

Children and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in the Context of the Rights-Based Approach to Development; the Cases of the Municipalities of Catarman and Laoang in the Province of Northern Samar

Juniver P. Delorino

Master of Arts in Development Policy

Abstract: *This study attempted to investigate the extent of children's participation in the local disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) programs and its contribution to their rights to development towards building their future individual preparedness in responding safely and responsibly to disaster and other emergencies. It also investigated the impact of their participation on their individual awareness, knowledge, skills, motivation, and attitude, in relation to DRRM. The overall goal of the study was to evolve policy recommendations toward strengthening the local DRRM and making them work as welfare-enhancing programs for the children and youth. The rights-based approach (RBA) to development, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provisions on participation, were made as reference in looking at the institutionalization of children's participation in DRRM. The study made use of a Conceptual Framework generally anchored on Institutional Analysis Development (IAD) model in describing the relationship of key variables under investigation. The variables of the study were grouped according to the framework's components, namely: exogenous variables, action arena, interactions, evaluative criteria and outcomes. The overall anchor of this study was the RBA, with emphasis on the partnership/collaboration between and among duty bearers – NGOs, Schools and MDRRMOs, and rights holders-the students. This study was conducted in the municipalities of Catarman and Laoang in the Province of Northern Samar. The Respondents include MDRRMOs, school heads of selected private and public primary and secondary schools, some local officials and parents, and some elementary students who are at Grade V and Grade VI, and all the year levels in the secondary level and selected NGO representatives. The range of activities under the local DRRM programs being institutionalized by the respondent-agencies include representation in decision-making in DRRM activities; organizing and mobilizing children's organizations; child-led risk assessment and training for delivering indigenous early warning system; child-led theatre presentations and cultural shows related to DRRM; film screenings and other point activities with teachers and school officials; coordinator of Earth Day and similar celebrations with other municipalities; tree planting and growing campaigns; support in management of marine protected and watershed areas; adopt a tree/watershed project; promotional and educational activities for disaster preparedness at school or in the community; first-aid and basic life support trainings; and community drills and disaster simulation exercises. The assessment by the students themselves showed that the first two most participated activities include "tree planting and growing campaign" and "community drills and disaster simulation exercises" while the least participated activity is "support in management of marine protected and watershed areas". The groupings of these option activities revealed that about 75 percent of the activities of which children were involved was under the "preparedness" phase of disaster management, while the remaining 25 percent belonged to the "mitigation" phase. Unfortunately, the local children have no participation in activities under the "recovery" and "response" phases of disaster management. In terms of the extent of institutionalization of children's participation, the school heads group revealed that more than one-half of the activities was moderately institutionalized, MDRRMOs group, about three-fourths, highly institutionalized; and the NGOs gave an assessment of moderately institutionalized to half to half of all the activities. Gauging the impact on the children of their participation in DRRM activities, it was shown based on their self-assessments that they were moderately aware moderately knowledgeable, moderately skilled, moderately motivated, and neutral in attitude. A set relevant policy recommendations has been developed in response to critical gaps as drawn from the conclusion of the study towards enhancing local DRRM programs and making children's participation sustainable.*

1. Introduction

The amount of damage and the impact disasters have on the economy and humanity is far too evident for governments to remain passive and indifferent from formulating initiatives for a safer community and prepared citizenry.

The increasing incidence of hazards and the impacts of disaster worldwide are undermining collective efforts towards alleviating global poverty, specifically in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The International

Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that the average economic cost for each individual large scale natural disaster event was over 5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in low income countries between 1997 and 2001; recent World Bank estimates have placed this figure in the range of 2-15 percent of GDP for low income countries (DFID, 2006).

In 2011, the Philippines' National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported a total of 431 natural and human-induced disasters, leaving 1,774 people dead, and affected more than three million families or 15.3

million people while causing over Php26billion in economic damage (Philippine Disaster Report, 2011).

The Philippines normally experiences at least 20 typhoons a year but the recent years saw more disaster events that were influenced by climate change. The notable changes in the country include increasing temperature, rising sea level and increased frequency of extreme events. These changes eventually converted disaster-safe zones into areas that are at nature's mercy.

Moreover, being situated in highly seismic zone as it lying along the Pacific Ring of Fire, the country is also prone to earthquakes. The Philippine Institution of Volcanology and Seismology (PhilVolcs) reported an average of five earthquakes occurring in the country per day (FAO, undated) and their impact on the affected communities is it at times massive and devastating.

There are some of the urgent consideration for the country to adopt disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). Laying the basis for a paradigm shift to DRRM from the disaster preparedness was the enactment of Republic Act 10121 otherwise known the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010. This is in support of the Philippines' commitment to achieve the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to build resilient communities as expressed by its adoption of the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) in 2005.

To mitigate the situation, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM) measures have been formulated at the international, national and local community levels. At the international scene, the HFA was launched at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in 2005 by the 168 member states that issued the Hyogo Declaration in support of the HFA which aims to assist the efforts of nations and communities to become more resilient to natural hazards.

The potential of a hazard to become a disaster depends on the population's vulnerability or coping capacity. The poor women, the elderly or disabled, and children are often most vulnerable and therefore, the worst affected. Disasters do not just happen, they are a result of failures of development process which increase vulnerability and reduce coping capacities, containing development further in a "downward spiral". The goal of disaster risk reduction policy is to contribute to sustainable development through reducing the burden of disasters on the poor and most vulnerable (DFID, 2006)

Consequently, DRR and DRM efforts have been adopted by governments all over the world. As a means of incorporating DRR-related policies in national and local legislation, education has been identified as a venue in promoting to children the culture of preparedness to disasters and awareness to DRR policies. As a result of these efforts to institutionalize DRRM, it is has been deemed necessary to understand its concept, goals and functions.

In 2011, the United Nations (UN) defined DRR as the practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyze and manage the casual factors of disaster. There are many opinions with regard to what the casual factors of disasters are. However, the UN determines the casual factors, or "root causes" if disasters as the exposure to hazards, level of vulnerability of people and property, management of land and the environment, and level of preparedness for adverse events.

On the other hand, DRM is the process of using administrative decisions, organization, operational skills and capacities to implement policies, strategies and coping capacities of the society and communities to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters. It comprises all forms of activities, including structural and non-structural measures to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) adverse effects of hazards (Disaster Risk Reduction Resource Manual, 2008). For brevity and convenience, DRMM is used to refer to both processes.

The National DRRM Plan charts some strategies such as building the adaptive capacities of communities, increasing the resilience of vulnerable sectors, and optimizing disaster mitigation opportunities in hopes of promoting people's welfare and security towards gender-responsive and right-based sustainable development. To reinforce such strategies, the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) sets the agenda for climate change adaption and mitigation for 2011 to 2038. Consistent with the Climate Change Adaption (CCA) Framework, the NCCAP's ultimate goal is to "build the adaptive capacities of women and men in their communities, increase the resilience of vulnerable sectors and natural ecosystem to climate change and optimize mitigation opportunities towards gender-responsive and rights-based sustainable development.

Policies need to be implemented to mitigate the adverse effects of disasters and climate change. Aside from natural disaster, governments must also prepare for manmade disasters that may impact is people, environment and economy. Considering these, DRRM plans and policies have to incorporate parameters and procedures for both natural and man-made disasters to ensure compatibility, as well as to avoid wastage of funds, time and efforts between preparations and outcomes.

Amid this growing anxiety about disasters are children. Whatever approach is chosen to be undertaken, children's welfare and interests should remain as one of the top-most priorities. They should not remain passive victims of disasters nor as indirect beneficiaries of DRR initiatives. Rather, they should be capacitated and be made as active participants to such arrangements. As the most vulnerable and less prepared group, they need to be given attention by the government through promotion of develop men t policies such as DRR campaigns that are intended to promote their rights and well-being.

2. Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study attempted to determine how children's participation local disaster risk reduction and management programs contributed to their rights to development towards building their future individual preparedness in responding safely and responsibly to disasters and other emergencies.

Specifically, it hoped to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To describe the profile-characteristics of the local DRRM programs.
- 2) To determine how children's participation in DRRM efforts and activities are institutionalized by concerned local government in its, elementary and secondary schools and other proponent organizations;
- 3) To discover how proponent agencies or organizations promoting or institutionalizing children's participation impact on the level of children's awareness, knowledge, skills, motivation, and attitude towards DRRM; and
- 4) To recommend policy reforms anchored on the major findings of this study towards strengthening the local DRRM programs and ensuring the sustainability of children's participation over the long term.

3. Methodology

Generally, the study was undertaken in the Province of Northern Samar which is one of the provinces comprising Samar Islands (the other two are Samar and Eastern Samar provinces). Northern Samar is bounded by the Pacific Ocean on the east, the San Bernardino Strait on the north, Samar Sea on the west, and the Samar and Eastern Samar provinces on the south. It ranks thirty-seventh (37th) in size among the 80 provinces of the Philippines and accounts for practically 1.2 percents of the total land area of the country. It is located at the eastern edge of archipelago with an area of 369,293 hectares. About 52 percents of the total land area is covered by forest and 42 percent is classified as alienable and disposable.

4. Findings

Profile of the DRRM Programs

The profile of the DRRM programs for the sample municipalities is characterized in terms of the proponents' agency, existence of the DRRM program, program title, budget and funding source, and provision of incentive and/or protection (Tables 1a; 1c to 1f).

The existence of the DRRM programs has been confirmed by the school heads, NGOs, and MDRRMO groups (Table 1b). The activities in said DRRM programs were mostly undertaken once a year or based on the availability of funding and the appropriateness of said activities to be held based on the school celebrations and national celebrations, e.g. National Fire Prevention Month, Earth Day, among others.

Table 1 (a): Proponent Agencies and its Collaborators

A. Proponent Agency	Sample Institutions	B. Collaborating Agencies/Institutions
Department of Education	Department of Education-12 Elementary Schools and 7 secondary schools in the Municipalities of Catarman and Laoang, including their respective principal/school heads	Bureau of Fire Protection Department of Education NGOs/CBOs/POs Municipal of Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Offices. Armed Forces of the Philippines Philippine National Police
	MDRRMO of Catarman MDRRMO of Laoang	Chalice DSWD (PSWD/MSWD)
Philippine Red Cross	NGOS-Heads of PLAN international (Phils.) and Red Cross	DILG (Brgy. Council /Assoc. of Brgy Captains DOH DTI Office of Civil Defense (OCD)
PLAN International		Business and Private Sector

Table 1(b): Existence of DRRM Program for Children

Existence of DRRM Program for Children	With DRRM Program	Without DRRM Program
School Head	19	0
MDRRMO	2	0
NGOs	2	0

Title and Status of DRRM Programs

In terms of DRRM program/project titles, there were fifteen (15) titles presented and the earliest of which was implemented in 1947 (Disaster Management Services) and the least was in 2013 (School Disaster Risk Program). Notably, most of these programs have been implemented on a continuing basis (Table 1c).

Table 1 (c): Title and Status of DRRM Programs

C. Title of DRRM Program	Program Status	
	Start of Implementation	Termination/Completion
Catarman I Central School Disaster Risk Condition Management Program	2012	2013
Catarman SPED Disaster Risk Reduction Program	2013	continuing
School Disaster Risk Reduction Management program	2013	continuing
Tree Planting and Growing Campaigns	2010	continuing
School-based DRRM Information Drive	2011	continuing
School Disaster Management Committee	2011	continuing
The Environmentalists	1999	continuing

School-based Disaster Risk Reduction Program	2011	2016(5years)
Rawis Central School Disaster Risk Reduction Program	2010	continuing
Disaster Risk Reduction Management Program	Start of sponsorship	continuing
UEPLLHS Disaster Programs	2005	continuing
Catarman National High School Disaster Risk Program	2012	continuing
School Disaster Risk Programs	2013	2014
Disaster Emergency Drills and Exercises, Capability Building Seminars of Municipalities Volunteers on Rescue and Response, Celebrations of National Disaster Consciousness Month, Quarterly Meetings, <i>Kampanya Pagpangandamsa Kalamidad</i>	2011	2013
Disaster Management Services	1947	continuing
<i>BatangLigtas</i> (Child Protect)	From start of program	continuing

Lesson/integration in the curriculum	3	2	0	1	0	
Evacuation/Earthquake/Fire/Flood Drills	6	1	2		1	
Tree planting	3	2	0		0	

Provision of Protection or Incentives for Children

On whether the DRRM programs provide incentive or protection to children, the MDRRMOs and NGOs were both 1 out 2 under the same category while school heads were tied with seven (7) each for those “with” and “without” incentive or protection, but five (5) school head-respondents did not categorically state their choice. On the area of program’s protection and incentives in comparison to what were provided by the MDRRMOs and NGOs.

Program Funding/Budget

In regard to budget (Table 1d), the school heads indicated that they have allocated budget (but no specific amounts were provided) taken from the school funds (MOOE and PTA) and PLAN Phils; the MDRRMO group indicated the Municipal Calamity Fund (MCF) as their source; and the NGO-from the Red Cross’ donors and PLAN’s national organizations.

Table 1d. Funding Source/Budget

D. Funding Source			
Respondents	With Approved Budget		No Approved Budget
	Frequency	Funding Source	Frequency
School Heads	19	School Funds (MOOE and PTA)	0
		PLAN Phils.	
		Municipal Calamity Fund	
MDRRMO	2	PLAN National Organizations	0
NGO	2	Red Cross’ Donors	0

Program Components Involving Children

The proponent-groups representing three institutions, namely the schools, local government units and NGOs, also assessed their respective DRRM programs as to component-activities involving children. The school heads ranked *evacuation/ earthquake/ fire/flood drills* first; *lessons/integration in the curriculum*, second, and the rest they ranked third (Table 1e).

Table 1(e): Program Components Involving Children

E. Components Involving Children						
Specific Activities	School Heads		MDRRMOs		NGOs	
	Frequen cy	Ran k	Frequen cy	Ran k	Frequen cy	Ran k
Lecture or Awareness campaign on DRR AND Climate change	2	3	1	2	0	1
Capacity-building/ Capability Training	2	3	2		1	
Film Showing	2	3	0		0	1

Table 1(f): Provision of Incentive and Reward for Children

Provision of Incentive or Protection	With Incentive or Protection		Without Incentive Or Protection		
	Frequency	Aspect			
Schools	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children’s/Student’s Help Desk Seminars provide awareness to students on how to protect themselves in times of calamities Added items for dry ration Advocacy Protection is based on sufficiency of materials and technical expertise of the ones conducting the program 	7		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentive came in the form of knowledge shared with participants Protection through parents’ consent and insurance are issued Promotion of children’s participation/children’s voice before all mandated bodies 			
		MDRRMO		1	1
		NGO		1	1

Children’s Participation in DRRM-Related Activities

Children’s participation of interest in this study involved with the processes in which they engage with other people around disaster management-related issues that concern their individual and collective life conditions.

The participation of children in practically all the activities though in varying degrees, is a good indication of their

meaningful participation in DRRM (Table 2.1a.1, 2.1a.2 and Table 2.1b)

Table 2.1 (a): Participation Identified by Students

List of DRRM-related activities participated in by children	Total Frequency	Rank
Tree planting and growing campaigns	667	1
Community drills and disaster simulation exercises	605	2
First—aid and basic life support trainings	501	3
Promotional and educational activities for disaster preparedness at school or in the community	435	4
Film screenings and other point activities with teachers and school officials	255	5
Adopt a tree/watershed projects	220	6
Representation in decisions-making in DRRM activities	217	7
Organizing and mobilizing children’s organization	180	8
Coordination of Earth Day and similar celebrations with other municipalities	164	9
Child-led risk assessment and training for delivering indigenous early warning systems	141	10
Child-led theater presentation and cultural shows related to DRM	133	11
Support in management of marine protected and watershed areas	98	12
Other activities	81	13

Groupings of DRRM Activities by Phases of Disaster Management

Table 2.1c shows that nine (9) or 75 percent of the activities that were participated in by the local children belonged to the “preparedness” phase. While the remaining three (3) or 25 percent of the DRR activities were under the “mitigation” phase. The children have no involvement in the “recovery” and “response” phases of the local disaster management

Table 2.1(c): Classification of Children’s DRRM-Related Activities by Phases of Disaster Management

Activities	Phase of Disaster Management
Tree planting and growing campaigns	Mitigation
Community drills and disaster simulation exercises	Preparedness
First—aid and basic life support trainings	Preparedness
Promotional and educational activities for disaster preparedness at school or in the community	Preparedness
Film screenings and other point activities with teachers and school officials Adopt a tree/watershed projects	Preparedness
Representation in decisions-making in DRRM activities	Mitigation
Organizing and mobilizing children’s organization	Preparedness
Coordination of Earth Day and similar celebrations with other municipalities	Preparedness
Child-led risk assessment and training for delivering indigenous early warning systems	Preparedness
Child-led theater presentation and cultural shows	Preparedness

related to DRM	
Support in management of marine protected and watershed areas	Preparedness
Other activities	Mitigation

School Heads’ Assessment of the Extent of Institutionalization of Children’s Participation in DRRM

On the school heads’ assessment, of the range of option-activities, about 33 percent was rated “highly institutionalized” and these are “*child-led theatre presentation and cultural shows “coordination of earth day and similar celebrations with other municipalities” “first aid and basic life support trainings: and “community drills and disaster simulation exercises”*”. These activities obtained weighted mean valued ranging from 4.5 to 5.0.

“Moderately institutionalized” assessment was accorded to about 58 percent of the activities, ranging from the “*representation in decision-making in DRRM” “organizing and mobilizing children’s organizations” up to “promotional and educational activities for disaster preparedness at school or in the community”*”. This group activities has a range of weighted mean values of 3.5 to 4.1 (Table 2.3).

The MDRRMOs Assessment of the Extent of Institutionalization of Children’s

Participation in DRRM

Considering the very limited number of respondent-MDRRMOs (only 2 of them), the results of their assessments on the extent of DRRM institutionalization may not give a realistic picture in relation to the actual situation on the field. Their evaluation revealed that about 75 percent was “moderately institutionalized” (Table 2.4)

NGOs’ Assessment of the Extent of Institutionalization of Children’s Participation in DRRM

The assessment of the NGO representatives presented a more spread ratings on the activities which ranged from “*not institutionalized*” to “*highly institutionalized*”. More specially’ “*highly institutionalized*” assessment was given 17 percent of the activities; “moderately institutionalized” to the 50 percent of the activities; “*institutionalized*” to two other activities (17%); and another 17 percent was rated “*less institutionalized*”. Only one (8%) of the activities was assessed to be “*not institutionalized*” (Table2.5).

Impact of Children’s Participation

The impact of the children’s participation on their awareness, knowledge, skills, motivation and attitude in relation to DRRM programs were assessed by the same group-respondents (Table 3a-3e).

This research sought for a comparative data between and among students, school heads, MDRRMOs and NGO representatives in terms of their respective assessment of the impact of children’s participation in DRRM. The reason

behind this comparative assessment is anchored on the idea that these stakeholders have a differing view on how children should participate. To consider the student's view alone would

subject the study to biases of the students as children themselves and would have rendered this study as intrinsically flawed altogether.

Table 3 (a): Impact on Awareness

Respondents	Frequency					N	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
	*level of Awareness							
	1	2	3	4	5			
NGO	0	0	0	1	1	2	4.5	highly aware
Students	0	0	0	9	4	13	3.9	moderately aware
School Head	46	80	187	226	347	886	3.7	moderately aware
MDRRMO	0	1	0	0	1	2	3.5	moderately aware
Average Weighted Mean 3.9 Moderately Aware								

*4.2-5.0 highly aware; 3.4-4.1 moderately aware; 2.6-3.3 aware; 1.8-2.5 less aware; 1.0-1.7 not aware

Table 3 (b): Impact on Knowledge

Respondents	Frequency					N	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
	*level of Knowledge							
	1	2	3	4	5			
NGO	0	0	1	0	1	2	4.0	moderately knowledgeable
Students	0	1	4	5	4	14	3.9	moderately knowledgeable
School Head	26	81	194	359	248	908	3.8	moderately knowledgeable
MDRRMO	0	1	0	1	1	2	3.0	knowledgeable
Average Weighted Mean 3.7 Moderately Knowledgeable								

*4.2-5.0 highly knowledgeable; 3.4-4.1 moderately knowledgeable; 2.6-3.3 knowledgeable; 1.8-2.5 less knowledgeable; 1.0-1.7 not knowledgeable

Table 3 (c): Impact on Skill

Respondents	Frequency					N	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
	*level of Skill							
	1	2	3	4	5			
NGO	0	0	1	1	0	2	3.5	moderately skilled
Students	0	0	1	1	0	2	3.5	moderately skilled
School Head	63	120	269	254	160	866	3.4	moderately skilled
MDRRMO	1	2	6	5	1	15	3.4	moderately skilled
Average Weighted Average 3.7 Moderately Skilled								

*4.2-5.0 highly skilled; 3.4-4.1 moderately skilled; 2.6-3.3 skilled; 1.8-2.5 less skilled; 1.0-1.7 not skilled

Table 3 (d): Impact on Motivation

Respondents	Frequency					N	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
	*level of Motivation							
	1	2	3	4	5			
NGO	0	0	4	8	2	14	3.8	highly motivated
Students	0	0	1	4	0	2	3.5	highly motivated
School Head	65	133	265	238	169	870	3.4	moderately motivated
MDRRMO	0	0	2	0	0	2	3.0	motivated
Average Weighted Average 3.4 Moderately Motivated								

*4.2-5.0 highly motivated; 3.4-4.1 moderately motivated; 2.6-3.3 motivated; 1.8-2.5 less motivated; 1.0-1.7 not motivated

Table 3 (e): Impact on Attitude

Respondents	Frequency					N	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
	*level of Attitude							
	1	2	3	4	5			
NGO	0	0	0	2	0	2	4.0	moderately positive attitude
Students	0	1	4	9	0	14	3.6	moderately positive attitude
School Head	65	99	216	290	221	897	3.5	moderately positive attitude
MDRRMO	1	0	1	0	0	2	2.0	negative attitude
Average Weighted Average 3.3 Neutral Attitude								

*4.2-5.0 highly positive attitude; 3.4-4.1 positive attitude; 2.6-3.3 neutral attitude; 1.8-2.5 negative attitude; 1.0-1.7 very negative attitude

Recommendations Suggested by the Respondents-Groups

The following matrix (Table 4) lists the range of recommendations that were put forward by the concerned groups of respondents in the hope of enhancing the involvement children in DRRM programs. Of the 10 recommendations, the students' group gave the top most urgency to "motivate students that they can save others and self" and was rated rank 1. The second urgent recommendation is "budgetary support from the government". The "more promotion of the existence of the DRRM programs" ranked third among the range of recommendations. Interestingly, the students group elicited the highest number of recommendations over the other groups of respondents. This may reflect their understanding of the importance of DRRM and that they have started to embrace their potential roles in the program.

5. Recommendations

Summary. The proponents of DRRM programs in the sample municipalities of Catarman and Laoang in the Province of Northern Samar include the Department of Education (DepEd), Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)-more specifically Philippine Red Cross and PLAN Philippines. Most of these agencies' DRRM Programs have components involving children and have been implemented on a continuing basis. Conversely, a number these programs were providing a range of incentive or protection for the participating children.

Apparently, there were only a number of agencies all collaborating institutions that have been tapped in institutionalizing children's involvement in DRRM in the Municipalities of Catarman Laoang. These proponent-agencies have been allocating fund for their DRRM programs or activities from specific sources. For instance, DepEd (schools) was getting part of their budget from the MOOEs, PTA funds and the PLAN Phils; LGUs through the MDRRMOs from the calamity funds; and NGOs (Red Cross and PLAN Phil) were sourcing out from PLAN national organizations and some donors organizations. These institutional funds, however, have been assessed by select group of key informants to be very inadequate vis-à-vis the aggregate funding needs for their DRRM programs to become sustainably operational and in turn capacitate children.

There is variable degree of implementation of programs and activities allowing children's participation in DRRM. Children were greatly involved in the physical or more tangible aspects of DRRM like community drills and disaster simulation exercises (rank 1) and tree planting and growing campaigns (rank 2 for both elementary and secondary students. On the other hand, representation in decision-making was ranked last by the elementary students and ranked seventh by the secondary students.

The range of activities under the local DRRM programs being institutionalized by the respondents-agencies include representation in decision-making in DRRM activities;

organizing and mobilizing children's organization; child-led risk assessment and training for delivering indigenous early warning-systems; child-led theatre presentations and cultural shows related to DRRM; film screenings and other point activities with teachers and school officials; coordination of Earth Day and similar celebrations with other municipalities; tree planting and growing campaigns; support in management of marine protected and watershed areas; adopt a tree/watershed projects; promotional and educational activities for disaster preparedness at school or in the community; first-aid and basic life support trainings; and community drills and disaster simulation exercises.

So far, the first three rankings of these DRRM-related activities, which were mostly participated in by the children include the "tree planting and growing campaigns", "community drills and disaster simulation exercises" and "first aid and basic life support training".

The clustering of these DRRM activities by phases of disaster management showed that 95 percent of the option activities belonged to the "preparedness" phase while other 25 percent were under the "mitigation" category.

Interviews with key informants as well as follow-up interviews with school heads respondents revealed the absence of assessment and evaluation on the completed programs.

In terms of the extent of institutionalization of these activities involving children's participation, the school head-respondents indicated that 62 percent of these activities were moderately institutionalized. The MDRRMOs group gave an assessment that 45 percent were highly institutionalized while the NGO-respondents indicated that about 50 percent were moderately institutionalized.

Furthermore, with regard to the impacts of the institutionalization of the DRRM programs and activities, the children respondents themselves revealed that they are on the basis of awareness, knowledge, skills, attitude and motivation-moderately aware, moderately knowledgeable, moderately skilled, neutral in attitude; and moderately motivated, respectively.

The municipal LGUs' institutionalization of children's participation in DRRM is still a work in progress. While Catarman has yet to implement children's participation, more importantly, it has to craft an MDRRMF in order to comply with the mandate of R.A. 10121. Laoang, on the other hand, had already started incorporating children's participation in DRRM. During the interviews however, there were admissions coming from key informants that the proposed budget specifying children's participation in DRRM was not yet included/implemented in the past year and this year.

6. Conclusions

Generally, the findings revealed that there was low children's participation in the DRRM-related activities because the

opportunities were practically not made available to them by concerned institutions, both public and private. This scenario has to some degree constrained the children groups from the exercise of their rights to participation in the development processes. Apparently, there have been some gaps that exist between the roles of the children and the concerned institutions. On the part of the institution, there were relatively poor exercise of their respective responsibility and accountability vis-à-vis providing children access to participation in the local DRRM, as well as allowing them to be more involved in decision-making process.

The following are the specific inferences based on the problems presented:

1. In terms of proponents agencies and its collaborators, what can be gleaned is the lack of resourcefulness that had been exerted by respondent agencies in securing funding support from external sources. Specifically, there was over-reliance by the schools on its MOOEs and/or PTA funds which in essence impinges on the sustainability of DRRM programs.

That the current institutional DRRM budgets of the schools, local government units, and non-governments were very inadequate in relation to the total funding needs for their respective targeted DRRM activities. The limitation in budget has resulted in the weak or non-implementation of several of these DRRM activities which may have constrained children's involvement or participation.

Those programs with minimal budget were often ran on a yearly (to continuing) basis while those with big budget or established funding were ran on a 5-year term (to indefinite termination period). The respondents-school heads disclosed that this is based on the DRRM School Plan with is to be complied with on a yearly basis. Otherwise, clearances and/or salaries may be put on hold by the DepEd. In economic terms, minimal to zero budget is a threat to the sustainability of the programs.

The disinterest in conducting assessment and evaluation on the accomplished programs and activities in indicative of the needs for transparency and accountability mechanisms that are requisites for a more rights-based and sustainable undertaking.

2. That schools have a good number of DRRM-related activities in comparison with the LGUs and NGOs, and the most of these activities have some built-in incentive or protection component catering to children in particular. The very limited number of activities engaged in by the LGUs and NGOs may have something to do with their priority programs or thrusts at the time the study was conducted. Moreover, the low ranking received by "*representation in decision-making in DRRM activities*" from the students spoke of their perceptions that they should be more involved in decision-making for DRRM-related activities. It can be gleaned from the foregoing that children were made to be involved in the "physical" component of DRRM activities, rather than the character-shaping or personality-defining or empowerment aspect of DRRM. The former set activities simply require physical

involvement of children such as tree planting, Earth Day celebration, among others. The latter activities have to do with the development of children's capability and disaster preparedness. These agencies should as much as possible accord priority to these kinds of activities that would cultivate empowerment and at the same time enhance children's rights.

As duty bearers, the schools, LGUs and NGOs have failed to allow the children to make a meaningful participation within the context of the RBA. The children, for their part, have filed to demand entitlement to such a right (to participation). Even the SK, the representatives and alter-ego of the children within the political process went remiss in its obligation to be: 1) accountable to the children with its failure to ensure that DRRM programs and activities were fully institutionalized; and 2) assert participation (as a matter of right) e.g. selection of programs to fund/ implement.

3. That despite several moderately institutionalized DRRM-related activities, only a few are actively participated in by the children groups. Also, the majority of these activities have been found to have limited number of children actually participating. This finding further strengthens the clamor among students for more DRRM projects and activities. There were only a few, interesting DRRM-related activities that children can participate in. Children find the campaigns to be lacking in appeal since promotion of and awareness campaigns for these activities or programs were poorly executed.

4. That the impact of children's participation in DRRM-related activities upon themselves was still at a relatively moderate level which implies the necessity to increase or enhance their awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitude in relation to DRRM in general. Their heightened level on these parameters are necessary measures of their degree of empowerment and can immensely contribute as to how they will value their future involvement in DRRM-related activities.

5. That this study has provided some leads as to its contribution to child-based rights literature which generally embraces the inalienable rights of children in all circumstances including disasters when they are at their most vulnerable and the right to participate in decisions that ultimately affect them. The present state of the local DRRM with reference to children's participation is still relatively low in terms of institutionalization and resource-support and that serious efforts and allocation of the much-needed resources by the concerned government agencies and people's organizations have to be given top-most priority. Disaster risk reduction children about disaster risk and empowering them to use the knowledge that support life, survival and their development. Further, this study has specifically identified some kinds in the existing DRRM policies which have to be addressed through policy recommendation meant to ensure viable and sustainable participation of children in disaster risk reduction efforts.

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