



IOM and UNICEF: Enhancement of the Network of Evacuation Centers in Eastern Samar

First Disaster Resilient Evacuation Centre Opens in Guiuan, Philippines

On the 19th of April 2016, UNICEF and IOM joined partners and the local government of Guiuan to inaugurate the Philippines' first disaster-resilient evacuation centre. Ever since Super Typhoon Haiyan (locally named Yolanda) made landfall in Guiuan on the 8th of November 2013, the municipality has stepped up its disaster risk reduction efforts to minimize the effects of future disasters. The pilot community evacuation centre, funded by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Fuji TV, is the first in a network of evacuation centers in Eastern Samar that are being established through a partnership between UNICEF and IOM. At the inauguration, UNICEF Philippines Country Representative Lotta Sylwander stated that, "this disaster-resilient evacuation center symbolizes the resilience of Guiuananons who have been making great progress in rebuilding their community."

The building, able to withstand category 5 winds and magnitude-8 earthquakes, combines international best practices in disaster-resilient design for mass evacuation centres with local construction technologies and locally available materials. This provides safer shelter for up to 350 people during an emergency and allows the structure to be replicated at other sites across the Philippines. The building, called the *Sirungan ha Guiuan* (Shelter of Guiuan), was thoughtfully designed to address the needs of all members of the community, including vulnerable people. There is ample lighting to help prevent gender-based violence in crowded situations, a playground to ensure that children have a recreational space, as well as ramps and handrails for people with disabilities and the elderly. Furthermore, the design maximizes natural light and ventilation, and provides space for registration, information sharing and storage of supplies during mass evacuations.

Importantly for the humanitarian community, a dedicated evacuation center is a better alternative to the common practice of using schools as evacuation centres during emergencies, which can disrupt schooling for large numbers of children for extended periods. "UNICEF continues to work with local governments such as Guiuan to ensure that children are protected in times of emergencies," Ms Sylwander went on to remark. "IOM, with support from UNICEF, Fuji TV and the Municipality of Guiuan, constructed this building. After nine months of hard work of all the parties, the enthusiasm and professionalism of the project team and the unfailing support of our local and international partners has paid off with the completion of this multipurpose center," added IOM Philippines Chief of Mission Marco Boasso. The success of this initiative paves the way for further evacuation centres to be constructed and added to the Eastern Samar network in the near future.

For more information please see <http://www.iom.int/news/iom-unicef-open-first-typhoon-resilient-evacuation-centre-guiuan-philippines>



(Above) Completed evacuation centre in Guiuan © IOM 2016



(Above) Children with the evacuation centre's mural © IOM 2016



(Above) Inauguration Ceremony © IOM 2016



(Left) Planting trees on-site © IOM 2016