



# BUILDING FLOOD RESILIENCE: INSIGHTS FROM THE PHILIPPINES

## IMPACT BRIEF ON THE FLOOD RESILIENCE PROGRAM

2018 - 2024

By leveraging the Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC) framework, the program engaged deeply with local populations to build resilience and integrated their insights and experiences into both local actions and national strategies. Local voices and lessons learned were documented and shared to support policy influencing and scaling up through the Red Cross network.

The Philippine Red Cross is active across a network of more than 100 local chapters; preparing and responding to emergencies and disasters and improving overall resilience and wellbeing. With the aim of strengthening community resilience and reducing the impact of floods, the Philippine Red Cross, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), formed part of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (the Alliance).

It is estimated that approximately 74% of the population of the Philippines is exposed to more than one hazard, and the country is often ranked among the countries

with highest disaster risk worldwide. The Flood Resilience Program has strengthened local flood resilience in rural communities Mangatarem, Pangasinan, and in urban neighbourhoods in Pasig and Pateros in Metro Manila, affected by fluvial floods brought on by cyclones, tropical storms, and heavy rainfall.

As part of the Alliance, the Philippine Red Cross has implemented a diverse range of evidence-based resilience building interventions through engagement with local populations and stakeholders at national and subnational levels.



## Communities are more informed, organised and have the skills to face floods.

- Expansion of the Red Cross 143 volunteer network.
- First aid and health workshops.
- Training and equipping mobile health clinics.
- DRR, swimming and search and rescue trainings.
- Promotion of good hygiene habits and kits.

*It's super nice that there are volunteers in different barangays because when there's an emergency the volunteers are the eyes, ears and hands of the Philippine Red Cross in the field.*

Claire Henson, Rizal Chapter, Pasig-Pateros Branch

**+34,000**

## lives improved

*Changes in attitude and behaviours that have a deep and sustained positive impact on people's lives.*

**+260,000**

## indirect reach

*Estimated population that benefits from community interventions, scaling up and influencing initiatives, as well as the reach of mass media awareness raising campaigns.*



Resilience work carried out in communities in urban and rural contexts, as well as with municipal, city, provincial, and national actors.



## Communities leverage the physical and natural capitals to mitigate and adapt to flood risk.

- Environmental management trainings and tree planting activities.
- Community-based Early Warning System workshops, plans, simulations and distributions of equipment.
- Bridge between local population and key stakeholders.

*It's a change of culture that started simply with community members communicating through group chats ... to update each other on any upcoming disaster and informing each other what to do.*

Steven Laranjo, DRR Technical Officer, Philippine Red Cross



## Local authorities engage local communities in resilience-building.

- Formation and training of Barangay Flood Resilience Committees.
- Resilience measurement and intervention planning workshops.
- Regular engagement of stakeholders.
- Development and distribution of knowledge products.

*The Red Cross organised sessions where we had the privilege to speak and say what should be done to reduce flood risk in our Barangay, and the LGU and other departments listened to us ... they listened to our message and took action.*

Samuel Sagun, community leader, Barangay Dorongan Valerio



## INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

As part of the Alliance, the Philippine Red Cross has undertaken a process of institutional learning, and the past five years has had an important impact on institutional relationships and ways of working.

- Strengthened local Red Cross branches that can continue to build resilience at the local level.
- Red Cross volunteer network was expanded to local communities.
- Adaptation of methodologies and ways of working for rural and urban contexts.
- Technical expertise and field experience in resilience measurement.
- Enhanced adaptive management to navigate new contexts and unexpected challenges.
- Transition to the Zurich Climate Resilience Alliance to work in new contexts on flood and heatwave resilience.

*Every time that there is an opportunity, such as this program, Red Cross chapters have to make the most of it and not only work within the stated objectives, but rather go beyond that.*

Florame Sanchez, Chapter Development, Philippine Red Cross

## JACQUELYN'S STORY

Jacquelyn has lived in Dorongan Sawat, Mangatarem, Pangasinan, for 40 years. She is married with two children, and she runs a small general store and vegetable garden. She is active in her community, participating with the Philippine Red Cross and other organisations; *"I am the team leader of Red Cross in Dorongan Sawat ... I think I was born to be a leader, to stand up as the leader of the Red Cross in my community"*. As Jacqueline says, the impact is multi-faceted: *"this program was one of the best things that has ever happened to me. I'm not just resilient as a mother, I also became resilient as a team leader, and I have become more resilient as a citizen of my community"*.

Through her participation in the formation of a community group dedicated to flood resilience and numerous trainings and workshops, Jacquelyn recognised an important shift from a primarily individual or household outlook, to a broader community perspective, *"previously, we didn't think about our community, rather we tended to focus on ourselves and on our family. So, when we joined the Red Cross, we became aware of everyone. One shouldn't just think about family but should also think about your community, your neighbours and community members"*. This shift represents an important step towards leveraging solidarity, social cohesion, and local organisation for building collective resilience in the face of floods and other hazards.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The successful development of the Flood Resilience Program in the Philippines has marked a pivotal improvement in community resilience. However, as climate risks continue to grow it is important that our approaches remain dynamic and innovative; leveraging the lessons learned from previous experiences.



## Institutionalize co-designing methodologies and participatory approaches

- Apply resilience measurement tools to support evidence-based intervention design.
- Actively engage community members as resilience champions to facilitate local empowerment, ownership and accountability.
- Take action on the community's preferred solutions even where it requires undertaking innovative approaches.



## Establish mechanisms for collaboration and engagement with internal and external partners for scaling up and advocacy.

- Develop and nurture relationships with stakeholders through proactive and consistent communication and collaboration.
- Find alignment between the Red Cross mandate and existing stakeholder priorities.



## Prioritise adaptive management.

- Integrate flexibility into program design as well as within PRC training and guidance.
- Look at the big picture to understand how resilience actions have broader co-benefits.
- Adapt tools and methodologies for the characteristics of target communities, and particularly with an eye on the density, diversity and dynamics in urban contexts.



## Leverage organisational strengths for replication and sustainability.

- Prioritise institutional learning and innovation and integrate new ways of working into the PRC structure and plans, leveraging the nationwide reach.
- Expand the volunteer network to increase the capacity for action and to enhance the sustainability of the impact of the program.



The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance is a multi-sectoral partnership focusing on finding practical ways to help communities in developed and developing countries strengthen their resilience to flood risk. Find out more: [www.floodresilience.net](http://www.floodresilience.net)



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