HAVE WE BEEN READY?

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These past few weeks it is evident that the nature’s wrath startled every Bataeños. The non-stop pour of moderate to heavy rains has flooded the province – a second time experience for everyone. It has been possible for Bataan to be prepared in this kind of calamity since it is a repetition of previous incident brought by Typhoon Millenio. It should have been anticipated that any time in the near future there will be much stronger typhoons and other natural calamities such as earthquakes and fires. Leaving us the question, “Were we really have been ready about these?”

The province of Bataan intensifies its programs about disasters, thus, given a concrete example of the MBDA which secures everyone in the province to accidents that would happen in streets. Evacuation centers were erected in each municipalities to attend possible evacuees in case of emergency and natural calamities. Rural Health Centers provides information that will help the people to survive a natural calamity through symposia and other training-workshops that would dealt to an aware citizen of the community. Aside from this, the education sector implements a unit of the program by providing Disaster Risk Reduction Management DRRM) Coordinator and centers in schools. This is to provide security and prepared in school in case it will be needed by the community or the province. There are preparations that has been made by the school for DRRM, in fact, there is a checklist of activities and preparations needed in order to say that the school is “Disaster Ready”.

The said checklist includes 1) Safety Checklist on Educational Facilities; 2) Safety Checklist on Health and Environment; and 3) Disaster Preparedness. The checklist in Educational Facilities includes the a) School Building; b) Ancillary Facilities such as school canteen, school clinic, guidance and counseling office, etc.; and c) WASH
Facilities that includes the handwashing area and water source. Each of these facilities should satisfy the components in it highest extent that it can be used both by the school and in case of emergency by private individuals who suffered from threats of the environment. Health and Environment is also one of the main component of checking if the school is conducive to hold such evacuees or not. As per prescribed in the checklist, the H&E includes a) School safety and security which focuses on road signs, pedestrian lanes, signs for physically impaired, identification cards for students and parents, and absence of relative gambling activities; and Health and environmental safety which primarily look for waste segregation, accessible first aid kits, clear and strict regulations on drugs and etc. Lastly, the school shall be identified Disaster friendly if it follows the checklist on disaster. Disaster checklist consist of 1) Regular Conduct of Drills; 2) School Preparedness that focuses on a) Plans, b) DRRM organization and Facilities, and c) DRRM Supplies and Equipment. Each checklist is necessary in creating a child-friendly and disaster free school.

However, most schools haven’t sustained this kind of preparation. Giving them a dilemma every time a natural phenomenon will occur – the feeling of insecurity and not being safe. It is best advised that each school has these kind of facilities and activities inside the school so that each person will be educated about what things that may happen. As always said, “Prevention is better than cure.” It may be hard at start of calamities, you may find it hard to survive yet with proper education and assistance from the government then somehow we may provide room for improvements and may tell to ourselves that WE ARE READY.

References:

Division Memorandum-March 6, 2017 (DRRM/Monitoring School Checklist for Disaster Prepared School)