoon had passed. Everyone had no house to live in, nowhere to sleep or relax. But after we have an advantage. We can now make our homes better and stronger."
- "Adults need to take the initiative and look to the children who don't have school, food or clothes. They need to think about what children need."
- "Most adults only think about money. They think money is the only thing that will help them. But I think education is the best solution. That we know what we have to do when there is another typhoon like Haiyan in our community."



Second graders, Laurence, 8 (left) and Roy, 9 (right) read along during a Tagalog language class in a temporary learning space, a tent provided by Save the Children in a local elementary school in Estancia. Photo Susan Warner/Save the Children

The Government of the Philippines is well prepared to achieve this vision. It has earmarked \$8 billion to invest in reconstruction in order to build resilience. It also has the best legal framework for disaster risk reduction and management in the world.<sup>10</sup>

The persistence of inequality, poverty and marginalisation ultimately undermines community resilience, leaving some people vulnerable to future injury, loss of livelihoods or death. Building back better means investing in community-led resilience initiatives and designing improved social services that address the persistent root causes of vulnerability.

In the case of Typhoon Haiyan we have a chance to get this right.

Save the Children is implementing a three-year, \$100 million response plan for Typhoon Haiyan. The plan aims to support local specialist disaster risk reduction and response expertise, make breakthroughs in equitable access to basic services for vulnerable children, and increase understanding of how this disaster could have been mitigated. We will achieve this through child-centred approaches to community resilience and disaster risk reduction in the Philippines.

Save the Children welcomes the opportunity to share frameworks with the Government of the Philippines to engage children in age-appropriate ways in local and community level consultations.

Based on our experience of provision of child-friendly services, Save the Children makes the following further recommendations:

- The Department of Education implements strategies to ensure that all school-aged children in affected areas are able to get back to learning as soon as possible and continues to increase its investment in education and teacher training.
- The Department of Social Welfare to be adequately resourced to assist children to return to their home and schools; and to strengthen municipality and barangay level child protection mechanisms that are functional and focus on effective response and prevention services.
- The Department of Education and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council review the safety of existing and new school facilities, their procedures for school disaster management, and the quality of Disaster Risk Reduction curriculum to ensure that it is accurate for all types of disasters, and provided in language that children can understand.
- The Department of Health agencies to identify all children who are at risk of not accessing healthcare in order to provide them with services that are inclusive, affordable and accessible; and prioritise the rehabilitation of obstetric care for pregnant mothers in disaster affected regions, and support newborn health as an urgent priority.
- The Department of Social Welfare to work with government agencies to address child-friendly design of evacuation centres and ensure girls' right to privacy and develop further disaggregation of data by age and sex.
- Government Departments to develop child-friendly early warning language that describes 'surge', 'gusts' and 'magnitude' as well as other meteorological terminology
- The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council Act's community-based disaster risk reduction and risk mitigation initiatives should be adequately resourced at the local barangay level to ensure that children are included in age-appropriate ways in community activities and committees.
- The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the Department of Social Welfare, the Council for the Welfare of Children and the Department of Education to respond to children's demand for more information about how to best prepare for and mitigate against the impacts of future hazards, and to continue dialogue with civil society organisations on how to achieve this.
- The Government of the Philippines, with support from donors, should fully fund the Reconstruction Assistance on Haiyan Plan (RAY).
- International donors should fully fund the UN Strategic Response Plan.

## ANNEXE I: SAVE THE CHILDREN'S RESPONSE TO CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Save the Children was one of the first international agencies on the ground after Typhoon Haiyan. Within one week, we had flown in over 100 tonnes of pre-positioned aid, from three different continents, including shelter and hygiene kits and food, health, medicine and water supplies. To date, we have distributed over 30,000 shelter kits, including tarpaulin and rope to provide temporary shelter for families whose homes were destroyed.

The response to Typhoon Haiyan was the highest urgency rapid-onset humanitarian response since Save the Children joined forces with MERLIN – a frontline humanitarian health organisation that provides primary and specialist healthcare in conflict and disaster zones. Together, we have provided emergency and primary health through the establishment of mobile health teams, who have completed over 9,000 consultations.

With expanded health capacity, and by identifying mothers and children who are vulnerable and excluded from services, Save the Children is working to reduce infant mortality. Our nutrition teams are screening children for malnutrition, distributing micronutrient supplements and providing breastfeeding counselling to new mothers.

We are responding to the psychosocial needs of children through education programs, and through support to the local social worker referral networks established by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSDW). DSDW is also ensuring that measures to prevent exploitation and abuse of children are put in place. We have established 46 Child Friendly Spaces that are reaching over 9,000 children. To address the distress of children we have trained over 130 community members in psychological first aid; to ensure that children who could not reach a child friendly space could still receive support.



Save the Children nurse Adelson Auigueten discusses treatment with Rachel Ribo, 28, for her son, Mark Jade, 10-months who was screened for a fever at a mobile health clinic on one of the outer island communities in the Philippine archipelago. Photo: Susan Warner/Save the Children





Joseph, five-years old, sits on a neighbour's boat on the beach outside his home. His family are one of 1,630 being given cash grants on the island of Panay, allowing them to buy a new boat to replace the one destroyed during the typhoon. Photo: Mark Kaye/Save the Children

In response to children's desire to get back to school, Save the Children is co-leading the Education Cluster along with the Department of Education, supporting the "Getting Back to Learning" initiative. Save the Children has established 39 temporary learning spaces in school grounds to support over 3,000 children to continue with their education whilst their schools are repaired.

Our food security and livelihoods assistance has helped thousands of families to meet immediate, minimum food and household needs after the typhoon. Thanks to distributions, families have not been forced to sell assets, such as tools or equipment, to buy food – leaving them more food secure for the future. To date, we have distributed rice to over 200,000 people alongside the World Food Programme. We are also supporting families who fish to earn a living, many of whom have lost everything, with cash grants to assist them to repair equipment, while our outreach projects teach them about water safety, local fishery bylaws, sustainable fishing and disaster risk reduction.

We have worked in the Philippines for more than 30 years focusing on:

- building resilience of communities through programs that help to reduce the risk of major impacts from disasters and changes in climate (especially through school curriculum and school disaster management)
- supporting families affected by conflict
- assisting children in conflict with the law
- addressing poverty and inequality

As the focus of the response to Typhoon Haiyan shifts from emergency relief to reconstruction we remain committed to addressing poverty and inequality and building the resilience of communities in the long term. Over the next three years we plan to reach over 1,100,000 people including 800,000 children.

## END NOTES

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Children wait outside a mobile Save the Children Child Friendly Space on the remote island of Talingting. Photo: Mark Kaye/Save the Children