

Challenges of the Hyogo Framework for Action in the Disaster Relief Response and Early Recovery in a Municipality in Cebu, Philippines, in the Aftermath of Super Typhoon Yolanda (International Name: Haiyan)

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Abstract

Responding to the need to create a sustainable framework on disaster relief response, this study aims to assess the Relief Distribution and Early Recovery efforts in the Municipality of Daanbantayan, Cebu after Super-typhoon Yolanda using the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). It also aims to propose a policy on Disaster Relief Response and Early Recovery Mechanism for the Philippines. It used the qualitative approach through key informant interviews. Findings show challenges encountered in the relief distribution and early recovery efforts. The Daanbantayan Municipality used the freewheeling mode of distribution, which means there was an absence of the desired policy.

The gap between policies escalated to other adverse events, like the lack of coordination among humanitarian agencies with the local government unit of Daanbantayan and the lack of trust among main players in the management of distribution. These were manifested in the uneven distribution of relief goods,

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provision of some inappropriate relief goods, rise of security and economic issues, excessive relief goods in some barangays, mendicancy tendencies, inaccurate media reports, relief goods held at the airport due to Bureau of Customs issues, and politicking among local and national government officials. These findings recommend the following: (1) the endorsement of the proposal to strengthen the implementation of the disaster relief and recovery laws; and (2) the drafting of a proposal of national policies for the implementation of Disaster Relief Recovery Guidelines and the immediate application of penal clauses provided in the NDRRM law to discourage fraud and demand accountability from government officials and others who violate pertinent laws.

KEYWORDS: disaster relief response, humanitarian assistance, Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), early recovery efforts

Introduction

The Philippines ranks third as the most disaster-prone country in the world, according to the United Nations University's Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) Study (Mucke 2012, 9). In 2013, it suffered from two calamities, particularly in the Visayas region. On October 15, 2013 it was hit by a 7.2 intensity earthquake, with the province of Bohol as its epicenter. On November 8, 2013, Super-typhoon (ST) Yolanda (Haiyan) made landfall in the Philippines, causing massive destruction in the Visayas region. In Central Visayas, there were at least six municipalities and one city in northern Cebu massively affected by the typhoon. Daanbantayan, the town located in the northernmost point of Cebu province, was among those that were devastated.

The day after the typhoon, the areas in northern Cebu that were hit remained completely isolated. All modes of communication were cut off and roads were impassable to vehicles. The disaster caused by Yolanda had no recorded precedent in the history of Daanbantayan, or in the whole of the Philippines. The town had a total population of 105,550 people with 21,500 households in 2013. It suffered nine casualties and 50 injured; 95% of its residential areas and government infrastructure were destroyed, with damages totaling almost P1.2 billion as reported by the town mayor, and as reflected in the "Post Disaster Needs Assessment for

Super Typhoon Yolanda Hardest Hit Areas in Northern Cebu” document issued by the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council. On November 9, 2013, rappler.com posted the following pictures of the extent of Yolanda’s destruction in Daanbantayan on its website:



The local government unit (LGU) of Daanbantayan reported that almost all of its infrastructure was wiped out, including the municipal hall, the municipal multi-purpose hall (which housed the cultural center and a sports gymnasium), the public market, schools and residential houses.

In spite of the road accessibility problem, donations of relief goods and rehabilitation materials to Daanbantayan started to arrive from local donors. When roads became passable, international organizations appeared with food, shelter and other materials, as well as cash and services from doctors, architects, and engineers. The LGU was greatly dependent on the assistance from all the humanitarian agencies.

It was observed that humanitarian assistance was distributed to residents of the town directly, or through its municipal or barangay officials. These donations, whether in cash or in kind, arrived at various times during the relief and recovery period, either with or without coordination with the LGU. At one point, the mayor requested that assistance from one international donor be made in kind rather than in cash. The donor declined and proceeded to make its cash donation, commenting on whether the mayor knows what his people want (Kedmey, 2013). Other reports of disaster response-related disagreements involved the encounter between then Secretary of the Department of the Interior of Local Government and City Mayor

of Tacloban in Eastern Visayas. Outside the Philippines, where other disasters occurred, blame was likewise pointed at lack of aid coordination between non-government organizations and the government, as noted in an article on www.abc.net.au, “Tropical Cyclone Pam: Vanuatu's government criticises aid groups over poor coordination of disaster relief”.

The failure of some NGOs to report their presence and activities to government authorities represents only one aspect of the frequently tested relations between government and non-government organizations (Moore, Daniel and Eng, 2003, 314). In an article on “Legal Aspects of International Disaster Response in Dutch Emergencies and Crisis Situations: An Analysis of Dutch Legislation and Policy in Light of the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (the IDRL Guidelines),” published in 2010 by the Netherlands Red Cross, it was observed that “in practice, it appears that international disaster response regularly suffers from delay caused by domestic legislation and/or domestic (policy) procedures.” This “uncoordinated and sometimes inappropriate behavior on the side of assisting actors leads to a failure to deliver efficient and high quality disaster relief” (Legal Aspects of International Disaster Response).

Improving the level of coordination among humanitarian aid organizations so as to optimize the flow of resources among agencies and increase the accountability, effectiveness and impact of aid operations is viewed as critical. Yet the growing number of humanitarian aid organizations has taxed the capacity of any one governmental agency to coordinate the resources and activities involved in humanitarian aid operations. Whether due to the sheer number of organizations or the range of resources and activities they offer, the difficulties in coordination are seen as a systemic problem for the “humanitarian aid regime” (Moore, Daniel and Eng, 2003, 305).

The above-mentioned issues and concerns encouraged the author to conduct this study on the approach of disaster relief and recovery efforts in the Municipality of Daanbantayan. It particularly focuses on the coordination done by the municipality over the assisting humanitarian individuals and organizations conducting disaster relief and recovery operations, and its impact on the resident-beneficiaries.

Research Locale

The Municipality of Daanbantayan is one among the 1,490 municipalities in the Philippines, as cited on the website of the National Statistical Coordination Board which, as of June 30, 2015, is operated by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). The coastal town is located at the northernmost point of the Province of Cebu in the Central Visayas region, with a population of 105,550 as of 2013. It has 20 barangays, with one of its two island barangays called

Malapascua being an international tourist destination for scuba divers. A map from google.com, shows that the northern, eastern and western sides of Daanbantayan are bounded by the sea, and that to its south lies another municipality. On its northwest side is the Visayan Sea.



Figure 1. Province of Cebu

Framework: Policies on Relief and Recovery Operations

The effectiveness of the relief and early recovery operations in Daanbantayan is analyzed using as indicators the level of coordination, the existence of a database of donors with the nature and kind of donations and their actual beneficiaries, the appropriateness and timeliness of donations made to the resident-beneficiaries, safety and security accorded to donors, and other assisting humanitarian individuals and organizations.

It being the applicable framework at the time the disaster occurred, and when the field study was made, this paper uses the Hyogo Framework for Action and Early Recovery Framework to analyze the relief and recovery operations of the LGU, since the adoption by the UN member states of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 took place on 18 March 2015. References are made to

the Sendai Framework in the course of the recommendations made in this paper, however, for institutionalization of mechanisms both in legal and other regulatory frameworks, where applicable.

Under the HFA, efforts to reduce disaster risks must be systematically integrated into policies, plans and programs for sustainable development and poverty reduction, supported through bilateral, regional and international cooperation, including partnerships. One of the priority areas in the HFA is preparedness for effective response and recovery. Addressing gaps and challenges in this priority area is the subject of this study.

Hyogo Framework for Action and the Early Recovery Framework

On January 22, 2005, member countries attending the 9th plenary meeting of the United Nations, through its World Conference on Disaster Reduction, adopted the “Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters”, of which the Philippines is a signatory. Its expected outcome is the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.

The HFA was developed and agreed upon by the many partners—foremost being governments, international agencies, and disaster experts—needed to reduce disaster risk. It brought them into a common system of coordination, as cited on the website of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. The HFA identifies three strategic goals, which are to: (1) Integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning; (2) develop and strengthen institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards; and (3) systematically incorporate risk reduction approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programs.

To achieve these goals, the HFA outlines five specific priorities for action:

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|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1. Making disaster risk reduction a priority | 2. Improving risk information and early warning | 3. Building a culture of safety and resilience | 4. Reducing the risk in key sectors | 5. Strengthening preparedness for response |
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To provide guidance in meeting the fifth challenge on “strengthening preparedness for response”, the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Early Recovery Guidance Indicator Package was crafted primarily to assist governments, local authorities, and other stakeholders concerned with natural hazards in potentially vulnerable settings. It provides essential elements for an effective response, and stresses the need for processes to integrate early recovery analysis and planning. As acknowledged in the Guidance Notes on Early Recovery on the website of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, communities themselves are not only usually the first responders to disasters, but are also central actors in reducing risks. The Guidance Notes identify strengthening and enhancing the effective response and early recovery capacity at the community level as one of the key tasks of a national preparedness capability, to be reflected in national level planning processes.

The overall focus of the Early Recovery approach, as defined by UNDP, is to restore the capacity of national institutions and communities to recover from a conflict or a natural disaster, enter transition or “build back better”, and avoid relapses. Early Recovery is seen to begin in a humanitarian setting. It seeks to build on humanitarian programs and allow sustainable development opportunities to catalyze from there. The approach aims to generate and/or reinforce nationally owned processes for post-crisis recovery that are resilient and sustainable. It encompasses the restoration of basic services, livelihoods, transitional shelter, governance, security and rule of law, environment and other socio-economic dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations. It strengthens human security and aims to begin addressing the underlying causes of the crisis.

Under the Early Recovery Framework, different actors maximize synergy through efficient coordination of stakeholders. This can be achieved by sharing information and promoting integration to avoid duplication and gaps, optimizing the available resources brought in by humanitarian assistors even as early as the relief and response phase, which can contribute to the recovery and sustainable development of the disaster stricken area.

The Early Recovery Framework is guided by a set of 10 principles that are to be applied during the planning and implementation of early recovery interventions. These

principles are to: Focus on the most vulnerable; restore capacities; rebuild people's livelihoods; secure human development gains; reduce disaster risk; engage the private sector; foster independence and self-sufficiency; promote transparency and accountability; facilitate subsidiarity and decentralization; and effect coordination.

Figure 2 is a diagram for the HFA Disaster Life Cycle Framework as illustrated by Osamu Murao in his article, "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 Review from a Viewpoint" in the Report of the APRU-IRIDeS Multi Hazards Program for 2014 Summer School in the Tohoku University website and as based on the Hyogo Framework for Action.

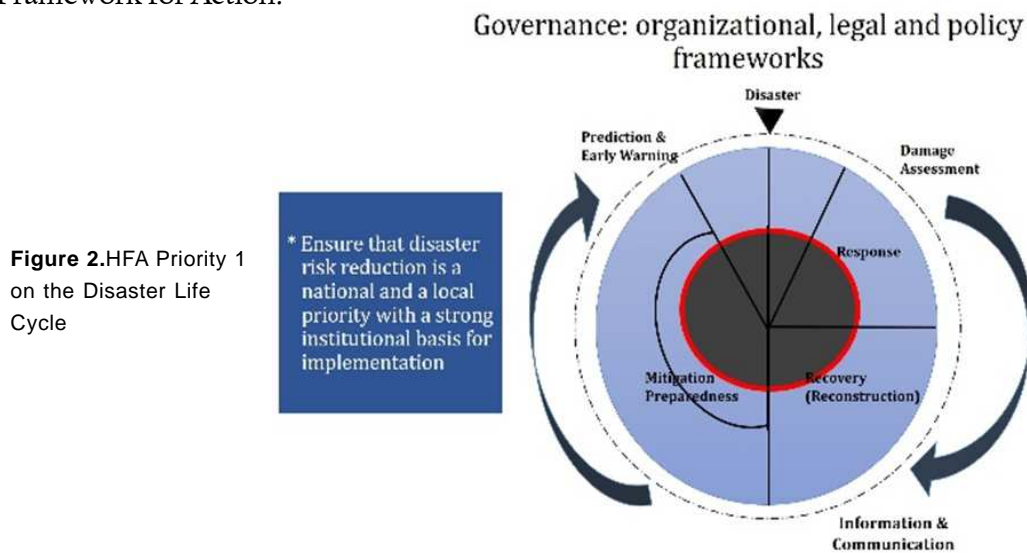


Figure 3 is the Early Recovery Framework, in accordance with the Guidance Notes of the Cluster Working Group for Early Recovery (CWGER) from the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the UNDP.

Pursuant to HFA and Early Recovery's key task of national preparedness capability being reflected in the national level planning processes, the Philippines and its local governments passed the following laws, orders, ordinances and policies:

- a. National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (NDRRM) or Republic Act (R.A.) No. 10121

The NDRRM law or R.A. 10121 provides for the development of policies and plans and the implementation of actions and measures pertaining to all aspects of disaster risk reduction and management, including good

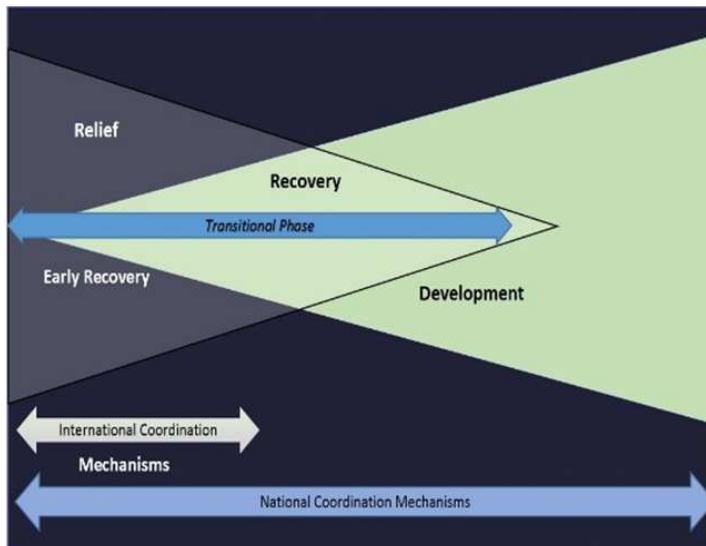


Figure 3. Early Recovery Framework

governance, risk assessment and early warning, knowledge building and awareness raising, reducing underlying risk factors, as well as preparedness for effective response.

It established the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), a working group of various government, non-government, civil sector and private sector organizations. The Council is responsible for ensuring the protection and welfare of the people during disasters or emergencies. It is empowered with policy-making, coordination, integration, supervision, monitoring and evaluation functions, and has the task, among others, to develop a NDRRM Framework which provides for a comprehensive, all-hazards, multi-sectoral, inter-agency and community-based approach to disaster risk reduction and management.

It is administered by the Office of Civil Defense under the Department of National Defense. Under RA 10121, various local governments throughout the country should establish Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management (LDRRM) Offices at the regional, provincial, municipal, city and barangay levels. The LDRRM Councils take the lead in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the effects of any disaster. The NDRRMC and intermediary LDRRMCs act as support to LGUs, which have the primary

responsibility as first disaster responders. Private sector and civil society groups work in accordance with the coordination mechanism and policies set by the NDRRMC and concerned LDRRMCs.

Implementing Rules and Regulations of NDRRM Law or R.A. 10121

Sections 1 and 2 of Rule 12 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the NDRRM Law state that the declaration and lifting of a State of Calamity is to be done by the President upon recommendation of the NDRRMC, based on the criteria it set. The Philippine President may warrant international humanitarian assistance as deemed necessary. Also under Section 2, declaration and lifting of state of calamity may be issued by the local Sanggunian or legislative body, upon the recommendation of the LDRRMC, based on the results of the damage assessment and needs analysis. If there is no declaration of a state of calamity, available external and internal recourses—such as the use of a calamity fund—cannot be invoked by the disaster-affected state or the LGU.

b. Cebu Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) Ordinance No. 2015-13

Pursuant to Sec. 12 of R.A. No. 10121, the Province of Cebu's Legislative Board passed Ordinance No. 2015-13 on June 18, 2015 for the creation of the PDRRMO. This office was created to set the direction, development, implementation and coordination of disaster risk management programs within the Province of Cebu. Clearly set in this ordinance, aside from the creation of the Office, were the qualifications of those who will hold the office and functions of both the Office and its personnel. This Ordinance adheres to and adopts the norms, principles, policies and strategies on disaster risk reduction management as defined by Republic Act 10121. Daanbantayan is covered by this Ordinance, it being a component municipality of the Cebu province. A declaration of a state of calamity over municipalities like Daanbantayan can also be made by the Legislative Board of the Province (or the Sangguniang Panlalawigan).

c. Daanbantayan Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (MDRRMO) Ordinance No. 06-2014

On November 7, 2014, the Municipality of Daanbantayan passed an Ordinance for the creation of the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office. This Ordinance provides that “The municipality shall likewise adopt and implement a coherent, comprehensive, integrated, efficient and responsive disaster risk reduction program incorporated in the development plan at various levels of government adhering to the principles of good governance such as transparency and accountability within the context of poverty alleviation and environmental protection and shall provide maximum care, assistance and services to individuals and families affected by disaster, implement emergency rehabilitation projects to lessen the impact of disaster, and facilitate resumption of normal social and economic activities.” It also specifically provides the functions of the MDRRMO, which, among others, are to respond and manage the adverse effects of emergencies and carry out recovery activities in the affected area, “ensuring that there is an efficient mechanism for immediate delivery of good, shelter and medical supplies for women and children, and to endeavor to create a special place for internally-displaced mothers.”

d. Revised Guidelines and Procedures on Customs Clearance of International Donations Availing of Duty and/or Tax Exemption during Calamities (as of April 2015)

Importation of goods donated from abroad are only exempt from duties and/or taxes under certain circumstances, one of which is during calamities. These guidelines include procedures that must be followed to avail of duty and/or tax exemptions. They are meant to be used as a guide for senders and recipients of donated goods from abroad. To be noted in this guideline is that donated imported goods must not be prohibited imports. Treated as prohibited are used clothing and medicines. Medicines are treated as prohibited if they have no English translations on their immediate labels; are not listed in the Philippine National Formulary or registered with an FDA-counterpart agency in the country of origin; and have an expiry date of less than six (6) months upon arrival.

- e. Republic Act (R.A. 10174), An Act Establishing the People's Survival Fund to Provide Long Term Finance Streams to Enable the Government to Effectively Address the Problem of Climate Change Amending for the Purpose Republic Act 9729, Otherwise Known as the Climate Change Act of 2009, and for Other Purposes

Under the law, the People's Survival Fund is established under the National Treasury, to support adaptation activities of local governments such as a guarantee fund for risk insurance of farmers, agricultural workers and other stakeholders, and for strengthening of regional centers and information networks in support of climate change adaptation initiatives.

- f. Administrative Order No. 2007-0017 of the Philippine Department of Health on the Acceptance and Processing of Foreign and Local Donations during Emergency and Disaster Situations

Under this Administrative Order, the Department of Health assumed the responsibility of defining the policy parameters for accepting donations and its processing and distribution to its beneficiaries, in the event of emergencies and disasters.

- g. Administrative Order No. 2012-0013 of the Philippine Department of Health on Policy and Guidelines on Logistics Management in Emergencies and Disasters

Noted under this Administrative Order is the setting up of Coordinating Mechanisms. It recognizes the importance of an effective and efficient Logistics Management System in times of emergency and disaster as a vital disaster response tool. It recognizes the lack of guidelines for the stockpiling of goods, insufficient amount of funds being set aside for emergencies and disasters, and delayed delivery of goods for the geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

Aside from the locally passed laws and policies, international policies pertinent to this study on coordination of humanitarian assistance are:

a. General Assembly (GA) Resolution 46/182 (1991)

This GA Resolution provides that humanitarian assistance is of cardinal importance for the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies. The sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States must be fully respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. In this context, humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle on the basis of an appeal by the affected country. Each State has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory (based on a compilation of United Nations Resolutions on Humanitarian Assistance, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Policy and Studies Series, 2009).

b. Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief (IDRL) and Initial Recovery Assistance

The IDRL Guidelines draw from many existing international instruments, including United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 of 1991 and 57/150 of 2002, the Measures to Expedite International Relief of 1977 and the Hyogo Framework for Action of 2005. The Guidelines provide that a well-functioning disaster coordination mechanism has clear policies and procedures, wherein all entities are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This means that they operate in a coordinated and timely manner, avoiding gaps, duplication of effort and parallel structures, and in the over-all, confusion. In effect, everyone assists in facilitating an effective response. This is as stated in the Introduction to the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance on the website of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2008. It takes away unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles and stimulates adequate coordination in crises and

disasters in order to bring about more efficient and quality disaster response (Introduction to the Guidelines).

In 2008, the UN General Assembly adopted three resolutions (Res. 63/139, 63/141, and 63/137) encouraging states to make use of the IDRL Guidelines, and in June 2011 they were also recommended to states by the World Customs Organization in a Resolution of the Customs Co-operation Council on the Role of Customs in Natural Disaster Relief.

The Guidelines aim to address legal, bureaucratic and operational concerns during international relief operations. The International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and Red Crescent Societies initiated the IDRL program in 2001. The Guidelines aim to address issues related to, among others: 1) Restrictions and delays at customs; 2) obtaining and renewal of visa, work permits, recognizing certificates of specialized personnel (particularly medical personnel) and liability issues; 3) administrative and operational responsibilities of authorities and relief organizations; 4) legal status of humanitarian actors and relief workers and regulations regarding relief goods and equipment; and 5) transportation issues, taxes, safety of relief workers and costs of emergency assistance.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was employed in this study in order to provide a richer and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The goal of this inquiry is to assess the effectiveness of the conduct of Disaster Relief Response and Early Recovery operations in Daanbantayan in the aftermath of ST Yolanda and the challenges it encountered using the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Upon securing the approval of the Municipal Mayor to conduct this study, the researcher recalled the observed and lived experiences of the Typhoon aftermath and formally collected data through field observation during the relief and recovery operations conducted in the succeeding six (6) months. In-depth interviews were conducted among key informants, particularly the Barangay officials who were main actors in providing relief and recovery assistance during the aftermath of the typhoon,

as they are directly involved in the distribution of relief goods. A purposive random sampling approach was also used.

The researcher interviewed 11 barangay captains, nine barangay councilors, and five municipal officials consisting of the Mayor and officers for Municipal Social Work and Development (MSWD), Budget, Human Relations (HR) and the Municipal Agricultural Office (MAO). These individuals were the front line municipal officials implementing the delivery of disaster relief response and early recovery. Interviews were also conducted with 12 donors, five different Civic Society Organizations, three Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officers (PDRRMO) and two Provincial Social Worker and Development Officers (PSWDO); and with 199 beneficiaries, equally distributed among all 199 sitios (hamlets or subdivisions of a barrio or barangay in the Philippines) of the 20 barangays in Daanbantayan. Hence, a total of 246 respondents were interviewed to complement news items from mass media as well as the researcher's personal observations. The questions asked of the respondents were:

1. How did the LGU develop its approach in the management of donations extended to its barangay constituents in the first three (3) months after ST Yolanda?
2. What problems were encountered in the process of delivering the relief goods?
3. What adverse events occurred as a result of the problems encountered in the different modes of distribution of relief goods?
4. Is there a policy gap in the implementation of the Relief and Recovery efforts?
5. Based on the lessons learned, what proposed policy action plan can be designed to brace the Municipality of Daanbantayan for any typhoon that may strike in the future?

Data Analysis Strategy

When the interview was completed, responses were analyzed through narrative inquiry. Interview responses were analyzed through syntax and decoding of the data by identifying keywords and phrases that were common among the interview responses. Keywords and phrases were analyzed and encoded using suitable

classification marks (Saldana 2009, 4). A deductive constructed analysis was also employed (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, 159). Commonalities and themes emerged in the coding process.

Limitations

Due to the manner in which the relief and recovery operations were conducted in Daanbantayan, it was discovered that there were several undocumented individuals assisting humanitarian organizations who participated in the activities. Thus there is no comprehensive data on these parties. It is important to note that the number of beneficiaries was difficult to calculate and maintain with certainty because efforts were primarily focused on expediting assistance to individuals or families rather than on recording such figures.

Another factor that reduces the reliability of the number of beneficiaries is the politics involved in recording these figures, as noted by authors in another study (Moore, 316). The municipal officials of Daanbantayan do not have a record of all beneficiaries who were directly assisted in the distribution efforts from all donors. What they were able to monitor was the number of tranches in which a barangay was served with relief goods, based on their own distribution efforts.

Findings

Mode of Distribution of Relief Goods

Relief goods from assisting individuals and organizations were provided to residents of Daanbantayan in various ways, including either directly to recipients in the affected areas anywhere in the municipality, or through the barangay captain of a specific barangay, who in turn was responsible for distributing the relief goods to the barangay's constituents; some donors coordinated their relief efforts with the Office of the Mayor.

Those who coordinated with the Mayor's office set certain conditions for making their donations: they should have a specific barangay in which the relief goods were intended to be given, and at the same time these donors required they would

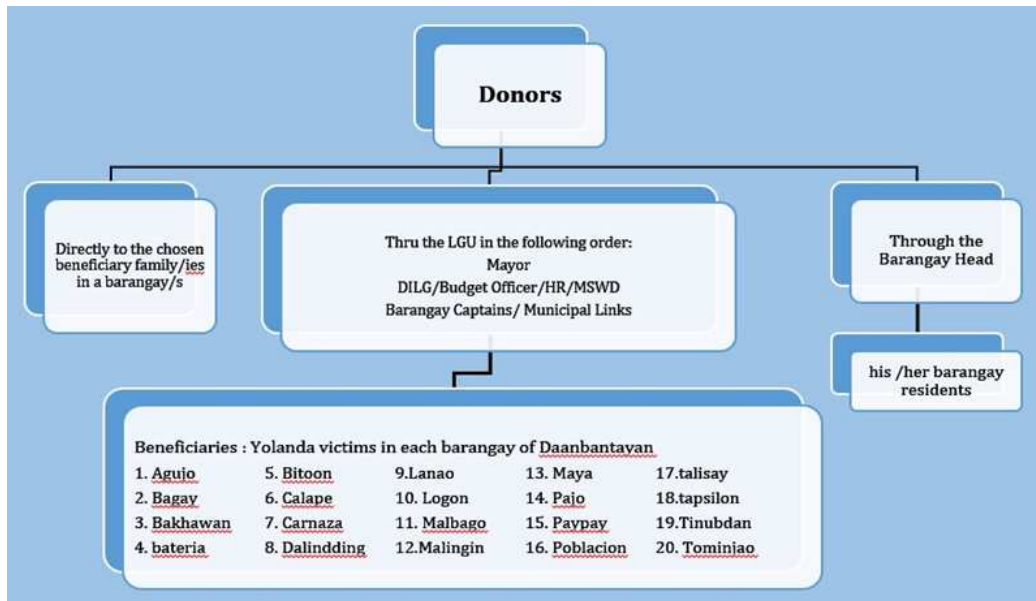


Figure 4. Modes of Extending Relief Assistance to Beneficiaries

personally hand their relief goods to the victims. Some donors coordinated their relief efforts with the Office of the Mayor without insisting on having a specific barangay where they would be conducted, but these donors required they would personally hand the goods to the victims. Others gave their relief goods to the Office of the Mayor and left the municipal officials to take care of the distribution to the affected areas. (See Figure 4 on the different modes followed in the manner of distribution of relief and recovery materials to Daanbantayan’s victims of Yolanda.)

The municipal employees who were directly involved in the delivery of relief goods to barangays and those who coordinated with the Office of the Mayor were chosen as front liners to assist in decision-making. These employees were:

1. The Municipal Officer for the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), who managed the front office, and whose tasks were to receive and record the quantity of donations brought in by donors and to gather information on the donors’ intentions or special instructions.
2. The Human Relations (HR) Officer, who acted as the custodian of the donations, especially the non-food items.

3. The Municipal Agriculture Officer (MAO), who monitored the resources and the extent of their damage, and prioritization of residents in terms of distribution of donations, especially in the livelihood aspect.
4. The Municipal Social Welfare Development (MSWD) Officer, who was tasked to monitor the residents in the barangays that did not receive any relief goods or that needed to be prioritized in terms of vulnerability.
5. The Budget Officer, who monitored the number of relief packs and other donations, the number of residents in each barangay (for matching the relief goods with the number of residents), and the number of tranches of relief goods that each barangay received.

Although some of the international and local corporate donors coordinated with the LGU through the Office of the Municipal Mayor, they had their own specific criteria and/or guidelines for relief goods distribution. The LGU had no control over those donors or the relief goods that were directly given to victims or to the barangay captains of specific affected areas. Neither did the LGU impose on these international and local corporate donors with regard to whom they should give their relief goods to.

Thus, it was observed that the LGU exercised a non-interfering manner of coordination. As presented in the diagram above (see Figure 4), a clear policy gap in the local government unit is identified by this study. It surfaced when donors gave directly to beneficiaries without coordinating with the Municipal Office, thus leading to inequitable distribution of relief goods among the overall recipients.

Based on the findings, this is how the LGU operated its system for the distribution process. Donors who coordinated their efforts with the Office of the Mayor followed either one of two procedures. Those that identified a specific barangay to help were asked by the Office of the Mayor to give the number of relief packs they were providing. This number was then matched with the population in the specified barangay. If the relief packs were less than the number of persons in the barangay, the Office of the Mayor augmented the number of packs with the municipality's own packed relief goods that were available at such time.

Donors who did not identify a specific barangay to help were also asked by the Office of the Mayor for the number of relief packs they were providing. A barangay whose population matched the number of relief packs was then identified by the Office of the Mayor. If the relief packs were inadequate, the Mayor's Office augmented the number of packs. However, the capacity of the LGU to supplement these was more commonly applicable only to food relief packs, and not to temporary shelter materials and livelihood assistance, such as farming or fishing implements or bancas, which were among the relief and recovery materials donated.

As for the LGU's process of distribution of relief goods to beneficiaries, the following procedure was applied: (1) Identification of the number of relief goods/item; (2) identification of the target sector/area based on the donor/stakeholders preference; (3) checking of the distribution flow/tranche (for number of deliveries made in the area); (4) identification of the number of households per sitio, and the barangay; (5) coordination with the barangay officials, barangay health worker or parent leader for validation and ground work in every sitio of each barangay.

In some instances, instead of a parent leader, a Municipal Link was used in coordinating distribution. This is the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) personnel in charge of the implementation of the Program called 4P's or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. The program is a human development measure of the national government that provides conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor, to improve the health, nutrition, and the education of children aged 0-18. After all these had been done, then they set the venue, target date/s and/or time for distribution, prepare the distribution list and claim stubs to be given to beneficiaries. Then distribution proceeds.

There were instances in which barangays with a smaller number of households were attended to before those barangays with a higher numbers of households, since most individual donors who came brought with them fewer relief packs. Such donor had to be redirected to a barangay with a number of households that matched it.

In the interviews, it was further disclosed by municipal officials that in order to prevent situations where a certain barangay or area is given more relief goods than another barangay, the LGU monitored and recorded the number of tranches of relief good distribution. A monitoring schedule showed the tranches of relief goods given to a specific area.

Donors' experiences

There are three classification groups for donors: (1) those who gave through the LGU (referred to as Group 1 Donors); (2) those who gave through the Barangay (Group 2 Donors); and, (3) those who gave directly to beneficiaries (Group 3 Donors).

In the interviews as well as in personal observations, Group I donors disclosed that they chose to course their donations through the LGU since they did not know anyone in the municipality. In addition, they needed to know which recipients urgently needed the relief goods, which was information that the LGU could provide. It was also mentioned that there was a need for accurate reporting, accountability and coordination with the LGU to ensure the proper dissemination and execution of the program in the relief and early recovery operations (e.g. Habitat for Humanity, French businessmen, some of the Rotary Clubs of Rotary International in District 3860).

As for problems encountered, no major problem was mentioned regarding the coordination process. However, the donors expressed their sympathy and full support for the LGU. Some international donors like the French and Swiss groups, International Labor Organization and French and Philippine Red Cross provided humanitarian assistance together with local donors like Mactan Shangri-la Resort and Spa and Dedon Corporation. These groups mostly supplied shelter and school and other public infrastructure rehabilitation.

Based on interviews with some local and international donors who coordinated with the LGU, they perceived the distribution to be systematic and were assured that their donations would reach the intended recipients. Suggestions were made by the LGU as to which barangay needed the most relief assistance, based on the barangays' assessment.

Among Group 2 Donors, international agencies like World Vision and Oxfam distributed cash during the second week after the typhoon. The container van bearing donations brought in by Philippine giant retail store SM, together with BDO, a universal bank, was refused entry in a big barangay by its barangay captain. Consequently, it had to transfer to a smaller barangay, resulting in an excess of relief goods for distribution.

When asked for their reasons for giving the donations directly, answers given primarily involved their fear that the relief packs would not reach the beneficiaries. This apprehension was due to stories or rumors about corruption in the government. Hence, there were donors who did not coordinate with the municipality or LGU, and just searched for accessible barangays in which they distributed relief goods randomly.

There were organizations—which included schools and corporations—that were known to have entered communities and donated relief packs but did not coordinate with the LGU. They merely informed the LGU about their presence and proceeded to distribute on their own.

On the part of Group 3 Donors, some of them knew the barangay captain or were brought by people who happened to know the barangay captain or some other residents in the place of beneficiary.

Beneficiaries' perceptions

Findings show that various beneficiaries had negative and positive perceptions about the relief goods distribution. Their negative perceptions included favoring of barangays with strong connections, politicking, and unruly distribution. Comments on favoritism in the goods distribution to other barangays was mentioned in an interview: “Naay pinalabi” or “There was favoritism”.

Uncoordinated distribution of relief goods in certain barangays was perceived by residents in other barangays as still having come from the municipal government rather than from donors, and gave these residents the impression that some barangays received more goods than others.

In addition, beneficiaries complained about the unequal distribution of donations. They perceived that only those who had strong connections with the business people, local and foreign tourists could receive donations first.

There were comments that barangays whose residents have “connections”, like Malapascua, were able to immediately mobilize or attract relief support compared to those that did not. Malapascua is one of the two island barangays of Daanbantayan that is famous as a tourist destination for its pristine beach and scuba diving. The relief goods delivered to Malapascua simply passed through Barangay Maya, the

northernmost barangay of mainland Daanbantayan and the area in which the sea port is located, making its residents feel that they were bypassed.

Beneficiaries also lamented over the slow distribution of donations, for which they had to queue until evening. Residents complained “Hinay kayo ang dagan sa pagdistribuyot” (Distribution was very slow).

There were comments that the distribution was politicized, as stressed in the recurring claim “Gisudlan ug politiko” (“There was politicking”). Respondents stated that residents who were affiliated with the political party of the government officials who distributed goods or supervised their distribution availed of more benefits than those who were not. They also observed some fraudulent ways of availing of donations, such as 1) claiming relief goods more than once; (2) having several members in one family claiming relief goods; and (3) pretending to be residents just to avail of the goods.

On the positive side, many beneficiaries perceived their LGU to be helpful and understanding of their needs. They expressed their satisfaction and sincere appreciation to their Mayor and the LGU officials, as shown in statements like “Mapasalamaton kayo mi sa among Mayor ug mga opisyalis kay nakita namo ilang paningkamot sa pagtabang namo” (We are very grateful to our Mayor and the officials. We witnessed their efforts in helping us).

Media as a boon and bane for Daanbantayan

Local news people and a local TV channel in Cebu province provided reports to the public on the situation in Daanbantayan during and immediately after the super typhoon hit, in real time. The media documented the town’s preparation before the typhoon, the evacuation procedures, and the challenges faced during the typhoon.

But it was also the media, through a local newspaper in Cebu province, that provided inaccurate reports. This local newspaper reported that a few weeks after the relief operations started, there were still several barangays in Daanbantayan with constituents that had not received any relief packs. When the local newspaper’s attention was called regarding the inaccurate report, it blamed the LGU of Daanbantayan for failing to update them. At that time, the town did not have water, electricity, or internet connections, and the municipality was still busy scouring for

tarpaulins and other relief goods it could provide as shelter for its constituents. The same media source reasoned that its data was taken from a foundation that supposedly monitored the frequency of relief operations. Inaccuracy in the report shows the lack of a clear communication and information between media and the LGU. It should be considered that in times of disaster, a clear and accurate flow of communication between media and the disaster affected areas is necessary. As Nini Cabaero noted in a SunStar Cebu article on November 8, 2015 (page A13), “when it really matters, the audience will turn to media for verified information”.

From the Municipality and Barangay Level: Problems Encountered in the Mode of Distribution as Recounted by Barangay Officials

The common underlying issue and problems that emerged in the course of the relief and recovery operations in the municipality were borne out by lack of coordination between assisting humanitarian organizations and LGU. It was disclosed that a coordination meeting was conducted in the municipality about one month later, during which the mayor presided and presented to donors a status report on their relief and recovery operations. But this did not mean that actual coordination followed. It should be noted that the only database on donors that the LGU was able to supply this researcher was a listing of email addresses of the different donors it would call for a coordination meeting, without the complete names of these donors. Neither was there a listing of what exactly they had donated. (The reason for this is discussed in the limitations of the study).

It was observed that the LGU expected that coordination would not only have addressed the gaps in the relief and recovery efforts in Daanbantayan, but also would have optimized the resources brought in by different donors, in terms of their distribution to those who needed them, the kind and amount of donation made, and the time when they should have received them.

There were humanitarian groups whose mandate was to expedite the spending of their funds, so cash was observed to be a priority in the assistance rendered by such donors. There was concern over the appropriateness of the kind of support given to the LGU at that point. Some NGOs refused to recognize the existence or authority or role of the LGU. The LGU regarded this as a result of the financial

independence of the said NGOs. It was also noticed that some NGOs were occasionally reluctant to work with government authorities, maybe because they felt that critical time and energy were lost during the political ceremonies and documentation associated with certain aid-distribution events. Another possible reason was that some beneficiaries had the impression that the relief goods they received came from the municipal government, and the real donors such as the NGOs were left out of the relief operations, which discouraged them from coordinating with the LGU.

These direct relief operations also caused other barangays to receive more relief goods than other barangays, since other donors likewise came in to distribute, not knowing that these barangays had been recipients already of relief goods. Likewise, the local government, not knowing that a specific barangay had already been directly given relief goods, gave again relief goods in that specific barangay during its own round of distribution.

Donors' lack of coordination with host disaster-affected town

According to the LGU, donations made without coordination with the LGU may have been misconstrued by others as favoritism or bias in the distribution. Based on the survey, there were those who refused to coordinate with the LGU, due to their pervasive fear and mistrust that their donations would not reach the recipients. There were donors that were also in a hurry because they had limited time, so they gave donations to barangays that were more accessible.

Adverse results of lack of coordination

Uneven distribution

In the course of the freewheeling mode of direct distribution done by donors who did not coordinate with the LGU, there were several challenges met by the town. The direct turnover of relief goods to recipients caused confusion among the typhoon victims. These direct relief operations caused distress to, or even envy from, other barangays that knew about such operations but did not benefit from them.

Inappropriate relief goods

The Municipal Mayor aired his preference for donations to be made in kind rather than in cash. However, one donor questioned whether the mayor really knew what his people wanted. Thereafter, such questions were raised: Despite the crisis, why were some typhoon victims seen drinking beer on streets a few weeks after the typhoon? Why were there some victims gambling and patronizing cock fighting? Where did their money come from?

But there were those who were fortunate enough to receive donations of G.I. sheets or tents, regardless of whether their houses were located in a safe zone or along coastal areas classified as danger zones. Those who were unfortunate not to have received roofing materials bargained and pleaded to be excluded from distribution of canned goods and other food items so they could avail instead of G.I. sheets or tents or whatever plastic materials could be used as shelter from the rain. Those who were recipients of G.I. sheets but lacked carpentry skills were not able to make use of these materials because carpenters and masons were in demand and became difficult to locate. There were also accounts of recipients of tarpaulins who used them as roofs for pigpens and housing for fighting cocks.

Safety, security and economic issues

Other issues encountered by the LGU involved the safety and security of those assisting humanitarian groups directly approaching beneficiaries and conducting their own relief efforts. Some donors and barangay officials recounted the unruly conduct of some recipients during the distribution. There were reports of isolated incidents where donors were physically harmed by beneficiaries during these events. This was either due to impatience and frustration among residents who were queuing, or to unruly and scheming people who fraudulently transacted with donors. The safety of students from international schools who came to help in the relief operations also became a concern. Due to their apprehension over the safety of these students, the LGU provided security personnel to guard them during their stay.

In another report, enterprising people took advantage of the business opportunities and increased their prices and rates, in spite of the law prohibiting price increases in times of calamity.

Politicking of local and national government officials

There were unofficial stories of complaints about LGU officials, from the municipal to barangay level, being biased in the distribution of their relief goods. According to these accounts, relief goods did not reach the intended beneficiaries, and were instead diverted to other recipients. There were complaints of expired medicine being distributed by some government offices or politicians. In confirmed accounts, food packs were passed off by local or national donors or politicians as their personal donations, when they turned out to be from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (as discovered when covered marks on the food packs were removed). There were donors or relatives and friends of donors who raised queries about whether donations intended for them were tax or customs duties free, since these donations were held at the airport or seaport.

However in the interview, respondents admitted there was no institutionalized way of documenting these complaints, since there was no official complaints' desk or feedback system or mechanism through which the LGU could be made officially aware of these complaints. Foremost among the complaints were the officials' alleged politicizing, especially at the barangay level, when beneficiaries claimed that their names were not included on the list because they voted for another candidate. Perceptions abound that if they did not vote for the incumbent officials or the official in charge of the relief distribution, these officials were bound to take revenge against them by withholding their share of the relief goods or early recovery materials, especially those for temporary shelter.

It should be noted that Yolanda struck just 11 days after the barangay election was held in 2013, so those in charge of the distribution were incumbent barangay officials who may either have been newly re-elected or were acting in their last few days' capacity as such. As for municipal officials, some had just assumed office four months earlier. Some of the constituents feared retribution from their government officials, whether at the municipal or barangay level.

Adverse Events

Mendicancy and dole-out culture

In the first month after typhoon Yolanda, a common sight was that of donors' vehicles stopping by the road to distribute relief goods, unregulated and without a semblance of order. A few weeks later, children and even some grown-ups were seen in the streets carrying placards, begging for food. Some claimed they had not received enough relief assistance, while others took advantage of the generosity of donors. This culture of mendicancy that instantly developed immediately waned and died down in Daanbantayan. The LGU took efforts to investigate the claims of families, and mostly children, of not having received or of still lacking relief goods or assistance. Social workers who visited these groups discovered multiple packs of relief goods in their houses. (Picture in inset taken from rappler.com, November 9, 2013)

Excessive relief goods

The MSWD officer, and even the Budget and Human Resource officers, who joined in the household rounds conducted by the municipal government recounted that they discovered canned goods and noodles and other food packs were abundant and were even enough for some of the beneficiaries to open up their own sari-sari stores.

In the case of relief goods consisting of temporary shelter materials like G.I. sheets, there were reports that these were sold by some of its recipients, either because they did not have any need for them since they were merely transients in Daanbantayan, or because they could not hire a carpenter to fix their houses.

Municipal officials reported that some resourceful residents who were able to accumulate excess tarpaulins and plastic materials used these to cover pigpens and fighting cocks' shelters. Others who received temporary housing materials did not install or disclose receiving them, thinking they might be disqualified as beneficiaries for permanent housing, should it be provided.

Daanbantayan's Relief and Early Recovery Efforts based on the Early Recovery Framework and Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA)

The National Government only provided relief and recovery assistance sometime in January 2014. In the immediate aftermath of ST Yolanda, the town relied only on aid from a few of the LGUs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (both local and international), augmented by its own limited calamity fund, consisting of 5% of its local budget. The LGU drew on its available calamity fund in the amount of approximately Php4,000,000 (\$88,889).

Focus on most vulnerable sector	Restore capacities	Rebuild people's livelihood	Rebuilding/ self sufficiency	Reduce disaster risk	Engage the private sector	Transparency and Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGU's distribution of relief packs gave priority to/ consideration for: • Senior citizens • Persons with disability • Indigents • Solo parents • Lactating mothers/ Pregnant women • Residents with no permanent income • No. of household in the family • 7 family members and up (priority) • Family members ages 0-6 years old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors: Private sector and humanitarian organizations, volunteers provided: materials, food, cash, medicines, moral. emotional and spiritual support • Health facilities established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTI distributed 100 sets of retail store items • TESDA provided technical-vocational training and 100 residents of Daanbantayan graduated • International Schools, Rotary provided fishing boats and nets, other donations • International Labor Organization provided cash for work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74 resilient houses on half-hectare site in Brgy. Agujo donated by Cebu Province in coordination with the French firms * Habitat for Humanity in partnership with LGU provided livelihood components • Swiss government gave shelter kits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households in danger zones near the sea or mangrove areas were moved and emergency shelter assistance fund from the Department of Social Welfare and Development disqualified those living in these danger zones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psycho social interventions was conducted by pharmaceutical companies e.g. Debriefing • Counseling • Group processing • Women's groups were provided capability building sessions (in livelihood or psycho social aspects) • Gifts in kinds were distributed (also to children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGU's guideline policy on transparency on accountability • LGU provided a liquidation report to donors (goods/ cash) • LGU submits financial report to Commission on Audit for government funds received • Cash donations uploaded at the government web portal • But at the Barangay Level: No accountability measures were practiced

Figure 5. Relief and Early Recovery Actions in Daanbantayan

Figure 5 shows examples of different Relief and Recovery Efforts executed in the LGU using the HFA frame of reference. The LGU recounted that it has complied with its duties pursuant to Commission on Audit Circular 2012-002 dated Sept 12, 2012, which directs all Provincial Governors, City/Municipal Mayors and Punong Barangay, local accountants, treasurers and budget officers, among others, to comply with the accounting and reporting guidelines for the LDRRM Fund of LGUs, and other funds given to LGUs or receipts of donations from other sources. The LGU endeavored to follow guidelines stipulated under the HFA except for one policy gap pointed out in the accountability, wherein Barangay officials did not provide report to the LGU for donations they received for transparency and accountability purposes. Under Section 1 of Article XI of the 1987 Philippine Constitution on the Law on Public Officers, it is a constitutional duty of public officers to be accountable to the people.

Figure 6 shows the absence of policy—at the time ST Yolanda struck in the Visayas region—at the local level, particularly from the provincial down to the municipal and barangay levels. It appears that the passage of ordinances for creation

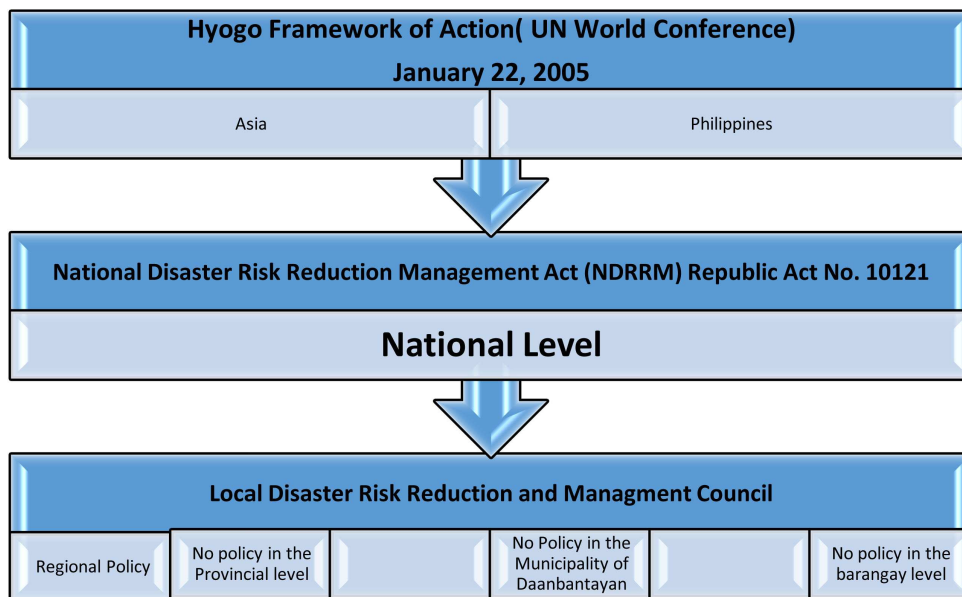


Figure 6 Policy Hierarchy

of local disaster risk reduction and management offices in the province, as well as in the concerned LGU subject of this study, happened only after November 8, 2013. These policies should be implemented with the common goal of coming up with a holistic methodology for disaster risk reduction. However, there is still no concrete solution that addresses the gap in the service delivery of each and every identified function of each and every policy, as provided for both under the HFA and the NDRRM Law.

Laws and policies provided for to fully and effectively operationalize disaster relief and recovery operations in affected areas have been cascaded from national line agencies to regional offices in Health, Customs and Social Work and Development. However, constraints exist in having these policies implemented at different levels (either international, national, provincial, municipal or barangay) or at different departments from each level in the LGUs. The reason for this is possible encroachment or interweaving of functions within the vertical sphere, within the horizontal sphere, or between both spheres. This is very important to consider because these facets are being considered in the implementation of these policies at the local level.

Conclusion

The success of humanitarian aid operations ultimately depends on the ability of organizations—the donors, the LGU, and civil society organizations—to work together. Even if the disaster-affected area restores a semblance of order and work for its early recovery, and sustains the gains it had prior to the calamity, assistance from humanitarian individuals and organizations will be very crucial in helping to continue to successfully implement these.

The freewheeling mode of distribution is a result of the absence, or lack of knowledge or non-implementation, of the applicable policy. It may likewise be due to improper or lack of control or supervision due to unclear roles and responsibilities. This has led to action that is dependent on the pleasure of those who handle the goods. It has likewise led to a lack-in-aid coordination, which is one of the major problems identified in this study. Adverse impacts in the distribution of disaster relief and recovery assistance is the result.

The absence of policy, particularly on the actual coordination of humanitarian assistors in a disaster affected area like Daanbantayan, results in a lack of coordination in the conduct of disaster relief response and recovery efforts. In the process, it creates issues in the distribution of relief assistance, which in turn raises issues on integrity in distribution management or the optimization of the donations extended by the humanitarian organizations. Consequently, it has led portions of the resources and efforts to be wasted or misaligned with other undertakings that are not within the purpose of donation. Ultimately, it hampers early recovery in the disaster-affected area, which could have led to a sustainable development.

Issues raised on the management of disaster relief distribution likewise lead us to believe that our present applicable law, rules and regulations are not well disseminated. This results in a lack of knowledge at the LGU and community levels. For those who are aware of these laws, but defy them, more stringent sanctions are required. Hence, there is a need to review the present NDRRM law and its implementation, so that legislative amendments can be introduced or new laws enacted that facilitate a comprehensive Disaster Relief Distribution and Early Recovery Program. Such a program would include detailed prohibited acts and omissions, administrative, civil and judicial remedies, and administrative and criminal sanctions.

When disaster strikes, its devastation can really eliminate all that it has gained, be it in the economic, social or cultural aspects. But the humanitarian aid that arrives at this time can also be an opportunity that can be taken advantage of, to shift misfortune into a reason to provide sustainable development.

Consistent with the general welfare clause, there are public demands for a better management system that is effective, speedy, prompt, expeditious, reasonable and equitable disaster relief distribution. This includes the need for preventive measures and support for the protection of disaster/calamity victims, and for donors, the government and public officers and employees; and the call for accountability and transparency on the release and utilization of disaster and calamity donations.

Recommendations

Proposed policies developed based on the findings

The NDRRMC should initiate, through a proposal to Congress for sponsorship and passage into law, a bill defining protocol when donors enter into disaster affected areas, so all parties know what to expect and how to deport themselves. This can consist of the adoption of a legislated policy on domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance, complete with a manual containing a compilation of relevant laws of the Philippines as the host country for the use of LGUs and humanitarian assisting organizations. The policy can also be made applicable to local donors.

With the passage of a “Humanitarian’s Guideline”, as encouraged by the United Nations, it can be expected that assisting organizations or individuals will now operate in a coordinated and timely manner, avoiding gaps and duplications of effort. In effect, everyone will assist in facilitating an effective response (Compilation of United Nations Resolutions on Humanitarian Assistance). This will take away unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles and stimulate adequate coordination in crises and disasters, in order to bring about more efficient and quality disaster response (Introduction to the Guidelines for Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief). It is proposed that the Humanitarian Guidelines provide legal and other facilities as an incentive to motivate the assisting actors to register, and provide other relevant information.

In order to discourage fraud/abuses/overpricing, more stringent accountability should be demanded from government officials, including barangay officials, and private citizens, and institutionalized information dissemination at the community level be provided as well as clear application of laws and corresponding penal clauses on NDRMM laws.

It is proposed that the People’s Survival Fund in the National Treasury under R.A. 10174 be used to immediately supplement the calamity fund at the local level, to support initiatives like insurance of government infrastructures and the development of new and enhanced technology for use of donors and beneficiaries in disaster affected areas.

The importance of information cannot be overemphasized. There should be support provided in terms of policy for the creation and capacitating of a local media arm in each disaster affected area as a central source of information during a disaster, coupled with institutionalized feedback mechanism for the LGU to get confirmed complaints and suggestions for a better improvement of the local level's management of disasters.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 provides a continuation of the HFA goals with enhanced area of priorities. The Early Recovery is targeted under Sendai's Four Priorities of Action, which provide as its Priority Four: "Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction." A further study can be made on whether the policy recommended in this study will hereafter help in ensuring that needed laws are in place to capacitate effective response and recovery at all levels. The recommended policy can be a reference for a post 2015 HFA study on gaps and challenges.

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