

GOOD PRACTICE DOCUMENTATION

DSWD FIELD OFFICE VIII

“From Hub to Home”

DSWD's direct-to-beneficiary Disaster Operations



CONTEXT:

According to Wikipedia, approximately twenty tropical cyclones enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility every year. Out of these, ten will make landfall and five are considered destructive. These weather disturbances result in flooding, storm surges and landslides which in turn result to loss of life and property. In fact, the Philippines has been ranked as the 3rd most exposed country in terms of disaster risk (based on the 2016 World Risk Report, see <http://weltrisikobericht.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/WorldRiskReport2016.pdf>). Due to its unique location inside the Pacific Typhoon Belt, the Philippines, especially Eastern Visayas, has always been prone to such disasters. Therefore, the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office VIII has always been active in disaster response.

Last October, President Rodrigo Duterte named Philippine Army Chief Lieutenant General Rolando Joselito D. Bautista as the new DSWD secretary. His appointment took effect on October 17. (<https://www.dswd.gov.ph/dswd-welcomes-new-secretary-in-simple-leadership-turn-over-ceremony/>).

With this new leadership came a new direction for the Department.

Based on a memorandum from the Secretary dated October 23rd 2018, all DSWD field offices shall no longer preposition goods at the Local Government Unit (LGU) level. This has been implemented January 2019 to ensure that DSWD has full control over its relief goods. (see Annex A)

Aside from prepositioned goods, this directive also limits LGU involvement and changes how DSWD delivers its relief goods to disaster-stricken municipalities. Following this directive, DSWD FO VIII decided that moving forward; all relief operations will be conducted by DSWD staff, both from the Regional Office and from the Provincial and Municipal Action Teams. DSWD started this practice of conducting its own relief operations directly during the response to Typhoon Samuel.

Originally implemented in line with Secretary's directives, DSWD Field Office VIII staff began to see the advantages of a direct-to-beneficiary mode of relief distribution. These advantages will be discussed in the Results/Impact section.

Prior to this directive, DSWD had encountered several problems during disaster relief operations. The most common are bloated reports, where due to inaccuracies or duplications, more relief items are required than are actually needed, political partiality, where several affected families complain that they are not listed/given relief items because of their political affiliations, delayed distribution due to a longer timeframe between submission of reports and validation.

This directive provided a window of opportunity for DSWD to address these previously-encountered recurring issues.

PRE IMPLEMENTATION:

Before this directive, DSWD usually relied on its partnership with the LGU for the transportation and distribution of its relief goods. A good example could be found during the relief operations during Urduja.

December 16, 2017. Tropical Storm Urduja (international name Kai-Tak) made landfall in Eastern Visayas. The slow-moving storm caused cloudy skies, heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, flashfloods and landslides. The storm affected 120 municipalities in Region VIII, especially in the province of Biliran, where at least 26 were reported dead and five bridges were damaged. (<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2017/12/18/1769560/damaged-bridge-isolates-biliran-urdujas-wake>)



(Relief goods being loaded from DSWD's warehouse to a truck dispatched by the Marabut, Samar during the Urduja operations)

During relief operations, LGUs requesting augmentation dispatched trucks to DSWD's Regional Resource Operations Section (RROS) to load and transport the relief items. DSWD worked in partnership with the Philippine Army to transport relief goods. After loading the Family Food Packs into army trucks, DSWD staff escorted the trucks to the destination.



Upon arrival, staff from the LGU of Biliran unloaded the FFPs and stored them at a temporary warehouse. Distribution of the relief goods would be carried out by the LGU.

(Left, Relief goods being loaded from DSWD’s warehouse to an Army truck bound for Biliran, Biliran.)



At the regional level, DSWD continuously packs family food packs (FFPs) at the RROS. Each family food pack contains 6 kilos of rice, 4 cans of corned beef, 4 cans of beef loaf and 6 sachets of coffee. After putting these items inside boxes, they are then marked with the date of production and the expiration date. Boxes with closer expiration dates are dispatched first, to avoid spoilage and to ensure that the relief goods are still fit for consumption when

they reach the beneficiaries.

Before, these boxes were stacked on top of pallets. However, instead of settling for this system, the Disaster Response Management Division continued to introduce innovations to ensure that these relief goods are properly stored. Earlier in the year, the RROS introduced a new racking system. The implementation of this new system has resulted in easier storage and organization of relief items. The RROS also stockpiles non-food items such as malongs and hygiene kits containing toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, and other hygiene items. Extreme care is exercised by the RROS staff in packing and storing these relief items. Food items are stored separately from non-food items.

However, the preparation didn’t stop at the Regional Level only.

Previously, DSWD had partnered with several Local Government Units to preposition relief items. Prepositioning is a disaster preparedness measure where relief goods, both food and non-food items would be stored at the LGU level even before disaster strikes. These would be stored in selected warehouses at the LGU.





(Relief goods being unloaded from the Army trucks by the staff of the LGU. These were then stored at a stockroom located beside the Municipal Hall in Biliran, Biliran during the Urduja relief operations)

IMPLEMENTATION:

The Secretary’s new directives were carried out by FO VIII staff during the relief operations for tropical depression Samuel.

On November 20, 2018, Tropical Depression Samuel made its first landfall at Eastern Samar. The heavy rains brought by the storm caused massive flooding and landslides in the province.

Less than a day later, DSWD responded to these LGUs’ request for assistance.

Oras, Eastern Samar

On November 20, 2018, DSWD received a request from the LGU from Oras, Eastern Samar for family food packs. The storm had caused the Oras River to overflow, flooding several barangays located upstream.

True to its commitment to efficient public service, DSWD initially dispatched 1,450 family food packs to the LGU with the help of the Philippine Army on November 21, 2018. These FFPs were loaded into 1 Elf-type truck (codenamed “Botswana”) and 1 Wing Van from DSWD, while the rest were divided and loaded into Army trucks. These FFPs were escorted by three DSWD staff – one from the DRMD, two from the Quick Response Team.

In accordance with the new directive to limit LGU involvement, the relief distribution itself would be carried out by DSWD staff, both from the Regional Office and from the Provincial Operations Office.

Since the barangays affected by the flooding were located upstream, the Family Food Packs had to be loaded on boats for delivery. On December 22, 2018, the relief goods were loaded with the help of the Philippine Army. From the docks it would take 2 to 4 hours to reach the upstream barangays.



There were 9 target barangays. These barangays were prioritized because these were the most badly affected and because these barangays were isolated because of flooding. DSWD staff split up into teams to cover each target barangay.

DSWD staff had to conduct the distribution straight from the boats to the beneficiaries, since there was no area where DSWD could offload and store the FFPs due to flooding.



From the boats, DSWD staff coordinated with the barangay officials who already had a masterlist of beneficiaries. If a beneficiary is absent and is unable to claim the FFPs, the barangay official would call on relatives or neighbors to receive the FFPs and to sign the distribution sheet in behalf of the absent beneficiary.



Distribution was fast and efficient due to the participation of the beneficiaries and their barangay officials. Minimum crowd control was required since the beneficiaries lined up to receive the FFPs.

Over-all, DSWD was successfully able to distribute relief goods to beneficiaries from 9 upstream barangays on November 22, 2018. Based on DROMIC reports, a total of 2,000 FFPs, worth Php 720,000 were allocated for Oras.

(see <https://fo8.dswd.gov.ph/2018/11/dswd-delivers-relief-to-flooded-barangays-in-oras/>)



(Left, Relief goods being moved from the docks into boats with the help of the Philippine Army. From there, the boats will travel upstream to deliver the FFPs)



Jipapad, Eastern Samar (First Wave)

On November 23, 2018, after confirming reports that the road to Jipapad, Eastern Samar was passable, DSWD staff immediately proceeded to the municipality, after wrapping up the relief operations in Oras. The relief goods and distribution for unclaimed FFPs in Oras were entrusted and continued by the Provincial Operations Office staff.

Similar to Oras, Jipapad was also heavily affected by TD Samuel. The heavy rains brought by Samuel caused the river to overflow. According to the residents, it only took 2 hours for the water to rise to the second-storey level of most houses. It has generally been described by the residents as the worst case of flooding in the towns' history.



Upon arrival at Jipapad past 12 noon, DSWD staff immediately began to set up tables to start the distribution of relief goods. Since 4-wheeled vehicles were not allowed to cross the wooden bridge leading to the town proper, DSWD staff set up the distribution area right next to the highway.



Also, since the flood damaged the local cell tower, communication through commercial networks was not possible. There was no signal available. To be able to communicate, DSWD-RICTMU staff set up the Cobham Explorer 710 Broadband Global Area Network (BGAN) and the satellite phones. With these satellite equipment, communication and internet connectivity became possible (see left). A beneficiary was able to call her relatives to tell them that she was okay using these satellite equipment.



Beneficiaries from the four Poblacion barangays lined up beside the highway to receive relief items. Due to the large number of beneficiaries, DSWD staff had to forego taking a lunch break and had to work into the night (see left). Also, due to minimized involvement from the LGU, DSWD staff had to perform multiple duties in unloading the relief goods, crowd-control, validation of beneficiaries, and distribution.





Initially, DSWD arrived with a limited number of family food packs. In order to provide enough relief goods for a target of 2,448 families, DSWD coordinated with Philippine Army using satellite equipment. The Army transported the additional relief goods from Tacloban to Hinabangan. From Hinabangan, the relief goods were cross-loaded into DSWD trucks and into a truck lent by the Department of Public Works and Highways (see left). From there, these trucks proceeded to Jipapad to augment the disaster operations.

DSWD also had to set up make-shift tents in the distribution area to minimize the usage of LGU facilities. Using the winged van, poles, tarpaulins, ropes and all available resources on hand, DSWD staff were able to set up temporary shelter against the sunlight and occasional rainshowers during relief distribution. (see left)

The first wave of relief operations in Jipapad concluded on November 25, 2018, after a three-day relief distribution. As of November 25, 1,334 families have been served. It gave DSWD staff a lot of insight and experience, which were immediately put into use during the second wave of relief operations.



Jipapad, Eastern Samar (Second Wave)

On December 4, 2018, DSWD staff planned for the second wave of distributions during a training held at Tanauan, Leyte. Among the items the various needs, strengths, opportunities and challenges of the team – including accommodations, food and logistics. Due to thorough planning, DSWD was able to prepare for the second wave of distributions at Jipapad.

On December 9, 2018 DSWD staff returned to Jipapad. This time, owing to the experiences gained during the first wave of distribution, DSWD was more prepared.

Upon arrival, DSWD immediately set up tents at the distribution area. Compared with the makeshift tents during the first wave, these tents were more organized. (see left)





There were designated tents for the FFPs, tents for the distribution team, and tents for the beneficiaries. Since there was no electricity at the distribution area, there was also a designated area for the generator.



Also, DSWD laid brown mats on the ground to cover up the mud. This ensured that the distribution area was dry and provided traction for the vehicles which otherwise sank in the mud.



Also, DSWD had designated staff, equipment and an area for the preparation of food. Meals would be carried from this area to the distribution area during breaks. Since LGU involvement was limited, DSWD staff had to contribute a small amount daily to purchase food items. *(see left)*

overcrowded. (see left)

DSWD staff would call the beneficiaries' names, organize them into groups of 20 and direct them into lines at the distribution center. This made the distribution organized, fast and more efficient. This also made crowd-control easier, ensuring that the distribution area was not



DSWD staff were also well-prepared for any emergencies. During the distribution, one beneficiary sustained an injury to the foot after accidentally tripping over a rope barrier. Fortunately, DSWD staff were trained in basic first-aid. Also, several project development officers who were licensed nurses were standing by as medics. They immediately provided first aid to the injured beneficiary. *(see left)*

Over-all the distribution was successful and was more organized. This was due to experiences gained during the recent round of distributions not only in Jipapad, but as well as in Oras and Arteche. As of December 13, 2018, based on DROMIC reports, 2,359 families have been served.

<https://fo8.dswd.gov.ph/2018/11/dswd-distributes-relief-at-jipapad/>



<https://fo8.dswd.gov.ph/2018/12/dswd-conducts-second-wave-of-relief-distribution-at-jipapad/>

RESULTS/IMPACT

As a result of Secretary Bautista's new directive, DSWD staff now deliver the relief goods directly to the beneficiaries. This is reflected in the sustainability mechanism, the Disaster Response Management Division's Response Operations Manual (see Annex C).

Since this limits the involvement of the LGU, this improves DSWD's control over the relief goods and minimizes the involvement of local politicians. This in turn leads to less politicizing and less complaints about beneficiaries who do not receive relief goods because they have different political affiliations. This leads to impartiality with the distribution of relief goods; a fairer system of distribution to the families who really need the relief assistance.

Further, this builds a connection between DSWD and its beneficiaries. This directive connects DSWD staff from the Regional Office with the beneficiaries, especially those located in far-flung areas. For example, the beneficiaries at Jipapad and Oras expressed their gratitude that the representatives from DSWD came all the way from the regional office to distribute the relief goods personally. This humanizes DSWD as a caring and compassionate agency. This also allows the DSWD staff to see the reality of the situation on the ground, thus allowing for a much more realistic needs assessment. And since DSWD staff are already on the ground, they were able to conduct onsite validation without having to rely wholly on the LGUs reports. This was evident during the relief operations in Jipapad. After receiving a report from the MSWDO, DSWD staff proceeded from Oras to Jipapad. Arriving onsite, DSWD staff immediately conducted a visual inspection of the area. Since they were on the ground, DSWD staff were able to conduct validation simultaneously while distributing relief goods.



This also improves DSWD's response time, which is in line with DSWD's 3rd Organizational Outcome, which is the immediate relief and early recovery of Disaster Victims.

This was made evident during the response to Samuel. The typhoon made landfall November 20, 2018. DSWD was able to respond in just 24 hours, with the delivery of goods to Oras accomplished on November 21. Prior to this directive, initial relief

operations would usually take more time. Because of the faster response time, DSWD is now more able to meet its Performance Contract Indicators to provide 80% of the severely affected households with relief within 3 days after the disaster occurred. In the case of Urduja, DSWD was able to serve 4,448 severely-affected families during the first week of operations.

This was made possible through strong coordination of the DSWD staff assigned in the area with the local MSWDOs. With DSWD staff coordinating on the ground, critical data (such as the number of affected families and the severity of the storm's damage) can be relayed to the Operations Center, from where the response is planned.

Another factor which contributed to the faster response time was the lesser turnaround time between the LGU reports to validation and to response action. Prior to this directive, during calamities, the LGUs would have to send their reports to DSWD, then DSWD would validate the reports, and then only after validation, decide on a course of action. Now that the LGU involvement has been minimized, DSWD can implement its response action and conduct validation at the same time, thus saving critical time.

According to the representatives of the LGU and the beneficiaries, both from Oras and Jipapad, DSWD was the first to respond to the typhoon. In fact, DSWD was commended by the OCD Regional Director Henry Torres for its quick response and for going “above and beyond the call of duty” during the Disaster Response Cluster Meeting, held onsite at Jipapad on November 25, 2018.

However, this directive places an additional task on the staff of the Disaster Response Management Division. Instead of leaving the distribution of relief items to the LGU, DSWD shoulders the tasks – from packing FFPs, to loading FFPs, to transportation, distribution to the beneficiaries and finally, reverse-logistics. Due to limitations in the number of vehicles, DSWD needs to coordinate with its partners for additional transportation. Also, due to the lack of manpower, DSWD staff need to take on multiple roles to ensure a successful distribution of relief items. Drivers also load and unload FFPs. Distributors also do crowd-control. Validators also work as grievance redress officers. Every staff contributes to the

team effort. While this is sufficient for a disaster affecting a few LGUs, this manpower might not suffice for a massive, region-wide catastrophe on the level of super typhoon Yolanda.



Also the additional tasks causes an interruption in the regular functions of the DSWD staff, which can only be attended to once the relief operations are finished. This would cause a delay, especially if the staff on duty during relief operations has deliverables to submit. To relieve this pressure, DSWD needs to look into the possibility of tapping into the private sector for additional manpower, to assist in relief operations (see left, DSWD staff resting after conducting a whole day of relief distribution during the first wave at Jipapad. Due to the urgency, DSWD staff had to forego lunch to start relief operations right away. The relief operations finished at around 7PM).



LESSONS LEARNED



On December 4, during a training held by the Disaster Response Management Division, the first wave of relief distributions was evaluated. During this training, DSWD's strengths, challenges and opportunities were discussed. It was agreed that the first wave of relief operations was a training ground. It gave DSWD staff important insight into the conduct of future relief distributions.

Coordination is the key. With limited LGU involvement, DSWD had to coordinate with its partners in the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC) and the Office of Civil Defense. Without coordination with other agencies, such as the Department of Public Works and Highways, and the Philippine Army, it would have been much more difficult for DSWD transport the relief items from Tacloban to the affected areas.

Coordination with the barangay officials proved to be crucial. In relief operations, the presence of the barangay officials is critical, especially in disseminating news about relief distribution, in identifying the beneficiaries and/or their substitutes and in grievance redress.

Of course, DSWD's internal coordination was also vital to the relief operations. From the start, staff from the Region coordinated with the staff assigned in the area, especially with the staff from the Provincial Operations Office for additional manpower. DSWD's logistics was also a result of coordination between the relief distribution team at Jipapad and the Regional Resource Operations Section in Tacloban. When the team at Jipapad lacked FFPs, they would coordinate with the team in Tacloban to send in additional FFPs. In turn, this would also be coordinated with DSWD's partner agencies for assistance in transporting the FFPs.

Coordination was made possible by communication. The need for communication became apparent, especially for the beneficiaries who lived in the interior barangays. These beneficiaries had to walk for an hour or more to reach the distribution area. It became clear that these beneficiaries needed to be informed ahead of time. For this task, DSWD coordinated with the barangay officials to disseminate the information. Proper communication was also necessary to dispel confusion, especially to the barangay officials who were unaware about the Secretary's new directives.

During the Jipapad operations, commercial networks were down, since the local cell towers were damaged by flood. Fortunately, DSWD was prepared for that challenge. With the help of Inmarsat satellite equipment, DSWD was still able to communicate. According to RROS OIC Orville Berino, "these satellite equipment were of very big help." Without it, the team on the ground would not have been able to coordinate with the team in Tacloban. These equipment became very critical to the success of the relief operations.

Through coordination, DSWD was able to successfully distribute its relief goods to the beneficiaries. However, challenges still exist, especially when it comes to manpower. The

same team who distributed relief goods in Oras was also the same team that was in Jipapad. Through this, DSWD staff learned the value of being properly rested.

Without sufficient rest, a person may fail to execute his duties properly. Rest became very important, especially for the drivers who had to travel for 4-6 hours to transport relief items.

DSWD learned to adapt quickly to the changing scenarios. In Oras, the relief distribution had to be done by boat. So DSWD staff conducted it straight from the boats. A day later, the scenario changed. The relief distribution had to be done on open ground in Jipapad. With only the tarpaulins used to cover the relief goods, DSWD staff were able to set up makeshift shelters for protection against both the harsh sunlight and the occasional rainshowers. Using this experience, DSWD brought shelters during the second wave.

Logistics management was also an area where DSWD was able to learn. These include practical lessons such as what to bring, what items are needed, where and how to secure the relief goods in an open area, how much FFPs can be transported, how to provide power supply to the distribution area, how to feed the DSWD staff, etc.

These are just several of the important lessons that the DRMD learned during the recent wave of relief distributions in Eastern Samar.

We recommend the implementation of a direct-to-beneficiary mode of relief distribution, with boundaries and limitations of DSWD staff clearly defined in accordance with the Republic Act 7160 (otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991) and the Republic Act 10121 (otherwise known as the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010).

IMPLICATIONS FOR REPLICATION

This memorandum has taken effect January 2019 (see Annex B). Fortunately, the waves of relief distribution in Eastern Samar have given DSWD FO VIII valuable experience. With this experience, DSWD is now much more aware on how to conduct relief operations with minimal LGU involvement.

However, DSWD still faces the challenge of manpower. In the event of a massive catastrophe on the scale of super-typhoon Yolanda, DSWD FO VIII will need additional manpower to be able to conduct relief operations. With minimal assistance from the LGU, DSWD will need to look into other sources of manpower, such as the private sector.

Hopefully, these experiences have trained DSWD FO VIII staff and will serve as an example to other Field Offices in the conduct of relief operations.



TESTIMONIAL



Lolo Leo was one of the beneficiaries of DSWD’s relief operations in Jipapad, Eastern Samar during the aftermath of typhoon Samuel.

“Salamat han bulig nga umabot ha am. Tungod nga nag-inuran; an am balay, waray na kami tahanan. Salamat ngada hit sinisiring nga bulig hit gobyerno kay waray man gud kami gin-iistaran ha pagkayana. Kun baga, kamo na an bahala, an gobyerno na an bahala ha amon. Salamat, sir, kun ano man an outcome hini nga mga bulig, salamat han gobyerno, kan Pangulong Duterte – number one! Asya iton, mga taga Region man kamo. Thank you, thank you very much! (Thank you for the help you gave us. We don’t have a house because of the rains. Thank you for the help from the government, because right now, we don’t have a place to stay. The government takes care of us. Thank you, sir, for the outcome, for the help, thank you for the government, thank you President Duterte – you’re number one! This is because you are from the Regional [Office]. Thank you, thank you very much! “

REFERENCES

NAME	AFFILIATION	CONTACT NUMBER
Pauline Liza Nadera	OIC Division Chief DRMD	09055248806
Orville Berino	OIC RROS	09278379842
Kenny Unay	Project Development Officer III	09158855648
Joseph Dela Peña	Project Development Officer III	09057867340

Prepared by:

Reviewed and noted by:

JOSHUA C. KEMPIS
Information Officer II

PAULINE LIZA C. NADERA
OIC Division Chief DRMD



