Disaster in the Philippines: Typhoon Haiyan

The Philippines is a disaster prone area experiencing both earthquakes and typhoons in recent years. On 7 November 2013 Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines killing over 6,000 people and affecting more 16 million people. It has become the most deadly natural disaster in country's history. (BBC, 2013). Typhoon Haiyan is known in the Philippines as Yolanda, and was the 25th typhoon to hit the country in 2013.

Devastation in Guian, Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan



Source: Flickr user robertodevido

When the typhoon made landfall at Samar on 7 November, 315km/h winds caused what was described by local people as 'a wall of wind and rain'. The winds near Tacloban city in Leyte province, which was one of the worst affected areas, blew water ashore over 7.5m high. As much of the city is less than 5m above sea level meaning that most of the city was completely engulfed by water.

The government issued a major typhoon warning and evacuated thousands of people to shelters prior to the typhoon making landfall but Haiyan was unique in both scale and impact and it went beyond the capacity of preparations. In some areas the risks from the typhoon were not fully understood. Even some of the shelters that were considered safe were totally destroyed.

Disasters in the Philippines: Typhoon Haiyan

The continued effects of natural disas- ters in the Philippines
Published: January 2014

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On 7th November 2013 Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines

16 million people have been affected by the disaster and 1.2 million houses have been damaged or destroyed.

Impacts

6000
People killed making it the most deadly natural disaster in the country's history

28,600
People injured as a result of the typhoon

4.1 million
People still displaced by mid January 2014

1.2 million
Houses that have been destroyed or damaged

International Aid



Satellite images show the extent of the storm. If the storm had been placed over a map of Europe it would cover the distance between London and Berlin.

International Aid

Many countries pledged financial aid to the Philippines shortly after the typhoon

Australia: £28 million package including medical staff, shelter materials, water containers and hygiene kits

China: $1.6 million in relief goods plus $200,000

Indonesia: Logistical aid including aircraft, food, generators, and medicine

Japan: $10 million including tents and blankets, 1000 soldiers and medical team

South Korea: $5 million

United Arab Emirates: $10 million

United Kingdom: $55 million including 1,400 tents

United States: $20 million, 90 marines and an aircraft carrier

A substantial amount of aid was also given from the Asian Development Bank ($500 million in emergency loans) and the European Commission ($11 million)

A country overwhelmed



Why was dealing with the impacts of the typhoon so difficult?

Geography
The Philippines are a network of over 7000 islands which have highly dense urban populations as well as remote and mountainous regions.

Repeated disaster
Typhoon Haiyan was the 25th typhoon in the Philippines in 2013.

Too much to handle
The government was overwhelmed as the country was recovering from the impacts of the Bohol earthquake in October 2013

Restricted access
Damages to roads and infrastructure made distribution of aid difficult. Tacloban airport in Leyte province was badly damaged.

How does Haiyan compare?

Typhoon Haiyan
- Philippines November 2013
- Winds reaching 315 km/h
- Category 5 at landfall
- 6,100+ killed
- Cost: $1.5 billion

Typhoon Megi
- Philippines October 2010
- Winds reaching 268 km/h
- Category 5 at landfall
- 60+ killed
- Cost: $709 million

Typhoon Bopha
- Philippines December 2012
- Winds reaching 261 km/h
- Category 5 at landfall
- 1000+ killed
- Cost: $1 billion

Hurricane Katrina
- USA 2005
- Winds reaching 205 km/h
- Category 3 at landfall (but reached Category 5)
- 1,800+ killed
- Cost: $108 billion

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Relevance

This can be used as a case study in the area of natural hazards across most specifications.

AQA – Unit GEO3 Contemporary Geographical Issues: can be used as a case study of a tropical revolving storm, and also when considering hazards associated with weather and climate.

Edexcel – Unit 1 Global Challenges: can be used to explore how physical and human environments combine to cause disasters. Unit 2 Geographical Investigations: will be useful for those covering the optional theme of 'Extreme Weather'.

IB – Part 2 Optional theme hazards and disasters: risk and response.

OCR – F763: Global Issues: can be used a case study of a tropical storm hazard and for considering the impacts of such storms at different scales.

Pre-U – Component 1: Geographical Issues Section A Hazardous Weather: can be used to explore causes, consequence of and management of hazardous weather event. S

WJEC–Unit 3: Theme 3: Climatic Hazards: can be used as a case study to examine the impacts of hazardous weather and strategies to reduce such impacts.

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