First Steps Toward Recovery
Typhoon Haiyan Debris Removal

Students returned to their studies as a result of the UNDP’s debris clearance in hard-hit Fisherman’s Village in Tacloban.
On 8 November, 2013, a Category Five typhoon slammed into the Visayas region of the Philippines. Typhoon Haiyan, or Yolanda as it’s known locally, killed over 6,300 people and displaced a further 4 million.

One of the first tasks facing the emergency responders was clearing debris. In Tacloban alone there was over 1.15 million cubic metres of debris. Concrete, mud, timber, vehicles and personal affects littered the streets clogging up vital roadways in the relief operation.

UNDP was instrumental in the widespread debris clean-up. Experts on the ground helped establish the Clearing and Cleaning Task Force at Tacloban’s City Hall that coordinated the agencies, governments and contractors, all of whom worked night and day to clear away the debris and help restore daily life of the people affected by Haiyan.

The storm surge was so powerful that it dragged a large ocean liner inland. While the boat remains, people have risen up around it in Anibong, Tacloban.
Opening the roads was a top priority following the disaster. Life-saving aid flowed quickly once the debris was cleared like debris from this road in Barangay 89.

The mindset of the affected population was one of optimism and moving forward. In Tacloban, the motto *Tindog Tacloban* or *Rise up Tacloban*, was widely quoted.
Debris clogged the canal making it a solid viaduct of wood, mud and twisted metal. With the help of emergency funds, workers spent a few weeks scooping out the debris returning the canal to its original state.