

# A Rapid Appraisal of Community-Driven Development in Post-Haiyan Philippines

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## Abstract

*More than seven years have passed after the onslaught of super typhoon Haiyan in November 2013 in the Philippines. This study provides a rapid appraisal in the implementation of the Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan- Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS) program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Haiyan-affected communities. Kalahi-CIDSS was anchored on community-driven development approach, an alternative approach from traditional top-down approach in program implementation. We collected secondary data from official reports from 2014-2018 and used a joint framework of participation, transparency and accountability in analyzing them. We unpacked five major themes surrounding the Kalahi-CIDSS program: 1) community-driven development as a response to disasters, 2) accelerated community empowerment activity cycle, 3) grievance redress system, 4) environmental and social sustainability safeguards and 5) impact of community-driven development.*

*We argue that community-driven development potentially offers an alternative response to post-disaster early recovery and rehabilitation where people are treated not merely as beneficiaries of aid but as partners in development. We end by noting that this rapid appraisal is not a one-stop, sweeping analysis of the operation and implementation of the Kalahi-CIDSS program but an attempt to supply a short analysis of the program's promises as post-disaster response. We encourage researchers and scholars to unravel the program's issues and challenges to build a better perspective and analysis in applying a community-driven development approach in post-disaster development and humanitarian responses.*

**Keywords:** Development, Participation, Transparency, Accountability, Haiyan, Post-Disaster, Philippines.

## Introduction

In November 2013, super typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda) ravaged Eastern Visayas, the second poorest region in the Philippines and destroyed livelihoods and communities resulting in almost AU\$ 3 billion in damages.<sup>1</sup>

Haiyan, considered as one of the world's strongest typhoon ever recorded, claimed thousands of individuals, displaced hundreds of thousands of families and destroyed billions worth of properties and critical infrastructures. In the aftermath of the typhoon came many humanitarian and emergency aids where local, national and international non-government and intergovernmental organizations utilized multiple approaches in delivering life-saving aids and assistance.

In most of these operations, the national government coordinated and worked with affected local government units in implementing post-Haiyan projects and programs. This study provides a rapid appraisal of the implementation of a Community Driven-Development (CDD) program entitled Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan- Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) of the Philippines. The principal question of this study is: How was community-driven development used as an approach in post-Haiyan development projects?

We used the concepts of participation, transparency and accountability to analyze this rapid appraisal. Participation, transparency and accountability are critical features of democracy and good governance considered to build citizens' trust in their representatives and sustain the legitimacy of governments and their institutions.<sup>2</sup> These three concepts are related and interdependent cornerstones of open and democratic governments.<sup>3</sup> By harnessing these three features, structures and processes in government projects and programs, local governance is improved through enhanced responsiveness to citizens' needs and minimized corruption.

Participation is a strategy of redistributing power to people and groups in different processes that affect them.<sup>4</sup> Incorporating people's needs, concerns and values in the decision-making<sup>5</sup> improve outcomes and legitimize decisions democratically.<sup>6,7</sup> However, there is a caveat when participation is only seen as a ritual and done for compliance instead of seeing it as a process of influencing and affecting genuine change through people's involvement. Therefore, there is a need to differentiate levels of participation from manipulation and seeing people as passive recipients of information to consultation where people are informed and are given a voice but are still powerless on decisions; when people have power and control in engaging with traditional power holders; or when they have complete control of the whole decision-making process.<sup>4</sup> Scholars argue that when there is adequate participation, transparency and

accountability, the outcome is more acceptable.<sup>7,8</sup> This increases people's sense of ownership and responsibility, encouraging tremendous encouragement and sustaining any project or program.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, transparency has various meanings and interpretations from differing scholars, civil society practitioners and bureaucrats. According to Transparency International<sup>9</sup>, transparency is a 'characteristic of governments, companies, organizations and individuals being open in the clear disclosure of information rules, plans, processes and actions. For civil society organizations, transparency's goal should be facilitating positive and favorable behavior from powerful institutions by putting them to account in the eyes of the public.<sup>10</sup> By mobilizing this power of shame, it is argued that transparency mechanisms may minimize corruption, encourage people's involvement in decision-making and increase accountability. However, transparency should not be seen only as information-sharing but should meet specific relevance, accessibility, timeliness and accuracy. Governments have enacted laws on transparency standards while particular organizations such as Transparency International, the World Bank and the International Monetary Bank have advocated and provided policy recommendations and support in ensuring transparency.<sup>11</sup>

The United Nations<sup>12</sup> defines accountability as 'the obligation of the Secretariat and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them and to be responsible for honoring their commitments, without qualification or exception.' When applied to governance institutions, accountability is about being answerable on the decisions made on where, why and how public offices use public resources. For example, the United Kingdom puts accountability as one of its seven Principles of Public Life, stating, 'Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.'<sup>13</sup>

Accountability should come from public officers, especially in representative democracies, where they should act in the best interests of those they represent. If public officers fail to meet the goals or outcomes they have committed, or their decisions ran counter to the interests of the public, they will be held accountable. However, the lack of meaningful redress mechanisms available to the public might hamper transparency and accountability initiatives. Putting people into account also depends on the data and information open to the public with a close link between transparency and accountability.<sup>10</sup>

The principles of participation, transparency and accountability have formed good governance and played a vital role in the democratization movement. Transparency and accountability mechanisms may minimize corruption and repair government inefficiencies. Moreover, the

allocation and use of resources have resulted in more significant and more visible results when the concerned communities are involved. This situation led advocates to push 'for democracy to deliver the goods, especially in terms of material outcomes'<sup>14</sup> as politics and bureaucracy have been inadequate in providing these services to its citizens.<sup>15,16</sup> These 'social,' 'citizen' or 'demand-side' initiatives supplement traditional forms of governance. Citizens and social actors deliver essential services, pushing for improved access to information and auditing public funds and projects.<sup>14</sup>

Supranational organizations such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and platforms like the Open Government Partnership have pushed governments to strengthen mechanisms on these principles and tangibly apply them in their structures and processes. With their technical help and funding support, governments used the Community-Driven Development approach as an alternative to the traditional implementation of programs and projects. An example of this is the Philippines' Kalahi-CIDSS National Community-Driven Development Program or the Kalahi-CIDSS NCDDP, which is the focus of this rapid appraisal.

## Material and Methods

We followed the steps of conducting secondary data analysis proposed by O'Leary<sup>17</sup>: (1) find research questions, (2) find data, (3) evaluate data's relevance, (4) assess data's credibility and (5) analyze data. We gathered secondary data through a desk review of official reports (2014-2018) of the Kalahi-CIDSS program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) regional office in Eastern Visayas, Philippines. After a thorough review of these data, we unpacked and focused on five major themes: 1) community-driven development as a response to disasters, 2) accelerated community empowerment activity cycle, 3) grievance redress system, 4) environmental and social sustainability safeguards and 5) impact of community-driven development.

## Results and Discussion

**Community-Driven Development as a Response to Disasters:** To respond to the Haiyan disaster, the Philippine government decided to use the Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan- Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS) as an approach to rebuilding affected communities. The use of Kalahi-CIDSS is in line with Article 13, Section 16 of the Philippine Constitution<sup>18</sup>, which stipulates the practical and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political and economic decision-making and as outlined in succeeding enabling laws such as the Climate Change Act of 2009<sup>19</sup>, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010<sup>20</sup> and the People's Survival Fund Act of 2012.<sup>21</sup>

However, while the Constitution only requires adequate consultation mechanisms short of meaningful participation,

these laws went beyond consultation. They instituted effective and reasonable participation mechanisms that share the same features with Kalahi-CIDSS NCDDP.

One of the widely accepted development strategies is the importance of understanding local variability context and mobilizing local participation to define development agendas.<sup>22</sup> Kalahi-CIDSS is a program implemented by DSWD since 2003 which uses the Community-Driven Development (CDD) approach to solving local community problems by providing mechanisms of control of the development process, resources and decision-making directly to community groups.<sup>23</sup> When people have adequate resources and information, capacity building and spaces for involvement in the local development process, they can effectively organize to prioritize and address local problems in building small-scale infrastructure and deliver essential social services.<sup>24</sup>

Because of the positive evaluation and impact of CDD, the government decided to make it a national program in 2013 and called it Kalahi-CIDSS National Community-Driven Development Program (Kalahi-CIDSS NCDDP) which also covered all areas affected by super typhoon Haiyan. The operations manual of Kalahi-CIDSS highlighted that the CDD approach is 'well-positioned as a channel for delivering support for re-establishing and strengthening capacities in the communities affected by the disaster, accelerating the re-establishment of small-scale public services and facilitating coordination.'<sup>25</sup>

Kalahi-CIDSS follows a four-stage community development process called the Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC), which involves various stages of implementation: a) Social Preparation; b) Community Planning; c) Community-managed Implementation; and d)

Community Monitoring. Within these stages are activities that facilitate the participation of citizens, particularly the poor and marginalized, in local development planning and implementation.<sup>26</sup> By operationalizing CEAC, it is expected that communities can generate participatory situation analysis, prioritize community problems and solutions, make action plans, proposals and detailed implementation plans.

Moreover, CEAC facilitates access to information interaction with government officials and provides different capacity development initiatives for diverse groups. Notably highlighted in the manual is that these activities should all be implemented and coordinated transparently. As with any internationally funded projects, specific performance indicators measure program impact and effectiveness.<sup>27</sup> As shown in table 1, the following are some indicators relating to the principles of participation, transparency and accountability:

**Accelerated Community Empowerment Activity Cycle:** Recognizing the value of a development approach that is participatory, humanitarian and sustainable while balancing the need for fast post-disaster response, Kalahi-CIDSS adjusted and fast-tracked its CEAC procedures and activities for municipalities affected by Haiyan and called it the Accelerated Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (ACEAC). DSWD also designed the Disaster Response Operation Procedures (DROP), a manual to be followed whenever Kalahi-CIDSS is used to respond to the effects of a disaster. Acknowledging that disaster operations differ significantly from standard operations, this modality allows Kalahi-CIDSS to shift its operations 'from regular developmental activities into a disaster response modality to address issues related to early recovery immediately.'<sup>28</sup>

**Table 1**  
**Key Performance Indicators of Kalahi-CIDSS**

Key Performance Indicators/ KPI	Target
% of Household Participation in local decision-making activities	80%
% of members from marginalized groups participation in local decision-making activities	30%
% of female participation in paid labor component during project implementation	15%
% of leadership positions in community volunteer committees are held by women	50%
% of women in participation in local decision-making activities	50%
% of municipalities with municipal poverty reduction plans prepared by a participatory process	80%
% of municipalities with increased membership of People's Organizations (POs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Local Development Councils (LDCs) and special bodies	50%
% of registered grievances satisfactorily resolved in line with the Grievance Redress System	80%

By waiving and modifying its activities and procedures, Kalahi-CIDSS maintains its demand-responsiveness feature putting into context the community's situation after a disaster. A total of 554 municipalities were affected by Haiyan implemented Kalahi-CIDSS through Accelerated CEAC.

While accelerated CEAC upholds participation, transparency and accountability as its fundamental principles, the approach's simplicity and speed make procedures fast and straightforward, implementing projects rapidly without compromising quality and in the shortest possible time to speed up community recovery.<sup>28</sup>

The use of Disaster Response and Operations starts by the declaration of a State of Calamity by any level of local government affected by disaster, after which the program staff assigned in the area maintains compliance to the exact accountability mechanisms on documentation, accounting and recording, internal controls, reporting and auditing as the standard CEAC process.<sup>29</sup> This ensures that mechanisms promoting transparency and accountability are still applied while processes are modified and fast-tracked.

The main difference between the Standard and Accelerated CEAC is the time to complete one cycle of implementation. While the Standard CEAC will take 6-8 months to implement from social preparation to project approval, the fast-tracked process for Accelerated CEAC is ideal from 31 to 131 days (about 4 and a half months) will include all preparatory, actual and post-activity follow-through. Aside from the timeline, one significant difference is the criteria for eligible projects to be implemented by the community.

The standard CEAC allows for flexibility in prioritizing projects to be implemented if the community collectively decides it and within the given resources. Accelerated CEAC only allows interventions that address emergency needs and early recovery interventions and other activities that facilitate the immediate restoration of community lifelines. Procurement, which is a wicked problem in any government program, is shortened under the emergency procurement method while monitoring and evaluation tools and processes are simplified.<sup>28</sup>

**Grievance Redress System:** One requirement for an adequate transparency and accountability initiative<sup>30</sup>, as discussed in this study, is the presence of a redress mechanism. Kalahi-CIDSS instituted its Grievance Redress System (GRS) as a feature to promote social accountability.<sup>31</sup> This provides ordinary citizens a space for questions, clarifications and complaints that may include misuse of funds, allegations of corruption, violation of policies and procedures and inappropriate intervention by outside parties, especially if it violates the principle of participation of the marginalized. This system also lets people request project-related information.<sup>26</sup> As Kalahi-CIDSS promotes meaningful participation in all stages of

implementation, handling and redressing grievances is given to a local grievance committee in the community.<sup>26</sup> These community members are oriented on the grievance redress system and trained on alternative dispute resolution. Whenever the grievance is unresolved at the community level, it will move to the municipal and regional level grievance committees, which must still adhere to standards for marginalized representation. By providing a system to address grievances and incorporating a participatory nature, the redress system shows a commitment to ensure fairness of the process and cultivate community bonds through a system that facilitates it.

Moreover, while the GRS is primarily a transparency and accountability mechanism, it has provided another opportunity to empower the people. This kind of responsive governance builds trust among people, especially in post-disaster situations where social capital plays a crucial role in survival and recovery.

**Environmental and Social Sustainability Safeguards:** Kalahi-CIDSS aims to ensure that the environment and the rights of people are not infringed upon by any project implemented or infrastructure built using its processes. An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) requires communities to prepare environmental and social management plans by set standards to ensure that all projects are environmentally sound and sustainable.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the ESMF requires the program to go beyond environmental and social impact assessments pre-implementation and allows changes to be made during implementation, management and monitoring if issues arise.

In the post-disaster implementation, the process was simplified, consistent with the principle of building back better and improved resiliency from future disasters while adhering to environmental safeguards.<sup>32</sup> Environmental and social protections are built-in directly to the stages and activities in the CEAC.<sup>33</sup> As with other program components, the ecological and social management plan and its implementation will be the responsibility of the communities guided by the program staff. This process ensures that the people are fully informed and actively involved even in technical matters and will be helpful in future activities that may be needing this set of knowledge and skills.

**Impacts of Community-Driven Development:** Several studies have explored the effectiveness of CDD as an approach to early recovery and disaster rehabilitation. The most evident effects of Kalahi-CIDSS would be the number of projects implemented by the communities through CDD approaches. In Eastern Visayas, a region where the Kalahi-CIDSS program covers all municipalities, the DSWD implemented 4,131 projects. Table 2 summarizes the top projects prioritized and enforced by local communities in Accelerated CEAC.

**Table 2**  
**Top 10 Kalahi-CIDSS Projects Implemented in Eastern Visayas, Philippines**

Types of project	No. of projects
Flood Control / River Control	707
Road	575
Electrification / Lighting	500
Footpath / Foot Trail / Access Trail	467
Community Center / Multipurpose Building	349
Day Care Center	219
School Building	207
Church / Chapel / Congregation Building	197
Water System	175
Health Station	126

Generally, these projects were basic social service infrastructures destroyed by typhoon Haiyan like roads, school buildings, water systems and health stations. It also includes infrastructures that protect them from future hazards, i.e., flood and river control, community centers, multipurpose buildings and congregation buildings commonly used as evacuation centers.

Worth noting is a municipality in the central Philippines that decided to prioritize the construction of a barrier before Haiyan that proved helpful. It protected their village from rising waters, which would have wiped out the community if not for the Kalahi-CIDSS project.<sup>34</sup> Also, people prioritized infrastructure reconstruction because these projects are perceived to significantly enhance people's lives by improving access to vital social services.<sup>35</sup> Some also reported that the projects enhanced people's social capital through shared trust, mutual understanding and cooperation.<sup>36,37</sup>

The Asian Development Bank<sup>38</sup> found that the community's poorest members were the most active and articulate in expressing their concerns and issues and advocating specific projects supported by anecdotal data during post-Haiyan implementation. Kalahi-CIDSS also promoted greater community participation, with one study saying that the program made people more open and charitable to community organizations.<sup>39</sup>

It is also worth noting that former Kalahi-CIDSS volunteers have become elected government officials, entering public office after being members of different committees in the program, which may improve local governance when they apply CDD principles in their functions as government officials.<sup>37</sup>

Kalahi-CIDSS shared technologies with their communities and it proved vital in building people's capacity to prepare for the future. Glova<sup>40</sup> shared how after Haiyan, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly Participatory GIS, helped communities recorded their natural resources and their potential in their communities. This awareness helps them in decision-making on disaster

mitigation and preparedness plans showing that technical knowledge and complete information should be shared with communities so that decisions can come from them. This approach further builds the capacity of people in an arena that has traditionally been shut to them and creates spaces to complement local indigenous knowledge with technical knowledge.<sup>41</sup>

Lastly, transparency and accountability mechanisms proved impactful as communities believe that the program is free from corruption. Local officials have become more receptive to these good governance practices because of Kalahi-CIDSS.<sup>38</sup> This increase of trust in the government and its officials contrasts with the widely held belief that these officials personally receive help from these kinds of community projects. The mutual trust between the local government and the governed contributes to building and strengthening responsive governance and will prove helpful, especially after disasters.

As of December 2018, Kalahi-CIDSS NCDDP has completed 25,469 projects planned, managed and implemented through participatory approaches. The people also chose these projects as a response to their lived experiences and challenges. This outcome speaks a lot to the people's capacity to define their own development goals and take a collective course of action in achieving these goals.

Moreover, the program assumes that if people are involved and took charge of the process and decision-making, graft and corruption will be eradicated or at least minimized. The total funding of NCDDP is PHP 43.9 billion (~AUD1.2 billion), of which communities directly managed PHP33.4 billion (~AUD 926 million). While Kalahi-CIDSS is not flawless, instances of corruption were limited and the Grievance Redress System reports a more than 98% resolution.

These are significant arguments as they challenge the thinking that poor people have no role in the governance and development process and are enemies of environmental conservation and protection. Moreover, the experience of the Philippines shows that it is possible to change participatory

processes and transparency and accountability mechanisms which are traditionally viewed as time-consuming to fit a disaster context where early recovery and rehabilitation require the efficiency of systems and fast delivery of services.

## Conclusion

With its central principles of transparency, accountability and participation, community-driven development has shown a positive impact in rebuilding more sustainably when people are encouraged to take part directly in decision-making and project implementation in disaster-affected communities. Kalahi-CIDSS, having started ten years before Haiyan, built upon those experiences and restructured it to fit the context of early recovery and disaster rehabilitation.

As the developing world prepares for more disasters, community-driven development has shown that when there is participation, transparency and accountability in systems, processes and structures, results could be positive and might even surpass the traditional approaches to project implementation and governance. Kalahi-CIDSS has innovatively improved people's access to essential services and helped them participate in local development processes. The experience in the Philippines has shown that community-driven development offers an alternative response to early recovery and rehabilitation where people are treated not as beneficiaries of aid but as partners in development.

We end by noting that this rapid appraisal is not a one-stop, grand analysis of the operation and implementation of the Kalahi-CIDSS program but an attempt to provide a quick breakdown of the promises and potentials of the program as a post-disaster response. We encourage researchers and scholars to unravel the program's issues and challenges to build a better perspective and analysis in applying a community-driven development approach in post-disaster development and humanitarian responses.

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