



Research Results 2023/2024

Climate Change, Human (Im)mobilities, and Resilience



About the logo

The RACPA logo is a stylized 'R' depicting a person, or persons, exhorting others to join them. The letter R's legs suggest people walking alongside each other in the same direction, representing movement and change, as well as community and accompaniment. The letter R's counter—the curved stroke—suggests an arm raised in a gesture of invitation. Beneath it is a yellow circle, like a human head illuminated with insight derived from science and from lived experience.

The colors of the logo make the anthropomorphized R more than human: The yellow and light blue above represent the sun and the sky; the greens in the middle, land and mountains; and the darker blues below, the sea and oceans. This suggests that we humans are inseparable from our environment and planet, and from the other creatures with which we share them.

The logo was designed by Maria Cecilia De Jesus.

Front cover photos

- (1) Abandoned fishing boat near the East Flood Canal in Semarang City, Central Java, Indonesia. (Photo: Cathy Torres)
- (2) Nocnocan Island, Talibon Municipality, Bohol, Philippines (Photo: Irene Gapay)
- (3) Rice paddies that had been turned to fish ponds in Karang Tarub, Wonoagung Village, Demak Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. (Photo: Elise Arya Chen)



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Background

Research and Advocacy for Climate Policy and Action (RACPA) is a five-year project designed to better understand the climate change and human (im)mobility nexus in the context of coastal and island communities. Through advocacy efforts geared toward government and other duty-bearers and actors that are informed by this improved understanding, it hopes to pave the way for more responsive policies that would help coastal and island communities increase their climate resilience.

The project, supported by the Australian Government through Caritas Australia, takes as its starting point three communities in Indonesia and the Philippines, two archipelagic countries in Southeast Asia that are deemed among the most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change.

The first year of the project, from July 2023 to June 2024, focused on gauging and deepening community understanding of climate change and displacement. Through participatory action research, evidence based on lived experience was gathered using a household survey and community

mapping, and complemented with key informant interviews with technical and policy experts.

A consortium comprised of Jesuit Refugee Service Asia Pacific (JRSAP), Environmental Science for Social Change (ESSC), and the Institute for Social Research, Democracy and Social Justice (Percik Institute) accompanied the community research teams throughout the research process, from preparatory training to data gathering, to results analysis, all the way to the presentation of findings to key stakeholders.

This regional report summarizes the initial results of these research activities, as well as of interviews and dialogues conducted by ESSC and Percik with key stakeholders from the national and local government, civil society, and the academe.

Insights from the findings will be validated and enriched through further research by the consortium in Year 2 of the project, using interviews, focus group discussions and multi-stakeholder forums. They will also underpin further community empowerment activities, including the preparation of community adaptation plans and implementation of small-scale community resilience projects.



Note: The contents of this report do not necessarily represent the views of the project donors.

The interplay of climate and environmental hazards, exposure, and vulnerability of communities and ecosystems could generate risks to them (IPCC, *ibid*), including the risk of displacement. However, displacement is only one part of the spectrum of human (im)mobilities that could arise in the face of climate change, with migration, planned relocation, and acquiescent immobility being examples of other forms ([Schewel 2019](#)).

Along this spectrum, displacement tends to be perceived as a “failure to adapt” and can be understood as a form of loss and damage associated with climate change ([Advisory Group 2022](#)), while planned relocation and resettlement are increasingly recognized as climate adaptation measures that also contribute to climate resiliency among communities ([UNHCR 2015](#)).

In understanding the drivers and motivations of individuals’, households’ and communities’ decision to move or stay, the focus tends to be on economic factors, such as material assets and livelihoods, with non-economic factors, such as affective and cultural attributes related to place attachment, being relatively less explored.

This project’s research framework brings these different concepts together in order to understand the adaptive responses of communities facing high risk of internal displacement due to climate change and disasters, and the policy environment, affective and cultural attributes, and local knowledge, attitudes and practices impacting their response.

Methodology

Household Survey

The RACPA household survey was administered between December 2023 and February 2024 in two sites in Indonesia and one in the Philippines, selected in view of their coastal or small island setting and observed vulnerability to climate change-related hazards and disasters.

A hundred (100) households each in Tambakrejo Village, Tanjung Mas Ward, North Semarang District (Semarang City) and in Wonoagung Village, Karangtengah Subdistrict (Demak District), both in Central Java, Indonesia, were surveyed by enumerators using a pen-and-paper format. Meanwhile, in Nocnocan Island, Talibon Municipality, Bohol Province, Philippines, enumerators administered the survey to 347 respondents using Kobo Toolbox.

The survey was designed to explore the relationship between climate change impacts and human (im)mobility, including both economic and non-economic drivers and factors that influence the vulnerability, as well as the resiliency, of individuals, households, and communities. The survey also sought to understand perceptions and experiences of climate change, extreme weather

events, disaster response, mitigation and adaptation, and migration and displacement.

At each study location, data collection was carried out by a team consisting of between 5 and 13 community researchers, more than half of whom were women. These researchers were selected using criteria that sought to balance qualifications with diversity and inclusion. Training was conducted to build their capacity on research enumeration, including adherence to data privacy and security, and to help them understand the relevance of the research to their communities, as well as its broader context. The survey instrument was developed by the consortium and pilot-tested with the community researchers to ground-truth the questions and responses. A common instrument was used for both the Indonesian and Philippine sites to enable comparative analysis.

Community researchers administer the survey in Nocnocan Island.



Methodology

Community Mapping

Community Mapping is an essential tool to better understand the changes in physical characteristics of an area and changes in the views of those who inhabit it. It is also a tool to empower a community by recognizing and documenting in spatial form their knowledge and lived experience in relation to technical information used by government and other policy influencers. This likewise encourages the community to have a sense of responsibility and ownership in planning and managing the area.

A phased hybrid approach was used wherein Phase 1 entailed online sessions to orient RACPA consortium partners on the ESSC method for community mapping, level off on the specific contexts of the three focus communities, and prepare for field visits.

Phase 2 included the following sub-activities, mostly conducted through field visits: 1) transect walk; 2) focus group discussion; 3) community mapping workshop; 4) integration of community sketch maps with technical maps; 5) validation of technically-integrated community maps; 6) presentation of final output to the community. A more detailed description of each of these sub-activities may be found in Annex A .

Nocnocan community members show their validated community maps.



Wonoagung village residents validate their community map.



Methodology

Key Informant Interviews and Dialogues



Stakeholders from government and civil society attend the Bohol provincial forum.

Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to (1) identify and review policies at various governance levels on responding to the impacts of climate change in coastal areas and remote islands, and (2) verify and deepen the findings from the household survey and community mapping.

Aspects explored through KII include (a) policymakers' perspectives on climate change and human (im)mobility; (b) coastal and island communities' particular vulnerability and adaptation strategies; (c) the rationale and development strategies of concerned policy institutions; (d) GEDSI considerations in climate change adaptation policies and human (im)mobility; and (e) progress and remaining challenges in implementing relevant policies at the sub-regional and national levels.

The KIIs were undertaken in various contexts, and involved conversations with government personnel, community leaders and members, and civil society representatives.

Policy dialogues were also conducted at the provincial and national levels. On 10 October 2023, 'COPEhan: A Philippine Conversation on COP28' was organized by ESSC to discuss how to contribute a Philippine voice to the global climate dialogue. On 13 March 2024, a Bohol Provincial Forum engaged the provincial, municipal, and barangay (village) governments as well as the academe, civil society, and the church diocese on climate vulnerability and resilience in island and coastal contexts, drawing on the particular experience of Nocnocan Island, as surfaced in the household survey and community mapping.

Faith-based organizations and religious leaders were among those who joined the forum in Semarang. (Photo: Elise Arya Chen)



Meanwhile, on 31 May 2024, ESSC hosted ‘A Conversation on Climate Vulnerability and Mobility of Communities in Island Barangays: Reckoning with a 3-degree C warming—How can Philippine island barangays prepare?’

The forum saw a spirited exchange among the participants, including representatives of the Climate Change Commission and other national government agencies, as well as civil society organizations working on climate change and human (im)mobility issues.

Vital to the conversation was the participation of four Noconocan community researchers, and four local government officials from Talibon Municipality and Bohol Province, fresh from their learning exchange visit to Central Java, Indonesia. Other community representatives attended from a climate change-affected community in Valenzuela, Metro Manila.

A multistakeholder forum was likewise organized by Percik Institute on 29 May 2024 in Semarang during the Bohol-Central Java Learning Exchange Visit.

During the forum, representatives from the three communities shared key results from the household survey and community mapping in their respective communities, while guests from another community, Tambak Mulyo, shared about the One Family, One Mangrove initiative being implemented in their community in response to tidal flooding. Representatives from government, the academe, and civil society, including religious leaders, were likewise present to share initiatives and insights from their own sectors.

On 5 June 2024, a policy dialogue at the provincial level, in the form of an FGD, was organized by Percik Institute and the National and Political Unity Agency (Bakesbangpol) of Central Java on the theme Climate Change, Human Mobility and Human Security.



A national roundtable discussion in Jakarta sought to bridge outsider-insider perspectives.

The FGD opened with remarks from the Director of Percik and the Head of Bakesbangpol Central Java, followed by the sharing of the temporary findings of the Percik Institute study. This activity involved Central Java Provincial Government representatives, civil society actors, and scholar-activists. The FGD focused on the relationship between climate change and environmental, economic, social, political and demographic changes (population migration process).

Policymakers at the Central Java provincial level were invited to better understand that climate change and its impacts have posed a new threat to human security in the form of the loss of cultural values and knowledge that are important for the welfare of communities and individuals. Human security, in the context of climate change, is understood as a condition that occurs when the core of human life is protected, and when people have the freedom and capacity to live with dignity.

The results of the discussion at the provincial level were then presented in the National Roundtable Discussion 'Climate Vulnerability and Climate Migration Risks' organized by Percik Institute with the Research Center for Social Welfare, Villages and Connectivity of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) on 11 June 2024. The event was attended by representatives of Indonesian ministries and national government agencies, NGOs working in environmental and disaster management, and the two communities, Tambakrejo and Wonoagung. The representatives of Tambakrejo and Wonoagung shared their vulnerability situation and adaptation strategies. The roundtable format and composition were chosen with the aim of bringing together outsider and insider perspectives.

A key recognition came out of the discussions, that climate change is an ongoing fact that has a serious impact on the environment, economy, society, culture, and (im)mobility of affected communities. Thus, rapid action is needed, with various stakeholders collaborating to formulate and implement risk reduction measures and adaptation strategies. In addition, it is important to develop national policies and regulations that support sustainable development.

Results

Indonesia: Tambakrejo

Tambakrejo is an urban hutment situated on the north coast of Semarang City, which is the capital of Central Java Province, and near the large industrial area of Tanjung Emas Port and PT PLN Indonesia Power, as well as the largest train station in Central Java.

Tambakrejo is surrounded by water on three sides: the Java Sea to the north, the East Flood Canal and the Banger River to the east, and the now inactive Mati River to the west.

Climate Change and Vulnerability

Tambakrejo is affected by land subsidence and sea level rise. Beginning around July 1993, tidal waters have entered the area as a result of reclamation and land subsidence due to the drilling of artesian wells. In the 2000s, public facilities such as cemeteries, football fields, and residents' fishponds were lost to flooding and land abrasion, and since 2010, tidal floods and sea waves have become a regular part of residents' lives.

Environmental changes in the area have been gradual, brought about not only by climate change but also by development around the village and the behavior of local residents. For instance, the past decades have seen the mass cutting of mangroves to make way for fish ponds ('tambak' in the hutment's name means 'pond'), and in 2020, the government built an embankment along the East Flood Canal as part of a so-called 'river normalization' project, resulting in the death of the Banger River. Household waste disposal practices of residents, particularly of plastic and solid waste, have also contributed to the degradation of the environment.

Tambakrejo's residents must regularly raise their houses to outstrip land subsidence.



Adaptation Strategy

Tambakrejo's residents are looking to the sea embankment (sea belt) construction project of the government to overcome these problems. In the last few years, the construction of the sea belt has been carried out by the Pemali Juana River Basin Center (BBWS) under the control of the PUPR Ministry. The sea belt construction also includes Tambak Mulyo (previously Tambak Lorok), an area in Tanjung Mas Village experiencing similar conditions to Tambakrejo. For the residents of Tambak Mulyo, the sea embankment, accompanied by mangroves—an example of so-called gray-green architecture, has been helpful in dealing with the tidal floods.

The 'river normalization' of East Flood Canal displaced a fishing community.



Mobility and (Im)mobility

Even as they recognize that they live in an area prone to hazards and disasters, the majority of Tambakrejo's residents (82 percent) do not want to move to other areas that might be safer. The main reasons cited for not wanting to move were family ties (41 percent) and livelihood (33 percent). Twelve (12) percent said they had nowhere to move, while six (6) percent each reported that they were held back by the cost of moving or that they are happy with their current life. The reluctance of residents to relocate can be seen from the survey finding that only eight (8) percent of respondents have family members who have moved elsewhere in the last 10 years.

Meanwhile, the factors that encourage residents to move or plan to move include damage to their residence, securing a better job, and marrying someone from outside the village. Such spontaneous resettlement was undertaken by some residents of RT 5 whose houses were damaged by sea waves. As a result, they were forced to move to another RT within Tambakrejo, or to live outside the village in other parts of Semarang City. Currently, RT 5 has only 40 families still living there, although some of the residents who have moved out still retain their livelihoods in Tambakrejo.

Among those forced to move, their attachment to the sea, and dependence on it, remain an influential factor in deciding where to move, with most hoping to relocate somewhere close to the sea. This was illustrated by the experience of residents of RT 6 Tambakrejo. Formerly dwelling along the East Flood Canal, they

were forced to move because their settlement was destroyed by the river normalization project. Through a long process involving the Central Java provincial government and activists from civil society, they were granted temporary housing close to their original settlement by the government in 2019.

Gender and (Im)mobility: Tambakrejo

Female respondents in Tambakrejo played a significant role in their families' decision whether to move or not. For those who have remained in the area in spite of its vulnerability, the reasons cited were a) family ties (41 percent); b) livelihood (35 percent); c) no place to move (11 percent), d) moving costs (8 percent); and e) feeling happy with where they are now (5 percent).

Family ties and livelihood are two important factors for deciding not to move on which both women and men in Tambakrejo agree. However, it would appear that family is more of a factor for women to remain than it is for men, with 56 percent of female respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would probably move if not for their families, compared with 47 percent of male respondents.

Meanwhile, whereas more women expressed total agreement that they have fond memories of the place (18 percent of female respondents and 11 percent of male respondents) and are comfortable living there (27 percent of female respondents and 22 percent of male respondents), more men were in complete agreement that Tambakrejo is important to them than women (24 percent versus 16 percent). This perceived importance of the place by men could possibly stem from its link to their livelihood, mainly fishing, because men tend to be the main breadwinner of their families.

Indonesia: Wonoagung

Wonoagung is a rural village with many households engaged in rice or fish farming. Unlike Tambakrejo, which is on the sea front, Wonoagung is situated 5 kilometers away from Glagah Wangi Beach, Istanbul (Tambakbulusan Village).

In spite of this distance from the coast, most of the agricultural land in Wonoagung has been flooded and turned into ponds as a result of rainwater or tidal water collecting and unable to flow back to the sea. This is due to, among other factors, the disappearance of small rivers that used to channel water to larger rivers (Sipon B7 River and Tuntang River). Another factor is silting at the mouth of the Sipon B7 River, where the river flows into the sea, in Tambakbulusan Village. As a result, river water is prevented from flowing to the sea and is instead diverted to residential areas and rice fields.

Climate Change and Vulnerability

The three hamlets in Wonoagung most affected by flooding are Karangtarub Hamlet, Wonodadi Lor, and Wonodadi Kidul, all three of which directly border the Sipon B7 River. Rob (tidal flooding) also occurs in two other hamlets, namely Mandiagung and Bagung. In Mandiagung, a small portion of agricultural land can still be planted with rice but most of the land has been turned to freshwater ponds. Meanwhile, in Bagung Hamlet, only a small section of land is affected by tidal/salt water intrusion and most of it has remained as rice paddies.

Rob has been observed in Wonoagung over the past few decades. It was a gradual process with Karangtarub Hamlet being the first hamlet to be affected. In 1973, rice fields in Karangtarub could still be planted with rice and produced good harvests. Twenty years later, the rice fields were affected by flooding, damaging rice plants and causing failed harvests. Since then, the majority of Karangtarub residents have switched their livelihood to pond farming. Although a few residents still work on rain-fed agricultural land, the change in livelihood was ultimately carried out by a majority of the village's residents.

Flooding and salt water intrusion forced villagers to turn rice paddies to fish ponds. (Photo: Elise Arya Chen)



Water is a vital asset for both rice farmers and pond farmers and this has led to conflicts of interest in the village. The Village Government has created a policy to overcome such conflicts of interest between fishpond farmers and paddy field farmers that occur due to changes in hydrogeomorphology. Since 2005, an agreement has been made between rice farmers and pond farmers to divide the flow of the Sipon B7 River into two. This division was effected at the Sipon B7 River floodgate on the connecting bridge between Wonodadi Kidul and Wonodadi Lor hamlets over the B7 river: The water flowing to the west of the sluice gate is salt water while that flowing to the east is fresh water.

Adaptation Strategy

The condition of areas experiencing tidal flooding in Wonoagung varies. According to the household survey, 44 percent of respondents often experience flooding, 34 percent experience it sometimes, 20 percent, rarely, and 2 percent have never experienced flooding. Even though only two hamlets are particularly prone to flooding (Wonodadi Kidul and Wonodadi Lor), their location on the main village road means the impact is felt beyond them, by majority of Wonoagung Village residents, including in terms of employment, education, and the broader economy.

This shared experience has helped create a sense of community and solidarity in the village with residents discussing the building of embankments as a possible communal response to prevent flooding even as they repair and renovate their homes individually. The household survey showed these two responses being carried out in parallel, with 19 percent of respondents reporting deploying each solution. Other responses include the planting of mangroves and other trees, temporary evacuation, having an emergency evacuation plan, and joining mitigation groups. The option of moving permanently was identified as a last resort.

Economic Resilience

Changes in environmental conditions have had a major influence on the transformation of the livelihoods of village residents. Agriculture, which used to be the dominant occupation of the community, has been replaced by wage labor and aquaculture. As seen from the household survey, 41 percent of the respondents now work as laborers and 8 percent are employed in fish cultivation, as compared with the 6 percent who remain in agriculture. The precarity of agricultural work in the village appears to have prompted residents to seek jobs that provide a stable, even if modest, income. According to the household survey,

63 percent of respondents earned wages slightly higher than the minimum wage for Demak Regency, while 37 percent lived below the minimum wage and could be classified as poor.

Changing land use from rice production to aquaculture entails adaptation and capital. In some cases, only those with prior experience in fisheries are capable of making the transition, something that has had an impact on economic inequality in the village. Younger residents prefer to work in factories that have cropped up near the village in line with industrialization policies. Some respondents still invest in agriculture, continuing to farm with the help of agricultural subsidies. Fishing (at sea), on the other hand, has not been widely taken up as an alternative livelihood by residents.

Mobility and (Im)mobility

Environmental changes and vulnerabilities have become common knowledge among the people of Wonoagung. Survey data shows that a majority (80 percent) of respondents are worried about the environmental conditions of their village. As many as 69 percent of respondents were worried about losing their place of residence, and 11 percent were worried about losing their livelihood. However, the majority of respondents (84 percent) answered that they would



The village is considering turning its mangrove-lined river into an ecotourism draw.

still live there, and only 16 percent expressed the desire to move. The same trend was observed in regard to the question, "Would you advise the younger generation to migrate?"

Residents' decision to move or to remain could be traced to various reasons. For respondents who did not want to move, the main reasons given were strong ties to family (73 percent) and livelihood (13 percent). Other reasons were that they do not have enough resources to move (5 percent), do not have another place to move to (4 percent), or were content with life in the village (5 percent). Meanwhile, those opting to move cited marriage to someone from outside the village and getting a job outside the village as the reasons for doing so.

Based on the household survey, family attachment and cultural reasons are the dominant factors for not moving. The majority of respondents have lived in Wonoagung for more than 10 years, an average of two generations (78 percent), and have their own assets (89 percent).

Does losing their livelihood really drive people to move? From the survey data, it can be seen that livelihoods were affected by land changes due to flooding, where 36 percent reported that they have lost their livelihood, 23 percent have lost quite a lot of it, and 23 percent have

lost a little of it, while only 18 percent were unaffected, likely due to having alternative jobs.

In spite of these livelihood losses, the decision to move permanently was a last resort. Most respondents (84%) said they would stay in the village, and only 16% wanted to move. The majority of residents who do not want to move are also reluctant to encourage the younger generation to move. Residents who wished to move if they had the economic means and somewhere else to live were more open to encouraging younger people to move to a better place.

Gender and (Im)mobility: Wonoagung

Female and male respondents alike in Wonoagung cited family ties as the primary reason, by far, for them not to move (77 percent and 70 percent, respectively). They then diverge on the other reasons for remaining in the village. For women, the second reason cited is the lack of a place to move to (9 percent), followed by livelihood and moving costs (6 percent each), and finally, because they are happy where they are (2 percent). For the men, the second reason cited is their livelihood (19 percent), followed by being happy where they are (8 percent), and moving costs (4 percent). None of the men cited not having a place to move to as a reason for not moving. Interestingly, 26 percent of male respondents, compared with 17 percent of female respondents, expressed either strong or total agreement that they would probably move to another place if not for their families.

The relative importance for men of livelihood as a reason for remaining in Wonoagung was also apparent in their answer to the question “My bond with this place is diminished when my livelihood here is lost,” with 77 percent of the male respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement, compared with 53 percent of female respondents.

Results

Philippines: Nocnocan Island

Nocnocan Island is an island barangay (village) under Talibon Municipality in Bohol Province. With an estimated land area of 4.1 hectares, it is situated some 19 kilometers northeast, or between 45 minutes' to an hour's boat ride, from the Talibon town center. Nocnocan has a population of 2,147 people living in 415 households, based on 2024 figures, making it among the most densely populated rural villages in the country, with a population density of 524 persons per hectare. Being the smallest and farthest island under the municipality of Talibon, access to social services from the government is a challenge for its population.

Climate Change and Vulnerability

The island's small size and location makes it vulnerable to the elements. Based on the community mapping, 175 houses were washed out, and 152 others damaged, after the onslaught of Typhoon Rai (Odette), a Category-5-equivalent super typhoon that made landfall in December 2021, and is considered the second costliest typhoon in Philippine history (USD 1.05 billion),



Nocnocan Island is one of the most densely populated rural villages in the country.

behind Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Sea level rise linked to climate change is expected to heighten Nocnocan's vulnerability, with a [Climate Central](#) projection showing two-thirds of the island's land area underwater at high tide by 2050.

Community members report significant feelings of insecurity or fear in the face of climate change, with this being the top impact of extreme weather events mentioned in the household survey. This was followed by loss of livelihood (fishing is the main source of income for more than half of households), though, overall, social or non-economic impacts (loss of communications, disruption of religious and social activities) figured higher than economic impacts reported by respondents (house damage, loss of savings, loss of valuables, etc.).

Adaptation Strategy

Survey results show that house repair is the largest non-food expense on average, even two years after Typhoon Rai damaged over two-thirds of the houses. To recover and adapt, residents reinforced roofs (68 percent), house foundation (58 percent), and walls (57 percent). Many households are implementing these measures through their own resources (72 percent) and some assistance from government, family, relatives, neighbors, religious groups and other civil society organizations. Forty percent have taken out loans.

Were it not for the damage from Typhoon Rai, education would have been the largest average monthly expense of households in Nocnocan. Coupled with the finding that 60 percent of the respondents encourage the next generation to migrate to other places, this suggests that the people of the island view education as a long-term adaptation strategy for future generations.

Mobility and Immobility

In the face of insecurity amid climate and environmental change, majority of the island's residents intended to stay put. Family ties and livelihood are major considerations, with 67 percent of survey respondents living on the island because of family ties (born to parents living on the island or there by marriage) and 33 percent living there because of their livelihood. These are also the two main factors, albeit in reverse order—livelihood first, then family ties—for people to continue staying in the island in the face of environmental disasters like Typhoon Rai.

But lack of capacity to move also appears to be a factor, with those thinking of moving increasing by 19 percent if they would have the means to do so. The openness to moving among the community is also shown by the survey finding that 49 percent of respondents have relatives or friends who had moved out of the island, and that 60 percent of respondents would advise the younger generations to move elsewhere.

The island only has an elementary school. Children travel to the neighboring island or the mainland for secondary school and higher.





Gender, Age, Disability: Nocnocan

Livelihood is the top reason for remaining in Nocnocan for both women and men, but beyond this, motivations diverge. Men are in Nocnocan more by choice than are women: more than twice as many men than women say they remain in Nocnocan because they are happy there; five times more women than men said they remain in Nocnocan because their family is there.

Male-headed households in Nocnocan are significantly more reliant on fishing than female-headed households, while female-headed households are 3 times as likely as male-headed households to rely on small businesses. Pension is a key source of income for female-headed households (15 percent), but not for male-headed ones.

Women from Nocnocan are more than twice as likely as men to think about migrating in the future, while female heads of household are more than 3 times as likely as male heads of household to think of moving. The effect of having the means on considering migration is more significant for men than for women.

Age-wise, thoughts of migrating out of the island follow a bell curve vis-à-vis age. It is lower among younger people and the elderly, and peaks around the mid-30s to mid-40s. Meanwhile, the increased likelihood of thinking about migration if one acquires the capacity to do so is most pronounced among young people and the elderly.

Finally, persons with disability (PWDs) are 9 percent less likely than the general population to think of moving out of Nocnocan Island. Even with the means to do so, they are 6 percent less likely to migrate than the general population. However, the increase among those who would migrate if they have the capacity is slightly higher among them (by 3 percentage points) than for the general population.

Analysis

Family ties are the primary reason why people continue to live and stay in their communities.

As with many Asian cultures, Filipino and Indonesian families have traditionally tended to be close-knit and to live in multi-generational households. Though customs are gradually changing, many children still remain with or near their parents even when they reach the age of majority. Among the implications this may have for climate change and human (im)mobility is that people might be more likely to consider moving if they are able to bring their family members with them. Also, those who move are likely to remain within a certain distance of their family in order to maintain their close ties.



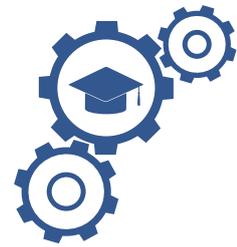
Livelihood is another key reason for people to stay amid climate risk and vulnerability, but its importance differs for men and women.

The survey findings suggest that women and women-headed households are less dependent on the island/coastal setting for their livelihood than men and households headed by men. In Nocnocan, women-headed households have more diverse income sources, with an equal number of households deriving income from fisheries as from small businesses and salaried employment together. In comparison, 86 percent of male-headed households in Nocnocan derive income from fisheries. Meanwhile, in Wonoagung, 24 percent more men than women agreed that their bond with their village would be diminished if they lost their livelihood.



The communities invest in the education of the young, possibly seeing it as a resilience-building measure, including in terms of mobility.

It is notable that while school tuition fees are free until middle school in Indonesia and until high school in the Philippines, education nonetheless figured as the top- and second-ranked non-food expense for the communities in the two countries, respectively. The finding that 60 percent of survey respondents in Nocnocan Island would encourage the younger generation to move out of the island suggests one possible reason for this: education could enhance young people's prospects for employment outside of the island. In Wonoagung, too, the younger generations are increasingly finding work outside of the village, mainly in factories, contributing to their community's shift away from agriculture.



Small islands like Nocnocan offer residents fewer options to diversify their livelihood and sources of income than coastal communities, making leaving more attractive.

Because of its small size and distance from the mainland, Nocnocan does not offer its residents the same options that residents of Wonoagung and Tambakrejo have, to regularly commute to work in nearby towns or cities. In Nocnocan, this would be expensive and time-consuming, even unsafe depending on tidal conditions. Moreover, its small size and the limits this imposes on population growth is an added challenge for growing the customer base of a business. The economic strain that could result from these limited livelihood prospects likely makes the choice between staying and moving more stark for the residents of a small, remote island like Nocnocan, and might account for why its population appears to be more open to moving than those of Tambakrejo and Wonoagung.



Government-led disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation (DRR CCA) efforts in the two countries are at varying levels of advancement, and there is room to better address the climate change-human (im)mobility nexus in both.



The Philippines has different policies and documents that address the climate change-human (im)mobility nexus. These include the Climate Change Act which was translated into the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2011-2028, the country's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act which led the creation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2020-2030.

The NCCAP has a desired immediate outcome relating to climate change-adaptive human settlements of vulnerable communities and “climate refugees,” while the NDRRMP highlights building disaster-resilient human settlements as part of prevention and mitigation and plans for building-back-better as part of recovery and rehabilitation. It is worth noting that where human (im)mobility is mentioned in the Philippines government's climate change policies, the focus is heavily on evacuation, forced evacuation, and pre-emptive evacuation which would still infer a reactive approach rather than having a proactive focus on planned resettlement of vulnerable communities.

Although there is an established National Resettlement Policy Framework (NRPF) for informal settler families (ISFs) and other displaced persons in need of resettlement due to natural or human-induced calamities, emergencies or crises, there are challenges on availability of land, administratively complicated processes for land acquisition, and community acceptance of resettlement plans and programs.

In the case of Indonesia, a number of achievements have been reported, such as in the field of policy regulation. In 1994, the central government ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Law 6/1994), and in 2016, the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Law No. 16 of 2016). In addition, climate-resilient development has become one of the sixth national priorities in the Presidential Regulation on the National Medium-Term Development Plan

(RPJMN) 2020–2024, namely building the environment, increasing disaster resilience, and climate change. The priority sectors where climate resilience will be increased are the sea, coastal sector, water sector, and health sector.

At the regional level, the Central Java Provincial Government prepared in 2023 a Regional Climate Adaptation Action Plan (RAD-API). Previously, in 2019, the Semarang City Government had also prepared a RAD-API. Meanwhile, the Demak Regency government is working on its own action plan. This document was prepared by the regional government (worked on by the development planning agency at the sub-national level) with NGOs and university scholars. The aim is to assess climate vulnerabilities, formulate adaptation plans to be more focused, and craft guidelines for short-term, medium-term, and long-term programs. Through these, it is hoped that vulnerable groups could be protected, economic losses avoided, and disruptions to the achievement of national and regional development goals due to climate change impacts deterred.

However, until now, Indonesia has not had a law to control climate change as a sustainable policy instrument. As a result, efforts to deal with climate change and its impacts are still carried out sectorally. According to the NGO Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL), regulations related to climate change are still limited to Presidential Regulation Number 98 of 2021 concerning the Economic Value of Carbon, thus focusing on mitigation rather than adaptation.

Another challenge is the quality of coordination and cooperation between the central government and provincial, district, and city governments. The majority of all action plans and programs related to climate change are made at the national level, and program implementation is often hampered at the local government level, where the technical capacity of local officials needs to be strengthened, in addition to limited budgeting aspects. A number of these challenges have also resulted in neglect to deal with the phenomenon of human (im)mobility due to the impacts of the climate crisis.

As with the Philippines, where the climate change-human (im)mobility nexus is treated, the focus is on displacement resulting from sudden or rapid-onset disasters and fails to explore the spectrum of human (im)mobilities arising from climate and environmental change, including voluntary (acquiescent) and involuntary immobility, migration, and planned relocation or retreat.



Recommendations: Policy

Consider women, and especially women-headed households, as a priority group for advocacy and support when it comes to mobility/relocation.



Women in Nocnocan Island

This is in light of the finding that women are at least twice more likely than men to think of migrating, are more constrained by the cost of moving, and have more ‘portable’ sources of income—meaning not specifically tied to the geographic characteristics of the place where they live. Relocating individuals, households, and communities is a difficult endeavor, and starting with the low-hanging fruits could potentially yield success stories that could support future advocacy and efforts. Furthermore, livelihood risk from climate change has been seen to be higher among low-income, young, women-headed households (IPCC 2022).

Support individual and household resilience efforts, such as those in the area of livelihood, so people have a real option to move to safer areas.

The research finding—to be further investigated in Year 2—that livelihood could be an “immobilizing” factor in the face of climate risk suggests that supporting individuals, households, and communities in finding alternative or diversified sources of income could increase the likelihood that people would move. If community members have other skill sets that are not tied to a particular geography or setting, the way fishing is, for example, they will have other options to move away if their usual place of work and residence is threatened. This recommendation is easier to apply prospectively, for younger generations, who have yet to choose their livelihood or career. The importance given by the communities to their children’s education, and the resources they invest in it, could be complemented with government, private sector, and civil society support, for instance by offering scholarships for children from families dependent on fishing to pursue other professions.

Fish drying in Tambakrejo



Create and implement environmental protection policies and programs that sufficiently take into account the livelihood of communities.

An example of this would be managing fish breeding areas and marine protected areas in a way that balances the promotion and protection of marine biodiversity with helping to sustain the livelihood of fisherfolk. The need for subsistence and survival could lead some people to disregard well-intended environmental regulations, such as those against illegal fishing practices. No amount of awareness-raising and behavior change campaigns would succeed in convincing people to embrace more environment-friendly practices unless they meaningfully coincide, if not completely align, with their personal needs and interests.

Another example of this would be the preservation of mangroves in Wonoagung. Some community members have proposed the removal of the mangroves planted along the river in order to make way for a concrete or soil embankment, however, an ecotourism project proposed by the village leadership, that would bring people on boat tours along the mangrove-lined river, has prompted a rethinking of their removal.

Redefine danger areas to include those that are susceptible to disasters and climate change impacts, including slow-onset ones.

This will require a major shift in land use planning, including identifying “no-build zones” and working with the concept of ‘presumed mobility’ in the local government’s zoning. This will likewise guide local government units in their evacuation protocols, including identifying communities and households that need to be evacuated. Examples from countries at different stages of development suggest that traditional zoning approaches work best when supported by governance systems that enable land use policies for climate adaptation that “preclude negative human-nature interactions and that curb spatial inequity” (IPCC 2022).



Tidal floods in early 2024 damaged the leisure area in this mangrove plantation in Tambakrejo.
(Photo: Elise Arya Chen)

Recommendations: Advocacy

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs to be better prioritized in disaster response and recovery, especially in the wake of major sudden-onset disasters.



Rainbow, with Nocnocan Island visible at the end

The psychosocial impact of climate change and environmental disasters is gradually receiving increased attention, including as a component of non-economic loss and damage. However, it continues to take a backseat to primary concerns such as shelter, food, and WASH in immediate disaster response, and might not be sufficiently addressed even during recovery and rebuilding. The need for MHPSS is shown by the significance of fear and anxiety as a reported impact among the accompanied communities. This is particularly pronounced for Nocnocan, and suggests that MHPSS is especially necessary in the wake of sudden-onset extreme weather events like supertyphoons, such as Typhoon Rai, which devastated Nocnocan Island in December 2021.

Access to water and sanitation in island and coastal communities should be seen as a human right that is equally demandable as the right to health.

Although access to water and sanitation has been recognized by the United Nations as a human right that is fundamental to everyone's health, dignity and prosperity, there are still many island and coastal communities who have limited access to safe water and sanitation facilities.

Whereas Nocnocan Island in the Philippines is surrounded by sea water, its residents have limited access to fresh water for drinking and sanitation. They rely on rainwater to get freshwater, however, due to long dry spells during El Niño, some resort to



Traditional jars used to store rainwater in Nocnocan Island

buying water from the mainland at a significant premium, out of their already limited earnings (Note: A new desalination plant was inaugurated in Cataban, a neighboring island of Nocnocan, in May 2024 and is hoped to reduce the cost of drinking water for Nocnocan's residents). Wastewater and solid waste management is another challenge for the residents.

In Tambakrejo and Wonoagung, too, waste management is an issue, as is access to clean drinking water, as tidal flooding brings debris and marine litter while simultaneously infiltrating pipelines with saltwater. Moreover, the water table of these coastal areas has been declining, leading to land subsidence due to over-extraction of underground water.

These issues are set to worsen with sea level rise and periods of extreme heat and drought, underscoring the importance of linking climate change advocacy efforts with these and other human development issues.



Marine litter tangled on mangrove roots in Tambakrejo. Locals try to clean up the area, only to have more trash wash up.

Transform financial systems by establishing equitable financial flows of the Loss and Damage fund for climate vulnerable communities.

Significant headway has been made last year towards the operationalization of a loss and damage fund to support climate adaptation by the hardest hit but least culpable communities and countries. However, it remains very much to be seen how effective the fund would be, with contributions so far falling far below what is needed to make a dent. The lived experiences of communities such as Tambakrejo, Wonoagung, and Nocnocan in Indonesia and the Philippines clearly document some of the most salient economic and non-economic losses and damages sustained by coastal and small island communities. Opportunities to join these pieces of evidence to those from other similarly situated communities by means of regional and global advocacy platforms would be vital in ensuring accountability from the World Bank, as host and trustee, and from the fund board and donors, so the fund could deliver on its expressed objectives.

Areas for Further Study/Exploration

The complexity of the subject of climate change and human (im)mobility means that for every question the research answers, another is raised. While recognizing the urgency of climate action and the need to resist being bogged down by the desire to obtain “definitive” findings on climate change and human (im)mobility, the consortium will continue to investigate the following questions in the second year (July 2024 to June 2025) of the project:

What could be gleaned about climate change and human (im)mobility from the experiences of those who had moved out of the communities researched?

The household survey and community mapping were conducted among those who have remained in the three communities, and could, thus, not provide a full picture of human (im)mobility in these communities. Where those who have moved were included in the research, these were those who have moved within the village, as in the case of those living in RT6 of Tambakrejo following their eviction from the riverside. In the case of Nocnocan, while a majority of the residents remained on the island following Typhoon Rai, there are reports of some who left. The perspectives of these individuals would be important to include to further substantiate the findings on human (im)mobility.

What do the reported psychosocial effects of climate change impacts mean for individual, household, and community resilience?

In determining this, various protective/preventive factors, including resilience and other individual coping strategies in the face of adverse situations, may be identified and may be adopted for post-disaster intervention techniques and holistic rehabilitation of affected populations.

Along with this, it is recommended to also explore and determine the factor or influence of spirituality, faith and religion on how communities handle the impacts of climate change and climate-induced disasters or the possible role of faith-based interventions in the planning process and to aid recovery and rehabilitation.

How do the gendered dynamics of livelihood affect individual, household, and community resilience?

The survey finding that livelihood is a bigger consideration for men in deciding to remain in place in the face of climate risk could be unpacked further to understand the reasons for this. It is easy to assume that the reason is primarily economic, especially since men tend to be the main breadwinner for a majority of the households in the communities studied.

However, livelihood can be more than a source of income; for some, it could also be a source of identity, dignity, and pride, for example. This subject is particularly important to investigate in Nocnocan, where most of the survey respondents, and all the community researchers, were women, possibly affecting the extent to which the research has been able to elicit the views of the men in the community.

How can persons with disability be better supported to have a genuine choice to stay or move?

While it is possible to hazard a guess why persons with disability are less likely to think of moving than the general population in the face of climate change impacts (eg. certain disabilities pose a barrier to economic participation, meaning fewer available resources for moving), it is vital to understand the particular constraints they face and the support they require in order to have a meaningful choice to stay or move, by hearing directly from them. Disability is a “risk multiplier” and persons with disability tend to be worse impacted by natural hazards and disasters, including those linked to climate change ([UNDRR 2023](#))

How this plays out in the coastal and island communities accompanied by RACPA would be important to understand better as the project gradually moves toward supporting the communities in crafting their adaptation plans.



Annexes

Annex A: Detailed community mapping methodology

Community Mapping is one of the essential tools to better understand the changes in physical characteristics of the area and changes in the views of those who live in a particular place. It is also a tool to empower a community by recognizing and spatially documenting their knowledge and experience in relation to technical information used by government and other policy influencers. This likewise encourages the community to have a sense of responsibility and ownership in planning the area.

A phased hybrid approach was used wherein Phase 1 entailed online sessions to orient RACPA consortium partners on the ESSC method for community mapping, level off on the specific contexts of the three focus communities, and prepare for field visits. Phase 2 included the following sub-activities, mostly conducted through field visits: 1) transect walk; 2) focus group discussion; 3) community mapping workshop; 4) integration of community sketch maps with technical maps; 5) validation of technically-integrated community maps; 6) presentation of final output to the community.

1 TRANSECT WALK	The activity involves walking between two points to intentionally cross or transect a community together with the local people. The objective is to explore environmental and social resources, conditions and systems by observing, asking, listening, and looking at the reality of daily life in the community.
2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS	This activity is conducted after the transect walk and prior to the community mapping workshop. The aim is to identify community baseline knowledge including on climate change and hazard reference events. Both the transect walk and focus group discussion help to tailor the guide questions, method and procedure to the specific context of the community, and surface hazard reference events on which the community mapping activity can be anchored.

3

COMMUNITY MAPPING WORKSHOP

This activity enables the community to map their experience from a selected flood hazard reference event, including identification of their vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities. This involves a facilitator who encourages community members to do a large sketch map reflecting their sub-village boundaries, features of interest for disaster risk management (e.g., evacuation facilities, flood walls), and land uses (i.e., houses, schools, mosques, open areas, markets, transport terminals, other public infrastructure, commercial areas, etc.). They are also asked to map the areas affected by the identified flood event, as well as safe areas. The output is a community sketch map of flood exposure, vulnerability and adaptive capacity.

4

INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY SKETCH MAPS WITH GEOREFERENCED DATA SETS

This is a desk-based activity wherein ESSC overlays sketch maps resulting from community mapping workshops with scientific spatial data (e.g. satellite/drone images, topographic maps) through a method called “rubber sheeting.” The output is a draft integrated community map for technical analysis and community validation.

5

VALIDATION OF DRAFT INTEGRATED COMMUNITY MAPS

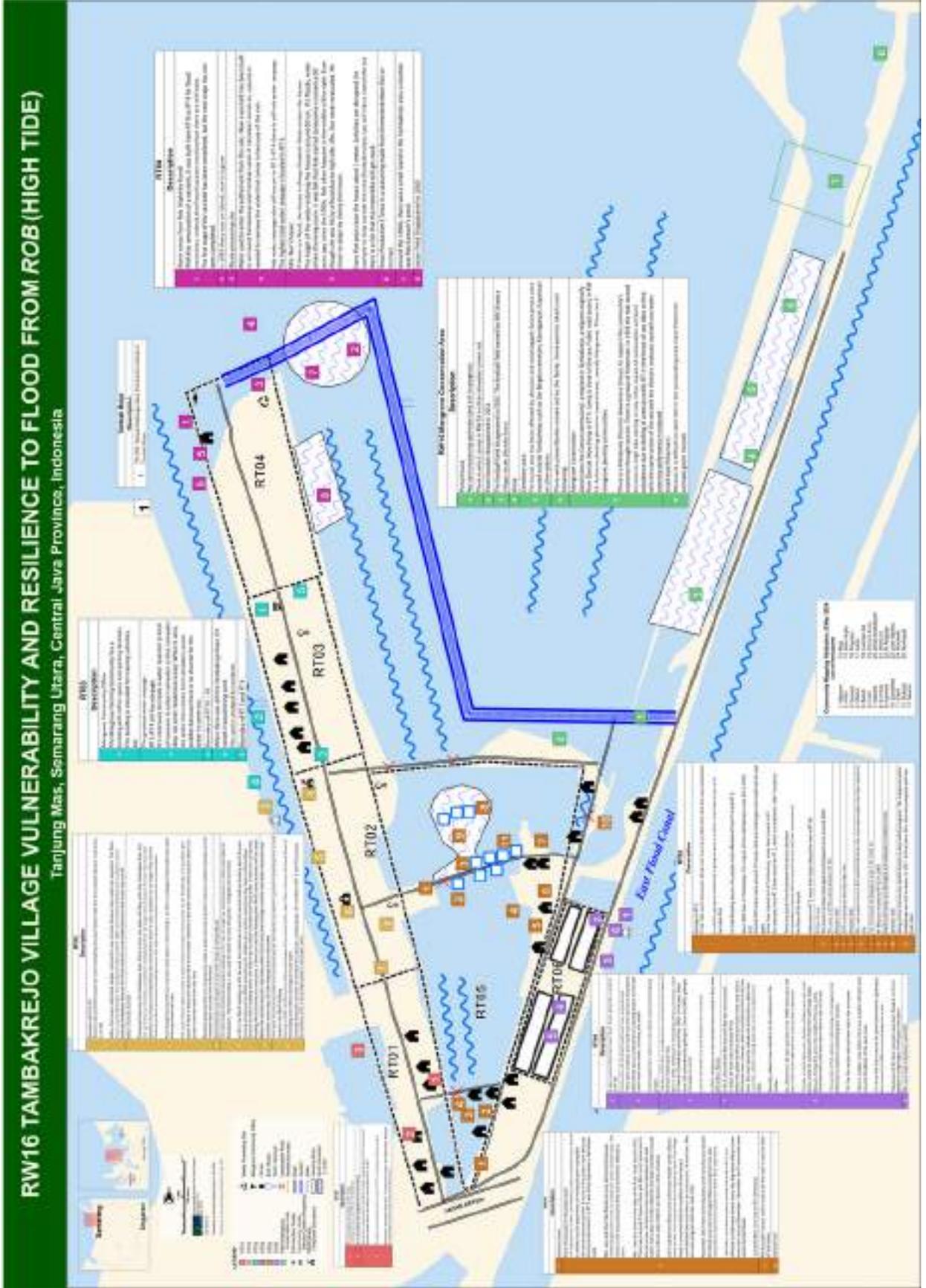
The activity involves going back to the community to validate the draft integrated community map with selected community mapping workshop participants and local leaders where necessary. The draft map is updated based on feedback from the community.

6

FINAL PRESENTATION OF MAPS

The validated map is presented to the community and other relevant stakeholders.

Annex B.1: Community Map of Tambakrejo (Indonesia)



Annex B.3: Community Map of Nocnocan (Philippines)



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Who We Are



The Jesuit Refugee Service Asia Pacific (JRSAP) is an international Catholic organization with a mission to accompany, serve, and advocate on

behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, that they may heal, learn, and determine their own future. Its work expresses the commitment of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) to stand with refugees around the world.

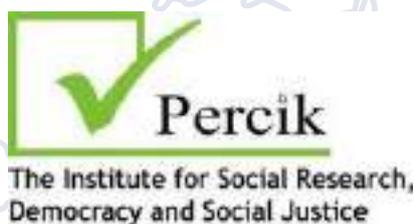
JRS programs are currently found in 56 countries, serving refugees and other forcibly displaced persons in conflict zones and detention centers, on remote borders and in busy cities, including in the Asia Pacific.



ESSC is a Jesuit research and training institute based in the Philippines, that promotes environmental sustainability and social justice by integrating scientific methodologies and social processes.

ESSC networks across the Asia Pacific region in moving an agenda of science for sustainability. ESSC also contributes to building scientific capacity that engenders people's commitment and integrity to see the changes emerge and develop and enables discernment of our life in the world with a deeper human spirit.

RACPA builds on risk and vulnerability assessment methods that the ESSC developed and implemented through prior projects under its Disaster Risk Reduction Program.



Percik Institute is an independent institution devoted to social research, democracy, and social justice. It was established in Salatiga in 1997 by

Indonesian anthropologists and social activists in Central Java. Percik Institute's projects and programs are guided by its three pillars of research, advocacy, and reflection in promoting social change and local democracy.

In 2022-2023, Percik completed a research project on Water Management and Ecoreligious Awareness in collaboration with the Netherland Indonesia Consortium on Religious and Interfaith Relation on ecological awareness.

