



World Vision provides immediate relief to affected families in Bohol (Photo credits: World Vision)

Happy new year! We are pleased to bring you the fourth issue of Beyond Relief!

In our **Feature Article**, Lina Gong writes about the need to adapt humanitarian practices to new environments and constraints. The sector needs to reform, adapt and innovate to prepare for much more complex and uncertain futures.

This issue's **On the Ground** features some of the relief and fundraising efforts that Singaporean humanitarian organisations - Mercy Relief, Singapore Red Cross, World Vision Singapore - have undertaken.

Our members in academia have also continued to publish articles and reports, covering a diverse range of topics including humanitarian financing, future-ready humanitarian action, and perceptions of COVID-19 risks. One highlight is the ASEAN Disaster Resilience Outlook: Preparing for

a Future Beyond 2025, which assesses the prospects for realising the ASEAN Vision 2025 on disaster management and anticipates the action needed to prepare ASEAN for disaster risks in the decade after 2025.

As always, **In the Spotlight** features a whole host of upcoming events and opportunities for collaboration.

Finally, we welcome your ideas, feedback and input and look forward to supporting joint efforts in research, networking and knowledge sharing. Do get in touch with either Christopher (christopherchen@ntu.edu.sg) or Al (iscook@ntu.edu.sg).



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FEATURE ARTICLE

Adapting Humanitarian Practices to New Environments

By Lina Gong, Research Fellow,

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Photo credits: Martin Michlmayr via Wikimedia Commons

The international humanitarian community started the new year with the response to the volcano eruption and the subsequent tsunami in [Tonga](#) on 15th January 2022. While foreign governments and international humanitarian organisations swiftly offered assistance, international relief efforts were constrained by the pandemic, as the Tongan government tried to prevent the spread of [COVID-19](#) in the country amid the delivery of international humanitarian aid.

The case of Tonga reflects a major challenge in humanitarian action since the outbreak of COVID-19 – [reduced access](#) to the communities in need of humanitarian assistance. Due to international travel bans, deployment of international humanitarian workers has been curtailed, and in some cases national responses have been affected as well because of domestic lockdown, particularly in the early days of the pandemic. In October 2020, several Southeast Asian countries were hit by successive tropical storms and deadly floods. The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster

management (AHA Centre), the leading regional actor in disaster management in Southeast Asia, was not able to deploy its assessment team as usual owing to border closures. These incidences point to the need for humanitarian organisations to adapt to the growing complexity of humanitarian situations.

One solution that international humanitarian organisations adopt in the pandemic is remote humanitarian programming. [Remote programming](#) enables foreign relief organisations to connect to communities in need without being physically present, with the facilitation of local organisations. Remote programming is not new to the humanitarian community, as international humanitarian organisations started to adopt this modality of assistance in the 1990s in situations with heightening security risks. The most recent example is [contactless aid](#) to Tonga in the past few weeks. International agencies and foreign governments sent in emergency relief aid but not personnel to avoid bringing COVID-19 to Tonga, and local authorities and

groups managed the relief efforts on the ground.

The increased use of remote humanitarian programming in the pandemic is adaptation of humanitarian organisations to restrictions caused by the pandemic and highlights the need to support the growth of local relief groups which play [key](#) roles in remote programming. Partnerships between international and local humanitarian actors should allow more space for the local partners in decision-making and strategic planning, as experience has shown that [local leadership](#) is beneficial for humanitarian action.

The concurrence of the pandemic and the double disasters in Tonga serves as a reminder that disasters and crises in the next decade and longer future are likely to grow significantly in magnitude, frequency and complexity. Such possibilities highlight the importance for institutions with humanitarian roles and responsibilities to reform, adapt and innovate to prepare for much more complex and uncertain futures.

ON THE GROUND

Mercy Relief Gives to Typhoon Rai Victims



Photo credits: Mercy Relief

On 16 December 2021, Typhoon Rai made first landfall on Siargao before going on to make eight more landfalls across various provinces in the Philippines.

The typhoon, named Odette by locals, was the first Category 5-equivalent super typhoon to hit the Philippines since Nock-ten in 2016. Violent winds, floods and storms surged across the 11 regions and affected the lives of at least 8 million people in its wake. Families lost their homes; some lost loved ones among the 405 deaths reported. Livelihoods were destroyed. A month after the disaster, survivors continue to struggle. Access to food and clean water remains limited, and with 1.4 million damaged houses, many of them still live in temporary shelters.

In response to the destruction created by the typhoon, Mercy Relief worked closely with local non-government organisation

Citizens' Disaster Response Center (CDRC) to identify the communities who are in dire straits and to address their immediate basic needs. Together with Disaster Response Center (DIRECT), relief supplies, which included dried food items and hygiene kits, were distributed to 400 disaster-hit families in Barangays Luna and Manjagao in Surigao City on 4 and 9 January respectively.

Mercy Relief also organised a month-long fundraising campaign from 23 December 2021 to 23 January 2022. With the help of Singaporean charity Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation (RLAF), the campaign raised \$70,000, which will go towards recovery efforts in affected communities.

Singapore Red Cross Supports Communities Affected by Floods in Malaysia and Typhoon Rai in the Philippines



Photo credits: Singapore Red Cross

In response to the climate emergencies in Malaysia and the Philippines, the Singapore Red Cross (SRC) pledged US\$100,000 in

humanitarian aid (US\$50,000 respectively) to the Malaysian Red Crescent and the Philippine Red Cross, in support of their ongoing relief efforts. The homegrown humanitarian organisation also launched public appeals, where funds raised would go towards the relief and recovery of affected communities, with a focus on emergency healthcare, first aid assistance and distribution of hygiene kits, shelter tool kits, tarpaulins, hot meals, clothes, mats, blankets, surgical masks to evacuation centres.

In the Philippines, Singapore Red Cross will also support a local organisation to distribute relief items including water, rice, groceries to 1,000 households across six communities in

need of support. Psychological first aid is also provided in evacuation centres to affected persons.

The Singapore Red Cross has also activated its "Restoring Family Links" (RFL) service to assist Singapore residents to locate their immediate family members who may have been affected by the disasters with whom they have difficulty in contacting.

For assistance, please contact SRC at rfl@redcross.sg.

Journeying With Survivors Before, During, and After Typhoon Rai



Photo credits: Martin Michlmayr via Wikimedia Commons

Typhoon Rai (local name Odette) barreled into the southern and central coast of the Philippines on 16 December 2021, bringing torrential rains, violent winds, landslides, and storm surges, making nine landfalls in seven provinces. Leaving a wake of massive destruction in its path, the typhoon reignited

many Filipinos' unforgotten memories of the lethal Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

In the immediate aftermath of the typhoon, World Vision was on the ground providing timely aid to families who were left in despair due to one of the strongest storms of 2021. Through the support of local and international donors, over 10,900 children in the Provinces of Cebu, Bohol, Negros Occidental, Southern Leyte and Surigao del Norte were supported with shelter, warm blankets, clean drinking water, food rations, hygiene kits, and more to protect themselves.

Over the years, World Vision has been helping to increase the resilience of the local communities vulnerable to disasters. Previously, in Bohol, World Vision had provided training in disaster risk reduction, equipped families with first aid kits,

installed early warning systems, and trained community responders, amongst other interventions. These initiatives have enabled the local community members to stand stronger against the frequent typhoons, like Typhoon Rai.

Moving forward, World Vision will continue providing relevant interventions like improving livelihoods to journey with Typhoon Rai survivors to full recovery.

Learn [more](#) on how World Vision builds resilience among children and their families before, during and after disasters.

ON THE GROUND

Combating Climate Change Through Sustainable Agriculture and Green Products



Photo credits: Freepik

Development and humanitarian practitioners have long been advocating to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to build disaster resilience in a

sustainable way. To this end, World Vision Singapore is actively journeying alongside the indigenous community of North Cotabato in the Philippines to combat climate change and disasters.

North Cotabato is susceptible to disasters like typhoons and flooding. However, the local farming community in the area holds a viable solution to the climate change issues we are facing today—abaca. The abaca plant absorbs carbon dioxide and its water-holding capacity prevents soil erosion, landslides, and floods, protecting the local community from disasters. Additionally, abaca fibers can be used to make biodegradable products like textiles, bags, and more—reducing the

(plastic) wastes produced by daily mankind activities.

This year, World Vision will be actively conducting Environment Protection and Climate Change Adaptation knowledge sharing as well as training the local community in environmentally-friendly farming practices. Families will also receive quality Abaca seeds for planting and training will be given so they can also produce eco-friendly products for supplementary income.

Learn [more](#) about World Vision's ongoing efforts to fight the impact of climate change on vulnerable children.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

News Articles and Commentaries

Is ASEAN Ready for the Disasters of Tomorrow?

Alistair D. B. Cook and Christopher Chen
The Diplomat
8 October 2021
Click [here](#) to read more.

Financing ASEAN Disaster Management and Resilience

Lina Gong and S. Nanthini
East Asia Forum
4 November 2021
Click [here](#) to read more.

HADR as a Diplomatic Tool in Southeast Asia-China Relations amid Changing Security Dynamics

Lina Gong
Asia Peace Programme Essays
3 December 2021
Click [here](#) to read more.

Future-ready Humanitarian Action: Strategic Resilience in a Post-Covid World

Christopher Chen
IDSS Paper
16 December 2021
Click [here](#) to read more.

Journal Articles

Nature-Based Solutions for Flood Risk Reduction: A Probabilistic Modeling Framework

David Lallemant, Perrine Hamel, Mariano Balbi, Tian Ning Lim, Rafael Schmitt, and Shelly Win
One Earth, 4, September, 2021
Click [here](#) to read more (open access).

Humanitarian Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific: Part I

Alistair D. B. Cook and Lina Gong
Asian Journal of Comparative Politics, 6(3), September, 2021
Click [here](#) to read more (open access).

Asia's Looming Black Elephant Events

Yolanda C. Lin, Gizem Mestav Sarica, Terence J. Chua, Susanna F. Jenkins, Adam D. Switzer, Gordon Woo, and David Lallemant
Communications Earth & Environment, 2(214), October, 2021
Click [here](#) to read more (open access).

Towards a Comprehensive Security Alliance: Evolving Dynamics in the United States' Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief to the Philippines

Julius Cesar I. Trajano
Asian Journal of Comparative Politics, 6(4), November, 2021
Click [here](#) to read more (open access).

China's Disaster Diplomacy in Southeast Asia

Lina Gong
The China Review, 21(4), November, 2021
Click [here](#) to read more (contact authors for free copy).

'Military Engagement in Disaster Response: Policies, Interests and Issues' in Bernard Loo (ed.) *Southeast Asia in Strategy And Defense Policy For Small States: Problems And Prospects*

Alistair D. B. Cook
World Scientific Publishing: Singapore, December, 2021
Click [here](#) to read more (contact authors for free copy).

Shedding Light on Avoided Disasters: Measuring the Invisible Benefits of Disaster Risk Management Using Probabilistic Counterfactual Analysis

David Lallemant, Maricar Rabonza, Yolanda C. Lin, Sanjana Tadepalli, Dennis Wagenaar, Michele Nguyen, Jeanette Choong, Celine Jia Ni Liu, Gizem Mestav Sarica, Bernadeti Ausie Miranda Widawati, Mariano Balbi, Feroz Khan, Sabine Loos, and Tian Ning Lim
UNDRR Global Assessment Report 2022, 2022 (early access)
Click [here](#) to read more (open access).

Reports

Access to Resources and Support for Singaporean Citizens and Permanent Residents during the COVID-19 Circuit Breaker

Patrick Daly, Jamie McCaughey, Caroline Brassard, Reuben Ng, Laavanya Kathiravelu, Benjamin Horton
NTS Insight
August 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

Perceptions of COVID-19 Mitigation Measures by Singaporean Citizens and Permanent Residents

Patrick Daly, Jamie McCaughey, Caroline Brassard, Reuben Ng, Laavanya Kathiravelu, Benjamin Horton
NTS Insight
August 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

Disaster Governance in the Asia-Pacific: Future Pathways for South and Southeast Asia

Alistair D. B. Cook and Christopher Chen
RSIS Policy Report
August 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

ASEAN Disaster Resilience Outlook: Preparing for a Future Beyond 2025

ASEAN Secretariat
October 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

Collaborative Governance to Achieve ASEAN Community Vision 2025–Implementing the Blueprint' in Compendium of Analytical Views for The ASCC Blueprint 2025

Alistair D. B. Cook and Mely Caballero-Anthony

ASEAN Secretariat

October 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Averted Disaster Award: Making Invisible Successes Visible



The ADA Prize is built upon the work by Prof. David Lallemand, Maricar Rabonza, Dr. Yolanda Lin and members of the Disaster Analytics for Society Lab at NTU in Singapore that highlights how successful DRM interventions are rendered invisible as a result of their success, and the corresponding challenges that arise when incentivizing interventions that reduce risk. The award aims to recognise successful disaster mitigation interventions around the world that often go unnoticed by the very nature of their success.

For more details, click [here](#).

Research Project: Fit for Resilience: Assessing COVID-19 Responses and Adaptation Mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific

Principal Investigator: Dr Marina Kaneti (LKYSPP, NUS)

The "Fit for Resilience" project tracks Covid-19 response mechanisms across the Asia-Pacific

as a way of assessing the region's collective ability to withstand, recover, and adapt to external and internal shocks. The project's key objectives are to i) compile a database on social protection mechanisms extended to vulnerable populations, such as migrants; and ii) develop an open data digital platform with customized options for scoring, comparison, and assessment of government and non-government actions, policies, and responses. A pilot "Social Resilience Index" based on an initial study of four countries is expected to be launched in March 2022. The next phase of the project will expand the study to at least six additional countries.

For more details, contact Dr Marina Kaneti at marina.kaneti@nus.edu.sg.

Upcoming Singapore Red Cross Events: SRC Grateful Hearts Day, SRC Charity Concert, Charity Golf

Do your part for charity by donating generously to Singapore Red Cross' (SRC) GratefulHeartsDay!The fundraising campaign, comprising pledge cards and online donations, will be launched on 8 May 2022.

Mark 21 May 2022 on your calendar! Join SRC's Charity Concert for an exciting line-up of performances while you contribute to an altruistic cause!

Charity Golf - Swing the club for a philanthropic cause in August 2022!

For the above Singapore Red Cross related events, proceeds raised will be channelled towards SRC's local humanitarian efforts. Keep your eyes peeled for updates on www.redcross.sg and find out how you can contribute by emailing events@redcross.sg.

Upcoming Event: Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week (HNPW) 2022



The HNPW provides a unique forum for humanitarian networks and partnerships to meet and address key humanitarian issues. One of the largest humanitarian events of its kind, it gathers participants from the UN, NGOs, Member States, the private sector, the military, academia and beyond to discuss and solve common challenges in humanitarian affairs. During the event, networks and partnerships hold their annual meetings and consultations, share their expertise and collaborate on best practices to address shared problems. The Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks (HNPW) 2022 will be held in a hybrid format from 02 to 20 May 2022.

For more details, click [here](#).

6th Singapore Red Cross Humanitarian Conference: Nurturing Young Humanitarians for Action



More than 200 global participants attended the 6th Singapore Red Cross Humanitarian Conference streamed live from Marina Bay Sands on 3 September 2021. Themed 'Nurturing Young Humanitarians for Action', the hybrid event, which gathered speakers from diverse backgrounds, was targeted at inspiring the younger generation to be the catalyst for positive change.

In his keynote speech, Guest-of-Honour Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Health, highlighted that tripartite partners - the union, employers and the government have been working to stave off social inequality and ensure inclusive growth for everyone. To fend off mental illnesses, the new Character and Citizenship Education curriculum focuses on developing mental health literacy, social-emotional skills, resilience building, digital literacy, destigmatising mental illness in students while establishing a stronger support network of teachers, counsellors, and peers. In addressing the topic of climate change, Mr Ong shared the Singapore Green Plan 2030, a five-pronged approach comprising 'City in Nature', 'Energy Reset', 'Sustainable Living', 'Green Economy', and 'Resilient Future'.

Ms Tan Poh Hong, Vice Chairman of the Singapore Red Cross (SRC) demonstrated

ways that youth and young people had stepped up to the plate amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Red Cross Youth - Chapter members demonstrated appreciation to frontline workers through Project Courage: Acts of Kindness. The youth donated blood when blood stocks ran low. Young employees and volunteers packed and distributed customised care packages to the migrant workers and low-income families. Young employees worked tirelessly to procure and deliver urgently required medical supplies to more than 20 regional countries, navigating through complex logistical, customs and even political challenges to deliver this humanitarian aid.

Dr Yang Mee Eng, Executive Director of ASEAN Foundation, underscored that the youth can leverage the power of technology, innovative practices, creativity, and cultural intelligence to spearhead humanitarian work. She highlighted the importance of forging public and private partnerships to provide free capacity building opportunities, mentorship programmes and cross-border virtual internships to empower youth to build their hard and soft skills while providing them with a platform to share their thoughts, concerns, opinions through dialogues and collaboration.

Ms Musubi Yata of the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) highlighted the importance of mental health in enhancing community resilience and the important role that society, schools, and private companies can play in supporting youth.

Member of Parliament and passionate animal and humanitarian activist Mr Louis Ng shared his life story and how he overcame challenges in his fight for a social cause. In conjunction with the Conference, the Singapore Red Cross organised a Humanitarian Innovation Challenge for youth to address society's concerns. Over 10 secondary schools and tertiary institutions submitted 20 submissions. The winners of the Humanitarian Innovation Challenge presented their ideas at the conference. Youth panellists shared their motivations and experiences behind their successes, their take on youth volunteerism and its impact, as well as tips on ways to keep going when the going gets tough.

RSIS-RHCC Workshop on Humanitarian Futures in Southeast Asia



The Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Programme of the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies organised the RSIS-RHCC workshop on humanitarian futures, jointly with the Changi Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Programme Coordination Centre (Changi RHCC). The workshop was held on 27th January at NTU@One North in Singapore. The workshop demonstrated practical ways that organisations can manage ongoing crises and prepare for those in the long-term future.

Disasters are growing significantly in magnitude, frequency, and complexity, and technological, socio-economic and geopolitical factors often aggravate the difficulty in response. We have witnessed the increasing complexity of natural hazards in the recent double disasters of volcano

eruption and tsunami in Tonga during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Southeast Asia faces a wide range of potential risks, such as the effects of climate change, natural hazards, infectious diseases, nuclear accidents, and transboundary pollution. It is important for actors with humanitarian roles and responsibilities to be better prepared for large-scale disasters and the cascading impacts. The workshop was the second of its kind to strengthen support systems for policy-planners and decision-makers on ways to improve crisis responses and improve disaster preparedness for challenges in this decade and beyond.

The workshop brought together local participants from different backgrounds to share their respective experience and insights on the themes to be covered in the workshop. To reflect the multistakeholder

environment, it involved 48 participants from the military, civil servants, think tanks, NGOs, and UN agencies in Singapore, whose work is related to humanitarian action in different ways.

During the workshop, speakers from international and regional organisations, foreign government officials and academia discussed the riskscape in Southeast Asia and shared the latest tools available to manage crises. The participants were divided into ten groups to test, analyse and plan for different emergency settings. The workshop is part of the HADR programme's ongoing commitment to organise exercises that can contribute to the improvement of institutional preparedness for humanitarian emergencies.

