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**War on Worms and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene  
(WOW-A-WASH): Integration of Helminthiasis Control  
with Wash in Selected Haiyan-Stricken and Armed Conflict  
Areas in the Philippines**

- GRANTEE:** University of the Philippines Manila (UPM)
- PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Vicente Belizario, Jr., MD
- INDUSTRY PARTNER:** Plan International Philippines
- GRANT PERIOD:** February 1, 2017 to January 31, 2018
- CONTRACT AMOUNT:** Php 3,759,943.60 (approximately USD80,000)

**Effective public health management**

Soil-transmitted *helminthiasis* (STH) and *schistosomiasis* (SCH) are neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) that remain public health concerns in the Philippines. STH and SCH, if left untreated, may contribute to poor nutrition resulting in stunted growth, cognitive deficits, poor academic performance, and predisposition to and exacerbation of co-infections. Preschool-age children (PSAC) and school-age children (SAC) are among the populations at-risk for STH and SCH due to poor hygiene practices, especially in places where open defecation (OD) persists. Deworming is the main strategy for STH and SCH morbidity control. However, deworming alone will not break the transmission of these infections; there is a need to end OD and improve access to improved water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in endemic communities.



*The research team meets with STRIDE for the finalization of grants requirements*

Effective morbidity control for STH and SCH has been demonstrated through the War on Worms (WOW) Campaign. WOW, which is developed and implemented by UPM, is an approach that includes advocacy, capacity building, social mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation partnered with deworming.

Plan International, on the other hand, has been implementing WASH efforts through community-led total sanitation. This proposed study will aim to demonstrate the feasibility of integrating the WOW Campaign with WASH among preschool and school-aged children. Selected sites will be from Haiyan-stricken areas in Eastern Samar and in armed conflict areas in Maguindanao, as these areas have considerable negative socioeconomic conditions that perpetuate and spread STH and SCH.

A situation analysis, comprised of review, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions, will be conducted to describe the status of WASH and STH and SCH control in selected sites. In addition, parasitologic parameters and validated WASH indicators will be collected through laboratory diagnosis and household surveys, respectively. A geographical information system map for the spatial visualization and surveillance will be generated using parasitologic parameters and WASH indicators. Based on the collected data and generated maps, an integration plan will be developed together with key local stakeholders in order to implement a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach for STH and SCH. To ensure continuity of the project and execution of integration plan, overall oversight will be transferred to the Regional Development Council and the Regional Implementation and Coordination Team, which are composed of various government and non-governmental agencies.

The implementation of such integration will help reduce infections suffered by preschool and school-aged children that will help improve their nutritional status and educational outcomes. The results of the study will also yield new strategies for more effective control and eventual elimination of STH and SCH in poverty-stricken areas in the Philippines.