

Oxfam's first Peepoo intervention in the Philippines



Philippines, Tacloban 2013



Background

On November 8 2013, Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines with devastating brutality affecting 14,1 million people and displacing over 4 million people. Typhoon Haiyan ended up being the deadliest event of 2013 in the Asia-Pacific, killing more than 6,000 people and damaging around 1 million houses.

Reports from the areas hit by the typhoon indicated heavy damage to sanitation infrastructure, particularly at household level, where thousands of people were left without any toilet facilities.

Barangay 42A is one of the slum areas/barangays in Tacloban City. Half of its area is nearby the Mangon Bangon River, which became a much-polluted creek at this time. The other half of the village area is located on the mountainside. The barangay has 445 families and the majority of them live in a poverty level.

Open defecation was a major problem in Barangay 42A even prior to attack of typhoon Haiyan, which was aggravated after the typhoon. In Oxfam's emergency response, Peepoo was introduced to the villagers who didn't have latrines as an alternative, or mean while latrine construction was still in the making.

PEEPOO FACTS

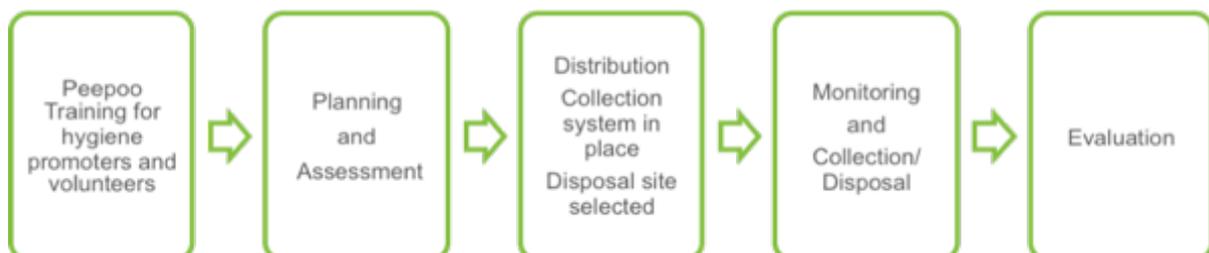
Peepoo is a personal, single-use, self-sanitising, fully biodegradable toilet that prevents faeces from contaminating the immediate area as well as the surrounding ecosystem. After use, Peepoo turns into valuable fertiliser that can be used to improve livelihoods and increase food security.

Peepoos come in sealed packs, containing 28 toilets, as well a biodegradable disposal bag, Moyla. The packs are developed with the purpose of making Peepoo quick to distribute in the field and available for use from day one. The whole Peepoo sanitation system is also created to minimise maintenance cost and maximising safety when disposing of human waste. Since the human waste becomes harmless inside Peepoo and the material is completely biodegradable, it is safe to dispose of in the ground, without risking contaminating people or the environment and the ground water.

Implementation

Oxfam distributed Peepoos in Barangay 42A in Tacloban City. The beneficiaries were from 300 households (of the 445) and two distributions were conducted during two months.

It was clearly announced to the people during the consultation that Peepoo would only last for one month yet due to congested setting of the community houses construction of communal latrine was not that easy. This caused the Peepoo program to extend for almost an additional month. In short, Peepoo lasted for almost two months in barangay 42A.



Peepoo Training

Two Peepoo field coordinators were deployed to support Oxfam with Peepoo training. Ten of Oxfam's local hygiene promoters and volunteers were trained using participatory training methods combining technical and local knowledge covering the areas of:

- Use of Peepoo and applicability
- Community promotion (tools and triggers)
- Appropriate disposal systems

Assessment

The sites for Peepoo distribution were assessed through site visits, interviews with key informants as well as gender separated focus group discussions (FDG). The assessment focused on sanitation habits in the community before and after Haiyan, as well as people's willingness to use Peepoo.

Open defecation was a major problem in Barangay 42A even prior to typhoon Haiyan. About 60% of the village households had no toilets before the typhoon and it rose up to 70% after the disaster. Creeks, drains and sidewalks were polluted with faeces, which posed an increasing public health risk. In Oxfam's emergency response, series of meetings was conducted with the Barangay leaders and volunteers for consultation. Community action plans, roles and responsibilities were agreed and the Peepoo collection mechanism was established. Barangay 42A raised the need and the acceptability of Peepoo.

Distribution

Trained promoters and volunteers distributed Peepoo on site. They also conducted Peepoo Community Promotion with focus on the appropriate use of Peepoo, the correct disposal of Peepoo and hand washing after defecation. The distribution consisted of Peepoo Personal Packs (28 Peepoos and 1 Moyla, disposal bag) and Peepoo Kitis (seat to be used with Peepoo).



Oxfam's staff distributing Peepoo in barangay 42A. Woman showing how she used Peepoo during monitoring.

Collection and Disposal

The beneficiaries through Oxfam's WASH staff set a daily schedule for the collection and disposal of used Peepoos. Three persons were paid for its collection under the Cash For Work (CFW) program. The collectors' task was to roam around the village for collection, bringing the Peepoo collection barrels to Oxfam's transport vehicle and facilitate the dumping at the sludge pit in Sto. Niño dump site, which was cleared by sanitation inspectors through the department of health (DOH). Every second day, Peepoos were brought to the disposal site and disposed of in shallow pits and then covered with soil.

When the payment for collectors had been stopped, the community mobilised the people to bury their used Peepoos in pits they have dug at the mountain side of the village while construction of temporary communal latrines were still in its making. The overall Peepoo intervention was a big success in barangay 42-A.



Collection barrel in barangay 42A and collection vehicle at disposal site.

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring was used to gather instant feedback to ensure correct usage and disposal. Oxfam based the monitoring on the Peepoople monitoring form where focus was on observation and practical demonstration of the correct use and disposal of Peepoos. Monitoring was reported continuously allowing for challenges to be straightened.

Evaluation of the complete WASH response was carried out. Based on these findings the effects of Peepoo response to provide guidance and lessons learned for the wider application of the Peepoo solution.

Lessons learnt

Peepoo lasted for two months and the acceptance of the people was great. During the FGDs with groups of females, males and children, it was found out that the people were thankful and very positive about the product. According to the Barangay leaders especially the Chairman as well as the two Peepoo collectors, there had been a big change in the villagers' defecation practice and their surroundings. Open defecation practice, which was very common to their community, had almost vanished. There had been fewer incidences of "flying saucers" (faeces put in a plastic bag and thrown away anywhere) practices and the people's awareness on safe excreta disposal had increased.

Since many implementing organisations find Peepoo applicable in first phase response the following is important to remember:

- Peepoo toilet is a plausible solution to bridge the gap of the constraints in accessing materials/equipment for toilets/latrines during emergencies.
- It is preferred to have the Peepoo products prepositioned in the affected country to ensure quick dispatch to affected sites, which is possible since the solution is compact and cost effective to stock (11 000 Peepoo Personal Packs in a 20" container). Co-packed pallets Peepoo/Kiti are preferred to avoid incomplete solutions on site and to make the logistics easier for the implementing staff.
- It is preferred to have had Peepoo training of the implementing organisations' staff prior to intervention, to ensure efficient role out. This also contributes to awareness and understanding of the Peepoo solution by ground staff, which is vital for high quality role out and a committed team. Peepoople's involvement should be agreed on prior to intervention in order to avoid misunderstandings, and for the ground staff to know what support they could get from Peepoople field officers.
- Cash-for-work program is a suitable resource for collection activities. The disposal mechanisms should be defined prior Peepoo distribution, incl. official approval if required.
- Lastly, it is important to have a plan for exit/continuous sanitation practice, before the distribution of Peepoos ends.

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