

# Community-Based Disaster Mitigation in the Philippines

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The Philippines' geographical location in the tropics and natural conditions make the country vulnerable to a variety of natural hazards. Development activities and the people's activities and socio-economic conditions contribute to the increase in risk. The government has continuously developed responsive schemes to mitigate the negative effects of disasters considering its budgetary constraints for structural countermeasures and the increasing occurrences of disasters. Community-based disaster mitigation is being pursued mainly to avert loss of lives, albeit in varying ways, because of the features of disasters in the country, the current condition of countermeasures and the people's constraint to live in hazard areas or high risk places. Camiguin Island and Ormoc City are two areas which manifest the importance of community perspectives and commitment in disaster mitigation. The formulation and development of non-structural measures in Camiguin Island considered community perspectives through constant participation and coordination, and pursued the strengthening of local disaster coordinating councils.

On the other hand, Ormoc City has benefitted from structural measures through a grant. The community appreciated the infrastructures when experiencing an extreme flood event. The presence of structures have spurred economic development in the city, and the Flood Mitigation Committee has been effective in managing the infrastructures and ensuring their functions are sustained through maintenance, river monitoring, watershed management, solid waste management, and others. A review of documents, survey and key informant interviews show the factors for sustainability of measures. Both cases show that the tragic experience of disaster mobilized people towards disaster mitigation. Sustainability of the measures provided by the government is attained with strong involvement of the community, good governance, linkage with technical and financial institutions and civil society. Risk management approaches are now actually introduced, e.g., land use plans which identifies hazard areas, watershed management, among others.



23-27 November • Manila, Philippines