

**EVALUATING THE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM FOR SELECTED COMMUNITIES LIVING IN DANGER ZONES AND FLOOD PRONE AREAS: THE CASE OF CALUBIHAN, BANAYBANAY, DAVAO ORIENTAL PHILIPPINES**

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This study was conducted to evaluate the resettlement program of the LGU of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental for selected communities living in danger zones and flood prone areas in Barangay Calubihan, Municipality of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental, Philippines. Data were gathered through interviews administered to selected proponents and recipients of the program and the gathered data were collated, analyzed and interpreted. Result of the study revealed that the process and impact of the resettlement program are the following: the inception stage of the program, the preparation and identification stage, rules and regulations, putting in place – through raffle draws, and peaceful living conditions.

**Keywords:**

Banay-Banay, Davao Oriental, Philippines, danger zones, evaluation, flood-prone areas, resettlement

**INTRODUCTION**

Shelter is the fundamental requirement of humanity. Developing countries are still grappling with the growing shelter problem, especially of the poor. The problem has further been compounded by the rapid increase in urban population. Constant migration of rural population to cities in search of jobs is causing unbearable strain on urban housing and basic services (Mondal, n.d. para. 1).

Along with the food and clothes, housing or shelter is one of the three (3) important requirements of a human being. The problem of housing is most acute among the lower-middle class and the villages (Important India, 2013, para. 1). There is a severe housing shortage in the urban areas with demand – supply gap increasing day-by-day (Mondal, n.d. para. 2).

The government is highly aware of the issues of homelessness and poverty in our country. In fact, the government has allotted a great amount of money for the improvement of the state of our fellow Filipinos. Projects involving relocation of informal settlers have been implemented (Caro, 2014, paras. 3-4). The state intervenes only to provide legal status to the land. The state intervention is also necessary to meet the housing requirements of the vulnerable sectors and to create a positive environment in achieving the goal of ‘shelter for all’ on self-sustainable basis (Mondal, n.d., para. 3).

It is essential to conduct an evaluation to any project or program implemented by the government especially that it is mainly funded by people’s money, hence, this study

**FRAMEWORK**

The Philippines has been steadily growing in population and is currently the 12<sup>th</sup> most populated country in the world. Although according to statistics, the growth rate of this year has slowed down compared to the previous one: from 1.55% to 1.52, population density has been prevalent on urban areas. Philippines' top populated cities, as per ranking respectively, Quezon City, Manila, Caloocan City, Budta and Davao City. More so, the entire Greater Manila, which includes those beyond the boundaries of Metro Manila has already the quarter of the entire country's population (World Population Review, 2018).

With this information, it can be derived that people flock on areas where opportunities lie and opportunities grow where people flock. Such a tricky system could then be assumed as one of the causes for site planning and human settlements. Apparently, over density on areas could bring about issues that could jeopardize the quality of life of people and the governance of authority (CareerRide, 2014, paras. 3-5).

Urban agglomeration causes increase in pollution that not only hurts the environment but makes inhabitants first-hand recipients of its hazards. Quality of life is affected--traffic congestion, despite of it signifying economic growth, when excessive and not managed well, decreases economic gain, and growing amount of slums causes exploitation of land intended for other use--however also connoting that there is failure to providing 'affordable and decent housing' (Clarkson, 2014, paras. 1-2). This is where site planning and human settlements come in to the scene.

Site Planning. Serves as the land's design or *blueprint*, site planning aims to organize "external physical environment to accommodate human behavior" where organization of land includes the following: zoning; access; circulation; privacy; security; shelter; land drainage; and other factors (University of Nairobi, n.d.).

Human Settlement. Human settlements organize and *settle* the problems on urbanization residence. In 2008, a record was set of urban population surpassing rural population and with this, it was expected that by 2050, two-thirds of the world population will be in urban areas. With urbanization comes overpopulation, when there is no regulation properly exercised resulting to disorder that can only be reset when those not in residential areas would be relocated. This is where human settlement is practiced (United Nations, n.d.)

In South Africa, migration or resettlement of selective society to long-distances would mean uncertainty as there is an alarming scarcity of job opportunities across the country which means unemployed people are very high and poverty is felt everywhere (Todes & Turok, 2017, p.26).

It is exacerbated by the ever-widening gap between the upper and middle social classes, and by the increasing environment crisis globally. The main player to the process in sustainable development are the people. However, the global trends suggest that there is no single country that has achieved the status of being able to provide all its citizens decent housing conditions. One fifth of the population in the world, which translates into over a billion people are living in an inadequate and unhealthy housing presently, with around 10 percent of them do not have any physical shelter at all (HIC, 1992).

In order to systematically respond to the established spatial pattern visible across geographical scales, planners must take into account the uniqueness of the needs and potentials in the emerging development passage of the various rural and urban areas. The state will revisit its policies on household to put constitutional housing rights in better realization, make sure that housing delivery to reconstruct towns and cities and fortify household's prospects for livelihood. Strong support and offering incentive through a scope of intervention which properly funded, citizen-led vision and scheming and establishment of social compacts in the levels from neighbourhood to city, will inaugurate active citizenship as it is the field of spatial development (National Planning Commission, n.d. paras. 3-4).

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in order to evaluate the process and identify impact(s) of the resettlement program of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of the Municipality of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental to the selected communities living in danger zones and flood prone areas.

### METHODOLOGY

The study utilized qualitative research design as it “explores a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understanding, experiences and imaginings of the research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings they generate” (Mason, 2002, p. 3). Its common feature is aimed at “creating understanding from the data as the analysis proceeds” (Richards, 2005, p. 73). The data were gathered from the residents of Barangay Calubihan, Municipality of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental who were recipients of the resettlement program and the program proponents of the LGU through interviews. Corroborating data were taken from related legal bases used in the program. The data obtained from the sources were subjected to analyses and interpretation.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the process and impact of the resettlement program as a result of gathering, collation and interpretation of data from the selected program proponents, recipients and other sources.

#### The Inception Stage of the Program

During the prioritization of the project in 2007, the Local Government Unit (LGU) deemed it necessary to prioritize resettlement area for the communities living in the qualified danger zones and flood prone areas as per LGU’s assessment based on the Hazards and Disaster Risk Area criteria as reflected in the existing Hazards Map of the Municipality.

#### The Preparation and Identification Stage

The LGU identified prospective locations intended for the resettlement of the beneficiaries. The land owners of the prospective area made an agreement with the local officials of the said LGU for the acquisition process. Hence, the LGU properly scrutinized the ownership of the land title and other legal documents to suffice for the availment of the said area. Moreover, LGU officials made the effort to qualify for possible funding support to be taken from the local coffer, National Housing Authority (NHA) and the Second Congressional District Office of Congressman Joel Z. Almario.

The **LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF BANAYBANAY**, a government entity organized and existing under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines with principal office at the Municipal Hall, Banaybanay, Davao Oriental, represented in this act by its Municipal Mayor, **PEDRO T. MEJOS**, and hereinafter referred to as the “**MUNICIPALITY**” (LHP-MOA, 2007, p. 1).

The beneficiaries/households in Sitio Mapanga, Calubihan Resettlement Site of the Local Government Unit of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental are living in the danger zone and flood prone areas. Some of which were: tricycle drivers, habal-habal (single motorcycle) drivers, fisherfolks, farm workers and other private construction workers. They underwent a lifestyle and background check if these so-called beneficiaries owned private lands. They were pre-identified by the Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS) through a survey conducted in different communities in the said barangay.

During the survey period, most of them are receiving meager income or wages from their present jobs. They said “it is not even enough to cover for our day to day expenses”. Most of them give priority to food, clothing and for educational needs of their children. Medical needs are seldom given attention. They could not afford to send their children to college since most of them could not afford to sustain the four-year course. At that time, free tertiary education was not yet in placed.

**Rules and Regulations**

The recipients' occupation of the resettlement site does not guarantee a lifetime settlement. They may be subjected to eviction for not complying with the following prescriptive rules and regulations made by the Local Government Unit of Banay-banay, Davao Oriental. First, they cannot have it leased nor sell to other parties. Second, scandalous acts such as immorality or adulterous deeds. Herewith is a citation taken from the LHP-MOA:

**Article II****Project Beneficiaries**

2.2 The rights of the project beneficiaries to individually acquire their housing unit shall be secured through the Execution of a Conditional Contract to Sell (CCS) by and between the MUNICIPALITY and the beneficiaries;

2.3 Disposition of housing units, cost recovery and estate management shall be subject to restriction on disposition of lands prescribed under Article IV Section 14 of RA 7279 (LHP-MOA, 2007, p. 2).

Furthermore, an association must be established to help them monitor and oversee the living condition of every household. Transparency and due process must be strictly observed in the implementation of the aforementioned rules and regulations, and in accordance to appropriate and applicable laws.

**Putting In Place – Through Raffle Draws**

Due to high number of households who are living in the identified danger zone and flood prone areas, and limited number of land space to cater all of them, they underwent a dialogue with the different stakeholders such as: LGU officials, Barangay officials, and Civil Society Organizations. Everyone agreed to adhere with whatever the result of the raffle draw intended for the available number of slots for the resettlement since, they are all qualified. However, those potential beneficiaries who were not luckily picked during the raffle were given the assurance by the local government officials to be included in the next phase of the resettlement program of the LGU.

The second phase took place in year 2010 wherein 70 households were catered, following the same process as with the first phase. And the rest is history.

**Peaceful Living Conditions**

As per evaluation, presently, the community has shown a positively enhanced quality of life. They have established structures and religious organizations manifesting their freedom to religious beliefs. Their security of a permanent shelter enabled them to attend to other matters such as livelihood, and other socio-political and cultural participation.

**CONCLUSION**

The evaluation of the resettlement program of the Local Government Unit of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental for selected communities living in danger zones and flood prone areas in Barangay Calubihan, Municipality of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental reflects a successful implementation of a program. Cooperation through understanding, and political will are key factors to the success. This resettlement program has brought new hope—a promise of a better future that pushed them to work harder that has, so far, was attained.

The association, with the help of other stakeholders, must maintain the sustainability of the recipients' present sources of livelihood through a diversified income generating programs. It is then paramount that the community in an impoverished situation, must be given the opportunity to turn their lives around. As one's ability cannot be maximized without opportunity, the government's extended help holds a crucial role in improving the lives of its people.

The researchers have found out that the resettlement program is very effective. However, matters concerning communities affected by any development plan have to be regularly reviewed and revised accordingly.

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