



Disaster Impacts on Human Capital Accumulation Shown in the Typhoon Haiyan Case

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School children and their school environment are increasingly exposed to all kinds of hazards. Many disaster events have shown the extent of disaster impacts on the education sector which this study also highlights in the Typhoon Haiyan Case. Disasters do not only cause loss of lives or damage to educational facilities, they also entail significant economic and social consequences on human capital development in the short and long-run. While the trend of short term disaster impact can easily be analyzed in rapid post disaster assessments taking destroyed assets as proxy, usually analyses of medium and long-term effects of disasters include large inherent uncertainties and are of less tangible nature, require more time and complex methods and can often not give comprehensive results. The consequences of disasters especially in developing countries are therefore to a certain extent often left unknown. Generally, economic and social effects of disasters on human capital seem to be ambiguous and to some degree these effects are related to economic, social and institutional well-being. Thus, clear understanding is crucial to interpret its complex effects on human capital accumulation. This essential nature of medium and long-term effects has not been reflected in many analyses. Focus has mostly been given on the extent of physical damage, displacements, lives and assets lost instead of targeting resilience of social and economic characteristics of communities in terms of preventing human capital accumulation disruption.

Main objective of this study is to provide a conceptual framework illustrating the impacts of disasters on schooling which might help in assessing such effects, as one of the fundamental components of human capital accumulation (Ozceylan Aubrecht, 2013). The dimensions of human capital building and its relationship to disasters under the light of past disaster events are discussed with a special focus on the recent Typhoon Haiyan that struck the Philippines in November 2013.

Natural disasters adversely affect human capital accumulation in several ways including loss of life, damage to the educational system, decreased educational quality, increased child labor, and associated high dropout rates. Another dimension closely related to the human capital is the reduced economic strength of families that can limit the expenditures on well-being, including education, health and food (child malnutrition) (Baez et al., 2010; Cuaresma, 2010). According to information provided by UN and international media approximately 6 million children were affected by Typhoon Haiyan with 1.4 million homes of children and their families destroyed and 1.8 million children displaced. About 90% of the school buildings in the affected region were damaged and schools therefore stayed closed for up to 2 months causing disruption for more than a million pupils and 34,000 teachers. In some areas, when school returned to operation, only half of the school kids reported back. Also for the other pupils the situation was still challenging with many of the prior basic educational resources affected (destroyed textbooks and learning material, damaged classrooms) and no own equipment available (books, pens, etc.). Those reported impacts have already interrupted the educational continuity and it is expected to further continue by adversely affecting human capital accumulation in the longer term.

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References:

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