



# **Understanding the Social Vulnerability of Children and Youth to Disasters: Practice from the Philippines**

# Content

- 1. Children and Youth as a Socially Vulnerable Group (SVG) to disasters**
- 2. Methodology for mapping social vulnerability: social indicators**
- 3. Case Study: Typhoon Haiyan and Child Laborers in the Philippines**
- 4. Key Findings**
- 5. Challenges**
- 6. Recommendations**

# Children as a SVG in disasters:

## Age

Children: Young infants, 6-11 year olds

- Dependent on caregivers/others for access to resources, livelihood, decision making, mobility and emotional support
- Highly susceptible to injuries

Adolescents

- transitioning to adulthood, often take on the role of adults

Elderly (> 65 years)

- Reduced mobility, diminishing sensory awareness, increased dependency on others, more susceptible to injuries, reduced financial income (dependency on pensions, allowances, family support)

(Fernandez et al.,2002)

## Gender

- Societal norms on gender
- Unequal access to resources by women
- Gendered division of labor
- Girls and women more susceptible to Gender Based Violence

(Enarson, 2012)

## Example

240,000 women and children/300,000 lives in the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami

- Culture of gender inequality & marginalisation, children inferior in social hierarchy
- Domestic abuse
- Limited participation in the recovery process

(Larson et al., 2008)

(Rowbottom, 2007)



**3.2 million children of 8 million persons affected by Nepal earthquake 2015**



**TABLE 7.1****Indicators of Increased Vulnerability among Children and the Elderly**

<b>Children</b>	<b>Elderly</b>
Very young (0–5 years of age)	Oldest old (85 years of age or older)
Live in a single-parent household	Frail elderly
Homeless	Poor
Poor	Chronically ill
Mentally or physically disabled	Mentally or physically disabled
Occupy older or less stable housing	Experience sensory or mobility limitations
Racial or ethnic minorities	Live alone
Pet owners	Socially isolated
Attend inadequately prepared day-care centers or schools	Renters
Lack access to social support	Occupy older or less stable housing
Have limited coping resources	Live in inadequately prepared nursing homes or senior living facilities
Reside in a hazard-prone area	Racial or ethnic minorities
	Pet owners
	Reside in a hazard-prone area

Phillips et al., 2010

# Methodology for mapping social vulnerability

## 2.1.Unpacking ‘Children’ as a SVG in disasters

### **Not all children affected equally:**

*“Instead, the age of the child intersects with other personal and social characteristics, such as his other geographic location, family structure, socioeconomic status, physical and mental ability, stage of development, and nationality, to determine the likelihood of harm in a particular disaster event.” (Peek 2010)*

- Working children (child laborers) and adolescents
- Girls
- Indigenous children
- Orphaned children, children on the streets
- Children with disabilities

## 2.2. Indicators

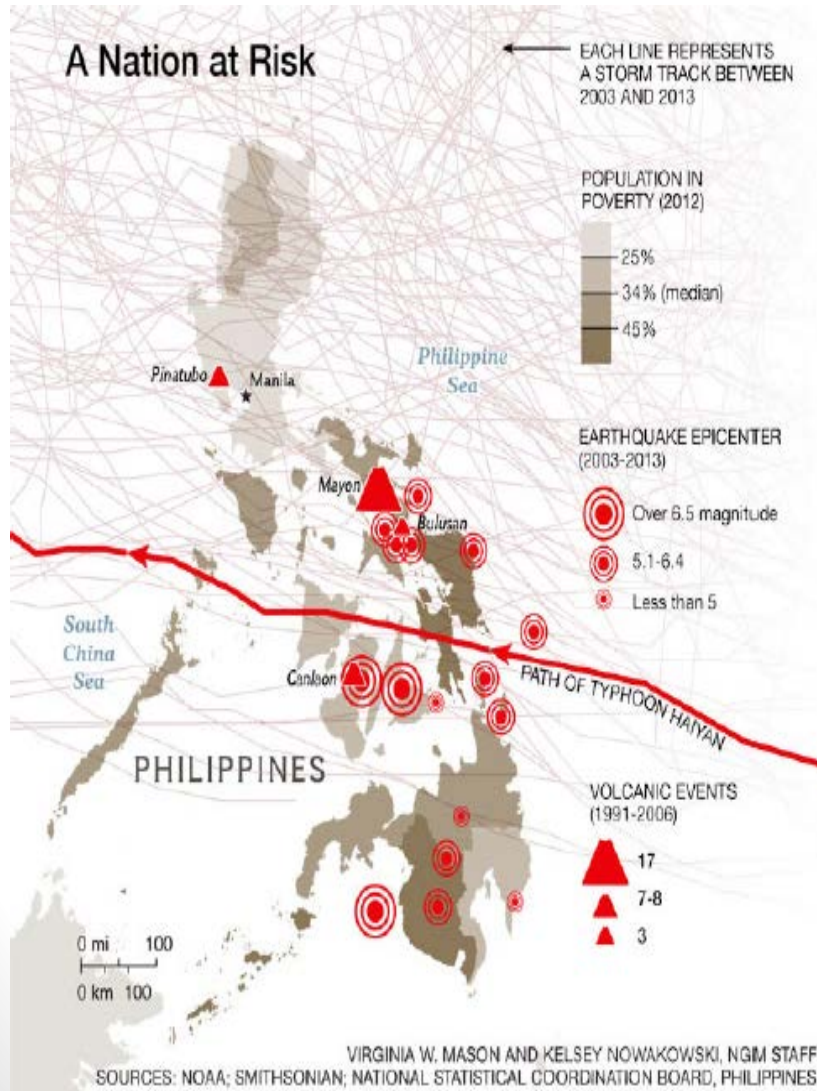
1. Socio-economic: - livelihood of caregivers (permanent/disaster-prone) & income of caregivers -access to basic services and social protection
2. Indicators of psychosocial, physical, social vulnerability of children in disaster prone settings

TABLE 5: TYPES OF VULNERABILITY

Psychosocial Vulnerability		Physical Vulnerability		Social Vulnerability	
TYPE	INFLUENCING FACTORS	TYPE	INFLUENCING FACTORS	TYPE	INFLUENCING FACTORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Emotional distress</li> <li>• Sleep Disorder</li> <li>• Somatic Complaints</li> <li>• Behavioural Problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life threat</li> <li>• Family separation</li> <li>• Death of a loved one</li> <li>• Material loss</li> <li>• Home/school damage</li> <li>• Direct exposure or media exposure to disaster</li> <li>• Child characteristics (race, age, gender, SES)</li> <li>• Poor functioning pre-disaster</li> <li>• Parental distress</li> <li>• Low levels of social support</li> <li>• Additional life stressors</li> <li>• Negative coping skills</li> <li>• Lack of coping assistance</li> <li>• Displacement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death</li> <li>• Injury</li> <li>• Illness &amp; Disease</li> <li>• Malnutrition</li> <li>• Heat Stress</li> <li>• Physical and Sexual Abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living in poor communities in hazard-prone regions</li> <li>• Living in/going to school in substandard structures</li> <li>• Loss of a parent</li> <li>• Family separation</li> <li>• Child characteristics (age, gender, SES)</li> <li>• Size, strength, stage of development</li> <li>• Poor diet</li> <li>• Parental distress</li> <li>• Unsafe/unsanitary shelter environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missed School</li> <li>• Poor academic performance</li> <li>• Delayed progress</li> <li>• Failure to complete education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destruction of school buildings</li> <li>• Displacement of students and teachers</li> <li>• Loss of vital records</li> <li>• Delayed enrollment</li> <li>• Multiple school changes</li> <li>• Family instability</li> <li>• Unwelcoming/unsupportive school environments</li> <li>• Poor academic performance pre-disaster</li> <li>• Loss of a parent</li> <li>• Increased work</li> </ul>

Source: (Peek 2001, 5)

# Case Study: Working children and Typhoon Haiyan, the Philippines



Sample:

7 barangays,  
107 participants,  
60 child laborers

**(5.492 million working children aged 5 to 17 years)**

Secondary sources: models of social vulnerability

Primary sources:

- Field Visits: Manila and Eastern Visayas (Ormoc, Tacloban, Borongan, San Julian, Oras)
- PRA tools:
  - Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions
  - Interactive exercises



# Tools



'24 hours calendar' of working children before and after the typhoon



Focus Group Discussions with caregivers, barangay in sugarcane plantations, Ormoc

# Key Findings

## Causes of Social Vulnerability of working children

### 1. Strong push and pull factors

<b>Pull factors for Child Labor in Eastern Visayas</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Piece-rate payment for daily work	1
Lure towards a higher standard of living/urban lifestyle/materialism	2
Skills development	3
Means for financing education	4
For child's own spending (personal use)	5
<b>Push factors for Child Labor in Eastern Visayas</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Poverty/Insufficient Family Income	1
Lack of alternate livelihood opportunity	2
Large family size	3
Voluntary (to support family/self)	4
Typhoon Haiyan	5
Out of school children	6



Children transporting goods from a motor boat in Barangay Cadi-an, Oras which is inaccessible by land.

2. 'Hazardous' child labor under DOLE
  - Rural: Deep sea fishing/ diving, collecting coconut lumber, manual labor in sugarcane plantations, working with pesticides
  - Urban: Market vendors, odd jobs, 'scrap-ing'/scavenging

## **Impact of Typhoon Haiyan**

### **Humanitarian:**

1. Delayed humanitarian aid
2. Neglect of child labor in Haiyan humanitarian response (Humanitarian-development divide)
3. No contingency funding
4. Lack of clarity in terms of roles of coordinating mechanisms during disasters

### **Socio-economic & Health:**

1. New forms of /Shift in child labor:
  - 'scrap-ing' of metal
  - laundry for city dwellers and humanitarian workers
  - odd city jobs,
  - Children on the streets and child beggars
2. Sexual and reproductive health concerns for adolescent and young girls between 17-22 years
3. Destruction of schools→ increased dropouts, school transfers





## On Resilience

- Community resilience: No-build zone' Barangay in Tacloban rebuilt barangay using own resources, community hall, vegetable garden, day care centre for children with volunteer teachers from the community
- Community evacuation maps
- *Beginning of culture of understanding disaster risk: family emergency kits*
- In Ormoc, taking roof off before evacuation
- Young women attested to saving money for emergencies
- Child-led governance structures active in DRR: Children's Association on Child Labor
- *Decreasing social vulnerability → personal and family safety from disaster*



## Challenges

- Unavailability of updated and precise baseline statistics on child labor
- Unavailability of post-disaster statistics and studies on child labor: Eastern Visayas/Region VIII excluded from Labor Force Survey 2014
- Access to remote areas
- Gender inequality, out-of-school children under-represented
- Categorization of work performed by adolescents



# Recommendations

1. Mainstreaming DRR into development programming
2. Context- sensitivity!
3. Identification of nodal agencies for coordination of various children's issues before, during and after disasters
4. Understanding children's perception of disaster risk:
  - From 'children as helpless victims' to 'children as individuals'
  - direct child participation in surveys
  - Research ON and WITH children
5. Adolescents!
6. Investment in disaster resilient structures (physical vulnerability): Schools!
7. Joint collaboration: Shelter- Education- Livelihood

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