

## Exploring Challenges and Opportunities of Livelihood Recovery for Post-Typhoon Resettlers in Catbalogan City



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**ABSTRACT:** This study explored the lived experiences of post-typhoon resettlement in Barangay Payao, Catbalogan City, Samar, Philippines. Ten participants were interviewed to understand the challenges they faced and how they coped with them. The findings revealed that the relocation site's distance from the city center created difficulties in transportation, limited job opportunities, and disrupted social networks. Despite these challenges, the resettlers demonstrated resilience by finding alternative sources of income and adapting their skills. The study recommends that policymakers prioritize resettling communities closer to economic hubs and invest in infrastructure and support programs that address the resettlers' specific needs, such as skills training and access to healthcare. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of collaboration among resettled individuals, local authorities, and future researchers. Resettled individuals should actively voice their needs, while local governments should fulfill promises made during relocation and prioritize infrastructure development, particularly reliable transportation. Finally, the study offers recommendations for future research on resettlement programs, including exploring the role of resettlement agencies and the impact of social support networks on resettlers' well-being.

**KEYWORDS:** Post-typhoon Resettlement, Livelihood Challenges, Resettlement Policy, Resettlement Programs, Livelihood Recovery

### I. INTRODUCTION

While resettlement presents an opportunity for community recovery after disaster and climate displacement, previous studies have highlighted potential drawbacks of resettlement, including the disruption of existing social networks and community cohesion due to separation (Cernea, 1997; Robinson, 2003). This underscores the importance of considering both the opportunities and challenges associated with resettlement, and the need for strategies that address the social structure alongside physical and economic aspects.

This paper examines the challenges and opportunities faced by post-typhoon resettlers in Barangay Payao, Catbalogan City, Philippines, located in the Eastern Visayas region. It delves into the impact of resettlement on livelihoods, social networks, and community cohesion, considering the legal and policy frameworks governing such initiatives in the Philippines. The study highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach to resettlement that encompasses housing, access to services, economic opportunities, and the preservation of social structures, while adhering to relevant legal provisions.

By examining the experiences of resettlers, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the implications of disaster-related resettlement and provides valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to improve resettlement strategies. The study sought to ascertain the lived experiences of post-typhoon resettlers in Catbalogan City concerning their livelihood renewal.

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To address the previously mentioned issue, the researchers sought to answer the following:

1. What are the challenges faced by a post-typhoon resettled household in terms of livelihood?
2. How do these challenges faced by post-typhoon resettlers impact their opportunities for livelihood?
3. What are the coping mechanisms used by post-typhoon resettlers to address the challenges?

### II. METHOD

This research employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of post-typhoon resettlers in Barangay Payao, Catbalogan City, Philippines. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The data was analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step methodology.

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Colaizzi's seven-step methodology was employed to analyze the interview data. This approach involved: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) identifying significant statements, (3) formulating meanings, (4) clustering themes, (5) developing an exhaustive description, (6) producing a fundamental structure, and (7) seeking verification of the fundamental structure. Through this rigorous analysis, the researchers were able to identify key themes related to the challenges and opportunities faced by resettlers, such as economic hardship, social isolation, and resilience

Through the phenomenological lens, the research explored participants' perceptions of their resettlement experiences, including the challenges they encountered in terms of livelihood, housing, and social integration. This revealed the significant impacts of resettlement on livelihoods, housing, and social relationships and how participants reported difficulties in finding suitable employment, accessing adequate housing, and maintaining social connections in their new communities.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study, using a transcendental phenomenological approach, delves into the lived experiences of typhoon resettlers regarding their livelihoods. These insights into the lived experiences of the resettled population offer valuable information. Not only do they highlight the unique challenges faced by these individuals, but they also showcase their resourcefulness and adaptability. This information can be used by policymakers to improve future resettlement programs and better support the livelihoods of those affected by disasters.

The relocation, particularly due to distance, presents unique challenges: transportation difficulties, increased housing costs, and limited economic opportunities which are highly felt by those running small businesses or previously employed in city centers, as they now face long commutes and additional transportation expenses. This study reveals the harsh realities faced by typhoon resettlers in restarting their livelihoods. New locations which are from their original communities, create a critical need for reliable and affordable transportation. Unfortunately, such infrastructure is frequently lacking, forcing resettlers to rely on expensive or unreliable options. This financial burden adds to the existing strain on their resources. The relocation also disrupts the existing skillsets of the resettled population.

The new environment offered limited job opportunities that don't match their previous experience. This mismatch, coupled with the distance to potential markets, leads to job losses and decreased income. However, despite these significant challenges, the resettlers demonstrate remarkable resilience. They explore alternative sources of income, showcasing the importance of social networks, physical resources, and their own skills for building sustainable livelihoods. However, their attempts, particularly through micro-businesses, face limitations. Customers who rely on credit create difficulties in establishing a steady income stream. This highlights the limitations of theoretical frameworks when external factors, like credit reliance, hinder adaptation.

The study also discovered rarely discussed aspects of resettlement such as the hidden costs which resettlers struggled with limited food budget, lack of basic utilities and self-directed efforts in fixing their houses. Furthermore, the study also found unmet promises of government support which are only good at first and worst, other promised programs were unfulfilled that leads to broken trust in these systems that diminish hope and motivation, hindering their ability to recover in the new environment.

Generally, this emphasizes the importance of incorporating the resettlers' perspectives into future programs. They express a desire for specific support programs, including financial and health subsidies, government-backed business opportunities, and skills training initiatives. By involving them in decision-making processes, policymakers can develop more effective relocation programs that address the unique challenges faced by resettled communities. Furthermore, resettlement programs should not simply offer hope through promises. Instead, they should be faithfully implemented, reflecting the true intentions outlined in the initial proposals presented to the resettled communities. This highlights that local government and policymakers require revisiting and ensuring that promises of resources and programs are well-delivered.

### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Distance and a lack of job opportunities disrupt the livelihoods of resettlers. Relocation often pushes them far from their original communities, creating transportation difficulties. This burden is especially heavy for those who previously ran small businesses or worked in city centers. New locations often have limited job opportunities that mismatch the survivors' existing skills. This mismatch forces them to take lower-paying jobs or lose their jobs altogether. The study emphasizes that these challenges are particularly harsh for those who built livelihoods around social networks or local markets in their original communities. Furthermore, distance weakens their social capital. Scattered survivors lose access to shared resources, knowledge and other support that their previous area provided. This lack of social capital makes it even harder to find new jobs, start businesses, and address the challenges of restarting their lives. This calls the need for better infrastructure and support programs that consider the relocatees' skills and experiences. By incorporating their perspectives on desired assistance, policymakers can design programs that offer financial aid, skills training, and business opportunities intended to their needs. This not only empowers the participant to recover their lives but also promotes resilience in the face of future calamities.

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