

# BETTER TOGETHER

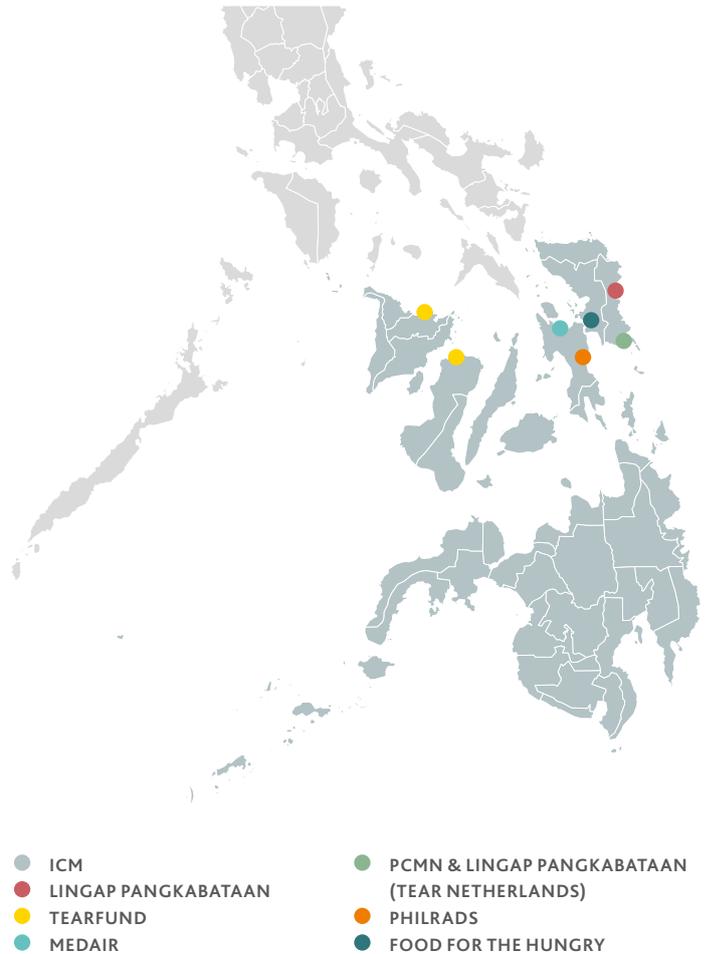
## Lessons learnt in participatory disaster risk reduction planning (Typhoon Haiyan)

**Typhoon Haiyan (locally named Yolanda) hit the Philippines on 8 November, 2013. Humanitarian assistance focused on some of the hardest hit areas in the Eastern Visayas region – Tacloban, Leyte and the nearby province of Samar. The typhoon also moved towards Central and Western Visayas. The majority of affected areas experienced storm surges, coastal flooding and strong winds. This included Cadiz City in the province of Negros Occidental.**

Tearfund's response focused on relief, early recovery and rehabilitation, with significant attention on 'building back better'. There was a strong emphasis on working with local organisations and strengthening the capacity of partners, communities and the local government. Tearfund's in-country presence aimed to support this approach and fill gaps in delivery. In the initial phase of the response, it became apparent that there were very few agencies in areas of Cadiz and Roxas and therefore many needs were unmet. After an assessment in early 2014, the decision was made to launch an operational programme to address priority needs in these two areas.<sup>1</sup>

While Cadiz City had the capacity to rescue and evacuate, it did not have an integrated plan on preparedness and risk reduction measures, or an integrated disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) plan, as mandated by the DRRM Act 2010 (also called the Republic Act 10121). In the absence of a DRRM plan, the city could not access the national disaster risk reduction (DRR) fund. A study by the Ateneo de Manila University encouraged the city to strengthen its disaster governance by institutionalising

### AREAS WHERE TEARFUND AND PARTNERS RESPONDED TO THE IMPACT OF TYPHOON HAIYAN



the local government office and developing partnership agreements with relevant stakeholders, such as civil society organisations working with vulnerable sectors.<sup>2</sup> Tearfund worked alongside the city's local government unit for nine months, which resulted in the creation of their DRRM plan. Tearfund invested less than £10,000 into the development of the DRRM plan. However, this small investment had a high return, as it unlocked the city's access to the national DRR fund. This led to the local government allocating a minimum of five per cent of the city's budget to the implementation of this plan.

# WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

We all know that a good plan is not enough – it actually needs to be implemented in order to generate results. As we've worked alongside the local government, we've identified areas where we can support the implementation of a disaster risk reduction plan (and indeed any plan).

## We encourage ownership by bringing everyone together

When developing a disaster risk reduction plan, it is important to work with those who know their communities. It might seem obvious, but as you begin to identify hazards and conduct vulnerability assessments, you want to hear from those who have direct experience in the affected areas. Not only do they understand the challenges and issues of the city, but they can also advise on the communities' capacity to cope. To facilitate this we formed a technical working group composed of relevant government departments, civil society organisations and community leaders. The range of experiences and expertise helped to formulate appropriate strategies and interventions that addressed real needs. By including a range of stakeholders in the planning process, it helped to secure buy-in and commitment to implement the programmes, projects and activities that they themselves proposed. Bringing all the key stakeholders together encouraged local ownership of the plan right from the beginning of the process.

## We learn by doing

Planning for disaster risk reduction is often recognised as an important process, but sometimes it can be hard to implement such a plan. As we journeyed alongside the local government, we found it helpful to ensure that the working group not only understood the plan, but also knew how to deliver it – from conducting assessments and analysis, to programming

and budgeting. To facilitate this process, we spent time practising the relevant tools that supported implementation. This allowed the working group to grapple with the practicalities before the finalisation of the plan. It also helped to ensure that the activities mentioned were feasible and that the relevant stakeholders were equipped to deliver against the planned activities. By using the tools throughout the process, the working group strengthened their skills and ability to deliver the intended results.

## We hold ourselves to account by monitoring and evaluating

Although creating a plan does not necessarily mean it will be implemented, our experience showed the importance of using monitoring and evaluation tools to hold stakeholders to account. These tools help to ensure the plan delivers its intended impact. Having an annual review of the implementation can promote accountability and ensure the plan is being outworked. It also gives space to reflect on any changes that need to be made. Developing a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework at the beginning of the implementation phase helps departments, offices and other relevant stakeholders to allocate time and resources towards the measurement of impact and learning. The framework provides a place to plan for best practice visits, opening up a space to learn from the experiences of others and see what worked and what didn't. Visiting other models can motivate those implementing the plan, showing them proof that building resilient communities is possible.

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1 Tearfund Philippines Typhoon Response Programme Final Evaluation 2013–2017

2 Cornelio J, Dela Cruz A, Amor U (2016) *Assessing the implementation of the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act in Cadiz and Roxas cities*.

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