



DISPLACED WOMEN DISASTER SURVIVORS: SURVIVAL QUALITIES AND COPING STRATEGIES

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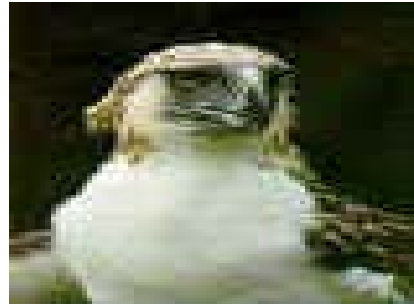
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A Little Background of the Philippines

- The Philippines is an island nation located in Southeast Asia, with Manila as its capital city.
- The Philippine Archipelago comprises 7,107 islands in the western Pacific Ocean
- The Philippines has been called the “Pearl of the Orient” because of the abundance of natural resources, from its breathtaking sights to its unique ecological structure – a reflection of the diversity of life in this part of the world. It is home to 121 and 3,200 rare and endemic species of mammals and flora, respectively, which included the world's smallest primate, the Tarsier, and the world's heaviest and second to the largest eagle, the Philippine Monkey-eating Eagle.



Wander Our Wonders

The Albay Province

- The Albay province is a paradise located in the Bicol Region of the Philippines
- Albay is filled with many natural wonders: waterfalls, caves, natural springs, beaches and marine life. The local cuisines are delectable, and for those who like to shop, there are plenty of the finest abaca handicrafts, cutleries and ceramics. The people are friendly and very hospitable.
- Home of the famous MAYON VOLCANO (former seven (7) wonders of the world).
- Very Good Tourism Industry
 - Famous Whale Shark Sighting (Butanding)
 - Man-made Water Sports Facilities
 - Beautiful Beaches
 - Rich Mountain Ranges



Reality Strikes!

- Straddling the typhoon belt, the Philippines gets hit by 15 to 20 typhoons a year. Five or six of these are serious enough to cause devastation and destruction to lives, property, and livelihood.
- Albay is one of the regions of the Philippines which has always been confronted by natural hazards like typhoons, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes and is also highly vulnerable to natural disasters as it is located within the Eastern Pacific sea board.
- Last November 2006, Albay province was struck by a large scale disaster (Typhoon Reming) where almost 1,060,875 people were affected, hundreds lost their lives and many suffered disability.
- The typhoon left ten thousand six hundred eighty three (10,683) displaced families prompting the local government to allocate approximately 500 million calamity assistance and 40 hectares of lands for shelter units of the displaced families (Philippine Daily Inquirer, Dec. 31, 2007)

*TYPHOON REMING WAS THE
GREATEST EQUALIZER
AMONG THE PEOPLE.*

THE DISASTER THAT CHANGED THE HISTORY
OF ALBAY PROVINCE



Basic Challenge for Psychosocial Professionals



• How resilient are the Bicolanos (people from Albay) in the face of disasters?
• What are their character strengths?

- How do they cope with the disasters regularly coming their way?
- What recommendations can be purported do to enhance the character strengths of the people?

Ehrenreich, John H. Coping with Disaster: A Guidebook to
Psychosocial Intervention. October 2001



“The most basic issue in psychosocial intervention during disasters is to transform those affected from being victims to survivors. What differentiates a victim from a survivor is that the former feels himself subject to a situation over which he has no control over his environment or himself, whereas a survivor has regained a sense of control and is able to meet the demands of whatever difficulty confronts him. A victim is passive and dependent upon others; a survivor is not – he is able to take an active role in efforts to help his community and himself recover from the disaster”.

Foundation



often the hardest hit when disaster strikes
they are under- represented among the poor,
often have no safety nets and are primarily responsible
for those made most vulnerable by disaster like the
children and the elderly.



Why Women?

- With the current gender and development (GAD) approaches in the social welfare programs of the country, there is growing international consensus on the need to consider gender issues in emergencies and humanitarian assistance.
- There remains a widespread conception that women and children are the primary victims of emergencies, and yet there is limited analysis of the role of social relations, specifically gender relations, in determining who suffers in emergencies and what options are available to affected individuals and communities.



In this study, the researcher investigated the survival qualities that aided the one-hundred eighty (180) women survivors of Typhoon Reming (International Code Name: Durian) in the ten (10) resettlement areas in Albay and their long-term coping strategies.

Method

- Structured Interview delivered through Pakikipagkwentuhan

Knowing the diversity of the participants in terms of their educational background, the indigenous Filipino research method known as “***Pakikipag-kwentuhan***” was applied. This indigenous method was used in collecting the data on the coping strategies adopted by the “*kalahok*” or participants as well as on their perceived personality characteristics. In this research method, the researcher engaged in a story-telling with an “*umpukan*” (group) of participants. The researcher merely served as the facilitator, while the “*kalahok*” (participants) were the ones who talked. The term “*kwento*” means to “tell a story”.

Survival Qualities



1. Religious *(Strong Faith)*

2. Persuasiveness

3. Accepting *(It may have happened to us today—but tomorrow is another day!)*

4. Cheerful *(Filipinos are one of the happiest people on earth!)*

5. Trusting *(Everything will be okay!)*

6. Giving *(There is fulfillment in giving)*

7. Wise *(Street-smart)*

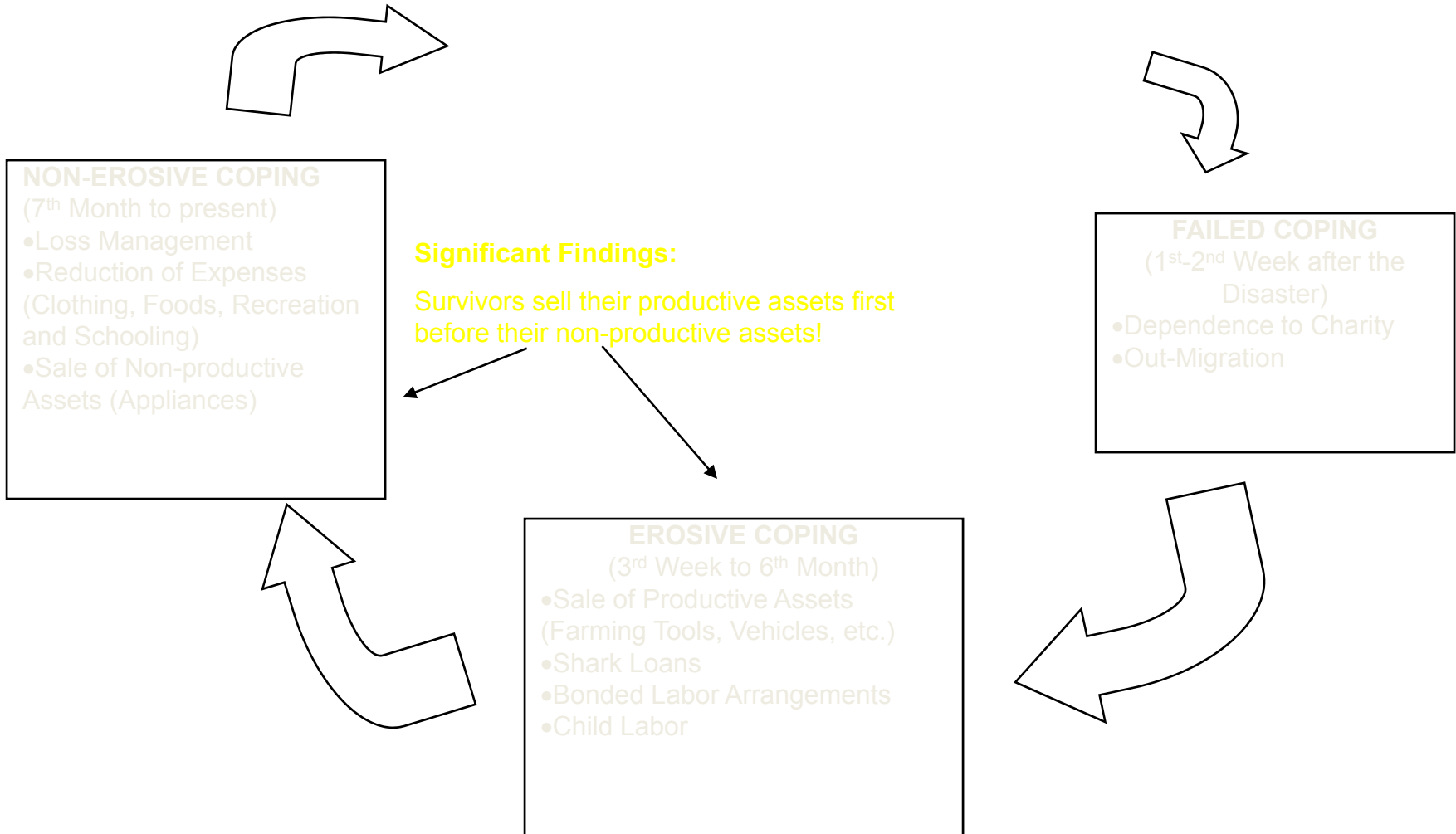
8. Patient *(“Everything will be okay even if it may take time”)*

9. Ambitious *(“We can make it happen!”)*

10. Sociable *(“Relationships are far more important than material things”)*

Coping Mechanism Diagram: The Albay Experience

LARGE SCALE DISASTER



Recommendations

- *Invest more on the **Life Skills Programs**. Beyond meeting basic needs, organizations assisting women survivors should provide culturally and effective mental-health services to help women enhance their character strengths and see how these qualities can be developed further so as to aid survivors in coping with post-traumatic stress and eventually in rebuilding lives should there be again a large scale disaster.*
- Healthy coping should be the focus of these life skills programs.

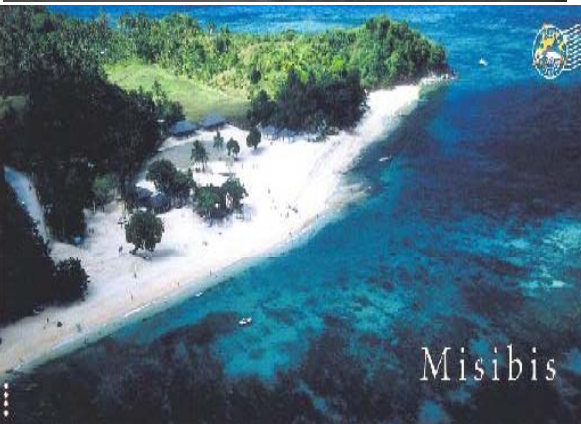
Recommendations

- *Support in increasing the women's personal capacity (capacity building) to increase their access for aids and livelihood programs so that out-migration and child labor can be prevented*
- *Community and religious leaders reflecting the demographics of affected communities should engage in planning and organizing the rebuilding process at the local level.*

Recommendations

- Foundations and other charity organizations should focus on ***support efforts to help survivors find alternative employment*** through retraining or develop other businesses and technical and financial assistance rather than dole-out relief goods.
- The massive clean-up and reconstruction operation should ***utilize the services of disaster survivors to the greatest extent possible***, providing living wages to inject much-needed cash into the family and local economy, rather than relying on out-of-state contractors utilizing labor from outside the community.

Albay Now...



Celebrating Life Amidst Tragedy!



“Filipinos live for **TODAY**, work to live, **NEVER** live to work as in many developed countries, take care of their elderly personally and as they struggle with incredible poverty remain good natured finding the simple joys of life enough to smile. **So when visiting the Philippines, do as they do SMILE, it's a beautiful life. DON'T WORRY BE HAPPY!**”

Hakuna Matata!

Maraming Salamat!