

Philippines. Government enumerators register families from Itogon, Benguet into the BRAVE System.
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Philippines Disaster Displacement Data from Preparedness to Recovery

1. Context

Situated on the Pacific Ring of Fire and the typhoon belt, the Philippines is composed of 7,641 islands exposed to typhoons, floods, landslides, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions.¹ In 2019, the Philippines faced 55 disasters that displaced 4,094,000 people across the country, with some 364,000 people still displaced at the

end of the year.² In addition, the country also has internal displacement related to development projects and conflict associated with long-running religious, ethnic, political and criminal insurgencies.

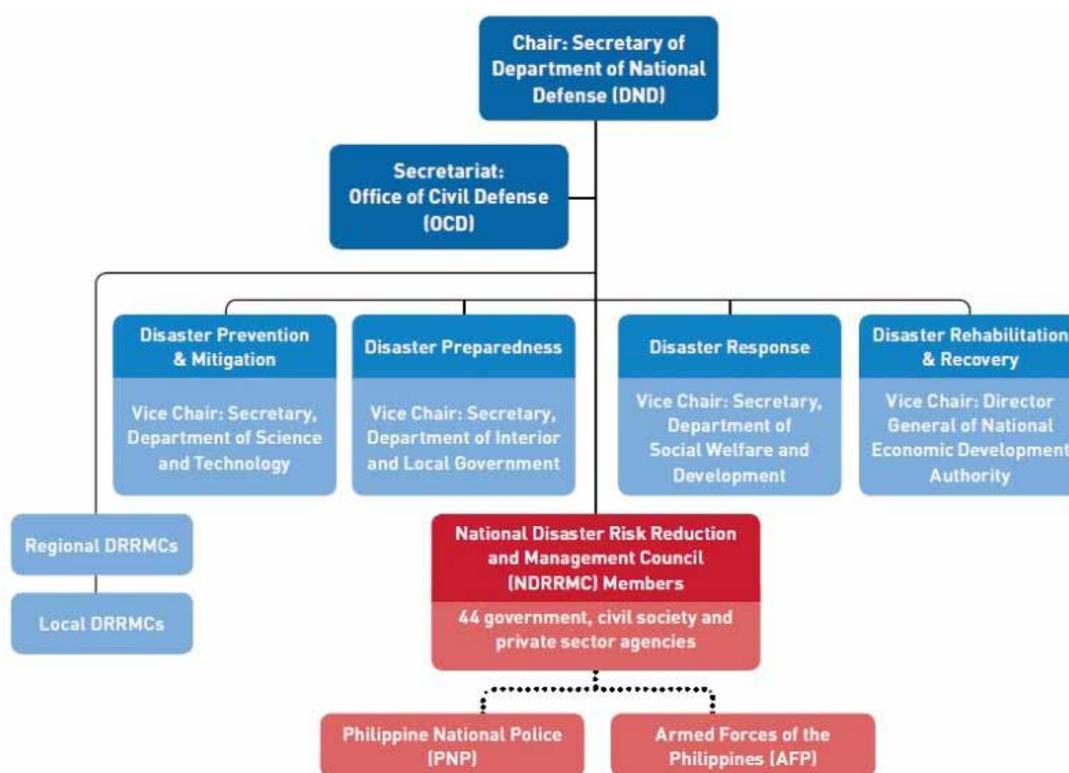
The Government of the Philippine's response to internal displacement in both disaster and conflict situations is governed by the 2010 Philippines Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (Republic Act 10121). The

2011-2028 National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) further sets out roles and responsibilities according to four pillars of activity, each led by a different government entity: i) Disaster Prevention and Mitigation; ii) Disaster Preparedness, iii) Disaster Response, and iv) Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery.³ The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, chaired by the Secretary of the Department of National Defense, coordinates and monitors implementation of all four pillars. Notably, the NDRRMP includes multiple references to internal displacement with respect to pre-emptive evacuations, assistance and access to services during displacement, early recovery activities associated with reintegration, and as part of rehabilitation and recovery activities.

2. Description of the practice

While many countries collect disaster displacement data during the immediate aftermath of a disaster,⁴ the Government of the Philippines has begun collecting data on potential displacement as part of its disaster preparedness activities. In the event of a disaster, it continues to monitor IDPs' protection and assistance over time, both in the emergency phase and as part of its longer-term rehabilitation and recovery activities.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) leads the delivery of humanitarian assistance and early recovery activities for IDPs as part of its responsibilities



This diagram presents NDRRMC Members under four pillars according to their inherent functions. While the Philippines National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines play a supporting role to the NDRRRMC, they report directly to the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of National Defense, respectively.

under the Disaster Response pillar. DSWD also houses the Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC), which among other things, collates disaster-related data on the number of affected persons, the number of displaced people both inside and outside evacuation centres, and the amount of assistance provided at regional, provincial and municipal levels.⁵

In 2018, DSWD launched the pilot Disaster Vulnerability Assessment and Profiling Project (DVAPP) supported by IOM to initiate data collection and analysis on displacement risk as an integral component of disaster preparedness activities.⁶ Relying on DROMIC's Predictive Analytics for Humanitarian Response and IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), DSWD identified hazard-prone, geographically isolated areas in northern Luzon that face high levels of disaster displacement risk. The DVAPP project worked closely with local authorities to register some 65,000 vulnerable families using IOM's Biometric Registration and Verification System (BRaVe) as part of its disaster preparedness activities. Once registered, the head of the family was issued with a bar-coded plastic identification card with their photo, called the Comprehensive Assistance for Disaster Response and Early Recovery Services (CARES) card. The CARES card enables authorities to access the beneficiary's data from a centralized data base to serve as a guide in the delivery of disaster assistance. While DVAPP is currently implemented as a pilot project, the DSWD hopes to expand the pre-registration process to other regions in the future.⁷

Similarly, since 2018, UNHCR's office in Mindanao has collaborated with local government authorities and DSWD to identify communities at risk of displacement as part of its Municipal Protection Profiling project. This social and demographic profiling project relies on historical displacement data, including DVAPP data when available, to analyse not only the potential protection and assistance needs of those who may be displaced, but to also identify the needs of

communities likely to host displaced people. The project seeks to establish a baseline to inform local government units' policymaking, assist with the mainstreaming of protection within development initiatives at *barangay* (local administrative) level, and inform advocacy and programming activities carried about by protection-mandated organizations like UNHCR. Although it primarily captures issues related to the conflict situation in Mindanao,⁸ it can also contribute to disaster risk reduction and preparedness activities associated with natural hazards.⁹

Local and Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils also use DROMIC's scientific data, risk assessments and past disaster data to determine when to order pre-emptive evacuations¹⁰ and as part of disaster preparedness activities more generally.

Once a disaster strikes and displacement occurs, DSWD Central Office records data on internal displacement through DROMIC based on information gathered and reported by its Field (Regional) Offices. The Field Offices closely collaborate with the local government officials concerned using a standard reporting template developed by DSWD's Disaster Response Management Bureau (DRMB). Humanitarian organizations, including IOM,¹¹ the Philippine Red Cross¹² and UNHCR,¹³ also share displacement-related operational data collected by their field staff with DROMIC to be used for cross-referencing. These reports are then processed and translated into statistical reports for submission to DSWD senior management for strategic planning and to NDRRMC to assist with inter-agency action planning.

DSWD's Field Offices provide staff members to act as camp managers and work hand-in-hand with local government officials to register, manage, and monitor IDPs and other disaster-affected families using the manually entered Disaster Assistance Family Access Card (DAFAC) database system, a paper-based version of the new CARES

card. Although the numbers may vary from day to day, especially in cases where IDPs intend to leave evacuation centres and settle elsewhere, the current data will still reflect the changes in the numbers of the IDPs in evacuation centres. Since 2018, the World Food Programme (WFP) has also collaborated with DSWD to register and profile IDPs in disaster and conflict situations using its cloud-based, biometric beneficiary management system called SCOPE.¹⁴

After IDPs are registered with the Government to receive assistance and the paper-based information is entered into a database managed by local government units, a master list of the displaced families is produced to guide the Government's future assistance.¹⁵ DROMIC then enters this into a national database that includes disaggregated information about individual family members, the family's location, whether they are with a host family or in an evacuation centre, as well as the assistance the family has received during the emergency and early recovery response.¹⁶ IDPs' information is periodically verified and updated by DSWD in consultation with local government officials and as part of DSWD assessments.

Once IDPs have left evacuation centres,¹⁷ programmes to address their longer-term recovery needs are coordinated by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), which leads the Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery pillar. The 2020 Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery Planning Guide, which explains the Government's response in this pillar, recognizes internally displaced populations as a particularly vulnerable group.¹⁸ Consequently, the Government includes statistics about IDPs as part of its post-disaster socioeconomic assessment, and also implements activities and programmes for IDPs related to relocation,¹⁹ long-term livelihood support, access to education and health.²⁰ NEDA relies on DSWD for data and information on IDPs, which is periodically confirmed through the local government units' databases. During the response period, when DSWD camp

managers are still present and evacuation centres are in use, DSWD updates the information on a daily basis.

3. Results for internally displaced persons and others

The DVAPP project's proactive approach has already informed disaster preparedness efforts. In 2020, DVAAP facilitated implementation of the Government's COVID-19 Social Amelioration Program in three regions. Its database created a list of the most vulnerable participants eligible for the programme, while the security features of the CARES card, matched with the database, made it simple to identify recipients despite some people having the same names and similar facial characteristics. Finally, in addition to reducing the possibility of IDPs receiving the same assistance multiple time or others not receiving any at all,²¹ the digital photograph on the card allows DSWD to estimate the amount of financial assistance required for emergency shelter support. For example, by taking the beneficiary's photo with their home as a background whenever possible, Government assessors gain information about the condition of the home prior to the disaster.

4. IDP participation

Collaborative data collection and analysis processes related to displacement in the Philippines have enabled IDPs to influence the type of government assistance provided.²² For example, following the 2020 Taal Volcano eruption, the findings from DTM assessments, involving key respondent interviews and focus group discussions, suggested that IDPs preferred living in rented rooms in apartments rather than in tents, since most of the affected municipalities were in a semi-urban area. Based on this

information, DSWD decided to provide IDPs with cash assistance to use for rental payments. This constituted a significant policy shift from previous responses that either provided IDPs with temporary shelters or repaired damaged shelters. The Government also maintains an online ticket system, the e-Reklamo platform, to register and monitor IDPs' complaints about disaster assistance delivery.²³

5. Challenges

The Government of the Philippines has used the paper-based Disaster Assistance Family Access Card to identify IDPs and monitor the delivery of assistance for a number of years. However, it was noted that registering displaced families during an emergency response was time consuming, potentially delaying access to lifesaving services. The Government has invested in streamlining the registration process. For instance, DSWD and UNHCR have developed a pilot project in Maguindanao province to digitize the process. Use of WFP's SCOPE system has also contributed to efforts to build a national IDP registration system and database.

Yet, given the country's exposure to recurrent and cyclical natural hazards, the Government determined that investing in pre-registration could further ease practical and administrative challenges encountered during chaotic and challenging disaster situations. Authorities can plan ahead for future needs, such as by identifying the need for prepositioned relief items, detecting families that may require special assistance, and anticipating the need for livelihood support during displacement.²⁴ The CARES card's database can help DSWD to ensure that IDPs quickly and easily receive an appropriate level of assistance, since government officials in any location can access beneficiaries' information from a centralized database rather than having to contact the local authorities in the IDPs' place of origin. The CARES card database also

contains information not included in DAFAC, including families' housing, livelihood and vulnerability assessment information, which helps the Government to prioritize assistance based on need.

6. Lessons learned

Although DROMIC and DSWD provide a centralized source for internal displacement data, there is still a need to harmonize the various sources of IDP registration information. This requires closely collaborating with Disaster Coordinating Councils at the local, regional and national levels, as well as with other local and international humanitarian agencies and organizations. For example, there is an ongoing effort to harmonize WFP and IOM biometric IDP registration support for DSWD. Although the SCOPE and BRaVe systems can be interoperable, as shown in South Sudan,²⁵ in the Philippines, the two systems use different indicators, cover different locations, employ different database system designs and have different owners. As a result, they must be managed and administered separately to comply with the Philippines' Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173).

Pre-emptive data collection and analysis can improve preparedness for disaster displacement in a number of ways. For example, the experience from the devastating 2013 typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan showed that relocating displaced communities to a new location after a disaster occurs is a complex and time-consuming process.²⁶ One of the most challenging aspects is simply identifying available land that is safe for future habitation.²⁷ DVAPP can help authorities identify people living on high-risk terrain, such as on sloping plots prone to landslides or flood-prone areas, who would most likely need transitional or permanent relocation sites in the event of future displacement. Local government units can use this information to set aside land for potential

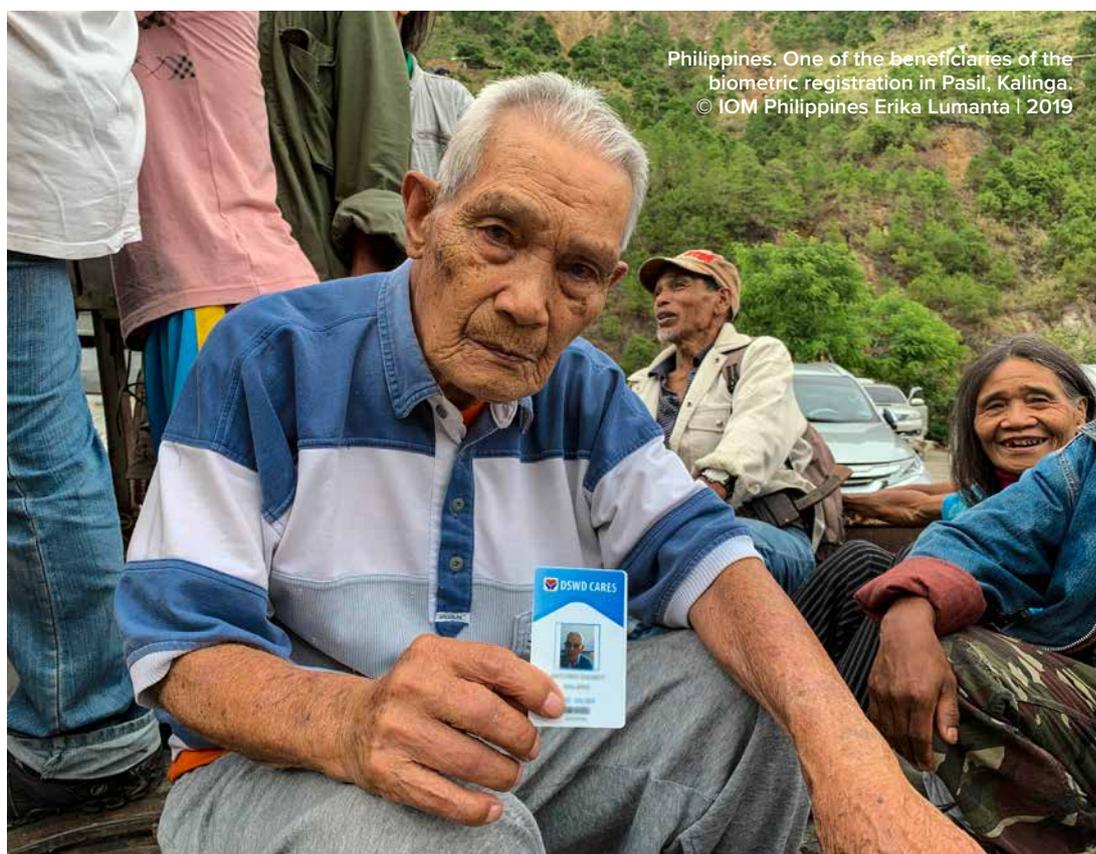
relocation in their Comprehensive Local Development Plans, a practice known as “land banking.” Pre-registration can also aid in disaster preparedness and response efforts more generally, including helping assess whether planned interventions are likely to meet the needs of the most vulnerable displaced people.

In terms of strengthening resilience, NEDA has partnered with the World Bank to develop the Socioeconomic Resilience Assessment Model.²⁸ While the model does not specifically address the needs of displaced people, the tool seeks to understand the socioeconomic consequences of events that may result in displacement, such as the impact of a destroyed home, and aims to inform efforts to mitigate future disaster risk, including displacement. Recognizing that IDPs are a particularly vulnerable group, this model could be adapted in the future to identify the specific socioeconomic consequences of

disasters for displaced persons over time to help understand when IDPs have achieved a durable solution and no longer face specific needs related to their displacement.

7. Why this is a good example to share

Disaster displacement affects almost every country in the world. This example shows how authorities in the Philippines have undertaken efforts to improve and streamline the management of IDP data systems, beginning with an anticipatory registration processes that can ultimately help the government prioritize and identify the families that need the most assistance. It also highlights how international partners can complement, enhance or augment national IDP registration systems, ideally working together to harmonize their support and ensure a coherent approach.



Endnotes

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