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Session H3: Beyond adaptation: The reality of Loss and Damage for cities

Assessing the linkages between CCA, DRR, and loss and damage in the Philippines

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Abstract:

The Philippines has been experiencing and will continue to experience devastating climate-related disasters given the current and projected impacts of climate change. Loss and damage (L&D) is inevitable. This study aims to create a framework that links loss and damage with climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies. It will introduce a holistic approach with emphasis on the importance of loss and damage knowledge for effective policy-making and action. The study presented aims at improving the current state of the loss and damage system in the Philippines through a set of research, development, and policy recommendations.

Keywords:

Adaptation, Climate change, Disaster Risk Reduction, Loss and Damage, Philippines

1. Introduction

Climate-related disaster events are common in the Philippines. According to the World Risk Report 2014 (Garschagen et al., 2014), the country ranks second on the World Risk Index (WRI; factors being risk and exposure). Meanwhile in the 2015 Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) by Germanwatch (Kreft et al., 2014), Philippines is among the top five most affected countries by extreme weather events from 1994-2013. These extreme weather events along with the impacts of slow-onset events have caused losses and damages in the country. With the projected climatic changes and current efforts in mitigation, loss and damage will continue to persist and may even worsen. The climate change problem is so severe and the efforts are so minimal that the concept of loss and damage must be realized and emphasized.

This study will present the current state of loss and damage assessment system in the Philippines, and the challenges and opportunities of incorporating loss and damage (L&D) information with climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR). It also aims to introduce a cyclical and holistic approach on tackling L&D through a framework that links it to CCA and DRR.

2. Methods

The study employed review of literature was, focus group discussions (50 participants) and key information interviews (three interviews) with key experts on L&D, CCA, and DRR. Fifty-eight (58) science and policy experts and representatives from various national government agencies, local government units, non-governmental organizations, research organizations, and other relevant stakeholders were also c in a form of a national workshop to discuss gaps, challenges, and opportunities in linking L&D with CCA and DRR in the Philippines.

3. State of Loss and Damage Assessment System in the Philippines

The Philippines has been using the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) as an approach to assess the impacts of all types of disasters in the country (e.g. fire, earthquake, and flood) since 2009. During typhoon Ondoy (international name: Ketsana), PDNA was used for the assessment in Metro Manila through the request of the Department of Finance to various development partners such as Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Commission, United Nations (UN), and World Bank (WB), among others. The approach used for the assessment of losses and damages was based from the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Damage and Loss Assessment (DALA) methodology. The DALA methodology for PDNA was constantly revised to best fit the context of the Philippines.

3.1 Assessment Flow and Key Actors

The L&D assessment system in the Philippines generally follows a five-step procedure or stage: (1) planning, (2) assessment, (3) analysis, (4) approval, and (5) action stage. Figure 1 shows the general flow of the L&D assessment system in the Philippines and the key actors. The national L&D assessment team cannot proceed with in-depth assessment while humanitarian assistance and initial relief and recovery activities are still ongoing.

Some humanitarian organizations also conduct assessment. Their gathered data are submitted to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as guide in providing the needed aid, usually financial assistance.

3.2 Challenges in and Recommendations for the Loss and Damage Assessment System

The Philippines has a L&D assessment system as incorporated in the Republic Act (RA) 10121 or the *Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010* which aimed to create a holistic approach on disaster management in the country. While the existing L&D assessment system was adopted from a more general but internationally-used kind of system, the tool has to be improved to fit the Philippine context.

Since the first time the Philippine Government conducted a post-disaster survey using the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) tool (2011 Sendong; 2nd – 2012 Pablo; 3rd – 2013 Yolanda), the Office of Civil Defense – National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (OCD-NDRRMC) has been actively modifying the tool to suit the different situations in the country. However, there are still some gaps, issues, and needs to be addressed on the tool and the system as a whole. Table 1 shows the perceived issues and recommended solution(s) on the loss and damage system in the Philippines based on various consultations:

Table 1 Summary of perceived issues and recommended solution(s) on the loss and damage system in the Philippines

Issues	Results	Opportunities/ Recommendations	Potential impacts if issues will be addressed
Lack of awareness of government units on the tool being used	Tool not efficiently used	Regular trainings for LGUs; do not wait for the disaster before conducting trainings	Easier and faster assessment; more efficient system; ensures that LGUs are aware of the necessary data needed for post-disaster assessment so they can prepare and update the baseline data of

Issues	Results	Opportunities/ Recommendations	Potential impacts if issues will be addressed
			their community
Lack of a standardized process	Data mismatch	Set up uniform set of guidelines (standardized data management system); strengthen coordination and communication between levels of governance	Easier consolidation, recording, and tracking of data
Lack of baseline data and projected damages and losses	Over- or underestimation of post-disaster data	Prepare baseline data per community; prepare damage and loss projections; set list of data requirements; valuation of assets and other resources	Easier and faster recording and validation of data
Capability of national government to properly distribute resources	Improper distribution of resources; some affected areas do not get the relief they needed	Set baseline data as basis; strengthen coordination and communication between levels of governance and donors	Proper and faster distribution of resources
Poor governance, especially on implementation of institutional arrangements	Misguided actions; wrong prioritization	Set baseline data for evidence; strengthen political will	Proper implementation of policies; people will more likely to follow and cooperate; stronger sense of community
Slow assessment system	Relief, recovery and rehabilitation are delayed	Review functions, roles, protocols, and performance of assessment teams; strengthen coordination and communication; explore possible use of new technologies; clearing of roads and transportation among top priorities	Faster and more efficient assessment system
Assessors are victims themselves	Delayed assessment of	Build and strengthen partnership, coordination, and	Secure support and assistance in times of disaster

Issues	Results	Opportunities/ Recommendations	Potential impacts if issues will be addressed
	needs	communication with neighbouring communities	
Data loss and absence of integrated data from various sectors	No basis for comparative analysis of data	Strengthen information sharing between and among LGUs and national agencies; creation of a national data repository	Secured database
Tool has temporal limitations; focused on short-term and direct impacts	Difficulty in assigning value to non-economic and consequential/ long-term losses	Creation of a new framework or tool	More holistic estimation of losses and damages

Given these recommendations, it is clear that the main issues that need to be addressed are on standardization, data needs, capacity-building, partnership, and governance. Other issues and identified solutions:

- Communication during and after a disaster – Since communication lines are most likely to be down because of the disaster, telephones, cellular phones, and internet are not reliable modes of communications. **Solution:** invest on satellite phones
- Accessibility of affected areas – When roads are impassable due to several reasons like felled trees or flooded waters, there will be a delay in the assessment. Delayed assessments will lead to delayed actions. **Solution:** invest on equipment such as chainsaw, boats, etc.
- Distribution of climate and disaster data – There are already a lot of existing information on climate and disaster but its accessibility still seems to be a problem. **Solution:** transparency and aggressive information dissemination

In the end, damages and losses have already been borne, what is needed is to build back better. Rehabilitation efforts must be geared towards better systems that are adaptive to current problems, responsive to future challenges and centered to sustainable development. This requires adjustment of the physical, social, natural, technological, institutional, and economic factors and mechanisms.

4. Linking Loss and Damage with CCA and DRR

The framework for the L&D system in the Philippines is shown in Figure 2. This framework aims not just to quantify losses and damages brought about by climate-related disasters and assess the recovery needs of communities but also to create a holistic approach in viewing the importance of loss L&D knowledge for policy-making and effective action. It also highlights the importance of the assessment in creating better CCA and DRR strategies. It shows that L&D assessment does not start and end in the assessment part but is actually a cycle that intends to improve the resiliency of the people and reduce their vulnerability to future climate-related disasters. This is essential since L&D is not solely caused by the impacts of climate change and other disasters but also the capability, or lack thereof, of a community to adapt and prevent it from happening.

When a disaster hits a community, L&D assessment is done after. This assessment is divided into two: rapid or early assessment and in-depth assessment. Rapid assessment is done immediately after a disaster to gather information on the immediate relief needs of a community. In-depth assessment, as its name suggests, gathers in-depth information on a community for reconstruction and rehabilitation purposes. L&D information from the in-depth assessment should be used for the following: (a) identification of priority areas, (b) improvement of CCA and DRR strategies, and (c) preparation of sustainable development action plans. Given the amount of information that can be extracted from an in-depth L&D assessment, opportunities for more research and development action plans are feasible. The challenge now is to properly implement and monitor the plans. If these are properly executed, it is expected that future losses and damages can be reduced, if not prevented.

Since CCA and DRR strategies are now required to be integrated in development action plans, maximizing the use of L&D information for the improvement of CCA and DRR strategies should be prioritized. However, for this to be efficient and successful, smooth integration of these strategies must take place first.

Acknowledging the importance of loss and damage information for improving CCA and DRR strategies, some participants during the national workshop listed various ways on how loss and damage data can be of relevance to the development of these strategies (See Table 2). Results show that participants recognize that L&D information acts as the scientific basis for action plans.

Table 2 Ways on which L&D information can be of relevance to CCA and DRR

Sectors	Relevant in the following:
Department of Health	Infrastructure, manpower, logistics
Department of Agriculture	Targeting CCA and DRR measures, to assess gaps in production, growth and development

Department of Trade and Industry	Information to respond to: requirement type and extent of intervention
National Economic Development Authority	Providing sense of direction (what to prioritize, evaluation of effectiveness, design infrastructure)
Department of Finance	Identification of appropriate model and instruments; justification of viability, to quantify budget requirement for economic recovery and reconstruction
Department of Public Works and Highways	Flood control and management
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council	(Re)settlement purposes
Others	Basis for upgrading of codes, setting up new establishments, delineating expansion areas, and monitoring progress in carrying out recovery and reconstruction programs

Note: Answers are according to the participants of the national workshop held on April 28, 2015

Despite these opportunities to use L&D information for CCA and DRR, roadblocks are inevitable. Stakeholders identified various gaps and challenges in achieving enhanced CCA and DRR strategies such as (a) poor execution of existing policies, (b) unclear delegation of tasks, and (c) individualized implementation of harmonized CCA and DRR plans and projects.

5. Conclusion

The state of L&D assessment system in the Philippines has a structure already. However, there were still some issues particularly on standardization, data needs, capacity building, partnership, and governance. These should be addressed in order to have a smooth and efficient system.

Moreover, results of the consultation revealed that various government agencies and relevant stakeholders acknowledged the essence and relevance of using L&D information, especially for planning and development. They also acknowledged that L&D information could be used to improve existing CCA and DRR strategies. However, there were some issues on the integration of CCA and DRR that must be tackled. In order to fully utilize L&D information for planning and improvement of CCA and DRR strategies, proper and guided actions must be undertaken to fill the existing gaps.

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Bio

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Attachments:

- **Figure 1** General loss and damage assessment flow in the Philippines and the key actors
- **Figure 2** Loss and Damage Framework for the Philippines

Figure 1:

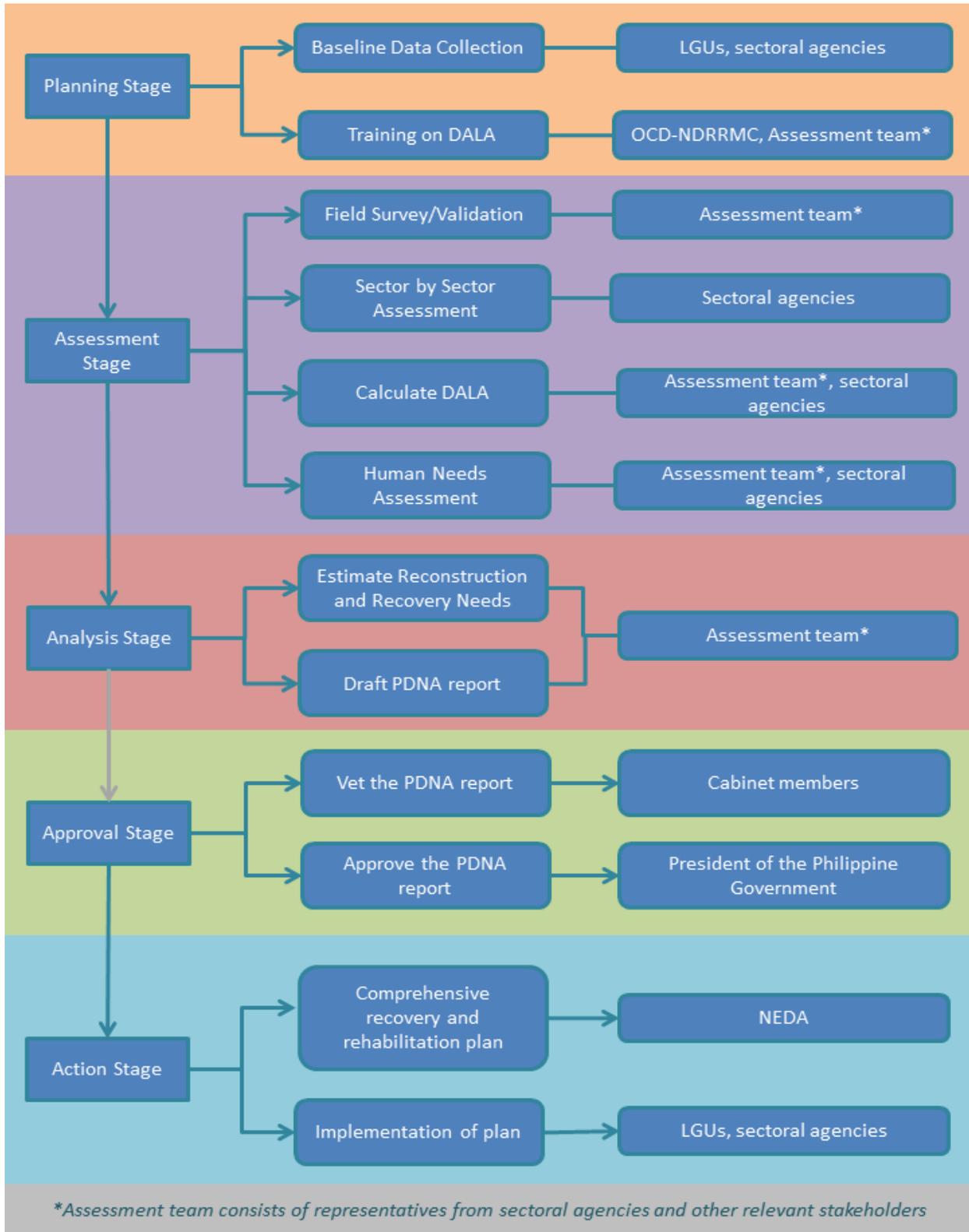


Figure 2:

