

NON-STATE ACTORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN DEVELOPMENT -
ACTIONS IN PARTNER COUNTRIES (MULTI COUNTRY) FOR NON-STATE ACTORS

Best Practice Olongapo: Olongapo City Disaster Coordinating Council

- short version -

Thematic Area: Inclusive Urban Public Services

Country of Origin: Philippines

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A Project implemented by the consortium: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), Local Government Development Foundation Inc. (LOGODEF), United Cities and Local Governments for Asia and Pacific (UCLG-ASPAC), Association of Indonesian Regency Governments (APKASI), Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN), and National League of Communes/Sangkats of the Kingdom of Cambodia (NLC/S).



ABOUT DELGOSEA

The Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in Southeast-Asia (DELGOSEA) was launched in March 2010 and is co-funded by the European Commission and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) of Germany through the German Ministry of Development Cooperation.

DELGOSEA aims to create a network of cities and municipalities to implement transnational local governance best practices replication across partner countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. It supports the role of Local Government Associations (LGAs) in providing and assisting the transfer and sustainability of local governance best practices replication by local governments. Most importantly, through the exchange of best practices in the region, DELGOSEA intends to contribute to the improvement of living conditions of disadvantaged groups in Southeast-Asia by helping increase their participation in local planning and decision-making.

In the first phase of project implementation, an intensive research was done to determine Best Practices (BP) in local governance in each of the five participating countries. A consortium of international local governance experts and representatives from the LGAs reviewed and selected 16 BPs out of the submitted 27 BPs.

The project concentrated on the following four thematic areas while selecting best practice examples from the five countries:

1. Peoples' participation in planning and decision-making;
2. Institutional governance;
3. Inclusive urban public services;
4. Fiscal management and investment planning.

The following short descriptions BP is one of the selected 16 BPs in the area of inclusive urban public services, provided by Olongapo in the Philippines.

Starting in January 2011 through August 2012, DELGOSEA will continue to collaborate with LGAs and local governments to transfer best practices replication. The pilot cities/municipalities could modify or improve the original best practice to their local context. The LGAs in the five participating countries will closely consult and guide the selected pilot local governments on the transfer and implementation of BP replication.



Country	Philippines
Local Government:	Olongapo City
Type:	City
Best Practice:	Olongapo City Disaster Coordinating Council
Aspect of Governance:	Inclusive urban public services
Reported By:	Dr. Alvin Ang

Summary

The City of Olongapo has taken initiatives in developing a disaster-preparedness program as early as the 1980s. The innovative aspect of this best practice is the centralization of crisis management with the establishment of the Disaster Management Office (DMO), as implementing arm of the Olongapo City Disaster Coordinating Council (OCDCC). This centralization led to

- well-coordinated actions,
- availability of highly trained experts, and
- fast rehabilitation in and after crisis situations.

The comprehensive program which was set up is not only designed for on-spot activities, but rather entails the whole management circle from mitigation, to preparedness, response and rehabilitation activities. Like this, CDCC/DMO managed to evolve into a well-recognized organization *committed* to saving lives and properties far beyond Olongapo City boundaries. The efficient and quick functions and services of OCDCC/DMO could not have been realized without the significant support of the people living in Olongapo, the private sector and media as well as various partner agencies who all contributed financial, equipment, skills, technology and resources.

Background and Objectives

For several years, Olongapo City served as a major United States Naval base until it was returned to the Philippine government in 1992. Located on the western region of Luzon, it is commonly hit by typhoons coming from the eastern region as these trace the path toward the South China Sea. Typhoons affecting the city are typically characterized by heavy rains and strong winds resulting much to flash floods and landslides. The city is not exempted from experiencing earthquakes and volcanic eruptions either. The 5.6 magnitude earthquake in 1990 caused physical damages to the city. The historical eruption in 1991 of Mt. Pinatubo, which lies close to the city, claimed hundreds of lives, displaced thousands of others, and rained heavy ash on the city.



A. Innovative Elements

The City of Olongapo has taken initiatives in developing a disaster-preparedness program as early as the 1980s. In particular, the City has created the Olongapo City Disaster Coordinating Council (OCDCC). This unit is responsible for undertaking plans and programs on disaster preparedness and awareness as well as mitigation and rehabilitation plans on emergencies and disasters in the city. It was created through Resolution No. 91, series of 1985, entitled "A Resolution Establishing a Community Disaster Coordinating Council." The Olongapo City Disaster Coordinating Council (OCDCC) is responsible for undertaking plans and programs on disaster preparedness and awareness as well as mitigation and rehabilitation plans on emergencies and disasters in the city. It was created through Resolution No. 91, series of 1985, entitled "A Resolution Establishing a Community Disaster Coordinating Council."

To further strengthen the OCDCC, the Disaster Management Office (DMO) was established as a secretariat and implementing arm. The DMO is manned by trained, knowledgeable, and competent personnel, who are experienced in dealing with disasters and emergencies. It is also responsible for overall coordination of the OCDCC's operations. It directs the effective implementation of its emergency plan and supervises emergency operations. For almost eight years, the OCDCC/DMO has evolved from a local office responsible for saving and protecting lives and properties, into a well-recognized organization in the nation committed to saving lives and properties.

It has received the Gawad Kalasag¹ Award five times for Best Disaster Coordinating Council-Highly Urbanized City Category; it is the lone Regional Gawad Kalasag Hall of Famer. This award aims to recognize the outstanding performance of disaster coordinating councils in the implementation of their disaster management programs and activities, and in providing humanitarian assistance and effective emergency response.

OCDCC/DMO's primary response organization, the Olongapo Fire-Rescue Team (ORFT), joined the Government Emergency Responders (GOERS) in the National Gawad Kalasag Hall of Fame on August 1, 2008. The 16-man team was chosen to represent the country as the Philippine Urban Search and Rescue Team in the third ASEAN Regional Disaster Simulation Exercise in Singapore. Organizations from the United Nations and foreign dignitaries from around the world had also graced this regional capability

¹ Gawad Kalasag is a recognition scheme developed by the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), which acknowledges excellence in Disaster Risk Management Programs and humanitarian assistance.



exercise. This made the OFRT one of the best rescuers in the Philippines. At present, the OCDCC/DMO is focused on building the culture of preparedness among its city constituents. More than reaping national and international recognitions, it takes careful consideration of the need to earn the trust of its people, especially during times of disasters.

B. Involvement and Activities

The OCDCC uses a three-tiered approach in planning and managing its performance:

1. Olongapo City Disaster Management Plan.
2. Inter-Agency Disaster Preparedness Plans, where every member-agency of the OCDCC have a plan concerning their own area of expertise. At the lowest level, a Barangay Disaster Preparedness Plan is also created.
3. Olongapo Contingency Plans, which deal with emergency situations involving evacuation, search, rescue, and relief situations for particular emergency scenarios.

The OCDCC represents a wide spectrum of government agencies, non-government organizations, Barangay (Village) Disaster Coordinating Councils, government emergency responders, volunteer organizations, and individuals. The city government—under the leadership of City Mayor and with technical assistance from the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC)—actively works toward the promotion and observance of programs on disaster prevention, mitigation, and preparedness.

To effectively help the city government addresses emergency situations, participation and assistance of each member of the community are necessary. OCDCC/DMO is able to engage civil society by its consistent information campaign and continuous conduct of trainings, seminars, and drills in almost all schools and commercial/industrial establishments within the city. Among the programs implemented by the OCDCC/DMO are:

- Development of Standard Operating Procedures during Emergency Operations. The city's Emergency Response Plan administers a citywide emergency plan on an all-hazards approach.
- Information and education campaigns to communities, schools and offices. DMO publishes and disseminates flyers on disaster preparedness. It also regularly releases *The Guardian*, OCDCC's official quarterly publication, as part of its information campaign.



The local media and publications were also tapped to educate the public on issues relative to disaster preparedness.

- Vulnerability Reduction and Risk Control/Mitigation. Mitigation programs are in place to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to human life and property. Assistance for recovery from disasters is provided through infrastructure programs and human services assistance programs. Structural mitigation activities include annual desilting of the city's rivers, concreting of roads, drainage construction, and river slope protection.
- On the other hand, non-structural mitigation programs involve Earthquake Safety Drills and Orientations, and Community Based Flood Early Warning System Seminars. The DMO also has completed its update of Flood and Landslide Susceptibility and Vulnerability Maps.

C. Sustainability and Replication

The success of the OCDCC/DMO ultimately depends on engaging people with high level of willingness and commitment to serve. It is important that these people be truly committed in implementing the activities of the organization and in earning the trust of the citizenry. Rescue facilities and systems should be constantly updated and tested to ensure their functionality. It should be noted that the standard training tools and resources available from the OCDCC/DMO are limited to the general disaster risk situation of the Philippines and lack specific examples of how these strategies can be tailor fitted in other municipal and local government units. The challenge of replicating these programs lies in developing emergency response plans and disaster management activities targeted to address the needs of their respective areas. Nonetheless, the basic elements required to ensure a well-planned disaster response system can already be implemented through the different aspects of these programs.

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