Disaster Recovery Annotated Bibliography - Community-Based and Non-Governmental Organizations

This document was developed to provide information on the state of knowledge on disaster recovery. This document includes a list of articles collected in the Fall of 2018. To obtain relevant articles, a list of keywords was used to search Google Scholar and University Library Databases. These keywords were: “community disaster recovery”, “disaster recovery”, “post recovery planning” “pre disaster planning”, and “national planning recovery”. An additional search of academic journals that are related to the planning field was then undertaken to ensure that articles from these journals were not overlooked. These journals included: Journal of the American Planning Association, Journal of Planning Education and Research, Applied Geography, Land Use Policy, Environment and Planning A, Planning Theory, Progress in Planning. After collecting articles, each article was then systematically reviewed to ensure relevance. The articles needed to address community level recovery (including issues related to housing, economic, infrastructure, planning, etc.) or note issues that affect recovery outcomes (e.g., differences in housing outcomes for rental versus owned housing). Next, we reviewed the reference list of identified articles to determine if any articles had been missed in the initial collection process. If there were additional articles that were missed, we collected the information and searched for the title of the article. After processing each article, the articles were then compiled into the Zotero software.

The Zotero bibliographic database is open to the public to view at: https://www.zotero.org/groups/2278263/recoveryguidancetamu/items

Community-based Organizations & Nongovernmental Organizations

Articles that addresses recovery roles and activities for community-based organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including nonprofits and faith-based institutions.


Objective: Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are important to a community during times of disaster and routine operations. However, their effectiveness is reduced without an operational framework that integrates response and recovery efforts. Without integration, coordination among NGOs is challenging and use of government resources is inefficient. We developed an operational model to specify NGO roles and responsibilities before, during, and after a disaster. Methods: We conducted an analysis of peer-reviewed literature, relevant policy, and federal guidance to characterize the capabilities of NGOs, contextual factors that determine their involvement in disaster operations, and key services they provide during disaster response and recovery. We also identified research questions that should be prioritized to
improve coordination and communication between NGOs and government. Results: Our review showed that federal policy stresses the importance of partnerships between NGOs and government agencies and among other NGOs. Such partnerships can build deep local networks and broad systems that reach from local communities to the federal government. Understanding what capacities NGOs need and what factors influence their ability to perform during a disaster informs an operational model that could optimize NGO performance. Conclusions: Although the operational model needs to be applied and tested in community planning and disaster response, it holds promise as a unifying framework across new national preparedness and recovery policy, and provides structure to community planning, resource allocation, and metrics on which to evaluate NGO disaster involvement.


As the five-year anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita approaches, thousands of Louisiana residents remain displaced from their homes and continue to struggle to recover in the disaster aftermath. Historically marginalized and vulnerable populations in particular (e.g., elderly, those from low socioeconomic backgrounds) face barriers to recovery and confront difficulties in identifying and accessing the resources essential to recovery. The purpose of this report is to summarize some of the lessons learned by the state of Louisiana as it implemented the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Case Management Pilot (DCMP) from fall 2009 to spring 2010. The DCMP specifically targeted the post-hurricane population who were still in FEMA temporary housing units as of April 27, 2009, in order to connect these individuals with a range of services, including housing, financial counseling, social services benefit restoration, and mental and physical health assistance. This report also offers recommendations for the state of Louisiana and FEMA regarding how to better design and improve implementation of disaster case management in Louisiana and across the nation. In the wake of new disasters, such as the 2010 British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, other state authorities that are responsible for disaster case management might also be interested in using this document to help inform how states manage and conduct disaster case management for future catastrophic events. On March 29, 2010, at the request of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), RAND Corporation researchers began to document how the DCMP in Louisiana was organized and financed; identify the major challenges to communication, coordination, and financing of the pilot; and provide recommendations to the LRA and FEMA about how to improve future implementation of disaster case management. The Louisiana Recovery Authority and FEMA were interested in understanding optimal methods of disaster case management. Thus, the intent of this analysis is to identify implementation barriers and focus on areas for process improvement rather than client outcomes. This work was funded by the Louisiana Recovery Authority as part of the FEMA-funded DCMP and builds on earlier efforts (e.g., Chandra and Acosta, 2009) to summarize some of the lessons learned by nongovernmental organizations as they worked through the cycle of emergency response into a lengthy, long-term recovery process that continues today. This effort is consistent with the RAND Corporation’s mission to respond to the hurricanes of 2005 by establishing the RAND Gulf States Policy Institute to support research and analysis.

The focus of this article is planning for resiliency in the aftermath of a catastrophe. First, the authors offer their conception of planning for resiliency as a goal for recovering communities, and the benefits of planning in efforts to create more resilient places. Next, they discuss major issues associated with planning for postdisaster recovery, including barriers posed by federal and state governments to planning for resiliency, the promise and risks of compact urban form models for guiding rebuilding, and the failure to involve citizens in planning for disasters. Finally, they discuss lessons from prior research that address these issues and policy recommendations that foster predisaster recovery planning for resilient communities.


Recent discussions of social capital within the public choice literature have tended to focus on its role in solving collective action problems and promoting political accountability. Consequently, two areas of inquiry remain underexplored: (1) the role social capital plays in facilitating lobbying and rent seeking, and (2) the possibility that the availability of government resources can cause community-based groups to re-orient their stocks of social capital away from mutual assistance and toward lobbying and rent seeking. This article examines the relationship between social capital and lobbying in New Orleans’s post-Katrina recovery.


This research on the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in supporting community efforts to recover and rebuild from the devastation in the Gulf States region since Hurricane Katrina highlights ongoing challenges facing NGOs in terms of appropriate recovery models and financing, NGO-government coordination, and processes to formalize and operationalize NGO roles and responsibilities. Drawing on these lessons, this paper also offers a series of state and federal policy recommendations and a set of possible future research directions to assess and address barriers to long-term human recovery efforts.


Community resilience (CR)—ability to withstand and recover from a disaster—is a national policy expectation that challenges health departments to merge disaster preparedness and community health promotion and to build stronger partnerships with organizations outside government, yet guidance is limited. A baseline survey documented community resilience-building barriers and facilitators for health department and community-based organization (CBO) staff. Questions focused on CBO engagement, government-CBO partnerships, and community education. Most health department staff and CBO members devoted minimal time to community disaster preparedness though many serve populations that would benefit. Respondents observed limited CR activities to activate in a disaster. The findings highlighted opportunities for engaging communities in disaster preparedness and informed the development of a community action plan and toolkit.

Haiti’s catastrophic earthquake of 2010 left approximately 200,000 people dead, 1.5 million homeless and most government buildings destroyed. Even pre-disaster, Haiti’s outcomes on the UN Human Development Index were among the lowest in the world, and since the quake the country has fallen into further decline. Today, most Haitians continue to lack basic services, struggle with daily survival, and confront daunting challenges in their change efforts. Many have called for reconstruction of society, and argue that local civil society organizations should lead the way in these efforts by valuing local knowledge, and building on small-scale community successes. This research investigates one community’s change efforts toward a new form of community development and potential pathway to transformation in Haiti. We aim to apply learning from this case to inform development practice and policy in Haiti and similar contexts. The case study community, Bellevue-La-Montagne, is applying an education-centered community development approach which has placed construction of a new school and education at the heart of collaborative rebuilding efforts by local residents and organizations, primarily Haiti Partners. Education and participatory practices are embedded in all aspects of the community development, including: social entrepreneurship, healthcare, environmental stewardship, community agriculture, planning and construction. These efforts involve participation of people and organizations (local and international) in dialogical negotiations that aim to share power and build capabilities of local people, and to create, change, or preserve structures and institutions consistent with the interests of local people. Participatory and phronesis research methodologies reveal nuanced understandings of the community development and its meaning for local people. In spite of substantial progress in development projects, findings reveal tension points that potentially threaten long-term sustainability, such as: the highly fragile nature of state-society relations, lack of a sense of agency of local people despite strong levels of participation, and differences between outcomes for the community as a whole and individual households. Moving from revealed community change in this case to a broader and deeper social transformation will require key ‘levers of transformation’, identified in this case as: 1) education; 2) place identity, networks, and research; 3) social entrepreneurship and social innovation; and 4) state-society trust and accountability. These levers can be activated through participatory and education-centered community development strategies that provide important roles for local people and civil society, and a nuanced role for international organizations which is sensitive to power dynamics. Such development strategies would give ‘voice’ to communities in their struggles for change. Strengthening, networking and scaling community level innovation that shows promise of transformation, such as the case of Bellevue-La-Montagne, would contribute to Haiti’s attempts to forge a new narrative, and to evolving international development planning policy and practice.


Problem, research strategy, and findings: Conventional hazard mitigation and pre-disaster recovery planning processes typically begin with hazard scenarios that illustrate probable events and analyze their impacts on the built environment. The processes conclude with responses to the hypothetical disruption that focus on “hardening” buildings or structures or removing them from threatened areas. These approaches undervalue the importance of natural and social sources of adaptive capacity. Three
“proof-of-principle” exercises designed to strengthen the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)’s Risk MAP (Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning) process in Washington State suggest how better to conduct hazard mitigation and recovery planning. Each begins with workshops where stakeholders identify built, natural, and social assets that contribute to human wellbeing (HWB) before introducing earthquake scenarios that affect HWB. Participants then identify assets that could facilitate adaptation to changed circumstances (a “new normal”). Participants discuss how these assets would achieve the goals of comprehensive community planning as well as hazard mitigation and recovery from disaster. Neighborhood-scale social organization emerges as an important priority. Takeaway for practice: Asset-based approaches enable communities to better recover from disaster and adapt to a post-disaster “new normal.” By premising planning discussions on a more holistic set of assets, communities can balance physical recovery goals with qualities that help them to adapt to future change. Furthermore, thinking about recovering before an event actually occurs can enlarge the menu of mitigation strategies. Planning for adaptation can also help communities achieve many non-risk-related objectives.


Background: Assistance from non-professional disaster volunteers (hereinafter, volunteers) is essential for disaster victims to recover physically and rebuild their lives; however, disaster victims in some areas are reluctant to accept assistance from volunteers. This study explored factors that may influence collaborative activities between volunteers and victims of earthquake disasters. Methods: From July to September 2008, a self-reporting questionnaire survey was conducted with all 302 leaders of neighborhood associations in a city within Niigata Prefecture at the time of the Niigataken Chuetsu-oki Earthquake in 2007. Each factor was determined based on the Health Belief Model. Multiple regression analysis was conducted, using collaborative activities as the objective variable. Results: From 261 valid responses received (response rate 86.4%), 41.3% of leaders collaborated with volunteers, and 60.2% of associations had residents who collaborated with volunteers. Collaboration with volunteers was significantly and positively related to perceived severity of an earthquake disaster (standardized partial regression coefficient beta = 0.224, p<0.001) and neighborhood association activities during the earthquake disaster (beta = 0.539, p<0.001). A positive and marginally significant relation was found between such collaboration and sense of coherence within a community (beta = 0.137, p = 0.08), social capital (beta = 0.119, p = 0.08), and perceived benefits (beta = 0.116, p = 0.09). Conclusion: Collaboration between disaster victims and volunteers during the response to an earthquake may require the preemptive estimation of damage by residents during normal times and the enhancement of neighborhood association activities during a disaster. For residents to have such estimation abilities, public institutions should provide information related to anticipated disaster damage and appropriate disaster prevention training and education. In addition, residents should create a disaster prevention map with other residents. Lastly, promoting neighborhood association activities may require the participation of many residents in disaster drills and education as well as a preemptive discussion of neighborhood activities during a disaster.

This paper describes how the inhabitants of Llico, a small fishing town in Chile, organized to move from the coastline to avoid a tsunami that devastated their homes and livelihoods and then to manage immediate responses. It then describes how long it took for state support to arrive and how the inhabitants were marginalized from planning and implementing the reconstruction processes. As a result, this poorly served their needs and priorities and failed to utilize their knowledge and organizational capacities. Here and elsewhere in Chile, post-catastrophe reconstruction processes miss the opportunity to improve living conditions for the affected communities and to develop policies for disaster management that incorporate and use their social capital.


Social capital and leadership are critical in mobilizing collective actions to promote community and individual recovery after a natural disaster. Transformation to a better situation post-disaster, not just returning to a previous state, reflects the growing emphasis on disaster as a catalyst for change. To facilitate transformative change, the development focus at the core of this approach emphasizes empowerment through local governments and domestic civil society organizations working in the “bottom up” participatory mode to enhance the resilience of vulnerable population groups. Poverty reduction and disaster risk reduction are interlinked. However, the research literature on disasters pays least attention to socially created vulnerabilities. They are ignored because of the difficulty in developing agreement on theory, and prioritizing issues quantifying them. This article investigates the impact of the cultural contexts in Myanmar and Taiwan on disaster recovery and reconstruction plans for specific disaster events in which vulnerable population groups respond to different risk governance frameworks and suggests a foundation for developing a cross-cultural, all-hazards approach to understanding the relationship between resilience and recovery in the context of large-scale Asian disasters.


Talca, Chile, has been negatively impacted by both a major 2010 earthquake and the ensuing reconstruction process. Talca’s poor have been forced out from their neighborhoods and relocated to remote areas where employment, public transportation, and basic services are limited. Based on extensive community development work in Talca, this article analyzes the dynamics that have led to these conditions and the insufficiently supported alternative community-based initiatives that could have allowed Talca to redevelop in more sustainable and equitable ways. Planners need to systemically understand the implications of programs often pushed in times of emergency as urgent and inevitable that may not favor a healthy long-term redevelopment of communities recovering from disasters, be politically savvy and courageous to denounce and resist them when necessary, and work with/for communities to define and promote more just and sustainable postdisaster futures.


This study explores the disaster response, political transformation and community development prospects of the Philippine community of Guinsaugon, a village devastated by a 2006 landslide. Utilizing a social
justice perspective, we analyze a range of qualitative data collected over a 5-year period to understand how linking capital functions following a major social disruption. An understudied form of social capital and linking capital features embeddedness, shared values and mutual goals between individuals and groups that are divided by cleavages of class, power and privilege. We uncovered three major outcomes. First, an existing village institution-Cristo Rey High School-was a principal agent of distributive justice, providing immediate material goods and social support to the survivors. This local institution was deeply embedded in the village, yet maintained extensive ties with outside groups that provided crucial resources. Second, linking capital contributed to procedural justice and political transformation. The disaster sparked many emigrants to return to the village and form The ATHena Project: Advocacy for Transparency and Honesty, a civil society organization that promoted accountability and helped dethrone a local political dynasty. Finally, our study uncovered a crucial limitation of linking capital. This powerful social resource did not help fulfill essential elements of long-term community development, such as helping secure land, sustainable jobs or infrastructural development for re-located Guinsaugon villagers. In this way, we underscore the importance of a strong developmental state in post-disaster recovery. Without it, some of the gains derived from linking capital do not endure, undermining the advances of distributive and procedural justice that followed a major social disruption.


A reading of the social capital literature suggests that the networks and the social relationships which enable collective action can be used to address critical livelihood needs, even in disaster contexts. Yet even when such community-led approaches are combined with substantial resources, too often these interventions (re)produce vulnerabilities without recovering prior levels of development. Examining the outcomes of community-led approaches in post-tsunami Aceh after the gaze of the aid industry has moved elsewhere, this paper finds that in a few cases, interventions worked with social networks to revive livelihoods successfully, albeit in complex, contingent ways. Yet, given the nature of post-disaster contexts and the exigencies driving NGO and donors actions, the research concludes that the capacity for community based approaches to address the underlying drivers of vulnerability remains limited. The paper calls for a rewriting of intervention narratives and a reworking of intervention practices, to address the deeper determinants of disadvantage and vulnerability.


The relationship between development and religion is an uneasy one. Since the invention of modernisation theory in the 1950s religion has been marginalised—seen as something that would fade as secularisation increased. Although this has not occurred, religion is still considered a taboo subject which falls outside the gamut of development, despite the religiosity of many faith-based development organisations, donors, and recipient communities. In this paper I emphasise the importance of religion to development by tracing religious influences within transnational development networks operating in Aceh, Indonesia, after the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. Religious influences are analysed amongst donor communities in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa; within the activities of religious NGOs in Aceh; amongst recipient communities; and in the physical landscape of Aceh, where the rebuilding of sacred spaces has been slow and difficult. It is argued that the current approach to religion within development,
and much development research, is outdated and inappropriate, reflecting and enforcing particular Western divisions between church and state. For more effective aid which attends to local concerns and priorities, transnational development networks need to acknowledge, incorporate, and involve religious spaces and institutions rather than continue to promote a culture of secularism.


Purpose - This paper aims to focus on the relationship between the people’s perception of livelihood recovery and micro-social capital to seek more effective disaster support at the community level. Design/methodology/approach - The household survey was conducted for a randomly selected total of 190 households in two divisions of the Ampara District of the Eastern Province, Sri Lanka. The quantitative analysis design captured the extent to which both cognitive and structural social capital factors prescribe people’s overall perceptions of livelihood recovery. Findings - The factors which best prescribe people’s perceptions of livelihood recovery are formal network in the community, and leadership and trushtship of community-based organizations. The negative coefficient for newly established community-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) after the tsunami assumed a serious aspect of “élite capture”, which implies a dark side of collective action with semi-forced participation. Participatory design process in the organizations was another negative factor for livelihood recovery. Research limitations/implications - Further research should consider influencing factors related to religious organizations and conflict issues in the area. Practical implications - Disaster support for livelihood recovery at the community level needs serious consideration about social factors and power structure of the community, and careful design of a participatory approach to reduce the risk of “élite capture”. Originality/value - The research facilitated a quantitative analysis on social capital and livelihood recovery, which may be quite rare, and highlights the issue of effectiveness of disaster support at the community level.


This chapter describes the faith-based response to the greatest urban disaster in U.S. history and is the first to document the full range of efforts. In a context in which many deemed government response delayed and inadequate, the faith-based sector responded in a broad-based and overwhelming manner. Local denominations, dramatically affected by the storm, responded in new and often creative ways, and national organizations stretched their resources to meet a broad array of needs across an extensive geographic area. We define faith-based organisations as social units linked to religious traditions, such as disaster-specific organizations like Presbyterian Disaster Assistance or the Mennonite Disaster Service, or more general organizations like Catholic Charities or the Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team. Faith-based organizations (FBOs) represent crucial linkages between families, policies, programs, and “ultimately” response and recovery to disasters. Because so many families lack resources for mitigating and preparing for disaster, they face difficulties with evacuation transportation, shelter needs, short-term housing, and long-term reconstruction. Federal assistance programs, for example, provide a maximum
$28,800 grant to low-income families, hardly enough to rebuild a home. FBOs provide knowledge, labor, and building supplies to those lacking adequate federal assistance. To describe FBOs’ relevance to disasters, the sections that follow situate the chapter in the context of New Orleans, examine the limited literature available to date, explain our data sources and methodology, and reveal how FBOs operate in a disaster context. A narrative section then outlines the broad range of faith-based response and recovery activities observed in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Response functions included rescue, reunification, sheltering, meeting of cultural and special needs, donations management, cleanup, and medical and dental services. Recovery functions included salvage work, addressing of unmet needs, case management, counseling, funding, volunteer labor and housing, rebuilding, reestablishment of households, transitional needs, satellite services, child care, political participation, community organizing, partnerships, and economic development. Finally, we identify recommendations for policy, practice, and future research. We offer this chapter from two perspectives and note our two voices in the text. Pamela Jenkins offers an insider’s point of view reflecting knowledge gained from personal and professional activity within the communities of New Orleans. Brenda Phillips brings an outsider’s understanding supported by observations from Hurricane Katrina volunteers and researchers.


Coordination during disaster recovery is one of the most neglected areas of disaster risk management, as the majority of literature on coordination focuses on disaster response. The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors affecting coordination for long-term recovery. For this purpose, the study uses semi-structured interviews with different actors involved in the recovery process of the 2004 tsunami in Tamil Nadu, India. The study highlights five key factors that affect coordination in long-term recovery: (1) the need to coordinate; (2) the role of the government; (3) knowledge networking; (4) mandates and goals and (5) coordination at the donor level. Finally, the study indicates a potential for applying a governance perspective on disaster recovery coordination, which needs to be further researched.


Nine years after the Kobe earthquake in Japan, social issues are still prominent, and the rehabilitation process is still ongoing. The earthquake caused two major changes in Japanese society: an increase in voluntary and non-government activities, and the enhancement of cooperation between local government and the residents’ association. People’s participation in the decision-making process was a significant achievement. To sustain the efforts generated after the earthquake, the Kobe Action Plan was formulated and tested in different disaster scenarios. The current study suggests that civil societies in urban areas are sustainable if, first, the activities related to daily services are provided by the resident’s associations; and second, these are linked to economic incentives. Leadership plays a crucial role in collective decision-making. Creation of the support system is essential for long-term sustainability of civil-society activities. These observations are exemplified in the case study in Nishi Suma, one of the worst-affected areas in the Kobe city.

Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on 29 August 2005, leaving a great deal of destruction, pain, and uncertainty in its wake. Post-disaster community rebound is a collective action problem where every individual’s decision to rebuild is impacted by the likelihood that others in the community will rebuild. The literature on post-disaster recovery suggests that homogenous, tight-knit communities will have an advantage over more diverse, less connected communities in solving this collective action problem and bringing about community rebound and redevelopment. Consequently, these studies have tended to underappreciate the capacity of loosely knit, heterogeneous communities to overcome the challenges associated with community recovery after a disaster. This article hopes to fill this gap in the literature by examining how loosely knit, heterogeneous communities can facilitate post-disaster community recovery and redevelopment. To examine this, we highlight the importance of community-based organizations and focus on the recovery efforts of Broadmoor after Hurricane Katrina.


Over the past years, many scholars emphasized the importance of maintaining social relations which were built before disasters into temporary housing communities. However, reality is that most of the temporary housing complexes need to develop newly community relations due to the difficulties of maintaining community ties built before disasters. This paper attempts to find community management issues in newly developed temporary housing communities and argues solutions to the issues of constructing social capital. Key findings from this study are summarized as follows: From bonding aspect, the challenges of community management in temporary housing are leadership, ownership, and participation. One of the suggestions to solve these challenges is to employ community organizers, and a union of existing neighborhood associations is supposed to be the community organizer. From bridging aspect, information sharing among presidents of the neighborhood association in temporary housing was effective for the improvement of community management in the neighborhood associations. If this information sharing is run by an external organization, the external organization can be a bridging organization to make weak ties among neighborhood associations, which overcomes negative impacts of social capital. From linking aspect, particularly housing reconstruction is a big concern for residents in temporary housing and gives impact to community management, and therefore, linking information on housing reconstruction process to management of neighborhood associations in temporary housing is significant. To foster three categories of social capital in temporary housing, key is a bridging organization as an external organization, which functions to link among neighborhood associations and neighborhood associations to external resources.


Shortly after the second major earthquake in Canterbury, New Zealand in 2011, an inventory of the activities and initiatives of community groups and NGOs was conducted. Another two inventories were undertaken in 2012 and 2013. Analysis of these three inventories reveals some significant changes in both the types of activities being undertaken and the “communities” responsible for them. The inventories document a rapid increase in the number of community groups and non-governmental organisations playing a role in recovery. An important finding is that most of those active almost 4 years after the first earthquake were actually in operation before the earthquakes and have since layered recovery work over
their core business. In building resilience to all hazards, we therefore argue for better recognition of the potential roles that different communities play, not only in recovery, but across all phases of disaster risk reduction. These roles range from administering first aid through to co-producing knowledge underpinning risk management strategies and actions. We argue that different types of communities have the potential to weave disaster readiness, response and recovery, and risk reduction into their core business, and therefore represent a valuable - though often underestimated and poorly understood - resource.

http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=28B29E3490E97DB3C771992ED44A8354?doi=10.1.1.611.301&rep=rep1&type=pdf

This is a study of how two small neighbourhoods, Mano and Mikura, recovered from the 1995 Kobe (Japan) earthquake, with a particular focus on the relationship between community vulnerability and capacity. Few studies have examined these interactions, even though vulnerability reduction is recognized to be a vital component of community recovery. Drawing from literature on disaster recovery, community development, vulnerability analysis, community capacity building and the Kobe earthquake, a community vulnerability and capacity model is elaborated from Blaikie et al.’s Pressure and Release Model (1994) to analyze the interactions. The Mano and Mikura cases are analyzed by applying this model and relating outcomes to the community’s improved safety and quality of community lives. Based on the experience of Mano, appropriate long-term community development practices as well as community capacity building efforts in the past can contribute to the reduction of overall community vulnerability in the post-disaster period, while it is recovering. On the other hand, the Mikura case suggests that even though the community experiences high physical and social vulnerability in the pre-disaster period, if the community is able to foster certain conditions, including active CBOs, adequate availability and accessibility to resources, and a collaborative working relationship with governments, the community can make progress on recovery. Although both Mano and Mikura communities achieved vulnerability reduction as well as capacity building, the long-term sustainability of the two communities remains uncertain, as issues and challenges, such as residual and newly emerging physical vulnerability, negative or slow population growth and aging, remained to create vulnerability to future disasters. The case studies reveal the interactions of community vulnerability and capacity to be highly complex and contingent on many contextual considerations.