



A family sits outside the bunkhouse where they continue to live after being displaced by typhoon Haiyan. Many of those in bunkhouses are being targeted for permanent resettlement to safer land as part of recovery plans. Photo: Genevive Estacaan/Oxfam 2014

## IN THE SHADOW OF THE STORM

### Getting recovery right one year after typhoon Haiyan

**The scale of the destruction caused when typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines on 8 November 2013 was staggering. The emergency response provided life-saving support to millions of people in the affected region. But the challenge now is to ensure that recovery efforts leave devastated communities better able to pursue diverse livelihoods, access safe shelter and withstand future shocks.**

**A pro-poor recovery agenda, premised on the strengthened capacity of local authorities and communities, is critical to building a better future for Haiyan's survivors living in the shadow of the storm.**

# SUMMARY

*'I feel like we are dying slowly every day.'*

Jomarie, Northern Cebu

For many who survived typhoon Haiyan's brutal winds and deadly storm surge, their struggles continue one year later. As recovery efforts progress, a critical opportunity exists to ensure that these communities have the chance not only to rebuild their lives but to strengthen their resilience – to future disasters as well as to poverty.

Many of the areas hit hardest when typhoon Haiyan devastated a large corridor through the central Philippines were already vulnerable. In the Eastern Visayas, for instance, poverty rates were close to 40 percent before the typhoon,<sup>1</sup> and an estimated 32 percent of people are considered 'landless', often living under constant threat of eviction in hazard-prone coastal areas.<sup>2</sup>

The initial emergency response was not perfect, but it was strong, delivering life-saving assistance to millions of survivors. However, while humanitarian assistance has now been phased out, many of those experiencing the greatest vulnerability before the storm remain unable to resume their essential livelihoods activities. Women and men who work in the coconut sector have shouldered a particularly heavy burden, with 33 million coconut trees damaged or destroyed overnight.<sup>3</sup> In the continued absence of the rehabilitation of whole farming and marine ecosystems, incomes remain uncertain and scarce.

The need for safe shelter also persists in areas affected by the typhoon. For those able to return to damaged homes, many have relied on typhoon debris to make necessary repairs in the absence of shelter assistance. Others continue to live in the cramped bunkhouses and tents that dot the region, awaiting resettlement to safer land. It is urgent that recovery efforts reach the estimated half a million people who are living in such precarious situations, if the gains of the response are to be maintained and strengthened.<sup>4</sup>

The Philippines government is showing much needed leadership in the transition to the recovery phase. Importantly, the government's 'master plan' for recovery has been developed based on municipal and provincial-level priorities. However, by failing to support key implementation mechanisms, including needed capacity building for local government units (LGUs) and the full operationalization of coordination mechanisms, there is a risk that overarching plans will not translate into impact on the ground. Likewise, more systematic measures to fast-track and streamline administrative processes are necessary to support a different way of working for all levels of government in the aftermath of disaster.

The planned resettlement of an estimated 205,000 households to safer land is a critical aspect of recovery efforts. Yet with livelihoods the overriding concern of many of those consulted by Oxfam, they risk moving to

*'Getting back to our normal lives has proven to be difficult. After Haiyan, fishers come back with smaller catches. Before, they could catch at least a bucket of fish. Now, it has been reduced to just around 30 percent of that.'*

Castillo, Eastern Leyte

places of greater safety without any certainty as to how they will gain an income. Resettlement planning must be grounded in meaningful consultations and responsive policies, to reflect the priorities of affected people and ensure they can make informed, voluntary choices. With less than 1 percent of the planned permanent houses completed to date, those awaiting resettlement in bunkhouses and unsafe shelter face continued risks, including gender-based violence, limited livelihoods and exposure to disaster.

Strengthened disaster risk reduction and management plays an important role in realizing the government's promise of 'building back better, faster, safer' after the storm. While national legislation is in place, the absence of fully functional disaster management structures and plans at local levels reflects a broader weakness in the capacity of LGUs to translate laws into a more resilient reality for those affected by the typhoon. Capacity building at the local level, including with local authorities, civil society organizations and communities themselves, is a necessary foundation for a more operational and inclusive disaster management system in the Philippines. Recovery efforts must rebuild critical infrastructure while strengthening the ability of communities to cope with future shocks.

This need for increased resilience is not just for the typhoons, floods and earthquakes that hit the Philippines every year. It is also for tackling the underlying vulnerabilities that continue to drive exposure to such disasters and to limit the capacity of people to recover. A pro-poor recovery agenda, premised on effective disaster preparedness, strong social protection mechanisms and robust local capacities, is critical to building a better life for those living in typhoon Haiyan's shadow.

*'Those sites are just too far from my workplace. I will be commuting every day and I will probably spend more on my fare than the actual monthly salary I am earning.'*

Emma, Western Leyte

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure recovery strengthens the rights and resilience of affected communities:

### The national government should

- **Comprehensively address remaining humanitarian needs while delivering a scaled up, pro-poor recovery agenda premised on resilient livelihoods;** strengthen the protection of people living in transitional and unsafe shelters and focus livelihoods recovery efforts on supporting the re-establishment of whole agricultural and marine eco-systems, and enabling farmers, fisherfolk and other vulnerable workers to establish more resilient livelihoods.
- **Provide more robust support for the implementation of recovery projects, including through increased local capacity, operationalization of coordination mechanisms and streamlining of government processes.** The Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan (CRRP) must include the resources required to capacitate local authorities to effectively implement recovery projects based on community priorities, fully operationalize recovery clusters and further accelerate government processes.

- **Address weaknesses and gaps in local-level implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management law.** This includes the need to comprehensively tackle the financial and technical constraints faced by many municipalities in translating national law into safer communities.
- **Integrate the lessons learned from responses to previous disasters, as well as to typhoon Haiyan, to establish a clear policy framework on key recovery issues.** More coherent, responsive policies addressing the challenges of land acquisition for resettlement sites, the identification of No Build Zones (now categorized into safe, unsafe and controlled areas) and a lack of adequate transitional shelter, for instance, must be integrated into planning for future disasters.
- **Strengthen social protection mechanisms to ensure that families experiencing the greatest vulnerability have access to the basic services and systems that enable them to live with dignity.** Adequate social protection measures would support not only recovery but also poverty reduction and, ultimately, resilience to future disasters. Existing initiatives must be scaled up, incorporating a strong role for civil society organizations, and be fully integrated into recovery processes.

#### **Local Government Units should**

- **Where resettlement is justifiable, develop community-driven plans that reflect the priorities and rights of those being resettled.** Local authorities, with support from national authorities, must implement meaningful consultations, prioritize the most vulnerable people and ensure adequate planning for livelihoods, basic services and disaster management well before any movement of people to resettlement sites. The identification of safe and unsafe areas, based on geo-hazard mapping, must be done with full engagement of affected communities and integrated into land use plans.
- **Ensure effective spaces exist for the participation of civil society organizations and communities in local planning and decision making processes,** including with post-disaster recovery and coordination mechanisms and ongoing disaster management and development processes.

#### **International donors should**

- **Boost support for the provision of technical expertise to LGUs** to further build their capacity in recovery project implementation, urban planning, meeting human rights standards, community consultations and strengthening disaster risk reduction measures.
- **Ensure continued support for the long processes of recovery and poverty reduction that are badly needed in affected areas.** While the most pressing humanitarian needs must continue to be addressed, longer-term, predictable support for recovery is also needed. Enhanced capacity building with national civil society organizations should form a key element of such efforts.

**National and local NGOs and civil society organizations should**

- **Enhance community organizing efforts, with a particular emphasis on women's leadership**, as part of community-driven recovery, disaster management and development processes.
- **Continue to engage national and local authorities** to ensure participatory planning and decision making throughout recovery efforts.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Typhoon Haiyan cut a wide swath of destruction through the central Philippines when it made landfall on 8 November 2013. It caused massive loss of life and injury, uprooted millions of people and flattened whole communities. The impact on the livelihoods, rights and resilience of those in its path has been tremendous.

## **Box 1: The impact of typhoon Haiyan<sup>5</sup>**

An estimated 14 million people were affected by typhoon Haiyan across nine regions in the Philippines. More than 6,000 deaths were reported. A total of 4 million people were displaced with many still unable to return to their original places of residence, and an estimated 1 million homes were severely damaged or destroyed. Haiyan is the strongest recorded storm to ever have made landfall.

The immediate emergency response to the devastation is widely acknowledged as having provided life-saving support to millions in the affected regions. The Philippine government, in partnership with national and international humanitarian actors, led massive efforts to clear roads clogged with debris, re-establish power systems and provide a range of critical humanitarian support in the weeks and months following the typhoon. However, in the transition to longer-term recovery it is clear that big challenges remain, despite the government's promise to 'build back better, faster, stronger'.<sup>6</sup>

The issues involved in recovery from Haiyan are not only complex, they are on a massive scale. Despite the significant levels of emergency assistance distributed, significant needs remain as survivors continue to struggle to repair damaged homes and resume their livelihoods. While the Philippine government has shown much needed leadership in the transition from the humanitarian phase, missing elements with overall recovery plans could dampen impact. Actual capacities, coordination and operationalization on the ground lag behind.

Of particular concern is the planned resettlement of the 205,000 households identified as living in 'unsafe' areas. If done right, resettlement has the potential to strengthen the safety and rights of many of the informal settlers living in hazard-prone coastal areas. However, without being rooted in meaningful consultations with affected communities and clear guidelines for local authorities, resettlement plans risk reinforcing poverty and people's exposure to disaster. As those awaiting resettlement continue to live in makeshift homes and bunkhouses one year after the storm, uncertainty prevails and their vulnerability to key protection concerns, including gender-based violence, persists.

In a country exposed to an average of 20 typhoons a year, and with affected provinces already characterized by high levels of poverty before typhoon Haiyan, the rights and resilience of communities must form the foundation of any efforts to build back better. However, the limited implementation of national Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) laws and community-driven preparedness processes has exposed weaknesses in the capacity of Local Government Units (LGUs) to address recovery challenges and ensure that communities are better able to cope with the next disaster. The underlying drivers of vulnerability must be addressed as part of longer-term recovery efforts if the compounding effect that disasters have on poverty levels is to end.

The insights and lessons gained during Haiyan recovery represent an opportunity for the government to not only strengthen its current recovery plans, but also its capacity to prepare, respond and lead the recovery to future large-scale disasters. This paper examines the recovery process one year after typhoon Haiyan hit 171 municipalities in the central Philippines and displaced more than 4 million people. It integrates Oxfam's reflections on recovery efforts thus far and raises key concerns. Based on a series of community consultations on resettlement and Oxfam's ongoing work in affected areas, the paper identifies the need to boost local capacities, to strengthen the rights of displaced people and to amplify disaster preparedness and response in order to support affected communities to fully recover, and ultimately, to build a more resilient future.



## 2 GRAPPLING WITH THE DEVASTATION

The storm's path struck some of the poorest areas in the Philippines. An estimated 37 percent of people in the Eastern Visayas region were living in poverty before the storm, with the heavily affected province of Eastern Samar having a poverty rate of 63 percent.<sup>7</sup> The lack of land and property rights in the region has been recognized as both a key driver of these pre-existing high levels of poverty as well as an impediment to recovery.<sup>8</sup> An estimated 32 percent of the population of the Eastern Visayas fell into the category of 'landless', with many of these informal settlers living in hard-hit coastal areas and urban centres, including Tacloban City.<sup>9</sup> Typhoon Haiyan further highlighted that for many of these informal settlers, not only are they at constant risk of eviction because of the lack of tenure security, but they are also exposed to enormous physical danger.

In the days and weeks following the typhoon, people were confronted with staggering levels of devastation. The first to respond were affected people themselves, as survivors shared the few resources they had, cared for the injured and began the arduous task of clearing pathways through the debris. As the months have passed, households have struggled to cope through a range of means, including an increased reliance on unpaid care work, borrowing money and migration. The reliance on such coping mechanisms has had particular impacts on the well-being of women and girls as their workloads have increased along with the risks they face of growing debt loads, gender-based violence and trafficking.<sup>10</sup>

The Philippine government's stated goal of rehabilitation and recovery is to 'restore and improve facilities, livelihood and living conditions and organizational capacities of affected communities, and reduce disaster risks in accordance with the "building back better" principles'.<sup>11</sup> With an estimated 33 million coconut trees affected, countless amounts of fishing gear and farming tools ruined and more than 1 million homes severely damaged or destroyed, the recovery remains a long-term endeavour.<sup>12</sup>

*'We do not own the land where our house is built. We can be evicted any time the owner wants the land. We have no place to go anymore'*

Edgardo, Eastern Samar

### Box 2: Oxfam's emergency response to typhoon Haiyan<sup>13</sup>

***In the aftermath of typhoon Haiyan, Oxfam launched a large-scale response focused on providing life-saving assistance, supporting people to gain an income and protecting rights.***

- A total of 868,960 individuals or 173,792 families have been assisted;
- Programs have focused on 4 areas in the Visayas, including Tacloban and communities throughout Leyte, Eastern Samar and Cebu;
- Examples of Oxfam's response include emergency livelihoods assistance, including cash for asset recovery, support for women's access to safe spaces, facilitating the replacement of destroyed legal documents, support for the re-establishment of municipal water and sanitation systems, and shelter assistance.



## Gaps in livelihoods and shelter recovery

Despite an impressive emergency response, given the scale of damage and underlying vulnerabilities, continuing needs remain in communities affected by the storm. Shelter damage, estimated to be greater than that suffered in the Haiti earthquake, is a significant ongoing concern.<sup>14</sup>

Reflecting the lack of adequate shelter, hundreds of thousands continue to live precariously: an estimated 475,000 people (or 95,000 households) reside in what have been assessed to be unsafe or inadequate emergency or makeshift shelters.<sup>15</sup> These people, living outside of formal displacement sites, have been identified as at risk of slipping into crisis if recovery support is not delivered fast enough. An additional 24,785 people continue to live in the evacuation centres – formal tent settlements and bunkhouses that comprise official displacement sites. While the national government continues to push towards its goal of ‘zero tents’, shelter needs go far beyond the visible tents that families continue to live in one year after the typhoon.

Shelter responses from the government have largely focused on establishing transitional measures, primarily in the form of bunkhouses, for those unable to return to their homes (further discussed in section 4).<sup>16</sup> The roll-out of emergency shelter assistance by the government to those able to return to their homes and make repairs has been slow, only being initiated now in some heavily affected areas, while others continue to wait.<sup>17</sup>

Reflecting the lack of emergency shelter assistance and people’s limited finances, many households have resorted to using typhoon debris for urgent repairs, such as scrap metal and plastic. Only 3 percent of respondents to a recent assessment felt they had completed shelter recovery, with the assessment concluding that longer term shelter needs remain unmet.<sup>18</sup> The continued lack of adequate shelter has been further amplified with the onset of typhoon season in the Philippines. Typhoon Rammasun, for instance, struck many of the areas hardest hit by Haiyan, flooding tents and easily destroying makeshift and already damaged shelters.<sup>19</sup>

Vulnerabilities are increased by the continued slow resumption of livelihoods, despite the end of most humanitarian assistance several months ago. Many already impoverished households are now struggling with mounting debt levels and increasing economic vulnerability.<sup>20</sup>

Subsistence farmers, for instance, have been left to grapple not only with the destruction of a core asset, their coconut trees, but also with the delay in replanting crops as many fields remain strewn with coconut debris. The longer the clearance of such debris takes, the more complicated it becomes, as overgrowth and the risk of pest infestation set in. A systematic, industrial-scale response to coconut lumber clearance and utilization is urgently needed, with commensurate levels of planning, resourcing and equipment.<sup>21</sup>

While some farmers have been able to cultivate crops with shorter gestation periods, such as rice, the continued damage to post-harvest

*‘We have been living in these tents since November (2013). Our tents have holes, even if we patched them, the rain seeps through. The recent continuous rains have made it impossible for us to sleep comfortably because our tent becomes flooded.’*

Edita, Eastern Leyte

*‘People were desperate, especially right after the typhoon hit. The loaning group would come to our town, lend us money, but this has a 10 percent interest rate that accumulates every week that we are not able to pay.’*

Aileen, Northern Cebu

facilities and markets limits the income gained from such activities and weakens food security systems.

Likewise, recovery support aimed at fisherfolk must now be urgently scaled up, given the extent of the damage to their livelihoods. During the humanitarian phase, the focus was on the repair or replacement of fishing boats, but larger issues, stemming from the damage sustained to fishing grounds and the need for more comprehensive rehabilitation of marine eco-systems, remain. This is having a direct impact on the size of daily catches and the consequent ability of fisherfolk to sustain themselves and their families.<sup>22</sup> These often less-visible dimensions of typhoon Haiyan's impact must now be addressed, along with efforts to diversify livelihoods as agricultural and marine eco-systems stabilize.

Given continued gaps in livelihoods and shelter recovery, renewed humanitarian needs and protection concerns are set to emerge if support does not reach the most vulnerable people soon. Likewise, the impact of recovery efforts will continue to be dampened if the underlying context of poverty and limited land rights remains. As noted in Aceh in the years after the Indian Ocean tsunami, important progress made in physically rebuilding communities was not matched by similar advances in addressing patterns of disadvantage; ultimately affecting the development and resilience of communities.<sup>23</sup>

*'Getting back to our normal lives has proven to be difficult. After Haiyan, fishers come back with smaller catches. Before, they could catch at least a bucket of fish. Now, it has been reduced to just around 30 percent of that.'*

Castillo, Eastern Leyte

# 3 FROM RECOVERY PLANS TO REAL IMPACT

The official end of the typhoon Haiyan humanitarian response phase was announced by the Philippine government in early July 2014.<sup>24</sup> With this came related shifts in coordination and planning mechanisms, primarily led by the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery (OPARR). Yet serious concerns remain about the ability of recovery plans to translate into impacts on the ground, given the lack of support for effective operationalization. Without necessary consideration for, and resourcing of, the mechanics of implementation, the impact of recovery efforts risks being dampened.

In line with its planning and coordination mandate, OPARR has led the development of the government's Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan (CRRP).<sup>25</sup> Referred to as the 'master plan' for recovery, it represents a compilation of recovery plans prepared by municipal and provincial authorities, the plans of the five government-led recovery clusters (or sectors), and key initiatives of private sector partners. The approval of the CRRP by the President at the end of October 2014 enables full implementation to proceed.<sup>26</sup>

## **Box 3: Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan Objectives<sup>27</sup>**

- To restore, rehabilitate or reconstruct damaged infrastructure necessary to sustain economic and social activities in the affected areas;
- To repair houses or rebuild settlements and basic community facilities and services that are more resilient to natural calamities;
- To restore the people's means of livelihood and continuity of economic activities and businesses; and
- To increase resilience and capacities of communities in coping with future hazard events.

## **Missing elements of the master plan**

At 8,000 pages and a budget of 170 billion pesos (US\$3.9bn), the plan is big. However, early indications point to a number of concerns in the plan's ability to deliver the needed impacts on the ground. Livelihoods and resettlement programs, for instance, miss out on opportunities to integrate disaster risk reduction principles. New permanent resettlement sites, for instance, lack specific provisions for the establishment of safe and durable evacuation centers and a stable food supply, with clear linkages to markets and transportation systems.

Further, key coordination mechanisms have yet to be fully operationalized. While the Social Services Cluster has conducted several open meetings to date, the Resettlement Cluster has yet to formally include non-government partners in its planning and coordination activities. Critical spaces for local-level engagement on recovery issues,

including the Local Inter-Agency Committees on housing, are either not yet functional or not convening regularly. In the absence of spaces for joint planning and participatory coordination, the ability of government and its national and international partners to address remaining humanitarian needs and operationalize recovery plans will remain limited.

There is also an absence of support mechanisms for the effective implementation of recovery processes by local authorities. Given the government's decentralized structure, LGUs have primary responsibility for the implementation of local disaster risk reduction and management plans, including post-disaster recovery projects. Even prior to typhoon Haiyan, many LGUs had been limited by their lack of technical and financial capacity in coming up with updated local land use plans and disaster risk reduction and management plans, for instance. In the aftermath of the typhoon, local authorities have themselves struggled to resume core operations, having sustained serious damage to infrastructure, equipment and documentation. Consequently, local planning units are already struggling to develop the required recovery plans and to perform related tasks, such as developing beneficiary lists for shelter and livelihood assistance. The projects included under the CRRP represent additional workloads for LGUs. Yet these are not being matched with additional support. By placing further demands on local authorities without the requisite technical and financial resourcing, their absorptive capacity will remain limited.

At present, OPARR is looking to development partners to fill this gap by providing capacity building at local levels. However, this should be an integral, funded part of the overall CRRP. Otherwise, it may result in ad hoc initiatives, with those municipalities which are already struggling likely to fall further behind in recovery efforts.

## **Beyond 'business as usual'**

Beyond assuring greater capacity at local levels, the CRRP and related recovery efforts must seek to establish a more coherent basis for the government to move away from a business-as-usual approach in light of the scale of devastation wrought by typhoon Haiyan. Extraordinary measures are needed, and they are needed at scale.

While the Philippines government is looking for ways to fast-track specific initiatives and streamline particular administrative processes, this remains largely based on the one-off initiatives of individual government agencies. The rapid downloading of 2 billion pesos to local authorities in 2014 for the repair of municipal facilities used as evacuation centres is a positive example of the government's willingness to respond differently to the scale of Haiyan.<sup>28</sup> The urgency of the repairs to these key pieces of infrastructure was reinforced by findings that only 8 percent of such facilities in Eastern Samar were useable as evacuation centres.<sup>29</sup> However, rehabilitation of these facilities lags despite the availability of funds at the local levels, reflecting continued challenges with lengthy administrative processes and local capacity. Under half of these municipal-level repairs are set to be completed by the end of 2014.<sup>30</sup> A second tranche of similar funds, aimed at the repair of community-level facilities, has yet to be disbursed.

Such efforts must be located within a larger disaster recovery framework which accelerates key processes without compromising minimum standards for accountability. Without sufficient attention to the mechanics needed for effective implementation, including fully operationalized coordination mechanisms, technical support to local authorities, and a government-wide framework that streamlines administrative processes, the most vulnerable people will bear the brunt of the limited impact of the recovery efforts.

# 4 GETTING RESETTLEMENT RIGHT

A key initiative of the government in the aftermath of Haiyan has been the planned resettlement of 205,000 households (affecting approximately 920,000 people) to safer land.<sup>31</sup> Resettlement processes are set to provide targeted households, living in hazard-prone areas, with a new permanent home in areas considered safe from major geo-hazard risks. Given the scale and complexity of the undertaking, resettlement represents a core aspect of both recovery plans and potential outcomes. While getting resettlement right represents the opportunity to strengthen the safety and land rights of close to a million people, without necessary attention to the priorities of those targeted, it risks reinforcing their vulnerability to poverty and to future disasters.

Resettlement following typhoon Haiyan stems from a declared 'No Build Zone' (NBZ) policy, effectively disallowing any structures on land extending 40 meters from the high-water mark in foreshore areas. Such declarations, along with attendant resettlement processes, have also followed previous disasters in the country, including tropical storm Washi and typhoon Bopha.<sup>32</sup> In the case of Haiyan, the NBZ policy has since been somewhat refined into the determination of safe, unsafe and controlled areas, enabling the protection of key livelihood structures. Further, such areas are now to be identified on the basis of geo-hazard mapping. While this represents an important step forward, national guidelines are still needed to clarify how local authorities are to formalize the determination of these areas; including how to take into account potential mitigation measures and community inputs, what implications this has for residents, what compensation will be provided to land and property owners, and how to ensure such zones are reflected in updated land use plans.<sup>33</sup>

## **Box 4: Housing, Land and Property Guidance Note on Relocation<sup>34</sup>**

### ***From the Philippine Shelter Cluster:***

'Experience shows that relocating people involves large costs in terms of infrastructure and services and can also severely disrupt people's livelihoods and community lives.

Responsible settlements are about more than the construction of shelter, they are about creating a safe environment for the entire community where they not only have access to an adequate standard of housing but also to utilities, critical infrastructure and livelihood opportunities.'

## **The primacy of livelihoods**

Livelihoods have consistently been identified as the overriding concern with regards to resettlement in Oxfam's ongoing consultations on the topic. In an earlier survey of those at risk of resettlement, half indicated that livelihoods were their primary concern in identifying sites for

resettlement, while 32 percent identified safety as their top consideration.<sup>35</sup> More recent consultations confirmed the continued primacy of livelihoods, along with a lack of clarity on the opportunities and supports that will be available in permanent resettlement sites.<sup>36</sup>

Reflecting the lack of available, safe land, some resettlement sites are being developed far from coastal areas and town centres, creating real uncertainty for households about how they will earn an income. Given the distances, families are also concerned about their ability to cover the additional transportation costs needed to access key facilities, such as schools, markets and healthcare services.

Many feel they are without any real choices. As one informal settler described it, 'either we stay by the coast and face typhoons, or we move to the mountains and starve'.<sup>37</sup>

Important measures to begin addressing such concerns are being considered in some areas, including the potential establishment of docking stations for fishing boats in foreshore areas and free shuttle services to the coast, ensuring continued access to the sea for those with livelihoods dependent on it.<sup>38</sup> The government-led Resettlement Cluster has indicated that livelihoods are being incorporated into its planning, particularly through engagement with the government-led Livelihoods Cluster. Such measures and planning efforts, along with the communication of the tangible opportunities that will be available at resettlement sites, must be urgently stepped up. A responsive approach is needed that reflects the specific priorities, needs and choices of different communities targeted for resettlement.

*We were told that we were beneficiaries (of resettlement) but they can't seem to tell us specifically where we will be relocated. New Kawayan? Tagpuro? We don't know. Either way, we don't want to transfer. Those places are just too far'*

Joan, Eastern Leyte

#### **Box 5: Particular considerations for fisherfolk resettlement**

***In line with Section 108 of the Fisheries Code, the National Anti-Poverty Commission, along with key partners from civil society, are looking for ways to ensure fisherfolk settlements reflect the particular priorities of these communities. Considerations include***

- Fisherfolk's access to municipal waters and their livelihoods are threatened if resettlement processes do not consider their proximate access to coastal resources; this must be a leading consideration.
- The standard size and design of permanent houses do not reflect the needs of fishing communities. Increased square footage and stand-alone design would better enable fisherfolk to continue key livelihoods activities, such as net repair and fish drying.
- Current requirements from the National Housing Authority regarding the acquisition of large tracts of titled land are creating major stumbling blocks, given the lack of availability of such land. The acquisition of smaller tracts of land, for instance, would increase available land along with the potential for fisherfolk settlements to be located closer to foreshore areas.
- Livelihoods support in resettlement areas must take into account diverse fishing-related activities, including seaweed farming and fish vending, areas often dominated by women.



## Consultation, consultation, consultation

The voluntary and informed nature of the decision to relocate underlies the relevant national laws and international principles that are in place.<sup>39</sup> However, this right is being undermined by the continued lack of clarity around basic aspects of the resettlement process.

During recent consultations with targeted communities, questions of who will be relocated and where to, what services and supports will be available, what right of return people have to their previous homes, what payments might be required on the new houses and what compensation land and property owners in unsafe zones will be provided all persist. In some communities, this lack of clarity continues despite plans for the transfer of people to permanent resettlement sites in the coming weeks.<sup>40</sup>

Transparent, participatory beneficiary selection processes are particularly important aspects of resettlement processes. As noted by the Commission on Human Rights and as evident in Oxfam's own consultations, perceptions of preferential treatment by local authorities in selecting who will be a recipient of permanent housing are evident.<sup>41</sup> For displaced people unsure of their right to return to their previous homes and unsure of whether they will be selected as a beneficiary of resettlement, they live in a true limbo, left to 'hope and pray'. The targeting of the most vulnerable members of the community, including informal settlers, must be further reinforced through community consultations, transparent beneficiary selection processes and clear confirmation of the rights and choices people have.<sup>42</sup>

*'We do not know if we are selected beneficiaries. The list was not disclosed. We learned that two families in our community were already selected. The process and criteria for selection of beneficiaries was not discussed during the groundbreaking. We hope and pray that we will be selected.'*

Michelle, Northern Cebu

### Box 6: Life in limbo: one family's struggle after the storm

***Rita is a widow who is living in Tacloban with her six grandchildren in a family tent provided to her by UNHCR, after her home was destroyed by typhoon Haiyan.***

'Life is not easy. All of us are relying on my daughter, who lives in another tent across the street. She earns 50 pesos (US\$1) a day from washing other people's clothes, some days 80 pesos if she gets lucky. I used to have a small store and that helped us with our everyday needs but after Haiyan I lost everything. Now, we only have this tent and some materials we salvaged from town. We were told that our area was not a priority. The ones who were included in the list to be relocated are families living near the main street because they said that the Pope is planning to visit. We were assured by the *barangay* (neighbourhood) officials that we too will be transferred but we don't know when or where. We can't make permanent plans because of all this waiting. I worry everyday for my grandchildren, my daughter who works too hard, and about food now that relief has stopped. We still need help.'

Recent events in Palo, Leyte underline how lack of meaningful consultations are directly impacting people's willingness to relocate and, ultimately, their ability to make informed, voluntary choices. Ahead of the planned visit of the Pope to the town during his upcoming trip to the Philippines in January 2015, 254 displaced families were stunned by the

sudden announcement of their imminent transfer from the bunkhouses where they have been living to permanent resettlement sites.<sup>43</sup> Without information about the basic services that would be in place and how children would continue their schooling, people voiced significant concerns about the transfer. Ultimately, these families were unwilling to move so abruptly and with such uncertainty about basic conditions.<sup>44</sup>

#### **Box 7: The gendered dimensions of resettlement**

The particular impacts of resettlement on women are significant, and must be considered to ensure that women's rights are protected and strengthened throughout the process. Examples include:

- As a way of coping in the weeks and months following typhoon Haiyan, many women took on additional workloads, mostly in the form of unpaid care work, to meet the needs of their families in the absence of basic services. Well-being was compromised as the working hours of many poor women extended, while their ability to engage in paid work was further restricted. Such a pattern risks being repeated if households are transferred to resettlement sites without functioning basic services. Likewise, specific livelihoods opportunities for women must be promoted through resettlement planning.
- The bunkhouses established following the typhoon have been identified as creating increased risks of gender-based violence.<sup>45</sup> Such risks reflect the lack of necessary standards in construction and design, including with respect to adequate space for privacy, and electricity to ensure well lit pathways. The absence of livelihoods opportunities further compounds vulnerability. Additional measures are needed to ensure that bunkhouses and other transitional shelters reinforce the protection of women and girls while they await resettlement.
- As noted in other disaster recovery contexts, women face disproportionate obstacles to claiming housing, land and property rights.<sup>46</sup> For those being resettled, women must be recognized as equal owners or beneficiaries in all housing contracts. Women's security of tenure can be further strengthened by addressing challenges in related administrative procedures, including complex and expensive processes required for changes in title after the death of a partner.

## **As timelines extend, protection concerns increase**

Government timelines remain set for the resettlement of the majority of identified households by the end of the President's current term, in 2016.<sup>47</sup> However, such timelines reveal the push and pull of resettlement processes.

On the one hand, resettlement targets have government agencies pushing forward with the development of sites and construction of houses where land is available, often in the absence of meaningful consultations and adequate planning. On the other hand, timelines for resettlement are likely to become protracted as land acquisition for permanent resettlement sites becomes more difficult. Many local authorities responsible for land acquisition are reliant on the acquisition

of private land, given the scarcity of appropriate government owned land, as outlined in Table 1. The processes involved in land acquisition are lengthy and complex.<sup>48</sup> As seen in Eastern Samar, local authorities are increasingly vocal about their inability to acquire land for resettlement that meets the requirements of national authorities.<sup>49</sup> As of October 2014, a total of 3,071 units were under construction, while 452 units were completed; representing less than 1 percent of the overall target of 205,000 permanent houses.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 1: Examples of reliance on acquisition of private land for resettlement<sup>51</sup>**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>No. of families in unsafe zones</b>	<b>No. of housing units to be generated on government land</b>	<b>No. of housing units to be generated on private land</b>
<i>Tacloban, Leyte</i>	14,443	1,935	12,498
<i>Guiuan, Eastern Samar</i>	1,200	381	819
<i>Madridejos, Cebu</i>	3,693		3,693

Source: Resettlement Cluster Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan

As timelines for resettlement extend, protection concerns grow. For those people continuing to live in houses in unsafe locations while awaiting resettlement, their ability to repair damaged homes remains limited. Shelter assistance, even temporary, has been disallowed in certain unsafe areas and some shelter providers are hesitant to assist families to rebuild given that their current locations are not considered sustainable. For those living in bunkhouses, humanitarian actors have identified a range of protection concerns with these facilities, including inadequate water and sanitation systems and increased risks of gender-based violence.<sup>52</sup> Some of these concerns have been addressed, but others remain, including those of insufficient drainage and hazard-prone locations. The lack of adequate emergency and transitional shelter, particularly in light of protracted timelines for resettlement, was also noted in the aftermath of typhoon Bopha in 2012.<sup>53</sup> More robust measures are needed now and in future responses.

# 5 REDUCING RISKS AND BUILDING BACK BETTER

The long and complex process of recovery from the devastation wrought by Haiyan has begun. The opportunity this early stage of recovery presents should not be underestimated; by ensuring that recovery tackles underlying vulnerabilities from the outset, the foundation for longer-term development that strengthens the rights and resilience of those so badly affected by Haiyan can be firmly established. This requires not only scaled up recovery efforts, but a clear focus on integrating disaster risk reduction and management into local governance processes.

The government's mantra of build back better has infused the response to typhoon Haiyan to date. In seeking to build the increased degree of resilience that such a slogan infers, the government is implementing both immediate technical measures, such as disaster-resilient housing design, as well as longer-term initiatives, including the expansion of national poverty reduction programs into Haiyan areas.<sup>55</sup> The necessity of pro-poor recovery strategies is reinforced by the experience from the Philippines and elsewhere: poverty perpetuates exposure to disasters and disasters perpetuate exposure to poverty.<sup>56</sup> As noted by the Asian Development Bank, 'large natural disasters can cause poverty traps and dampen growth' and those living in areas regularly exposed to typhoons and flooding are particularly vulnerable to chronic poverty.<sup>57</sup>

*'Experience has underscored the importance of getting recovery efforts right from a human rights perspective so that pre-existing patterns of vulnerability and disadvantage are neither perpetuated nor reinforced.'*

Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines<sup>54</sup>

## Box 7: The link between disasters and poverty

### ***Evidence from tropical storm Ondoy and typhoon Pepeng***

Tropical storm Ondoy and typhoon Pepeng hit the Philippines in quick succession in 2009. The joint Post-Disaster Needs Assessment reported an expected additional 480,000 people to fall into poverty that year as a result of the storms, potentially causing an increase of 0.5 percent in poverty rates nationwide.<sup>58</sup> The actual impacts were even greater than what was predicted in some areas, including in heavily affected Rizal, where poverty rates doubled between 2006 and 2009.<sup>59</sup>

## Investing in resilience

Recognizing the devastating impacts of disaster, the Philippines has made significant investments in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). Government expenditure in DRR, for instance, represents approximately 2.12 percent of the national budget.<sup>60</sup> Further funding is available at local levels, with at least 5 percent of a local government's revenue required to be set aside as its Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Fund. Such expenditures are grounded in legislation, including the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010.<sup>61</sup>

While these investments have paid off, as witnessed in the successful evacuation of 800,000 people before Haiyan made landfall, more needs

to be done. The typhoon revealed weaknesses in existing disaster risk reduction and management measures, particularly at the local level. Not only are many municipalities in Haiyan-affected areas struggling financially to implement DRR measures, especially poorer ones, but many are also struggling technically.<sup>62</sup> While national legislation requires that each municipality establish a Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (LDRRMO) with a requisite number of qualified staff, many municipalities in affected areas remain without functional offices or dedicated staff.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, some municipalities are without basic DRR plans and budgets while the land use plans of others date back 30 years to the early 1980s.<sup>64</sup> The lack of necessary structures, staff and plans is indicative of the more general lack of capacity at the local level in terms of meaningful disaster preparedness and response.

Given the exposed weaknesses in the actual operationalization of key aspects of national legislation, the current review of the country's National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act must ensure that lessons from Haiyan are considered, as well as those from previous disasters.<sup>65</sup> Such lessons include the need for comprehensive capacity building with local government to better enable them to fully implement national legislation and develop plans that reflect local capacities and vulnerabilities. Critically, the role of civil society organizations and community members themselves, particularly women, must be strengthened, ensuring that communities are at the forefront of managing preparations and responses.

Not only does disaster risk reduction and management need to be seen as an integral part of recovery processes in areas affected by typhoon Haiyan. It should also fit firmly within a broader social protection system that underpins development efforts in the country. The further strengthening of social protection mechanisms, such as social assistance and social insurance schemes, is critical to reducing the multi-dimensional risks which communities across the Philippines face. Current poverty-reduction efforts, such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program and the National Community Driven Development Program, are positive. However, with the country ranking below average within the Southeast Asia region in terms of current investment in such measures, these initiatives and others aimed at providing a strong social safety net are needed at greater scale and as an integral part of recovery efforts. Haiyan serves as a stark reminder of just how destructive a disaster can be when it lands in areas already scarred by poverty and inequality.<sup>66</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The pressing livelihoods and shelter needs of so many survivors serves as a compelling reminder of the continued precariousness of life in areas of the Philippines affected by typhoon Haiyan. Of immediate concern is the need to further operationalize recovery plans, ensuring they reach the most vulnerable people in a scaled up and responsive way. Strengthened local government capacity along with the full roll-out of coordination mechanisms is integral to translating emerging recovery plans into impact on the ground.

The planned resettlement of those living in unsafe areas has highlighted a range of critical governance and capacity issues that are jeopardizing the rights and wellbeing of those being relocated. The lack of clarity in terms of livelihoods, beneficiary selection and the right of return, for instance, all point to the need for greater engagement with affected communities. Safe houses are important but for resettlement to truly ensure that families are better off, informed decision making and responsive approaches to settlement are integral.

Ultimately, recovery efforts should be seen as part of a long-term commitment to strengthening the entire social and economic development of typhoon Haiyan-affected regions. This development must be premised on strengthened local implementation of disaster risk reduction and management processes as well as further investment in climate change adaptation measures, particularly in agriculture-based livelihoods, and social protection mechanisms that target the most vulnerable people. Beyond a business-as-usual approach to recovery, national and local authorities must push forward with scaled up efforts and participatory processes grounded in the leadership of local organizations and communities. For those who continue to live in typhoon Haiyan's shadow, a better, more resilient future depends on it.

## NOTES

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