

The Impact of Floods and Typhoons on Housing Welfare: Case Study of Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam

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Abstract : This research investigates and records post-flood and typhoon conditions of low income housing in the Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam; area prone to extreme flooding in Central Vietnam. The cost of rebuilding houses after flood and typhoon has been always a burden for low income households. These costs often lead to the elimination of essential construction practices for disaster resistance. Despite relief efforts from international non-profit organizations and Vietnam government, the impacts of flood and typhoon damages to residential construction has been reoccurring to the same neighborhood annually. Notwithstanding its importance, this topic has not been systematically investigated. The study is limited to assistance provided to low income households documenting existing conditions of low income homes impacted by post flood and typhoon conditions in the Thua Thien Hue Province. The research identifies leading causes of the building failure from the natural disasters. Relief efforts and progress made since the last typhoon is documented. The quality of construction and repairs are assessed based on Home Builders Guide to Coastal Construction by Federal Emergency Management Agency. Focus group discussions and individual interviews with local residents from four different communities were conducted to get incites on repair effort by the non-profit organizations and Vietnam government, and their needs post flood and typhoon. The findings from the field study informed that many of the local people are now aware of the importance of improving housing conditions as one of the key coping strategies to withstand flood and typhoon events as it makes housing and community more resilient to future events. While there has been a remarkable improvement of housing and infrastructure with the support from the local government as well as the non-profit organizations, many households in the study areas are found to still live in weak and fragile housing conditions without gaining access to the aid to repair and strengthen the houses. Given that the major immediate recovery action taken by the local people tends to focus on repairing damaged houses, and on this ground, low-income households spend a considerable amount of their income on housing repair, providing proper and applicable construction practices will not only improve the housing condition, but also contribute to reducing poverty in Vietnam.

Keywords : disaster coping mechanism, housing welfare, low-income housing, recovery reduction

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