

# Poorer communities need empowering in order to become more resilient to natural disasters

November 21 2017

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Credit: University of Nottingham

People in poor urban areas are the least likely to be able to rebuild their lives after a natural disaster, and need support in order to become more sustainable, according to research from the University of Nottingham.

'Poverty Alleviation in the Wake of Typhoon Yolanda' is a three-year collaborative research project with the University of the Philippines, looking at the effectiveness of the aid efforts in the wake of Typhoon Yolanda (international name Haiyan) in 2013.

Typhoon Yolanda was extremely powerful and deadly. Its effects were particularly felt in the Visayas region of the Philippines. It is the deadliest Philippine [typhoon](#) on record in the modern era. At least 6,300 people died, although the official death toll is highly contested. 4.4

million people were displaced and more than one million houses were destroyed.

The total number of people affected by the typhoon, in terms of livelihood, environmental and food security, was approximately 16 million.

## **Vulnerability to disasters**

This ESRC-DFID funded collaborative project looks at the effectiveness of the relief efforts following the typhoon in relation to building sustainable routes out of poverty. The project focuses on urban population risk, vulnerability to [disasters](#) and resilience in the aftermath of these shocks. Urban slum dwellers are extremely vulnerable to [natural disasters](#), particularly those living in coastal and low lying flood prone areas.

The key themes of the project are vulnerability, risk, resilience and shocks in relation to paths in and out of poverty. Lessons learned from this research will be highly relevant to post-disaster reconstruction efforts in low-income countries, especially within densely populated-urban areas.

Dr Pauline Eadie, from the School of Politics at the University of Nottingham, is the lead researcher on the project. She said: "These poorer communities are amongst the most at risk and yet least able to revive themselves after disasters. Vulnerability and risk are conditions that are heightened by poverty, and inform why and how poor people are exposed to natural disasters, whilst resilience informs how they coped and how coping strategies can be supported and risk lessened."

## **Four years on**

A policy recommendation report 'Four Years On: Rebuilding disaster affected communities for a sustainable future' was published by the project on the four year anniversary of the typhoon. The findings of the report were gathered from field data collected from interviews, focus group discussions with various stakeholders, document reviews, and a survey of 800 households in selected communities of Palo, Tanuan and Tacloban City, yearly from 2015 to 2017.

Data was also collated by the research team about aid received, recovery, community support and employment and livelihood in order to identify strategies for poverty alleviation in the wake of the disaster.

Dr Eadie adds: "Four years after the typhoon, the affected communities are still recovering and rebuilding. Restoring the livelihood of people living in these communities is a vital part of post-disaster reconstruction and lengthened for people living in poverty. Currently, a lack of sustainable livelihoods, inadequate and unsafe housing, the inadequate provision of utilities such as water and electricity, and poor infrastructure continues to threaten people's security in these areas.

"In the aftermath of Yolanda, INGOs and NGOs were extremely active, but by November 2015, many of these agencies had pulled out of the region. Lessons can now be learned from these responses in order to help these communities be better prepared for future disasters. Our paper looks at the challenges faced and gives recommendations on how to prepare vulnerable societies."

**More information:** The report is available online:  
[tracking.vuelio.co.uk/tracking ... Ij19t4A2&target=http%3a%2f%2fwww.projectyolanda.org%2fdocuments%2fpolicy-recommendations.pdf&v=r8oEm0SUhvRqWg0V0IFSng2&lc=932617804908232799](http://tracking.vuelio.co.uk/tracking...Ij19t4A2&target=http%3a%2f%2fwww.projectyolanda.org%2fdocuments%2fpolicy-recommendations.pdf&v=r8oEm0SUhvRqWg0V0IFSng2&lc=932617804908232799)

Provided by University of Nottingham

Citation: Poorer communities need empowering in order to become more resilient to natural disasters (2017, November 21) retrieved 28 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-11-poorer-empowering-resilient-natural-disasters.html>

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