Disaster Risk Reduction and Children’s Rights to Education and Safety: Integrating Humanitarian Response and Development after Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in the Philippines

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Abstract

Disasters represent a major humanitarian concern with increasing regularity and intensity due to climate change. Children are one of the most vulnerable groups during a disaster and new challenges arise for at-risk countries to guarantee children their inalienable rights. Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in the Philippines has again brought these challenges into focus. Disaster Risk Reduction in education can help to fulfill children’s rights to education and safety in face of disasters. The objective of this paper is to analyze how DRR strategies were integrated during the education sector response, recovery and rehabilitation following Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda). It discusses both the challenges and opportunities for building a disaster resilient education system in the Philippines. This includes considering the critical thread of connecting DRR, humanitarian response and development programs. The study builds on the elements for comprehensive school safety for organizing the major findings of the education sector response analysis, identifying strengths and weaknesses. It leans heavily on qualitative research including interviews with key-informants working in the field and on community level. This paper argues for a stronger cooperation and integration between humanitarian and development programs through Disaster Risk Reduction measures in order to fulfill the rights to education and safety of children in the Philippines.

Introduction

On the 8th of November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Yolanda) made landfall in the Philippines. It was one of the strongest storms ever recorded and affected around 16 million people in nine provinces of the Visayas, quickly creating a humanitarian crisis. The typhoon is a powerful example of the type of disaster risk experienced by many communities around the globe, and the need for effective ways to protect children’s rights when they are at their most vulnerable. For this, education is a critical component. Given the risks for children in the aftermath of disasters, the provision of education in emergencies does not only fulfill their right to education at all times, but also protects and offers a sense of normality (Sinclair, 2001). Moreover, education is essential to provide children with the knowledge and skills to reduce the impact of future disasters (UNESCO, 2005). While the Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world (CRED, 2014) and Filipinos are long accustomed to extreme weather events, there still exists a great need for raising awareness about hazards, related risks and responses. Typhoon Haiyan has also caused extensive damages to school infrastructure and continuing the teaching-learning process has been one of the struggles within the relief efforts.
following the disaster (Philippine Education Cluster, 2014a). Both put children’s right to education and safety at risk.

In the Philippines, natural hazards exacerbate the issues that are already hindering equal access for all children to quality and relevant education and safe schools (World Bank, 2014) (NEDA & UNDP, 2014). Therefore, ensuring education continuity within a safe and resilient environment is fundamental. Disaster Risk Reduction offers the conceptual framework to support efforts to respond effectively in case of disaster to provide education in emergencies as well as development of disaster resilience through core activities of the education sector. This paper is concerned with Disaster Risk Reduction in the education sector during the response, recovery and rehabilitation phase of Typhoon Haiyan, as it offers a critical opportunity to prevent the creation of new risk and reduce existing risk. The study aims to explain how Disaster Risk Reduction in the education sector helps to both protect children and to realize their right to education in face of frequent disasters. It argues that the need for Disaster Risk Reduction strategies in the education sector should be thoroughly considered during the response, recovery and rehabilitation phase of any disaster, as they have an important role to play in building individual’s and sector’s resilience. DRR provides a holistic approach to humanitarian response that incorporates a view to longer-term development and resilience building (UNISDR, 2005).

Justification for the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction and education in emergencies and early-reconstruction situations is present within multiple themes. The key frameworks include the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Education in Emergencies, as well as the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). Other relevant themes are Education for Sustainable Development, and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for Education for All (EFA). The interplay of education and Disaster Risk Reduction is unique in that both DRR has a great impact on the education sector itself and, as identified in HFA Priority Action 3 (UNISDR, 2005), education is an important component in building resilience of at-risk communities.

In view of the interconnectedness of Education and Disaster Risk Reduction, this paper is taking on a comprehensive perspective based on the Comprehensive School Safety Framework published in preparation for the 3rd U.N. World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 (Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector, 2014). The framework combines three pillars for Disaster Risk Reduction in education, namely (1) Safe Learning Facilities, (2) School Disaster Management, (3) Risk Reduction and Resilience Education, and is in line with the interpretation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) (UNISDR, 2005). While Education in Emergencies as well as Disaster Risk Reduction have gained growing importance in academic research, work that brings together both themes continues to be rare. Most current studies are concerned with either (i) mitigation of impacts disaster have on education by safeguarding schools, (ii) ensuring education continuity following disasters, or (iii) the role of education for disaster risk reduction (Sorensen, Rumsey, & Garcia, 2014). However, for an effective integration of humanitarian response and development of the education sector to deal with disasters, a holistic approach is essential. The right actions in the response, recovery and rehabilitation phase aiming to address issues prior to future disasters can
help to build resilience. Moreover, Disaster Risk Reduction measures can also contribute and safeguard the development of sectors as a whole. Due to its essential role to ensure children’s right to education and safety, this is particularly important in the education sector.

The qualitative study aimed to explore the range of factors that both hinder and facilitate Disaster Risk Reduction in the Philippine education sector following Typhoon Haiyan. Case study research on school level offered to understand which resources and capacities schools are able to access and to what extent existing policies and frameworks are implemented on the ground. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding, semi-structured interviews were conducted within different target groups. These included teachers in public and private schools, staff and local volunteers who are involved in the response and rehabilitation work as well as community members. The paper is first giving an overview of the children’s situation following the disaster. Following, the findings on Disaster Risk Reduction on school level are explained including safe learning facilities, school disaster management and risk reduction and resilience education. Further, the challenges as well as opportunities for actions on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Philippines are discussed. The paper ends with recommendations for building a disaster resilient education system in order to fulfill the rights to education and safety for children in the Philippines.

**Impact of Typhoon Haiyan on children’s right to education and safety**

According to UNICEF, 5.9 million children are affected by Typhoon Haiyan (UNICEF, 2014). Many lost their homes, their schools and maybe family members at the same time. Eight months after the typhoon a great number of families are still without homes. This post-disaster environment creates various stresses and risks for children. Due to the losses caused by the Typhoon, many families struggle to make their living. Temporary housing situations result in lack of access to sanitation and hygiene. Also, children face risks outside their homes, especially on their way to school. Many have to walk longer distances, and have to swim in some areas during rainy season, to reach their school. They are highly vulnerable to abuse, sexual violence, human trafficking and exploitation following the disaster (Child Protection Cluster & Education Cluster, 2014).

In addition to their situation at home, children face difficulties regarding their access to education. Typhoon Haiyan left more than 2500 schools and more than 2500 day-care centers totally or partially damaged (Philippine Education Cluster, 2014b), resulting in the disruption of the teaching-learning process. Following the typhoon, schools remained closed. Besides the damages caused by the strong wind and rising water, others are man-made destructions following the disaster. In many places, law and order broke down after the typhoon struck and massive supply disruption has caused a desperate search for materials by community members to build temporary houses. The resumption of classes varied between two weeks to a few months after the typhoon. On the 6th of January, schools in the affected areas were officially re-opened within the ‘Back to Learning’ Campaign of the Department of Education and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (UNICEF Philippines, 2014). Even though most children are back in school, the lessons are held under difficult conditions. The damages by the typhoon caused a lack of useable classrooms. Re-opening plans required alternative arrangements for the schools.
The pupils are now studying in temporary classrooms or tents set up outside, in shifts or sharing their classroom with other grades. Many schools have been used as evacuation centers for affected community members. Although most schools are not designed to accommodate a large number of people, they are often the only possible facilities for evacuation within an area. This complicated the resumption of classes in schools, since classrooms could not be used for classes while evacuees occupied them. Also, the number of school dropouts has increased following the disaster, due to displacement and transfer to other regions, lack of food, lack of resources for school supplies and transport.

These risks and challenges for children following Typhoon Haiyan are common in post-disaster situations. They also illustrate the need for provision of education in emergencies creating safe spaces for children. With regard to future disasters, the education sector needs to be strengthened to support children in preparing for, responding to and coping with those difficulties.

Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector following Typhoon Haiyan

Following the typhoon, the education sector is now concerned with rehabilitation and reconstruction. This process offers opportunities to address the risk to ensure that the next disaster will not cause similar impacts. Therefore, longer-term disaster risk reduction and resilience building should be made a strong component of the education sector rehabilitation.

Safe school facilities

By far the most common intervention following in the education sector following Typhoon Haiyan is the rebuilding and reconstruction of school buildings. However, the situation in the schools varies greatly. While some schools have brand new buildings, others are still holding classes in temporary learning spaces. The great number of schools affected resulted in a lack of resources and available funding for the rehabilitation, and lead to some schools receiving more support than others. In general, most schools depend on the help of international or local NGOs and receive little by the government. In addition, the availability of resources is very much depending on the location and size of the school, partnerships with overseas institutions or other beneficial connections. The schools differ in their specifics and thus also in their ability to rebuild. In principle, the situation in private schools is much better as they are receiving support from international partners overseas and, to a certain degree, have more resources available through their tuition fees. Also, schools with a large number of pupils and located within the city areas are receiving increased attention by international NGOs and donors. On the contrary, schools located close to the ‘no-build zone’ are still struggling for funding for the reconstruction. Located close to the seashore, the schools are not receiving support from the government and other organizations.

Regarding improvement of building design and safer construction, the situation and approaches also vary. In general, to build a hazard-resistant school is more expensive. This does not only apply to the materials, but also to the need for skilled labour. Due to the lack of resources, most schools are simply getting roofed and painted. Sometimes the funding by organizations stops for internal reasons during the process, and schools cannot be finished. Supporting and funding a
school is reported to be complicated with many parties and organizations involved. Transparency and accountability is one great problem, as well as the bureaucratic process. When new buildings or facilities have already been completed, their usage requires official certificates. This application process often takes a long time. In summary, improvement of building design and safer construction is not always the case or rather the exception. The reason is simply the lack of available resources. Since school somehow has to go on, it is hardly possible to wait for greater support and proper improvement.

*School Disaster Management*

Dealing with the damages of the school buildings, schools have set up temporary learning spaces, shifted or merged classes. Motivated and engaged teachers and personnel tried to get the schools ‘back on their feet’. In some cases, the teachers did not receive their salaries following the typhoon or are paying themselves for the repairs of the classrooms. Many schools were used as temporary shelters or evacuation centers without the necessary amenities or facilities to support a large number of affected people. Alternative venues for classes needed to be found while the remaining classrooms accommodated community members and their families. The schools make do with what was possible to reopen and resume the classes following Haiyan. However, planning ahead for future disasters remains low and preparedness is not part of normal school management and improvement. Standard operating procedures, such as evacuation and contingency plans, are not available in most schools. The reasons range from lack of awareness to lack of time and staff due to other competing tasks following the disaster. Even though multi-hazard drills were targeted in public schools, response preparedness remains relatively low in many schools.

In the Philippines, schools are usually institutions that are very much imbedded in the communities. The teachers live together with their families in the communities and are often locals from the same area or region. Also, the schools are often used as venue for community activities. Therefore, schools could be the center for disaster risk reduction programs involving the communities. However, activities on education for disaster reduction, evacuation management and disaster documentation are rare and mainly undertaken by non-governmental organizations, with little support of the local government.

*Risk Reduction and Resilience Education*

Also, Risk Reduction and Resilience Education is not really present in the curriculum and teaching in the schools. The main reason is the lack of awareness and sense of responsibility for education for disaster risk reduction. Teaching about disaster preparedness is not regarded as a responsibility of the school, but of the ‘barangay’ (meaning the smallest local government unit in the Philippines and refers to a ‘village’ or ‘community’). Therefore, capacities and priorities for Education for Disaster Risk Reduction in the schools are limited. Even though it was referred to efforts of the Department of Education (DepEd) to integrate hazards and disaster preparedness in the curriculum, the schools are lacking trained staff and materials. It has been explained that the government and other organizations attempt to train educational personnel on DRR, but that these actions often do not reach the schools. One reason mentioned is that teacher trainings are usually held in bigger towns, requiring travel to attend. Often there are no travel expenses
available. Another problem is that there are often no teaching materials on natural hazards and disaster preparedness. The Department of Education published a module on DRR, but there are no teaching materials available in the local dialects. Overall, the mindset on disasters is very conservative with little awareness on the importance of knowledge on natural hazards. It lacks attention and responsibility to prevention and preparedness at the school level.

It needs to be emphasized that schools where all components for Disaster Risk Reduction are undertaken also exist. However, they are the exception. In many schools the attention, responsibility and capacity to prevention, mitigation and preparedness to future disasters remains little.

**Challenges for Disaster Risk Reduction in the education sector response**

The findings reveal several challenges impeding actions towards successful Disaster Risk Reduction especially in the education sector. The following sections outline the reasons why the implementation of disaster risk reduction in the Philippine education sector remains difficult.

**Lack of financial resources**

The main challenge for action on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Philippine education sector is the enormous lack of financial resources. More than eleven months following Typhoon Haiyan the affected areas are still recovering. The government is on the hard road to reconstruction, and in need of more than 100 Billion Pesos for rehabilitation (National Economic and Development Authority, 2013). The biggest need still represents shelter, as whole communities need to be rebuilt. At the same time, public schools are struggling with raising the necessary funds for the reconstruction of school buildings. Under these circumstances, it is difficult, and in most cases impossible, to ‘build back better’ as envisaged by the Philippine government (Government of the Republic of the Philippines, 2013). The ability of the Philippines to bounce back following the disaster is limited, as just not enough resources exist for the countless urgent needs. To fill the gaps, the international community provides significant humanitarian assistance in response to the large-scale disaster and its impacts (Government of the Republic of the Philippines, 2014).

Furthermore, disaster risk reduction struggles for government attention among a number of competing priorities resulting in DRR to be among the least prioritized. Sufficient resources to initiate a working system of DRR continue to be a challenge. Decision-makers are also unable to have a long-term perspective of the challenge and opt for short-term solutions. Even donors tend to support projects that are visible.

**Lack of capacity**

While the Philippines has specific disaster risk reduction policies in place, implementation is lacking. National policies can serve as the basis for community actions and locally driven disaster risk reduction processes, but an enabling environment is essential. Disaster Risk Reduction requires multi-stakeholder engagement and capacity development at many levels. At the local level, Disaster Risk Reduction is often viewed as a separate sector and not a cross-cutting one. This results in non-inclusion in sectoral plans and Disaster Risk Reduction strategies as not properly budgeted. Despite a number of efforts, the awareness and capacity for disaster risk
reduction on the ground remains low. The response to Typhoon Haiyan shows a large gap between the targeted aim of the national government, published strategy papers and the actual implementation at sub-national levels.

Focus on response and post-disaster phase

Although the Disaster Risk Reduction approach has been identified as a means to reduce disaster losses at the national level, disaster management is still primarily focused on the response and rehabilitation after disasters. Following Typhoon Haiyan, the education sector aimed to reopen schools and resume classes as quickly as possible. The schools set up temporary learning spaces, shifted classes or used multi-grading to continue the teaching-learning process in a post-disaster environment. These actions were necessary to limit the interruption in the provision of education. However, vulnerability reduction in view of future disasters is not adopted in many cases. Disaster Risk Reduction seem as term widely known, but establishing a universal understanding of what precisely DRR entails appears as difficult not only within the education sector, but among many involved in disaster response. Most commonly, DRR is referred to the undertaken actions following Typhoon Haiyan. In contrast, preparedness-planning measures are not part of the normal school management in many communities. Classes were suspended when warnings were received before Typhoon Haiyan, but the schools are not prepared for unforeseen disaster occurring during school hours.

The same applies for disaster risk and resilience education. Disaster Preparedness has been formally included in the curriculum of public schools within the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act of 2010. However, teaching on natural hazards and disaster preparedness often does not take place due to lack of capacities and teaching materials in the schools. While it has lacked preparation and knowledge in the case of Typhoon Haiyan, education for disaster risk reduction is not a future priority of most schools. The government is deemed responsible for information and education on disaster preparedness. Furthermore, insufficient financial resources lead to simple repairs and rebuilding of schools. For many, improvements of building designs incorporating hazard-resistant building standards are just not affordable.

Focus on rebuilding and infrastructure

In general, actions following a disaster undergo different phases from immediate response to long-term rehabilitation. More than eight months after Haiyan, efforts have shifted towards long-term recovery and reconstruction. Most initiatives are targeting reconstruction and infrastructure efforts. In the education sector, this means to repair the 2500 schools that have been affected by Typhoon Haiyan. Obviously, the repair of classrooms and facilities is necessary to establish a functioning school system. Also, it appears plausible that resources should be spent for safe building construction to withstand future typhoons. Nevertheless, safe school facilities do only represent one integral part of disaster risk reduction in education (UNESCO, 2011). Disaster Risk Reduction also depends on teaching and learning about DRR and school-level disaster management. In the Philippines, the month of July of every year is declared as ‘National disaster consciousness month’ (Government of the Republic of the Philippines, 1999). Nonetheless, activities on Disaster Risk Reduction in schools remain little. Echoing what the
Philippine Education Cluster had already advocated, a great need exists for “[…] education in emergencies to be streamlined in teacher training, incorporating child protection in emergencies, and psychosocial support training” (Philippine Education Cluster, 2014b). Even though the Education Cluster partners are accelerating the training of education officials, it remains difficult to reach the large number of schools.

**Lack of cooperation and constituency**

Already before Typhoon Haiyan, coordination and cooperation on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in the Philippines has not been considered as effective. The large-scale devastation brought by Typhoon Haiyan has highlighted the problems once again. First, the coordination in disaster risk reduction and management between the different levels of government is difficult. That is visible in that the implementation of national policies differs from region, province and barangay. Second, the cooperation between the local government and non-governmental organizations is intricate and bureaucratic. The Philippine government leads the disaster response and every project undertaken requires the permission of local officials. The Philippine Government is unable the situation without international support. Third, the collaboration between the different organizations, donor agencies and other actors is complicated. Recovery efforts following a disaster are typically very complex with numerous actors and international entities involved, all pursuing their own approaches. This results in various different concepts, training methods and materials for Disaster Risk Reduction. While some argue for a standardized training curriculum, others give preference to diversity and instead suggest sharing of lessons learned for successful Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives. Changes in the local government also often lead to pursuing new projects and strategies for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Even within the Education Cluster, the cooperation on strategies for Disaster Risk Reduction is difficult to pursue. The involvement of national and local NGOs in the cluster remains challenging and they are far from reaching all actors. The undertaken research has shown that the situation between the schools and communities could not be more different. While some schools can be considered as role models for the implementation of disaster risk reduction measures, actions on disaster risk reduction are non-existent in other schools. These major differences pose a great challenge for building a disaster resilient education system. The increased focus on specific cities or regions also poses the danger that existing challenges on the ground are overlooked. If certain schools are repeatedly used as benchmark for actions undertaken on Disaster Risk Reduction, the risk arises that it distorts the overall status of measures for Disaster Risk Reduction in the education sector.

**Opportunities to strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction in Education**

Besides the many challenges, the research has also discovered many chances to strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction in education in the Philippines. First, this chapter discusses two opportunities on organizational level. Following, strategies of the affected communities that can be viewed as starting points for bottom-up Disaster Risk Reduction actions are explained.
Greater visibility and relevance of DRR

The scale of the disaster following Typhoon Haiyan made the Philippines the center of international attention. Such large-scale disasters bring the most interest, and also funding, for Disaster Risk Reduction. Within response and recovery efforts, Disaster Risk Reduction can achieve higher visibility and relevance. The Philippines does have policies for Disaster Risk Reduction in place that emphasize the role of the local governments for disaster mitigation and preparedness. However, the extent of the impacts of Typhoon Haiyan has undermined those existing policies and strategies. It also highlighted that there are still many needs existing at all levels, especially for the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction in the response and rehabilitation process. Successful Disaster Risk Reduction requires a strong institutional basis for effective implementation. The recent disaster offers new opportunities for enhanced advocacy on Disaster Risk Reduction and its mainstreaming as cross-cutting theme. In the numerous reports of the organizations involved in the response and rehabilitation process, this endeavour is highly visible. In the education sector, attention was directed to activities for disaster preparedness and conducted multi-hazard drills. Although the research showed that there still is a long way to go, greater advocacy for Disaster Risk Reduction within the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan may offers opportunities for resource mobilization for Disaster Risk Reduction in national development plans.

Strengthening partnerships through Cluster Approach

In the Philippines, the cluster approach has been established by the National Disaster Coordinating Council in May 2007 (National Disaster Coordinating Council, 2007). It is part of the global response aiming for provision of more timely and consistent help to the affected people in complex emergencies. As in the case of Typhoon Haiyan, the cluster system is striving to enhance the partnership between UN agencies, international, national, and local NGOs as well as with government departments (IASC, 2006). Even though one observed problem for Disaster Risk Reduction during the research was the weak cooperation between international agencies and organizations with national and local NGOs, the cluster approach can be considered to strengthen the complex relief coordination. It provides an important structure for mutual sharing of challenges and strategies in the response, beneficial for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). While challenges do exist regarding the participation of NGOs, the cluster structure is supportive of the strengthening of the partnerships of the different stakeholders involved after the Typhoon. Within these partnerships, there is potential for increased advocacy and a common understanding of Disaster Risk Reduction.

Self-organized community groups

In the response to the many needs on the ground, the affected communities are often self-organizing and mobilize resources to help themselves. In many cases, waiting for help from the outside takes too long so the communities organize themselves. Teachers spend their own money for school repairs to be able to resume their classes. In other communities, informal gatherings developed by women’s groups to protect children and women from abuses. The Philippines is known for ‘people power’, and these local organisations offer opportunities for effective coping strategies following Typhoon Haiyan. They can also provide a starting point for
community-based disaster risk reduction actions. The community groups may have different resources and capacities and are able to contribute to successful Disaster Risk Reduction with their local knowledge. Their strong relationships can also support the spread of information and knowledge on risks and disaster preparedness, building resilience of the community for future disasters.

**Role of social networks**

In the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, families and households relied on the support of their friends and family. The Filipinos have strong social networks and are one large community. Following the disaster, their social networks were useful in getting information on the status of family members, providing shelter for those who lost their home and receiving remittances sent by family members working abroad. Many families transferred to other regions to stay with their relatives, instead of staying in the evacuation centers. In addition to the support by the international community, a big part of aid came from Filipinos working and living overseas. Also regarding the financing of school buildings, many schools could count on the support of partner schools overseas or other friends of the school. It was found that social networks are the most effective tools for action on the ground. Particular international partners would support actions for Disaster Risk Reduction, such as funding hazard-resistant school buildings. More importantly, this is another example of how knowledge and information on natural hazards and preparedness could be exchanged and spread through already existing social relationships and networks.

**Conclusion**

This paper is built on the argument that Disaster Risk Reduction strategies in the education sector should be an essential part of disaster response, recovery and rehabilitation. Disaster Risk Reduction measures can help to strengthen the education sector in order to fulfill children’s rights to education and safety in the face of disaster. Therefore, the research assessed the response, recovery and rehabilitation phase following Typhoon Haiyan, with particular focus on Disaster Risk Reduction strategies on school and community level. Drawing on the findings, recommendations can be made in order to build a disaster resilient education system in the Philippines.

The research made visible that the implementation of international strategies and national policies at the local level remains incomplete and a work in progress. While the Philippines has been widely praised for its leadership regarding Disaster Risk Reduction and Management policies within the international community, the research showed that their widespread translation to action at the local level still needs time and political will. The response and rehabilitation process following Typhoon Haiyan is strongly influenced by political factors and power relations in the affected areas. It is also hampered by organizational and coordination issues. Despite Disaster Risk Reduction has been on the national agenda for years, many at the local level are still unaware of the opportunities to build resilience to natural hazards. This especially applies to the education sector. The existing policies and strategy papers for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Philippine education sector show a different state of progress than the implementation on local level. Likewise, teachers and school administration were both little
aware and also lacking resources for Disaster Risk Reduction. The research assessed the peoples’ and schools’ concerns and needs that are caused by political, economic and structural processes. This shows that the main reasons for disasters and vulnerability lie far beyond the scope of fragmented Disaster Risk Reduction strategies. It also highlights that the local governments are the essential stakeholders to align the overarching strategies to local priorities and capacities, leading to meaningful actions for effective Disaster Risk Reduction.

Many challenges exist due to factors that lie beyond the power of those who are affected by the disaster. Lack of financial, and resulting lack of human, resources, often limits the implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction actions on community level. Community- based Disaster Risk Reduction cannot be enabled without tackling poverty. Disaster Risk Reduction in general and in the education sector therefore needs to go hand in hand with everyday development efforts. While Disaster Risk Reduction supports these investments, more equal distribution of resources and power within the Filipino society is also necessary to increase Disaster Risk Reduction. The research showed that most schools are struggling with their reconstruction due to insufficient resources and within these efforts remains little capacity for disaster risk reduction strategies. Many schools were very basic and the public school system in the affected areas appeared to be not of high quality. Therefore, supporting requirements for actions on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education sector are investments in the public education system. These investments would be mutual safeguarded by Disaster Risk Reduction. Disaster Risk Reduction needs to be strongly integrated into education sector development plans, rather than viewed as separately.

Another finding noted during the research has been the thinking in terms of disaster response and relief. Nevertheless the research has been focused on the post- disaster phase, the concept of Disaster Risk Reduction is to build resilience to future disasters. These actions should be already integrated within the response and rehabilitation phase, in order to build back better. During the fieldwork, it was found that Disaster Risk Reduction for many still applies to the coping after the disaster. Schools are focused on setting up temporary learning spaces and continuing education following the Typhoon, rebuilding their classrooms and facilities. However, when asked about preparedness for future disasters, little activities have been undertaken. Especially in a disaster prone country such as the Philippines, rethinking the way to cope with disasters is an urgent need. This must not only be taken seriously at the national level, but increased focus and effort must be made to translate it to the local level.

Disaster Risk Reduction depends heavily on information and knowledge of people about hazard risk and preparedness. Therefore risk reduction and resilience education is of highest priority. The case study of Typhoon Haiyan showed tragically the consequences of lack of knowledge about natural hazards and preparedness. Despite this, the research showed that many are not aware of the important role of education to limit disaster loss. Disaster Risk Reduction actions, if any, were mainly focused on safer construction of school buildings and facilities. Teachers and education staff were wondering about their task to teach on Disaster Risk Reduction and referred to the responsibility of the local government. Trainings also focus mainly on local government officials, which is of course important but not far reaching enough. With regard to future disasters, strengthen human resources and capacities needs to be one of the priorities. It is
also probably more sustainable and effective investment, as knowledge can be easily shared within families and communities and helps to save lives. Therefore, education for disaster risk reduction should be promoted within the schools, facilitated by widespread teacher trainings and the development of teaching materials in local dialects.

Disaster Risk Reduction in Education is often referred to as the role of education in Disaster Risk Reduction, not including the role of Disaster Risk Reduction for the education sector. Therefore, the study chose a holistic approach including School Disaster Management, Disaster Risk and Resilience Education, and safe learning facilities. However, based on the information gathered during the research, not all of these elements exist to the same extent in the schools. If Disaster Risk Reduction goes beyond disaster response, it is focused on safe learning facilities in most cases. International sponsors would pay and call for hazard-resistant building construction. In contrast, school disaster management and disaster risk and resilience education are the responsibility of the schools themselves. Again due to lack of resources and capacities, these two components for comprehensive school safety just don’t exist in many cases. To guarantee children their rights to education and safety requires continued effort and advocacy to promote a comprehensive approach to Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education sector at all levels. The reasons for their importance and connections between the elements are strongly interconnected, making the holistic approach even more important. This research intended to do exactly that, to contribute to the advocacy for comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction in education in the Philippines to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development efforts.

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