



# The Sudden Shift:

## What prompts increased local government response to the climate change challenge in the Philippines?

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# *“It’s just a buzzword from above”:* Climate Change Challenge and Local Government Indifference in the Philippines

This is a follow-through paper of the one above, presented at the Development Studies Association conference in University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus, United Kingdom in September 2008





# Structure of the Paper

- Introduction
- Local Development Planning in the Philippines
- Results of the Study
- Things Change, or did they?
- Implications of the same story and concluding remarks



# Statement 1

“We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all.”

- **Ban Ki Moon**  
UN Secretary General  
66<sup>th</sup> General Assembly  
21 September 2011



## Statement 2

“In short, we have the plans and strategies to adapt to climate change, but we have to remember that the real challenge still awaits us—the fact that these plans still have to be implemented through consolidated efforts by our local government units.”

- **Benigno Aquino III**  
President, The Philippines  
LGU Climate Change Adaptation Summit  
16 March 2011



## Statement 3

“It’s just a buzzword from above. Nobody here cares about it.”

- Mayor in Bohol Philippines, 2007

(name withheld as requested)



# Statement 4

“Climate change needs to be in the development agenda.”

- Mayor in Bohol Philippines, 2011

(name withheld as requested)



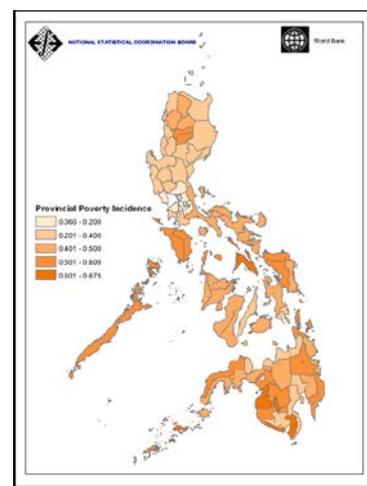
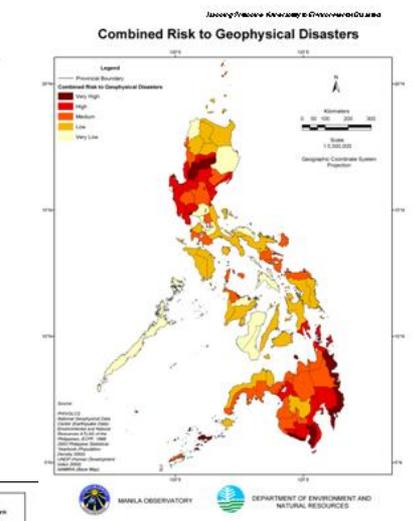
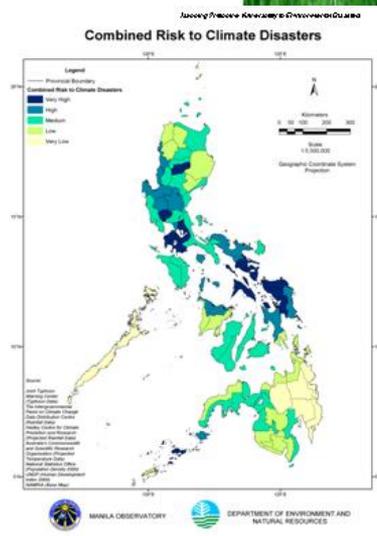
# The type of questions this paper asks...

- Why is it that there seems to be a disconnect between commitments at the international and national levels and local government awareness?
- Why the change in local government articulation in a short time?
- What are the implications of these on the governance structures of climate change and local government response?



# Locale of the Study







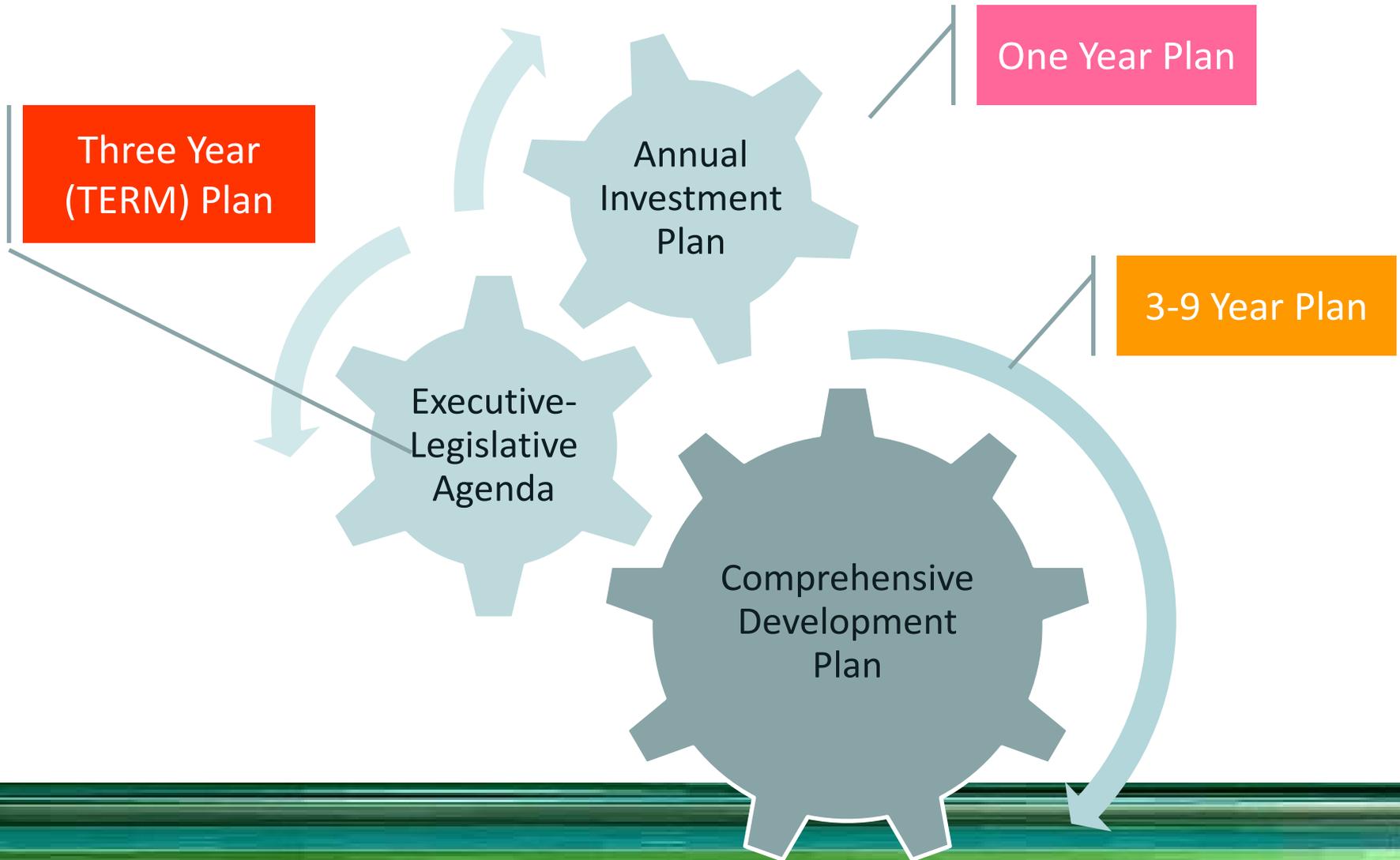


# Local Development Planning in the Philippines





# Local Development Planning



# LOCAL PLANNING STRUCTURE

## POLITICAL COMPONENT

### LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

LCE

PUNONG  
BARANGAYS\*

CONGRESSMAN OR  
REPRESENTATIVE

CSOs/ PSO

### LOCAL SANGGUNIAN

## TECHNICAL COMPONENT

### LOCAL SPECIAL BODIES

### SECTORAL & FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES

DEPARTMENT  
HEADS

LPDO

NGAs

Private Sector  
Representatives

\* In case of the City/municipality; members of the Sanggunian in case of the Barangays; mayors in case of the Province



# Some Notes

- Political (elected officials and civil society representatives) and technical (sectoral, thematic, function-specific) stakeholders participate. But the political stakeholders define the direction.
- Plans are dependent on the “prioritization ethic” of elected leaders who decide on the Annual Investment Plan, the basis of the local government budget



# Some Notes

- Plans (the development plans) are of long-term in nature but implemented by officials of short-term horizons
- Elections are held every three years, poverty is prevalent, patronage politics still rampant



# Locating the Argument

- “the local” is an important site “in governing global environmental problems” (Betsill and Burkeley 2006)
- Communities need to be empowered so that they can actively contribute in vulnerability assessment and implementation of adaptation (Adger et al 2003)
- Climate change needs to be incorporated into development planning at all scales, levels, and sectors (Stern 2007)



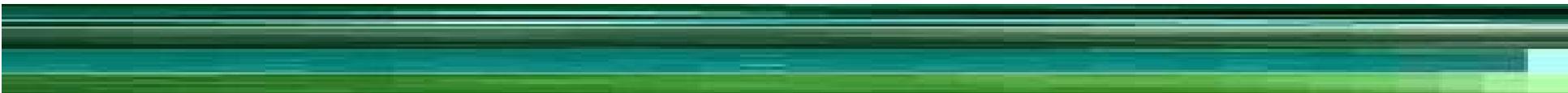
## Methods:

- A review of development plans in 2007, 2011
- Survey of local legislators in 2007, 2011
- Key informant interviews of local chief executives in 2007 and 2011



# Results – Review of Local Development Plans

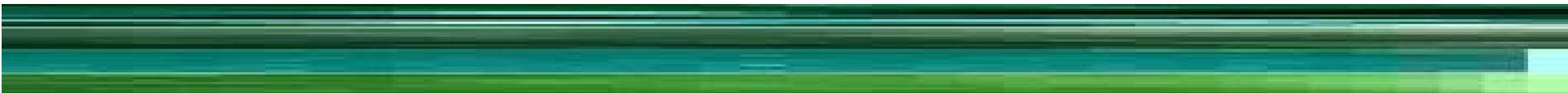
2007 Results	2011 Results
60% of local development plans were reviewed	60% of local development plans were reviewed
No single plan mentioned climate change issues	2 plans mentioned climate change
Environmental projects are identified but not related to climate change concerns (re: mitigation or adaptation) but are compliance to national laws (e.g. solid waste management)	12 plans contains programs, plans, projects, contain concerns regarding disaster risk reduction
Mitigation and adaptation not in the lexicon	Mitigation and adaptation not in the lexicon





# Results: On Survey and KII in both years....

- Knowledge is sufficient at general level, wanting at the specific level
- Perception regarding the gravity of the problem is high but views the problem as not as urgent as poverty
- There is insufficient knowledge as to how climate change is to be addressed at the local level





# Did we get the questions right?

- In 2011, only 41% has actually assessed the risks and vulnerabilities of their specific areas to climate change
- Local leaders have a very basic understanding of the climate change issue
- Though urgency of climate change is felt, there is a far serious problem than climate change as poverty



# Did we get the questions right?

- Local stakeholders are not indifferent to the issue of climate change. Translation to action is constrained by the lack of information and understanding of the means by which these can be addressed.
- But in a span of three years, climate change has started to enter the local development agenda, why?

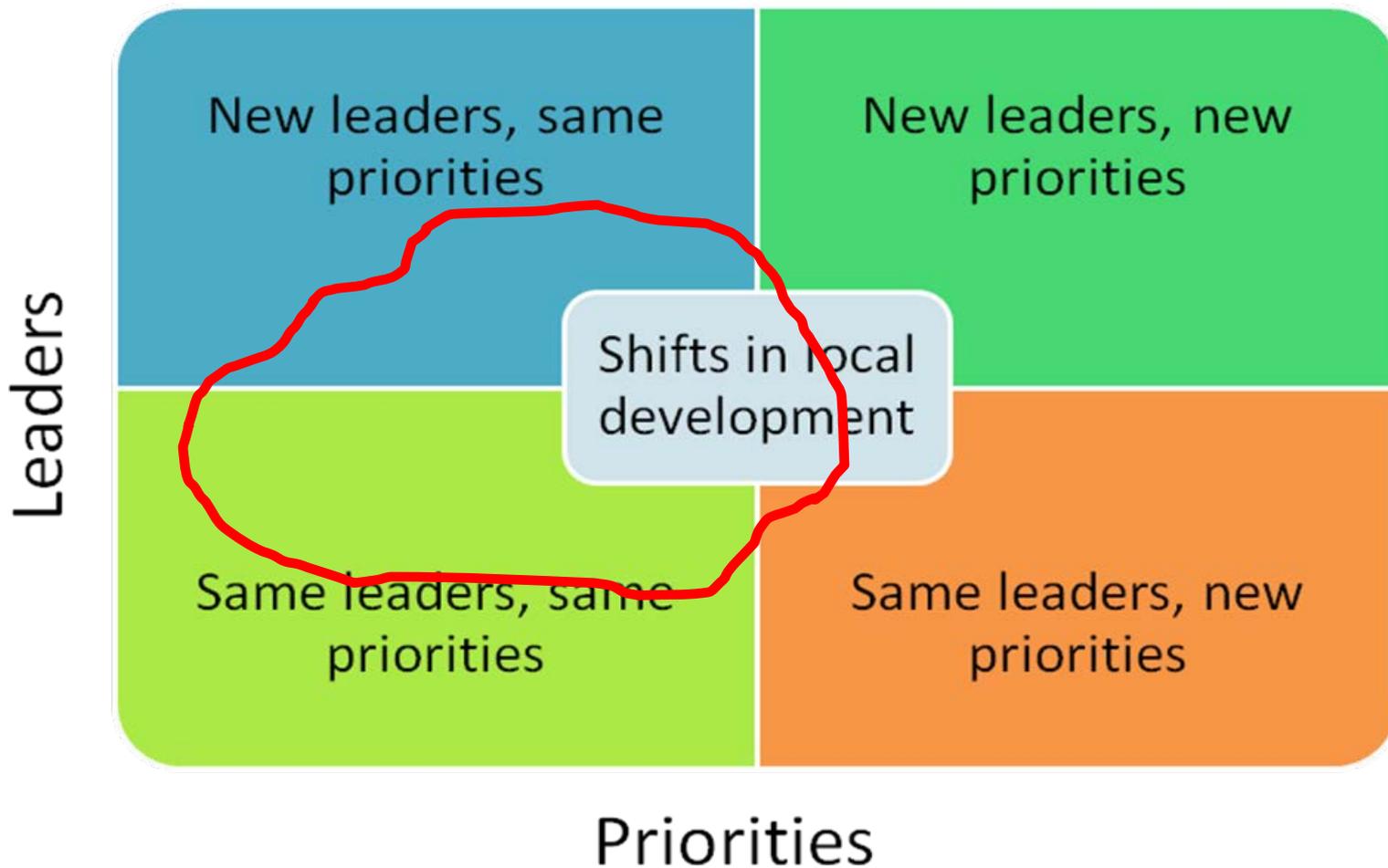


# Potential Explanations

- Explanation 1: Election effect
  - Between 2007 and 2011, one local election occurred.....



# Is it an election effect?



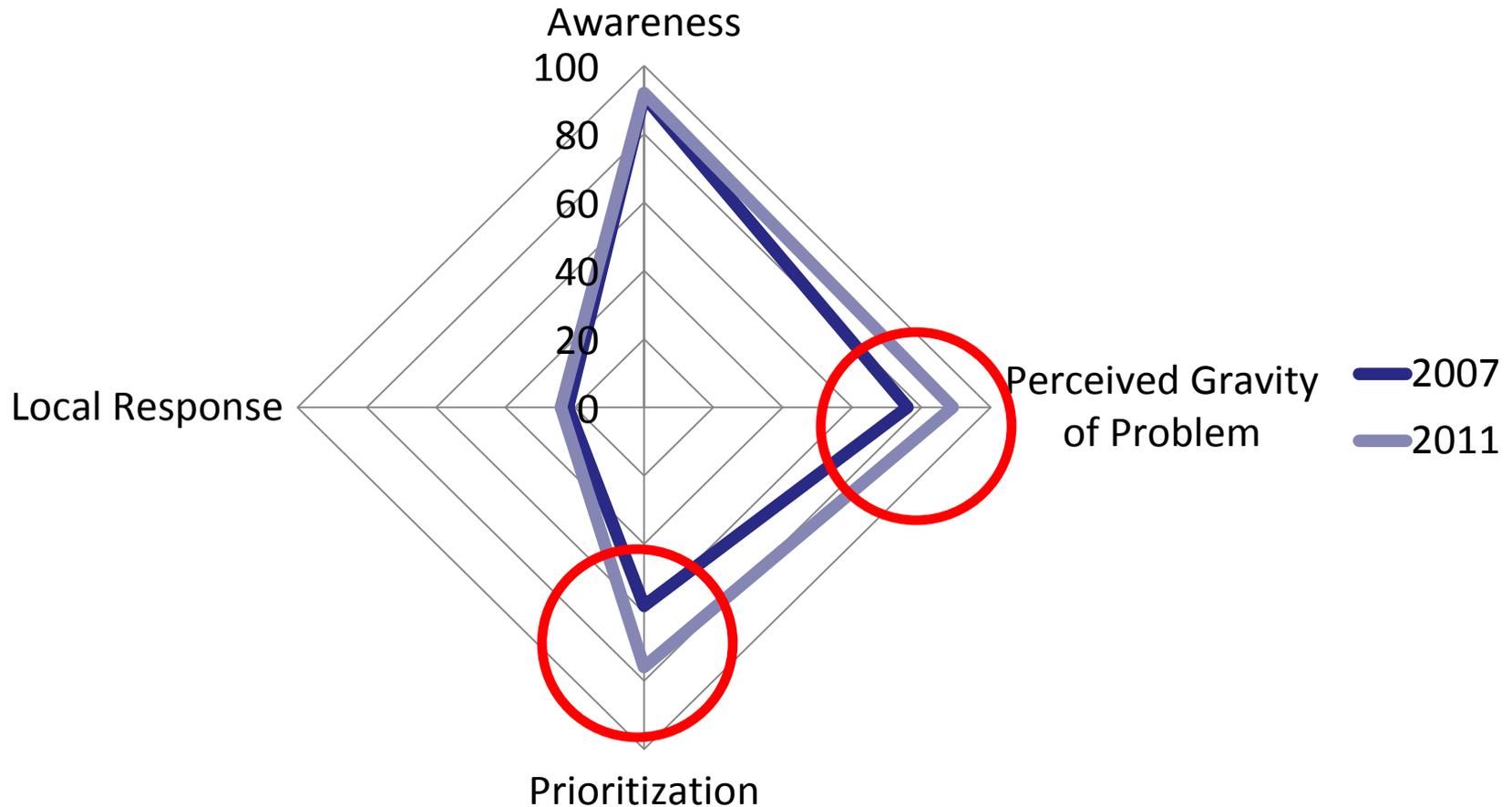


# Potential Explanations

- Explanation 2: change in awareness of local planners



# Has awareness changed?





# Potential Explanations

- Explanation 3: Recent events affecting lives of people and property



# Disasters more frequent?

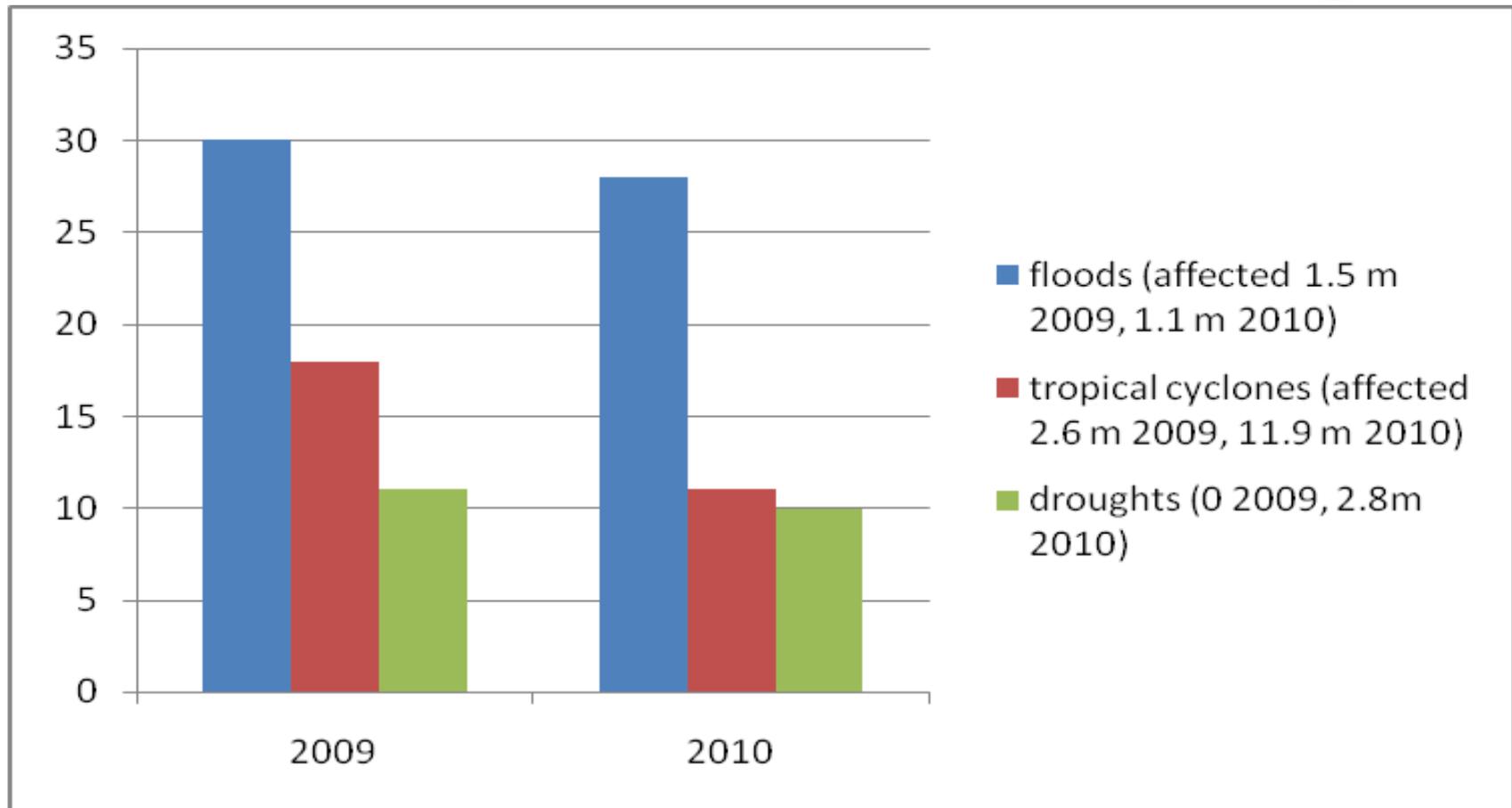
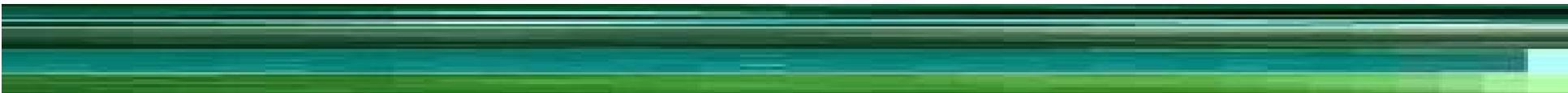


Figure 3. Droughts, Cyclones, and Floods - 2009-2010, Philippines



**BUT.....**





# Of the 29 local development plans...

- Only 6% mentioned climate change
- 100% of those that mentioned climate change are coastal municipalities
- 41% mentioned disasters and calamities
- 100% of those municipalities which plans mentioned disasters and calamities were recipients of a project that seeks to integrate disaster risk reduction to local development plans



# Where does this leave us?

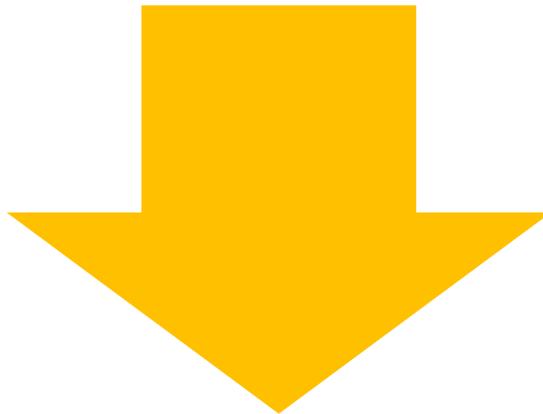




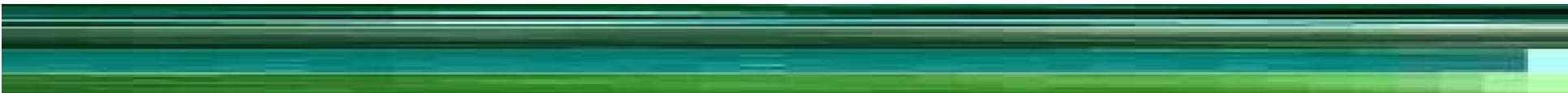
# Top-down VS. Bottom-up Incorporation



upward pressures from local communities to incorporate into the local development agenda climate change concerns and issues



Downward pressures from national governments due to treaties signed, legislations passed, or programs implemented





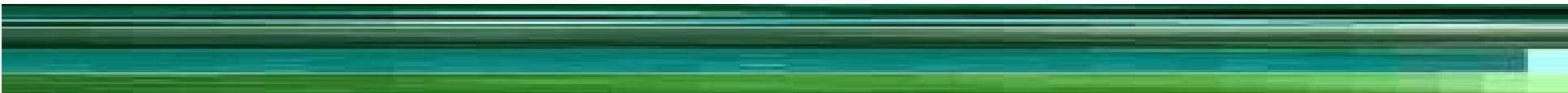
# Looking back at our case...

- passage of Republic Act No. 10121, otherwise known as Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, requires local government units to adopt and implement “coherent, comprehensive, integrated, efficient and responsive disaster risk reduction programs”



# Looking back at our case...

- Bohol also is a pilot province for the project entitled “Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in Local Planning and Decision -making Processes”. The 12 municipalities where disaster risk reduction processes were incorporated into local development plans were part of this pilot





# So?

- Change in leadership did not have a significant effect
- Knowledge of local planners hardly changed
- Recent events may have an impact but not significant
- There is more reason to conclude that incorporation is a result of top-down pressure than any other else



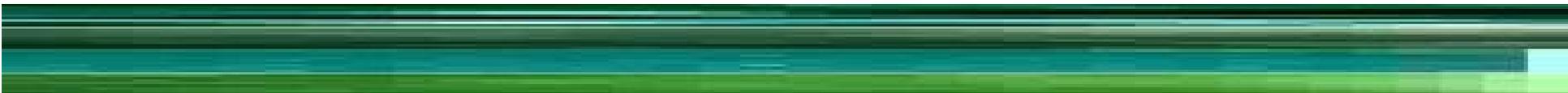
# Same Implications of A Changing Story





# Implications on the Climate Change Challenge

- The Challenge of Information
  - How should public information on climate change be structured?
  - How is information reaching at the local level with the current national commitments?





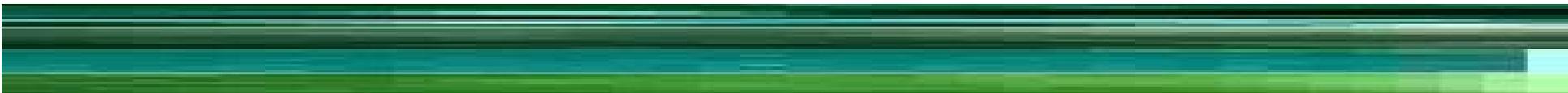
# Implications on the Climate Change Challenge

- The Challenge of Prioritization
  - How should climate change place itself in the current challenge of eradicating poverty?
  - How should local governments strike a balance between immediate concerns and long term goals?
  - What is the viable option for local responses in a situation of insufficient development funds?



# Implications on the Climate Change Challenge

- The Challenge of Ownership
  - How will local stakeholders own a concept when they did not participate in how the questions and solutions are structured?
  - Are local governments informed on what are the commitments of their national governments?
  - How should this concept be felt and owned by people struggling for daily survival?





Thank you...

