

Longer-term recovery following major disasters in Asia-Pacific: Lessons for resilient development

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1. Rationale

- Increasing disaster risks causing greater social and economic losses
 - Climate change affecting hazard frequency and intensity (IPCC SREX 2012)
 - Root causes of vulnerability: poverty and inequality, non-risk informed development, weak governance and institutions (SFDRR 2015)
- Major disaster losses in Asia over the past decade, yet recoveries (relatively) under-researched (Smith and Wenger, 2006; Rubin, 2009)
- Linking disaster risk management phases requires attention
- Disasters and recoveries can be windows of opportunity for positive change (Birkmann et al., 2008; Fan, 2013)
- Transformative solutions to increasing risks are needed, particularly around resilience building and better risk-informed development policies and practices



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2. Research Design

Objectives

- Improve understanding of loss and damage systems in recovery contexts
- Contribute to the Loss & Damage debate from a “disasters/DRR” perspective
- Offer lessons for building resilience through recovery interventions

Research Questions

- What types of loss and damage systems exist in post-disaster recovery contexts?
- How effective were interventions in aiding recovery and building resilience?
- What factors enable or hamper the ability of recovery interventions to build resilience, or “build back better”?

Case studies

- 2000-2001 Mekong delta floods, Cambodia and Vietnam – *Local responses and living with floods*
 - 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Indonesia – *The role of customary institutions in fishery communities recovery*
 - 2011 floods, Thailand – *Uneven vulnerability of small and mediums enterprises (SMEs)*
- = Range of contexts: governance systems, development, vulnerability, and recovery “success”

Methods

- Case studies: scientific literature review; government and NGO policy and planning document analysis; key informant interviews and household surveys
- Synthesis: conceptual literature review: resilience, loss and damage; writeshop



3. Key Definitions

“Long-term” recovery

A process of restoring, rebuilding, reshaping and improving facilities, livelihoods, living conditions, and the socio-economic and natural environments of disaster-affected communities, over several years post-disaster, often with the aim of “building back better” and addressing future needs (UNISDR, 2009; Smith and Wenger, 2006)

Loss and damage systems

Systems, formal and informal, which help people recover and cope with the impacts of natural hazards, including climate-related and slow onset environmental changes, that are irreversible (loss) or which can be replaced (damage)

Resilience

The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions (IPCC, 2012; UNISDR, 2009)



4.1 Results – Recovery Narratives

1. **Early restoration (ER)** argues that it is important to replace lost assets and get lives back to normal as quickly as possible
2. **Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)** focuses on reducing the gaps between short-term humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation
3. **Build back better (BBB)** aims to make places and people's lives better, and more resilient, than they were before
4. **Empower local communities (ELC)** treats disaster recovery as a political process in which local communities need to be empowered so that their underlying vulnerabilities will be addressed



4.2 Results – Loss and Damage Systems

Loss & damage system type	Thailand	Vietnam	Indonesia	Cambodia
Illustrative Initiatives LIVELIHOODS				
Sector or livelihood stimulus policies	-Car tax rebate -Reduced interest rates (to 3%) -Raised minimum wage & govt salaries -Gave tax exemptions to foreign investors -Floodwall construction stimulated economy	Living with flood (3 rd rice alt.) Trainings	"Rapid" reconstruction of fisheries livelihood (boats, equipment, infrastructure) – fishing stock levels only down for 1 year Trainings (SME, accounting, etc.) Cash transfers/ cash for work	Alternative Livelihood Training
Alternative livelihood options used by HH	(SMEs didn't make any changes -> returned to selling same good with same strategies -> but reduced sales for some)	+ additional income from off-farm activities and additional crops	Different economic activities along fisheries P2C chain besides fishing (e.g. processing, retail)	Migration to city useful for recovery and borrow money lenders and micro finance.
INFRASTRUCTURE				
Reconstruction funds			BRR, UN, INGOs, donors, RC, etc. – "enough" funds to "build back better"	N/A
Disaster (Flood) protection projects	Raised roads Estate walls Small dykes along waterways Change in dam management (retain less water in dry season)	Residential cluster program with full and semi-dyke system	Exclusion zone (decision reversed) but some reconstruction more inland (e.g. road building, also upgraded) Tsunami EWS, evacuation routes, centres, training	Road and bridge upgrading to protect flooding and access to incomes and social health care.
Community-based institutions	Disaster preparation plans (but in other communities)	Central Government created community-based disaster risk plan and applied it to entire country	Panglima Laot lhok (bay, also district, provincial) (other customary leaders - forest, agricultural land)	Disaster Association
Household building improvements	Raised floors; moved good upstairs during rainy season; moved office to back of house; order less inventory during wet season (pre-cautionary measures)	Better building of houses based on the frame-house provided by the Residential Cluster Program	Better quality houses, located further from coastline (mostly) Home-owners given land titles/deeds (most didn't have before so challenge of knowing who owns what land after houses flattened)	Raised homes
FINANCIAL				
Compensation	Refined Following protest	Compensation for households affected by disaster funding available at local level for death or injury, & for damages to or losses of property & crops.	Cash transfers/ cash for work Revolving fund for fisheries communities – held at district gov. level	Food for work and rice, and some stuff.
Insurance	Some bought/others had already		N/A	N/A
HH-Community funds - loans		Loans for land & house construction provided to farmers by Bank for the Poor	N/A	Charity-donation coordination, social capital and kindness
NON-MATERIAL				
Cultural-social support (institutions)	Market Association	- Local knowledge – cultural memory toward predicting coming weather conditions such as flood, repetition	Reciprocity norm weakened; gotong royong (mutual cooperation) eroded by cash transfer (amount, long period of time, many activities)	Reciprocity-helping norm And cultural and solidarity.
Peace-building / conflict resolution	N/A	N/A	Aceh peace agreement (August 2005) but insufficient funds to conflict recovery (<\$1bn, est. economic losses >\$10bn)	N/A
ECOLOGICAL				
Ecosystem services	Few retention ponds (but not many – more being built now but to reduce drought)	Semi-dykes and rational use of natural resources, such as soil management	Mangrove protection, fisheries stock and marine ecosystem restoration	crop vertices/ lake Impacts on fisheries, sedimentation

4.2 Results – Loss and Damage Systems

L&D systems	Flood walls built around industrial estates (Thailand)	Cash for work schemes (Indonesia)
Target group	Major foreign investors	Coastal fisheries communities
Timing	Long-term	Medium- to long-term
Resources	Large	Large
Scale	Regional (Central Thailand)	Local
Decision-making	National government and private sector	National government (BRR) and international donor agencies
Legitimacy	Supported by investors but not locals(?)	Support at first, but negative impacts on local culture in the long-term



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5.1 Discussion – Improving Loss and Damage Systems

- Improving accessibility of flood insurance to increase coverage, particularly among the poor
- Re-assess the value of cash for work schemes – do they really empower affected communities?
- Leadership and central coordination (e.g. Nepal earthquake reconstruction agency)
- Decentralized decision-making to better balance bottom-up/top-down approaches
 - Local government for accountability
 - Customary institutions and NGOs for community inclusion
- Better risk-informed development: reduce not redistribute risk
 - Risk reduction mainstreaming in development sectors
- Strategies for meeting short-term needs and long-term resilience – how should humanitarian and development practitioners work together in post-disaster contexts?



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5.2 Discussion – Disaster Recovery Narratives

- Constructed by coalitions of stakeholders to articulate combinations of problems and solutions as logical courses of action which should be followed
- Narratives of donors and national governments often significantly differed than those of local authorities and communities on the ground
- However, the dominant narrative in three cases was driven by elite actors to build coalitions
- Narratives evolve, suggesting that “recovery” is not a discrete DRM phase, nor a strictly linear process
- Indicate how disaster recoveries can differ, in part due to who owns the discourse, and how they use it (e.g. BBB, Fan 2013)
- Narratives, along with control of resources and power, help determine who sets the goals for recovery and what loss and damage systems exist as part of recoveries



Thank you – Any questions?



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