



30 August 2023

Towards d/Deaf-Inclusive Climate Action and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

A Governance and Political Environment Analysis of the Philippines

PUBLISHED BY:

Oscar M. Lopez Center for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Foundation, Inc.



This report is made possible by the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of Oscar M. Lopez Center for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Foundation, Inc. (OML Center) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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Special Thanks to:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

5	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
6	ABBREVIATIONS

01

Literature Review on The Climate Resilience of Persons with Disabilities

8	Climate Change and Vulnerable Communities
8	Persons with Disabilities as a Vulnerable Group
	Projected Impacts on Persons with Disabilities
9	Common causes of greater vulnerability
10	The case of the Filipino d/Deaf community
12	A Rights-based Approach to Climate Action

02

The Philippine Policy Landscape on Climate, Disaster, and Disability Affairs

14	Research design for the policy mapping
15	Policy landscape per sector
	Climate Change Laws and Policies
18	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Laws and Policies
19	Persons with Disability-related Laws and Policies
22	Filipino Sign Language Laws and Policies
23	Synthesis of key insights

03

Key Findings: Barriers Of Inclusive Governance In The Philippines

25	Stakeholder Engagement Process
25	Barriers of Inclusive Governance
26	Lack of an updated and comprehensive database on persons with disabilities

TABLE OF CONTENTS

28	Limited access to quality education for th Deaf
29	Low prioritization of resource for disability affairs
30	Siloed and tokenistic approaches to disability nclusiveness
	Limited access to information for the Deaf
31	Lack of representation and participation of the disability sector
32	and its sub-groups
	Synthesis
33	

04

Key Findings: Pathways To Deaf-Inclusive Governance In The Philippines

34	Deaf Aware
35	Deaf Sensitive
36	Deaf Responsive
	Deaf Inclusive
37	Key Stakeholders

05

Ex-Post Evaluation: Assessment Of Impact And Projected Outcomes Of Work Program 2

52	REFERENCES
58	ANNEX A. CONSULTED ORGANIZATIONS

Executive Summary

As the climate crisis worsens, developing countries like the Philippines continue to bear the brunt of adverse impacts brought about by more intense typhoons, more prolonged droughts, and other hazards. Within these vulnerable nations, there are marginalized communities that are even more severely affected due to the social, economic and political inequalities that prevail, creating conditions that overlook or render those minorities invisible in the eyes of the law and governance. The d/Deaf community is a marginalized sector that experiences compounding inequalities and vulnerabilities due to their nature identities as a sub-group within the persons with disabilities community, as a cultural and linguistic community similar to indigenous and ethnic minorities, and other compounding intersectionalities, such as women and children or senior citizens with disabilities (*Chapter 1*).

The current laws that govern climate, disaster and disability-affairs, though considered progressive by other measures, have yet to adopt an explicit and rights-based approach, specifically towards persons with disabilities, in accordance with international agreements such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), among others (*Chapter 2*). The operationalization and localization of laws have also encountered numerous challenges relating to the lack of quality data, limited quality education, lack of resources and prioritization, prevalence of misconceptions and negative perceptions, lack of accessible information, and lack of representation from marginalized communities like the d/Deaf (*Chapter 3*). Addressing these challenges will require a concerted multi-stakeholder effort to achieve Deaf-Inclusion in all phases of development. Such a solution would involve raising awareness about

d/Deaf culture, right, and that needs in the context of climate change; inculcating the importance of deaf-sensitivity that considers the unique needs of the d/Deaf community; institutionalizing laws and policies that are responsive to those needs; and ultimately fostering strong partnerships with the d/Deaf community (*Chapter 4*).

In an effort to shed more light on the realities faced by the Filipino d/Deaf community, the Oscar M. Lopez Center for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, Inc. together with the Philippine Federation of the Deaf, Parabukas, and other partners, have undertaken a project entitled “Climate Resilience of the Deaf: Signs for Inclusive Governance and Development” (Project SIGND), with technical assistance from the US Agency for International Development through the Gerry Roxas Foundation’s INSPIRE Project. The project aims to increase the preparedness and adaptive capacities of the Deaf to climate-related risks and disasters by increasing access to and participation in hearing-led programs on climate action and disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). A series of assessments and studies was conducted to bring to light the realities faced by the d/Deaf community, and the barriers and challenges inhibiting more inclusive and accessible action. This report presents the key findings of the assessments.

Abbreviations

AIP	Annual Investment Plan
ALS	Alternative Learning Systems
ASL	American Sign Language
CBMS	Community-based Monitoring System
CBRS	Community-based Rehabilitation Specialists
CC-DRR	Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction
CCC	Climate Change Commission
CDRVA	Climate and Disaster Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CHR	Commission on Human Rights
COA	Commission on Audit
COP	Conference of Parties
CRVA	Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessments
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CVA	Climate Vulnerability Assessments
DepED	Department of Education
DHSUD	Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government

DILG-LGA	Department of Interior and Local Government - Local Government Academy
DOH	Department of Health
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DPO	Deaf People's Organizations
DRR or DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction or Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
DRRMO/S	Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office/Service
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FSL	Filipino Sign Language
GAA	General Appropriations Act
GAD	Gender and Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	International Disability Alliance
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRR	Implementing Rules and Regulations
KWF	Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino
LCCAP	Local Climate Change Action Plan

DILG-LGA	Department of Interior and Local Government - Local Government Academy
DOH	Department of Health
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DPO	Deaf People's Organizations
DRR or DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction or Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
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IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRR	Implementing Rules and Regulations
KWF	Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino
LCCAP	Local Climate Change Action Plan

LCE	Local Chief Executive
LDRMO	Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer
LDRMP	Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan
LGU	Local Government Unit
MTRCB	Movie and Television Review and Classification Board
NCCAP	National Climate Change Action Plan
NCCDA	Naga City Council for Disability Affairs
NCDA	National Council for Disability Affairs
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
NDRMF	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund
NDRMP	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan
NFSCC	National Framework Strategy on Climate Change
NGA	National Government Agencies
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OCD	Office of Civil Defense
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
PDAO	Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office

PDRC	Philippine Deaf Resource Center
PFD	Philippine Federation of the Deaf
PIA	Philippine Information Agency
PRPWD	Philippine Registry for Persons with Disabilities
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PSF	People's Survival Fund
SIGND	Signs for Inclusive Governance and Development Project
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council



Chapter 1

LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Climate Change and Vulnerable Communities

In 2015, world leaders made a commitment, by virtue of the Paris Agreement, to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius in an effort to maintain a liveable world. Unfortunately, recent findings have shown that with the continuing increase of greenhouse gas emissions, global warming is on track to breaching that limit, which means that the global population is more likely to experience frequent droughts, tropical cyclones, sea level rise, among other climatic impact-drivers (IPCC, 2023, B.1.4). Despite best efforts to adapt to the adverse impacts of such drivers, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that while progress has been documented in certain parts of the world, these benefits are unevenly distributed. There are still gaps in adaptation efforts and even maladaptation observed in more vulnerable regions, with particularly adverse effects on vulnerable groups (IPCC, 2023, A.3-A.3.4).

In the context of climate change, the term “vulnerable groups” is often used to refer to marginalized sectors of society defined by gender, ethnicity, economic status, disability, age, among other demographic factors (IPCC, 2023, C.5.3). Together, this represents a plethora of marginalized groups, each representing diverse needs, rights and interests that often go understudied and unrecognized. To address the issue, there has been a more concerted push for greater equity, inclusion and the adoption of a rights-based approach in climate action (IPCC, 2023, C.5-C.5.2). Some significant international agreements that have guided development efforts in this regard include the Paris Agreement, which declares that all parties should “respect, promote and consider their respective obligation to human rights, the right to health..”, specifically highlighting the rights of people in vulnerable situations, and the Sendai Framework of 2015-2030, which includes in its guiding principles the stipulation that disaster risk reduction “requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible, and non-discriminatory participation”.





Persons with Disabilities as a Vulnerable Group

Projected Impacts on Persons with Disabilities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) acknowledges that persons with disability are often subject to higher levels of discrimination during disaster or high-risk scenarios (Handicap International, et. al., 2020). There is a need to emphasize the States' obligation to ensure the protection of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies, and occurrence of natural disaster" (UNCRPD, 2006).

A review of available literature reveals that they are differently and more severely affected by climate change. Some glaring impacts that have been documented include higher susceptibility to health issues, including water- and vector-borne diseases, mental health issues, and food insecurity, among others (Jodoin, et. al., 2020; Kosanic, 2022; Lewis & Ballard, 2011; OHCHR, 2020); reduced livelihood opportunities (Jodoin, et.a., 2020; C3ER, n.d.); higher risk of gender-based violence (Vaughan, 2020; Lozada, 2015; Handicap International, et.al., 2020); migration or displacement, which disrupt the critical social networks and services that they need (Jodoin, et. al., 2020; Lewis & Ballard, 2011; OHCHR, 2020); and a mortality rate of up to two to four times higher during disasters (Jodoin, et.al., 2020).

It is critical to note, however, that the vulnerability within the disability sector is not simply because of their unique needs relating to the nature of their disabilities, but rather the various social, economic, health, and even political

inequalities that contribute to the prevalence of misconceptions and discrimination against the sector, and serve as significant barriers to their access and participation in society (Jodoin, et. al., 2020; OHCHR, 2020).

Common causes of greater vulnerability

Persons with disability are often among the most resource poor and impoverished populations due to various systemic issues that affect their socio-economic and even political situation. Studies have established that there is a cyclical relationship between poverty and vulnerability during disaster scenarios, which leads to a continuous and even worsening state of poverty and vulnerability for marginalized groups. The most prominent gaps in current systems that contribute to this cycle include the limited access to education and information (Cooper, et. al., 2021; Calgaro, 2021), lack of livelihood and stable income (Jodoin, et.a., 2020; C3ER, n.d.), lack of adequate housing and social protection (Jodoin et.al, 2020; Calgaro, et.al., 2021, Smith, et.al., 2017; C3ER, n.d.), and lack of inclusive post-disaster response and rehabilitation (Jodoin, et.al., 2020), among others.

The lack of participation among the disability sector in climate discourse has been attributed to the continued lack of interventions for their community. Despite accounting for at least 15% of the global population (World Bank, 2023.), persons with disabilities continue to be among the most overlooked groups in climate change and disaster policy-making and programme implementation (Handicap International et.al, 2020). While various agreements recognize persons with disability as a key stakeholder in the international response to climate change, there is no constituency for disabled people under the United Nations Forum Convention on

Climate Change (UNFCCC), despite the presence of nine (9) other constituencies including women and gender, youth, and indigenous people's organizations, among others, also deemed among those most vulnerable to climate change (Inclusion Scotland, 2021). The prevalence of the "charity model" or medical approach towards understanding disabilities is a major barrier for the resilience and empowerment of the disability sector, because it perceives "disability" as an impairment that needs to be fixed and something that makes them incapable of action or agency, especially during disaster scenarios (Eriksen, et.al, 2021; Bennett, 2020). Such a narrow view on disabilities reinforces existing negative stigma and perpetuates discrimination that contributes to their exclusion in critical issues, such as climate change, where they are viewed as merely "victims", "needy recipients", "passive beneficiaries", if not "costly burdens" in the context of climate change (Bennett, 2020; Handicap International, 2020; Calgaro, et.al., 2021; Bell, 2020).

As a result, the integration of persons with disability's concerns in climate change action plans across the world continues to be limited. Since "disability" and the various types of disabilities are not always clearly defined in climate change and disaster policies and programs, strategies to reduce vulnerability have a tendency to be designed based on generalized assumptions that often skew in favor of the more "high profile" or more familiar vulnerable groups, such as women and children, rendering the needs of other groups invisible and unaddressed (Kett, 2018; Bennett, 2020; Engelman, 2022). According to a 2021 review of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), only 32 out of 192 mentioned persons with disabilities in their NDCs, and only 45 countries have mentioned the sector in national policies and programs for adaptation, while none at all mention persons with disability in mitigation plans (IDA, et.al., 2022). It should be noted, however, that while there is mention of the disability sector,

these are usually limited only to statements that acknowledge persons with disabilities and their differentiated impacts, rather than programs that include or address their needs (IDA, et.al., 2022). The Philippine Statistics Authority's 2010 Census of Population and Housing revealed that the persons with disabilities community represents 1.57% of the country's total population at 1.44 million individuals. Specific to the Deaf community, the last known count was documented 10 years prior, estimating 121,598 d/Deaf individuals or 0.16% of the 2000 census population count (Cruz, 2016). However, even these estimates have been contested as being an underestimation (Cruz, 2016).

Current laws in the Philippines continue to regard disabilities as impairments, in line with a medical perspective. As a result, deafness is often characterized as merely a hearing impairment, with 'deaf' referring to individuals who have or are experiencing hearing loss. This, however, does not reflect the true culture and identity of the d/Deaf in the country. A study by Cruz (2016), captures the sentiments of many Deaf individuals, when he writes that there is a distinct difference between lowercase 'deaf' and uppercase 'Deaf'. The former represents deaf individuals whose deafness is likely a result of medical conditions. This is aligned with mainstream definition. In contrast, the latter represents Deaf individuals who acknowledge their deafness, not as an impairment, but as a cultural and linguistic identity that is anchored on their shared visual language – Filipino Sign Language (FSL). Furthermore, the study also noted some characteristics of uppercase Deaf individuals, including that they identify as a member of the Deaf community, stand in solidarity with their experience, participate within the community, and of course utilize FSL as their form of communication with the Deaf (Cruz, 2016). Under this definition, members of the "Deaf community" are not merely limited to Deaf individuals, but broaden to encompass

other significant groups such as sign language interpreters, [hearing] children of Deaf adults, and other relatives or critical social networks of Deaf individuals. The same was later legitimized in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the **Republic Act No. 11106 (“Filipino Sign Language Act”)** with the definitions included in Table 1, below:

Table 1: Defining d/Deaf in the Philippines

deaf	“... individuals who are unable to fully use their hearing to process information. They may not be signers or identify themselves with the community of other persons with hearing loss.”
Deaf	“...individuals with hearing loss who use the natural visual language of the community, and support its goals and values as a linguistic and cultural minority”
Deaf community	“A group of Deaf individuals who share a culture and language: interest, value systems, rules of behavior and norms”

Of the different disabilities present within the disability sector and defined by existing laws, the d/Deaf present a unique challenge to resilience efforts because their resilience is contingent upon bridging the communication barriers that exist between deafness and hearing, and thus spoken and written languages and the visual language of FSL and any other variations that may exist within local d/Deaf communities (Signing Exact English, Gestural, etc.). Republic Act No. 11106 (“Filipino Sign Language Act”) most prominently stipulated the legal recognition of FSL as the national sign language of the Philippines, thus mandating its use across all public offices and services (Martinez & Tionson, 2020). The particular rights of the d/Deaf to sign language was also further acknowledged by the Commission on Human Rights in a statement that reads as follows:

“The right to linguistic and cultural identity is part and parcel of the higher right to self-determination. It must, therefore, be fully guaranteed especially in the case of deaf Filipinos, which is a vulnerable group. These rights are crucial to the development of their life and social skills toward full and equal participation in society that the State is duty-bound to not only respect but also to fulfill.”

This emphasis on the use of FSL has significant implications in all the previously discussed climate impacts and gaps in adaptation efforts, including ensuring that the d/Deaf have access to governance processes, basic services like education and healthcare, eligibility for accessible livelihood options, and most critical of all, access to climate information and disaster warnings.

While there is little to no information about the Filipino Deaf community during disasters, studies have shown that the d/Deaf are often the last to receive emergency information (Ivey, et.al., 2014), unaware of evacuation centers and other support services that are being provided during and after disasters (Calgaro, et.al., 2021). This can lead to confusion, feelings of helplessness, panic for themselves and their children, and a complete state of unpreparedness due to the lack of comprehensive information for them to prepare, adapt or respond effectively (Calgaro, et.al., 2021). Disaster preparedness information and early warning systems are typically disseminated in the national spoken or written language, and often favor sound-based or audio alert systems which may not be accessible to the d/Deaf, depending on access to quality education and their current level of comprehension of the dominant language (Cooper, et. al., 2021; Calgaro, 2021). In emergency response, during- and post-disaster, the consequences of the language

barrier between d/Deaf and other hearing actors, such as emergency service personnel and first responders, has also been observed (Calagro, et.al., 2021; Cooper, et.al, 2021). This has been associated with the language being too technical for the d/Deaf (Calagro,et.al., 2021), and a shortage of interpreters or responders who are able to communicate with d/Deaf (Calagro, et.al., 2021; Cooper, et.al, 2021) and likely, the lack of sign language competency among hearing individuals. The same studies even noted that there was an observed discomfort or impatience among first responders to adjust and communicate with the d/Deaf (Calagro,et.al., 2021), even noting a “disdain of deaf community members” (Cooper, et. al., 2021). More studies are needed to better understand the realities faced by Deaf communities in the Philippines, particularly those living in far-flung areas that are likely to have even more compounding challenges.

A Rights-based Approach to Climate Action

In an effort to address the glaring oversight of the disability sector in the context of climate change, the CRPD Committee and other persons with disability advocates have also emphasized the importance of a Human Rights Approach to ensure that the diverse needs of persons with disability are taken into account “*before, during, and after emergencies, and contribute to strengthening resilience*” (Handicap International, et.al., 2020). Such an approach acknowledges persons with disabilities as “*rights bearers that are entitled to legal protection against discrimination and to achieve substantive equality with their peers without disabilities*” and requires the elimination of discrimination, and the adoption of measures to address barriers that hinder the full participation of persons with disabilities. This approach also implies the adoption of an intersectional approach (Jodoin, et. al, 2020) that takes into consideration

the various forms of marginalization that may be experienced by virtue of other intersecting identities (e.g., gender, race, age, etc.) (Jodoin, et. al., 2020; Handicap International, et.al., 2020; Chaplin, Twigg, & Lovell, 2019).

For persons with disabilities in particular, some of the relevant rights that are of primary concern in the face of the climate crises include the right to health, work and employment, adequate standard of living and social protection, food security, water and sanitation, and human mobility (OHCHR, 2020), protection during situations of risk and humanitarian response, accessible information, and the right to public participation (Handicap International, et. al., 2020; Jodoin, et.al., 2020). This report further asserts that the right to language is an addition that should be included to this list. Such rights are enshrined in various international human rights frameworks such as the UNCRPD, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities, among others (OHCHR, 2020).

The 2020 UNHRC Analytical Study on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Context of Climate Change stated that a

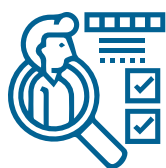
“disability-inclusive and human rights-based approach to climate change entails climate action that is inclusive of and accountable to persons with disability at all stages”.

Succeeding sections of this report will discuss the policy landscape in the Philippines and pathways towards a more inclusive and rights-based approach to climate action for the d/Deaf.

Chapter 2

THE PHILIPPINE POLICY LANDSCAPE ON CLIMATE, DISASTER, AND DISABILITY AFFAIRS





Research design for the policy mapping

A review of relevant laws and policies on climate change, disaster risk reduction and management, persons with disabilities and FSL was conducted, accounting for a total of 142 policies that have been adopted at the national, regional and multilateral levels, as well as pending bills at the Philippine Congress. This consisted of 24 climate-related, 30 DRRM-related, 79 persons with disabilities-related, and 9 FSL-related laws and policies, further disaggregated in Table 2, below.

These policies were reviewed to retrieve any specific textual references to persons with disabilities and other equivalent terms (e.g., differently-abled persons, disabled persons), and analyzed to answer the following questions:

- 1 Do the policies refer to persons with disabilities?
- 2 Do the policies recognize persons with disabilities as a vulnerable group and that they face heightened risk to climate change and acknowledge the need to reduce their risk to climate change and its impacts?
- 3 Do the policies acknowledge the need to build adaptive capacity of most vulnerable communities, including persons with disabilities, to climate change?
- 4 Do the policies include at least one measure for enhancing inclusion of persons with disabilities? (e.g., education and public awareness raising activities for the public, including persons with disabilities)
- 5 Do the policies recognize the importance of participation of persons with disabilities in decision- and policy-making? (e.g., reserved seats at the local body for vulnerable sectors including the disability sector)
- 6 What government programs, benefits and services are persons with disabilities entitled to?

Table 2. Tabulation of Reviewed Laws & Policies

	National	Regional	International	Total
Climate-related	19		5	24
DRRM-related	29		1	30
Persons with disabilities-related	68	7	4	79
FSL-related	9	7	10	9
Total Count				142

- 7 What are the sources of funding for programs for persons with disabilities and their organizations, as well as potential funding sources to tap for their programs?
- 8 Which government agencies and offices at the national and local levels provide direct services for persons with disabilities?
- 9 Are there existing databases or data gathering efforts that include data on persons with disabilities?



Policy landscape per sector



Climate Change Laws and Policies

The Philippines signed and ratified the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** in 1994, and later ratified the **Paris Agreement** in 2017. The Paris Agreement is the legally binding global climate agreement adopted in 2015, aimed to reduce gas emissions that contribute to global warming. Under Article 4, State Parties are directed to prepare, communicate, and maintain successive **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)** every five (5) years that shall set out their respective targets for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change and for adapting to climate impacts.

Both the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, as multilateral climate-related policy instruments, acknowledge that persons with disabilities are among the sectors most vulnerable to climate change and its impacts, and likewise recognize the importance of participatory adaptation action that takes into consideration vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. The need to promote awareness, encourage participation, and enhance access to information on climate change and its effects among the public are also enshrined in both policy instruments. In its submitted NDC in 2021, the Philippine government noted that it shall uphold the importance of meaningful participation of the vulnerable groups, including “differently abled”, in implementing climate actions.

In 2009, the Philippines enacted into law **Republic Act No. 9729 (“Climate Change Act of 2009”)** to systematically mainstream the concept of climate change in various phases of policy formulation, development plans, poverty reduction strategies, and other development tools and techniques of all government agencies and instrumentalities. By virtue of this law, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) was created to act as the policy-making body on programs and action plans relating to climate change. The CCC has two supporting bodies, namely the Climate Change Advisory Board, composed of key government agencies and sectoral representatives, as well as the National Panel of Technical Experts, composed of the leading climate scientists and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) lead authors in the Philippines. The Advisory Board was intended to serve the important role of recommending legislation of policies in coordination with relevant stakeholders. It should be noted, however, that there is no representation from the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), as the primary policy- and coordinating body for all disability issues and concerns in the Philippines, nor any representative of persons with disabilities.

Pursuant to the policy direction provided by the Climate Change Act of 2009, the Philippines adopted the **National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (NSFCCC) for 2010-2022**. The Framework Strategy laid out the roadmap for the Philippines' program on climate change anchored on climate adaptation with mitigation co-benefits. Among its Guiding Principles is the need to build the adaptive capacity of communities. While it places emphasis on the principle of complementation wherein climate change initiatives by one sector should not restrict the adaptation of other sectors (see Section 2.11), the document did not contain explicit mention of persons with disabilities, but instead assumes that the sector falls under the classification of "other vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors", as used in the document.

The NSFCCC is complemented by the development of the **National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2011-2028**, which outlines the operational plan of the NSFCC through short, medium and long-term action points across

seven (7) thematic areas including food security, water sufficiency, ecological and environmental stability, human security, climate-smart industries and services, sustainable energy, and knowledge and capacity development. The objective of the National Strategic Priority on the Human Security Agenda in the NCCAP is to "reduce risks of men and women and other vulnerable groups (children, elderly, and persons with disability) from climate and disasters". While the targeted actions and activities have successfully mainstreamed inclusion through gender-responsive activities, none of the strategic actions and activities under this Agenda included specific measures to reduce risks of persons with disabilities. Examples of the activities being proposed include conducting provincial level gendered vulnerability and risk assessments, and mainstreaming and implementation of gender-responsive CC-DRRM in local plans, based on information from the vulnerability and risk assessment. Based on this document, which also provided the list of government agencies consulted for the Human Security Agenda, the NCDA has contributed



input, yet the document was silent on measures targeted to minimize climate risks of persons with disabilities in particular.

Cascading climate action down to the local level, Section 14 of the Climate Change Act of 2009 has mandated local government units (LGUs) to localize the direction and priorities laid out in the NSFCC and NCCAP through their **Local Climate Change Adaptation Plans (LCCAP)**. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) issued several memoranda on the formulation of LCCAP, including the **DILG Memorandum Circular 2014-135 (“Guidelines on the Formulation of Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAP)”)** and **DILG Memorandum Circular 2015-77 (“Guidelines on Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk in Local Development Plans”)**. Both guidelines provide a detailed orientation on the process of developing climate action plans, with a specific emphasis on the social context of the LGU and strategies to address challenges in the social sub-sector. In the said guidelines, neither persons with disabilities nor the Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO), the direct service provider of the disability sector at the LGU level, were not explicitly listed among the stakeholders who were recommended to be consulted in the formulation of the LCCAP, while other vulnerable groups like women, youth and the elderly were explicitly mentioned. As of the 2022 data of the CCC, 80% of LGUs across the country have already submitted their respective LCCAPs, with 1,372 out of 1,715 LGUs formulated their LCCAP between 2005-2021.

In the context of climate financing, the Philippines has enacted laws providing guidance on possible sources of funding for programs and projects relating to climate change. In 2012, the Climate Change Act of 2009 was amended by **Republic Act No. 10174 (“The People’s Survival Fund”)**, which created the People’s Survival Fund (PSF).

PSF is a special fund in the National Treasury that allocates 1 billion pesos for the financing of adaptation programs and projects based on the NSFCC for local government and communities. Section 24 of the said law provides criteria for prioritization of the funds that work in favor of marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, among others. Likewise, Section 25 calls for transparency and participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the adaptation project by allocating observer seats for community representatives and/or non government organizations counterparts in the identification, monitoring, and evaluation process of the projects. The same law amended the provision in the Climate Change Act of 2009 regarding the composition of the Advisory Board to the CCC particularly to include two (2) representatives from the youth sector, yet no seats specifically dedicated to represent persons with disabilities were added.

Specific policy measures to integrate climate change in basic education have also been introduced in the Philippines. **Republic Act No. 9512 (“An Act to Promote Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008”)** mandates the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) to integrate environmental education in school curricula at all levels. This effort is further bolstered by the Climate Change Act of 2009, which called for the integration of climate change in education, as well as **Republic Act No. 10533 (“Enhanced Basic Education Act”)**, which strengthened the curriculum integration of key climate change concepts across grade levels, wherein DRRM and CCA-related concepts

have been integrated into various subject areas from kindergarten to junior high school level. Currently, a pending bill in the Senate (see **Senate Bill No. 1379** or the “**An Act Integrating The Subject On Climate Change Education Into The Science Curriculum Of Grades 2 To Senior High School Of The Philippine Education System, Both Private And Public**” or “**Climate Change Education Act**”) is pushing to integrate climate change education into the the Science curricula of Grade 2 to senior high school in both public and private educational institutions.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Laws and Policies

Republic Act No. 10121 (“**Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010**”) provides for the development of plans, policies,

and implementation of measures relating to disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM), and preparedness for effective response and early recovery. The same law declared that it shall be the policy of the State to develop and strengthen the capacities of vulnerable and marginalized groups to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of disasters. By virtue of this law, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) was created to be the focal office to make, coordinate, integrate, supervise, monitor, and evaluate DRRM activities in the country. Within the Council, four (4) seats are reserved for representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs). At the LGU level, all Provincial, City, and Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils form the Local DRRM Councils, in which four seats are reserved for representatives of four (4) accredited CSOs. In the BDRRMC, it is encouraged that at least two (2) CSOs representatives from existing and active community-based people’s



organizations representing the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in the barangay form a part of the barangay-level council.

As provided in the Republic Act No. 10121, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) formulated the **National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP)**. The NDRRMP sets out the activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of the national government and LGUs to build disaster resilience and institutionalize measures for reducing disaster risk and improving disaster response at all levels. Outputs under NDRRMP 2020-2030 with specific reference to persons with disabilities include the call for disaggregating data, including by disability, and strengthening public participation in planning activities at all levels, particularly persons with disabilities, women, indigenous peoples, and children. With regards to data collection in particular, the DSWD has implemented a supplemental **Memorandum Circular No. 20, s. 2019 (“Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center Reporting Guidelines”)** that sets out the template for reporting disaster occurrences to capture data on persons with disabilities with age and sex disaggregation, among others. The **DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 25 series of 2020 (“Disaster Vulnerability Assessment and Profiling Project Implementation Guidelines”)**, on the other hand, aims to create a database on the profile of affected families at the LGU level through the Disaster Vulnerability Assessment and Profiling Project. The said database is deemed crucial for appropriate and effective post-disaster interventions.

Under **Republic Act No. 10821 (“Children’s Emergency Relief and Protection Act”)**, LGUs declared under a state of calamity are directed to establish an option for transitional shelters with priority for vulnerable and marginalized groups. **Senate Bill No. 940**, a pending bill in the Congress,

is seeking to make it mandatory for LGUs to establish evacuation shelters in all municipalities and cities for disaster and other emergency events.

With the aim of bolstering the national government’s disaster preparedness efforts, mobile service providers are being mandated to send out message alerts at regular intervals to mobile phone subscribers near and within the affected areas of disasters, calamities, and other emergency events, per the **Republic Act No. 10639 (“An Act Mandating the Telecommunications Service Providers to send free mobile alerts in the event of natural and man-made disasters and calamities”)**. The alerts shall include contact information of the LGUs, direct mobile service, and agencies required to respond to emergency situations. Alerts may be in the form of SMS, MMs or email, as needed and appropriate. The emergency text alerts are currently in Filipino text, a language that is not necessarily accessible for the Deaf. In an effort to enhance the accessibility of the emergency text alerts, several pending Bills (see **Senate Bill No. 275, Senate Bill No. 680, Senate Bill no. 834**) are now being pushed in the Congress to make it mandatory for local government agencies and LGUs to translate all issuances, press releases, advisories, announcements and any other information related to disasters or emergencies into an easy form and to Filipino and any other appropriate regional language/s or dialect/s.

There are also efforts to integrate DRRM into formal education.. In the **DepEd’s Department Order (DO) No. 50 series of 2011 (“Creation of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (DRRMO)”)**, the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS) has been created to serve as the Agency’s focal and coordination unit for DRRM, climate change adaptation and education in emergencies. The pending **Senate Bill No. 917 (“An Act Requiring the Teaching of**

Disaster Awareness and Disaster Mitigation as part of the Curriculum of all Primary and Secondary Schools, and for other purposes”) is seeking to require integrating disaster awareness and disaster mitigation into the curricula of all primary and secondary schools in the Philippines.



Persons with Disability-related Laws and Policies

The Philippines has enacted a substantial number of laws and policies pertinent to the promotion of the welfare and rights of persons with disabilities. The Philippines has enacted **Republic Act No. 1179 (“Vocational Rehabilitation Act”)** in 1954, its first law specifically for persons with disabilities, which was established under the formerly known Social Welfare Administration, now known as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The Office of the Vocational Rehabilitation is responsible for programs for vocational training for the blind and other persons disabled by natural and/or accidental causes that have resulted in job handicap.

By virtue of the **Presidential Decree No. 1509**, the Philippines created the National Commission Concerning Disabled Persons, the country’s first government body to handle all matters pertaining to the welfare of persons with disabilities, and placed it under the Office of the President. The body was later replaced by the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons, attached to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Development per **Executive Order No. 123**. The said Council was then transferred to the Office of the President in 2007 per **Executive Order No. 676**, and later renamed the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) in 2008, which is the government office primarily handling disability affairs now by virtue of **Executive Order No. 709**. At present,

the NCDA is the national government’s primary policy-making body for laws and policies concerning the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities, and leads in monitoring the implementation of national laws and international commitments relating to the protection and promotion of rights of the disability sector. Apart from the NCDA, DSWD is also handling disability affairs, which indicate overlapping mandates of these government offices in overseeing programs for the sector. In the Congress, a House Special Committee on Persons with Disabilities was created to specifically handle pending legislations concerning persons with disabilities.

At the national level, there is a mechanism to ensure funding for programs for persons with disabilities. **Executive Order No. 417 (“Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities”)** mandates that at least one percent (1%) of the total yearly budget of all National Government Agencies and instrumentalities, including Government Financial Institutions and Government owned and controlled corporations, shall be allocated for programs and projects of persons with disabilities and their organizations. However, the inclusion of this stipulation in the annual General Appropriation Act has been removed since 2013. The deletion of the 1% mandatory budgetary allocation allowed the national government to simply provide an amount that it deemed to be “necessary” to fund programs for persons with disabilities, even if it amounts to less than one percent (1%) as previously mandated. This has been maintained in the General Appropriations Act F.Y. 2023, which can be found under Section 36 although with additional stipulations on the provision of Filipino Sign Language (FSL) and accessible materials for the Deaf.

Among the most critical laws and policies for persons with disabilities in the country is the **Republic Act No. 7277 (“Magna Carta**

for Disabled Persons”), which sets out the rights, benefits and privileges for persons with disabilities, including measures to improve their access to employment opportunities, and increase accessibility to quality education and health care. The said law was later amended by **Republic Act No. 9442 (“An Act Amending Republic Act No. 7277, Otherwise Known As The “Magna Carta For Disabled Persons, And For Other Purposes”)**, to specify the list of goods and services eligible for the 20% discount and VAT-exemption that persons with disabilities are entitled to and incentives that those caring for and living with them can avail. In 2010, the Magna Carta was further amended by **Republic Act No. 10070 (“Magna Carta For Disabled Persons,” as Amended, and For Other Purposes”)**. In the amended version, LGUs are being directed to establish Persons with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO) in every province, city and municipality. Among the functions of the PDAO is compiling

relevant data on persons with disabilities in their respective localities, and providing for funding for the policies, plans, and programs for the sector. PDAOs play a crucial role in ensuring inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in policy- and decision-making at the local level, since they formulate and implement policies, and ensure funding for these. PDAOs also play a critical part in updating the Philippine Registry of Persons with Disabilities, since they are the ones in nearest contact to persons with disabilities. They are also the “immediate” and “closest” service providers to the sector. In accordance with the **General Appropriable Act**, a portion of the five percent (5%) of Gender and Development (GAD) budget and the Internal Revenue Allotment for LGUs shall be allocated for the implementation of programs and activities of PDAO. According to the 2021 data of NCDA, only 146 cities and 1,488 municipalities in the 81 provinces in the Philippines have established PDAO so far



(Quismorio, 2022). In the case of lower class municipalities that face greater budget restraints, LGUs may choose to designate a focal person who shall shoulder the functions of the PDAO, instead of creating the Office itself. The same data from NCDA in 2021 indicated that only 254 of the 387 LGUs have designated focal persons for disability affairs in the absence of PDAO, and this is often the case in the lower class municipalities.

Subsequent amended versions of the Magna for Disabled Persons were also enacted, namely **Republic Act No. 10524** (“**An Act Expanding The Positions Reserved For Persons With Disability, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 7277, as Amended, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability**”) which provides that at least 1% of all positions in all government agencies, offices or corporations shall be reserved for persons with disability, and in addition, private corporations with more than 100 employees were also called upon to reserve at least 1% of all positions for persons with disability. **Republic Act No. 11228** (“**An Act Providing For The Mandatory Philhealth Coverage For All Persons With Disability (PWDs), Amending For The Purpose Republic Act No. 7277, As Amended, Otherwise Known As The “Magna Carta For Persons With Disability”**”), on the other hand, provides that all persons with disabilities registered in the Department of Health-managed Philippine Registry of Persons with Disability (PRPWD), shall be automatically covered under the National Health Insurance Program of PhilHealth.

Apart from the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, there is also **Batas Pambansa No. 344** (“**Philippine Accessibility Law**”), which concentrated more on enhancing physical accessibility of infrastructures, benefitting mostly persons with physical disabilities but was silent on increasing accessibility of information and communication. This was later addressed through the passage of

recent laws, including **Republic Act No. 10905** (“**An Act Requiring All Franchise Holders or Operators of Television Stations and Producers of Television Programs to Broadcast or Present Their Programs With Closed Caption Options**”) which requires provision of closed captions in news programs for the benefit of the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing, as well as **Republic Act No. 11106** (“**Filipino Sign Language Act of 2018**”), which acknowledged FSL as the national sign language of the Philippines and mandated its use in all government transactions involving the Deaf. **Senate Bill No. 1700** is currently pending in Congress, seeking to amend Batas Pambansa No. 344 by adding specific measures to increase accessibility of information, communications, and other services, apart from physical infrastructures. Among the proposed measures include provision of professional sign language interpretation and other appropriate forms of assistance and support to ensure access to information of persons with disabilities, including the Deaf.

The Philippines is also a State Party to the United Nations Convention for Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD), which is the international policy instrument that sets out the fundamental human rights of persons with disabilities. The country’s ratification to the Convention reinforced the country’s focus on the State’s mandate to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of persons with disability including rights to education, health, access to justice, social protection, and political participation, among others. The Convention highlighted critical rights that are relevant in the context of climate change such as accessibility (Article 9) and situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (article 11). The UNCRPD takes a different approach to disability affairs, and considers disability a result of interaction between persons with disability, and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. This is in contrast to the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons’ adopted perspective that persons with disabilities are mere recipients of medical

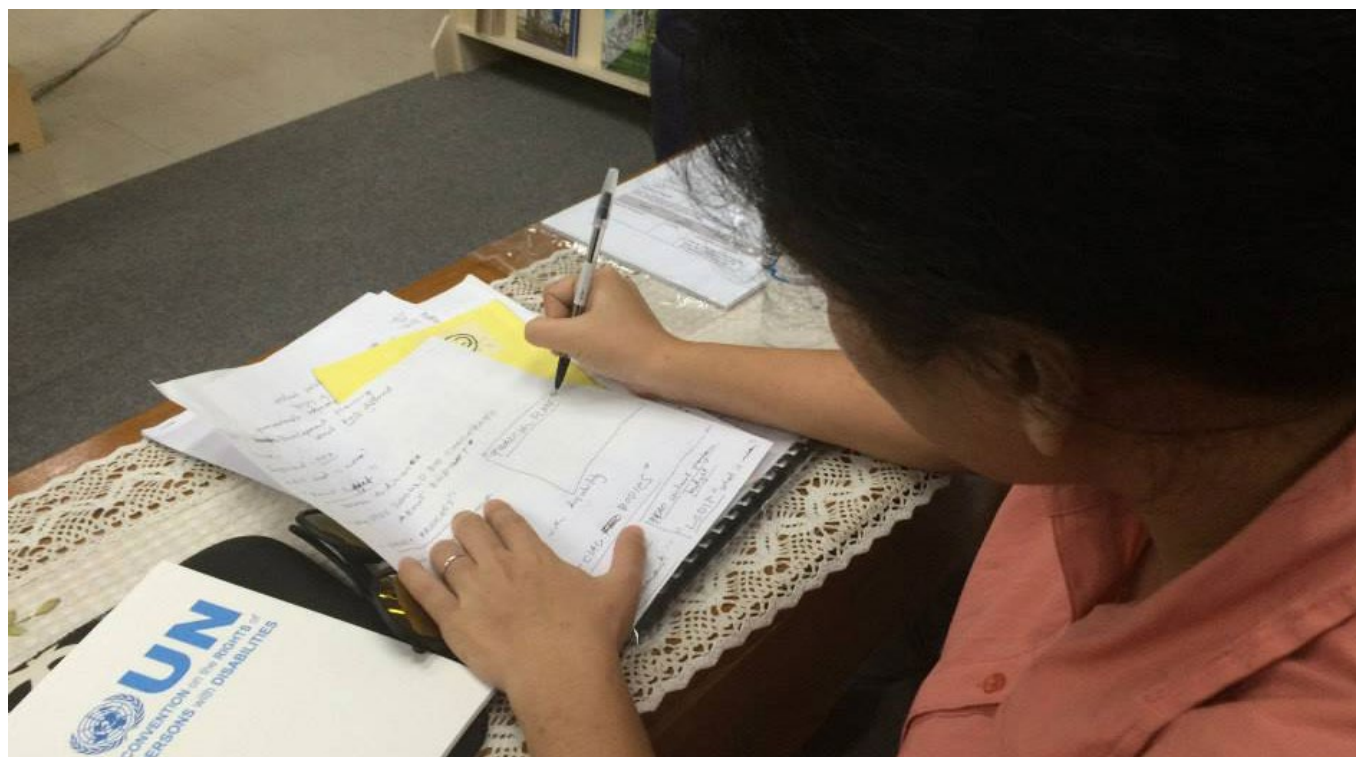
treatment and social protection services. This medical perspective to disability has guided the data reporting for the National Registry, wherein persons with disability are categorized based on physical and mental impairments (e.g., visually impaired, hearing impaired). Other laws in the Philippines have also adopted varying terms for, and definition of, persons with disabilities. There are laws that have adopted the terms “disabled persons,” “special and exceptional children,” “handicapped,” “physically, mentally and socially disabled,” “differently abled,” and “individuals with special needs” to refer to persons with disabilities.

Filipino Sign Language Laws and Policies

In 2018, the Philippines enacted into law a landmark legislation, **Republic Act No. 11106** (“**Filipino Sign Language Act of 2018**”), which

recognized Filipino Sign Language as the national sign language of the Philippines. This law further recognizes that FSL shall be the official sign language of the government in all its transactions involving the Deaf. The law had specific stipulations for promoting and integrating the use of FSL in education, the justice system, the workplace, the health system, the media and other public transactions, services and facilities, as well as the standardization of FSL interpretation.

Specifically on the use of FSL in education, national and local government offices involved in the education of the Deaf are mandated to use FSL for Deaf learners, and that FSL be added as a separate subject in the curriculum for Deaf learners in schools. The same law is also pushing for the licensure of Deaf teachers. The University of the Philippines (UP), together with the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), professional sign linguistics and linguistics researchers, in collaboration with the CHED, DepEd, and the



Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) are being tasked to formulate specific guidelines for developing training materials in the education of the Deaf.

Prior to the enactment of the law, there had already been legislations that recognized the use of FSL, namely **Republic Act No. 10410 (“Early Years Act”)** which promoted the use of FSL being the visual language of the Deaf in their early education, as well as **Republic Act No. 10533 (“Enhanced Basic Education Act”)** which recognized FSL as the mother tongue language of the Deaf and thereby supports its usage as the medium of instruction for Deaf learners. Implementation-wise, however, there are institutional issues hindering the full and effective use of FSL in teaching Deaf learners in schools, with limited financial resources and limited knowledge on the use of FSL, among the evident factors.

Synthesis of key insights

Under international law, States have a clear obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of their efforts to respond to climate change and its impacts. The rights-based approach to tackling the climate crisis, in which States should consider their respective human rights obligations, is a principle well-enshrined in the Paris Agreement. Laws and policies at the national and regional level have also echoed the need for an inclusive and participatory approach to tackling the climate crisis. Yet it is apparent that there is no clear discussion on the vulnerability of persons with disabilities to climate change, nor specific concrete measures on addressing their increased risk to climate change and its impacts.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), in its resolution adopted on 12 July 2019,¹ and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in its 2020 report on the situation of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change,² both acknowledged the disproportionate impacts of climate change for persons with disabilities, and called on States to adopt a “comprehensive, integrated, gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation policies.” Both reports recognized the need to ensure the meaningful participation, inclusion and leadership of the disability sector and their organizations within decision-making bodies relevant to DRRM and climate change, as well as in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts at all levels. Nevertheless, opportunities for the Deaf community in particular to take part in these efforts remain scarce. It is only very recently that the call for inclusion of persons with disabilities and consideration of their rights in the context of climate change have gained more visibility. For one, there has yet to be a constituency for persons with disabilities at climate negotiations on the international level.

Among the clear gaps observed in the national laws and policies are the lack of a comprehensive, updated and disaggregated database on persons with disabilities, which is crucial for evidence-based decision- and policy-making; a tokenistic approach to disability-inclusiveness, wherein the Deaf are still lumped together with other persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups not recognizing the varying needs and requirements of these different groups; national climate

1 UN Human Rights Council Resolution adopted on 12 July 2019 ([A/HRC/RES/41/21](#))

2 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ 2020 Analytical study on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of climate change ([A/HRC/44/30](#))

adaptation measures that have made progress in becoming gender-sensitive, but remain silent on disability-inclusiveness; and lastly, inadequate representation of the disability sector in relevant policy- and decision-making processes that would have significant implications in the formulation of national and local development plans that could consider their specific needs and requirements for effective climate action.

Overall, the current policy landscape suggests that while there is already recognition for the

increased risk of the Deaf in the face of climate change, concrete measures to identify the nature of their vulnerability, consider and address their risk, needs, and requirements have yet to be institutionalized. Moving forward, it must be recognized that pursuing a genuinely Deaf-inclusive climate action is contingent upon the meaningful participation of the Deaf in the climate action at all levels. Evidence also points to stronger climate actions and more climate-resilient societies if persons with disabilities are included in mitigation and adaptation efforts.



Chapter 3

KEY FINDINGS: BARRIERS OF INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN THE PHILIPPINES





Stakeholder Engagement Process

Following the review of laws and policies, a series of multi-stakeholder consultations were conducted to deepen the discussion on the actual realities faced by the Filipino Deaf community, as well as the challenges and best practices of duty-bearers in addressing the impacts of climate change in the Philippines. This involved a series of bilateral interviews with representatives from national and local government, other disability and climate advocates, and several learning sessions and workshop consultations with a larger group from the same sectors, along with representatives from Deaf Organizations from across Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. A total of 51 organizations were involved in this process, including 17 agencies from national government, 11 offices from local government, 8 non-government organizations (NGOs), and 16 Deaf People's Organizations (DPO). See Annex A for a full list of organizations.

The primary objectives of these sessions were to:

Level off on the concepts of climate change, inclusion, Deaf culture, rights, and laws;

Understand the current level of perception of duty bearers on the the Deaf community, and the larger persons with disabilities sector;

Identify and validate challenges and barriers faced in implementing or accessing critical services provided by government and other organizations; and

Identify and validate strategies towards enhancing inclusion in the climate discourse and in climate action, as well as the organizations that must be involved in its implementation





Barriers of Inclusive Governance



Lack of an updated and comprehensive database on persons with disabilities

There are several statistical and data gathering processes in the country that consolidate information on persons with disabilities. These include the Philippine Statistics Authority Census for Population and Households, the Philippine Registry for Persons With Disabilities (PRPWD) managed by the Department of Health (DOH), and the Community Based Monitoring Systems surveys, in line with **Republic Act No. 11315 (“Community-Based Monitoring System Act of 2018”)**. These are all implemented on different timelines and managed by different agencies for varying purposes that ultimately dictate the policies developed on disability affairs, and the effectiveness of the delivery of services and enforcement of benefits and rights as stated in the **R.A. 7277 (“Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities”)**.

However, the latest data on the sector varies across datasets, with the 2010 CPH reflecting 1.44 million persons with disabilities (1.57%) and the latest PRPWD accounting for only 900,000 persons with disabilities, as of May 2022. The glaring discrepancy in the latest figures show that there is a significant gap in data governance systems and the completeness of data on persons with disability, which is of utmost concern because unaccounted persons with disabilities are often left out of development programs, which can be detrimental in the context of climate change and

disaster. Additionally, differences in methodology (e.g., via LGU vs. trained enumerators), terminologies (e.g., Persons with Disabilities vs. Functional difficulties), parameters (e.g., 5 years old and above vs. household population), and level of disaggregation (e.g., gender, type of disability, age, etc.) are areas of concern that can affect the quality and usefulness of information as the basis for decision-making about the sector.

The lack of data is associated with the lack of political will and poor compliance at the local level, which are dependent on the priorities of changing local chief executives. As of 2021, only 50% of LGUs have been able to successfully establish the mandatory Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (Rocamora, 2021), which is considered the frontline agency for disability affairs and thus the registration and accounting of persons with disabilities within their jurisdictions. Furthermore, some notable challenges encountered by LGUs in data gathering include the low participation rate of persons with disabilities in barangay-level surveys, a general unwillingness of others to register their disabilities for fear of discrimination or due to the lack of resources to pay for medical requirements of registration. Additional challenges faced in data reporting include the lack of necessary equipment and Internet connection for the encoding and transmission of data to the centralized PRPWD.

There is a consensus among all stakeholders that data is critical as the first step to better understanding the impacts of climate change on marginalized sectors and identifying appropriate strategies to address their specific vulnerabilities (Smith, 2022; Kett, 2018). Concretely, such data would improve the specificity of existing climate risk and vulnerability assessments (CRVA) that are used at the local level for the development of LCCAPs and LDRRMPs. However, this raises yet another concern by disability-advocacy groups that even in cases where data is available, it is

often not shared across government offices and agencies, and thus not incorporated in other cross-sectoral issues such as local hazard and risk mapping, or for reference in climate and disaster planning. While there are existing tools and policies that encourage the conduct of such assessments¹ for vulnerable groups like the disability sector, this has yet to be realized.



Limited access to quality education for the Deaf

Education and awareness raising has been identified as a critical intervention to enhance the Deaf's overall adaptive capacity to climate related risks and hazards. Accessibility of information, such as disaster preparedness information and early warning systems that are largely produced in national spoken or written language, is often dependent on the Deaf's access to quality education (Cooper, et. al., 2021; Calgaro, 2021; World Bank, n.d.). The case, however, is that generally, only a small portion of Deaf population have access to quality education.

According to the World Federation of the Deaf, 80% of the 70 million Deaf people in the world have received no education at all (World Federation of the Deaf, n.d.). This was found to be likely associated with scarcity in the family's financial resources to support schooling of the Deaf, as well as limited opportunities for them to enter formal schooling to begin with. Even for Deaf learners able to enter schooling, there are prevailing challenges, such as limited availability of sign language interpreters, limited signs used to

teach technical information like climate change in schools or lack thereof, and ultimately, the lack of a Deaf-appropriate model of education.

The right to access to quality education of persons with disabilities is well enshrined in **R.A. 7277 ("Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities")**. Specifically for Deaf learners, learning institutions are encouraged to provide auxiliary services such as qualified interpreters or other effective methods of delivering materials. In addition, persons with disabilities are entitled to educational assistance to support their schooling as provided by the **R.A. 9442 ("An Act Amending Republic Act No. 7277, Otherwise Known As The "Magna Carta For Disabled Persons, And For Other Purposes")**.

Existing laws such as **R.A. 10410 ("Early Years Act")** and **R.A. 10533 ("Enhanced Basic Education Act")** have formally recognized the use of Filipino Sign Language (FSL) for the education of the Deaf. Under the recently enacted **R.A. 11106 ("Filipino Sign Language Act")**, all relevant government offices involved in the education for the Deaf, including the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), are directed to use FSL as the official medium of instruction in education for the Deaf. However, integration of FSL into formal education for the Deaf was found to be another challenge given its budgetary implications for the LGUs, as well as the differences in sign language competency and presence of regional variances of sign language across the different provinces in the country.

In an effort to promote an inclusive education for all, **R.A. 11650 ("Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act")** was enacted in 2022. This law provides that all early and basic education schools must ensure equitable access to quality education to every learner with disability, including the Deaf.

1 See references in the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) Outcome 1; National Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (NDRRMP) Thematic Area 1, Outcome 4; Local Climate Change Adaptation Plan (LCCAP) Guidebook 3 & 4, and Department of Human Settlement and Development (DHSUD) Guidebook on conducting Climate and Disaster Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CDRVA)

However, the law has no Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) that have been released to date (Torregoza, 2022).

Specific to the challenge of raising more awareness about climate change, there seems to be **very limited opportunity for the Deaf to learn technical knowledge such as climate change both inside and outside the formal school setting**. While there are existing laws such as R.A. 9729 (“Climate Change Act of 2009”) and R.A. 9512 (“National Environment Awareness and Education Act”) pushing the integration of climate education into the school curriculum, no data is available on the status of implementation of these policies. Increased efforts to educate and build the knowledge of the sector on this very important issue would be crucial to ensure that they make informed insights in climate discourse.

Low prioritization of resource for disability affairs

For the Deaf, ensuring accessibility involves the provision of reasonable accommodations to bridge communication barriers through FSL interpretation and closed captioning, among others. While they are included under auxiliary services and acknowledged in existing policies, these services have been overlooked in many disability-related policies, which have a tendency to focus primarily on physical accessibility². Despite the strengthened mandates put forth in the **Republic Act No. 11106 (“Filipino Sign Language Act”)**, many government actors still raised points of confusion and concern regarding its implementation.

First and foremost were concerns regarding

competing priorities and mandates that divert attention and resources away from specialized services such as those for the Deaf, in favor of interventions that address the needs of the larger population. Secondly, considering the high rates and limited availability of interpreters and varying levels of signing competency among the d/Deaf community, many claimed that there were insufficient financial resources required to implement or even mainstream FSL across all activities, resulting in the irregular or “upon request only” provision of such services. Finally, the allocation of resources are also restricted by the financial guidelines provided by Commission on Audit (COA) and Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and budget line items included in annual plans. These concerns are more pronounced for agencies and offices whose mandates are not explicit in their link to persons with disability affairs (such as climate change and disaster risk reduction and management), and LGUs and barangay-level units located in rural or geographically isolated and depressed areas.

There are existing policies like **Executive Order No. 417 (“Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities”)** that mandates that at least one percent (1%) of the total yearly budget of all government agencies be allocated for programs of persons with disabilities and their organizations; **Republic Act No. 10070 (“Magna Carta For Disabled Persons,” as Amended, and For Other Purposes”)** which provides that 5% of the gender and development fund and internal revenue allocation of the LGUs shall be allocated for programs of the PDAO; and finally the **General Appropriations Act F.Y. 2023** currently provides directives for government to develop plans and programs for persons with disabilities and senior citizens, and the allocation of FSL interpretation and other resources. It’s important to note that, until 2013, the GAA included a mandatory “1% of the total budget of national government agencies” for this purpose, but this has since been removed

² Republic Act No 7277 (“Magna Carta for Disabled Persons”) & Batas Pambansa Bilang 344 (“Accessibility Law”)

to give “flexibility to the government to provide the actual amount that would be necessary,” even if it amounts to less than 1% (NCDA, 2013). The role of the Deaf community, their organizations, and other disability experts and advocates are critical in providing guidance regarding the needs of the sector and ways to adequately provide for them, so as to provide a basis for determining exactly how much would be “necessary”.

Siloed and tokenistic approaches to disability inclusiveness

According to Kett & Cole (2018), there is a continuing “siloed approach” to disability issues in which they are treated as “specialist issues” that should primarily be handled by social welfare agencies. The same medical perspective is still in the Philippines, where in most cases, merely the mention of “persons with disabilities” or the “d/Deaf” garners the immediate endorsement to the

Department of Social Welfare and Development, the NCDA, or any similar offices within other agencies. This presents significant challenges in mainstreaming disability inclusion more strongly in cross-cutting issues relating to rights and equity at the policy level. At the LGU level, this can be seen in the explicit exclusion of the PDAO in the DILG-LGA’s mandatory CC-DRR training for LGU, due to the training being generally viewed as outside the mandate of PDAO. This prevailing siloed approach can be associated with the prevailing medical model and the generalized language used in existing laws that refer to persons with disabilities as homogenous groups, or worse, lumps them together as merely among “other vulnerable and marginalized communities,” making the sector virtually invisible in the mandates of agencies dealing with cross-sectoral issues. As a result, the government has a tendency to craft solutions addressing the salient common ground of issues of the general public, rather than focusing on the unique needs of individual groups. This sets the stage for policy-based exclusion of groups like the d/Deaf community, limiting their



participation and rendering their needs invisible and unrecognized in the design of programs and services.

The consultation process also revealed that there are still many prevailing misconceptions about the d/Deaf community among government officials and other key stakeholders. Use of terms such as “deaf and blind” or “deaf and mute” is still prevalent, as well as notions that FSL interpretation being only for the d/Deaf community or that merely the presence of disaggregated data is sufficient for being inclusive. Furthermore, there is a notable lack of awareness about relevant mandates under the FSL Act, and even more so a lack of FSL competency within government agencies. While there was a consensus among stakeholders that FSL training was indeed important to better serve the d/Deaf community, it still stands that the budgetary requirements for this is often seen as an “added burden” or as “enrichment programs”, rather than as part of the norm. These observations were validated through insights from members of the Deaf community who noted that there are indeed very few advocates for disability-affairs in positions of power who are willing and able to address the needs and rights of persons with disabilities.

Stakeholders noted that more effort is needed in building the capacity of governments as duty-bearers, and including disability sector representatives in the same so that they can represent the needs of their constituents accordingly. This includes raising awareness about persons with disabilities and their sub-groups, promoting disability affairs as a cross-cutting issue requiring attention by all, and advocating the importance of acknowledging that the Deaf can be more than mere victims of disasters and mere beneficiaries of relief efforts, but rather partners in building their own resilience.



Limited access to information for the Deaf

The Philippines has lagged far behind when it comes to ensuring accessibility of information on climate change and its impacts for the Deaf. Generally, information is rarely communicated or made available in a format accessible to the Deaf. The importance of access to information among the Deaf is highlighted more in times of disasters and calamities wherein because of the limited accessibility of information to the Deaf, the Deaf are often the last to receive emergency information (Ivey, et.al., 2014), are unaware of evacuation centers, and are less likely to access support services being provided during and after disasters (Calgaro, et.al., 2021). As explained by the “Information Deprivation Trauma” framework, the Deaf experience negative events such as disasters more intensely because their limited access to knowledge and information has prevented them from fully assessing the threat and thereby limited their capacity to engage in self-protective behaviors (Schild & Dalenberg, 2016).

Early warning systems (EWS) in the Philippines signaling impending disasters and calamities are typically in national spoken or written language and are primarily audio-based. In 2014, the Philippine government enacted **R.A. 10639 (“An Act Mandating the Telecommunications Service Providers to send free mobile alerts in the event of natural and man-made disasters and calamities”)** directing mobile service providers to send out text emergency warning alerts to notify potentially affected mobile phone subscribers of an impending tropical storm, typhoon, tsunami, or other calamities. However, the text alerts are in Filipino, which is generally not a language accessible for the Deaf. Senate bills are currently pending seeking to require translation of all information relevant to disaster or emergency

in other appropriate regional languages and/or dialects³. No version of these bills, however, mentioned the need to create an FSL version.

Another important aspect of the issue regarding accessibility of information is the most accessible medium of information dissemination for the Deaf. Currently, information on impending disasters are disseminated through broadcast media, such as television and radio. Even with sign language interpretation and closed captioning in some TV news programs, as required by R.A. 7277 (“**Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities**”), R.A. 10905 (“**An Act Requiring All Franchise Holders or Operators of Television Stations and Producers of Television Programs to Broadcast or Present Their Programs With Closed Caption Options**”), and R.A. 11106 (“**Filipino Sign Language Act of 2018**”), there have been concerns regarding the visibility of small “sign bubbles,” quality of interpretation given that there are no Standards for Filipino Sign Language Interpreting yet, and quality of English closed captioning (see Cooper, et. al., 2021). Other pressing issues like digital inequality (access to internet and equipment), recurring power outages in the provinces, and limited access to quality education among the Deaf present added challenges to the accessibility of information to the Deaf through popular communication media.



Lack of representation and participation of the disability sector and its sub-groups in decision-making bodies

Representatives from national government agencies noted that there is a lack of guidance and strategic direction on the operationalization

of Deaf/disability inclusion, and this has been associated with the lack of representation of persons with disabilities in decision-making bodies. It is widely acknowledged, among those consulted, that persons with disabilities are best placed to advocate for the needs of the sector and identify the strategies most appropriate to address them, and should thus be seen as experts on the matter of disability inclusion. However, there remains to be an observed lack of participation of persons with disabilities in consultations and decision-making bodies from the international to local levels, especially on highly technical issues such as CC-DRR. Representatives from the sector were not consulted in the crafting of critical national plans such as the NFSCC, NCCAP and NDRRMP, and they are also not included in **DILG Memorandum Circular 2015-77 (“Guidelines on Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk in Local Development Plans”)** among the recommended stakeholders to be consulted in the development of LCCAPs. In the case of local special bodies, the challenge is that disability sector representatives are eligible only for the sole seat for non-government representatives and must, therefore, go through the same accreditation and nomination process in competition with other sectoral representatives⁴. Such processes are particularly difficult for Deaf organizations that experience significant barriers in complying with the required documents, such as for SEC registration.

The generalized reference of the disability sector as “vulnerable and marginalized groups” or generally as “persons with disabilities” has inadvertently contributed to a perspective that a single sectoral representative can sufficiently represent all the encompassed sectors, overlooking the need for individual representation of each and every group primarily due to their

3 See [Senate Bill No. 275](#), [Senate Bill No. 680](#), [Senate Bill No. 834](#)

4 Republic Act No. 9729 (“Climate Change Act of 2009”), Section 5; Republic Act No. 7160 (“Local Government Code of 1991”), Title 6: Local Development Councils

varying needs. In cases when the disability sector is afforded a seat at the table, persons with disabilities that do not entail communication barriers are favored over groups like the d/Deaf. This often results in programs appropriate for some (e.g., ramps), while overlooking the needs of others (e.g., FSL interpretation). It was also raised that participation, especially at the national level consultations, has often been limited to representatives based in Metro Manila, which has led to the oversight of unique cultural needs of persons with disabilities located in peripheral areas, such as rural or island communities. Furthermore, it is often the case that the disability sector's participation is limited to specific topics based on assumptions about their disabilities, without recognizing the sector's capacity to contribute to other issues (e.g., assigning the Deaf only to early warning systems because it is the most relevant to their disability). Finally, concerns were also raised that even when they are engaged in consultations, it is also often the case that their insights are not carried over in the final version of policies.

Besides these policy gaps, the communication barrier experienced by the Deaf has also presented

a significant challenge in operationalizing greater participation in decision-making. The d/Deaf have been described as being difficult to organize due to communication difficulties, often leaving them out of the larger federations of organizations of persons with disabilities. Likewise, due to the lack of signing capacity or resources to secure FSL interpreters, decision-making bodies also do not have the capacity to engage with or serve the d/Deaf community. Mainstreaming the use of FSL and the provision of FSL training is thus more critical than ever in bridging both of these concerns.

Exclusion of persons with disabilities from conversations about CC-DRR has resulted in plans and policies that are generally not Deaf-inclusive (C3ER, n.d; Smith, 2017). Such limitations in the government plans and policies can (or already have) led to inadequate measures in addressing their increasing vulnerability. There is also the possibility that climate action and risk management strategies are maladaptive or may make life even more difficult for persons with disabilities if nothing is done to address this (Inclusion Scotland, 2021; Engelman, 2022).

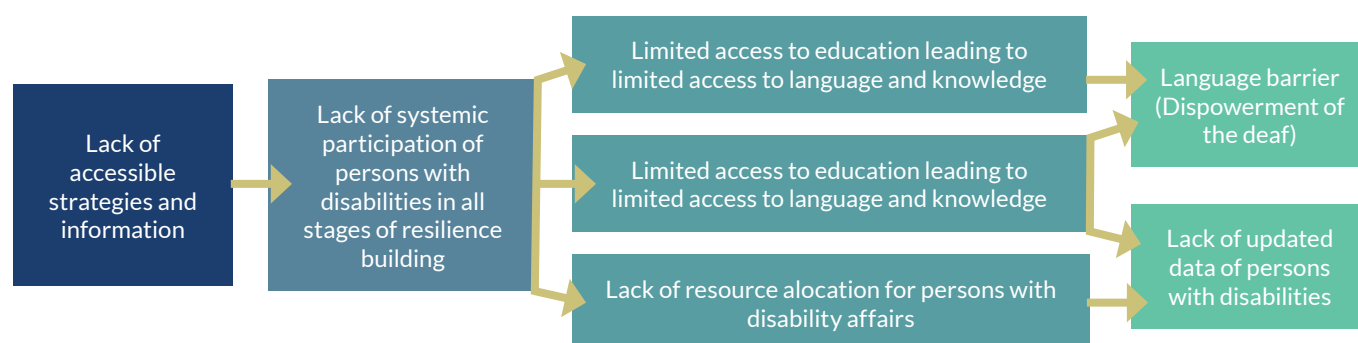


Figure 1. Governance Agenda for Deaf-inclusive Climate Action

Synthesis

The policy assessment has brought to light several layers of issues and barriers (“Governance Agenda”) that provide context for the seeming inadequacy of the Philippines’ climate action in terms of Deaf-inclusivity. Based on the assessment, authors posit that the direct, and arguably the most critical, driver for the vulnerability to climate change of the d/Deaf community is the inherent lack of accessible strategies and information in the country that leaves them uninformed and underserved. This happens as a result of a combination of institutional issues that inhibit more inclusive systems. Further, the communication barrier has been observed as a recurring layer of issue in each of the identified barriers. For example, the limited sign language interpreters and the limited capacity of schools to use FSL to educate Deaf learners have been identified as challenges contributing to the generally limited access to quality education among the d/Deaf. In another context, the d/Deaf are often not invited to participate in decision-making. This is often seen as an outcome of the communication barrier, wherein due to their inability to communicate using FSL or limited resources to hire FSL interpreters, duty-bearers are discouraged to engage with the sector in consultations for example.

Among the most prominent institutional issues is the lack of systemic participation of the d/Deaf community or disability sector in decision-making, which aligns with the sector’s battle cry of “nothing about us, without us” that acknowledges their own primacy in addressing the needs of their community. This lack of participation is observed to have persisted due to the limited access to education of the Deaf which factors into their capacity to make informed decisions, especially for a very technical discourse such as climate change; the **prevalence of misconceptions** which

perpetuates discrimination and social exclusion; and of course, the lack of prioritization for disability affairs, which limits the attention and opportunities available to the sector as well as resources to fund and support programs for them.

As it comes to the root of the issue, the assessment deduced that there are two foundational issues, namely lack of updated comprehensive data on persons with disabilities (specifically the d/Deaf) and lack of education, that would form the basis for greater Deaf-inclusion in governance. Addressing these two issues would be imperative before the aforementioned institutional barriers could be tackled. Data on the d/Deaf community and their needs, for example, would provide the evidence to support the programs and services necessary for the sector.

Taking an even deeper look at the realities surrounding each issue would only serve to deepen the interrelatedness and linkages between each barrier. Strategies to address each barrier must be seen as a holistic process that seeks to achieve or inject inclusion in all phases of the policy process, from data baselining and planning, through to implementation and monitoring. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

KEY FINDINGS: PATHWAYS TO DEAF- INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN THE PHILIPPINES



A common challenge for creating more inclusive systems is the lack of guidance on what “inclusiveness” or even “accessibility” should actually look like and how it should be implemented, particularly when considering the d/Deaf community. This chapter puts forward a proposed pathway towards Deaf-Inclusion in the Philippines, indicating proposed milestones, thematic strategies and key stakeholders, that can serve as a guide for duty-bearers and the d/Deaf community. This was developed through the consultations, as discussed in Chapter 3.



Deaf Aware

The first proposed milestone, as is usually the case in development, is to raise awareness about the disability sector. This means that there must be a level of exposure and knowledge of the d/Deaf community, their culture, language and rights, both within the d/Deaf community and more importantly, among duty-bearers. Critical strategies to achieve this include the following:

Raising awareness and training

There is strong sentiment that there is a need to proactively create opportunities for the d/Deaf to learn about climate change and its impacts within and outside the formal school setting. Before we start discussing opportunities for the sector to engage in climate conversations and take part in decision- and policy-making in this type of technical discourse, it is important to ensure

that they are well-capacitated with adequate knowledge about climate change and discursive skills in order to make informed decisions on this issue.

Another aspect of this proposed strategy is the need to educate duty-bearers about the d/Deaf. The attitudinal barrier, which has been linked to prevailing misconceptions and attitudes of duty-bearers towards the sector, has been identified as among the institutional barriers that hinder Deaf-inclusion in governance. It is by educating duty-bearers about the Deaf, their culture, and language, that they develop an adequate level of understanding of the needs and requirements of the sector. This is an important requirement for duty-bearers to fully and effectively implement laws for the d/Deaf, such as the FSL Act and the law requiring provision of closed captioning in some TV news programs.

Stakeholders have recommended these specific activities under this thematic strategy:

	Raising awareness on the Deaf, their needs, rights and the Deaf culture
	FSL training for frontline service providers and the d/Deaf to standardize their signing competency
	Raising awareness on CCA-DRR and impacts of climate change on the Deaf

Gathering appropriate baseline data on the disability-sector

Data is critical for evidence-based decision- and policy-making. Data on the d/Deaf would be crucial in order to formulate appropriate programs and strategies truly responsive to their actual needs and requirements. Yet, as elaborated in the previous sections of this report, the national government lacks an updated and comprehensive database on persons with disabilities, especially on the d/Deaf population. For one, there are multiple existing data gathering efforts at the national level but responsibility of implementation boils down to the LGU level. This engenders issues and problems in standardizing the data profiling system and reconciling data from different sources.

Stakeholders have recommended these specific activities under this thematic strategy:

Conduct of localized climate vulnerability assessment on the d/Deaf to compile baseline climate risk data on the sector

Enhance data sharing across the different government offices both at the national and local levels



Deaf Sensitive

The second milestone focuses on developing awareness into a level of sensitivity that allows duty-bearers to consider the needs of the d/Deaf in the ways that they execute their mandates through the provision of reasonable accommodation. In this scenario, their knowledge of the community is translated into actions that enable the d/Deaf to access mainstream programs and services. A critical strategy to attain the level of Deaf-sensitivity is through *providing reasonable accommodation, including making information accessible through the use of FSL*.

Current practices in disseminating climate and disaster-related information, as well as in designing consultations and similar activities, have yet to improve in terms of its accessibility for the d/Deaf. With enhanced knowledge and understanding of the needs and communication requirements of the sector, it is foreseen that duty-bearers will be able to consider these specific needs of the d/Deaf in executing their mandates and activities specifically by providing reasonable accommodation.

Stakeholders have recommended the following activities under this thematic strategy:

Improving policies on provision of FSL interpretation and closed captioning in newscast programs, including for press briefings on weather forecasts and updates

Provision of FSL interpreters, advanced reading materials, and easy-read versions of documents for consultations and similar activities



Deaf Responsive

While the previous milestone presents a critical step towards d/Deaf inclusion, and the mainstreaming of FSL truly opens the doors for greater participation of the d/Deaf community, the mere provision of interpretation services is not enough to claim genuine inclusion. It is necessary to move away from viewing d/Deaf inclusion as a process of bringing them into the status quo of the “hearing”. Rather, inclusion should be more concerned with redesigning existing systems to be intrinsically inclusive for the d/Deaf and other marginalized sectors.

The third milestone takes that extra step forward by crafting responsive policies, plans and programs that accommodate or address the causes of inequality and reduce the adverse impacts of the same. At this level, duty-bearers are actively engaging the d/Deaf community as key stakeholders that must be involved in decision-making processes, and are taking the necessary steps to institutionalize the needs, rights, and interests of the community across policy landscapes. A critical strategy to attain the level of being Deaf-responsive is by *enhancing laws and policies to integrate disability-inclusion in all phases of the policy process*.

In order to ensure the full integration of a disability-inclusion lens in all phases of the policy process, it is imperative to recognize that disability affairs, as with gender, is a cross-cutting issue that requires attention by all and must be considered in all cross-sectoral issues, including CCA-DRRM. To this end, data on the d/Deaf population would enable duty-bearers to formulate policies and programs that are truly responsive to their needs and requirements. The data on their population, for example, can serve as evidence to support

mobilization of resources to fund programs and services for the sector to enhance their overall adaptive capacity to climate change for example.

In addition, meaningful participation of the sector in all phases of decision- and policy-making should be pursued. Currently, the d/Deaf are often lumped together with other subgroups of persons with disabilities or other vulnerable groups. It is only through giving the d/Deaf opportunities to represent and speak for themselves can we ensure that their needs, concerns and issues are considered in policies and programs.

Stakeholders have recommended the following activities under this thematic strategy:

Strengthen and enforce the mandate of national and local government offices to allocate sufficient budget to support programs for persons with disabilities, including for hiring FSL interpreters, in accordance with the 2023 GAA

Restructuring the civil society or sectoral representative seat in decision-making bodies at the national (e.g., CCC Advisory Council, NDRRMC) and local levels (e.g., LDRRMC) to be more accessible to marginalized communities like the d/Deaf in terms of achieving equitable representation and accessibility of application processes



Deaf Inclusive

Finally, the fourth milestone in the process is one that follows through on the promise put forth by responsive policies, through the realization of their execution and the implementation of plans and programs to safeguard the rights and needs of the d/Deaf community. At this level, duty-bearers are well informed and able to operationalize inclusive governance in partnership with the d/Deaf community through all phases of development. The resources necessary to do so are also allocated in accordance with the stipulations of updated and responsive policies and plans. The critical step towards becoming genuinely Deaf-inclusive is through *strengthening partnerships and collaboration across multi-sectoral groups*.

The ultimate goal should be to involve the d/Deaf in all phases of the policy and program implementation from development to implementation and monitoring. This can be possible by establishing collaborative partnerships with representative groups of the d/Deaf community. More than as beneficiaries, the Deaf should be seen as agents of change with the

capacity to influence their own development and contribute to the design and implementation of solutions.

Stakeholders have recommended the following activities under this thematic strategy:

Strengthen the coordination between government offices in providing programs and services for persons with disabilities

Increase partnerships among the different sectors of the society, including the duty-bearers and Deaf People's Organizations, in all phases of policy and program implementation

While none of these are meant to be prescriptive in any way, these are among the most common and critical milestones that should be considered in pursuing more inclusive governance at any level, from international to the local levels





Key Stakeholders

Various stakeholders were consulted throughout this assessment process, highlighting their relevant mandates, programs, and potential areas for contribution towards more inclusive climate action. Below is a list of government and civil society stakeholders with significant roles in the path to d/Deaf inclusion that showed particular interest and willingness to collaborate, together with a short description of their current and potential contributions:

1. The **National Council for Disability Affairs (NCDA)** is the national policy-making body that coordinates and leads the development of policies and programs and the implementation and delivery of services for persons with disabilities. Their functions under R.A. 7277 (“Magna Carta for Disabled People”) and NCDA’s Administrative Order 001-2021 also include ensuring the reliability, availability, and integrity of databases on persons with disabilities, the coordination of activities of all agencies concerning disability issues and concerns, and spearheading efforts to mainstream disability-inclusion across all sectoral and cross-sectoral issues. Their inclusion as key representatives in climate and disaster discourse can be improved at all levels to ensure that the needs of the disability sector are adequately addressed.

As the representative agency for the disability sector at the national level, the NCDA plays a big role in advocating and raising awareness for the rights and needs of persons with disabilities. Currently they co-manage the PRPWD and provide disability-sensitivity training for other national government

agencies, on a “upon request” basis, both services that can and should be enhanced to emphasize needs of disability sub-groups, and strengthened to achieve greater Deaf Awareness across government offices.

2. The **Local Government Academy** is the training arm of the **Department of Interior and Local Government**, responsible for the human resource development of local government officials and personnel for the effective delivery of their mandates. Included among their functions is the development and provision of training programs relating to climate change, such as their on-going programs on LCCAP/LDRRMP formulation, conducting Climate and Disaster Risk Assessments (CDRA), gender-responsive or community-based DRRM, among others.

The LGA is best placed to integrate capacity development agenda on persons with disability issues and concerns, and the use of FSL and d/Deaf sensitivity at the local level. A possible program that may be developed to this end would be a disability-inclusive DRRM training program for LGU officials, including PDAO personnel.

Another Bureau under the DILG, the Bureau of Local Government Development (BLGD), is also in the process of developing a Disability and Inclusion Framework and Roadmap to ensure that social protection policies address the unique needs of the marginalized groups.

3. The **Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino (KWF)** leads in the formulation of rules, regulations and guidelines for plans and programs relating to Filipino and other Philippine languages. In accordance with R.a. 11106 (“FSL Act”), they are mandated to establish a national system of standards, accreditations

and procedures for FSL interpretation with the direct involvement of the d/Deaf community. Additionally, they are also responsible for developing guidelines for the use of such languages in the development of knowledge and training materials.

Through their **FSL Unit**, the commission has also indicated their willingness to provide FSL training and policy support for the institutionalization of FSL in systems and programs of government agencies.

4. The **Commission on Human Rights (CHR)**, an independent National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) of the Philippines, is mandated to monitor and investigate human rights violations in the country, particularly those affecting vulnerable populations such as the disability sector. The CHR also plays a critical role in monitoring the implementation of the country's international human rights obligations in accordance with the UNCRPD, and subsequently highlighted in the CRPD committee recommendations for improving access to rights of persons with disabilities in the country.

Their reports on the National Inquiry on Climate Change and the on-going development of a National Guidebook on Disabilities are important steps towards understanding the human rights issues associated with climate change, and the best ways to engage with the disability sector, both of which are issues that need to be integrated.

5. The **Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB)** is the governing body mandated to regulate and classify movies, television programs, related publicity materials and/or promotional materials. In accordance with R.A. 11106

("FSL Act"), they have further been mandated to require the use of interpreter insets in all news and public affairs programs and promote the progressive use of FSL in all other broadcasts and programming.

The consequent establishment of an FSL and CC committee, and the on-going enhancement of their internal policies and IRRs to reflect their obligations under the FSL Act, are significant steps in ensuring the accessibility of information. This is particularly critical when it comes to news and emergency alert systems that are critical for survival of persons with disabilities.

6. The **Department of Science and Technology - Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (DOST-PAGASA)** is the government agency tasked to provide timely, accurate and reliable weather-related information, products and services.

Ongoing efforts to develop visual warning systems, through color coding hazards and projected impacts, are vital for developing accessible EWS for the d/Deaf. Training in FSL and additional capacity building for their Gender and Media Unit were also suggested to improve inclusivity and access to their news alerts and weather programs, among others.

7. By virtue of R.A. 9729, the **Department of Education** is mandated to integrate climate change into primary and secondary education curricula. They are further mandated to use FSL as the official medium of instruction in education for the d/Deaf, and further develop guidelines for the use of FSL in the creation of all learning materials. These mandates, together with the ongoing development of the IRR of R.A. 11650 ("Inclusive Education

Act”) create an enabling policy environment for more inclusive d/Deaf education, specifically on the topic of climate change and disaster risk reduction and management.

DepEd has integrated Climate change and DRR concepts across various subjects and levels of education, from kindergarten to senior high school, and even Special Education (SPED). Ongoing efforts to develop learning materials on and in FSL are also being done to try and bridge technical subjects to d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners. Ensuring the implementation of these efforts and that they are in line with the desired level climate and disaster competencies as well as the cultural and linguistic parameters of FSL are important next steps to increasing access to quality education for the d/Deaf.

8. The **Office of Civil Defense** is designated as the chair of the **National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council**. Their functions under R.A. 10121 (“Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management”) include the mandates to capacitate vulnerable and marginalized groups, establish

national early warning and emergency alert systems, and establish communication systems among local DRRM units for the purpose of coordination and gathering disaster information before, during, and after disasters. Their role as a policy-making body as well as in implementation and monitoring are critical to mandating and ensuring inclusion and protection for persons with disabilities.

Ongoing efforts to update the LDRMP formulation guidelines provide opportunities to strengthen the integration of disability data in disaster planning, thus ensuring that they are protected during situations of risk. Other efforts such as the development of a DRRM Strategy for persons with disabilities, highlighting the unique needs of each sub-group, and the conduct of FSL training for frontline responders, could further strengthen a more inclusive national and localized response to CC-DRR.

9. The **Climate Change Commission** is the lead policy making body mandated to coordinate and ensure the mainstreaming of climate change in all programs and plans at all levels



of government. Their functions as stipulated in R.A. 9729 (“Climate Change Act”) include the dissemination of information on climate change, vulnerabilities, risks and protocols for adaptation and mitigation, promoting greater multi-stakeholder participation, among other critical functions.

As stated in the previous section, most of the existing climate policies and plans fail to consider or address the case of persons with disabilities. Strengthening the language on disability-inclusion in the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and NSFCC which is set to be developed/updated in the near future would greatly improve inclusive climate action in the country. Securing a seat for a representative of persons with disabilities in these consultations would open the door for stronger and more concrete partnerships.

10. By virtue of R.A. (“Local Government Code”), **Local Government Units** (LGUs) are the frontline agencies in addressing the needs of local communities, especially during disaster situations. R.A. 10070 (“Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, as amended”) provides for the creation of PDAOs and their mandate to collect data and represent the disability sector in all governance processes; while R.A. 10121 (“Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Law”) mandates DRRMOs to facilitate the conduct of risk assessment and the provision of programs and services in accordance with national plans and targets. Their role in the operationalization and ensuring rights and needs are adequately met are invaluable.

Many LGUs have already taken the steps to go above and beyond what is stipulated in these laws, which have already been noted as lacking, through various innovations to develop better

data, conduct risk mapping, and enact various disability policies. However, the challenges they encounter are equally great, and more support through capacity development and resource allocation, among others, is needed.

11. The **d/Deaf community through Deaf People’s Organizations** (DPOs) are the best placed to raise awareness about their culture, language and rights. While programs offered are often lumped together under the banner of “Disability-sensitivity” programs. Partnering with Deaf organizations and other Deaf advocacy groups is essential to strengthening awareness raising efforts on the community. Prominent DPOs include the Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD), and Philippine National Association of Sign Language Interpreters (PNASLI), among other local DPOs that are active at the provincial, municipal or city levels.
12. **Civil society organizations** (CSOs) are critical for improving governance for all stakeholders. They serve to advocate for the needs of marginalized groups, facilitate the delivery of resources and knowledge to the people up to the grassroots level, and provide critique and technical support for the improvement of current policies and strategies. Both disability-related organizations, as well as those focused on CC, humanitarian response, and DRRM are important actors to bridge the d/Deaf community with relevant duty-bearers, and champion a more rights-based approach to both CC-DRR and disability affairs, and the intersection of both. Prominent organizations to note in the Philippines include disability organizations like CBM Global Philippines & Humanity and Inclusion Philippines, and Aksyon Klima Pilipinas, a network of organizations working on CC-DRR in the country.

Chapter 5

EX-POST EVALUATION: ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT AND PROJECTED OUTCOMES OF WORK PROGRAM 2





Reflection on outputs of Work Program 2

Part of the strategic approach of Project SIGND to increase the climate resilience of the d/Deaf is by empowering the sector to participate in policy-making and programming. This is aimed to derive more Deaf-inclusive policies, programs, services, and activities in the country. In fulfillment of this goal, Work Program 2 worked towards delivering the following outputs:

1. System-wide review of the government's national plans and policies for climate action, DRRM, cultural protection and human rights

The Work program was able to identify a total of 142 plans and policies at the international, regional, and national levels. A review and content analysis of these plans and policies provided key insights on existing efforts to mainstream disability affairs in CCA-DRRM plans while at the same time, it brought into light policy gaps and opportunities to enhance Deaf-inclusion in governance. The series of stakeholder consultations organized by the Work program as well as the Climate Vulnerability Assessment on the d/Deaf also played a role in identifying gaps in the implementation of these plans and policies. Overall, the Work Program achieved the system-wide review of government's plans and policies which formed part of the basis of the development of the Governance Agenda.

2. Empowered participation of the Deaf in the review, formulation and implementation of Deaf-responsive policies and programs

The Work program has so far only organized learning sessions for members of the d/Deaf community as an effort to start engaging

them in discussions about climate change. Given this nature of engagement, it would be difficult to ascertain how much the Work program has already contributed to empowering the d/Deaf to participate in policy making and programming especially in terms of capacity-building. Nevertheless, we note that there are d/Deaf participants who have continually participated in the activities of the Work Program. We find that this is a significant marker of their interest in the Project and achievement of its goals.

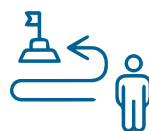
Further, the Work program has significantly made progress in the roll out of the Climate Vulnerability Assessment on the d/Deaf. Preliminary findings of the assessment have been disseminated to inform both Hearing and d/Deaf stakeholders of the impacts of climate change to the Deaf community. Feedback on the effectiveness of the learning sessions on raising awareness about climate change and its impacts to the sector has so far been positive. Ultimately, the purpose of the assessment is not only to understand the nature of vulnerability of the d/Deaf community to climate change but also to serve as knowledge products for both the Hearing and the d/Deaf to inform their insights and decisions.

3. Improved support to and promotion of the development and/or adoption of Deaf-responsive policies and system changes

Policy assessment and stakeholder consultations formed the basis of development of the Governance Agenda, which presents the several layers of issues and barriers that hinder greater Deaf-inclusivity of the country's climate action. This Agenda was later transformed into an action-oriented roadmap called "Pathways to Deaf-inclusive Governance in the Philippines", which outlines the proposed milestones,

corresponding strategies, and concerned stakeholders to guide the operationalization of how to be Deaf-inclusive. Following the presentation of this roadmap to stakeholders during the workshops organized by the Work program in August 2022, several stakeholders have already indicated their interest in partnering with the Project for its implementation. The stakeholders have also already identified specific areas of work that they are willing to support, such as in the formulation of Deaf-inclusive DRRM plans and policies as well as the amendment of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons which provides the specific rights and benefits to which the d/Deaf are entitled. It is important to note only that the roadmap is yet to be further refined during Year 2 of the Project and as such, it will be difficult to conclude that the same stakeholders who indicated willingness to contribute to the implementation of this roadmap are also going to adopt this roadmap. Nevertheless, the Work Program has already observed the national government's willingness to incorporate insights tackling the needs and concerns of the d/Deaf community into national plans and policies. As of Year 1, the Work program has contributed proposed wording to make explicit textual references

to the d/Deaf in 2 policy instruments, namely the National Adaptation Plan being developed by the CCC and the LDRRMP Formulation Guidebook being spearheaded by the OCD.



Prospects for achieving the Project's purpose

The prospects of achieving the overall goal of Work program 2 which is to empower the d/Deaf to participate in policy making and programming through promoting Deaf-inclusive policies, programs, services and activities are difficult to determine at this point given that the roadmap to operationalizing Deaf-inclusion in governance is still in its development phase and is inherently recommendatory in nature. Nevertheless, the relatively large number of both Hearing and d/Deaf stakeholders expressing continued support for the Project is a significant indicator of the willingness to enhance Deaf-inclusion in governance especially if support from the same is sustained over the next activities of the Project for Year 2.



Glossary

Accessible Material	Refer to any communication material that are provided in language (spoken or visual) and platform (audio, written, etc.) that is clear and understandable for all people, including those who may have unique communication needs; For the d/Deaf, this particularly requires materials to be provided in Filipino Sign Language or with English Closed Captioning.
Adaptation	The adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli (such as increasing temperature) or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities. (Taken from R.A. 9729)
Adaptive capacity	The ability of ecological, social or economic systems to adjust to climate change including climate variability and extremes, to moderate or offset potential damages and to take advantage of associated opportunities with changes in climate or to cope with the consequences thereof. (Taken from R.A. 9729)
Assistive Devices or Assistive Technology	Refer to devices (hardware or software) that supports or enhances every day living for persons with disabilities; For the d/Deaf specifically this helps those with hearing, voice, speech, and language disorders communicate more meaningfully and participate more fully in their daily lives.
Beneficiaries	The person designated to receive the income of an estate that is subject to a trust
Climate Change	Refers to changes in climate, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity, that result in various hazards that adversely affect ecosystems and communities, among others. (Adapted from from R.A. 9729)
Climate Mitigation	Refers to human intervention to address anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all GHG, including ozone-depleting substances and their substitutes. (Taken from R.A. 9729)
Communication Barrier	Conditions that prevent people from relaying relayong, receiving or understanding information; can be due to differences in language, accessibility of platforms, among other possible issues.
Consequent	The state of occurring or existing as a direct result of a prior action, occurrence or fact.
Contingent	The state of occurring or existing only in direct connection to a prior action, occurrence or fact.
Cross-cutting Issues	Refers to problems and concerns that affect all communities, all sectors and all aspects of development and should thus be addressed in a manner that is considered throughout all stages of governance from policy making, implementation, evaluation, and more.
Curricula; Curriculum	The subjects, topics, and content that are included in school programs at different grade levels.
Disability Sector	Refers to persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, as well as able-bodied individuals and organizations that work to support persons with disabilities and address disability affairs and issues.
Disaggregated Data	Data that has been broken down by detailed sub-categories, for example by marginalized group, gender, region or level of education

Evidence-based	The principle of ensuring that any decision or action are determined on the basis of practical application and use of the best available research or data
Governance	The process of authorizing and managing processes such as policies and their implementation, through institutions, processes, and mechanisms that lead towards development at the national and local levels.
Homogenous / Heterogenous	Homogenous refers to things that are considered to be of the same or a similar kind or nature, while Heterogenous refers to things that are composed of dissimilar (different) or diverse characteristics or components.
Implementation	An act or instance of implementing something : the process of making something active or effective
Impoverished Population	Sectors of society that are living under the poverty line and with diminished or inequitable quality of life due to the lack of adequate resources or access to provide for their basic necessities, such as healthcare, shelter, food, and clean drinking water
Inclusion	The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or intellectual disabilities and members of other minority groups.
Inequalities	Refer to differences in demographics, socio-political and economic status, among others, that contribute to their disadvantaged or unequal opportunities, rights and access to services, among others.
Institutionalization	The process of adding, adopting, or changing laws, policies, and programs to adhere to norms and protocols that are socially and politically acceptable, making them mandated or mandatory for all citizens.
Integration	The act of adding or ensuring the inclusion of certain factors, phrases or considerations in laws or policies
Literature	Written works and published works that can be considered valid and relevant to the conducted research or study
Mainstreaming	The integration of policies and measures that address climate change into development planning and sectoral decision-making.
Misconceptions	A wrong or inaccurate idea or conception
Monitoring	The process of periodically collecting, analyzing, and using information to actively manage performance, maximize positive outcomes and minimize risk of adverse impacts resulting from interventions.
Parameters	A measurable factor forming one of a set that defines a system or sets the conditions of its operation.

Participation	The act of being involved in governance processes such as decision-making, planning and implementation of programs in activities; this can occur at different levels such as through attendance only to having the power to make decisions or dictate or steer actions to be done.
Representation	The action of speaking or acting on behalf of someone or the state of being so represented.
Representative Data	The quality of data that accurately represents the characteristics of the target community it is trying to profile.
Resilience	The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions. (Taken from R.A.10121)
Stakeholder	Individuals or communities that have a role and responsibility or are affected by a certain situation and thus whose interests must be considered in any decision or action.
Tokenistic	The practice of providing opportunities for marginalized communities to participate, but only within minimal compliance with the level of participation stipulated within laws and policies.
Vulnerability	The degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. (Taken from R.A. 9729)

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ANNEX A. CONSULTED ORGANIZATIONS

National Government Agencies

Climate Change Commission
 Commission on Human Rights
 Commission on the Welfare of Children
 Dept of Environment and Natural Resources
 Department of Foreign Affairs
 Department of Internal and Local Government -
 Bureau of Local Government Development
 DILG - Local Government Academy
 Department of Science and Technology - PAGASA
 Department of Social Welfare and Development
 House of Representatives, Special Committee on
 Persons with Disabilities
 Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino
 MTRCB
 National Council of Disability Affairs
 National Economic and Development Authority
 Office of Civil Defense - National Disaster Risk
 Reduction and Management
 Philippine Commission on Women
 Philippine Information Agency

Local Government Units

CSWDO, Cagayan de Oro City
 DRRMO, Davao City
 DRRMO, Iloilo City
 CSWDO, Iloilo City
 DRRMO, Makati City
 PDAO, Makati City
 PDAO, Naga City
 DRRMO, Pasig City

SPED, Pasig City

MSWDO, Trinidad Municipality

DRRMO, Iloilo City

Non-Government Organizations

Aksyon Klima Pilipinas
 CBM Global Philippines
 Humanity and Inclusion Philippines
 Kapamilya Konek
 Mapakalamidad
 Puerto Princesa School of Arts and Trades (PPSAT)
 United Nations Development Programme
 UP Resilience Institute

Deaf Organizations

Bicolandia Deaf Society
 Bulacan Province Association of the Deaf
 Catanduanes Provincial Association of the Deaf
 Catholic Organization for Deaf Youth
 Cebu Federation of the Deaf
 Children of Deaf Adults, Philippines
 Davao United Deaf Association
 Deaf Association of Misamis Oriental
 Deaf Association of Iloilo
 Dumaguete Effata Association of the Deaf, Inc.
 La Trinidad Association of the Deaf
 Naga City Deaf Society
 Pasigueno Society of the Deaf, Inc.
 Puerto Princesa Association Deaf
 Tri-People DEAF Association of Cotabato City,
 Maguindana

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