

Participatory Development and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in the Philippines: The
Case of Albay Province

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Abstract

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“Climate Change” is no longer an esoteric phrase. In the context of the Philippines, the damage in recent years has been substantial. In addition to the tragic loss of lives and damage to ecosystems and land, the average annual damage caused by disasters amounts to PHP 19.7 billion in the past two decades, equivalent to an average of 0.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) each year. The city of Tacloban serves as an example of failure in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) in the wake of November 2013’s super typhoon Haiyan. In contrast, the province of Albay’s DRRM practices interpret complex, abstruse DRRM legislation and frameworks into a highly contextualized model of participatory development that succeeds in saving lives and mitigating economic and property-damage risks. This paper also assesses the extent to which Albay’s DRRM practices succeed in addressing the factors that make communities vulnerable to begin with, such as lack of economic opportunity or public health issues. Development and DRR are deeply intertwined, and development often becomes a conversation that excludes the very communities that it purports to serve. Participatory DRRM offers a means of returning some level of efficacy to victims of climate change, even in the face of disasters that are difficult to predict.

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Abbreviations

APSEMO Albay Public Safety, Emergency and Management Office
CCA Climate Change Adaptation
CLUP Comprehensive Land-Use Planning
CSO Civil Society Organization
DILG Department of Interior and Local Government
DOST Department of Science and Technology
DRRM Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
DSWD Department of Social Welfare and Development
IPCC Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LCE Local Chief Executive (Public Personnel Administration of the Local Government Unit (LGU))
LCF Local Calamity Fund
LGU Local Government Unit
MDG Millennium Development Goals
NEDA National Economic and Development Authority
NDRRMP National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Program
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
[Project] NOAH Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards
OCD Office of Civil Defense
PAGASA Philippine Atmosphere, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration
PDP Philippine Development Plan
PGA-CIRCA Center for Initiatives and Research on Climate Adaptation
PIDS Philippine Institute for Development Studies
PINDOT Provincial Information Network on Disaster Occurrences and Threats
RDRRMCs Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (RDRRMCs)
SDG Sustainable Development Goals
SNAP Strategic National Action Plan

Preface

Disaster and Visiting Leyte

In the weeks following November 8, 2013, images of Tacloban, a city in the Philippines' Visayas region that was destroyed by super typhoon Yolanda,¹ dominated media outlets. More than 6,300 people died and 11 million were affected by the storm, according to UN estimates. A report released by the Philippine government indicates that they received \$386,084,529.63 USD in combined governmental, NGO, and in kind relief donations.² Wallets opened, and international volunteers poured into the Philippines to help alleviate the worst of the acute humanitarian crisis.

I was one such volunteer. In December 2013, I traveled to the town of Tanauan in Leyte. 18 kilometers south of Tacloban, Tanauan was devastated by tsunami-like waves that left two-story piles of trash in the middle of the road and very few houses standing, even a month after the storm had hit. In English or Tagalog, and sometimes in Waray-Waray with the help of a local interpreter, I interviewed families living on the beach about their experiences during the storm. Many had tragically lost family members or close friends and neighbors. The loss of possessions, homes, livelihoods, and community members, however, was ubiquitous.

I wrote an article recounting the stories I heard there, and what I came back to again and again was how seemingly avoidable the tragic loss of life was, if the system of communication and disaster warning had been stronger and more effective:

Time and again, what residents of Tanauan articulated was that the warnings they received were inadequate. Though they were warned, sometimes multiple times, of a

¹ Super typhoon Yolanda was known internationally as super typhoon Haiyan. These names are used interchangeably throughout this paper, depending on sources.

² "Full Report: Breakdown by Donor entry," Foreign Aid Transparency Hub, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.gov.ph/faith/full-report>.

coming, “storm surge,” few if any knew what a storm surge was. Since the Philippines regularly experiences typhoons during its “typhoon season,” residents are accustomed to riding out storms in their homes. If people had understood the diction of storm warnings, would more have headed for safer places further inland? “Why couldn’t they have just said that a tsunami was coming?” asked one exasperated resident of Tanauan in an interview. “That, we would have understood.”³

Miscommunications and logistical shortsightedness amplified the effects of typhoon Yolanda in Leyte, some areas of Samar, and many other provincial areas of the Philippines. Their Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) practices had failed, leaving citizens clamoring for basic needs long after the typhoon had come and gone. Though Yolanda affected many areas in Leyte, Tacloban, the coastal city that serves as Leyte’s capital, became the central focal point for media coverage of the storm. It was the largest city that had been destroyed. In the storm’s aftermath, Tacloban, like nearby Tanauan, had seemed nearly completely unprepared.

Introduction

³ This article was published in the online version of *Columns Magazine*, in the June 2014 issue. To view the full article and read further about Tanauan citizens’ accounts of Typhoon Yolanda, visit <http://www.washington.edu/alumni/columns-magazine/june-2014/the-hub/typhoon>.

“Because no matter how well-crafted our laws are, no matter how grand the speeches we deliver, if it is not implemented on the local level, then that is the problem,”

--Philippine Senator Loren Legarda, regarding National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management legislation⁴

“Climate Change” is no longer an esoteric phrase. As this phenomenon has become more observable and measurable around the world, the phrase permeates news stories, social media, and everyday conversations. The international governing community as well as individual states, including the Philippine government, has begun to recognize the “critical need to have the appropriate policy and institutional framework in dealing with the climate change phenomenon and natural disasters.”⁵

In the context of the Philippines, the damage in recent years has been substantial. In addition to the tragic loss of lives and damage to ecosystems and land, “the average annual damage caused by disasters amounts to PHP 19.7 billion in the past two decades, equivalent to an average of 0.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) each year.”⁶ Philippine Senator Loren Legarda, an environmental advocate and a proponent of National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) practices reported that in 2011, “due to natural disasters, it cost the country P26 billion and it displaced more than 15 million people.”⁷ Climate change is increasing the strength of tropical storms, as well as contributing to rising sea levels that increase some communities’ vulnerability during extreme weather events.

While the above example of Tanauan and Tacloban represented nearly complete failure in DRRM terms, Albay province, which was likewise hit with gale-force winds and, albeit

⁴ “Philippine laws on disaster risk reduction and climate change cited among the best in the world,” May 3, 2012, accessed May 15, 2015, <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/news/v.php?id=26602>.

⁵ Llanto, Gilberto M., *Mainstreaming disaster risk management in local governments*. (Makati City, Philippines: Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2011), 2.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “Philippine laws...among the best”

significantly smaller storm surges, experienced zero casualties.⁸ The lack of deaths in Albay is attributed to aggressive pre-emptive evacuation and well-trained local government units (LGUs) that have efficient, well-practiced emergency trainings, in addition to the comparatively weaker effects of Yolanda in Albay, as compared to Tacloban. The response to Typhoon Haiyan in Albay was thoughtfully preemptive, rather than inadequate and reactive, as it was in Tacloban and other areas of Leyte, Samar, and the provincial regions—areas which experienced large losses of life and infrastructure.

In the scope of this paper, I explore the ways in which Albay's DRRM practices interpret complex, abstruse DRRM legislation and frameworks into a highly contextualized model of participatory development that succeeds in saving lives and mitigating economic and property-damage risks. I will also assess the extent to which Albay's DRRM practices succeed in addressing the factors that make communities vulnerable to begin with, such as lack of economic opportunity or public health issues. I will consider legislation, DRRM policy reports, slideshows and presentations by Albay Governor Joey Salceda, and news articles as sources. In the context of a world increasingly impacted by climate change, DRRM will become an essential function of governments for much of the so-called Global South.

This work is important in that it considers some of the participatory aspects of Albay's DRRM practices that make it most effective in saving lives and allowing for economic opportunities in spite of uncertainty. In the current context of Climate Change, the world is looking for successful models of DRRM for developing countries with infrastructural problems and vulnerabilities similar to those characteristic of the Philippines. The number of climate refugees and communities that are becoming more vulnerable to climate change induced natural

⁸ "No typhoon deaths in Albay, officials say," ABS-CBN News video, 1:59, November 9, 2013, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/video/nation/regions/11/08/13/no-typhoon-deaths-albay-officials-say>

disasters is constantly increasing. Development and DRR are deeply intertwined, and development often becomes a conversation that excludes the very communities that it purports to serve. Participatory DRRM offers a means of returning some level of efficacy to victims of climate change, even in the face of disasters that are difficult to predict.

Limitations

One obvious limitation of this study is that it only considers sources available in English and Tagalog. Many of the DRRM materials that I consider are prepared for national audiences, and, as such are written or spoken in English, Tagalog, or some combination of the two. However, since the paper's focus is on Albay province, there are likely several sources written or recorded in the province's local language, Bikol and its many dialects.

However, according the province's official government website, "The official documents are mostly in English. Most of the local daily newspapers are in English. About 95 percent of the books and publications in its libraries are in English."⁹ While some sources will likely be excluded from the scope of this paper, the majority of information available that is relevant to DRRM local and national policy seems to be in English or Tagalog, and has therefore been accessible for research related to this project.

Chapter I: Building a Context for Natural Disasters in the Philippines

The Philippines: A "Disaster Risk Hotspot"

⁹ "About Albay Province," Republic of the Philippines:Province of Albay, accessed April 22, 2015, <http://albay.gov.ph/about/>.

When in 2005 the World Bank conducted a “Global Risk Analysis” of countries that were “Disaster Risk Hotspots,” they ranked the Philippines as fourth on a list of “Countries Most Exposed to Multiple Hazards” in relation to land area. This category included countries exposed to at least 3 hazards—the Philippines being vulnerable to 5. The World Bank estimated that 22.3% of the Philippines land area and 36.4% of the population as exposed to disaster risks.

The Philippines ranked similarly in other analyses within the same paper—ranking fourth in the category of “Countries at Relatively High Mortality Risk from Multiple Hazards,” with 72.6% of the population in the danger hot spots at a “high mortality risk” if a natural disaster occurs. The World Bank’s designated risks for the Philippines include the categories of Volcanoes, Earthquakes, Landslides, Storm Surges, Cyclones, and Typhoons. The Philippines also ranks highly on the list of “Countries at Relatively High Economic Risk from Multiple Hazards,” which cites 78.7%, or a large majority, of the Philippines’ GDP as located in at-risk areas. Another way to describe this statistic is as potential economic losses.¹⁰

These statistics are important in articulating not only the “natural” vulnerability of the Philippines—engendered by its inherent geography, geology, and climate— but also in acknowledging the ways in which vulnerability is constructed and defined through economic impoverishment. Development theorist Piers Blakie’s work in *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People’s Vulnerability, and Disasters*, foregrounds this notion of socially- and economically-constructed vulnerability. Blakie noted that although natural disasters are often difficult to predict, “People’s

¹⁰ Dille, Maxx, Robert S. Chen, Uwe Deichmann, Arthur L. Lerner-Lam, and Margaret Arnold with Jonathan Agwe, Piet Buys, Oddvar Kjekstad, Bradfield Lyon, and Gregory Yetman. *Natural Disaster Hotspots: A Global Risk Analysis*. Washington, D.C.:The World Bank, 2005. Accessed March 25, 2015. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2005/11/23/000160016_20051123111032/Rendered/PDF/344230PAPER0Na101official0use0only1.pdf

vulnerability [to natural disasters] is generated by social, economic, and political processes that influence how hazards affect people in varying ways and differing intensities.”¹¹

Here, Blaikie defines “vulnerability” as, “the characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of a natural hazard.”¹² Within the scope of this definition, the role of the government in capacity building then becomes essential in reducing people’s vulnerability, without minimizing the gravity and largely unpredictable nature of disasters. In his words, “This approach does not deny the significance of natural hazards as trigger events, but puts the main emphasis on the various ways in which social systems operate to generate disasters by making people vulnerable.”¹³ When writing about disasters within the scope of this paper, I will be referring explicitly to those events that are triggered by, what Blaikie calls, “natural hazards.” In keeping with Blaikie’s idea, the scale of the disaster can be measured by its effect on human life and resilience. That is to say, when using the word disaster, I will be referring to the physical effects of natural hazards, but I acknowledge the role that capacity, poverty, and other socioeconomic factors play in the scale of effects from such natural events. When referring to “resilience,” I mean the ability to return to a state in which basic needs, livelihoods, and mental health are stable.¹⁴ With little hope of a reversion “back” to a time in which climate change-induced super typhoons were anomalies rather than commonplace occurrences, the Philippines is an important example for the ways in which dynamic conceptions of “disaster” can help both structure conversations surrounding development, but also, quite literally save lives.

¹¹ Blaikie, Piers M. *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability, and Disasters*. (London: Routledge, 1994), 4.

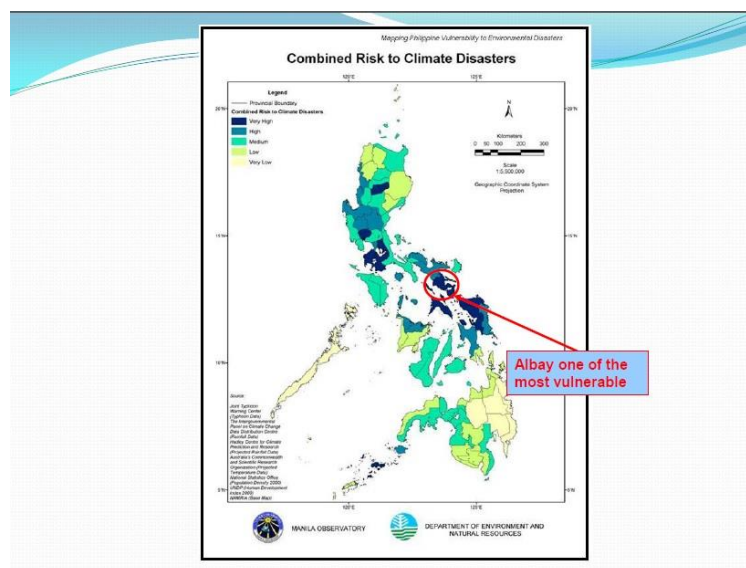
¹² *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴ Admittedly, sometimes this is not a state to which people are returning, but perhaps reaching for the first time given the “Build Back Better” ethos that is pervasive in much of the Filipino DRR discourse.

Albay Province: “The Vatican of Disasters”

The Philippines, an archipelagic nation, sits in the Pacific Typhoon Belt as well as the Pacific Ring of Fire. Because of this, it regularly experiences pacific storms as well as volcanic and tectonic activity. While the country as a whole is predisposed to disaster, the province of Albay, by all accounts, is unfavorably situated. The province is located in the Bicol region, on the eastern side of the island of Luzon. Of the approximately 19-21 typhoons that the Philippines experiences per year, an estimated 3-5 are “major direct hits on [the] Province of Albay.”¹⁵ Since the majority of storms approach the Philippines along the Pacific Typhoon Belt (i.e. from east to west), Albay’s location is particularly vulnerable to being hit by the brunt of approaching storms, as visible in figure 1. Generally, storms lose speed and destructive force as they pass over land and other obstacles. The threat of storms and their associated damage (such as typhoons, increased rainfall, and lahar¹⁶) are conceived of as “Climate Weather Related” risks, in Albay’s DRR literature.



¹⁵ Joey Sarte Salceda, “Adaptation Practices of Albay” (powerpoint presentation, Richmonde Hotel, Metro Manila, Philippines, February 11, 2012), 4.

¹⁶ Mudslides.

Figure 1. Slide adapted from Albay Governor Joey Sarte Salceda's Power Point presentation, demonstrating the province's geographical vulnerability since it is among the first islands to be hit by West-moving tropical storms. Source: Salceda, "Adaptation Practices of Albay," 8.

Furthermore, storms and their associated storm surges are not the only risk to which Albay is especially vulnerable. The province also has geophysical risks, including Mayon—an active volcano. In sum, Albay's perceived threats are: the eruption of Mayon Volcano, flooding, mudslide/lahar, landslide and storm surge/tsunami.¹⁷

In reference to the density of potential hazards in his province, Governor of Albay Joey Salceda said, "We have all the risks, we are the Vatican of disasters."^{18 19} When Salceda says "risks," he means something specific. An article discussing Salceda's presentation at the Social Good Summit held at the Asian Institute of Management in Makati, Salceda explains the difference between a "hazard," and a "risk:" "The textbook definition of hazards and risks tends to lump them together, but in disaster management, hazards refer to a source of potential damage or harm, while risks refer to situations a person exposes himself to that could harm him." He further elaborated: "*Ang hazard, nagiging risk pag-alam ng tao!* [A hazard becomes a risk when people know about them!]"²⁰

The case of Albay is worth examining because of how well-established their DRRM programs are. According to Salceda, it took an estimated 12 years to implement localized, "built-in" DRR capacities in different *barangay[s]*.²¹ DRR efforts and planning began in earnest in

¹⁷ Salceda, "Adaptation Practices of Albay," 4-6.

¹⁸ Czeriza Valencia, "Phl urged to build climate-resilient communities," *The Philippine Star*, July 13, 2014, accessed May 3, 2015, <http://www.philstar.com/agriculture/2014/07/13/1345524/phl-urged-build-climate-resilient-communities>.

¹⁹ A google search of "Vatican of Disasters" reveals that sometimes the Philippines as a nation is referred to by this epithet.

²⁰ Victor Barreiro Jr., "Albay's SirChief on social media," *Rappler*, September 23, 2013, accessed May 3, 2015, <http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/39514-joey-salceda-social-media-albay>.

²¹ "Neighborhood" in Tagalog—also a governmental categorization for a level of community organization.

1994, and became largely effective in 2006.²² Thus, the province's DRR efforts are the product of long-term planning, feedback, and, perhaps most importantly, trial and error since the province has experienced multiple disasters from 1994 to present.

If Albay is the province with the highest disaster risk density, within a country that is likewise often referred to as the Vatican of Disasters, the implications of the effectiveness of Albay's Disaster Risk Reduction strategies are enormous. Albay can, and, in most cases does, function as a successful model of disaster preparedness in a country ravaged by regular natural disasters. While, in light of climate change, there is likely no way to prevent disasters, they can often be anticipated. If Albay is successful in mitigating the effects of disasters, then the governments' responsibility and role in DRR shifts. While governments have always been relied upon to do what is within their means to keep their citizens safe, perhaps Albay's example expands what is possible within the realm of DRR. "Zero casualties," Philippine President Benigno "Noy" Aquino III's stated DRRM goal, is in Albay well within reach.

²² Salceda, Joey Sarte, "PH+SocialGood Summit 2013 - Speech of Gov. Joey Salceda," YouTube video, 34:54, posted by Rappler, Sept. 23, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLxIGRNqt1BBg5aAulcwY_NP3HaUrfu5-k&v=bUFFOBKYvIU.

Chapter II: International and National DRRM Legislation and Policies

“People have the basic right to the capacity to adapt. Relief, recovery and rehab is essentially a compensation [penalty] of the state for failing to reduce exposure and to increase capacity.” – Albay Governor Joey Salceda from the PowerPoint presentation, “Adaptation Practices of Albay” slide (123)

The Breakdown of Philippine DRRM Legislation and Frameworks

The Philippines has begun to address the issues of DRRM and CCA by creating a comprehensive, national legislative platform that allows for and demands the allocation of funding, resources, time, and organization to local, regional, as well as national DRRM planning. These laws have been internationally lauded as one the best frameworks for addressing Climate Change and DRRM, for their thoroughness. When United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, visited the Philippines in 2012, she called the Philippines’ legal framework for DRR, “the best in the world.”

She went on to praise their strong practice of deputizing Local Government Units in the case of disasters, or LGUs: “You do have now an excellent legal framework for disaster risk reduction and an excellent legal framework for climate adaptation. The basis [of the laws] is really for empowering local governments.”²³ The law deputizes LGUs to play a critical role in designing highly contextual, locally-based contingency plans in preparation for the specific variety of potential natural disasters that are risks in each local jurisdiction. This policy of decentralization, “places LGUs at the forefront of response to climate change impacts and risks, requiring them to formulate strategies on the bases of comprehensive, scientifically sound vulnerability and impact assessments and in close collaboration with scientists and researchers

²³ Michael Lim Ubac, “UN lauds Philippines’ climate change laws ‘world’s best,’” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 4, 2012, accessed May 1, 2015, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/35695/un-lauds-philippines%E2%80%99-climate-change-laws-%E2%80%98world%E2%80%99s-best%E2%80%99>.

and the local communities”²⁴ The laws and policies have, however, resulted in the creation of countless organizations and committees. In reading Philippine DRRM and CCA literature and policies, one is overwhelmed by the barrage of organizations, chairpersons, co-chairs, funding titles, administrative review boards, etc.

The architecture of Philippine DRRM is largely defined by national legislation and national development plans— the RA No. 10121 or “The Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010,” the RA No. 9729 or “The Climate Change Commission Law of 2009,” and the RA No. 10174 or “The People’s Survival Fund Act.”²⁵²⁶ Because these acronyms are both numerous and absolutely critical to include in discussions about DRRM practices, the opacity and internal disorganization has a ripple effect. Thus, policy papers or independent assessments of Philippine DRRM, including this paper, are necessarily riddled with highly similar acronyms. It becomes difficult to differentiate between different iterations of the same base, such as NDRRMC, RDRRMC, MDRRMC, PDRRMC, CDRRMC and LDRRMO and their roles in fulfilling the NDRRMP which falls under the NDRRMF. An example sentence from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan illustrates the redundancy and complication characteristic of Philippine DRRM discourse:

The NDRRMP also outlines the roles of the national government, the NDRRMC, OCD, the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC), the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices (LDRRMOs), and the Provincial, City, Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (P/C/MDRRMC or Local DRRMCs).²⁷

²⁴ Jose Clemente Sarte Salceda, “Albay Provincial Government,” in *Climate Change Adaptation Best Practices In The Philippines*, Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) (Manila: ProGED, 2012), 10.

²⁵ “Philippine Laws Related to Disaster Risk Reduction,” DRR Knowledge Center, accessed May 1, 2015, <http://drrknowledge.net/phil-laws-drr/>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (2014). National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2011-20128. Retrieved April 17, 2015, http://www.ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/article/41/NDRRM_Plan_2011-2028.pdf (7).

Especially since, as the quote above illustrates, when delineating chains of command, the density of acronyms generally increases, tracing responsibility becomes particularly difficult. *Rappler*, an exclusively online news-source based in Indonesia, articulates the organizational structure of the Philippine NDRRM as follows:

As such, for disaster prevention and mitigation, the law mandates the Department of Science and Technology to be in charge, while for disaster preparedness, it is the Department of the Interior and Local Government. For disaster response, the overall responsibility rests with the DSWD, while disaster rehabilitation and recovery lies with the National Economic and Development Authority.

The different heads of these government offices are named vice-chairpersons of the NDRRMC.

Under the hierarchical structure of the NDRRMC, the Executive Secretary, in fact, is just a member of the council. It is the DND chief who's supposed to be on top, retaining the position as chairman.

It is the OCD, which is under the DND, that oversees and sees to it that the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) is implemented from the national to the regional and local DRRM units. Such task is overseen by the NDRRMC secretariat, headed by executive director Eduardo del Rosario.²⁸

The jargon and burdensome interrelation of organizations and policies obfuscates not only the chain of command, but also leaders' respective responsibilities in disaster preparation, relief and recovery. These policies and organizational chain of command are nearly impossible to translate into effective, on the ground policy without a dedicated staff of local DRRM units. However, merely establishing a local DRRM office is not sufficient to save lives. Local Government Units (LGUs) must be able to interpret these national and international guidelines and mandates in ways that are highly specific and useful, while considering local risks and hazards. Below I examine the ways in which the city of Tacloban utterly failed to reduce risk in the case of super typhoon Yolanda, in spite of pre-existing legislation outlining governmental

²⁸ Aries Rufo, "NDRRMC: Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth," *Rappler*, Dec. 2, 2013, Accessed May 15, 2014, <http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/44956-ndrrmc-assessment-disaster-management>

DRRM responsibilities. Creating change or implementing policy can be as bureaucratically difficult as passing national legislation, however, DRRM demands the ability to react quickly and efficiently. This bureaucratic armature seems like particularly ill-suited match for DRRM's intended functions.

In the case of Tacloban during typhoon Haiyan, the bureaucracy was paralyzing, with terrible results. According to the NDRRMF, Defense Secretary and NDRRMC Chair, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin should have been the commander of NDRRM response efforts.²⁹ Interior Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, in a media briefing claimed that, in actuality, no one was clearly in charge in Tacloban. When asked who filled the role of ground commander, Roxas said, "There is no such title."³⁰ Roxas, who was very visible in media in the relief effort, was, as Interior Secretary, supposed to be in charge of preparedness, as opposed to response or relief.³¹ Former Defense Chief Senator Juan Ponce Enrile wondered in interviews why Gazmin didn't take a more active role in the relief effort: "Why was the Defense chief relegated to a support position when he was supposed to be in command?" Enrile asked, recalling that during his time, the military always responded first. "That's why we have the military manpower. The military is always the one in command."³²

There were also widespread allegations of politicking that debilitated and severely hindered the relief effort. There was much publicized political tension between Secretary Roxas and Tacloban Mayor Alfred Romualdez. The alleged, "You are a Romualdez, and the President

²⁹ Paterno Esmaguél II, "Politics, lack of command hound Tacloban," *Rappler*, December 10, 2013, accessed May 2, 2015, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/45608-yolanda-haiyan-politics-lack-command-tacloban>.

³⁰ Paterno, Esmaguél II, "Haiyan Crisis: No Ground Commander," *Rappler*, November 20, 2013, accessed May 20, 2015. <http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/disasters/typhoon-yolanda/44165-haiyan-yolanda-ground-commander-roxas>

³¹ Ernie Reyes, "ROMUALDEZ KA, AQUINO ANG PRESIDENTE| Tacloban mayor cries, says Mar was 'politicking' over Yolanda," *InterAksyon.com*, December 9, 2013, accessed May 2, 2015, <http://www.interaksyon.com/article/76529/tacloban-mayor-breaks-down-accuses-pnoy-mar-of-politicking-in-yolandas-wake>.

³² Paterno Esmaguél II, "Politics, lack of command hound Tacloban."

is an Aquino,” scandal, weakened peoples’ faith in the government’s goodwill towards its people.³³³⁴ There were further allegations that President Aquino was reluctant to declare a state of emergency, which would have enabled the federal government to wrest authority, as well as responsibility, from failing LGUs that had been virtually wiped out in the storm. Aquino supposedly claimed that LGUs should initiate the declaration of a state of emergency, even though declaring a state of emergency would allow an increased role for the federal government.³⁵

International Frameworks for DRRM

In articulating a domestic framework for addressing Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, the Philippines joins a much larger legislative and policy-based conversation. With regard to international organizations and collaborative policy, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction’s (UNISDR’s) has launched various international initiatives focused on DRR including the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), The UN World Conference on DRR, The Global Platform for DRR, Regional Platforms for DRR and the UN Plan on DRR for Resilience. The Philippines is also a signatory of The Association of Southeast Asian Nation’s (ASEAN’s) Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), which is ASEAN’s commitment to the Hyogo Framework. This list is not exhaustive. These frameworks and agreements provide international recognition

³³ Tacloban Mayor Alfred Romualdez famously cried in public, recounting what he alleged was the federal government’s unwillingness to assist Tacloban because of political rivalry. Romualdez had requested troops to keep order and undertake rescue and relief operations in the days following typhoon Haiyan. Romualdez accused Roxas of saying, “You have to be careful because you are a Romualdez, and the President is an Aquino,” citing the long-standing political rivalry between the Romualdez and Aquino. Romualdez is a relative of the Marcos family, a rival to the Aquino clan.

³⁴ Roberto Tiglao, “You are a Romualdez, and the President is an Aquino,” *Manila Times*, December 10, 2013, accessed May 22, 2015, <http://www.manilatimes.net/you-are-a-romualdez-and-the-president-is-an-aquino/59616/>.

³⁵ Aries Rufo, “NDRRMC: Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth.”

of the importance of DRRM as an issue of governance. While they provide this ideological substantiation, they can also, like Philippine domestic DRR policy and legislation, be paralyzing in their number of programs, stipulations, partners, and demands. The benefit is that since these agreements rhetorically substantiate CCA and DRRM as internationally critical issues, funding from international organizations and foreign countries is and will continue to be allocating to addresses them.

Currently, participatory development is likewise being substantiated through a conceptual shift that is observable in international development rhetoric. In September 2015 the window for completing the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight fields that have articulated "concrete and time-bound action to eradicate poverty," will close. The MDGs, while in some ways innovative, were also largely criticized for their lack of community input and their emphasis on the responsibility of developing countries to help themselves.³⁶ The MDGs are being replaced with the UN's *Sustainable* Development Goals (SDGs) (emphasis mine). The "sustainable" qualities of the new goals include explicit consideration of three dimensions of development: economic, social, and environmental.

Not unlike Albay's participatory social-media- based DRRM model, the SDG planning process leveraged technology to allow more than 5 million people to vote on which new development priorities would be set for the international development community and national governments.³⁷ Other instances of the use of participatory practices, that distinguish the process of defining the new SDGs from the MDGs, is the creation of the Open Working Group as one of two major processes that will converge at the 2015 Global Summit in September. The Open Working Group enhanced opportunities for participation since, "In addition to serving as a quasi-

³⁶ Adams, Barabara and Kathryn Tobin. *Confronting Development: A Critical Assessment of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals*. (New York: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2014), 1.

³⁷ Adams and Tobin. *Confronting Development*, 8.

universal space for government deliberation, the Open Working Group expanded space for a range of non-state actors and their views, allowing new actors and the often crowded-out voices of social movements, South-based civil society, and autonomous organizations to participate actively and challenge the hegemony of North-based INGOs.”³⁸

According to one critical analysis of the conceptual shift represented by the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs demonstrates that, “Development has been redefined as a collective project. Governments share responsibility both for their own citizens and for those of other states.”³⁹ This transition of UN ideology is significant because the UN’s agenda is instrumental in defining the larger international development agenda and the corresponding flow of aid. The SDGs then, “will help shape the global development agenda for years to come. They will affect not only the UN’s Secretariat, funds, and programmes but each member state as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector around the world.”⁴⁰ These goals illustrate the continued conceptual link, or conflation, between addressing human rights and basic needs issues (such as universal education access, gender inequality and violence, hunger and nutrition, poverty, etc.), and development. This view sees development as a means of addressing chronic, dire issues that are symptomatic of poverty. Similarly, Governor Salceda and the Philippine government’s understanding of the role of the government in the case of disaster. In a DRRM presentation Salceda said, “What is the goal of governance in disasters? It is to allow development to proceed in the midst of all of these uncertainties.”⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid., 11.

³⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁴¹ Salceda, Joey Sarte, “PH+SocialGood Summit 2013 - Speech of Gov. Joey Salceda,” YouTube video, 34:54, posted by Rappler, Sept. 23, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLxIGRNqt1BBg5aAulcwY_NP3HaUrfu5-k&v=bUFFOBKYvIU.

The SDGs, in their present draft form, contentiously make the first mention of “climate change,” in relation to a UN defined development goal. Proposed SDG number 13 proposes to “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (acknowledging that the UNFCCC is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.)”⁴² The attempt to direct dialogue around climate change and development back toward the United Nations Forum on Climate Change was not born from a desire for organizational clarity, but rather because of the pressure from some of the UN member states who are likewise the largest emitters of greenhouse gases. Smaller states pushed to have climate change included on more of the SDGs, to no avail.⁴³ With the at least temporary incorporation of the parenthetical aside in SDG number 13, the climate change language remained, in part because:

The presence and pressure of CSOs [Civil Society Organizations in the Open Working Group] prevented a lowering of standards as the negotiations intensified, and proved definitive in securing goals on inequalities, peaceful societies, climate change, and sustainable consumption and production, all of which would likely have been dropped without this advocacy and relationship-building with specific government delegations.⁴⁴

This demonstrates one way in which a participatory process has the potential to manifest in better representation in both policy and funding.

⁴² Adams and Tobin. *Confronting Development*, 6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁴⁴ Adams and Tobin. *Confronting Development*, 12.

Chapter III: Participatory Architecture of DRRM in Albay

Social Media

“Nang heart and soul ng social media is the ability to feedback, to talk back to you, to speak to you. And that is the heart and soul of social media to us as practitioners—it is the ability to speak to people—where they are, on their own circumstances, on their own terms”

–Albay Governor Joey Salceda, with regard to Disaster Risk Reduction and Management strategies

Preceding the modern technology that currently shapes DRRM methodologies and practices, disasters were anticipated by observing changes in nature (such as dramatic drops in sea level, forecasting an imminent tsunami) and changes in animal behavior. In order to spread this message, towns tolled church bells or relied on *umalakohan*⁴⁵ or *bandillo*-- town criers who disseminated official warnings and messages via word of mouth.⁴⁶ Likely some small towns still rely on these Ludditian methods of warning.

Albay’s contemporary DRRM practices look different, but they still rely upon, or have at least returned to, the idea of getting information through other people—only now warnings are facilitated by technology, rather than solely by word of mouth. While the weather-related technological advances have been absolutely critical in providing larger windows of time for evacuation, predictions of storms’ magnitudes, and data sharing between national organizations like the Philippine Atmosphere, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)⁴⁷ and LGUs, advances in cell phone technology and social media have been arguably equally, if not more critical in saving lives.

⁴⁵ Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Mlagros C. Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, (Philippines: Malaya Books, 1970) 47.

⁴⁶ Trevor R. Buckley and Marie Macchiarolo, *A Sustainable Revival: Leyte After Yolanda*. Palo, Leyte, Philippines: Kusog Tacloban, 2014. Accessed February 18, 2015. http://issuu.com/conwaydesign/docs/a_sustainable_revival-leyte_after_y

⁴⁷ “Pag-asa” in Tagalog also means hope, or expectation, with the connotation of something that has not yet been actualized but is desired.

Social media is the pivot around which Albay's DRRM revolves. Governor Salceda's following then, becomes more than a reflection of his popularity. Functionally, his large social network connects him with a loyal audience of Albayanos that is also well trained to respond in the event of a natural disaster. "Information in times of disasters has become as important as food and shelter," notes Salceda.⁴⁸ To this end, Albay has equipped every *barangay* with remote Wi-Fi and a global positioning system (GPS). Albay also has a social media team in order to relay important, disaster-related messages to Albayanos, as a part of DRRM strategy.⁴⁹ The Albay government used surveys to glean Albayanos preferred communications strategies. In order of most to least preferential, citizens of Albay look to Facebook, Albay's Infoboard, email blasts via responders/partners/traditional media, and finally, PINDOT (*Provincial Information Network on Disaster Occurrences and Threats*), which is an infoboard in coordination with a GPS.

In stark contrast to the multidirectional communication in place in Albay is the complete communication breakdown that occurred in Tacloban during typhoon Haiyan. While the top NDRRMC officials, Gazmin and Roxas, strategically positioned themselves in Tacloban on November 7, a day before the storm's arrival, they did so with an amazingly short-sighted understanding of the potential risks. They failed to bring satellite phones with them such that, "When Yolanda toppled communication lines and isolated the city, both of them lost contact with Manila."⁵⁰⁵¹ When questioned about this huge strategic failing, Roxas is reported to have replied jokingly, "*Walang load eh...Siguro oversight, oversight namin 'yon. Hindi namin naisip.*

⁴⁸ Victor Barreiro Jr., "Albay's SirChief?"

⁴⁹ Salceda, Joey Sarte, "PH+SocialGood Summit 2013 - Speech of Gov. Joey Salceda," YouTube video, 34:54, posted by Rappler, Sept. 23, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLxIGRNqt1BBg5aAulcwY_NP3HaUrfu5-k&v=bUFFOBKYvIU.

⁵⁰ Paterno Esmaguél II, "Politics, lack of command hound Tacloban," *Rappler*, December 10, 2013, accessed May 2, 2015, http://www.rappler.com/nation/45608-yolanda-haiyan-politics-lack-command-tacloban_

⁵¹ Carmela Fonbuena, "Communications down, Mar can't be reached," *Rappler*, November 9, 2012, accessed May 10, 2015, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/43234-communications-down-yolanda-challenge>

[There was no load⁵²... It was probably our oversight. We didn't think about it.]”⁵³ The inability to communicate with the Malacañan Palace because of lack of satellite phones; allegations of the president's delayed announcement of a state of calamity; and lack of a clearly articulated, on-the-ground chain of command all contributed to the slow and cumbersome humanitarian relief effort.

Mapping, DRR Construction Practices, and Training

Mapping



Figure 2. Slide adapted from Albay Governor Joey Sarte Salceda's Power Point presentation, on CBDRR mapping practices.

Source: Salceda, "Adaptation Practices of Albay"

Albay uses a combination of google mapping and community input to map at-risk houses, evacuation routes, and potential economic risks. Albayanos have the opportunity of articulating

⁵² Having no "load," refers to the common problem of having no credit purchased in order to operate one's cell phone in the Philippines. The informality of the response demonstrates that Roxas is both trying to humanize the idea of not thinking strategically as simple, relatable forgetfulness, however it can also be perceived as a callous attempt at humor in addressing a painful, serious topic.

⁵³ Paterno Esmaguél II, "Roxas admits overlooking satellite phones," *Rappler*, January 23, 2014, accessed May 10, 2015, <http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/disasters/typhoon-yolanda/48730-roxas-yolanda-haiyan-satellite-phones>.

specific things they need to protect, such as revenue or food sources, and potential hazards of evacuation routes. In a video presentation, Governor Salceda explained, “Alam ninyo po yun pinakamalaki naming ginastusan sa Albay ay yun pagmamapa ng lahat na risk, bawat barangay, bawat purok. Sila mismo po nag-dodrawing kung nasaan bahay nila... ano nasa tabi nilang punong kahoy ng mangga, ng niyog, [You know, our biggest expense in Albay is mapping all of the risks, in every neighborhood, in every village. They can draw where their own house is, what sorts of trees are on the side of their house, like mangoes and coconut].”⁵⁴ He goes on to say that the residents themselves, because they live there and have intimate knowledge of the space, are in the best position to advise or have input on evacuation routes’ utility and thoughtfulness. They have the opportunity to correct or make suggestions impacting the official evacuation plan for their *barangay*. Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) are created to this end, and SIMCLIM, software customized for Albay that produces localized climate scenarios facilitate this process. The lenses through which CLUPs are designed include an assessment of both vulnerability and socioeconomic impacts.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Salceda, Joey Sarte, “PH+SocialGood Summit 2013 - Speech of Gov. Joey Salceda,” YouTube video, 34:54, posted by Rappler, Sept. 23, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLxIGRNqt1BBg5aAulcwY_NP3HaUrfu5-k&v=bUFFOBKYvIU.

⁵⁵ Joey Sarte Salceda, “Zero Casualty: DRRM in Albay,” (slideshow presentation, Global Public Innovations Conference, Manila, Philippines, October 3, 2013).

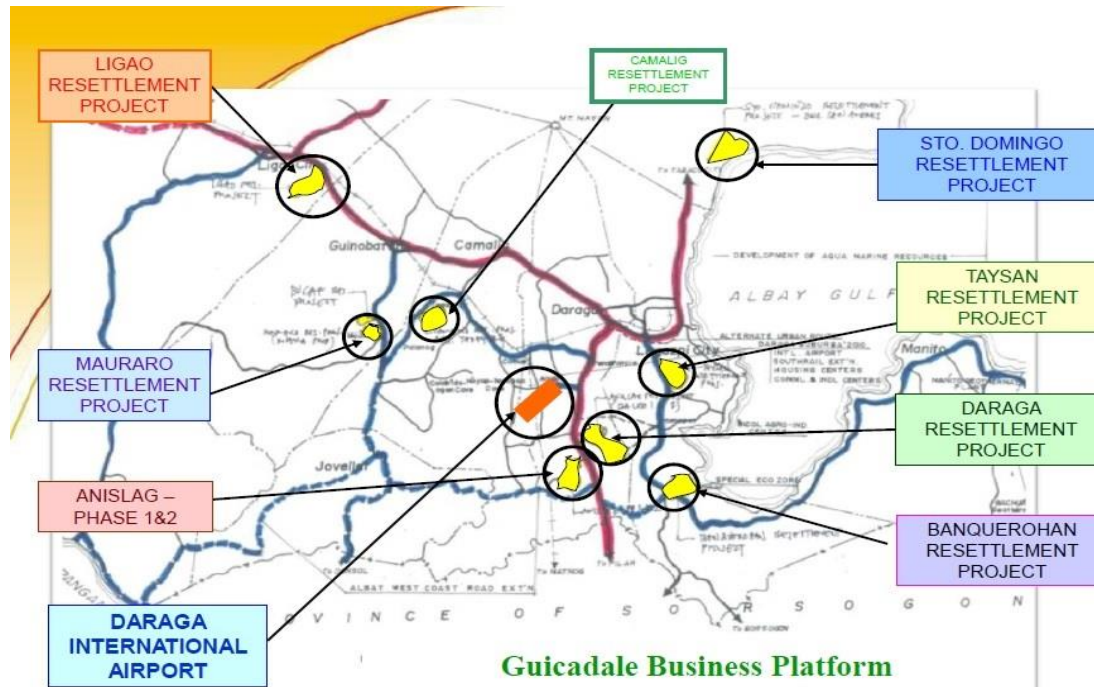


Figure 3. Slide demonstrating the relocation component of the Guicadale Business Platform.
Source: Salceda, “Adaptation Practices of Albay,” 8.

Risk mapping has played an essential role in Guicadale Economic Platform, Albay’s plan for geostrategic intervention. The program is defined as the “**Guinubatan, Camalig, Daraga, and Legazpi** disaster proofing development platform which is a holistic and geo-strategic integration approach that considers the inter-relationship of DRR, development planning and strategies, and environmental protection [emphasis mine].”⁵⁶ The program has four components: relocation households away from high-risk areas, construction of a new international airport, road networks, and a new government center.⁵⁷ The relocation program being undertaken by the Albay MDG Office as a part of the Guicadale economic platforms includes the relocation of 10,076 households to safer locations. The program is funded by the Philippine government

⁵⁶ Ruth Rodriguez, “Philippine Municipality Adopts Disaster Risk,” *Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Practitioners in Southeast Asia*, March 2008, 2.

⁵⁷ Joey Sarte Salceda, “Zero Casualty: DRRM in Albay,” (slideshow presentation, Global Public Innovations Conference, Manila, Philippines, October 3, 2013), 46.

through NHA, DSWD, in coordination with funding from international organizations USAID and Habitat for Humanity, and the local NGO Galing Pook. Albay's LGU is furnishing the relocation site.⁵⁸

While relocation is an effective strategy for decreasing exposure to risk, it is not uncomplicated. Governor Salceda acknowledged that family history and “attachment to place” complicate relocation programs.⁵⁹ The acknowledgement of the emotional attachment demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of behavioral economics, which helps humanize Albay's development efforts. Relocation programming, then, is more than simply providing an acceptable site and funding. It involves numerous dialogue, education, and opportunities for community input. Without a population who is on-board with relocation, and who understand the full risks of staying in their original place, relocation fails as both a DRRM and development strategy. Therefore, relocation programs have the opportunity to be both empowering and effective.

DRR Building Construction and Maintenance

DRR construction in Albay has been innovative in the dimensions of both planning and physical construction. An excerpt from the *Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Practitioners in Southeast Asia* newsletter demonstrates the ways in which the planning process in one area of Albay offered opportunities for community participation and ownership of the project:

⁵⁸ Salceda, Joey, “Innovations in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation: Albay Province, Philippines,” slideshow presentation, undated, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://hlsesc.org/documents/4hlsesc/2B%20-%20Albay.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Salceda, Joey Sarte, “PH+SocialGood Summit 2013 - Speech of Gov. Joey Salceda,” YouTube video, 34:54, posted by Rappler, Sept. 23, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLxIGRNqt1BBg5aAulcwY_NP3HaUrfu5-k&v=bUFFOBKYvIU.

Since the project was truly participatory, a Project Management Training was held for beneficiary communities and was participated in by representative teachers, parents, barangay officers, other community members and children. The objective of the training was to orient the community on how to properly manage, effectively evaluate and precisely monitor the construction project. The participants were also tasked to re-echo the teachings of the training to the rest of the community. In this way, a wider audience will be reached and more people will be informed about the project and the participation it required.⁶⁰

In the same construction project, contractor bidding was regulated by the community. A community Pre-qualification and Bidding Committee was formed to “verify the eligibility of the contractors in the project bidding prior to construction. Participatory community workshops about DRRM construction also included instruction in water rescue, first aid and emergency care.⁶¹ In addition, the workshop served as training on self-organizing, encouraging future collaboration towards resilient causes. According to the *Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Practitioners in Southeast Asia* newsletter, “Community integration and participation also imparted to the people the value of organizing them-selves, and the experience with Plan empowered them with the knowledge that they can work together before and during disasters. For them it was a big contribution to resilience.⁶²

Physical construction innovations which consider typhoon characteristics such as strong winds and salination, were largely incorporated to improve construction. One brief example of these types of building innovations is “Metals and steels that were coated with red lead primer, one with rust preventive component, to protect it from saline environment.”⁶³ Some local *barangay* funds were allocated to building maintenance, to improve building longevity and structural integrity for as long as possible. The newsletter article referenced above specifically applied to the construction of school buildings as community spaces as storm resistant structures.

⁶⁰ Vicke Eleen Catadman, “Rising from the Storm: Plan Philippines’ DRR Intervention in Albay,” *Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Practitioners in Southeast Asia*, March 2008, 6.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 6 & 9.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

In addition to having a safe space and secure infrastructure in storms (so as not to suffer severe economic losses that would prohibit a quick return to normal life after the storm), the improved school buildings are able to function as storm shelters.

Training

Training also demonstrates a way in which Albay has invested in human capital. An emphasis on locality has allowed training at the *barangay* level of government. In a series of workshops, *barangay* chairmen were asked, “to identify the hazards in their locality; estimate the population at risks; identify the kinds of warning instruments available and accessible; formulate warning levels/indicators and required actions; design warning advisories; establish communication protocols; and devise evacuation procedures.”⁶⁴ In this way, risk reduction is truly community-based and participatory, as there are built-in opportunities to influence the DRRM process locally. For example, the anticipation of disasters requires nearly continuous training. Since DRR exercises involve preemptive, planning and drills, citizens are able to condition themselves to respond effectively in anticipation of disasters.

Regular training of community members and *Barangay* Captains alike reinforces the importance of Community Based DRRM (CBDRRM).⁶⁵ Continuous training includes Critical Incidence Stress Debriefing; Community Risk Mapping and Contingency Planning; Education-On-Air with local broadcast media; and Conduct of drills and exercises in schools, hospitals, hotels, malls and communities to pre-test the hazard specific contingency plan on volcanic eruption, earthquake typhoon and fire.⁶⁶ Every day, two *Barangay* Captains from around the

⁶⁴ Ruth Rodriguez, “Philippine Municipality Adopts Disaster Risk,” *Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Practitioners in Southeast Asia*, March 2008, 3.

⁶⁵ Salceda, Joey, “Innovations in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation: Albay Province, Philippines,” slideshow presentation, undated, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://hls-esc.org/documents/4hlsesc/2B%20-%20Albay.pdf>

⁶⁶ Salceda, Joey, “Innovations in DRR,” 17.

province are retrained, in order to prevent backslide and keep training fresh.⁶⁷ In addition, CBDRR relies on community networks to echo messages to those who could not attend DRR trainings.⁶⁸ Communication and training/community mobilization are the two most important people-related links in a CBDRR chain to attain zero casualties, illustrated in figure 4.

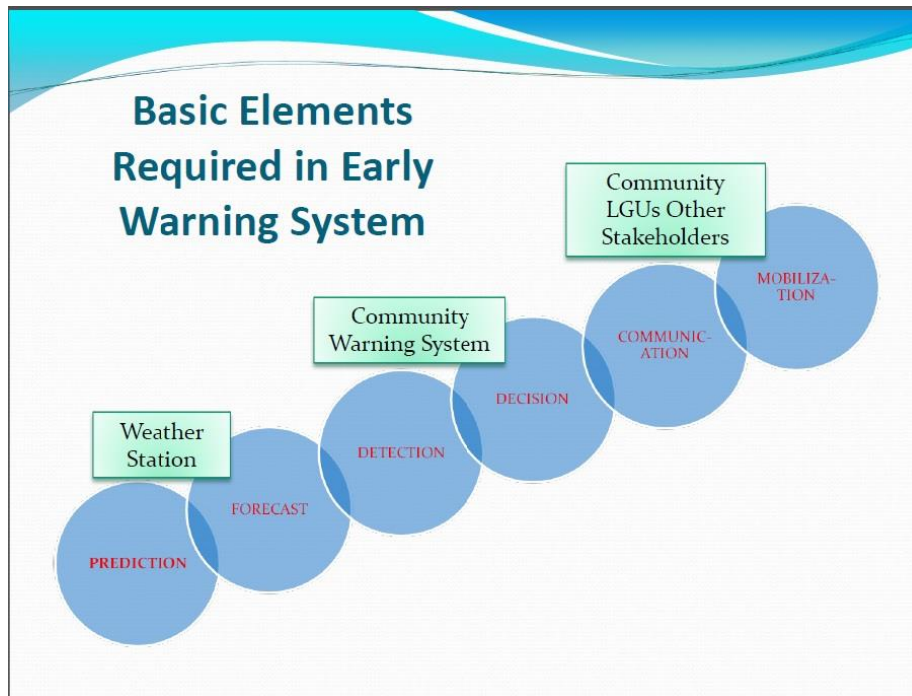


Figure 4. Slide from Albay Governor Joey Sarte Salceda's Power Point presentation, demonstrating the chain of DRR actions in the event of a disaster.

Source: Salceda, "Adaptation Practices of Albay."

⁶⁷ Salceda, Joey Sarte, "PH+SocialGood Summit 2013 - Speech of Gov. Joey Salceda," YouTube video, 34:54, posted by Rappler, Sept. 23, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLxIGRNqt1BBg5aAulcwY_NP3HaUrfu5-k&v=bUFFOBKYvIU.

⁶⁸ Vicke Eleen Catadman, "Rising from the Storm," 9.

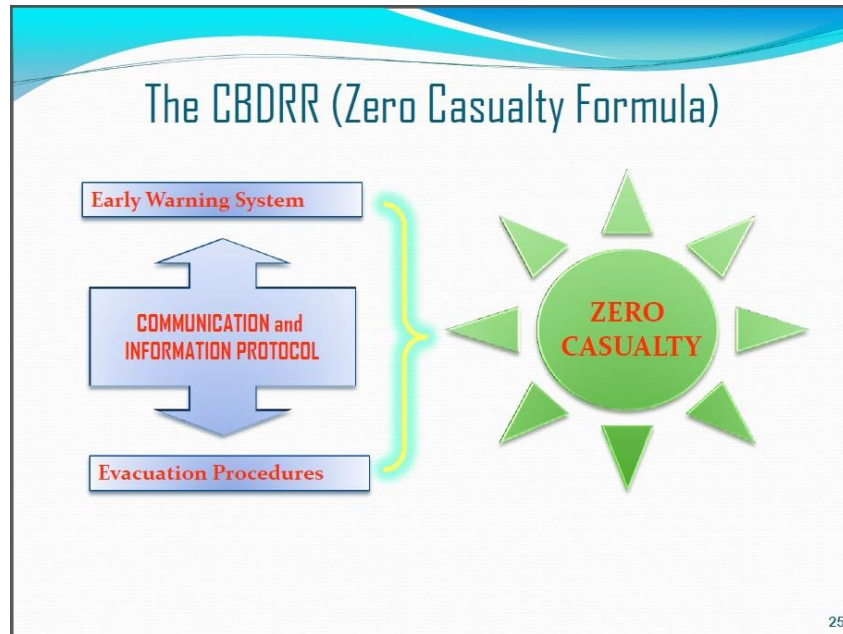


Figure 5. Slide adapted from Albay Governor Joey Sarte Salceda's Power Point presentation, showing Albay's formula of Community Based DRR for zero casualties.
Source: Salceda, "Adaptation Practices of Albay," 8.

I posit that CBDRR training and participation, in the way that it leverages community support and participation, may provide a means of, what development theorist Blakie defines as, “an institutional memory of hazard events and disasters that link with new generations of government administrators and planners and their bureaucratic culture and practice, and the with populace and its own collective memory preserved perhaps in popular cultures (stories, songs, etc.) and practice (building, farming, etc.). Ideally a bridge would be built between popular commemorative and precautionary culture and its bureaucratic counterpart.”⁶⁹

Assessing Pre-Disaster Risks and Vulnerabilities

Public outrage over the handling of Tacloban intensified because of the sentiment that, because of meteorological technology, there was advanced notice of the storms' arrival. An understanding of pre-disaster risks and vulnerabilities should, in theory, result in more

⁶⁹ Blakie 223. *Natural Disasters and Adaptation to Climate Change*.

comprehensive and effective DRRM practices. However, a lack of planning can do the exact opposite—exacerbating pre-existing infrastructural issues. Blakie notes that, “Relief and reconstruction can aggravate divisions and patterns of inequity within a society. Social, economic, and political vulnerability are often reconstructed after a disaster, thus reproducing the conditions for a repeat disaster.”⁷⁰ Interestingly, “social, economic, and political” dimensions are the conditions that the Sustainable Development Goals’ guidelines outline for consideration in order to categorize development as “sustainable.” Since DRRM practices in the Philippines purport to be sustainable, they should give extra emphasis to considering the social, economic and political vulnerabilities that may affect disaster relief and recovery. While acknowledging “that disasters are events that happen to vulnerable people,” Blakie’s scholarship suggests that development practitioners “[shift] the emphasis away from the natural hazard itself towards the need for a much better understanding of the processes that generate vulnerability.”⁷¹

Albay does this in a systematic way, recognizing that “risks” are reduced to mere “hazards,” when people are empowered to deal with or anticipate them through education. For example, Salceda points out that there is no way to get rid of Maya Volcano. The only way to reduce the risk is, instead, to inform people. “Hazards? *Hindi ko naman mapaalis ang Mayon.* [Hazards? I can't make Mayon Volcano leave.]⁷² In light of this, Albay is undertaking certain preventative measure that serve to recognize and humanize some institutional inequality issues as well as reduce economic and political vulnerabilities.

One example of this is Albay’s prioritization of preemptive healthcare. Albay has seen a steady increase in the number of families enrolled in healthcare coverage, with 18,510 families

⁷⁰ Ibid., 210.

⁷¹ Blakie 218.

⁷² Victor Barreiro Jr., “Albay's SirChief on social media,” *Rappler*, September 23, 2013, accessed May 3, 2015, <http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/39514-joey-salceda-social-media-albay>.

enrolled in 2007 to 173,262 families enrolled in 2010.⁷³ Their preemptive healthcare plan aims to cover “indigent families,” and includes “regular medical missions in high risk areas prior to disaster season.” They likewise perform similar functions through insuring school buildings through the Provincial Government of Albay.⁷⁴ In Governor Salceda’s slideshow presentation at a Training Workshop Climate Change for National & Local Governments in Southeast Asia and South Asia, on “Adaptation Practices of Albay,” he acknowledges the correlation between poverty and risk, noting that “poverty heightens exposure to disaster risks.” Economic programs like GUICADALE have continued to encourage private investment and therefore economic stability, even in the wake of natural disasters such as typhoons Reming, Milenyo and an eruption of Mayon volcano.⁷⁵

Personalities and Legitimacy



Figure 6. Governor Joey Salceda fields questions from the audience during a post-talk discussion at the Social Good Summit. Photo by Mark Demayo.

Source: Victor Barreiro Jr., “Albay’s SirChief on social media,” *Rappler*, September 23, 2013, accessed May 3, 2015, <http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/39514-joey-salceda-social-media-albay>.

Much like the highly contextualized nature of Albay’s DRRM success, the individuals who play key roles in DRRM are likewise important in creating successful programming. That

⁷³ Salceda, Joey, “Innovations in DRR,” 32-33.

⁷⁴ Salceda, Joey, “Innovations in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation: Albay Province, Philippines,” slideshow presentation, undated, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://hls-esc.org/documents/4hlsesc/2B%20-%20Albay.pdf>, 31.

⁷⁵ Salceda, “Adaptation Practices of Albay,” 15.

is, *who* you have implementing the laws is as important a consideration as other logistical puzzles, like budgets and technology. Philippine Senator Loren Legarda, a longtime champion of environmentalism, calls this, “getting the right people to implement [the Philippine laws pertaining to DRRM].”⁷⁶ Since much of Albay’s success can and should be attributed to the efforts of Albay Governor Joey Salceda. Salceda is an iconic, amiable man who speaks with passion, pride, and expertise about Albay’s evolution in the DRRM field. Because of how integral social media and DRRM training is to attaining zero casualties, Salceda’s large following is deeply intertwined with the success of his DRRM programs. Many wonder, for example, if Albay will continue to be a model of DRRM practices next year, when Governor Salceda reaches his maximum number of terms and runs for congress instead.⁷⁷

In the wake of typhoon Haiyan, several media states shined a light of the role that a lack of state legitimacy played in preventing disaster-related casualties. For example, peoples’ lack of faith in the government’s ability to protect their property engendered a reluctance to evacuate⁷⁸:

“The apparent fear that the Philippine government would be unable to provide or police may be self-reinforcing, making criminals and non-criminals alike more likely to loot if they believe the state won’t come through. It may also help explain why a number of families in the worst-hit areas reportedly ignored the warnings and stayed in their homes. Reportedly, many feared that the state would be unable to protect their homes from looters, leading them to try to do it themselves.”⁷⁹

In Albay, the positive notion of government legitimacy has been reinforced by long-term fiscal, temporal and resource investment in DRRM, and corresponding success in the reduction of

⁷⁶ “Philippine laws...among best,”

⁷⁷ MST News, “Salceda eyes return to House,” *Manila Standard Today*, May 17, 2015, accessed May 20, 2015, <http://manilastandardtoday.com/2015/05/17/salceda-eyes-return-to-house/>

⁷⁸ Llanto, Gilberto M., *Mainstreaming disaster risk management in local governments*. (Makati City, Philippines: Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2011), 3.

⁷⁹ Max Fisher, “Why the Philippines wasn’t ready for typhoon Haiyan,” *The Washington Post*, November 11, 2013, accessed May 20, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/11/11/why-the-philippines-wasnt-ready-for-typhoon-haiyan/>.

economic losses and lives. Successful DRRM enables citizens to trust LGUs, increasing LGUs' effectiveness in implementing creative DRRM practices, such as social media communication or relocation programs.

The role of celebrity and personality in the Philippines should likewise not be overlooked. Salceda mentions that, in terms of his social media following, which is directly tied to effective DRRM communications, being perceived as human or fallible may actually be a positive: "If I'm serious all the time, no one will follow me."⁸⁰ Salceda regularly cracks jokes and makes his DRRM presentations humorous and relatable. His connection to people, visible, for example, in a reference to alcohol on his "official" Facebook page, makes him relatable to his constituents. In combination with his successful record as a politician, and his thoughtful, humanizing policies, Albayanos are willing to listen, and, more importantly, to trust him.



Figure 7. Governor Joey Salceda's official Facebook page, featuring a joke about alcohol.
Source: Adapted from Salceda, Joey, "Innovations in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation," 74.

⁸⁰ Salceda, Joey Sarte, "PH+SocialGood Summit 2013 - Speech of Gov. Joey Salceda," YouTube video, 34:54, posted by Rappler, Sept. 23, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLxIGRNqt1BBg5aAulcwY_NP3HaUrfu5-k&v=bUFFOBKYvIU.

Chapter IV. What Can We Learn From Albay?

Poverty, vulnerability, and geophysical characteristics have a profound impact on a community's ability to be resilient in the face of disasters. As one development theorist observed, "Reconstruction activity is constrained by pre-disaster limitations and deficiencies."⁸¹ The MDGs, in contrast, were criticized for an overemphasis on quantitative initiatives that led to policies incentivized by quantifiable progress rather than improved material realities for the poor. In addition, the responsibility to end global poverty was placed primarily on the shoulders of the Global south: "The MDGs focused almost entirely on actions to be taken with regard to developing countries; only one goal, MDG8, was directed at the Global North."⁸²

In spite of the semantic and conceptual shift from "Millennium" to "Sustainable," perhaps more telling is the continuation and renewal of the term "Development Goals." The implication of the MDGs and the SDGs is that if the goal of modern development is achieved worldwide, we can, as a society, rid ourselves of these chronic ailments. Underlying conversations about DRR always include the implicit pressures to modernize, and to move "forward" towards western-style development. How then, does DRRM offer a space of accountability that acknowledges, rather than sanitizes, the discourse of the state's culpability as well as individuals' efficacy in their own personal DRR?

I argue that the highly context-specific, participatory models of Albay's DRRM offer a translation of often confusing and overwhelming national and international DRRM frameworks, in ways that are both meaningful and useful to Albayanos. The use of social media and several of Albay's other DRRM practices are transformative mechanisms of governance because they enable citizens to play an active role in their own Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Governor

⁸¹ Blaikie, Piers M. *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability, and Disasters*. (London: Routledge, 1994), 209.

⁸² Adams and Tobin. *Confronting Development*, 4.

Salceda noted that “Social Media essentially means the ability to feedback... it’s a feedback loop mechanism that is the heart and soul of social media.”⁸³ Quite literally, social media has allowed people to avoid becoming mere victims when disasters strike. In addition to learning up-to-date evacuation information and other pertinent messages, social media also provides a new level of transparency with regard to governmental actions and timelines of governmental communications. Citizens in one part of Albay, for example, can see up to date news about other areas of the region, through Albay’s centralized DRRM social media outlets.

Albay has become a successful because of its ability to return to the original conceptualization of humanitarianism—the humanizing aspect. The DRRM strategies in Albay embrace the most important parts of the idea of sustainable development, as defined in Philippine national DRRM legislation:

“Sustainable Development” ~ development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two (2) key concepts: (1) the concept of “needs”, in particular, the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and (2) the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organizations on the environment’s ability to *meet* present and future needs. It is the harmonious integration of a sound and viable economy, responsible governance, social cohesion and harmony, and ecological integrity to *ensure that human development now and through future generations is a life-enhancing process* [emphasis mine].⁸⁴

Albay’s development strategies are humanizing, because they acknowledge people’s distinct, individual needs, through participation rather than governmental dictates. For example, Albay has unique DRRM policies that recognize the special needs of individuals within certain groups, namely: lactating women, indigenous peoples, elderly citizens, children, and disabled people.

Democratizing development is realized through Albay province’s innovative, participatory

⁸³ Salceda, Joey Sarte, “PH+SocialGood Summit 2013

⁸⁴ Fourteenth Congress of the Philippines, Third Regular Session, “Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010,” 31

practices, enabled by the conditions of possibility for democratized development, such as having governmental legitimacy and citizens' trust. This empowerment has allowed people to take active roles in reducing their own vulnerability, such that, according to Salceda, "Albayanos now depend primarily on themselves in responding to these threats."⁸⁵ In a country racked by allegations of governmental scandal and corruption, governmental dependability, transparency and accountability are vastly important in both having successful DRRM systems and in making the development conversation inclusive of common people, rather than simply development practitioners and technocrats.

Recommendations

While there are many admirable characteristics of Albay's DRRM strategies, I am not advocating for the simple, developmental style "Scaling Up," of Albay's programs for shipment throughout the Philippines. Instead I would argue that we can look to Albay as an example of a way to make sure that democracy, as it manifests in development, affords people their rights: "People have the basic right to the capacity to adapt. Relief, recovery and rehab is essentially a compensation [penalty] of the state for failing to reduce exposure and to increase capacity."⁸⁶ Scaling down, then, may be a much more relevant suggestions. The emphasis on locality and the importance of creating "built-in" capacities cannot be overemphasized. In bad storms, such as the case of Yolanda, it is difficult to get to remote areas. Therefore, "the capacity to save should

⁸⁵ Jose Clemente Sarte Salceda, "Albay Provincial Government," in *Climate Change Adaptation Best Practices In The Philippines*, Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) (Manila: ProGED, 2012), 2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

be built in...local capacitation should be there...especially the vulnerable community because the more vulnerable the poorer, eh?”⁸⁷

In order to make even the most well-thought-out DRRM policy feasible, there must be a regular budget, regularly allocated to DRRM local offices in order to prevent or recover from disasters. According to one training session hosted by Albay’s DRRM board, “The budget is the best articulation of public policy and instrument for its execution.”⁸⁸ Similarly, having local laws that are clear and uncomplicated or at least clear local interpretations of complicated national laws, is absolutely essential in creating successful DRRM programs. Citizens must be able to understand their role in DRRM and be properly trained on what to do in the event of different disasters. In this model, DRRM programs succeed *because* of an acknowledgement of individual human needs, rather than in spite of it.

The state’s responsibilities in DRRM are not limited, however, to pre-storm preparation and post-disaster recovery. Instead, states must return to the humanizing components of humanitarianism. Disaster relief and recovery has largely been geared toward attending to physical needs. Conceptions of resilience usually refer to economic, basic-needs related, and infrastructural recovery, or simply a return to pre-disaster conditions. The Philippines should try to “Build Back Better”—one of their reconstruction mantras—in the realm of mental health and trauma. Communities that go through conflicts such as civil war or large scale violence often work through community-based reconciliation processes, but disaster survivors are largely left to manage their own mental health and trauma. Even Albay could extend the humanizing

⁸⁷ Salceda, Joey Sarte, “PH+SocialGood Summit 2013 - Speech of Gov. Joey Salceda,” YouTube video, 34:54, posted by Rappler, Sept. 23, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLxIGRNqt1BBg5aAulcwY_NP3HaUrfu5-k&v=bUFFOBKYvIU.

⁸⁸ Joey Sarte Salceda, “Adaptation Practices of Albay,” (slideshow presentation, Training Workshop Climate Change for National & Local Govts in Southeast Asia and South Asia, 42. ICLEI, Makati City, Philippines, February 11, 2012), 42.

conception of the DRRM role of the state by incorporating counseling or other types of mental health services to their DRRM plans in post-disaster areas.

While acknowledging that “It is the primordial duty of the state to save the vulnerable from disasters, climate change,”⁸⁹ the Philippine government must acknowledge that “saving the vulnerable,” is not relegated to disaster preparation. It must also include attention to mental health and trauma in the wake of disaster. States must create and maintain conditions in which citizens can survive, but also thrive.

⁸⁹ Salceda, “Adaptation Practices of Albay,” 122.

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