

Asian Cities Climate Resilience

WORKING PAPER SERIES 29: 2016

Building resilient and safe communities against poverty and disaster

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Abstract

This study examines the institutional networks required to link processes of community-level deliberation to city- and national-level processes of decision-making and implementation. In 2010, the Philippine government introduced a resettlement programme that would remove all informal settlers living along vulnerable waterways in Metro Manila. The introduction of the People's Plan as the legal framework for the programme has become a formidable tool to address the exclusionary patterns of governance and development that perpetuate informality and push informal settlers to the peripheries of social, economic and political life in the cities. The People's Plan is expected to improve outcomes for housing and resettlement within the city for the informal settler families in the urban sprawl. However, communities have to comply with the complicated rules and procedures of different agencies and engage with various stakeholders that have disconnected programmes and policies and different interests. The findings of the study can be summarised as follows: The People's Plan framework unleashed energy and dynamics among stakeholders to address practical matters and open up public and institutional spaces to forge new roles and rules that fit changed circumstances. The People's Plan as a process raised awareness and harnessed the self-initiative, self-responsibility and self-reliance of communities, which are important elements for community resilience. Essentially, the People's Plan is a transformation of the poor and marginalised from 'informal' to active citizenship. The research was guided by the following questions:

- Will the People's Plan enable poor and marginalised citizens to form new, more empowered types of relationship with the state, civil society and other stakeholders?
 - Will it reshape institutional rules and the planning and decision-making process of the government's housing and resettlement scheme?
 - What lessons can be taken from the People's Plan with regard to how 'climate resilience' can be built into urban governance programme and planning?
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Abbreviations and acronyms

AHPPP	Alternative Housing Programme and People's Plan
AMVA–HC	Alyansa ng Mamamayan sa Valenzuela Housing Cooperative
AMC–HC	Alyansa ng Mamamayan ng Caloocan Housing Cooperative
CDA	Cooperative Development Authority
CMP	Community Mortgage Programme
CLUP	Comprehensive Land Use Plan
CHC	Corrinai Housing Cooperative
DAP	Disbursement Allocation Programme
DRA–HC	Dario River Alliance Housing Cooperative
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DoF	Department of Finance
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare Development
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
HDH	High-Density Housing
HLURB	Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board
HUDCC	Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
IRR	Implementing Rules and Regulations
ISF	Informal Settler Families
ISF–NTWG	ISF–National Technical Working Group
JMC	Joint Memorandum Circular
KM	Kilusang Panlipunang Proteksyon para sa Maralita
LDRRMC	Local Disaster Risk and Rehabilitation Management Council

LGC	Local Government Code of 1991
LGU	Local Government Unit
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MMDA	Metropolitan Manila Development Authority
MWSS	Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
NAPC	National Anti-Poverty Commission
NCR	National Capital Region or Metropolitan Manila
NHA	National Housing Authority
NUPC	National Urban Poor Council
PCUP	Philippine Commission for the Urban Poor
PP	People's Plan
SHFC	Social Housing Finance Corporation
SRCC–Magic Circle HC	Social Resettlement for Comprehensive Community
UMALPAS–HC	Ugnayan ng Maralita ng Lungsod ng Pasay Housing Cooperative
UP–ALL	Urban Poor Alliance
UDHA	Urban Development Housing Act

Key words

Beneficiaries refers to the actual occupants, such as structure owners, renters and sharer/rent-free occupants who reside in danger zones within Metro Manila, who will receive assistance under the Housing and Resettlement Programme for Informal Settler Families (ISF) programme.

Danger areas, as provided for in Section 28 of Republic Act 7279, otherwise known as the Housing and Urban Development Act (UDHA) of 1997, refers to the *esteros*, railroad tracks, garbage dumps, river banks, shorelines, waterways and other public places such as sidewalks, roads, parks and playgrounds. Under the P50-billion ISF fund/programme, danger areas are particularly those along waterways, such as rivers and their tributaries, floodways, creeks or *esteros*, identified by the Supreme Court as having to be cleared of all structures.

In-city refers to a relocation site within the jurisdiction of the city where the ISFs are living.

Informal settler families (ISFs) refers to family household/s living: in vulnerable areas not for habitation; on a lot or lots without the consent of the property owner nor with formal legal documents of agreement; in areas reserved for government infrastructure projects; in protected or forest areas (except for indigenous people); in areas for priority development, if applicable; and on other government/public lands or facilities not intended for habitation (Senate Bill 1104).

Under the P50-billion Alternative Housing Programme and People's Plan (AHPPP) for ISFs Living in Danger Areas in the NCR, ISFs in this study refers to families living in dwellings or facilities constructed in vulnerable waterways such as rivers and their tributaries, floodways, creeks or *esteros* in Metro Manila.

ISF housing programme (or ISF housing fund) refers to the P50-billion Alternative Housing Programme and People's Plan for ISFs living in danger areas in the NCR.

Near-city refers to a relocation site in a city other than the city of the present ISFs' settlements. Provided that said relocation site is adjacent to the present settlements and within the National Capital Region (NCR).

Off-city refers to a relocation site outside of Metro Manila or National Capital Region.

People's Plan (or People's Proposal) is developed by community associations. It refers to a community development plan that has undergone a process of consultation with, and endorsement by, the beneficiaries. It comprises a housing design and site development plan, and may include non-physical developments such as livelihoods, self-help development and capability development training, among other.

Social preparation refers to the process of establishing social and organisational capabilities, norms and mechanisms that will enable the settlers to work together and develop their housing resettlement plans. This takes place in partnership with concerned institutions and stakeholders, further enabling settlers to actively participate in housing resettlement projects and resolve community action problems among members and coordination problems with government and other entities.

1 Background

In December 2010, the Philippine government announced a five-year, ISF housing programme to provide on-site or in-city housing for more than 100,000 families living on top or near ‘danger zones’ such as estuaries, waterways, rivers and creeks. President Aquino approved a P50 billion fund allocation for the implementation of the project and committed P10 billion a year to it until he steps down from office in 2016.

The ISF housing programme complies with the December 2008 Supreme Court judgment on Metro Manila Development Authority vs. Concerned Residents of Manila Bay *et al.*, which required by writ of mandamus that “... *the ISFs living near the waterways is the principal cause of water contamination ...*” (SC GR No. 171947–48, par 8) and that “... *concerned development agencies commence a large-scale clean-up operation of the Pasig River and its tributaries to eliminate all sources of environmental contamination*” (SC GR No. 171947–48, orders). The court set a deadline of 31 December 2015 for the complete removal of all informal settlers in areas subject to the jurisdiction of the mandamus. Furthermore, there were other factors moving the president to create the ISF housing programme. In October 2009, super-typhoon Ondoy flooded most parts of Metro Manila and decimated many slums, leaving hundreds dead, many injured and missing and properties destroyed. Another is the blockage of a portion of the Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue (EDSA), the metropolis’ main avenue, on 19 September 2010. This was due to street clashes between the combined force of the police and demolition forces against informal settlers, who were defending their community along the EDSA from eviction and demolition. These clashes caught the attention of the international media while the president was on a state visit to the US.

An inter-government agency – ISF–National Technical Working Group (ISF–NTWG) – was formed to develop the policy framework for the implementation of the ISF housing programme. The ISF–NTWG is chaired by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and includes government agencies such as the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Department of Finance (DoF), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), the Philippine Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP), the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), the National Housing Authority (NHA), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the National Urban Poor Council (NUPC) and the urban poor formations of Kilos Maralita (KM) (Poor People’s Action) and the Urban Poor Alliance (UP–All). In April 2013, the ISF–NTWG came out with a Joint Memorandum Circular on Policy Guidelines on the Operationalisation and Utilisation of the P50-billion Housing Fund for ISFs in Danger Areas in the National Capital Region. The DILG, in its Oplan Likas update (2013), identified a total of 104,000 households that would be affected by the programme, with 19,440 households set for immediate resettlement as their dwellings were located over water.

What is the significance of the policy guidelines? These provide an avenue for ISFs to develop their People’s Plan for housing and resettlement within or near the city. The People’s Plan was the impetus for numerous informal settler community organizations to develop their proposals. Yet, despite its appeal, community leader participants in the focused group discussions claimed that developing, submitting and processing for approval a People’s Plan requires the association to negotiate requirements and procedures involving different agencies (national and local). Not only does the People’s Plan have many requirements that proponent community organizations must comply with, but there are also the various rules and procedures of the different agencies. Among the requirements are evidence of the association’s and its members’ legality; validated qualification of the beneficiaries; social preparation activities; organizational and financial status of the association; land search and title; intent to buy and intent to sell documents; housing design and construction

plans; accreditation of developers and contractors; clearances and permits, etc. While the People's Plan is proving to be a formidable tool to address the "... *exclusionary patterns of governance and development that perpetuate and deepen inequality and informality*" (Isandla 2013: 1), it also involves negotiating a complicated process with agencies that have different rules, agendas and interests.

As of March 2015, 23 of the 52 People's Plans submitted to the Social Housing Finance Corporation were approved for financing (purchase of land and housing construction). Three have started construction. The housing project of Alyansa ng Mamamayan ng Valenzuela Housing Cooperative (AMVA-HC) in Valenzuela City will benefit 1,440 families; the Aniban para sa Lehitimong Paninirahan Ligas sa Sakuna (ALPAS) 556 families; and the CORRINAI Housing Cooperative in Pasay City 120 families.

2 The research design

2.1 Objectives of the research

This study examines the institutional networks necessary to link processes of community-level deliberation to city- and national-level processes of decision-making and implementation. Specifically, there are two objectives: first, to build a narrative and gain insights into the engagement of ISF communities with the programme and the dynamics with other stakeholders; and second, to look at how national and local laws and policies with regard to ISF communities relate to urban governance, community development and climate change.

2.2 Activities and methodology

The research team's activities and methodology were as follows:

Preliminary review

- Collection and analysis of all publicly available legislation, policies and programmes relevant to the ISF housing programme, sanitation and other urban services in urban poor communities.
- Collection and analysis of reports and other research documents prepared by international organizations, government agencies, NGOs and individual researchers.

Secondary review

To establish evidence of communities' situation and obtain first-hand stakeholder insights and perspectives on community concerns regarding sanitation and other services in ISF communities, as well as the ISF housing programme itself. The following fact-finding activities were also undertaken:

- Focused group discussions with community members whose areas fall under the ISF housing programme, and with leaders of organizations involved in the People's Plan.
 - Consultations and interviews with government agencies and representatives from civil society organizations.
 - Round-table discussions with government and civil society stakeholders.
 - A survey was conducted in five slum areas distributed in four cities of Metro Manila. This involved an administered questionnaire interview, and respondents were approached at random from various predetermined sites within each area. The survey was conducted from 5–7 December 2014 with 902 respondents, or a two per cent sample size of the 38,500 total household population in the five areas.
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3 The informal settlements in Metro Manila

Urbanization continues to gain momentum around the world, while climate change remains a constant and formidable force in developing nations. Across all continents, there is increased human movement from rural to urban areas, as well as an explosion in overall population numbers. Furthermore, many of the impacted cities and towns suffer from poor urban planning and governance as well as a lack of resources to adequately address infrastructure and basic services needs for this growing population (Russel 2014). Consequently, the UN–Habitat 2013 report cites that informal settlements have become a growing by-product of urbanization, from 776 million residents in 2000 to a staggering 827 million in 2010, worldwide.

Unfortunately, Metropolitan Manila, or the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines, is not immune to the challenges of urbanization. For example, an estimated 37 per cent of the population in the NCR, or more than four million people, lived in slums as of 2008 (HUDCC 2008). This statistic, in conjunction with a Philippine population that is steadily increasing by nearly one million every year (DOH 2008 and with a mammoth housing backlog, paints a concerning picture for the future of the cities across the country. For example, current projections indicate that by 2030 the population will stand at 126 million, up from 90 million in 2013 (SHDA 2012: 14).

The challenge of climate change in Metro Manila is compounded by its location in a low-lying coastal zone sandwiched between the vast Manila Bay to the west and Laguna de Bay to the east. Water drains from Laguna de Bay, which is above sea level, through only one river, the Pasig. In the eastern side of Metro Manila, rainwater from the highlands of Rizal province drains through the Marikina and Tullahan rivers. The three rivers branch out to numerous tributaries running through different cities in the region. During strong typhoons or intense rain, coupled with sea level rise from Manila Bay, sections of the Pasig, Marikina and Tullahan rivers and their tributaries overflow and cause floods.

The World Bank Risk Index 2011 has ranked the Philippines third in an index of countries most at risk to natural hazards. The index examines four major components, namely: exposure to natural hazards such as earthquakes, storms, floods, droughts and sea level rise; susceptibility as a function of public infrastructure, housing conditions, nutrition and the general economic framework; coping capacities as a function of governance, disaster preparedness, early warning, medical services, and social and economic security; and adaptive capacities to future natural events and climate change (World Bank 2012: 2).

Increasingly, Filipinos are migrating to the metropolis to escape rural poverty and in search of greater opportunities for their families. Although this influx is neither an abrupt nor unfamiliar phenomenon for government and policy makers, the ever-increasing population continues to place considerable strain on infrastructure and essential services within the cities in terms of urban development and public service delivery by government (Wardle 2014). Such strain exacerbates the spatial exclusion of the majority of the urban poor from formal and legitimised spaces, and this informality has created a section of the urban poor population called ‘informal settler families’ (ISFs). ISFs are pushed into the most vulnerable and neglected neighbourhoods: onto vacant private or public lands, often in low-lying areas; along riverbanks, waterways and coastal shorelines; onto dumpsites; along major highways and railroad tracks; beside industrial establishments; and under bridges or in abandoned buildings. Furthermore, the exclusionary patterns of governance and development that

perpetuate informality push the ISFs to the peripheries of social, economic and political life. For example, approximately 104,000 ISFs in Metro Manila live in so-called danger areas along riverbanks and waterways. These communities often lack infrastructure and access to basic services such as safe drinking water and reliable electricity, and suffer from health care issues aggravated by overcrowded and crude habitation, besides joblessness (Ballesteros 2010). The effects of urban environmental problems and the threats from climate change are also most pronounced in these communities due to their hazardous and unsanitary location, the lack of sewerage and sanitation facilities, air pollution and poor waste management, as well as weak disaster risk management. Occasionally, according to leader participants in the focused group discussions (FGDs), along with their existing daily struggles, the communities are also threatened with eviction notices before the rainy season and with the potential threat of infrastructure projects crossing their communities.



Informal settlement along the Tripa Gallina river in Tramo Riverside, Pasay City.
Photo taken by the writer Patrick I. Patino. January 2015

ISFs are the by-product of two social phenomena in the Philippines. First, poverty and lack of opportunities in the rural areas serve as ‘push factors’ for people to move to urban areas, especially to Metro Manila (Wardle 2014). Second, rapid urbanisation due to population growth and migration from rural areas, combined with a lack of affordable housing, has resulted in the development of informal settlements on marginal lands in or near cities (World Bank 2011: 13). While migration to the city did not solve the problem of poverty, it has, in fact, created a new set of problems, which include the increased vulnerability of the city and communities to floods, sea level rise, storm surges, typhoons, erosion and post-calamity diseases. The most directly and usually affected are the neglected slums in Metro Manila.

The FGDs revealed that a number of urban poor in Metro Manila who were evicted and resettled out of the city under the government’s resettlement and housing programme simply returned to the city due to a lack of income opportunities (affecting their capacity to pay the monthly amortisation of their houses) and basic services. This led to the growth of unregulated settlements, or slums. Informal settlers tend to live in unattended and marginal areas in the city: on steep slopes; along highways and railroad tracks; under power lines and bridges; on flood plains; and along transportation corridors and waterways such as rivers, creeks and *esteros*.

Informal settlements often lack the following critical living conditions: access to improved water; access to improved sanitation facilities; sufficient living area (not more than three people sharing a room); structural quality and durability of dwellings; and security of tenure (UN–Habitat 2008).

In Metro Manila, slums are generally occupied by squatters (illegal settlers) and informal residents (no formal or legal documentation of agreement). In its 2008 report, HUDCC estimated that 37 per cent of the total population in Metro Manila lived in slums.

The government's housing programme for the urban poor remains inadequate. For the period 2005–2010, there was an acute housing shortage estimated at more than one million units. The majority of the backlog consists of the housing needs of informal settlers and slum dwellers in danger areas (Ballesteros 2009).

There are two factors affecting the government's inadequate housing efforts. First, the annual public expenditure on housing has been very limited, at approximately less than 0.1 per cent of the gross domestic product on average from 2000 to 2007, one of the lowest in Asia (ADB 2011). Second, most local government units are opposed to using their locality as relocation sites due to the additional public expenditure on social services.

However, it seems that there is also bias against the slums and squatters. This is manifested during the rainy seasons, when floods are anticipated. Some media people and government officials label slums as bad housing and bad communities, inhabited by bad citizens (InterAksyon 2012; Santiago 2013; Cruz 2009). Government employs the same trucks it uses to haul garbage out of the city to carry evicted poor people to distant relocation centres. Garbage and the urban poor are treated similarly. The purpose was the same: haul them out of the city, garbage and the poor, as quickly as possible (PDI 2012).

Even the Supreme Court ruling to clean up contaminated rivers implies that informal settler communities are primarily responsible for the condition of Manila's waterways. It is worrying that such a pronouncement is made by the chief judicial institution without any further elaboration or evidentiary basis on which to attribute such responsibility. (Wardle 2014) The exercise of judicial power in this way promotes discrimination. Part of the ruling says that: "... *the court can take judicial notice of the presence of shanties and other unauthorised structures which do not have septic tanks along the rivers which discharge their waters, with all the accompanying filth, dirt and garbage into the major rivers and eventually the Manila Bay. If there is one factor responsible for the pollution of the major river systems and the Manila Bay, these structures would be on top of the list*" (SC GR 171947, par 8).

4 Sanitation and other urban services in the city

While joblessness and poverty are the greatest problems for ISFs, a natural part of their habitat and daily struggle is the lack of access to safe water and inadequate sanitation and sewerage facilities. Urban poverty, the absence of basic services and inadequate infrastructure underscore the quality of the environment as key determinants of disaster and climate change. A lack of safe water results in lower resistance, and low immunity can increase susceptibility to water and sanitation-related diseases during flood events (Brown and Dodman 2011: 39). This is compounded by a combination of high population density in slums and high exposure to poor sanitation, thus increasing the risks not only of disease and water pollution but also of vulnerability to the effects of climate change, especially for those slums located in already vulnerable geographic locations.

Metro Manila consists of 16 cities, one municipality and 1,694 *barangays* (villages), governed by their respective local government units (LGUs). The LGUs are relatively autonomous and are responsible for decisions and actions related to the delivery of a wide range of services that ensure the well-being of their citizens. The Philippine Local Government Code of 1991 (LGC) mandated the LGUs to provide, among other, services and/or facilities related to general hygiene and sanitation, primary health care, water supply systems, drainage and sewerage, flood control, and solid waste disposal and management systems (RA No. 7160)

On the other hand, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is a government agency tasked with planning, monitoring and coordinating functions and, in the process, exercising regulatory and supervisory authority over the efficient and effective delivery of metro-wide services (RA No. 7924). The functions, services, programmes and projects the MMDA provides relate to, among other: flood control and sewerage management; shelter services that include the rehabilitation and development of slum and blighted areas; and health and sanitation. Also public safety, which includes programmes and policies on preparedness, and for preventive or rescue operations during times of calamities and disasters.

However, in 1997, the government privatised the supply of potable drinking water and sewerage services with two concession contracts awarded to Maynilad Water Services (for the west Manila area) and Manila Water Company (for the east Manila area). Privatisation of the water supply has improved access to piped potable water compared to conditions prior to privatisation. On the other hand, privatisation can also exacerbate unequal access and provide poorer services if regulation is weak (Manahan 2008). More stark, is that privatisation has caused local government unit's "... *efforts and attention ...*" given to water and sanitation to become "... *patchy and inadequate*" (ESI 2011: 59).

4.1 Access to safe piped drinking water

Nine years after the water supply was privatised in 1997, 20 per cent of the 12 million population in the metropolis remains without water. By 2006, Maynilad Water Services had supplied water to 86 per cent of its client population in west Manila, up from 67 per cent in 1997, while Manila Water claimed 94 per cent of the 4.2 million residents in east Manila were provided with water, compared with 47 per cent in 1997 (Marin 2009: 56f)

It is fairly obvious that there has been an increase in water supply in the two metropolitan areas, however it has not been equitably distributed, especially in urban poor areas and slum settlements. Argo and Laquian (2007) argue that privatisation schemes in Metro Manila had adverse effects on urban poor settlements located in hazardous zones such as riverbanks, along canals and streams, on garbage dumps and along railroad tracks. The water concessionaires simply refused to provide water to these places because they were considered temporary settlements and it was expected that people living there would relocate to other sites. Many of these settlements had existed for a very long time. However, the inadequate investment in safe water can be explained by the following factors: the high cost of capital investments and operations in the water sector, low tariffs, low user fees and poor revenue generation. The World Bank (2003) recommended that regulatory authorities should ensure the coverage of low-income areas, as private providers are inclined to focus on higher-income areas.

In some urban poor areas, the concessionaires built pipelines to the edges of the communities and contracted-out to small water providers. However, these small water providers often charged exorbitant fees, either for communal faucets or for direct connections, far higher than the water bills from either Maynilad Water Services or Manila Water.

In urban poor communities that lack water, people get their water from doubtful sources such as wells and communal pumps/faucets, which leads to water-borne diseases such as skin disease, diarrhoea and gastroenteritis. Furthermore, the poor pay more to buy low-quality water from water lorries. A UN Study (2006) found that families in Metro Manila slums pay 5–10 times more for water than those in high-income areas.

In addition, the absence of piped water connections in slums is a catalyst for human-induced hazards such as fires, which are normal occurrences in these areas. Even the LGU fire trucks are of limited use because they cannot enter the congested areas. For example, one of the areas surveyed (Sitio San Roque, *Barangay* Pag-Asa, Quezon City) has experienced seven fires since 2000. Another two areas surveyed experienced fires during the research: in Sitio Kaingin in Bgy. Apolonio Samson, Quezon City, which affected 3,000 families; and in Sitio Parola, *Barangay* 20, City of Manila, which left 2,000 families homeless.

City governments operate lorries that sell water to communities that are not served, but these are very limited and have irregular supply schedules. Local governments operate lorries more for income generation purposes than for delivering a public service. Community members need to wait in line for many hours to get this water, and in most cases people go home without any because of the limited supply or because the lorry did not arrive.

In the survey conducted for this study, it was found that 54 per cent of household respondents had direct connections from the private water concessionaire Maynilad, while 27 per cent fetched water from a community faucet provided by Maynilad. The rest (19 per cent) accessed water from different sources – water pumps, open deep wells, from private and/or public water lorries or they bought water from a neighbour. Upon closer examination of the surveyed communities, households with connections actually get their water from households that extend their connections to the neighbourhood, or from groups that illegally tap water from Maynilad's main water pipes. But compared to the broader spectrum of Maynilad customers, slum households with direct connections pay more for their water because non-revenue water (water losses from damaged pipes, illegal tapping and other leakages) is charged in these communities. The water supply provided by Maynilad and Manila Water in slums is also regulated, that is, water valves are opened for a specific number of hours daily. During the dry season, water provision is limited to 4–6 hours each day.

In the FGDs, participants said that one of the fears of slum dwellers due for relocation is the absence of a safe drinking water supply in government resettlement sites outside of the metropolis. The lack of income opportunities is compounded by the high cost of basic necessities, especially water. Part of the relocatees' transition to a new environment includes creating their own water source by digging wells or using artesian pumps. The FGD participants said that it is

understandable why residents in danger areas opt for the government's P18,000 assistance fund and voluntarily leave their community. The reason is simple: they don't want to be forcibly relocated to places far from the city.

4.2 Sanitation

Sanitation usually refers to any service or facility that maintains public health by safely disposing of human (or other) wastes, and includes sewerage systems. In the Philippines, the term 'sanitation' is used slightly differently: disposal systems are classed as either 'sewerage' (piped networks to off-site treatment and disposal) or 'sanitation' (on-site facilities such as toilets and septic tanks) (World Bank 2003: 5).

Government water service contracts with Maynilad Water Services and Manila Water required the concessionaires to carry out sewerage and sanitation activities such as rehabilitation and upgrading of existing sewerage systems and expanding coverage, as well as implementing sanitation programmes, including septage collection, construction of septage treatment plants and the rehabilitation of sewage pumping stations.

Until 2007, less than eight per cent of the households in Metro Manila had sewer connections. The private concessionaires focused their attention on expanding and maintaining piped water networks as that is where profits lay. There were very few improvements to the sewer networks nor any construction of new sewage treatment plants, as it was extremely difficult to bill people for these services.

The urban poor are those most affected by exclusion from sanitation services. Sewer networks do not reach the slum and squatter settlements (ADB 2003). Many slum households have a private toilet and an individual septic tank, but most are badly designed and constructed. Most often, poorly maintained and unregulated septic tanks discharge inadequately treated sewage and effluent directly into drains, waterways and streets. During the rainy season, when serious flooding occurs, hazardous sewage mixes with flood waters, notably because the sewer and storm drainage systems were combined in the design (Argo and Laquian 2007: 15). Furthermore, as many slum settlements are located in flood zones, the urban poor are constantly exposed to health dangers.



Informal settlement along Tripa Gallina river in Barangay Tramo Riverside, Pasay City.
Photo taken by Patrick Patino. January 2015

In the absence of piped sewerage in the slums, 80 per cent of households in the surveyed areas dispose of human waste using pour-flush toilets with individual septic tanks. Another 10 per cent use pour-flush toilets with communal septic tanks and a further eight per cent have pour-flush toilets whose waste flows directly into the river. Another 2.1 per cent in the survey don't have toilets and instead throw their human waste into the river.

Either because of limited sources of water or by sheer ingenuity or both, households flush their toilets with used water collected from laundry, dishwashing and bathing. Again, in the absence of piped sewerage, slum dwellers dig canals (usually open canals) for wastewater disposal, which are directed towards the river, and these were used by 57 per cent of households in the survey. Another 30 per cent direct their wastewater canals to an open cess pit made by the neighbourhood. Usually, the neighbourhoods that create their own open pit are relatively distant from the river, but when this overflows, the waste flows down to the river.

Furthermore, 32.2 per cent of households comprise more than two families under one roof, with an average 3–5 families living together. It could also be assumed that 50 per cent of the 66.8 per cent of the households with 1–2 families have two families living together. While these communities are very congested and have high population densities, a significant percentage of the population lives in dwellings where space for movement is limited. Overcrowding inside the dwellings manifests itself in the crowded streets and alleyways during the day. Congestion inside dwellings is compounded during the dry season by temperatures that, according to 51.7 per cent of the respondents, have risen over the past five years. However, congestion is seemingly worse when the community is flooded during intense rains and typhoons. At least, during the hot season, residents can get out of the house to get some air and move around.

Congestion may also be a catalyst for pulmonary disease (pneumonia, tuberculosis, asthma, bronchitis) in the community, which affected 15 per cent of the household population. Slum communities are threatened with possible wide scale epidemics as a result of high population densities.

4.3 Garbage collection and waste disposal

Local governments are mandated by the Local Government Code of 1991 to provide basic services and facilities regarding general hygiene and sanitation, beautification and solid waste collection. These are further stressed in the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act 9003), which stipulates that local government is responsible for collecting and segregating biodegradable, compostable and reusable wastes. Furthermore, RA 9003 requires local governments to decentralise garbage collection and disposal, and orders all *barangays* to have a materials recovery facility (MRF) where the village's trash is accumulated.

However, most LGUs in Metro Manila find it too difficult to decentralise garbage management through the MRFs. For example, the head of the Environment Protection and Waste Management Department of Quezon City states that space is a problem and residents complain of bad odours and sanitation and health problems. Besides, constructing an MRF in every *barangay* is too costly, too complicated and too smelly. Out of 142 *barangays* in the city, only 40 have an MRF.

In Metro Manila, 11 of the 17 cities and municipalities contract-out garbage collection to private haulage companies and only six LGUs collect garbage themselves as part of their mandated responsibilities. The local governments are empowered by the Local Government Code to charge fees for garbage collection services, which includes waste management fees from business establishments and residential areas. Yet, local governments spend much more on waste management than they receive in service fees: business establishments' fees are low while fee collection from residential areas is limited to a handful of wealthier *barangays*.

The National Waste Management Commission, the agency tasked with overseeing the implementation of RA 9003, claimed that only about 73 per cent of the 5,280 metric tonnes of waste in Metro Manila generated daily is collected by dump trucks hired by local governments. The remaining 27 per cent of daily waste, or about 1,417.5 metric tonnes, ends up in canals, on vacant spaces and street corners, and in rivers and the sea.

The survey indicated that 89 per cent of garbage collection in slum communities is done by local government and 9.3 per cent of waste is disposed of through other means (thrown into the river or onto vacant lots or burnt). On the other hand, there is a small but significant portion of the household population that manages their garbage through composting (1.1 per cent) and segregation (0.7 per cent). While this small section of the household population should be applauded, it also indicates that local government's function in waste management – ensuring hygiene and sanitation – seems to be limited to garbage collection.

4.4 Disaster risk reduction and management

According to the Local Government Code of 1991, LGUs are expected to be at the frontline of emergency measures in the aftermath of disasters, in order to ensure the general welfare of its constituents. The mandated function of LGUs is broadened by the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 or Republic Act 10121, which mandates LGUs to create a Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (LDRRMP) covering four aspects of Disaster Risk Recovery and Management (DRRM), namely: disaster preparedness, response, prevention and mitigation, and rehabilitation and recovery. The planning and execution of the LDRRMP is to be led by the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (LDRRMC) at every level of local government. At the village level, a *Barangay* Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council is to be formed.

It is worth noting that the survey indicated that the slum communities had a positive approach to DRRM, with 60.6 per cent of the household population having a disaster preparedness kit that covered primary basic needs during calamities: for example, food (56.2 per cent); water (54.8 per cent); flashlights (52 per cent); clothes (49.5 per cent); candles (48.5 per cent); and important documents (46 per cent), among other.

Having the basic needs prepared can be understood in a context where communities often experienced flooding more than once: 50.7 per cent of households have experienced flooding for 1–3 hours and another 26.7 per cent have endured flooding for one or more days. The inclusion of flashlights as one of the primary basic needs is perhaps due to the fact that 47 per cent have experienced fires 1–5 times.

The high preparedness of households in terms of basic needs is perhaps also a result of having been informed of the *barangay* disaster risk reduction plan (48.8 per cent) and there being an early warning device or alarm before the disaster occurs (70.8 per cent).

The preparedness is a result of the frequency of typhoons, floods and fires and the local government having a prepared warning and response mechanism for evacuating people to safe shelter and also providing assistance. However, there appear to be few if any prevention and mitigation measures by local governments to reduce disaster risk in slums. According to participants in the FGDs, local governments construct concrete walls along riverways, but mostly in areas with wealthier residents or business establishments. LGUs are also lax in implementing the 'no construction' rule within the three-metre easement from the river. Instead, the FGDs note that when the rainy season comes, *barangay* governments promote the P18,000 assistance fund for those who volunteer to leave the area and seek their own relocation. But because of the leniency of local governments regarding the no-occupancy three-metre easement, those who leave come back after the rainy season.

FGD participants also stated that representatives of slum dweller associations are not invited to the *Barangay* Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council discussions for their ideas to be heard. The argument against them is that being informal settlers, they are only temporary residents.

5 Survey

A survey was conducted for the purposes of this study, and five informal settlements in four cities of Metro Manila were targeted. The four cities (Malabon, Manila, Navotas and Quezon) comprise the largest population and concentration of urban poor and informal settler households in Metro Manila. The five communities were chosen based on the presence of rivers and waterways and/or nearness to the coastline. There were 902 respondents in the survey, a two per cent sample size of the 38,500 total population in the five slums.

Table 1. General Profile of Communities Surveyed

Informal settlement	<i>Barangay (village)</i> , city location	Slum dweller population	Respondents
San Roque	Pag-asa, Quezon City	5,000	122
Sitio Kaingin	Apolonio Samson, Quezon City	4,500	106
North Bay	North Bay Blvd, Navotas City	9,000	205
Catmon	Catmon, Malabon City	8,000	188
Parola	<i>Bgy.</i> 20, City of Manila	12,000	281
	Total	38,500	902

N.B. There was a fire in Sitio Kaingin early on New Year's Day 2015, which affected more than 3,000 families. This was followed by one in Parola on 6 March, which razed more than 1,000 houses, affecting more than 2,000 families.

5.1 Brief profile of the slum communities surveyed

San Roque, Pag-asa, Quezon City – The land occupied by the slum dwellers is government owned and managed by the National Housing Authority. For decades, despite the development of the city, the land remained vacant and the swampy areas were covered with water lilies. Informal settlers started arriving in the late 1980s and made an effort to redirect the swamp water to the river. Of an original population of 8,000, the current population is around 5,000, as the others were either forcibly evicted or agreed to relocation by the government. Most of the labour force is made up of contract workers in shopping malls, commercial establishments and the metro rail station around the area. Residents have experienced several demolition attempts and fires, since when they have become alert to fires as they suspect these, perhaps lit intentionally, were intended to drive them out.

Sitio Kaingin, Apolonio Samson, Quezon City – The settlement, with a total population of 4,500, is clustered along both sides of the riverways. Settlers were allowed to establish their dwellings upon a payment for rights to the overseer of the land. Most of the households' income comes from working in manufacturing factories and from vending and hauling goods in and around the market. Residents were threatened with eviction in the aftermath of typhoon Ondoy in October 2009; however, they resisted because no alternative relocation was offered, except for a certain amount offered by the city government. Some residents accepted the amount only to return some time later.

North Bay, North Bay Boulevard, Navotas City – In this community, residents cluster along the boulevard, the main stretch of road cutting across the city. The estimated 9,000 slum households mostly find livelihoods as fish haulers, as workers in the Philippine Fish Port or as workers in small establishments manufacturing fish-related products. The construction and operation of the fish port during the 1970s brought increased migration to the area. Others work on privately owned fishing boats, and yet others scavenge on the dumpsite. Young women are said to work in the various beer houses and eateries that abound around the fish port. When there is a high tide, the area is submerged in water, usually two to three feet high, and this is even higher when there is intense rain.

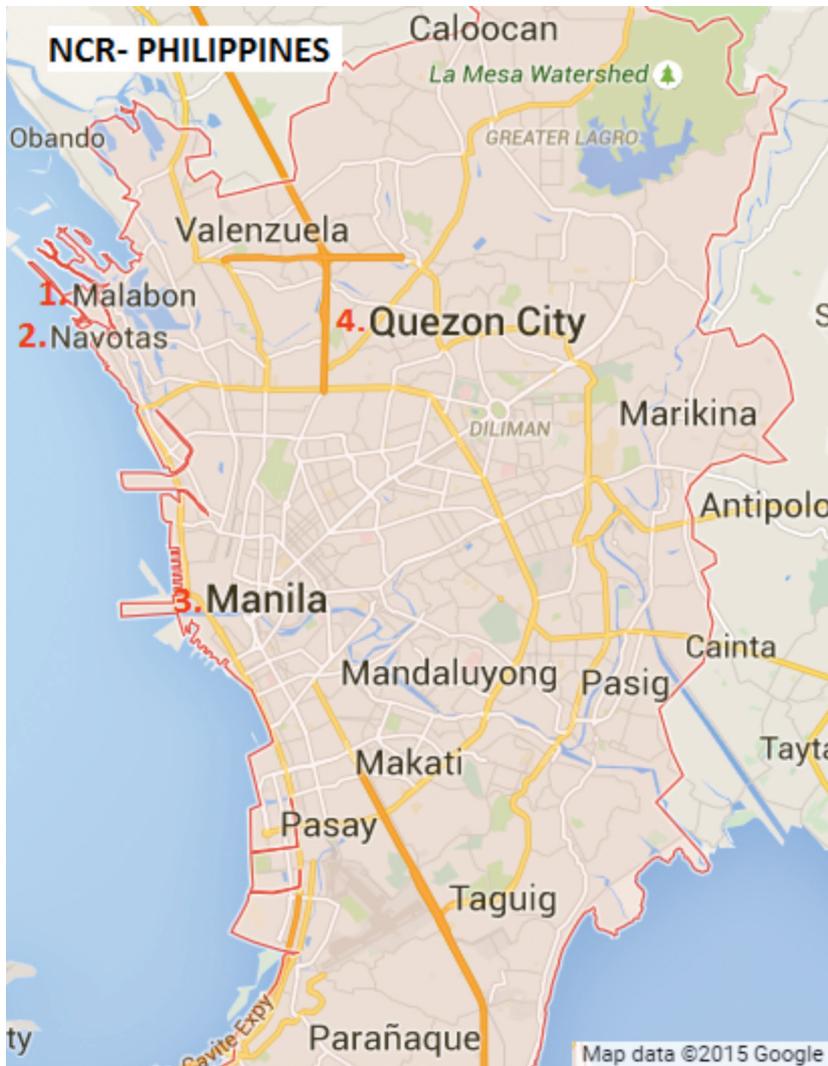
Catmon, Malabon City – Almost half of Catmon comprises 8,000 slum households. At first, settlers were allowed to set up their dwellings after payment for rights. Subsequently, land syndicates, in connivance with local government officials, offered people the opportunity to apply for the government's Community Mortgage Programme (CMP), whereby residents pay a monthly amount that allows them to own the lot they occupy. However, residents stopped making payments because even after several years, they still did not have security of tenure. Being a low-lying area, the community is prone to flooding during high tides.

Parola, Barangay 20, City of Manila – There are an estimated 12,000 slum households in Parola, clustered along a riverbank. The neighbouring communities of Parola in *Barangay 20* are also slum settlements. According to the Manila City website, all of the 32,000 residents of *Barangay 20* are informal settlers. Most of the community works in the cargo shipping and container port in the surrounding area or in the nearby market and commercial area of Divisoria. People work as haulers, ship maintenance workers, vendors, service workers, tricycle drivers and scavengers. The community has existed since the 1970s.

The communities get their electricity and potable water from illegal tapping by organised 'syndicates', and there is a lack of public health centres and clinics, schools, parks and recreation or sports facilities in these communities. Besides being affected by floods, they are occasionally razed by fire – whether intentionally or not.

Figure 1 shows the location of the surveyed areas in the National Capital Region (Metro Manila).

Figure 1. Location of the surveyed areas



1. Catmon, Malabon City
2. North Bay, North Bay Boulevard Navotas City
3. Parola, *Barangay* 20, City of Manila
4. San Roque, Pag-asa, Quezon City; Sitio Kaingin, Apolonio Samson, Quezon City

Source: www.googlemap.com.ph.

5.2 Survey results

The communities surveyed have existed since the 1970s and 1980s, and 132 respondents (14.6 per cent) have resided in their communities for more than 31 years; 139 (15.4 per cent) for 26–30 years; and 173 (19.2) for 21–25 years. Only 75 (8.3 per cent) have lived in their area for 1–5 years. The rest have been residents for 6–10 years (110 or 12.2 per cent); for 11–15 years (123 or 13.6 per cent), and for 16–20 years (145 or 16.1 per cent).

Table 2. Number of families living under one roof

	Respondents	Percentage
1–2 families	603	66.8
3–4 families	147	16.3
5–6 families	87	9.7
7–8 families	37	4.1
9–10 families	6	0.7
11 or more	13	1.4
No response	2	0.2
Others	7	0.8
	902	100

Table 2 shows that 290 (32.2 per cent) respondents live with more than two families under one roof. While these areas are congested in terms of population density and number of dwellings, a significant percentage of the population lives in structures where space for movement is very limited. The overcrowding manifests itself in crowded streets and alleyways during the day. Congestion inside households is compounded during the dry season by temperatures that, according to 466 respondents (51.7 per cent), have risen over the past five years. However, congestion is seemingly worse when the community is flooded during intense rains or typhoons. At least during the hot season, residents can be outside.

Congestion may also be a catalyst for pulmonary disease (pneumonia, tuberculosis, asthma, bronchitis), as this was shown to affect 15 per cent of the whole population.

Table 3. Means of disposal of human waste/type of toilet being used

	Respondents	Percentage
Pour-flush toilet with individual septic tank	721	80
Pour-flush toilet with communal septic tank	90	10
Pour-flush toilet with waste flow direct to the river	69	7.6
Wrapped in paper/plastic or use of chamber pot	19	2.1
	899	

Table 3 shows that a huge majority of households have their own toilet and individual septic tank, however these are crudely built. Unless the septic tank is dug deep and walled with concrete, there is a danger that the foundations will weaken, especially as the houses are so close together and the communities are located near rivers and waterways. There is also the possibility of bad odours, and that bacteria or viruses present in the ground could cause illness.

Table 4. Type of canal or wastewater flow system from the household

	Respondents	Percentage
Canal directed towards the river	517	57.3
Canal directed towards an open cess pit	273	30.3
Canal directed towards the sewage pumping station	105	11.6
No wastewater flow system at all	7	0.8
	902	100

Table 4 shows that in the absence of piped sewerage, slum dwellers rely on man-made canals directed towards the river for their wastewater disposal. Such a system, especially if it is open canals, results in wet or moist open ground, and because the canals are directed towards the river, various wastes collect there, causing water pollution.

Table 5. Means of garbage management

	Respondents	Percentage
Garbage collected by local government	802	88.9
Household burns their garbage	12	1.3
Composting	10	1.1
Recycling	0	0.
Segregation	6	0.7
Thrown into the river	4	0.4
Other	68	7.6
	902	100

Table 5 shows that local governments in the surveyed areas mainly collect and dispose of the communities' solid waste. The Local Government Code of 1991 provided that with regard to the efficient and effective provision of basic services and facilities, local governments should be responsible for "... *general hygiene and sanitation, beautification and solid waste collection*" (LGC 1991).

On the other hand, given that eight per cent of the population disposes of their garbage in the river, this must mean that the local government service is limited to waste collection, and does not necessarily include waste management and ensuring general hygiene and sanitation.

Table 6. Frequency of garbage collection by garbage trucks

	Respondents with valid answers	Percentage of total
Daily collection	91	10.1
Every 3 days	25	2.8
Every 4–5 days	4	0.4
No regular schedule	1	0.1
	121	13.4

Local governments generally contract-out hauling companies to collect and dispose of garbage. In sub-divisions and commercial and business areas, there are regular schedules for garbage collection, however this is not usually the case in slum communities, and the survey shows that most residents don't know when garbage collection is going to take place in the community.

Table 7. Length of time of flood before it ebbs compared to the past five years

	Respondents	Percentage
Flooding for 1–2 hours	458	50.8
Flooding for 3–6 hours	91	10.1
Flooding for half a day	38	4.2
Flooding for more than a day	241	26.7
Does not know	16	1.77
No response	58	6.43
	902	100

Flooding for more than a day (241 respondents or 26.7 per cent) occurred mostly in Malabon and Navotas. Even when it's not raining, the slum areas in the two cities are submerged in water during high tides due to their low-lying geographic locations. The difference during the rainy season is that the floods are higher and typically last longer. However, all of the areas surveyed are regularly flooded due to their locations along or near rivers and waterways.

Table 8. Types of disease/sickness affecting household member/s in the past two years

	Respondents	Percentage of total
Pulmonary disease (Pneumonia, tuberculosis, asthma, bronchitis)	135	15
Heart disease (Heart disease, hypertension)	92	10.2
Digestive disease (Diarrhoea, appendicitis, hepatitis)	43	4.8
Vector-borne disease (Dengue, measles)	41	4.5
Water-borne disease (Skin disease, leptospirosis)	32	3.5
Urinary tract infection	12	1.3
Typhoid fever	2	0.2
Goiter	2	0.2
	360	39.7

Table 9. Cause of death in the family the past two years

	Respondents	Percentage of total
Heart-related death	10	1.1
Tuberculosis	7	0.8
Measles	5	0.6
Diabetes	5	0.6
	27	3.1

The survey also reported 32 cases of psychological problems in the past two years as a result of ‘calamity’ (20 of post-traumatic stress disorder and 12 of depression).

6 The People's Plan

The everyday problem for informal settlers in Metro Manila is the lack of access to basic social services, and the fundamental cause of this is their lack of security of tenure – their being ‘informal’. However, their ‘informality’ is not only because their settlements are illegal and they have no formal or legal documents of agreement for residency but is also a result of the exclusionary patterns of governance and development that perpetuate informality and push informal settlers to the margins of social, economic and political life.

The Policy Guidelines on the Operationalisation and Utilisation of the P50-billion Housing Fund for ISFs in Danger Areas in the NCR (JMC 2013) defined the legal framework for an on-site/in-city or near-city community-driven People's Plan for adequate, affordable and resilient housing for ISFs in danger areas. Its intention is explicit in improving the government's housing solution programme for ISFs through the following provisions:

- The housing solution for ISFs in danger areas “... shall be undertaken without sacrificing the basic human rights of the affected ISFs”, which the UDHA is silent about.
- “Relocation of the ISFs shall be on-site, near-city and in-city in accordance with the People's Plan.” This is a departure from the mandate of the National Housing Authority (Executive Order No. 90 1986) as the sole national government agency to engage in shelter production and to undertake identification, acquisition and disposal of lands for socialised housing, and relocation and resettlement of families with local government units (UDHA).
- The UDHA provides for ‘adequate consultation’ for government agencies before implementing relocation and resettlement. On the other hand, the policy guidelines expanded the provision so that affected ISFs “... had been adequately and **genuinely** consulted. Off-sites shall only be resorted to in accordance with the People's Plan or when directly requested by the affected ISFs themselves.”
- Affected families shall create, draft and generate a People's Plan that will be developed and implemented with the help of CSOs and government agencies such as the NAPC, PCUP, NHA, DSWD, SHFC, LGUs and other relevant agencies of government. Whereas the UDHA mandated specific government agencies with specific roles and distinct powers that sometimes conflicted or duplicated each other.

The policy guidelines can be considered a progressive legal framework in the realisation of various instruments, including:

- Article II, Section 11 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution that declares as a matter of policy that the state values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.
- Article XIII, Section 10 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that the urban and rural poor dwellers shall not be evicted nor their dwellings demolished, except in accordance with the law and in a just and humane manner. Moreover, no resettlement of urban or rural poor dwellers shall be undertaken without adequate consultation.
- Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.

- Obligation of the Philippine government, under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to achieve progressively the full realisation of the right to adequate housing and, at the minimum, to show that it is making every possible effort, within its available resources, to better protect and promote this right.
- Article I, Section 2 (a) of the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992, which shall provide for a comprehensive and continuing urban development and housing programme that shall uplift the conditions of the underprivileged and homeless citizens in urban areas and in resettlement areas by making available to them decent housing at affordable cost, basic services and employment opportunities.

The policy guidelines defined the rules and structure of engagement of the various stakeholders “... to ensure safe and flood-resilient permanent housing solutions for ISFs, with basic social services and employment opportunities, and shall be undertaken without sacrificing the basic human rights of the affected ISFs.” Because the policy guidelines are an outcome of deliberation among various stakeholders involved in the ISF–NTWG, it is expected to be a “... shared understanding about enforced prescription concerning what actions are required, prohibited, permitted” (Ostrom 2005). Thus, the fundamental challenge for the state actors, civil society, other social stakeholders and, importantly, for the community associations, is understanding the policy guidelines, the nuances and the potential dynamics that may entail. As Eggertson (2005) asserted, one cannot improve outcomes without knowing how the structure itself is produced. Throughout the implementation and interpretation process, it is expected that the policy guidelines shall bring about policy discourse in relation to community expectations and practices, and vis-à-vis government agency mandates, rules and procedures and other social stakeholders’ perspectives and practices (NGOs, state developers and so on).

On the other hand, the People’s Plan serves as the plan of action for the policy guidelines, as “... affected families shall create, draft and generate a People’s Plan that will be developed and implemented with the assistance of CSOs and government agencies.” The People’s Plan provides the community associations with an instrument to propose ways to improve their current situation, as well as a tool to engage the state by changing the way in which choices about development are made (Heller 2013: 62). Thus, the People’s Plan has become a place for social mobilisation and a channel for re-engaging citizens in the process of decision-making (Heller 2013: 73). It has also created potential institutional spaces for deliberation, while unleashing new forms of claim making for the marginalised ISFs. Thus, the People’s Plan has become a formidable tool to potentially address the exclusionary patterns of governance and development, while improving outcomes for adequate, affordable and resilient housing, and for disaster-free communities in particular.

As an implementing tool of the policy guidelines, the People’s Plan can be an extremely adaptable strategy. It is used by community associations – as they move forward and in the opportunities and constraints they confront – to understand how to use the information they obtain, understand the benefits they may get or are excluded from, and in how they reason about their situation and needs. All this is affected by the rules defined by the policy guidelines, whether the ISF–NTWG intended this or not. In this instance, Kilos Maralita (KM), an alliance of ISF community associations and represented on the ISF–NTWG, played a strategic role in engaging the policy discourse, following the process of implementation of the policy guidelines and translating them into policy actions through the People’s Plan. KM and its partner NGO, the Institute for Popular Democracy, encouraged the Social Housing Financing Corporation (SHFC) to be more flexible with its policies on housing loan schemes, while also pushing the National Housing Authority (NHA) into recognising the housing cooperatives as a form of organisation in its housing programme.

The process of executing the policy guidelines through the People’s Plan carries with it policy debate not only on addressing housing rights for the poor but also for building resilient and disaster-safe communities. On the one hand, while the People’s Plan is a participatory quest for improving outcomes for housing and resettlement, the ISF housing programme does not have a legislative mandate that will ensure its sustainability in the long term. On the other hand, the mainstream government shelter and resettlement programme, which for decades has defined the out-of-city and market-driven housing programme, is institutionalised by legislated laws and administrative orders. The two programmes belong to two entirely different systems of thought and practice.

Secretary Rocamora of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) clearly summed up the conflicting systems of thought and practice: “*This (the policy guidelines) is an entirely new scheme and the bureaucracy is not used to this. Even the urban poor are new to this*” (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2012). According to Rocamora, the NHA and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) were pushing for off-site, while the ISF–NTWG was advocating in-city housing. Dennis Murphy, the executive director of Urban Poor Advocates added: “... *the NHA people, they want the way things are now. They’re more comfortable buying land in the countryside and shipping people out there*” (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2012).

The relationships and dynamics between, and among, community associations, government and civil society actors and other social stakeholders – working together or engaging with each other on different levels and in different areas of stages of the People’s Plan – “... *may create or transform the structure, rules and procedures that affect their behaviour and the outcomes they achieve* (Ostrom 2005: 6). There are various possible factors, expected or unexpected, that may influence and/or define the relationships and dynamics of the players. These are understanding and interpreting the rules and procedures as well as the capabilities and expectations. In addition, there are intervening/influencing external factors, such as the politicians’ agendas and interests and the prevailing political environment (as, for example, when the Disbursement Allocation Fund (DAP) was under fire). Thus, the implementation of the programme in general, and the processing of the People’s Plan in particular, may go faster or slow down. Also, relationship dynamics may be friendly or antagonistic, policies or procedures may advance or stall, and outcomes may not materialize or may fall below expectation. In the long term, institutions may be strengthened, or further complicate the implementation and practices of the government’s housing and resettlement programme.

Thus, the policy guidelines and the People’s Plan cannot be evaluated mainly from their outcomes. Nor should the outcomes be evaluated on their own or based on the decisions arrived at. More attention should be paid to an assessment of the decision-making process and the engagement among stakeholders, which include the state, community associations, civil society and other social stakeholders.

6.1 Rules, procedures and actions

The People’s Plan involves ISF community members in the process of ‘creating, drafting and generating their plan’ for housing and community development: from forming their community associations, building their capacities, designing their housing and community, and negotiating with landowners and developers, to managing and maintaining their own housing and community. Members must learn new skills to this end, including monitoring construction, also health and sanitation, community governance and estate management. The process of developing and seeking approval for their plans involves negotiating the rules and procedures defined by the policy guidelines and concerned agencies, all of which have disconnected programmes, inflexible policies and different agendas. There are other factors that come into play – legal questions and the interests and perspectives of other stakeholders (NGOs, landowners, developers, bureaucrats and politicians).

Communities have to go through four major stages before they can relocate to new housing and a new community. These are the pre-entry stage; the entry stage; the actual stage; and the post-construction stage (Table 10). The People’s Plan content, processing for approval and implementation involve the first three stages.

Table 10

Stages	Layers and components	
	Project implementation	Social preparation
Pre-entry (People's Plan development and organisational formation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enlistment and profiling of target beneficiaries; community profile and needs survey ■ Project orientation ■ Submission of all documentary requirements ■ Financing and payment scheme ■ Project site assessment and negotiations with landowner ■ Housing design and land development map ■ Preparation and submission of project feasibility study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community consultations ■ Organisational formation (formulation of by-laws, election of officers and setting up of committees and systems) ■ Membership orientation and capacity development ■ Generation of funds ■ Application for registration of organisation
Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Validation of target beneficiaries ■ Validation of site assessment ■ Technical review and feasibility study of housing design, costs and specification of construction and development arrangements ■ Review, revision and approval of People's Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Technical knowledge and capacity development ■ Negotiations with landowner and developer/contractor ■ Networking
Actual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Phase 1: land payment; seek approval for necessary permits and clearances ■ Phase 2: construction fund; permits and clearances for construction ■ Phase 3: construction and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development of livelihoods ■ Monitoring ■ Application for utility connection ■ Establish health, sanitation and sewerage facilities
Post-project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Estate management; community development; enterprise development; access to social services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community governance structure and system

The key agencies involved in the development, processing and implementation of the People's Plan are the following:

Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)

The DILG was tasked by the president as convenor/chair of the ISF–NTWG to develop and implement the Policy Guidelines on the Operationalisation and Utilisation of the P50-billion Housing Fund for ISFs in Danger Areas in the NCR. Specifically for the development of the People's Plan, the DILG conducts validation of enlisted beneficiaries of the ISF housing programme, provides assistance for social preparation, offers technical assistance, reviews People's Plans, etc. The DILG also heads the Project Management Office, to ensure execution of the programme.

Department of Finance (DoF)

The DoF chairs the Finance and Affordability Committee of the ISF–NTWG, which identifies appropriate financing and affordability schemes based on assessments and an analysis of affordability levels of the ISFs.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)

The DENR chairs the Site Selection and Evaluation Committee of the ISF–NTWG, which evaluates the suitability of sites for housing development, taking into consideration essential factors such as land research and geo-hazard assessment.

National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)

As a member of the ISF–NTWG, the NAPC assists community associations in crafting their People's Plan, and conducts community profiling and surveys and activities for social preparation. The NAPC facilitates coordination between community associations and concerned agencies and, when necessary, mediates coordination problems. It also organises forums and consultations to help communities understand the ISF housing programme and the policy guidelines.

Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)

The CDA reviews applications for the registration of housing cooperatives. It provides assistance in capability building of cooperatives' internal systems regarding finance management, bookkeeping and auditing.

Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP)

The PCUP conducts activities for social preparation, and facilitates participation of community associations in the governance processes that affect them in the development and implementation of their People's Plan. The PCUP also ensures that communities are not evicted once the community association is in the process of developing its People's Plan.

Kilos Maralita (KM)

KM (Kilusang Panlipunang Proteksyon para sa Maralita – Movement for Social Protection of the Poor) is a broad coalition of the urban poor with almost 300 member organisations nationwide. It started as a movement against the forced evictions and demolitions of informal housing settlements. It aims to combine the struggle for rights to housing with the struggle for broader rights to the city and for social protection – job security and access to employment; universal health; public education and access to basic social services regarding water, electricity and sanitation.

KM aims to ensure the engagement of the ISF community associations, and the government will secure the following: in-city housing relocation with adequate access to jobs and livelihoods as well as to water, power, health and other essential services; affordable housing and amortisation costs; and security of tenure. KM coordinates with its affiliate associations regarding the activities or communiqués of the ISF–NTWG. It also deliberates with the ISF–NTWG on policy questions and coordination problems, as well as any procedural concerns the community associations encounter while dealing with different agencies.

The implementing agencies of the ISF housing programme are:

Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC)

As a government financing institution mandated to manage the Community Mortgage Programme, the SHFC processes, reviews and approves financing of People's Plans submitted to the agency. These plans undergo technical and credit reviews before a recommendation for approval. The SHFC finances the purchase of land identified and negotiated by the community association with the landowner and pays the developer/contractor for housing construction.

National Housing Authority (NHA)

The NHA is the sole national agency mandated to engage in housing programmes for low-income families. Under the ISF housing programme, the NHA identifies, acquires and disposes of lands for public housing and undertakes resettlement of those subject to evictions. It also undertakes resettlement housing for ISFs that opt for this under the project.

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)

The DSWD, as co-chair of the ISF–NTWG, works with LGUs to provide help in developing access to social services for the resettlement areas. The agency is also mandated to finance land acquisition and housing construction for ISF communities identified by the agency for support, or who submitted a People's Plan.

Local Government Units

Unless the land is owned by the national government, most of the land identified by cooperatives involved in People's Plans is under the jurisdiction of city governments. Community associations must secure the necessary resolutions, permits and clearances from local government with regard to land acquisition and housing construction. Local governments also validate the qualifications and residency of beneficiaries under the programme.

6.2 The People's Plan process

The first People's Plans approved for financing (early January 2014) were those of the Alyansa ng Mamamayan ng Valenzuela Housing Cooperative (AMVA–HC) and the Dario River Alliance Housing Cooperative (DRA–HC). The AMVA–HC has 1,440 beneficiary families and the DRA–HC has 1,164. However, it took another nine months before the AMVA–HC started housing construction, in September 2014. The main reasons for the delay were to do with payment terms with the landowner regarding the land purchase and securing project recognition from the city council, as well as securing construction-related clearances and permits from the different agencies of local government of Valenzuela City. Regarding the DRA–HC, payment for the land purchase was stalled by the SHFC due to legal problems on land ownership.

The People's Plan process, from its development, to approval for financing, to land purchase and the release of construction funds, to final construction is slow and, on occasion, is delayed. One factor is that the crafting of a People's Plan is generated from the collective action of community associations, all of whom are in the process of "... *adapting to the new terrain of citizen–state engagement*." (Heller 2013). So that, while people's planning is an instrument of social mobilisation and a means of re-engaging citizens in the process of decision-making, it also creates dynamics and issues between state actors (politicians and bureaucrats), civil society (community associations, NGOs) and other stakeholders with regard to how participatory inputs are actually translated into actual outputs. (Heller 2013: 63)

Application by community associations for their People's Plan starts with the tedious task of complying with the numerous legal and documentary requirements, for accreditation of both the organisation and individual member beneficiaries. For their accreditation, the organisation must apply through either the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), as a housing cooperative, or the Housing and Urban Land Regulatory Board (HLURB), as a neighbourhood association. The CDA and the HLURB have their own requirements before accreditation is granted.

Member beneficiaries must produce legal documents to prove their qualification both as a member of the organisation and a beneficiary of the ISF housing programme. Validation of qualified enlisted beneficiaries is undertaken by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), which receives and approves the application of the People's Plan. The validation process typically takes a long time, as enlisted beneficiaries are individually checked by the understaffed DILG-ISF section.

There is policy discourse among concerned agencies that accompanies the processing and implementation of People's Plans. The People's Plan framework is a departure from the government housing and resettlement programme and its implementation policies. On the one hand, the People's Plan is for an integrative and comprehensive housing and resettlement programme within a participatory and sustainable framework. On the other, the mainstream government housing and resettlement programme is market driven and determined by top-down technocratic forms of decision-making. The two programmes belong to two entirely different systems of thought and practice. Thus, the People's Plan goes through different concerned agencies that have their own sets of policies and procedures that are different from or opposed to the policy guidelines and the People's Plan. An example of this is the proposal by Kilos Maralita (KM) that the SHFC incorporate into its programme the fund allocation for 'high-density housing (medium-rise housing) for People's Plans'. Another is the KM policy that advocates housing cooperatives as a form of organisation, aside from the traditionally required homeowner's associations. As the People's Plan is a new dimension, even for the government agencies concerned, policy discourse took time before policy adjustments and/or refinements were agreed upon.

Local government units hinder the fast-track implementation of People's Plans, even when approved for financing. Some LGUs do not allow the relocation of ISFs from outside their jurisdiction, with the result that some communities have to opt for 'near-city' or 'off-city' relocation, contrary to the 'in-city' relocation that the community associations wanted. Other LGUs demand the inclusion of their local ISFs, thus complicating the programme implementation for ISFs living in danger areas. The numerous permits and clearances needed with regard to land acquisition and construction are also daunting for community associations.

For example, it took almost two years for the Alyansa ng Mamamayan ng Valenzuela at Caloocan Housing Cooperative (AMVACA-HC) to organise itself and undergo validation of its qualified member beneficiaries by the DILG and SHFC, to comply with the various legal and documentary requirements of different agencies, explore various land sites for relocation within the city and negotiate with different landowners – only to have its organisation divided. The reason being that the mayor of Valenzuela City wouldn't allow the resettlement of ISFs from outside the city's jurisdiction and almost half of the members of AMVACA-HC were ISFs from the adjacent city of Caloocan. Thus, AMVACA-HC became Alyansa ng Mamamayan ng Valenzuela (AMVA-HC) and ISF members from Caloocan had to form a separate organisation, the Alyansa ng Mamamayan ng Caloocan (AMC-HC), and start anew with developing and processing their own People's Plan.



Site tour of leaders of the different informal settler organizations in Metro Manila to the on-going construction of the resettlement housing project of the Alyansa ng Mamamayan ng Valenzuela (AMVA) in Barangay Ugong, Valenzuela City. Photo taken by Ricky Gonzales. July 2015

Land acquisition is another factor. People's Plans include proposed land sites within the price ceiling dictated by the programme. However, identifying and purchasing suitable resettlement land is increasingly challenging. As a result, resettlement sites within the cities are determined by three factors: availability, viability and affordability of the land (Russel 2014). There are landowners willing to sell their land but they demand on-the-spot cash payments because of a lack of trust in the government. In some cases, land title clearances are problematic. In other instances, after investigation by the community leaders, the land is found to be vulnerable to flooding or the soil is not suitable for medium-rise building or there is no access to clinics and hospitals, schools or livelihood opportunities.

It is expected that by 2016, at least seven resettlement communities will be built under the programme. It is important that prior to the actual relocation of beneficiaries, the community associations (housing cooperatives or housing associations) develop knowledge and capacities on estate management, establish economic activities and strengthen resilience for both individual residents and the community as a whole in terms of basic services and disaster risk awareness and preparedness.

The post-project stage of the People's Plan implementation requires various sets of strategies and requirements. This stage measures the degree of 'transformation' for the housing organisation, the member beneficiaries and the collective community, as well as related rules and guidelines. In doing so, the agencies can establish whether the expected 'improved outcome' is taking, or has taken, place. The post-project stage is crucial, not only so that the government's capital investment can be paid back by the beneficiaries, but also in finalising the 'model' – a model that substantiates the People's Plan, solidifying the need for institutionalisation in terms of a legislative mandate from Congress. Thus, there is a vital need for active collaboration between all stakeholders – concerned government agencies, other community organisations, non-governmental organisations and other social stakeholders – for the integrative and comprehensive development of new communities.

A legislative bill is currently being developed for submission to Congress. The proposed bill on the Institutionalisation of People's Plans for an Integrative and Comprehensive Housing Solution for the Poor is being developed by several NGOs as well as legislators on the House of Representatives Committee on Urban Development and Housing. There's hope the bill will be legislated by Congress and enacted by the president before his term ends in June 2016, providing a long-term mandate for the programme.

7 Stakeholders' round-table discussion

An informal exchange between intellectuals, policy makers and implementers took place at the round-table discussion (RTD) organised in March 2015. The objective of the RTD was to provide an avenue for discussion on current resettlement efforts under the ISF housing programme, while examining the future direction and challenges that the People's Plan posits. Furthermore, they assessed the prospect of enhancing the roles of certain agencies in urban governance and community development. The RTD was also an opportunity to present, validate and gather more ideas for the research findings. In an attempt to gain insights and solutions, the RTD focused on the policies and implementation practices and challenges of housing and resettlement. Insights from the series of focused group discussions also provided inputs to the following:

Coherently and effectively addressing informal settlements in cities requires a strategic and judicious mix of short-term and long-term interventions. Interventions must both improve liveability for the urban poor and meet their immediate needs, while addressing those exclusionary patterns of governance and development that perpetuate and deepen inequality and informality.

The urgency in addressing resettlement and safe and affordable housing for the poor has been established. The magnitude of the informal settler challenge has been recognised, as well as the inadequacy of current and projected government shelter programmes to meet this challenge. Following the devastation and loss of life from super typhoons Ondoy in 2009 and Yolanda in 2013, as well as floods in the metropolis becoming a regular feature during the rainy season, relocating populations in areas at risk has become both a publicised and political issue.

The current national administration is serious about addressing the rehousing and resettlement of ISFs. The P50-billion Alternative Housing Programme and People's Plan for ISFs Living in Danger Areas in the NCR and the creation of a multi-agency body to implement the programme is a sign that the national government is seriously trying to address not only the housing needs of the ISFs but also the population at risk of climate change. At the local level, there is a community perception that the success of the ISF housing programme is "... heavily dependent on the integrity and seriousness of the government." (from stakeholders round table discussion).

The present political environment and the urgent need to address the plight of the ISFs are conducive to reforming the government's housing and resettlement programme. The creation of the ISF-NTWG, which included representatives from the urban poor, is a convergence approach to addressing the issues of the informal settlers sector. This approach harnesses the resources and programmes of various concerned agencies towards a more comprehensive solution to the problem, providing ample options for addressing the housing, livelihood and social services needs of the ISFs.

The Policy Guidelines on the Operationalisation and Utilisation of the P50-billion Housing Fund for ISFs Living in Danger Areas in the NCR provide the means to incorporate various strategies, employing a multi-track, multi-agency and multi-year approach. As such, the entire ISF housing programme, and its implementation process, is an opportunity to review housing and resettlement policies and practices in the NCR, in the hope of providing inputs to further reform the housing and resettlement institution (legislation, policies, programmes, agencies, etc.)

The introduction of the People's Plan framework approach to housing and resettlement builds a constituency for accountable urban governance as well as effective and efficient social services, while facilitating a risk-free community development programme. In the immediate term, the participatory avenue for communities is expected to improve liveability for the ISFs and support their agency in meeting their immediate needs. In the long term, community participation addresses the exclusionary patterns of governance and development that perpetuate and deepen inequality and informality, and ultimately allows poor people to create their own humane communities.

Housing and resettlement under the People's Plan framework strengthens community involvement, ensures security of tenure and provides opportunities for the beneficiaries to shape and develop their new community. These are substantial components in facilitating 'new communities in the making' to establish reliable water supply systems, identify space for the construction of private septic tanks, organise the collection of sanitation and sewerage waste, also septic drainage fields and treatment and disposal systems.

Off-city resettlement inherently isn't an effective housing and relocation solution. On-site, in-city and near-city options with medium-rise buildings can be cheaper than off-city solutions with single, detached units, notwithstanding the social and displacement costs that typically accompany off-city resettlement. Because it is not a typical choice by the community, off-city resettlement often lacks cohesion and economic consideration, and in most cases residents do not set up any formal organisations, leading to a dismantling of existing social structures and no sense of community.

There is a legal framework in place, but there is a need to strengthen the institutionalisation of reform to address flaws in implementation. With regard to international standards, the strength of the Philippines' housing and resettlement framework is evident in the legal framework in place, namely the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) of 1992. However, in terms of realising the UDHA's aspiration to "... uplift the conditions of the underprivileged and homeless citizens in urban areas and in resettlement areas by making available to them decent housing at affordable cost, basic services and employment opportunities ..." (page 1: Article 1: Section 2 (a)) there is still much to be done.

Land acquisition and land use planning for social housing. One of the major challenges for the viability of in-city housing and resettlement is the availability of land. On the one hand, land prices in the metropolis are alarmingly close to the cost ceiling for the ISF housing programme, and this is compounded by the fact that some landowners demand on-the-spot cash transactions with the government. On the other hand, identifying land for social housing is hardly considered in the land use and/or urban development planning of local government units. The UDHA provides that LGUs are responsible for identifying social housing areas within their jurisdiction.

Access to basic social services such as potable water, power, health, income and job opportunities. Section 21 of the UDHA states that the following shall be provided in resettlement areas: potable water; power and electricity and an adequate power distribution system; sewerage facilities and an efficient and adequate solid waste disposal system; and access to primary roads and transportation facilities. The problem with this provision is that no single entity is specified regarding the provision of said services. While the NHA, LGUs and concerned agencies are mandated to provide basic services, the absence of clearly defined functions and funds allocation only encourages non-compliance. This leads to the failure of service provision in resettlement areas or a failure to build facilities for basic services during the construction of houses in the relocation areas.

The distribution of functions for housing and resettlement across various government agencies encourages an environment of non-compliance with standards for adequate, affordable and resilient housing and community development. Because of the number of agencies with mandates and responsibilities for housing and resettlement, the effectiveness and efficiency in implementing standards for housing and resettlement and the protection of human rights established by law have been weakened. This is, in part, because various government entities are responsible for a specific function, but without further stipulation as to which actor is responsible for which aspect of that function (Wardle 2014). This leads to a lack of accountability among concerned agencies, allowing them to be absolved of responsibility on the basis that there is another entity that is capable of performing the obligation.

8 Analysis: Trends, tests and responses

As of January 2015, there were 20 SHFC-approved People's Plans. However, around 80 plans still await approval in the remaining year of the Aquino administration, whose term ends in mid-2016. Furthermore, there is only just over six months left on the timeline set by the Supreme Court to clear the vulnerable waterways in Metro Manila of informal settler structures.

Kilos Maralita (KM) expects that at least seven resettlement communities within the city, or near the city, will emerge from People's Plans, benefiting at least 8,000 ISF members. By the end of 2014, it should be noted, the DILG had relocated 12,564 ISFs, most of which were outside of Metro Manila. The agency had also provided 10,032 ISFs with relocation assistance. In parallel, the NHA had constructed 6,197 housing units ready for occupancy, a large majority of these being off-city resettlements. The aforementioned DILG figures (DILG 2015) were achieved under the ISF housing programme but not through the People's Plan process. The P18,000 relocation assistance per family was provided to those who volunteered to leave their communities and look for their own places to live.

The P50-billion ISF housing programme is a clear manifestation that the government is embracing in-city resettlement, placing a premium on People's Plans, and regard off-city resettlement as a last resort. The goal of achieving the government's target of relocating and rehousing 104,000 poor and indigent families by 2016 is a noble one; however, as noted, the pace of implementation has not been fast enough.

A myriad issues seriously slow down the implementation of the ISF housing programme and limit the results on the ground.

8.1 Political will

Given that the P50 billion for the ISF housing programme was committed in 2010, it is surprising to note that the policy guidelines to implement the programme were not formulated until 2013. The 'political will' driving the programme lost steam in August 2011 with the death of the then DILG secretary and chair of the ISF-NTWG, Jesse Robredo. Robredo, a reform and action-oriented politician who gained national credibility for good and accountable governance as mayor of Naga City, actively oversaw the creation and deliberation of the ISF-NTWG. He was also directly engaged with community associations and urban poor alliances in the policy formulation of the programme. His leadership provided enough hope and trust for communities to re-engage with the government. This was because Robredo ordered different agencies, including local governments, to stop forced evictions and the demolition of ISF dwellings and to give way to the ISF housing programme. Tasked by the president, Robredo used his mandate to engage various concerned agencies in 'getting their acts together' to formulate the implementing guidelines of the programme.

Inter-agency politics hounded the ISF-NTWG after the death of Robredo, with agencies' conflicting policies, agendas and interests. In the absence of 'political will' at the forefront of the programme, urban poor organisations and alliances together with NGOs clamoured for the president to announce an executive order. Such an order would give the programme

a legal and political mandate, especially as Robredo's replacement – Secretary Mar Roxas – had different priorities, as well as being bannered by his political party as its candidate for the 2016 presidential elections. This put Roxas in a politically sensitive position as the potential opposition candidate to the country's vice president, Jejomar Binay, who as early as 2010 had publicly declared his intention to run for the presidency in 2016. Binay heads the HUDCC and has power over agencies involved in housing, for example the NHA, SHFC and HLURB among other.

KM and the NAPC, along with lobbying and mobilisations by urban poor organisations, have, in one way or another, to push the concerned agencies into working within the bounds of the ISF-NTWG.

8.2 Budget politics

Immediately after the ISF-NTWG came out with the draft Policy Guidelines on the Operationalisation and Utilisation of the P50-billion Housing Programme for ISFs in Danger Areas in the NCR in April 2013, the Disbursement Acceleration Programme (DAP) came under fire from the public. The DAP is a stimulus package introduced by the national administration and designed to fast-track public spending and push economic growth. However, a disbursement from the DAP to senators, identified during the impeachment of the Supreme Court Chief Justice, put the DAP in a controversial situation.

Funding for the ISF housing programme comes mainly from the DAP. Due to the legal and political issues surrounding the DAP controversy, processing and approval of People's Plans was hindered. Suspicions abound within community organisations that Binay, as Chair of the Board of Directors of SHFC, tried to delay the board's approval of the People's Plans for AMVA–HC and DRA–HC until the legal questions concerning the DAP had been resolved. Only after two months, after picketing outside the SHFC called for by KM, coupled with an open letter to the vice president published in the print media, did Binay signed the board's resolution approving the People's Plans for AMVA–HC and DRA–HC on 7 January 2014.

Prior to this, the ISF-NTWG deliberated the proposal from Kilos Maralita (KM) for the SHFC to finance the People's Plans on high-density housing (HDH), or the construction of medium-rise buildings. SHFC policies, however, did not include HDH financing and therefore its fund allocation is limited to the Community Mortgage Programme. Understanding the plight of the ISFs, open-minded officials from the SHFC secured approval from the agency's board of directors to make their guidelines flexible to the HDH approach.

KM's proposal arose from the inflexibility of the NHA policy guidelines. Initially, all of the People's Plans were submitted to the NHA, however, NHA policies restricted the options of community associations in determining their People's Plan. Despite KM's request for the housing body to readjust its policies, the NHA leadership stood firm – hence community associations found another way to submit their People's Plans to the SHFC.

8.3 Community-driven People's Plans vis-à-vis agencies tied to their narrow mandates and technocratic forms of processing and decision-making

The policy guidelines of the ISF housing programme clearly state that “... *affected families shall create, draft and generate People's Plans that will be developed and implemented with the assistance of CSOs and government agencies.*” Citizen participation in the programme has been welcomed by community members, allowing them to create, draft and generate their own People's Plans. It has given community members the zeal to engage with the government as their partner and compel it to be more responsive, efficient and transparent. From the initial application to initiate a People's Plan, to the relocation of beneficiaries, to managing their new estate, participation will have taken hold among

communities that have long suffered from extreme forms of social exclusion. The communities' attitude to the future can be characterised by what Prof. David said in his newspaper column, "... everyone rose from the smallness of their ingrained prejudices so they could tackle the grave concerns that confronted them" (David 2015).

However, it is not easy for associations to engage collaboratively with the government. Left to their own devices, community associations actively develop their People's Plans and comply with all the legal and documentary requirements. In many instances, however, working with various agencies can become too daunting for ISFs in terms of effort, time and resources. For instance, the member beneficiary validation process as well as the surveying process conducted by agencies can be extremely daunting. The process also puts the community's own assessment of their needs at the mercy of the results of the agencies' technical surveys and validation methods. Furthermore, and more problematic, associations must play 'cat and dog' with agencies, travelling back and forth between offices to fulfil compliance requirements. While agencies adjust or refine their policies, the introduction of new policies sometimes confuses associations and forces them to restart the whole process. This was exemplified in a policy change that capped the membership of housing associations/cooperatives to 200. This pushed back the efforts of associations with more than 200 members, forcing them to reorganise into separate organisations and start again.

8.4 ISF housing programme/People's Plan as action arena

The People's Plan became a means of providing new avenues for community mobilisation and re-engaging citizens in the process of public decision-making. The People's Plan can also be appreciated as a process that nurtures new forms of state-citizen engagement, specifically in changing the way in which choices about development are made (Heller 2013: 62).

Looking at the ISF housing programme/People's Plan as an 'action arena', we define the 'spaces' as the means, rules and process. Unlike other spaces that are institutionalised, the ISF housing programme/People's Plan is a work in progress in terms of institutionalisation. The ISF housing programme has neither a legislative act nor an executive order. Thus, as a work in progress, the People's Plan is an 'action arena' that involves different stakeholders all engaging with each other and/or working together. How they interact and how they understand the programme may define the 'standard' rules and structure of the action arena they are currently in.

Before the 'standard' rules and structure are defined, each agency proposes new ways to improve the outcomes of various 'action situations' in the arena. Such proposed measures would either enhance or, in some cases, hinder the People's Plan process. The opportunities and constraints the actors face in any particular situation – the information they obtain, the benefits they get or are excluded from, and how they reason about their situation – are all affected by the rules, or absence of rules, that structure their situation.

The discourse in the action arena generally takes the form of stark oppositions between delivery and participation and top-down versus bottom-up decision-making. The discourse is also influenced by the various actors' differing agendas, as well as their proposed ways to improve the outcome of the programme. However, how can outcomes be improved in the context of 'the ISF housing programme/People's Plan being a work in progress' without the mandated institutional rules? Especially as established rules are meant to be a shared understanding between participants about what actions (or outcomes) are required, prohibited or allowed (Ostrom 2005:9)

9 Summary

The introduction of the ISF housing programme/People's Plan indicated the government's seriousness about effectively and meaningfully rehousing ISFs from dangerous areas. The People's Plan was pushed through by inspired communities taking advantage of the institutional space '*... to create, draft and generate ...*' their alternative approach to resettlement. The communities had to steer their People's Plan through the vaguely mandated ISF housing programme, dealing with agencies marked by officialdom and red tape, and a duplication of functions if not discordant programmes and interests. More importantly, the People's Plan framework deviates from the mainstream perspective and practices of government regarding forced evictions and off-city resettlement. The institutional context posed challenges to the implementation of a community-driven approach to rehousing and relocation. On the other hand, the People's Plan has shown immense inspiration and potential for building safe and resilient communities and social-institutional transformation.



On-going construction of the resettlement housing of Alyansa ng Mamamayan ng Valenzuela (AMVA) in Barangay Ugong in Valenzuela City. Photo taken by Ricky Gonzales, July 2015

The People's Plan unleashed an energy among stakeholders, especially informal settlers, that allowed them to confront challenges and different dynamics, not only to address practical matters but also to create the institutional spaces to forge new roles and rules to fit changed circumstances.

The expected results of the ISF housing programme – to improve outcomes for adequate and dignified housing and community development for the poor and marginalised sections of the urban population – will soon be realised. But the action arena that the programme laid down has resulted in other unexpected qualitative changes to the community organisations, other stakeholders and institutions.

The People's Plan served as a vehicle for ISFs to engage government in recognising their right to the city in general, and security of tenure in particular. Contrary to the conventional practice of the urban poor movement being involved in contentious actions for their right to housing, and their use of extra-legal means against forced evictions, the People's Plan involved participatory civic culture – notably, awareness of the right to citizens' participation in the government's decision-making and planning process.

The recognition of housing cooperatives is a development from the government's mainstream form of housing beneficiary organisation, ie homeowners associations. The cooperative principles introduced strong internal democracy, transparency and accountability among officers and members. These elements are important for building community resilience and the transformation of informal settlers into active citizens.

The People's Plan can be viewed as a work in progress, involving institutional reform and, foremost, a means of providing new avenues of mobilisation, engaging the urban poor in the process of public decision-making, nurturing new forms of government–citizen engagement, particularly with regard to changing the way in which choices about resettlement and community development are made. The Policy Guidelines on the Operationalisation and Utilisation of the P50-billion Housing Programme for ISFs Living in Danger Areas in the NCR is proof of this.

On the other hand, the institutional sustainability of the ISF housing programme should be established by giving it a legislative mandate. That mandate should locate the housing and resettlement programme and related basic services, as well as functions and responsibilities, between the national and local governments and other agencies involved in urban governance and development planning.

While there were cases where local government hindered part of the People's Plan process, this highlighted the critical role that city governments have. Local governments have responsibility for most of the interventions that can and should reduce hazards or reduce the population's vulnerability (Swalheim and Dodman 2008). On the other hand, where ISF organisations and local governments have a good relationship, this speeds up the People's Plan process and makes it more adaptable to the specific improvement of the resilience of the housing and community development project.

The ISF housing programme unleashes community-driven resettlement approaches and addresses security of tenure – important elements in addressing poverty alleviation. But building safe and resilient communities against poverty and disaster also requires community-driven sanitation and livelihood improvements.

The community process of crafting and developing a People's Plan and engaging with government, civil society organisations and private stakeholders has generated ideas and awareness for building settlements that are resilient and guard against poverty and disasters. The People's Plan harnesses self-initiative, self-reliance and self-governance – important elements for community empowerment and resilience.

The informal settlements are being reorganised as communities of practice. As defined by Wenger and Snyder (2000: 139), "... *the community of practice as a group of people bound together by shared experience and passion for a joint enterprise.*" Through deliberation and actual engagement, members of a community of practice generate ideas and creative approaches, and can put forward plans to address issues in new and exciting ways (Isandla 2014).

10 Recommendations

10.1 Legislative reform

- **Institutionalise the People's Plan.** In order to be sustained and broadened, the People's Plan must have a congressional mandate, gained through the approval of the proposed legislative bill: The Institutionalisation of People's Plan for an Integrative and Comprehensive Housing Solution for the Poor.

The policy guidelines of the ISF housing programme indicate that government has recognised an in-city resettlement and community-driven approach to resettlement programmes. This policy shift should be commended and encouraged, however, it must have a legal framework to be effective and sustained. At present, there is no assurance that the ISF housing programme will continue when the national administration changes after the May 2016 elections. The announcement of an executive order or the enactment of a legislative law will eliminate uncertainty for communities and agencies alike.

- **For a clearer and more judicious perspective on housing and resettlement of the poor, there must be a review of the UDHA regarding:**

- Expressly providing for a mandatory and detailed process of genuine and adequate consultation with communities prior to eviction.
- Providing for the prioritisation of on-site/in-city development.
- Providing detailed and mandatory requirements for the establishment of all basic and essential services prior to any resettlement. These services include: access to potable water; electricity connections; sewerage facilities and an efficient and adequate solid waste disposal system; access to primary roads and transportation facilities; access to health and child care services; access to educational facilities; and assistance for livelihood development and access to jobs and employment.

- **The government should consider stronger harmonisation of national and local urban planning and development schemes, programmes and policies.** Local urban planning and development schemes, programmes and policies are crafted and implemented independently from national urban development programmes and policies. The Local Government Code of 1991 provided autonomous power to local governments. Whether it is a Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), Comprehensive Development Plan or Comprehensive Zoning Plan, there is limited or an absence of harmonisation between the national government and local government units. Moreover, shelter plans are often crafted or written as a stand-alone programme by any one agency.

This limitation leaves the basic services component of housing, community and even urban development dependent primarily upon the priorities of the LGUs. The national administration, through the DILG, DSWD and HUDCC, should consider strengthening the joint undertakings with LGUs, especially in the delivery of basic services, capacity building of communities, livelihood projects and the development of local enterprises in the context of community development. This will provide a clear and effective strategy, not only for LGUs but also for the urban poor.

- **The government should consider the consolidation of different housing and resettlement agencies.** To rectify some of the inefficiencies encountered in the delivery of housing and community services, and the attendant failures in promoting the enjoyment of housing and resettlement-related human rights, a consolidation of housing and urban development agencies should be considered by government.

The creation of a single housing and urban development agency can be a significant institutional reform for harnessing convergence of resources and programmes towards a more comprehensive solution to addressing issues of poverty, security of tenure, access to social services and economic opportunities for the poor.

10.2 Institutional and governance reform

- **Government should allocate additional funds to the ISF housing programme for basic services infrastructure and facilities.** The P50-billion fund of the ISF housing programme is allocated mainly to land acquisition and housing construction. It is for the resettled communities to develop their own facilities and sanitation and sewerage systems. While these systems are reflected in the People's Plans, their realisation is dependent upon any savings the community associations can make from the funds allocated to land purchase and construction.

- **The government should enhance the responsibilities of LGUs in sanitation and sewerage development in urban poor communities and increase capacities with additional resources.** The government's Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) signed concessionaire contracts with two private consortia for the provision of water supply and sanitation services to Metro Manila. These contracts included targets for expanding sewerage and sanitation coverage. To date, the concessionaires have focused on water supply to built-up areas, leaving most urban poor communities without water. This leaves LGUs responsible for providing limited water supply and sanitation services in most urban poor communities. Most LGUs rarely have the capacity, technical knowledge and funds needed to manage or improve their systems.

As LGUs have final responsibility for urban sanitation services, they should retain overall control of their local services; and this can be done with support from the national government through clearer guidelines and resource support.

- **The government should take steps to institutionalise community and civil society participation in housing and urban development.** The People's Plan framework and practice highlight citizens' participation in decision-making processes and policy formulation, acting together through their community organisations. This development should be enhanced and supported in the institutional structure, not only in the ISF housing programme but also in other aspects of urban governance and development planning.
- **As part of the social preparation activities (in the People's Plan process), urban and climate change awareness training is undertaken to help housing cooperatives and associations make informed decisions regarding their resettlement sites.**

A huge amount of the P50-billion ISF housing programme is geared towards social preparation – organisational and technical capacity building, orientation seminars, financial management and estate management among other, but nothing on disaster preparedness and harnessing community resilience to disasters. In the first instance, the ISF housing programme is relocating communities away from vulnerable areas and building safe communities.

- **Disaster risk reduction management (DRRM) should be mainstreamed by empowering local governments, local institutions and communities to plan and implement disaster risk and rehabilitation. DRRM should be mainstreamed as a regular management and planning process and integral part of local government functions, operations and services.**

The Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2010 (Republic Act 10121) is in place, yet there is no robust and applied set of guidelines nor resources for local governments, which have a critical role in reducing hazards and harnessing community resilience. This in spite of the provision of the Local Government Code of 1991 that states

that LGUs are expected to be at the frontline of emergency measures in the aftermath of disasters, to ensure the general welfare of its constituents.

The DILG should ensure and provide clear guidelines to the local government units, and DRRM and climate change adaptation should be integrated into the local development plans, programmes and budgets as a strategy in sustainable development and poverty reduction.

- **The Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Councils (LDRRMCs) should be convened regularly and provided with funds. Urban poor and ISF community organisations should be represented in the LDRRMCs.**

The LDRRMCs are provided under the Philippine Disaster Risk and Management Act of 2010 and should be created at every level of local government, including the *barangay*. But the councils are convened only once every eight months, or as necessary. Their role is limited to monitoring, and recommending measures of forced or pre-emptive evacuation of local residents if necessary. The LDRRMCs, having a multi-stakeholder character, should be empowered to ensure the integration of DRRM and climate change adaptation into local development plans, programmes and budgets. They could also be given an active role, and therefore resources, in the promotion and raising of public awareness on climate change. The participation of the private sector in the councils should be encouraged for resource contributions and joint projects. The urban poor and ISF communities should also have representation, as these communities need more help regarding adaptation and resilience building. Importantly, these communities are deep reservoirs of perspectives and initiatives when it comes to the realities of calamities and disasters.

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Published by IIED, 2016

IIED order no: 10771IIED

<http://pubs.iied.org/10771IIED.html>

ISBN 978-1-78431-295-4

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