

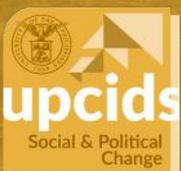


UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES  
CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES  
**PUBLIC POLICY MONOGRAPHS**

# Rebuilding Disaster-Affected Communities for a Sustainable Future:

Lessons and Policy Recommendations for  
Poverty Alleviation from the  
Typhoon Yolanda Experience

MARIA ELA L. ATIENZA  
Editor



University of  
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# Introduction

In 2015, the project *Poverty Alleviation in the Wake of Typhoon Yolanda* (Project Yolanda) began. Funding for the project was provided by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Department for International Development (DFID) (ES/M008932/1) of the United Kingdom (UK). The project team is composed of researchers from the University of Nottingham (UK and Ningbo China campuses) and the University of the Philippines (UP) (Diliman and Manila campuses and Tacloban College). A memorandum of agreement between the University of Nottingham UK and UP Diliman, through its Department of Political Science, enabled this project to be a formal collaborative research undertaking between the two institutions.

The overarching aim of the project is two-fold: (1) to identify strategies that work in relation to poverty alleviation in post-disaster environments, and (2) to ascertain the conditions necessary for the scaling up of these strategies based on the case of relief efforts in selected Yolanda (international name Haiyan)-affected areas. Project Yolanda focuses on urban population risk, vulnerability to disasters, and resilience towards environmental shocks. The frameworks of the research project are resilience and human security. In terms of its practical objective, the project assessed selected barangays (villages), mostly those affected by the super typhoon, across three local governments in Leyte, namely Tacloban City and the municipalities of Palo and Tanauan. From 2015 to 2018, project team members, with the help of students and early career faculty of UP Visayas – Tacloban College, conducted documentary reviews, key informant interviews, household surveys across twenty barangays done three times, repeated focus group discussions with selected sectors, and qualitative interviews with forty selected families. The project has now wrapped up and the team members are in the process of analyzing the voluminous data gathered and developing various research outputs that can benefit different stakeholders.

The current monograph covers the four panels that comprise Project Yolanda's seminar workshop, *Four years on: Rebuilding disaster affected communities for a sustainable future*, held on 7 November 2017 at Balay Kalinaw, University of the Philippines Diliman. The goal of the seminar-workshop was to disseminate the project's research findings to different stakeholders and for them to share their experiences in and lessons from the rebuilding of Yolanda-affected areas in order to come up with policy recommendations for poverty alleviation not only in the Philippines, but also in other countries facing development issues and humanitarian crises. Hence, the four sections (role of external actors in disaster risk reduction and management, housing and community, gender and livelihood, and implications for governance and future policy) highlight the experiences and lessons learned from Yolanda as well as policy recommendations.

The Philippine-based researchers of the Project Yolanda team wishes to thank our principal investigator Dr. Pauline Eadie (University of Nottingham UK), co-investigator Dr. May Tan-Mullins (University of Nottingham Ningbo), researcher Dr. Georgia Spiliopoulos (University of Nottingham Ningbo), our field workers from UP Visayas – Tacloban College, our seminar-workshop's

resource persons/panelists and participants representing various stakeholders, and the supportive administrative staff of the Department of Political Science, UP Diliman. We are especially grateful to Ambassador Daniel Pruce of the Embassy of the UK in the Philippines and Dean Maria Bernadette L. Abrera of the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy (CSSP), UP Diliman for attending our November 2017 seminar-workshop, giving the welcome remarks, and supporting our project. We also wish to thank Miss Bianca Franco for transcribing the recordings of the whole-day workshop. For this monograph, we are grateful for the support of the Program on Social and Political Change and the Publications Unit of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS).

We are releasing this monograph near the time—8 November 2013 to be exact—that Yolanda has devastated large areas in Eastern Visayas five years ago. It is our hope that various sectors have learned valuable insights from Yolanda and there are enough stakeholders committed to review and improve policies and programs dealing with disaster risk reduction and management as well as sustainable development. After five years since Yolanda has happened, there is still a lot to be done particularly in the Philippines to deal with the related issues of poverty alleviation and disaster risk reduction and management.

**MARIA ELA L. ATIENZA, Ph.D.**

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Co-convenor, Program on Social and Political Change,  
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The Project Yolanda team with Zosimo E. Lee, Ph.D. (Former Dean, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines Diliman), Maria Bernadette L. Abrera, Ph.D. (Dean, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines Diliman), Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Philippines Daniel Pruce, and resource persons and participants during the 7 November 2017 seminar-workshop.





# The Role of External Assistance in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

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Co-convenor, Program on Social and Political Change, UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies, and  
Co-investigator, Project Yolanda

While disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) is a responsibility of national and local governments, the international community also has a role to play in disaster and risk prevention, reduction, and management. In the case of Typhoon Yolanda in November 2013, the international community has responded overwhelmingly. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (UN OCHA) data in 2016 show that foreign aid (contributions, commitments, and carry-over) for victims of typhoon Yolanda as reported by various governments, UN agencies, other international groups, the private sector, and citizens reached US\$865,151,866. The United Kingdom (UK) was the number one donor, followed by private donations, the United States, the UN, Canada, Japan, and the European Union (EU).

The first panel discussed the role of external assistance in DRRM using the experience of Yolanda. Aside from the tentative insights from Project Yolanda, the panel also discussed the experiences and recommendations from three international agencies, namely Oxfam, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and World Vision, who all had or continue to have engagements in the areas affected by the super typhoon. The following were the panelists:

- (1) Dr. Maria Ela L. Atienza, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman
- (2) Mr. Dante Dalabjan, Economic Justice Program, Oxfam in the Philippines
- (3) Ms. Eden Garde, Typhoon Yolanda Response and Recovery Project, Crisis Prevention and Recovery Programmes, UNDP Philippines
- (4) Ms. Meraldy Doñoiz, formerly affiliated with World Vision

## External assistance, human security and resilience in Yolanda areas

Dr. Atienza presented some of the preliminary findings of Project Yolanda assessing the role of external actors in the area of human security and resilience. Human security, which covers three freedoms (freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity), also

covers two approaches, namely (1) top-down or protection approach which is what is expected from government and external actors initially and (2) the longer-term bottom-up or empowerment approach since external assistance has limits. Resilience is related to human security since people and communities should have the capacity to prepare for disruptions, recover from shocks and stresses, and adopt and grow from a disruptive experience. Since resilience is particularly tied with vulnerability and capacity, the focus of the analysis is on marginalization because the human security approach targets the most vulnerable and it directly addresses factors that increase vulnerability to poverty, disease, conflict, and disempowerment. It also requires mechanisms to be established at different levels of government to focus on governance to protect communities from threats. Thus, local communities should be the locus of disaster preparedness activities.

In the Philippines, there is already a strong set of policies, frameworks, and plans that actually allow the participation of international agencies in DRRM. The Philippines' DRRM Law, which was passed in 2010, already created a national DRRM council as well as counterpart local councils at different levels of local government units (LGUs). Furthermore, the 1991 Local Government Code has already devolved to LGUs various responsibilities, including DRRM. In these laws and frameworks, there are points for multilevel governance, including partnership and coordination with foreign and international agencies. Under the UN OCHA which started operating in the Philippines even before Yolanda, the UN cluster system is the framework being followed in multilevel partnerships. The Philippine national government also has a national cluster system in place during emergencies. However, there are some administrative and resource problems in the national and local frameworks even before Yolanda. Most of the local DRRM councils and bodies are understaffed and underfunded and very few local councils are actually operational with working disaster plans.

Immediately after Yolanda, there was plenty of foreign involvement, particularly in relief and reconstruction efforts. Based on official and academic data, the national government has played a key role during the response efforts with the international UN cluster system joining the government cluster system. There were a number of exemplary cases of good coordination among different sectors, such as the work of the UN OCHA; the programs of the UN water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and protection clusters; and the Tanauan LGU's sectoral coordination system in relation with external assistance. Coordination was made possible but there were also significant tensions between the government, on the one hand, and international agencies and NGOs, on the other, as the latter's response actually led to the sudden influx of international actors, which undermined the usual procedures and relationships established by the Philippine government. Some foreign agencies also bypassed and did not consult government agencies and local communities in terms of priority needs. There were also cases of different actors working in parallel and duplicating efforts alongside cases of exemplary programming and coordination. The parallel efforts occurred because of the following: (1) some NGOs and even LGUs being unaware of the cluster system; (2) preference or policies of some foreign agencies and other external actors not to coordinate with government agencies; (3) no active engagement of non-cluster local and international actors perhaps due to the magnitude and need for immediate action; (4) weakness of some LGUs that were further overwhelmed and incapacitated by the disaster to coordinate and absorb assistance; and (5) limitations of the National DRRM Council (NDRRMC) to monitor the assistance and coordination at different levels. The result was market distortion with some families and communities getting multiple or duplicate aid in terms of cash, supplies, and livelihood packages like boats, even if they are not appropriate, while others who also needed assistance received nothing.

What has been the impact of foreign and international agencies on human security and resilience? They were very helpful in the relief or emergency phase but given that not all of

them have long-term engagement in the area, they were not able to address livelihood and long-term empowerment of communities left behind after the first two years of massive assistance. They were able to contribute a lot in terms of infrastructure development (schools, health centers, barangay and multipurpose/evacuation centers, etc.) but remaining issues include health security, food security, and environmental security, particularly in the resettlement areas where infrastructure facilities are still inadequate. Some sectors like the elderly and persons with disabilities also did not get enough assistance. However, a few international agencies remain, e.g. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and are working with numerous barangays in capacity building in the area of DRRM and developing appropriate livelihood programs for communities that will later be turned over to various sectors like women's and fisherfolks' cooperatives.

In terms of tentative conclusions, while significant and comprising majority of the interventions during the relief and reconstruction phases, assistance from international and foreign actors have not addressed most of the human security and resilience concerns of people due to the limited nature of foreign aid and the need to balance the needs of communities with the agenda or mandate of the aid agencies and foreign governments.

### The Oxfam experience and reassessing humanitarian and development programming

Mr. Dante Dalabajan, who led his organization's rapid response team in Cebu and Samar, first explained the nature of Oxfam, which is a global confederation with headquarters in the UK and working in different countries. It has been in the Philippines for more than two decades. It is a development and advocacy organization working on poverty alleviation programs, including in Eastern Visayas and Mindanao, and working with local organizations campaigning for policies and programs as well as public spending towards addressing issues affecting the poor and vulnerable communities. It is also a humanitarian organization that responds to different emergencies in the Philippines, including Yolanda and the Marawi crisis.

The Yolanda case has led to a serious rethinking not just for Oxfam but for other international organizations about what they could have done better and what steps should be taken from that experience. The experience is instructive not just in how international agencies conduct emergency work in the immediate aftermath of a crisis but also in how they can improve their development work. Any crisis of the magnitude of Yolanda can overwhelm any humanitarian system, but it also exposed the Philippine system's weaknesses. In particular, the Philippines has gained a reputation globally as being one of the more progressive countries in terms of existing humanitarian and DRRM frameworks and policies. However, the massive amount of aid that flowed in the immediate aftermath of the disaster was directly proportional to the Philippines' lack of ability to respond to the crisis.

The Yolanda experience has led to rethinking the way international agencies view humanitarian and development programming. This rethinking is directed at two areas, namely (1) how people are viewed by international agencies and (2) addressing lapses in public policies. First, people have often been seen as beneficiaries when in fact, they are agents with their own capacities to address issues that affect them. They can be made more resilient not by bringing them back to their preexisting vulnerabilities but bouncing forward in the midst of uncertainties with a range of options available to them before disaster strikes and preparedness to respond when it does come. Second, there are a number of public policy lapses in the country that must be addressed or implemented properly. These are in three areas, namely:

- (1) *Resettlement.* The amount of displacement and the disarray in resettlement afterwards whenever an emergency (natural or human-made) strikes exposes the lack of a coherent

resettlement agenda on the part of the government. Resettlement must be seen as a matter of choice for people, where safe areas can be rebuilt and there are suitable livelihood options available in areas where people settle or resettle.

- (2) *Disaster financing.* The Philippines has good laws here. For example, there is a People's Survival Fund, a one billion equity funding allocated by the National Treasury to build the resilience of poor local communities and which Oxfam, together with many local organizations, has helped push into law. However, after the implementing rules and regulations have been signed in 2014, there are only two LGUs that have been allocated funds.<sup>1</sup>
- (3) *Social protection.* How can current social protection schemes be done differently? This goes beyond the conditional cash transfer system of the national government. The focus should be on capacity building of vulnerable communities instead of just giving them funding. Oxfam's staffing during Yolanda and its immediate aftermath was 400 people brought in the area for relief, recovery and rehabilitation. This was inefficient and did not tap into the potential of local organizations and communities. Partly as a result of Yolanda and in response to a lot of development trends in the Philippines, Oxfam has moved to a new business model or standard of operations where all programs are now done and conducted by local partner organizations in the country. By investing more in building local capacities (technical expertise, knowledge base and funding), Oxfam's program footprint could potentially shrink and provide a more sustainable approach to development programming and emergency aid. Currently, Oxfam is partnering with the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance (UP NCPAG), the Government Service Insurance System, the Department of Finance, and the NDRRMC to develop a meso-scale insurance system to help local governments recover faster and help their communities in cases when local governments also suffered assets. It is also working with telecommunication and credit companies to be able to deploy a digital platform where a range of financial products are available to the poor.

### The UNDP's Yolanda-response projects

Ms. Garde gave a brief overview of the projects UNDP implemented during the recovery and rehabilitation phases. These are funded by the EU and the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). These projects are concerned with building resilience and leaving behind strengthened national government agencies and local governments as well as their partner communities in facilitating timely and sustainable recovery of Yolanda-affected families in Eastern Visayas (Region 8). UNDP sees its role as merely a complement to government units and agencies to strengthen their capacities.

The projects have five components. These are:

- (1) *Disaster-resilient public infrastructures.* UNDP selected twelve LGUs to construct their community evacuation centers. UNDP went beyond the requirements of the National Building Code by making sure that the buildings can withstand super typhoons and strong earthquakes as well as equipped with electric cables and solar panels, generators, water systems, and other WASH systems. The Tacloban evacuation center can accommodate 500 people while the other eleven can accommodate 250.

<sup>1</sup> From a 2017 perspective

- (2) *Sustainable livelihoods.* The projects are focused on fishing and farming communities. These are done both at the individual/family as well as association/community levels. The goal is to develop sustainable and resilient local economies; this involves not just developing sustainable agriculture, fisheries and community enterprises but also alternative or non-agricultural or off-resource livelihood. For the agricultural-based livelihood, the focus is not only on production but other aspects of the value chain, like support for logistics, post-production and marketing. Agricultural-based livelihood is diversified, integrated, and natural or organic. For non-agricultural livelihood, UNDP partnered with the government agency Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in trainings on specific skills of interest and market needs, but participants were also given post-training or pre-employment support. All livelihood options must be gender sensitive and consistent with government programs.
- (3) *Resettlement.* Housing is a major concern when disasters and crises happen. So, resettlement areas provided resilient housing with all the basic needs, like water. Self-sufficient home gardens are encouraged. Livelihood trainings and opportunities for individuals and associations are built in resettlement areas, and infrastructures like roads and drainage systems are included.
- (4) *DRRM capacity building for LGUs.* Fifteen LGUs received capacity building trainings as well as support for DRRM planning, monitoring and assessment as well as provision of equipment.
- (5) *Waste management.* This involves construction of a sanitary landfill in Basey and modification of the landfills in Hernani and Guiuan, as well as trainings on solid waste management. Waste water treatment and materials recovery facilities were also built.

### World Vision's engagements in Yolanda-affected areas

According to Ms. Doñoz, World Vision's response was implemented in Cebu, Panay, and Leyte provinces from 2013 to 2016. For Cebu and Panay, the engagements were only during the emergency to recovery phases but in Leyte, it covered all three phases (emergency, recovery, and rehabilitation). The goal of the response was to strengthen the resilience of Yolanda-affected communities, including children because World Vision is a child-focused organization. The organization's program has five intended outcomes, namely: (1) improved living conditions and access to basic services; (2) restored affected livelihoods and increased capital and asset base; (3) strengthened local government capacity in disaster preparedness, coordination and management; (4) empowered typhoon-affected communities and families including children in terms of informing World Vision Response Programming; and (5) improved capacity of typhoon-affected communities, including children in Tacloban, to establish safe environments that can withstand the impact of future disasters. Outcome four, which is about accountability, is implemented across the three phases of the program. World Vision had to ensure that in all three phases, accountability is taken into account.

In addition to World Vision's framework of establishing accountability, the program also provides relevant information to the affected population. To do this, World Vision partnered with local media and other international organizations working in the affected communities. The organization also attended meetings of various clusters. In these cluster meetings, Oxfam shared what it was doing in its program areas, the feedback Oxfam gets from the communities, as well as feedback regarding the programs of other agencies. The feedback mechanism is definitely part of the organization's framework even in the clusters where it works. Feedback from communities

can be done face-to-face, through text messages, or using feedback boxes in barangay halls in areas without mobile signal.

For particular interventions, Oxfam has been involved in (1) repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction of community structures like clinics and school buildings; (2) skills training in various types of livelihood and community savings; (3) rehabilitation of community and natural resources like mangroves; (4) DRRM capacity building for LGUs; and (5) citizens' assessment and dialogue with LGUs regarding the latter's performance in DRRM using a scorecard.

## Issues

During the open forum, additional issues regarding the role of external assistance as well as DRRM in general and elaboration of points raised by the panelists were discussed.

### Local power and interests

During disasters like Yolanda, local power and interests always come into play. Many scholars, development workers, and communities themselves witnessed cases where some local politicians take advantage of the help to corner relief items and other assistance channels for their own interests. Examples include high quality and imported relief goods being sold in some resorts owned by politicians or being consumed by local government personnel instead of being distributed to communities, local and foreign aid workers and other volunteers renting or being housed in resorts or hotels owned by local officials, and financial assistance being used by some local officials to rehabilitate their own resorts and businesses first. How can foreign agencies ensure that relief goods and other assistance are not cornered by local elites for their own agenda?

The panelists acknowledge that local power and vested interests are always present and must be taken into consideration in their interventions. Of course, humanitarian actors should stay independent and impartial. That is why it is important to build accountability mechanisms into the programs of different agencies, with emphasis on people empowerment and public welfare. The international community definitely could have done more in this area in previous interventions worldwide, Yolanda included. The Yolanda experience has made many agencies realize that an important component of assistance is building local capacities and working with local civil society organizations and communities to build not just capacities in DRRM and development but also in monitoring authorities and other groups. There is no need to bring in plenty of outsiders when communities and organizations at the local level can be partners in the process. The assistance programs can also be creatively packaged with conditionalities emphasizing public welfare to check LGUs and officials so that they are accountable for the aid received and possible future aid. Some of them can be blacklisted for future assistance packages for noncompliance with conditionalities. In the case of World Vision and many UN agencies, while LGUs are informed all the time of the programs and activities, aid is given directly to target beneficiaries.

### Accountability and transparency mechanisms

National government agencies, foreign and international agencies, and local civil society organizations should be actively engaged in monitoring and making sure that accountability and transparency mechanisms are working. This also means that they have good baseline data on the areas, as well as data on actual beneficiaries of programs. These data should be validated by the target beneficiaries themselves. Some agencies did well in these areas but not all. Many national agencies did admit some of their limitations and these should be addressed. All concerned

should also inform beneficiaries about the impact and details of assistance. In other words, all agencies need to be transparent to their partners, including the communities.

#### Private business interests and displacement of communities

Private businesses also take advantage of disaster or other emergency situations. For instance, a large corporation immediately moved into areas devastated by the typhoon to establish businesses and in the process denied communities the option to return to areas they were previously settled in or to move into areas that can actually be used for resettlement. Thus, the best assistance programs should involve partnership with and accountability of private businesses as well.

#### Problem of lack of coordination and consolidated data on total aid

Different international and national agencies have different figures regarding the total aid that were given to Yolanda. This is because data mainly came only from those that coordinated with each other. Others went straight to LGUs or communities and did not coordinate with other groups. It is also important to sort through all these data to separate the pledges from the actual aid given. Of course, the next step is to find out how much of these resources went to administrative and operational services, personnel, target beneficiaries, etc. These detailed data are necessary to settle issues of accountability and transparency of different agencies and actors.

#### Distrust between LGUs and aid agencies

Are there best practices in addressing the existing distrust between agencies and LGUs? Aside from the accountability mechanisms and capacity building of local communities being done by some agencies, the national government should strengthen its monitoring of LGUs and capacities in filing cases and dispensing the appropriate punishments for local officials and personnel found guilty of mismanagement of funds and other assistance.

### Recommendations and lessons

There are many lessons and recommendations from the experiences of coordinating with foreign and international agencies. The panelists as well as participants during the open forum agreed on the following:

- (1) Strengthening the national and local coordinating systems in terms of capacities, monitoring, coordinating, human resources, and finances;
- (2) Focusing on inclusive decision making, community involvement and empowerment in DRRM, development and other related areas (e.g. housing, social financing, livelihood, etc.) and reorienting mindset of aid agencies from people as simply beneficiaries to people as partners and agents of change to limit the losses as a result of disasters and other emergencies;
- (3) Developing accountability mechanisms at all levels (national, local, foreign, private, public, etc.) where citizens provide informed feedback and assessment;
- (4) Linking sustainable economic development and DRRM programs to develop a comprehensive approach;
- (5) Partnering with and capacitating local organizations, national agencies, and local governments in the implementation of development, DRRM and other programs;
- (6) Replicating and scaling up best practices in DRRM and development practices;

- (7) Improving the UN-led system of coordinating foreign assistance;
- (8) Developing a more pro-active regional or Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) response to disasters, given the latter's current emphasis on building an ASEAN community of caring and sharing societies.



FIGURE 1.1 A poster at the entrance of the Tacloban City Hall thanking aid agencies and the private sector who helped during and after Yolanda. (Photo taken by Maria Ela L. Atienza, November 2016)



# Post-disaster housing, community, and resettlement: Challenges and alternatives

**LADYLYN LIM MANGADA**

Associate Professor, University of the Philippines Visayas – Tacloban College and  
Research Associate, Project Yolanda

Studies on disaster reconstruction put emphasis on two important aspects that must be dealt with to establish community resilience: the provision of housing and livelihood assistance to affected communities. The second panel focused on post Yolanda housing and community issues, in particular housing reconstruction and relocation of communities. Experiences, challenges, and recommendations for improvement in future planning and responses were discussed. The panelists are as follows:

- (1) Associate Professor Ladylyn L. Mangada, Division of Social Sciences, University of the Philippines Visayas – Tacloban College
- (2) Dr. Pauline Eadie, Principal Investigator, Project Yolanda and Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
- (3) Mr. Ted Jopson, Housing Office, City Government of Tacloban
- (4) Dr. Aleli Bawagan, Assistant Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Associate Professor, Department of Community Development, College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines Diliman<sup>1</sup>

## Research findings and insights

Associate Professor Mangada shared and stressed the problem of conflicting housing data from the local government unit (Tacloban City) and the National Housing Authority (NHA). She raised the following questions: Which data from the local government are error-free? Or does NHA have the reliable figures? Like most of the participants, she raised why the numbers from the two agencies differ and asked which agency has the more reliable figures. In addition, she gave an account of the process and experiences Yolanda survivors went through in availing shelter assistance from the government and from humanitarian groups and foundations. Political connections and interests played a role in determining who got transferred to resettlement areas. Delays in transfers were also experienced due to problems in the masterlist of beneficiaries.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bawagan was still with the DSWD during the seminar-workshop in 2017. She has now resumed her academic post at the University of the Philippines Diliman.

However, in some areas with active humanitarian groups, beneficiaries were involved in the process of moving, some livelihood packages were offered, and there were less problems encountered.

Dr. Eadie shared about her observation on *bayanihan* and resilience in the different barangays in Tacloban City and in the municipalities of Palo and Tanauan. She discovered that it was more of the family or clan rather than the community or the government helping residents recover. Using the data from the surveys conducted by Project Yolanda (*Poverty Alleviation in the Wake of Typhoon Yolanda*), the results indicated that residents of Tanauan manifested more resilience compared with the residents of the two other areas. Partisan politics and inequity of aid distribution divided the communities and limited the power of *bayanihan* to push for bottom-up approaches in undertaking recovery efforts.

### Experiences of government agencies

Mr. Jopson, Tacloban City's Housing Office head, emphasized the smooth relations the city government had with nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and humanitarian groups in the provision of housing units in the resettlement sites. He appreciated the coordinated efforts put in by private and development organizations (e.g. SM Cares / SM Foundation Inc., Pope Francis for Resilient and Co-empowered Sustainable Community, GMA Kapuso Foundation, SOS, Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers, etc.) which produced satisfactory dwelling units for the survivors. However, he also highlighted a few issues. First, the housing mechanism known as the Local Inter-Agency Committee (LIAC), where local and national representatives should meet to talk and iron out problems, was not assembled. Second, the attitude of the survivors in the resettlement sites can be problematic, as many were too dependent on assistance and were not too honest to disclose that they already received multiple assistance whenever a new donor comes in or a public office personnel asks them about it. Third, some beneficiaries got resettlement housing via raffle during the Duterte administration and they were distributed in different resettlement areas, which made tracking and monitoring difficult for the city government. Fourth, in many NHA resettlement sites, people leave or return to their places of origin because of lack of basic utilities like water and electricity. In closing, Mr. Jopson recommended that disaster-prone cities like Tacloban should have land banking, which will provide information about available lands within the city for post-disaster use. He also recommended that the local government focus on on-site housing development and tenement buildings. Housing projects should also be community-driven and be incorporated with disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) training.

Dr. Bawagan gave an account of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)'s post-Haiyan emergency shelter assistance and community housing. She explained that the DSWD conducted a study on rehabilitation and housing in Yolanda-affected areas as part of the department's mandate. While the DSWD committed to build 3,112 units, shelter completion was delayed due to (1) the highly competitive wages for laborers and prices of materials for housing in Yolanda-stricken areas, which made it harder for DSWD and NHA to find bidders because foreign and private agencies can pay higher; (2) the inability of the local government units to put up a counterpart to housing aid and grants such as procuring land; and (3) the highly bureaucratic processes such as the approval of housing design, and release of funds, etc. The Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) funds released during the Aquino administration to Yolanda survivors whose dwellings were destroyed by the typhoon did not reach all intended beneficiaries. The Duterte administration released additional ESA funds, but only in limited amounts.



**FIGURE 2.1** Water containers lined up in one of the resettlement sites in Tacloban North waiting to be filled by the water trucks of City Hall that bring water daily. (Photo taken by Maria Ela L. Atienza, November 2016)

## Challenges

Particular challenges were raised during the open forum. These included (1) weak intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration, (2) numerous government offices working on housing and resettlement, (3) the lack of participation and voice of the survivors, (4) the lack of inclusive policy, (5) the absence of accountability mechanisms for government housing projects, and (6) the return of the internally-displaced people (IDPs) to their pre-Yolanda locations/villages.

### Weak intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration in data gathering and management

The participants were disappointed to find out conflicting statistics for shelter needs from the government, particularly from the local government unit of Tacloban City and the NHA. For the city government of Tacloban, the contradicting data come from two sources: the Tacloban Recovery and Rehabilitation Plan and the Tacloban North Integrated Plan. Both plans were initiated and formulated during former mayor Alfred Romualdez' term. However, the NHA, the lead agency in socialized shelter delivery, had a different figure. This led to the confusion of the workshop participants as to which data to be used. Some participants noted that this deepened their suspicion that public offices are working independently of each other.

This is related to the larger issue of poor intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration. Participants called for improved coordination and communication between state institutions to work on discrepancies and gaps, and eventually, to harmonize data.

Numerous government offices on the ground

During the open forum, the participants realized that there were several government offices similarly working on housing and settlements on the ground. They expressed doubt whether relocated residents are familiar with the mandates and services of these offices. An example is the Presidential Council for the Urban Poor (PCUP). What role does the PCUP have in the Yolanda resettlement program? Are Yolanda survivors, especially internally displaced persons (IDPs), considered as urban poor? Another office mentioned was the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Eastern Visayas. Moreover, when does the local government unit come into the picture under the NHA program?

Lack of participation and voice of survivors

Survivors or the IDPs did not have a voice in the formal decision-making structures of the government on post-Yolanda housing and rehabilitation. It was noted in the discussion that the IDPs did not vigorously challenge the government's decision to relocate them outside the city. They were certainly confused and traumatized from the disaster, but this does not mean they did not want to be consulted as stakeholders. Shelter providers such as government agencies should not have waived the participation and involvement of the disaster survivors in the planning of their relocation and in determining the size and design of the dwelling units. The scale of post-Yolanda relocation is often cited as the reason for this minimal participation, but its large scale is even the more reason to involve survivors. More beneficiaries mean more needs to meet, but also more creative inputs to draw from. Beneficiaries were passive as they were just advised to wait. The participants strongly pointed out that government shelter programs lacked opportunities for the affected residents to voice their needs and urged policymakers to look into development/humanitarian procedures and experiences to produce better outcomes. Interim or temporary solutions should be designed with enough resiliency to provide adequate living conditions while permanent housing must be accompanied with participatory processes.

Lack of inclusive policy

The participants also raised the issue of the exclusionary policy of the government's housing program. Some survivors were not eligible for government housing. For instance, LGBT couples were excluded from becoming beneficiaries. This sector felt they were discriminated and questioned why the government denied them of such assistance. The central and local governments need to be reminded that it is their duty to protect and advance the welfare of their citizens and that sexual orientation and gender identity or expression (SOGIE) should never be an issue or hindrance in availing public services.

Need for accountability mechanisms

On the discussion of the government's inability to respond to queries on substandard or inferior housing units and delayed occupancy by beneficiaries, the participants pressed the need for public offices such as the NHA and the DSWD to be more transparent and accountable to the survivors. This was aggravated by the issue of a politicized beneficiary selection process. Clientelism and patronage were acknowledged to have affected most decisions and workshop participants unanimously echoed the need for the two offices to schedule periodic meetings with the survivors and adopt the 'accountability boxes' or 'mobile phones' system of some of

the humanitarian organizations. These mechanisms, they asserted, minimize the controversial ‘top-down’ approach and ‘closed governance’ which has been proven to be unresponsive, wasteful, and disastrous.

#### Dealing with cases of resettlement beneficiaries returning to their original areas

Some relocated residents have been moving back to their pre-Yolanda locations or villages due to socio-economic reasons. It was acknowledged that most resettled families do not have sources of income in their new homes and problematic or inadequate social services would push them to go back to their old homes. Some of the IDPs even live very close to the dumpsite. The workshop participants highlighted that the provision of livelihood in the resettlement areas will sustain the resettled survivors. The government and other actors need to identify viable livelihood opportunities as well as improve the livelihood skills of the IDPs.

### Alternatives

To defray costs and to achieve sustainable resettlement that can withstand another Yolanda-like event in the future, the participants agreed that the government should strengthen its partnerships with NGOs by pursuing a number of alternatives.

#### Community-driven (*bayanihan*) housing

For this shelter approach, an example mentioned was the model of the Pope Francis Village which was established by a consortium of Philippine-based and international NGOs. Beneficiaries were informed and involved in the choice of the location and the details of their housing units. The quality and quantity of materials identified in the plan as indicated by the engineers were religiously followed in the construction and any deviation or change was presented for discussion. Sweat equity, or the practice where beneficiaries contribute labor to the housing project, plus monitoring on site became the IDPs’ counterpart. Most of the beneficiaries worked in the construction of the housing units in Diit, Tacloban City. Based on this model, the workshop participants stressed a number of considerations, such as whether the concept of *bayanihan* could be incorporated in existing government processes, and considering a preference for NHA bidders who can commit to hiring a certain percentage of beneficiaries and has a participatory and consultative planning.

To minimize risks and prevent political interference and corruption, the workshop participants further suggested that an updated registry or masterlist of residents living in no-build zones and the urban poor be created and updated semi-annually. This masterlist should be posted or made publicly available all throughout the year.

#### On-site housing

Workshop participants from humanitarian and development organizations offered on-site housing or resettlement as an alternative to relocation. Compared to relocation, on-site housing does not need the provision or construction of new social services facilities and will not result in non-displacement of the survivors’ current sources of income. It is less costly as the government need not purchase land and build expensive utility structures.

## The way forward

The government, through its subnational units, should come up with an overarching policy on settling displaced persons. Pre-disaster vulnerabilities should be addressed, coupled with effective communication on current risk assessments in every barangay. Citizen-government relations need to be improved through inclusive, equitable, participatory, transparent, and accountable disaster risk reduction and management governance. Housing and resettlement should not be seen as a means for disaster risk reduction but as a part of a long-term sustainable development goal.



# Gender and Livelihood

## **CLARINDA L. BERJA**

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences, University of the Philippines Manila and  
Researcher, Project Yolanda

Aside from housing, livelihood is another crucial area that must be dealt with after disasters. More importantly, livelihood plans and programs must also take into consideration the needs of specific sectors, e.g. women. The third panel focused on the links between gender and livelihood. There were four presenters, namely:

- (1) Assistant Professor Clarinda L. Berja, Department of Social Sciences, University of the Philippines Manila
- (2) Dr. Georgia Spiliopoulos, University of Nottingham Ningbo China
- (3) Mr. Oliver Cam, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tacloban City
- (4) Mr. Raul Reyes, Investment Promotions Office, Catbalogan City

## **Livelihood in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda:**

### **Analysis of survey data on vulnerability, community support, and resilience**

Assistant Professor Berja presented the analysis of the survey data from Project Yolanda by focusing on livelihood after Yolanda. Restoring employment and livelihood of people in the community is a vital component of post-disaster recovery and reconstruction. But this process takes a longer time for people living in poverty since they are more vulnerable, i.e. they are more susceptible to hazards, suffer greater relative loss of assets, and have a much lower capacity to cope and recover. They also lack productive assets to be able to re-build what they lost.

Typhoon Yolanda struck the Philippines in November 2013 and Leyte was most severely affected. The impact of the typhoon was devastating since poverty was widespread in the province. Recent estimates of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) revealed poverty has gotten worse in the province. Poverty has increased from 40 percent in 2012 to 47 percent in 2015. At the national level, however, poverty is declining, from 28 percent in 2012 to 26 percent in 2015. About 5.6 million workers in different occupations were affected in the four most affected regions, with varying extent of vulnerability to disasters. Among those affected by Typhoon Yolanda, 40 percent are women, and among them, 43 percent reported that they are self-employed and unpaid family workers. These figures might exclude those doing informal work and are likely to be counted as unemployed.

Aside from income and productivity, disasters affect the availability of goods and services to people and this underscores credible damage assessment. Recent literature on damage assessment

are largely macro, probably because rapid assessments are required. Based on the report of the representative from Oxfam, about 24,200 enterprises were affected. Among the affected enterprises, about 10,000 were totally damaged, which distressed more than 140,000 workers. About 93 percent of these enterprises are micro and home-based enterprises. It was also reported earlier that aside from the enterprises, vast quantities of crops were destroyed, including livestock, agriculture, agricultural equipment, facilities, fishing vessels, and irrigation systems that affected about 1.6 million people.

Assistant Professor Berja examined livelihood vulnerability as a consequence of disaster and vulnerability of people's existing socio-economic reality. She takes off from the position that adaptation and resilience measures of livelihood may not be effective in coping with disasters without assessing and identifying vulnerability of people's existing socio-economic reality. She analyzed household survey data from 20 barangays in Tacloban City and the municipalities of Palo and Tanauan as shown in the map on page 22.

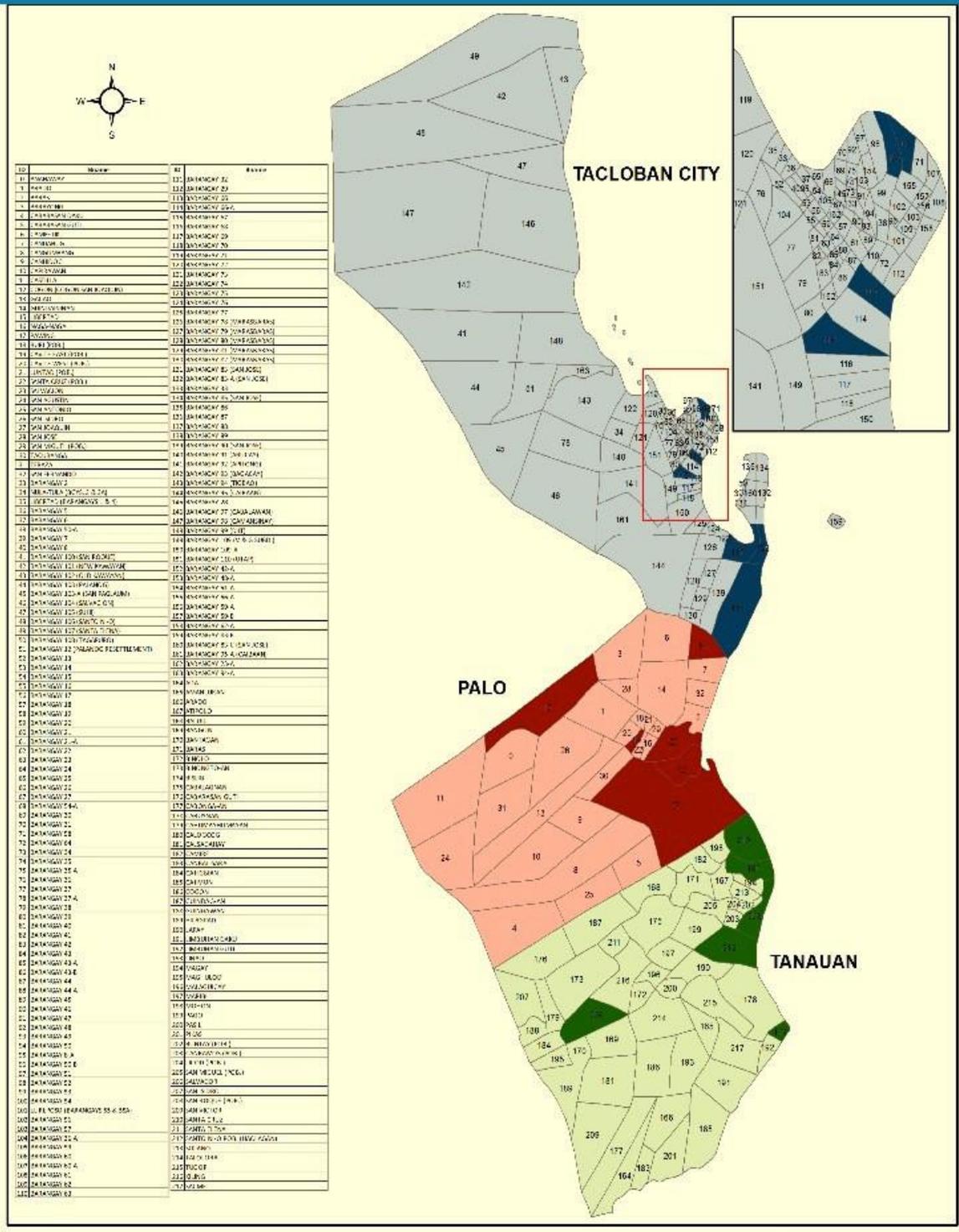
The survey areas include three localities adjacent to each other and have coastal areas that were severely affected by the Typhoon. Palo is classified as a third-income-class municipality and Tanauan is a second-class municipality while Tacloban is a highly urbanized first income class city (PSGC 2016). The highlighted parts of the map are the barangays included in the study. The blue shaded parts represent the barangay in Tacloban, red for Palo, and green for Tanauan (See Figure 3.1 on page 22). The survey focused on the most affected communities in Tacloban, Tanauan, and Palo, which may magnify some of the figures. It is also worthwhile to mention that the survey was conducted in 2015 which is almost two years after the Yolanda disaster and some of the survey respondents were returnees to portions of the barangay that are considered as “no build zones.”

#### Livelihood vulnerability and capacity to cope with disaster

Taking the sustainable livelihood framework elaborated by Twigg (2015), Prof. Berja focuses on four factors: (1) vulnerability, (2) assets, capability, and capital, (3) livelihood strategies, and (4) policies, institutions, and processes.

- (1) Vulnerability is defined as “enduring sources of hardship, destroying people’s livelihood assets or forcing them to dispose of assets as part of coping or survival strategies” (Twigg 2015, 175). Twigg (2004) contrasted vulnerability with capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from hazard impacts, and like vulnerability, capacity depends on social, economic, political, psychological, environmental and physical assets and the wider governance regimes. According to Wisner et al. (2004), there are a number of different models that exist to demonstrate the connections between assets, development contexts and disaster risk.
- (2) Assets, capabilities, and capital refer to “a wide range of resources which poor people possess or have access to and use to gain a livelihood.” These are commonly described as different forms of ‘capital’: human, social, natural, physical, financial, and political. The significance of such assets is related to the prevailing context of different vulnerabilities—including vulnerability to disaster shocks—and influenced by social and governance relations at different levels. Capacity to cope depends on adequate household assets and supportive social and governance relations.
- (3) Livelihood strategies are the “ways in which poor and vulnerable people deploy their assets and capabilities to improve their livelihoods (for consumption, production, processing, exchange, and income-earning activities).”

## Map of the Municipalities of Palo, Tacloban City and Tanauan Province of Leyte



Date Sources: SADM, PSA (2010)

The boundaries and names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

FIGURE 3.1 Map of the municipalities of Palo (shaded in red) and Tanauan (shaded in green) and the city of Tacloban (shaded in blue), Leyte.

- (4) The policies, institutions and processes provide the “enabling environment for livelihoods, development and disaster risk reduction that influence vulnerable people’s access to assets and resources, and choice of livelihood strategies.”

In this study, these four factors are analyzed in the context of changing local conditions, as well as the national and international organizations that could contribute to local development opportunities. Household surveys, in-depth interviews and focus group interviews were conducted yearly to generate data that would reflect the yearly changes starting 2015 to 2017.

#### Education, occupation, and income

Survey results reveal low educational attainment of respondents from the sample communities which are the most affected areas in Tacloban City, Palo, and Tanauan. These are also poor communities which are mostly near the coastal areas. Since education is very low, unemployment is high. More than half of the survey respondents reported that they are unemployed. There are more unemployed females than males. About 65 percent of females are unemployed. Majority of those who are employed are males and are engaged in elementary occupations such as pedicab driving. As gleaned from photographs of everyday activities in the community, the working people are mostly food vendors, manicurists, construction workers, pedicab drivers and household workers. A large majority of them earn less than 10,000 pesos or below the poverty threshold. For an average family size of 5, the per capita income is about 2,000 pesos per month or roughly 40 US dollars per month per person. Based on the household data, the dependency ratio is 57.2. This is relatively high, with child dependency of 52.1 and elderly dependency of 5.1. This implies that the income earning population is lesser than the income-dependent population.

The survey data also show that men and women workers are engaged in menial jobs such as informal food vending, *sari-sari* (variety) store, and pedicab transportation service. What they earn from these jobs are barely enough for the family’s daily needs (*Refer to Figure 3.2 on page 24*).

Gender, education and social networks affect people’s livelihood opportunities but external aid and community support are key in livelihood recovery. In the aftermath of a disaster, government, private and civil society organizations cooperate in creating an enabling environment for people in the community for livelihood recovery. It is during disasters that people’s livelihood assets are converted to cash for the family’s daily subsistence. Thus, many of the disaster victims draw support for livelihood recovery from external aid.

It was well-documented from various reports that the devastation from Yolanda resulted in losses in employment and income, and disruption of markets and supply and value chains. Consistently, nine in ten of the survey respondents claimed that Typhoon Yolanda affected their livelihood (*Refer to Figure 3.3 on page 24*). This is consistent in all survey years, implying that in the communities surveyed by this study, livelihood has not yet been recovered.

#### External aid

While most of those affected by the typhoon reported they received assistance from government, foreign and local organizations, only 21 percent mentioned that they received “aid” (financial assistance) or training that would help them re-establish their livelihood. About half of them mentioned that their source of livelihood has become worse than before. This finding is consistent in all survey years—2015, 2016, and 2017. Livelihood did not improve. While most of those affected by the typhoon reported that they received assistance from government, foreign,

### What is your occupation?

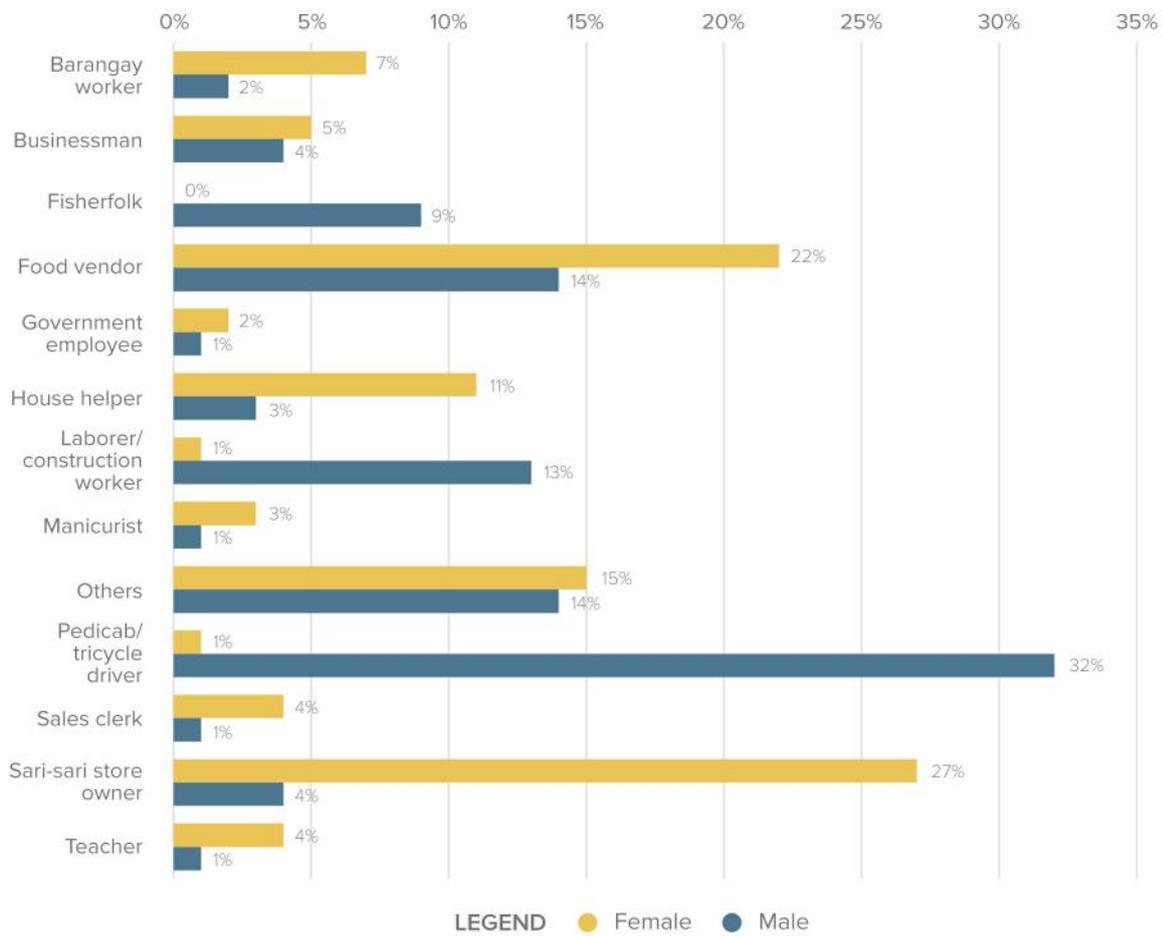


FIGURE 3.2 Occupation by gender, all survey areas, 2015.

### Did Yolanda affect your family's main source of livelihood?

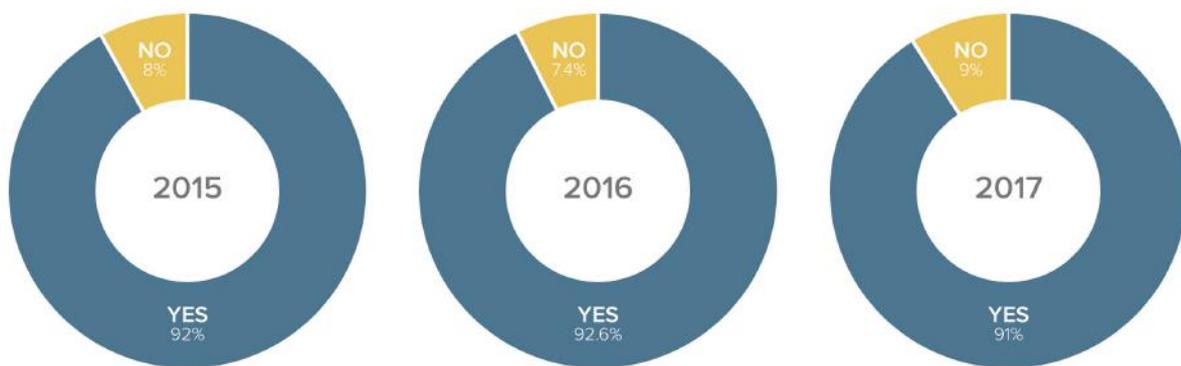
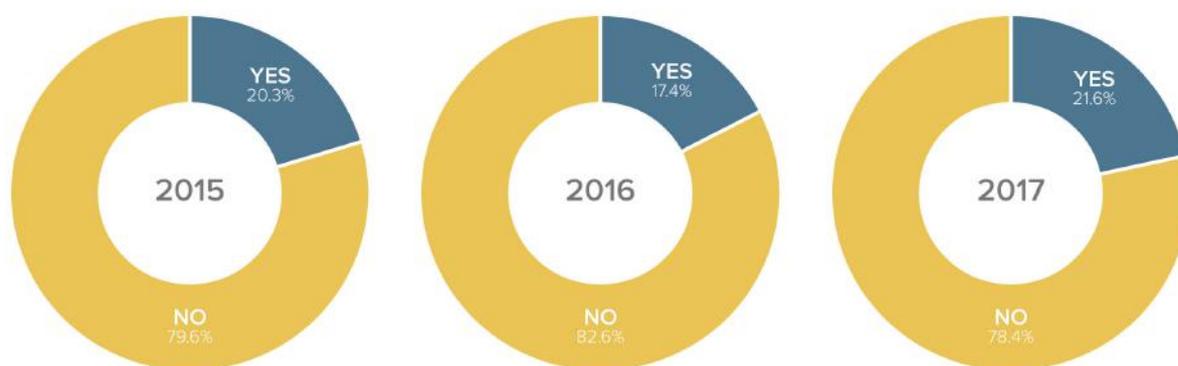


FIGURE 3.3 Main source of livelihood affected, 2015–2017.

and local organizations, only 21.3 percent mentioned that they received aid or financial assistance or training that would help them reestablish their livelihood. The assistance that people received was in the form of food aid, shelter assistance, livelihood, education of children, and health services. More males than females reported that they received assistance. When asked if they received aid or training that would allow them to reestablish their livelihood, only 20.3 percent of respondents answered affirmatively. This percentage became even lower in the following year, with 17.4 percent. It increased to 21.6 percent or rose by four percentage points in 2017 (Refer to Figure 3.4 below).

### Did you receive aid or training that allow you to re-establish your livelihood?



**FIGURE 3.4** Livelihood-related aid or training received, 2015–2017.

Four years after the devastating typhoon, a large majority still did not receive aid or training for livelihood. When asked to what extent did the aid help them, majority said they did not receive any training or equipment, although some of them consider the aid essential for their livelihood. From 2015, the percentage of those who think that aid was essential in their livelihood is 8.8 in 2015, and it increased to 15.9 in 2017 (Refer to Figure 3.5 on page 26).

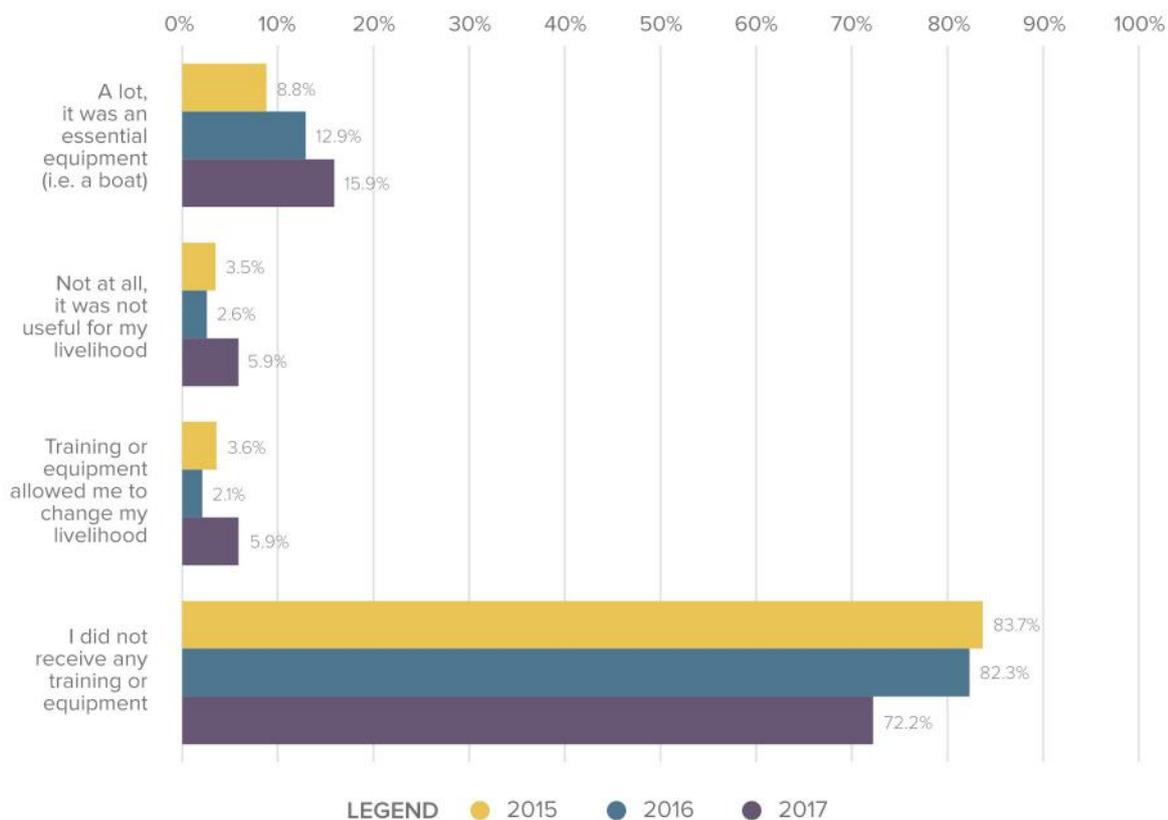
Survey results show that those who received help are more likely to be resilient. Among those who received help from the barangay, 86.1 percent said they are resilient. The same is true among those who mentioned that they received aid from international NGOs; 71.2 percent of them consider themselves as resilient.

Majority mentioned that people in the community support each other if income is inadequate. There is a slight decline in 2017 but majority still said that people in the community help each other. 17.8 percent reported that they received livelihood assistance in 2017. While only 1.6 percent received livelihood assistance in 2016, half of those who received livelihood aid think that it is adequate. They also mentioned drawing from personal savings and loans from relatives as initial capital. When asked if it was adequate for those who received aid, half of them said it was adequate. The money that they received from their relatives were added to their savings to start a small business.

#### Community support

Majority mentioned that the community could have been more helpful in the aftermath of disaster. On the other hand, 27 percent reported that their community helped them a lot. After the disaster, majority drew support from their community through personal loans, neighbors

### To what extent did the aid or training you received allow you to re-establish your livelihood?

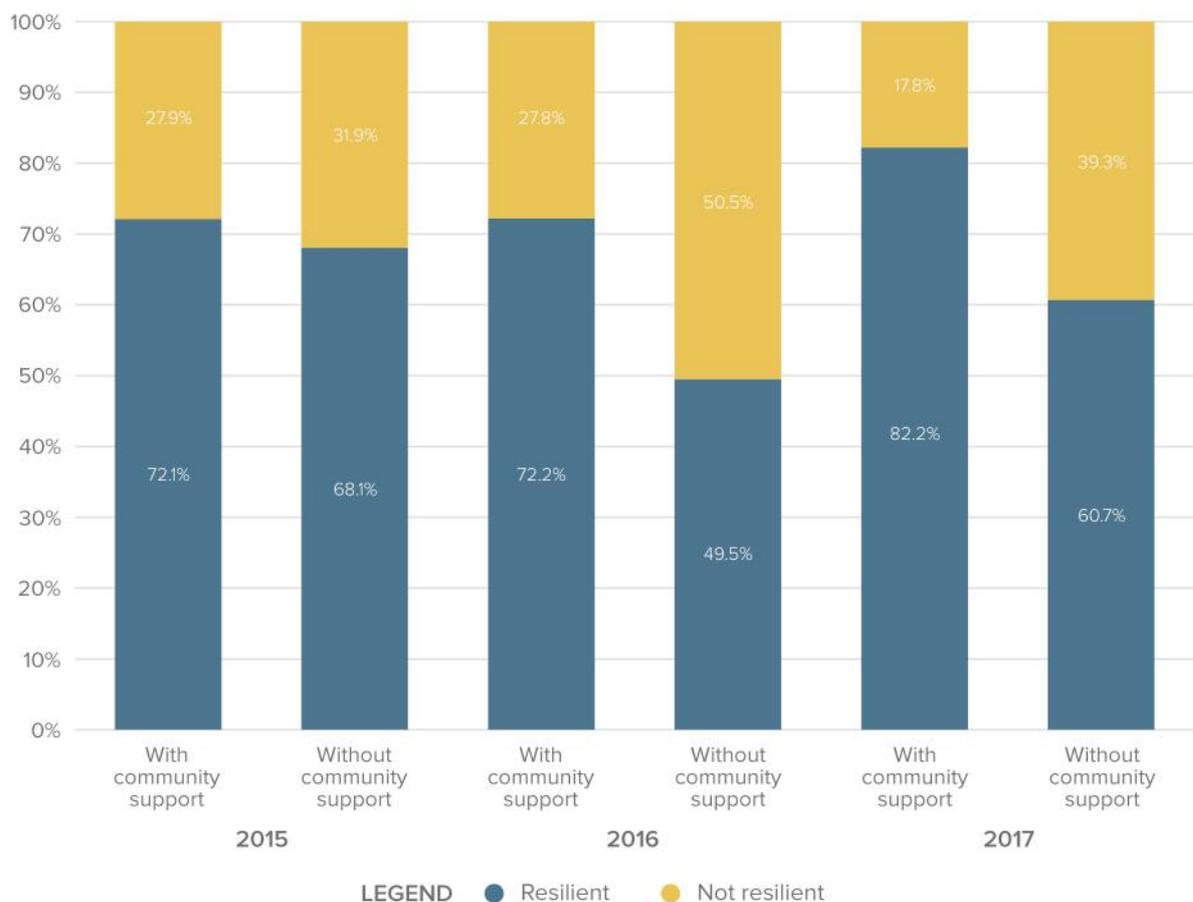


**FIGURE 3.5** Extent of aid or training in re-establishment of livelihood, 2015–2017.

babysitting their children while parents are at work, etc. while 17 percent reported that there were organizations that helped them to have a regular source of income. Interestingly, perceived resiliency increased. Before Yolanda, it was only 66 percent, in 2017, it went up to 76.2 percent.

Figure 3.6 (on page 27) shows us perceived resiliency and community support. As shown in the graph, those with community support perceived themselves as resilient. The difference is more evident in 2016 where 72.2 percent of those who had community support considered themselves as resilient compared to 49.5 percent among those without community support. In 2017, 82.2 percent of those who received community support said that they are resilient compared to only 60.7 percent who did not get community support. It could be surmised that they received support from other organizations.

Previous experiences have demonstrated that livelihood-centered approach to disaster risk reduction provided people with new opportunities and enhanced ways of earning a living and that community support is key to make it sustainable. Those in the most affected areas in Tacloban as well as the depressed communities of Tanauan and Palo would certainly benefit from livelihood assistance that will introduce people to other ways of making a living other than putting up a home-based variety store (or *sari-sari* store). The survey data reveal that the home-based variety store remains to be the major source of livelihood among women. The average monthly income of females is 6,500 pesos while for males the average is 8,000 pesos.



**FIGURE 3.6** Community support and resilience, 2015–2017.

Of course, these are poor communities. The challenge is for government and aid agencies to provide sustainable livelihood for people in poor communities. Alternative sources of livelihood for women in the poor communities might work in building back their livelihood better.

### Micro lending and micro financing for women in disaster

Dr. Spiliopoulos (whose paper was read by colleague Dr. May Tan-Mullins) focused on the financing available for women after disasters like Yolanda. As mentioned earlier, 40 percent of the victims of Typhoon Yolanda are vulnerable people such as women. They have very specific vulnerability and healthcare needs. Women are more vulnerable in terms of sexual risk as well as health risk. The kinds of risks that women are facing are very different at the different stages of the rebuilding process.

“Micro lending and micro finance are very important schemes that actually help women as a household earner to have better livelihood.” This is one of the quotes from the in-depth interviews with a woman barangay leader in Palo. She suggested to target women in terms of livelihood and particularly during the rebuilding process. This is because plenty of livelihood schemes are very much targeted at men such as fishermen (boats) and farmers, but very few schemes have been put in place for women. Again to quote her,

“The women in the village are sitting around doing nothing. We will be grateful if there are some kinds of livelihood options that are available to us. Very simple things such as an investment to buy an oven so that they can start a bakery.”

The woman barangay leader also talked about how far away her village is to the marketplace, and they have to spend a high amount of transport cost if they were to take the tricycle to the market everyday to buy fresh bread. She also suggested a weaving cooperative so that women can weave and watch over their children and make money at the same time.

These quotes highlight that the skills and resources they need are in fact very low cost investments. However, they are not able to receive that kind of investment from government or from the NGOs. Second, it implies that they are trying to multitask—weaving and looking after the children. Even in today's society, care work is not considered as work. Looking after your own child is a job and should be duly compensated in terms of wages as well. As a result, women in villages like this are in a difficult position where they have to look after the kids and find ways to earn money.

One livelihood strategy is to diversify the source of family income. For instance, the Yolanda project of UNDP Philippines targeted not just the male earners of the family, but also the other family members. They looked at how to enable women family members to earn income. In fact, a lot of these livelihood initiatives should focus on women in order to diversify the family income.

Another livelihood strategy is to give women opportunities for employment and training within their community. To increase women's labor productivity, there is a need to identify new ways to relieve them from their child caring duties. For example, Project Yolanda found that only a few INGOs or NGOs have schemes or livelihood options that targeted women. It is also worthwhile to explore the possibility of scaling up the best practices, good programs and good initiatives in livelihood recovery in the aftermath of a disaster.

The study also found that micro finance is considered a very good option in terms of helping communities to build back quickly, and we found that there is in fact evidence that there is increased popularity of micro finance schemes in the affected area. Data also revealed there are schemes targeting the women which discriminates against men in some instances. Reasons why lenders prefer women borrowers is the belief that women are more diligent and will pay on time. Another example of stereotyping is, to quote the barangay captain, “Most of them are women because the one that asked the families or asked them to join these facilities are women.”

Strategies that will provide options for women must be formulated. However, it is interesting to note men are not keen to join the livelihood programs because they are more tailored for women.

Aside from providing micro finance schemes for women, there is also a need to train them and be aware of the limitations of these schemes. Not every scheme is in fact beneficial because some of them could be quite exploitative, for example, imposing a high interest rate. Thus, they need to be trained in order to increase awareness about the various schemes.

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

- (1) *Advocate for financial schemes though they involve risk.* Knowledge exchange and training about these schemes is very important and women naturally can talk about these schemes with each other.
- (2) *Develop community support to enable women to earn a living.* For example, community or barangay day care centers can look after small children to allow the mothers to do full time jobs.
- (3) *Provide trainings on how to come up with feasible business plans if women want to get investments for their initiatives.*

To conclude, the women in the villages are very keen to earn an income but there seems to be barriers in terms of structure. There is a need to change the structure in terms of gender-stereotyped jobs. To build forward, there must be a paradigm shift from a male-centered livelihood mindset to a more inclusive mindset.

### Local government and private sector livelihood initiatives and plans

Mr. Cam explained that Region 8 (Eastern Visayas) now has a regional development plan and there are now more funds available. The plan recognizes a number of problems, including Northern Samar being the poorest province in the region as a result of Yolanda and a large number of women being below the poverty line. However, a larger number of women are now engaged in farming as a result of opportunities provided by international agencies and NGOs. The current thrusts now of the region are the following: (1) more resilient agriculture and fisheries, (2) more inclusive and local manufacturing, and (3) tourism. The region is now planning on investing in modern rice production instead of just coconut farming, developing the Leyte Ecological Industrial Zone, Spark Samar tourism campaign to solve poverty which leads to insurgency, etc.

Mr. Reyes, for his part, said that Catbalogan City located in Samar became the de facto regional center for a while because Yolanda devastated Tacloban City. The city has embarked on a transformative program that is inclusive and cross-cutting; however, the challenge is how to sustain the development of the “Yolanda corridor” and continue to find opportunities. The boats provided by international agencies cannot be a big help in an area where the fish catch has already been depleted. Sari-sari stores that cropped up after Yolanda due to external assistance are also not sustainable because the area has no industry backbone. Mr. Reyes also observed a number of gaps at the regional level which must be addressed to provide sustainable livelihood. These are the following:

- (1) Structural problems;
- (2) Institutional dissonance, i.e. various agencies not working in the same direction;
- (3) Low supply of qualified or trained labor plus high unemployment because of too much mendicancy; and
- (4) Too many plans being made that are disconnected from each other.

Without coordination and an institutionalized systematic plan, there cannot be development and livelihood opportunities in the region.

## Additional issues

During the open forum, the following issues were discussed:

- (1) As regards incorporating resilience in the regional development plan, climate change and the Sendai Framework must be incorporated in any plan much like what Catbalogan City is doing.
- (2) Good local practices in DRRM and development planning at the local level can be scaled up at the regional level.
- (3) There should be harmonization between regional and local data on economic and other indicators and statistics.
- (4) There are now more opportunities for women to participate in livelihood activities, especially if the food processing industry will be developed further in the region.

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# Implications for Governance and Future Policy

## JAN ROBERT R. GO

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman and Research Associate, Project Yolanda

The fourth and final panel of the seminar workshop focused on the disaster management and governance experiences in different localities and their implications for future policy. The session featured four presentations based on different research studies on disaster management and governance in various Philippine local settings. From the presentations, the following are the recurring themes: (1) institutions and political leadership, (2) innovative governance and resource utilization, (3) civil society participation, and (4) real-world challenges faced by national and local governments in disaster situations. The following were the panel presenters:

- (1) Assistant Professor Jan Robert R. Go, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman
- (2) Dr. May Tan-Mullins, Co-Investigator, Project Yolanda and Institute of Asia and Pacific Studies, University of Nottingham Ningbo China
- (3) Dr. Perlita Frago-Marasigan, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman
- (4) Dr. Maria Lourdes G. Rebullida, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman

## Institutions and political leadership

Disaster management and governance is largely affected by the institutional framework in place. In the case of the Philippines, the laws were initially reactive in the sense that they were crafted to guide how rehabilitation and relief operations will be undertaken. Later, with a new disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) law, various levels of government are now expected to come up with general plans in reducing risks, managing actual damages from disasters, and post-disaster efforts. However, it was pointed out that despite the presence of a new institutional framework, many challenges still arise. Some of those identified include: (1) the actual capabilities of poor municipalities to come up with sound plans; (2) their inability to have sufficient funds to implement plans; and (3) the political conflicts between local officials and the national government.

One important aspect in addressing governance challenges is how the political leadership, particularly the mayors and other local leaders, appreciate the issues and problems related to DRRM and their strategies. If a locality like one facing the Pacific Ocean is hit by typhoons more than ten times in a year, there is a higher chance that its local leadership has been able to adjust and prepare for such events. The cases of Legazpi City and Albay Province were two of the examples raised. Through effective political leadership and coordination with civil society groups, policies were made to respond to the real-world challenges of preparation and rehabilitation.

In the Yolanda-affected areas, mayors have tried to be as responsive as they can be. In Palo, Leyte, the mayor was coordinating efforts from various international and national agencies and organizations. Notwithstanding her old age, her experience as a veteran politician and her political connections proved to be useful in implementing her pre- and post-disaster visions. In Tanauan, Leyte, the mayor was hands-on in making a post-disaster plan and in engaging the people through livelihood initiatives and other programs. Given his private sector managerial background, he was able to formulate solutions to fast-track recovery in the municipality. However, with the nature of their positions and their interests, political rivalries and colors play a role in the distribution of resources and implementation of relief efforts as raised by the citizens and village heads.

### Civil society participation

As mentioned above, the participation of an active civil society was key in the formulation of situation-sensitive policies that would serve as the local framework in responding to challenges of natural and other calamities. In fact, effective governance, whether in the case of disasters or otherwise, requires not only the local government's actions, but more importantly the involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly people's organizations (POs) and international and national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

CSO-led governance focuses on capacitating localities. While there are mechanisms of direct provision of needs, such as donation of construction materials, monetary support, and other material provisions, the end goal of CSOs is to build capacity and enable the community to minimize risks and respond on their own in case of future similar or worse disasters. In Legazpi City's case, their interventions were largely focused on housing planning and shelter provision, targeting the village (barangay), city, and provincial levels. This intervention eventually involved a greater number of stakeholders and budget from the local government units were allocated for DRRM purposes.

However, CSOs and NGOs may also be caught in conflicts in the local political arena. Some CSOs and NGOs may be used by politicians for their personal and political interests. While this is unconscious for some, some CSOs and NGOs may consciously allow themselves to be used for their organizations' interests. There are also CSOs and NGOs which did their own arrangements without coordinating with the local governments, just like in the case of Yolanda-affected areas. This has caused more trouble than solutions. Others may disband and leave the community behind, which means having to start the building-up process in the communities again, although the good thing with this is that they already have foundations to build upon.

Notwithstanding these challenges in the involvement of CSOs, the general impression is that their presence hastened processes. It has also created a sense of ownership among the stakeholders, particularly the survivors of disasters, which is important in the process of governance under the context of disaster response and rehabilitation in order to make it as effective as possible.

## Innovation in governance

Different situations may require different solutions. This is where innovations in governance come in. Crises faced by localities, such as disasters, become the impetus for innovation. The novelty of the situation may demand different, if not unorthodox, means in resolving the challenges faced by local governments in a given situation. The cases of Palo in Leyte and Balangiga in Eastern Samar were presented to provide examples of improvisations and innovations in disaster governance.

In these Yolanda-affected areas, some of the on-the-ground challenges include lack of access to quick response funds, the difficulty of evacuation, and lack of adequate preparation. Banks are usually in the provincial capital or center. In Leyte, these are in Tacloban City, while in Eastern Samar, these are located in Borongan City. Thus, accessing funds for quick response was not easy, especially for those living far from these cities. While Palo is close to Tacloban City, Balangiga, however, is far from Borongan City. Another barrier is evacuating the residents, particularly those in the coastal areas. This difficulty resulted in a huge number of casualties in storm surge-affected coasts. Compared to Palo, Balangiga has very few accounted deaths. Lastly, the lack of adequate preparation may be attributed to the limited resources available to the areas prior and after the typhoon. This may also be true in other poor municipalities.

The improvisations observed in the two cases are different. In Palo, the improvisations are: (1) inventory or computation of the survivors, casualties, and damages and the organization of community relief operations; (2) negotiations for a steady supply of gasoline, which was lacking, but necessary in order to fuel vehicles carrying relief goods, and supply of rice, which is a staple food; and (3) the use of personal resources in order to provide other needs such as medicines. On top of these, the municipal council gave the mayor blanket authority to accept aid for the municipality.

In Balangiga, the improvisations were limited. First, the mayor asked the officials to donate their salaries to the victims and survivors, which earned mixed reactions. Second, the mayor also bought the goods necessary for the relief efforts, thereby “expediting” the procurement process. Third, the mayor ensured the equal distribution of goods in the different areas in the municipality. In this case, similar to the theme of political leadership in Palo, the role played by the Balangiga mayor, although he was away during the typhoon itself, also exhibited initiative and decisive leadership.

However, innovations and improvisations are not always seen in a positive way. These interventions only placate the obvious—the failure of local government units to prepare for disasters. They only resort to innovative means and improvisations in order to get by and move forward. Nevertheless, the initiatives put in place were helpful in facilitating the much-needed assistance during the time of disaster.

## Challenges in governance

The different cases presented in the panel surface the challenges in governance. These are mainly in the areas of capability, capacity, and coordination. The lessons learned, not only from the Yolanda experience, but also in the experiences of other disaster responses, are instructive as the country moves forward and various levels of government revisit and reformulate their DRRM frameworks, plans, and policies.

### Capability

Skills and knowledge are necessary, but complex problems may require additional help from technological advances. It was shared in the panel that Japanese advanced technologies can be very helpful in mitigating the effects of natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons. However, the reality among localities in the Philippines is their resource limitations. On top of funding problems, there are also legal hurdles that officials have to face. In the area of capability building, one area that needs to be improved is technology and technology transfer. As technologies come with a price and require specialists, capability building in this area will remain a challenge for the Philippines.

### Capacity

In the cases observed, stakeholders lack sufficient capacity. This is a big challenge because capacitating an entire municipality requires enormous amount of financial and human resources. DRRM plans and programs cannot be fully realized when offices in charge are put up only in compliance with existing laws, but are not fully operational. Also, in the context of large calamities like Yolanda, the expected responders themselves are likewise affected and are also victims. This incapacity remains a big challenge in the area of DRRM.

### Coordination

The problem of coordination can further hamper the provision of the services needed before, during, and after the disaster. Aside from political and personal problems which result in coordination problems, each level of government may not have a synchronized plan or a complementing set of policies. Each level would have its own set of policies, which may not be consistent with the higher level's policies. This would create confusion during policy implementation. Aside from this, each government level has different offices and departments, which may not be coordinated properly as well. They may have their own initiatives which are not in sync with other initiatives in operation.

### Moving forward

Should there be a national department under the executive branch to handle solely disaster risk reduction and management? Currently, DRRM is placed under the Office of Civil Defense under the Department of National Defense. Is there a need to revise the existing laws to incorporate the lessons learned from the Yolanda experience? But more than amending laws, it is also necessary to refocus the understanding of disaster and how governments respond to it. One of the suggestions during the panel discussion was a shift of view from a reactive to a proactive mindset. Instead of planning for the disaster, the government must plan to solve the risks in order to mitigate or reduce the effects of natural calamities like typhoons and earthquakes. Therefore, a change in perspective and mindset is necessary as the country moves forward. At the same time, DRRM plans must be linked with broader development plans.



**FIGURE 4.1** The risk assessment map of Barangay San Roque, Tanauan done with the help of international agencies and national government agencies. (Photo taken by Maria Ela L. Atienza, November 2016)





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