COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS AN APPROACH TO REDUCING RISKS AMONG FLASHFLOOD-AFFECTED FAMILIES IN ALBAY, PHILIPPINES

Emmanuel M. Luna, Ph.D.
University of the Philippines-Diliman

melluna_up@yahoo.com

resettlement continue to wonder about their security of land tenure and their survival in the new site. There is an increasing number of victims of armed conflicts uprooted from their communities, and settlements ravished by flashfloods. Ordinary neighborhoods have been deprived of the basic services needed for socio-economic and environmental survival.

More people and communities could be added to the list, and they have more or less common attributes. A social activist provides a very apt description of this:

These are communities which have been marginalized by societal forces beyond

their control, people who have accepted their fate as that of simple recipients of

capable only of reacting to conditions which threaten their very survival, and very

Table 1. Selected Flashfloods and Landslides in the Philippines

Flashflood and Landslide	Month/Year	Maximum Event Rainfall	Depth of the Flood/Mud	Casualties	Missing
Ormoc City	November 1991	580.5 mm 3 days	3-4 meters	4921	3000
Camiguin	November 2001	517 mm 3 days	1.5 to 3 meters	180	72
Panaon Island	November 2003	793 mm 3 days	Covered a section of the village**	154	40
REINA, Quezon	November2004	450 mm 3 days	4-6 meters	1068	553
St. Bernard, Leyte	February 2006	802.6 mm six days	Covered the whole village**	1447	968
Albay*	November 2006*	467 mm*	3-6 meters**	604*	419*

Unless noted, the sources of the data came from Ollet, 2008

2) the active participation of the people through collective actions in the process of change and transformation;

in the church, there are equally important social values such as the sense of equity, justice, cooperation and collective concern, nationalism, gender sensitivity, environmental and risk consciousness, and the like. In fact, these social values can counter-balance the domesticating, conforming and dependency-creating values and attitude that have dominated the powerless sectors of society.

Secondly, the people have to critically understand the community and the world they are in, the forces that lead to and sustain such existence, and the way out from any oppressive

must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection:

Thirdly, to enable the people to translate their consciousness into operational and effective actions, they have to be equipped with the necessary skills for community work such as community organizing, education and mobilization, human relations and communication, conflict confrontation, planning, and management of community resources. Skills development also includes the ability to innovate and to master appropriate technology and other expertise that have been traditionally held by the educated elite and technocrats (such as those pertaining to health, energy, economic production, media and other technologies necessary for community development processes). These can be popularized, simplified and brought down to the level of

Community Organizing (CO)

CO is the core method in community development. Without it, one cannot engage in developing communities.

CO is a method which refers to the activities aimed at the grouping of people to struggle for their to

The Community Development framework as shown in Figure 4 suggests three areas of CO, namely area-based organizing, sectoral or issue-based organizing, and building networks,

organizations, and supra-organizations in the forms of networks, alliances and coalitions are the

Community Resource and Disaster Risk Management (CRDRM)

Community resources such as land, urban services, credits and capital, forests, coastal and other natural resources have always been the source of issues and conflicts among people and organizations in area-based and sectoral organizing. CRDRM is a field of study and practice in Community Development. (Figure 3). Community resource management (CRM) includes the acquisition, generation, production, development and conservation, protection, rehabilitation of community resources and the redistribution of benefits from the collective management of these resources. Community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) involves the assessment

out with plans and responses to mitigate disaster impacts, and to effectively respond to disaster events. Both CRM and CBDRM entail the involvement of the people in advocacy for policies and programs for resource and disaster risk management that would ultimately be for the advantage and welfare of the people and the community.

Figure 3. Community Resource and Disaster Risk Management

The management of community resources includes the establishment of social enterprises that will provide basic social services such as housing, education, health, recreation and transportation. Community economic development is needed to transform the existing economics by having alternative systems for production, processing and distribution of goods, services and benefits to the people. Similarly, community environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation are imperative to ensure a wholesome, livable, sustainable and ecologically-balanced habitat. There are social, economic and environmental risks that have to be properly assessed and managed to prevent or mitigate disaster events. When the resource thresholds and the environmental limits are reached or violated, disaster occurs. When economic risks are missed in the planning of livelihood projects, losses can take place.

Figure 4 presents the integrated fields of Community Development practice. In the actual practice, these fields are intertwined and in most community development programs, they emerge as program components.

Figure 4. Community Development Framework
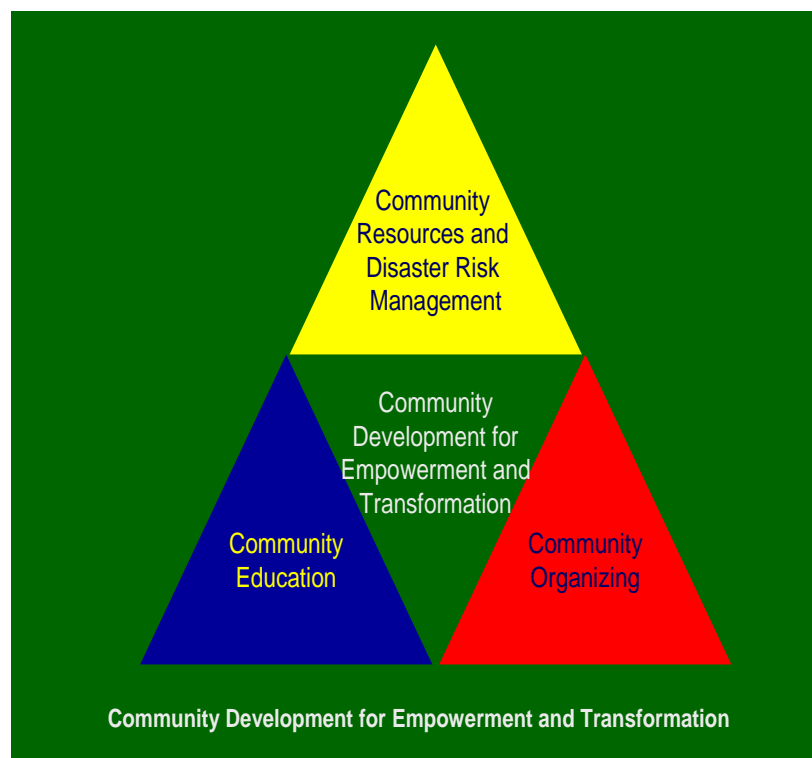
refuge of families living near the dike. They were very confident that their places were safe until they heard warnings from neighbors that huge currents of flood water were approaching. The families moved two or three times before they settled in a safe place. Most of them evacuated when the water was already breast deep. Mang Dan, now the chairman of the Amore People Organization, said that he and his family moved out of the house only when he saw the flood rising very fast. He took off the roof so that they were able to come out:

> I held my small children like a cat carrying her kittens. My wife put our youngest one year old daughter inside her shirt and was almost choked by the tight shirt. We passed through the roof, jumping from one roof to another until we reached a safe place.

Some survivors witnessed their neighbors and friends being carried by the current and shouting for help. One managed to hold on to a refrigerator and landed on a big house. But when she saw a large snake just beside her in the house, she let herself flow with the current again. She was later rescued naked. Her husband did not make it. Months later, she found out that she was pregnant. Some victims were never recovered, most probably buried by the debris. Most of the survivors spent the sleepless night wet and without food in a church located on a hill.

The next day there was a gruesome sight of dead bodies in the street. Houses were buried up to the ceiling.

Quezon and Aurora, OC stayed and helped in re-building the devastated communities, developing a long-term, community-based development plan for their holistic transformation of

ng out the true essence

of **bayanihan[1]** spirit, a progressive attitude towards community welfare, empowered, productive, good steward of resources, and strong love for god and country   -b,n.d.). In partnership with the government, non-government organizations, business and the church sectors, OC is committed to the national transformation by helping calamity-stricken communities via relief and emergency response operations and subsequent holistic community development. (OC-a, n. d.)

Armed with community development experience from the previous disaster work in Quezon, OC went to Albay and an initial assessment of the damages. At that time, there was an influx of emergency assistance coming from government, non-government and humanitarian organizations. OC decided to focus on rehabilitation, particularly in the rebuilding of new communities for the affected families. It became the coordinating secretariat of AYUDA (HELP) Albay, the coordinating body created by the provincial governor to facilitate the rehabilitation of the province. The provincial government gave OC the mandate to manage 2.5 hectares called Amore Transit Camp as a Transitory Housing Project. This became the resettlement area of the families from Barangay Banyag.

Amore Resettlement Village: The Building of a New Community

The Amore Transitory Housing Camp (now renamed Amore Village because of the negative connotation of transitory housing) is located in Brgy. Anislag in Daraga,. 11 kilometers from the center of Daraga. The land is owned by the provincial government and OC is responsible for managing the resettlement, including the mobilization of resources to build permanent shelter for 132 families, 116 of whom came from Brgy. Banyag and 16 from Brgy. Tagas in Daraga. Other families that were displaced by the flashflood from the two barangays were dispersed and lived in other resettlement areas.

Figure 7. Resettlement Project Sites
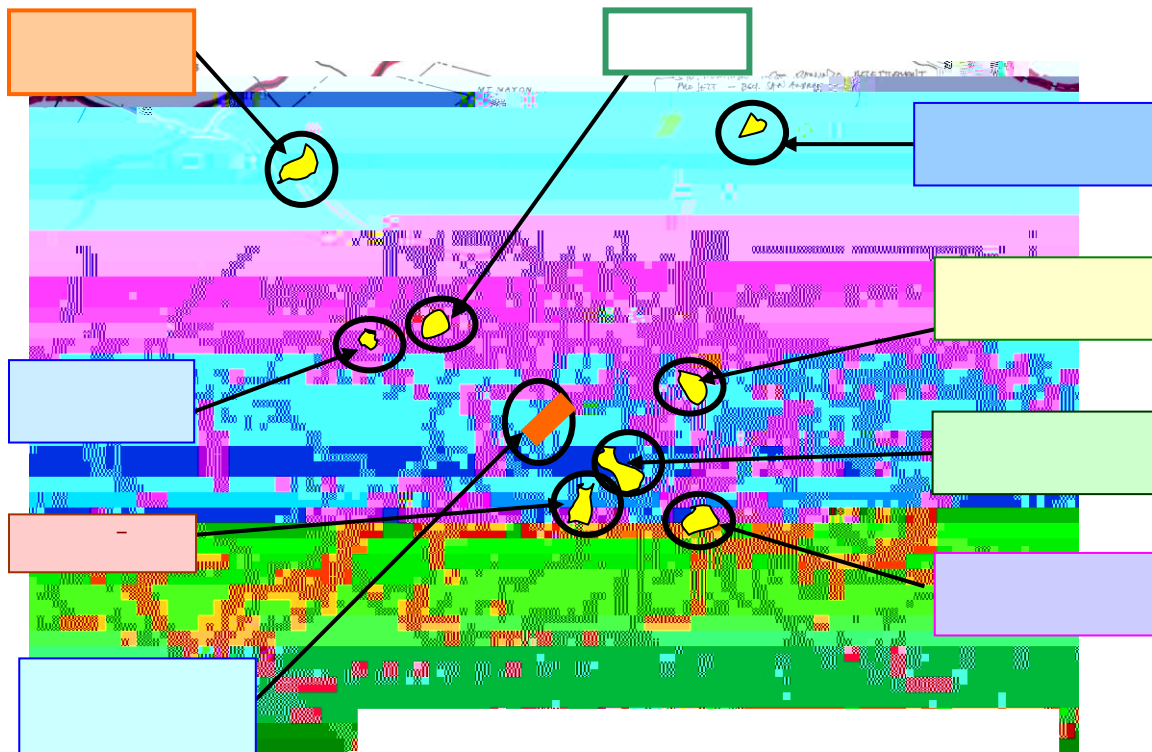
Source: Daep, n.d. Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office

Table 4. Family Displacement and Resettlement in Amore

	Communities Assisted by OC	
	Barangay Banyag	**Barangay Tagas**
Total Households Prior to Disaster	960	1,530

leaders, they elected the chairman, the vice-chairman, secretary and the treasurer. An OC community development worker lived in Amore and facilitated the organizational activities.

The Sambahayan Housing Program

While community development activities were taking place, the foundation of a telecommunications company entered into a partnership with OC for a housing project. The

housing program as its corporate social responsibility. The foundation promised to finance the housing for the 130 families and gave an initial amount of 2 million pesos. However, the

foundation officials changed its thrust from disaster risk management to youth and sports development. With no funds coming from the foundation, the point person of the foundation raised funds from personal donations. The combined amount was able to put up 14 duplexes for 28 housing units.

With the corporate foundation backing out, OC had no recourse but to carry on what had been started. They called the housing program *Samahayan in Albay*. *Sambahayan* is a Filipino value that encapsulates love, care and compassion for one another. OC believes in the resilient spirit of the Albay residents in renewing their lives. OC helps in building homes where love, respect, acceptance and protection are experienced by each member or *kasambahay*. It is envisioned that each *kasambahay* will be given a role to fulfill in rebuilding their lives. Homes will in turn a build a community of responsible, self-sufficient and contributors in society. (OC-b, n.d.)

early exposure to sex and temptation of incestuous relations. Also, there is an area for business to aid in their financial needs. (OC- b, n.d.)

The construction of the housing units was done by the residents themselves. The design of the house and the housing policies were formulated by the residents, with the OC workers as facilitators. The 120 families were divided into two priority groups composed of 60 families each. The 60 families who first came to Amore were prioritized. They were divided into six teams with ten members each. Each team had to construct five duplexes. Each family contributed a member who would provide labor for the construction. For each day of work, the family worker got a kilo of rice and 50 pesos (approximately US $ 1). In cases where the family could not send a family member to work, it hired a laborer as its contribution. So far, 28 units have been put up by the first 60 family workers. It was agreed that the first 60 families would occupy their units once the 30 duplexes are completed (6 teams x 5 duplex each team). The cost per unit now is 120,000 pesos or approximately US $ 3,200. Recently,
Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) entered into a memorandum of agreement with OC that it would provide 70,000 pesos for each of the 100 families: this is the maximum amount that it can give for housing disaster-affected families.

Meanwhile, OC is mobilizing resources so that the housing project can continue. It has to raise 50,000 pesos per housing unit or 5 million pesos (US$ 108,695), which is 42% of the total housing costs. With the DSWD promising to provide the bulk of the funds for the permanent housing, the Amore People Organization has started to prepare for the resumption of construction activities.

Guts and Gaps in Amore and OC

Using the Community Development framework in disaster risk reduction, much can be gleaned from the experience of the Amore community and OC as a humanitarian organization facilitating post-disaster development work. Considering Community Development fields such as education, organizing and resource and disaster risk management, the experience in Amore shows that there were sincere attempts or guts to bring the three together, but there were also gaps in effectively undertaking them.

When the families survived the flashflood in 2006, they had nothing but their clothes; some had not even those. They lost their houses, lands, investments and other properties. They were thankful that they lived, though many lost their relatives. Now, as one visits their temporary housing, one can notice the growing normalcy in their lives. They have acquired basic household implements, with some having televisions and refrigerators. Electricity and water are provided free by the government. Among the former middle-income families, the new situation is far less convenient. However, for some, even the temporary housing is a lot better than the shanty houses they had before, and are they thankful that they have the chance to own a house in the near future.

they get nervous at the sound of rain. They still dream about it and tears came to their eyes when they related their stories. One said that she could not look at the place where she used to live every time the vehicle she was riding on passed through it.

The physical displacement of the families has also dislocated them economically. Whereas before, they coul

empowerment can take longer due to the socio-economic, emotional and mental healing that should be addressed.

In the case of Amore and OC, they have been partners for less than two years. OC adopts a participatory approach by facilitating decision making among the people. However, there is a

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published

David, Karina C. 1984.   in
          Lambatlaya, 3rd and 4th Quarter Issue.

Freire, Paulo. 1970. **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**. New York: The Continuum Publishing
          Corporation.

Heijmans, Annelis and Victoria, Lorna. 2001. **Citizenry-Based and Development-Oriented**
          Disaster Response: Experiences and Practices in Disaster Management of the
          Citizens' Disaster Response Network in the Philippines. Quezon City: Center
          for Disaster Preparedness.

Knud, Falk, Ed. 2002. **Preparing for Disaster: A Community-Based Approach**. Manila:
          Philippine National Red Cross.

                                on and Preparedness: The Case of NGOs in the
          Disasters: The Journal of Disaster Studies, Policy and
Management. Vol 25. No. 3. Oxford: Blackswell Publishers.

_____ 1999-   ice in
          CSWCD Development Journal. Vol. IV. No.1.
          QC: College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the
          Philippines.

_____1999-

Luna, Emmanuel M. and Knud, Falk. Eds. 2003**. Guidelines for Implementing the Integrated Community Disaster Planning Model**. Manila: Philippine National Red Cross.

Third World Studies Center (TWSC). 1990. **The Language of Organizing: A Guidebook for Filipino Organizers.** Quezon City: TWSC, UP.

Tungpalan, Ma. Theresa V. 1991**. Popular Education: An Alternative Educational Approach.** Quezon City: Lambatlaya, Network for Participatory Development, Inc. CSWCD, U.P. Diliman.

Unpublished

Amore Purpose Driven Community. Sambayahan Housing Policy. Unpublished document.

Daep, Cedric, n.d. Institutionalizing Disaster Risk Reduction. PDCC Operational Experience in Albay Province, a power point presentation.
Operation Compassion (OC-a) n. d. Relief and Emergency Response Operations.

_____ (OC-

Ollet, Eddgardo Jaucian. 2008. Flashflood and Landslide Disasters in the Philippines: Reducing Vulnerability and Improving Community Resilience. Unpublished Master of Science Thesis. The University of Newcastle, Australia.

Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council (PDCC) 2006a Province of Albay. Final Damage

_____2006 b. Project Proposal for the Victims of Mayon Volcano Eruption.