RISING WATERS & RISING INEQUALITY
FLOODING & CITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

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THE PHILIPPINES

An archipelago nation composed of more than 7,100 islands; composed of three major islands (Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao)

population of 112 million Filipino (2022); 1.35% annual average growth rate

A long history of colonization; Spanish, American, and Japanese

Part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Extremely vulnerable to climate change impacts, extreme weather events, sea level rise, water scarcity, among many others

Located along the Pacific Ring of Fire and the Typhoon Belt

Complex administration; severely weakened GDP due to the pandemic

Sources: ADB, BBC, IDMC, Climate Change Commission
The country is becoming **more urban** with Metro Manila poised to become a MEGACITY by 2030 (WEF).

**Urban population is growing:** 1.9% average growth from 2017 – 2020; 47.7% of total population is urban (World Bank); 60% of the total population lives along coastal municipalities and cities (DENR).

**Poverty has risen:** from 16.7% in 2017 to 23.7% in 2021 (PSA) roughly translating to 26.14 million Filipinos; Rising inequality, increasing lack of accessibility, and exclusion.

Climate change impacts, hazards, risks are becoming **more unpredictable, more intense, and more frequent** e.g., super typhoons, ENSO, storm surges, landslides.

Urban population are more exposed to these hazards and risks; disproportionately affecting vulnerable and marginalized groups.

**Slum development and informal settlements are increasing** due to influx of migrants/displaced; Cities have a hard time keeping up.

Life-saving programs like NOAH have been defunded by the government; Spread of misinformation, troll media; **Gaps in effective risk communication**

*Sources: WEF, World Bank, IPCC, DENR Climate Change Commission*
1.9 million population; average annual growth rate of 2.2%

Urban flooding incidents have been increasing; a multitude of reasons

Numerous land use change in the last five years from agricultural to residential/subdivisions especially in the highlands; plastic pollution; improper drainage, et al.

Urban flooding is not mentioned/addressed in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2013-2022; Comprehensive Development Plan 2018-2022
DEADLY FLOODING IN 2011

June 29, 2011 at 11 in the evening along the Matina River

One of the deadliest to hit the typhoon-free city.

Claimed 30 lives with some still missing and displaced more than 3000 families; More than 190,000 EUR in damages.

Improved the flood monitoring and response of the city.

BUT many informal communities/settlement remained/rebuilt their houses in the same place;

WHAT CHOICE DO VULNERABLE IMPOVERISHED PEOPLE HAVE IN CITIES IN FACE OF INCREASING EXPOSURE TO URBAN RISKS, INCREASING VULNERABILITIES AND ERODING RESILIENCE?

Source: SunStar Davao, MindaNews, Screencap from LIDAR Project
IDPs AT A GLANCE

- 59.1 million total IDPs in 2021
- 40.8 (2020) & 38.1 (2021) million new displacements
- 10.1 million displaced due to floods
- Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest number of new conflict displacements;
- East Asia and Pacific tallied the highest new disaster displacements
- UNHCR states that IDPs account for more than half of the global forced displacement figures in 2021
- Internal displacement is fast becoming an urbanization problem.
- Top 5 countries in 2021 are China, the Philippines, Ethiopia, India, and Dem. Rep. of Congo (DRC).

Sources: IDMC's GRID 2021, UNHCR Global Displacement
I S S U E S & C H A L L E N G E S

- ignored & invisible, especially in cities; lack of coverage or inclusion (FIELDEN, 2008)
- underrepresented in international discourse (UN OCHA, 2018)
- increasing number of displacements; unreliable and incomplete data & information (IDMC, 2021)
- climate change impacts vulnerability; high exposure to risks; displacement due to slow-onset disasters are often underdiscussed (IPCC)
- lack of research and knowledge building especially on post-displacement and highly-contextualized situations (IDMC, 2018)
- intertwine of drivers e.g. conflict-disaster nexus; displacement exacerbated by development-related drivers (IDMC, 2018)
Harassed by rebels decades ago in the mountains, fled to the coastline; via a small boat, fled to (approx. 70 km) Davao City and found shelter in an informal settlement along the coastline.

**Moved around the city multiple times – all informal settlements – until the night of June 30, 2011 where flooding swept their home and precious belongings;**

Moved to an empty land (the current relocation) without any facilities and utilities; took small jobs because of language and cultural barriers (indigenous group).

Relies on a small business and has to tend her ailing father.
Vulnerable and marginalized (e.g., extreme poor, IDPs, migrants, indigenous peoples) are pushed into informal spaces or the “fringes” of the city.

These informal spaces often are more exposed to hazards and risks due to lack of attention in terms of urban development.

Limited or lack of access to life-saving infrastructures before, during, after a crisis; the “Filipinos are resilient” mantra leads to weak support infrastructures.

Crisis pushes them out; the choices are to move to another informal area/hazard zone OR remain and rebuild in the same place.

We think it is cyclical, but I argue it is more of a downward spiral; each “cycle” lowering their quality of life and security.
RESEARCH: Examine the lived experiences of these vulnerable and marginalized groups (e.g., internal migrants, IDPs, indigenous peoples) and how they are integrated in the city; aim for a more inclusive/participatory urban processes.

POLICY: Informed policies that take into consideration recent climate information and future scenarios; policies that includes rather than excludes

COOPERATION: Most disaster responses are very city-specific but disasters ignore geopolitical boundaries; regional or intra-city coordination/cooperation has to be explored and amplified.

PLANNING & ACTION: more anticipatory, adaptive, collaborative, participatory rather than just being reactive

FRAMING OF THE CITY: Shifting paradigms of sustainable and inclusive cities from the high-tech, smart, innovative (hard) approaches to the users/inhabitants especially the disproportionately affected
DAGHANG SALAMAT

dank u wel / merci / thank you