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*Disaster-readiness of the National Library of the Philippines**

Disasters happen when you least expect it. Often they cause irreversible damage to the collection of a library. The National Library houses several important materials like the incunabulas, rare serials, Garcia and Quezon papers, Philippine Revolutionary Records, the rare Rizaliana collection as well as several books and manuscripts. To be able to minimize the damage or even prevent disasters from happening they must always be ready. For an institution to be ready they must perform risk analysis in the building; have a disaster plan, a trained disaster team, emergency equipment and supplies, access to support services and experts, and a budget for its disaster management. The data were gathered from an interview with the Acting Chief Administrative Officer and the Chief of the Property Section of The National Library, survey questionnaire given to the staff, and photo documentation to verify the data gathered from the interview. Based on the data gathered from the interview, survey questionnaires and site visits, the researcher was able to make these observations: 1) Most of the staff (83) was well-informed about the importance of a disaster plan and disaster team. Some (46) were skilled and knowledgeable in operating emergency equipments and most (50) of them were willing to take on any role that will assigned to them. However, they were not trained to respond as a team. 2) The National Library is equipped to combat fire. However, the soundness of its fire suppressants needs to be checked. Problem areas have been identified and steps were taken to reinforce and repair them. However, there was no equipment to detect flood. The building is also not regularly inspected. 3) The national Library has no disaster kit. 4) The National Library will have a hard time during the

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reaction and recovery phase because it has no emergency numbers of institutions in times of disasters, and has no access to experts and support services which can help respond, recover and restore collections damaged by disasters. 5) Evacuation of users and staff in case of disasters will be problematic since emergency exits are locked and exit routes are littered with library materials. 6) The National Library has no disaster plan and has no budget for disaster management. The researcher would like to recommend that The National Library should: 1) Devise a way to evaluate the soundness of its fire extinguishers. 2) Unlock the emergency exits, clear the path and make sure that the exit signs can easily be seen by the users and staff. 3) Create a directory or a disaster tree that contains information and numbers of institutions, agencies, support services and experts that can be tapped to help if a disaster occurs. 4) Strengthen its alliance with institutions and agencies (i.e. fire department and the fire brigades. The Records Management and Archives Office) that will be of great help to them when a disaster does occur. 5) Form a well-trained disaster team. They should also expose the whole staff to disaster drills, lectures and forums about disaster management on a regular basis. Train more staff on how to operate emergency equipment. 6) Purchase basic disaster kits. 7) Perform risk analysis on the building. 8) Create a disaster plan and provide a budget for disaster management.