



## OXFAM IN THE PHILIPPINES

### 'Washing with bubbles'

Hygiene and water kits post Typhoon Haiyan



Story & photos by Jane Beesley  
Oxfam Humanitarian Support Personnel – Program Communications

**O**n 8<sup>th</sup> November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan struck parts of the Philippines with winds around 195 mph and creating a tsunami like storm surge killing over 6,000 people, displacing over 4 million and destroying or damaging over 1 million houses. Today over 1,500 people are still missing, an,



estimated, area the size of Portugal has been devastated and over 14.1 million people have been affected. Oxfam is working in three areas, Leyte, Eastern Samar and North Cebu, providing humanitarian assistance in water, sanitation, hygiene, livelihoods support and emergency shelter.

Along with the many homes lost or damaged people lost essential and basic items in the typhoon and storm surge. Now living in extremely poor conditions public health risks are high and outbreaks of sickness and disease can spread quickly. Children under five, the elderly and other

vulnerable people are particularly at risk.

Consequently, amongst the first things Oxfam distributed were hygiene and water kits to help prevent disease outbreaks.

A basic hygiene kit contains soap for personal use, household soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, bed sheets, underwear for women, men and children, mats, sanitary towels and 'Malong', which are pieces of cloth that can be worn but have been described by those who have received them as 'An all round item with many uses.' In post distribution discussions people said, besides wearing, they used the 'malong' as a sheet, to protect themselves from the sun or mosquitoes, as a face cloth or towel, to cover their bodies to maintain dignity when washing outside. The kit amounts are based on a family size of five.



*'I cried when I opened the bag. There were so many items. So many things we all need.'* Vergie Ochia

Contaminated water puts people's health at risk so Oxfam distributes jerry cans and bottles of 'Hyposol' for disinfecting the water, to ensure people can access safe drinking water. People are provided with information about how to use Hyposol. Each 100ml bottle is enough to disinfect water for one family for one month.

*'Having the jerry cans and Hyposol has been a big help for us. Before we had our own water facet in the house but all that was destroyed in the typhoon. Now we have to collect water from elsewhere and it's not safe to drink.'* Letty Bulit

Hand washing with soap is among the most effective and inexpensive ways to prevent diarrhoeal diseases and pneumonia, which together are responsible for the deaths of over 3.5 million children under the age of 5 every year. On current evidence, washing hands with soap can reduce the risk of diarrhoeal diseases by 42-47% and interventions to promote hand washing might save a million lives.'

<http://www.globalhandwashingday.org.uk>

When asked for feedback about the hygiene kits Diego Bermiso (right), laughed and rubbed his arms up and down, 'We can wash with bubbles!'



In an emergency simple bars of soap for washing hands, bathing and washing clothes not only keeps people healthy but helps restore dignity too.

*'The hygiene and water kits are a big help to us. We lost most of our things and don't have money to go to the market to buy anything so everything is useful. There's nothing that's not useful! We need it all.'* Romeo

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