

Experiences in the implementation of DRRM Policies and Programs in selected barangays in the Municipality of Tolosa: The Case of Barangay DRRMC

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Abstract

This study pertains to the experiences of the BDRRMC Members in the selected barangays of Tolosa Leyte. It aims to explore the experiences, problems encountered, and coping mechanisms of the participants. It utilized the Qualitative Research Design through Case Study. Participants accomplished a consent form during an individual interview with the aid of an Interview Guide and an audio recording device. The researcher used Colaizzi's method in treating the gathered data. The following themes were formulated: DRRM Policy Implementation, BDRRMC Intervention Projects and Programs, Minimal Fund Allocation, Volunteers and Community Support, Samaritans in the Sanggunian, and LGU as Reinforcement to Barangays. The findings are as follows; as to policy implementation, DRRMC policies and guidelines are implemented but with minimal initiatives in terms of policy promotion and program development, and some of the members of the BDRRMC request more orientation and capacity-building to improve their performance. On the Intervention Programs and Projects of the BDRRMC, they are using some proactive measures; Public Address System, CCTV Installation, and Pabahay Programs. Among the problems encountered; there were minimal fund allocations to DRRM projects and programs, a lack of support in terms of Training and Seminars, Equipment (Debris Clearing), Multi-purpose Vehicles, Budget for Relief Goods, and Livelihood Programs. Lastly, they cope with problems by maintaining camaraderie and resolving issues as one council despite differences and regularly conducting barangay sessions, and looking for possible ways to support the community for their livelihood. Participants shared that when concerns are out of their capability, they can count on the LGU as their support system.

Keywords: Social Science, BDRRM Experiences, Qualitative Research, Colaizzi's Method

Introduction

“In the Philippines, natural disasters are common” (Harlan, 2014), an overrated statement that may cause anxiousness to readers yet a good thought to ponder for a warning. The Philippines, as it lies along the typhoon belt and Pacific Ring of Fire, is considered a disaster-prone country who experienced more than 300 disasters: from landslides to floods to volcanic eruptions and several typhoons over the past two decades (Domingo & Manejar, 2018). The country goes through such since it has active volcanoes and fires, making the country experience many forms of natural disasters (CFE-DM, 2021).

The nation may endure disasters that have immediate consequences including harm to homes, agricultural and fishing industries, and even fatalities (Harlan, 2013). Not to mention the incident that occurred on August 31, 2012, in Guiuan, Eastern Samar, which resulted in a reported extremely tiny tsunami that occurred despite the cancellation of the tsunami warning signal and damaged an estimated

83 residences (Inquirer.Net, 2012). Additionally, the well-known Super Typhoon Haiyan, also known as Typhoon Yolanda, locally, struck the Eastern Visayas Region of the Philippines on November 8, 2013, becoming the second deadliest typhoon to strike the nation, killing 6,000 people, and pushing more than two million into poverty (World Bank, 2017). Even though individuals are exposed to disasters regularly, a disaster might overwhelm the ability of the affected people to manage its effects (Nia & Kulatunga, 2017).

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office, on the other hand, oversees guaranteeing the safety and welfare of the populace in times of emergencies or catastrophes. Additionally, it oversees and coordinates the directing activities in the emergency response, transportation, evacuation, and rescue sectors as well as the fields of communication, warning signals, emergencies, and law enforcement (NDRMM Act 2016, s. 9). With such a wide range of responsibilities, integrating the local government units in cascading the policies and guidelines would be the ultimate way to guarantee that the objectives set by the agency are accomplished. This entails integrating and putting into practice the rules and regulations set forth by the National DRRM through the Local DRRMSOs (RA 10121). The legal bases for implementing RA 10121 are to ensure that in each barangay, there will be an in charge of directing the creation, implementation, and coordination of disaster risk management programs within their respective territorial jurisdictions and to assign persons responsible in the administration and training, research and planning, and operations and warning in the local jurisdiction which is more accessible for the community (JMC No.2014-1).

The NDRRM Plan covers Four Thematic Areas: Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Response, and Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery, the structure of the NDRMMC (NDRRMP, 2011-2018). Each of the barangays across the country should be in line with these thematic areas and must create committees that would fulfill the identified duties and responsibilities. Nonetheless, the barangay council is at the forefront of the implementation of any policy guideline to be carried out to the local communities in as much as DRRM is concerned. Policy implementation is not easy and takes a lot of courage and efficiency to fulfill such responsibilities. Despite having the idea of the functions and roles of each member of BDRRMC, the day-to-day life experiences of such members vary depending on their situations. This idea makes the researchers interested in knowing about their experiences being assigned to such roles, exploring both the positive and negative experiences of the members of the BDRMMCs and how they deal with the problems that they were able to encounter in the implementation of their policies and programs in the community with or without disaster. The researchers believe that this study is timely and relevant and aims to help the LGU in identifying the best practices that a particular BDRMMC is utilizing and somehow sharing it with other neighboring municipalities. The researchers intend to explore as well important points that might help craft new programs and interventions that could be beneficial to the community.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to:

1. Analyze the experiences of the Barangay DRRMC in the implementation of DRRM Plans from selected barangays in the Municipality of Tolosa;
 - 1.1. Program Implementation for Disaster
 - 1.2. Intervention programs after Disaster
2. Determine the challenges encountered by the Barangay DRRMC in the implementation of the DRRM Plans to the community in the Municipality of Tolosa Leyte.

3. Evaluate the mechanisms utilized by Barangay DRRMC in coping with the challenges encountered.

Methodology

The study utilized the Qualitative Research Approach through a Case Study Design to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event, or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson et.al., 2011). This research approach was employed to explore various lenses and reveal multiple facets of the experiences of the BDRMMC as the local implementing unit of DRRM Policies and Programs in the designated barangays in the Municipality of Tolosa Leyte (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

This study was participated by the BDRMMC Members from the selected barangays in the Municipality of Tolosa, Leyte; San Roque, Telegrafo, Tanghas, Doña Brigida, and Quilao. The researchers conducted individual interviews with the participants with the aid of an Interview Guide. Data gathered will be treated and analyzed through Colaizzi's Method of treating the data and likewise taking full consideration of ethical standards in the conduct of the study.

Results and Discussion

Out of the six hundred and thirty-seven lines of responses from the transcription of the interview, the researcher was able to identify 164 significant statements and was able to formulate six emergent themes; DRRM Policy Implementation, BDRRMC Intervention Projects and Programs, Minimal Fund Allocation, Volunteers and Community Support, Samaritans in the Sanggunian, and LGU as Reinforcement to Barangays. These formulated themes will be the array of discussions the researcher is intending to use to better portray and substantiate the results of the study conducted.

1. DRRM Policy Implementation

As known, the adoption of the intergovernmental negotiated and agreed policy framework worldwide is encouraged to be utilized (WDS/DRR, 2017), aiming to prevent and reduce the risks any calamity could bring and strengthening the resilience of the community. Anent hereto, the following are the themes that were formulated; a) Functions of the BDRRMC, b) Establishment of the BDRRMC, c) Appointment of BDRRMCs, and, d) Thematic Areas of BDRRMC.

1.1. Functions of the BDRRMC

The organization of the BDRRMC was mandated by the law through the Republic Act 10121, also known as the Philippine Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010. Its function is to manage and lead the safety protocols to be observed by the members of the community (NDRRMC-DILG-DBM and CSC JMC No. 2014-I). The committee should be comprised of members coming from various sectors and must be led by the Punong Barangay. It is also mandated that the BDRRMC should create an organogram (organizational structure) listing the respective tasks and responsibilities of each sub-committee.

In the individual interview conducted, the researchers were able to record the various functions and tasks of the participants. Their experiences with their assigned tasks in the BDRRMC; Evacuation, Rescue, and Response are the common functions that they made mentioned. In the context of their

responses, the researchers observed that the common tasks that they had shared are more on the “during and after” situations in a calamity. No participant had made mentioned how the committee is planning and conducting risk assessment studies that could be utilized for disaster preparedness of their barangay.

As mentioned, the functions of the BDRRMC Members should be aligned with the NDRRMP Plan. It must be noted that such a plan is general in scope and nature and that each barangays has its geographical situation that is vastly changing, hence, the Barangay Development Council through the BDRRMC is entitled to conduct its risk assessment on DRRM-related studies and submit their findings to their LGUs for review and approval (RA10121, sec 12). Based on the data gathered, the saturated responses of the participants fall more on *disaster response* and *rehabilitation of the community*.

On the other hand, knowing our specific roles or functions in our workplace is indeed vital, (Lennon-Smith, n.d.), for an aim will not be achieved unless no one knows what he is opting to do. Based on some of the responses of the participants, some would say that they know that they are members of the BDRRMC yet cannot confidently say what are their specific roles.

Our government should make sure that certain roles and responsibilities being delegated to our local officials should be well-briefed and coordinated for the community is oftentimes dependent on the decision-making and communication our local authorities are disseminating, hence, one indiscretion might cause problems that could be impactful to the welfare of the community members.

Completing a job is far way different from leading, “Leadership is the creation of an environment in which others can self-actualize in the process of completing the job, (Irby et.al, 2010). To get the community in cooperating, their trust must be earned and that could be achieved when they can see the sincerity and dedication of our officials, much more when they can see how dependable our officials are even in worst-case scenarios.

1.2. Establishment of the BDRRMC

Being acknowledged and recognized as an operational unit or office of the government is an essential factor to consider in knowing whether the community is aware of a specific office.

On a JMC Number 2014-1, dated April 4, 2014, the NDRRMC, DILG, DBM, and CSC released an Implementing Guidelines for the Establishment of Local DRRM Offices or Barangay DRRM Committees in Local Government Units intending to strengthen the country’s National DRRM System towards sustainable economic development by mainstreaming the same in all national and local development processes.

This sub-theme revealed that the establishment of LDRRMos specifically the BDRRMC is not well disseminated even to those who take office, thus, potentially, not all the community members would also have the idea that such an office is active in the barangay. According to the Local Government Code of the Philippines, Book III, Local Government Units, sec. 384, the Role of the Barangay as the basic political unit must serve as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs, projects, and activities in the community however, before relaying it to the community, it should be better if being discussed and briefed within the council initially.

A study conducted by the University of Canada West on the importance of communication strategy where emphasizes managing organizational communication to be at the core or center of a business as it allows a smooth flow of information across all levels in a hierarchy, ergo, no matter how simple or minute information is, the year where the office was established is for example, must be of high importance to be well disseminated or briefed within the unit to avoid incorrect circulation of information.

1.3. Appointment of BDRRMCs

The Punong Barangay, being the Chairman of the BDC and the BDRRMC has the power to appoint the BDRRMC Members through an Executive Order or a resolution coming from the Sangguniang Barangay. Ergo, the Punong Barangay has the power of assessing the potential members of the BDRRMC and appoint them accordingly.

The authority to appoint the members of a specific unit plays an essential factor, especially in achieving the goals of an organization. The underlying success depends on how the leader of the organization handles problems, develop programs and interventions, assign, and appoints its people, and encourages the members of the organization to do better in their work by serving as a role model (Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020). Moreover, being a leader entails a great responsibility for one indiscretion, and the unit's function may be compromised, that is why, the leader of the unit must be very vigilant and careful, especially in delegating the tasks to its members and ensuring that the mission, vision, goals, and objectives of the unit is clearly understood and be carried efficiently. But most importantly, there must be a uniformity of appointment to the assigned members of the BDRRMC because, with this occurrence, various issues might arise or is the potential to transpire.

1.4. Thematic Areas of BDRRMC.

The flow of an organization is set by how the head of the unit runs the office. In the delegation of tasks and assignments to the members of BDRRMC for instance, the Barangay Chairman must ensure that the members delegated for a specific task must not only be equipped with knowledge on what is generally his role but to exert effort in capacitating such individual through initiating training, simulations, community involvement activities and the like. And all capacity-building activities must conform to the structure or framework set forth by the office.

Out of the responses gathered, the saturated responses fall more under disaster rehabilitation and recovery which is more on emergency evacuation, relief operation, and clearing operations while there were also responses that fall under disaster preparedness which includes warning and information dissemination.

The delegation of tasks from the different barangays on the other hand was identified and delegated well to its members however lacks exposure and capacity-building since the budget for training and seminars relative to DRRM is minimal due to fund constraints yet, the researcher observed that the members of the BDRRMCs are quite interested in engaging themselves to such activities if allowed to attend to.

The mentioned roles of the BDRRMC members may sound shallow to others yet indeed a hard task to act knowing how serious a disaster occurrence is and the damages it could cause, nevertheless, the BDRRMC must be well considered in terms of capacity-building for them to be more efficient and confident in their assigned areas.

2. BDRRMC Intervention Projects and Programs

Disaster preparedness and response, being a part of the four thematic pillars of DRRM, should be emphasized and given focus to prevent and reduce the impact of disasters on communities, thus, taking appropriate steps to fully achieve such a goal is indeed vital (IFRC, n.d.).

In the conduct of the data gathering, the researcher was able to gather data revealing some of the positive experiences of the respondents as well as some proactive strategies that they utilized to at least carry on some disaster preparedness measures and disaster response activities as well. Among such measures are as follows.

2.1. Utilization and Maximization of Public Address System

The Public Address System, which is utilized in the barangays of Tolosa, Leyte, is one good avenue for effectively disseminating important announcements and information across the barangay. “*Trumpa*”, as it is called in the dialect of Tolosanos, is equipment installed across all zones of the barangay and used whenever there are important announcements that the barangay council is relaying to the community. All the respondents had made mentioned the utilization of this PA System and included this in their responses on their positive experiences as members of the BDRRMC due to the convenience and expediency of relaying messages to the public.

The utilization of the Public Address System in information dissemination and announcements in the barangays of Tolosa Leyte had been one of their measures as well for disaster preparedness and had made their work faster and less time, effort, and manpower consuming as shared by the respondents.

2.2. CCTV Installation and Utilization

The involvement of technology in our daily work and activities provides us with the convenience and expediency of accomplishing our assigned tasks. One of those widely used is the Closed-circuit television most known as the CCTV. It was designed to help in crime prevention and detection but as mentioned by the respondents of this study, CCTVs were used also in their barangays as proactive measures before, during, and after disasters.

2.3. “Pabahay” for No Build Zone Areas

The Municipality of Tolosa is facing and is bounded at the east by the Leyte Gulf, in which Tolosa is facing the open sea and is prone to Tidal Sea Wave or Tsunamis just like what happened last November 8, 2013, when Super Typhoon Haiyan hit the Eastern Visayas. What happened had been a great call to Leytenyos and led to awarding of Pabahays to those Yolanda Victims most especially to those who are living in the No-build zone areas. This Pabahay Project was given to the localities around the No-Build Zone that had not only served as their houses but also as a haven of refuge for people who had nowhere else to go in times of emergency. DRRM policy implementation and intervention in the form of projects, programs, and other activities utilized in the barangays of Tolosa, form part of complying with the four thematic pillars of the DRRM set forth; disaster prevention and mitigation, disaster preparedness, disaster response, and disaster recovery and rehabilitation. The presented data based on the data gathering conducted had revealed quite some *baby steps* or gradual development and growth of actions yet a good starting point for a sustainable structure.

3. Minimal Fund Allocation

Because of the constrained or low budget or funds, one of the ongoing issues in most government agencies and offices is when it comes to resources, including labor, equipment, infrastructure, and the like. The national government's intention to localize the implementation of the policy outlined in the establishment of BDRRMO throughout the nation is impressive, however, the resources in the realization of such an aim are quite difficult for our BDRRMC members due to limited resources. The responders frequently voiced the following issues: a) Training and Seminars; b) Equipment (Debris Clearing) Lack; c) Multi-purpose Vehicle; d) Sufficient Relief Goods; and e) Livelihood Initiatives for the Victims. Without sufficient funding, resources like manpower, infrastructure, and equipment could not be fully acquired. As a result, when developing policies, programs, and interventions, the government should put sufficient funding first to avoid undermining any intended programs' primary objectives.

4. Volunteers and Community Support

Community is a classic terminology that is often used to describe a group of people with something in common in terms of perspectives and ideals (Wooll, 2021). It is a group of people who are believed to be influential and instrumental. Policy implementation can be strictly implemented but is drawn to be ineffective when the community does not care to adhere to it. Like the policies and programs introduced to them in the DRRM, proactive measures and initiatives of the council will be useless if disregarded by the community. This concern is one of the revealed problems and challenges encountered by the BDRRMC Members. They shared that despite experiencing the damage of Super Typhoon Yolanda way back, there are still members of the community who did not learn lessons from it and tend to be the problem of the council, especially during the evacuation period.

Volunteers, a part of the community, can also be one of the augments of the BDRRMC in their line of job. Since the community has many sub-groups, Volunteers or those who are inclined to the same nature of duty are indeed needed. A volunteer can be of help such as technical rescue, fire response, medical response, debris cleaning, logistical support, and transportation (Yükseler & Yazgan, 2022). However, in the case of our barangays in Tolosa, it was revealed through the responses that there is a minimal, sometimes none, volunteers in each of the barangays which makes the tasks of our BDRRMC quite difficult. That is why, the government, the council specifically, should need to find ways and means through research to support the concept of how useful volunteers are during emergency cases and that this could be investigated by the government and allot funds for proper training and miscellaneous expenses of these volunteers to at least encourage them in continuing the good act they are doing.

5. Samaritans in the Sanggunian

A “good Samaritan” is an exaggerated term that might be used to compliment someone, yet it can represent the attitude of being considerate, composed, and having empathy towards people from which the following concepts were formulated; a) Barangay Meeting and Consultation, and b) Empathy to the Community.

5.1. Barangay Meeting and Consultation

The Barangay Sanggunian often convenes barangay meetings to address and discuss reports from the Sangguniang Barangay, particularly those about the activities and finances of the barangay as well as the emerging issues and problems in the barangay. This is the appropriate channel via which they should carry

out any comments, initiatives, or other issues that require unanimous and collective approval of the council. According to the respondents, holding an urgent meeting with the Sanggunian barangay is one of their coping techniques for handling a specific problem or concern that arises, particularly in emergencies.

5.2. Empathy to the Community

When we tend to quickly evaluate someone based on their circumstances, our elders often tell us to "put yourself in someone else's shoes." It indicates that for us to grasp a situation, we should try to imagine ourselves in it and try to anticipate how we would respond to or handle this kind of problem. The barangay council's use of the strategies, which were identified as coping mechanisms during data collection, demonstrates their sincerity in overcoming their current challenges and in looking for ways to support the community in any way they can. One thing the researcher was able to see is the Barangay Council's positive outlook despite the different problems they are facing.

6. LGU as Reinforcements to the Barangays

The Local Government Units act as the barangay units' support system, making sure to help the barangay when it can no longer handle issues. The LGU is meant to lend the barangays a helping hand in resolving issues that are beyond the control of the barangay when major issues occur during or after a calamity.

In the case of the Barangay DRRM Offices, it was previously reported that their troubles with funding, which causes a chain reaction of issues, lack of equipment, inadequate training, difficulty with providing relief, and transportation, notably the multipurpose vehicle. Therefore, budget and funding are not available, despite their desire to buy all the desired equipment for their BDRRM Offices. That is why, when the researcher asked them how they deal with those mentioned challenges and problems, they responded that seek assistance and help from the LGU. Further, the respondents shared that they could ask for assistance from the LGU but due to minimal funds also, they could not get much help from them as well.

Even while it is given that LGUs must help each barangay council in their municipality, it is good to note that when circumstances are already beyond their control, the barangays view them as their reinforcement. One of the methods used by the respondents to deal with issues and difficulties they have while performing their duties as BDRRM Members is the LGU, which serves as the barangay councils' support system.

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