



PROOFING THE FUTURE AGAINST DISASTERS

Davao City: Preventing Flooding

Davao City is a thriving city in Mindanao Island that continues to grow and develop like its counterpart in Visayas which is Cebu City, and Manila in Luzon. It is the Philippine's largest city in terms of land area and boasts of its agricultural and technological successes which contribute to its modernization and continuing progress.

Like many cities of the world, Davao also has its humble history rooted to its river. The local newspaper Sunstar reported that the word "Davao" is from the blending of three words from ethnic Bagobo subgroups which refers to the main river that traverses the city: the Obo calls it Davoh; the K'lata, Diangan or Guingan, "Duhwow"; and the Tagabawa Bagobo, "Dabu"¹.

Davao river is the third largest river in Mindanao. Running 86 kilometers long, it is part of the Davao River Basin- one of the 18 major River Basins in the country. Davao River's most significant benefit to the city which it traverses is its potential as freshwater supply².

Its positive benefits to the city however was offsetted when it overflowed and affected an estimated 31,000 people or 6,614 families on December 22, 2017-just a few days before Christmas- due to typhoon Vinta³.

Another catastrophic event is the flooding of Balusong River which killed 20 people while 15 people were reported missing in 2012.

Learning from past flooding incidents and to avoid the recurrence of such, the local government of Davao now recognizes the need to rehabilitate the rivers and streams of the city. A major problem now is the siltation according to the present Mayor, Sara Duterte. According to her, "there is a need to allow desilting operations within the watershed areas to address the heavy siltation problem in rivers and streams, which could result in overflowing of water and flooding during rainy seasons"⁴.

The de-silting operations is part of the city's project under the Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation but in targeting the important watershed, it might very well be included in the Environment- Protection and Conservation of the City's Watersheds program of Davao.



Photo by Maria Kristina Cuenca (River transport by Davao)

Note: (1) The Rise of Davao City, Sunstar Philippines (2017) (from <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/423711/>) (2) Formulation of Davao River Basin Management and Development Plan Executive Summary Volume 1, 2015, DENR-RBCO (From <http://rbco.denn.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/executivesummary.pdf>) (3) Over 31,000 affected by flooding in Davao City, Mick Basa, 2017. (from <https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/disasters/192067-hundreds-davao-city-residents-evacuate-river-overflows>) (4) Davao creates group to desilt city's rivers and streams. F. Pearl A. Gajunera, 2018. (From <http://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/264598>)

Mapping Wetland Priorities for Ecosystem - based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (EbA) in the Philippines



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