

Source: Lucy Bengé. Temporary shelter post TC Winston, Navala village Western Viti Levu, Fiji Islands .



Source: Domes for the World (2007) Dome village in New Ngilepen, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Disaster as ‘Development Opportunity’

An Analysis of Institutionalized Disaster Management in the Global South

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Source: Lucy Benge, foundations of a home in Eastern Viti Levu, Fiji, destroyed during TC Winston.

Framing the Research

Disasters are understood as socio-political events.

De-naturalization leads to the mainstreaming of DRR in development and the linking of relief and development.

Disasters are attributed to local patterns of 'underdevelopment' and 'maladaptation', with little look at global accountability.

This may legitimize external interventions to address vulnerability through efforts to 'build back better', 'safer' and more 'equitably' than before.



Source: Lucy Benge. Damage to homes in Fiji following Tropical Cyclone Winston.

Guiding Questions

Part 1: Policy

How have global disaster management frameworks linked relief efforts with long-term development goals?

Part 2: Organizations

How have disasters been used as ‘opportunities’ for resilience building by external relief agencies?

Part 3: Community

How do communities use disaster events to drive long-term adaptive change?

Key Concepts

- **Building Back Better**, blends post-disaster relief with long-term development objectives, in an effort to reduce vulnerability to disaster and increase the safety, resilience and adaptive capacity of communities (Clinton, 2006).
- **Resilience** “The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase this capacity for learning from past disasters for *better future protection* and to *improve* risk reduction measures” (Hyogo Framework, 2005, p. 4)
- **Adaptation** “Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits *beneficial opportunities*” (IPCC, 2014, p. 5).

Part 1: Critical Discourse Analysis

Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (1994)

- DRR mainstreamed into development
- Emphasis on 'human progress' and 'vulnerability reduction'
- Vulnerability understood as physical exposure to hazards
- Promoted risk awareness through training, education and technical support to create a global 'culture of prevention'

Hyogo Framework for Action (2005)

- Resilience building through education
- Prevention starts in the recovery phase
- Disasters become 'windows of opportunity' for development , adaptation and best practice

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015)

- Recognizes multiple risk factors and drivers
- People centered approach, recognizing need diversity
- 'Building back better' to reduce long-term risk

Part 2: Externally Driven Attempts at 'Building Back Better'



Source: Lucy Bengé. New Ngelepen village, Yogyakarta, reconstructed by 'Domes for the World' following the 2007 Java earthquake.

Part 3: Community Driven Approaches to Adaptation in Fiji



Recovery and Adaptation



Source: Andreas Neef. Community members reconstruct their homes following repeated flooding in Votua village, Viti Levu, Fiji.

Part 3: Community Driven Approaches to Adaptation in Cambodia



Better-off households can build higher homes



Better-off HHs can buy land elsewhere



Better-off HHs can build refuge areas for livestock



Communal refuge area in Phrek Prasob commune

Source: Andreas Neef. Long term DRR strategies in Prek Prasob Province, Cambodia.

Findings: Can (or 'should') disasters be used as opportunities for development?

- At the **policy level** this depends on who and what is the focus of 'improvement' – the development model or the 'under-developed'?
- At the **organization level** this depends on the ability for external actors to recognize the intersection of physical, cultural, social, economic and political risk factors, and the different ways these risks are understood, when implementing projects with long-term impacts.
- At the **community level** this depends on the ability for *all* stakeholders to meaningfully participate in implementing long-term change that is in-line with their own visions of 'success' or 'improvement'.

Concluding Remarks

- Need to **re-politicize**: to look at how disasters might challenge status quo models of development and engage new ideas or alternatives.
- Need to **re-contextualize**: to place more emphasis on local strategies of linking disaster recovery with development, and to move towards the Sendai framework's 'people-centered' approach.