

RESILIENT URBAN COMMUNITIES

Stories from
the Ketsana
Rehabilitation
Programme



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Rehabilitation Programme

Quezon City
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Resilient Urban Communities: Stories from the Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme

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Acronyms

ABCD	Asset Based Community Development
AKKMA	<i>Aksyon para sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad at Klima</i> (Action for Preparedness for Calamity and Climate [Change])
ALMAMO	<i>Alyansa ng Mamamayan sa Montalban Rizal</i> (Citizens Alliance in Montalban Rizal)
BDC	<i>Barangay</i> Development Council
BDCC	<i>Barangay</i> Disaster Coordinating Council
BDRC	Building Disaster Resilient Communities
BDRRMC	<i>Barangay</i> Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
BEC	Basic Ecclesial Community
BULKK-DRRAG	<i>Bagong Ugnayang Lakas sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad</i> (New Alliance for Preparedness to Calamity) – Disaster Risk Reduction Advocacy Group
CA	Christian Aid
CARRAT	Christian Aid Rapid Response and Assessment Team
CBDRM	Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction/Management
CBDRR-SB	Community-based DRR for small buildings
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CDP	Center for Disaster Preparedness
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CKUP	Christ, King of the Universe Parish
CMP	Community Mortgage Program
CO	Community organizing
COM	Community Organizers Multiversity
COSE	Coalition of Services of the Elderlies
COPE	Community Organization of the Philippines Enterprise
CSI	Capital, Savings and Insurance
CSO	Civil society organization

DFID-GTF	UK Department for International Development - Governance and Transparency Fund	MMDA	Metropolitan Manila Development Authority
DHOA	Damayan Homeowners Association	MO	Manila Observatory
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government	MRB	Medium-rise Building
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways	MRF	Material Recovery Facility
DRR	disaster risk reduction	MSAI	Migrant Savings for Alternative Investments
DRRNet Philippines	Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines	NCR	National Capital Region
ECHO	Empowered Children of Home Owners	NGO	Non-Government organization
EO	Executive Order	NHA	National Housing Authority
EOC	Emergency Operations Center	NLUMA	National Land Use and Management Act
EPRT	Emergency Preparedness and Response Team	NWRB	National Water Resources Board
EWS	early warning system	OSY	Out-of-School Youth
FEDMMASC	<i>Federasyon ng Magsasaka at Mangingisdang Sta. Cruz</i> (Federation of Farmers and Fisherfolk in Santa Cruz)	PAGASA	Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	PCP II	Plenary Council of the Philippines
FRAMPC	Future Mothers' Heart Multi-Purpose Cooperative	PCUP	Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action	PCVA	Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment
HOA	Homeowners' associations	PD	Presidential Decree
JJCICSI	John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues	PHILSSA	Partnership of Philippine Support Agencies, Inc.
KAMMMPI	<i>Kapatiran ng Malayang Maliliit na Mangingisda sa Pilipinas</i> (Brotherhood of Free Small Fisherfolk in the Philippines)	PINAGPALA	<i>Pinagkaisang Pamayanan ng Laguna</i> (United Communities of [the Province of] Laguna)
KAMPI	<i>Kalipunan ng mga Maralitang Taga-lungsod</i> (Urban Poor Federation)	PO	People's organization
KILOS	<i>Kabataang may lisang Layunin sa Pag-Oorganisa sa Sabah</i> (Youth with One Goal in Organizing in Sabah)	PSMBB	<i>Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Mangingisada sa Buong Baybay</i> (United Lake-wide Organization of Fisherfolk)
KRP	Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme	RA	Republic Act
LCCAP	Local Climate Change Action Plans	RIA	Rodriguez Islamic Association
LGU	local government unit	RROW	Road Right of Way
LLCA	Laguna Lake Conservation Authority	SALIGAN	<i>Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal</i> (Alternative Legal Assistance Center)
LLCP	Laguna Lake Conservation Program	SAMAKABA	<i>Samahan ng mga Magkakapitbahay sa Baybay Ilog</i> (Neighborhood Association in Baybay Ilog)
LLDA	Laguna Lake Development Authority	SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
LRA	Land Registration Authority	SEEDS	Social Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development Services
MAPAGPALA	<i>Mamamayan para sa Pagpapanatili at Pangangalaga ng Lawa</i> (Citizens for the Care and Conservation of the Lake)	SMALT	<i>Samahan ng mga Mangingisda sa Lawa ng Taytay</i> (Association of Fishers in Taytay Lake)
MDRRMC	Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council	SMMD	<i>Samahan ng mga Magbabasahan at Mananahi sa Damayan</i> (Association of Ragmakers and Sewers of Damayan)
MDRRMO	Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office		

SNA	Sabah Neighborhood Association
SSDM	Social Service and Development Ministry
SPI	Socio-Pastoral Institute
SOS	Spirituality of Stewardship
STOP DISASTER	<i>Suburban Tungo sa Organisadong Paghahanda kontra Disaster</i> (Suburban Toward Organized Preparedness Against Disaster)
TACAD	Taguig Alliance for Conservation and Development
TAO-Pilipinas	Technical Assistance Organization, Inc.
TOT	Training of Trainer
TLLD	<i>Taytay Laban sa Lakeshore Dike</i> (Taytay Against the Lakeshore Dike)
TWG	Technical Working Group
UDHA	Urban Development and Housing Act
UGMMARIZ	<i>Ugnayan ng mga Samahan ng Mamamayan at Mangangisdang Rizal</i> (Network of Citizens and Fisherfolk Organizations in (the Province of) Rizal)
ULAP	<i>Ugnayang Lakas ng Alyansa ng Apektadong Pamayanan</i> (Strong Alliance of Affected Communities)
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UP-CSWCD	University of the Philippines' College of Social Work and Community Development
UP NIGS	University of the Philippines National Institute for Geological Sciences
UP-ALL	Urban Poor Alliance
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children
WRS	Water Refilling Station



INTRODUCTION

Introduction

When Tropical Storm Ketsana (local name: Ondoy) hit the Philippines on September 26, 2009, it brought to mainstream consciousness a number of relatively new terminologies that soon became buzzwords in communications media, social networking sites, workplaces, and daily conversation: “climate change,” “early warning,” “hazards,” “preparedness,” “mitigation.” For scholars and practitioners of disaster management, new frameworks and strategies emerged as we all grappled with the historic disaster that very few people saw coming: Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), Resilience.

Ketsana could not have chosen a more “appropriate” place to hit than Metro Manila and its surrounding megalopolis to grab the world’s attention. When floodwaters began to rapidly rise after a day of incessant rains (455 millimeters in 24 hours), they gave rise to what turned out to be tons and tons of debris and garbage, much of which ended up clogging natural waterways and drainage systems. Hours after the floodwaters receded and as people began the massive clean-up operations, the obvious could not be stated enough: Metro Manila had a serious garbage problem and an equally dire drainage infrastructure. Many other factors were blamed and later validated: poor urban and settlements planning, overcrowded communities living in high risk areas, substandard infrastructure, and unsustainable resource management.

In the meantime, hundreds of thousands of people were housed in evacuation centers, while even more stayed in their homes trying to save their properties and belongings. Power was down in most parts of the metropolis, and mobility was very limited because most major streets were either deep in floodwaters or filled with stranded vehicles and people. Economic and social activities were severely halted, with businesses, government and private offices, and schools declaring non-working holidays so people could deal with the emergency in their own ways. By the end of September 27, most local governments had declared a State of Calamity, whereas the national government had officially called for assistance from the UN and international humanitarian organizations.

Three years after Ketsana, it is now quite apparent that the attention on emergencies in the Philippines has been elevated to the level of public discourse. It gave focus to the specific hazards and risks faced by urban centers like Metro Manila, and how the pace and quality of urbanization has a direct correlation with people’s vulnerabilities. There is also a growing recognition of the human side of disasters by many humanitarian and development actors. Before Ketsana, disaster risk analysis mainly focused on the hazards and exposure elements, and how we could mitigate the effects of disasters. Now there is growing consciousness on the human side of the equation, especially on the vulnerabilities of communities and the existing capacities of institutions, as well as the need to install preparedness and sustainability measures into interventions.

Even as the Philippines saw perhaps the most massive relief operations seen in recent history—one that many consider to be the source of many lessons learned in disaster response, both positive and negative—the challenges posed by Ketsana on the humanitarian and development sectors in trying to understand its complexity and underlying causes proved to be the real battleground. For international development and humanitarian actors like Christian Aid (CA), what programming strategies and flexibilities needed to be employed to respond to an emergency of this scope and scale? For local partner non-government organizations (NGOs), what characteristics of urban and peri-urban areas in the Philippines needed to be considered in undertaking DRR work? For communities, what measures needed to be introduced to make them develop their own resilience to disasters without having to depend so much on outside help?

The Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme

Christian Aid and its partners launched an emergency response programme that provided relief, early recovery, and rehabilitation support to some of the most affected and vulnerable communities. The relief and early recovery phases of the programme lasted for six months, while the ensuing rehabilitation phase lasted for 30 months, aptly ending on the occasion of Ketsana’s third anniversary in September 2012.

The Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme sought to **“enable urban poor communities seriously affected by Typhoon Ketsana to recover from their loss and strengthen their capacities to sustain their lives and livelihoods.”** Consequently, the Programme set out not only to restore the pre-Ketsana status quo, but to **enhance the affected communities’ resilience to disasters and reduce their vulnerabilities.** Changes would have to be seen beyond the target individuals, households, and communities to become sustainable; changes in the beneficiaries’ environment would have to enable institutionalized and lasting impact that could benefit a bigger and more inclusive population.

To achieve this overall objective, the following strategies were employed:

1. Prepare and/or strengthen community structures for urban DRR work through organizing and strengthening of community structures. This strategy focused on strengthening the DRR capacities of people’s organizations (POs) and 2,000 families across four communities: Suburban and Sabah in Rodriguez, San Juan in Taytay, and San Bartolome in Novaliches.
2. Enhance DRR knowledge and skills of partners and target communities through capacity building interventions. This includes capacities on preparedness, response, infrastructure, and psychosocial support. It also entailed the conduct of Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessments (PCVAs) to serve as bases for community-specific analyses and interventions.
3. Ensure secure livelihoods of target communities through sustainable individual and collective enterprise development. This installed community-managed livelihood enterprises and provided technical support to 1,000 families across three communities, including the development of policies, savings schemes, and allocation of community emergency funds. It also covered the set-up of mechanisms to link livelihood interventions to broader markets, institutions and government, and the establishment of links and referral mechanism to support the beneficiaries of employable skills trainings.
4. Improve disaster resilience and ensure safe settlements of communities through small infrastructure facilities. This included setting up an evacuation and livelihood center in Banaba, model flood-resilient house in Taytay, improvement of evacuation center and

bridge in Suburban, and provision of technical capacity on community-based DRR for small buildings (CBDRR-SB) for 1,000 families in all areas.

5. Conduct risk assessments in Metro Manila and neighboring provinces affected by Ketsana. This was done through an analysis of the physical and social dimensions of flood risks, the identification of geo-hazards in Programme sites, and installation of community-based early warning systems.
6. Enhance the overall knowledge base on urban DRR through documentation of learnings and development of knowledge products. This included subsequent publication and dissemination to a wider range of stakeholders.
7. Mainstream urban DRR into local development planning and increase overall awareness on urban DRR through policy development, advocacy, networking, and communication activities. A particular target for advocacy work is the enabling environment through government policies and resources recognizing the tenure and resource rights of the urban poor living in high-risk areas.

Programme Components and Partner Inputs

The identification of Programme elements came both by way of opportunity and design. In the relief stage of the Programme, Christian Aid worked primarily with the Community Organization of the Philippines Enterprise (COPE) to lead the provision of much-needed emergency assistance to thousands of affected families in Metro Manila and Rizal Province. This came in the form of food and non-food items and emergency livelihood assistance. Owing to the sheer number of areas and people that needed to be assisted, COPE worked with a number of other partners that maintained presence in the target areas. These included the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) and its local partner *Buklod Tao* in San Mateo, Community Organizers Multiversity (COM) in Taytay and Pasig City, and the Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI) in Novaliches and Rodriguez.

Area-based Partners

As Christian Aid drew out the design of the subsequent Rehabilitation Programme, it became apparent that it could tap into the expertise of the partners already on board to facilitate the implementation of DRR interventions. Once mobilized, the area partners set out to conduct Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessments (PCVAs) to come up with a community-based understanding of the disaster; the resources, vulnerabilities and risks present within each community; and identify measures by which communities could address their vulnerabilities.

Center for Disaster Preparedness

CDP is a regional resource center that promotes Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM), facilitates interactive learning and discourse on disaster risk management, and advocates for policies and programs that protect the environment and mitigate disaster risk. For the rehabilitation programme, CDP collaborated with the people's organization, *Buklod Tao*, to enhance DRR capacities and strengthen community structures in *Barangay*¹ Banaba, San Mateo, Rizal.

Community Organizers Multiversity

COM was established as an alternative learning center for community organizers, PO leaders, and NGO workers. Its goal is to build sustainable and resilient communities through enhanced issue-based community organizing methodology and participatory strategies. Partnership between CA and COM started during the Ketsana Response in

¹ *Barangay* means "village."

October 2009. For the Rehabilitation Phase, it worked with Damayan Homeowners' Association (DHOA) to integrate DRR and resilience elements into the long-term community organizing and people's planning process in *Barangay* San Juan, Taytay, Rizal.

Socio-Pastoral Institute

SPI is a church-based NGO committed to church renewal and integral social transformation. As a service institute, SPI has been conducting pastoral courses including Theology in the Philippine context, Pastoral Sociology, Faith and Ideology, and tools of social analysis. It espouses an integral framework for social transformation, taking into account the central roles of culture and spirituality. It is also involved in peace-building work through inter-faith organizing of urban poor communities in Pagadian, Zamboanga del Sur. For the Ketsana Programme, SPI incorporated its community formation and spirituality framework in organizing two communities in San Jose, Rodriguez, and another in Novaliches, Quezon City—working hand in hand with homeowners' associations and church-based groups.

Technical and Advocacy Partners

As implementation progressed, it was determined that additional partners were needed to implement key interventions that were not within the capacities of the area partners. These interventions were determined by analyzing other possible components of urban DRR alongside the pool of urban partners that had relevant capacities and expertise. These partners then came to be known as technical and advocacy partners as they provided necessary capacity and mentoring inputs to complement the community-based processes being led by area partners.

Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA)

PHILSSA is a non-stock service network of 55 social development NGOs based in urban centers nationwide. Upon its formation, PHILSSA embarked on a mission of prototyping innovative paradigms of sustainable development for the effective empowerment of urban sectors, namely, the slum dwellers, the formal and informal labor force, the youth, women, children, and development workers. Advocacy work for the enactment of enabling policies for the urban poor—particularly on issues of housing, settlements, and resource allocation—was managed by PHILSSA under the Ketsana Programme, with focus on integrating risk, vulnerability, and capacity elements into the development of an advocacy agenda.

Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal (SALIGAN)

SALIGAN is a legal resource NGO doing development legal work with women, workers, farmers, fisherfolk, the urban poor, and local communities. It has more than 100 partner organizations spread all over the three regions of the country. SALIGAN seeks to effect societal change by working with women, the basic sectors, and local communities for their empowerment through the creative use of the law and legal resources. Under the Ketsana Programme, SALIGAN introduced a human rights-based approach to litigation, focusing on the implementation of the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) and other related urban poor development policies. It formed community-based volunteer paralegal support structures in all Programme communities, and conducted legal clinics to strengthen capacities and provide avenues for community-based paralegal work.

Technical Assistance Organization (TAO) Pilipinas

TAO-Pilipinas is an organization composed of women architects, engineers, and planners that provide technical support to programs on human settlements and environment, education and training, research and publications, and a volunteer program for young professionals. Its technical assistance includes designing houses, research on alternative building technologies, and making community master plans for slum dwellers who receive housing grants or subsidies from the government or NGOs. As a CA Partner, it was tasked to develop community design and planning capacities on disaster- and climate-resilient housing and small buildings, and build small infrastructures that would contribute to the overall resilience of target communities.

Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation

*Unlad Kabayan*² is an entrepreneurial NGO that builds and generates assets for the socio-economic upliftment of the poor. It promotes social entrepreneurship as an approach to development. Its mandate is to enable the poor to access wealth-creating assets so they can establish their own livelihood and build sustainable communities. Its strategies consist of mobilizing Migrant Savings for Alternative Investments (MSAI) and setting up community-based business centers of Social Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development Services (SEEDS). It developed key enterprise projects in food production and processing, environment-enhancing production and products, and innovative farming techniques. Under the Ketsana Programme, *Unlad Kabayan* utilized its expertise in social entrepreneurship and innovative farming techniques in introducing livelihood support activities across three Programme sites.

John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues (JJCICSI)

JJCICSI is a church-based non-government organisation whose primary work and competence is research-based advocacy. Inspired by Catholic social teaching, JJCICSI professes a preferential option for the poor and utilizes the discipline of the social sciences to shed light on issues affecting the poor and marginalized in Philippine society. JJCICSI has been engaged in research and advocacy on urban poor issues since its establishment, and was one of the primary support NGOs in advocating for the passage of the Urban Development and Housing Act in 1992. Among the bills it has helped pass are the repeal of the anti-squatting law, Presidential Decree (PD) 772, and the enactment of the Comprehensive Integrated Shelter Finance Act. The Ketsana Programme engaged JJCICSI to facilitate the overall documentation work with partners. It was sought for its capacity to analyze the urban poverty angle of the Ketsana Programme and facilitate the process of drawing out key insights and lessons that could be transformed into knowledge products for both the humanitarian and development sectors.

² *Unlad Kabayan* literally means "Progressive Compatriot."

Science and Research Partners

As it was important for all actors and stakeholders to understand the different factors that led to the Ketsana disaster, the Programme set out to conduct a number of risk assessment studies to look into such factors from the perspective of science. The Manila Observatory (MO) studied the physical and social dimensions of flood risks in Greater Metro Manila, while scientists from the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences (UP NIGS) conducted geo-hazard and hydro-meteorological assessments in Ketsana Programme areas.

Manila Observatory (MO)

The MO is a scientific research institution established by the Jesuit order in the Philippines with over a hundred forty-five years of service in the fields of atmospheric and earth science. It advocates a science-based approach to sustainable development and poverty reduction through its principal focus on the areas of climate change and pre-disaster science. The Observatory actively confronts these challenges through investments and partnerships in scientific research which must inform and guide a safe and sustainable future for humankind.

Since 2008, MO has been instrumental in instilling science-based action in disaster risk reduction initiatives of Christian Aid's partners and in developing links with scientific research and academic institutions. Under the Ketsana Programme, MO was tasked to conduct a multi-disciplinary risk analysis associated with climate change and geohazards in Metro Manila. This involved studying hazards, exposure, and vulnerabilities resulting from the rapid and unregulated development of Metro Manila. This integrated approach towards risk analysis is expected to provide a valuable input to evidence-based policy for urban disaster risk reduction and management and climate change adaptation. The study, entitled "Tropical Storm Ketsana (Ondoy): Case Study for Disaster Risk Reduction Management in Metro Manila" was completed in mid-2012. It is in the process of being presented to partners, communities and other stakeholders at the time of this publication.

The Programme conducted risk assessment studies to better understand the Ketsana disaster from an objective and scientific standpoint. These studies are expected to help inform partners and communities make informed and empowered decisions on what preparedness and adaptation measures to pursue, and as they engage with government and other stakeholders in securing necessary policy and resource support to address their vulnerabilities.

In addition to the MO study, consultants were engaged from the UP National Institute of Geological Sciences (UPNIGS) to conduct a Stream Geo-hazards Assessment, which led to a better understanding of the geological and hydrological factors that affect flooding along the Wawa-Marikina River system in Rizal and the Tullahan River in Quezon City. This, in turn, served as basis for establishing community-based early warning systems in programme areas. From the UPNIGS study alone, gains have been noted in the negotiations of partners and community leaders for government's delivery of urgent social services, such as the rehabilitation of the small dike in San Juan, the local government's recognition of the community-based early warning information in Banaba, and the local government's demolition of the bridge that had been constricting the natural flow of the creek in Suburban.

On a larger scale, the findings and recommendations of both the MO and UPNIGS studies will be analyzed by partners and communities to guide them in determining resilience strategies that would then be elevated to the level of local and national government policy. They will incorporate the information in on-going negotiations for in-city relocation of communities in Novaliches, the clarification of the tenure rights of Manggahan Floodway communities, and the process of challenging the policies and decisions guiding the relocation and site development process in various perilous locations in Rodriguez. Further, the studies could also be useful for other urban poor groups across the Greater Manila and Laguna de Bay areas in identifying objective long-term options for long-standing issues such as housing and settlements, resource use, and the continuing marginalization of the urban poor in social service delivery and land use planning.



Informal settlers protest in front of Quezon City Hall on March 2011 the eviction and demolition of houses in danger areas without appropriate and acceptable safe resettlement area.

Strengthening Emergency Preparedness and Response Capacities

To complement the strategies led by partners, Christian Aid facilitated the provision of crucial capacity building activities to strengthen the emergency response capacities of partners and communities. The process of building frontline capacities was seen as critical elements in building community resilience as communities consistently face the challenge of having to take care of their own when responding to emergencies. These capacities are especially useful in responding to “small-scale” emergencies that are not usually addressed by government and big humanitarian actors.

Rapid Assessment and Response

Ketsana partners and community leaders were made part of the Christian Aid Rapid Response and Assessment Team (CARRAT) trainings. The CARRAT is a mechanism that develops in-house partner and community capacities for emergency assessment and response. It also expands the surge capacity of CA and its partners in providing timely and strategic response in more areas. In fact, the assessment of the Ketsana emergency was itself an exercise of the CARRAT mechanism as it was the CA partners nationwide that led the assessment process. At the time when the disaster hit, urban CA partners did not have enough capacity to respond. As such, they obtained support from rural partners who had been trained as CARRAT members under the Building Disaster Resilient Communities (BDRC) Project.

The effectiveness of the CARRAT mechanism—in addition to the community-based emergency response training activities led by partners (e.g., Search and Rescue, First Aid, evacuation procedures, etc.)—was tested in the subsequent flooding emergencies, such as Typhoons Meari (local name: Falcon), Nesat (local name: Pedring), and Nalgae (local name: Quiel) in 2011; and the August 2012 monsoon rains that inundated the same Ketsana areas. This time around, CARRAT members and trained community leaders were able to conduct rapid assessment and response activities with minimal supervision from CA or the government. These displays of capacity also helped them leverage resources from government and other humanitarian groups.



SPI, the Diocese of Novaliches, and Christian Aid consult the residents alongside the Tullahan river in Novaliches regarding their conditions and proposed rehabilitation program.

Community-based Psychosocial Support

CA engaged the services of professional psychologists to develop the counseling skills of psychosocial support volunteers and help build community-based structures that can provide diagnostic or referral services for traumatized residents. The psychosocial capacity support was seen as a crucial complement to the other capacity building interventions that were provided under the Programme. The partners and communities that participated in this training gained basic knowledge and capacity for managing processes that would address community psychosocial concerns. Likewise, it led to the further identification of community psychosocial needs and the appropriate responses by the Programme, partners, and communities, including the identification of opportunities to link with existing groups and institutions that can provide long-term support. Some developments worth noting were the psychosocial reflection sessions that were conducted in San Mateo, the re-orientation sessions for the DRR Committee given by the trainees in Taytay, and the psychosocial referral activities that were made during the Falcon (Meari) Emergency in Rodriguez. Subsequently, the Programme provided additional capacity building support to sustain the gains from the training: (a) Training of Trainer (TOT) for Ketsana partners, community leaders, CA staff, and other relevant partners; (b) continuing mentoring of trained community leaders to link the psychosocial support institution and network; and (c) development of a guidebook for community-based psychosocial support volunteers. This last output, the guidebook, will be published by CA and shared with other communities, government, and development and humanitarian practitioners as it is the first known document of its kind in the country providing basic psychosocial support guidelines to “non-expert” community volunteers.

Towards Community Resilience

The Ketsana Programme was analyzed and designed from the pioneering DRR work of CA and its partners globally and in-country. Necessarily, the operationalization of certain implementation strategies were also heavily influenced by the changes in the enabling policy environment that came after Ketsana. The consecutive passage of the Climate Change Act (October 2009) and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (May 2010) provided opportunities for partners to anchor their policy advocacy work towards the implementation of key provisions of both laws, and effect related changes in the way local governments engage communities in emergency preparedness and response work. In particular, significant attention was given to advocate for the creation of Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAP) and local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans, as well as the necessary structures that need to be formed by local governments. Parallel to this, national advocacy partners, such as the Disaster Risk Reduction Network (DRRNet) and *Aksyon Klima*—both heavily involved in the formulation and passage of both laws—continued to monitor the implementation of critical provisions with the support of CA.

It can be argued that the overall landscape has significantly changed for the better since the Ketsana Programme was designed. As different government, humanitarian, civil society, and community interventions were completed, public consciousness and advocacy processes kicked in to improve the enabling environment so that the country is better equipped and prepared for similar emergencies in the future. Along with the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) as a guide and the formal recognition of DRR and CCA approaches in development planning and emergency response, we are now at a point where the concept of “resilience” as a unifying framework for humanitarian and development work is gaining more attention and momentum. Christian Aid’s strategy 2012+ document “Partnership for Change” defines resilience as the “power of individuals and communities to live with dignity, responding successfully to disasters and the opportunities and risks they face.”³ The strategy highlights the need to direct our humanitarian and development interventions to focus not just on survival and subsistence but more importantly, on resilience. Christian Aid believes that all men and women have the right to live decently and safely, and have the resources to adapt and plan for the future.

Worth noting about this Programme is the fact that most of the partners involved had no prior specialization in humanitarian response; they are development organizations working to empower the poor and marginalized. Seeing the intricate links between humanitarian and development



Biodegradable waste is processed further to hasten the production of organic fertilizer as part of the associative livelihood program in Brgy. Banaba, San Mateo.

³ Christian Aid, *Partnerships for Change: the Power to End Poverty*, 2012, 11.

work, partners invested in building and improving their capacities in the former, but with the clear vision of linking these to their long-term development mandates. In the end, what came out was a nexus that effectively bound the proven knowledge and practice of both sectors. It is hoped that the interventions and strategies employed in the Programme, with the evidence of actual change it brought to the partners and communities, would contribute to the growing body of knowledge on resilience in urban contexts.

About this Publication

This document contains a compilation of stories, experiences, and lessons learned by Christian Aid and its partners in taking part in humanitarian assistance work for Tropical Storm Ketsana. The relief phase of the programme is not tackled in detail in this document. Instead, it showcases the insights and lessons learned by partners in the task of building the resilience of highly vulnerable communities.

Featured in this volume are the experiences of seven Christian Aid partners who worked together as a consortium in finding effective ways for building disaster resilience in marginalized and vulnerable communities located in hazard-prone and high-risk areas: Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP), Community Organizers Multiversity (COM), Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA), *Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal* (SALIGAN) Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI), Technical Assistance Organization Pilipinas (TAO-Pilipinas), and *Unlad Kabayan* Migrant Services Foundation (*Unlad Kabayan*).

These stories are intended to be shared to the general public to illustrate the efforts of local NGOs and communities to face the complex challenges posed by the Ketsana emergency as well as the well-earned lessons that came out of their experiences. For government officials and policymakers, this document could provide insights on how NGOs and communities view disasters, what they have done to develop alternative measures to achieve resilience, and possible points for engagement (policy measures and service delivery mechanisms) so that government could mainstream resilience into local development policies and fulfill its role as the main institutional support for all communities—urban poor or otherwise. For humanitarian practitioners, this compilation could serve as a source of cases and programming options for delivering the collective and individual elements for community-based DRR, CCA, and resilience in urban contexts.



Ate Belen volunteers to monitor the flood markers under the San Mateo bridge and communicate with Buklod Tao and local officials.

Importantly, these stories—these human narratives from our partners and beneficiary communities in the Philippines—are a modest gesture of appreciation and reaching out to the thousands of ordinary citizens, church groups and supporters of Christian Aid in the United Kingdom, Ireland and elsewhere, who so generously provided support when the Ketsana Appeal was launched back in 2009.

The Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme ends at a time when newer lessons are coming in from the country's recent experience in the Typhoon Washi (local name: Sendong) and August 2012 monsoon (*habagat*) emergencies. Much was learned from Ketsana and much has been applied in humanitarian operations and the enactment of enabling policies since. It is important that these are documented so that we may learn as much we can to prevent such disasters from happening again. Inevitably, the flip side of prevention—response and adaptation—needs to be recognized and dealt with squarely especially in the face of a fast-growing population, an ever-changing climate, and a dynamic governance and social landscape.

Alwynn C. Javier
Senior Programme Officer
Christian Aid



THE PARTNERS' STORIES

Survivors, Not Victims. Resilient, Not Downtrodden. Forging Unity in Barangay¹ Banaba for Better CBDRRM²

Manuel “Ka³ Noli” A. Abinales
Buklod Tao

with Michael Vincent DC. Mercado
Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP)

That early morning of September 26, 2009, *Buklod Tao*⁴ monitoring and rescue teams on their usual watch heard the customary flurry of mobile radio messages from Belen, broadcasting to our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the rest of the teams on the status of the water level of Marikina River.

Buklod Tao's fiberglass rescue boats—fabricated by local residents, the head lamps, the mobile radios, the pair of metal escape ladders, and the innate courage and Filipino *bayanihan* (cooperative endeavor) instincts of dedicated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Team members all proved to be worthwhile community-based development investments for *Buklod Tao*'s grassroots disaster response mechanism. Thus equipped, the DRR Team was confident that Typhoon Ketsana (local name: Ondoy) would be just another typhoon to contend with; the same feeling we had during the bluster of Typhoon Fensheng (local name: Frank) in July 2008 or the bustle of Typhoon Lingling (local name: Ibiang) in August 1997.

“In times of affliction, God and preparedness are our protection.”

But I sensed that early Saturday morning of September was different. Combined fear and apprehension cascaded up and down my 61-year-old spine, as minute by minute incident and monitoring updates via mobile phones from Belen and AI came one after the other. It was the sort of chain of reports that *Buklod Tao* had not experienced during its 12 years of grassroots disaster response initiatives. More and more reports revealed the true nature of the event. We were feeling the same catastrophic anxiety experienced by *Ka Ilyo* as a young man living in Ampid, San Mateo in 1937. We were witnessing the fulfillment of the vision seen in a waking dream by Fr. Benny de Guzman, S.J. in 1996 at the Jesuits' La Ignaciana Retreat House of the whole valley of Marikina and its surroundings engulfed by a huge flood. In my 2009 planner is a note that on September 26, 2009, at 7:54 am, the water level of Marikina River at the San Mateo-Batasan Bridge was at 21 meters.

The sound of sirens grew deafening, amid the blare of DRR Team Leaders' voices, transmitted and magnified through the megaphones, imploring, beseeching the neighbors to evacuate with haste, faster than their legs had ever run. There was commotion ... and then there was nothing.

¹*Barangay* means “village.”

² CBDRRM stands for Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction.

³*Ka* means “comrade.”

⁴*Buklod Tao* may be translated as “People Bonding Together.”

No more sirens, no more advisories. Only silence against the unrelenting onrush and rampage of the flood waters. The water came from three directions: from the west, the rapidly rising Marikina River, intensified by the big drainage canal originating from the Batasan Complex area; from the south, the trapped flood waters of the Nangka River; and from the east, the overflow of two streams, Nangka Brook and Nangka Creek, that run parallel to Gen. A. Luna National Road.

It was like an “abandon ship” scenario in the middle of a tempest. Informal settlers and subdivision homeowners alike had to leave houses and belongings. Only their dear lives were left to be saved. *Buklod Tao*'s capacities were tested but they were not sufficient at that time. The initiatives of the *Barangay* Disaster Coordinating Council (BDCC) likewise wilted inside a marooned *barangay* hall. *Buklod Tao* and the local government went on to undertake separate operations, their lack of coordination the sheer consequence of the absence of cooperation and communication.

People were literally left trapped on the upper floors of their houses. Saving grace faintly knocked on the galvanized iron roof of Rhonny, a heart attack and stroke survivor. The DRR team of *Buklod Tao*, passing by in a rescue boat, managed to tear open the galvanized iron sheets in time to pluck him and his two daughters, Monica, 14, and Danica, 8, out of the rising flood water that was already reaching the beam of the roof.

Monica's Reflections

Three days after the devastation of Typhoon Ketsana, inside the temporary relief delivery operations center of *Buklod Tao* at the community's Holy Cross chapel, Monica requested me to encode her post-Ketsana reflection in my laptop:

September 26, 2009 – Alas singko ng madaling araw ay umaapaw ang dalawang ilog agad sa amin. Hanggang sa aking paggising, sa oras na a las diyos ng umaga, ay ang laki na ng tubig. Tatlong baitang lamang ng hagdanan ang natitira at aabot na sa ikalawang palapag ng aming bahay ang tubig-baha. Halos nataranta na ang Papa dahil sa tatlo lang kaming naiwan sa aming bahay – ang aking bunsong kapatid na si Danica, ang Papa at ako... A las onse ng umaga, hanggang diddib na ang tubig-baha sa ikalawang palapag ng aming bahay. Sa oras na iyon, kami ay nakulong sa loob ng aming bahay. Pakiramdam ko ay mamamatay na kami.

Sabi ko sarili ko, hindi ako susuko lalo na nang nakita ko ang Papa ko na dati nang na-heart stroke, at nilalamig na kasama ang kapatid kong bunso ... Kumatok kami, lumikha ng ingay sa yero gamit ang mga kamao at palad namin upang makatawag pansin man lamang sa labas. Buti na lamang dumaraan ang pangkat ng Buklod Tao Rescue Team sakay sa rescue boat nila. Agad silang huminto sa ibabaw ng bubong namin, sako sa kinalalagan namin sa

September 26, 2009—At five in the morning the two rivers near us overflowed. When I woke at ten in the morning, the water was very high. Only three steps of our stairway remained [above water] and the floodwater had almost reached the second floor of our house. Papa almost panicked because only the three of us were left in the house—my youngest sister Danica, Papa, and me... At eleven in the morning, the floodwater was chest-high on the second floor of our house. At that moment, we were trapped in our own house. I thought we were going to die.

I said to myself that I would not give up, especially when I saw my Papa, who had once survived a heart-stroke, shivering with my younger sister. We knocked [on the ceiling], made a noise against the iron sheets using our fists and the palms of our hands to get attention from the outside. Fortunately, *Buklod Tao*'s Rescue Team was passing at that moment in their rescue boat. The Rescue Team immediately stopped at the place where they heard the noise, exactly where we were located. They

ibaba. Tinuklap nila ang yero upang kaming tatlo ay mailabas at maisakay rin sa rescue boat.

Nang nasa bubong kami, ang Buklod Tao Rescue Team ay naglagay ng mga lubid upang makatawid ang mga bata at matatanda. Pagkatapos, sinabi ng Papa ko na mauna na kami. Natakot ako, kasi maiiwan ang Papa ko na nagiisa doon.

Habang tumatawid kami sa apartment (kasi ito ang pinakamataas na bahay na natira sa oras na iyon), iyak ako nang iyak. Nakita ko na wala pa rin si Papa sa rooftop ng apartment, kaya hindi ako mapakali sa oras na iyon. At lumalabas ako sa tabing na plastik at tiningnan ko si Papa sa labas. Pagtingin ko, nakita ko si Papa na nag-iisa na lamang siya sa bubong ng aming bahay—at siya ay nilalamig, giniginaw, at walang kasama. Umiiyak ako noon, kasi wala akong magawa para matulungan ang tatay ko noon. Humingi ako ng tulong sa Rescue Team ng Buklod Tao (na abalang abala sa pagsagip ng mga bata at mga matatanda) na kung puwede ay ilangoy ang Papa ko, kasi hindi nga siya makalangoy.

Noong nakikita kong kinukuha na ang Papa ko, parang naginhawaan ako, pero, hindi pa pala tapos ang pagtaas ng tubig-baha. Kaya, kailangan naming lumikas muli. At, sumakay kaming muli sa bangka ng Buklod Tao.

Noong pasakay na kami ng bangka, sabi ko na naman sa aking sarili, “Maiiwan na naman si Papa.” Sabi ko kay Papa na maghintay siya at susunod siya sa amin.

Nang nagkita kami ng tita ko at ng aking kapatid na bunso na si Danica sa second floor ng Charles Science Integrated School, napansin ko na wala pa rin si Papa ... Halos dalawang oras na ang lumipas at wala pa rin si Papa. Noong naghintay pa rin kami, mula sa pagkakatayo ng tita ko ... nakita niya si Papa na parating na at nakasakay na sa bangka.

Ang kuwento ni Papa, kaya siya nakasakay sa bangka ay dahil pinilit niyang sumakay at nakipagtalo pa nang bahagya upang tulungan siyang makahakbang sa pader ng apartment. Sa oras na iyon, halos walang kain, tulog, at sobrang pagod ang aking

pried open the iron sheets to haul out the three of us and put us in the rescue boat.

Once we were on the roof, the *Buklod Tao* Rescue Team laid ropes so that the children and the elderly could cross [to the boat]. Then Papa said we [Danica and I] should go ahead [in the boat]. I grew afraid, because Papa would be left by himself there [on our roof].

While we were crossing over to the apartment [building] (because this was the highest structure left [above water], at that moment), I cried and cried. I saw that Papa still wasn't on the rooftop of the apartment [building], so I couldn't rest easy at that time. I would leave the plastic shelter and go look at Papa. When I looked, I would see Papa by himself on the roof of our house—chilled, shivering, and alone. I cried because there was nothing I could do to help my father at that moment. I asked for help from the *Buklod Tao* Rescue Team (which was preoccupied with saving children and the elderly) [and asked] if they could swim my Papa over because he couldn't swim.

When I saw them going for Papa, I was relieved, but the floodwater wasn't done rising yet. So we had to evacuate again. Again we got into the *Buklod Tao* boat.

As we got into the boat, I thought to myself, “Papa will be left behind again.” I called to Papa to wait and he would be rescued after us.

When my younger sister, Danica, and I were reunited with our aunt on the second floor of the Charles Science Integrated School, I noticed that Papa still wasn't there ... Almost two hours had gone by and still no Papa. While we were waiting, my aunt from where she was standing ... saw Papa arriving in a boat.

Papa's story was that he was able to get on a boat because he insisted on getting on and he even argued a little bit for them to help him climb onto the wall of the apartment [building]. At that moment I'd had no food or sleep and was feeling exhausted. Everyone I saw had their heads bowed in prayer. My only wish at that moment was to see my Mama again.

⁵ The name *Baybay Ilog* literally means shore of the river.

naramdaman. Lahat ng tao na makikita ay nakayuko at nagdarasal. Ang tanging hiling ko lang sa mga oras na iyon ay ang makita kong muli ang Mama ko.

Noong ganap na a las kuwatro ng madaling araw, Setyembre 27, bumaba na ang tubig-baha. Lahat ng tao ay natutuwa. Nang tuluyang bumaba na ang tubig-baha at maaaring makapaglakad ang mga tao, at sa aking pagbaba, nakita ko ang Mama ko, umiiyak na ako noon, at halos ay ayaw nang bitiwang ako ng Mama ko.

Pagkalipas ng isang oras, noong pagbaba ng tubig-baha, nakita ko ang aming lugar sa direksiyon ng Baybay Ilog, na napakaraming bahay ang nawala at nasira. Napaiyak si Mama ko nang makita ang aming bahay na isa sa mga nasira at nawalan ng mga gamit.

At four in the morning, September 27, the floodwater went down. Everyone was glad ... When the floodwater had ebbed and people could walk, upon descending I saw Mama, I was crying then, and Mama wouldn't let go of me.

After an hour, when the floodwater was gone, I saw our neighborhood in *Baybay Ilog* ⁵... with so many houses swept away or destroyed. Mama wept when she saw that our house was one of those destroyed and emptied of belongings.

Barangay Banaba

Barangay Banaba is one of the villages in the municipality of San Mateo—a first-class urban municipality of Rizal Province—largely composed of residential areas alongside high plateaus and rocky mountains. It is bordered on the west by Quezon City, on the south by Marikina City and Antipolo City, and on the north by Rodriguez, Montalban, also part of the province of Rizal. Seventy-five percent mountainous and 25 percent low-lying, *Barangay* Banaba is susceptible to flooding and riverbank erosion, a condition that can be attributed to the two rivers skirting the community: the Nangka and Marikina Rivers. Human activities further worsen the vulnerability of the people living in the community, especially the urban poor.

Barangay Banaba may be highly at risk, yet it is still a haven for informal settlements in the metro area. Libis, a seven-hectare patch of land, now holds an informal community of 2,100 dwellers making up 750 households. A recent geohazard assessment of *Barangay* Banaba by the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences (UPNIGS) reveals that the informal settlement in Banaba, covering an area of approximately 11 hectares, consists of at least 2,023 houses with an estimated 2,250 families. A good number of new families transferred to Banaba from other flood-affected communities during the area's reconstruction right after Ketsana. Ironically, the number of residents in the area increased by about 200 households (approximately a thousand people) after the historic 2009 flood.

The Environmental Constraints Map of San Mateo, Rizal depicts Libis in Doña Pepeng Subdivision as one of 13 areas prone to flooding. Libis is located on the embankment of a major waterway, the San Mateo-Marikina River, and its tributary, the Nangka River. Poor settlers have set up their houses on this elongated strip of land. The southwestern part of Libis abuts onto the juncture where the Nangka River feeds into the San Mateo-Marikina River at an almost 45-degree angle. When it rains heavily and continuously, the waters of the Nangka River slam into the turbulent flow of the San Mateo-Marikina River and push the latter's waters back upstream. Floodwaters then begin to inundate houses and arable land, and in the last few years, have begun to erode the riverbanks and undermine the foundations of houses, causing them to slide into the river. But *Barangay* Banaba is not like any other *barangay* in the country. It is blessed with a

people's organization (PO) that has been serving the community for 14 years. *Buklod Tao* has always existed for the benefit of the community, working for the common good. It is guided by three core values: nationalism, creativity, and humility.

Buklod Tao's Beginnings

The origins of *Buklod Tao* date back to the formation of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) or *buklod* in the area by a *tagadiwa* (BEC animator) from the parish. In line with the participatory character of the BEC, I organized, as *tagadiwa*, six *buklod* or cells in North and South Libis, each of 10 to 12 neighbors who met weekly. These six *buklod* merged into what is now known as *Buklod Tao*, which registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on February 1, 1996 as a nonprofit, nonstock people's organization in *Barangay* Banaba, San Mateo, Rizal. To date, *Buklod Tao* has 756 members: 276 males, 480 females. Community organizing efforts in recent months resulted in additional prospective members in Riverside Libis, Banaba.

Buklod Tao officers assume multiple roles. Tess Belen is member of the board and also president of the local seniors' group, the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE). Al Caybot is Corporate Secretary of Banaba Extension Neighborhood Association. Lyn Ramos is Second Secretary of *Buklod Tao* and Adviser of *Samahan ng mga Magkakapitbahay sa Baybay Ilog* (Neighborhood Association in Baybay Ilog or SAMAKABA). Belen de Guzman is a member of the Board of Trustees and point person for the monitoring of the Marikina River water level.

September 26, 2009 marked the historic arrival of Ketsana, which dumped in one day the largest amount of rainfall the country had ever experienced for the previous 42 years. The community had never before seen a flood level of such a height that caused so much damage. Many households were displaced, but overcrowded evacuation centers could not accommodate them. The involvement of *Buklod Tao* for more than a decade in working for the community's safety and resilience paid off during Ketsana's onslaught. The community sustained no casualty due to drowning, structural collapse, or soil erosion of the riverbanks because *Buklod Tao* was able to warn the people to evacuate to safer places. Those who needed to be rescued were properly assisted and brought to higher ground.

In contrast, the local government of *Barangay* Banaba had no contingency plan. This was the reason why informal settlers, spearheaded by *Buklod Tao*, developed their own counter-disaster plan. Since 2003, *Buklod Tao* had been undertaking common mitigation measures like sandbagging and bamboo tree planting in the riverbank areas. But soil erosion still continued.

From Polarity to Partnership

The efforts of *Buklod Tao* remained unappreciated by the local government of *Barangay* Banaba until the close of 2010, when two fortunate events reduced the polarities between them.

First on August 31, 2010, *Buklod Tao*, in tandem with the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP), organized the first ever stakeholders' consultation and kick-off activity for the Banaba Disaster Risk Reduction (BDRR) Project. CDP is a regional resource center based in the Philippines that promotes Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM), facilitates interactive learning and discourse on disaster risk management, and advocates for policies and programs that protect the environment and mitigate disaster risk. CDP has been working with *Buklod Tao* for more than a decade. The partnership between the two organizations started when the inhabitants of Doña Pepeng Subdivision, North Libis and South Libis in Banaba, protested against the ongoing activities in an adjacent patch of agricultural land that residents used as their *tumana* – a piece of arable land planted with vegetables, corn, radish, and other



Leaders of various homeowners associations and people's organizations in *Barangay* Banaba meet at the *Buklod Tao* gazebo to discuss the formation of the Banaba Disaster Risk Reduction Federation that would aid the BDRR Project in the implementation of its programs.

root crops – which was being degraded by a construction company that was building a cement batching plant, right on top of the *tumana*.

Barangay Chairman Reynato Sulit graced the consultation and kick-off event, along with the Municipal Administrator and the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management (PDRRM) Officer. The activity served as the fulcrum for our community to leverage ourselves and our institutions into one herculean movement from apathy, non-involvement, and lack of interest towards a united disaster-resilient community.

Second, *Buklod Tao* paralegal team members, at their action planning session at *Buklod Tao's* gazebo last December 7, 2010, seriously considered having the organization accredited by the *Barangay* Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (BDRRMC). They developed a plan to activate the BDRRMC and to be enlisted as one of its accredited partners (Table 1.1).

As planned, the advocacy paralegals of *Buklod Tao* trooped to the office of *Barangay* Chairman Sulit for a scheduled dialogue on the afternoon of January 4, 2011. The highlight of that meeting was his verbal recognition of his role as the head of the BDRRMC. He also agreed to accommodate *Buklod Tao* as a member of the Council and gave specific instructions to the *Barangay* Secretary always to list *Buklod Tao* as one of the invitees in future BDRRMC meetings. On March 11, 2011, the *Sangguniang Barangay*⁶ of Banaba issued a certification, duly signed by *Barangay* Chairman Sulit, accrediting *Buklod Tao* with the BDRRMC.

True to his word, *Barangay* Chairman Sulit sent an invitation to me, as head of *Buklod Tao's* Emergency Operations Center (EOC), to attend the emergency meeting of the BDRRMC on May 15, 2011. It was the best time for *Buklod Tao* to announce the upcoming Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (CBDRM) training for the seven zones of *Barangay* Banaba, scheduled by the CDP and *Buklod Tao* as part of the BDRR Project's capability development efforts, and invite Sulit and the members of the BDRRMC, particularly the *barangay*

⁶*Sangguniang Barangay* is the village council.

councilmen, to attend. In that same meeting, it was made clear to everyone that the Overall Chief of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management is *Barangay* Chairman Sulit.

Sulit attended all the training activities of CBDRM in different zones of the *barangay*, even when two zones were engaged in seminar-workshops simultaneously. These seminar-workshops took place, to the great joy of the *barangay*, on May 19 to 20, 26 to 27, and June 19, 2011.

The best thing that happened as a result of the local government's partnership with *Buklod Tao* was the installation of an Early Warning System (EWS) to enable people to prepare when the water level rises, *Barangay* Chairman Sulit said. He is also thankful to the CDP for giving the training: *"Ang kagalingan kasi ng nati-train mo ang mga tao, hindi na sila natataranta, nagkakaroon na sila ng idea, bagkos tumutulong pa dun sa mga kapwa kapitbahay niya, kabarangay niya na [malaman na] ganito ang gagawin. Ibig sabihin, nagkakaroon ng systematic na pamamaraan ang bawat isa sa ating komunidad. Yun ang natutunan nila para makaiwas tayo sa damage at magkaroon ng zero casualty."* ("The advantage of training people is that they no longer panic, they get an idea, and instead they help their neighbors and fellow citizens of the village [to know] this is what they should do. This means each one in the community develops a systematic procedure. That is what they learned that enables us to avoid damage and sustain zero casualty.")

*Now it is for real:
The convergence, the unities
All brothers and sisters of the
soil.
Banaba Terrafirma.*

He also acknowledged the advantage of having a system for relief operations: *"Maiiwasan 'yung nagkakadoble-doble, nagkakasilipan, nagkaka-inggitan, 'yun ang tamang pamamaraan para sa akin na ginawa 'yong relief operation na area-area talaga na, bukod tanging sila lang ang pupunta do'n, gano'ng oras sila lang ang pupunta. Halimbawa ang mabebenipisyuhan niyan ay isang libo, hindi puwedeng 'yung isang libong 'yon ay papilahin mo ng biglaan. Kailangan bigyan mo ng tamang pamamaraan katulad ng ginawa ng CDP at Buklod Tao"* ("You can avoid duplication, people seeing [what other people get], getting envious of others, so for me it was the correct procedure to have the relief operations done area by area, [people in each area] are the only ones who go there, at any one time. For instance if the beneficiaries are a thousand, you can't have them lining up all at once. You have to put in place a proper system like what CDP and *Buklod Tao* did."). He added that with the guidelines, the residents learned discipline, a significant change in the culture of the community.

- Box 1.1: Outline of a Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Plan**
1. Transmittal Letter
 2. Message of the *Barangay* Chairperson
 3. *Barangay* Vision and Mission
 4. Location Map
 5. *Barangay* History
 6. Brief *Barangay* Profile
 7. *Barangay* Spot Map
 8. *Barangay* Risk Assessment
 - 8.1. Hazard Maps
 - 8.2. Disaster Timeline
 - 8.3. Seasonal Calendar
 - 8.4. Social Venn Diagram
 - 8.5. Actual DRRM and Adaptation
 - 8.6. Livelihood, Health and Attitude
 - 8.7. Before, Now and Tomorrow
 - 8.8. Other relevant tools
 9. Prioritize Hazards and Prepare a Hazard Specific Contingency Plan

Government Plans for Banaba

Barangay Chairman Sulit said that he has spoken to the Mayor who has a plan to resettle the houses along the riverbanks in three to five years. He also said that Vice President Jejomar Binay, as Chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, has a plan to construct a high-rise building where those on the riverbanks of North and South Libis will reside, along with those from Banaba Extension. He said this plan includes turning the riverbanks into a road to connect Marikina and San Mateo because of the severe traffic here in the vicinity of General Luna. He added, *"Mukhang 95% ay matutuloy ang plano kaya nga nakakatuwa."* ("It looks like there's a 95% chance that this plan is pushing through so it's heartening.")

Typhoon Meari

The efforts of the local government of *Barangay* Banaba and *Buklod Tao* were put to the test from June 23 to 25, 2011 when Typhoon Meari (local name: Falcon) struck the community.

In contrast to previous years, there was impeccable coordination between the *barangay* government and *Buklod Tao*. The monitoring personnel of the two bodies and the staff of the San Mateo Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (MDRRMO) all worked hand in hand beneath the San Mateo-Batasan Bridge to monitor, assist, validate, and give up-to-the-minute updates of the water level of Marikina River.

The *barangay* health workers efficiently managed the evacuation camp. They readily coordinated with *Buklod Tao*'s health-relief-community kitchen staff and gave information on the number of families evacuated at the elementary school and the covered court, which would determine the amount of noodles to be cooked at the community kitchen.

*Makinig. Makinig. Ang panahon ay nag-uulyanin.
Di na alam kung saan at kailan papalo kanyang mga anak na bagyo, tagsibol, tagtuyo, tagbaha. Tao, makibagay na sa pabago-bagong klima
Isabay na rin ang kahandaan, katatagan, at kaunlaran.*

(Listen. Listen. The weather grows senile
She knows not when or where her children may fall,
her seasons of storm, spring, drought, and deluge.
Humanity, adapt to the capricious climate
With preparedness, resilience, and development.)

Barangay Chairman Sulit was very grateful to the CBDRM training because it greatly raised the awareness and readiness of at-risk families to evacuate immediately. For the first time, the BDRRMC did not have a hard time evacuating people. He further added that the proliferation of early warning system tarpaulins in the *barangay* provided a systematic way for people to know when and where to evacuate through the utilization of installed sirens in select areas.

The preparedness, the rescue, the courage, and the *bayanihan* spirit and efforts paid off. Nobody drowned in the flood. In Banaba Extension, the story is told of how a thousand residents used the pair of metal ladders fabricated by *Buklod Tao* and endorsed to our members there in 2006 as an exit route over the high wall of the nearby San Joaquin Village.

Meari brought 116.74 millimeters of rainfall, half of Ketsana's 369 millimeters. Still many families were affected by the flood. Relief assistance came from the Red Cross, GMChannel 7, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Caritas Manila, Katerina Werk Foundation, University of the Philippines' College of Social Work and Community Development (UP-CSWCD), and other organizations. The *barangay* government assisted in the maintenance of peace and order.

Christian Aid advised *Buklod Tao* that it intended to undertake Rapid Damage Needs Assessment. In tandem with the CDP and *Unlad Kabayan*, another partner NGO, *Buklod Tao* took the initiative and arranged a meeting with *Barangay* Chairman Sulit, *Kagawad*⁷ Bong Chan, *Kagawad* Edgar Pilapil, and the active *barangay* health workers to plan and coordinate the Post-Meari Damage and Needs Assessment (DANA) in the seven zones of our *barangay*.

The joint forces of *Buklod Tao* officers and members and the *barangay* health workers, with the full support of *Barangay* Chairman Sulit, undertook the gargantuan task of reaching out to some nine hundred flood-affected families, eliciting answers from them as truthfully as possible. The *barangay* concurred that the three criteria for assistance eligibility were the following: (1) the family belongs to the poorest of the poor; (2) the family's abode was flooded at least knee high; (3) the family so far had not received any relief assistance.

When the identities of eligible families were validated and revalidated, there were complaints about the non-inclusion of some 300 families in the list of qualified recipients. To clarify this matter, *Buklod Tao*, CDP, and *Unlad Kabayan* called for a community assembly at the covered court of Doña Pepeng Subdivision on July 6, 2011. *Barangay* Chairman Sulit, *Kagawad* Bong Chan, *Kagawad* Ed Pilapil, and *Kagawad* Santa Palma were present and staunchly defended the list prepared by their NGO partners.

The *barangay* health workers, Julio Domanico and Jasmin Usman, were instructed to assist in providing access numbers to recipient families for the distribution of Php1,000 cash assistance. Domanico and Usman both noted that people have learned to be more responsive and not stubborn when it comes to evacuating their homes and properties in times of flooding. Usman added that the DRR training they received, coupled with their experience during Ketsana, had brought visible change in the ways and culture of safety of their community.

Fluidity of efforts best describes the symbiosis between *Buklod Tao* and the *barangay* government during and after Meari. This is the current situation in our community regarding disaster risk reduction and management.

⁷*Kagawad* means "village council member."



Community members take part in the creation of a participatory 3D map which serves as an important tool in determining the low-risk, medium-risk, and high-risk areas in the area. The activity was supervised by Prof. JC Gilliard from the University of Auckland, and Jake Cadag from the Geography Department of UP Diliman.

Box 1.2: 10 Essential Steps in Making a Contingency Plan

1. Community-Risk Assessment
2. Disaster Risk Reduction training
 - a. Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Management Training
 - b. Emergency Response Training
 - c. Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) Monitoring
 - d. Early Warning System Orientation
3. Setting Up Benchmark
 - a. PAGASA Station
 - b. Rain gauge
 - c. Localized flood markers, staff gauge
4. Strengthening the *Barangay* Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
 - a. Monitoring Committee
 - b. Warning Committee
 - c. Communication Committee
 - d. Ordinance
5. EWS Workshops
 - a. Community Consultation
 - b. Communication Flow
 - c. Contingency Plan
6. Logistics
 - a. Supplies and Equipment
 - b. Partners – Communication Groups and Volunteer Groups
7. Flood Simulation and Evaluation
8. Community Assembly for the Contingency Plan and the BDRR Plan
9. Public Awareness Plan
10. Review and Improvement

SOURCE: CENTER FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS RESOURCE CENTER

Typhoon Nesat

Typhoon Nesat (local name: Pedring) provided another opportunity for *Buklod Tao* and *Barangay* Banaba to undertake joint relief operations, reaching some two thousand families in high risk areas. The homeowners' association was involved in listing the flood-affected families.

In the midst of a steady downpour on September 26, 2011, they launched the Early Warning System (EWS) of *Barangay* Banaba at the covered court of Doña Pepeng Subdivision. In attendance were Teddy Apiladas, the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer of San Mateo, a representative of Mayor Paeng Diaz, former Councilor Chabeng Nagata, *Barangay* Chairman Renato Sulit, and Banaba Councilmen Edgar Pilapil, Bong Chan, and Santa Palma. The BDRR Project turned over three mobile radios to the San Mateo MDRRMO.

The community has benefited and will continue to benefit greatly from this important collaboration. *Barangay* officials, particularly *Barangay* Chairman Sulit, were appointed as persons-in-charge in the design of the *barangay's* EWS to affirm their stake in ensuring the peoples' welfare and safety. They now work with Belen de Guzman, the *Buklod Tao* person in charge of the water level monitoring at the San Mateo-Batasan Bridge during typhoons.

Furthermore, the CDP⁸ also helped the BDRRMC to understand the Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) Law and to come up with its own BDRRM Plan. This is to ensure that the *barangay* and *Buklod Tao* integrate its actions before, during, and after a disaster with the same framework and goals.

⁸ CDP gave the same orientation to the municipality of San Mateo in 2011.

*“Thank you for the blessings.
Everything in life is a blessing.”*

Advocacy

What can civil society organizations (CSOs) do to further engage the *barangay* in effective, far-reaching DRRM programs and projects? They can:

1. Help the *barangay* realize that it is best to relocate at-risk families out of harm's way;
2. Cultivate a more intense partnership with the *barangay* to undertake Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)-DRR measures on a daily basis; and
3. Optimize government initiatives, since government agencies are enabling instruments towards CCA-DRR capacity development.

But more than the community-based disaster risk reduction training, rescue training, operations, and assessments, one of the more important steps that *Buklod Tao* took, together with the Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNet Philippines), was successfully advocating for the passage of the proposed bill in the House of Representatives and the Senate House for a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Law. On September 11, 2009, I represented *Buklod Tao* in a radio program interview on the Catholic radio station, Veritas, together with World Vision Foundation representative, Ruel Cabile, to discuss the merits of having a national DRR framework through a law for CBDRRM.

On September 29, 2009, some 35 Ketsana-affected members of *Buklod Tao* trooped to the session hall of the House of Representatives to listen to the privilege speech of then Bukidnon Congressman and now Senator Teofisto Guingona III sponsoring the House Bill on DRRM. *Buklod Tao* put in more appearances, together with DRRNet, at the House of Representatives in October, November, and December to push for the passage of the bill. Also with DRRNet, *Buklod Tao* members lobbied at the Senate through January and February of 2010. Finally on May 22, 2010, outgoing President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo signed into law the Philippine National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, or Republic Act (RA) No. 10121.

DRRM as a Big Enabling Instrument

Between typhoons in our community, the days are full of meetings and activities. Activities include planning at the grassroots, strengthening the newly formed *Barangay* Disaster Risk Reduction Federation, rigid zone-based CBDRRM trainings, consolidation of resources, risk mitigation initiatives such as riverbank erosion mitigation, enhancement of plant nurseries,



The Banaba Disaster Risk Reduction Federation, Buklod Tao and the Center for Disaster Preparedness.



A senior resident from Banaba Extension plays the role of a woman needing medical attention during the successful *barangay*-wide flood simulation exercise that involved the MDRRMO, BDRRMC, and other agencies that could help them in times of real disaster.



A staff member of the Center for Disaster Preparedness lets a mother sign the acceptance form during the distribution of relief to the victims of Typhoon Falcon.

*Palakas nang palakas
Ang ugnayan ng dalawa
Buklod Tao at Barangay.
Halina, umawit na muli:
Bawas peligro! Bawas peligro!
Bagyo! Bagyo!
Bawas Peligro.*

*(Stronger and stronger
The links between the two,
Buklod Tao and Barangay.
Come, let us sing again:
Risk Reduction! Risk Reduction!
Typhoon! Typhoon!
Risk Reduction.)*

clean-up drives, the refinement of systems like the EWS, and swift water rescue efforts. There are also sessions to level off understanding, and gatherings at Ciudad Christia for training of trainers, fostering camaraderie, and streamlining and mainstreaming our efforts.

During disasters, we engage in a continuum of activities—early warning, monitoring the river's water level, reporting, recording, anticipating when to evacuate, preparing the evacuation centers—as long as there is threat to life and property by natural hazards such as flooding. This is the praxis of capacity building. I say DRRM is one big enabling instrument.

It has been said that one dimension of vulnerability to disaster is the social milieu. The more there is apathy, animosity, distrust, and utter absence of cooperation in daily governance, the more people are in harm's way and exposed to danger. Disaster resilience is not enhanced and counter-disaster plans for the community become ineffective. The confluence of efforts of *Buklod Tao* and the *barangay* for CBDRRM reduces this dimension of vulnerability. *Barangay* Banaba then becomes a better place to live in.

However, the number of informal settlements at the high risk area in Zone 2 keeps mushrooming. Low-income groups keep flocking to the Nangka River, ignoring billboards installed as early as October 2009 by the municipal government's Urban Poor Affairs Office stating that it is a violation of the law to erect houses near waterways.

Banaba is a community highly exposed to a variety of hazards. Aside from the physical vulnerability of the place—bound as it is by the Nangka River and Marikina River, the banks of which continue to erode swiftly every rainy season—the community is beset with issues related to poverty. Any hazard that hits the area is sure to bring untold suffering to majority of the residents. While the people are aware of the risks they face, they still opt to stay in the high-risk riverbanks because they cannot afford to build their houses in relatively safe areas.

Through the lens of CBDRM and community development, *Buklod Tao* took notice of the community situation and acted on it. The government also took notice. The polarity that existed between them had been stamped out, ushering convergence, cooperation, and unity. With the government's support in shaping policies and designing appropriate DRR actions, *Buklod Tao* and the CDP ensure the sustainability of its EWS and consequently, create a real culture of disaster preparedness within the community.

Buklod Tao describes itself as a civil society organization in *Barangay* Banaba that still has a lot to learn in humanitarian strategies. Its cooperation with the community people and local government has already been established. Therefore, it is in the best position to campaign for cleanliness in the *barangay*; help in maintaining infrastructures for safety; plant trees in the vicinity of the rivers; and disseminate public information on proper waste management. *Buklod Tao* can pursue the improvement of its community and contribute to the effort to maintain the safety of every citizen in the *barangay*.

Buklod Tao has demonstrated good leadership in the community. It is united and disciplined. It has positive relationships and good teamwork within its ranks. If in the past, Banaba's *barangay* officials did not support the work of *Buklod Tao*, had other priorities, and had no appreciation of disaster risk management, now they are on the same page as *Buklod Tao*, largely due to the CBDRR trainings provided by the CDP. More importantly, the *barangay* officials and *Buklod Tao* now work together. The synergy of their efforts greatly helps in reducing the vulnerabilities of their community.

The risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities assessments undertaken by various CSOs and entities in the community have indicated the important areas and concerns that need to be addressed by the community during and after disaster. Tempered by past disasters and gaining lessons from the experience, they can now manage their own situation, most especially with support from fraternal and donor organizations.

The CDP and *Buklod Tao* tandem has survived and learned from countless typhoons. Together they will continue to devise ways and design systems to address the need for safety and build the resilience of the community. They will continue to empower and build the community's capability in disaster preparedness, and mitigation. They will generate livelihood opportunities to reduce economic vulnerability and will advocate policies for short-term and long-term disaster risk reduction. ■

Table 1.1: Barangay Banaba Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan

Layunin: Sa unang tatlong buwan ng 2011 ay mayroon nang naitatag na BDRRMC at ang Buklod Tao ay kasapi na dito.

Aim: Establishment and activation of the BDRRMC in the first three months of the year 2011 and accreditation of Buklod Tao as a member.

Aktibidad (Activity)	Kailan (When)	Sinu-Sino (Who)	Mga Rekurso/Pangangailangan (Requirements)	Magkano/ Gastos (Budget)	Palatandaan ng Tagumpay (Success Indicators)
Sulat kay Kap. Sulit.	Unang linggo ng Enero.	Lalagda ang lahat ng paralegal.	Papel, printer. Paper, printer.	Php 10.00.	Appointment kay Kap. Sulit.
Letter to Brgy Cap. Sulit	First week of January [2011].	All paralegals will sign.			Appointment with Brgy Cap. Sulit.
Pakikipagusap kay Kap. Sulit.	Unang linggo ng Enero.	Lalagda ang lahat ng paralegal.		Meryenda ng paralegal.	Nakumbinsi si Kap. Sulit na magpa-accredit ang Buklod Tao sa BDRRMC.
Dialogue with Brgy Cap. Sulit.	First week of January [2011].	All paralegals will sign.		Snacks for paralegals.	Cap. Sulit is convinced to accredit Buklod Tao with the BDRRMC.
Pagsusumite ng aplikasyon para sa akreditasyon mula sa BDRRMC.	Pangalawang linggo ng Enero. Second week of January.	Sec. Al Caybot.	Mga kakailanganin. Requirements.	Php 300.00.	Naisumite. Submitted.
Filing of application for accreditation BDRRMC.					
Pag-follow-up hanggang maitatag at ma-reactivate ang BDRRMC.	Huling linggo ng Enero. Last week of January.	Sec. Al Caybot.			Nalaman ang status ng accreditation. Buklod Tao accredited sa BDRRMC.
Follow-up initiatives until BDRRMC is reestablished and reactivated.					Status of accreditation known. Buklod Tao is accredited with the BDRRMC.

Community Organizing and Safe Settlement: The Damayan Experience

Ma. Abelaine P. Silva¹

Community Organizers Multiversity (COM)

Communities living for many years along river banks have survived the periodic rising of flood waters using indigenous protection measures. They have seen their houses destroyed by strong winds or flooded by the rising waters of the nearby river. But they have rebuilt their houses over and over again.

However, with the massive destruction brought by Tropical Storm Ketsana in the Philippines on September 29, 2009, they suddenly found themselves being evicted by government and losing their housing and land rights due to a “policy disaster.”

*Sitio*² Lumang Ilog in the Municipality of Taytay was one of those river bank communities that suffered extensive flooding. Houses were destroyed and sources of livelihood were ravaged. The residents evacuated and set up makeshift tents along the roads that were above water. It took a while for the waters to subside. Food was scarce and electricity was cut off. People got sick and some of them died.

The local government of Taytay had no disaster risk reduction (DRR) plan or disaster mitigation mechanism in place. Nonetheless, aid came from non-government organizations (NGOs), government institutions, local government units (LGUs), and others. Neighbors supported each other, some taking in those who have lost their houses. The members of the community shared what they could—food and clothing—with others. For many, survival depended on the quick thinking and resourcefulness of their families and community members.

When the typhoon passed, the residents of *Sitio* Lumang Ilog wondered what was going to happen to them. *How were they going to start rebuilding what they have lost?*

The Long Struggle for Land Security

Sitio Lumang Ilog used to be a vast land filled with overgrown weeds. Access to the land was difficult and there were no provisions for water supply and electricity. In the early 1980s, settlers began occupying the land despite the lack of facilities. These settlers came from different parts of Metro Manila. Some were evicted from their previous residences. Others came to *Sitio* Lumang Ilog in the hope of having a piece of land and their own house without having to pay for rent.

Life was hard for the settlers in those days. There was no water and electricity. The whole place was a big breeding ground for mosquitoes. Some eventually left. Others kept their small huts for weekend visits while they stayed in Manila to work during the week. But many stayed on despite the hardships because they aspired to have their own land and home. Land and housing security

¹ Although written by one author, this article is a collective effort of several individuals. It benefited greatly from the oral accounts of Damayan Homeowners Association (DHOA) President Bella de la Rosa, and other DHOA officers and leaders. Significant inputs were also provided by the Damayan COM Team members Rosita Santos, Ivy Rose Igup, and Shara Mae Mortos. Earlier drafts of the article were reviewed by the review team composed of Luz Malibiran, Francia Clavecillas and Jessica Amon.

² *Sitio* is the smallest division of a village unit.

was important to the residents, especially to those who have been evicted from their former homes in the city. In *Sitio* Lumang Ilog, they found the chance to start over and build a life for themselves and their families.

Around 1984 to 1985, the local government of the Municipality of Taytay planned on turning *Sitio* Lumang Ilog into a tourist attraction. Then incumbent Mayor Godi Valera ordered the settlers out of the place, citing that the land was deemed unfit for residence due to the absence of basic amenities. The mayor’s people would come and tear down the small huts and houses. But as soon as they left, the people would rebuild their homes just as fast. The settlers fought the mayor for their right to remain in *Sitio* Lumang Ilog.

In August 1990, the Damayan Homeowners Association (DHOA) was established in *Sitio* Lumang Ilog to fight for land tenure, promote cooperation, and provide assistance to members. DHOA was a product of organizing work done by the *Kalipunan ng mga Maralitang Taga-lungsod* (Urban Poor Federation or KAMPI), a federation of urban poor groups in different communities in Metro Manila. Some of its leaders and members were relocated to *Sitio* Lumang Ilog, Taytay.

In 1992, Mayor Valera conceded and struck an agreement with the residents: they would be allowed to keep their homes and their land in exchange for their support in the upcoming elections.

Two years later, then President Fidel V. Ramos issued Presidential Proclamation 458, proclaiming the land of *Sitio* Lumang Ilog fit for housing and habitation. It was then classified under the Ramos Administration’s Socialized Housing Project.

Over the years, the residents of *Sitio* Lumang Ilog have resisted many threats of eviction and demolition. They even successfully negotiated for road construction, water supply, and electrical connections.

However in 1999, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Metro Manila Flood Control Project advised DHOA that it will be building a dike that would affect some areas of the community. This meant demolishing the houses of 25,000 families. In response, DHOA joined with other community organizations to form an umbrella organization called *Taytay Laban sa Lakeshore Dike* (Taytay Against the Lakeshore Dike or TLLD). TLLD negotiated for the realignment of the dike so that families need not be relocated. However, provincial and municipal executives insisted on relocating the affected families.

By sheer stroke of (mis)fortune, Typhoon Utor (local name: Senyang) struck on the very day the demolition was scheduled to happen, derailing the plan. More than a month after this event, there was a change in administration. Then incumbent President Joseph Estrada was ousted by means of an unexpected display of people power and replaced by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

TLLD continued its negotiations with the new administration until 2003 when a Memorandum of Agreement realigning the dike was signed. But in 2006, the DPWH closed the project because the funds were no longer enough. This meant that a part of *Sitio* Lumang Ilog would not be protected from future floods.

This presented another challenge for the community. DHOA leaders wrote to the DPWH insisting that the dike must cover the entire length of the community. Their advocacy efforts finally resulted in the completion of the dike and construction of the riprap in 2011 that could provide protection for the entire community when the river waters rose.

In October 2006, then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo declared Presidential Proclamation 1160, which amended portions of Presidential Proclamation 458 and declared 25.2 hectares of *Sitio* Lumang Ilog as an industrial site and parts of the berm slope for socialized housing. The planned housing project would displace the communities located along the river to make way for a medium rise building.

This time, the community leaders negotiated with then Vice President Noli de Castro. They explained that the community rejected the new socialized housing scheme and the medium-rise building because they could not afford the payment rates.

But before decisions could be made on these demands, Typhoon Ketsana struck in 2009 and flooded the whole community. The small dike broke under the pressure of rising water levels. As a result, President Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order 854, which declared *Sitio Lumang Ilog*, along with its neighboring communities, a danger zone and therefore unfit for housing and habitation. Not only did the residents lose their homes and properties, they were also about to lose their right to remain in what they considered to be their land.

Again, the DHOA leaders took up the challenge of fighting for their community's right to their land and houses. They continued the negotiations with the government up to the time when the current President, Benigno Aquino III, was elected to office. In a dialogue with President Aquino, they raised their concerns about gaining land tenure as well as the security of the people living there in times of calamity. President Aquino appointed Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Jesse Robredo as head of a Technical Working Group (TWG) tasked to study the situation of *Sitio Lumang Ilog* and recommend a solution. A three-month moratorium was granted to postpone all demolitions in the area while the problem was being studied. The DILG is spearheading localized TWG consultations together with government agencies, local government units, and the non-government organization (NGO) Community Organizers Multiversity (COM), in Floodway, Taytay, Rizal. The DHOA is a part of the local TWG³.

The onslaught of successive typhoons has revived and intensified demands from government authorities and segments of the public for settlements located on floodplains and along riverways to be relocated to what are considered safer grounds. However, the community is well aware that its sense of security remains threatened by forces other than natural calamities. Nonetheless, the people continue to hope that the government would help them attain land security as well as safety from natural disasters in the future.

Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Community Organizing (CO)

Together with DHOA in the struggle for land security is the Community Organizers Multiversity (COM), a capacity building institution that promotes empowerment of communities. Its goal is to build sustainable and resilient communities through enhanced issue-based community organizing methodology and participatory strategies so these communities can respond to issues concerning housing and land tenure, livelihood, peace, environment, and health.

In 2000, COM got involved with the community of Lupang Arenda at Floodway A and Damayan, *Sitio Lumang Ilog* at Floodway B. At that time, the DPWH Metro Manila Flood Control Project that would affect the lives of 25,000 families was underway. COM helped facilitate the negotiations with the involved government agencies to ensure that consultations were conducted with the affected families. COM also helped set up a moratorium on demolitions while the realignment of the dike along the floodway was being studied. After the Memorandum of Agreement realigning the dike was signed in 2003, COM ended its engagement with the community.

In 2006, COM reestablished contact with the Damayan community when Presidential Proclamation 1160 was declared, designating 25.2 hectares of *Sitio Lumang Ilog* as an industrial site and parts of the berm slope for socialized housing.

COM, through the support of Christian Aid, helped build the capacity of DHOA to respond to the many issues they face in relation to land security and safe settlement, disaster preparedness, and livelihood recovery towards becoming a disaster-resilient community. Community organizers integrated themselves in *Sitio Lumang Ilog* to learn more about the people's way of life, becoming observers and participants of the daily goings-on in the community. Eventually they

³ The other members of the local TWG are the National Housing Authority (NHA), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Land Registration Authority (LRA), Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), Municipal Government of Taytay, and COM.

⁴ *Barangay* means "village."

⁵ The "People's Plan" is a specific output of a participatory planning process undertaken by the community which incorporates a proposed community site and housing plan. This process is explained further in a later section of this chapter.

⁶ *Kangkong* means "water hyacinth."

became privy to the issues and concerns that the community faced—land tenure, housing rights, and livelihood. However, these issues have become more complicated with the reality posed by frequent typhoons and flooding in the area. DRR, thus, became indispensable to the continuing community organizing work. This called for a marrying of DRRM and community organizing.

Mainstreaming DRRM necessitates understanding the disaster-related issues and concerns of the community as well as utilizing existing organizational systems and structures. In the case of DHOA, it formed a committee to deal specifically with DRRM.

Initially, COM, along with the members of the DHOA, gathered data to assess the risks present in the area, determine the degree of damage left by Typhoon Ketsana, map out the recovery needs of the community, and identify the people's capacities. They used the information in the planning conducted by the community for dealing with disasters and in DHOA's succeeding engagements with the broader *Sitio Lumang Ilog* community.

In the beginning, only the officers and the board of the DHOA conducted the activities. Eventually, more members of the community became involved in the organization's work as the DHOA undertook a major restructuring. Based on DHOA by-laws, committees were formed and block leaders were identified. *Barangay*⁴ officials were also involved in the development of the People's Plan.⁵

Formation of Committees and the Convergence of Participatory Actions

The DHOA formed the following committees: Land and Housing, DRRM, Paralegal, and Livelihood.

Box 2.1: Committees Formed by DHOA

- 1. Land and Housing Committee**
Composed of one leader per block. There are 59 land and housing committee leaders.
- 2. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM)**
Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (CBDRRM) – core group expansion to cover all 59 blocks in the community
 - 2.1. Organization of one leader per block and seven officers (59 block leaders of CBDRRM)
 - 2.2. Organization of subgroups composed of the vulnerable sectors of CBDRRM; youth, children, women, elderly, and people with disabilities
- 3. Paralegal Committee**
- 4. Livelihood Committee**
Composed of six clusters: (1) Tailors and Rag Makers in Damayan; (2) Fisherfolk in Taytay; (3) Scrap Collectors; (4) Wholesalers and Retailers (*sari-sari* or variety store); (5) *Kangkong*⁶ Growers; and (6) Various Enterprises.

COM provided capacity building activities to the residents of *Sitio Lumang Ilog*. These included training in community organizing, leadership, and organizational strengthening. The disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) training provided by resource persons from government agencies and NGOs taught the residents how to respond to natural disasters, conduct rescue operations, and provide first aid. In coordination with partner NGOs, LGUs, and government agencies, DHOA also underwent training on:

- Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment (PCVA)
- Hazard Mapping
- Contingency Planning
- Hazards: Fire and Earthquake workshop
- Safety Walk for Children
- First Aid
- International Standards on First Aid Response
- Water Rescue
- Psychosocial Interventions and Processes
- Disaster Preparedness
 - Rapid Assessment (damage reporting, rapid response, and field monitoring)
 - Information and Stock Filing System (Relief Operations)
- Camp Management
 - Evacuation System Simulation
 - Command Center Operation and Mass Handling of Evacuees
- Emergency Drills
 - Earthquake Drill with Children, Youth, Mothers, and the Elderly
 - Fire Drill
 - Flood Drill

Disaster preparedness activities were conducted in every block. Even the children were given training seminars and were allowed to participate in the community activities until they understood what DRRM is and what they can do. The community also learned how to install an Early Warning System (EWS) in anticipation of floods and typhoons. They conducted community-wide drills so that everyone became well-versed and comfortable with the emergency procedures. Their Ketsana experience made them appreciate the need to be proactive in ensuring their safety and security even before a disaster strikes.

In addition, COM and *Unlad Kabayan*, a project partner NGO, offered livelihood training-seminars to everyone in the community and not only for DHOA leaders. The topics included livelihood skills training and enhancement, business enterprises, managing livelihood programs, and how to share or impart the training to others as well as leadership training for the livelihood clusters and the livelihood committee.

DRRM in Practice

The afternoon before Typhoon Nesat (local name: Pedring) struck on September 26, 2011, members of the DRRM Committee commenced early warning procedures. They went around the community, reminding everyone to prepare for the impending storm. The rains came in the night and did not stop. Very early the next morning, the community woke up to the sound of the heavy rains, wind, creaking tin roofs, and shaking walls. Around five that morning, the DRRM Committee started evacuating families that lived near the dike because the river began to rise and the lower parts of the community were already flooded. The evacuees were taken to the nearby church where the evacuation center was set up. Other members of the DRRM Committee were already at the evacuation center listing down the names of the evacuees. This list was needed for monitoring the distribution of relief goods and medicines.

First to be secured at the evacuation center were pregnant women, the children, the elderly, and the sick. Other institutions like the Office of the Mayor and the Red Cross provided relief goods and perform medical examinations for the people at the evacuation center. The members of the DRRM Committee took turns helping the people at the evacuation center. Some of them stayed through the night to watch over the evacuees. Early the next morning, the rain subsided and the storm's intensity decreased, indicating that evacuees could already return home.



Flood drill with the municipal DRRMO.

Typhoon Nesat gave members of DHOA's DRRM Committee an opportunity to practice what they have learned in disaster management. It tested their skills in leadership, rescue and evacuation, management, and administration during an actual calamity.

There was a remarkable difference in the way the community responded to Typhoons Nesat and Meari (local name: Falcon). During Ketsana, only the DHOA officers and *barangay* officials were mobilized. The community did not know how to secure their families and homes. In contrast, during Meari and Nesat, the community already had disaster response mechanisms in place. It had an early warning system. Each block was prepared for the coming of the typhoon. The community had divided itself into groups to tackle different tasks like preparing the evacuation center, helping with the rescue, taking care of food and supplies, and providing first aid. By DHOA's assessment, the residents' readiness to respond to typhoons has now reached 90%.

Table 2.1 compares the community-initiated responses during the three typhoons: Ketsana, Meari, and Nesat.

During Typhoons Meari and Nesat, the DHOA formed committees that engaged the residents in participatory actions and these committees' efforts converged toward making their community safer, more prepared for future disasters, and more resilient.

Community Organizing Methods

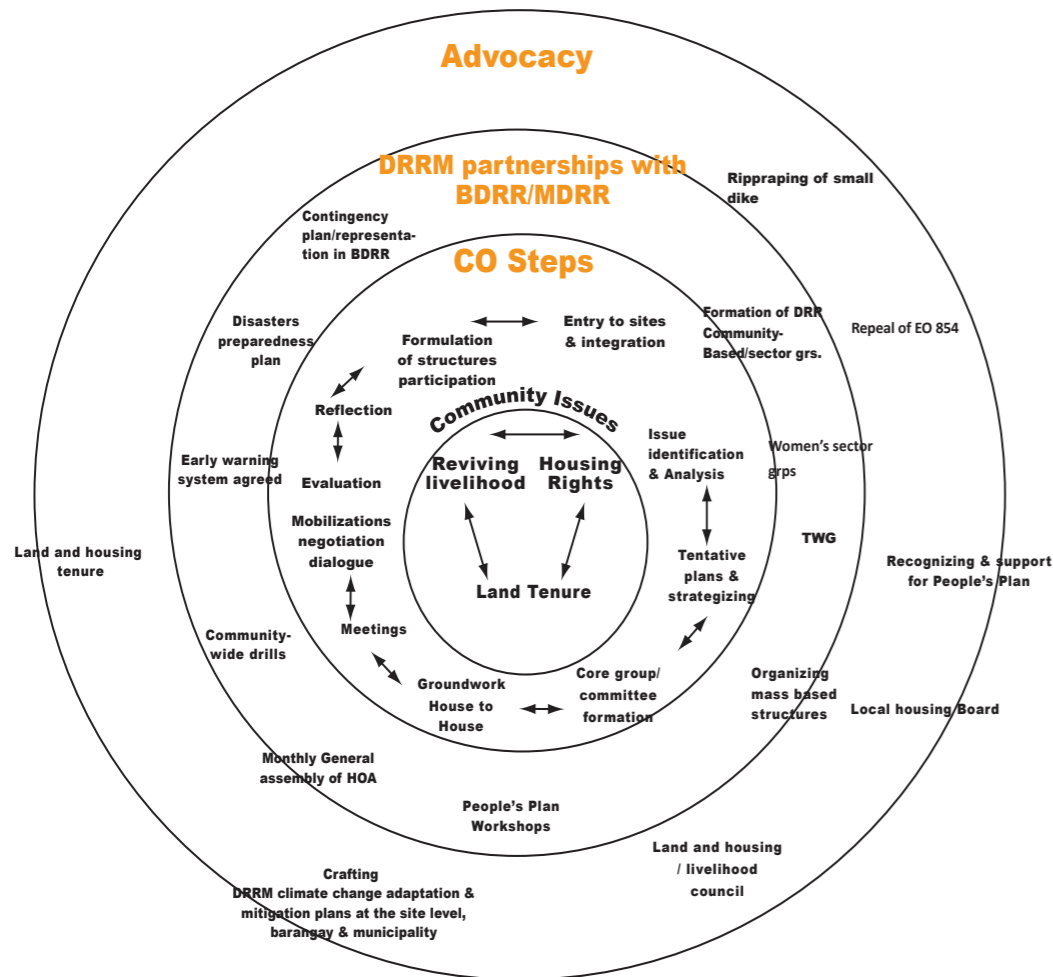
The integration of CO methods and community-based DRRM training was necessary to ensure the broadest participation and learning possible because a disaster affects every family. The earlier approach taken by DHOA was limited to the participation of active leaders but land and housing issues required the participation and education of all members.

Concepts of empowerment were learned through actual experiences like participating in a dialogue with government housing authorities, joining a mobilization or marching to housing agencies, and reflecting as a group on how these experiences affected the community's life.

The knowledge enhancement part of the activities included awareness-raising and information dissemination on DRR, orientation on the various policies that impacted on the community, and orientation on the strategies that the communities can employ to achieve land security. Capacity building activities included developing the People's Plan, organizing and leadership strengthening, advocacy, and various livelihood recovery options.

In Figure 2.1, the innermost circle shows the main issues faced by *Sitio* Lumang Ilog. The circle around it represents the community organizing process, containing the different CO steps

Figure 2.1: Integration of Community Organizing and DRRM



that usually start with a community organizer's entry and integration into the community. This is followed by the identification and analysis of issues, formulation of plans, mobilization, and so on.

The *Sitio Lumang Ilog* experience integrates the DRR process, which is represented by the circle around the CO steps. Within this circle are the different DRR activities, which include partnerships with *barangay* and municipal DRR (BDRR and MDRR) teams. The outermost circle shows the various advocacies of the community generated throughout the CO and DRR processes.

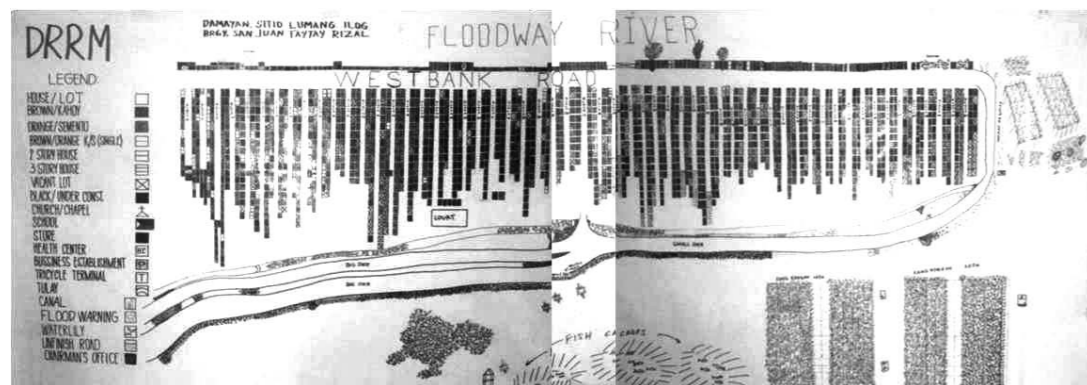
Having integrated DRRM in the community organizing approach of COM, it became intertwined with initiatives to address other community issues. Disaster management became integral to the community's fight for land tenure and housing rights. DRRM did not only teach the community how to deal with floods and typhoons, it also improved the way the people developed strategies to remain in *Sitio Lumang Ilog* vis-a-vis the government policy that declared their area a danger zone. Developing the People's Plan was the process that consolidated the community's many struggles.

The People's Plan

Through the block leaders, sectoral leaders, committees, the DHOA leadership, and the community went through a series of consultations and planning sessions to develop a better,

Table 2.1: Community Responses to Typhoons

Typhoon Ketsana (local name: Ondoy) September 2009	Typhoon Meari (local name: Falcon) August 2011	Typhoon Nesat (local name: Pedring) September 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHOA President Bella dela Rosa led the response. House-to-house warning using a megaphone to prepare residents for evacuation DHOA Board Officers rapidly mobilized themselves to organize the evacuees, used improvised tents, fed the evacuees, and encouraged families living on higher ground to accommodate families who lost their homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early warning system for flood developed: 59 blocks installed with signage Water level monitoring in 31 blocks (Blocks 68 down to 37) along the dike DRR tools consist of whistle, megaphone, first aid kit, lifesaver vests, flashlights, and tents Quick and systematic response and mobilization of DRR response teams Coordination between the municipal and <i>Barangay</i> DRR teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early warning system installed and functional Water level monitoring in Blocks 68 down to 37 along the dike DRR tools consist of whistle, megaphone, first aid kit, lifesaver vests, flashlights, and tents Quick and systematic response and mobilization of DRR response teams Scaled-up assistance to poor and vulnerable persons—the sick, the elderly, children, and pregnant women evacuees Management of 100 evacuees for overnight stay in the chapel by the Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) Response Team Overnight monitoring of the water level in the blocks and identification of vulnerable persons to be given assistance Damage assessment report CBDRR operation command in DRR office in Block 45 Youth sector actively involved in response and monitoring



Consolidation of hazard maps of the 59 blocks.

safer, and more secure community. COM played the role of facilitator as the residents developed the People's Plan, which includes the community's vision of itself and its goals of development and security of tenure. Containing community-endorsed housing options that are technically and scientifically sound, the People's Plan serves as their counter-proposal to the government's plan to relocate them to distant places, far from their sources of livelihood. It is their advocacy platform with the government that would ensure that they can stay in *Sitio Lumang Ilog* without the threat of eviction, and at the same time, be secure against floods and typhoons. The different phases of developing the People's Plan are shown in Box 2.2.

In *Sitio Lumang Ilog*, the process involved participatory consultations by block involving 200 participants per block. The residents incorporated their newly acquired knowledge and understanding of DRRM as well as scientific, legal, and technical information in their People's Plan. Box 2.3 shows the results of the visioning exercise in Phase I of the People's Plan Framework.

The consultations resulted in the identification of several points of action. The lobbying efforts of DHOA's Land and Housing Committee resulted in the construction of the small dike with riprap. This would protect the community from flooding when the river rises. Other action points included the following: fixing the drainage systems in each block in the community; the need for houses to have two storeys for more security when there are floods; and the need to construct schools and health centers. The People's Plan included a financial plan (Table 2.2) for the infrastructure that needs to be established.

Before this plan comes to fruition, the community would have to sustain their advocacy with government to adopt the People's Plan. Alongside this, the community calls for the repeal of EO 854 and the reinstatement of a policy similar to the previous Presidential Proclamations 1160 and 704, which essentially award the land to the residents.

Acquiring new knowledge and actually implementing DRR activities made the people more confident in their ability to fight for land tenure and safe settlement.

⁹ The 12-meter strip refers to the area in the berm slope of the east and west banks of the Manggahan Floodway from Pasig to Taytay that was declared part of the proclaimed area under Presidential Proclamation 1160 issued by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, amending Proclamation 458 of President Ramos which limited the proclaimed area to the embankment of the Manggahan Floodway.

¹⁰ *Kangkong* means "water hyacinth."

DHOA has been actively involved in Technical Working Group (TWG) Convergence Workshops composed of government agencies, LGUs, NGOs, and POs that are being conducted in Floodway, Taytay. The consultations include discussions on issues regarding the 12-meter strip⁹, geo-hazard study, soil test and design analysis, housing feasibility and affordability, 25.2 hectares industrial site, and the specific concerns of informal settlers on the berm slope and embankment. The over-all goal is to come up with housing solutions that will build safe and resilient communities.

Outcomes

Resilience and Empowerment

After more than a year of implementation, the community leaders and the residents of *Sitio Lumang Ilog* have gained much on various fronts. They applied what they have learned in the CBDRRM training such as installing an early warning system and developing a disaster preparedness plan. They have become more resilient and empowered as a result of increased awareness of their rights, the policies that impact their lives, and the realities that they face. After experiencing three major typhoons—Ketsana, Meari, and Nesat—they learned to cope with and adapt to the different natural calamities that came their way. They were able to uphold the *bayanihan* (cooperative endeavour) spirit, saved lives, and secured houses and livelihoods during and after the onslaught of natural disasters. They mobilized the residents, including the vulnerable sectors, and organized community-wide advocacy to demand for basic services and relief assistance. One successful result of this advocacy is the construction of the dike and culvert needed in Block 37. They developed strong partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector.

On the whole, the DHOA has evolved as an organization with improved systems and organizational policies. Nonetheless, it is still learning to cope with organizational problems. For instance, some of its officers are not able to perform their roles properly. They either do not understand their responsibilities or they do not have adequate skills to perform their duties. To address this problem, they conducted training on organizational development and workshops on roles and responsibilities. Another example is the failure of a number of livelihood cluster members to pay their dues. A Livelihood Council composed of cluster heads was formed to address this problem together with the Oversight Committee composed of COM, *Unlad Kabayan*, and DHOA.

These issues are all part of a process that the organization has to go through. Nonetheless, the DHOA leadership has become stronger and community participation has been enhanced.

The Role of Livelihood Programs in Community Resilience

The Livelihood Program that was implemented by COM and *Unlad Kabayan*, its partner NGO, with the community in *Sitio Lumang Ilog* was part of the Ketsana Rehabilitation Project supported by Christian Aid. It began in August 2010. The initial activities included livelihood assessments and community consultations regarding the nature of livelihood activities already existing in the area.

From the livelihood assessment, they identified six main sources of livelihood in the community, which became the basis for creating six livelihood clusters for individual enterprises. These clusters are: (1) Tailors and Rag Makers in Damayan; 2) Fisherfolk in Taytay; 3) Scrap Collectors; 4) Wholesalers and Retailers (*sari-sari* or variety store); 5) *Kangkong*¹⁰ Growers and 6) Other Various Enterprises. Each livelihood cluster selected its head. Two group enterprises were also identified: the fingerlings hatchery and the rag consolidation.

Box 2.2: The People's Plan Framework and Process

PREPARATORY PHASE:

Community Organizing. It must be noted that CO is a continuing process.

- Issue Analysis
- Development of a People's Plan Committee. Part of the role of this committee is to stop the threat of eviction.
- Preparation of a master list of all members of the community
- Socio-economic profiling utilizing a standard format
- Identification of lots for in-city option. This includes conducting land research to provide the community with options in the event that relocation becomes inevitable.
- Structure mapping

Community Organizers and people's organizations (POs) must be equipped with knowledge of the following:

- Technical and scientific know-how and understanding of engineering solutions
- 1987 Philippine Constitution and housing-related laws such as the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (Republic Act 7279)
- Community planning process
- Land acquisition modes and procedures
- Current situation of the community
- Presentation of data to POs or committees
- People's Planning process
- Integrating a gender sensitive perspective

PHASE 1: Visioning

Concept of a Community. The members of the community need to develop and agree on a vision of the kind of community they want.

Housing Option. The community needs to learn about the appropriate housing structures that could be constructed and the location of their envisioned homes in terms of access to basic services.

Housing Finance. This takes into account how much the community members are able to pay for housing and considers payment options.

PHASE 2: Capacity Building, Technical and Scientific Aspects of Land and Housing

This phase entails building the capacity of the community in matters that would help them understand many aspects of land and housing advocacy. This includes learning about relevant laws and policies about land and housing ownership, disaster mitigation, and matters pertaining to zoning, housing, site development, and construction.

PHASE 3: Community Validation

In this phase, the community residents are consulted about the design of the houses that they find suitable and the amount that they are capable of paying. This assumes

that inputs regarding appropriate housing design have already been given to the community. Moreover, the results of the first two phases are validated with the community.

PHASE 4: Public Presentation

The results of the previous phases are then presented to relevant stakeholders like the National Housing Authority (NHA), the local government, and the NGO networks working with the community. Then negotiations will commence regarding the needs presented by the community. This also entails the community's readiness to advocate for what it needs.

PHASE 5: Assessment

After the initial plans and needs of the community have been presented to the stakeholders, the people need to step back and assess their position. They can then review their negotiation and advocacy strategies and incorporate these in the development of their People's Plan.

PHASE 6: Submission to Government

The People's Plan is presented to the appropriate government agency responsible for implementing the proposed site development and housing option. It is here where the government presents the requirements for the subdivision plan approval and for the granting of site development and building permits.

PHASE 7: Project Implementation and Take Out

The community shifts to a project implementation mode by undertaking the following steps: site development, building construction and application for power and water connections.

PHASE 8: Project Turnover and Input of Estate Management

As the community implements the site development and housing project, it prepares to assume responsibility for estate management, the filing of application for the certificates of occupancy and receives training related to these.

PHASE 9: Moving In and Actual Occupancy

The scheduling and phasing of the community members' moving into the housing units will also form part of the People's Plan and would depend on the schedule of construction which can be done in phases. This will be discussed and agreed upon by the community members. This phase will include the turn-over ceremony and the actual occupation of the units by the community residents.

Box 2.3: Initial Output of People's Plan Visioning

1. Concept of a Community (*Konsepto ng isang pamayanan*)

- 1.1. What is a community for you? (*Ano sa inyo ang isang komunidad?*)
 - Has orderly roads (*May maayos na kalsada*)
 - Has secure livelihood (*May matatag na kabuhayan*)
 - Has electricity, water, school, church and health center (*May kuryente, tubig, school, simbahan, health center*)
 - Has strong relationships (*May matatag na samahan*)
 - Has transportation (*May transportasyon*)
- 1.2. What is your picture of a progressive and orderly community? (*Ano ang larawan ng isang maunlad at maayos na pamayanan?*)
 - Has livelihood, flea market, junk shop, water refill station, day care (*Mayroong livelihood, talipapa, junkshop, refill station, day care*)
 - Has roads, health center, electricity, water supply (*May daan, health center, kuryente, patubig*)
- 1.3. Describe your present community. (*Sa kasalukuyan, ilarawan anong pamayanan kayo meron*)
 - Has livelihood, flea market, junk shop, water refill station, day care (*Mayroong livelihood, talipapa, junkshop, refill station, day care*)
 - Has electricity (*May kuryente*)
 - Has CBDRRM mechanisms (*May CBDRRM*)
 - No drainage (*Walang drainage*)
- 1.4. What are the issues/problems in your community? (*Anu-anong mga isyu/ problema meron kayo sa pamayanan?*)
 - No security of tenure because of EO 854⁷ (*Walang kasiguraduhan sa paninirahan dahil sa EO854*)
 - No proper drainage system (*Walang maayos na drainage system*)
 - Peace and order issues among the youth (*Problema sa kapayapaan kasangkot ang mga kabataan*)
 - No evacuation center (*Walang evacuation center*)
 - No health center (*Walang health center*)
 - No curfew (*Walang curfew*)
 - Dark inside the blocks, no street lights (*Madilim sa loob ng block, walang ilaw sa mga kalsada*)
- 1.5. What do you see as the solutions? (*Anu-ano ang nakikitang solusyon?*)
 - The President should issue a new proclamation (*Maglabas ng bagong proklamasyon ang pangulo*)
 - Repeal EO 854 (*Mawala ang EO 854*)
 - Strictly enforce curfew (*Mahigpit na ipatupad ang curfew*)
 - Put street lights and prepare people to pay for electricity (*Paglilagay ng ilaw sa kalsada, advocacy sa barangay at ihanda ang mga tao sa counter-part lalo na sa pagbabayad ng kuryente*)
 - Village watchpersons to do rounds (*Magronda ang mga tanod*)

⁸ A sharer is a rent-free occupant of a dwelling structure.

⁷Executive Order No. 854 revoked two presidential proclamations promising security of tenure to 100,000 informal settlers along Manggahan Floodway and in Taytay, Rizal.

2. Housing option

- 2.1. What are your housing options/solutions? (*Sa usaping pabahay anu-anong option/ solusyon ang inyong nakikita?*)
 - Onsite development/ engineering solution
 - Land is the chosen option of the majority and those who own structures (*Lupa ang napiling option ng karamihan ng mga structure owner*)
 - Land within Damayan if possible and housing for renters, caretakers, and sharers⁸ (*Lupa at bahay ang mga renter, caretaker, sharer - hanggat maari ay sa loob ng Damayan*)
- 2.2. How much can you afford to pay? (*Ano ang kakayahang magbayad?*)
 - Land at Php 500 to Php 800 per square meter (*Lupa - 500-800 per sqm*)
 - Affordable rate (for the land) is Php 200 monthly for 25 years (*Kakayahang magbayad ay 200 bawat buwan sa loob ng 25 taon*)
 - House and lot at Php 1,000 monthly for 25 years (*Lupa at bahay -1000 bawat buwan sa loob ng 25 taon*)
- 2.3. What are the appropriate housing designs for you? (*Ano ang disenyong pabahay ang nararapat sa inyo?*)
 - Structure owner – concrete and if possible with a second floor (*Kongkreto at hanggat maari ay may ikalawang palapag*)
 - Renter, caretaker, sharer –two options: medium-rise building (MRB) if limited space or two-storey concrete, 50 square meters (*dalawang option: medium-rise building (MRB) kung hindi kasya ang mga vacant lot, up & down concrete 50 sqm*)
- 2.4. Savings Scheme (*Schema ng pag-iimpok?*)
 - Php 5 to Php 10 savings every week (*5-10 pesos ang gustong maimpok lingguhan*)

Table 2.2: Damayan Homeowners Association Proposal

Considering the dangers posed by the geographical location of the community, the organization proposes the following activities with the corresponding costs:

Geo-hazard study to identify the hazards in the area, as well as determine the suitability and capacity of the land for the construction of residential structures	Php 1,500,000
Survey works, including the boundary, relocation, topographical, and as-built surveys	Php 630,000
Site development, including the construction of an open canal	Php 450,000,000
Re-survey, titling, and census	Php 525,000

“We have become aware and prepared in dealing with calamities. In working with the barangay, the municipality and the provincial DRRMC, we have become more responsive during disasters and actions are systematic and coordinated. We now have the things we need to respond effectively during floods and typhoons. And we now have the capability to help those affected because we have learned to do first aid, conduct rescue operations, and even manage evacuation centers.

DHOA CBDRRM Committee

A structure was created to manage the program. *Unlad Kabayan*, COM, and DHOA comprised the Oversight Committee and conducted capacity building activities to enhance the community's skills in managing livelihood activities.

The benefits of the livelihood program were far-reaching. The residents found the means to earn additional income for their families. They gained skills in business management and learned how to grow their enterprises.

DHOA members who participated in the Livelihood Program gained a better appreciation of the economic condition and livelihood needs in their community. Being involved in the program also enhanced their skills as community leaders. DHOA's active membership grew when the community learned about the livelihood options available to them.

The livelihood activities helped strengthen families because each member learned to contribute to the tasks. Children became more responsible, especially those whose parents were not always at home because they were active community leaders.

According to Bella dela Rosa, the President of DHOA, “Organizing is important in sustaining the livelihood program. It enables the cluster heads to continuously learn and enhance their skills in managing their clusters. The capacity building seminars also allows them to widen their knowledge on how to improve the community businesses.”

Lessons Learned

DRRM is Vital to Community Organizing (CO)

Understanding the DRR program and its intended benefits to the community resulted in increased acceptance of the intervention as well as increased motivation to participate in program activities. Having been part of the risk assessment and needs mapping, community members realized the various levels of risks that they face. They also gained an appreciation of what it means to be safe and secure in their homes and on their land.

The DRR training—specifically in water rescue procedures, early warning systems, and evacuation and relief distribution system—built and enhanced individual and group survival skills.

DHOA established different committees that were tasked to handle particular aspects of the DRR program. These committees include DRRM, Land and Housing, Paralegal, and Livelihood Committees.

Community Organizing is Vital to DRRM

In the different phases of project implementation, the strategic mobilization scheme through community participatory action was implemented. It involves mobilization for specific purposes and target groups to elicit maximum peoples' participation. It also entails critical analysis of issues and the formation of structures with sectors affected by the issue. Community organizers



Community consultation on the DRRM Act and PCVA facilitated by DRRM leaders.

helped the DHOA strengthen its organization through the formation of different committees and sectoral groups, which developed leadership skills and ensured maximum participation of the community, including the vulnerable sectors such as the women, the youth, the elderly, and persons with disability. The formation of different committees encouraged broader involvement of the community, which can be mobilized for disaster preparedness, response, and rehabilitation.

Delegation of responsibilities to committee members not only increased their capabilities in handling responsibility for the whole group, it also increased their sense of ownership of the program because they are part of the day-to-day operations of the organization.

The inputs of the communities, particularly the vulnerable groups in *Sitio Lumang Ilog*, were surfaced through consultations. After these consultations, the community, led by DHOA officers and assisted by COM community organizers, embarked on a series of activities—planning, training, advocacy, and lobbying—which showed the inter-connectedness of the different committees and sectors with the over-all objectives of the project. Critical to the different phases of the project implementation of DRRM is the use of CO methods.

Community organizing is a critical tool in facilitating people's participation to deal with the issues they face. Its processes are inherently facilitative because it creates an environment

“Community organizing is vital to the implementation of the DRR project because the facilitators (community organizers) made it easier for us to understand the project. The process by which we created committees and identified block leaders helped us a lot... Community organizing helped the people have more patience and become involved in the process.

Bella dela Rosa
DHOA President

that allows the members of the community to identify and analyze the issues that they face and develop joint responses and solutions. The process of coming up with solutions is guided by the principle of meaningful participation when decisions and options are arrived at collectively.

CO builds on the basic principle that the people most affected by an issue are also the ones who could best solve it. Furthermore, the CO process makes people realize their own strengths and capacities and allows them to rely on themselves and on each other in times of trouble. CO develops strong bonds within the community through the identification of a unified goal that would benefit everyone.

These principles are translated into action when CO is integrated into DRRM. For example, in times of disasters like typhoons, the first to respond and help are the neighbors. As such, the DRR process benefits from CO because the latter has already laid down the foundation that makes it easier for a community to cope with disasters. During disasters, the members of the communities pitch in to help and achieve the common goal of keeping everyone safe and of saving their homes and livelihoods. The kind of concerted effort required to respond successfully to disasters is learned in community organizing.

Program Management

From the program management perspective, there were also important lessons learned during the implementation of the project. For one, issues faced by these communities cannot be solved by just one mandate or program. There has to be a concerted effort from various stakeholders and key players. Additionally, strategies and approaches have to be multi-dimensional to respond to the various urgent needs of the community (i.e. safety during disasters) and still address the structural and more strategic issues and concerns (i.e. land tenure).

Role of Research, Science and Technical Know-how

Research and technical knowledge are very important in laying the groundwork for the development and implementation of alternative solutions incorporated in the People's Plan.

In 2011, the NGO, *Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal* (Alternative Legal Assistance Center or SALIGAN), conducted a paralegal training with 28 leaders of the community that included an orientation on the laws related to demolitions and evictions (e.g., RA 7279 and the Building Code). The community leaders also learned about the legal processes involved in community-led interventions in the implementation of the above laws that may conflict with the interests of the community.

The training on geo-hazards that the University of the Philippines National Institute for Geological Sciences (UPNIGS) conducted for DHOA taught the community leaders about the nature of the land and the kinds of structures that could be built on it. They also learned how to measure the land area and the drainage system, and why conducting soil boring and topographical surveys is necessary.

In January to February 2012, DHOA worked with the NGO, Technical Assistance Organization, Inc. (TAO-Pilipinas), which provided capacity

building on subdivision planning and designs. TAO-Pilipinas also assessed the capacity of 10 leaders of the Land and Housing Committee in developing the People's Plan. During the process, the leaders gathered data on subdivision plans and rainfall, and received orientation on topographic surveys.

The DHOA leadership also conducted background studies on the boundaries, titles, and land classification. The leaders collected primary data from the most concerned people or communities. Involving the people in gathering the data was crucial in enhancing the community's ownership of the research results. The participatory process empowered the community as a whole.

They incorporated all the data gathered in the community-led research and consultation process in the People's Plan. This, in turn, consolidated their efforts to claim their land and housing rights and to build a disaster-resilient community. ■

“At the personal level, we learned about the relevant laws that affected us. In terms of skills, we learned and became interested in conducting research. We also learned to facilitate meetings and to impart what we have gained to other members of our community. We learned the value of accountability and transparency. This helped us become better leaders.”

Bella dela Rosa
DHOA President

Building Resilient Communities in Novaliches

Jose Clemente
Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI)

The Sky is Falling

The rain fell down ripe, nasty and full, thrashing the bare earth and galvanized iron roofs with loud awful thuds that boomed and punched their way out one's ears and chest. For the residents of California Riverside and Tomasa Riverside in *Barangay*¹ San Bartolome, Novaliches in Quezon City, years of living on the easement of the meandering Tullahan River had freed them from ignorance or wishful thinking. They knew very well what was coming next. What they were unprepared for, however, was how quickly it engulfed and took over the neighborhood.

The flood waters rose, breached the river's banks and claimed everything in their path. With complete contempt, the flood waters ignored all natural and constructed boundaries and took everything, transforming the expanse into a giant restless, eddying pool relieved only by the protrusion of the occasional roof and tree top.

The residents erupted into purposeful action, free-sprinting, mad-dashing to higher ground. *Ate*² Lanie scrambled to carry her belongings to the second floor of a neighbor's house, unaware that the flood would rise above it and gobble up everything. *Ate* Vilma managed to rescue just a few precious personal documents and the clothes on her back.

When the flood swelled to about chest high, Flor and her husband reconciled themselves to the inevitable, turned off the mains, padlocked the door, and abandoned their house. They struggled against the raging, swirling currents, doing their utmost not to drown. As luck would have it, they got hold of a floating piece of styrofoam and used that to carry their young grandson and themselves to safety.

While others rode out the flood in the safety of California Village's multi-purpose hall, Glenda rushed back to her inundated house just as the flood waters began to subside. Foremost in her mind was the money entrusted to her by her church group, and she was going to get it back.

When she got to her house, most of her things had been swept away by the flood, and her handbag, which had hung by the nail on the wall, was nowhere in sight. Glenda hunched down and frantically fumbled about the still-flooded floor swirling with mud and debris. After a few minutes of groping in the muck, she finally felt something. It was her shoulder bag! By chance, it was jammed fast to the floor by a plastic cabinet that had fallen on top of it, keeping it safe from the retreating waters.

She thanked God for her good fortune.

¹*Barangay* means "village."

²*Ate* means "older sister."



Aftermath of Tropical Storm Ketsana in California Village.

Later that day, the entire world would learn that on September 26, 2009, Tropical Storm Ketsana (local name: Ondoy) had dumped over 341.3 millimeters of rain water in Metro Manila in a matter of six hours, causing the worst floods in the capital. Even by Filipinos' undemanding standards, the state of the nation's preparedness to deal with extreme weather events is lamentable. Like most communities in danger zones, California Riverside and Tomasa Riverside in *Barangay* San Bartolome were bereft of early warning systems, evacuation plans, or community-based quick response teams. Like most local governments around the Philippines, *Barangay* San Bartolome was also without a *Barangay* Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (BDRRMC) ready to respond to a humanitarian crisis.

Given all that, it was indeed a surprise that although at the last count Ketsana took 747 lives, no one in *Barangay* San Bartolome died.

Accidental Partners

Socio-Pastoral Institute

The Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI) was founded in 1980 during the darkest hours of martial law in the Philippines. Confronted by an illegitimate regime that corrupted democratic institutions and wantonly violated human rights, and by a Catholic Church divided on how to respond, progressive priests and religious from various congregations came together and put up SPI to proclaim that work for justice and social transformation is an integral and constitutive dimension of our Christian faith.

Today, SPI participates in the building of peace communities or *Darusalams* in the urban poor Muslim communities of Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur in Mindanao. That venture involves helping the communities develop their own leaders, self-help programs, and people's organizations while strengthening the local Inter-Faith Council to help them deal with various socioeconomic, political, and environmental challenges.

The stirring feature of SPI's work is the link of its community development endeavor to spirituality or a way of life that enhances life for all, especially the poor. The health campaigns, adult education, feeding program, women's program, and interfaith work are framed as elements of the *Khalifa's* (stewardship) mission to care for all of creation.

SPI has also been working with the poorest local Catholic parishes and dioceses to help them become stewardship churches. A crucial feature of the accompaniment process is the development of a local team which spearheads the re-evangelization education process that covers both the center and the periphery—the parish and the people living in the far-flung *sitio*³. This is in light of the fact that most Catholics today hold fast to a faith muddled by folklore, superstition, and magic.

SPI sees stewardship as vital to the renewal of both Church and society because the only way we can make this a better, kinder world is if we share our blessings with each other, one gift at a time.

As it happened, one of the members of SPI's Spirituality of Stewardship or *Buhay Katiwala*⁴ Task Force, Sr. Mila Singap, FLP, was assigned to Christ, King of the Universe Parish (CKUP) in San Bartolome. When Ketsana demolished the urban poor communities in the parish, we already had an insider who could lead the rapid assessment process to determine the extent of the humanitarian response required.

Fr. Jun de Peralta, CKUP, and the Church of the Poor

By his guise and garb, it is understandable if Fr. Jun de Peralta does not seem like a respected and venerable member of the clergy of the Diocese of Novaliches. After all, his predilection for simple, nondescript clothes favored by the working class is in stark contrast to the habit and bidding of most priests to appear august and esteemed. Moreover, it does not help that when this slightly undersized man with a booming voice and easygoing charm speaks, he interfuses his discourse with street waffle and humor rather than with biblical passages and Christian parables as most "real" priests are wont to do.



Fr. Peralta visits a flood victim.

It is only when one learns that Fr. Jun is an honest-to-goodness stalwart of the Church of the Poor⁵ that people begin to understand the "unsuitable" veil of perplexing indicators, and make sense of the bewildering ensemble of priestliness, simple clothes, earthy speech, and folksy manner.

Nine parishes in the Diocese of Novaliches suffered varying levels of ruin by inundation. At CKUP alone, close to 800 families dwelling by the riverside were in dire need of assistance as their homes and livelihoods were either completely washed out or badly damaged by the flood. To add to the difficulties, Fr. Jun had only recently assumed the post of parish priest of CKUP and was still in the process of getting his bearings.

Working in their favor, however, was that the CKUP had a Social Service and Development Ministry (SSDM) in place. It was headed by Rene Busmente, a soft-spoken titan of a man who walks and treads lightly, who is ever so careful not to intrude on others or draw attention to himself. He is

³*Sitio* is the smallest division of a *barangay* or village unit.

⁴*Buhay Katiwala* means "Life of Stewardship."

⁵ The "Church of the Poor" is a reference to the vision of the Philippine Catholic Church as articulated by the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines. See Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II), *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* (Manila: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1992), 47-52.

a former overseas worker who now commits his relaxed personality and almost all his free time, skills, and resources to serve the Church and the communities in its margins.

Unfortunately, the SSDM's main experience was limited to organizing and providing logistical support to medical missions. It was in no way adequately prepared to meet a humanitarian emergency of this nature and scale.

The possible missteps in responding to this kind of complex humanitarian crisis are legion. When SPI approached Fr. Jun with a proposal to provide relief for those affected by the flood, he also reached beyond the borders of the Parish to enlist the help of a longtime friend and head of the Land and Housing Ministry of the Diocese of Novaliches, Joseph Garcia.

It takes a man who is larger than life to make it in the confrontational world of community organizing. Joseph is such a man—large and full-sized; a flamboyant disputant and an enchanting storyteller. Like a tank, he plows forward against all opposition.

As a young man, Joseph cut his teeth in organizing informal settlers in Manila so that they may avail of the protection and rights accorded to them by law in situations of illegal and often violent demolition, relocation, and resettlement. When asked why he is still hacking away, doing battle side by side with insecure communities in Novaliches, he said, "I myself come from disadvantaged circumstances. I know how hard it is and what it is like. I just want to give back and help in any way I can."

With Rene and the SSDM and Joseph and the Land and Housing Ministry of the Diocese in his corner, Fr. Jun felt he was as ready as he could ever be to tackle this humanitarian emergency head on.

Christian Aid

Christian Aid is an international development agency that works with peoples of all faiths and persuasions in over 50 countries around the world to eradicate poverty. It works exclusively through local partners rather than by directly implementing projects or programs.

Christian Aid is committed to build the capacity of its local partners and provides them with the necessary funding support to implement effective and meaningful programs on the ground.

When Ketsana ravaged Metro Manila, Christian Aid realized that it did not have a single partner in Manila with the capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies. As a result, Christian Aid called on some long-term partners in the provinces like Community Organization of the Philippines Enterprise (COPE) Bicol and the Social Action Center of the Prelature of Infanta, Quezon, and asked if they could lend their expertise to lead the humanitarian assistance and to mentor the Manila partners.

Christian Aid invited SPI and its other Manila-based partners to respond to the humanitarian emergency and to develop the requisite proficiencies along the way. Little did we know that this experience would be so powerful that it would induce us to rethink and reinvent ourselves. As to what SPI would become, no one knew at that point. Were we to metamorphose into a development agency with a strong emergency program? Or perhaps become a legitimate relief agency with strong developmental sensibilities and capabilities?

At that point, the only thing we knew for certain was that Ketsana had taken us to a crossroads, to a place marked by the need to question established institutional practices and traditions, combined with the need to develop new capacities. It was in this setting of utter uncertainty that we were now called to join this dance of change and revolutions.

And so with goodwill and lots of derring-do, SPI, Christian Aid, and CKUP leapt into the unknown, praying that somehow, a net would appear to catch us before we hit the stony ground.

Keeping it Together

Four frameworks provided us with the scaffolding on which to glue the many conceptual, operational, and programmatic concerns of this Project into a coherent approach. These were: (1) the Hyogo Framework, (2) the linking of relief with development, (3) the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, and (4) the integration of spirituality and social change.

Hyogo Framework

By adopting the Hyogo Framework, we were driven regularly to consider and attend to the five major gaps and challenges that relief experts have identified as crucial to address for humanitarian campaigns to succeed:

1. Governance: organizational, legal, and policy frameworks
2. Risk identification, assessment, monitoring, and early warning
3. Knowledge management and education
4. Reducing underlying risk factors
5. Preparedness for effective response and recovery

Linking Relief to Development Framework

The sorting of interventions according to the categories of relief, rehabilitation, and development is often puzzling, subjective, and weighed down with acrimonious debate. To a great extent, the impetus is inadvertently driven by funding agencies that are comfortable with clearly demarcated project boundaries and phases alongside pre-determined timetables and sets of interventions.

In the Ketsana Project, we agreed to try our utmost to implement the humanitarian endeavor in a way that brings these four frameworks together. That meant introducing developmental activities as close to the heels of relief as possible as well as regarding the saving of lives and other community assets as an immutable requisite of development.

This approach clarified for us that setting up an effective community-based, *barangay*-synchronized disaster risk reduction (DRR) program to reduce the severity of disasters and shocks would translate into a significant reduction of the need for emergency relief and aid. Less demand for relief and aid, in turn, means more resources to invest in enhancing the asset base of the community for its long-term security and development.

Sustainable Livelihood Framework

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework is an asset-based framework for understanding poverty and the appropriate development activities for its remedy. The Framework identifies five groups of assets—physical, social, political, natural, and economic—that must be protected and nurtured to help a community withstand, cope with, and recover from natural and human-made shocks.

From this asset-based standpoint, the Ketsana Project had to be a collaborative and multidisciplinary endeavor because no single partner had all the capacities to secure the five categories of assets. Enlisted into active service was a motley group of civil society organizations with a colorful array of strengths and experiences: *Unlad Kabayan*⁶ for sustainable livelihood, Technical Assistance Organization, Inc. (TAO-Pilipinas) for infrastructure improvement, Partnership of Philippine Support Agencies Inc. (PHILSSA) for national DRR and climate change advocacy, University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences (UPNIGS) and Manila Observatory (MO) of the Ateneo de Manila University for scientific studies, and *Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal* (Alternative Legal Assistance Center or SALIGAN) for paralegal education.

As the area-based partner in Novaliches, SPI was responsible for seeing that the seeds of resilience and development fell on fertile ground. This meant preparing the community so that all

⁶*Unlad Kabayan* literally means “Progressive Compatriot.”



The multi-purpose hall in California Village was used as an evacuation center during Typhoon Falcon.

project interventions, including those from collaborating non-government organizations (NGOs), would flourish in the community.

Relating Spirituality with Social Change Framework

In the world of poverty eradication and social transformation, spirituality is hardly ever brought up as important or pertinent.

To a great extent, this is due to the popular misconception that spirituality is “doing what priests do.” That while prayer may give us resolve and spiritual energy, it does not by itself establish participatory democratic organizations or meet the poor’s basic needs. Whereas worship may do wonders to our interior lives, it does not necessarily lead to redistribution of social wealth or the creation of equitable standards of living.

But spirituality is not just about prayers and rituals. It is not just about what we do on Sundays, or about making personal sacrifices and meeting religious obligations. Spirituality is a way of life. It is a commitment to nonviolence and respect for life, to solidarity with the poor and a just economic order, to tolerance and truthfulness, to equal rights, and to genuine partnership between men and women. And most importantly, it is a way of life that is committed to sharing our gifts and blessings with others in love and in justice, especially with the poorest of the poor.

As such, spirituality is a fundamental and constitutive dimension of social transformation.

Any attempt at social change that focuses exclusively on correcting external structures, policies, mechanisms, or institutions that excludes the conversion of the human heart is doomed to fail. As surely as there are unjust social structures that breed injustice, there are habits of the mind and heart that promote oppression as well.

This is exactly the point that Bishop Julio Labayen refers to in his book, *Revolutions and the Church of the Poor*. The renowned writer, Conrado de Quiros, summarized the essence of the book in his review: “To Bishop Labayen, the heart of revolutions is the revolution of the heart.”

This insight is not exclusively Roman Catholic or even Christian, but SPI believes that it is absolutely correct.

With these four frameworks—Hyogo, the linking of relief with development, Sustainable Livelihoods, and the integration of spirituality with social change—we had a conceptual and operational scaffolding to hold the undertaking together. All that was left to do was to pound ahead at the serious work of humanitarian assistance so that out of helplessness and uncertainty might come hope.

Shelter from the Storm

Barangay Bagbag and Barangay San Bartolome

Due to its sheer size and complexity, it took a few months to bring all the components of the Ketsana Project together. In the intervening time, CKUP took the initiative to raise and distribute aid to the flood victims in the nearby communities.

Through the generosity of the Red Cross, television station ABS-CBN, the Knights of Columbus from Holy Cross Church, Couples for Christ from Odelco Subdivision, the nearby Chinese communities, kind families from *Barangay* Goodwill and California Village and many others, CKUP collected a fair amount of food and nonfood items which they later distributed to the victims.

A month or so after SPI submitted the results of its rapid assessment of the situation of informal settlers around CKUP, Christian Aid appointed COPE as the lead agency for housing assistance and livelihood support in Bagbag and San Bartolome.

Shelter Assistance

At Fr. Jun's instigation, a fresh approach to packaging and delivering shelter assistance was modeled in Bagbag. It was more equitable and responsive to the needs of flood victims than typical modes of aid that were top-down in orientation and execution.

In this approach, the beneficiaries themselves determined the assortment of materials that made up the shelter assistance package. The only constraint was that the aid package must fall within the budget of Php 5,000 per household, a ceiling that Christian Aid, CKUP, and the COPE team had agreed upon given the resources available and the scale of devastation.

However, even if the beneficiaries decided to exceed the allotted amount, they could still avail of the package as long as they provide the difference. Through the involvement of the beneficiaries, the shelter assistance scheme closely matched their needs.

A key mechanism in the operation was the issuance of access cards to legitimate beneficiaries. The access card is a standard article in most aid efforts. Legitimate beneficiaries were identified from house to house based on a set of predetermined criteria like poverty, number of children, and extent of damage suffered.

This access card also carried a list of materials that could be requisitioned along with the corresponding prices. All the beneficiaries had to do was to write the specific building materials and the quantity that they required on the cards and submit them to the designated hardware store on the appointed dates.

The authorized local hardware, in turn, verified the submitted access cards by matching the signatures to a master list of legitimate beneficiaries. Upon proper authentication, the store released the materials. Because the hardware store is near the community, the beneficiaries just brought the materials home using tricycles or push carts.



Community members widen the exit route by the riprap.

This method circumvented the massive logistical nightmare involved in centralized deliveries from warehouses as well as the issues of security and crowd and quality control.

Livelihood Support

When the muck from the calamity had settled and the need for relief receded, the Cash-for-Work Program was started to clean and repair the walls of the canals running by Oro and Bicol Compounds. This was a strategic move to wean people away from dependence on aid and to nudge them in the direction of self-reliance.

This case blurs the line between relief and development. By using relief funds to compensate people for cleaning and repairing an important community asset—the water canals—the initiative moved into developmental territory.

Aside from the Cash-for-Work Program, financial support was also provided to kick-start the formation of group enterprises that could provide the flood-stricken community with basic products vital to its recovery and resilience. This endeavor, which involved navigating through needs analysis, technical marketing survey, and business plans, was spearheaded by Jojo Rom of COPE.

Noteworthy in the approach was the development of a Livelihood Committee as the central mechanism for overseeing the various aspects of the group enterprises. It was composed of trusted community leaders as well as representatives from CKUP and COPE.

Out of this undertaking arose two group enterprise schemes: a rice store and a fresh meat shop. These mini-enterprises served not only as providers of essential goods to the community but also as a training ground on entrepreneurship and business management.

Barangay San Bartolome and SPI

Sometime in June 2010, a good nine months after Ketsana struck, Christian Aid gave the green light to the “Building Disaster Risk Reduction Mechanisms (DRR) for Highly Vulnerable Communities” Project.

With SPI as the main proponent, the Project involved developing community-based DRR programs and responders, strengthening local peoples’ organizations, and mainstreaming DRR into the *barangay* and the CKUP.

With this new Project, we had to shift our efforts from Bagbag to San Bartolome. Bagbag had already benefitted greatly from the shelter and livelihood assistance led by COPE and Christian Aid, so Fr. Jun proposed that this time around, we come to the aid of the informal settlers in San Bartolome. Nonetheless, we invited the leaders from Bagbag to attend the DRR trainings for San Bartolome.

The DRR training was both intensive and extensive, with modules that include basic DRR concepts, the Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) Act of 2010, the Hyogo Framework, and the hazard mapping and contingency planning. In all, we facilitated four DRR modules, each taking about two to three days to finish.

“As Cluster Leader, I share everything I learn here with my community,” Florence “Unso” Pastor remarked on the importance of the DRR training. “In that way my neighbors become more aware of our situation in the danger zone and they can begin to think of ways they can participate in our DRR program.”

Our partner NGOs also gave training to equip the beneficiaries with a miscellany of knowledge and skills essential to the building of a hazard-resilient community, including the development of people’s assets.

SALIGAN gave paralegal training on countering Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), urban governance, and the DRRM law. The people’s organization, *Buklod Tao*,⁷ hosted learning visits that gave the people from our communities a peek at early warning systems and livelihood projects of another area in a danger zone. Christian Aid provided psychosocial training to help flood-affected people deal with the shock and trauma.

Fr. Jun attests to how the training has boosted the people’s self-confidence. Someone from the informal communities approached him and told him, “Father, I may not have gone to college but now that I’ve finished paralegal training, they cannot twist the law to take advantage of me anymore.”

The point of the intensive education campaign was not to ram scholastic knowledge down people’s throats, but to provide them with the basic common sense “doables” and inspiration necessary to build resilient communities. With this knowledge from the DRR training under their belt, the people of the community moved on to undertake two crucial activities towards resilience: the Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment (PCVA) and Contingency Planning.

In the PCVA, the community used popular participatory tools like the Venn diagram, the historical timeline, transect walks, and the seasonal calendar to appraise its capacities and vulnerabilities. As a result, the community came to a clearer, more insightful appreciation of its situation, its vulnerabilities, its resources, and capabilities to deal with hazards and shocks.

The Contingency Plan is about what the community will do before, during, and after worst case scenarios. This was collectively drawn up by the residents based on the insights and results of the PCVA as well as their collective experiences of dealing with previous disasters.

⁸*Ka* means “comrade.”

A major part of the Contingency Plan is an orderly evacuation plan. This requires the formation of community-based committees that will oversee the potentially chaotic process, ensure that everything goes smoothly, and no one is left behind. In San Bartolome, the following committees were created and staffed by properly trained community-based volunteers: Transportation, First Aid, Physical and Psychosocial, Health and Sanitation, Food and Water, Early Warning and Evacuation, Complaints, Rescue and Recovery, Protection and Security, and Communications.

Like most people in the area, Antonio “*Ka*⁸ Tony” Namoro was a victim of the flood. He lost half of his house to Ketsana. But when shelter assistance from COPE and Christian Aid came, he graciously gave way to others who had suffered worse than he so that they could avail of aid before him.

“I still have a place to stay while others do not. So it’s only fair that they should receive assistance first,” explained *Ka* Tony.

Ka Tony is now the head of the Early Warning System Committee and the Emergency Preparedness and Response Team (EPRT). “When it rains, I stay up the whole night monitoring the river. We made a critical level marker on the riprap (river wall) and when the river reaches it, I go from house to house and wake people up so that they are not caught unprepared.”

Princess Briol is the only resident of California Riverside Extension who owns a telephone line. When there is a heavy downpour, she uses that asset to call La Mesa Dam, the government weather service (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration or PAGASA), *Barangay* San Bartolome, and SPI to make sure that the community has the latest and most reliable information. “This is my way of giving back to the community,” she said.

Reflecting on the outpouring of national and international support and assistance that they received after the flood, Ate Flor said, “We are fortunate because in our case, with the disaster came grace. Thank you to SPI and thank you to Christian Aid. Now we have an early warning system, community-based quick response teams, and we have identified where the most vulnerable in our community are.”

First Fruits

For all its limitations and imperfections, the Project has produced a core group of leaders with the skills and commitment to lead the process of enhancing the community’s resilience. These committed and trained individuals are organized around community-based committees with various specializations that play a crucial part in the humanitarian operation, especially in the course of evacuations. Importantly, actions of community-based committees are dovetailed to the response and rescue efforts of both the local government and CKUP.

The intensive DRR training and the formation of community-based response committees have also resulted in the formal inclusion of our DRR trained *sitio* leaders in the *Barangay* Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Council (BDRRMC) of *Barangay* San Bartolome.

As a matter of course, we coordinate all our DRR activities with the *Barangay* Chairperson, Dong Pascual. But this is mostly due to *Barangay* Secretary Sheryl Bernardo, *barangay* staff members Danny Mariano and Marie Keng, *Barangay* Health Worker Noemie San Juan, and *Barangay Tanod*⁹ Carmen Lucio and Romeo Darlucio, who all diligently attended our DRR training. They championed the inclusion of our DRR trained *sitio* leaders in the BDRRMC.

Toning Balang (FORGE) and Shirley Bolanos (Coastal Core Inc.)¹⁰ told us, “It is a wise strategy to include the *barangay* from the very start and woo them as partners.” This is a tip that we took to heart from the outset and it has proven fruitful.

⁷ *Buklod Tao* (which literally means “ People Bonding Together”) is a community-based organization in *Barangay* Banaba in San Mateo, Rizal. See Chapter 1 of this volume.

⁹*Barangay Tanod* means “Village Watchperson.”

¹⁰ FORGE (which stands for Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors) and Coastal Core Inc. are partner NGOs of SPI.

At first glance, the inclusion of our trained *sitio* leaders in the BDRRMC may seem trifling because there is a law mandating each *barangay* to form its own council. But in our estimation, it is a small triumph worth noting because most *barangay* are not properly trained in DRR. Although *barangay* governments often start their DRR program with the best of intentions, most proceed on a catch-as-catch-can manner. More often than not, they just conjure the BDRRMC out of thin air and assign any person whom they fancy to staff this council.

By training and developing community-based DRR teams with the skills to respond to humanitarian emergencies, we have made available to the *barangay* a pool of experts that can be tapped to become members of the BDRRMC. While it has been common practice to include anyone arbitrarily in the various *barangay* councils, the presence of DRR-trained community leaders made it inevitable that they be included in the BDRRMC.

Officials of nearby *Barangay* Bagbag have heard about our effect on *Barangay* San Bartolome and they are now eager to join us in the remaining DRR training sessions.

The CKUP

SSDM Coordinator Rene Busmente, lay ministers Efen Lagunilla and Frank Salgo, and SSDM member Dories Jupia came to most of the training sessions and participated in the rolling out of the DRR program in the communities so that they now have their feet planted squarely on DRR ground.

But Fr. Jun was not satisfied with this. He noted that the urban poor community leaders were more diligent in attending the DRR training, PCVA, Contingency Planning, and community-based quick response committees than the members of the SSDM. The common explanation is that most people in the SSDM are employed and have less time to devote to this undertaking. They also tend to come from better-off parts of the parish and live in places that are less prone to flooding. This is not to say, however, that the only reason the informal settlers are more persistent and participative is that they have a lot of free time on their hands.

Glenda Pentecostes—the woman who went back to her still flooded house to recover the money from her church group—is a bellwether of the people’s commitment to the program.

Glenda and her husband wake up before dawn to buy fish and vegetables at Balintawak Market, several kilometers away. They sell these on retail at a simple wooden stall. It is a physically demanding job but they keep at it because it puts food on their family’s table.

While it might appear that Glenda’s work is already too much, she still finds time to serve as CKUP Area Coordinator, focal person of the feeding program, DRR Cluster Leader, and member of *Gawad Kalinga*¹¹ and the church choir. Glenda was also instrumental in the speedy adoption of SPI’s DRR Program in the community. She vouched for and introduced Karen Sarmiento-Clemente, SPI community organizer in San Bartolome, to the residents.

Clearly, there are factors other than mere availability at play. Perhaps it is personal grit, time management skills, or a sense of mission and priorities. Or possibly dedication to DRR work is a function of one’s vulnerability and exposure to disasters. Whatever it is, some people are able to engage in works for the common good despite personal costs while others cannot.

Fr. Jun wants DRR formally declared as the centerpiece mission of the SSDM in the coming Parish Pastoral Assembly, the key mechanism by which his parish determines where it wants to go and how it will get there. He wants the leaders of the informal settlers to step forward and claim the leadership of this ministry.

In the Philippine Catholic Church, leadership roles in the ministries and mandated organizations are almost always filled by people from the upper and middle classes. This is understandable because people from the upper classes tend to rise above the throng because of their superior

¹¹ Literally translated, *Gawad Kalinga* means “to give care” or “to award care.” It is the name of a program of the lay Catholic community, Couples for Christ, which invites volunteers to assist with the building of homes for poor families.



Community consultation on the PCVA.

language and people skills as well as their experiences being involved in managing businesses, agencies, or institutions. This arrangement, however, does not move us any closer to the vision of the Church of the Poor.

That vision can only be realized if there is a massive project to tip the center of gravity in favor of the poor. An essential feature of that project must be a formation program that empowers the poor so that they can develop the skills, self-confidence, and motivation not just to participate in the life of the Church but also to take the lead.

Equally crucial is the re-evangelization of current leaders so that they actively participate in the empowerment of the poor and when the time comes, graciously give way so that the poor can assume leadership positions in the church.

Undoubtedly, Ketsana created a terrible mess. But to people of vision and goodwill, it also presented an opportunity. It compelled the poor to build more resilient communities. It obliged the *barangay* to be better prepared and to govern well. It nudged the Church to be better at being one with the people.

“Before (Ketsana), the Church was far removed from the lives of the people in the informal communities. Yes, it was there, a beautiful structure standing proudly in the center of the community. And yet it was very far from the people’s hearts,” Fr. Jun thoughtfully declares.

“But after (Ketsana), they saw that the Church is actually one with them. Today, they see her as a faithful partner, someone who will never abandon them, someone who will be with them even in their darkest hours. After (Ketsana), the poor realized that this Church is their Church.”

The Project jolted both the *barangay* and the Church to shape up to meet the challenge of the times.

As to the impact of this Project on the informal settlers living in danger zones, Unso Pastor, a leader from Tomasa Riverside and an informal settler herself, had this to say, “When (Ketsana) came, we had no one to turn to but God. But today, thanks to the DRR Project, we can now depend on the Church, our *barangay*, our community leaders, and yes, now we can rely on ourselves.”

Lessons Learned: Pearls of Great Price

The large-scale crisis brought by Ketsana demanded urgent new action, strategies, and methodologies from SPI, an institution that did not have prior skills and experiences regarding humanitarian emergencies.

Here are some of the lessons we learned about SPI as an institution, our methodologies, and approaches:

On Working with Government

SPI was born in the period of Philippine history marked by dictatorship and martial rule. Because of our trying experience to promote democracy and human rights in the face of oppression, there is this lingering if unexamined tendency to cast government as the “enemy.”

For the longest time, SPI was wary of government, disinclined, and sometimes even unwilling to work with it. The default thinking is that nothing good could come from that partnership, that government is corrupt and incapable of providing genuine service to the poor, and that we would be better off if we go at it alone.

The Ketsana Project, however, compelled SPI to work closely with the *barangay* because building the capacity of local government is vital in developing resilient communities. This experience proved to be a turning point for us.

This is not to say, however, that the present government is a perfect partner in development work. On the contrary, it is still ridden with graft and corruption, lacks the institutional resolve to stand up to sleazy political pressures from within and outside its institutions, and needs to promote financial transparency and accountability. The government also lacks empathy towards those it labels as “squatters.”

But we also saw a lot of things that made us hopeful. Government can move forward in its development agenda. There are a good number of laws that are genuinely pro-poor, hacking at the roots of poverty and marginalization. There are many people in government who aspire to make a difference and are trying to address the issues surrounding poverty and marginalization. We have realized that by encouraging and helping government become better at governance, we can help uplift the lives of many people.

An important lesson from the Ketsana Project is that civil society organizations like SPI can help government achieve its developmental goals, not by condemning and criticizing it but by engaging with and challenging it, especially in moments when it is not quite sure where to go.

DRR and Development

SPI has been involved in community development for quite some time, but it was only in the Ketsana Project that we realized the significance of incorporating the building of resilience into community development.

We work hard to address community issues that range from gender inequality, corruption, human rights violations, land tenure, and illegal drugs to micro-credit, adult literacy, sanitation, basic health education, and child nutrition. However, if we do not strengthen the capacity of the

communities and the *barangay* to protect their assets—especially human lives—in the face of disasters like fire, floods, and tsunami, all our hard won gains could be taken away from us in the blink of an eye.

A central part of SPI’s ethos is to be a catalyst that assists poor communities to end human misery. Thanks to the Ketsana Project, we know now that such a vision cannot be achieved without seriously addressing the community’s capacity to withstand and recover from shocks and disasters.

Interdisciplinary Partnerships with Other NGOs

Without reflection and careful self-observation, we fail to notice that many NGOs in the Philippines tend to concentrate their interventions on sectors, geographic areas, or communities that they then unwittingly treat as their turf or private stomping grounds. Extreme poverty, exacerbated by climate change and intense weather events, is so difficult to tackle and subdue that we cannot address it all alone and unaided.

The reality is that no one institution can meet all the challenges of building resilient communities. We struggle to put up community-based quick response teams, early warning systems, and so on, while we endeavor to implement long-term solutions like sustainable livelihood, retrofitting of unsafe structures, identification of safe relocation sites, strengthening of existing people’s organizations, and helping the *barangay* put up its own BDRRMC.

This is just too much for one institution to do. We need interdisciplinary partnerships that will bring complementary skill sets, resources, and energy to make the work more manageable.

However, working with NGO partners—each of which brings its own array of activities, deadlines, and agenda—is not easy because their schedule of activities is bursting-at-the-seams.

The logistics, planning, and coordination involved in squeezing the myriad of activities to fit into a short timeline of two and a half years is downright demanding. The sheer number of workshops, drills, and meetings pushed the grassroots communities, SPI, and the partner NGOs to the verge of fatigue. This was the most challenging aspect of this set-up.

One thing that could have caused friction but fortunately did not is the different languages spoken by NGOs. Scientific and legal institutions like UPNIGS and SALIGAN employ data-laden, technical language that creates an aura of pedagogy and exclusivity. SPI uses the language of ethics and values which other scientific, legal, or development NGOs may find preachy and off-putting.

But that is how it is. We organize our work and discourse in different ways which, in turn, generate their own idioms and expressions. The trick is to appreciate and make use of the larger arena for dialogue, alliances, mutual support, and learning, and not to get stuck with the baggage of institutional prose.



Baseline data gathering in Novaliches.

In the end, the Ketsana Project was instrumental in gently prodding SPI and other Christian Aid partner NGOs to accept, welcome, learn from, and take advantage of each other's strengths and uniqueness.

DRR as an Endeavor that Unites

We were surprised at the speed with which various stakeholders—grassroots communities, *barangay*, various churches and other NGOs—adopted DRR.

Perhaps this is because the severe hardships of fellow human beings reawaken our sense of solidarity and compassion so that there is an upsurge of volunteerism and donations immediately after disasters. On the other hand, we must also acknowledge the role that the DRRM Act played in contributing to the prevailing sympathetic and altruistic temper in our society. After all, that law deconstructed and reframed the relationship between government, civil society organizations, and poor communities from rivalry and antagonism to partnership.

Another pleasant surprise is how DRR managed to transcend the toxic fault lines of religion and social class as many people and institutions exerted genuine efforts to go beyond their vested interests, class consciousness, world views, ideologies, and egos to assist the affected people and communities in urgent need. Noteworthy is how the various churches suspended their mission to “save souls” as they focused on providing relief and saving lives.

In sum, the outpouring of sympathetic response from all sorts of people and institutions during Ketsana showed that DRR, at least for a few precious moments, narrowed the gap between the periphery and the center, and constructively advanced its attendant socio-symbolic discourse on marginalization, oppression, disenfranchisement, exclusion, and power.

Women and DRR

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the successful adoption of DRR by the communities and the *barangay* is largely due to the industry and determination of urban poor women.

Perhaps the DRR program's call to save lives and lessen human misery is something that rings deep in the hearts of women. Perhaps they realized better and before others that if they did not step up, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children would remain in harm's way.

Whatever it was that stirred them to action, the women from the danger zones embraced DRR and used it as an opportunity to rewrite their life narratives from helpless, passive recipients of aid and mercy to leaders and dynamic actors who build safe and resilient communities.

On the Limited Duration of the Project

SPI thinks that the project window of two to three years is too short given the ambitious goal to build sustainable resilient communities.

Our dream is for the communities to continue to enjoy the hard won gains of the Ketsana Project long after we have packed up and gone. To realize that, there are a few things that need to be secured in place—strong homeowners' associations (HOAs) that are committed to safety and development; community-based quick response teams with the skills and wherewithal to do their job; *barangay* governments with capable BDRRMCs and *Barangay* Development Councils (BDCs) that partner with the communities at risk; organic leaders who inspire, educate, and mentor others; and vibrant civil society organizations in the area that support and promote pro-poor and safety initiatives.

The gold standard is for the culture of safety, development, and a preferential option for the poor to permeate the organizational structures as well as infuse the ethos of all stakeholders. When we reach that point when safety and development are in the vision-mission statements, in the



A woman participates in a seminar on contingency planning.

institutional action plans, in the newsletters and memos, and in day-to-day conduct and prose of all stakeholders, then we could rest easy that DRR will indeed endure with or without SPI and Christian Aid.

SPI and Spirituality

As SPI is a faith-inspired organization, we would like to share some of our insights regarding the emerging spirituality from the people living in danger zones. It should be noted that we use the term “spirituality” in its broadest sense as the striving to integrate our lives according to what we hold as our highest values and meanings.

We also use the term “emerging spirituality” because spirituality is dynamic and ever changing. Even today, the people are still in the process of negotiating this emerging spirituality from various perspectives and categories—the known versus the mysterious, the human against the divine, the traditional as opposed to the current and relevant, the what-is as opposed to the nascent.

What did we do to help the people negotiate the slippery slopes of spirituality?

There were three key processes that SPI instigated to accomplish this: (1) the conscientization-education efforts embedded in the community organizing process; (2) the actual actions to improve the community (DRR, development work, advocacy campaigns, and claim making); and (3) the promotion of the spirituality of stewardship or *buhay katiwala*.

Spirituality from the Riverbanks

The extreme context of the people living in danger zones has given birth to an emerging spirituality that is not only personal and relational but profoundly social, economic, and political.

Unlike those of us who do not share their vulnerability, they do not have the luxury of adopting a spirituality that is privatized—faith and spirituality that is limited to one’s relationship with God alone; and “ecclesiasticalized”—faith and spirituality as obedience to the doctrines, traditions, and sacred rituals of a religion.

Their vulnerability demands a spirituality that provides them with the self-identity and the direction for the transformation of their communities that addresses their urgent need for protection from shocks and hazards. So a feature of the emerging spirituality from the riverbanks is that it is strong on social, political, economic, and developmental actions that bring concrete benefits to the community.

Corollary to that, the people from the danger zones also had to negotiate a model of spirituality that includes the problematic of struggle because socio-economic-political actions that make right unjust situations often result in intense opposition from persons and institutions that benefit from the discriminatory order.

In this regard, their experiences of advocating and demanding rightful services from local government units (LGUs), government agencies, and other civil society organizations provided them with the perspective to transact a nuanced view of spirituality. What emerged from that is a position that spirituality from the danger zones must be strong on justice and must accept that conflict is unavoidable.

This characterization of spirituality is in fundamental discrepancy with most other discourses from the center that regard spirituality as smooth personal and social relations. Its basis, however, is in their own experience that when the poor negotiate for their rights with the rich and powerful, hard bargaining, advocacy campaigns, and militant action along with the attending strains in relations are necessary to obtain results.

On Human Misery and How to Address It

The community organizing process necessarily involves activities like historic-socio-structural analysis of social problems, and tactic sessions that summon and sharpen critical awareness. By critical awareness, we mean a deep understanding of the world that exposes social and political contradictions that are the roots of oppression.

At SPI, however, we do not stop there. We use this educative method not only to examine the social condition, but also to examine the human person and how selfishness, greed, and ignorance generate actions, conditions, and structures that are oppressive to others. Consequently, the community comes to the realization that human misery is caused not only by unjust social structures and socio-economic-political relations, but also by the weaknesses and failings of the human person.

A mark of the emerging spirituality from the riverbanks, therefore, is that it understands that our task in the world is not only the renewal of social institutions—church, media, armed forces, schools, government, family, and so on—but the purification of the human heart and changes in individual behaviors as well.

When the structural analysis is combined with faith reflection, the communities come to the insight that poverty and social ills are not God’s will. They realize that they are not destined to endure oppression and exploitation. That it is not their fate to suffer because of “karma” or punishment from a vengeful God for their “sins.”

This insight is profoundly liberating to the urban poor. When they realize that their misery is a product of unjust social structures and the machinations of avaricious persons and not decreed by God, they are encouraged and reassured that they can indeed do something to improve their situation.



DRR leaders get ready for the fire and earthquake drills.

Spirituality Sustains DRR and Development

There is an emerging appreciation that actions that strengthen peoples’ capacities and develop public assets are not just activities of a project by Christian Aid and SPI but fundamental to who we are (identity as stewards) and what we do (mission to care for one other and all of creation).

Thus, an important character of the emerging spirituality is that all actions—DRR, development work, and common everyday activities and personal deeds—are integrated into a way of life or *gawi ng buhay* held together by the frame of stewardship.

Given this, SPI believes that it is the spirituality of stewardship that will provide the energy and motivation to sustain DRR and development initiatives in the danger zones. We must continue to foster this emerging spirituality that enables the communities to continue confronting both structural and individual injustices and oppression, be that in the form of poverty, domestic violence, or the absence of rights or access to basic services.

Democratization of Spirituality

SPI conducted stewardship workshops that gave the poor communities access to symbolic, religious resources that were normally held only by members of the clergy and lay theologians.

When the communities realized that spirituality is not the exclusive property of churches but that it is about the everyday events of their lives, about their hopes and aspirations, their pains and struggles, it gave them the self-confidence to participate and join the dialogue on spirituality. This process serves culturally to empower members of the poor communities, enabling them to challenge stereotypes, repressive doctrines, and hypocritical traditions, and to engage with governing institutions and the Church.

So the other mark of the emerging spirituality from the riverbanks is that it approaches the discourse on meaning and purpose, self-transcendence, renewal of the community, and

conversation with God in a language that is intelligible to the ordinary person because it is rooted in their context, struggles, and lived experiences.

As this spirituality of stewardship engages peoples of different faith traditions, SPI's DRR Program includes Mormons, Protestants, Muslims, and Roman Catholics.

Raising it Up to the Light

There is no disputing that Ketsana has left the urban poor in Metro Manila racked in trouble and uncertainty. Not only did Ketsana take the little they had, but also made it even more difficult for them to recover and realize the most modest of life ambitions like putting food on the table, paying for electricity and water, seeing their kids through school, and staying alive.

Poverty in the Philippines springs from a curious heap of massive failures of development initiatives, an imposed globalization process that favors corporations over states and peoples, the bungling inefficiencies of a feeble, corrupt self-serving state, and a history marked by colonialism and neocolonialism.

If poverty then is a result of unjust social, political, and economic relations and structures, where does that beggar-your-neighbor spirit that drives it come from?

Fr. Nonong Pili has an answer to this intriguing question. He says, "The reason why the world is in such a mess is because we have lost awareness of our true identity. We delude ourselves that we are individuals who are totally separate and apart from each other. But the truth is we are all interconnected. We are one and in solidarity with each other so that what happens to you, happens to me."

Fr. Nonong is currently the Rector of St. Joseph Formation House and an SPI Board Member. Through years of self-reflection and self-discipline, Fr. Nonong was able to conquer his mercurial instincts and passion that he now succeeds in sensitive life-coaching and socio-pastoral projects that require calm, patience, and careful diplomacy. He is equally at ease around cardinals of the Catholic Church as well as unschooled peasants and children.

How can we help the poor rise above their poverty without that sense of basic solidarity? How can we commit to social justice, human rights, sustainable development, and care for creation, shorn of that communion with the "other?" How can we heal our human institutions of their ills and ineffectuality when there is this fundamental brokenness in ourselves? How can we aspire for the common good when we are without that basic connection with others?

We need solidarity with, rather than for, others; a fellowship which refuses to objectify the poor, as it demands a rigorous analysis of poverty and its causes. Without that solidarity, the poor could never be part of our lives and concerns. They would forever be doomed to subsist at the margins of our awareness like specters or ghosts, scooting in and out of our realities without weight, causing barely a ripple.

They could be out there in broad daylight, begging in the streets, hanging around the courtyards of churches, tapping on our car windows for handouts, but impeded by our tribalism, we do not even see them. Hindered by the "we-they" mindset, we fail to see their dreams and aspirations, their pains and struggles, their innate capacity to transcend themselves, their need for purpose and meaning, and their generous capability for self-sacrifice and self-giving.

"And because we do not see, then we just might tread on this and trample it," Fr. Nonong said.

The hardest part in the journey to build resilient communities is not the Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment (PCVA) or the Contingency Plan, but that which takes you from where

you are to a place where you truly see the "other," especially the poor, as yourself. That could be just a short hop to the next corner or a voyage to an unexplored dark continent that lasts an entire lifetime.

That journey is fraught with twists and turns and involves trekking up the highest mountains and down the lowest valleys. One may rightfully wonder if we will ever— as a nation, as a Church, as a community, as a civil society organization— approach that holy place and enter it together.

In solidarity with the poor and all peoples of good will, we certainly believe so. This is our dream.

Let us pray our dreams shall be prophets. ■

The Rise of the Human Spirit: Spirituality in CBDRR¹ Work in Rodriguez

Mayee Abear-Marzan
Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI)

The Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI) recognizes the human spirit in every person as the capacity to transcend or go beyond oneself, the gift of self, and the search for meaning. The experiences of *Sitio*² Sabah and Suburban Village in Rodriguez, Rizal during Tropical Storm Ketsana (local name Ondoy) are examples of the triumph of the human spirit.

The following documents the experiences of the many individuals and groups whose meaning in life has been touched and deepened through SPI's integral approach of spirituality and disaster risk reduction (DRR) work. Highlighted is the burning human spirit which emerges during times of calamities and continues to be nourished by formation and community activities. This is followed by stories of how these individuals and groups translate the human spirit into community action by engaging in different DRR activities from mitigation (e.g., regular community clean-up drives) to advocacy (e.g., dialogue with local government units or LGUs). What ties these stories together is the constant struggle with identity and the striving to better relationships within the family and among neighbors as communities continue to improve their contingency plans. Lastly, SPI underscores the importance and relevance of an approach in community development work that uses spirituality in DRR while partnering with secular people's organizations (POs).

Context

Urban poor communities are besieged with different issues emanating from within and outside the community. *Sitio* Sabah and Suburban Village of *Barangay*³ San Jose, Rodriguez are not spared from these issues.

Located at the northern part of *Barangay* San Jose, a significant portion of Sabah is found on the banks of Marikina River. Continuous riverbank erosion results in immediate flooding in the area during the rainy season. About 56 Muslim households along the riverbank and about 400 individuals in the low-lying portion of Sabah are directly affected. During Ketsana, water rose to six meters in different parts of the community, trapping residents on the roofs of their houses. While locals since the 1970s have been inundated only during major floods, the worst flooding was during Ketsana in 2009. In 2011, Typhoons Meari (local name: Falcon) and Nesat (local name: Pedring) caused floods that forced some residents to evacuate to nearby designated centers. Hence, the community has experienced more frequent flooding after Ketsana, validating the studies completed by the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences (UPNIGS) Team.

Suburban Village is a relocation area located at the boundary of *Barangay* San Jose and *Barangay* San Isidro. It is separated from Temfacil, *Barangay* San Isidro by Bautista Creek.

¹ CBDRR stands for Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction

² *Sitio* is the smallest division of a village unit.

³ *Barangay* means "village."

⁴ Carlos Primo C. David, et. al., *Stream Geohazard Assessment of Christian Aid Ketsana Rehabilitation Site in San Mateo, Province of Rizal*, 38, unpublished report by Christian Aid and UPNIGS.



A portion of Suburban Village after the flood.

It is part of Erap City and is home to about 800 families who have relocated from different parts of Metro Manila. Since the first families settled in 2003, the community experienced only two floods prior to 2009: during Typhoon Melor (local name: Viring) in 2003 and during Tropical Depression Winnie in 2004. Neither was as bad as the floods brought by Ketsana in 2009. Several other physical factors increase the community's vulnerability. The site sits on the trace of the West Valley Fault⁴ and the row houses offered them by the government are substandard. The concrete culvert box connecting Suburban Village and Temfacil is structurally defective and causes flooding in some parts of the area.

Ketsana brought extensive damage to properties and livelihood. This prompted SPI to engage in relief work for the first time, with support coming from Christian Aid and the Embassy of Japan. Further social investigation affirmed the communities' qualification for a rehabilitation program that officially started in 2010. The project, Building Disaster Risk Reduction Mechanisms for Highly Vulnerable Communities, was then implemented by SPI with its partner POs: the Home Owners' Association (HOA) of Suburban Village and the Sabah Neighborhood Association (SNA).

In 2010, both communities were severely influenced by political partisanship at play in the national elections, affecting the two partner organizations and the support coming from the local government. Disputes among the officers have increased their vulnerability to poor governance and also heightened division among the residents.

Personal Transformation

This chapter reveals the struggles of some of the residents during Ketsana when they were taken by surprise by the quickly rising flood water. It emphasizes their will to overcome the crisis and the capacity to extend help to others.

The wrath of Ketsana for many victim-survivors was unimaginable, overwhelming, and unforgettable. People were caught unprepared in the midst of quickly rising waters. Parents were separated from their children. Scores of women panicked, not knowing who to rescue first or where to run.

I had to live for others

Aling⁵ Naneth Bernabe of Sitio Sabah was the only able adult left in the house after her husband and son went to work that day. With her were her daughter-in-law with a ten-day-old baby, another six-year-old grandchild, two girls, and an elderly woman with a hemorrhaging daughter, entrusted to her by a neighbor who had gone to work. According to Aling Naneth, when someone shouted that the water was already near their vicinity, she immediately set aside her laundry and felt very nervous. “Ang nerbyos ko, nangatog talaga ako...dahil hindi ko alam kung sino ang uunahin ko, kung sino ang mahalaga.” (“I was so nervous, I shivered ... because I did not know who to rescue first, who was more important”). But she did not let her daughter-in-law feel her panic. “Nanginginig ako pero pinipigilan ko, pero nanginginig pa rin ako.” (“No matter how much I tried, I could not control my shivering.”) Aling Naneth made



Naneth Bernabe

her daughter-in-law wear socks to warm her feet and repeatedly told her, “Don’t be afraid and don’t be nervous. Nothing will happen to us as long as we are careful. I have to evacuate you.” A few minutes later, she had her daughter-in-law and the children transferred to a house on higher ground. Fortunately, her son, whom she had texted repeatedly, finally arrived. With him she went back for the sick elderly mother and daughter. But the Lola⁶ did not want to be moved and Aling Naneth could not tell her that the water was already rising for fear that the old woman might panic. So with the help of some neighbors, they carried Lola and the daughter to a safer house. Then she thought of going back to her house to get some things and food. “Pero ang tubig ay traydor parang ahas... Pag pasok ko sa bahay dun ako nangilabot, yung tubig wala pang tatlong minuto nasa loob na ng bahay!” (“But water is a traitor, like a snake ... When I entered the house, that’s when I was really terrified. In only three minutes, the water was already inside the house!”)

Aling Naneth, like many other women and men, went beyond themselves, beyond their capacities, to save their family members and even their neighbors. Despite the tremendous threat facing her, she did not panic. “Kailangan kong mabuhay para sa mga apo ko, sa pamilya ko.... At saka syempre, marami pa akong obligasyon sa kapwa ko.” (“I had to live for my grandchildren, for my family ... And of course, I still had many obligations to my fellows.”)

Baby Boy Ondoy

“Nagradyo ako sa barangay para magpadala ng ambulansya sa Sabah at makuha na ang mga buntis, mga bata, pati na rin ang mga may sakit at matatatanda.” (I radioed [using a hand-held radio] to the barangay to send an ambulance to Sabah and rescue the pregnant women, the children, the elderly, and the sick.) Ate⁷ Sarah Eleuterio, a Red Cross volunteer, a Kabalikat Civicom⁸ member, and one of the most active in the Sabah DRR Core Group, relates her experience during Ketsana. Braving the chest-high flood water, with only a gallon-sized bottle of mineral water as her floater, she crossed their street to the home of a woman who was about to give birth. The mother of the woman, weeping, asked for help to deliver the baby. Ate Sarah was very nervous because she had not done this before. But she knew that the lives of the mother and the baby depended on her. While her strong will fought against great fear, Ate Sarah recalled to her best knowledge the training she had received and started assisting the woman in labor. To add to her panic, she had to keep watch over the stairs of the house because the water level was

⁵Aling is a form of address to a woman.

⁶Lola means “grandmother.”

⁷Ate means “older sister.”

⁸ Kabalikat Civicom is an active group of community communicators engaged in public assistance particularly during disasters and calamities or whenever there is need to ensure public comfort and convenience.

already near the top step. But she eventually delivered a healthy boy who was named Baby Boy Ondoy.

Sabah, My Family

Ate Sarah admits that since that Ketsana experience, her relationships in the family, organization, and neighborhood have become stronger. Her children learned the value of helping without expecting anything in return. She says they understand whenever she needs to respond to an emergency. They themselves have become active volunteers in the community.



Sarah Eleuterio with husband Ariel

Ate Sarah never refuses anyone who asks for her during emergencies even in the wee hours. “Ang katwiran ko, hangga’t kaya ko at malakas pa ang katawan, go lang, para sa aming komunidad.” (For me, as long as I can and my health allows it, I will continue doing this for the community.) “Kahit noong may takot at pobyta ako kapag umuulan, nilalaban ko ito para mawala lahat ng nararamdaman ko. Unti-unti naman itong nawala dahil din ‘life must go on.’ Kahit nahhirapan ako, go pa rin, lalo pa ngayong lalong nagtiwala ang mga kapitbahay ko.” (I try to fight my fear of rain and flood. The phobia has gradually vanished as I tell myself that life must go on. Because of the trust that my neighbors give me, despite the difficulties, I continue helping others.) “Ate Sarah also realized that with her services, she has encouraged more volunteers—youth, mothers, fathers, even elderly people—to ask to be invited to DRR trainings and activities. “Bahala na po si God sumubaybay sa akin. Inaalay ko na sarili ko sa pagtulong... Maraming natutunan sa S.PI [at] tutugunan ko po ang tawag ng tungkulin bilang isang katiwala at lalo pang pag-iibayuhin ang madagdagang pa po ng mga kaalaman para mapataas pa ang pagbibigay ng serbisyo para sa komunidad nang walang hinihintay na kapalit o pabuya man.” (“Let God guide me in what I do as I offer myself to the service of my community. I have learned so much from SPI and I will respond to the call of duty as a good steward. I will strive to improve my knowledge to better serve my community without expecting anything in return.”)



Feves Plaza

Disaster as a Humbling Experience

“Ang mga taong nasa paligid ang nagiging inspirasyon ko” (“The people around are my inspiration”), says Feves Plaza, one of the youth leaders in Suburban Village. Neighbors who suffered more than her during Ketsana became her inspiration. For the first time, Feves experienced how it was to stay in a cramped evacuation center. What she thought was a “silly” decision for evacuees to go to the evacuation areas was then the only option for her and her family. “Tapos, bigla nagkaroon ng Ondoy naranasan ko din pumunta sa evacuation center, naranasan ko din ang mainit, naranasan ko ding magutom, naranasan ko ding matakot na baka pano kung hindi na ako makabalik sa bahay namin dito na lang ba ako sa evacuation center forever yung feeling na ganun. Naranasan ko din na lumusong sa tubig na dati makakita lang ako ng putik nandidiri na ako kahit maliit lang yon. After kasi ng Ondoy yung bahay naming ay isang malaking putik. Ang dami daming putik sa loob ng bahay namin, lahat ng gamit namin nasira pati gamit sa school

hindi ko na napakinabangan lahat kasi naabutan ng tubig. Hindi ko naman akalain na ganun kataas talaga ang tubig. Tapos, hanggang ngayon hindi maalis ang takot na baka maulit ulit yun, na baka kapag umulan ulit babaha ulit mapupunta na naman kami sa evacuation center. Tapos madudumihan na naman ang bahay namin. Maglilinis na naman kami.” (“During Ketsana, I experienced for the first time living in an evacuation center. There I experienced the crowding, the heat, and the hunger. I feared not being able to go back to our house and staying at the center forever like other evacuees. After the flood, our house was one big [mass of] mud! All our things were destroyed. I could not even salvage my school things. I did not expect that the flood would reach that high. Until now, I have not gotten over the fear that it will happen again, that we will have to live in an evacuation center, that we will have to clean our house all over again.”)

The Sacred in Me Greets the Holy in You – Namaste!

But Feves drew strength from the people who were more affected. She saw that despite what happened, they did not lose hope. *“Makikita mo na bukas may darating pa rin na magandang buhay para sa kanila, na iniisip nila na makakaahon pa rin sila”* (“You can feel in them their hope for a better future, and the belief that they will recover”). For Feves, it has become a personal challenge to be strong and to help others in whatever way she can. It is recognizing the spirit that dwells within oneself and in others. This paradigm shift is especially important in the cohesion of any community. It is as important in the process of empowerment. To acknowledge not only the weaknesses in persons but most of all, the willingness of others to contribute to the common good and to share themselves is to open opportunities for anyone to participate in community development. The experience of Feves has made her strive for a more meaningful participation in Suburban Village and has currently brought her to a significant role in the organization, Empowered Children of Home Owners (ECHO).

Community Action

Self-transformation should lead to community action. The process of self-realization and actualization requires opportunities for renewed faith in oneself to be developed and harnessed through meaningful participation in the community. Integral transformation means individuals striving to better themselves while engaging in community action towards addressing issues and realizing their dreams.

The following are stories of persons and groups that have come together and initiated disaster preparedness plans and simple mitigation measures because of their common concern for their community.

Appreciation of the Power Within

Reden Mejarito has been participating in the DRR Project only lately. But the impact of SPI's Spirituality of Stewardship (SOS) seminars on him was so deep that he organized some young people for Sunday cleaning. More than contributing to risk reduction, Reden and his group recognized their capacities and wanted to change the community's image of them as unemployed. For them, this transformation is a life-changing decision and a big step toward becoming part of the community. Ms. Arcelie Dellosa, President of the Sabah Neighborhood Association, recognizes this positive change and the youth's big contribution in their area, which further affirms her participation and contribution as Association President.

This is also true of Julie Fe Biasora. She used to think that as a petite young woman, there is nothing she could do during calamities like Ketsana. But with the stewardship workshops she attended, she realized that her participation now in the ECHO planning sessions is a gift of her time and talent. Being part of the *Bantay Ilog* (River Watch) and helping disseminate typhoon updates to the community during emergencies is already a significant contribution. Recognizing these gifts and sharing them builds self-confidence that could otherwise not have developed.

⁹ *Awa* means pity.



Julie Fe



Emily Rubido

Renewed spirituality and faith in herself propelled Julie Fe to more meaningful participation in the Suburban Flood Contingency Plan.

From “Awa” to Action⁹

As soon as Ian, the head of the Information Dissemination Committee, texts *Aling* Emily Rubido that the water under the bridge is rising, the latter starts going around and announcing to the community to prepare and ready their things because the water level in the river is rising. *Aling* Emily makes sure that every house, especially in blocks that are easily flooded, hears her announcement. This has been her role in the Flood Contingency Plan after Ketsana.

Aling Emily Rubido was not in Suburban Village when the flood during Ketsana came. She kept receiving text messages from her husband to come home. Hurrying back, she took a longer route because the water level where she would normally pass was already very high. When she finally arrived, she and her family, having no children to rescue, helped the neighbors whose houses were already flooded. This included a mother who had just given birth, to whom she gave warm drinks and a blanket to keep her comfortable and safe. They also helped an elderly person and several others. After the flood, they helped neighbors in other severely affected blocks to clean their houses.

“Gusto ko rin na mai-prepare sila hindi kagaya ng dati na wala silang pakialam na lahat sa baba, naaawa din ako sa kanila.” (“I wanted them to be prepared unlike before when they didn't care. I pitied them.”) says *Aling* Emily. Having a systematic flood contingency plan that clearly spells out the tasks of individuals has given her the opportunity to translate her pity into concrete action, especially during the typhoons that occurred in 2011. This knowledge about DRR made a big difference in the preparedness of Suburban against floods. *Aling* Emily hopes that

through her efforts and those of the *Suburban Tungo sa Organisadong Paghahanda kontra Disaster* (Suburban Toward Organized Preparedness Against Disaster or STOP DISASTER), more people in the community would know about DRR.

“Where no one is so poor as to have nothing to give, and no one is so rich as to have nothing to receive”¹⁰

A few months after SPI started the DRR training, both communities initiated their Flood Contingency Plan. *Sitio* Sabah met its first challenge during Typhoon Songda (local name: Bebeng) sometime in May 2010. The DRR Core Group, from the senior volunteers like *Mang*¹¹ Bienvenido “Ben” Caca to the members of the youth organization *Kabataang May Lisang Layunin sa Pag-Oorganisa sa Sabah* (Youth with One Goal in Organizing in Sabah or KILOS), and even entire families like Ariel and Sarah Eleuterio's, took turns watching over the river. They braved the

¹⁰ “Message of the Council,” in Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II), *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* (Manila: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1992), XCVII.

¹¹ *Mang* is a form of address to a man.



Manuel Ian Sipin reporting on his group's PCVA.

rain the whole night just to be ready to announce to the community if it was time to evacuate their homes. Using flashlights and megaphones given by Christian Aid and handheld radios of the Kabalikat Civicom Members, they transmitted information to key people distributed around Sabah. This was the first systematic Early Warning System (EWS) recognized by the whole community. So significant were their efforts that one resident even said: *"Nakakatulog na kami nang mahimbing kahit malakas ang ulan"* ("We are now able to sleep soundly amid the heavy rains"). The community feels safer with the unwavering sharing of the volunteers' time and health for the rest of Sabah.

While *Sitio* Sabah kept watch over the Marikina River, Suburban Village was faced with a physical hazard. The collective result of the community's Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment (PCVA) pointed to the concrete culvert box connecting Suburban Village and Temfacil as one of the primary causes of flooding. Built during the construction of the village as a resettlement site, it is a passageway for heavy equipment to be stored in the temporary facility (Temfacil) at the other side of the river. Its main defect is the pillar in the bottom center of the structure, which traps debris and causes overflowing of the water to the houses in the immediate vicinity. STOP DISASTER reactivated its *Bantay Ilog* and expanded its members to those who have become more aware of the need for risk reduction. Every typhoon thereafter has been monitored. Volunteers, with their personal equipment complementing those given by Christian Aid and some tools to pull away solid wastes from beneath the bridge, offer themselves and their own simple equipment for flood mitigation. This is how Feves, *Aling* Emily, Julie Fe, and dozens more commit to taking care of their community during this period.

As more typhoons came, their contingency plans were sharpened according to the needs they experienced. Sabah has already formally entered into an agreement with Bishop Florante Enriquez of the Mormon Church for the use of that facility as a temporary evacuation center

especially for women, children, and the elderly. The community members have devised a public announcement system using their own amplifiers and tricycles and the communication system of some Kabalikat Civicom members. Suburban has also designated "staging areas" or first evacuation centers within the community. The community has systematized camp management for the small Immaculate Conception Chapel for evacuees from both Sabah and the adjacent *sitio* of Temfacil. In subsequent floods since Ketsana, the committed chapel Pastoral Council members automatically took on their assigned tasks. *Ate* Rose Lily Areola led in the cooking and feeding. Horacio "Doc Aga" Beltran, the Home Owners Association Secretary, used his skill as a nurse by responding to the evacuees' medical concerns. ECHO organized the registration list of the evacuees. Some of their members helped in the damage and needs assessment in Sabah during Typhoon Songda and helped Sabah volunteers mobilize relief responses for Sabah and for affected neighboring areas.

This improved system of typhoon preparedness and response as an output of the DRR trainings has shown the progress of awareness and sense of affinity with other urban poor communities experiencing the same hazards. There is a renewed sense of community and rediscovery from nothingness to abundance, from helplessness to empowerment. What was started in Ketsana has grown through opportunities for volunteerism and sharing with the creation of the DRR systems. This spells the difference.

DRR as a Dialogue of Life and Faiths

When SPI first worked in the area of *Sitio* Sabah, there was no mention of the Muslim Community living on the riverbanks. It was only in succeeding DRR training activities that Muslims were invited to attend and participate. The transect walk during the PCVA was almost a ground-breaking activity for Christians to encounter more closely their Muslim neighbors of so many years. The group that conducted observations, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) in the Muslim community was surprised to learn that they were no different from Christians, with the same issues and struggles in life. The only difference was their faith and their greater vulnerability to flooding as they are the first to be washed away.

Addressing preconceived notions about other faiths by simply engaging in formal and informal dialogues has immensely bridged the gap that became apparent during the Ketsana response. To further reduce suspicions about SPI's approach, our partner in the interfaith project, Building Peace Communities in Pagadian, Mindanao led by Sultan Maguid Maruhom, was invited to dialogue with their Muslim sisters and brothers in Sabah, with the Rodriguez Islamic Association (RIA), and with the Christians of the two communities. This allowed the liberal airing and clarification of biases and discrimination. With this introductory activity, the DRR Core Group of Sabah has opened its services to the Muslim communities. During Songda (local name: Bebung), this area was one of the first assessed and relief goods were distributed in consultation with the Muslim leaders. Whereas previously Muslims were hardly seen in community activities, now they are included in the beneficiary selection and target recipients of relief distribution and medical missions. Abdullah Mohamad, President of the Neighborhood Association of the Muslim Community of Sabah, and two other Muslims, Tarhata Allioden and Norjuda Kahar, were among the decision makers in the damage assessment conducted. By institutionalizing communication and breaking social isolation, the DRR project enabled immersion into the Muslim community's plight and extended the DRR work with them. In the coming months, the contingency plans would broaden inclusion of Muslim brothers and sisters.

Reducing risks requires bridging fundamental misconceptions about cultural and faith differences, especially in a small community like *Sitio* Sabah. Integral transformation as embodied in DRR work includes acknowledging the human spirit despite these differences, taking into consideration different vulnerabilities including those resulting from faith discrimination, and incorporating into community development plans the capacity building of members of differing faiths.

Advocacy and Networking

As a result of the PCVA and the various interventions of the other partners in the Ketsana Consortium, the two communities took on the challenge of engaging in dialogues with the LGUs and different agencies using newly acquired skills and knowledge to find solutions for the identified concerns in their areas.

Advocating Within, Advocating Outside

The efforts of Suburban's Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction Management (CBDRRM) to monitor the river and the bridge are only a first step to mitigate the flood. Plans are currently being undertaken to request the permanent removal of the concrete bridge. This requires ongoing dialogues with the LGU, the National Housing Authority, and San Jose Builders, the developer of the resettlement site. Currently, leaders are meticulously soliciting from each house in the village individual signatures that would complete the 1,500 required for the petition. At the height of Typhoon Songda, one of the residents took a video footage of the bare human effort of one of the volunteers, Jhun Hingpit, to remove the garbage blocked under the bridge. Posted on YouTube, this video was picked up by a media network for its investigative report. The media network has since become an ally of the community to strengthen its advocacy. A dialogue with the Mayor has finally been scheduled because of this. Regular dredging has also started to reduce riverbed elevation. Furthermore, the request for street lighting that will significantly decrease threats to peace and security has been promptly followed through by the LGU. In the pipeline are some 40 streetlights ready to be installed in the locations proposed by the community. Influencing political will and political structures is an ongoing effort started by a few volunteers of Suburban but is now gaining positive results for the benefit of the whole community.

Other initiatives have been conducted. ECHO raised funds for the temporary repair of the metal footbridge that has caused injuries to many children and has become a venue for warring gangs' activities due to poor lighting. The members of ECHO have also contributed their time for repairing the bridge themselves. Inspired by the workshop on Spirituality of Stewardship, they drafted their own module to be shared with their family and neighbors and encourage volunteerism.

Sitio Sabah's efforts to request for drainage clean-up and to organize the evacuees at the San Jose Elementary School have elicited the attention of the municipality as well. In October 2011, the DRR Core Group members led by Ariel Elueterio was invited to the office of the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (MDRRMC) where they shared their contingency plans. Little did they know that word of their organized typhoon response had reached the municipal officers. In this meeting, they were promised direct support during emergencies. Although these promises have yet to be fulfilled and the contingency plans have yet to be integrated into the plans of the *Barangay* Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (BDRRMC), this is already great progress compared to past situations. The group has also been allowed the use of the public school for evacuation, especially the use of the rooms for the more vulnerable evacuees. The core group was ignored previously because members were affiliated with a different political party, but now the LGU recognizes it for its actions as a community-based DRR group and not as a political competitor.

Knowledge is Power — Power With

To effect bigger changes in risk reduction is to understand the issues surrounding the causes of risk and to know the options in approaching these. The legal education and advocacy support of the NGO, *Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal* (Alternative Legal Assistance Center or SALIGAN), has equipped the communities with the basic knowledge necessary to address their immediate issues. Having knowledge about laws and advocating for legal actions is a plus factor for any people's organization (PO).



Jhun Hingpit (bottom) and the STOP DISASTER volunteers remove garbage trapped under the bridge during Typhoon Nesat (local name: Pedring).

¹²Tatay means "father."

*Tatay*¹² Abdullah Regarde of Suburban Village exemplifies the critical use of what he learned. He questioned one MDRRMC Officer who lectured about the structure of the DRRMC. *Tatay* Abdullah pointed to the lack of participation of the people in the structure and in the implementation of DRR. Moreover, he told the Officer that his source was Presidential Decree (PD) 1566 when there is already the more recent and improved Republic Act (RA) 10121 that mandates the participation of different organizations. He reminded the MDRRMC Officer to be cautious about implementing programs drafted by only a few people without the participation of the communities.

Such questioning often demonstrates the empowerment of urban poor communities. It displays the kind of critical thinking that enables POs to assert themselves to authorities, thereby creating shifts in power and anchoring their gains and accomplishments. However, this empowerment can be counterproductive if used to rule over others. It is therefore necessary to provide avenues for leaders to reflect on their principles and mission and on the purpose of their leadership.

Such a leader is *Tatay* Abdullah, who is no ordinary resident. He received the Regional Award in Retrieval Operation from the Office of the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council in Region 6 for leading the rescue team that saved twenty-eight people during Typhoon Frank in 2008, which affected parts of the Visayas. Now he has opted to become a member of the Rescue and Response Committee of the CBDRRM and share his knowledge and skills with his neighbors in Suburban.

For *Tatay* Abdullah, bringing up the issue of people's participation in the MDRRM plans is to convey the voice of his community. For as long as leaders think of their positions as opportunities for service rather than the means to wield power over others, a more contextualized and needs-appropriate development can be achieved.

Solidarity Among Communities

Networking has gone as far as initiating a flood early warning system not only between the two communities but also with other neighboring areas. Surprisingly, issues about relationships in the communities and in the local organizations have also been raised as concerns of this new network. The stories below describe a concrete DRR action among three communities through the EWS. The second part exemplifies how human interaction significantly influences the dynamics of any organization, and how this should be regarded with prime importance in DRR as well as in spiritual work.

With the heightened awareness of the need for early warning, the UPNIGS will soon conduct its research, entitled “Incorporation of an Upstream Early Warning System for Marikina River Communities.” A continuation of their earlier studies, this research will result in an early warning system in which assigned persons in *Sitio Wawa, Barangay San Rafael*, Rodriguez will provide information on the water level in the river to key persons in *Sitio Sabah*. This will be further disseminated to *Buklod Tao*, a people’s organization located downstream in *Barangay Banaba, San Mateo*.¹³ This will provide much lead time for the Sabah and Banaba disaster preparedness groups to implement their community evacuation plans.

In Solidarity

Sitio Wawa was not originally part of the SPI DRR project, but the upstream river water comes from Wawa and the existence of a PO in that community were enough reasons to invite some of the leaders to the DRR training sessions. Since then, they have journeyed with the Sabah participants and have been part of the workshops and planning. They were very grateful for the chance to participate in and learn more from the different training seminars sponsored by SPI and the other Ketsana partners. “Noon, ang iniikutan ko lang ay *Barangay San Rafael*. Dahil sa DRR, natuto ako na puwede ka palang lumabas at hindi lang umiikot sa buong nasasakupan ng *San Rafael*” (“Before, [my concerns] revolved only around San Rafael. But with DRR, I learned that you could also leave [those boundaries] and [have concerns] that don’t just revolve around the entire area of San Rafael”), says Ate Florentina Watson of Future Mothers’ Heart Multi-Purpose Cooperative (FRAMPC), a Wawa community-based cooperative. Ate Tinay, as she is called, has learned to bond with the Sabah participants and see their common community issues. She also expresses a desire to learn about the EWS because she sees the importance of giving warning to communities downstream. She realizes that there can be communication between them. “We can contact Sabah and warn them if water is already rising at Wawa because it will surely rise higher in Sabah.” She adds that joining the DRR Project has been a wonderful experience even if she and other community members had already been attending a lot of training previously because they learned to go beyond their community and be in solidarity with others.

Thus, when the need for an early warning system emerged and Wawa was identified as a strategic location for its information system, Wawa residents readily volunteered their time and skills.

And Challenges Too

But not everything is good news. In *Sitio Sabah*, there are two factions in the community that try to co-exist civilly but whose differences, though not religious in nature, are susceptible to daily speculations and intrigues from each other, surfacing in every DRR activity conducted by SPI or other partners. Recognizing this major challenge, individuals have articulated their earnest concern for *Sitio Sabah* many times. During the stewardship workshop, many participants from Suburban, Sabah, and even from Wawa tearfully expressed their fears that Sabah will not be able to focus on strengthening its DRR capacity because of these personal conflicts. Ate Josie Villariz of Wawa shared that training and seminars succeeded in developing their organizational capacities but personal differences and unaddressed issues led to the breakdown of relationships of the members and eventually of the organization. “*Huwag niyong hayaang mangyari iyan sa inyo*” (“Don’t let that happen to you”). Unlike many organizations that do not consider these

¹³ See Manuel Abinales, “Survivors, Not Victims. Resilient, Not Downtrodden. Forging Unity in *Barangay Banaba* for Better CBDRRM,” for more on *Buklod Tao* and *Barangay Banaba*.



The Wawa Dam.

matters integral to an organization’s life, Ate Josie admonished the community to maximize opportunities to sort out relationship issues. Some offered their prayers for the estranged groups.

From the DRR perspective, personal issues, especially among leaders, can badly affect even the sharpest contingency plans. For instance, withholding information, bias in beneficiary selection, and other interpersonal issues can influence and damage any preparedness plan. But looking at it from the spirituality approach, these are common life situations that challenge the human spirit. But once given space, tackled, and seen as an integral part of community development, the process of involving introspection and community dynamics can become a very powerful tool for unleashing the human spirit in everyone as it did during Ketsana.

As we continue to journey with the communities, we hope to facilitate the *pagasasaayos ng ugnayan* (recovering and deepening of relationships) while undertaking the other tasks of risk reduction.

Synthesis: Disaster Risk Reduction and Spirituality with Secular Groups and People’s Organizations

Why did SPI engage in spirituality work and DRR with secular groups and POs? The answer is *integral transformation*.

Personal Transformation

SPI envisions a community of peace, justice, abundance, and joy for all especially for the marginalized and poor. Amid all the types of community development approaches used through the decades, SPI sees that personal transformation is essential in any fundamental change. The way one sees, judges, and acts is critical in any undertaking. *Pagpapakatao*, or giving voice to one’s human spirit, as the core of our being is a key turning point in realizing a better relationship with oneself, with others, and with the environment (*pagasasaayos ng mga ugnayan*). To “see



Relief distribution in Muslim Community in Sitio Sabah.

reality as it really is” in oneself is to have the capacity for self-observation and taking hold of the innate raw goodness that lies deep in one’s humanity.

The simplest, most innocent desire for the good of all creation stems from an understanding of oneself. Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen, OCD emphasizes the need for a *puso-sa-pusong ugnayan* (heart-to-heart relationship) that is rooted in the core of our beings. And rooting our core being is not an easy formula. It requires a process. It requires a change of heart.

There are several ways that can influence a change of heart. For some, praying, silence, or meditation becomes the primary methodology in developing retrospection and self awareness. In our DRR communities, SPI provides spaces for reflection on their experiences. Their difficulties during Ketsana, their struggles to live past the devastating flood, and their ongoing community participation are reflected upon in sessions on spirituality or during some community meetings. It is also important for the SPI staff to bear witness to behaviors carrying the message of good stewardship. The way we relate to communities, our win-win principle, and the manner by which we try to address issues are examples of the messages we take to the people. We try to be cautious in giving advice and in tackling serious concerns to emphasize the need for a process of self-reflection, analyzing, and thinking about a situation before making decisions. In this way, we are able to share the method of observation of thoughts and feelings before acting out a decision that could badly affect others.

Gradually, we see this transformation in bits and pieces of changed attitudes, in acknowledging personal weaknesses, or in displays of deep concern for the welfare of neighbors. A leader once mentioned that he is now more sensitive to his nephew’s feelings, avoiding hurtful and insulting words whenever he disciplines the teenager. Realizing the image of God and the natural goodness that dwells in him, he began to change his usual compulsion to shout and curse the child. At the same time, he began to acknowledge the dignity and sacredness that is in the young boy. Without this capacity for self-observation, all behaviors and resulting actions, be they political, cultural, or economic, will only be a reflection of the compulsive habits of the mind and heart. They will simply be venues for normal and habitual reactions to situations that oftentimes result in inappropriate, if not disastrous judgments, decisions, and actions.

The SPI framework emphasizes a *babad* or an immersion in oneself to be aware of one’s authentic goodness, and in *babad* or immersing with others and putting oneself in the shoes of the other. In this framework, SPI believes that as one affirms his or her innate goodness and sees in others the core of their beings, this consciousness can be a very powerful means to unleash one’s concern, talents, and affinity with his or her environment. And once an individual takes hold of this power, it becomes the propeller for genuine community awareness and participation.

Mission

But spirituality is only as good as its mission. One cannot be truly spiritual without engaging in actual works for transformation. And one cannot do this alone. It is more effective and powerful to work as a collective in solidarity with other groups, institutions, or disciplines tackling issues concerning humanity from different perspectives and approaches in a united manner. For instance, social action within the community and advocacy with the municipal government are all part of the mission that SPI encourages and strongly supports.

DRR in Rodriguez, Rizal is an example of how spirituality can be concretized in addressing the plight of urban poor communities. It is new evangelization at work. It is realizing the Good News by addressing vulnerabilities and exposure to hazards and by developing human capacities of the vulnerable in order to be prepared and more resilient in the face of disasters. It is “allowing people to sleep soundly amid the heavy rains.”

Church as Community

So why work with POs?

SPI believes that working with the Church is both working with the institutional Church, for instance through partner parishes and dioceses, and working with the Church as a community of believers. Mothers and fathers who aim to protect their families against hazards such as typhoons are believers in life. Neighborhood associations that react to the financial corruption of local officials are believers in the honor of servant leadership. Residents who advocate against the careless disposal of solid wastes are believers in the integrity of creation. All who believe in the fullness of life are members of the Church.

But as Jesus was biased for the poor, so SPI puts priority on the Church of the Poor, whose members are the marginalized and underprivileged sectors of the society—those living in danger zones, relocatees striving to live in multi-hazard areas without facilities for the most basic needs, Muslims, and members of other faiths discriminated against by the majority, women, and children constantly facing abuse within their homes. SPI accompanies urban poor communities in Sabah, Suburban, Wawa, and other places, which, when empowered, will actively participate in their own transformation. They will have a part in increasing their own capacities and reducing their risks against interpersonal conflicts, hazards, and disasters, and in moving towards resilience.

This is SPI’s contribution.

*“When the Church in the Philippines becomes truly this Church of the Poor, the poor will be at home with her, and will participate actively, as equal to others, in her life and mission. The Church will then become truly a communion, a sign and instrument for the unity of the whole Filipino nation.”*¹⁴ ■

¹⁴ PCPII, “The Conciliar Document,” #136, in PCP II, Acts and Decrees, 51-52.

Building Resilience through Self-Help Infrastructure Development and Technical Capacity-Building

Maria Faith Y. Varona
Technical Assistance Organization - Pilipinas, Inc. (TAO-Pilipinas)

Background

Tropical Storm Ketsana devastated Metro Manila in September 2009. The unprecedented scale and magnitude of the damage was a huge wake up call to both rich and poor inhabitants of the metropolis. Christian Aid (CA) in the Philippines is helping the most vulnerable communities cope with disasters¹ and works through partner NGOs in several communities around Greater Metro Manila for the post-Ketsana rehabilitation.

In April 2011, Christian Aid's partner NGOs conducted participatory capacity and vulnerability assessments (PCVA) in their partner communities to help determine disaster risk reduction strategies. Five areas articulated the need for technical support in infrastructure development: Banaba in San Mateo, Rizal; Sabah and Suburban Phase 1B in San Jose, Rodriguez, Rizal; San Bartolome in Novaliches; and *Sitio*² Lumang Ilog in Taytay, Rizal.

Banaba community is being assisted by the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP), a resource center that promotes community-based disaster risk management; both Suburban and Sabah are being assisted in organizing by the Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI), an NGO founded by priests and religious that promotes the spirituality of stewardship and the building of disaster-resilient communities; and *Sitio* Lumang Ilog, Taytay has the organizing support of Community Organizers Multiversity (CO-Multiversity).

Christian Aid tapped the Technical Assistance Organization, Inc. (TAO-Pilipinas), a women-led technical service non-profit, non-government organization of architects and planners, to assist its partner NGOs. Established in 2001, TAO-Pilipinas has been working with urban poor communities on housing and security of tenure issues through participatory processes in support of its vision of sustainable human settlements and holistic urban development. It has four main programs: (1) Human Settlements and Environment for direct community technical assistance; (2) Education and Training for technical capability building and training; (3) Research and Publications for research and knowledge base support; and (4) Organization, Networking and Advocacy.

Vulnerable communities should be ready. We should manage risks. We should not wait for disasters to happen.

Manuel 'Ka Noli' Abinales
President, Buklod Tao

¹ Christian Aid website available at <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/asia/philippines.aspx>

² *Sitio* is the smallest division of a village unit.

³ *Barangay* means "village."

Safer Communities through Disaster-Resilient Design

In the project, *Initiating Self-Help Infrastructure Development with Technical Capability-Building Towards the Development of Community-based Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation Plan*, TAO-Pilipinas' primary task is to develop disaster-resilient designs of specific community infrastructures together with the beneficiary communities of Christian Aid's partner NGOs in four areas: (1) Suburban in Rodriguez, Rizal for a concrete pedestrian bridge construction, renovation of the old basketball court as temporary evacuation center and multipurpose center, structural assessment of damaged houses, and capability building on house retrofitting; (2) Sabah in *Barangay*³ San Jose in Rodriguez, Rizal for a water supply line installation at San Jose Elementary School that will serve as an evacuation center for the area; and (3) *Sitio* Lumang Ilog, *Barangay* San Juan in Taytay, Rizal for drainage study and design, and prototype design of a house-on-stilts.

The application of disaster-resilient standards in the design of housing and infrastructure is seen as a long-term approach to the challenge of building safer communities.

A Delayed Start

TAO-Pilipinas and Christian Aid with its partner NGOs started discussing the details of the infrastructure project as early as March 2011. In mid-2011, the technical assistance project was approved in principle by Christian Aid but with numerous changes from the original proposal in terms of scope, budget, and project schedule.

TAO-Pilipinas initiated preliminary activities as early as May 2011 with site visits of the target areas and partner meetings with the community. The first community planning workshops were conducted in Banaba, Damayan, and Suburban in August 3, 4, 5 and 13, 2011, respectively. TAO-Pilipinas postponed succeeding activities after August 2011 to wait for the official project approval and contract from Christian Aid.

At this point, TAO-Pilipinas already needed to engage the services of other technical professionals—civil and structural engineers, surveyor, and hydrologist—and to conduct geotechnical analysis of the sites. Without the notice to proceed from Christian Aid, it was difficult for TAO-Pilipinas to get other professionals to commit their technical expertise to the project.

Finally, in January 2012, formal project approval and funds release came and adjustments to the project implementation schedules were made accordingly.

Scope of Project Documentation

This documentation is only about TAO-Pilipinas' technical support to the Center for Disaster Preparedness with focus on the design process of the evacuation and livelihood center led by the people's organization (PO), *Buklod Tao*, CDP's main partner in *Barangay* Banaba, and with the support of other community stakeholders. Because of the delayed commencement, it will cover only four months of actual project implementation and will center on the insights about the activities conducted so far and some lessons learned. The rest of the infrastructure projects with other CA partner NGOs will not be covered in this documentation.

The infrastructure project in Banaba is currently in the process of securing permits for construction. This documentation covers only the design process and not the actual construction of the Banaba evacuation and livelihood center.

This is the first time that TAO-Pilipinas has worked directly with CDP on a project.

Project Stakeholders

Based on the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity, and operational independence⁴ on disaster situations, Christian Aid requires that the infrastructure project be accessible to the entire Banaba community. Guided by this, TAO-Pilipinas ensured that all the stakeholders participate in the process of designing the evacuation center with CDP support. These are *Buklod Tao*, the *barangay* local government, and the federation of community organizations and disaster management groups in Banaba,

⁴From UN OCHA on Message available at http://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/OOM_HumPrinciple_English.pdf

TAO-Pilipinas' Technical Assistance Process

TAO-Pilipinas envisions the development of inclusive, people-centered, and sustainable human settlements with equitable access to resources and opportunities. Towards this end, it has been advocating participatory processes in its technical assistance work with communities.

To facilitate its technical assistance work with the communities, it also partners with existing community-based organizations already working in the target areas.

In general, there are three stages to the technical assistance process. The details of each phase depend on the scope and complexity of the project:

1. Preparatory Phase

This phase entails preparation not just by the technical team but also the beneficiary community of the project. There are two main classifications of the activities:

a. Social Preparation: This covers community profiling and integration such as community visits, meetings, and consultation.

b. Technical Preparation:

Land and Site Preparation. This includes land research (if there is no site yet), site selection, ocular inspection, site analysis, engineering analysis and tests (soil, water, etc.), and site survey (topography, structure, and vegetation).

Community Planning Workshop. This process helps people articulate their ideas for the physical developments in their community.

2. Design Development Phase

At this stage, plan production is the main activity. Schemes will be drawn from the prior community planning workshop activity, validated with the community through another workshop, and approved in a general membership meeting.

As soon as a consensus is reached on the community design or plan, it is translated into technical drawings, detailing area sizes, function, and relationship of spaces—how it would look, the heights, circulation system, utilities, structural integrity, including cost estimate and human power.

After the technical drawings and plans have been completed, permits and/or licenses are obtained from the concerned local government agencies to ensure that the plans comply with existing building laws, zoning and land use regulations, and environmental preservation concerns.

3. Construction and Implementation Phase

Finally, this phase is the realization and actualization of the community plan and process. This includes regular monitoring activities to ensure that project implementation goes according to plan and to address any issues that will cause delay or deviation from the targets in a timely fashion.

Technical assistance will always be unique for each community although there will be similarities in some of the processes and outputs.

The Case Study

Beneficiary Community:	Banaba
Key Stakeholders:	<i>Buklod Tao</i> and the residents of Banaba
Location:	<i>Barangay</i> Banaba, San Mateo, Rizal Province
Assisting CA Partner NGO:	Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP)

The Site: Selection and Analysis

The proposed Banaba Evacuation and Livelihood Center will be built around three kilometers on the old *Buklod Tao* office and livelihood center in Banaba Extension adjacent to Nangka River. It has an area of 827 square meters and can be accessed through two private subdivisions—Greenland Newtown and Sta. Lucia.

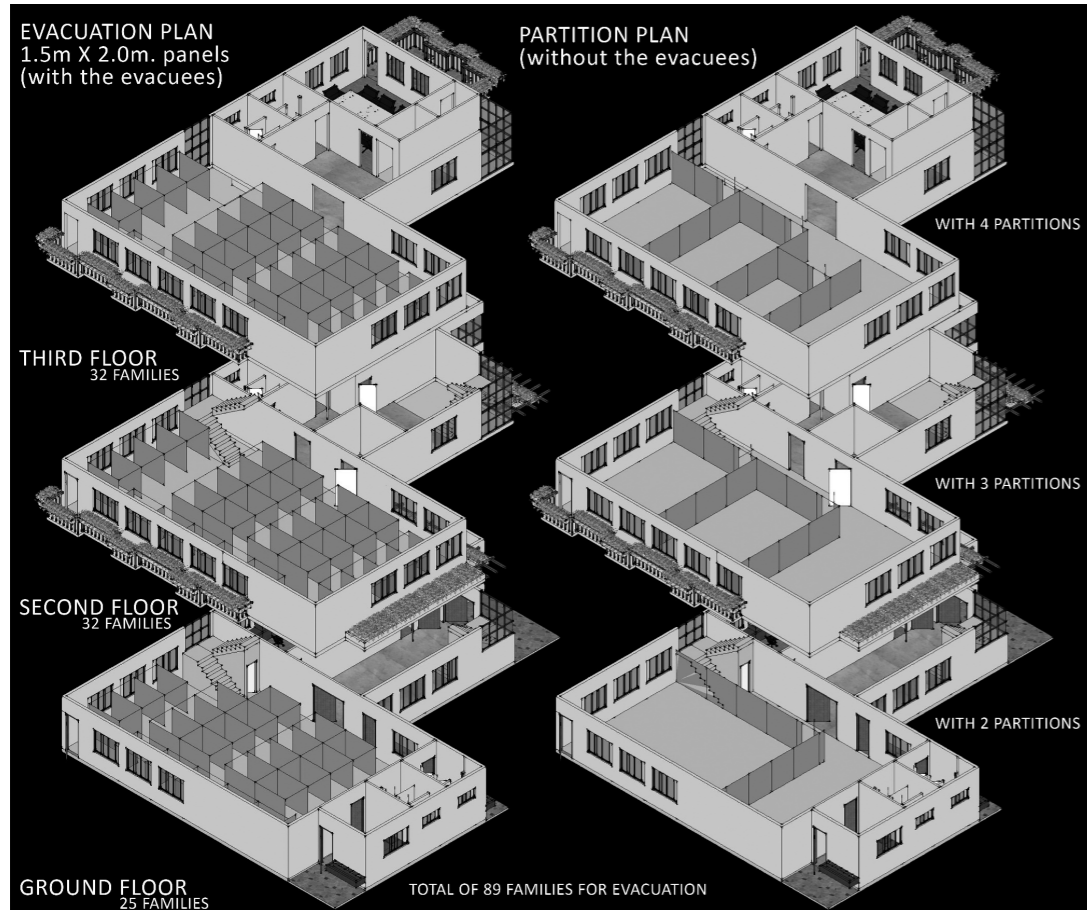
Land research was not needed as CDP already acquired the site. TAO-Pilipinas made an initial site analysis—checking the location, topography, existing vegetation, and existing structures. It also examined boundaries, utilities, facilities on site and in the surrounding areas, and overall suitability of the site.

The lot is situated atop a small hill with moderately rolling terrain populated by several mature fruit trees (mango, avocado, and santol). The trees with caliper diameter of 20 centimeters or bigger will be retained. The old caretaker's house was moved outside the lot boundaries to clear the site. Judging by the lush vegetation growth, the soil is rich and deep although there are already evidences of soil erosion especially along the steeper slopes in the southern portion of the lot. The right-of-way is located north of the site.

A temporary office, livelihood center, and urban garden were constructed on the site by *Buklod Tao* in coordination with CDP and other project stakeholders.

Buklod Tao is a people's organization focused on strengthening the community's capacities in disaster preparedness and environmental preservation. Together with key stakeholders of the project, *Buklod Tao* has been spearheading disaster management-related activities in *Barangay* Banaba in San Mateo, Rizal since 1993.

Because of Banaba's critical location at the confluence of Marikina and Nangka Rivers, its residents have also developed a heightened awareness of their vulnerability to the flooding in the area. *Buklod Tao*'s initiatives and support for disaster risk reduction and management in Banaba have made it one of the most proactive groups in disaster preparedness. Extensive flooding caused by Tropical Storm Ketsana in 2009 gave it added impetus to upgrade the community's level of disaster preparedness. This was realized with the support of CDP and Christian Aid through the Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme.



Banaba Evacuation and Livelihood Center Final Floor Plan showing the different configurations of the space inside the center with and without evacuees

Design Preparatory Phase: The Planning Workshop

Held in August 2011, the first workshop with stakeholders from *Barangay* Banaba yielded three main ideas for the building configuration and site amenities:

- One group proposed a big building that will house everything.
- Two groups suggested one big building with one to two small auxiliary structures.
- One group proposed a cluster of buildings.

In the initial planning workshop, the participants were brimming with ideas for the evacuation and livelihood center. There were lively discussions on space allocation and use between people's organizations, NGOs, and *barangay* government representatives.

The group easily agreed on preserving the environment. To ensure that the 20 centimeter diameter fruit trees on the site will not be affected by the structure, some groups measured the "clear" distance between trees by counting their steps (pace factor method) before they decided on the dimensions for the building footprint. A good but extremely challenging idea was how to make the center "self-sustaining"—energy efficient, with its own reliable energy source, regular potable water supply, and safe. Alternative building materials and technology in the construction were explored as well as solar panels and rainwater harvesting. They wanted it to be a model "green" building for Banaba.

Another concern that surfaced during discussions was accessibility of senior citizens and persons with disability—how can the elderly and differently-abled people navigate three flights of stairs in a disaster situation? These are valid concerns based on the group's experience of flooding



Banaba Evacuation and Livelihood Center Perspective viewed from the main entrance gate.



Banaba Evacuation and Livelihood Center Aerial Perspective showing the main building and proposed areas for fiberglass rescue boat-building, compost stockpile, MRF storage and urban garden A-risers

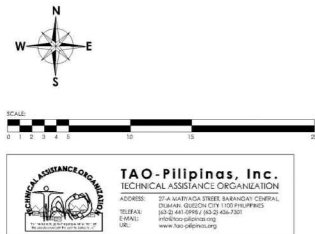
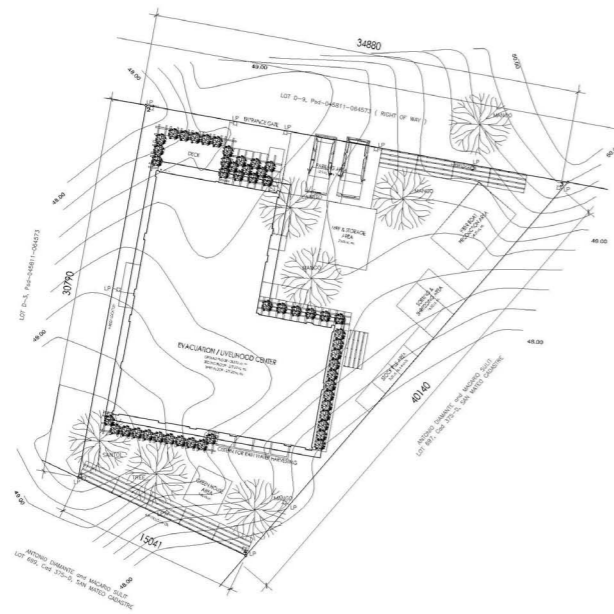
in Banaba. Everyone agreed to make the upper floors safe and to equip the second and third floors with toilet facilities and kitchen.

Livelihood-related equipment like the high-speed sewing machines were put on the upper floors to secure them against floods. However, a recommendation to house the production of fiberglass boats on the upper floors was abandoned when they realized that strong winds could blow fumes and fiber all over the site and adversely affect a big area. Fiberglass boat production uses materials that need special handling and disposal. The majority opted for a separate structure from the main evacuation center. A design of the fiberglass boat fabrication shop was provided by the Department of Science and Technology to *Buklod Tao* and formed the basis for the space allocation.

The different ideas were synthesized and the group agreed that the following spaces were needed: offices, evacuation area, production area for tetrapots,⁵ production area for fiberglass boats,⁶ recreation area, Audio-Visual Room, A-riser (plant holder/stand for the urban garden),

⁵Tetrapots are recycled tetrapack juice containers sewn into various sizes to function as pots for plants.

⁶ Fiberglass boats are used as emergency rescue boats in floods.



SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Site Plan showing the different structures that will be built on site, property boundaries, topography and existing trees and vegetation

materials recovery facility (MRF), greenhouse, nursery, compost stockpile, and storage area. All groups proposed a medium-rise building of three to four storeys.

Design Schematics

On February 17, 2012, the consolidated results of the first workshop were presented back to Buklod Tao.

Two schemes were introduced:

Scheme 1:
Three-storey building that will house all the spaces except the urban garden and MRF.

Scheme 2:
A cluster of structures zoned into four main functions: Evacuation, Production, Green (Garden), and Market

At the end of the consultation and after weighing the pros and cons of the different options, the people decided to go for the three-storey building in Scheme 1 because it is more economical in terms of construction cost and space. A compact design is more appropriate with the limited land area. A one-stop information center for visitors and guests was also added.

The quantity and location of other spatial needs were likewise considered such as the urban garden A-risers, fiberglass boat production area, MRF with pulverizer and stockpile, offices for the different organizations in the federation, storage spaces within and outside the building, space for each evacuee family, space for laundry, location of rain gauge, rainwater harvesting, and parking area.

The optimum number of evacuees that can be accommodated in the building was based on this computation: 75 families at 3 square meters per family (1.5 m x 2 m). Also provided was additional space for tents on the grounds around the building to accommodate a maximum of 25 families. Thus the maximum number of evacuees that can be accommodated on the site is 100 families. It should be noted that this is not even close to the 45 square meters per person set by the Sphere Standards (Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response). Concerns about fire exit, security, control of entry and exit into the site, and use of lead-free paints in the construction of the building were also raised during consultations.

Design Finalization

By March 27, the pre-final design was presented again for final validation. The distribution of spaces in the main building consists of the following:

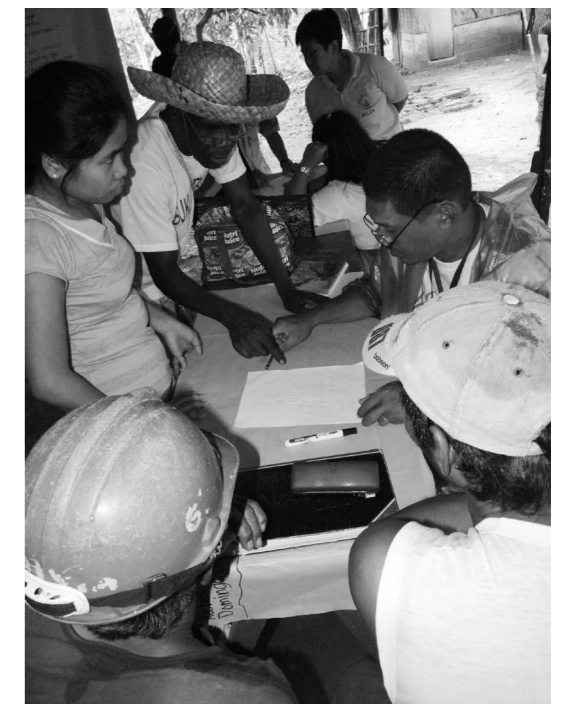
First floor:	Offices and visitor information center
Second floor:	Tetrapot production area
Third floor:	Multipurpose area and Audio-Visual Room

On each floor, there will be an evacuation area or multipurpose hall that can be subdivided into private areas and stalls, storage area, kitchen, toilet, and bathroom.

By July 2012, the technical drawings have been completed and the application for building permit is underway. Canvassing of construction materials is also being done. Target start of construction is on August 2012.

Challenges

1. Access to the site is a major challenge. The actual layout showed that the road right of way (RROW) does not connect with the main road system, which is incidentally owned by another subdivision, Sta. Lucia Properties. Buklod Tao is still negotiating with the private subdivision to allow it to connect to the subdivision road for the RROW and also the evacuation center's drainage line. These are basic elements in site development that should be addressed as soon as possible as they will have a profound effect on the construction of the building and the actual use of the site.
2. Water supply and sanitation are also major issues. Since there is no available water supply connection to the site, a shallow well of about 20 meters deep with pump was installed. When the water was tested, results showed coliform bacteria contamination (level 8). The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) strongly discouraged the use of the water for cooking, bathing, and even watering the plants. Several options were given to address this problem: (1) put additional pipes to deepen the well and find a better aquifer; (2) treat the well with chlorine; or (3) build a new well in a different location within the site. It strongly recommends doing



Community Planning Workshop to plan for the Evacuation and Livelihood Center with Buklod Tao and barangay representatives.



Presentation of design schemes and validation workshop for Banaba Evacuation and Livelihood Center.

a geo-resistivity study to locate a good ground water source. For now, *Buklod Tao* buys filtered water in containers for use on site but it is exploring the option of lengthening the deep well pipes by 20 to 50 meters to address the coliform contamination problem.

3. Time is running short. Ideally construction should have started during the summer months of April or May 2012 to maximize good weather conditions.
4. Construction materials storage will also be a problem since the site does not have a warehouse big enough for the bulk procurement that will be done to save on time and money.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The Executive Director of TAO-Pilipinas has this to say about technical collaborations and NGO work:

For NGOs, it is important to get a technical consultant who knows how to work with people and is willing to work with people. Not all technical consultants have the patience to meet with communities and consider their ideas in a participatory manner. Not all technical consultants can communicate well with people. It may also be important for the NGO to assert the minimum terms in consulting at the start of the engagement. It is, however, the role of the NGO to ensure the participation of project stakeholders at all stages of the project. The consultant's time requires money so it is important to ensure that target objectives for a specific activity are met. Failure to do so will mean extra fees to repeat a process with the consultants and to cover logistics.

For funders, it is important to allow adequate time for project implementation, especially infrastructure development. Although construction can be fast-tracked, the quality may suffer or

costs may escalate to maintain the desired quality and strength of a building. Agreeing with area partners about post-construction responsibilities needs to be studied to determine a good set-up or structure for the operations of the building. Post-construction responsibilities should be clarified at the start of the engagement.

For POs, the greater role lies with the specific organization that will benefit and use the structures to be built. Clear guidelines on the administration, use, and maintenance of the structures should be formulated before they are completed. The community should enforce these guidelines. A committee may be assigned or a separate entity may be set up, whichever is suitable, to manage the use and maintenance of the structures. The longevity of the structure will greatly depend on how the community cares for it. An agreement with the NGO partner or the donor may be sought by the community to establish order and clarify the authorized body in the community to administer the building.

At this point, the effect of the technical intervention in relation to its goal of disaster risk reduction and mitigation is not yet evident. But the enthusiasm and optimism that *Buklod Tao* has shown to make the project work in spite of the challenges is admirable.

Overall, how the technical intervention will affect the organizational dynamics among the members and between community and organizations cannot yet be seen. It can be viewed in many ways, both positive and negative. But TAO-Pilipinas is hoping that the participatory technical processes it insists on adopting will enhance community ownership of the project and activities, encourage people-to-people linkages and exchanges, and on a more practical level, facilitate the caring and management of the infrastructure that they helped plan and build. ■

Standing Up for Secure and Safe Settlements: Networking and Policy Advocacy by Ketsana-Affected Communities

Benedict O. Balderrama
Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA)

“I grew up in an informal settlement along the Pasig River. I am familiar with the river and its various moods. But Ondoy (local name for Tropical Storm Ketsana) was something different. It made me realize that the challenge for informal settlers today is not just to struggle for tenure security but also to strive for family and community safety.

Jose Morales
Urban Poor Leader

Ketsana: A Wake-up Call

Tropical Storm Ketsana caused flooding and wreaked havoc in the Greater Manila Region, a vast, mostly flat area covering the administrative region of Metro Manila and adjoining municipalities. The unprecedented floods affected especially those living near the two large water bodies bordering the national capital region—Laguna Lake and Manila Bay—and along the main river systems that run through it (Marikina-Pasig River System, Tullahan River System, and Parañaque-Zapote River System). The Post-Disaster Rapid Assessment done by the World Bank estimated the damage and losses caused by Typhoons Ketsana and Parma (local name: Pepeng) to be at US \$4.4 billion or 2.7 percent of the country's GDP!

World Bank, “Typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng: Post-Disaster Needs Assessment,” 2009.

For many persons, families, and communities, the experience had been very vivid and significant, even traumatic, with the loss of lives, properties, and livelihoods. But there were also numerous stories of solidarity and united action during the rescue operations, evacuation, and debris clean up that helped rebuild their lives.

Indeed, Ketsana had been a wake-up call, reminding everyone to take seriously the reality of climate change, the need for disaster risk reduction and management, and the urgency of implementing the new laws: the Climate Change Act of 2009 (Republic Act 9729) and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 (Republic Act 10121).

Triple Victimization of the Poor

The Poor Suffer the Loss of Homes, Properties, Livelihoods, and Lives

The poor bore much of the damage and losses suffered during and after Ketsana. Many of their houses, especially those made of light materials and situated on waterways, were either totally



AKKMA calls for climate justice.

or partially damaged, forcing many families to evacuate and live in tent cities and public facilities. Household items like furniture, appliances, and clothing as well as livelihood assets, such as equipment and merchandise were lost and damaged, affecting family income and well-being. They were also the majority of those who got sick and who died.

The Poor are Blamed for the Flooding and Disaster

Government agencies and officials, among them local governments, have blamed the poor for the floods, saying that their presence in the waterways and their improper waste disposal practices were major causes of the flooding. Aside from being the primary disaster victims, the poor have been made convenient scapegoats for government's inadequacy in flood control and disaster preparedness.

The Poor, especially those in “Danger Areas”, are Threatened with Eviction

As a knee-jerk reaction, government officials identified the areas near the water bodies and waterways as “danger areas,” making this the justification for evicting families from these areas, including those whose settlements had been formalized through presidential proclamations, Community Mortgage Program, and other means, supposedly to keep them out of harm's way. Then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo even issued Executive Order (EO) 854 revoking earlier proclamations of social housing sites in the Manggahan Floodway and nearby areas.

In a sharing session of community leaders in Ketsana-affected areas, Elgin Ibaoc of Lupang Arenda narrated how EO 854 has affected thousands of families in Pasig City, Cainta, and Taytay. “We thought that we have already won our struggle for security of tenure when our communities were declared social housing sites through Proclamation No. 704 in 1995 and Proclamation No. 1160 in 2006,” she said. “But EO 854 changed that.” Once again the threat of eviction hangs over all the families. This additional apprehension about their security of tenure is hampering their efforts to recover from the typhoon damages and livelihood losses. Other communities suffered the same loss of tenure security. “Our houses were demolished while we were still in the process of rebuilding,” shared Presilda Juanich of Navotas City. “We were forced to move to the resettlement areas in Rodriguez, Rizal where there are limited social services and livelihood opportunities.”

Task Force Anti-Eviction, a federation of people's organizations monitoring and opposing unlawful evictions, estimates that families threatened with eviction include about 80,000 families along estuaries and waterways in Metro Manila; 100,000 families around Laguna Lake; 60,000 families along and near Manggahan Floodway; and 40,000 families in Lupang Arenda, among others.

The numbers could easily reach 300,000 families. Assuming that each family has an average of five members, the affected population would be at least 1.5 million persons. It would be like moving the whole population of the city of Manila or of several smaller cities.

All these are contrary to the spirit and provisions of existing laws. The Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (Republic Act 7972) provides for relocation and proper eviction of informal settlers, including those residing in so-called “danger zones;” while the Fisheries Code of 1998 (Republic Act 8550) provides for the establishment of fisherfolk settlement in coastal and lakeside areas.

There are also many infrastructure projects, both public and private-initiated, being proposed and discussed among various government agencies like the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), and the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), to address the issue of flooding in Metro Manila and the Laguna Lake area. Among these are proposals for dredging Pasig River and Laguna Lake, the planned Parañaque Spillway, and the Marikina Dam as well as a Ring Road Dike around Laguna Lake. These projects, if planned without consultation with affected communities, could cause further displacement of poor families.

The poor see threats of eviction and dislocation as a bigger disaster risk that would inflict greater harm on their security and well-being.

Building a Constituency for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Advocacy in the Greater Manila Region

To address the various issues stemming from the effects of Ketsana on poor families in the Greater Manila Region, the Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA)², with support from Christian Aid, embarked on the Project, “Networking, Technical, and Policy Advocacy Support for Safer Settlements for Communities in Greater Manila Region Affected by Typhoon Ketsana.” The project sought to build a constituency for advocacy for disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) by working with existing federations of community organizations in the affected areas.

Project Partners

Mamamayan para sa Pagpapanatili at Pangangalaga ng Lawa (MAPAGPALA)³

MAPAGPALA Coalition is a fisherfolk-led multi-sectoral alliance of people living around Laguna Lake in the provinces of Laguna and Rizal as well as Taguig City in the National Capital Region (NCR). MAPAGPALA is made up of seven federations:

1. *Ugnayan ng mga Samahan ng Mamamayan at Mangingisda ng Rizal (UGMMARIZ)*⁴ in the towns of Taytay, Angono, Binangonan, and Cardona in the province of Rizal.
2. *Kapatiran ng Malayang Maliliit na Mangingisda sa Pilipinas (KAMMMPI)*⁵ in the towns of Baras, Morong, Tanay, Pililia, and Jala-Jala in the province of Rizal.
3. *Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Mangingisda sa Buong Baybay (PSMBB)*⁶ in Lumban, Kalayaan, Pakil, Pangil, Mabitac, Siniloan, and Paete in the province of Laguna;
4. *Federasyon ng Magsasaka at Mangingisda ng Sta. Cruz (FEDMMASC)*⁷ in Sta. Cruz, Pila, and Bay in the province of Laguna.
5. *Pinagkaisang Pamayanan ng Laguna (PINAGPALA)*⁸ in Biñan, Sta.Rosa, Calamba, Los Baños, San Pedro, and Cabuyao in the province of Laguna.
6. Taguig Alliance for Conservation and Development (TACAD) in Taguig City in the National Capital Region (NCR).
7. MAPAGPALA-Women, composed of women leaders from all the member-federations of MAPAGPALA.

² PHILSSA is a national network of social development NGOs, many of which work with urban poor communities on urbanization-related issues such as land tenure security for informal settlers, housing, eviction and access to basic services.

³ The literal translation of the organization’s name is “Citizens for the Care and Conservation of the Lake.”

⁴ The literal translation of the organization’s name is “Network of Citizens and Fisherfolk Organizations in (the Province of) Rizal.”

⁵ The literal translation of the organization’s name is “Brotherhood of Free Small Fisherfolk in the Philippines.”

⁶ The literal translation of the organization’s name is “United Lake-wide Organization of Fisherfolk.”

⁷ The literal translation of the organization’s name is “Federation of Farmers and Fisherfolk in Santa Cruz.”

⁸ The literal translation of the organization’s name is “United Communities of (the Province of) Laguna.”



DRRM Assessment & Planning with the DRMM Head of the Province of Rizal.

According to its Chair, Melchor Magano, MAPAGPALA promotes policies and projects for the development of Laguna Lake and surrounding communities. It focuses its efforts on implementing the Laguna Lake Conservation Program (LLCP) that includes advocating for the passage of the Laguna Lake Conservation Authority (LLCA) Bill, the establishment of fisherfolk settlement sites, extraction of janitor and knight fishes from the lake, engagement with Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), and implementation of the 6,000-hectare limit for fishpen and fishcages. Its other activities include organizing, training, disaster risk reduction and management, climate change adaptation (CCA), policy and budget advocacy, livelihood development, and promotion of land and housing rights. Welima Arevalo adds that through MAPAGPALA-Women, gender issues and women concerns are being discussed and addressed.

Urban Poor Alliance (UP-ALL) – Mega Manila

Urban Poor Alliance (UP-ALL) of Mega Manila is made up of non-government organizations and people’s organizations within the National Capital Region and nearby provinces. UP-ALL Mega Manila has active city-wide alliances in most cities of Metro Manila; Antipolo City, Rodriguez, Cainta, and Taytay in the province of Rizal as well as organizations in the provinces of Laguna and Bulacan.

According to then UP-ALL Mega Manila Convenor and now Commissioner of the Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP), Cipriano “Ping” Fampulme, UP-ALL’s advocacy agenda include:

- Addressing eviction and demolition threats.
- Strengthening the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA).
- Lobbying for the release of the balance of the legislated budgetary allotment of the Comprehensive and Integrated Shelter Finance Act for the Community Mortgage Program.
- Promoting localization of shelter strategies.
- Advocating for the proclamation by the President of lands occupied by informal settlers as social housing sites.

Ugnayang Lakas ng Alyansa ng Apektadong Pamayanan (ULAP)⁹

ULAP is a federation of community groups living on the banks of rivers and waterways in Metro Manila presently threatened with eviction as well as some who had already been resettled. The federation has a presence in urban poor communities in Quezon City, Manila City, Pasig City, and Makati City in Metro Manila; and in Cainta and Taytay in the province of Rizal.

According to its Convenor, Jose Morales, ULAP's advocacy involves campaigning for security of tenure, access to social services, and livelihood development.

Alyansa ng Mamamayan sa Montalban Rizal (ALMAMO)¹⁰

ALMAMO is the municipal alliance of about 50 community organizations of relocated families living in government resettlement projects in the municipality of Rodriguez (formerly Montalban), Rizal. According to its Chair, Vangie Serrano, ALMAMO is united around the issues of safe settlements, decent housing, access to basic services, sustainable livelihoods, and building resilience to disasters. Arriving at a consensus on a common agenda was a major milestone for the alliance.

Aksyon para sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad at Klima (AKKMA).¹¹

The various federations and alliances of affected community organisations were consolidated into a bigger multi-sectoral coalition focused on DRRM advocacy. The NGO network, PHILSSA, facilitated the formation of a new coalition named *Bagong Ugnayang Lakas sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad*¹²— *Disaster Risk Reduction Advocacy Group* (BULKK-DRRAG), which was formally established on November 19, 2010. BULKK-DRRAG became a vehicle for the various member organizations to work together in advocating for secure tenure for families living in so-called danger areas as well as in promoting disaster risk reduction and management and climate change adaptation. BULKK-DRRAG was renamed *Aksyon para sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad at Klima* (AKKMA) on August 3, 2011. On September 2, 2011, AKKMA elected Jose Morales of ULAP and UP-ALL as Convenor and Jaime Evangelista of UGMMARIZ-MAPAGPALA as co-Convenor.

Other community organisations and groups, such as partner community organizations of Christian Aid in the Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme and partner people's organizations of PHILSSA member NGOs, were invited and integrated into AKKMA.

For Zacarias Asuncion of UP-ALL QC,¹³ the formation of AKKMA as a multi-sectoral alliance of DRRM and CCA advocates was very significant for "it consolidated a broad range of people's organizations representing different sectors and localities." Vangie Serrano of ALMAMO emphasized the relevance of a coalition focusing on DRRM/CCA and integrating this concern in proposed policies long advocated by different groups. Jose Morales adds that in the National Urban DRRM Workshop held in June 2011, he realized "the widespread interest in DRRM and CCA not only in the Ketsana-affected Greater Manila Region, but also in other parts of the country."

Towards a People's Agenda for Secure and Safe Settlements

Participatory Research on the Situation of Communities Regarded as "Danger Areas"

PHILSSA collaborated with an NGO, the Technical Assistance Organization (TAO-Pilipinas), in conducting a participatory research on the situation of communities considered by government agencies as "danger areas." In its assessment, TAO-Pilipinas considered factors such as the area's topography and geo-physical features, the effects of Typhoon Ketsana as experienced by the residents, the land use and development plans of the local government units, the socio-economic profile of affected families, and the presence of organizations. Trained to be local

⁹ The literal translation of the organization's name is "Strong Alliance of Affected Communities."

¹⁰ The literal translation of the organization's name is "Citizens Alliance in Montalban Rizal."

¹¹ The literal translation of the organization's name is "Action for Preparedness for Calamity and Climate [Change]."

¹² The literal translation of this portion of the organization's name is "New Alliance for Preparedness to Calamities"

¹³ UP-ALL QC is the city-wide alliance of organizations in Quezon City that is affiliated with UP-ALL.

researchers, the community leaders implemented the data-gathering activities and participated in the data analysis.

Community leader Erlinda Mosqueda of UP-ALL Valenzuela did not encounter much difficulty accessing information and documents from the city government. However, Felimon Buena of KAMMPI-Rizal had to go back and forth the various offices in the city hall and ended up with incomplete and outdated data. For many, like Rosalina Taghoy of Pasig City, Loida Cillo of the City of Manila, and Rose Italia of Taguig City, the research activity familiarized them with local government offices and officials in their areas. For some, like Melchor Magano of Lumban, Laguna and Vangie Serrano of Rodriguez, Rizal, participation in the research deepened their awareness of the disaster risks in their communities.

AKKMA's Five-Point DRRM Advocacy Agenda

For AKKMA leaders and members, one of the most significant achievements of the Ketsana Project was the formulation of a common DRRM advocacy agenda by the federation which has a broad and multi-sectoral constituency—urban poor, fisherfolk, and women. Many of the community leaders take great pride in their participation in formulating this common agenda.

Formulated in a workshop conducted on January 21-22, 2011 in Romblon, AKKMA's advocacy agenda was based on the long-standing advocacies of the sectors, their communities' experiences during Ketsana, and the output of the participatory research.

AKKMA's Five-Point DRRM Advocacy Agenda consisted of the following:

1. Addressing the threat of eviction in the "danger areas."
2. Promoting people's participation in DRR-related technical studies and local development planning undertaken by government.
3. Strengthening the implementation of the DRRM Law.
4. Supporting advocacy for relevant policies and laws, specifically the amendment of UDHA and the passage of the LLCA and National Land Use and Management bills.
5. Allocating a bigger budget for DRRM, CCA and social housing.

Jose Morales of ULAP observed that "AKKMA has helped mainstream DRRM/CCA and its agenda into the advocacy and activities of its member organizations." Zacarias Asuncion of UP-ALL QC took note of the deepening of understanding and solidarity between the urban poor leaders of UP-ALL and fisher leaders of MAPAGPALA in coming up with a common advocacy agenda. Jaime Evangelista shared that his participation in AKKMA's formation and various activities "broadened his involvement beyond fisherfolk issues and into other pressing concerns such as DRRM, security of tenure, access to social services, and monitoring of government spending." Welima Arevalo emphasized the significant participation of women in the process of agenda formulation.

Lobbying and Campaigning for Secure and Safe Settlements

Addressing Eviction Threats in "Danger Areas"

PHILSSA and AKKMA work together in addressing eviction threats in "danger areas" primarily through the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Informal Settler Families led by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). They do this by:

- Referring eviction threats and cases to the TWG.
- Participating in the formulation of the "Roadmap to Addressing Informal Settlements in Danger Areas in Metro Manila," a study undertaken by World Bank consultants for the TWG.
- Participating in Local Technical Working Groups tasked to deal with eviction threats in particular areas and communities.

Among the activities carried out by AKKMA and PHILSSA to sharpen the people's understanding of the legal, political, and social dimensions of the issue were a roundtable discussion on "danger areas" on April 6, 2011; a "deepening discussion" on the same topic of danger areas on July 18, 2011; and an internal discussion on the legally mandated "three-meter easement"¹⁴ on April 11, 2012.

Fora (such as the Stakeholders Forum on Post-Ondoy Situation held on November 17, 2010), mobilizations (such as the ULAP mobilization against evictions in Quezon City on March 28, 2011, *Kalbaryo ng Maralitang Tagalunsod 2011*¹⁵ and *Panunuluyan 2011*¹⁶), and other activities (such as the Ketsana Commemoration tree-planting event, which took place in Baras on September 26, 2011 with Congressman Erin Tañada and in Rodriguez on November 15, 2011 with Department of Interior and Local Governments Secretary Jesse Robredo) facilitated dialogue and coordination with government officials and helped forge links with institutions vital to the advocacy work to address eviction threats.

PHILSSA and AKKMA also work with the Congressional Task Force Fisherfolk Settlement, which is made up of legislators and representatives of government agencies tasked with coming up with studies and recommendations on how to address the situation of families living in the lakeshore areas.

Promoting People's Participation in DRRM-related Technical Studies and Development Planning

PHILSSA, with the help of TAO-Pilipinas, conducted Joint Technical Sessions on Flood Control Projects and Plans on April 26, 2011 with national government agencies and April 27, 2011 with selected local government units.

PHILSSA and AKKMA continued their engagement with DPWH, MMDA, LLDA, and with local government units in connection with these agencies' flood control projects and plans that would impact on their constituencies.

Because of these engagements, PHILSSA and AKKMA have been invited to consultations regarding DRRM and flood control projects called by these agencies.¹⁷

Strengthening the Implementation of the DRRM Law

PHILSSA saw that the advocacy for the implementation of the DRRM Law was an opportunity for civil society groups like AKKMA to engage local government structures at various levels. Thus, it conducted a number of roundtable discussions (RTD) and fora on this issue, in the process breaking new ground in forging linkages with provincial government bodies.¹⁸

PHILSSA and AKKMA engaged in discussions with the Provincial DRRM Council of Rizal, Provincial DRRM Council of Laguna, MMDA, and Office of Civil Defense-NCR for strengthened implementation of DRRM Law at the provincial and regional levels. PHILSSA also collaborated with member-NGOs and partner local organizations and federations to undertake capacity building and networking activities for strengthened implementation of the DRRM Law at the *barangay*,¹⁹ city and municipal levels.

Advocacy for DRRM-Related Legislation

PHILSSA and AKKMA identified three proposed bills as priority for policy advocacy: (1) amendment of the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), (2) enactment of the Laguna Lake Conservation Act (LLCA), and (3) enactment of the National Land Use and Management Act (NLUMA).

In these proposed bills, PHILSSA and AKKMA worked with proponent groups and legislators in strengthening provisions related to DRRM, especially qualifying the definition of "danger areas," emphasizing the need for technical studies and community consultations before declaring a

¹⁹ *Barangay* means "village."

¹⁴ Article 638 of the Civil Code of the Philippines states that "The banks of rivers and streams, even in case they are of private ownership, are subject throughout their entire length and within a zone of three meters along their margins, to the easement of public use in the general interest of navigation, floatage, fishing and salvage." By implication, no dwelling structures may be built within this area.

¹⁵ This event is an annual gathering of urban poor people and advocates that dramatizes Jesus Christ's passion and carrying of the cross to Calvary. The procession highlights current issues that burden the urban poor.

¹⁶ Similarly, this event is a dramatization of the biblical narrative of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and their search for a place where their child would be born. This event takes place every year along a designated route somewhere in Metro Manila.

¹⁷ PHILSSA and AKKMA were invited to consultations on the DPWH Metro Manila Flood Control Master Plan and the MMDA strategic visioning dubbed as Greenprint 2030.

¹⁸ Among these fora were a Roundtable Discussion on DRRM and its Implementation (May 12, 2011); a National Urban DRRM Workshop (June 9-10, 2011); Fora on Disaster Preparedness for the Province of Rizal (August 15, 2011), the Province of Laguna (August 16, 2011), and the National Capital Region (August 17, 2011); and Forum on DRR Adaptation by Government and Communities (March 20, 2012).



AKKMA members conduct river cleanup in Barangay Doña Imelda, Quezon City.

locality a danger area, and ensuring that the prohibition against building on declared danger areas would apply to all types of structures, including government offices and business establishments.

Lobbying was carried out in the Senate and the House of Representatives. AKKMA leaders held dialogues with Senators Ramon Revilla, Jr., Alan Peter Cayetano, and Pia Cayetano, and Representatives Lorenzo Tañada III, Lani Mercado-Revilla, Arlene Bag-ao, and Bernadette Herrera-Dy, among others. Many leaders, among them Welima Arevalo of MAPAGPALA-Women, Loida Cillo of Manila, and Rose Italia of Taguig said, "We were very nervous during the initial lobbying activities and meetings with officials but we are proud that we were able to talk to legislators and convince them to support our proposed bills."

Advocating for a Bigger Budget for DRRM/CCA and Social Housing

PHILSSA and AKKMA also participated in the preparation of agency budgets to ensure that resources are allocated to implement DRR interventions and provide decent and affordable housing to informal settlers. PHILSSA forged a "budget partnership" with the National Housing Authority (NHA) for the preparation of its budget for 2012 and 2013. AKKMA leaders actively participated in the consultation workshops held to identify communities that would be given priority for social housing so that they can be included in the agency's budget.

PHILSSA is also starting to engage the Provincial DRRM Councils of Rizal and Laguna on their respective DRRM budgets.

Assessing the DRRM Advocacy Outcomes and Gains

The Advocacy Assessment Tool

After formulating the DRRM Advocacy Agenda in January 2011, AKKMA conducted semi-annual assessments to gauge the progress it had made in its advocacy work. To assess advocacy

outcomes and gains, AKKMA adopted the “Policy Scale” developed by Transparency International in its project with the UK Department for International Development’s (DFID) Governance and Transparency Fund. (See Box 6.1.)

Addressing Eviction Threat in “Danger Areas”

AKKMA members perceived that they have achieved significant gains in addressing eviction threats in “danger areas.” The average score given by the group members using the above policy scale was between 3 (i.e., policy adoption) and 4 (i.e., implementation), around 3.3.

The coalition noticed considerable changes in the discourse of officials with whom it has been in constant contact such as NHA, DILG and HUDCC. Terms first used by civil society groups such as “on-site upgrading,” “nearby relocation,” “medium-rise housing,” “community consultation,” “social preparation,” “community-driven development,” and “participatory approaches” are now accepted and used in discussing social housing projects.

Thanks to the networking and lobbying efforts of urban poor groups under the leadership of UP-ALL, President Noynoy Aquino allotted Php 10 billion for social housing projects for informal settler families in danger areas in Metro Manila as part of his economic stimulus plan and committed an additional Php 10 billion per year in the next four years.

Though there are still no clear mechanisms for the utilization of the Php 10 billion fund, pilot on-site or nearby medium-rise housing projects, such as those in *Barangay* Dona Imelda and Gulod in Quezon City, have begun the social preparation to access the fund.

Promoting people’s participation in DRR-related technical studies and development planning

The group rated the promotion of people’s participation in DRR-related technical studies and development planning at 1.75 (closer to policy development).

Because of AKKMA’s engagement with the agencies through roundtable discussions and fora, agencies such as DPWH and MMDA are now starting to conduct “consultations” and apparently have come to appreciate “participation and inclusion,” not only as good governance principles but also as effective practices to ensure the success of development initiatives. For instance, DPWH invited PHILSSA and AKKMA to a public consultation workshop on the Metro Manila Flood Control Master Plan. MMDA did the same for its strategic visioning, called Greenprint 2030. There were also other engagements in participatory activities at the *barangay* and city or municipal levels.

Vangie Serrano of ALMAMO shared that her local government is now “more open to engage” with her group after months of being ignored and marginalized. Seseng Almodavar of PINAGPALA mentioned that he feels “respected and appreciated by local officials” for his familiarity with DRRM and CCA issues and concerns. Elgin Ibaoc of Taytay, Rizal is happy that local and national officials are now “more open to onsite upgrading and mitigation measures” after months of uncertainty due to EO 854.²⁰ Rose Italia of TACAD-MAPAGPALA appreciates that local government units and national agencies (like DPWH, DILG and NHA) are now “inviting NGOs and community leaders to consultations and dialogues.”

Strengthening Implementation of DRRM Law

The group’s rating on strengthening the implementation of the DRRM Law was 1.8 (approximating policy development).

While PHILSSA and AKKMA engaged closely with the Provincial DRRM Councils of Rizal and Laguna, their activities strengthened the engagement of local groups with their municipal or city governments and officials, opening more avenues for dialogue and coordination. Vangie Serrano of ALMAMO shared how the provincial fora organized by AKKMA with the PDRRMC-Rizal

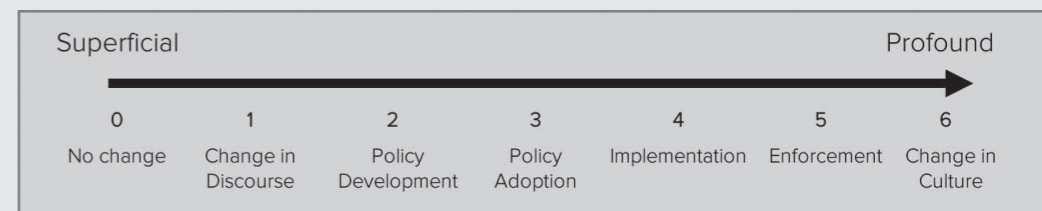
²⁰ Executive Order 854 issued by President Arroyo after the occurrence of the floods brought by Ketsana revoked an earlier presidential proclamation which gave a promise of land tenure security to the communities along the Manggahan Floodway.

Box 6.1: Policy Scale Developed by Transparency International

The policy scale depicts a continuum of change in policy or practice by public or private actors. The starting point can be at different stages of policy change: development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement. The simplest change to monitor is the adoption or rejection of a particular policy. However, the work that goes into achieving change is not solely measured on this yes/no, passed/not passed, dimension. There are a number of stages of policy change:

- Development
- Adoption
- Implementation (including funding)
- Enforcement
- Change in Culture

A zero value is included, as even institutionalized policies can regress, for example, due to a change in government. The unit of analysis can be the policy itself, or changes in practice by public administrators, or other actors.



Level	Definition	Activities
Change in Discourse	Alteration of way targeted representatives communicate verbally or in writing on the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal support for proposed changes • Changes in written documents, but not at sufficient level to alter direction of policy
Policy Development	Definition of a deliberate plan of action on the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed principles reflected in draft policies/legislation • National Chapter input included in draft policies/legislation
Policy Adoption	Passing/not passing of legislation by the legislature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted • Not Adopted
Policy Implementation	Execution of the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions/staff dedicated to new policy • Budgetary resources allocated to new policy • Training provided on new policy
Policy Enforcement	To ensure that the law is obeyed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecution of offenders of new policy • Court rulings in favour of new policy
Change in Culture	Change in values, attitudes or social norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking principles perceived as almost universally wrong • Principles have permeated all aspects of administration

SOURCE: TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL, UK DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DFID) GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY FUND.

facilitated a breakthrough in its relationship with the municipal government of Rodriguez, Rizal. Likewise, Jose Morales of Quezon City, Rose Italia of Taguig City, and Loida Cillo of Manila City said that their engagement with the local government “deepened and strengthened existing interactions and cooperation.” AKKMA leaders—Melchor Magano and Seseng Almodavar in Laguna, Jaime Evangelista and Felimon Buena in Rizal, and Carlos Diaz of Malabon City—were recognized as DRRM Council members in the *barangay*, municipal, city, and provincial levels.

Supporting Advocacy for Relevant Policies and Laws

AKKMA rated the support for its three priority bills at 2.25 (i.e. policy development).

Concrete policies were developed and proposed to Congress. The amendment or introduction of provisions on “danger areas” and other DRRM-related concerns was the Project’s contribution to these proposed bills.

PHILSSA and AKKMA is continuously networking and lobbying with legislators so that the bills will move in the congressional committees.

Advocacy for a Bigger Budget for DRRM, CCA and Social Housing

PHILSSA and AKKMA focused their budget advocacy on the National Housing Authority and rated their policy gain in this area at 3.5 (i.e. halfway between policy adoption and implementation).

Budget partnership activities with NHA and lobbying with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) resulted in the allotment of an additional Php 1.2 billion to NHA for social housing projects proposed by PHILSSA-affiliated NGOs and community organizations on top of the agency’s Php 4.5 billion pesos budget for 2012.

PHILSSA and AKKMA, together with allies such as the urban poor coalition UP-ALL, are currently working with NHA and monitoring its work plan and project implementation to ensure that the additional Php 1.2 billion fund would go to the intended projects.

Reflections from Community Leaders

The community leaders themselves have articulated their appreciation for the lessons they learned from the multi-sectoral engagements they have undertaken under the project. These experiences and reflections point to the importance of concerted and broad-based advocacy as an indispensable tool for reducing the vulnerability of urban poor and fisherfolk communities through defensive and proactive policy change.

The Success of a Multi-sectoral Advocacy Group and Advocacy Strategies Rests on Having a Clear Common Agenda.

“Being able to work together with other sectors in formulating the Five-point AKKMA Advocacy Agenda is a big success in multi-sectoral cooperation,” said Melchor Magano of MAPAGPALA. Felimon Buena of KAMMMPI-MAPAGPALA added, “It is significant that the different sectoral groups within AKKMA are working together to advocate this common agenda, in spite of differences in their situation, needs, and interests.” Zacarias Asuncion of UP-ALL QC reiterated that “this common agenda helps in building multi-sectoral solidarity in advocacy and campaigns at the *barangay*, municipal, city and national levels.” Welima Arevalo of MAPAGPALA-Women adds that the “views and concerns of women should always be taken into account.”

The Common Agenda and Proposed Policies and Programs Should be Based on Research and Study.

Vangie Serrano of ALMAMO emphasized “the importance of continuous research and study in analyzing the situation and risks in the area and in coming up with needed policies and programs to address the situation and needs.” Jaime Evangelista of UGMMARIZ-MAPAGPALA added that “community leaders should continuously enhance their skills and capacities in research and in DRR so that they can also continuously improve the programs and activities for DRRM and CCA.”

Lessons Should be Shared with the Whole Community for United Action.

Melchor Magano of MAPAGPALA emphasized “the need to share DRRM concepts and information with the whole community so that a people’s plan for addressing disaster risks could be formulated and implemented.” Elgin Ibaoc of ULAP-Lupang Arenda said, “Information-sharing helps in raising community awareness on DRRM and CCA.”

Problems and Challenges will Make us Stronger after We Overcome them through Continuous and United Action.

Most of the community leaders mentioned that the various problems and difficulties experienced during and after Ketsana were addressed through continuous and united action of the community and of the confederation. “Our local volunteers worked continuously, drenched in the rain and flood and without eating, from morning til evening during the typhoon (Ketsana),” narrated Vangie Serrano of ALMAMO. Zacarias Asuncion of UP-ALL QC shared that AKKMA advocacy was helped by the working together of various sectors and groups. “It is only through cooperation and united action can we overcome problems and achieve our dreams as a group,” emphasized Rose Italia of TACAD-MAPAGPALA. Jose Morales of ULAP emphasized the “interconnectedness of different issues” and hence, the need for continuous engagement and action on various fronts, such as advocacy, community preparedness, and environmental regeneration, all directed at building secure, safe and resilient settlements.

Presenting Concrete Recommendations Helps to Advance the Engagement with Local and National Government.

Erlinda Mosqueda of UP-ALL Valenzuela City shared that formulating provisions on “danger areas” for incorporation in proposed laws and providing concrete recommendations and solutions helped in the advocacy process. Elgin Ibaoc of ULAP-Lupang Arena emphasized “the need for continuous engagement and dialogues with both local and national government agencies in developing concrete DRRM and CCA policies and programs that would flesh out the agenda.” ■

Our group had long been very active in local and sectoral (fisherfolk) issues. Our involvement in AKKMA and concern for DRRM and CCA has brought us to work with urban poor groups. It was not simple and easy, but it was meaningful. We are now working together and standing up for secure and safe settlements.”

Jaime Evangelista
Fisherfolk Leader

Legal Empowerment for Resilience

Atty. Arnold F. De Vera
Anna Liza B. Mones
Atty. Aubrey F. Albo-Perez
Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal (SALIGAN)

Liza Dominico

Like her neighbors in Bicol Compound in San Bartolome, Novaliches, Liza Dominico was witness and victim to the damage brought by Tropical Storm Ketsana on September 2009. She saw corrugated iron roofs blown off and walls tilted to strange angles. She saw flood waters from the swollen Tullahan River surround the informal settlers in Bicol Compound in a semi-circle, inundating homes and causing the most damage. Even after two years, *Ate*¹ Liza would recall her ordeal with arresting clarity. While her house was being engulfed by the flood, already knee-deep and rising, her urgent concern was to secure documents in her custody as secretary of the neighborhood association.

As the flood subsided, assistance found its way through parts of San Bartolome and into Bicol Compound. Rebuilding destroyed houses and repairing the damaged ones were among the many things that demanded attention. It was crucial to have information on who resided where and what supplies were most needed. Luckily for the residents of Bicol Compound, *Ate* Liza was able to secure the detailed lists containing the names of families despite the onslaught of the flood. Thanks to her, these lists allowed help to reach more people faster.

And yet, *Ate* Liza's desire to help her community goes beyond repairing the damage to houses caused by Ketsana. She wants her community to be ready for other typhoons and calamities that could threaten them in the future. However, knowing what to actually do and where to go is not easy. What does "being ready" mean anyway?

When the NGO, *Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal (SALIGAN)*, or the Alternative Legal Assistance Center, conducted its paralegal training in Bicol Compound, *Ate* Liza found the opportunity to translate her desire to help her community into action.

For a total of eight training days, *Ate* Liza joined 20 other community volunteers in a hall adjacent to the nearby parish church to learn how the law can help her community become more resilient. *Ate* Liza had a 100% attendance record—no mean feat for someone who plays the multiple roles of mother, partner, *barangay*² worker, parish coordinator, and community confidant.

¹*Ate* means "older sister."

²*Barangay* means "village."



Behind these faces are stories of struggle and sacrifice. Paralegals leave their homes and serve the community while keeping their jobs to support their families.

Empowering Paralegals

The paralegal training attended by *Ate* Liza is one of four trainings conducted by SALIGAN for the communities participating in the Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme supported by Christian Aid. These communities are located in the following areas: (1) Rodriguez, Rizal, (2) Banaba, San Mateo, (3) Novaliches, Quezon City, and (4) Taytay, Rizal.

Paralegals are community members who have knowledge of and skills in the law. To form volunteers into paralegals, SALIGAN designed an eight-day training program divided into three parts, each part involving a theme of law. The themes represent areas that affect the participating communities, such as laws regulating property rights, laws providing remedies for abused women, and laws on disaster risk management. Each theme addresses vulnerabilities felt in urban communities that are related to existing laws, regulations, and policies. Deliberate focus is on urban issues and people's participation in promoting good governance. At the end of the training, the paralegals are able to use their legal knowledge and skills to help enhance the resilience of their respective communities.

The Training Modules

The paralegal training program of SALIGAN consists of three modules:

Module 1: Urban Governance (three days)

This module provides an overview of the law and the legal system and explains the concept of paralegalism. It discusses issues that are pertinent to the land and housing situation of the urban poor—housing rights, land classification, ownership, land titles, possession, and ejection. It explains the constitutional basis of the Urban Development and Housing Act (Republic Act 7279), the government's socialized housing program, and what constitutes just and humane demolition and eviction. On the third day, the module introduces the basic principles of local governance, people's participation in local governance, and the local

Box 7.1: From Centralization to Decentralization

Against the backdrop of the Philippines' unfortunate national experience under the highly centralized government of President Marcos, the 1987 Constitution has mandated Congress to "(E) nact a local government code which shall provide for a more responsive and accountable local government structure instituted through a system of decentralization with effective mechanisms of recall, initiative, and referendum, allocate among the different local government units their powers, responsibilities, and resources, and provide for the qualifications, election, appointment and removal, term, salaries, powers and functions and duties of local officials, and all other matters relating to the organization and operation of the local units." (Article X, Section 1)

In pursuit of this and the fundamental state policy of autonomy of local government units (Article II, Section 25), Congress enacted Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, which embodies the most significant step to institutionalize decentralization in many facets of governance. Built into this decentralized system are means to broaden people's participation beyond the casting of ballots, especially at the local level. Thus, there are provisions on mandatory prior consultations, local sectoral representation, representation in local special bodies, and mechanisms for people's participation in local legislation and holding erring or neglectful public officers accountable. **In this new system of local governance, citizens are not simply beneficiaries but are pivotal actors to its success.** Hence, citizens need to be capacitated to maximize the available avenues of participation, to counter potential abuse by local officials, on one hand, and to directly contribute to good governance, on the other.

legislative process. In the last session of the module, participants go through an exercise drafting an ordinance.

Module 2: Gender and Violence Against Women (two days)

This module introduces basic gender concepts and explains that women's rights are human rights, with a discussion on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It proceeds to explain existing laws that promote women's rights such as the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710), Anti-Rape Law (Republic Act 8353), and Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act (Republic Act 9262). On the second day, the module compares civil and criminal laws and explains the basic rules on criminal procedure, civil procedure, and evidence. The last two sessions consist of inputs and workshops on legal interview and making an affidavit.

Within the framework of decentralization and democratization, Congress enacted Republic Act No. 10121, the **Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act of 2010**. While the former system gave national entities principal roles, this new law created a layered system where the *barangay* council is recognized as the frontliner in preparing for and responding to various kinds of disasters. The active engagement of capable community members with these *barangay* councils is necessary for village level councils to be convened. Engagement of community members is also critical to its success.

Module 3: Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) and Advocacy (three days)

This last module explains the basic concepts of advocacy, including meta-legal and negotiation tactics. It also reviews the salient features of the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Act of 2010 (Republic Act 10121) and the mechanisms for people's participation. It further explains the mechanics of doing advocacy work—coordination, mobilization and mass action, political mapping, and monitoring. On the last day of the training, there is a sharing of experiences on



At a paralegal training on disaster risk reduction and management, Kris (Banaba), Nida (Taytay), Flora (Novaliches), Agnes (Banaba), Luz (Taytay) discuss. Paralegal trainings combine theoretical instruction with participative group work such as discussions and simulations.

DRRM advocacy. The culminating activity of the module and the entire training program is a session when participants formulate their advocacy plans for a whole afternoon.

Advocacy Plans

During the half-day planning session, the paralegals agree on plans of action to address community issues and concerns that they have identified, such as flood, pollution, displacement and eviction, and abuse of women and children.

Of the four communities that SALIGAN trained, one plans to ascertain the terms by which residents had been allowed to occupy their land; and another plans to occupy a parcel of land and call for the relocation of persons currently living on it.

Common to most of the communities that participated in SALIGAN's paralegal training is the plan to have their group recognized or accredited by the local *Barangay* Development Council, which is mandated by law to be at the frontlines of disaster risk reduction and management. This recognition would allow paralegals to promote good governance in their community by demanding the proper implementation of laws.

For the paralegals, the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act entails educating local officials of the need to activate the *Barangay* Development Council to plan for disasters before they happen.

Wanting to enforce the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act, paralegals in Novaliches helped form the Doña Tomasa Riverside Group and assigned a person to specifically take charge of complaints involving abused women.

As paralegals use their legal knowledge and skills in their communities, there is increased interaction and collaboration between citizens and local officials in identifying and maximizing the use of community resources to address the vulnerabilities of their community.

Months after the training, the paralegals provide periodic progress updates on their advocacy plans. SALIGAN lawyers schedule follow-up meetings—called “clinics”—with each of the paralegal groups, facilitate the discussion, and respond to questions posed by paralegals.

There were instances when unexpected events occur, calling for new plans or the adjustment of previous ones. For instance, the proposal of a youth group from Suburban, Rodriguez to construct a footbridge across the canal running adjacent to the neighborhood needed local government support. This required knowledge of local government structures as well as skills in negotiations, all taken up during the paralegal training. Similarly, negotiation skills and meta-legal tactics that the paralegals learned came in handy when government personalities showed little interest in their initiatives. When the members of *Buklod Tao*³, a people’s organization in Banaba, San Mateo, asked to be accredited by the *Barangay* Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, they had to apply their negotiation skills to persuade *barangay* officials to activate and convene it.

A Community of Paralegals

In all, about 100 community members participated in SALIGAN’s paralegal formation program under Christian Aid’s Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme. This represents 22 to 30 persons from each of the four areas participating in the Programme. Each has his or her own stories to tell.

One of these is Maria Lolita Racho, *Ate Lolit*, who always sat at the back during trainings. And yet, she has become one of the most active paralegals in her community in California, Novaliches, performing a wide range of roles. *Ate Lolit* developed self-confidence when she learned about the law in general and her rights in particular. Her participation in the paralegal trainings gave her the knowledge and skills to seek security of tenure on land and housing, enabling her to negotiate courageously with public officials and private individuals alike.

Ate Lolit helps out in community advocacies. One instance was when she and her co-paralegals facilitated the improvement of their access road. They got the approval of the lot owner to use a piece of property as access road as well as secure a modest amount from the *barangay* to improve it with concrete. She proudly shares that the *barangay* officials have grown to recognize the paralegals’ involvement in improving sanitation, especially in keeping their area dengue free. As of this writing, *Ate Lolit* and her co-paralegals are convincing the *barangay* officials to repair the community common area which is used for wakes, meetings, and other community activities.

Ate Lolit also works to protect women in her community. She was instrumental in forming the Doña Tomasa Riverside Ladies Group which acts to address violence against women in the community. *Ate Lolit* observes that the number of violent incidents against women in their area has declined to only one in recent months. In that single case, *Ate Lolit* and her co-paralegals brought the incident to the attention of the *barangay* law enforcers who then recorded it in the *barangay* blotter and helped separate the couple. For *Ate Lolit*, an important consideration in these cases is the protection of children affected by violence in the family.

Nonetheless, *Ate Lolit*’s paralegal involvement has invited some skepticism. Some think that she is only doing it for personal gain, financial or otherwise. But the truth is *Ate Lolit* actually contributed her own money for the improvement of her community. Her continued commitment to paralegal work has convinced many in her community that she genuinely desires to be an agent of positive change.

Such commitment to paralegal work is also embodied by Rosalyn Ramos, *Ate Lyn*, a member of the people’s organization, *Buklod Tao*, in San Mateo, Rizal. Like *Ate Liza* and *Ate Lolit*, *Ate Lyn* devotes herself to the many roles of a paralegal. She helps reduce violence against women and children in her community by sharing with abused mothers and abused children information on government agencies that may be able to help them. She has even gone out to rescue abused

³*Buklod Tao* may be translated as “People Bonding Together.”



Paralegals experience conducting legal interviews of women victims of violence during a training’s simulation activity.

women and children several times. *Ate Lyn* also documents her organization’s activities, ensuring that members have a way of keeping up with the latest updates. She has learned so much from her paralegal training that when she met a detained minor in prison, she convinced the detainee’s mother to produce her son’s birth certificate so that the he can be released from jail. The prison was not even in her community. Indeed, paralegals aim to help anyone, anywhere.

Ate Rita (not her real name), a female paralegal in *Sitio*⁴ Lumang Ilog, Taytay shares that knowing the rights and remedies available to abused women encouraged her to stand up to an abusive relationship, a personal achievement which now enables her to help other women similarly situated in her community. She adds that knowing laws related to ownership and property spurred her to formalize her status within the homeowners’ association and subsequently, bring herself and others in her community before the municipal office to secure their respective occupation, if not ownership, of the property that they are living on.

Manuel “Ian” Sipin, a 36-year-old paralegal of Suburban, Rodriguez with a ready and infectious smile, used his knowledge and skills from the paralegal training to get the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to help him rescue an abused minor in his community. While the rescue was short-lived—the girl was subsequently retrieved by her family—any frustration Ian experienced has not dampened his desire to help the most vulnerable in his community. He continues to serve in various capacities, such as Chair of the Information Committee, Coordinator of the Livelihood Committee, and Head of the Livelihood Council of the community’s Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Team. Ian is also the Youth Coordinator of the homeowners’ association, a pivotal role that can address the suspected anomalies of the previous officers of the association. According to Ian, the paralegal training enhanced his knowledge of the laws relevant to his community roles and equipped him with skills that gave him confidence to bring community issues before government authorities.

For *Ate Liza*, now a full-fledged paralegal, the training gave her useful skills and introduced her to laws useful to her and her community. Knowing laws on property ownership has enabled her to discuss the different ways by which members of her community can secure their stay on the land

⁴*Sitio* is the smallest division of a village unit.

where their houses stand. She says that it is possible for her community to participate in the Community Mortgage Program (CMP)⁵ to acquire the land. While Ate Liza firmly believes that her community can be at its best when its members are united behind a common purpose, she is bothered by the members' intermittent attendance in activities of the neighborhood association.

Applying the drafting skills she learned from the paralegal training, she was able to formalize her association's commitment to be actively involved in group activities into a Resolution. Approved and signed by association members, the formal Resolution was an initial step to help bind community members closer together through common cause and action, allowing them to prepare for many of the risks and challenges in the days ahead.

Mr. Ric Espiritu of Damayan in Taytay, Rizal uses the knowledge and skills he learned to enable his community to tap into resources of agencies and offices of the local and national government. As a member of the homeowners' association, he continues to work to improve its services to members, assisting them to address their various issues.

The other paralegals—such as youthful Jose Galicia, Jr. of Taytay, seasoned Jun “Doc Aga” Beltran and Regarde Abdullah “Commander” Bagsiran of Suburban, and earnest Melinda Lopez of Sabah—likewise use the knowledge and skills they learned from the paralegal training to find more effective ways of collectively addressing their vulnerabilities, thereby enhancing the resilience of their respective communities.

Reflections

As the work on legal empowerment progresses, it is already apparent that **knowledge of the law and skills to use it greatly facilitates the increased use of the law**. Knowing their rights under the law, rights holders are able to demand it from duty bearers. Residents of *barangays* were even the ones who told *barangay* officials of the need to activate and convene the local councils, which under the law can address vulnerabilities in the community. In this way, mechanisms provided by law, like the recently enacted law on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, are used to prepare for various hazards. By knowing what the law provides, vulnerabilities of specific groups within the community are minimized. Thus, women and children have access to members of their community who know what to do and where to go in situations of abuse.

People's organizations, such as *Buklod Tao* in *Barangay* Banaba, San Mateo, demonstrate that private initiative and action can go a long way. *Buklod Tao's* Noli Abinales has gone beyond his own organization to show other communities how resilience can be continually enhanced. Still, it is an important realization that **coordination with public institutions is an indispensable element in developing resilience**. Thus, the paralegal groups in all four areas of the project tap into the resources and mechanisms at different levels of government, from the most immediate *barangay* level to the municipal level, and even to the provincial and national level. The common agenda in this engagement is addressing vulnerabilities in the community, whether individual or collective, to enhance resilience.

Efficiency and effectiveness of the use of the law is enhanced by the degree to which paralegals work in concert. Even as individual paralegals such as Ian are able to provide assistance to community members confronted by specific problems, an organized group of paralegals, acting in close coordination, could implement action on a broader scale. Thus, the plans of *Buklod Tao's* paralegals involve the establishment of a livelihood and evacuation center in addition to providing immediate assistance to individual community members. Recognizing the importance of concerted action, Ate Liza initiated a formal agreement among members of her organization to strengthen commitment and involvement in group activities. “*Mahalaga na magkaisa tayo para makamit natin ang ating mga plano*” (“It is important that we become united so we can accomplish our plans”), she says.

⁵ The Community Mortgage Program is a housing finance program of the government which lends funds to community associations for the purchase of land.

Even before Christian Aid's Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme made its way to her community, Ate Liza already harbored within her a sincere desire to serve her community. On impulse, she saved organizational documents entrusted to her care.

Paralegal training builds on people's public spirit and willingness to serve. The discussions on law during the training, the simulated activities on negotiations and interviews, and exercises on drafting affidavits and proposed ordinances provide participants with ideas on the range of things that they can do for their communities. Armed with skills and knowledge of the law, paralegals can see the possibilities that they can claim for themselves and their communities. ■

Building Resilience through Community Enterprises and Livelihood Skills

Maria Angela dIC. Villalba

*Unlad Kabayan*¹ Migrant Services Foundation

Impact of Disaster

In a typhoon and flood disaster, the very first reaction, as attested by survivors of Tropical Storm Ketsana (local name: Ondoy), is to secure the lives of family and neighbours without thought of one's safety. The next is to gather whatever is of value. But in a devastating emergency such as Ketsana, it is enough for survivors to know that everyone is alive and safe. However, there are still those who refuse to evacuate so they can guard their livelihood and properties.

Jennifer was a Red Cross volunteer during Ketsana. She was part of the out-of-school youth (OSY) of *Sitio*² Sabah, *Barangay*³ San Jose, Rodriguez who learned to carry out rescue operations. They were assigned as *Bantay Ilog* (River Watchers). In the mid-morning of September 2009 when the river was rising fast, Jennifer's volunteer team brought the elderly and pregnant women to safer areas. Sabah is easily flooded and becomes an island when the waters of the Marikina River rise. That is where Sabah got its name.⁴ Jennifer's father, *Tatay*⁵ Ben, is the town crier. He had already gone around shouting "*Magsilikas na kayo!*" ("Everyone go to higher ground!")

Jennifer and her family earn their living by making and selling rags and doormats from cloth cuttings sold by garment factories to rag makers like them. Ketsana put their house under water, the flood carrying away several kilos of cloth cuttings, thread, and other materials, and damaging their only sewing machine beyond repair.

After the rains stopped and the floodwaters subsided, some semblance of calm was restored. Then came the question of living. Jennifer and *Tatay* Ben went back to their house and found their small *sari-sari* store (variety store) gone and their house waist deep in mud. There was nothing to save or use. Meanwhile, their immediate needs for food, clothing, and shelter were met by emergency relief assistance.

Like Sabah, *Sitio* Lumang Ilog in *Barangay* San Juan in Taytay was flooded. *Sitio* Lumang Ilog is a tongue-shaped land area sandwiched between Laguna Lake and "the floodway,"⁶ a human-made waterway that drains water into Manila Bay through the lake and the Pasig River. Fishers in *Lumang Ilog*, specifically the members of Damayan Home Owners Association (DHOA), lost their fishing equipment—fish nets and "skylab"⁷—and their fish cages (*baklad*) were destroyed.

Disasters hit both the rich and the poor. As the Good Book says, "it rains on both the good and the wicked." But recovery time varies between rich and poor. The actress, Christine Reyes, was precariously perched on her rooftop as she waited to be rescued. She also lost everything in her house like the rest of the Ketsana victims. She lost her cars as well.

¹*Unlad Kabayan* literally means "Progressive Compatriot."

²*Sitio* is the smallest division of a village unit

³*Barangay* means "village."

⁴ Sabah is one of the states of Malaysia found on the island of Borneo, located west of the Philippine archipelago. A good number of Filipinos live and work in this Malaysian member state.

⁵*Tatay* means "father."

⁶ This refers to the Manggahan Floodway.

⁷"Skylab" is a contraption that resembles the shape of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) space station orbiting the earth known as "skylab." The contraption is used to catch small shrimps.

However, disasters are more disastrous to the poor. The impact on their lives and livelihood is multiplied many times over compared to those of the rich. Now Christine Reyes is back on the silver screen and the unforgettable, traumatic nightmare of her Ketsana experiences behind her. To urban poor informal settlers, on the other hand, recovery and return to their previous lives means return to being poor—in shanty homes and in hazard-prone locations.

Disaster risk reduction and prevention towards resilience is not about maintaining the status quo. Livelihood should be improved to enable the poor to secure and improve their lives.

It took a long time after Ketsana for many flood-stricken households to restore their livelihoods and move on with their lives. In meetings, the community always talked of access to financial resources as a crucial element to recovery. The few who had a significant amount of savings and those who were able to borrow money had an early start on the road to recovery. Fishers bought new nets and smaller fishing equipment. Some said that they were better off than many others once they got back to the lake. Junk was aplenty after the floods and junkyards were quick in seizing the opportunity, advancing cash to junk collectors.

It was the rag makers in Taytay who had a tough time. Like *Tatay* Ben in Sabah, their cloth cuttings and other raw materials were swept away and their sewing machines were rendered useless. Their skills were in sewing and rag making—not in running a small business. Today they are the most active among the livelihood clusters in the community.

Unlad Kabayan

Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation is a non-government organization (NGO) established to respond to the need of migrant workers to plan their return and productively reintegrate into their home communities. In applying its reintegration strategy of Migrant Savings for Alternative Investments (MSAI), it realized the need to be more inclusive in its approach by not only building enterprises for returning migrants but also taking in the poor sectors in the community and looking at the local economy—the economic sectors and the value chain. It is also looking into issues of sustainability and resilience especially in the context of many disasters that visit and affect the poor severely.

As a Christian Aid partner, *Unlad Kabayan's* involvement in the Ketsana Project is premised on its experience and growing competence in developing enterprises, livelihoods, and the local economy that empower the poor to become entrepreneurs in their own right.

Unlad Kabayan's work in emergency assistance and disaster risk reduction (DRR) started in 2008 when it first responded to the needs of those affected by the armed conflict in Lanao del Norte through emergency relief. Afterwards it helped rebuild livelihoods through seaweed production. In 2009, it likewise undertook relief work among flood-affected communities in North Cotabato and Maguindanao.

In 2010, it was commissioned by Oxfam Great Britain to undertake a Rapid Livelihood Assessment of nine communities in three towns along the Laguna Lake whose livelihoods were damaged by Tropical Storm Ketsana. It was in this context that *Unlad Kabayan* was made part of the consortium approach in the Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme of Christian Aid.

Understanding the Community Economy

Unlad Kabayan believes that entrepreneurial practice is key to building community resilience. To support and strengthen people's livelihood, there must be some understanding of the dynamics of the community economy. What are the main economic activities? What are their products? Where are they located in the supply chain? What is the resource flow—net inflow or net outflow—like?

With the DHOA in *Sitio Lumang Ilog*, *Unlad Kabayan* conducted a participatory livelihood assessment that identified six economic activity clusters: (1) fishing; (2) rag making and sewing; (3) junk collection and trading; (4) *kangkong*⁸ growing; (5) *sari-sari* or variety stores; and (5) miscellaneous businesses: frozen meat trading, eateries, barbecue, *ukay-ukay* or used clothes, and others. Except for the miscellaneous businesses cluster, each cluster had a distinct supply chain with the cluster members at varying locations in the chain.

Without capital for production and sewing machines, rag makers and dress makers are in a vulnerable position in their supply chain. The small amount of money they can borrow could only buy low quality cloth cuttings in small quantities and produce only a few rags that they can sell. They use the money that they earn for food and other daily needs and set aside a small amount to produce another batch of rags. This has been the situation of many women after Ketsana.

Organizing a community on an economic platform is not new. Examples are cooperatives, credit unions, and “corporative”⁹ that needs further clarification. “Social enterprise” as a concept and category has recently been gaining currency. As early as 2000, *Unlad Kabayan* has been promoting social entrepreneurship and social enterprises as one important pillar in addressing poverty. *Unlad Kabayan* considers poverty as not just the lack of financial resources but also the lack of access to wealth-creating resources. Engendering widespread poverty in the country is the deprivation or lack of access to the pentagon of assets¹⁰—human resources, natural assets, physical assets, financial resource, and social assets which are mostly intangible such as social networks and economic-cultural practices. Without land, agricultural implements, and production capital, farmers have little opportunity to move out of poverty. Large tracts of agricultural land are concentrated on a few families whose interest is to maximize profit through production of export crops. This has resulted in structural unemployment in the rural areas. During disasters, when floods, droughts, heavy rains, and extended dry spells occur, rural folks start to take the road to urban centers in search of jobs. Other push factors would be armed conflicts.

It is no surprise, therefore, to find that DHOA members in Taytay came from all over the country—Bohol, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Quezon province, southern Leyte, Biliran, Davao, Cotabato, Cebu, and Iloilo.

Entrepreneurial Literacy

Sitio Lumang Ilog was practically under water during Ketsana. Most people had only the clothes on their back when they fled (or swam) to safety. Nothing was left of their livelihood and many houses were swept away. The Entrepreneurial Literacy Program taught the community how to access, manage and wisely use financial resources. More importantly, the people were able to increase their financial resources and create social value as well.

During *Unlad Kabayan*’s first community meeting in *Sitio Lumang Ilog*, the rag makers and dressmakers made up more than half of the attendees. A few fishers, women fish vendors, and small store owners were also present. But the rag and dressmakers were the most active in articulating their situation and in seeking help to get back on their feet: “We have been making rags and sewing clothes before (Ketsana) and our market for these products is still there. If the project will provide capital and sewing machines, we can see a new dawn.”

A few had sewing machines but majority lost theirs in the flood. They supply rags to small and big stores and traders, who, in turn, sell them to peddlers who sell their wares along the main streets in Metro Manila. Rizal and the town of Taytay have long been the textile and garment manufacturing capital of the country. However, over the past decades the industry went on an irreversible decline.¹¹ What remains of the industry continues to be a lucrative source of cloth cuttings that women buy to make rags, doormats, and dresses.

⁸ *Kangkong* means “water hyacinth.”

⁹ An economic category applied to farmers and tenants in Hacienda Luisita who were issued stocks and investment certificates as proof that they are shareholders of Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) in lieu of outright land distribution under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

¹⁰ From the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework developed by the British Department for International Development (DFID).

¹¹This was partly due to the lifting of US import quota and subsidies to the industry and the proliferation of ready-to-wear (RTWs) clothes from Thailand, Korea, Taiwan, and China.

Unlad Kabayan designed introductory exercises with the following objectives:

1. Determine the level of commitment of community leaders such as DHOA to a socially responsible partnership.
2. Develop democratic and transparent processes for collective actions.
3. Prepare the process of shifting mindsets from passive producers to active entrepreneurial players in the supply chain.

The exercises affirmed the appropriateness of the cluster approach. It is in the cluster activities that commitment to responsible partnership is demonstrated. In doing the same economic activity and sharing the strengths, opportunities, and risks, solidarity is built at the sub-industry level. At least two clusters, Fishers and Rags/Clothes Makers, started to show some readiness to move into the level of exploring and brainstorming ideas on how to improve livelihoods.

Clusters were formally organized and cluster meetings were convened to discuss and deepen self-understanding of the sub-industry. The Fishing Cluster became part of the existing organization, *Samahan ng mga Mangingisda sa Lawa ng Taytay* (Association of Fishers in Taytay Lake or SMALT), whose membership goes beyond *Sitio Lumang Ilog*; while the rags and dress makers established their own organization, *Samahan ng mga Magbabasahan at Mananahi sa Damayan* (Association of Ragmakers and Sewers of Damayan or SMMD). Cluster plans and actions were undertaken.

The knowledge and process of rebuilding livelihoods and community economy must be participatory and transparent. Entrepreneurial literacy training modules are designed to mobilize the community to discern and act on the resources and opportunities found in the local economy.

The training modules are:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Module 1: | Knowing Your Community and Economy |
| Module 2: | Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) |
| Module 3: | Livelihood and Enterprise Development Management |
| Module 4: | Capital, Savings, and Insurance (CSI) |

Modules 1 and 2 introduced learning exercises such as drawing a community map that identified the assets and their location. Which of the assets were accessible to them? The lake and wetlands around the community were natural assets that fishers and *kangkong* growers marked as crucial to their livelihood. Without these assets, there would be no fishing and *kangkong* production in the economy of *Sitio Lumang Ilog*. Water lilies that abound in the shallow parts of the lake are considered a nuisance, blocking their way as they negotiate the water. But when water lily stalks are used to make slippers and sandals and then sold, they become assets.

As part of the exercise, the participants described in detail the economic activities and those involved in each of the activities. From the descriptions, they were able to establish the various supply chains that existed in the community. Entrepreneurial literacy puts a premium on understanding and managing supply chains. This understanding should lead towards improving the community’s position and control over value chains.

During Module 3 (Livelihood and Enterprise Development Management), the training process was more succinct among the Rag and Dressmakers Cluster. Outputs and outcomes were immediate and concrete. They established their own organization, the SMMD, with a clear goal: “To be a sustainable enterprise providing jobs and livelihood to its members.”



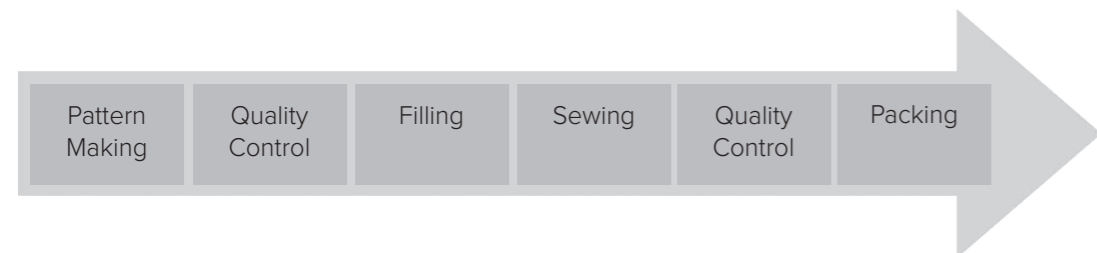
Various livelihood projects introduced by Unlad Kabayan in Ketsana-affected communities.

They adopted and implemented a production and operations plan that consisted of the following:

1. **Consolidation of Raw Material Supply.** Bulk purchase of cloth cuttings reduced cost and allowed SMMD to choose the cuttings. This was helpful when they bought the required white cloth cuttings for Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, its new market for rags. Bulk purchases can also build inventory.
2. **Line Production.** Although the larger part is individual home-based production, line production is being tried to see if it leads to higher efficiency.
3. **Livelihood Center.** Line production takes place in the Livelihood Center in *Sitio Lumang Ilog*, which also functions as a place for storing inventory. SMMD is the most active user of the Livelihood Center.
4. **Quality Control.** Quality control is done with raw materials, particularly with cloth cuttings, and in final products prior to packing and delivery. This practice improves the marketability of rags.
5. **Market Consolidation.** Consolidation of supply is done especially among the individually produced rags. This would allow SMMD to negotiate a better price and volume with customers. By consolidating supply, SMMD would have a better chance of meeting market demand. One market's weekly requirement was 500 kilograms of rags and the trial delivery was only 250 kilograms.

Figure 8.1 shows the production line in making rags. It ensures that raw materials and finished products are according to the product specifications of the market. SMMD's market is Wyeth Pharmaceuticals. The line production tries to improve the production capacity of the SMMD team by identifying and addressing production bottlenecks. In the process, it continuously improves capacity and efficiency. Comparative assessment will be done between individual production and product consolidation and line production.

Figure 8.1: Rag Making Production Line



SMMD's entrepreneurial road is far from smooth. But this is what SMMD members have chosen to take to ensure that livelihoods and jobs are sustainable and resilient. So far, it is employing three women: one purchasing officer, one for quality control, and one for packing.

Through CSI, SMMD acquired 30 new sewing machines.

Social Enterprise: Water Refilling Station

Rebuilding livelihoods and businesses that address the economic needs and social issues of the community starts with changing people's attitudes towards work and the way they carry out their economic and other activities. A painstaking step-by-step education and learning process prepares the community (beneficiaries and other stakeholders) to learn some basics in entrepreneurship. Within the project period, this process had to be hastened and in some instances reversed.

In Suburban community, social issues and needs were surfaced during the livelihood assessment survey¹² and meetings. Three community enterprises were established in Suburban Phase 1a2-1b: (1) Water Refilling Station (WRS), (2) *Tindahan Bayan* (Community Store), and (3) Material Recovery Facility (MRF).¹³ Suburban is a relocation site in *Barangay San Jose*, in the town of Rodriguez (formerly Montalban), Rizal for informal settlers who lost their houses in a fire or due to public works projects (e.g. road widening). It is some distance away from commercial areas, including the Rodriguez town center. Moreover, some basic services such as potable water supply have not been installed. The need for potable water was a glaring gap in the Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment (PCVA) report and in community consultations.

The community had been dependent on commercial suppliers for their drinking water. However, many households could not afford to buy commercial drinking water. With the WRS, the community was able to have drinking water that was 33% cheaper than that from commercial suppliers. Additionally, the community was able to learn many other things: water processing technologies, negotiating skills, business plan making, securing permits, and accreditations.

Box 8.1: Learning from Social Enterprises

Social enterprise is a great teacher; everyone involved learns. With the WRS, the community, the managers and the organizers learned about distilling processes and varied water qualities. As if advertising their product, the water refilling providers explain what they have learned:

"[The] reverse osmosis system takes away more than 99% of natural mineral in the water. Purified water is best for milk formula for infants. Mineral water is water that has been strained suitable for daily use for drinking. Alkaline water on the other hand, is the most recent technology introduced in the market. Water passes through a ceramic particle that emits FAR Infrared increasing pH of water that is most suitable for our bodies. Alkaline water is rich in ionic and trace minerals..."

The WRS has ten distribution centers in the community, which consist of household-run micro-enterprises. It also delivers water to houses. Jobs were generated for the youth as cleaners of water containers and delivery boys. The enterprise Vision, Mission, and Goals state that WRS will provide free drinking water during disasters, tragic events, and to bereaved families. A specific percentage in the net income of WRS is earmarked for the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Emergency Fund. As the WRS staff learns more about the technical operations of the business, income is generated for the staff and the community. The Livelihood Council, which oversees the

business, envisions a WRS that meets the demand of the community and plans to expand to other areas in Rodriguez.

Now that the WRS is operational, the staff and the community must do their homework of learning social enterprise management. As a supplier of water for the public, the enterprise must have a legal personality registered with the proper authorities so that accountability is established. Governance bodies should be constituted with clear duties and responsibilities.

Capital, Savings, and Insurance

In every livelihood assessment session, participants never failed to mention the capital-deficit character of the community economy. According to the rag and dressmakers, in the pentagon of assets, financial asset is what they needed most but was the most inaccessible.

The final training module addresses this concern. Module 4 (Capital, Savings, and Insurance) focuses on managing capital and savings. The demand for capital was high, and the challenge of building credit readiness and worthiness among potential credit users had to be met.

CSI operational units were established in each community of *Sitio* Bagong Ilog, Suburban, and Sabah. Each is composed of representatives from the livelihood clusters and council. The unit is responsible for processing capital loan applications for which members were trained, particularly the conduct of credit investigation. Each community CSI Unit employs two staff, one loan officer and one collector, who are paid from the interest earnings of loans.

Representatives from *Unlad Kabayan*, COM, and the community comprise the CSI Team that collectively manages the operations and operating expenses.

Capital provision started in December 2010 and as of July 2012, more than 500 women and men have been served. Some have reached the sixth cycle of loan while others are just starting. Although there is a high delinquency rate, the level of growth of good payer's is remarkable. One such good payer is Adel.

Adel is married with two children. Her husband is a carpenter. During Ketsana, everything in her house was swept away by the flood, including her small store. Her house was severely damaged because it was built near the river. After the typhoon, her husband found work doing repairs and construction. But his earnings from carpentry were far from adequate. They were not able to rebuild their store immediately.

After more than a year, there was still nothing much to do. Adel along with others in *Sitio* Lumang Ilog were despondent. The lack of financial resources made it difficult for their children to go back to school. This scenario changed after the livelihood rehabilitation project was introduced. Entrepreneurial literacy and enterprise development services were made available to the women in the community. Training and education on credit and savings management was only interesting to Adel because of her desire to take a loan. Entrepreneurial literacy made her hope again. Adel conscientiously attended training-workshops on enterprise development and became the leader of the Miscellaneous Businesses Cluster.

She wanted to borrow Php 20,000 and tried to convince the CSI Unit that she could be relied on, that she would match this excellent opportunity with hard-work, imagination and creativity. She was dismayed when the approved amount was only Php 5,000 (US\$120.00), only a quarter of what she applied for. But true to her word, she was able to rebuild her store and refill its shelves with basic items: rice, salt, and the like. After her third loan cycle, the store expanded and included a small eating area with small tables that could accommodate seven to ten people. She started serving three types of dishes sold at very reasonable prices. Regular customers continued to increase, making her anxious to finish the current loan cycle and apply for a bigger loan.

Adel's husband is now helping in her business, adjusting his work schedule. His mornings would now start at 3 or 4 o'clock to join Adel in buying the ingredients she needs for the dishes she will prepare. The children are also helping out before and after school.

Adel has good relations with customers but is very strict with her cash flow. However, she sometimes allows people to take goods or meals on credit because she knows what it is to have nothing to feed the family, especially the children. She has lent money to neighbors during emergencies because she has been a recipient of other people's good heartedness in the past.

Adel is now on her third loan cycle of Php 35,000. Although her hands are full with work, she has agreed to take the leadership position in the Miscellaneous Business Cluster and represent it in the Livelihood Council. She was able to buy a small home lot and recovered her lost assets: electric fan, a gas range, refrigerator, and delivery tricycle with side car.

Reflections

As the monsoon rains (*habagat*) lashed Metro Manila in August 2012, the disaster resilience of Ketsana communities was put to the test. Geophysically, the communities had little chance because all the low-lying areas were submerged. But the people were more prepared. Many of them went to higher ground early on before their houses got flooded. In Damayan, *Sitio* Lumang Ilog, the side of the berm was still flooded almost a month later because the water level of Laguna Lake had not subsided. Some 1,600 households had to transfer to 12 evacuation centers in Banaba.

The condition of *Sitio* Sabah in Rodriguez was most severe. When the water level of Marikina River started to rise, people moved to higher grounds and to the evacuation centers. But there were still some who simply refused to leave their houses and belongings until the last minute. Only when the floodwaters sent them up to the rooftops that they shouted for help. Initially, the rescue teams in *Sitio* Sabah were reluctant about braving the swirling waters of the Marikina River. Nonetheless, they went ahead and rescued everyone.

While there were no casualties this time, what happened to the livelihoods and community enterprises? What lessons can be learned?

Damayan, *Sitio* Lumang Ilog

Waters from the floodway and the rains combined to flood Damayan in *Sitio* Lumang Ilog. Only the road on the highest part of the community was spared.

Learning from their previous experience of disasters, members of the SMMD had, early on, brought their sewing machines and cloth cuttings to the upper floor of the Livelihood Center. After two weeks when the water receded, the women cleaned up the flooded section of the center and promptly resumed their production of rags, which was momentarily disrupted during the floods. They also continued drafting their Constitution and By-Laws in preparation for registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). A commitment document, *Kasunduan ng mga Magbabasahan*, "(Covenant of the Rag Makers) binding SMMD members will be notarized.

Most of the *sari-sari* stores and other micro-businesses are slowly getting back into business, including Adel's store. But her eatery is temporarily closed because her kitchen, which is in the lower section of the house along the berm side, is still submerged.

A one week grace period for repayment requested by many CSI beneficiaries was granted. Those who have completed payment are renewing their loans. Among the more active CSI applicants are junk collectors needing additional capital for the junk abundantly deposited by the flood.

The Fishing and *Kangkong* Clusters will take a longer time to recover because they are dependent on the lake. A natural asset that is undergoing change, the lake has refused to return to pre-flood levels. *Kangkong* plantations were washed away while the growing areas are still choked with water lilies.

Fishers continue to wait for the lake waters to recede and get rid of the water lilies. Fishing nets, cages, and “skylabs” were destroyed either by strong water current or covered with water lilies. Fishes grown in cages escaped.

Sabah and Suburban, Rodriguez

In Sabah, all the houses were flooded, many completely submerged. Home based micro-businesses and livelihoods that were rebuilt and rehabilitated by the Ketsana Rehabilitation Project were either washed away or severely damaged. Businesses in the market outside of the community were spared. Market stalls became their temporary shelter. The families, mostly Muslims, will continue to stay in their stalls until the repair of their houses can start.

Being located on higher ground, Suburban was the least affected by the floods. However, two houses are in peril because of the severely eroded foundation of a retaining wall, creating several sinkholes between the houses and the creek. Nonetheless, the Suburban community was prepared for the disaster and helped its neighbours when the monsoon rains fell. Spearheaded by the Livelihood Council, the community collected clothes and other relief items. Using the CSI petty cash, the *Tindahang Bayan* prepared hot meals and distributed them to the evacuees in Sabah and Kasiglahan Village. Operations of the Water Refilling Station were largely unhampered. And true to its commitment and mission statement, WRS distributed free bottled water to the evacuation centers in Rodriguez.

Lessons in Resilience

One of the important lessons learned is that the pace and speed of recovery of livelihoods that depend on natural assets, such as the lake, are linked to the pace and speed of recovery of the natural asset. After Ketsana, the fishers and *kangkong* growers recovered faster because they were able to return to the lake to fish and grow *kangkong*. On the other hand, when livelihoods depended on physical assets and technical skills, such as sewing machines, *sari-sari* stores, and tricycles, recovery and restoration of livelihood took longer and encountered more difficulties.

Knowing the theory and practice in entrepreneurship enhanced the resourcefulness of the people. This time they knew what, where, and how the assets can be mobilized and were quicker to make use of opportunities that enabled them to recover quickly. On the other hand, when the natural asset is damaged, livelihood recovery will have to wait until the asset is restored to “normal.” When the lake did not recede as hoped, the fishers and *kangkong* growers were unable to move forward.

Knowing this, fishers and *kangkong* growers must have at least one other alternative income source while waiting for the water in the lake to recede. They have to find another way of “navigating” the high level of water in fishing and growing *kangkong*. This calls for climate change adaptation (CCA) on the livelihood front. But unless a strategic and more comprehensive

action is taken, the lake will not be restored to its “normal” state immediately. This would entail a major endeavor of dredging and restoring the watershed of Laguna de Bay.

If resilience means spiritual strength to survive, then livelihoods, community enterprises, and most importantly, the people, have achieved a satisfactory level of resilience. Hopelessness and despair that prevailed after Ketsana were no longer the predominant feelings after the monsoon rains, except perhaps for some households in Sabah. What could be sensed among many is the spirit of strength, courage, and hope. In Suburban, the spirit of compassion and solidarity was evident. Beneficiaries were no longer asking what to do. They planned their recovery. Assets built and re-built after Ketsana have withstood the disasters. CSI members are confident that they could access financial resources through loans and savings.

Resilience, however, does not start with livelihood. It starts with the mind—an entrepreneurial mind that continues to be challenged to create and recreate resources and wealth under ordinary and extraordinary conditions. ■

Rebuilding After Ketsana: Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building in an Urban Context

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Within two years after Tropical Storm Ketsana (local name: Ondoy) brought one of the biggest floods in Metro Manila in recent memory, other big typhoons visited the Philippine archipelago and caused devastation to lives and property. Typhoons Meari (local name: Falcon), Nesat (local name: Pedring), and Washi (local name: Sendong) were notable in the destruction they left behind. The most recent calamity experienced by residents of Metro Manila happened in August 2012 and was brought about not even by a typhoon but by heavy monsoon rains that fell on the western parts of Luzon over several days, severely affecting almost 2 million people. What is also evident is that cities are experiencing more and more the damaging effects of the degradation of surrounding watersheds which has become the biggest threat to the safety of urban settlements. Typhoon Washi claimed more than a thousand lives in the cities of Iligan and Cagayan de Oro where rampaging floodwaters fed by torrential rains from the mountains of Bukidnon swept away homes, people, livestock, and infrastructure in a matter of hours. Similarly, at the height of Ketsana the silted river systems could not contain the massive volume of water coming down the mountain ranges of Rizal which then flowed onto the natural catch basins in Marikina and Cainta that were unfortunately inhabited by humans.

Contested Spaces in Urban Areas

Urban areas have higher population densities compared to rural areas. This simple demographic difference has implications for the nature of risks to which urban communities are exposed. Urban areas are also usually found along large river systems and on lowland areas that serve as floodplains which over time might have been built on. In the aftermath of Ketsana, it was discovered that middle class housing subdivisions and buildings were given permits to build structures on what used to be *esteros*(estuaries) or catchment areas. The combination of high population densities, weak enforcement of zoning laws, and the presence of bodies of water and floodplains that offer habitable, even if hazardous, spaces for those without the economic means to buy suitable residential land pushes the poorer urban dwellers to the margins, those public spaces that are hitherto unused because they are undesirable or unsafe.

The urban context presents a distinct character and challenge to disaster risk reduction. High population density coupled with intense economic activity in urban areas means that there are many competing land uses for the scarce land available. The urban setting is thus characterized by the existence of many contested spaces. Among them are lands that are deemed to have little economic value and are judged unfit for human habitation. Yet in a situation where about a third of the urban population earn incomes that are barely above the poverty threshold, many are forced to build their dwellings in areas officially categorized as danger zones. In Metro Manila, it is

¹ This chapter is a synthesis of the reflections and insights contributed by the implementing partners of the Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme in a workshop held on May 21, 2012. The chapter also benefited from comments made by Mr. Allan Vera of Christian Aid on a previous draft.

² This estimate comes from the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA).



A typical informal settlement in Manila.

estimated that 556,000 families are informal settlers, that is, without formal land tenure.² Of this number, some 102,000 families reside in so-called “danger zones.”

Because the urban economy has consigned the poor to living at the margins, the spaces where the poor live are usually congested and without clean water, sanitation, and drainage. Because of the absence or the high cost of legal service connections for water and electricity, illegal tapping of water and electricity is common. Makeshift houses of light materials predominate, making these settlements susceptible to fires. Poor sanitation gives rise to diseases and epidemics. Solid waste disposal practices contribute to constricted waterways and clogged sewage systems that increase the likelihood of flooding. Garbage dumps present livelihood opportunities attracting poor families to live around them despite the risks of “trashslides” and respiratory illnesses from pollution.

Urban disaster risk reduction (DRR) work in the Philippines is thus forced to confront the question of how effectively and realistically can risks from disasters be reduced for poor families that are forced to live on areas where many physical hazards exist. When alternative sites for safe habitation are not easy to find due to economic or policy constraints, danger zones become havens for the marginalized poor and thus, become contested spaces. Poor communities challenge state policies on prescribed easements for rivers, railroad tracks, and garbage dumps by their unauthorized occupation of these spaces. But formal regulations are a Damocles sword hanging over the residents of these settlements who can be evicted anytime that authorities decide to do so.

The fact that many urban spaces, especially where the poor live, are contested means that many different stakeholders within the city would need to be engaged when addressing public concerns such as disaster risk reduction.

More Heterogeneous Communities

Urban communities are typically more heterogeneous compared to rural communities in terms of the economic base, ethnolinguistic backgrounds, levels of income, social networks, skills, assets, and capacities of their members. The web of social relationships that link community members with people and institutions in the larger society is more dense and intricate precisely because of the more varied activities in the urban setting. In a typical urban poor settlement, one would find teachers, construction workers, market vendors, and tricycle drivers living in the same community. Their day-to-day activities could be so disparate and some of them could be completely unaware of the people living at the other end of the settlement.

Income inequality also tends to be higher across communities within an urban area compared to the situation in rural areas. This inequality has social and political consequences that have contributed to the further impoverishment of the poor and the lack of development in the poorer sections of the city. Social divisions are made visible in the gated communities that purposely try to prevent outsiders or those of a different social class from entering them. Not a few politicians have used the large number of people living in informal settlements to win elections while keeping the slum communities perpetually without secure tenure.

Despite differences in occupations, organizations are pervasive in urban poor communities. The members of the Damayan Homeowners Association (DHOA) used to be affiliated with urban poor organizations and federations even before they settled in *Sitio*³ Lumang Ilog in Taytay more than twenty years ago. Some of them even moved to their new residences as a group. In this sense, some urban poor communities have a reserve of social capital built over the years by their mutual dependence ready to be mobilized for various purposes. But other communities are not so organized, their members having been subjected to successive transfers of residences due to eviction.

Urban spaces, because they are scarce and valuable, usually have multiple uses. In urban poor communities, residential spaces are used also as retail stores and shops where work for the day's wage is done. Streets double as basketball courts and venues for holding wakes and parties. The boundaries between public and private spaces are not fixed.

Urban Dwellers' Perceptions of Danger

Just as there are many contested spaces in the urban setting, danger is also a contested concept, pitting the insiders against the outsiders, the users against the regulators. Where existing laws and official policy define certain urban spaces as “danger zones” outsiders would tend to accept such definitions much less critically than would the insiders. Residents of these areas officially categorized as hazardous would find refuge in their history of repeatedly being able to survive floods, fires, and earthquakes that would leave them convinced that their habitat is not as dangerous as the outsiders imagine it to be. Experience might have taught them that safety is a collective undertaking; that it is not an attribute of a place but is rather the outcome of the actions of people working with one another to make living in a place reasonably secure. Safety and resilience are also associated with being familiar with the risks in their locality. Hence, relocation increases their vulnerability to the extent that they become unfamiliar with the risks in the resettlement site. And so they continue to contest or negotiate how the outsiders define the place they have made for themselves and the policies that would determine whether they have the right to stay there or not. The *Sitio* Lumang Ilog community has lived through a succession of presidential land proclamations declaring their community as a social housing site and then later revoked, if only to underscore the fact that policymakers are not immune to the push and pull of contending forces in the social construction of danger.

Conflicts over the concept of danger involving different sectors of society has led to the triple victimization of the urban poor in the aftermath of Ketsana as elucidated in the Chapter “Standing Up for Secure and Safe Settlements: Networking and Policy Advocacy by Ketsana-Affected

Communities” by Benedict Balderrama of PHILSSA. The urban poor are thrice victims for they did not only suffer losses of lives and property caused by Ketsana, they were also blamed by public authorities for allegedly obstructing the flow of water in the rivers and tributaries and consequently had to contend with government-initiated eviction orders that sought to remove their illegally built shanties.

Policy advocacy in urban DRR

Negotiating the policies whereby the contested definitions of danger would be interpreted and translated into concrete rules and government programs for dealing with informal and coastal settlements is therefore a logical response expected from poor communities. Policy advocacy thus became a necessary component of the Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme. The risks to their life and property, as perceived and experienced by poor communities, are rooted in their informality. These risks include government regulations and the all too present danger of forced eviction. Yet it is also clear that the risks are greatly increased by their occupation of coastal areas and lands lying on floodplains and on the easements of rivers and waterways. Whether to resettle these communities and where to resettle them are the subject of state policy. Poor communities need and want a voice in shaping these policies.

The intersection between poor communities' exposure to hazards by virtue of where they live and the economic shortage of land in cities where they can be accommodated presents a unique challenge to urban poor advocacy on DRR. Such advocacy would necessarily touch on broader issues of urban governance and land use. In the Ketsana Programme, one of the partners, the Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA), facilitated the formation of a multi-sectoral alliance that engaged government at the provincial, regional, and national levels on the proper and systematic implementation of the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (Republic Act 10121) enacted in 2010. While this engagement would be long-term, laying the foundations for building a constituency to push for the law's implementation by consolidating the people's organizations that would be part of the advocacy alliance, *Aksyon para sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad at Klima* (AKKMA) had been PHILSSA's contribution to the Ketsana Programme.

The agenda-building process conducted by AKKMA produced a five-point agenda that served as a platform for the alliance to engage government not only in implementing the DRR law but also in proactively ensuring the participation of the urban poor and fisherfolk as citizens in the planning of major development initiatives. Many urban infrastructure projects impact on the risks that poor communities are forced to bear as urban growth intensifies. Yet these projects are usually planned by government agencies without benefit of any inputs from urban poor communities who are mainly seen as “affected families” that need to be cleared from river easements, or the road right of way (RROW) of projects, rather than as the intended beneficiaries of urban development. Through an organizational vehicle like AKKMA, urban poor and fisherfolk organizations are able to position themselves to give feedback on development programs such as the Department of Public Works and Highway's (DPWH) Metro Manila Flood Control Masterplan and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's (MMDA) Metro Manila Greenprint 2030.

Advocacy becomes an essential component of disaster risk reduction because providing safe settlements to the urban poor demands no less than restructuring existing urban spaces and land uses, which are currently outside the sphere of influence of the poor. Urban policies must recognize the need to allocate land for urban poor housing. Governance practices would need to involve poor communities in determining land uses and development priorities. The advocacy initiated by AKKMA on the implementation of the DRR law at the provincial and regional levels aptly complements the engagement of community organizations like *Buklod Tao* and Damayan Homeowners Association (DHOA) with their respective *barangay*⁴ insofar as mainstreaming DRR in local government plans and budgets is concerned.

³*Sitio* is the smallest division of a village unit.

⁴*Barangay* means “village.”

Community-driven disaster-risk reduction

Government-led approaches to disaster risk reduction can have devastating consequences on the poor. PHILSSA's analysis of government responses in the aftermath of Ketsana underscores the tendency to blame poor people for inhabiting so-called "danger areas" and to rely on the wholesale resettlement of informal communities as a key DRR strategy. Poor families, on the other hand, consider off-city resettlement as a bigger disaster because of the disruption it causes on their livelihood.

This clash of perspectives creates an imperative for community-driven DRR. Poor people's vulnerabilities to hazards can be identified with the help of science and social techniques like hazard mapping, participatory capacity and vulnerability assessment (PCVA), and psychosocial mapping, among others. As the area partners of the Ketsana Programme—Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP), *Buklod Tao*, Community Organizers Multiversity (COM), and Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI)—have affirmed, the identification of risks and hazards through hazard mapping and the PCVA was a factor in the sensitization of community members to their vulnerability to different forms of hazards and to the nature of these hazards.

The recognition of hazards is only one side of the equation. The other side is to present ways of reducing the risks and people's vulnerabilities to them. The "People's Plan" process facilitated by COM in *Sitio Lumang Ilog*, the paralegal training given by the *Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal* (SALIGAN), the participatory settlements planning techniques introduced by Technical Assistance Organization, Inc. (TAO-Pilipinas), and the livelihood schemes developed by *Unlad Kabayan* with the communities allowed community residents to devise strategies for addressing their vulnerabilities.

At the same time, the multi-disciplinary and informed interventions made people realize certain "non-negotiables," or the limits of their options. Some limits are due to natural causes, like geo-physical hazards and rainfall patterns. Others are economic such as the supply and price of in-city land and how much poor families can pay for housing. Within these limits and mindful of options presented by technical, legal, and economic measures for mitigating risks, poor communities have the power to make decisions. Urban poor groups within AKKMA arrived at a consensus to respect the prohibition against building within the three-meter easement of waterways as provided by the Water Code of the Philippines. Such a consensus could not be achieved previously by any urban poor coalition. In *Sitio Lumang Ilog*, technical studies helped to convince the community residents that there are certain portions of the Manggahan Floodway on which structures should not be built. Other portions can be made safer by retrofitting the houses. The community's "People's Plan" took these options into account.

In contrast to government-led DRR strategies that tend to be restrictive because of the emphasis on prohibitions, community-driven approaches to DRR create options for people to address their vulnerabilities. These approaches create in the people a critical awareness of their capacities and vulnerabilities, assets and needs, options and limits. Because they consciously make the choices, they are subjects, not objects, of the DRR interventions.

Outcomes

Enhanced Skills and Capacities

The partners involved in the Ketsana Programme were one in their assessment that two years is a short time within which to realize the goal of capacitating communities to become resilient to disasters. The scale of the devastation wrought by Ketsana made many residents of Metro Manila's informal settler communities more aware of the need to prepare and equip themselves for similar disasters and devise strategies to reduce the risks faced by their communities. The Programme aimed to build the capacities of poor communities for identifying and reducing their vulnerabilities, equipping themselves with quick and effective disaster response mechanisms and



NGOs and partner communities of the Ketsana Rehabilitation Programme are trained on providing psychosocial support services to communities affected by flooding.

building organizational, legal, economic, and spiritual resources to help their members recover from the economic, physical, and psychological disruption they would experience from a disaster.

The range of skills imparted to community members included contingency planning, emergency response, evacuation camp management, swift water rescue, water search and rescue, life support and first aid, para-legal engagement on urban governance, countering violence against women, and the DRRM Law, advocacy and negotiation, and disaster-responsive settlements planning. Community members were also trained in the use of risk assessment tools like the participatory capacity and vulnerability assessment (PCVA), psychosocial and hazard mapping. Training related to building resilience through livelihoods included financial management, setting up community funds for credit, savings and insurance, business planning, and enterprise development.

On top of these, there were advocacy and programme-level activities that demanded the presence of community leaders in meetings, forums, and dialogues outside the community, sharpening the leaders' skills in the critical analysis of information, negotiation, and networking.

The desired outcomes of reduced risks and improved systems for responding to disasters are most felt at the level of the community.

Better Preparedness and Response to Disasters

In 2010 and 2011, two big typhoons, Meari (local name: Falcon) and Nesat (local name: Pedring), visited Metro Manila. A notable change observed in the communities that were part of the Programme was the setting up of early warning systems which enabled community members to prepare themselves for these typhoons. In *Sitio Lumang Ilog*, residents of flood-prone areas, taking their cue from the early warning system set up by the community, carried out an advance evacuation during Typhoon Nesat without waiting for flood waters to rise before leaving their homes. During Typhoon Meari, the Damayan Homeowners Association (DHOA) mobilized residents to clean up the drains and remove water lilies that in the past have caused the clogging

of the drainage system in the area. Similarly, the residents of *Sitio* Sabah were able to test their early warning system during Typhoon Songda (local name: Bebeng) in 2011.

Disaster response and relief operations were carried out more quickly and systematically. In *Barangay* Banaba, cash transfers to assist affected families as well as the evacuation of vulnerable families were promptly made in an organized manner. In Sabah and Suburban, disaster response activities like information dissemination, camp management, and monitoring became more systematic, with groups knowledgeable of their respective roles and assigned tasks.

What was also notable in Banaba and in *Sitio* Lumang Ilog was the visibly more collaborative and synergized implementation of disaster response actions by the residents and the *barangay* government. This became possible because the community associations and the *barangay* government, after undergoing common training and planning activities as part of the Programme, agreed to adopt a common contingency plan and disaster response system.

In Banaba, there was more visible participation of different levels of government in disaster preparedness as well as in the relief operations during typhoons Nesat and Meari. The national government, as well as the municipal and *barangay* governments took part in typhoon drills.

Aside from the broad range of skills on DRR acquired by community members, the scientific knowledge base also improved considerably and informed the early warning systems and contingency plans formulated by the communities. The results of the study done by the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geo-Sciences (UPNIGS) were used by the community in Banaba in designing its early warning system and planning the evacuation sites. The UPNIGS study also helped the residents of Sabah in Rodriguez to understand the factors that caused flooding in the resettlement site. The community incorporated the mitigation (e.g. ripraps and dredging) and other measures recommended by the study into the community's infrastructure building and contingency plans. In Suburban, knowledge about the existence and location of a fault line running through the community was factored into the plans for the building of an evacuation and multi-purpose center.

Disaster-responsive Community-based Structures

The more organized and systematic response which the communities were able to implement during Typhoons Meari, Songda, and Nesat was made possible by the formation of community-based structures and the establishment of committees specifically for disaster response and preparedness by existing community-based organizations. These structures and committees became instrumental in mobilizing more members of the community for DRR activities and in the process, strengthened the existing community organizations and enhanced the relationships among them.

In Banaba, a *barangay*-wide federation made up of 16 different community-based organizations was formed to better coordinate DRR initiatives and consolidate human and technical resources to support these initiatives. The federation was mobilized during DRR simulation exercises so that the entire *barangay* became involved in activities such as the identification of evacuation camps and organizing the families of the rescuers for evacuation. The interaction among the three groups: *BuklodTao*, which had been the primary organization engaged in DRR activities, the *barangay* government and the federation resulted in improved coordination and broader community participation in disaster risk reduction and response.

In *Sitio* Lumang Ilog, the establishment of the DRR committee and various livelihood clusters had the effect of decentralizing community leadership and participation. Whereas DHOA leaders previously were the only active members of the community who initiated activities on housing, land tenure acquisition, and other community issues, today there is participation by more community members on these issues through the different committees formed. Through the training and other capacity building activities provided by the Programme, community members

have acquired skills that are being applied to various community endeavours. The hazard mapping and legal education sessions became inputs to the "people's planning" process which involved the wider community in the advocacy for land tenure and housing. Because of the DRR capacity building activities, the advocacy for land tenure and housing has been strengthened and reframed into an advocacy for "safe settlements" which integrated DRR into the community's long-standing struggle for secure tenure.

An Early Warning System Committee and Emergency Preparedness and Response Team were set up in *Barangay* San Bartolome whose members diligently monitor the water level in the river when heavy rains occur. They make house-to-house calls to alert people when river waters rise to a critical level. These structures have been instrumental in increasing community awareness on DRR and involving ordinary people in disaster preparedness and emergency response.

Sitio Sabah has a DRR Core Group whose members include elderly and youth volunteers who take turns watching the Marikina River during heavy rains. They issue announcements to the community when evacuation would be necessary. This is done through an early warning system which transmits information to key people distributed around Sabah who then relay the information to the residents. Similarly Suburban Village has a *Bantay Ilog* (River Watch) which mobilizes volunteers to remove solid wastes and debris that accumulate during heavy rains in a culvert box underneath a passageway that had been used to transport heavy equipment during the construction of the resettlement site. The volunteers use their own equipment in addition to those provided by Christian Aid to prevent the trapping of wastes in the culvert box and thus avert flooding in the community.

Communities Linked to Local Institutions

"When Ondoy came, we had no one to turn to but God. But today, thanks to the DRR project, we can now depend on the Church, our *barangay*, our community leaders and yes, now we can rely on ourselves." These words of a woman-leader from San Bartolome as narrated by Jose Clemente in the chapter "Building Resilient Communities in Novaliches" express well the new awareness of poor people in the Programme's partner communities about local institutions.

Functional relationships, initially forged between communities and local institutions on DRR, extended to other concerns. DHOA's capacity building and DRR activities enabled the community members to become more active in the various committees of the community association which in turn became more relevant to the people's daily lives. These committees attended to the people's livelihood, housing, land tenure, and safety concerns and now serve as community-based institutions that serve as a mechanism for community discussions, strategizing, and consensus-building on how to address these issues.

In Rodriguez, community members in Sabah and Suburban have become more aware of their *barangay* and municipal government for concerns related to women's issues. Through the legal education modules given by SALIGAN, they have become more conscious of the resources that can be tapped from government institutions that are supposed to assist them in times of disaster and other emergencies. In some cases, this awareness enabled them to see gaps in local government structures such as the absence of a women's desk, a mandatory structure at the *barangay* government, for responding to cases of violence against women. When these gaps were experienced, people came to realize that they are limited in what they can do if there are no appropriate public institutions to respond with the required support, resources and skilled interventions.

In Banaba, the DRR capacity building activities conducted by *BuklodTao* with *barangay* officers helped to create a more harmonious working relationship between the community and the *barangay*. In San Bartolome, Novaliches, community members, after themselves receiving training on DRR through the Programme, trained the *sitio* leaders on DRR. Aside from linking people to their local officials, the DRR activities also brought the local church closer to the poor people in the parish. The poor are gaining acceptance and confidence enabling them to gradually take on

leadership roles within the church. The parish priest wants DRR to be the centerpiece mission of the Social Services and Development Ministry of the parish and the leaders of the informal settlers to claim the leadership of this Ministry. SPI regards this as a radical change in the structures of the local church in which typically the leadership roles in the various ministries are almost exclusively assumed by people from the upper and middle classes.

The formation of the multi-sectoral regional alliance AKKMA made possible the engagement of people's organizations with provincial and national level institutions on DRR concerns. In some cases, such engagement by a bigger organization at the higher levels of government helped the local advocacy of community-based organizations with their local government at the *barangay* and municipal levels. The DRR forum organized by AKKMA with the provincial government of Rizal paved the way for the community organizations in San Mateo and in Rodriguez, both municipalities in Rizal, to be acquainted with their respective municipal DRRM officers. The municipal DRRM officers who attended the forum became open to working with AKKMA-affiliated groups because they appreciated the knowledge on the DRRM law imparted to them during the forum and recognized the groups in attendance as somehow having the endorsement of the provincial government. The forum served as a trust-building activity which opened channels for the communities to engage their municipal government on DRR concerns. In addition, the forums and mobilizations organized by AKKMA also facilitated dialogue and coordination with government officials that became vital to addressing eviction threats.

The community-based Programme partners believe that the linkages forged by the communities with local institutions will help them sustain their on-going capacity building and DRR activities not only because of the resources which can be tapped from these institutions but also because of the recognition and legitimacy gained by the people's organizations through their engagements with these institutions as they carry out their activities.

Institutionalized Participation in Local Governance

In some cases, the relationships forged by the communities with their *barangay* and municipal governments went beyond tapping the resources of the latter for various community concerns, cooperating during emergencies, and implementing joint DRR training and disaster response. Through the initial engagements on DRR, community organizations were able to become part of *Barangay* and Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Committees (BDRRMCs and MDRRMCs). This institutionalized form of partnership was exemplified by the experience of *Buklod Tao* with the local government of *Barangay* Banaba. Earning the acceptance and trust of the *barangay* leaders had not been easy especially when there is a history of animosity between the parties. The DRR activities served as trust-building mechanisms for clarifying agenda and sharing skills. *Buklod Tao* decided to formalize its engagement with the *barangay* government by seeking accreditation of its organization. Having earned the *barangay* government's recognition of its capacities in DRR work, *Buklod Tao* was eventually accredited as a member of the BDRRMC. Similar efforts were undertaken by DHOA and the community organizations in San Bartolome, Novaliches and Rodriguez, Rizal. The AKKMA Alliance also gained accreditation in the Laguna and Rizal provincial DRRMCs.

Equipped with the legal training on the DRRM Law and experienced in risk assessment and contingency planning, community-based organizations have been able to demonstrate capacities for effective disaster response and thus, became easy candidates to be part of the BDRRMCs. As Clemente observed in San Bartolome, "by training and developing community-based DRR teams with the skills and aptitude to respond to humanitarian emergencies, we have made available to the *barangay* a pool of experts that they can tap to become members of the BDRRMC."⁵ Local governments recognized what the community organizations could contribute in the implementation of the DRRM Law.

Even as communities used the skills and legal knowledge they learned to gain entry into the formal structures of governance, such knowledge was also used critically to advocate for greater people's participation. *Tatay*⁶ Abdullah Regarde of Suburban Village pointed out to the MDRRMC

⁵Jose Clemente, "Building Resilient Communities in Novaliches," this volume, 56.

officer who lectured about the structure of the DRRMC the lack of people's participation in the structure and in the implementation of DRR. Because of the paralegal training and cliniquing sessions provided by SALIGAN on issues of urban governance, housing, gender and violence against women, many of the communities made plans to have their respective organization accredited by the local *Barangay* Development Council (BDC). Aside from attending to disaster risk reduction and management, the BDC is also mandated to formulate and monitor all development plans for the *barangay*. Thus, the institutionalized engagements with local governments on DRR became opportunities for advocacy towards greater people's participation in other aspects of governance.

Resilience in Livelihoods

The asset-based community development approach employed by *Unlad-Kabayan* proceeded from an understanding of poverty not merely as the lack of financial resources but more as stemming from a lack of access to wealth-creating assets. The emphasis placed by this approach on understanding the community economy and the assets existing in the community was critical to the development of enterprises that would build people's capacities in managing financial resources. By heavily investing in capacity development using its various training modules, *Unlad Kabayan* was able to assist the Programme's partner communities develop social enterprises that did not only augment the incomes of those involved in them but also created employment for other community members. This was the case with the ragmakers' enterprise in *Sitio* Lumangllog, which has employed three women for purchasing, quality control, and packing, and the Water Refilling Station in Suburban, which has given employment to young people. Aside from helping the families directly involved in them, the social enterprises in Suburban and *Barangay* Banaba also earmark a percentage of their income for a DRR and emergency fund, which benefits the entire community.

Given the short time that the social enterprises have been in operation, they are focused on making the businesses functional and working towards sustainability. Aside from generating incomes for the households, some of the enterprises have been developed purposely to promote environment-friendly practices such as



Ka Al proudly shows off the organic produce in tetra pots which are products of the associative livelihoods program in Brgy Banaba, San Mateo.



A beneficiary of household-based rag production facility in Taytay.

the organic soil composting, recycling through tetra-pot production, bag-making, and urban container gardening in *Barangay* Banaba. The mix of livelihood activities in Banaba benefited from value chain analysis that took into account forward and backward linkages among the enterprises.

Certain livelihood-related investments have had direct benefits to the Programme's partner communities during times of disaster. In Banaba, during the monsoon-induced flooding that occurred in August 2012, the site on which the community plans to build an evacuation center was used as an evacuation area to which the livelihood assets of *Buklod Tao* were transferred before the flood waters rose. During the monsoon floods, several families took refuge in the site as it had been identified as one of the 18 evacuation areas of the *barangay*. Thus, the investment made by the project in the evacuation center in Banaba protected lives and livelihood assets even before the actual construction of the building.

Lastly, there are examples of the rehabilitation of household livelihoods. By availing herself of a series of loans from her community's capital, savings and insurance (CSI) fund, Adel of *Sitio* Lumang Ilog was able to buy a small home lot for her family and recover the assets she had lost due to Ketsana, which included an electric fan, a gas range, refrigerator and delivery tricycle with a side car. Such an achievement, though limited to a few people in the communities with an entrepreneurial bent, demonstrates the resilience-building potential of the CSI system.

Lessons Gained

The initial efforts at undertaking urban disaster risk reduction in a set of pilot communities had to use existing community development and organizing practices even as they challenged some long-held precepts and methodologies. The lessons, based on a limited set of cases, are tentative at this point, yet they provide insights into the nuances and directions of urban DRR work in the Philippine urban context.

DRR and Community Organizing

While much is known from DRR literature and practice about the value of community organizing to community-based DRR, the Ketsana Programme has demonstrated that the reverse is also true: DRR is essential to community organizing in the Philippine urban context. DRR has the unique power of being able to mobilize and involve more community members compared to other issues, including land tenure and housing. As many urban poor communities are vulnerable to disasters from floods, fires, landslides, and earthquakes, people in these communities readily feel the necessity and urgency of protecting themselves against these calamities.

Beyond its mobilizing power, DRR has a strategic value to community organizing. NGOs such as COM which have long practised issue-based community organizing have found in DRR a useful framework for integrating their various community interventions. As a result of its having incorporated DRR into its organizing work, the hitherto singular focus on land security which underpinned COM's involvement in *Sitio* Lumang Ilog has evolved into a more expanded approach encompassing other concerns. COM's partnership with the DHOA came to include livelihood development, credit and savings, advocacy and engagement with local government on DRR and gender issues. All of these found coherence in the overarching agenda of achieving a safe settlement for the residents of *Sitio* Lumang Ilog.

As Silva has written, "DRRM did not only teach the community how to deal with floods and typhoons, it also improved the way the people developed strategies to remain in *Sitio* Lumang Ilog despite the government policy that declared their area a danger zone. Developing the People's Plan was the process that consolidated the community's many struggles."⁷ Through the DRR interventions, the people came to realize that without achieving an acceptable degree of safety for the community, the goal of tenure security cannot be attained. In the absence of

⁶ *Tatay* means "father."

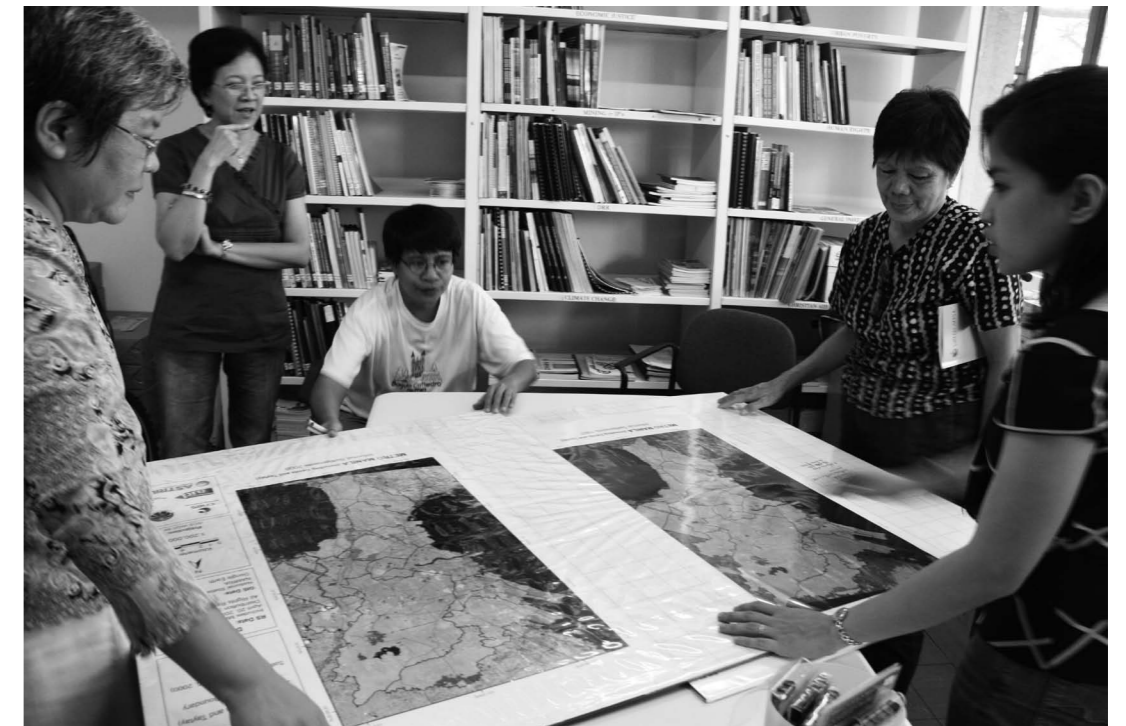
⁷ Ma. Abelaine P. Silva, "Community Organizing and Safe Settlement: The Damayan Experience," this volume, 34.

evidence that the community has become a safe settlement, government will not grant the community security of tenure. In Metro Manila, given that government authorities frequently use danger as a pretext for evicting communities, the challenge for poor communities is to show concrete proof of their preparedness to disasters and their having reasonably mitigated the risks associated with them.

The mainstreaming of DRR in community organizing will necessarily also have implications on the content and method of the training of community organizers. Familiarity and engagement with local government structures and processes and with multiple stakeholders and working with multiple partners are essential to DRR in the urban context and will have to be equally emphasized to balance the conflict confrontation mode of "traditional" community organizing, which continues to be relevant for making government principally accountable in providing services to the people. Moreover, DRR has rekindled the risk-based approach in development work which is future-oriented, complementing the dominant need-based/issue-based and rights-based approaches typically practised by NGOs and people's organizations.

Power from Knowledge

In the Ketsana Programme, the appreciation for science has enabled people in the communities to go beyond their personal experience and knowledge of the effects of a disaster to try to understand the cause of the floods on the basis of objective data. Was it the release of the water from the dams during the height of Ketsana that caused the inundation of many parts of Metro Manila, as some people had alleged? The evidence pointed instead to the excessive volume of rainfall as the major cause of the massive floods. Moving from effects to causes brings a new perspective to how communities see themselves in the larger ecosystem and how they can protect themselves more effectively. Monitoring rainfall through the use of simple rain gauges and the setting up of early warning systems are now widely accepted basic DRR measures in urban poor communities particularly in flood-prone locations, including the Programme's partner communities. Science helps empower communities through informed and evidence-based planning.



Manila Observatory consults NGOs working with informal settlements on their integrated risk mapping of Greater Metro Manila.

The AKKMA Alliance learned about the concept of “ecosystems-based protection and management” and used this as a framework for harmonizing the DRR and settlements concerns of the urban poor and fisherfolk groups that comprise the alliance. The ecosystem perspective enabled the groups to see the coastal areas within the lake and the urban settlements as part of an ecosystem and the interconnectedness of their vulnerabilities. Proposed solutions must therefore not disadvantage any sector while benefiting another. This framework was applied in the reassessment of risk mitigating measures being proposed by some fisherfolk groups such as the dredging of the Laguna Lake. The new knowledge informed their proposed solutions and consequently the content of their advocacy.

Science becomes particularly important when communities decide to take a more proactive and developmental approach to disaster risk reduction, going beyond disaster preparedness, response and rehabilitation and venturing into settlements planning, housing and advocacy for secure tenure and safe settlements. The geohazard and hydro-meteorological assessments conducted by UPNIGS in the Programme areas in Rodriguez, Rizal revealed the communities’ vulnerability to flooding, a finding that can have important implications for the advocacy of urban poor groups that government resettlement sites be subjected to more stringent science-based risk analyses. The resettlement community’s vulnerability to floods was tragically proven when the monsoon-induced floods of August 2012 caused the dike protecting the resettlement village to break, submerging thousands of houses and causing the evacuation of thousands of families. The study’s findings, as proven by actual events, should inform community action to engage the National Housing Authority to delineate sections of the resettlement area which should not be inhabited.

An imperative of resilience thinking is complexity which necessarily involves dealing with change, uncertainty and diversity. Acquiring knowledge from various sources, experts, and sectors reduces uncertainty and allows people to anticipate, organize, act, and learn better.

Interdisciplinary Partnerships

The forging of partnerships was a major strategy in the community-based disaster risk reduction, response, and resilience-building of the Ketsana Programme. NGOs and development workers accustomed to dealing with government entities in an adversarial way have discovered that government can be a partner in development and that in DRR work, government *must* be a partner. This is because the government, even at the lowest level of the *barangay*, commands resources that are significantly greater than what NGOs and civic organizations can provide. The legal mandates entrusted to local governments make it possible for the DRR efforts of their NGO partners to reach bigger populations within and beyond the communities where the NGOs operate.

In forging partnerships, building trust is important and DRR proved to be an effective means for achieving this. This was particularly seen in the experience of *BuklodTao* in *Barangay* Banaba and the community in *Barangay* San Bartolome where the trained DRR teams gained credibility in the eyes of local officials as qualified members of the BDRRMC. In DRR, local governments saw in the NGOs and community organizations cooperative partners who had the same agenda as they had in preparing communities for disasters and reducing their vulnerability to them.

Aside from building partnerships between the local government and community-based organizations and NGOs, the Ketsana Programme also sought to forge partnerships among the civil society partners. As Clemente observed, “dialogue, alliances, mutual support and learning” were emphasized by the way the Programme was designed and implemented. Complementation among the partners was recognized and harnessed. The skills and systems possessed by the community-based partners were complemented by technical inputs of *Unlad Kabayan*, TAO-Pilipinas, and SALIGAN. Each of the partners had distinct skill sets to contribute to building DRR capacities. Forging partnerships sometimes became easier because of the existence of pre-existing networks such as PHILSSA, of which a number of partners—SALIGAN, Tao-Pilipinas, and COM—are members. Building on existing networks or partnerships was particularly useful in

advocacy as has been the experience of AKMMA in this project. However, sustaining the advocacy and the gains achieved would require continuing commitment and resources.

On the practical side, there were lessons learned in implementing a program with multiple partners. One of them is adopting a “needs-based phasing” of implementing the different components of the program—livelihood development, advocacy, para-legal training, and settlements planning. The programming and implementation of the activities in the various components must make room for flexibility in the sequencing of the components based on the needs of the communities. For instance, the paralegal cliniquing sessions conducted by SALIGAN occurred earlier in some communities and later in others. The phasing of the activities must also be sensitive to “meeting fatigue” that might be experienced by community leaders involved in different program components. A technique that some communities resorted to was conducting one-time planning sessions or partner-inclusive meetings that involved the various partners in a common planning activity.

The length of the project period was a clear constraint recognized by all the partners in implementing their respective project activities. Consciousness of the deliverables added to the pressure of being able to show results within the project timeframe. The Programme partners recognized that two years was hardly enough time to achieve sustainability of project outcomes and concrete evidence of resilience on the part of the households and the communities that were assisted. It was therefore important that the partners had a commitment to continue some degree of presence in the communities after the project, if necessary using their own resources.

Gender Roles and Issues

It is generally acknowledged that women play an active role in the development of urban poor communities because their traditional roles of child rearing and the care of the household make them more present in the community compared to men. The involvement of women is again highlighted in community-based activities related to disaster preparedness and response. Women were noticeably well represented in the organization and DRR activities in *Barangay* Banaba, *Sitio* Lumang Ilog, Sabah, and Suburban. In Banaba, as well as in Sabah and Suburban, women were very active in disaster response.

In *Sitio* Lumang Ilog, participation of women in the DHOA leadership gradually expanded—from one active female president to the involvement of more women in the various committees (e.g. livelihood clusters, DRR and advocacy committees). Clemente of SPI attributes the relative ease with which DRR was accepted by the communities to the “industry and determination of urban poor women.”⁸ In Sabah, woman leader Ate⁹ Sarah discovered that more people have become interested in the DRR training and activities through the services she has been extending to them in times of personal emergencies. Because extending help to people in need is second nature to many women community volunteers, they easily gain the trust of people in the community.

Relationships and roles within the family sometimes also changed as a result of the increased involvement of women in DRR. Ate Sarah of Sabah noticed that after the community experienced disaster rescue and response operations during the typhoons that visited their community after Ketsana, relationships within the family seemed to have become stronger as did the bonds amongst neighbours and within the organizations in the community. Sometimes, the women’s involvement in DRR encouraged other family members to be similarly involved.

DRR Breaks Down Social Barriers

Experience in the Ketsana Programme has demonstrated that different sectors are able to work together more easily with DRR as a common agenda. From frameworks of action based on conflict, hostility and confrontation, the new action frameworks that emerged through the program relied more on partnerships and interdependence. As Clemente observed in the chapter “Building Resilient Communities in Novaliches”, “DRR managed to transcend the toxic fault lines of religion and social class as many peoples and institutions exerted genuine effort to go beyond their

⁸ Clemente, this volume, 60.

⁹Ate means “older sister.”

vested interests, class consciousness, world views, ideologies, and egos to assist the affected people and communities in urgent need.”¹⁰

Buklod Tao in *Barangay* Banaba for years had an uneasy, at times even hostile, relationship with the *barangay* government. But the hostility thawed with the introduction of DRR training by *Buklod Tao* to the *barangay* officials which paved the way for the eventual recognition of *Buklod Tao* as a member of the BDRRMC.

Because DRR demands collective action, acting together helps people to consciously overcome the differences that because of certain “habits of the mind”¹¹ tend to divide a community. As Mayee Abear-Marzan wrote about the gradual opening up of residents to the Muslims in the community of *Sitio* Sabah, “reducing risks requires bridging fundamental misconceptions about cultural and faith differences.”¹² In Suburban, the Programme became instrumental in the community’s becoming aware of the Muslims as among the most vulnerable in the community and the inclusion of the Muslims not only as recipients of assistance but also as participants in decision-making.

Perhaps the reason that DRR unites is that all human beings instinctively want to live in safety. They know that they have to depend on one another to keep safe. Relationships not only amongst neighbors but also within the family were strengthened as was the experience of residents in Sabah and *Sitio* Lumang Ilog. Family members came to better appreciate the activities and sacrifices of other family members because they have witnessed how the community and their own families have been benefited by them.

A Culture of Safety and Solidarity Embodied in Community Institutions

At the same time, DRR cannot be done without the collective action of conscious agents deciding to act in solidarity with one another. This new consciousness taps into and is reinforced by existing cultural values such as *bayanihan* (cooperative endeavour). DRR is not only a set of activities or practices but a way of life (“*gawi ng buhay*”¹³). The external (*panlabas*) manifestations of acquired skills and capacities are nurtured by an internal (*panloob*) transformation ultimately tied to people’s recognizing themselves as stewards of life and creation. The internal change breeds a culture of safety and solidarity which demands that people become conscious of their interdependence and realize that the best way to protect themselves is to protect one another. After a personal near-death experience in a disaster, a survivor comes to the humble realization that one had escaped death through the heroism of another and that one’s life must henceforth be directed towards helping others preserve and enhance their lives. The culture of safety then becomes inseparable from a culture of solidarity.

The heightening of the awareness of interdependence in times of disaster strengthens relationships within the community. It encourages volunteerism and recasts people’s relationship with their community. This is the experience exemplified by *Ate Sarah* of Sabah who began to see the community as an extension of her family. This new awareness made her even more resolute in offering her time and services for the benefit of the community.

Solidarity knows no boundaries, or at least its boundaries tend to go out farther beyond one’s community within a DRR framework. After attending a DRR training, the community leaders of *Sitio Wawa* in *Barangay* San Rafael, located upstream of the Marikina River, came to an awareness of their responsibility towards the residents of Sabah and the need to be able to warn them early when the waters in Wawa start to rise. This early warning system has extended all the way down to *Barangay* Banaba in San Mateo. Urban communities are normally thought to be more individualistic compared to rural communities because of the more transitory relationships found in them. But in DRR, the urban poor have found a way to work with and care for others within and outside their communities.

¹⁰ Clemente, this volume, 60.

¹¹ Clemente, this volume, 51.

¹² Mayee Abear-Marzan, “The Rise of the Human Spirit: Spirituality in CBDRR Work in Rodriguez,” this volume, 73.

¹³ Clemente, this volume, 63.

During disasters, the outpouring of volunteerism and expression of people’s best spiritual qualities—generosity, courage, humility, selflessness—need to be reinforced and embodied in institutions. Safety and solidarity become a daily reality and practice as they are institutionalized in DRR committees, emergency response systems, quick reaction teams, evacuation, and camp management systems. Disaster response operations are organized not only to efficiently distribute relief goods and warn people promptly of an imminent danger but also to make sure that no one is left out, the most vulnerable are cared for, and everyone is kept safe. Disasters have a way of bringing to light the needs and vulnerabilities of certain individuals and groups within a community which tend to be overlooked under normal circumstances. This is another dimension of the ethos of solidarity that typically characterizes people’s responses to a disaster.

The DRR committees, the livelihood clusters, and the various structures in the community organizations exist to promote the culture of safety and solidarity. At the same time the human and spiritual motivations are the energy that sustains these structures . ■

The Ketsana (Ondoy) Rehabilitation Programme sought to “enable urban poor communities seriously affected by Typhoon Ketsana to recover from their loss and strengthen their capacities to sustain their lives and livelihoods.” The Programme set out not only to restore the pre-Ketsana status quo, but to enhance the affected communities’ resilience to disasters and reduce their vulnerabilities.

Featured in this volume are the experiences of seven Christian Aid partners who worked together as a consortium in finding effective ways for building disaster resilience in marginalized and vulnerable communities located in hazard-prone and high-risk areas:

Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP), Community Organizers Multiversity (COM), Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA), *Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal* (SALIGAN) Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI), Technical Assistance Organization Pilipinas (TAO-Pilipinas), and *Unlad Kabayan* Migrant Services Foundation (*Unlad Kabayan*).

It is hoped that the interventions and strategies employed in the Programme, with the evidence of actual change it brought to partners and communities, would contribute to the growing body of conceptual and practical knowledge on resilience in urban contexts.

- *From the Introduction*

