



DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF ASSESSING LOSS AND DAMAGE IN THE PHILIPPINES

BACKGROUND

Defining Loss and Damage

Increasing awareness of the intense and non-exclusive impacts of climate-related hazards has allowed the re-emergence of the concept of loss and damage (L&D), which is accepted to refer to “negative effects of climate variability and climate change that people have not been able to cope with or adapt to” (Warner & van der Geest, 2013). These negative effects can be economic in nature, that is, loss in income or damage to property, or non-economic in the form of social and health costs, to mention a few (UNEP Global Environmental Alert Service, 2014).

Loss and Damage in the Philippines

L&D is not solely caused by the impacts of climate change and other disasters but also by the capability, or lack thereof, of a community to adapt and prevent them from happening. This makes it especially visible in developing countries of high climate risk such as the Philippines.

When Typhoon Ondoy struck Metro Manila in 2009, the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) was used to assess loss and damage at the request of the Philippine Government to various multilateral development partners. The government has led the PDNA (See Figure 1 for general process and key actors) in recent years through the Office of Civil Defense – National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (OCD-NDRRMC). Since then, the PDNA methodology continues to be modified to fit the Philippine context.

The gaps on the tool and the system as a whole were identified in a forum and workshop: 1) funded by the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN); 2) graced by the notable speakers from Cebu and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Champion, Vice Mayor Alfredo Arquillano, Jr., Mr. Relan Jay Asuncion of the OCD, Ms. Jessica Bercilla of the Manila Observatory (MO) – whose presentation completes the outreach of the ongoing Coastal Cities at Risk (CCAR) project, – Atty. Therese Guiao of the Ateneo School of Government (ASoG), as well as from Climate Change Commission representative, Mr. Arnold Belver; and 3) participated by relevant stakeholders.¹ The main issues that emerged are: standardization, data needs, capacity-building, partnership, and governance (Figure 2).

KEY MESSAGES

- A community’s lack of capability to adapt to climate disasters intensifies losses and damages.
- The current status of the PDNA tool in the Philippines needs improvement to ensure a holistic approach that views loss and damage assessment as a critical component of sound policy-making, strategic action-planning and sustainable development.
- Various government agencies and relevant stakeholders appreciate the role of loss and damage assessment as a robust scientific basis for planning and development, and ultimately, as a tool to achieve resilience.

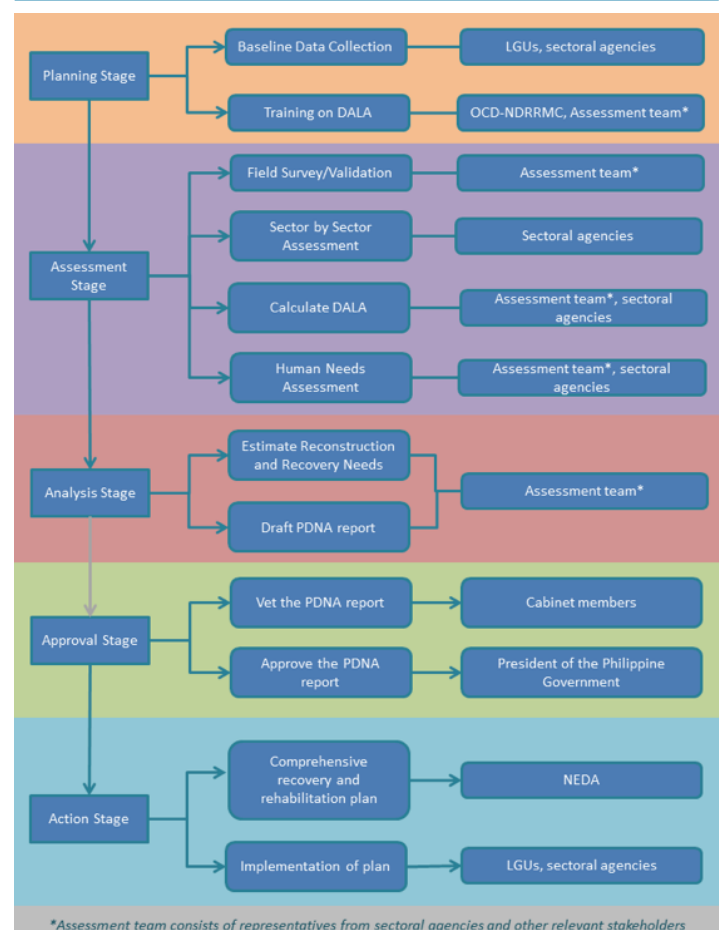


Figure 1. Stages of the PDNA process and corresponding actors

¹ Participants of “Linking Loss and Damage with Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Philippines” held at Richmond Hotel in April 28, 2015 included representatives from the following government organizations: Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Municipality of Bacnotan, National Economic and Development Authority, Philippine Statistics Authority, Special Committee on Climate Change of the House of Representatives, Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Finance, Department of Health, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Transportation and Communications, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, League of Cities, League of Provinces, Local Water Utilities Administration, the academe: Ateneo School of Government, University of the Philippines, and the following private organizations: Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Oxfam, Philippine Disaster Recovery Foundation, PNOOC Renewables Corporation, United Nations.



Figure 2. Gaps and recommendations on the L & D System in the Philippines

LINKS TO DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

It is crucial to have a holistic approach in viewing the importance of L&D knowledge for policy-making and effective action to improve adaptation and mitigation strategies. Hence, a framework for L&D system in the Philippines (Figure 3) is proposed to ensure a cyclic process that can enhance the resiliency of the people and reduce their vulnerability to future climate-related disasters. This framework has two main levels: (1) rapid assessment, during which information on the immediate relief needs of a community is gathered; and (2) in-depth assessment that gathers information for research and planning. No. 2 can be used for the following:

- Identification of priority areas;
- Construction of rehabilitation plans;
- Improvement of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies; and
- Preparation of sustainable development action plans.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prioritize continuous discourse on standardization, data needs, capacity building, partnership, and governance for collaborative action and inclusion progress
- Consider the application of the holistic approach to L&D assessment from the planning up to the evaluation of policies and programs
- Promote the optimal use of L&D information to improve CCA and DRR strategies

References:

- UNEP Global Environmental Alert Service. (2014). Loss and damage: When adaptation is not enough. Retrieved from http://na.unep.net/geas/getUNEPPageWithArticleIDScript.php?article_id=111
- Warner, K., & Van der Geest, K. (2013). Loss and damage from climate change: Local-level evidence from nine vulnerable countries. *International Journal of Global Warming*, 5(4), 367-386. Retrieved from <http://www.lossanddamage.net/download/7237.pdf>

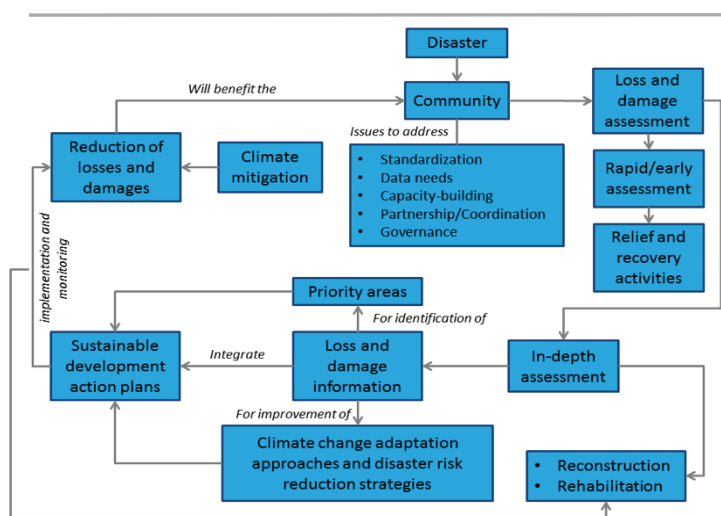


Figure 3. Proposed framework for the L & D in the Philippines

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The **Oscar M. Lopez Center** recognizes that science and technology have a critical role to play in enhancing the resilience and coping capacity of the various sector of the society whose aspirations to develop sustainability is threatened by climate-related risks and disasters. It is striving to create a “Center of Excellence” by generating science-based solutions in the area of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.