

Addressing disaster risk reduction through community-rooted interventions in the Philippines: experience of the Homeless People's Federation of the Philippines

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ABSTRACT This paper describes the support programme developed by the Homeless People's Federation Philippines, Inc. (HPFPI) for disaster-affected communities, working with its support NGO, the Philippine Action for Community-led Shelter Initiatives, Inc. (PACSII). The programme developed in response to six major disasters and includes: community-rooted data gathering (assessing the severity and scope of destruction and victims' immediate needs); trust and contact building; support for savings; the registering of community organizations; and identifying needed interventions, including building materials loans for house repairs. It also includes negotiating for land for transit housing and land acquisition for permanent housing construction. The paper also discusses the limits to community processes without government support, and through a case study in the city of Iloilo shows the scale and scope of what can be achieved when local government works with community organizations. The HPFPI and PACSII are also developing disaster risk reduction initiatives by profiling at-risk communities and establishing what can be done to reduce disaster risk. These efforts find impetus in enabling national policies and practice that have shifted from disaster response to disaster risk reduction, and funding for disaster response that can be drawn on for pre-disaster risk reduction.

KEYWORDS community organizations / disasters / risk reduction

I. INTRODUCTION

The experience of the Homeless People's Federation Philippines, Inc. (HPFPI) in disaster risk reduction (DRR) has evolved from years of post-disaster response to poor communities that have been hit by calamities.⁽¹⁾ As a learning organization, the federation has sharpened its disaster-related capacities with every community-driven intervention it has supported.

This paper begins with a brief discussion of the Philippine disaster and intervention profile and describes how the HPFPI, along with its support NGO, the Philippine Action for Community-led Shelter Initiatives, Inc. (PACSII),⁽²⁾ developed its support for disaster-affected communities

to encourage community-rooted and driven post-disaster response. It identifies the ways in which government and other stakeholders can support the needs and address the vulnerabilities of at-risk communities, mapping out possible entry points for incorporating DRR into the effort to scale up community-driven initiatives to the city level. It also discusses the limits of community processes and highlights the fruits of community and government partnership. The paper concludes by summarizing the lessons and recommendations for advancing a community-rooted and community-driven DRR programme.

II. PHILIPPINE DISASTER AND INTERVENTION POLICY CONTEXT: THE SHIFT TO DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

The Philippines maintains a high disaster risk profile, attributable to its location within the Circum-Pacific belt (Pacific Ring of Fire) and the typhoon belt of the North Pacific basin. Consequently, the Philippines suffers from frequent earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, lava and mudflows, landslides, typhoons, floods and droughts that adversely impact on the populace, most especially the poor. This constitutes a major development issue as the frequent disasters, natural or human induced, hinder government efforts to reduce poverty and lessen vulnerabilities of many low-income, hazard prone-located communities.

Furthermore, climate change has probably exacerbated the intensity of recent extreme weather events – for instance during the September–October 2009 mega floods caused by strong winds and extremely high levels of rainfall (450–100 millimetres within the first 24 hours) occasioned by typhoons Ketsana (Ondoy) and Peping (Parma), which resulted in 1,212 fatalities, countless displacements and up to Php 38 billion (US\$ 852 million) in total damages. Climate change is also likely to continue exacerbating the intensity and/or frequency of these and other extreme weather events.

Philippine disaster intervention practice and policy have, prior to the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA)⁽³⁾ in 2005, been reactive and oriented to immediate disaster response and rehabilitation rather than to the more proactive measures of pre-disaster mitigation, risk reduction and management. The laws and policies in place then, such as Presidential Decree 1566 (Strengthening the Philippine Disaster Control Capability and Establishing the National Programme on Community Disaster Preparedness) and Republic Act 7160 (Local Government Code) provisions on disaster relief support and use of calamity funds focused on post-disaster relief and rehabilitation, and lack the comprehensive institutional, policy and implementation requirements for DRR.

As signatory to the HFA and climate change protocols, and based on actual insights into succeeding typhoons, floods, earthquakes, landslides and mudflows since 2005, the Philippines initiated a shift towards disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) in combination with climate change mitigation and adaptation. This shift manifests itself in the adoption of various policy and implementation protocols such as the Medium-term Development Plan for 2004–2010, the Strategic National Action Plan on DRR (2009–2018) and laws such as Republic Act No 9729 (Climate Change Act of 2009) and Republic Act No 10121 (Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010).

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1. See Rayos Co, Jason Christopher (2010), *Community-driven Disaster Intervention: Experiences of the Homeless People's Federation Philippines, Inc.*, IIED/ACHR/SDI Working Paper, IIED, London, 54 pages. This can be downloaded at <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10587IIED.pdf>.

2. The Homeless People's Federation Philippines, Inc. (HPFPI) is a duly registered national federation of close to 250 community associations of the urban and peri-urban poor in 16 cities and 16 municipalities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao for community-led approaches to secure tenure, upgrading, housing and basic services delivery. The Philippine Action for Community-led Shelter Initiatives, Inc. (PACSII) is the primary intermediary support institution of the HPFPI, providing "networked intermediary support" to the emerging needs of the HPFPI on secure tenure, housing, upgrading, disaster risk reduction, climate

The last two pieces of legislation provide for the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures with that of DRRM at the national and up to *barangay* (village) levels. National and local governments are mandated to prepare, budget for and implement their climate change and DRRM action plans.

Regarding calamity funds allocation and use, noteworthy is the consistency in the orientation towards DRR. Republic Act No 10121 amends existing protocols by expanding the allocation and use of the 5 per cent of total local government unit (LGU) budget comprising calamity funds, from merely post-disaster response to:

"... disaster risk management activities such as, but not limited to, pre-disaster preparedness programmes including training, purchasing life-saving rescue equipment, supplies and medicines, for post-disaster activities, and for the payment of premiums on calamity insurance."⁽⁴⁾

It is in this development context that the HPFPI-PACSII Alliance (hereinafter the Alliance) strives to fulfill its mission to organize, build capacities, mobilize and network low-income communities in high risk areas towards community-driven approaches to securing tenure, upgrading, housing, and disaster/climate change impact risk reduction and management.

III. SIX MAJOR DISASTERS IN 10 YEARS

The Payatas trash slide that was triggered by heavy rains in the year 2000 spearheaded the involvement of the HPFPI and PACSII in disaster response. The tragedy took the lives of 288 people, buried hundreds of homes and displaced close to 1,000 waste pickers. With no background in disaster response, the HPFPI engaged in rescue and relief coordination and later supported the trash slide survivors to acquire land and to re-build their houses away from the garbage dump. The experience in Payatas provided a wealth of learning on disaster-related responses that would help improve later interventions in other disaster-affected communities, as in the years following the trash slide, the Alliance had time to reflect on and assess the long-term effects of its interventions on the lives of the community people.

From 2006 onwards, the Alliance had its hands full in this regard, with disaster situations involving thousands of marginalized families. In 2006, the HPFPI was involved in two major disasters, namely the landslide that buried the whole *barangay* of Guinsaugon in Leyte province, and the Mt Mayon mudflow and subsequent flash flood in the Bicol region. Combined, these disasters killed at least 362 people and thousands more were recorded missing. They also caused massive devastation to livelihoods, infrastructure and agriculture.

In the last three years, the Alliance has supported communities that have been the victims of fire and flash floods. In 2007, 246 houses were razed by fire in Lower Tipolo *barangay* in Mandaue City and almost 1,000 people were left homeless. In 2008, Typhoon Frank brought 354 millimetres of rain within a 24-hour period, flooding 180 villages in the city of Iloilo; up to 500 people were killed and 261,335 were affected. And in 2009, at least 464 people died, 529 were injured and hundreds of

thousands left homeless by the widespread flash flood caused by Typhoon Ketsana in Metro Manila and neighbouring provinces.

The successive onslaught of disasters in recent years has highlighted the multiple vulnerabilities of poor communities in times of natural or even human-induced calamities. But likewise, these disasters have brought out the inherent strength of communities to rise above the tragedies and harness their experience to create local learning, which can be used in designing community-driven DRR interventions.

The thrust of the Alliance – to address the increased vulnerabilities of communities with appropriate support mechanisms – fuels and sustains the community-driven initiatives in disaster response and risk reduction.

IV. SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY DISASTERS

a. Parameters of intervention

The Alliance's involvement in disaster-related interventions stems from its core belief that human beings have a right to an adequate standard of living that includes food, clothing and shelter, especially in the context of disasters where poor communities are the ones most affected.

The decision to intervene is made by the regional governance structure composed of the PACSII executive director, the HPFPI regional coordinators and experienced leaders in disaster interventions. They discuss and decide whether or not to intervene in a particular disaster based on the availability of experienced leaders, accessibility and knowledge of the disaster area, the general safety of the leaders, and available funding. Other factors such as communication systems, lodging and language barriers are important points that are also considered when planning for a post-disaster intervention.

b. Disaster response process

After six major disasters and subsequent interventions, the HPFPI has developed a post-disaster response process that is rooted in communities and driven by their articulated needs.

i. Initial data gathering. The post-disaster response team's initial activity at ground zero is to gather data on the severity and scope of destruction in terms of lost lives, numbers of affected families and immediate needs of victims. During this stage, the HPFPI also touches base with disaster response structures such as the Disaster Coordinating Council.

Armed only with pens and enumeration forms, HPFPI volunteers are often the only team that comes to the disaster site without any material help to offer the victims, a fact that makes contact building and initial networking with a community difficult, as victims need material help immediately after a tragedy. Some volunteers have found that most victims expect relief from the organizations that visit them, and in the absence of this they tend to be sceptical about the reasons for the HPFPI's presence; if funds allow, the HPFPI does provide relief to communities that have not been reached by other outside help.

The data-gathering process is used both as a disaster documentation tool and an entry point strategy for community and local government

change adaptation, basic services delivery and urban livability. Together, they form the Philippine Alliance, which organizes, mobilizes and networks low-income communities towards community finance and other community-driven strategies in securing tenure, implementing upgrading, housing, disaster risk management activities and urban liveability through collaboration with government, academe and other stakeholders.

3. The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) is a 10-year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards/disasters, and was adopted by 168 Member States of the United Nations in 2005 at the World Disaster Reduction Conference that took place just a few weeks after the Indian Ocean tsunami. This framework seeks to substantially reduce disaster losses by 2015, by building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters and thus encouraging far more support for the reduction of disaster risk rather than only for responses after disasters have happened.

4. Section 21 of Republic Act 10121 passed on 27 May 2010, page 31.

5. If the disaster-affected or disaster-threatened communities are existing active HPFPI member communities, they would have a governing structure and a core of volunteer leaders that may be tapped by the HPFPI to conduct rapid socioeconomic and damage assessment surveys. For non-HPFPI-organized or non-member communities, usually the HPFPI will first settle in these communities, establish local contacts, and scout for and mobilize volunteer leaders from the community to collectively plan and perform the various activities.

engagement. The information gathered is used to assess the immediate needs of families, especially women, children and the elderly, for inclusion in the appeal for emergency funding to international organizations involved with the HPFPI network.

Since HPFPI volunteers are rooted in communities,⁽⁵⁾ they are often the first to undertake damage assessment of the aftermath of disaster, and the initial information they produce is what local government units (LGUs) and outside organizations involved in rescue and relief operations rely on immediately after tragedy strikes. For example, in the massive flooding that submerged almost all of Metro Manila as a result of the heavy rains caused by Typhoon Ketsana in September 2009, HPFPI volunteers, who themselves were disaster victims, rapidly provided accurate data to the authorities and aid organizations concerning the scope and gravity of destruction that the flooding had brought to their communities, including the following:

- number of affected families;
- immediate needs of victims, especially children and women;
- general situation in the disaster and evacuation areas; and
- map of the disaster-affected area.

ii. Trust and contact building. In the initial stages of intervention, HPFPI leaders expect scepticism and an outright refusal to cooperate from disaster-struck communities, and even local authorities, regarding their programme. Federation leaders thus invest in trust and contact building by introducing the HPFPI and its interventions to the village authorities, local leaders and also to city or municipal government. Experienced volunteers consider this process as among the most arduous challenges in the disaster response cycle, since the process of establishing and legitimizing the HPFPI presence in the community can create foes as well as allies. Ultimately, however, it helps cement the relationship between the community and the HPFPI. Another effective strategy for trust and contact building is learning exchanges and exposure visits to other communities, which adopted the HPFPI programme and were given necessary support by the Alliance to implement their post-disaster rehabilitation/reconstruction plan.

iii. Savings programme implementation. At the heart of all HPFPI intervention is the savings programme, which is quite difficult to introduce to disaster victims who often have lost much, if not all, of their material possessions as a result of the tragedy, and generally feel that they should be at the receiving end of resource generation and not the initiators.

The experience of community leaders who introduced a savings programme to the mudflow and flash flood victims in the Bicol region best illustrates this point. They were accused by local government officials and some non-government organizations operating in the area of extorting money from the victims. Likewise, community people did not believe that a few pesos each week could be enough to finance a land acquisition scheme. The accusations cast doubts on the effectiveness and credibility of savings to finance a long-term reconstruction plan. But the time and hard work invested in trust and contact building countered people's negative perceptions about savings and it paid off in the long run. The community's savings enabled them to purchase land within only a year of implementing the programme, thereby demonstrating that savings mobilization can be a vital instrument in disaster response.

iv. *Organizational formation and registration.* Simultaneous with savings programme implementation is social preparation for the formation and registration of a community association, as part of the organizing work. This part of the disaster intervention process usually takes a couple of years to come to fruition as it entails a lot of preparation on the ground.

While working on increasing the savings funds, the HPFPI and the communities also work on capacitating local volunteers and potential leaders to take on lead roles in mobilizing people. Once the community organization is formally created and registered, the HPFPI then assists in its development and strengthening.

v. *Intervention identification.* Disaster-affected communities choose the kind of interventions they prefer depending on their needs. To date, the Alliance has developed three types of disaster intervention:

Immediate: house materials loan. The flash flood triggered by Typhoon Ketsana in 2009 washed out or heavily damaged many houses in poor communities. Thousands of victims sought refuge in different evacuation centres in Metro Manila, but the congested state of most of these put families, children and elderly members at particular risk of health problems. Therefore, affected families whose houses were not completely damaged wanted to leave the evacuation centres and go home; but first they had to repair their houses to make them habitable once more. Thus, materials loan assistance was implemented by the federation as the immediate response to the needs of disaster-affected families. The maximum materials assistance that families could access amounted to Php 7,000 (around US\$ 155), payable within a one-year period, with the affected families or the community being responsible for the collection and repayment of the loan.

Activities conducted for this kind of intervention include:

- mapping communities and identifying families who need materials loan assistance;
- conducting a materials loan assistance workshop, which includes participants sharing their disaster experience, to help them not only rehabilitate their houses but also their emotional well-being;
- validation of the loan proposals of affected families;
- installation of a community-driven procurement process that includes canvassing, price negotiations, purchasing construction materials, and delivery and warehousing (if applicable), all with the participation of the house repair loan applicants;
- creation of loan criteria and repayment policy with the participation of loan applicants; and
- continuous savings orientations.

Mid-term: transit housing has been used three times by the Alliance as a disaster intervention, namely for the survivors of the landslide in Guinsaugon in 2006 (Leyte province), and for the displaced families of typhoons Frank in 2006 (Iloilo) and Ketsana in 2009 (Metro Manila).

Transit housing offers a medium-term solution to displacement arising from disasters, especially in an urban context where land is scarce and affected families do not want to be relocated outside the city limits, far from their sources of livelihood.

Transit housing in Leyte and Iloilo was dismantled after occupants had moved to their permanent houses. The transit shelter in Quezon City (Metro Manila), however, will serve as a re-usable evacuation centre for

the *barangay* in cases of disaster, as Bagong Silangan is among the high risk areas in Quezon City due to its low-lying location, which leaves it prone to massive flooding.

The technical side of transit house construction necessitates capacity building for the participants. Workshops on community procurement and house design are conducted to boost the involvement of participants in all phases of the project cycle. These help people to procure standard quality materials at the least cost possible and to take the everyday needs of families into consideration in the design of the units that they will temporarily occupy. The housing participants also participate in planning the work schedule based on the availability of construction materials and the manpower support that can be mobilized.

Long-term: a land acquisition initiative was pioneered in the community of Payatas in Quezon City in 1988, when it directly purchased a 30,000 square-metre plot of land in Montalban, Rizal for Php 3.9 million (US\$ 86,666). The disaster-affected communities in the municipalities of Guinobatan, Daraga and Camalig in Bicol region followed suit in 2007 and 2008. The communities engage in activities that include land research, soil assessment and negotiations with owners, before making the actual purchase.

House construction in a safe location is the end result of disaster interventions. The housing projects in the cities of Mandaue and Iloilo, supported by the HPFPI, exemplify the processes inherent in a community-rooted and driven development initiative. These include social preparation for participants, capacity building, project planning, implementation and management, to actualize a housing project that draws impetus from community people.

c. Vulnerabilities and support mechanisms

The general feeling of helplessness that immediately follows a tragedy immobilizes victims, contributing to a fatalistic attitude that leads them to accept rather than address their situation. This helplessness stems from myriad vulnerabilities caused by limited financial access, insecure land and house tenure, high risk locations and a lack of organization.

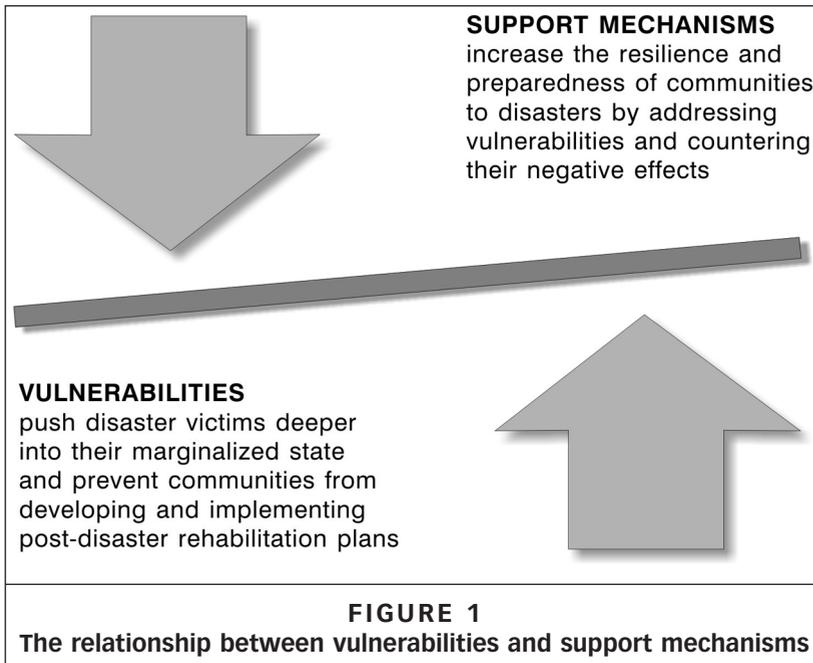
To free the communities from the grip of vulnerabilities that prevent people from utilizing their full strength and potential as drivers of their own reconstruction, the Alliance establishes and continues to develop the support mechanisms that aim to counter the root causes of their weaknesses.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between vulnerabilities and support mechanisms.

d. Core causes of vulnerabilities

i. Limited financial access. The lack or absence of financial resources can create major obstacles in the daily grind of the poor even in normal circumstances, since in the city everything from food, education, health and mobility depends on whether or not a family has money to spend.

The negative effects of limited financial resources are exacerbated in the context of disaster situations, and can make or break the outcomes. For example, families that were trapped inside their houses at the height



of the flooding brought about by Typhoon Ketsana said that the lack of money for transportation prevented them from leaving their houses before their safety was compromised.

To address this financial weakness of low-income families, the following support programmes were developed and implemented:

- **Savings programme** – promotes prudent spending and basic management of household earnings through the internal generation of resources.
- **Community inter-lending** – is an option for access to resources, where communities can seek financial assistance from other communities for their needs related to upgrading, land acquisition or other matters of collective interest.
- **Financial management** – refers to the development of skills that will aid communities to record, manage and monitor their savings for transparency and accountability.
- **Livelihoods** – the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) can be used as a loan vehicle for livelihood enterprises that can boost household earnings; for example hog raising and small-scale buy and sell businesses.

ii. Insecure land and house tenure. Adding to the stress of families displaced by disasters is the uncertainty of their living situation in the informal settlements. Constant threats of demolition and the general threats inherent to living in unsafe surroundings hound poor communities on a daily basis.

In line with the long-term goal of achieving land and house tenure, communities implement the following programmes:

- **UPDF loan for land acquisition** – communities can borrow money from the UPDF to augment their community savings for the purpose of land purchase or to finance its documentary requirements.
- **House construction/reconstruction** – community-driven housing projects where people design and construct their own homes reflect the culmination of the community’s post-disaster development plan.

iii. High risk locations. In the context of informal settlements, high risk locations usually refer to places under bridges, along coastlines, and near open dumpsites, catchment basins and landslide-prone areas among others. The following mechanisms seek to identify and mitigate the dangers inherent in high risk areas:

- **Disaster risk assessment and reduction** – community-based and driven disaster risk assessment and reduction activities such as environmental mapping, historical time lining and soil assessment raise people’s awareness of their safety situation and promote the cultivation of homegrown solutions to mitigate and reduce risk.
- **Enumeration** – helps to profile at-risk communities in terms of their socioeconomic conditions and their exact location within the community.
- **Community upgrading** – can immediately address the safety and health issues related to slum living if a more permanent solution to the tenure problem is not yet in sight. Technical assistance is provided by volunteer professionals such as architects and engineers to communities undergoing an upgrading project.

iv. Lack of organization. A lack of organization within communities prevents the kind of collective action that can move them to plan their development agenda and act towards achieving it.

- **Organizational formation and development** is a vital step towards community organizing and building. The subsequent development and strengthening of the community organization is achieved by building the capacities of people through popularized education.
- **Urban poor networking** allows for sectoral planning and strategy development among urban poor organizations for engagement at the city level. This steps up the organizing work to include other urban poor federations working towards the same sectoral goals within a city or municipality and also promotes the same principle of community empowerment and leadership in their development agenda.
- **Local government unit (LGU)** collaboration opens the door for outside support from the LGU, which is the main player in the city development process because it has control over public resources and policy formulation at the city level.

Figure 2 shows the inter-relationship between vulnerabilities and the mechanisms that address them.

V. FROM POST-DISASTER RESPONSE TO DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

a. Identifying and supporting at-risk communities

The HPFPI is slowly but deliberately incorporating initiatives for risk reduction in addition to its disaster response initiatives as part of its avowed mission to

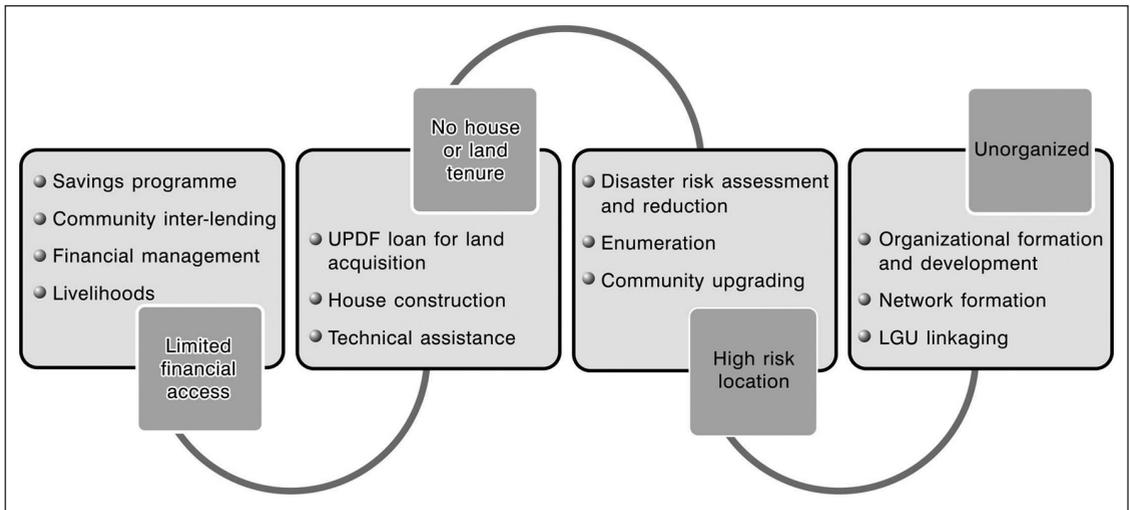


FIGURE 2
The inter-relationship between vulnerabilities and the mechanisms that address them

organize and mobilize low-income communities in high risk locations. At the heart of the federation’s efforts on DRR is the identification of highly at-risk communities in cities and municipalities where the HPFPI is seeded.

The citywide enumeration is the main tool used by the HPFPI to identify and support at-risk communities. Community surveys began after the Payatas trash slide catastrophe in 2000. Federation leaders reflected on the importance of accurate and updated documentation of slum settlements after the official tally of deaths and missing persons reported by the government and the media did not even come close to the number of lost lives estimated by community people themselves, who were familiar with the vicinity and the people living and working there.

The lack of government documentation on poor communities, many of them located in high risk areas, pushes marginalized people further into invisibility. Although poor settlements are visible just about anywhere within the city proper, there is little or no record of their existence other than what is provided by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in the general population census. Because of this, their needs are not included in city development and DRR planning.

The Alliance is now in the process of identifying and profiling at-risk communities in 12 cities and 10 municipalities located in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Budget constraints, however, have necessitated the prioritization of communities that are most highly at risk. HPFPI community volunteers and experienced leaders focus on informal settlements located under bridges, near cliffs and other landslide prone areas, on coastal shorelines and riverbanks, in public cemeteries, near open dumpsites and those in flood-prone locations, among others.

The city enumeration initiative began in August 2009 and will be completed by January 2012. Results of the initiative will be published in order to give an accurate profile of marginalized settlements that are highly at risk of being victimized by disasters at both the regional and city levels,

thereby raising awareness among community members of the dangers and risks of living in unsafe environments; also, to build community-based information systems on informal settlements on a city and municipal scale; and to utilize enumeration results as inputs for community-driven initiatives, local government planning and network building.

The Alliance has likewise partnered with an institution that is knowledgeable in disaster mapping and risk assessment. ESSC (Environmental Science for Social Change) is helping the Alliance to capacitate communities in disaster risk assessment and mitigation by designing a popularized module that will enable a community-driven risk assessment and mitigation (CRAM) process to be implemented. The federation overlays the CRAM results with actual local maps that ESSC helped develop for the HPFPI's selected high risk communities.

The enumeration, CRAM results and map overlays combined will provide a two-dimensional profile that shows both the socioeconomic and environmental vulnerabilities of communities to disaster. This profile is a powerful tool that can bolster the credibility of the HPFPI in engaging with city stakeholders, especially the LGUs, on the matter of DRR planning, which includes the issue of marginalized communities.

b. Further support

The limited resources of the federation cannot sustain the regular and comprehensive conduct of enumerations and map overlays in high risk communities. The HPFPI is thus advocating that local government at *barangay* and city levels incorporate enumeration and risk assessment in their development planning so that more marginalized communities can be profiled and assessed. The results of these enumerations should be taken into consideration by both the *barangay* and the city government in their climate change and disaster response and risk reduction plans, as called for in the newly enacted Climate Change Act 2009 (Republic Act 9729) and the Philippine Risk Reduction and Management Act 2010 (Republic Act 10121).

c. Citywide scaling up of community-driven development and DRR initiatives

DRR is likewise being incorporated into efforts to scale up community development initiatives at the city level. The scaling up effort will be pushed forward, supported and sustained by four factors: strong community networks, an alternative financial facility, a technical support institution, and a community-based information system, which are currently at different stages of development. The alternative finance facility will help to financially support the scaling up process. It is a potential vehicle for risk sharing as it can include among its products disaster insurance for the poorest families. Reconstruction or rehabilitation loans can likewise be included in its potential list of financial products that cater to highly at-risk communities. The legal and structural framework for this finance facility, to be called the Philippine Action for Slum Upgrading Facility, Inc. (PASUFI), is now being fine tuned before its formal registration as an institution that will support the scaling up process.

The technical support institution will contribute to risk mitigation measures by promoting and encouraging the use of green architecture

in the houses that participants will design. By taking into account the geography and topography of the environment where the houses will be built, the design can combine maximum efficiency in house use with minimum exposure and susceptibility to disaster. The same principles will hold true whether communities are working on the design of small-scale or large upgrading initiatives.

Technical professionals can also look into the following to push community development initiatives to the citywide scale:

- site selection and land use planning and zoning that considers hazard-prone areas;
- disaster and climate change resilient designs that combine affordability and indigenous materials; and
- advocacy for appropriate but easy to comply with building standards that can ensure resilient and safe structures but without the prohibitive costs.

This technical institution has now been registered as the Technical Assistance Movement for People and Environment, Inc. (TAMPEI), and is in the process of planning its activities and support services.

The last pillar of the scaling up process is the community-managed information system, which will be the primary source of data that can help identify communities in dangerous areas and the risks they are facing. This system is still being designed to the advantage of the communities who will be the end users.

Table 1 maps out possible entry points for DRR intervention in the scaling up thrust of the Alliance.

VI. LIMITS OF COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROCESSES

While the efforts of communities to develop and implement their own disaster-related interventions, moving from response to risk reduction, have produced concrete results, much still needs to be done to move these development initiatives from small-scale success stories to a mainstream approach to city development.

Communities can only maximize and control the development drivers that are inherently theirs, such as their savings, acquired capacities and the support given by the HPPFI and PACSII. Other development drivers such as land provision, the formulation of enabling policies at the city and national levels and institutionalization of the community-driven process at *barangay* and city levels are among the supports that city stakeholders can provide to match the efforts of communities.

The communities' limitations largely involve resources and the legal framework within which they have to operate. With external support, however, community-driven DRR holds a lot of possibilities in terms of appropriately addressing the core vulnerabilities of low-income communities to calamities.

VII. COMMUNITY, COMMUNITY NETWORKS AND GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

The interplay of institutional partnerships of communities with local government, academia, private organizations and international partners

TABLE 1
Entry points for disaster risk reduction intervention in the scaling up thrust of the HPFPI-PACSII Alliance

Pillars of scaling up	Risk identification	Risk mitigation	Risk transfer/sharing
Strong community networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community enumeration • Community risk assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying for DRR policies that are community based and driven 	
Alternative finance facility			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster insurance for the marginalized • Reconstruction/rehabilitation loan
Technical professionals supporting community processes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green architecture • Land use planning and zoning that includes geo-hazard maps • Disaster and climate impact-resilient designs that are affordable • Policy reform on building standards • Community upgrading 	
Community-managed information system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community enumeration • Community risk assessment 		

SOURCE: PACSII (2010), "A profile of the Philippine Alliance", PACSII, the Philippines.

is best exemplified by the story of the HPFPI in Iloilo, where the post-disaster response initiative has been scaled up to the city level.

The partnerships established with local and national governments and grassroots organizations started long before Typhoon Frank caused devastation in the city. Initial engagements were in the implementation of a community-led upgrading programme and the CLIFF project (Community-led Infrastructure Finance Facility). The partnership was further strengthened after the Typhoon Frank disaster in June 2008. The active participation of the Alliance in technical and multi-sectoral working groups, made possible through executive orders and other local policy structures, opened a wider space for engagement to effect change in local policies.

As a member of the Resettlement and Monitoring Task Force, the Alliance assisted in social preparations and other resettlement-related activities conducted by the local government. This included an information dissemination campaign among communities living in danger zones (along riverbanks, shorelines and those directly affected by the city's infrastructure projects), who were to be transferred to government relocation sites.

Extending facilities and equipment, and detailing personnel (site engineers, surveyors, mappers) to provide technical assistance to housing and disaster rehabilitation measures/interventions of the Alliance were the major contributions of the local government. This kind of assistance effectively lowered the cost of projects managed by the Alliance.

The formulation of Memoranda of Agreements (MOAs), which allocated a portion of the 16.2 hectares of the San Isidro relocation site (in the Jaro district of Iloilo) and also provided for the construction of temporary

housing units and communal facilities for Typhoon Frank-affected families, also formalized and facilitated counterparting and collaboration.

The city government, through the Iloilo City Urban Poor Affairs Office (ICUPAO), assisted in the social mobilization activities of the federation, which included mapping of high risk/disaster-affected communities, and identification and prioritization of communities to be given post-disaster assistance (temporary houses and materials loan assistance for housing repairs).

The local government (Iloilo) recognized that the urban poor sector and their support organizations are partners in the city's development. It has opened opportunities/venues for the sector to participate in local decision-making through representation in technical working groups and multi-sectoral bodies. Delivery of housing, upgrading, post-disaster assistance and other basic services became massive in scope because of resource sharing that resulted from the partnership built between the LGU and the communities through the Alliance.

With other city stakeholders, the communities have managed to do the following:

- Establish good partnerships with international networks/organizations that invest in programmes that build on the capacities of organized urban poor communities to address slum problems. These international partners (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Homeless International, IIED, Slum Dweller's International, Misereor) have been supporting people's capacity and process in the delivery of development programmes.
- At the local level, the communities have linked with various academic institutions (University of San Agustin–College of Engineering and Architecture; University of the Philippines–Visayas; and Western Visayas College of Science and Technology), which provide technical support to poor communities living in high risk areas. This support is in the form of documentation and research on alternative building technology, engineering and architectural or logistical services.

Note that central to the Iloilo experience in multi-stakeholder and scaled up disaster response and DRR intervention is the quality of organizational and governance strength of each of its urban poor communities, which allows them to act on their development agenda. A key factor in obtaining empowered communities is the confluence of determined and enabling community leaders able to mobilize their members into undertaking collective visioning, planning and action, and the unwavering support of said members derived from a keen understanding of such a vision.

Good community leadership, capable of multi-tasking, has contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of communities in managing local and citywide development initiatives, including post-disaster rehabilitation measures. But other community drivers are also vital to the scaling up process:

- **Organized urban poor communities and a unified network** are vehicles used for social mobilization, information dissemination on DRR and implementation of post-disaster interventions. Specific to the experience of the Alliance in Iloilo, community associations together with the Iloilo City Urban Poor Network (ICUPN) are used to help identify and prioritize disaster-affected families as

target beneficiaries of temporary housing and materials assistance programmes. Housing materials assistance applicants are endorsed by their respective associations to the ICUPN for initial screening. Then a follow-up community visit is conducted to validate the condition of applicants' housing structure before final approval by PACSII and ICUPN. Procurement management and monitoring of delivered materials are entrusted to community associations. ICUPN and the Alliance are responsible for the following:

- formulation of selection criteria and application requirements for the housing materials assistance programme. For the transitory housing project, the selection criteria and requirements were formulated in collaboration with ICUPAO and other multi-sectoral housing members;
 - projection and disbursement of fund requirements for transit housing and housing materials assistance programme;
 - cost estimates, design and construction supervision of 66 transit housing units; and
 - documentation and financial reporting to donors.
- **Indigenous knowledge, tools and practices** (e.g. warning signals) on DRR developed through experience, which have proven effective within the locality. Approaches to DRR become more holistic if this indigenous knowledge and practices are combined with the knowledge of the scientific community, and there is a need for experienced communities to share with newly disaster-struck communities/cities their indigenous knowledge and processes on how they implement DRR interventions. For this to materialize there should be an appropriate venue for sharing of experiences, either through learning exchanges between community and community, and LGU and LGU, also fora or seminars and advocacy campaigns.
 - **Internal financial resources** in the form of savings, which serves as community leverage in its engagement with city stakeholders.

An important realization emerging from the Alliance's disaster experience is the need to leverage additional local resources, particularly land for transit and for (permanent post-disaster) housing projects to be replicated and scaled up.

On leveraging local resources, cities can avail themselves of allocations from the national calamity funds as well as their own calamity funds, which amount to 5 per cent of their total budgets. As discussed in Section II of this paper, the new Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Law⁽⁶⁾ has amended the use of the calamity funds from strictly post-disaster response to include pre-disaster risk reduction activities. Of these funds, up to 30 per cent is allocated for post-disaster interventions. Yet disseminating information on this new law needs to be improved.

There is a push to further refine the implementation of this law to allow these funds to be given directly not only to disaster-affected communities but also to communities at risk, for DRR. The reason for this is that the experience with the housing materials assistance programme of the federation has shown that cash (loans) or in-kind transfers to communities provide them with the power and flexibility to decide and act on their rehabilitation.

6. Sections 21 and 22 of Republic Act 10121 passed on 27 May 2010.

VIII. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The HPFPI-PACSII Alliance experience in disaster response, risk reduction and management has resulted in various community-driven processes providing concrete and doable schemes that fine tune existing policy and practice of localized disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) and climate change impact mitigation and adaptation.

First among these efforts is the HPFPI's five-part disaster response process. This involves initial data gathering, trust and contact building, savings programme implementation, organizational formation and registration, and intervention identification (immediate, mid-term or long term), and is proven to be effective in mobilizing disaster-affected communities to act on their own rehabilitation agenda. The effectiveness of such measures stems from the fact that they address identified needs and are implemented in a simple, facilitative manner that arises from a deep understanding and rootedness in the community.

The disaster response measures likewise build community capacities in governance, collective decision-making, technical and documentary skills, project implementation and knowledge sharing. Other strengths of the process are its simplicity and replicability.

Beyond disaster response, the Alliance implements a community-led DRR process that targets, through citywide enumerations, at-risk low-income communities, identifies their core vulnerabilities and provides appropriate support mechanisms that reduce vulnerabilities and increase resilience of communities.

The Alliance realizes that such a community-driven DRR process needs to be replicated at city scale for impact. Consequently, the Alliance strives towards citywide scaling up of efforts involving the establishment of four pillars that address the various aspects of DRR that are risk identification, mitigation and sharing. The four pillars for scaling up are:

- strong urban poor community networks;
- an alternative finance facility that supports DRR upgrading and housing;
- a technical professionals network that supports community processes; and
- a community-managed information system.

In implementing this scaling up of community-driven DRR processes at the city level, the Alliance experience in Iloilo indicates the need for:

- a pool of strong, empowered urban poor communities that have networked citywide and collectively plan and act on identified DRRM, upgrading and housing issues;
- a deep and active collaboration with the local government and key urban stakeholders such as academe, NGOs and key shelter agencies on DRRM;
- building on and sharing local knowledge and learning on community-led DRRM; and
- leveraging of internal (community) and external (Alliance, LGU, national, NGO, private sector, academe, technical professionals) financial and non-financial resources.

Lastly, the Alliance sees the need to consolidate the learning and insights from the aforementioned efforts in order to influence both policy and practice, by demonstrating the potency of community-driven DRRM processes and institutionalizing their use.

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