

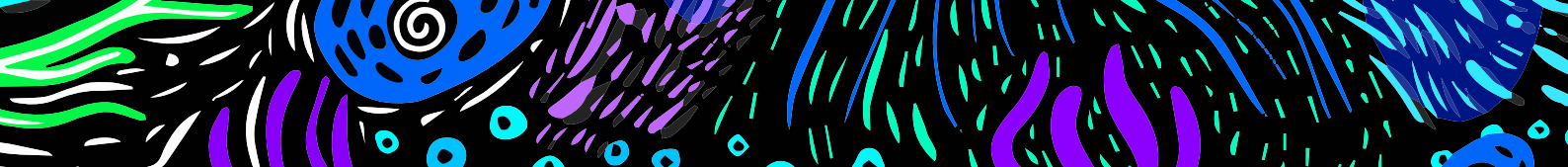


CEVAW

ARC Centre of Excellence for the
Elimination of Violence Against Women

WOMEN'S SAFETY IN COMPOUNDING DISASTERS IN THE PHILIPPINES: Roundtable Findings





Traditional Custodians

The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Elimination of Violence Against Women acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our various nodes stand and whose cultures and customs have nurtured and continue to nurture these lands. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend our respects to all Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and other Indigenous peoples around the world.

Authors

Tomaro, Queenie Pearl
Davies, Sara E.

Contributors

Cebu Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office
City Social Welfare and Development Office – Mandaue City
City Social Welfare and Development Office – Lapu-Lapu City
Department of Social Welfare and Development – Field Office VII
Juanito I. King Foundation, Inc.
Mandaue Blind Association
Mandaue Women's Organization
Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology
National Confederation of Transport Workers Unions
Pagtambayayong – A Foundation for Mutual Aid Inc.
Velez College
Philippine Red Cross – Cebu Chapter
University of the Philippines – Cebu

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CEVAW

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Elimination of Violence Against Women

The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (CEVAW) aims to transform our understanding of gender-based violence by examining the structural drivers that cause and compound violence, while pioneering evidence-based approaches to improve policy and practice across Australia and the Indo-Pacific. The Centre mobilises survivor-centric and Indigenous methodologies, interdisciplinary collaborations, and Indo-Pacific partnerships to deliver scalable solutions across legal, security, economic, health, and political systems.

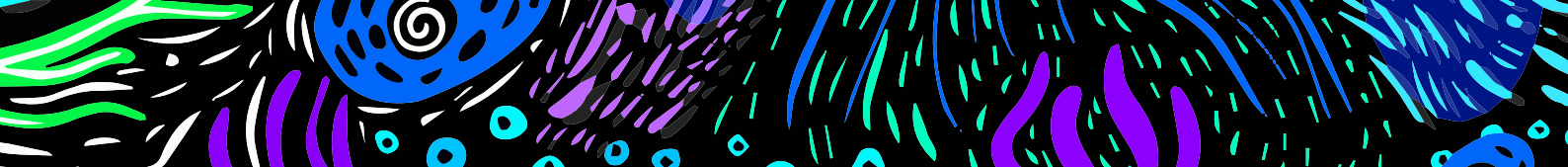
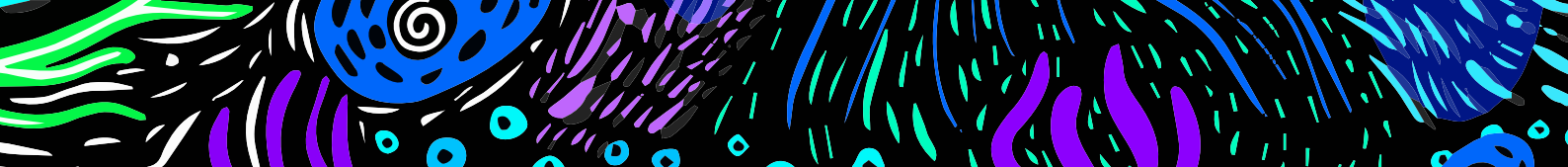


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Executive Summary

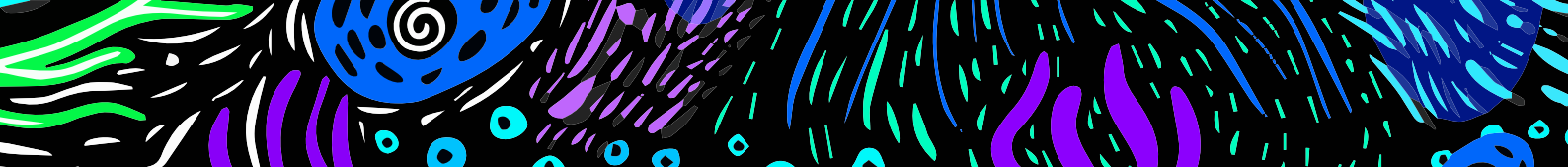
This technical report documents the proceedings of the Women's Safety in Compounding Disasters Roundtable held on 21 April 2026 at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Cebu City. The roundtable was convened by the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (CEVAW) and brought together government agencies, civil society organisations, humanitarian actors, and community-based organisations active in Cebu's disaster response and recovery landscape.

Cebu has been among the country's most severely affected regions by a series of overlapping disasters in 2025, including a magnitude 6.9 earthquake and successive super typhoons. These compounding events placed extraordinary pressure on the systems and networks responsible for protecting women's safety, from gender-based violence (GBV) response and emergency shelter to health services, livelihoods, and legal protection. Unlike single disaster events, the temporal clustering of these shocks generated cascading institutional strain, disrupted established coordination mechanisms, and exposed structural gaps in the governance infrastructure that women depend on for protection.

The roundtable was structured across three sessions: a government roundtable, a CSO and humanitarian roundtable, and a participatory network mapping workshop. Across all three sessions, six cross-cutting themes emerged consistently: the absence of pre-disaster data infrastructure for women at risk; the centrality of shelter to women's safety; weak inter-agency coordination compounded by political transitions; the invisibility of women's unpaid disaster labour; the political economy of relief distribution; and disaster prevention as the weakest link between disaster management and women's safety.

These themes point directly to the priorities that emerged from the dialogue. The absence of centralised, gender-disaggregated data on women at risk before disaster onset was identified as the foundational gap underlying coordination failures across every phase of the response, a gap that could be addressed through investment in local data management systems aligned with DANA requirements and barangay-level VAW infrastructure. The disruption of Barangay VAW desks during the disasters raised urgent questions about how community-level GBV response mechanisms can be designed to maintain functionality under displacement and compounding shocks. The consistent finding that persons with disabilities, and women with disabilities in particular, were among the last to be rescued points to the need for disability-inclusive evacuation and rescue protocols.

Participants also identified the political economy of disaster response as a research and accountability priority. The allocation of relief along political rather than needs-based lines, and the disruption of coordination caused by electoral cycles and leadership transitions, require dedicated analysis and the development of accountability frameworks capable of protecting gender-equitable service delivery from political interference. Finally, the Camp Coordination and Management Program (CCMP) was identified as a promising model for integrating GBV prevention and response within displacement settings, one warranting documentation, evaluation, and potential scaling, particularly its women-friendly spaces and gender-sensitive camp management components.



Background to the workshop

The Philippines is among the world's most disaster-prone countries, exposed to recurrent geophysical and climate-related hazards.¹ Disasters have wide-ranging impacts on women's safety, health, and livelihoods, which are exacerbated by structural inequalities related to gender, class, ethnicity, and ability. Research consistently shows that humanitarian and disaster settings heighten the risks of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and that women bear a disproportionate burden of disaster impacts across all phases of the disaster management cycle.²

The critical issue of how compounding disaster shocks shape women's safety has to date received limited attention in research, policy, and practice. This is despite growing evidence that the temporal clustering of multiple disaster events strains the governance systems responsible for women's protection in ways that single-disaster analyses do not capture.³ In 2025, Cebu province experienced a magnitude 6.9 earthquake in September followed within weeks by Tropical Cyclones Kalmaegi (local name: Tino) and Fung-Wong (local name: Uwan) in November. It is a clear instance of compounding disaster shocks that generated governance strain, service disruption, and heightened risks to women's safety.⁴

No single institution has sole responsibility over disaster risk reduction, social protection, GBV prevention, and legal services simultaneously.⁵ These responsibilities are distributed across a constellation of state and non-state actors. A long-standing challenge (of both government and non-governmental actors) is how to coordinate across other actors to not only prioritise women's safety amidst immediate disaster response, but to specifically identify and support women who fall through the gaps. While many women affected by these disasters have prior contact with GBV response services, social protection systems, or community-based support structures, the fragmented nature of these systems may pose as a structural barrier to meeting their needs. This risk is heightened when institutions are under immense pressure due to multiple, or compounding disasters, occurring within short time frame.

¹ Vincenzo Bollettino et al., "Public Perception of Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness: Evidence from the Philippines," *Climate Risk Management* 30 (2020): 100250, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2020.100250>; Pamela Louise M. Tolentino et al., "Projected Impact of Climate Change on Hydrological Regimes in the Philippines," *PLOS ONE* 11, no. 10 (2016): e0163941, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0163941>.

² Huong Thu Nguyen, "Gendered Vulnerabilities in Times of Natural Disasters: Male-to-Female Violence in the Philippines in the Aftermath of Super Typhoon Haiyan," *Violence Against Women* 25, no. 4 (2019): 421–40, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218790701>.

³ Sandra G. Catane et al., "Landslide-Amplified Flash Floods—The June 2008 Panay Island Flooding, Philippines," *Geomorphology* 169–170 (October 2012): 55–63, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geomorph.2012.04.008>; Nguyen, "Gendered Vulnerabilities in Times of Natural Disasters."

⁴ Pam Castro, "Philippines Halts Search for Typhoon Tino Dead as Huge New Storm Uwan Nears," *GMA News Online*, November 8, 2025, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/965369/philippines-halts-search-for-typhoon-tino-dead-as-huge-new-storm-uwana-nears/story/>; IFRC, *Philippines Earthquake: 30 Seconds and a Life Turned Upside Down*, January 6, 2026, [https://www.ifrc.org/article/philippines-earthquake-30-seconds-and-life-turned-upside-down#:~:text=For%20Rona%20and%20Margien%20—%20and,would%20change%20their%20lives%20forever.](https://www.ifrc.org/article/philippines-earthquake-30-seconds-and-life-turned-upside-down#:~:text=For%20Rona%20and%20Margien%20—%20and,would%20change%20their%20lives%20forever.;); Nicholas Jon Malaga, *VAWC Cases in City Rise*, December 2, 2025, <https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/cebu-news/2025/12/02/2491346/vawc-cases-city-rise>.

⁵ Tahira Mohamed, "Institutional and Policy Networks in Disaster Management in the Horn of Africa: Insights from Kenya¹," *Disasters* 50, no. 1 (2026): e70031, <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.70031>.

Failures in disaster settings, specifically protection failures, are typically examined through individual-level analyses focusing on women's vulnerability or coping strategies.⁶ There is limited empirical evidence on the institutional- and network-level conditions that shape their safety.⁷ This roundtable aimed to highlight these gaps, bridge perspectives across sectors and levels of government, and explore systemic challenges that surface during compounding disaster experience.



Image 1. Roundtable Participants with the CEVAW team

The roundtable sought to document and better understand how to strengthen women's safety in contexts of compounding disaster shocks by bringing together government agencies, civil society organisations, humanitarian actors, and community-based organisations working at the frontline of disaster response in Cebu.

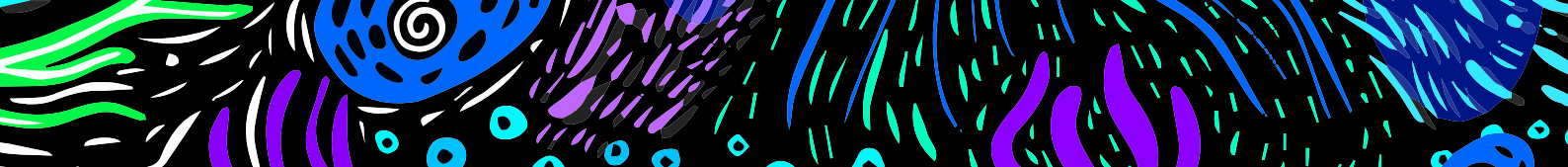
1. Aims

The roundtable was guided by three core aims:

- Identify the prevention and preparedness policies and measures that support effective disaster response, with a particular focus on how and when women's safety is centralised within that response.

⁶ Oo, Phyu Phyu, Helen Stenger, Connie Gan, Sara E. Davies, and Jacqui True. "What keeps women safe from violence during shocks? Review of risk and protective factors in the Indo-Pacific region." *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* (2026): 106027.

⁷ Mohamed, "Institutional and Policy Networks in Disaster Management in the Horn of Africa"; Hazel D. Jovita et al., "Why Does Network Governance Fail in Managing Post-Disaster Conditions in the Philippines?," *Jàmbá: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies* 10, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.4102/jamba.v10i1.585>.

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- Understand how information, resources, and decision-making processes are exchanged among actors in disaster governance networks, and how these exchanges influence women's protection, equity, and access to essential services during compounding disaster events.
 - Through collaborative dialogue, identify priorities for further research to inform recommendations that enhance policy and practice for safeguarding women during overlapping disasters.

2. Key Themes

The key themes identified in the roundtable as critical to women's safety in compounding disasters are:

- **Data infrastructure as a foundational gap.** Gender-disaggregated data on women at risk of violence and disaster vulnerability were often unavailable before disasters occurred, creating challenges for identifying vulnerable populations and targeting assistance during response. And Barangay VAW desks operations were disrupted limiting the community-level protection infrastructures available
- **The centrality of shelter to women's safety.** Participants linked access to safe and adequate shelter to women's safety in evacuation centres and displacement settings. Delays in the provision of shelter and the absence of gender-sensitive measures were identified as ongoing concerns during recovery.
- **Coordination failures and duplication.** Participants reported that coordination challenges, communication breakdowns, and disruptions associated with leadership transitions contributed to uneven relief distribution, including both service gaps and duplication of assistance.
- **The invisibility of women's labour and needs.** Women were described as undertaking substantial caregiving, household management, and community support responsibilities during displacement. Participants noted that these demands could affect women's ability to access services and seek support.
- **The political economy of disaster response.** Participants identified political transitions, leadership priorities, and relief allocation practices as factors shaping response coordination and access to assistance.
- **Prevention as the weakest and most consequential phase.** Many of the challenges identified during the response were linked to gaps in prevention and preparedness, including the absence of data systems, disruptions to community-level protection mechanisms, and limitations in coordination arrangements prior to disaster onset.

Methodology

The Women's Safety in Compounding Disasters Roundtable was convened by CEVAW on 21 April 2026 at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Cebu City. In keeping with CEVAW's Indigenous research principles, this location was most convenient for most participants to access. The roundtable brought together government agencies, civil society organisations, humanitarian actors, and community-based organisations active in Cebu's disaster response landscape for a structured, full-day dialogue on women's safety across the 2024 - 2025 compounding disaster events. The conduct of the convening received ethics approval from Griffith University under Human Ethics Approval 2025/424 and all participants provided written consent prior to the session, which was audio and video recorded.

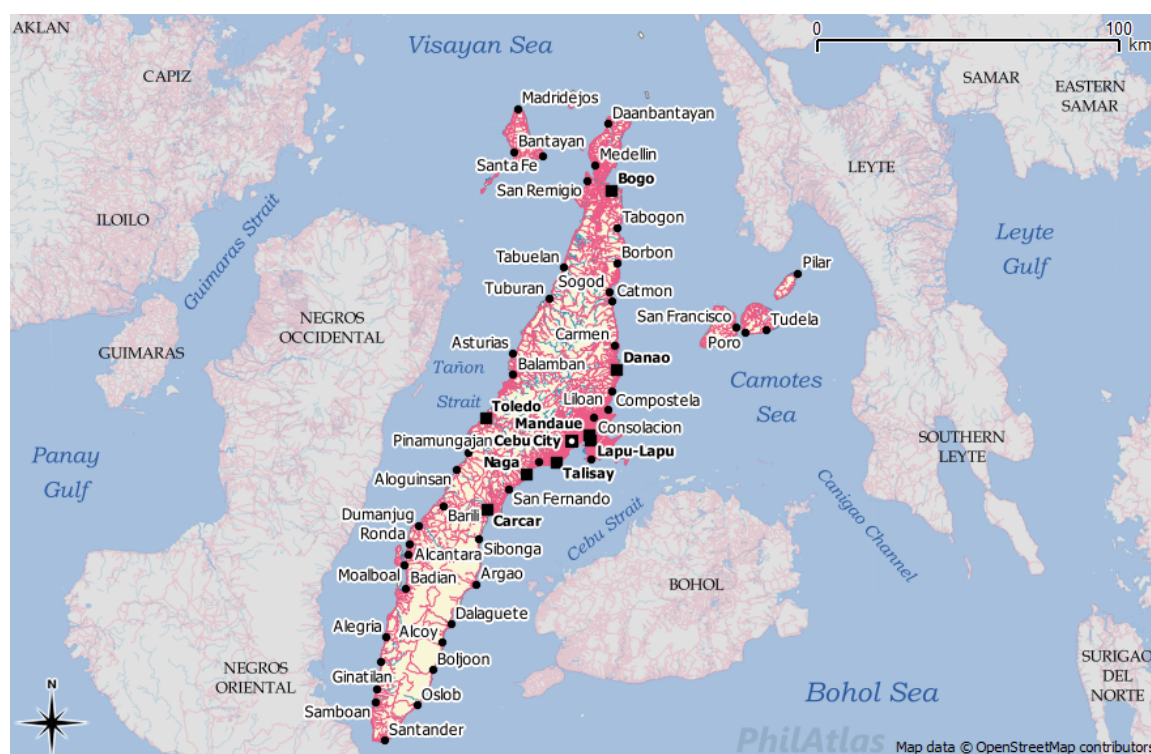


Image 2. Map of Cebu
Source: PhilAtlas.com

Participants were invited to attend through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. The research team initially identified key government agencies, civil society organisations, and humanitarian actors with mandated or documented roles in women's safety and disaster governance in Cebu. Identified participants were then emailed and invited to recommend additional organisations whose knowledge and experience would be relevant, extending recruitment to community-based and informal actors not always visible within formal governance structures. Organisations were the primary unit of recruitment, with invitees asked to send the staff member best placed to speak to their disaster response experience.



The roundtable was organised into three sessions: a government roundtable, a CSO and humanitarian roundtable, and a participatory network mapping activity. The first two sessions were structured around five guided questions spanning the four phases of the disaster management cycle, Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery, and were facilitated to create deliberate space for storytelling as a form of knowledge production. Participants were not asked to report policies or summarise data; they were invited to speak from experience, to describe what they had witnessed, what had worked, and what had failed. This is grounded in commitment to Indigenous research traditions, to oral narrative and storytelling as legitimate and irreplaceable forms of knowledge; knowledge that is tacit, relational, and embodied in ways that policy documents cannot capture.⁸ It is reflective of the Filipino practice of *kwentuhan* or storytelling, used to actively weave *kapwa* relations (relations of reciprocity at the core of Filipino self-understanding).⁹

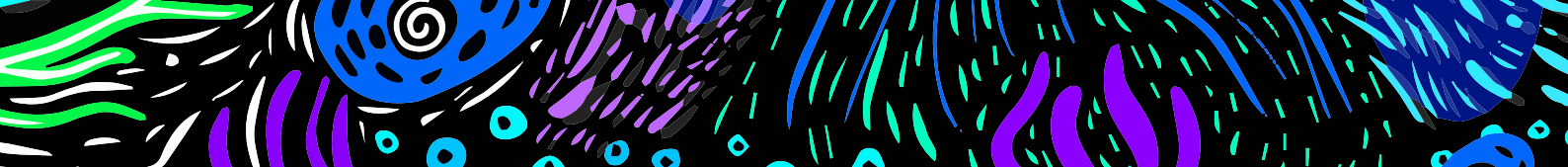
The session design was further guided by the principle of relational accountability: the recognition that researchers are accountable not only to formal ethical standards but to the relationships they enter through the research process. In practice, this meant positioning participants as co-contributors to a shared analytical project and committing to share a summary report of findings with all participants prior to wider dissemination. This process is understood and valued as an enactment of the reciprocal relationship that the research team sought to establish with participants.¹⁰ It is a recognition that the knowledge generated through the roundtable belongs, in a meaningful sense, to those who participate.

The third session comprised a one-hour participatory network mapping activity in which mixed teams constructed visual maps of Cebu's women's safety disaster governance network using colour-coded sticky notes and drawn lines to represent actors and relationships across disaster phases.

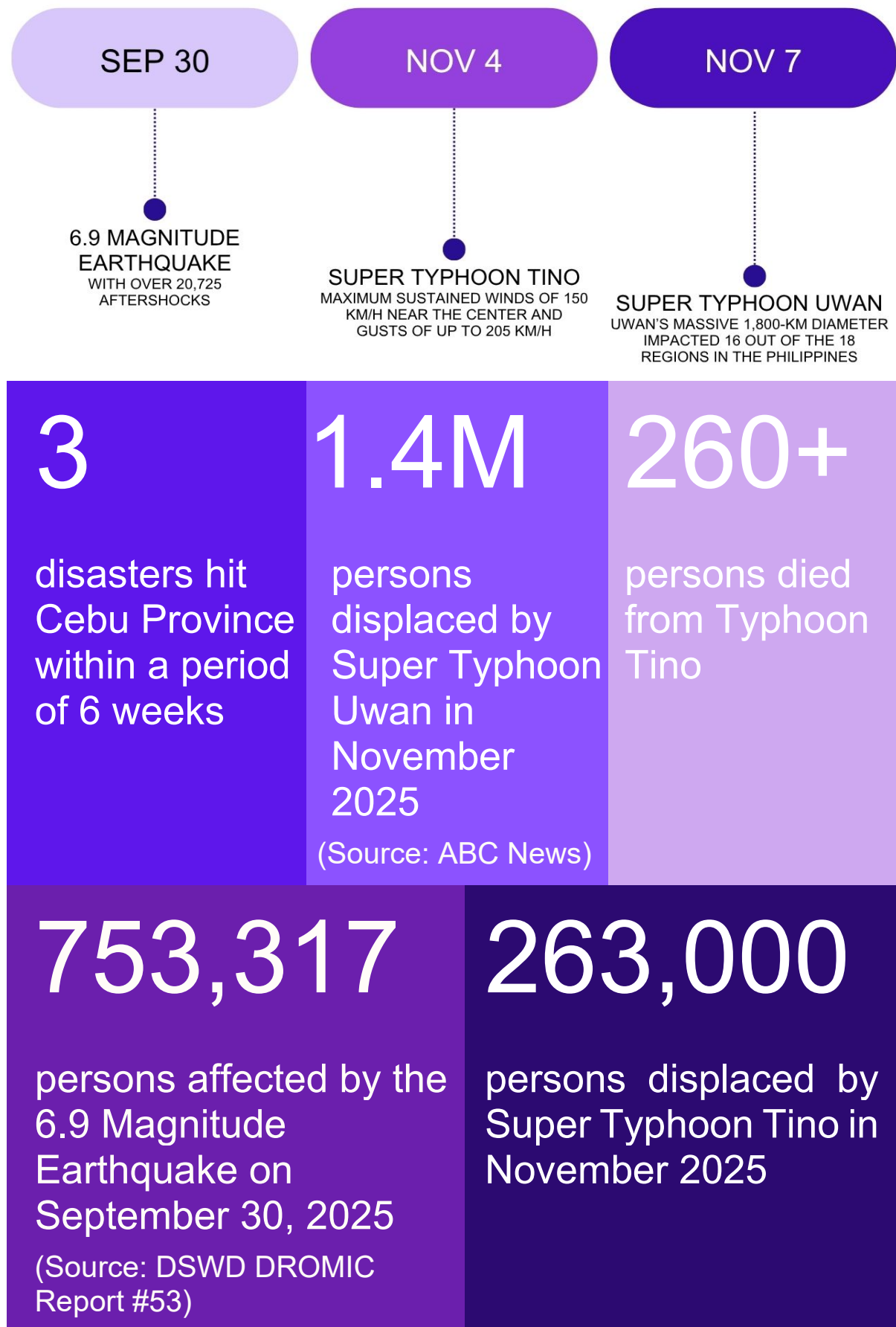
⁸ Wilson, Shawn. "Using Indigenist Research to Shape Our Future." In *Decolonizing Social Work*. Routledge, 2016.

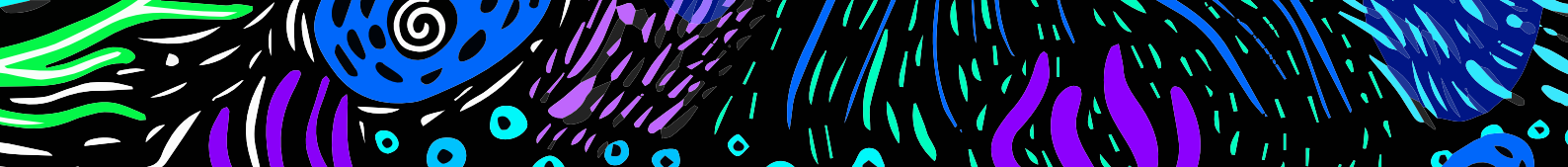
⁹ Paclibar, M. L. C. (2026). *Kwentuhan as the active weaving of kapwa relations: Notes towards a decolonizing practice in Philippine education. Thesis Eleven*, 07255136261444380.

¹⁰ Wilson, Shawn. *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood publishing, 2020.



The 2025 Disaster Sequence in Cebu: Scale and Impact





Unpacking the roundtable

How do compounding disasters impact women's safety?

Cebu's 2025 disaster sequence was not simply two disasters in succession. The magnitude 6.9 earthquake and the two typhoons that followed within weeks constituted what the literature describes as compounding disaster shocks, which is defined as two or more acute, high-impact hazardous events occurring within a close temporal window and the same jurisdiction. The interactions of these disasters intensify disruption, overwhelm local response capacity, and amplify human, material, economic, and environmental losses.¹¹ It is well established that disaster settings heighten the risks of SGBV, and that women bear a disproportionate burden of disaster impacts across all phases of the response cycle.¹² While there are studies examining compounding shocks as distinct from single disaster events,¹³ there is less attention on how compounding disasters interact with institutional systems over time in ways that strain and erode the very structures responsible for women's protection.¹⁴

Roundtable participants provided direct answers about the consequences of compounding disasters. Compounding disasters does not simply increase the volume of need, but it stretches the capacity of protection systems until women's safety is the condition that erodes. A government participant described the experience plainly:

"One (disaster) versus three (disasters).. three is overstretching us... it always has an effect on the way we do protection for women... we are spreading ourselves too thinly."

Protection, in other words, is among the first priorities to be deferred when institutional load exceeds capacity. This deferral has material consequences for women. Participants described women in evacuation centres managing menstruation, pregnancy, and breastfeeding with inadequate or no provision, not because these needs were unknown or unacknowledged, but because the compounding of disasters had pushed organisations into a mode of operation in which gendered needs were consistently displaced by more immediately visible demands. As one participant described,

"it's a double burden for a woman in the evacuation centre, menstruating, pregnant, lactating, with nothing, so the secretary now has to develop a maternity kit."

¹¹ Susan L. Cutter, "Compound, Cascading, or Complex Disasters: What's in a Name?," *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development* 60, no. 6 (2018): 16–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00139157.2018.1517518>; Andrew Gissing et al., "Compound Natural Disasters in Australia: A Historical Analysis," *Environmental Hazards* 21, no. 2 (2022): 159–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17477891.2021.1932405>; A. Kruczkiewicz et al., "Compound Risks and Complex Emergencies Require New Approaches to Preparedness," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 19 (2021): e2106795118, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2106795118>.

¹² Maria Tanyag, "Resilience, Female Altruism, and Bodily Autonomy: Disaster-Induced Displacement in Post-Haiyan Philippines," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 43, no. 3 (2018): 563–85, <https://doi.org/10.1086/695318>.

¹³ See, S., Opdyke, A. & Banki, S. Overlapping disaster and conflict events reveal gaps in displacement reporting in the Philippines. *Int J Humanitarian Action* 11, 23 (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-026-00209-z>

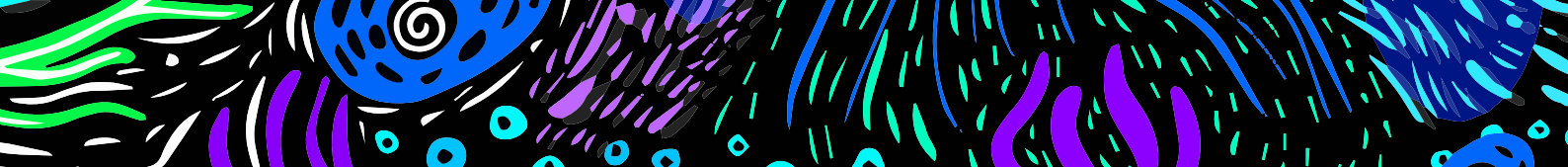
¹⁴ Catane et al., "Landslide-Amplified Flash Floods—The June 2008 Panay Island Flooding, Philippines"; Nguyen, "Gendered Vulnerabilities in Times of Natural Disasters."



The maternity kit is a meaningful response, but the fact that it had to be developed by a secretary in the middle of a disaster response, instead of being pre-positioned as a standard component of emergency relief, reveals the problem. It illustrates how the absence of gender-responsive planning in the prevention and preparedness phases is transferred to the response phase demonstrated through individual acts of improvisation by frontline workers who are themselves already overstretched. The maternity kit example also illustrates a broader feature of women's protection during disasters. Rather than being delivered through a single institution, support for women depends on the coordination of multiple actors responsible for disaster response, social protection, health services, and violence prevention. When preparedness measures are absent, gaps in this system are often addressed through ad hoc initiatives by individual frontline workers.

Under the Philippine NDRRMC framework, DSWD serves as a key coordinating agency during disaster response. However, the protection of women and girls relies on the effective coordination of multiple actors responsible for social welfare, health, gender, legal assistance, and community-based services. As a result, women's access to protection depends on how effectively these actors work together. Participants suggested that compounding disasters placed considerable strain on these coordination arrangements, creating challenges for services that were already operating with limited resources and capacity.

The sections that follow document the impact of compounding disasters to women's safety, drawn from the two roundtable sessions held across the day. The first session brought together government agencies responsible for disaster risk reduction, social welfare, and GBV response, and examined how their mandates and coordination arrangements held up under the compounding pressures of 2025. The second session drew on the experience of civil society organisations and humanitarian actors working directly with affected women and communities, offering a field-level account of what the failures of the governance network looked like from the ground. Read together, the two sessions build an evidence base for the central finding of this report: that women's safety in compounding disasters is not primarily a problem of individual vulnerability, but of how the systems and relationships responsible for protection perform, and fail, when shocks compound.



Session 1: Government Roundtable

Government participants were invited to reflect on how their agencies activated their mandates during the 2025 compounding disasters (three declared large-scale emergencies in six weeks) and how coordination unfolded across the response. Participants represented the Department of Social Welfare and Development Region 7, the City Social Welfare and Development Offices of Lapu-Lapu City and Mandaue City, and the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office. The roundtable was structured around questions designed to analyse women's safety spanning from disaster prevention through to recovery.

A. Prevention and Preparedness

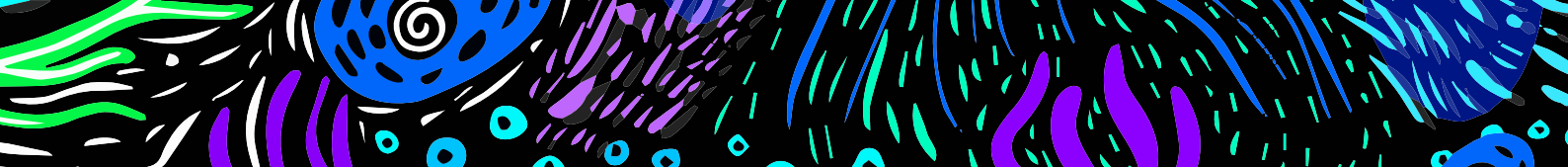
In the prevention and preparedness sub-session, participants examined the systems that existed to protect women from gender-based violence prior to the disasters and how these held up under compounding pressures.

What is a Barangay Violence Against Women Desk?

Section 12 D, Rule IV of the Rules and Regulations Implementing the [Magna Carta of Women \(Republic Act 9710\)](#) mandates the establishment of a VAW Desk in every barangay. The Violence Against Women (VAW) Desk is a barangay-level facility that serves as a frontline service provider for victim-survivors of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and other forms of abuse. It is managed by a VAW Desk Officer designated by the Punong Barangay and is usually located within the premises of the barangay hall. There are more than 42,000 VAW desks all over the Philippines.

The absence of pre-disaster data for women at risk was identified as a critical gap by the roundtable participants. They noted that Barangay Violence Against Women (VAW) desks,¹⁵ which are community-level structures mandated to provide initial GBV response, were operational prior to the disasters but were themselves disrupted and displaced by disaster events. Their physical displacement and the disruption of local personnel significantly impaired their functionality during the response phase, the moment when they were most needed. The collapse of critical protection infrastructure such as Barangay VAW desks illustrates how disasters can intensify women's vulnerability by weakening community-level protection services designed to protect them.

¹⁵ The Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Magna Carta of Women establish the establishment of a Violence Against Women (VAW) desk in every barangay. These desks serve as frontline service providers to victim-survivors experiencing physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and other forms of abuse. They are managed by a VAW Desk Officer designated by the Punong Barangay and are typically located within the barangay hall (Philippine Women's Commission, n.d.). <https://pcw.gov.ph/barangay-vaw-desk/>



It is notable, however, that participants emphasised the trainings conducted by the Department of Social Welfare and Development to build local government capacity such as the trainings on Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCMP), the Harmonised Disaster Response Reporting Template (HDRRT), and Psychological First Aid (PFA). These trainings have become critical in ensuring women's safety within evacuation camps and temporary settlements. The limited functionality of displaced Barangay VAW desks forces camp managers to take on additional responsibilities within evacuation camps. They must ensure the basic needs of displaced populations are met, while also preventing camps from becoming sites of gendered harm.

B. Response and Recovery

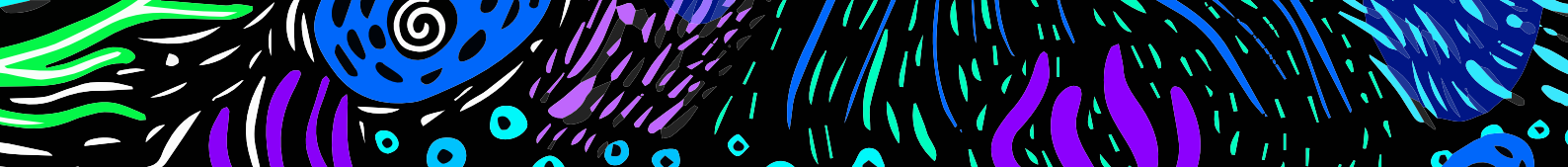
The second discussion focused on how women's needs were met, or not met, during immediate disaster response and into longer-term recovery. Four key issues were raised.

Access to Shelter and Basic Needs

A noticeable theme to emerge from the roundtable was the strong and consistent link participants drew between women's safety and access to shelter. Inadequate or unsafe shelter was identified as a direct risk factor for GBV, with evacuation camps recognised as settings in which women face heightened exposure to violence and harm. In response, a range of protective initiatives were enacted within temporary shelter and camp environments, including couples' rooms, dedicated women's shelters, and separate children's shelters, each designed to enhance safety and privacy in displacement settings.



Image 3. Evacuation Camp in Talamban, Cebu City
Source: CDN Digital Photo by Airam Limatog



Participants reported that access to safe shelter remained an unresolved issue for several communities affected by the 2025 typhoons. Within evacuation and camp settings, protective initiatives were enacted to mitigate GBV risk. This includes the establishment of women-friendly spaces and child-friendly spaces, separate sanitation facilities for men and women, and the provision of couples' rooms within temporary shelter arrangements. These measures represent a deliberate attempt to reduce exposure to violence within displacement settings, and participants acknowledged their value. They are, however, responses to a risk created by displacement rather than solutions to the displacement itself.

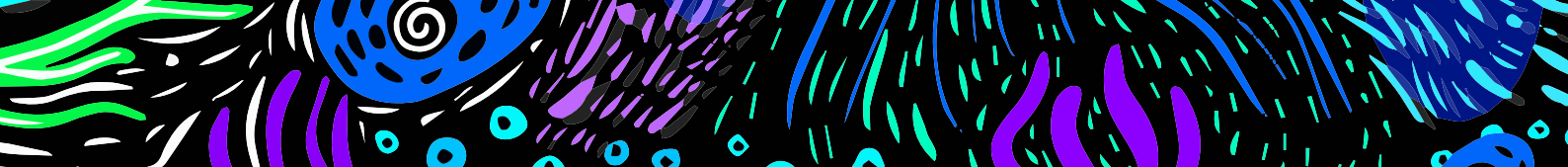
The enduring displacement is a separate and compounding concern. In Talisay, a city in Cebu severely affected by the 2025 typhoons, DSWD data recorded 5,419 people still displaced as of March 2026, several months after the typhoons made landfall. Whether this protracted displacement reflects localised infrastructure and land tenure challenges specific to Talisay, the compounding effect of successive disaster shocks that exhausted recovery resources before permanent shelter could be provided, or a combination of both, warrants further investigation.

Research consistently documents that the longer women remain in camp and temporary shelter settings, the greater their cumulative exposure to GBV risk, as the conditions that generate violence, overcrowding, loss of privacy, economic stress, and breakdown of community protective networks, intensify over time.¹⁶ Thus, the persistence of displacement at the scale documented in Talisay therefore raises serious concerns that extend well beyond the immediate recovery phase.



Image 4. DSWD Region 7 and Sara Davies during the Session 1 Roundtable

¹⁶ Matthew Scott, "Accountability for State Failures to Prevent Sexual Assault in Evacuation Centres and Temporary Shelters," in *Climate Hazards, Disasters, and Gender Ramifications* (2019), 13; Brenda Phillips and Pamela Jenkins, "Gender-Based Violence and Disasters," in *Women and Disasters in South Asia* (2016), 225–250; Sarah Bradshaw and Maureen Fordham, "Double Disaster: Disaster through a Gender Lens," in *Hazards, Risks, and Disasters in Society* (Academic Press, 2015), 233–251.



Camp Coordination and Management

The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Program, led by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), was identified as a key operational framework during the response phase.

What is Camp Coordination and Camp Management?

Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) is the technical sector that coordinates the temporary assistance and protection activities to displaced persons living in camps or camp-like settings (IOM, 2020).

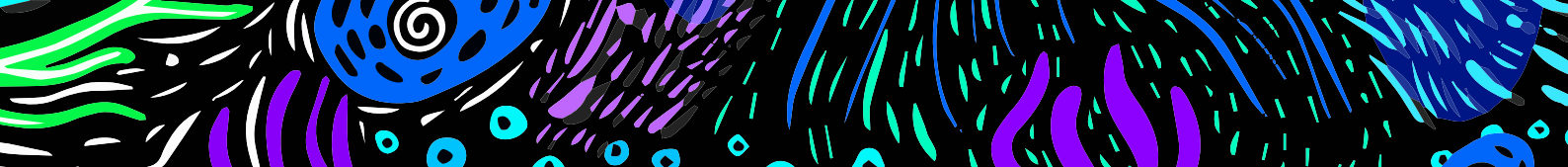
Participants from the social welfare sector reported two GBV cases that were identified and responded to within camps in 2025. Participants attribute the focus on “only two cases” to the effectiveness of protective measures within the camps. These measures, part of the CCCM Program, included creating women-friendly and child-friendly spaces, providing separate sanitation facilities for men and women, and incorporating gender sensitivity training into camp orientation for both residents and staff. However, it is important to note that while these initiatives were mandated and implemented after the 2025 disasters, their implementation was inconsistent across the affected localities. Participants believe this inconsistency was due to the disaster’s compounding impact, which had overwhelmed the service delivery capacity of government agencies.

Inter-Agency Coordination and Data Gaps

Inter-agency coordination challenges were among the most frequently raised issues in this session. A central concern was the absence of a shared data infrastructure, particularly the lack of a centralised database identifying women at heightened risk of violence or disaster vulnerability. The Disaster Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA) framework was referenced as a key mechanism, with participants noting that its effectiveness is contingent on pre-existing, gender-disaggregated data being in place before a disaster event. Where this data is absent, according to roundtable participants, agencies were forced to gather baseline information during the acute response phase, diverting time and capacity away from direct service delivery. And participants noted that this data (pre-disaster data), which should be collected and maintained in the pre-disaster phase by local government units, was often not available until after disaster onset, significantly delaying targeted response.

The 2025 Cebu experience surfaces a further and underacknowledged dimension of this problem which relates to the mentioned displacement of Barangay VAW Desks, among the primary community-level structures responsible for recording information on women at risk. The absence of updated data posed issues in prioritisation of women’s needs. Gender-disaggregated risk data therefore needs not only to be collected and maintained before disaster onset, but stored on accessible, cloud-based platforms that remain reachable when the physical infrastructure that generated them has been disaster-impacted.

Linked to the weak data management system, duplication of service delivery was also reported as a significant coordination failure. Participants described instances where some affected households received multiple allocations of relief goods, including food, water, and shelter materials, while others received none. This points to the absence of a unified tracking and distribution system, supported by a centralised database across agencies.



Communication Failures and Leadership Transitions

Participants identified significant communication breakdowns between agencies in the wake of the disasters. These were compounded by political transitions following the May 2025 local elections, in which several newly elected and recently appointed leaders had assumed their roles around the time of the disaster response, resulting in rapid staff turnover and the disruption of established lines of communication and institutional relationships. Some frontline responders were only three months into their positions when the compounding disasters struck, meaning that new officials and agency staff were simultaneously navigating unfamiliar roles and an active, complex disaster response, a combination that weakened coordination at a critical juncture.

The consequences extended beyond the immediate disruption of the response. As one participant observed,

"Fast turnover of staff, different priorities of local chief executives, we are reactive, we collect data when there is disaster. That affects provision of services."

This account summarises three institutional failures highlighted during the roundtable and that accompany each disaster cycle. First, when leadership changes, institutional priorities shift with it. This means that coordination relationships and gender-responsive approaches built under one administration are not guaranteed to survive into the next. Second, the reactive orientation toward data collection. Gathering information only when disaster has already struck, means that every new administration begins its disaster response from the same starting point of inadequate baseline data, regardless of what was accumulated before the transition. Third, these two failures compound each other. A new local leadership, with different priorities and no inherited data infrastructure, is least equipped to provide services when a disaster hits. This is not a uniform failure across all agencies. The Department of Social Welfare and Development Region VII maintained institutional continuity and operational preparedness at the regional level, and participants acknowledged its central role in coordinating the 2025 response. The constraint, however, is one of scale and reach rather than capacity alone. DSWD cannot substitute for the localised knowledge, community relationships, and gender-responsive institutional memory that are lost when barangay and city/municipal-level leadership turns over, and it is at that community level where the data gaps and coordination failures documented in this report were most acutely felt.

The political dimension of this problem runs deeper than administrative disruption. The willingness of elected and appointed leaders to prioritise gender-responsive approaches was identified by participants as a critical enabling or limiting factor in disaster response quality, one that is not guaranteed to carry over from one administration to the next. As one participant in a senior government leadership position put it,

"No matter how good the research is, if we are not able to implement the recommendations on the ground, it will be like this even until the next generation... political willingness is not present at all times."

This challenge was evident in the failure to institutionalise and maintain pre-disaster databases of women vulnerable to violence and disaster. Although the need for gender-disaggregated risk data has long been recognised, participants described how inconsistent political commitment and shifting local priorities limited efforts to embed these systems within routine disaster governance. As a result, the burden of data generation often fell on victim-survivors themselves at the moment they were least able to provide it.



Protection against violence during disasters relies not only on formal policies but also on the institutional relationships, local knowledge, and referral networks that are built over time between local government units, social welfare offices, women's organisations, and affected communities. Participants described how electoral turnover frequently disrupted these relationships, resulting in the loss of institutional memory and weakening coordination mechanisms. Because local elections occur every three years in the Philippines, these disruptions are predictable. The absence of mechanisms to preserve gender-responsive knowledge, data systems, and coordination arrangements across electoral transitions therefore constitutes a governance failure. The 2025 compounding disasters in Cebu exposed the consequences of this failure, as newly constituted local administrations struggled to identify vulnerable women and mobilise established protection responses.

C. Institutional and Workforce Dimensions

Beyond operational issues, participants reflected openly on the broader institutional and personal costs of responding to compounding disasters.

Institutional Strain and the Human Cost of Compounding Response

Participants acknowledged that the scale and compounding nature of the 2025 disasters placed significant strain on institutional capacity. Agencies that would ordinarily operate within defined mandates were required to respond to multiple, simultaneous crises, stretching staffing, logistics, and decision-making systems well beyond their designed parameters. A disaster response lead from a government agency said,

“We were overworked... earthquake, then one week of rest, then Typhoon Tino... inter-agency coordination, especially with provincial offices. The bosses are new and communication was not yet established.”

Some local government employees rendered shifts of 15 to 24 hours during the immediate disaster response phase. Participants acknowledged that this strain, both institutional and personal, affected the quality of services that could be delivered.

Additionally, there was candid recognition among participants of the emotional burden borne by frontline responders. Several participants spoke about how their work is “so challenging”. Government staff working across GBV response, camp management, and social services described sustained exposure to distressing conditions. As described by a participant from the government:

“When we run (evacuation) camps that's 24 hours... walang tulugan (no sleeping), walang Kainan (no eating)... we have to make sure they are protected while in the camp.”

The people responsible for ensuring the safety of displaced women were themselves operating without sleep, without adequate rest, and without the kind of institutional support that would acknowledge the psychological cost of that work. This was particularly acute for local government actors closest to affected communities, whose proximity to need offered no buffer from its weight. The roundtable surfaced that the human capacity of the system is not separable from its institutional capacity, and that compounding disasters *can* erode both simultaneously.

Session 2: CSO and Humanitarian Roundtable

The second session brought together civil society organisations and humanitarian actors who have worked directly with disaster-affected women and communities in Cebu. Participants included representatives from community-based civil society organisations (CSOs) and humanitarian organisations operating across the September 2025 earthquake and November 2025 typhoon responses, the majority of which were women-led. This session offered a field-focused perspective on the lived experience of women in affected communities and the practical challenges faced by those working to support them. The discussion was structured around field realities, policy network engagement, and systemic gaps across the disaster management cycle.



Image 5. CSOs Roundtable

Rapid Deployment and Field Presence

A notable strength from the outset was the speed of CSO and humanitarian deployment. Community-based CSOs and humanitarian organisations were on the ground at disaster sites within 24 hours of both the September earthquake and the November typhoons. This rapid presence positioned CSOs as first points of contact for many affected women and communities, often before formal government response mechanisms were fully operational. This was particularly striking after a CSO revealed that there were no operation centres set up the next day after the landfall in some of the hardest-hit areas, such as Cebu City and Talisay, during Typhoon Kalmaegi/Tino. Therefore, the immediate field presence of CSOs is critical.



A. Field realities

Underreporting of Violence Against Women

Humanitarian participants stated that violence against women in disaster-affected communities was significantly underreported. It was acknowledged that this finding complicates the small number of cases formally recorded by the Social Welfare and Development Office during the 2025 response. Participants attributed this discrepancy to barriers that discouraged women from reporting violence, alongside institutional constraints that limited the identification, recording, and response to cases.

The disruption of Barangay VAW Desks during the disasters, documented in Session 1, removed a critical and, in many communities, the only recognised reporting pathway available to women in displacement settings. Participants nevertheless argued that the problem extended beyond the temporary loss of these services. They observed that violence was largely identified only when women themselves initiated contact with formal support systems. In the absence of proactive case identification mechanisms, many incidents were likely to remain unreported. As a result, official case counts reflected only those cases that came to the attention of authorities rather than the full extent of violence experienced in evacuation centres and affected communities.

The barriers to reporting for women in displacement/evacuation camps are compounded by the conditions of the disaster environment itself. Fear, stigma, and distrust of formal systems are present in ordinary circumstances and conditions of overcrowding, loss of privacy, and dependence on relief assistance intensify them. These barriers identified by the roundtable participants are also well documented in the humanitarian literature.¹⁷ Where access to relief is perceived to be conditional or politically influenced, the risk that reporting may jeopardise assistance is a real deterrent, according to one roundtable participant. The need to address underreporting in disaster contexts requires more than strengthening formal reporting channels and must include building trusted, accessible, and community-level reporting infrastructure before disasters occur. During the disaster response phase, there is the need for clear communication amongst staff and within shelters that reporting will not compromise continued access to shelter and supports, and create safe and discreet ways to ask for help in addition to existing formal processes.

¹⁷ Souleymane Bayoulou et al., "Unseen Struggles: Barriers to Care for Gender-Based Violence Survivors in Forced Displacement in Kaya, Burkina Faso," *Sexuality & Culture* 29, no. 6 (2025): 2907–2922; Argiro Karakosta and Elena Riza, "Increased Vulnerability to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Refugee Women in Humanitarian Settings: Identifying the Gaps," *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience & Mental Health* 3, no. 2 (2020): 117–125.



Image 6. Philippine Red Cross contributing to the CSOs Roundtable

Overstretched Woman

Participants described women as carrying a disproportionate and largely invisible burden in disaster-affected communities. In the immediate aftermath of the 2025 disasters, women were organising access to water, securing and queuing for relief goods for extended periods, managing the care of children and other family members, and maintaining household functioning within camp environments, often while processing their own displacement and loss. This labour was seen as foundational to disaster response, yet it remained unrecognised by the formal systems operating around it. As one CSO representative observed,

"It's the women who knows where the basic necessities are. They led my team to the nearest well. They should have been given a role."

The knowledge and navigational capacity that women brought to the response were drawn upon without being acknowledged, compensated, or protected. The same participant added, *"Women try to protect their children disregarding their own,"* a statement that points not only to individual selflessness but to a deeply embedded cultural and gendered expectation that women absorb collective need at personal cost.

The result of this invisible burden extended beyond exhaustion. Women performing unpaid labour under conditions of acute stress were less able to seek support, less able to disclose harm, and less visible to the formal systems that might otherwise identify their needs. This was compounded, in some instances, by the active displacement of institutional responsibility onto women themselves. In the absence of pre-existing data systems, survivors were at times enlisted to collect data on other survivors, a practice that generated conflicting interests and community tensions alongside the additional burden it placed on already overstretched women. One grassroots organisation participant gave a stark account of where this practice can lead:

"[A government agency] asked a mother to gather the data amid extreme heat. After she collected the data, because of the heat, she died. Why do we keep asking for the same data again and again?"



This account highlights how deficiencies in disaster preparedness generated additional forms of labour for women. The absence of established data systems meant that responsibilities normally associated with institutional response were, at times, displaced onto disaster-affected women themselves, adding to the unpaid and often invisible work they were already undertaking during recovery.

A. Policy Network Engagement

Disability and Exclusion from Rescue

Persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, were consistently described by participants as the last to be rescued. A participant from a disability organisation, who is themselves blind, gave direct testimony to this experience:

"Blind and deaf are mostly left behind during disaster. They are the last to be rescued, the last brought to the evacuation centre."

The same participant pressed for a response that goes beyond rescue:

"In your evacuation center, please also include that there are women who needs wheelchair. Are there comfort rooms [that] are accessible for persons with disability? In the kit, are there also kits for persons with disability, especially for those partially blind? Maybe during disaster, some of the partially blind, they weren't able to bring their eyeglasses. We were not able to bring our cane. The one that I'm holding now is our cane. It serves as our eyes."

These two observations together point to the breadth of the challenge. The first concerns the acute phase, where physical and systemic barriers mean that persons with disabilities are often left behind at the moment of evacuation, not always because of indifference, but because disability-inclusive planning was not built into the protocols that govern how rescue is organised and prioritised. The second concerns what follows, where even when persons with disabilities reach an evacuation centre or camp, the infrastructure they encounter, including sanitation facilities, relief kits, spatial design, and access assistive devices, was not designed with their needs in mind.

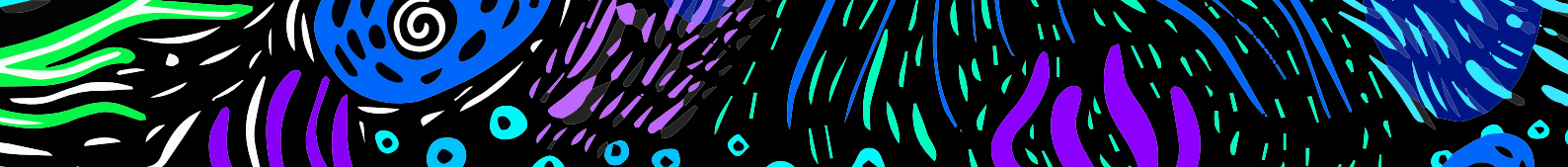
The exclusion speaks to how pre-disaster planning may render disability invisible, including evacuation protocols that deprioritise it, and relief environments that do not accommodate it. Participants identified this as requiring dedicated policy attention at each of these points and listening to the experiences of persons with disabilities, not only at the moment of rescue that tends to receive the most visible focus.

Political Barriers to Equitable Service Delivery

CSO and humanitarian participants offered a frank assessment of the barriers they encountered when engaging with formal disaster governance systems. Political dynamics within service delivery networks were identified as a significant obstacle, with the distribution of relief and support services reported to be influenced by political considerations rather than needs-based allocation frameworks. This was captured by a women's organisation representative who said,

"You will not really be included if you are not considered a political ally."

Another participant from the transport union added to this when asked about her message to the government:



“Stop politicising us... if we are not for that [politician], our names will not be included. That's a reality.”

This form of politicking, as expressed by the roundtable participants, contributed to both service gaps and inequities in who received support, with consequences that fell disproportionately on the most vulnerable women and households.

Data Gaps at the Point of Response

Civil society organisations also reported actively seeking government data to identify where they could most effectively direct their assistance, but found that local government units were themselves unable to provide it. According to the participants, at some points of the response phase, some local government units in Cebu did not have the data needed to guide targeted relief delivery.

Data infrastructure is foundational to the provision of goods and services during disaster response. One key mechanism within this infrastructure is the Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Communication (DROMIC) platform, an online system managed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development that is designed to make disaster situation data and response initiatives publicly accessible. Participants identified significant gaps in this system's operationalisation during the 2025 response. As one government participant noted,

"There is the need to boost the re-establishment of DROMIC for the prepositioning of gender-appropriate kits."

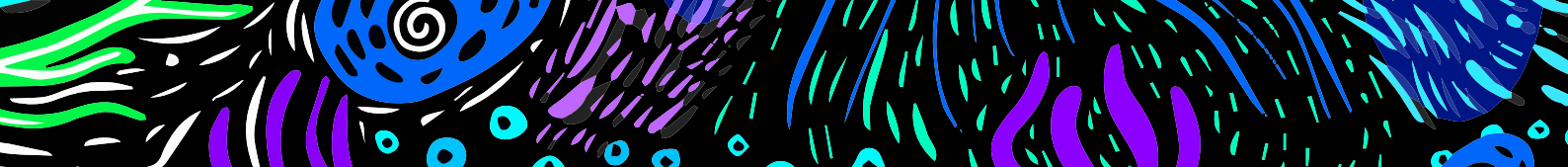
These findings raise questions about DROMIC's effectiveness as a data and coordination mechanism for supporting gender-responsive relief distribution during the 2025 response. In the absence of usable government data, CSOs were directed to conduct their own counts of affected populations. Some CSOs remarked that when they sought records of pregnant women and lactating mothers specifically, they were informed that no such records existed and were told to “look around and count manually”. The absence of this basic demographic data during the response meant that some of the most vulnerable women remained effectively invisible to relief efforts at the point they most needed support. The finding highlights how the lack of pre-existing and gender-sensitive data systems can constrain targeted relief and protection efforts once a disaster is underway.

Preparedness Gaps and the Costs of Survival Mode

Participants repeatedly linked challenges during the 2025 response to gaps in disaster preparedness prior to the earthquake and typhoons. In particular, they noted that operational coordination centres at the barangay, municipal, and city levels had not been established before disaster onset. As a result, local responders were required to develop coordination arrangements during the emergency itself rather than activate pre-existing systems and structures. A representative from a women's organisation named the structural logic underlying this failure directly:

"Why do we always fail to prevent? The budget should be 70% preparedness, 30% response. Why can't we follow it? When disaster hits, we are in chaos mode."

Participants described operating in "survival mode" during the compounding disasters of 2025, with response efforts focused on meeting immediate needs. As a result, provisions intended to support women and persons with disabilities, including spaces for lactating mothers, women-friendly spaces, and child-friendly spaces, were at times deprioritised or overlooked.



Participants also noted that the conditions they described as "survival mode" had been observed in previous disasters as well. In their accounts, the pressures experienced during the 2025 response reflected longer-standing gaps in preparedness rather than challenges unique to this event. As a senior government leader responsible for disaster response acknowledged,

"I am truly concerned. If the readiness of our local, national, CSOs will not change, we will have the same problem all over again."

That concern, expressed from within the system by someone with direct authority over its functioning, points to the need to revisit and address how preparedness is resourced, owned, and sustained across multiple and overlapping disaster cycles.

Synthesis

Following the roundtable sessions, a synthesis session was conducted for the purpose of encouraging a period of reflection for participants as well as to highlight the key themes arising from the roundtable discussions with a focus on both the evident divergences and convergences appearing throughout the roundtable conversations. Within the reflection, there was a shared acknowledgment of key challenges including working within organisational mandates where there are divergences across organisations and sectors in mandate priorities, as well as the strain of competing prioritisation within ground-level responses, particularly when a disconnect between mandate priorities and ground-level realities was apparent. Within the discussion, some participants also shared personal challenges of responding within the disaster context when they were also impacted on a personal level and the emotional impact of their response roles.



Image 7. Joanna Klieve-Longman leading the Synthesis Session

Consistent themes within the synthesis included a strong focus on equity, community and partnerships. Notable points for synthesis included a shared emphasis on ensuring marginalised voices (particularly people with disabilities) remained present and centralised within response prioritisation, as well as the recognition of shared values including cross-sector harmonisation, collaboration and partnering. Within the synthesis discussion, there was an energy of good-will, commitment and connection that was evident from the engagement amongst participants and vocalisations of strengths and goals throughout the session.

Session 3: Network Mapping Activity

The third session comprised a one-hour collaborative group exercise in which mixed teams, drawn from across government, CSO, humanitarian, and community-based participants, constructed a visual map of the actors, relationships, and resource flows within Cebu's women's safety disaster governance network. Three group maps were produced, each offering a distinct but complementary picture of the network. Session 3 was designed to identify which actors are present in Cebu's women's safety disaster governance system, how they are connected, how strong or weak those connections are, and at which phases of the disaster management cycle different actors are active. The exercise was also designed to surface, through collective mapping, relationships and gaps that might not emerge through discussion alone, since participants from different sectors would each bring visibility into parts of the network that others could not see. The resulting maps were intended to serve both as a research output, providing the data for a network mapping, and as a reflective tool for participants themselves, allowing them to see the governance system they operate within represented as a whole.



Image 8. Breakout groups for the Participatory Network Mapping Session

A. Mapping Methodology

Teams worked with colour-coded sticky notes to identify and organise key actors by sector: government agencies (pink), CSO and humanitarian organisations (yellow/white), and community and informal actors (blue/green). Once actors were identified, participants mapped the connections between them using solid lines to denote active coordination relationships and broken lines to indicate weak or inconsistent relationships. Each actor was labelled according to the disaster phase or phases in which they are primarily active: Prevention (P), Preparedness (PR), Response (R), and Recovery (RC).

B. Key Observations Across the Maps

The LGU and DSWD as Network Hubs

Across all three group maps, the Local Government Unit (LGU) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) emerged as the most consistently central actors in the network. In Group A's map, the LGU was positioned at the centre with solid lines radiating outward to the majority of actors, both government and CSO. DSWD appeared across all maps and was one of the few agencies labelled across all four disaster phases, reflecting its cross-cutting mandate from prevention through to recovery. The concentration of connections around these two actors points to a network that is heavily hub-dependent, where coordination flows through a small number of central nodes instead of being distributed across the network.

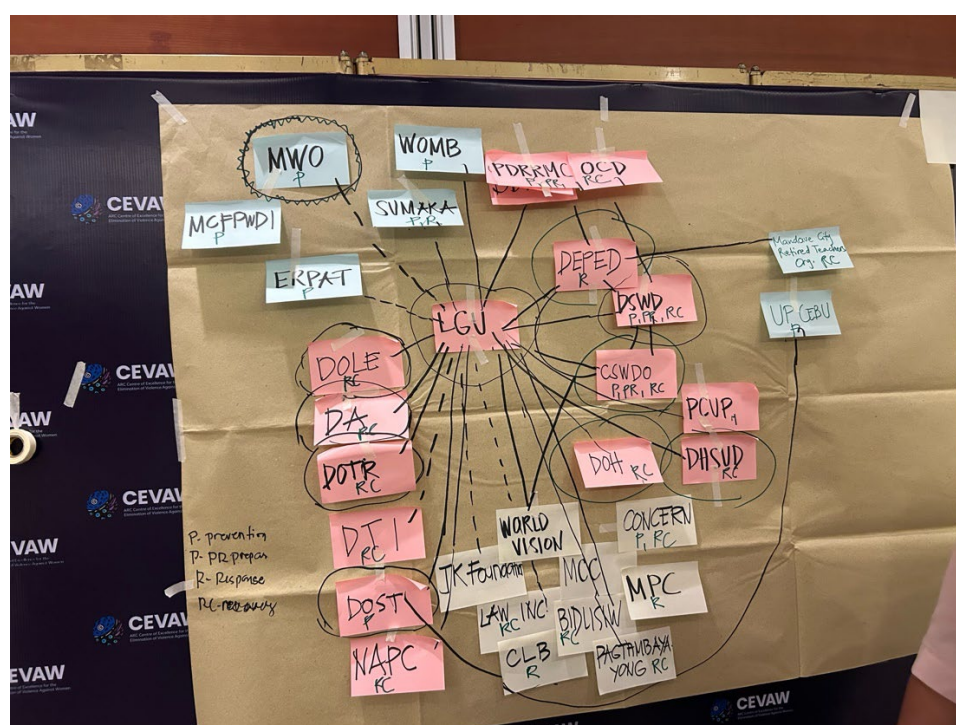


Image 9. Group A's map

The Philippine Red Cross as a Cross-Sector Connector

The Philippine Red Cross featured prominently in two of the three maps and was notable for its connections across government, CSO, and community actors. In Group B's map, the Red Cross occupied a central position with solid lines connecting it to a wide range of actors across all phases. This reflects the organisation's field presence and its role as a practical bridge between formal government systems and community-level response, a function that was also noted in the roundtable discussions.

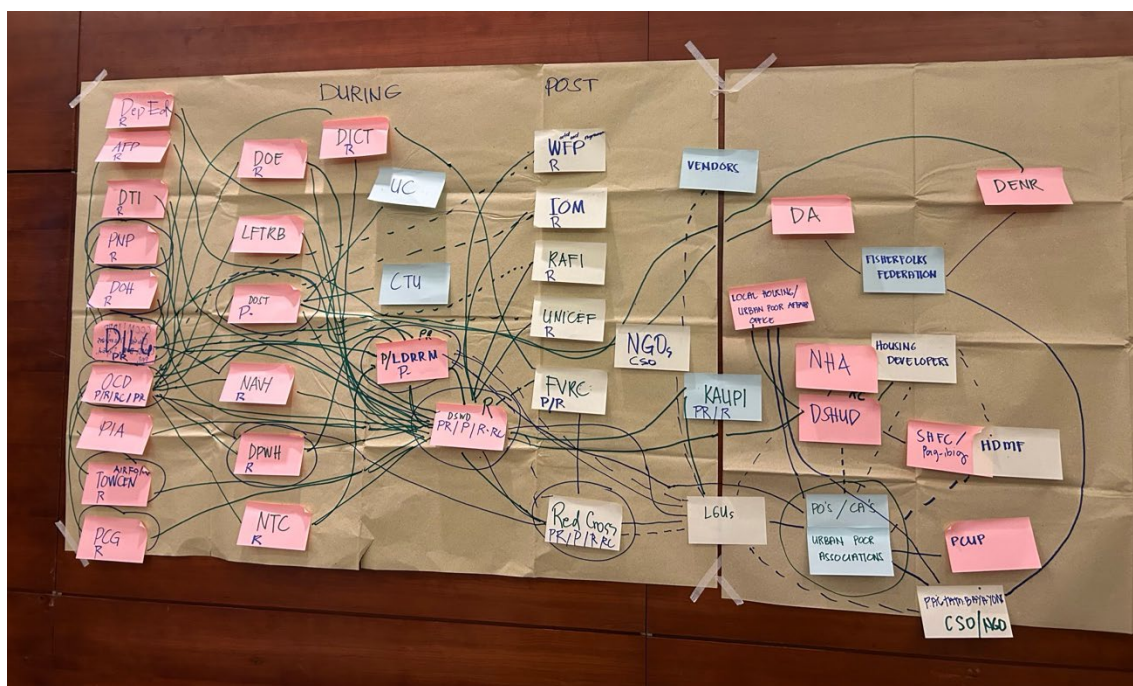


Image 10. Group B's map

Phase Distribution: Response Dominates, Prevention is Sparse

A consistent pattern across all three maps was the concentration of actors in the response and recovery phases, with very few actors labelled as active in prevention or preparedness phases. In Group A's map, the majority of government agencies carried R or RC designations, with only DSWD, CSWDO, and DOST marked as active in prevention or preparedness. In Group B's map, government actors such as the CDRMC, CHO, BFP, Coast Guard, and PNP/AFP were active across multiple phases, but CSO and community actors were predominantly concentrated in response and recovery. Group C's map made this temporal pattern most explicit, structuring the entire network around "During" and "Post" disaster phases, with international organisations including WFP, IOM, and UNICEF appearing only in the post-disaster column.

This phase distribution highlights the finding from both roundtable sessions that preparedness and prevention are the weakest links in the women's safety governance network, with few actors positioned or resourced to operate at this phase.

Weak Relationships and Network Gaps

Broken lines, indicating weak or inconsistent coordination relationships, appeared across all three maps. In Group A, several CSO actors maintained only dashed-line connections to the LGU, suggesting that their engagement with the formal governance system is irregular or strained. In Group B, actors on the periphery of the map, including fraternity groups and urban poor and some service providers, were connected to the broader network only through broken lines, indicating their marginal integration into formal coordination structures despite their potential role in community-level response. These weak ties align with the coordination failures described in Sessions 1 and 2.

Breadth and Diversity of the Network

The maps collectively identified a wide and diverse range of actors operating within Cebu's women's safety disaster governance network. Beyond the core government agencies, participants mapped faith-based organisations, academic institutions, private sector actors including Jollibee Foundation, urban poor associations, fisherfolk federations, transport worker groups, and LGBTQIA+ organisations. Group C's map included a dedicated recovery and housing cluster, encompassing the National Housing Authority, Pag-IBIG, HDMF, housing developers, and urban poor associations, reflecting the centrality of the shelter issue raised throughout the day.

The inclusion of informal and community actors, including vendors, people's organisations, and community associations, across multiple maps points to the important but often unrecognised role of non-institutional actors in sustaining women's safety networks during and after disaster.

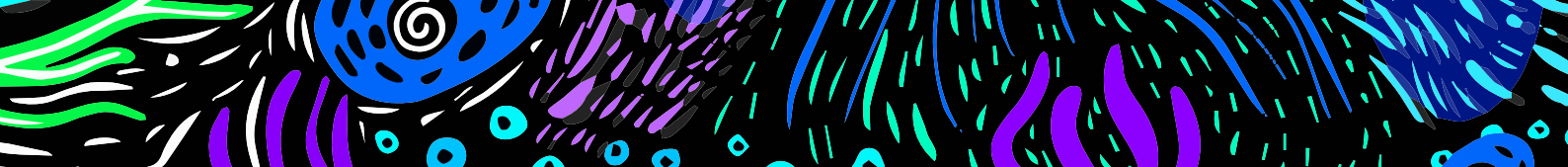


Image 11. Network Mapping Activity

International Actors: Present in Recovery, Absent from Prevention

International organisations including WFP, IOM, UNICEF, and international NGOs appeared in Group C's map exclusively in the post-disaster phase. This is reflective of the typical deployment model of international humanitarian actors but also highlights a gap which is the absence of international engagement in prevention and preparedness phases, where investment could have the greatest long-term effect on women's safety outcomes.

The network mapping exercise produced three rich visual representations of Cebu's women's safety disaster governance network. The maps reveal a network that is large and diverse in its membership but structurally concentrated around a small number of central hubs, phase-skewed toward response and recovery at the expense of prevention and



preparedness and marked by weak ties between formal government systems and CSO and community actors. These structural features help explain many of the coordination failures and service gaps identified in Sessions 1 and 2 and point to clear priorities for network strengthening in future disaster prevention and preparedness efforts.

Findings

Across all three sessions, a number of issues recurred with sufficient frequency and emphasis to be identified as cross-cutting themes across all disasters:

1

Data infrastructure as a foundational gap.

The absence of pre-disaster, gender-disaggregated data on women at risk of violence and disaster vulnerability emerged across all sessions as a key challenge during the 2025 response. Participants noted that the pace of the compounding disasters left little time to address these gaps once the emergency had begun. With VAW Desks disrupted and baseline information unavailable, agencies encountered difficulties identifying vulnerable populations, civil society organisations conducted their own population assessments, and data collection responsibilities were, at times, shifted onto affected communities and survivors themselves.

2

The centrality of shelter to women's safety.

Participants consistently identified access to safe and adequate shelter as a key component of women's protection in displacement settings. They reported that evacuation centres with limited gender-sensitive design could increase women's exposure to safety and protection concerns. Nearly a year after the typhoons, some families remained in camp settings without permanent or transitional shelter.

3

Coordination failures and duplication.

Participants identified coordination challenges as a significant constraint on the 2025 response. They linked these difficulties to local government transitions following the elections, communication breakdowns, and the absence of shared data systems. These factors contributed to uneven relief distribution, with reports of both duplicated assistance and unmet needs. Participants also described how changes in local leadership disrupted existing coordination arrangements and institutional knowledge during an active disaster response.

4

The invisibility of women's labour and need.

Participants reported that women in disaster-affected communities assumed substantial responsibilities during displacement, including organising access to water and relief, caring for dependants, and managing household needs within camp environments. These demands could reduce the time and capacity available to seek support or report violence. Participants also described instances in which survivors were involved in collecting information on other survivors, reflecting broader gaps in pre-disaster data systems.

5

The political economy of disaster response.

Participants identified political factors as influencing both the distribution of assistance and the coordination of response activities. These included disruptions associated with post-election leadership transitions, the allocation of relief based on political relationships rather than assessed need, and variations in inter-agency coordination linked to relationships between local executives and agency representatives. Participants also reported that concerns about losing access to relief discouraged some women from reporting violence, creating additional barriers to seeking protection and support.

6

Prevention as the weakest and most consequential phase.

Participants' accounts consistently highlighted the importance of prevention and preparedness for women's safety during disasters. They identified gaps in pre-disaster data systems, limited support for VAW Desks, and weaknesses in coordination arrangements before the 2025 disasters occurred. These shortcomings constrained response efforts once the earthquake and typhoons struck, requiring agencies and frontline workers to address information, coordination, and service delivery gaps during the emergency itself.

Next Steps and Research Priorities

The findings of this roundtable point to a research and policy agenda that is specific and urgent. The evidence from Cebu provides a detailed map (for Cebu and for other disaster-prone areas) of the structural conditions that will produce the same failures again unless they are addressed before the next compounding disaster arrives.

1

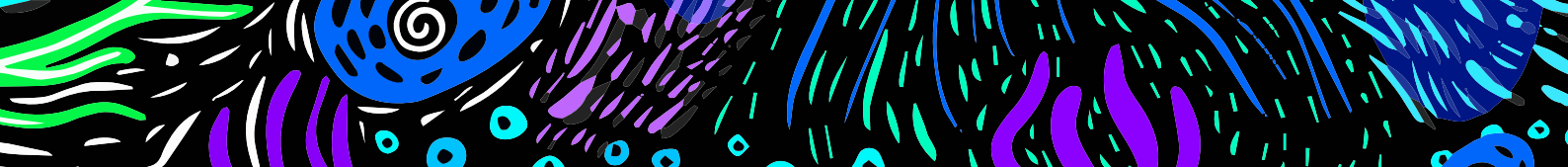
Strengthen pre-disaster data infrastructure for women at risk of violence and disaster-related vulnerability.

The roundtable discussions identified the absence of gender-disaggregated baseline data as a recurring challenge across prevention, preparedness, and response. Establishing and maintaining accessible databases, integrated with DANA processes and barangay-level VAW and DRRM mechanisms, would support the identification of vulnerable populations before disasters occur and facilitate more targeted response and recovery efforts. Participants' accounts suggest that, where such systems are absent, significant resources are diverted to emergency data collection during response operations, creating delays and additional burdens for both responders and affected communities.

2

Develop mechanisms to ensure that Barangay VAW Desks remain operational during and after disasters.

The roundtable discussions highlighted the need for continuity planning for community-level GBV services, particularly in contexts of displacement and compounding disasters. Future research should examine how VAW Desks can maintain reporting, referral, and coordination functions during emergencies and how these mechanisms can be integrated into broader DRRM preparedness and response planning.



3

Implement disability-inclusive evacuation and rescue planning.

Participants identified significant barriers faced by persons with disabilities during evacuation and rescue operations, including delays in evacuation and limited access to assistance during successive disaster events. Research is needed to identify the factors that contribute to these barriers and to inform the development of evidence-based, disability-inclusive evacuation and rescue protocols. Particular attention should be given to evacuation planning, transportation, communication, assistive devices, and coordination mechanisms that support the safe and timely evacuation of persons with disabilities during emergencies.

4

Prioritise research on the political dimensions of disaster governance.

Participants described how post-election leadership transitions, political relationships, and relief allocation practices shaped the distribution of assistance and the operation of response systems during the 2025 disasters. Further research is needed to better understand these dynamics and to identify accountability and oversight mechanisms that support transparent, needs-based, and gender-responsive disaster management.

5

Embed GBV prevention and response measures within camp management and displacement planning.

The roundtable discussions highlighted a number of protective initiatives associated with the CCMP, including women-friendly spaces, separate sanitation facilities, and gender-sensitive camp orientation. Systematic evaluation of these measures could inform their broader adoption within evacuation and displacement settings. Future policy and practice should also consider mechanisms that enable women to report violence safely and discreetly while residing in shelters, recognising the barriers associated with disclosure in crowded and highly visible camp environments.

6

Examine the conditions required to integrate GBV prevention into mainstream disaster risk reduction practice.

Across the roundtable discussions, many of the challenges affecting women's protection during the 2025 disasters were linked to gaps in prevention and preparedness. Future research should investigate the institutional, political, and resource-related factors that influence the inclusion of GBV prevention within disaster risk reduction systems. The resulting evidence would assist government agencies, civil society organisations, and community actors in aligning disaster risk reduction and GBV prevention objectives and in maintaining attention to women's protection across the disaster management cycle.

Appendix 1: Program

FULL WORKSHOP AGENDA — 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM	
10:00 – 10:20	Welcome, Context-Setting and Ground Rules <i>Welcome Remarks by Sara Davies</i> <i>Rationale by Queenie Tomaro</i>
10:20 – 11:20	SESSION 1. Government Roundtable: Policy, Mandates and Gaps <i>Lead Facilitator: Queenie Tomaro and Sara Davies. Notetaking: Joanna and Hazel</i>
11:20 – 11:30	Short Break
11:30 – 12:30	SESSION 2. CSO / Humanitarian Roundtable: Field Realities and Women's Safety <i>Lead Facilitator: Queenie Tomaro</i>
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch Break
1:30 – 1:45	Synthesis Moment: Connecting the Two Perspectives <i>Joanna Klieve-Longman</i>
1:45 – 3:45	SESSION 3. Group Workshop: Mapping the Women's Safety Policy Network <i>Lead Facilitator: Hazel Jovita</i>
3:45 – 4:00	Closing: Key Takeaways and Next Steps <i>Queenie Tomaro and Sara Davies</i>



Appendix 2: List of Questions/Instructions

Session 1. Government Roundtable

- Before the disasters struck, what systems were in place specifically to protect women from GBV, shelter risk, or loss of livelihood? Which held up, and which collapsed?
- During the immediate response phase, what specific actions were taken to address women's safety? Where were the bottlenecks?
- Recovery is often where women's needs become invisible again. What has the recovery phase looked like for women in Cebu: housing, livelihoods, mental health, legal protection?
- Reflecting on both disasters together, how did compounding events change the equation for women's safety? What would have been different if you had faced only one disaster?

Session 2. CSOs Roundtable

- Take us to the ground. After the earthquake, and then after the typhoon, what were the most critical threats to women's safety you encountered in communities?
- SGBV in disaster contexts is often underreported. What barriers to reporting, service access, and support did women face during the 2025 disasters in Cebu?
- How would you describe your organisation's relationship with government agencies during the disaster response? Where was coordination effective, and where did it break down?
- If you could speak directly to policymakers and government agencies — what is the one thing you most want them to understand about the reality of women's safety in these disasters?

Session 3. Policy Network Mapping

Using the materials provided, map the network of actors involved in women's safety in disaster governance in Cebu. Your map should answer:

- Step 1. WHO are the key actors? (Pink = government | Yellow = CSO/humanitarian | Blue = schools/community/informal)
- Step 2. HOW are they connected? Solid lines = strong, regular coordination. Dashed = weak or ad hoc. No line = gap.
- Step 3. WHEN are they most active? Label each actor: P = Prevention | PR = Preparedness | R = Response | RC = Recovery.
- Step 4. WHERE are the gaps? Mark missing actors or broken links with a red X or question mark.
- Step 5. WHO holds the most decision-making power and resources in this network? Circle them.



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ARC Centre of Excellence for the
Elimination of Violence Against Women



Australian Government

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CEVAW

Monash University, Clayton Campus, Wellington Rd,
Clayton VIC 3800

cevaw.org

info@cevaw.org

