Introduction

Disasters trigger reflections on human–environment relations. Taiwan’s Typhoon Morakot dropped copious rain during a short period, causing diverse people to reflect on the factors that had aggravated the disaster. These included climate change, the impact of larger storms, soil erosion, landslides, inappropriate large-scale developments and construction projects in environmentally inappropriate areas. In the Typhoon’s aftermath, greater attention was placed on environmental protection and environmentally friendly projects. However, the question remained: have such reflections produced actions and changes in the field? After the disaster, survivors were offered generous government resources. After funding ran out, some sponsored programmes were sustained; others were suspended. Many factors yielded these outcomes. This chapter analyses four post-Morakot environmentally friendly reconstruction cases to consider the contextual requirements for sustainable, local, long-term community reconstruction programmes. Then, it will reflect upon local green social work practices in Taiwan.

Typhoon Morakot

In 2009, Typhoon Morakot’s long-lasting, heavy rains in the mountains and plains of Chiayi, Tainan, Kaohsiung, Pingtung and Taitung devastated southern Taiwan with landslides, large amounts of driftwood, flooding and waterlogging. This was the deadliest typhoon in Taiwan for 50 years (Lee et al., 2011). Much of the serious damage resulting from Typhoon Morakot was associated with global warming and increases in severe weather stemming from a changing climate in combination with the absence of a long-term national land conservation plan. The resultant devastation was also attributed to traditional capitalist land management wherein interrelated political and commercial interests produced the environmental degradation of mountains, forests and coastal lands (Chiang, 2010).
Fan (2012) indicated that failure to consider local characteristics and lay knowledge in risk assessments by excluding local communities in reconstruction decision-making processes resulted in further environmental injustices. For example, the Tzu-Chi Foundation (TCF) suggested that a permanent housing policy to reduce the cost of building pre-fabricated houses. This view was supported by central government (Shao, 2012; Chiang 2013). Also, TCF advocated for a ‘total evacuation of interior settlement and reforestation of the mountains’ which the government enacted as ‘Forced Resettlement or Village Relocation’, a pivotal point of post-disaster reconstruction policy (Shieh et al., 2012: 43).

Indigenous peoples’ areas were most seriously affected by Typhoon Morakot (MTPDRC, 2011). Accordingly, dozens of indigenous Taiwanese villages were relocated from the mountainous interior to the foothills. Removing indigenous people from ancestral lands destroys their traditional territory, livelihoods, interpersonal relationships, material culture and collective memory (Taiban, 2013: 59). This reconstruction policy caused multiple protests and resistance activities, further increasing victim–survivors’ anxiety including mental and physical stresses. The man-made disaster caused by government policy may have had a greater impact than the natural disaster (Hsieh et al., 2011:159; Dominelli, 2012).

Typhoon Morakot’s devastation is associated with many issues that green social workers address, such as the impact of physical and ecological environments on humans (and vice versa), environmental and ecological justice, and environmental damage induced by capitalism and neoliberalism (Dominelli, 2012). The experiences of several local workers and their practices in confronting this environmental disaster will be discussed in this chapter through case studies.

Sources of information

Memory work was used to obtain source information (Haug, 2000, 2008). This method, based on group research, brings together a group of people to engage actively in the research process and share thoughts, knowledge and analyses with each other. Adjustments were made to Huag’s (2000) models to fit local conditions. The steps taken were:

1. The authors formed a group to develop research questions collectively.
2. Issues were first clarified, and then discussions were held with local workers. Discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim for the first author to conduct the initial analysis.
3. Brainstorming within the group of researchers identified similarities, differences, contrasts or inconsistences in the transcripts, leading to further discussions and revisions.

Several discussion groups were held. Those that occurred on 22 August 2015 and 26 April 2016 involved seven and three local workers, respectively. They had participated in post-Typhoon Morakot reconstruction responses. The transcript was emailed to co-authors for three rounds of review. Another group discussion on 18 November 2016 revised the manuscript. Additionally, a two-hour interview to clarify items was held with a local worker in Dakanua Village on 17 December 2016. The first author also visited reconstruction sites during the research period, and field observations were recorded for further analysis.

The transcripts were analysed to generate themes and categories from repeatedly comparing and contrasting the differences and similarities found within the texts. A further analysis linked these dialogues with theory and related concepts in the literature. Koutroulis (2001) argues that memory work is a form of meta-analysis in which participants share, record and analyse each other’s memories during the research process, placing participants in an equal position as...
With this collective, participatory approach, the authors worked with the participants to coproduce knowledge as green social work advocates.

Local participants remain anonymous, and informed consent was obtained. Participants also reviewed the final draft of this chapter. The seven members of the first group are identified as M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6 and M7. The second and third groups included M2, M6 and M7. Since M8 was unable to participate in group discussions, the first author visited for a one-on-one interview.

Cases of environmentally friendly reconstruction

Typhoon Morakot represented a crisis and opportunity for change. After the disaster, some communities proposed different ideas on how to structure their communities’ economies, switching from a consumption-oriented approach that attracted many tourists to a model based on local agricultural assets and characteristics. Although this transition has not been globally applied, the current case studies exemplify a good start.

A. Jiasian Community Association

The Jiasian Community Association (JCA) was extensively dedicated to rural education and actively advocated on issues pertaining to public farmland and agricultural topics before Morakot. JCA continues to make adjustments and shift its direction as a result of hands-on experimentation. It has promoted cultivation of Indica Rice and integrated their advocacy efforts with the Typhoon Morakot Temporary Work Programme within the existing Public Farmland System. The planting of organic rice is executed in conjunction with the Wild Peanut Family, formed by students at Chi-Mei Community College. They also participate in food and farming education at elementary schools and advocate environmentally friendly farming techniques developed through working with independent farmers. JCA organises farming events for children, expecting hands-on experiences to enable young students to connect with the land.

The Jiasian region is famous for taro ice cream. Even though taro is the key ingredient in the ice cream, people in this area bought taro from other regions. During the post-Typhoon Morakot reconstruction process, JCA and other local organisations encouraged large numbers of farmers in Jiasian to grow taro. The Agriculture Bureau then started investing in Jiasian taro farming. Local taro ice cream makers are now using local taro to support local agriculture.

Usage of local products has boosted the income of local farmers, created more work opportunities and lowered carbon footprints. Previously, business owners in Jiasian competed with each other and fought over business opportunities. After the Typhoon, the community engaged in discussions on how best to showcase Jiasian’s unique features and come together for joint marketing in new collaborations and connections.

JCA provides a dependable platform that informs independent farmers about sustainable farming. It organises small local excursions, which have led to better care of the smallest corners of the community, wherein local stories are highlighted. These excursions entail more than just promotion and smart packaging. The management and maintenance of each destination depends on discovering new attractions in the community’s accumulated history, and community-building processes. They allow consumers of farm products to experience farming and interact with farmers. These excursions have shifted conceptions of and reframed farmers as knowledge holders, not merely labourers. Furthermore, these excursions have created diverse educational opportunities and greater awareness of community values.
B. Duona Tribal Village

Duona Tribal Village, located in Maolin District, is composed of indigenous peoples from the Rukai Tribe. Its tourism, based on hot springs, was previously this community’s major source of income. M6 says:

It used to be that when neighbours in the hot springs region of Duona ran into each other they would ask how many customers they had that day. Because the hot springs were damaged after the Typhoon, the locals started developing other jobs locally, so now they would greet their neighbours by asking, ‘Have you eaten yet? Have you been sleeping well?’

Thus, the Typhoon altered relationships among residents.

After the hot springs were buried by landslides, residents thought about other local assets to survive. The tribe invited tribal elders to elder care locations and traditional weaving workshops to develop and teach the craft of traditional weaving to women and young people. Tapakadrawane, or the ‘Black Rice Festival’, has been revived after a two-decade hiatus. Environmentally friendly farming methods are used to cultivate a type of black rice that is unique to this region. Children are guided by the tribal elders to plant rice and learn about the history of their tribe. After the disaster, a restaurant owner began growing herbs on a long-abandoned piece of land and served food cooked with home-grown organic ingredients. The restaurant offers guided tours and invites children with mental disorders to gain hands-on gardening experiences. This serves as a form of therapy. Underprivileged people are also employed in the herb garden.

These exemplify that people are thinking beyond making money as green social workers suggest. They develop their businesses and help underprivileged people. Land is no longer solely linked with production or considered a good for trading. It is now connected with important issues including provision of local ingredients, food safety, job opportunities and care for less fortunate people.

Different organisations present in Duona Tribal Village include a patrol team, women’s association and youth association. These groups quickly organise to form a support system in times of disaster. The village office becomes an emergency response centre, the village chief serves as the commander-in-chief, and villagers are divided into groups to handle different tasks during emergency scenarios. As M2 says, ‘They can proudly say that even without air-dropped relief supplies, they can still survive for two weeks’.

C. Small-Town Community Empowerment Alliance of Kaohsiung City

The Small-Town Community Empowerment Alliance of Kaohsiung City (Small Town) was founded in September 2014. After the conclusion of post-Typhoon Morakot rebuilding, a group of local staff that participated in rebuilding formed a regional cross-township organisation to carry on mid- to long-term rebuilding. As M6 states, ‘We can’t leave and won’t leave because our home is here, and it doesn’t feel like the disaster was that long ago, so we need to continue to gain more experiences’.

Small Town now serves as a connective platform for community resources and information distribution and acts as a consulting team for the community. M2 claims, ‘Whenever resources are made available for the region, we can quickly help with allocating the resources to the groups with the most urgent needs’. This group has also organised a cross-generational education programme with donated cameras to record participants’ lives and efforts during both recovery and reconstruction periods.
Its core focus is to bring locals together in an alliance of companionship to inspire, provoke and engage other local inhabitants in discussions with one another and devise collective solutions for potential problems. The alliance hopes to ignore one-time carnival-like events that entail passive participation and traditional community development models. Rather, it brings people together to face regional problems collectively and form a pathway towards local, sustainable solutions.

Community work is being neglected in Taiwanese social work education, and many young social workers are unsure of what to do when they arrive in a community. Small Town acts as a bridge for social workers coming from outside the community, helping them understand and learn how to work with the community. Small Town recruits student interns majoring in social work, who are trained in post-disaster reconstruction. The alliance anticipates continued participation in training future social workers.

D. Dakanua

After Typhoon Morakot, Dakanua Village located in Namasia, Kaoshiung opted for in-situ reconstruction instead of moving people into the government’s permanent housing. As described by M8:

“When some tribal members and I came back here, each one chose a tree. When the flood came or the government forced us to relocate, we decided to tie ourselves against the tree. We would prefer being washed away with the tree in the flood than become homeless in cities.”

After the disaster, maintaining livelihoods was the main priority. Dakuna’s women grew traditional crops using natural farming methods, restored endangered golden taros, raised chickens and baked breads. They called it Usuru, or ‘the women’s farm’, where women used their knowledge and resources to restore plant species that had nearly been lost and connected farming with their lives and livelihoods. Tribal farmers had been growing cash crops as their main source of income, utilising chemical fertilisers and pesticides to increase yields. The products were high in production costs, yet low in market price. Environmentally friendly ways of farming have now been adopted to reconstruct the tribe through the rediscovery of wisdom from their own culture.

‘A tribe does not imply solidarity or collaboration. It did, perhaps. Yet under the impact of globalisation, the interpersonal cooperation in a tribe is not as close as we imagined anymore’, said one woman of the tribe (fieldwork note). Therefore, a group of women returned to the tribe and founded a network to provide mutual help, offering a communal kitchen and after-school programme. These women urged other women to take their children to the after-school programme and invited older people to teach children about their traditional culture and diet. An hourly rate paid to those providing instruction fosters a sense of accomplishment and source of income.

After Typhoon Morakot, numerous mental health specialists came to provide treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder. This was of little help for older people. Instead, Dakanua villagers’ creation of space for older people to share their cultural wisdom became an important healing mechanism (Apu’u Kaaviana, 2015). The Usuru provides women and older people with income and a chance to see how different life can be when working together and using their collective power and wisdom. Women of the tribe are committed to restoring endangered traditional crops and teaching children the tribe’s traditional culture. This restoration ensures diversity of agricultural seeds and a supply of quality food for disaster preparedness (e.g. planting crops resistant to heavy rain). As M8 explained, ‘canned food is provided by the government for
disaster preparedness. But canned food has expiration dates, which no one checked. We do not dare to eat those’.

Small Town and Usuuru in Dakanua were founded after Typhoon Morakot, while the organisations in Duona Village and the JCA had been operating before the disaster. During the government’s five-year reconstruction period, many resources were provided by public and private sectors. Both M7 and M6 noted:

Some organisations were set up to accept such resources. However, most of these organisations are out of operation now and some of the buildings are left vacant or have become ‘mosquito halls’ where insects are the only occupants. Those organisations left nothing but problems. Those continuing to take root after the end of reconstruction period are often local organisations with a basis that had already been developed.

(M7)

Some . . . community organisations have had a plan and strategies for local empowerment but have suffered due to scarce resources [prior to] Morakot. The resources provided for recovery . . . allowed such organisations to step-up, advance and expand . . . their original basis.

(M6)

The observations of M6 and M7 show that certain levels of existing local capacities are required. The communities that had mutual help organisations involved in community and environmental issues before Typhoon Morakot were more likely to continue these trajectories and become more sustainable afterwards. Nevertheless, growing local organisations and empowering human beings are very important in the vast and complex mid- and long-term reconstruction efforts.

Significance of local organisation and human resources

The centres and work stations of disaster reconstruction following Typhoon Morakot were generally planned by central government. As the right to commission organisations nationwide belongs to central government, NGOs are geographically and socially closer to central government. Consequently, local NGOs were less favoured in the competition for the resources following the disaster. After field visits, the first author discovered that when national or large institutions left a site at the end of the reconstruction period, their work or experiences were not always transferred to local organisations. Consequently, sustaining the reconstruction endeavours of a service network for fundamental necessities was difficult. Having been closed, these stations dismissed many capable and enthusiastic local workers.

Unlike other impacted counties and cities, Kaohsiung started to implement the ‘Human Resources Supporting Plan’ (HRSP) in 2010 to involve local workers in reconstruction and provide them with training. Unlike the projects of central government, local organisations were made eligible to apply for second phase projects. As M3 pointed out, ‘granting funding to high-profile NGOs or to local associations that are willing to engage and take responsibility, I think, will lead to two different outcomes’. Local organisations often play more critical roles during times of emergency (Lin, 2010). As M5 said:

It was mainly because at the early stage of reconstruction, the stricken areas were in disarray. The place and people as a whole were in such an unstable state that the locals were the only ones who were capable of managing the logistics. They also had more and better ideas and solutions throughout the entire intervention.
Organisations operating in a community when a disaster strikes can act as a self-help relief force until formal rescue units arrive. For example, an elder care service existed in the Baolai community. When Typhoon Morakot struck, frightened local older people were kept company by community leaders and given instructions on how to evacuate, prevent or prepare for disasters. Now, when a Typhoon warning is issued, their community disaster prevention plans become activated.

In the early aftermath of Typhoon Morakot, many external teams providing services in stricken places were unfamiliar with local characteristics and cultural particularities and spent time on mutual adjustments (Wang et al., 2014). M1 and M3 noted that language barriers or short time frames made it hard for external professional helpers to fit into the community, making it difficult to establish trusted relationships and have smoothly running services. In contrast, local workers who knew the environment and community situation were able to pass on information and distribute resources to affected residents. Additionally, they were in the same situation as the victim–survivors, making it easier to develop a sense of trust.

The HRSP aims to train local women and young people to be semi-professional reconstruction workers. However, ‘because no immediate effect could be produced and no results were demonstrated by the person in charge, the project ended up being regarded a waste of money’, said M7. Projects that do take root and foster the long-term empowerment of human resources and community may not show results after the reconstruction period ends. The experience shared by M7 shows that recovery programmes that empower local people ensures a deep-rooted, locally relevant and more visionary means of post-disaster follow-up. According to opinions in the focus groups, the community needs substantial, long-term support. Organisations founded in response to specific resourcing are usually unsustainable. This reflects the importance of local organisations in long-term reconstruction work, when external organisations withdraw.

The government’s role

The central government’s decision to force relocation and permanent housing was the most controversial policy following Typhoon Morakot. Researchers criticised government for ceding disaster management and the direction of reconstruction programmes to large NGOs (Tseng, 2010; Chen, 2012). Indigenous people, most affected by forced relocation, endured benevolent violence (Awi, 2009: 38), which implies that the provision of housing is a form of help while denying indigenous people their perspective or self-determination.

One researcher questioned whether the state executed village relocation to create a suitable environment for capitalist development (Cheng, 2009). The forced relocation policy also implies that the government prioritised ‘convenience in management’ or refused to waste resources on ‘mountainous areas with no economic benefits’ (Chen, 2010: 419). These studies highlight issues of environmental justice, as does green social work (Dominelli, 2012). According to Kapucu (2005), a policy without coordination, communication and comprehensive planning that is formed without listening to survivors can intensify the impact of a natural disaster and create an even worse man-made one.

The lengthy process from initial emergency responses to reconstruction requires enormous quantities of material and human resources. Therefore, community empowerment and participation are highly valued. Dominelli (2012) emphasises the significant role played by the community in providing local knowledge, collaboration efforts and decision-making. M1 mentioned that local workers often strongly opposed inadequate governmental policies and measures that put massive limitations in practices involving local knowledge and wisdom. Habitual ways of thinking and practising ensure that governmental reconstruction projects are composed of countless performance reports, repetitive achievement presentations and
incessant payment requests and verifications (Hung, 2015). Sponsored community organisations were busy with extensive paperwork. Performance-focused reconstruction projects made life in the community unusual, rendering it more difficult for the community to return to life as usual (ibid). M7 argued that after five years many community workers were trained experts in writing project plans to obtain funding and considered ‘success’ by mainstream values. M2 mentioned:

The absence of a comprehensive community economy development plan that would comprise the establishment of a marketing platform led to overproduction [of community generated products] in many cases. People were working and working like crazy, but no one was buying. No one buys. In fact, it was wearing down the community. In the end, it was the grandpas and the grandmas who bought the produce or products themselves.

Without comprehensive planning and carefully used resources to guide community reconstruction, many governmental measures became formalised routine work rather than attending to community needs. If the care of people and the land are not included and reconstruction plans remain short term, then reconstruction programmes are nothing more than a series of activities or projects. This makes it impossible to use resources wisely or generate new ways of thinking to guide appropriate avenues for development and reconstruction.

All local workers in the focus group sessions claimed that both central and local governments were eager to erase memories of disasters after their arbitrary recovery period of five years, after which any hints of Typhoon Morakot would disappear. The government also dismissed disaster workers’ wish to symbolically mark the accomplishment of the recovery mission.

Reflections on green social work

Landslides caused by Typhoon Morakot devastated agricultural and indigenous tribal communities of southern Taiwan following heavy rainfalls. These were attributed to climate change, continual development efforts and neglect of national land conservation. Like a magnifying glass, the disaster exacerbated disadvantage among deprived groups, agricultural villages and rural Taiwan. Working to reduce these in the cases of Jiasian Community Association, Duona Tribal Village, Small-Town and Dakanua stimulated the following reflections on green social work.

A. The importance of the state’s role

Quarantelli (1960) noted the myth of the state’s almighty response to disaster. Government is expected to control everything. However, during Typhoon Morakot, local workers experienced the state’s operational failures including its exclusion of local groups in favour of designing the framework and sharing reconstruction work with large, national NGOs.

Rather than encouraging nation-states to support neoliberalism, green social workers advocate for nation-states to act in partnership with local communities to coproduce solutions devised, agreed and owned by the local populace (Dominelli, 2012). One lesson highlighted by Typhoon Morakot was that local organisations and interpersonal neighbourhood networks provide the cornerstones of reconstruction when external aid groups have gone. However, the state controls most disaster relief resources and reconstruction programmes. These should be utilised to reduce vulnerability, support high-risk populations and include disaster risk factors like gender, poverty and inequality in mitigation efforts, endorsed by green social workers. Strong social and state institutional support is critical in disaster responses, providing social security and
offering social development solutions. While not compromising on the state’s role, public interest groups must monitor its behaviour.

**B. Value of long-term reconstruction**

The five-year reconstruction period set for Typhoon Morakot was inadequate. Many issues did not emerge until later according to local workers. Therefore, government agencies should plan resource distribution and allocation from a long-term perspective, establishing mechanisms to sustain human resources, empower organisations, and channel resources into organisations founded after the disaster. Long-term coproduced reconstruction is advocated by green social workers.

**C. Significance of local organisation and dedicated personnel**

Another concern is how to achieve constant, long-term, sustainable effects given the abundant resources made available after Typhoon Morakot. This study found that community organisations with experience in community empowerment and participation before the disaster sustained their activities, while those established specifically to capture new resources usually suspended their operations when funding ceased. Disaster relief and reconstruction efforts should build and consolidate relationships with existing local social networks and organisations (Dominelli, 2012).

Instead, central government commissioned successful bidders for Morakot disaster reconstruction centres under the Government Procurement Act. This favoured large institutions and national NGOs at the expense of small local organisations who could not compete. Yet, national NGOs operate badly in unfamiliar localities and lack cultural sensitivity (Lin and Lin, 2014). Hence, this privatisation mechanism excluded participation from local organisations, residents and indigenous people (Wang, 2010).

To showcase the achievements of reconstruction, the government dismissed disaster workers as soon as reconstruction projects ended. Furthermore, these workers were marginalised as recipients of social assistance or a low-wage backup workforce. Short-term or volunteer positions are disadvantageous in developing human resources: a decent position and stable wage can support local workers through long-term reconstruction efforts. So, reconstruction programmes should value local organisations and workers. Valuing locality emphasises decentralised, collaboration-oriented and place-based projects, and engages grassroots organisations, as proposed in green social work.

**D. Environmental justice**

Environmental problems and human rights issues are gaining attention in social work. Dominelli (2012) advised making environmental justice a core element of social work’s social justice framework. Schlosberg (2007) suggests that environmental justice includes local communities or those affected by environmental issues in decision-making and choice-making and recognises community culture, traditional lifestyles and knowledge.

Numerous studies on Typhoon Morakot demonstrated that inadequate public policies and industrial capitalism turned indigenous peoples into victims most affected by environmental disasters (Lu, 2010; Chen and Kuo, 2011). Additionally, indigenous peoples are excluded from the formation of reconstruction policies, and their cultural and regional particularities are ignored in decision-making processes (Wang, 2010). A disaster is socially constructed, and individuals from different groups or social status have differing levels of vulnerability. Environmental justice should be addressed in disaster impact assessment and national land-use planning (Guo, 2009).
E. Responding to climate change

Before the Morakot disaster, local livelihoods depended mainly on crop cultivation, tourism, Bed and Breakfast hotels, and hot-spring tourism. Although central and local governments formulated tourism-oriented reconstruction programmes, some local organisations considered alternative economic development options to respond to the severe challenges and unpredictability of climate change.

This chapter illustrates attempts to change dominant frameworks and strike a balance between conserving livelihoods and local environments. A capitalist approach reproduces the vulnerabilities of agricultural villages and tribes. Current economic activities dominated by neoliberalist ideology that prioritise profits over people and the environment were rejected locally, as in green social work. The cases discussed in this chapter indicate that organisations following individualistic economic development endeavours avoid their environmental impact without mitigating neoliberalism’s negative influences on disadvantaged groups or communities, especially tribes. Focus group interlocutors reiterated that reconstruction no longer solely implies economic restoration. It involves emotional elements, enhancing connections between people and land, fresh perspectives on the relationship between humans and nature, and acknowledgement of ecological justice.

F. Value of physical and ecological environments

Green social work emphasises the social, physical and ecological environments (Dominelli, 2012). The physical space and permanent housing for Morakot survivors reflect a lack of sensitivity towards indigenous agriculture, lifestyles and culture. Some indigenous survivors rebuilt their homes at their tribe’s original site because the land was relevant not only to their livelihoods but also their cultural heritage. Some community organisations became aware that their community’s future relies on conserving the ecological environment and implemented a more locally relevant or place-conscious reconstruction.

Townsend and Weerasuriya (2010) identified the effects of the natural environment on health and welfare. This study revealed that new rice cultivation workshops in Jiasian and the Usuuru of Dakanua exemplify nature-compatible solutions. People living in rural areas are generally reluctant to permit children and teenagers to receive psychological counselling. The rice cultivation workshop organised by the Jiasian Community Association provided a subtle and localised solution for improving students’ mental health (Ho, 2010). Dakanua’s experience showed that tribe members regained serenity through interaction with the land and nature, and self-reflection during crop planting and animal farming. These activities also calmed older people and children. In addition, the Usuuru collaboration of women provided a space where local women could give and receive support.

Conclusion

The post-Typhoon Morakot reconstruction experience highlights the importance of incorporating physical, ecological and social environments alongside local experiences and place-based concepts in reconstruction plans. Post-disaster reconstruction should not simply restore the past, but develop networks and connections between residents and organisations and inter-organisational alliances to face the future impacts of disasters on land, livelihoods and the environment together. In this framework, long-term post-disaster reconstruction should be substantial and address issues like sustainability, environmental justice and ecological justice. Disadvantaged
individuals and communities suffer most in climate change-induced disasters (Wisner et al., 2003). The areas most severely stricken by Typhoon Morakot illustrate the problems of structural inequality within Taiwan. Individual resilience to disaster risks are determined by ethnic background, class, gender, age and other social divisions (Huang, 2014).

Community organisations and empowered human resources are potential assets to emerge from the aftermath of a disaster. Environmental justice issues should be considered during national decision-making and land-use planning. Reconstruction represents more than mobilisation or organisational activities. It is a joint effort in finding means for returning affected peoples to normal livelihoods. In the case of Taiwan, the government did not commemorate or recognise the experience of disaster, but focused instead on the achievements of reconstruction. Local wisdom and strategies during the reconstruction process should be more systematically documented. Researchers and practitioners must collaborate and coproduce knowledge to ensure that future disaster relief and reconstruction practices can rely on databases and recorded information rather than memory alone. Green social workers can facilitate these tasks and affirm local knowledge, skills and innovations.

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