



SUPER TYPHOON ROLLY: One month on



ROLLY IN NUMBERS:

- more than **two million people**—around **450,000 of which are children**—affected across eight regions
- more than **170,000 houses** damaged or destroyed
- around **PHP 5 billion** damage to agriculture

Source: Super Typhoon Rolly situation report no. 12 from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, November 11, 2020



A Save the Children staff surveys the destruction caused by Super Typhoon Rolly in Tiwi, Albay.

Super Typhoon Rolly (international name: Goni), as of this report, is the strongest typhoon recorded worldwide in 2020. Packing torrential rains and winds of up to 310 kilometers per hour, Rolly blew through the southern part of Luzon on November 1, leaving a trail of massive destruction in its path.

Save the Children Philippines immediately deployed a humanitarian response team to the provinces of Camarines Sur, Albay, and Catanduanes, which bore the brunt of Rolly's impact. The team conducted a rapid assessment and provided immediate assistance to some of the most affected families in the three provinces and is now focusing on longer-term programming in Catanduanes, where Rolly first made landfall and caused the most destruction.

Rolly's impact may continue to be felt in the coming months because of its sheer magnitude, which has affected many aspects of children's lives and that of their families. These impacts are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and Typhoon Ulysses (international name: Vamco) that came less than two weeks after Rolly.

EDUCATION

COVID-19 caused schools across the country to close in March. The new school year belatedly opened in October, but without face-to-face classes. Students are given modules to study at home, and they communicate with their teachers through mobile phones or laptops.

Rolly knocked down power and communications lines in nearly all of Catanduanes. Restoration time is estimated to take a few weeks. It also washed away students' modules and teachers' equipment used to prepare learning materials. Teachers also have a hard time looking for a safe place to work because Rolly severely damaged many school buildings. This will also cause further delay in the event that face-to-face classes are finally allowed.

On November 6, Catanduanes Governor Joseph Cua issued an order suspending classes in all levels in the province until power is restored and school buildings and Department of Education facilities are safe to be used.

"The current situation underscores the urgency to support families and teachers affected by the typhoon. While schools may be closed because of the pandemic, answering modules and periodic communication with teachers bring a sense of normalcy among children. While provision of needed materials is necessary, mental health and psychosocial support is of equal importance. We also urge other community members, the private sector, the local government unit, the Department of Education, and other government agencies to assist the emerging needs of teachers during these trying times."

SIERRA PARAAN
Basic Education Advisor
Save the Children Philippines



Learning modules are left out to dry in Catanduanes after getting soaked by heavy rains brought by Super Typhoon Rolly.

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD

The main source of income in Catanduanes is Abaca. Many residents rely on the fibers of this plant—used for luxury textiles, among other purposes—to make ends meet. However, Rolly knocked down many of the abaca trees in the island and it will take at least two years to plant and harvest new ones.

Other crops like rice and coconut were also badly damaged. Fishing was also affected, as Rolly destroyed fishing boats and other equipment.

In the past, residents would travel to Albay or even Metro Manila to seek jobs when their livelihoods are jeopardized. But this is not an option for them right now because of travel restrictions implemented by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases.

Residents interviewed by Save the Children said that their food stocks are dwindling. Vegetables that they planted in their backyards were damaged, and the few that remained were already consumed. While meat is available, not everyone can afford it. Most of them now rely on relief goods, while some receive remittances from relatives working elsewhere in the country or abroad.

CASE STORY: Eddie and family

Eddie and his wife, Maryjane, are among the many people in Catanduanes who rely on abaca as their main source of income. Now that the trees have been toppled, they are struggling to earn money for their daily needs.

“We survived Typhoon Rolly, but we might die of hunger,” said Eddie.

But they are determined to go on. “People here are resilient. We’re used to poverty,” said Maryjane.

Maryjane does laundry for other people to augment their income while Eddie looks for work. They are currently living in a makeshift shack constructed by Eddie after the typhoon blew their house away. No matter how hard the situation may be, they are thankful that their two children, Sowee and Denver, were unharmed.

Save the Children provided Eddie’s family with a household kit, a family hygiene kit, a jerry can, face masks,

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Not having regular access to healthy foods due to disrupted livelihoods can also result in a rise of malnutrition cases among children. The Rural Health Unit of Catanduanes received 1,200 boxes of ready-to-use supplementary food (RUSF) for children with malnutrition, but these are only good until December this year.

Some families interviewed by Save the Children Philippines said that the coronavirus scare made them avoid going to hospitals for fear of getting infected by COVID-19 positive patients.

WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

The typhoon resulted in damaged water pipelines, resulting in limited water supply in some areas. In some areas, residents are unable to drink water from deep wells because of its high turbidity level. Instead, they buy drinking water from refilling stations, which cost around PHP 30 per 20-liter container.

Open defecation poses a risk of spreading water-borne diseases. This is a practice observed among those whose homes were destroyed or damaged, and in evacuation centers where the toilets are not enough to serve all evacuees.

alcohol, and two plastic sheets to replace some of the basic necessities they lost to the typhoon. “Everything Save the Children gave us will definitely help us,” said Eddie. “At least we don’t have to buy them anymore. That’s a big thing for us.”



Eddie and Maryjane, with their sons Sowee and Denver, pose for a photo with the items they received from Save the Children.



Robina and Adrian at their home in Catanduanes

CASE STORY: Robina

COVID-19 made 56-year-old Robina and her family scared of going to the hospital, fearing that they might catch the dreaded disease.

Her 16-year-old son, Adrian, has been diagnosed with a learning disability. Adrian was supposed to have a check-up last April but they did not go because of the pandemic. “I’m afraid that going to the hospital will just expose us to the risk of getting COVID-19,” she said.

Robina shared that instead of going to the hospital, they utilize home remedies for common ailments. “The debris from the destroyed houses and fallen trees has caused a lot of wounds for both children and adults in our neighborhood,” she said. To treat these, they would boil malunggay leaves and patch it onto the wound.

For cough and fever, Robina would use lemons from her backyard, which fortunately grew back after Super Typhoon Rolly hit. She would also boil water with some herbal plants and use the steam to help ease breathing. “When fevers do not subside even with these remedies, that is the time I would go to the barangay health center and ask for paracetamol,” she said.

The fear of catching COVID-19 is also what drove Robina and her family to immediately leave the evacuation center. Her husband put together a shack for them to sleep in, but they would still get wet because the roof has holes.

“When Save the Children Philippines gave us the kit with household items, plastic sheets for our roof and walls, family hygiene supplies, water container, and even alcohol and face masks, the shack we are living in felt more like home,” said Robina.

CHILD PROTECTION

The aftermath of Super Typhoon Rolly has exposed children to different protection issues. Although there have been no reports of child abuse or exploitation at the time of this report, the pressure caused by the long-term impacts on food security and livelihood may lead to such cases. Frustration, anger, and anxiety may cause parents to unload their stress on their children. It may also drive children to work to help provide for the family.

Because classes are still suspended, children are often seen playing outside, even in places with debris—a serious risk for physical injuries.

In a consultation with children in the municipalities of Bato and San Miguel, Catanduanes, it was revealed that they have little knowledge of the different kinds of abuse against children. They also said they do not know where to report cases of child abuse if they witness such incidents. In the same consultation, the children expressed their need for safe places to convene and discuss their feelings and concerns about the current situation.

“Although there were no reports of child protection issues attributable to Super Typhoon Rolly as per our assessment, it is in the children’s best interest not to assume that there really are none. Reporting may be affected by mobility limitations due to the pandemic, or lack of access to information about referral structures in communities. Children’s psychosocial concerns should be addressed as it can adversely affect their mental health and development in the long run.

Likewise, attention should be given to their parents or carers to help them process their feelings. This can also prevent them from resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as physical or emotional abuse. A mother whom I interviewed said that she longs for an opportunity to air out her frustrations—the typhoon took all their household investments, leaving them only with the loans they need to continuously pay for those items forever gone with the flood. ‘I really need that because I’m very stressed, and I unconsciously let that stress out on my husband and children, because there’s nowhere else to release it,’ she said.”

JCEL LUNA
Humanitarian Officer
Save the Children Philippines



SAVE THE CHILDREN’S RESPONSE

Just a few days after Super Typhoon Rolly hit, we immediately dispatched vital items to help affected families in Camarines Sur, Albay, and Catanduanes. These items include:

2,000 family hygiene kits

containing hygiene essentials such as soap, towels, and sanitary napkins to help families maintain proper hygiene and prevent the spread of diseases

1,000 household kits

to replace household items lost to the typhoon, such as cookware, blankets, and sleeping mats

2,000 jerry cans

for storing potable water

3,000 plastic sheets

for temporary shelter

2,000 boxes of face masks and

4,000 bottles of alcohol

for additional protection against COVID-19

To date, we were able to reach nearly 10,000 individuals, including around 4,800 children.

Short sessions on proper hygiene practices were held during distribution activities. Families also received printed materials on proper handwashing and cleanliness to serve as reminders inside their homes.

Our Health and Nutrition Advisor, Dr. Amado Parawan, provided technical assistance to health workers in Tiwi, Albay, on screening malnutrition in children.

We also secured partnerships with four radio stations in Catanduanes—DZAS FRR 98.50 FM, Radyo Natin, Radyo Peryodiko, and Radyo Pilipinas—which have agreed to air our COVID-19 radio plugs free of charge.

We are also planning a cash assistance program for 1,200 families in Catanduanes. This will also integrate food security and child protection components through the provision of free vegetable seeds or seedlings and education about backyard farming, children’s rights, positive parenting, and reporting of child protection concerns.

Save the Children Philippines is also ready to work with the Department of Education in ensuring learning continuity for the children of Catanduanes.



Residents travel via a small boat to their homes in San Miguel, Catanduanes, after receiving their kits from Save the Children.



Children in Catanduanes show the items their families received from Save the Children.

SUPPORT OUR WORK

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Save the Children Philippines extends its sincerest gratitude to the following companies which supported us in our response to Super Typhoon Rolly:



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