

CARE Gender in Emergencies



**Women's journeys towards recovery:
One year after Haiyan**

INTRODUCTION

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon “Haiyan” struck the Philippines, particularly the Eastern and Western Visayas region. An estimated 16.1 million people were affected, with 1.1 million damaged or destroyed homes and as many as 4.1 million people displaced – nearly four times as many as those left homeless by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. At least 6,300 people were killed and another 5.9 million workers lost their livelihoods and sources of income to support their families.

This was by far the strongest typhoon ever hitting the country. “Yolanda”, as it was locally known, tested the Filipinos’ ability to withstand and rise from adversity, to adapt to adverse conditions, and to transform and thrive even when things are not going well. This disaster has taught women that they can step up and do more beyond their traditional roles. That they can rebuild their own houses, restart their livelihoods, work together to support schools, organize community events, and help look after neighbors’ needs.



CARE’s experience in the Philippines and around the world shows that natural disasters and armed conflict affect women, men, boys and girls differently. In “*Sex and Age Matter*”, research carried out by CARE and Feinstein International Center showed that programming is rarely informed by experiences of women and girls and the collection of sex and age disaggregated data. In the Philippines, widows became the sole providers and caretakers of their households, women and girls risked sexual and gender-based violence in evacuation centers and makeshift houses, girls faced particular challenges attending school in the aftermath of the storm, pregnant women suffered from unsafe deliveries, and there were protection issues amongst households who lost their houses and livelihoods.



In CARE’s operational areas around 48% of affected people were women and girls.

Mainstreaming Gender in CARE's Programming

CARE Philippines is working hard to make sure that women's needs and voices are heard and included in its programming to address protection and empowerment concerns. Households that are female-headed, child-headed, with disabled and older persons, or with the highest number of children and young girls were consciously prioritized for shelter and livelihood assistance.



Recognizing the valuable role women can play in the Haiyan recovery, they have been actively engaged in CARE's program beneficiary targeting and identification. Women were trained as community organizers and members of the shelter roving teams which ensured compliance to build back safer principles. They were also encouraged to lead income generating activities to meet their basic needs. Capacity building support was provided to ensure appropriate skills needed.

A year after, through the generous support from its donors CARE has surpassed its initial target of reaching 200,000 people or 40,000 households in the three worst-affected areas: Leyte, Samar and Panay.

As of November 2014, more than 48 percent of the 318,650 individuals having received CARE's food, shelter materials and livelihood assistance were women and girls.

This booklet shares the stories of these women, their inspiring journeys highlighting their strength as social weavers of their communities and source of life, love and care.



Aileen tends to the pig she bought with her first tranche of CARE's household cash transfer.

Aileen Militante, 38, from Cutay, Sta. Fe.

Single mother takes on non-traditional jobs to make ends meet

Juliet Inisa, 44, is a single mother of three children with 13, five and two years old.

Juliet used to cook and sell local delicacies to school children, waking up as early as 2 a.m. Juliet earned about 100 pesos (USD 2.50) daily for her efforts. To augment her income, she also raised pigs and chickens in her backyard.

Being a single mother was tough, but things became even harder when super typhoon Haiyan ravaged her town in the Panay Islands in the Philippines on November 8.

Juliet's home was badly damaged. Even her tools for livelihood, pots and pans, were destroyed, leaving her without an income for a month. She and her children had to evacuate to a nearby school. Her family slept on the school's stairs for more than two weeks, using only torn boxes and old floor mats to protect their backs.

Juliet then led the construction of a makeshift shelter with the help of kind neighbors. She salvaged whatever material she could find to save money – sparing nothing, not even bended nails

which she tried to straighten.

“There’s nothing I would not do for my children” she says.

Determined to bounce back from Haiyan's blows, she immediately borrowed money to be able to sell delicacies again earning roughly USD 2.50 a day. As Juliet wanted to earn more to rebuild a safer home she had no qualms taking on an extra job traditionally left to the men: drying rice grains on the streets. Her efforts earned her an extra USD 2.50 a day or rice from the owner.

In her situation, she was able to qualify for CARE's shelter assistance composed of construction materials and extra cash to help her rebuild a new and safer home which she and her children now enjoy.

“I really have to strive hard. Being a single mother carries with it a heavy burden, but there’s nothing I would not do and cannot do for my children. I will never allow them to go hungry.” Juliet Inisa, 44



*Marcela Cataros,
widow, partially
sighted,
Ormoc City,
Leyte province*



Marcela Cataros, 66, is partially sighted and walks with a limp. She acquired both conditions in separate accidents when she was still a kid. Being widowed so early, she had to work extra hard to provide for her three children by planting rice, working on coconut farms, and at some point, cooking and selling delicacies in the neighborhood.

Even now that her children are grown-up, she refuses to rely them for her own needs. Instead, Marcela continues to persevere by taking on jobs in the rice fields to help out her married children and her grandchildren in their day-to-day necessities disregarding her back that she claims “is not young anymore”. The only thing that could make her rest from work is the occasional regular illnesses like fever and headaches.

Marcela was also downed by the same sickness during the onslaught of Haiyan last year. She could hear the howling winds and the strong rains but was too weak to get up then. Outside, roofs were flying and houses were getting destroyed in their Esperanza village in typhoon-ravaged Ormoc City in the province of Leyte.

Her youngest son, Severio, 35, rushed to her rescue and carried her out of the house. “Hurry up! Hurry! Something might hit you here if the house breaks down”, she recalls her son’s anxious words. Mere minutes after Marcela was brought out, her house collapsed.

After the storm, only one post remained of her house. Marcela evacuated to her daughter’s home. But being self-sufficient all her life, she did not relish the thought of living in someone else’s home, even if it is with family. “They are already cramped there, with my grandchildren and all. I do not want to be an inconvenience for them. I feel shy living in another home”.

Marcela was determined to have her own home again, so that when the shelter assistance from CARE arrived, she was very much involved in the rebuilding of her home. With help from her son and some members of her community, she ensured the completion of her house’s construction following the build-back safer tips she learned from attending CARE’s training.

She also looks forward to earning an extra income from the piglet she is now raising with CARE’s livelihood intervention. This tireless grandmother plans to have a bigger piggery some day.

Mother boosting her family's recovery and confidence

When CARE provided shelter assistance to the Cutay village residents in Santa Fe municipality in the province of Leyte, Aileen Militante, 38, was lining up during the distribution of materials gripping with hope that her family would immediately start rebuilding their totally damaged home. She and her husband excitedly carried the construction items home. She assisted in any way she could during the construction by handing materials to her husband and brother-in-law and preparing their food as well.

“I did everything I could so that the rebuilding would be fast. I wanted so much to transfer to a better, safer home for my children, especially since I have a child with special needs, and sleeping in a makeshift shelter where it can get cold at nights, is not good for her”, Aileen shares.

When CARE gave out livelihood assistance in June 2014, Aileen decided to use the USD 70 to buy a piglet. This allowed her to tend to her children and manage her household at the same time.

But Aileen took on an even bigger task by participating in the livelihood program. Not only was she in charge of handling their household's cash grant, she also became a group



leader in their village in charge of monitoring the livelihood activities of her neighbours. Given this responsibility, she had a burst of confidence and pride that she was part of her community's recovery.

When she qualified for the second and larger livelihood cash assistance, Aileen and eleven other neighbours decided to pool half of their individual share to buy a carabao which can be rented out for farm work. She used the other half to buy

food for her piglet. She is hoping to expand into a bigger piggery once she starts earning.

It is very important for Aileen to boost her family's livelihood so she can help her husband provide better for her five children, especially her daughter's medicines. "Sometimes my daughter suffers from convulsion, and it hurts me to see her in pain. I wish her illness can be transferred to me since I'm older and stronger. I don't even know what her condition is called, only that the doctor says regular medication is needed to improve her health, something I hope to afford soon", shares Aileen.

Determined survivor copes with post-Haiyan effects

Gemma Garcia's life was turned upside down by Haiyan's devastation but she's willing to fight back and recover.

The 34-year old resident of the remote Tabang village in the municipality of typhoon-battered La Paz in Leyte province is a mother to four children ages six, eight, 11 and 12. Gemma's house was completely washed away by the disaster.

Through CARE's shelter assistance, Gemma's family has started to rebuild their home.

Gemma and her husband used to earn roughly USD 35 a month from coconut farming. Such earnings, along with a supplement income from other farming work, used to sustain their modest food needs and the school expenses of their children. But Haiyan destroyed even the coconut trees, which will take at least seven years to regrow and be productive again.

The first six months after the typhoon was particularly daunting for Gemma and her family. "Because of Haiyan, we had to alter our lives. With hardly a steady source of income for so many months, we had to save on food. Before we could afford to eat a full meal for breakfast; after the storm we had to skip breakfast. Sometimes, I would give up my share and just take coffee. My children have learned to adjust.", says Gemma.

Gemma's husband has started to prepare the farm to restore rice planting and other crops. He is still actively looking for further available farm work to earn a living for the family.

As a good and equal partner, Gemma wanted to contribute more than her fair share for her loved ones. She has also started a small vegetable farming for their food needs, which can generate a small income as well.

"If it were up to me, I would do everything to find work, even beyond this village or even outside the country. I have been asking around. I'm determined to work." Gemma shares. "I cannot remain idle when we're facing difficulties. My children are studying. I want to do something for them", she adds.



Gemma Garcia is determined to cope with post-Haiyan effects.

A leader emerges after Haiyan

At 61 years old, Marlyn Iradiel looks frail and when she walks, her back hunches a bit. Hard lines are visible on her face. She also talks in a soft voice. But her looks and gentle demeanour betray her resolute spirit to surmount the challenges super typhoon Haiyan dumped on her once quiet life.

Marlyn lost her house when Haiyan battered her hometown of Malinao in the province of Aklan on Panay Island. During the storm, her husband, Edelito, 59, became so nervous that he suffered a stroke. It left him paralyzed.

Edelito used to lead an active life as a farm worker and carpenter. Now, while nursing her husband, Marlyn also had to take over the task of earning for the family and to lead the rebuilding of their house.

Marlyn shows no hint of anger or bitterness for how difficult her life has suddenly become after Haiyan. She is more concerned about how her husband is coping with his condition, not just physically, but also psychologically. “If only I’m not like this, our house would have been rebuilt by now. I feel for you – that you are assuming the role that I should have been fulfilling,” Marlyn recalls her husband’s pained words.

Given her household’s condition, Marlyn received a shelter repair kit which contained corrugated iron sheets, nails and carpentry tools. “I’m excited because on my own, I could not afford to buy those materials. With the shelter repair kit, we can now start rebuilding our house,” she says.

Marlyn was not just there to get her package, but also to be a volunteer assistant team leader. She was in charge of helping CARE’s distribution by monitoring the flow of materials and ensuring that her fellow beneficiaries get the right amount of materials. This gave her a sense of fulfillment because she wanted to help her neighbors so their recovery can move faster too.

Marlyn and her husband not only enjoy their newly restored home but also the respect she earned from her community.

Marlyn’s participation as volunteer assistant team leader in the shelter program has given her a sense of fulfillment.



Young mother discovers her innate skills



Evea Delicano, 30, was just starting her family life with a seven-month old baby when Haiyan battered her village in Albuera municipality in Leyte. Nothing prepared her for the storm's devastating strength. "It was beyond what we imagined. I could see trees being uprooted, roofs being torn off and iron sheets flying", says Evea.

When she went back to her house, all she saw was a single post remaining while the rest of the home was gone. Evea's husband built a makeshift shelter by putting together salvaged materials from the typhoon's debris.

CARE gave shelter assistance to their village inspiring the start of the rebuilding process for Evea's family. "I was really thankful for the help. I was so happy to start rebuilding. My husband, father and a hired carpenter finished mounting the house's foundation and roof, complete with steel strapping in three days", says Evea. Unfortunately, it still lacked walling. A pleasant surprise came when Evea learned that CARE will give an additional shelter assistance package to the most vulnerable households which fortunately included hers.

"Your assistance inspires us to rise and recover, and on our end, we promise to do what we can."

Evea told her husband: "We will have the money to buy plywood for our walls! We will be the ones this time to buy the specific items we need!" In excitement, she went to the market to research prices of the materials they lack. The total came just about the cash grant's amount. The young mother is determined to see her home's completion. She is grateful that CARE has given her the chance to design and see through the completion of her house. The process also allowed her to manage the cash assistance and be accountable for it.

"My husband says I'm good in handling money. I will really ensure that the shelter cash grant given to us will only go to shelter-related expenses. It's my dream to have a completely finished home for my baby. I'm really thankful that CARE is here."

Steadfast mother moves a community towards recovery

Being resolute saw Venia Gresda, 42, through the crises in her life. Her husband died of heart attack in 2005. As a young widow, she single-handedly provided for her four children through farming and tending to a small convenience store. She successfully sent all her children to college by actively searching for scholarships for them.

Another crisis hit Venia's life when their village of San Miguelay in Santa Fe municipality in Leyte province was heavily affected by Haiyan. Most of the houses were totally damaged and the fields were destroyed as well.

CARE provided shelter assistance composed of construction materials and cash grants to the San Miguelay villagers. Her neighbours volunteered Venia to be their community mobilizer tasked with monitoring the rebuilding progress of the homes and providing technical assistance to residents. Venia took on the challenge.

"I value the trust and confidence of my neighbours. Every day, I would go out and roam our village, house by house, whether under the scorching heat of the sun or even when it was raining hard. I asked my neighbours to follow CARE's guidelines in building back safer techniques. I also studied it and can explain the process myself." She also works closely with the two village carpenters in providing technical assistance to neighbours as they construct their homes.

"Sometimes our carpenters tend to be shy. I encourage them that it is our duty to make the residents comply with 'building back safer' techniques. I also motivate the carpenters when they get frustrated with having to explain so much. So we devised a way: I will do most of the talking, even explanations, while they demonstrate the techniques." Venia's perseverance and patience have paid off. Some residents would even tell her that they are more inspired because of her.

"I would do everything; laugh with them, banter with them, so long as we all follow build back safer techniques in the end, for our own protection in the future should more storms come. This is especially true for families with small children. I feel for the children who are staying in makeshift homes, exposed to the elements. That is why it's very important to build back safer."



"As a community mobilizer, I have to ensure that my neighbors follow the build-back safer principles."

Young mother learns to dream again

Dina Quano, 21, a mother of two feels that super typhoon Haiyan is one nightmare she won't be able to forget for a long time.

"When the winds grew fiercer and our roof started to be blown off, we made a run to the health center. My father took my sister's two children with him. I had my two-year old child. Mother held my barely a month-old baby", shares Dina.

In the ensuing tense moments of running through ferocious winds and flying debris all over, Dina lost track of her father and her sister's children. She was able to stay close to her mother and her children, but what happened next is Dina's worst memory of the disaster.

"My mother was able to wrap my baby in a thick blanket. Half way through our run, a fresh wave of really strong winds blew our way. My mother lost her balance and she slid, and unfortunately dropped my baby. My baby rolled on the ground", narrates Dina.



"The disaster was harsh, but surviving it has also inspired me to dream again. I want to finish my interrupted college education since I married early. I want to graduate so I could find better work, and my children can be proud of me."

Dina screamed at her mother to pick up her baby immediately, and feared for the worst. "I was crying, thinking that I might have lost my baby."

Dina felt tremendous relief when she saw her baby breathing when they reached the evacuation site. The harrowing experience briefly turned euphoric when she reunited with the rest of her family. "I was so happy that we were all alive, that we were saved from harm."

Dina's heart sank again when she saw that her house and her parents' shelter were totally damaged. The sacks of rice they have been saving were also washed away.

Dina qualified for a larger shelter assistance package from CARE composed of materials and cash grant of USD180. Today, she is on her way to completing her shelter.

Her family has also received livelihood assistance allowing Dina to expand her piggery and restore the farm destroyed by Haiyan. "I realized more than any thing, that it is a blessing to be alive."



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