



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

Philippines: Meeting Immediate Water Needs

USAID is providing more than 3,000 flash flood-affected families in Cagayan de Oro City with water daily through partner Catholic Relief Services.



Photo courtesy of CRS

USAID-supported water tanks provide water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning in an evacuation center in Cagayan de Oro City.

USAID-funded WASH initiatives are supporting people staying in evacuation centers, as well as families that are able to return to their houses.

Disasters can strike quickly—killing hundreds of people and destroying communities in a matter of seconds—but their impacts continue well beyond those tumultuous first minutes. Survivors are often confronted with the challenge of meeting their basic needs as they struggle with the effects of disasters.

Late on December 16, 2011, Nida Go and her family were among the thousands of people in Mindanao, the Philippines, who were taken by surprise when water surging from nearby rivers reached the roofs of their houses in less than an hour. Hearing shouts from her neighbors, Nida and her family scrambled for higher ground, but not before her granddaughter was swept away. In total, Tropical Storm Washi—known locally as Sendong—killed 1,257 people and left 182 others missing.

In the midst of their grief, Nida and her family have worked to pick up the pieces of their lives, yet the devastation from the floods has created new challenges. In Cagayan de Oro City, floods damaged the main water supply line, initially leaving 80 percent of the city without water and forcing many families to face the difficult choice of purchasing bottled water with their scarce resources or risking illness by drinking unsafe water.

Within days of the storm, USAID began providing soap, toothbrushes, water containers, and other items to help with the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs of 10,730 people in evacuation centers and affected areas through Catholic Relief Services (CRS). USAID is also working with CRS to truck nearly 8,000 gallons of water to evacuation centers in the city daily, benefiting more than 3,000 families.

Building off this initial response, USAID has expanded WASH support through CRS and other partners to ensure that families returning to their houses or relocating to other areas have a safe and sanitary environment. While WASH support is only one part of the response, it has helped to keep families healthy enough to begin to plan for their future.