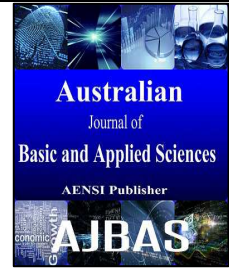




ISSN:1991-8178

Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences

Journal home page: www.ajbasweb.com



Resettlement's Sustainability Across Two Decades

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 3 October 2015

Accepted 10 October 2015

Published Online 13 November 2015

Keywords:

Informal Settlers, Resettlement Program, City of Marikina, Squatter-Free Program

ABSTRACT

The surge of informal settlers in Metro Manila is a continuing challenge to the government that bears its negative effect in the economy and efficiency of its governance. In general, the growing number of informal settlers is directly associated with the increase of poverty and the growing disparity between the rich and the poor among rural and urban regions. In effect, the government from national down to the local units institute public policies and programs like Balik-Probinsiya (Going Back to Province of Origin), social housing for the lower-middle class to poor families, and relocation programs for the informal settlers to mitigate and eventually stray the problem of informal settlers. In the city of Marikina, under the administration of then Mayor Bayani Fernando launched a settlement program for informal settlers. His administration made a rational reform within a year; from conducting city-wide census and registration to track down definite number of informal settlers, and identifying sound places for relocation and settlement. Twenty one years after the implementation of Marikina City Squatter-Free Program, data yielded a positive response both from the program beneficiaries and the program implementers therefore the philosophy of the new administration of Marikina City would further enhance the sustainability of the program.

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To Cite This Article: Florenda S. Frivaldo., Resettlement's Sustainability Across Two Decades. *Aust. J. Basic & Appl. Sci.*, 9(34): 1-10, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The continuous struggle between the existence of any organization's programs and their demise have become factors that defined sustainability. It has become a challenge for most organizations whether government or non-government to find methods and ways on how to be sustainable. Among those struggles that confront a government is on how to address informal settlements. It has been a perennial problem brought about by the human plight which includes the search for settlement to establish an agglomeration of community where they can live and survive (Mann, 1986). This saga of human survival is a continuous and never ending process reflected today in the growing statistics of external and internal migration of people.

Historically, the influx of internal migration from outskirt provinces to the capital can be traced immediately after the Second World War where countryside population was drifted towards the capital as demand for laborers during the American restoration phase went up. After the restoration and the subsequent independence of the Philippines from

the American rule, migrants or movers settled in the capital and established their livelihood. Shortly after the Second World War spontaneous settlements or squatter areas came into existence (Naerssen, 1993).

The movement of people in one space to another is coined with a radical shift from pessimistic to optimistic view pertaining to development (Haas, 2008) against the previous climate of widespread skepticism around it (Massey, 1998). Thus, migration in all its type in a developing country is rather a deliberate attempt by social groups to spread income risks to improve their social and economic status and, hence, to overcome local development constraints (Haas, 2008). The positive correlation of migration and development sometimes breeds adverse effects especially to countries in position to development (ibid).

Among the problems a country face in the context of internal migration is the delimitation of spaces. The surge of population in the capital and the concurrent rise of population grappled Metro Manila as the most crowded place in the Philippines and the

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most number of informal settlers coming from various provinces in the outskirts of the country.

Marikina City, as one of the booming city in the National Capital Region hurdles the same problem of informal settlers; but what is amazing and inspiring is on how the Marikina City government solved the problem of informal settlers without sacrificing the reduction of human capital because of its innovation of in-city relocation.

The conceptualization of the program started prior in the early 1990s. In the year 1992, the city government of Marikina was able to identify squatter colonies as well as conducted a citywide registration and census of the beneficiaries of the program. They also conducted inventory of all possible land in-city for resettlement. They were able to identify seven areas of relocation in which six holds the bigger percentage of 23,000 listed relocatees. These are areas in barangays: Fortune, Malanday, Marikina Heights, Nangka, Santo Niño, and Tumana.

Based on the recent status update report of the Marikina Settlement Office, the program yields positive results. It was able to transfer 9,935 families and was also able to established 251 community associations among others.

Twenty two years after the initiation of the program, this paper aims to examine the sustainability of the Marikina City Squatter- Free Program.

Literature Review:

As the urban millennium unfolds — with half of humankind already living in cities and towns, and the numbers on the rise — the process of urbanization leaves us facing unprecedented challenges. One of the more daunting is the provision of adequate shelter for all. This is made more critical by the urbanization of poverty, the fact that an increasing proportion of the world's poor are to be found in cities and towns. The most conspicuous evidence of this phenomenon is the proliferation and expansion of slums and informal settlements in the cities of developing countries (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2006).

Since urbanization, squatter settlements are inevitable phenomena. As long as urban areas offer economies of scale and agglomeration economies, large cities will always continue to grow attracting migrants from rural and smaller urban areas, leading to more squatting (Srinivas, n.d).

Developing countries with different level of industrialization where the vast of urban poor and slums are located has struggled to solve the informal settler and housing problem in their country which is considered as the world's most unsolvable problem (Orbit, n.d).

These bring harrowing tales of inadequacy, poor unsafe structures, and lacks of clean water, sanitation, drainage, waste management, and access to roads. This housing condition can be seen as a

significant expression of human ingenuity and effort that shows strive to survive and live in an industrialized world (UN-Habitat, 2006).

Today, the challenge of every government- in particular every local government unit in the Philippines situated in urban areas is how to solve the problem of informal settlers. Various scholars are gaining another perspective on looking the problem of informal settlers. They often used a new approach by it as an opportunity to the government to display and harness the potential of these people. Scholars like Abrams (1964), Mangin (1967), Turner (1976), Payne (1977) and Cohen (1983) are in consensus that informal settlements can therefore be said to be solutions and not problems.

Abrams (1964) purported that the trend of informal settler is a form of "conquest" of city areas for the purpose of shelter defined both by the law of force and the force of law. The scholar often refers opportunity as a force of nature.

Mangin (1967) depicts that opportunity is concentrated mostly in urban areas; the natural tendency of people is to drift and anchor towards it. The increase of this trend over time produces an increase of impact in the scale of informal settlements in urban areas.

Turner (1969) on the other hand takes a positivist standpoint that images the informal settlers and settlement as highly successful solutions to housing problems in urban areas of developing countries. According to Turner, since informal settlement are already fixated and similarly situated to opportunity this gives chance of treating informal settlement a solution rather than a problem- and developing and working-up with this attitude according to Payne (1977), puts the development of informal settlements in the overall perspective of urban growth in the third world countries.

This gives way to urge changes in the attitude of the government in confronting issues of settlement. One of the approaches used by various governments is the "Enabling Approach". In this approach, instead of taking a confrontational attitude towards informal settlers and settlement, government authorities shifts towards giving pliable space and producing an enabling environment to them in order to develop as a legitimate settlement community with an absolute ownership of the land they possess.

Cohen (1983) argues that this process is logical in improving housing conditions since it remove constraints on the housing process such as inappropriate and restrictive regulatory frameworks. More importantly, the security of tenure and absolute ownership encourages people to investment in their housing improvement and maintenance.

This has been the approach adopted by the Marikina City in dealing with informal settlers which gives rise to the genesis of the Marikina Settlement Programs and Marikina Squatter-Free as its flagship program.

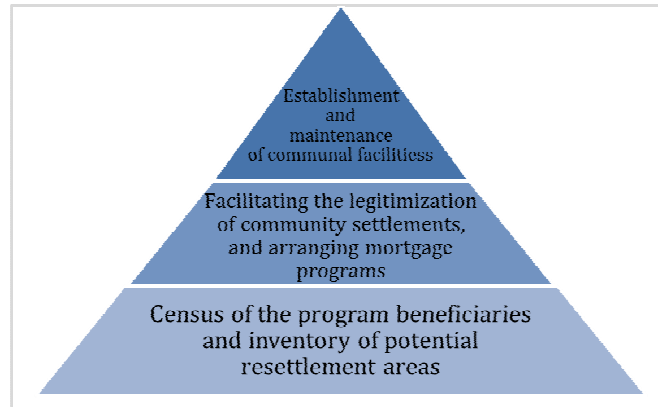


Fig. 1: Marikina City Squatter-Free Program Enabling Approach

Taking the Marikina City experience in applying the Enabling approach, it can be observed that the intervention of the government was often cycled around three (3) levels:

The first level involves the census of the program beneficiaries and the inventory of lands for a potential settlement area. The second level of intervention includes facilitating the legitimization of community settlements, assistance and arranging mortgage programs with private land owner or various national government agencies and government owned and controlled corporations such as the National Housing Authority, the Social Housing Financing Corporation and various non-government organization partners. Once the community was established and legitimized, the third level of intervention was applied. It includes providing basic government utilities such as footpaths, road, lamp post, communication lines, and street signage, sewage and drainage systems, including standard housing program concepts.

Reports of the Marikina Settlement Office yields positive development. However, such data were not validated because of the minimal research ventures that tackle Marikina Squatter-free program's sustainability.

Objective of the Study:

In the course of conducting the study, the researcher was guided by the achievement of the following objectives:

1. To evaluate sustainability of Marikina City Squatter-Free Program since its conceptualization in 1992 to the present based on:

1.1 Length of time the respondents were informal settlers' prior enrollment to the resettlement program

1.2 Tenure of residency in the relocation area

1.3 Status of residency

2. To evaluate the economic and social sustainability of the program to its beneficiaries based on the following variables:

2.1 With family members attending various school levels

With family members working

2.2 Employment Classification

2.3 Work and livelihood

2.4 Proximity to education centers/institution

2.5 Proximity/presence of health centers

2.6 Transportation services

3. To evaluate the environmental sustainability of the Marikina City Squatter-Free Program in terms of:

3.1 Safety and Security

3.2 Utilities and Organization

4. To analyze the prevailing condition on the problem of informal settlement in Marikina City.

5. To gauge the sustainability of the program to the years beyond.

Research Method:

This study utilized the descriptive research method. It was designed to provide information about the prevailing situation of the Marikina Squatter-Free Program in the aspect of its sustainability. The researcher also employed survey research where samples from the total number of population served as the respondents of the study. The utilization of this method was due to a relatively large number of population in the six identified locale of the study.

The six barangays that were used as locales of this study were identified based on the data provided by the Marikina Settlement Office and other researcher of various researchers claiming that the program design of Marikina Squatter-Free Program identified these barangays as major relocation sites of the program.

Lastly, the triangulation method was used in this study. The utilization of this method is to bring in the attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint (Cohen and Manion, 2000).

There are three major data channels in this research which includes the following : (1) Past literature and published researches pertaining to the Marikina Squatter-Free program; (2) Interviews of the researcher to the officials of the Marikina Settlement Office; (3). The responses of the respondent/beneficiaries in a survey conducted to the six identified relocation areas.

Findings:

1. The status of Marikina City Squatter-Free Program was assessed by the respondents based on the Length of Time the Respondents were Informal Settlers Prior their Enrolment to the Re-Settlement Program, Respondent’s Tenure of Residency in the Relocation Area and Respondent’s latest Status of Residency.

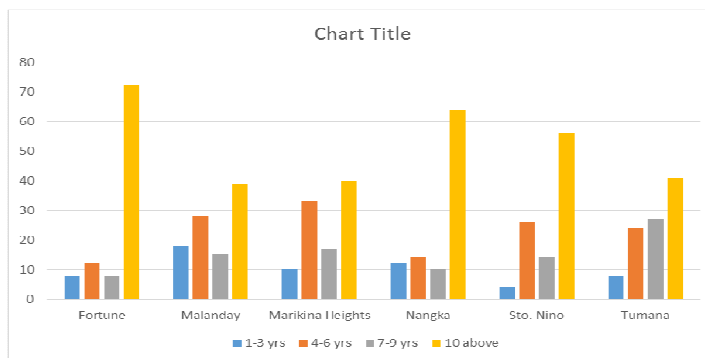


Fig. 2: Percentage Distribution on the Length of Time the Respondents were Informal Settlers Prior Enrolment to the Re-Settlement Program

Figures 2 shows that majority (50.42%) of the respondent household beneficiaries were informal settlers for more than ten years (10 yrs). Twenty three (23%) percent of them had been informal settlers for less than six (6) but more than four (4) years while 16.8% had been informal settlers for more than 7 years but less than 9 years and only

9.71% were informal settlers for more than 1 year but less than 3 years prior to their enlistment on the program.

This findings can be explained by the proximity of Marikina City being one among those cities in the National Capital Region that entice families from rural areas who were seeking for a greener pasture.

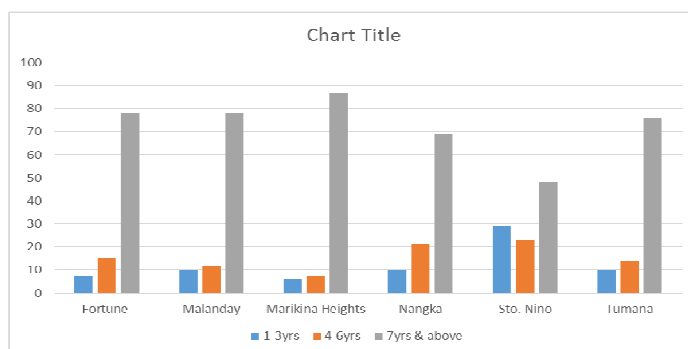


Fig. 3: Percentage Distribution of the Respondent’s Tenure of Residency in the Relocation Area

This figure shows that 73.14% of the household had been living the resettlement areas for more than 7 years up to present while 15% of them are living in the area for more than 4 years but less than 6 years, and only 11.71% are settling there for less than 3 years.

This findings can be attributed to initiative of the city government of Marikina in providing a decent shelter to the respondents afar from other basic services they received.

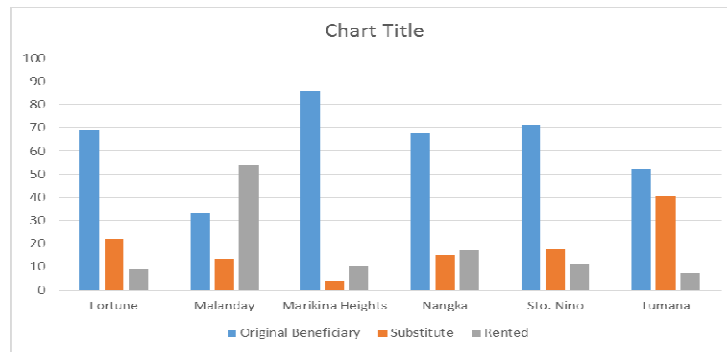


Fig. 4: Percentage Distribution of the Respondent's latest Status of Residency

Figure 4 reveals that 61.57% of the household are the original beneficiary of the Marikina City Squatters-Free Program. Currently, there are 21.85% households who are substitute from the original beneficiary and 16.57 percent are renting from the original beneficiary.

Although it can be seen in the data that some of the beneficiaries of the program leased their houses or some are just renting, still majority of the original beneficiaries are staying to their dwellings. This may be due to the support that the local government

provides to them especially in facilitating the application and the delivery of loans between the Socialized Housing Financing Corporation and the Community Association that lead the development of the area into a habitable community by providing communal facilities and utilities.

Using the three (3) pillars of sustainability this paper depicts a sustainable development on the socio-economic and environmental status of the program beneficiaries.



Fig. 5: Three Pillars of Sustainability

2. The socio-economic sustainability of Marikina City Squatter-Free program was evaluated by the respondents based on the Family Members Attending Various School Levels, Working Family

Members per Barangay, Respondent's Employment Status, Work and Livelihood Opportunities, Proximity to Education, Proximity to Health Services and Transportation.

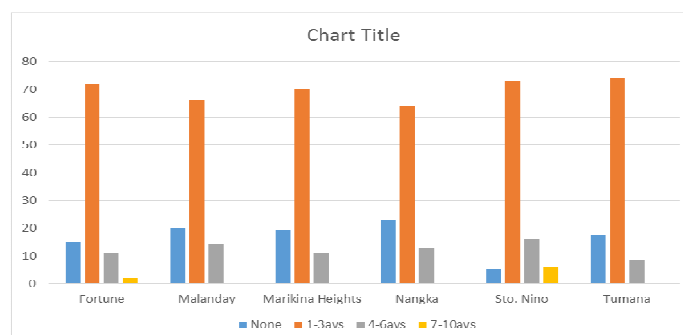


Fig. 6: Percentage Distribution of Respondents with Family Member Attending Various School Levels

This figure shows the aggregate of household with a member who attends to various school levels.

51.85% households have a maximum of 6 and a minimum of 4 household members who attend to

various school levels. 33.28 percent have at least 7 to 10 members, 16.28 percent of them have at most 3 studying member and 16.71% household have no member who goes to school.

This can be attributed to the fact that the government makes public basic education, that is, elementary and secondary, accessible to those in

need in the barangays. Even tertiary education nowadays is made accessible to poor families who cannot afford to send their children to college in private colleges and universities. This was made possible through the establishment of local colleges and universities in almost every city in the National Capital Region.

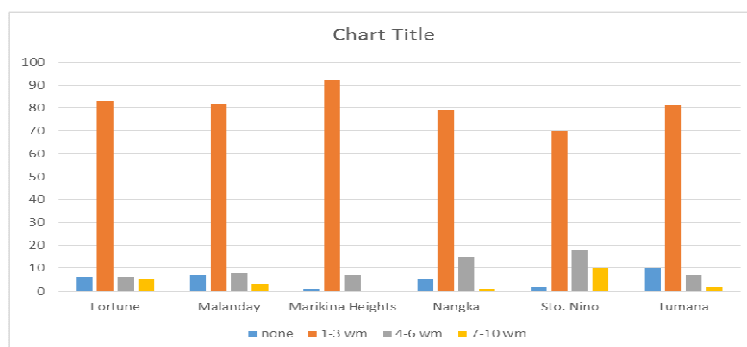


Fig. 7: Percentage Distribution of Respondent's with Working Family Members per Barangay

Figure 7 shows the percentage distribution of respondents with family members who are working. 81.14% belong to the household by which 1-3 of their family members are working while 9.71% of the household respondents have a family members working from 4-6. On the other hand 3.28% belongs to a household with 7-10 working members and

5.85% of the respondent households have no members who are working.

Seemingly this is due to the fact that most of the respondent household members are still attending schools that is why only minimal members of the household respondents are working.

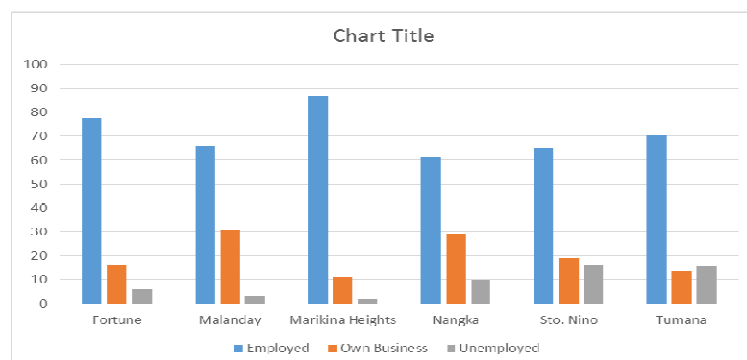


Fig. 8: Percentage Distribution of the Respondent's Employment Classification

This figure shows the status of employment of the households. 71.14 percent are employed into various work organizations. 19.14 percent of them owned and manage their own business, and 9.71 percent are unemployed.

The result of this data can be explained by the financial constraints to the respondents household to engage in business that is why they opted to find employment in various organization whether in government or in private sector.

Table 1: Work and Livelihood Opportunities

| WORK AND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------------------------------|
| INDICATOR | F | | | | W | Verbal interpretation |
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Working opportunity in the resettlement area | 128 | 184 | 221 | 167 | 2.39 | Sustainable to a great extent |
| Business opportunity in the resettlement area | 151 | 286 | 199 | 64 | 2.74 | Sustainable to a great extent |
| Proximity of working opportunity in the resettlement area | 148 | 198 | 211 | 143 | 2.50 | Sustainable to a great extent |
| Proximity of livelihood opportunity in the resettlement area | 173 | 232 | 198 | 97 | 2.68 | Sustainable to a great extent |

Table 1 shows that work and livelihood opportunity are relatively sustainable to a great extent however it is also evident that on some occasions it was not strongly felt. This can be translated with a slight demand for improvement and

development of new project and programs related to the optimization of work and livelihood opportunities including the development of business climate near the area of relocation to generate more economic activities.

Table 2: Proximity to Education

| EDUCATION | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|----|------|-----------------------------------|
| INDICATOR | F | | | | W | Verbal interpretation |
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Proximity to the Day Care Center/Pre-Elementary School | 481 | 176 | 25 | 18 | 3.6 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Proximity to the Elementary School | 455 | 196 | 34 | 15 | 3.55 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Proximity to High School | 440 | 212 | 32 | 16 | 3.53 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Proximity to the University/College/Technical-Vocational School | 230 | 227 | 249 | 94 | 2.84 | Sustainable to the great extent |
| Prevalence of educational materials like books <i>laboratory equipment</i> , among others. | 303 | 275 | 107 | 15 | 3.23 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Prevalence of educational and wellness facilities like libraries, <i>gym, court, science laboratory</i> , among others. | 326 | 257 | 206 | 11 | 3.28 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Presence and adequacy of teachers | 357 | 244 | 96 | 3 | 3.36 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |

All indicators in the item of education are strongly felt and observed. This can be translated that the program beneficiaries are benefiting from a developed and enabling education system of the

Marikina City. However, a slight demand for the establishment of more tertiary and vocational schools near the settlement area can be observed.

Table 3: Proximity to Health Services

| HEALTH | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|----|------|-----------------------------------|
| INDICATOR | F | | | | W | Verbal interpretation |
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Proximity to Clinic/Health Center/General Hospital | 442 | 213 | 34 | 11 | 3.55 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Prevalence of medical supplies. | 316 | 276 | 81 | 27 | 3.25 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Prevalence of medical equipment | 261 | 259 | 148 | 32 | 3.07 | Sustainable to a great extent |
| Presence of medical staff like nurses and doctors | 351 | 245 | 88 | 16 | 3.33 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |

All indicators in the item of health are very much evident, strongly felt and observed. This can be translated that the city government provided health services to the barangays through the provision of medical supplies and medicines to the barangay health centers, free medical checkups, and barangay

“botika” (drugstores) which sell affordable medicines to the poor. . However, it can be observed that there is an emergence on the demands to upgrade medical equipments of the health centers catering relative services to them.

Table 4: Transportation

| TRANSPORTATION | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|----|------|-----------------------------------|
| INDICATOR | F | | | | W | Verbal interpretation |
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Presence and adequacy of public transport system | 421 | 160 | 75 | 44 | 3.36 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Proximity to bus and jeepney terminal | 389 | 192 | 72 | 47 | 3.18 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Maintenance and development of bus and jeepney terminal | 301 | 188 | 140 | 71 | 3.02 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |

All indicators in the item of transportation are very much evident and strongly felt and observed. In general, this can be translated that the program beneficiaries are benefiting from a developed public transport system in their settlement area.

1. The environmental sustainability of Marikina City Squatter-Free Program was assessed by the respondents based on the safety and security provided by their barangay government in each resettlement area, and the adequacy of utilities used to maintain the cleanliness and sanitation of each barangay as well as the community associations that

regulate activities in their respective community especially during calamities.

Table 5: Safety and Security

| SAFETY AND SECURITY | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----------------------------------|
| INDICATOR | F | | | | W | Verbal interpretation |
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Maintenance of a safe, livable and peaceful environment | 192 | 187 | 191 | 130 | 2.63 | Sustainable to a great extent |
| Presence of security personnel from the barangay | 116 | 160 | 128 | 296 | 2.13 | Sustainable to a great extent |
| Enforcement of Barangay peace and order mechanism | 354 | 229 | 93 | 24 | 3.30 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Implementation of curfew hours | 331 | 239 | 94 | 56 | 2.15 | Sustainable to the great extent |
| Proximity from the police outpost | 246 | 239 | 81 | 34 | 3.28 | Sustainable to a great extent |

Majority of the indicators in the item of safety are relatively evident but in some occasions it was not strongly felt. This means the demand for further development and enforcement of such relative laws should be given due consideration in the future. These indicators include the over-all maintenance of

a safe, livable and peaceful environment, the heightened presence of security personnel from the barangay, the implementation of curfew and peace and order ordinances and the establishment of police outposts near the settlement area.

Table 6: Utilities and organization

| UTILITIES AND ORGANIZATION | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|----|----|------|-----------------------------------|
| INDICATOR | F | | | | W | Verbal interpretation |
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Adequate supply of electricity | 482 | 168 | 35 | 15 | 3.59 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Adequate and clean supply of potable water | 462 | 180 | 34 | 24 | 3.54 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |
| Presence of enabling Home Owners Association | 418 | 220 | 46 | 16 | 3.48 | Sustainable to the fullest extent |

Over-all indicators in the area of utilities and organization are strongly felt and observed. This can be interpreted that all resettlement areas have adequate supply of electricity and potable clean water, among others. The presence of enabling organizations are also very much evident.

2. It can be gleaned that on the prevailing condition on the problem of informal settlers in Marikina City, the 2014 report of the Marikina Settlement Office yielded a total of 9,738 informal settlers all over Marikina. This is the constant struggle of the Marikina Settlement Office in the problem of informal settlers today.

Table 7: Breakdown of Informal Settlers in Marikina City as of 2014

| Breakdown | Number of community association | Number of households |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Potential Community Mortgage Program | 67 | 8,711 |
| Informal settlers in Privately owned areas | 14 | 732 |
| With court eviction | 1 | 33 |
| Living within the permanent danger zone | 7 | 262 |
| Total | 89 | 9,738 |

At present informal settlers comprise 10.54 per cent of the total household population of Marikina City. Practically, the problem of informal settlers in Marikina City was not absolutely solved by the Squatter-Free Program in 1994 although its implementation still continue.

The present administration is thinking of other approaches in solving the issue of today and in future's informal settlers. Including in their new strategy is to develop partnership with nearby city and province like Baras in Rizal and the province of Laguna to accommodate relocates in their jurisdiction.

3. The restriction of space delimits the Marikina City to continue with the trend that made

the city famous in the platform of resettlement the "in-city" relocation. Recently after typhoon Ondoy (international name: Ketsana), the Marikina City shifted towards outside-city relocation. Another factor that adds to this strategy is the resistance of the people towards vertical development- or development that utilizes medium to high-rise housing akin to what developed country, on settlement like Singapore has adopted.

This resistance is brought out by the thinking of people to owned land rather than a unit or a flat, which is normal to the psyche of people who came from an agricultural country shifting towards an industrialized one.

It is in this light that the present administration under Honorable City Mayor Del R. De Guzman has adopted its governance philosophy "Tunay na Kaunlaran, Tao Naman" (Inclusive Development for People) which simply put, Marikina residents to feel secured because they know and feel that the city government is working with them in mind and their interest at heart.

The 7K program of the city translates this philosophy into concrete actions and results in the areas of Health, Education, Peace and Order, Livelihood, Environment, Housing and Good Governance.

It is hoped that the pursuit of the various programs/projects that are attuned to the 7K will bring spirit, new character and new hope to Marikina and its people.

Conclusions:

The rise of informal settlers is an indication for a country's readiness to embrace development. However, it is also a challenge to the government specifically the local government units to curve the problem that precedes development: The rise of informal settlers in urban areas.

Philippines as a developing country is not alien to the problem of informal settlers. As the opportunities and good fortune cascades to the capital, most people leaving on edges of the countryside yearns to aspire of a greener pasture, tends to migrates to the capital and tries to establish a new life nearer to the opportunities they long desired to have. Moreover, this pattern of migration amplifies a better opportunity for them but causes the local government units to have a problem on informal settlers.

Truly, this is the real challenge that all government units especially those in the national capital region are facing. The problem that LGUs are directly confronted with is on how to harness human capital in the patio of informal settlers.

Solutions of other Local Government Units to end and curve informal settlers on their jurisdiction is to radically evict them to decongest their area by transferring them to other areas far from dweller's working places. This scheme enslaves those who are working near their place of origin. It economically cost them large percentage of their income being lost solely to transportation expenses. This also promotes traffic as it increases the number of travelling population everyday going to and back from their work stations.

One of the prominent LGU to harmonize this problem-opportunity was the Marikina City government. In 1992, they started a program that revolutionized and gave a new perspective on how a local government unit should treat its informal settlers.

It is a program oriented to protect the rights of the informal settlers and the same time reconditions

the entire city to mitigate and terminate the rise of informal settlers. The best feature of the program is, it transferred the informal settlers inside the city and not relegating them outside the National Capital region.

Twenty years after the initiation of the program it yielded a positive result based on the data gathered and presented. Majority of the respondents indicated that they were informal settlers for more than ten (10) years prior their enrolment to the Marikina City re-settlement program, staying there for more than seven (7) years and are still the original beneficiaries of the program seemingly because of the success of the program in providing them a stable dwellings.

The socio-economic sustainability of the program was evident since majority of the respondent households have a family members who are attending school at various levels, have family members who are working, still more than majority are working in various organizations since to engage in business would require financial capability. Furthermore, the respondent's assessment on work and livelihood is sustainable to the great extent, proximity to education is to the fullest extent, health services to the fullest extent and transportation to the fullest extent. Apparently the socio-economic sustainability was made possible because education, health, employment and livelihood and other social services such as transportation are commonly catered and regulated by the local governments. They ensure its accessibility to the people.

The environmental sustainability on the other hand was supported by the assessment of the respondents on the safety and security in their respective barangay which is at a great extent while utilities and organization are to the fullest extent which means that the respondent are secured in their abode.

The subsequent local government administrator had continually adopted and implemented the resettlement program amidst some problem that had been encountered along the way. The realization of the program is due to the concerted effort not only of the leaders but of the collective advancement of the community towards social equity, livelihood opportunities, and people's engagement in governance. Community leadership and the local government worked hand and hand towards economic growth and people empowerment.

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