

# **Experiences of Stakeholders in the Emergency Relief Distribution during Typhoon Ompong in the Province of Abra, Philippines**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to describe the actors' experiences in the relief operation after the onslaught of typhoon Ompong last September 14, 2018, in the Province of Abra. The existence of related laws, administrative orders, and rules and practices have, in principle, provides protocols and procedures to ensure adequacy, appropriateness, responsiveness, timeliness, equity, sustainability and transparency, and accountability in the distribution of goods and services. Challenges were identified in the actual distribution of relief goods in some of the affected communities that needs to be addressed. One common observation in the barangays is that the distribution was not organized, which created tensions and mistrust between the government officials and the affected individuals and

families. The other major challenge is identifying the beneficiaries. The baseline data and a master list of those affected were not wholly and accurately prepared, causing confusion and contributing to the first challenge identified above. The residents of barangays should also be informed appropriately and oriented through appropriate IEC on the protocols of relief distribution and to honestly and promptly report their situations to the barangay officials. They should be advised to be vigilant about dishonesty and misuse of relief goods. Officers of the different sectors and associations in the barangay should be tapped to help barangay officials identify and validate the affected individuals or households. LDRRM and private sectors should strengthen and level up their coordination and collaboration through a MOA.

### **KEYWORDS**

Relief distribution, stakeholders, natural disaster, typhoon Ompong, Philippines

### **INTRODUCTION**

Validating theories of development through the real experiences of the stakeholders in the ground is one of the most important tasks of the academe, especially those involved in such fields of knowledge like rural development. It is a way by which narrative and discourses in such fields become empirical. Evidence in the field is a must.

In response to such great tasks, the research team under the subject RD 308 (Models of Development) has undertaken exploratory research about the locality's recent experiences, particularly on the disaster management after the onslaught of typhoon Ompong on September 14, 2018. Understanding the intricacies of disaster management is a difficult task. It involves a wide array of components comprising the stages in the cycle of disaster management, namely: mitigation, preparedness, response, and rehabilitation or recovery. Of these components, the researchers focused on just one component, that is, on the emergency or disaster response. Disaster response refers to the provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately after a disaster to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected. Disaster response is predominantly focused on immediate and short-term needs and is sometimes called "disaster relief" (Day et al., 2012).

The group concentrated on this specific aspect of disaster management as they take into cognizant the challenges and issues in the relief operation after the onslaught of typhoon Ompong in the province of Abra that was raised in the media by those involved in the relief operation as well as the beneficiaries. Thus, this study further focuses on the relief distribution system.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to describe the actors' experiences in the relief operation after the onslaught of typhoon Ompong last September 14, 2018, in the Province of Abra.

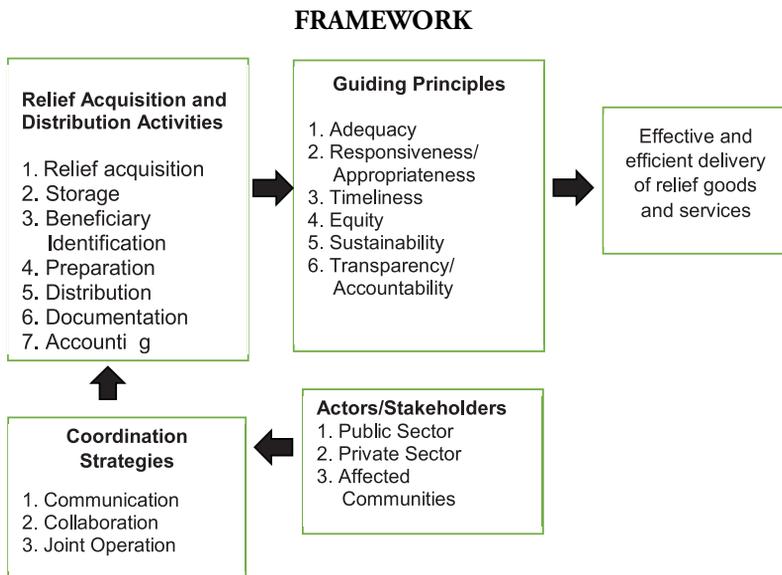


Figure 1: Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1 serves as the framework of the study that guides the formulation of the objectives and the corresponding analysis. The third box shows the stakeholders' stages of activities in the preparation and distribution of relief goods. These are relief acquisition, storage, beneficiary identification, preparation, distribution, documentation, and accounting. These activities are undertaken for the actors to effectively and efficiently deliver relief supplies (goods and services) to address the needs of the affected population in the aftermath of a disaster.

The public sector, which is spearheaded by the DSWD, performs the relief acquisition, storage, beneficiary identification, preparation, distribution, documentation, and accounting as listed in the box in coordination with the private sectors that voluntarily participate in the relief distribution. Those in the private sectors may perform all of the activities, or they may just serve as a channel, conduit, or mere donors depending on their advocacies and institutional guidelines (Domingo & Manejar, 2018).

To be effective and efficient in the emergency response, coordination, and collaboration strategies, as shown in the second box, are very vital in the whole process of disaster management. Coordination would refer to regulating the diverse activities and functions of the different actors into an integrated and harmonious operation. Primarily, it involves assessing situations and needs of the affected communities, agreeing on common priorities, developing common strategies to address issues on logistic activities, mobilizing funding and other resources, clarifying consistent public messaging, and monitoring progress. Coordination of independent organizations is undertaken to eliminate fragmentation, gaps, and duplication in services.

Coordination can also mean harmonizing separate disaster actions or activities and clarifying roles and responsibilities. Methods for ensuring coordination include written memoranda of understanding or other similar agreements. In coordinated systems, independent actors share information and work with a common purpose. Coordination may be voluntary or mandated and carried out through formal or informal agreements (Alindogan, 2019).

The second box lists the spectrum of humanitarian coordination activities, starting with simple information sharing or communication leading to collaboration and then to a joint operation. The discussion would refer to vertical and horizontal flow or sharing and exchanging information and knowledge between and among the stakeholders or actors regarding the activities listed in the third box. Collaboration is more than simply sharing and exchanging information. The partnership means that the sectors or actors in inter-sectoral or intra-sectoral coordination assess the situation together and share ideas on how to overcome the problem and initiate practical responses. On the other hand, the joint operation is the highest level of humanitarian relief coordination. Partnerships in the relief operation activities between the sectors involved will be formalized, which demands a higher level of commitment to facilitating the different stages of the operation from relief acquisition to accounting.

The activities and strategies undertaken will be evaluated and assessed along the guiding principles presented in the fourth box. Adequacy indicates if the actors ensure that the relief supplies are systematically and sufficiently provided and maintained. Responsiveness/ appropriateness would indicate if relief distribution is based on the evidence-based need assessment reports wherein the profile of the intended beneficiaries in the affected communities is properly identified and provided with the appropriate goods and services they need. This ensures that the relief goods and services will be supplied to the most affected or vulnerable members of the affected community.

Timeliness measures emergency relief to the needy population as rapidly as possible within a time span of 24-72 hours of impact based on the event's level. The principles of equity ensure that all the necessary relief materials are in place and distributed impartially. Sustainability ensures the continuity of provisions of the basic needs of the beneficiaries until recovery. And lastly, transparency and accountability indicate proper documentation, accounting, and liquidation of the acquired or purchased relief goods and services and dissemination of the same to the donors and beneficiaries.

## METHODOLOGY

The methods employed in this study include the gathering of data through in-depth interviews with the respondent and document analysis. The documents include those protocols or procedures that are required for the government agencies to follow. These were used to validate and analyze the data gathered from the respondents.

The respondents of the study were the disaster relief responders who actively participated in the emergency response during typhoon *Ompong*.

They come from the LGUs served in the RDRRMC, PDRRMC, MDRRMC, and BDC and from the NGAs. Particularly, they were from the PDRRMC-Provincial Health Office, Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, Provincial Engineering Office, Provincial Environment Office, Provincial Treasury Office of the province of Abra, and PDRRMC of Abra. The other respondents were from DSWD and DOH-CAR.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Legal Frameworks, Rules and Protocol on Relief Goods.

Laws/Rules/ Practices	Responsible Agency/Unit/Group Individual	Mandate/Protocol
Local government Code of 1991	Local Executives: Governors and Mayors	Carry out such emergency measures as may be necessary during and in the aftermath of man-made and natural disaster and calamities.
	Provincial/City/ Municipal	In the frontline of service delivery particularly with those which have to do with immediate relief during and assistance in the aftermath of man-made and natural disasters and calamities.
	Social Welfare and Development Officer	
	Provincial/City/ Municipal	Be in the frontline of health services delivery, particularly during and in the aftermath, of man-made and natural disasters and calamities.
Republic Act (R.A.) No. 10121 (Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act)	Health Officers	
	NDRRMC	Oversee the national government's disaster response, including the repacking and distribution of relief goods
	DSWD LGUs	Establishment of a Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (DRRMO) in every province, city and municipality, and a Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC) in every barangay
	LGUs	Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRM Fund); 5% of their estimated revenue from regular sources as LDRRM Fund to support pre-disaster preparedness programs and post-disaster activities; 30% of the LDRRM Fund is allocated as Quick Response Fund (QRF) or stand-by fund for relief and recovery programs

<p>DSWD's Administrative Order no. 51, S. 2003</p>	<p>National Relief Operations Center (NROC) and DSWD's field offices</p>	<p>Maintain a certain number of relief packages all the time; 5,000 family packages, while the field offices are required to maintain 3,000 family packages.</p>
	<p>NROC</p>	<p>Conduct an inventory of relief goods on a quarterly basis Procure relief goods if the donations are not sufficient to maintain the stock level.</p>
	<p>Proponents LGUs</p>	<p>Submit a request for relief goods to NROC. Such requests are reviewed, assessed, and approved by the DSWD Undersecretary who is in charge of NROC.</p>
	<p>NGOs NROC and DSWD's field offices</p>	<p>As much as possible, food commodity donations to be accepted shall have at least 30 days expiration period” and that the relief goods should be sorted for easy repacking into family packages.</p>
	<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>These packages are supposed to be able to feed a family of six for three days. Food donations with less than 30 days consumption date are supposed to be immediately allocated.</p> <p>Some Prohibitions regarding relief goods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covering, replacing, or defacing the labels</li> <li>Repacking the goods</li> <li>Substituting or replacing</li> <li>Diverting or misdelivery</li> <li>Prevention of the entry and distribution</li> <li>Buying, for consumption or resale</li> <li>Selling</li> <li>Forcibly seizing</li> <li>Accepting, possessing, using or disposing those that were neither intended for nor consigned to him/her</li> <li>Making false verbal claim</li> <li>Foreign food donations with expiration date of at least a year and have passed the sanitary standards are to be accepted.</li> <li>Highly perishable goods such as milk and flour are to be “inventoried and valued within three working days upon receipt,</li> <li>Used clothing donations from foreign donors are strictly prohibited, the order says, “in order to safeguard the health of the people and maintain the dignity of the nation.”</li> </ul>
<p>A.O. No. 06, S. 2010 ( Revised Omnibus Guidelines in the Management and Processing of Donations)</p>		

	DOH	Logistic and acquisition of relief materials related to health  Checking of expiry date
Administrative Order No- 08 Series of 2006	This partnership is an DSWD,	Monitoring of disaster relief distribution under the DSWD-Inter-Faith groups partnership;
	Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP),	Institute transparency and accountability in government's disaster relief operations consistent with existing policies on equitable distribution;
	National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)	Maximize utilization and ensure equitable distribution of resources during disaster relief operations;  Encourage participation of non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society and other stakeholders in disaster relief operations, and;
	Philippine Relief and Development Services (PHILRADS).	Identify problems and recommend workable solutions for the enhancement of disaster relief operations.

## MECHANISMS TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT RELIEF OPERATION

### Rules and Protocols Employed

Based on the interviews with the concerned members of local government units, DSWD, and DOH officials and corroborated with related literature, the frameworks and procedures for effective distribution of goods and services have been put into place to guide disaster responders and support services. It is just a matter of implementing them in the field through effective strategies. As indicated in Table 1, the functions and activities of national and local government agencies and units are guided by two primary laws: the Local Government Code of 1991 and that of Republic Act 10121, otherwise known as Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act.

Furthermore, Administrative Orders and Circulars provide for specific protocols and rules on relief goods and services.

The Local Government Code of 1991 provides general descriptions of the functions of the chief executives, city or municipal social welfare and development officers, and city or municipal health officers in relation to disaster management. It mandates that

LGUs are the primary responders whenever there are calamities and disasters. On the other hand, RA 10121 provides for a more detailed descriptions of the specific functions and coordination between and among national government agencies, LGUs, and civil society organizations.

RA 10121 mandates a comprehensive, all-hazard, multi-sectoral, inter-agency, and community-based approach to disaster risk management. Through the National Disaster Risk Management Plan (NDRMP), a coherent, integrated, efficient, and responsive disaster risk management will hopefully be achieved. The law also promotes the development of capacities in disaster management at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels.

The law emphasizes the decentralization of resources and responsibilities and thus encourages NGOs, private sectors, community-based organizations, and community members in disaster management. It encourages the full participation of the Local Government Units (LGUs) and communities in governance. As attested by the respondents, the supports from different agencies and departments of the government and private organizations and individuals were overwhelming in the aftermath of typhoon Ompong last September 14, 2018. However, as discussed later in the succeeding sections, the decentralization of responsibilities created challenges on the management of relief goods on the part of the LGUs.

The management of disaster and emergency starts at the top level with the convening of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) as mandated by RA 10121. The Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary serves as the chairperson of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) while the Social Welfare and Development Secretary serves as vice-chairperson for Disaster Response. Hence, DSWD's responsibility is to oversee the national government's disaster response, including the repacking and distribution of relief goods.

A more specific protocol is provided in the DSWD Administrative Order no. 51, S. 2003, which requires procedures to be undertaken by the National Relief Operations Center (NROC) of the DSWD national and DSWD's field offices. It provides that the DSWD at the national and its Field Offices (FOs) at the regional level are responsible for purchasing and packing relief goods and repositioning these goods to the affected local government units. DSDW is mandated to maintain a certain number of relief packages all the time; 5,000 family packages, while the field offices are required to support 3,000 family packages.

DSWD-CAR claimed that before the landing of typhoon Ompong, their office prepared thirty thousand family food packs ready to be distributed anytime and to ensure the adequacy of these goods, the DSWD - Central Office provided additional ten thousand food packs. With this preparation, when the typhoon came, sufficient food packs were delivered to the affected families.

School bags were also distributed to the affected students during the early recovery phase.

The reported data supported the preparation and prepositioning of relief goods that in the development before typhoon Ompong's actual onslaught, the DSWD Field Office in CAR had 5,000 available DSWD Family Food Packs (FFPs), 1,000 hygiene kits, 2,500 collapsible water carrier with purification water tablet, and 1,000 sleeping kits in its warehouse, ready for distribution to concerned local government units if the need arises. When NDRRMC determined that typhoon Ompong would hit the region, DSWD Field Office in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) initially delivered 600 FFPs, 60 hygiene kits, and 60 sleeping kits in six municipalities in the province of Abra

Apart from prepositioning goods at the provincial and local levels, DSWD field offices had also activated their respective Quick Response Teams (QRTs) and Provincial and Municipal Action Teams (P/MATs) to be on alert and monitor the situation on the ground. Furthermore, to monitor the relief distribution, the staff from the 4Ps, KALAHI- CIDSS, SLP Programs of DSWD –CAR were deployed to give assistance and ensure that all the affected individuals and families received the relief goods.

Aside from the goods procured, DSWD also received cash from the other government agencies and departments and international organizations. Accordingly, financial assistance to victims was provided by the Office of the President, other LGUs, and from international organizations like the World Health Organization, UNICEF, among others (Bowen, 2015).

Based on the data available, DSWD and NROC accepted donations from international and local organizations. The protocol for these donations is provided in the Administrative Order no. 51, which requires that as much as possible, food commodity donations to be accepted shall have at least 30 days expiration period and that the relief goods should be sorted for easy repacking into family packages.

Moreover, A.O. No. 06, S. 2010 (Revised Omnibus Guidelines in the Management and Processing of Donations) states that foreign food donations with an expiration date of at least a year and have passed the sanitary standards are to be accepted. Highly perishable goods such as milk and flour are to be "inventoried and evaluated within three working days upon receipt; They used clothing donations from foreign donors strictly prohibited to safeguard the health of the people and maintain the dignity of the nation."

In the interview with Mr.de Guzman of DSWD CAR, the guidelines in the acquisition of goods from donors were emphasized. Accordingly, used clothes and medicines were not accepted by their office because it is the Department

of Health or Red Cross with the expertise to check on these medicines. To maintain the dignity, health, and well-being of families affected by disasters, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reiterated that it discourages used clothes.

With regards to the relief distributions of materials related to health, the Department of Health assisted the DSWD and LGUs. According to the respondents from DOH-CAR, the Incident Command System was implemented during the response activities. All volunteers and responders needed to check-in in the Operations Center for registration.

Accordingly, donations from AUSAID and UNFPA were communicated through the DOH HE and received by DOH CAR. Donations included reproductive health kits, hygiene kits, and delivery kits. Portalets and water supply (part of WASH Cluster- Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene) were donated by the Philippine Red Cross- Abra Chapter. All logistics goods donated were inspected upon receipt at the Health Operations Center. Expiration dates and FDA seal and registrations were checked. Also, donated formula milk received at the DSWD OpCen were surrendered to the Health OpCen and were managed by the Nutrition Staff. The municipality provided a designated warehouse for the logistics of DSWD and DOH.

Accordingly, Rapid Health Assessment was the basis for allocation. Families listed were prioritized to be provided with the logistics. Distribution started 48 hours after the onslaught of typhoon Ompong. Quantity of drugs and medicines were according to prescriptions. The hygiene kits were distributed according to the number of women of reproductive age in every family.

At the local level, RA 10121 mandates for the convening and activation of the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (LDRRMC). At the regional level is the Rational Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), in which the Chairperson is the Regional Director of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) under the Department of National Defense (DND). The Vice-Chairperson responsible for disaster response and the repacking and distribution of relief goods is the DSWD regional director. And in every province, city and municipality, and barangay, there is the same setup. Thus, there is the P/C/MDRRMC and the Barangay Development Council

According to the respondents from the RDRRMC that were interviewed, just after the wrath of typhoon Ompong, the Regional Disaster Council was quickly activated. The Regional Offices of the Civil Defense immediately convened to address the incident. All Governors, Mayors, Regional Directors,

and Provincial Directors of concerned government agencies responded. The same was undertaken in the different provinces and municipalities in the region, the PDRRMC and MDRRMC were activated through memorandums through the Philippine Information Agency

One important activity of the LDRRMC is identifying those who are affected to serve as priorities in the distribution of relief goods. When it comes to determining the beneficiaries and validating the same, it is primarily the responsibility of the Barangay Development Council. They will be the ones to map, inspect, identify, record, and report, which is the part affected or completely affected households or individuals. And according to the respondent from the DSWD CAR, these officials were then required to submit DROMIC (Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center) report to the DSWD –CAR office. This report includes the number of families affected. As further explained by the respondents, the LGUs are enjoined to submit DROMIC reports to the national office with or without typhoons.

A respondent from the LGUs stated that schools and municipal gymnasium served as an immediate venue for storage and served as dispatching and receiving relief goods. They also shared that the initiative of the local community leaders and church leaders facilitated well the distribution of relief goods.

To ensure funding for disaster management, the RA 10121 provides that every LGU allot for the calamity fund to be used in support of disaster risk reduction or mitigation, prevention, and preparedness activities for the potential occurrence of disasters and not just for a response, relief, and rehabilitation efforts. They shall allot 5% of their estimated revenue from regular sources as LDRRM Fund to support pre-disaster preparedness programs and post-disaster activities; 30% of the LDRRM Fund is allocated as Quick Response Fund (QRF) or stand-by fund for relief and recovery programs (Blanco, 2015).

DSWD A.O. 51, some prohibitions apply to all not only for the responders. These include, among other things, covering, replacing, or defacing the labels; repacking the goods; substituting or replacing diverting or misdelivery; prevention of the entry and distribution; buying, for consumption or resale; selling; forcibly seizing; accepting, possessing, using or disposing of those that were neither intended for nor consigned to him/her; and making a false verbal claim. These prohibitions simply state that relief goods, particularly those that come from the government, become public goods. Therefore, no private individual or public officials will use them for private gain or allocate them against existing protocols and rules. This has helped a lot in securing the packages during the

relief operations during a typhoon, although, as discussed later, there are isolated infractions of the prohibitions.

To monitor and evaluate the relief operation of stakeholders, the Administrative Order No- 08 Series of 2006 is another mechanism. This is a partnership between DSWD and the inter-faith group which comprises of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) Philippine Relief and Development Services (PHILRADS). The purposes of this partnership are to monitor disaster relief distribution, institute transparency, and accountability to ensure equitable distribution of resources during disaster relief operations and to encourage the participation of non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society and other stakeholders in disaster relief operations, and to identify problems and recommend workable solutions for the enhancement of disaster relief operations.

## COORDINATION MECHANISMS AMONG THE STAKEHOLDERS

Table 2. Coordination among Stakeholders in the Relief Operations

Agencies/Groups Involved	Activities Being Coordinated
DSWD with LDRRMC	Acquisition, Logistics, Monitoring
Philippine Army, PNP, OCD, DPWH with DSWD Field Office	Logistics for the prepositioning and distribution
Among the LDRRMC: Regional, Provincial, City/Municipal, Barangay	Identification of Beneficiaries Logistic Documentation/Accounting
Civil Society Groups, International Organization with DSWD	Acquisition Logistics Distribution
DOH with LDRRMC	Logistic for health related relief goods and services
Affected LGUs with non-affected LGUs and other NGAs	Acquisition
Civil Society Groups with LDRRMC	Logistics

Table 2 summarizes the coordination of the stakeholders both from public and private sectors and from the national to the local levels. As discussed above, the DSWD and its Field Offices acquired and procured relief goods and accepted donations from international and local organizations and private individuals. These donations were repackaged based on the protocols. Coordination with the affected region, provinces were then undertaken for the allocation and prepositioning of the packed relief goods.

According to the respondents from the DSWD, in the aftermath of typhoon Ompong, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in coordination with the affected local government units (LGUs) and other private sectors worked for hand - in - hand in the delivery and distribution of the relief goods. DSWD – CAR communicated with the LGU concern for the provision of vehicles to haul the relief supplies.

Likewise, the DSWD Field Office in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) also tapped the help of Philippine Army, Police Regional Office Cordillera (PRO-COR) and Office of the Civil Defense-Cordillera (OCD-CAR) and DPWH to deliver thousands of Family Food Packs (FFPS) to different localities in the region in preparation for Typhoon ‘Ompong’.

As discussed above, coordination among the different levels of local government units was undertaken in the identification of beneficiaries and distribution of relief goods and services. In some barangays in the province of Abra, records of identified victims were corroborated by their respective families and leaders of their association. It was stated in the interview that some of the affected individuals had undergone briefing before goods were issued for orderly distribution.

Coordination was also undertaken in the identification of storage and distribution centers as well as monitoring and evaluation of the relief operations. Accordingly, distribution in evacuation centers was coordinated with camp managers (Social Workers) and with barangay officials in the barangays.

On the part of DOH, according to the DOH respondents and as discussed above, DOH CAR coordinated with the municipal and barangay officials in the distribution of relief materials related to health. The LGU received these through a Property Transfer Receipt (PTR). The LGUs took charge of logistics received through PTRs.

From the above discussions, various mechanisms have been employed by the responders and support groups to distribute relief goods to the affected individuals and families effectively. These were based on the existing laws and

administrative orders which specify and distribute functions to the government’s different agencies, departments, and units. They serve as rules and protocols to ensure adequacy, appropriateness, equity, sustainability, and accountability.

These are evolving rules and protocols that the Philippines have been adopting as a response to man-made and natural disasters and calamities. These may not be perfect, but as the country experiences these disasters, it continues to innovate.

The country is one of the most prone countries to natural disasters and emergencies, implying that the country has to make sustainable mechanisms to be able to respond to disasters at all times readily.

### EMERGING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Table 3. Issues and Challenges

Areas of Concern	Emerging Issues and Challenges
Acquisition Type of relief goods	Donation of discouraged relief goods Not appropriate relief goods Goods come in various packaging
Identification of Beneficiaries	Some people expect relief goods even if they are not victims of the calamity  Expectations and insistence of some resident to receive relief goods even if they are not affected.  Dishonesty in giving the correct data  Problems on who will be prioritized/ who is considered to be partly or completely affected
Distribution Relief Management	Closed roads  Lack of coordination of private sector with the LGUs  Palakasan /Favoritism of some of the barangay captains  Perceived “unfairness”  Opportunism on the part of the residents and politicians  Selling of relief goods
Documentation	Duplication Lack of master list as to the quantity of incoming goods

Table 3 shows a summary of emerging issues and challenges identified by the respondents of the study. These issues arose from the areas of acquisition, types of relief goods, identification of the beneficiaries, distribution, and documentation. Based on the analysis of the interviews, as to the quantity of the acquired and procured relief goods, it was indicated that there was a minimal problem.

The emerging issue or challenge is more on the type and quality of relief goods from private sectors. As discussed above, as per protocol, milk is discouraged, but it seemed that some donors were not aware of this. Hence, milk was included in some of the packages of the donations. According to DOH respondents, milk is discouraged based on the Milk Code of the Philippines. Breastfeeding is still encouraged even under challenging situations like disasters.

Another issue is the content of relief packs that comes from different private sectors. Accordingly, the donations had various forms and contents. The problem with this was that in the distribution, the principle of equity was questioned by the recipients when they compared what they received with that of the others. Some other recipients received that kind of goods, whereas they did not receive such. Also, respondents stated that some of the goods were not appropriate to the affected individuals' needs, such as used clothes rather basic needs.

It shows, based on the respondents' narrations, that the most problematic in the relief operation was the identification of affected individuals. Complete, accurate, verified and validated records and lists of affected individuals, households, or families were not ensured. There were duplications of names, or the names listed were not bonafide residents of the barangay, which means that they came from the other barangays. This was the case in some areas because some of the affected families went to stay with their relatives in the nearby municipalities or barangays.

Inconsistencies in the records and claims of dishonesty for some residents in the barangays were the common observations of the respondents from the municipal, provincial, and DSWD offices. Duplications were observed when names were traced. In some, each of the family members went to different relief distributions centers and sometimes giving different names so as not to be traced. Some were registered twice using their neighbors' records. Parents even instructed children that when interviewed, they would give names other than parent's names.

In some barangays, a system was put in place to identify the beneficiaries. Still, pressures from residents rendered the list useless as some residents insisted that everyone was affected and that no one should be exempted. Classifying

beneficiaries into priority and non-priority based on the extent of how they were affected if it was partially or wholly affected proved to be problematic. Some residents argued that “na Ompong tayu met amin... sapasap” (all of us were affected by typhoon Ompong, no one was spared). Even on the part of the respondent-barangay officials, they admitted that they were confused as to their basis on how they would classify barangay residents as to who were partially or completely affected.

When it comes to the distribution of the relief goods, a closed road initially caused the delayed delivery of relief goods on the first 72 hours. Still, it was eventually solved as rescuers from concerned agencies came to clear the roads. In some areas, coordination became problematic. Another problem that was observed by the respondent was that there were some lapses in the coordination between LGUs or DSWD with private donors. It was supposed to be part of the protocol that public and private sectors who donate or personally distribute relief goods should register and have them acknowledged by either DSWD or LGUs, but this was not followed. For some, because of their eagerness to help and volunteer, they went directly to the affected families and distributed relief goods. For some, they just simply did not want to be identified.

The problem, when these private donors went directly to the affected community, was that whoever they saw on the site, they just distributed the relief goods to them not knowing if they were the affected ones in the community or they if they only received one which resulted to duplication when in fact some individuals should have been prioritized.

The lack of coordination and lack of complete and organized listing and recording of affected individuals, households, and families created tensions, confusion, and distrust among the stakeholders and the disorganized distribution of relief goods. Barangay officials who were interviewed claimed that people accused them of being selective and favoring some households or groups. Some of the affected individuals claimed that the relief goods were insufficient and complained of “unfairness.” There were also insinuations from those who were interviewed that indeed favoritism had been observed from a few LGU officials.

Likewise, respondents claimed that some politicians had volunteered to deliver goods for personal intentions. One candidate even wrote his name as a donor on the relief goods he gave to one sitio, and he intends to run in a higher position in the 2019 election. Relief goods were sold at stores for commercial purposes rather than personal consumption. Opportunists outside the barangay were identified in one barangay.

Based on these findings, if these were true, then there were violations of the DSWD's Administrative Order no. 51, S. 2003, as presented in Table 1, which prohibits politicians from using relief goods for their political agenda and selling the same. It has to be clarified, though, that these are minor infractions of the protocols. It is not common to all the barangays.

As to documentation and accountability, the problem that was shared by the respondents was that not all of the transactions, particularly those that came from private sectors, had been accounted for because of lack of documentation and or disorganized one as presented above. As to the literature and accounting of the procured relief goods from DSWD and LGUs, it has been adequately done according to the respondents. The minor problem lies in the consolidating of this at the barangay level.

In summary, there were minor problems in the procedures in the logistics operations, particularly on the coordination between the public and private sectors. The major challenges identified above are at the recipient level, in the community, which have something to do with barangay officials' capacity to quickly provide baseline data of recipients of relief goods and the attitude and behaviors of the recipient of the relief goods.

For the first major problem, the barangay officials must have been overwhelmed by the situation of the damage inflicted by the typhoon; this was the common response from the respondent. It was sudden, and the demand of the situation seemed so great that they were not fully prepared to respond. The procedures were in place, but there has been no practice probably to apply them, such as scenario or simulation, perhaps.

For the second major problem, it may have been caused by the lack of knowledge and orientation of the community on who is considered to be "affected" (the United Nations prefer the term "affected" not "victim") to be prioritized in the distribution of relief goods. One of the barangay official-respondents recommended that the higher up should give them a clear definition of such term especially on the scales or degree like "partially" or "completely" affected or damage and provide precise mechanisms as to the prioritization in the relief allocation to the degree or extent of an affected individual or family. If there is a clear distinction of the term, then the people who are not considered to have been "affected" will not be expecting to receive and therefore, will not demand that they should be given with such relief goods.

Another thing that may be associated with the attitudinal problem is the values of the people. Dishonesty and intentional disregard of ethical principles of

allocation of goods like relief goods, which are not ordinary consumable goods as they relate to disaster, on the part of the free-riding individuals and politicians have been manifested. These are problems of a social norm that can be addressed through socio-cultural mechanisms as the challenge appear to be cultural.

## CONCLUSIONS

The existence of related laws, administrative orders, and rules and practices have, in principle, provides protocols and procedures to ensure adequacy, appropriateness, responsiveness, timeliness, equity, sustainability and transparency, and accountability in the distribution of goods and services. They also provide a framework for better communication and coordination between and among the stakeholders. Based on the respondents' experiences, these rules and protocols made it possible for them to be somewhat effective and efficient in their relief distribution; however, some issues were identified. Challenges were identified in the actual distribution of relief goods in some of the affected communities that needs to be addressed. One common observation in the barangays is that the distribution was not organized, which created tensions and mistrust between the government officials and the affected individuals and families. The other major challenge is identifying the beneficiaries. The baseline data and a master list of those affected were not wholly and accurately prepared, causing confusion and contributing to the first challenge identified above. Ethical issues were also observed as a challenge as dishonesty has been reported.

There were also minor issues for the coordination between NGA and LGUs, as well as between the private sector and the LGUs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to capacitate barangay officials through training for them to be able to map, identify readily, and classify affected individuals and household and accurately and comprehensively prepare baseline data and master list for reference of the different units and agencies of the government in all the components of disaster management.

The provision of ICT training is very important for this aspect. The residents of barangays should also be properly informed and oriented through appropriate IEC on the protocols of relief distribution and to honestly and promptly report their situations to the barangay officials. They should be advised to be vigilant

about dishonesty and misuse of relief goods. Officers of the different sectors and associations in the barangay should be tapped to help barangay officials identify and validate a list of affected individuals or households. LDRRM and private sectors should strengthen and level up their coordination and collaboration through a MOA. Coordination between the two should be institutionalized such that it will be easily activated during disasters and emergencies. The LGUs and members of the LDRRMC should update and reorient themselves to the procedures and formulate appropriate strategies to distribute relief goods in the future effectively. These recommendations advocate for community-based management relief distribution where the participation of the community and local-based NGOs and other groups in ensuring principles of adequacy, appropriateness, equity, transparency, and accountability are encouraged and institutionalized.

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