

Respond to natural disasters syndrome:



The case of Honduras

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Vulnerability
Briefing # 5
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Introduction:

Generally policies, strategies and actions are oriented to solve the consequences more than prevent the causes. In consequence “natural events” became “natural disasters”. What is needed is how devise short and long term strategies to mitigate and adapt against actual and future possible effects on natural disasters. In fact to avoid that natural event became disasters, policies and actions need to be oriented to prevent the causes (proactive) instead to solve the consequences (reactive)

This implies moving the attention from only ad-hoc responses and reconstruction to anticipate for threats reduction of vulnerabilities, define coping strategies and increase resilience. The challenges for the development, are the exploration of adaptive capacity to cope with adverse consequences, build resilience to prevent and mitigate negative effects and direct and underling causes, take advantage of emerging opportunities to cope with the consequences.

Winograd M., 2002, Natural Disasters in Honduras, TIEMPO, 43 (2):11-14

The case of Honduras:

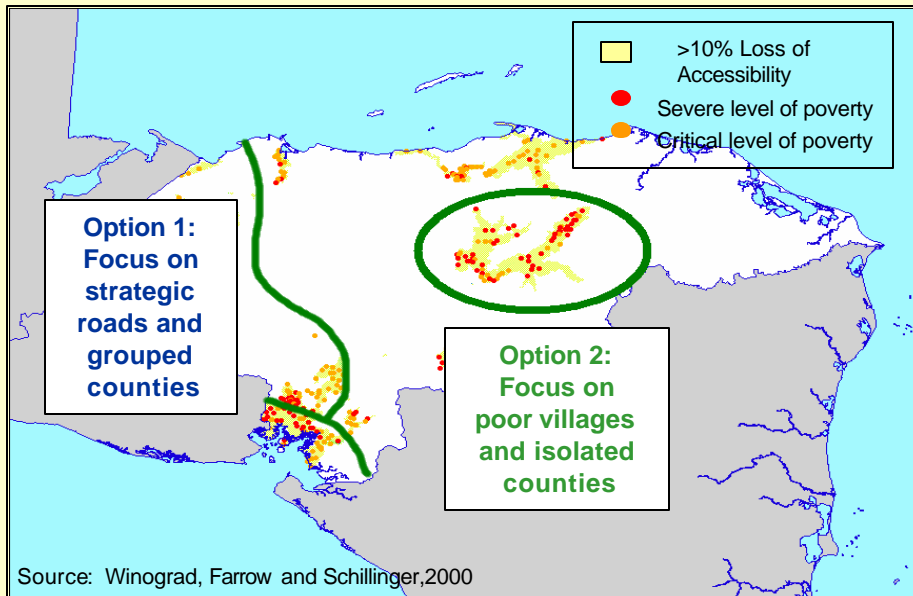
The absence of planning in the location of population, land use and infrastructures and the lack of precautionary principles are the main causes of the increase of risk and vulnerability to natural disasters.

Given than direct and indirect impacts of natural events are distributed heterogeneously in space and time, strategies and responses are needed differently at regional, national and local level. The underlying causes of both types of impacts should also be considered (e.g. land use, production systems, watershed management and urbanization)

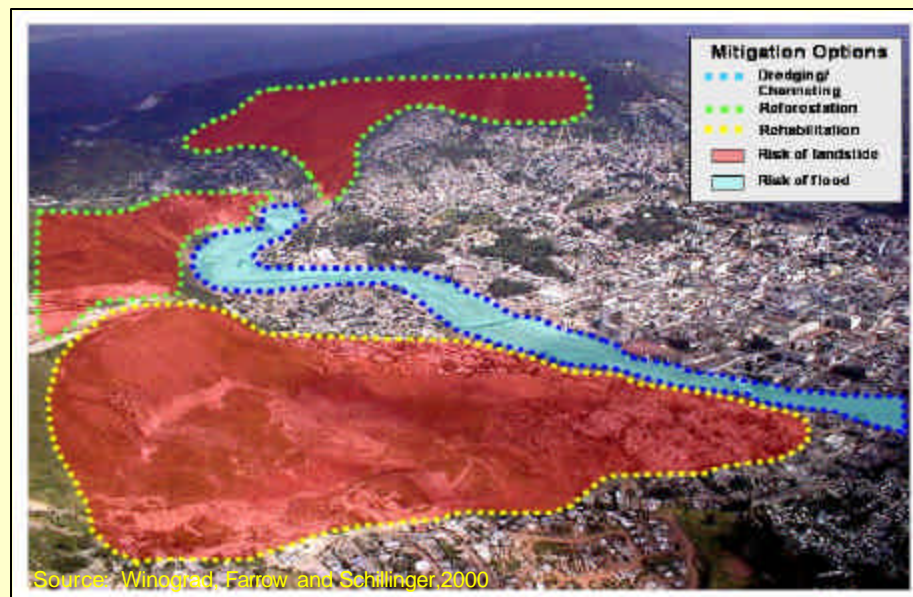
One first step should explore short term options and define urgent actions at national and local level in function of predominant land uses and infrastructures location. A second step should define vulnerability hotspots to explore adaptive long term options and actions and coping strategies for land use, production systems and planning.

Winograd M., 2002, Natural Disasters in Honduras, TIEMPO, 43 (2):11-14

Short term responses...

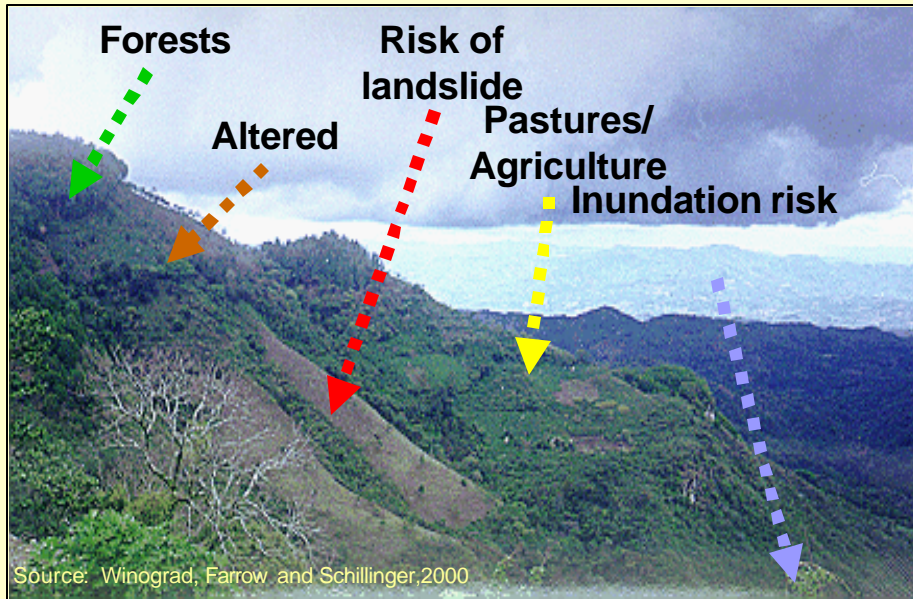


After Mitch, urgent actions were related with reconstruction. For example analyzing two alternatives in Honduras, option 1 implies costs of 1 million US with impact on 161,000 people in poverty. While option 2 implies costs of 1.4 millions US with impact on 72,000 people in poverty.

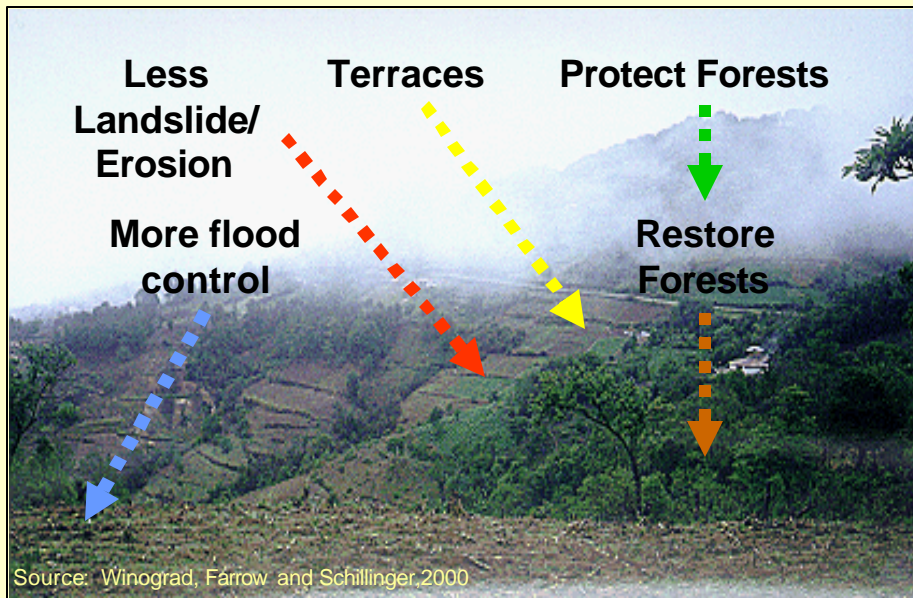


At local level, in urban areas (Tegucigalpa) exploration of short term options, shows alternatives to mitigate, prevent and adapt to syndrome effects. Actions are related with relocation of population and infrastructures as well rehabilitation of degraded and risk areas.

Short term responses...

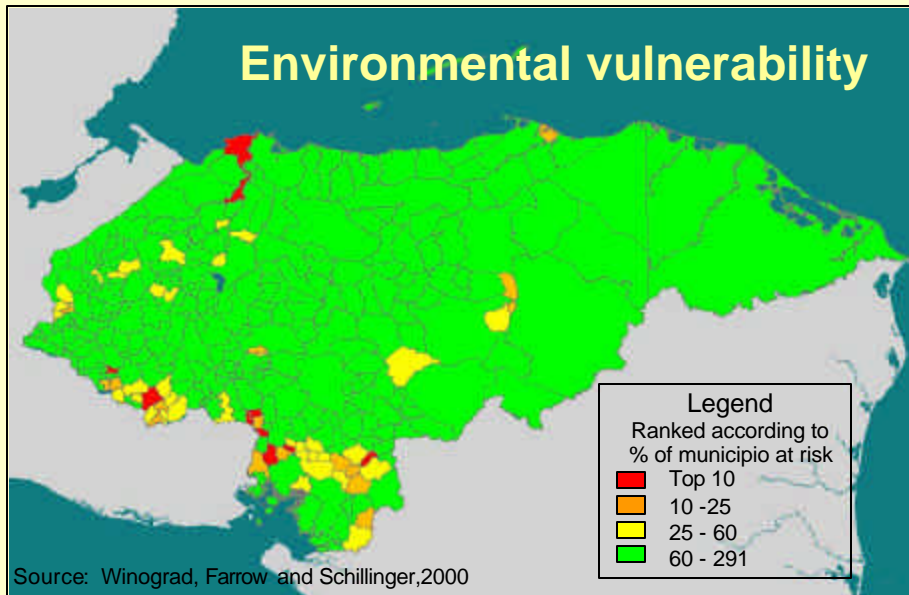


In the case of rural areas, the predominant land uses and actual production systems, increases risks of landslides and flooding.

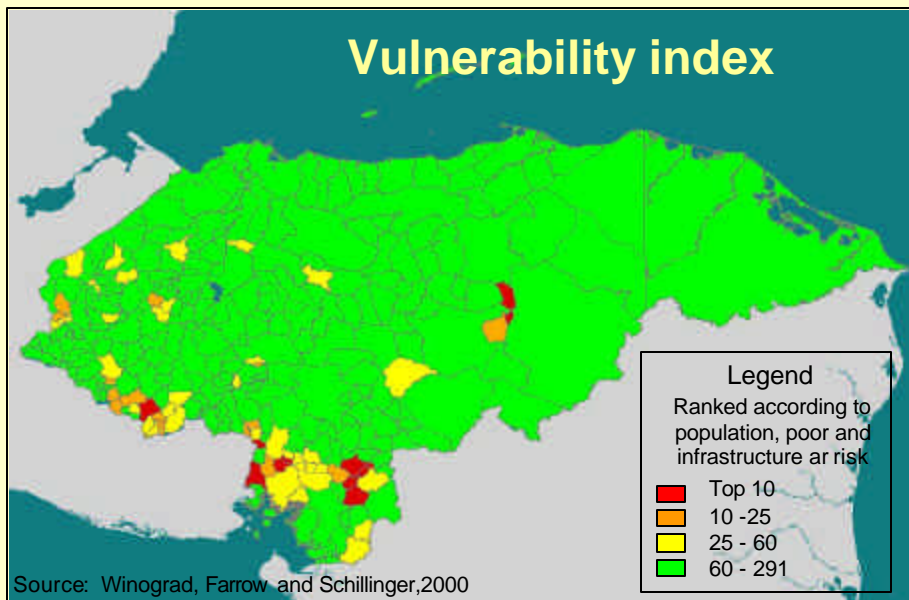


Nevertheless, it exist adapted land uses and production systems that avoid the risks of landslides and flooding, allowing agriculture diversification and increase in production.

Long term responses...

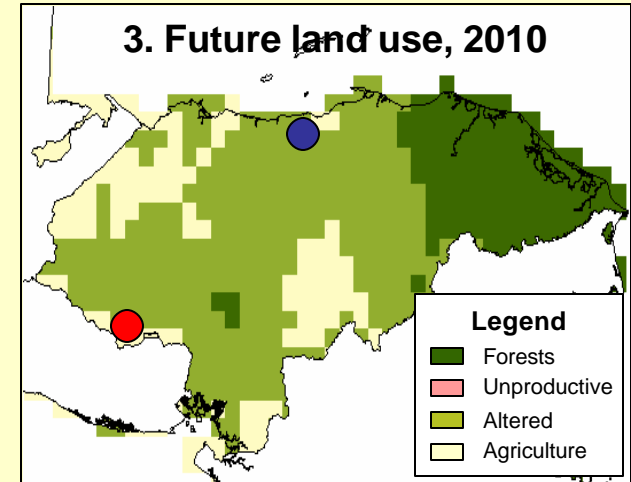
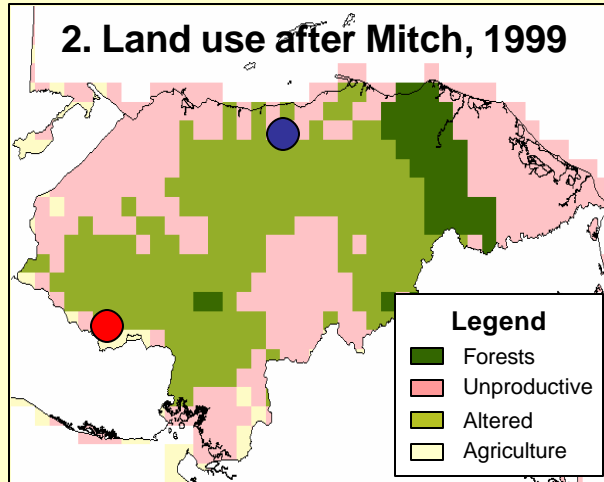
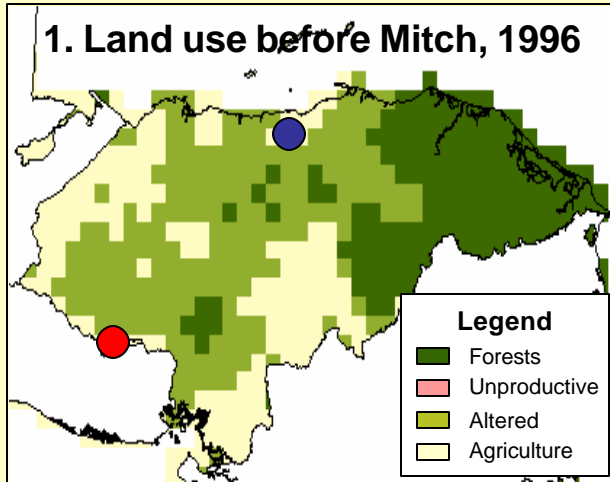


For example, in the case of Honduras, environmental, social and population hotspots could be defined to identify priority groups and areas (e.g. villages).



Also a vulnerability index could be defined to identify the top at risk groups and areas (e.g. villages) to identify long term responses to reduce vulnerability.

Short and long term responses...



● Affected villages by Mitch in hillsides with low capital and mono-cropping production systems

● Vulnerable villages in hillsides with low capital and multi-cropping production systems

