SECURING THE RIGHTS OF GIRLS AND BOYS IN URBAN POOR RELOCATION PROGRAMS

A Child Rights Impact Assessment of the Philippine Government’s Relocation Program on Children Living in Informal Settlements Along Metro Manila Waterways

FINAL DRAFT REPORT

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For
Save the Children
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AKKAP</td>
<td>Ang Kabataan Ating Protektahan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCPC</td>
<td>Barangay Council for the Protection of Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERNa</td>
<td>Bukluran sa East Riverside Neighborhood Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCT</td>
<td>conditional cash transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIA</td>
<td>child rights impact assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBM</td>
<td>Department of Budget and Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENR</td>
<td>Department of Environment and Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DepEd</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>DILG</td>
<td>Department of Interior and Local Government</td>
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<td>DOF</td>
<td>Department of Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOH</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPWH</td>
<td>Department of Public Works and Highways</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSWD</td>
<td>Department of Social Welfare and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERNA</td>
<td>East Riverside Neighborhood Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>focus group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPNAl</td>
<td>Gulayan-Pilapil Neighborhood Association, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>Gulod Urban Poor Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPES</td>
<td>Hugo Perez Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUDCC</td>
<td>Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISF</td>
<td>informal settler families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJCICSI</td>
<td>John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>key informant interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGU</td>
<td>local government unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIAC</td>
<td>local interagency committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meralco</td>
<td>Manila Electric Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMDA</td>
<td>Metropolitan Manila Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPES</td>
<td>Mapulang Lupa Elementary School</td>
</tr>
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<td>NAPC</td>
<td>National Anti-Poverty Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>nongovernment organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHA</td>
<td>National Housing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTWG</td>
<td>National Technical Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPLAN LIKAS</td>
<td>OPLAN Lumikas para Iwas Kalamidad at Sakit</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCUP</td>
<td>Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor</td>
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<td>PESO</td>
<td>Public Employment Service Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>PILAK</td>
<td>Pinagkaisang Lakas ng Kababaihan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAC</td>
<td>Relocation Action Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAP</td>
<td>Resettlement Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHFC</td>
<td>Social Housing Finance Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKM</td>
<td>Samahan ng Kabataang Maasahan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM-ZOTO</td>
<td>Samahan ng Mamamayan – Zone One Tondo Organization, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDHA</td>
<td>Urban Development and Housing Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP-ALL</td>
<td>Urban Poor Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTI</td>
<td>urinary tract infection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMETCO</td>
<td>Youth Meets the Children Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

This Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) study aims to determine the impact of resettlement on children living in informal settlements along Metro Manila waterways. Following the massive destruction wrought by tropical storm Ondoy (international name: Ketsana) and recent flooding due to extreme monsoon rains as well as the need to clear the waterways of major sources of pollution, as stipulated in the Supreme Court Writ of Mandamus, the National Government allocated ₱10 billion annually for five years from 2012-2016 for the construction of in-city high-density housing projects for informal settlers. Majority of the families, however, have been relocated in off-city resettlement projects through the OPLAN LIKAS spearheaded by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). Stories by families both to be relocated and already relocated suggest considerable lack of preparation and consultation in the conduct of relocation, as well as experiences of further impoverishment. Disruption of livelihoods and, in some cases, loss of sources of income, as well as poor access to basic services such as water, electricity, schools, and health centers are among the most common problems faced by resettled families. In such situations, children are among those who experience the most severe impact.

Specifically, the study looks into the changes and risks perceived by children in informal settlements targeted for demolition, and the actual situation of children in resettlement sites. It takes a holistic and integrated view of children’s rights and well-being, with special focus on the following: right to health; right to education; right to safe environment and safe spaces for play; freedom from abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence; freedom from discrimination; and right to participate and be heard.

Right to health

Access to medical services as well as basic services spells a difference in children’s health in both transition communities and resettlement sites. Health risks in informal settlements, particularly those along waterways, are numerous for obvious reasons. Sanitation facilities, sewerage systems, drainages, and ventilation in these communities are far below the standards set for achieving an acceptable state of wellbeing. Further investigation, however, will be needed to determine whether children will be healthier if they are transferred from an environment with poor sanitation and exposed to pollution to a resettlement site which is cleaner and more spacious. Nevertheless, the lack and inaccessibility of health facilities in resettlement sites, as was found in the two resettlement sites, should be taken as an indicator of the impact of resettlement on children’s health. The availability of safe drinking water and regular supply of electricity also impact on the children’s health. In transition communities, water, whether from the tap or bought from refilling stations, is available and generally safe to drink. In resettlement areas, water supply is irregular and the quality somewhat poor. The elimination of one health risk (e.g., air pollution, floods) is not the only rationale for a program that intends to keep families away from harm’s way. Unfortunately, the present program does not provide access to services that will allow them to have better health. In-city resettlement somehow prevents the occurrence of the problem of access to health services.
**Right to education**

**Resettlement poses a serious threat to children’s education.** Access is the primary issue to having quality education. Low-income families in the transition communities are constantly faced with financial constraints that have a negative impact on the children’s education. The presence of public schools where parents do not have to spend that much for education thus serves as some guarantee of greater chances for the children to attend school. It does not help that no schools are available *inside* the resettlement sites at the time of the relocation of the families. Relocated children either walk prohibitive distances to go to their schools or pay more than their families can afford for transport. The conduct of resettlement can also disrupt in the schooling of children. Although the law does not prohibit the conduct of demolition and relocation on weekdays when children have school, a day skipped in school means a missed opportunity. Dropping out of school is common in both transition communities and resettlement sites, but it emerges as a more difficult choice in the latter where the demand and opportunities for work and the need to supplement family income are greater.

**Right to safe environment and safe spaces for play**

**Resettlement will keep children away from danger’s harm in the waterways.** Children in transition communities expect to live in their own decent house in the resettlement area which is not prone to floods and will protect them from the adverse consequences of natural calamities. After all, as they have been told, these are the very reasons they are to be relocated in the first place. They look forward to wide spaces where children will be allowed to run around and play, and to clean surroundings since it will be a newly-developed housing site or community. Those who have been transferred already, however, find the weather very warm in their new home and community, especially because of the absence of plants and trees around the area.

Moreover, resettlement addresses certain safety and security concerns experienced in transition communities, but the new community also poses other risks to children and their families. Having a house of their own, the children look forward to a more secure place, and less exposure to bad influences. On the other hand, they could not help but feel fearful or anxious since they do not know what kind of neighbors they will have. They hope though that there will be security guards or personnel around to ensure people’s safety in the community. Those who have relocated shared that while they may feel safe from the perennial floods that frequently occurred in their previous community, some of the houses awarded are not completely done yet.

**Freedom from abuse, neglect, and discrimination**

**Relocation poses a threat to sources of income of already vulnerable families.** For children in transition communities, their foremost concern is the livelihood of their parents and sources of income for their family. With relocation, fathers working in construction or driving utility vehicles in the city may lose their jobs; if they continued with their work, going to work would cost more in terms of travel time and fare. Mothers who accept laundry services (among other informal occupation) in the transition communities may temporarily stop taking laundry since water and electricity connection in the resettlement sites. Children in transition communities where some families opted for relocation saw how some parents from the relocation area have returned to their community to work, leaving their children in the care of neighbors. Sources of livelihood that depend on a reliable supply of electricity (e.g., operating computer shops) may also be disrupted. Parents of relocated children have to travel back to the city to continue with their previous work, incurring increased costs for transportation. Some have changed their jobs while others lost their jobs altogether. Among those who have retained their work, staying in the city with a relative and going home in the resettlement site once or twice a week is the usual set-up. There are cases of older children who engage in paid work (e.g., construction) or scavenging to help augment the income of the family.
Right to participation

Resettlement opens opportunities for participation of children, but in practice, children have not been involved in a meaningful way. Children from the five transition communities source their information on relocation from informal conversations involving parents and neighbors. Some mentioned that their mothers told them about relocation. They have never attended any meeting that discussed the agenda of relocation. Information on the resettlement site and houses where they will be transferring are obtained from informal gatherings and pictures they have seen. Similar to the experiences in transition communities, the children from the two resettlement sites note that prior to relocation, no meeting was conducted to explain the purpose and process of the relocation. Nevertheless, there are cases where groups of children are organized and participate in the action planning of the community.

The process of resettlement involves not only the families or communities to be resettled but also other stakeholders such as the government, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and private groups. The various processes and activities undertaken and coordinated among these different stakeholders are intended to help the affected families realize an improved quality of life in their new community. Implementing the government’s relocation program, however, leaves much to be desired. Children in informal settlements experience numerous vulnerabilities that undermine their rights, but families have nevertheless devised ways to cope with their situation and survive. After being resettled, it does not follow that providing security of tenure to the “poor” families would automatically result in filling the gaps in the other rights of children. Thus, the fulfilling the right to housing is an essential, but not a sufficient, condition for ensuring that the rights of children would be protected.

Issues and Recommendations

Among the major issues identified are the following: (1) absence of venues for children to participate in the resettlement process; (2) difficulty of children to express their concerns within their own family; (3) ill-equipped resettlement sites, specifically the inadequate supply of electricity and water as well as distance from schools, markets, and health facilities; and (4) lack of economic opportunities for parents in the relocation areas.

In light of the above issues encountered by the families who are relocated, and where the children are among those affected, the following recommendations are put forward in the hope that future relocation programs do not take the children’s situations for granted and in fact consider processes and activities that will promote and protect the children’s rights. For the government, it is recommended that it allocates substantial resources not only for housing but also for education, health, and safety. To alleviate the hardships experienced by relocated families, basic and social services have to be in place prior to relocation or, at the minimum, made available at the soonest possible time. Because the effects of displacement and resettlement discussed earlier bring home the point that it is also the best interest of children that is at stake in the housing program of the National Government, it makes sense to incorporate child rights impact assessment in any resettlement plan. The livelihood and training programs of government agencies such as the National Housing Authority (NHA) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) should be offered systematically and programmatically to ensure restoration of the disrupted livelihood activities of relocated families. Lastly, support for people-initiated, in-city housing projects should be consistent. The idea behind such approach is for families to remain in the city, where opportunities, no matter how small, as well as social services from schools, hospitals, and markets, are more accessible.

With the shortcomings in resettlement sites and gaps in the resettlement process, calling the government’s attention to address the issues, and holding it accountable for the effective implementation of the relocation program is within the purview of NGOs and children’s rights advocates. They can also contribute to implementing community-based projects, technical assistance
and capacity building for children, and orientation and seminars on children’s rights for concerned government agencies. In the area of livelihood and employment opportunities, NGOs can assist by training, capacity building, networking, and counselling families on their livelihood options before or after relocation. Prior to relocation, it may be useful to tap groups that provide counselling to psychologically prepare the children. In terms of policy recommendations, advocates can focus on making the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) more responsive to the needs of children.

Finally, this research recognizes a huge gap in the aspect of involving children in the resettlement program. However, participating in the resettlement process requires enormous education and organizing efforts to engage children in planning and getting them to be involved in community affairs. Concerned groups such as NGOs and child rights advocates have to conceptualize and develop incentives and devise creative means to encourage and motivate children to contribute their ideas and energies in community issues that they themselves might not consider relevant. Education and organizing efforts on children’s rights and participation should not be limited to the children but should also concern parents in the community. The parents should understand that children are also stakeholders in the resettlement program. Community organizations should take advantage of the avenue of the people’s planning to push for in-city relocation. Unfortunately, off-city resettlement seems to be carried out more frequently than in-city relocation, and in some cases communities might actually prefer the former. It is therefore necessary for community organizations to plan sufficiently in order to prepare its members for the challenges of living in the resettlement sites. In any case, participation by the community, which is one of the overarching principles of the law but rarely taken seriously by implementers and affected populations themselves, must be pursued if the best interest of children is considered a priority.
Chapter 1
About the Research Project

A. Background

Based on reports from the 17 local government units comprising Metro Manila submitted to the National Housing Authority (NHA) as of July 2011, 104,219 out of 584,425 families, or around 18 percent of the total number of informal settler families (ISFs) in the region, are residing in so-called “danger areas”. Many of them live along waterways such as rivers, tributaries, and creeks. In 2011, the Aquino administration ordered the relocation of these ISFs to keep them away from flood hazards, and directed local governments to abide by the Supreme Court Writ of Mandamus which ordered various government agencies to clear the waterways of major sources of pollution. Communities encroaching on the easements of eight major waterways – San Juan River, Tullahan River, Manggahan Floodway, Pasig River, Maricaban Creek, Tripa de Gallina, Estero de Sunog Apog, and Estero de Maypajo – had been identified as priority areas. The National Government also allocated ₱10 billion annually for five years from 2012-2016 for the construction of in-city high-density housing projects for informal settlers. The program is overseen by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

To date, however, many of the ISFs have been moved to resettlement sites outside the metropolis. Although the resettlement program is consistent with Section 28 of the Urban Development and Housing Act (Republic Act 7279), which mandates the government to provide resettlement to urban poor families whose homes are demolished as a result of a court order, a government infrastructure project, or the clearing of danger zones, stories by families both to be relocated and already relocated suggest considerable lack of preparation and consultation in the conduct of relocation, as well as experiences of further impoverishment. Disruption of livelihoods and, in some cases, loss of sources of income, as well as poor access to basic services such as water, electricity, schools, and health centers are among the most common problems faced by resettled families. In such situations, children are among those who experience the most severe impact.

B. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to determine the impact of resettlement on children. Specifically, it looks into the changes and risks perceived by children in informal settlements targeted for demolition, and the actual situation of children in resettlement sites. It takes a holistic and integrated view of children’s rights and well-being, covering the whole range of child rights and actions taken by various stakeholders. The study hence answers the following questions:

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1 From the final draft of the Joint Memorandum Circular, which states the “policy guidelines on the operationalization and utilization of the ₱50 Billion Housing Fund for informal settler families in danger areas of the National Capital Region (NCR)”

2 Exchange rate as of 20 December 2014: US$ 1 = ₱44.78.
What is the situation of children in (a) communities targeted for resettlement and (b) recently-developed resettlement sites for recently-relocated households vis-à-vis their:
   a. Right to education
   b. Right to health
   c. Freedom from abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence
   d. Right to participate and be heard
   e. Right to safe environment and safe spaces for play
   f. Freedom from discrimination

What are the perceived and actual impacts or effects of the relocation program on the children’s rights?

What were the different actions taken by the various stakeholders (families, communities, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and other private groups, and government) in the relocation process to ensure that the children’s rights are promoted and protected?

Were the actions taken helpful or not helpful in ensuring the promotion and protection of the children’s rights? What were the gaps encountered in these actions? What recommendations can be put forward to ensure that actions of the different stakeholders will serve the best interest of the children in future relocation activities?

Bringing out children’s views and experiences using interactive and age-appropriate processes, and facilitating their active participation was a core approach and methodology of the study. This is based on the premise that children have a right to be heard in all decisions that affect their lives, including and especially policy decisions. Children’s perceptions and insights about their experiences, aspirations and needs are essential in understanding their situation. They must have a say in determining the quality of life that they want for themselves and their families. It has also been proven that programs and services for children become more effective and responsive if children themselves are involved in their design and implementation.

The study is also premised on the belief that partnership and collaboration, built through participatory and consultative processes, is important to build among the project partners ownership of the process and results. Thus the study utilized a multi-stakeholder and collaborative approach between and among the John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues (JJCICSI), the research institute that led the conduct of the study; the Samahan ng Mamamayan – Zone One Tondo Organization, Inc. (SM-ZOTO), a national federation of urban poor organizations; the Urban Poor Alliance (UP-ALL), a broad alliance of urban poor organizations and networks; two children's groups in one of the affected communities—the Ang Kabataan Ating Protektahan (AKKAP) and the Youth Meets the Children Organization (YMETCO); and Save the Children. Partners also have ownership of the data. The manner of utilizing the research results to promote the rights of children in their communities was collectively decided by all the partners.

The findings of the research ultimately will be utilized for developing a model of a resettlement program that will ensure the promotion and protection of children’s rights and well-being as their families prepare to move into the new communities, or have actually moved from their existing neighborhoods and settled into the resettlement sites.

The above objectives were achieved through the following key activities:

a. Consultations with stakeholders on the research design and plan. The research involved stakeholders such as networks of civil society organizations, urban poor coalitions and children, as early as at the conceptualization and planning stages of the research.

b. Development of research design and tools, and formulation of the research plan

c. Collection of primary and secondary data using a combination of academic and participatory research methods

d. Processing and participatory analysis of data with project partners
C. Analytical Framework

The research was guided by an implicit hypothesis that the resettlement of families (independent variable) will have both positive and negative impacts on children. These perceived and actual impacts (intervening variables) would then have implications on children's rights in terms of their survival and development, nondiscrimination and inclusion, protection, and participation. The children's rights assessed particularly for this study are the following: 1) right to health, 2) right to education, 3) right to safe environments, 4) right to safety, including freedom from discrimination, abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence, 5) capacity of the family to respond to the children’s socio-economic needs, and 6) participation on matters relating to relocation.

D. Research Design

1. Research Approach and Methodology

Data and information for this impact assessment study were gathered primarily through qualitative methods. The study employed focus group discussions (FGD), key informant interviews (KII), direct observation, and other participatory techniques appropriate for young children. Responses from the children were foremost as the research needed to get into the depths of child rights in the context of urban informal settlements and resettlement sites. Diagram 2 below provides an overview of the research design.

2. Site Selection

Data collection and analysis covered two types of research sites: (1) existing or “transition communities” to infer possible types and magnitude of impact (e.g., loss of access to vital services) and (2) resettlement sites or “new communities” to describe the situation in the areas where children and their families are to be, or have actually, transferred. This study concentrated on three of the eight waterways prioritized for clearing, and where Save the Children’s project partners have partner community organizations, i.e., (1) San Juan River, (2) Tullahan River, and (3) Tripa de Gallina. Five (5) communities located in these areas were identified. For the “new communities”, two (2) resettlement sites of the NHA were chosen.
In order to permit current and potential impacts to be gauged, monitored, and mitigated, transition communities were paired with resettlement sites, where families in the former would (or would most likely) be transferred. Data collection was thus focused on 5 transition sites and 2 resettlement sites.

**Diagram 2**
**Research Design**

**Datasets**

1. Conditions before Resettlement
   - Expectations
   - Perceived changes
   - Apprehensions

2. Conditions after Resettlement
   - Actual changes compared to previous communities (for existing off-city projects)
   - Anticipated changes (for in-city projects)

**Data Sources**

Transition communities targeted for resettlement

Resettlement sites where target families will be relocated

**Data Collection Methods**

FGD with Children
KII
Direct Observation

Off-City Site

In-City Project

**Table 1**
**List of Research Sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Transition Community</th>
<th>New Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Barangay 143, Pasay City  
      Barangay 144, Pasay City | Barangay Hugo Perez, Trece Martires, Cavite |
| 2    | Barangay Potrero, Malabon City | Barangay Mapulang Lupa, Pandi, Bulacan⁴ |
| 3    | Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City | Barangay Mapulang Lupa, Pandi, Bulacan |

⁴ Based on information from SM-ZOTO, the resettlement site originally intended for the ISF community in Barangay Potrero is the resettlement site in Barangay Batia, Bocaue, Bulacan. According to the NHA, however, the resettlement sites where ISFs will be transferred depend on the availability of ready-to-occupy units in their projects. As of June 11, the resettlement site in which ISFs could be accommodated was located in Barangay Mapulang Lupa in the municipality of Pandi, Bulacan. There were no more units in the projects in Bocaue and San Jose del Monte.
To be resettled in in-city housing projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Transition Community</th>
<th>New Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Barangay Gulod, Quezon City</td>
<td>Barangay Gulod, Quezon City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Barangay Catmon, Malabon City</td>
<td>Barangay Panghulo, Malabon City</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Data Collection Methods

The Research Team gathered from children aged 7 to 17 first-hand experiences in their communities and their views on the planned relocation of their families. Following the suggestion of Save the Children and the project partners, respondents were grouped into three: young children (7 to 9 years old), older children (10 to 12 years old), and teenagers (13 to 17 years old). Each group had at least 5 participants. In order to establish rapport, the research prioritized naturally-occurring groups of girls and boys in the community (e.g., barkada or group of friends). To the extent possible, each group had equal number of girls and boys. Key members of community organizations in the areas assisted the Research Team in selecting and inviting the young participants; consent was sought from parents and children themselves. The community organization of the project partners helped select the participants, and make arrangements for the actual conduct of the research (including the selection of the venue). (See Annexes A.1 and A.2 for the detailed FGD guides.)

The method used with the group of younger children differed from that with older children. For those 9 years old and below and where it was possible (i.e., the community organization has a building or meeting place with tables and chairs), drawing was considered in engaging them. The two main outputs were a drawing of their families and a map of their community (houses, school, spaces for playing, etc.). The discussion that followed focused on the illustrations. On the map, children stuck “smiling faces” to indicate areas where they feel happy, and “sad faces” to show where they feel sad or scared. The third part of the activity delved on their thoughts and feelings about transferring to a new community.

Space and time limitations as well as safety concerns compelled the Research Team to modify the conduct of the group activity with young children. In instances where the area of the venue was small or chairs and tables were not available, the Research Team dropped the warm-up game and the portions in which children would be asked to draw their families and map their neighborhood. Where it was deemed safe to go around the community (especially smaller ones), the Research Team instead conducted a “walking tour” with children. They were asked to bring the Team to places where they usually gather and play, where they pass by going to and coming from school, and where they live. In large communities such as resettlement sites, cards bearing names of specific places such as paaralan (school) or palaruan (playground) were flashed instead of going around the place. In both cases, children were asked to raise either a “smiling face” or a “sad face” to indicate what they feel in those places in their community.

Older children were gathered for a focus group discussion. In the focus group discussion, persons with similar backgrounds or experiences engage in an unstructured (or semi-structured) discussion of a particular topic of interest. The participants were guided by a facilitator or moderator. The researcher derived data not only from actual responses from the two sets of child-respondents, but also from the shared meanings and interaction of the group. Although the researcher played a reduced role in the FGD, s/he provided carefully phrased probing questions, and ensured active participation of the participants. Two groups of respondents were gathered: a mixed group of boys and girls aged 10 to 12 years old, and another mixed group of teenage boys and girls aged 13 to 17 years old. Each FGD
group was composed of at least 5 participants, and where possible, included children with disabilities, who have been out of school, or currently engaged in paid work.

The FGD revolved around the four themes of child rights – survival, development, protection, and participation. Instead of focusing on specific rights, however, statements were shown to the participants, to which they answered or reacted by using the printed facial expressions. The discussion revolved around their everyday experiences and how particular situations in their communities affected them.

On the whole, the interactive group activities and FGDs involved 100 children from the transition communities and 27 in the resettlement sites for a total of 127 children. Of the total child-participants, 51 (40%) were aged 7-9 years old, and 38 (30%) each from the groups aged 10-12, and 13-17 years old. It should be noted, however, that in several instances, children as young as six were allowed to sit down and join the discussion. More girls participated with 76 (60%) as against 51 boys (40%).

**TABLE 2**
**NUMBER OF FGD PARTICIPANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Number of FGD Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 1 (7-9 years old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripa de Gallina</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barangay 143 and 144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasay City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Riverside</td>
<td>6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barangay Potrero</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malabon City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Horizon</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barangay Hugo Perez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trece Martires City, Cavite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinatag</td>
<td>5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barangay Tatalon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quezon City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Gonzales</td>
<td>5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barangay Gulod</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quezon City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulayan-Pilapil</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barangay Catmon Malabon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandi Residences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barangay Mapulang Lupa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandi, Bulacan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Including children not within the age bracket but were allowed to join the discussion*

Primary data from the group activities were supplemented with data gathered through key informant interviews and direct observation during community walkthroughs. The perspectives of adults, primarily parents, in the community were collected through key informant interviews or small group discussions. (Note in Table 3 that the officers of the community organization are also parents.) The research team of JJCICSI conducted the interviews, while the local community leaders of SM-ZOTO, AKKAP, YMETCO, and UP-ALL helped, to the extent possible, identify the key informants and
assisted in setting appointments on behalf of the researcher. Owing to reasons to be elaborated later, not all types of community key informants were interviewed.

The Research Team interviewed a representative from the DILG who also furnished the team with helpful documents and pertinent records about the resettlement program.

### TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF KEY INFORMANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Type of Key Informant and Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Barangay 143, Pasay City | Barangay health worker – 1  
Barangay government official/personnel – 1  
Community organization officer – 1  
Parent – 2 |
| Barangay 144, Pasay City | Community organization officer – 1  
Barangay government official/personnel – 2  
Parent – 1 |
| East Riverside, Potrero, Malabon | Community organization officer – 2  
Barangay health worker – 1  
Parent – 2 |
| Golden Horizon, Hugo Perez, Trece Martires | Community organization officer/ parent – 7 |
| Pinatag, Tatalon, Quezon City | Community organization officer/ parent – 4 |
| Gulayan Pilapil, Catmon, Malabon | Community organization officer/ parent – 3 |
| Pandi Residences, Mapulang Lupa, Pandi, Bulacan | Community organization officer/ parent – 11 |

Further data were collected and initial information was validated through feedback sessions with communities and project partners. At the community level, the feedback session was part of the community action planning workshops facilitated by the main project partners with the participation of children. In the latter part of the research period, Save the Children sponsored a participatory data analysis which served as venue for project partners to validate the findings and at the same time to enrich the analysis by giving updated information, additional insights, and recommended actions for stakeholders.

### E. Limitations, Constraints, and Protocols

1. **Concern on making general conclusions on the research findings**

The selection of research sites was based on whether the project partners have direct intervention or activities in the communities. Thus, data from community informants and group activities involving purposively identified and selected children will not necessarily lead to generalizable conclusions about the anticipated impacts of resettlement on children in other areas with different conditions. Nevertheless, these communities may well represent the situations of children in informal settlements.

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4 By the end of the research period, only three transition communities conducted planning sessions: Barangay 143/144 in Pasay, Barangay Catmon in Malabon City, and Barangay Tatalon in Quezon City.
and in off-site resettlement sites and their exposure to different types of vulnerability that undermine the realization of their rights as young members of society.

2. Timing of the CRIA

A CRIA is conducted by evaluating existing conditions in order to assess possible impacts before introducing an intervention, in this case, the resettlement program. Although not all variables can be identified and factored in before actual relocation, positive and negative impacts as perceived by stakeholders are the primary data of the CRIA.

However, the research was undertaken at least one and a half years after the Philippine government formalized the resettlement program targeting communities in major waterways. Although program implementers—the DILG and the NHA being at the helm—have been modifying some procedures and have been involving other agencies along the way, the relocation of families from different waterways in Metro Manila occurred almost week by week. This prompted the Research Team and the project partners to gather data from resettlement sites that provide insights on the actual impact (or the immediate effects) of resettlement.

3. Naturally-occurring groups of children as priority sources of data and information

Engaging a group of friends rather than a diverse set of randomly-selected respondents for the FGDs may result in lesser disagreements or fewer points of contention. This approach proved to be more helpful in the case of children who showed to be uncomfortable or shy when sharing their thoughts and opinion with fellow children whom they have not met or seldom interact with. The approach, however, resulted in gender imbalances within focus groups.

4. Protocols in involving children in the research

Since most of the data-gathering activities involved children as participants, the research team needed to consult with Save the Children on the appropriate approach and protocols in going about these activities. Informed consent, both on the part of the child and his/her parents, were secured. A member of the Child Protection Team formed by Save the Children and project partners was also requested to be present during data-gathering. Save the Children’s Child Safeguarding Protocol was observed and followed at all times.
Chapter 2
The Context: Safer Communities for Informal Setter Families

The resettlement program of the National Government must be understood in the context of disaster-risk reduction in Metro Manila. Since the historic devastation caused by tropical storm Ondoy (international name: Ketsana) in September 2009, flooding in low-lying areas (particularly riverbanks) and storm surges affecting coastal communities have become more frequent and have resulted in the loss of lives and assets.5

Being most adversely affected, overcrowded high risk communities were to become the target of government’s effort to unclog natural waterways and improve drainage systems to minimize flooding in the country’s capital region. Equally important was the need to keep families away from harm’s way. The safety of informal settler families thus became the banner of an interagency program called OPLAN LIKAS. The word likas is a Filipino equivalent of the verb “evacuate", but as a “brand name”, LIKAS stands for Lumikas para Iwas Kalamidad at Sakit (Evacuate to Avoid Calamities and Diseases). The program, which was initially conceptualized as a preemptive evacuation measure, aims to relocate by 2016 60,000 informal settler families from critical waterways to safer areas, using a ₱10 billion fund allocation every year starting 2012 (or a total of ₱50 billion by the end of the Aquino administration). As of October 2014, the DILG reported that almost 8,000 families have been given housing units in NHA projects, while the number of families to be transferred to people-initiated, in-city housing projects has been negligible. Housing projects initiated by city governments accommodated quite a few.

The DILG chairs the interagency group that steers the program. This group, formally created in August 2013, is convened as a National Technical Working Group (NTWG). Its members include several departments, commissions, and offices: Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP), Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), NHA, Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Department of Health (DOH), and the Department of Education (DepEd) among others. In the meetings of the NTWG, urban poor groups and civil society organizations are invited to participate.

Key shelter agencies, particularly the NHA and SHFC, offer a menu of resettlement options for both unorganized and organized communities. One track is for communities, with the assistance of NGOs, to select their relocation sites and propose their own housing solution within the city (in situ, near-site, or in-city). Communities taking this option undertake what is called the “people’s planning process” in which they take an active role in the design, terms and conditions of the project. On the other hand, families can also volunteer to relocate to NHA resettlement projects outside Metro Manila, particularly

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5 This chapter is based on primary data gathered from a sit-down interview with the DILG.
in Bulacan (for families coming from the northern part of Metro Manila) and Cavite (for families from the south).

Because of issues such as the availability of land the cost of which is not within the range of what informal settlers can afford, people-initiated projects have not been that many. As of this writing, none of these projects have started being constructed. Off-city resettlement, despite perceived and actual livability issues, has thus become a more practical option for a significant number of families. The NHA has received almost half of the ₱50 billion fund, and much of it was utilized for its resettlement projects. Relocated families are given one-year “grace period”, after which they are expected to pay ₱200 per month within the next three years. The amortization gradually increases until they are able to completely pay the entire amount of ₱240,000 per unit within a period of 30 years. Some local governments have initiated their own housing projects that would not involve drastic displacement of families. In-city housing projects in Quezon City, Valenzuela, and Pasig have been allocated for some of the ISFs from the waterways.

All families relocated from the waterways are provided with ₱18,000 disturbance allowance, which comes from the national budget. This amount was arrived at on the premise that families would use it as rental assistance good for six months (or ₱3,000 a month). Consequently, this lump sum amount is given to those who opt for off-city relocation, that it became an incentive for many families to avail themselves of the off-city housing offered by NHA in the relocation sites in Bulacan and Cavite which were readily available.

Relocation of families to off-city sites follows this general process:

1. The DENR visits the community to delineate on the ground the three-meter legal easement that is supposed to be free of any structure. The program imposes the easement requirement as non-negotiable.

2. The NHA conducts a census of the families whose structures are within the easement or actually occupy the waterway. In some communities, the NHA works with the University of the Philippines Planning and Development Research Foundation (UP PLANADES).

3. The DSWD validates and verifies the names in the census list to determine if they are legitimate (i.e., long-time) residents of the community.

4. Qualified families are endorsed to the NHA for pre-qualification. Pre-qualification is a process where the NHA checks its “alpha list” to see if any of the names on the list has already been a beneficiary of a government housing program.

A Local Interagency Committee (LIAC) is set up to deliberate on the names to be included in the relocation and to prepare the families for their relocation. The preparation of communities is done by the LIAC. Prior to relocation, the LIAC, in coordination with the barangay government, holds meetings with affected families, mainly to announce required documents, the schedule of the relocation, and the resettlement site. The preparatory activities involve only adults, particularly household heads and their spouses. On the actual day of relocation, a Relocation Action Center (RAC) is put up, where almost all members of the LIAC have a desk to process documents and to receive queries. Families receive a pack of food items such as rice, instant noodles, canned goods, cooking oil, and other items. Government sends buses for the families, and trucks for the belongings.

As the term suggests, housing projects that undergo a people’s planning process take people’s participation as critical. These, however, have proceeded on a rather slow pace that none of them has materialized (i.e., families already transferred to and occupying the buildings) as of this writing. As a result, many of the families in these communities opt for a unit in a distant relocation site. One reason is so that they can be spared from future episodes of severe flooding at the onset of the rainy season. It is also a challenge for communities, especially the unorganized ones, to get involved in this scheme.
because the DILG requires that they have a legal identity as a group (i.e., registered at a regulatory agency), have already entered into a negotiation with the owner of the prospective resettlement site, are able to submit a conceptual housing design and financing plan. All of these requirements have been rather demanding on the part of communities whose members are more concerned about surviving and providing for the family for the day than undergoing a tedious organizational and technical process to obtain security of tenure.

With thousands of families already in the off-city resettlement projects, the DILG is aware that many problems and concerns have reached the NTWG. A DILG personnel admitted that much needs to be done to address resettlement matters, which ideally, is to be closely monitored by the PCUP. For the meantime, the DILG Project Management Office for the ISF Housing Program receives the complaints if these are reported at all. For instance, electricity in resettlement sites is not always readily available upon relocation of families because the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) has a condition that a certain occupancy rate has to be reached before it would install individual connections. In the meantime, generators are used to supply power on an intermittent basis. Water supply is to be ensured by the NHA, which is responsible for coordinating with the local water district.
Chapter 3

Children Speak Out on Their Situation

A. Transition Community 1
Barangay 143 and 144, Tripa de Gallina, Malibay, Pasay City

Estero Tripa de Gallina, an inlet canal that drains wastewater from the rich enclaves in Makati City and several residential areas to the Manila Bay, separates the informal settlement in Barangay 143 (also known as Gamban Riverside) from another slum community in Barangay 144 (also referred to as E. Rodriguez Extension). These communities are among the biggest in Malibay, Pasay City. Across the bridge in this part of Edsa, the main thoroughfare in Metro Manila, a wall of dilapidated iron sheets covers the community and the garbage-strewn estero. But perhaps, it is the five-story commercial building that effectively hides the congested, rundown shacks from most people's eyes. Community leaders and even barangay government officials could not give an accurate number of families in these two communities, which had less than ten houses in the 1980s. The irony becomes starker when one realizes that beside the community is a large vacant lot owned by a bus company.

Health. Children regard themselves as unhealthy, and they attribute this to their living along a polluted estero and beside a polluted highway. A participant during one of the discussions said that she considers his community to be unsanitary because of the polluted waterway. Coughs and colds, fever,

\footnote{The data presented is the status of the community before they were relocated in August 2014.}
measles (*tigdas*), diarrhea, and dengue are reported to be the usual illnesses of children. When there is flood, some children are said to be susceptible to athlete’s foot or leptospirosis.

The foods they normally eat also impact on their health. Children mention that most of them eat unhealthy foods such as junk food and street food. If healthy meals are available, it is rarely enough for the family. Water comes from the tap which is often not safe for drinking; those who can afford buy purified water. One said poor food preparation also causes illnesses.

The nearest barangay health centers from the community are in Libertad and Malibay. While check-up is free, it has been a practice to “donate” ₱20 to ₱50. A doctor and nurse conduct the check-ups on people visiting the barangay health center. Patients that need hospitalization are brought to the Pasay General Hospital, a jeepney-ride away from the community. For some families who cannot afford to bring the children to the hospital, they bring their sick children to a *hilot* (traditional healer) in hopes of lessening the pain of an illness or totally curing it. Parents actually prefer the *hilot* over the health center because they are more affordable. None of the children in the focus groups has seen a dentist.

Local politicians hold occasional feeding programs in the schools (meals include *champorado* or chocolate-flavored porridge) as well as free medical services, including distribution of vitamins to children.

Children think that girls tend to experience illness more than boys because girls have weaker resistance and suffer from dysmenorrhea. On the other hand, boys become ill because they sell peanuts on the street or are engaged in collecting scraps from garbage (*pangangalakal*).

Figure 2. The rear view of Gamban Riverside in Barangay 143. The vacant property, owned by a bus company, has a high perimeter fence, which some residents use as posts and walls of their structures.

**Education.** The elementary school is within walking distance from the community. Most of the children go to Timoteo Paez Elementary School and Juan Sumulong Elementary School in Malibay. To go to the schools, the children have to cross Edsa using a footbridge, then walk or ride a *pedicab* to the school. High school students go to Pasay City East High School. The children find their schools to be spacious and to have adequate books and chairs (some of which are unstable). The number of students ranges from 48 to 60 students per class.
Although tuition fee is free in public schools, children lament the expenses that their parents have to incur for projects, test papers, journals, and work books, among other school materials. They think that it is one of the reasons why some students do not continue with their studies. One said, “Pagdating ng pasukan, ang dami na pong babayaran (When classes start, there is a lot to pay)”. They also mentioned that there are some students who lose the drive to go to school (tinatamad) especially among the boys who, in the opinion of some children, prefer to stay idle (tambay). Some are engaged in vices such as smoking and drinking and even use addictive substances such as rugby, shabu (methamphetamine), and marijuana. They know of one girl who had to stop going to school because she got pregnant.

Figure 3. Boys play basketball in the unused space in front of the commercial building and near Edsa.

Safety. Curfew in the community starts at 10:00 in the evening, but bystanders still spend time in certain parts of the community. Children, especially the young ones, fear that these bystanders are drug-addicts or members of the akyat bahay gang, who break and enter into homes to steal. During the curfew hours, a barangay tanod goes around to patrol the vicinity. If children are still out during curfew or are involved in cases of conflict, they are brought to the barangay hall and asked to clean the hall. Children have witnessed occasional fights between youth gangs and neighbors, particularly drunken men, who lose their temper (nagkapikunan). Quarreling family members are also common in the community.

Due to clogged waterways, flood as high as five feet normally follows after a heavy downpour. If the flood level is not alarming, the children even play in the water as if they were in a “swimming pool.” During the onslaught of tropical storm Ondoy in 2009, some families evacuated to the barangay hall or to the Baptist Church (called the “Community of Praise” or Compraise) located in Barangay 144; those who have second floors stayed in their homes until the water receded. Because flooding is a frequent occurrence in both communities, children in the focus groups say they have gotten used to their community going under water during the rainy season.

Children fear fire more than flooding. Because structures are made of light and fragile materials, children are cognizant that they are vulnerable to fire. In fact, both communities were burned to the ground in 2009. The children in the focus groups dread anything similar to happen again. “Naging matatakutin na kami (We have become afraid),” said one participant. The experience was
compounded by the slow response of fire trucks and the long hours before the fire was completely extinguished. The affected families stayed temporarily in Compraise. Children remembered a television station distributed tents and brought food to the affected families.

**Environment and sanitation.** Since their houses stand on stilts above the estero, the children consider their community to be unclean with visible candy wrappers and other trash disposed improperly. Garbage from the households can only be disposed in a garbage bin located in the barangay hall. If the households have not yet brought their garbage in the barangay hall, small-sized trash make their way down the river, often unnoticed. And even if the garbage has already been brought to the barangay hall, the children said that collection of the garbage truck is irregular, so garbage piles up and stays longer than it should in the community. The garbage is not segregated by the households so the children hope to have more garbage bins and a proper segregation system in the community.

Lack of adequate toilets is one of the concerns of children in their community. Majority of the families do not have toilets. If their structure stands on top of the waterway, a "hole" on the floor serves as their main latrine. Others resort to “flying saucers”, a fancy name for baggies of human excrement that are thrown directly to the river. The alley which serves as the main access way to the community is often filled with mothers doing their laundry, children and also adults taking a bath, or with cages of pets and chickens. The area called “dulo” (end) is considered by children in the focus groups as one of the places in Barangay 143 that they would rather not go because the alley is always wet and slippery, and dark even at daytime.

**Family and community.** Most fathers in the community are engaged in construction work, while the mothers accept laundry services or stay at home. Some fathers also gain income as tricycle drivers or workers in the nearby restaurants (e.g., dishwasher). There are some who work as a “barker” who calls for commuters to take the jeepney. Some parents sell food or tend a sari-sari store and computer shops; one family was mentioned to own a billiards place in the community. Based on children’s observation, there are more parents who have no work. They also mentioned that some parents play and place bets on card games such as *tong-its* and *pusoy*.

But even among families with sources of livelihood, children said that their parents’ income is insufficient to provide for their needs. This forces some mothers to borrow food from the stores in the community. Some of the identified needs of the children include education and allowance for school, medication in times of sickness, and healthy food; some of the identified needs are non-material, such as care for the children, and time for playing and sleeping. Unfortunately, not all parents are able to support even the most basic needs of their children.

To help their family and to afford some of their needs, some children work as a barker, scavengers (*pangangalakal*), or ambulant vendors. A boy in his sixth grade said he used to collect bets for a game called *ending* (a game of chance in which players bet on the last digits of the final scores of a televised basketball game). While these may sound simple, they regard these activities as dangerous because children doing these are prone to vehicular accidents, especially for those who call out passengers or use their bicycles to sell peanuts on the street. Children in the focus groups claim that a few of these working children spend their earnings on gambling, smoking, or buying weeds (*tsongke*).

When asked what they feel when they are with their parents at home, none of the participants reported any untoward incidents or undesirable experiences. They, however, fear their parents because if they do something wrong such as answering back when reprimanded (*kapag sumagot sa nakatatanda*), they are certain to be punished verbally or physically. For both older and younger boys, they get punished when they stay out late and are believed to be spending so much time playing computer games than studying. Older girls, on the other hand, are told off when they wear skimpy clothes. The children said that a lot of parents physically punish them through spanking or in an
extreme manner such as hanging the child upside-down. There are also instances when they are reprimanded and humiliated in front of other people, especially in the case of the teenagers.

Only few of the children are aware of the conditional cash transfer program of the DSWD and they are aware of it because their families are enrolled in the program. They know of a monthly allowance given to a family as a beneficiary of the program.

Figure 4. A group of boys play computer games in this vacated space in Barangay 144.

Participation. Not all of the children are aware of any plan regarding their relocation, but they say that the idea of leaving the place where they grew up would make them sad. Transferring to a new place, they say, will mean getting separated from their friends especially those in school. They also worry about their new neighbors. They raise concern over their parents’ work. On the other hand, they think that one good thing about relocation is that they will live in a flood-free community. They have heard that houses where they would move in are spacious, with a kitchen, a bedroom, and even a yard. They also heard that a second floor can be constructed.

Children learned about the impending relocation from chats among parents in the community. They have seen photos of the houses taken by adults who visited the site but no meeting was conducted to inform children about the relocation. There was also confusion about where exactly they will be relocated. While some of the children are excited to move to their new house, most of the children said that they would rather stay in Pasay than be relocated.

The children hope for a peaceful transfer on the day of relocation. They wish to have the same neighbors and friends, and even pets, with them. They express concern over whether their new school will be accessible from their new house.
Postscript. Families were brought to a resettlement site in Trece Martires City in Cavite in August 2014.

B. Transition Community 2
   East Riverside, Barangay Potrero, Malabon City

East Riverside is a classic example of a “gillage,” a slang word derived from combining the Filipino word “gilid” (which means “on the fridge”) and “village” (usually depicted as housing enclaves of the rich). Housing conditions in the community range from concrete structures built on excess land to houses built with weak and inadequate materials practically hanging on the perimeter wall of the Araneta Village. All of the structures stand on the embankment of the Tullahan River.

From four families in early 1970s, East Riverside grew to a community with more than 500 families. Residents identify themselves as part of either one of two community organizations: New East Riverside Neighborhood Association (New ERNA) and the Bukluran sa East Riverside Neighborhood Association (BERNA). The community of New ERNA is on the eastern side of the bridge that links the city to Valenzuela City. On the other side are the houses of residents under BERN. There are more houses in BERN than in New ERNA. Even before the research, relocation of families—mostly the renters—had been ongoing as early as March 2013.

Health. Common diseases among children include cough, colds, chicken pox, toothache, boils, and measles. The children in the focus session heard about one child who had leptospirosis and few others who had fungal infection (usually athlete’s foot) following flooding, which occurs almost every year since 2009 when tropical storm Ondoy submerged this part of the city. Getting sick because of drinking water is rare as most families spend P25 per five-gallon container of purified water. During the discussion, the girls in the group did not react when the others said they are more likely to get sick than boys.

None of the children visits a doctor or a dentist regularly. One girl who had appendicitis was brought to the Manila Central University Hospital, the nearest public hospital that can be reached by taking a
tricycle. Residents of East Riverside, however, have to walk some distance to go to the tricycle terminal at the gate of the village.

The barangay health center is located in Durian Street but there is neither a doctor nor a dentist there. Nevertheless, newly-born babies are given a complete set of vaccines by the barangay health workers, while young children are provided vitamin A capsules. Underweight children are given free vitamins and immediately included in one-day feeding project of the local government. The same center does not have a nebulizer so the mother of a child with asthma borrows the nebulizer of her neighbor. Some families prefer the public clinic in Barangay Bagong Barrio in Caloocan City which has better facilities and medical personnel. Still some parents in New ERNA, believing that fever and colds are caused by sprain (pilay), bring their sick children to the hilot, an elderly woman in the community who does massage therapy.

Families without sufficient budget for food settle for cooked food sold at ₱12 per pack. One child remarked that her mother had been “training” them to eat vegetables in preparation for their relocation to Bulacan: “Sinasanay na kami ni mama na kumain ng gulay kasi lilipat na kami sa Bulacan.” They had a notion that they will have to eat cheaper food when they move out of East Riverside. To feed the family, some parents borrow not only money but also rice and viands from close neighbors and kumara (godmother of one’s child). Almost all children like packed salty chips (which costs only ₱1 per pack), and some eat it with rice.

Education. Children in the community have easy access to public elementary and secondary schools. Going to Potrero Elementary School, however, can be risky—the children have to cross the busy McArthur Highway where buses, trucks, and passenger jeepneys pass. Some parents thus enrolled their children at Morning Breeze Elementary School in Barangay Barrio West (in Caloocan City) which, although farther, is safer to go to. High school students are enrolled in Caloocan and Valenzuela, but many of them prefer going to Caloocan High School because there are no fraternities that might recruit or hurt them. None of them said that their classrooms are crowded.

Although they do not pay any tuition, school materials, some books, projects, and photocopying of readings (for college students) cut deep into the pockets of parents. Those who do not go to school are usually from families whose parents have no means of earning income. They also cited that boys are more likely to be less interested in going to school due to laziness. The 16-year old sister of one
child did not finish school because she got pregnant. Some parents, the children said, prefer their older boys, especially idling ones, to find work than to complete school.

Figure 7. Houses in BERNA (top) and ERNA (bottom) stand within the three-meter legal easement of the Tullahan river.

According to the children, parents are able to provide for their needs even if they are generally engaged in jobs in the informal sector (e.g., carpenters, food vendors, sewers). They recognize that children of parents with more stable incomes—such as those tending sari-sari stores or driving cabs—are better-off than those whose parents sell mobile phone cards in a shopping center, are scavengers (nangangalakal), or have no work at all.

There is one family whose children help make rags (nagtataytay) that their grandmother sells—which some of the children also sell—along the highway. Some boys also tie bags subcontracted to families
by a nearby factory. *Pangangalakal* is another activity that some children do to earn some money; children know one in East Riverside who does *pangangalakal* even if he has a heart problem. The *mangangalakal* scavenges scrap metals from vacated houses in the community, or goes around the village (while escaping the watchful eyes of the security guards) to search for trash that they can sell to the junk shops along the highway. Nails sell at ₱13 per kilogram, while iron sheets at ₱8 per kilogram. They also collect trash from the river especially after a heavy rain. The children said that they were not forced to do work such as these which they regard as relatively easy. Almost all of the children interviewed come from families included in the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program of the DSWD.

Safety. In BERNA, the alley is too narrow even for bicycles and motorcycles—as well as push carts with colored birds for sale. Despite this, girls and boys consider the alley as a good place to chase one another when playing as long as they do not interrupt adults who play card games. The name of a favorite game among young children, *harangang dagâ* (blocking the rat), fits the actions of the children as they scurry through the seemingly impenetrable alley. At night, however, children are not allowed to go out and wander down the dark passageway. There is also a basketball court and a chapel built by the local government within the premises of the village that children can use for playing and the residents for meetings (including the conduct of Family Development Seminars of the DSWD under its CCT program).

There are other open spaces that children also use as their playground. One is an area left by relocated families where smaller children play basketball and skate. The other, which is bigger, is an unused and enclosed but accessible part of the street near BERNA—called *kabilang kalsada* (the street on the other side). Older children gather in *kabilang kalsada* to socialize while others use this unlighted space for smoking weeds, which children call *tsongke*. Because the community is inconspicuous, older children and young adults smoking weeds can easily sneak out when the barangay patrolmen do their rounds, which they do at random rather than regularly. Some children have learned playing *video-karera* and other games of chance that involve betting on the outcomes such as *kara-krus* (flipping of coins), which are all prohibited. When caught, apprehended children are brought to the barangay until parents take custody of them.

In New ERNA, the cul-de-sac of White Lily Street serves as their main access road and open space for play and other activities (including wakes and parties), but residents have to go through “holes” on the concrete perimeter fence to go to their houses. Children used to play on the bridge but have since stopped when a child fell into the river and died. Some parents also expressed alarm about a couple who use methamphetamine or *shabu*; they fear that the children might end up also getting addicted to this illegal drug. None of the children or parents interviewed is aware of any case of sexual abuse in the community. In any case, the nearest police precinct has a complaints desk dedicated to concerns of women and children. Parents and children have not heard about the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC); one parent said, “*Bago po ‘yan sa aming pandinig* (It is our first time to hear that).”

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1Headed by the barangay chairperson, the BCPC is a local body that looks into the welfare and concerns of children at the barangay level (see the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 9344 or the “Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006”).
Children encounter teasing from their peers in these places for playing, although most of them do not take it seriously. Name calling based on disability, physical appearance, and behavior is common. They did not say whether boys tend to tease more than girls, but they mentioned that older children are the ones who badger younger ones. There are few cases where parents of quarreling children end up fighting each other with harsh words. Children make fun of those who act differently from expected gender behavior and demeanor (bakla or effeminate boys and tomboy or boyish girls) or those with a physical attributes (kuba or hunchback, and taba or chubby) by calling them names or singing mocking tunes. Children with Visayan diction are also poked fun at by imitating their manner of speaking. Teasing seldom leads to physical fights, but there are instances that children, usually boys, throw stones to or punch each other. Tambays (persons idling around) usually make fun of children for their amusement. None of the children reported being teased because of religion.

At home, parents use corporal punishment to discipline children when the latter do not perform house chores, quarrel with their siblings, go to places where they are not allowed, or do not go to school. This frightens children, even teenagers.

Children had been hit with clothes hangers, slippers, thin PVC pipes, or cable wires. Few children had been made to kneel on salt or hold books with their arms raised sideward while kneeling. One teenager said she was shouted at by her mother outside their house, and it embarrassed her. When older girls are seen to be hanging out with boys, some parents scold them for being malandi (flirtatious). Boys who feel humiliated when scolded by parents outside their house walk away and hang out somewhere. For most of them, it is improper to talk back to parents because they are the main decision makers in the family.

Children said it frightens them when tambays (idling persons) make noise or neighbors threaten others with knives or sumpak (improvised gun). Sometimes, older children are involved. They know some teenagers and young adults who possess a bente-nuebe or baisong (a fan knife). Because it would take them time to report a squabble involving adults to the barangay tanod, adult men in the community are the first to respond and try to mediate. The darkness in the alley scares them, but when there is a wake held on the street, some of them can stay out in the evening because the lights are bright enough to allow them to see the surroundings.

Environment. For some families in East Riverside, the river serves as a convenient dumping ground for garbage despite regular garbage collection by the city. There is one household in BERNA tending pigs in a pigpen, which under the law is prohibited in urban areas. Children, however, claimed that the trash does not come from the residents alone. The poor state of the river is also due to discharges from nearby factories (Malabon and Valenzuela are preferred locations for factories, and the longest running factories include those that manufacture soap, plastics, and paper).
The families in East Riverside experienced the highest level of floodwater during the onslaught of tropical storm Ondoy in 2009. During that time, they were caught unprepared, and families living in houses without second or third stories sought refuge in the school that served as the main evacuation center in Barangay Potrero. Fire had also affected families in East Riverside which allegedly started from a house with illegal electrical connection.

**Participation.** Even before some families decided to accept relocation in various NHA housing projects in Bulacan, the children had been aware that their community would eventually be demolished. They said that President Aquino and Interior and Local Government Secretary Mar Roxas ordered the removal of houses along waterways to keep families away from harm during heavy typhoons. The latest information they heard from their parents and neighbors is that families will transfer to Pandi, Bulacan. Others willingly accepted the government’s offer to be relocated. Some children, however, thought that the house they will have in the resettlement site will be given to their families for free.

The younger children do not worry about their relocation: “*Hindi po kami natatakot kasi kasama naman naming sina mama* (We do not feel scared because our mother will be with us). One child was able to go with her parents during a “site tripping” and described their possible relocation site as neat and orderly. Older children expressed attachment to their community, so it would be difficult to leave East Riverside. If they will be relocated, children pointed out jobs for their parents as most important; places for playing are secondary. If given the choice, they want to have as their neighbors their friends in East Riverside.

Children in BERTNA were keener on relocating to a new community. This is because their community is most prone to flooding when the river swells, and getting out daily from the community is more difficult than those in New ERNA. Although the children feel relieved that their houses will not be demolished, they were saddened when their playmates finally left for Bulacan.

Children share the view of parents about the positive and negative impacts of resettlement. For one, relocation will allow them to leave the constant threat of flooding in Barangay Potrero. Children accidentally falling in the river would also be avoided. On the other hand, they heard from those who have transferred and went back to Potrero to work that schools and hospitals, as well as computer shops, are quite distant from the resettlement site; the nearest establishments are a piggery and cemetery. They know they will need to adjust to their new neighbors who they learned come from different areas such as Manila, San Juan, Quezon City, Navotas, and Valenzuela. They said some of the parents have returned in East Riverside to work, leaving their children with the neighbors.

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**C. Transition Community 3**

**Gulayan-Pilapil, Barangay Catmon, Malabon City**

Gulayan-Pilapil is one of the biggest and most crowded informal settlements in Barangay Catmon, Malabon City. A huge part of the community stands on what used to be a fishpond, which over the years has been temporarily reclaim ed by residents with soil, rocks, and litter. Families compete for space with water hyacinth weeds that have invaded whatever is left of the wetland. Residents traverse their community using piled sacks of pulp bought from a nearby corn oil factory and rickety bamboo stilts. On rainy days, these sacks become slippery and precarious for people who are not used to walking on them; one admires how residents, especially children, have mastered treading on these improvised path walks.

**Health.** Despite the crowded situation in the community, children perceive themselves to be in good physical shape. The health of children of unemployed parents, they said, is more likely to suffer from poor diet and negligence. They know of families, including those of some of the participants, who resort to eating packed snacks or chips (*chichirya*) with rice. Moreover, boys are perceived as more
susceptible to common illnesses such as cough, flu, colds, and chicken pox because they are outside the house most of the time. They consider the poor environment as one reason why children easily get sick. Smoking has also become a habit for a few older boys. Water-related diseases are unheard of among children. Although some drink tap water (which, in many parts of the community, run through pipes beneath the tambak), there are more families that buy purified water.

“Traditional” and costless means are still employed to deal with some health-related problems. When it comes to dental health, none of the children has ever seen a dentist. Two children amusingly described a rather harmful and painful way to extract a broken tooth: the parents took out the tooth using sinulid (thread) attached to the door knob or any handle while the child stayed put, and the tooth was pulled as the parent closed the door. A girl recalled that crushed garlic was applied on her wound from a dog bite.

Medical services are accessible to the residents. Before reaching the community via Gov. Pascual Avenue, one can find the barangay health center located at the back of the barangay hall. Basic medicines are given for free, but supply has not been consistent. Consultations with the visiting doctor are also free but any donation by patients is welcomed. Children needing immediate medical attention or with emergency conditions are brought to public hospitals. The nearest is San Lorenzo Ruiz Hospital (also known as Makatao Center for Women Center) which can be reached by tricycle.

Figure 9. Aerial view of Gulayan-Pilapil, with Tullahan River in the north. [SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH]

Education. The children do not consider access to schools a problem. The elementary school—Catmon Integrated School—is within walking distance. However, it could not accommodate all pupils in the barangay. Many are enrolled in schools in the nearby barangays of Tonsuya and Panghulo. Each barangay near the community—Catmon, Tinajeros, Hulo, Maysilo, and Panghulo—has a high school. These public schools can be reached by tricycle but those who would rather save their cash allowance go to school on foot. The younger children mentioned visiting the library in the Justice Compound after school. There they read books and play toys. Others do house chores. Those with research homework use the computers available at the second floor.

The children are aware that low incomes constrain the parents from supporting their education. The fathers and men in the community engage in seasonal jobs as construction workers or contractual employees in factories. They usually go jobless when their contracts end. Mothers take laundry work, sewing, and household-keeping work that usually pay below the minimum wage. Many find work in
the informal sector peddling street food. The children said that to make ends meet, their parents borrow money from neighbors and relatives as well as from moneylenders who charge high interest rates ("5-6"). During weekends or holidays, not many children are engaged in pangangalakal (scavenging for scrap plastic items, glass bottles, and steel pieces) or are paid for fetching water where they earn a few pesos, enough for a day’s allowance in school. A 17-year old participant said he had stopped going to school to work as a welder in Pampanga. Older girls accept laundry jobs and peddle food to help their families. They are also aware of the government’s conditional cash transfer program but few of the participants in the research are enrolled in the program. For some of the older children, the number of children in the family (some said the most they know was 10) also impacts on the parents’ capacity to send them to school and provide for other needs. Other reasons for not attending school include disinterest and peer influence, both of which are common among boys. Among girls who should have finished high school and entered college, there are some who stopped schooling because of early pregnancy.

![Figure 10. Houses in Gulayan-Pilapil stand on what used to be a fishpond and compete for space with water hyacynth.](image)

**Safety.** Children, especially girls, come home from school with buddies. They fear the darkness in Sanciangco Street as the night approaches. Recently, the barangay government and a charity foundation installed posts with solar bottle bulbs, but according to children, these are inadequate to light up the entire street. Children dread dangerous people or the lokó-lokó, usually boys and men, who hang out in dimly-lit places.

Children go out to play mainly at the Malabon People’s Park which is inside the Justice Compound. It has recreational equipment such as seesaws, monkey bars, slides, and swings. The park is clean and spacious, and stands in contrast to the crowded landscape of the slum settlement. The children do not seem to mind the city jail that stands next to where they play; for some, the prison is called “hotel” because it is the highest concrete structure in the barangay. They feel safe when they are in the playground, although they mentioned one accident where a child fell off a bar and broke a knee. A bantay (hired watcher) looks after the children and ensures cleanliness of the playground but he does not stay until the barangay patrolmen make their regular rounds starting at 10:00 in the evening. At night, the playground becomes a place for older children to gather. Violent altercations have happened, although not frequently. One child recalled two groups—involving gang members from other communities—engaged in an altercation or “riot” that involved throwing of bottles, mud, and
rocks, as well as the use of a bente-nuwebe (a small knife) and bolitas (an improvised pistol). There is also a basketball court which was built by a retired policeman, and children need not get his permission to use the place. None of the children would play in Sanciangco Street for fear of being run over by passing trucks and tricycles.

The location and quality of their houses pose serious threats to the safety of children. Houses along the Tullahan River are surrounded by a recently constructed seven-foot high concrete dike, but it has not spared them from flood. Those who have houses with second stories would opt to stay rather than evacuate to the schools. When the water completely inundates their structures, as in the time of tropical storm Ondoy, some families leave their place using small boats. Children nonetheless recognize that garbage, due to improper disposal by some residents, and water hyacinths that clog the drains, make it difficult for the floodwaters to drain from the river. Fire was another cause of fear among children. In 2011, fire broke out in the community and turned the shacks to ashes. It rendered more than half of all the families in the community homeless for at least one week. According to the children, the consequence could have been less severe had there been a wider access road to allow the fire trucks to enter the community. Three years since the incident, ambulances and fire trucks still cannot enter the area.

![Image of Playground in Barangay Catmon](image11.png)

**Figure 11.** Playground in Barangay Catmon.

**Family and community.** Before and after school, girls perform household chores such as washing the dishes, cleaning the house, cooking rice, and watching over younger siblings. Older girls are given the task of going to the market. Others spend time (and money) to go to a computer shop to check out their Facebook accounts and upload their cellphone photos (i.e., selfies). Boys usually play basketball and billiards, and if they have money, they play computer games or video-karera, an illegal gambling activity.

Being spanked by parents is a common experience among children, especially when they quarreled with their siblings and playmates or failed to do errands. They enumerate a number of items that parents use to hit them: wooden stick, belt, broom handle, clothes hanger, and slippers. One child shared that he had been kicked and slapped. For a teenage girl, spanking is a way for parents to show that they care and is done because parents want them to learn a lesson. She explained, “Wala namang namamalo nang walang dahilan (No parent would hurt a child without a reason).” The children seem to accept spanking as a “normal” way to discipline them, although some appeared to
resent their parents when they hurt them. None of them has any idea about the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC). A girl said that it would be too much and unnecessary to report parents to the barangay.

Although none of the children had been apprehended by the barangay or police personnel, they have heard of stories of children, usually those who snatched items or sniffed glue, brought to Bahay Pangarap or a DSWD rehabilitation center. In one discussion group, a girl said that children in these institutions are taken care of. Another girl did not agree and asked, “Inaalagaan ba ‘yun? Hindi nga sila makakilos doon. Kapag nahuli sila, pinagwawalis sila (Are they really taken care of? They cannot move freely there. When they are caught, they are made to sweep the floor).” One participant thought children brought to these centers are to be adopted. Children who stay out during curfew hours are held by the barangay tanod and brought to the barangay hall. The parents are then called. Children also narrated stories of boys, referred as “jumpers,” climbing up parked or slowly passing trucks to steal goods. They noted older children (15 years old and above) who have become pickpockets. Children engaged in theft become the subject of conversation among neighbors.

Sexual harassment did not emerge as a concern among children, but that does not mean that such incidences do not happen in the community. During the discussion on how they view the police precinct, a nine-year old participant said her family once visited his imprisoned father charged with rape. Moreover, their stories about their everyday experience in the neighborhood suggest that children are exposed to drunken men (who normally gather on Sundays) and troublemakers (usually boys who tease girls and gay children). They do not feel offended when other children poke fun at them (whether based on one’s physical attributes, the sound of one’s name, sexual orientation, and intonation), but they mentioned instances when name-calling turn to harming each other physically (punching and pulling another kid’s hair).

Participation. Children do not know of any organization of or for children. The Gulayan-Pilapil Neighborhood Association, Inc. (GPNAI) has a youth committee, whose members were once mobilized by SM-ZOTO for the preparation of relief goods for families in communities affected by a strong typhoon.

Specific to relocation and the plans for the informal settler families, the children gather information from their parents and chitchatting neighbors. Some are aware of the proposed housing project of GPNAI in Barangay Panghulo. Others have heard that those whose parents are not members of GPNAI will be offered housing units in Bulacan.

The children have different views about their families’ relocation. If ever they will move to a new place, they want it to be more spacious and cleaner. Some expressed apprehension about living with new

Figure 12. Piles of sacks of pulp from a nearby cooking oil manufacturer serve as improvised path walk in Gulayan-Pilapil.
neighbors and leaving the place where they grew up. A teenage participant said he would expect children his age to participate in a riot if the demolition of houses is carried out violently. ■

D. Transition Community 4:
Pinatag, Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City

Pinatag is a relatively small community of informal settler families living on public land on the bank of the San Juan River. Surrounding it is a working class neighborhood of families who were awarded legal rights by the NHA during the administration of President Marcos; unfortunately, the residents of Pinatag are not part of this program. Right across the river is Barangay Roxas where an upper-class subdivision is located. Some members of the community have voluntarily dismantled their houses and accepted relocation in Bulacan, leaving some lots in the community vacant.

Figure 13. Pinatag is located across a gated village in Barangay Roxas. (SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH)

Health. Coughs, colds and fever are the common illnesses among the children in the community. Although the barangay health clinic is accessible, children say that most parents in Pinatag do not immediately bring sick children to the health center to consult a doctor or get some medicine. Within the community, the children mentioned Nemi’s Medical Clinic and Laboratory to be the most accessible and common facility for parents to have their children checked. The said clinic is also within their barangay. They can have their weight and height measured at the said clinic free-of-charge. For the older children, visiting the health center when they are not feeling well is not the usual practice (hindi uso), especially if they deem their condition as not that severe. In severe cases, the nearest hospitals to the community are privately-run and therefore costly: St. Luke’s Medical Center, Capitol Medical Center, and Delos Santos Medical Center.

Children who look for saleable scraps from the river are said to be most vulnerable to infections and other hazards such as drowning, but participants in the focus groups have not known a young mangangalakal who have fallen ill or got into an accident for staying in the river. Toddlers tend to go around the community without slippers and children in the focus groups know one whohas had gastro-intestinal worms.
Illnesses can also be due to the food that they eat, including food that has dropped to the ground. Instant noodles are a common meal for most children when their family is short of cash. An alternative is junk food in small packs mixed with soy sauce served as viand. Some children sprinkle chocolate and milk powder to add flavor to rice. While tap is the most common source of drinking water, children do not consider it as a potential cause of the illness because the water connection is not shared among households. Mineral water can be bought in the community at ₱1 per small glass of water. One girl prefers drinking mineral water because tap water has an odd, stale taste (*lasang kulob*).

Figure 14. Children use as their playground the areas vacated by renters who accepted government’s relocation offer.

**Education.** Younger children in Pinatag attend school at Gen. Roxas Elementary School in Barangay Roxas and Don Benito Legarda Elementary School in Sampaloc, Manila. The former can be reached by a tricycle while the latter via jeepney. Sometimes children opt to walk going home. According to an elementary school-age participant, the number of students per class ranges from 50 to 54 and they borrow books from the school. They have enough chairs inside the classroom. High school children attend Carlos L. Albert High School, Dr. Josefa Jara Martinez High School (located within their barangay) or Ramon Magsaysay High School in the city of Manila.

Not all children in the community go to school. They think that boys are more likely to drop out of school than girls because the former are addicted to computer games. In their school, some boys were reportedly caught smoking and using weeds, but they are confident that these children are not from Pinatag.

**Safety.** Houses in the community are made from sturdy materials, commonly a mix of wood and cement. Intense winds brought by a typhoon in July 2014 (local name: Glenda; international name: Rammasun) blew some roofs off the houses. For children, flooding in the community is an annual occurrence. Teenagers can still recall that the worst flood they experienced was in 2009 during the onslaught of tropical storm Ondoy. The most recent major flooding happened in September 2014 when tropical storm Mario (international name: Fung-Wong) slammed the island of Luzon and enhanced the rain-bearing southwest monsoon. Once the river overflows and the community gets flooded, families whose houses do not have second or third floors flee to King Solomon, an Episcopal church in Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. The children say that they are used to flooding but claim too that the floodwaters subside quickly.

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8 This was one reason why the remaining FGDs were postponed to October 2014.
Curfew starts at 10:00 in the evening and ends at 5:00 in the morning. But since curfew is implemented only for minors, this does not stop people in the community from having gambling sessions. Criminal elements who come from other places and hide in Pinatag and nearby communities to escape the police are also a source of fear among children. Also alarming for children are quarreling neighbors (one incident involved stabbing) and youth gangs having a row. A girl wondered how they can ever feel safe if there are such threats in their community, “Paano naman po kami magiging ligtas dito kung meron pong nagwawala dito, kung merong nagnanakaw? (How can we be safe here when there are people who pick a fight with others, when there are thieves?)” The barangay tanod patrols the vicinity to warn bystanders who stay up late and initiate fights as well as children caught playing kara-krus, a game considered to be illegal.

Areas vacated by families who volunteered to be relocated in Bulacan serve as recreational spaces for children in Pinatag. However, there is no fence to secure the lot or to prevent the children or anybody from accidentally falling or sliding into the river. Young boys play luksong baka (jumping over a hurdle), taguan (hide and seek), and tumbang preso (knocking down a tin can using slippers), while young girls play piko (hopscotch), dolls, and aswang-aswangan (a game where they act out as zombies and chase one another). For the older children, they also play bente-uno (a game of catching up players) and pogs (slamming of card discs). In addition, computer games are also common. Children regard places in their community where they play as unsafe and limited in terms of space. They also do not want to play on the streets; one of the participants was hit by a motorcycle and suffered a fracture.

Environment. Children say some residents—including those in the private village across the river—dump their garbage into the river. But it has been a practice for children to be instructed by their parents to bring their garbage to a certain corner of the community (sa kanto), where the garbage collectors pick up household trash twice or thrice a week. Children in the focus groups know a 12-year old child who collects garbage for a fee, depending on the weight of the garbage. This boy is sometimes joined by his 9-year old brother. Others simply burn their trash.

Family and community. Fathers in general work in construction projects or drive tricycles in the community. One participant mentioned that his father works abroad. Mothers, on the other hand, stay at home or provide laundry services. Some parents also engage in gambling such as kara-krus, video-karera, and tong-its, hoping to earn more money. Some children disagree with these ways of the parents, and feel that parents should spend for food. Children think that many parents in the community do not earn enough to be able to provide for the families’ needs. Although there are not that many in Pinatag, some children have become scavengers to supplement their parents’ income.

The children go to church and attend bible study groups where they are able to share whatever difficulties they experience inside their homes. During one of the discussions, the participants wanted
to be done with the focus group discussion to be able to attend the church service at Sto. Domingo Church.

Participation. The children are aware of the relocation program of the government because some families from their community have already relocated to Norzagaray, Bulacan. One expressed disagreement with the idea of being relocated. From what they know, a road will be constructed in Tatalon after the families have been relocated from their community.

Conversations between neighbors and their parents are the primary source of information for the children. No meeting has ever been called to explain the relocation plans to the children. They said that if they have a choice, they would prefer to stay in their present community because this is where they were born and they are happy. Also, their parents’ source of livelihood is in Barangay Tatalon. Older children express doubts about leaving the community. Some children said they already saw photos of the relocation site in Bulacan on the Internet and noted that facilities are not readily available. Younger children said that from what they heard, electricity in Norzagaray is not yet available. They want to transfer to a village that is flood-free, wifi-enabled, free of drug-dependent neighbors, where water and electricity are readily available, and that has a basketball court where they can play.

E. Transition Community 5
T. Gonzales, Barangay Gulod, Quezon City

At the cul-de-sac of T. Gonzales is a small neighborhood along the Tullahan River. Although their living conditions are not as bad as families in other slum communities in Metro Manila, residents in T. Gonzales face constant risk of flooding when the river overflows. It is for this reason that some families decided to have their names enlisted in the housing project initiated by the Gulod Urban Poor Alliance (GUPA). The housing project, called Ernestville, is located in a flood-free portion of Barangay Gulod.

Health. Children themselves admit that their eating habits are not that healthy. Many of them eat chips and drink soft drinks for snacks, and few like vegetables and fruits. The participants of the group discussions elaborated that eating of unhealthy food makes most children thin and underweight especially the younger ones. One of the girls said she was rushed to the hospital after having urinary tract infection (UTI) which she said was because of eating too much salty food. So that they are assured that their children drink clean water, some parents spend on purified water; others said tap water will do for drinking. According to girls and boys, there are parents who would rather spend their money on betting games, gambling, and other vices than on healthy meals.

Aside from poor diet, children say that they get sick because they are fond of playing under the rain (nalligo sa ulan), which makes them vulnerable to flu, cough, and colds. There have been incidences of dengue, which they attributed to clogged drainage (kanal) that are breeding grounds for dengue-carrying mosquitoes. They observe that people in the community tend to clean the drainage only when there is news of dengue. Among teenagers, boys are said to be more sickly than girls because they smoke cigarettes, among other unhealthy habits.

The barangay health center is located in Quirino Highway and within walking distance from T. Gonzales. Children who were brought by their parents to the health center say that there is a doctor and a nurse who attend to the patients. Although consultation is free of charge, children say their parents complain of the expenses for medical examination (e.g. blood test) and for the medicines prescribed to them. The nearest hospital is in Novaliches Bayan, which is one jeepney ride away from the community.
As in any low-income community, children suffer from poor oral health. None of the children in the focus groups has ever visited a dentist. When they have toothache, they resort to pulling their tooth manually by tying a thread to it and the other end to a doorknob and then rapidly closing the door. They are afraid of visiting a dentist because they think it would be a painful experience.

Education. Elementary school pupils cross a highway overpass to go to the Rosa Susano Elementary School. They say that their classrooms are well-ventilated and that there are enough books for them. High school students, on the other hand, have to take either a jeepney or a tricycle to go to San Bartolome High School or Doña Rosario High School. Teenagers who go to these schools are satisfied with the size of their classrooms and the facilities they use. Books and chairs are adequate although in very classes, children have to share these with one another.

Still there are children in the community who do not go to school usually because their parents cannot afford school expenses (including daily allowances) or children have lost interest. Children in the focus groups think that boys are more likely to skip classes or to stop going to school than girls; boys, they say, are distracted by their peers and computer games. They know some teenage girls who spend more time with their boyfriends rather than study.

Safety. The basketball court in T. Gonzales is also a place for girls to play volleyball. Because the court is frequented by older children, young ones play outdoor games in a vacated lot at the end of the neighborhood called “likod”, the yard in the middle of the compound which also serves as parking space for motorcycles and bicycles, and the cul-de-sac of the street under the camachile tree. Their favorite games include patintero, soccer, tumbang preso, tagu-taguan, and bente-uno. However, the younger children note that the adults in their community tend to use the court more often such that the children sometimes lose the opportunity to play. Girls and boys play most games together but one girl participant said physical games become occasions for some boys to make a pass at girls (tsansing).

When they have some coins left from their school allowance or when their parents give them extra money, children go to a computer shop to play online games or watch videos. One participant is concerned that there are children who watch videos in YouTube which she considers as obscene (“bastos”). When this happens, she goes out of the computer shop and play with friends.
Because no curfew is being enforced in their community, children can stay outside up to the wee hours of the evening. No barangay tanod or police patrol the streets at night. Older children usually go home at midnight while younger ones are expected by their parents to be at home earlier than 8:00 in the evening. So that it will be safe for residents, especially children, to walk outside, parents contributed money for the installation of a light post.

The community has no experience of fire but the children mentioned that most electricity connection are illegal (jumper). This, according to the children, usually causes conflict between families.

![Figure 17. Children play in the basketball court or a vacant area at the end portion of the community.](image)

**Environment.** Children are aware of the risk the river poses to their community. When it rains, they begin to worry when they hear announcements that the La Mesa Dam will be releasing water once it overflows. As far as they could remember, it was when tropical storm Ondoy hit Metro Manila that the river swelled to a level that inundated all the houses in T. Gonzales. On that fateful day, families fled to designated evacuation centers or to relatives whose houses were not affected. The traumatic experience forced some families to go home to their provinces. Five years later, T. Gonzales and many communities in Barangay Gulod again went underwater when typhoon Mario enhanced the southwest monsoon that dumped excessive volume of rain in Metro Manila.

**Family and community.** The fathers in the community usually work as construction workers, security guards or drivers of public utility vehicles such as jeepneys. The mothers, on the other hand, stay at home to take care of the children while some tend their own sari-sari store. Some engage in selling beauty products. A nearby factory also employs some of the mothers. The women also engage in vending viands and vegetables in the community or in the market in Novaliches Bayan. While parents have these sources of livelihood, the children said that not all of their needs are well provided for,
especially healthy and nutritious food, and supplies for school. To address this, some parents borrow food from stores or money from neighbors; another source of cash is the paluwagan.9

One non-material need that a participant pointed out is equal regard for the children in the family. Children mention that parents punish them by spanking, and for some, they feel they are not loved by their parents that they considered leaving the house. So they make amends with their parents by performing household chores. Moreover, they contribute to the family income by manning the sari-sari store, repacking charcoal for retail, and fetching water for other families. Some go to the river to collect scrap materials to be sold, although the participants think this is dangerous.

Participation. Not all families living in T. Gonzales will be relocating to Ernestville. According to some children, their parents cannot afford the expenses and amortization payment if they are to live in Ernestville. Children who will be relocating to Ernestville said they feel happy, excited even, to know that floods will no longer be a problem in their new home. Although they are excited to be relocated, there still have some concerns such as less opportunity to have fun because making noise is not allowed and fireworks ("paputok") are prohibited. Moreover, the families will not be allowed to use the videoke. One thing they will miss about their present community is the Christmas party with other families because they do not know if their current neighbors will still be their neighbors in their new place of residence.

The children expect other positive things occurring after relocation. These include a more systematic garbage disposal system, more regular pick-up of the garbage truck, a place to hang their clothes at the back of their houses, and less risk of fire because each house will have its own electricity connection. However, they are not aware if construction has already started or when they will be relocating. When asked whether they have attended any meeting where relocation was discussed, they could not remember attending any such meeting.

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9 *Paluwagan* is an informal pooled fund where members contribute a certain amount on a regular basis. The members of the group take turns in receiving the amount of the pooled fund collected.
Pandi Residences is one of the recent housing projects of the NHA to which informal settler families from cities in the northern part of Metro Manila are resettled. It is located about 40 kilometers away from Manila. It takes at least one hour by bus and jeepney from Quezon City to reach the place, and it costs some ₱120 for a two-way trip. The housing project, which comprises three phases, will have at least 3,000 units when completed, of which at least 500 have been occupied by families from various points of origin including Malabon, Valenzuela, Manila, San Juan, and Quezon City.

Housing condition. For children who used to live in shacks in their previous place of residence, their new house is a huge improvement. One said, “Nagulat po [ako], dahil napakaganda po, napakalinis po (I was astounded because the house is very nice and clean).” Children look forward to the day that their parents will have enough money to build a mezzanine so that they do not have to sleep on the floor. The NHA allows building a mezzanine only after one year of occupancy, and when families start paying their monthly amortization. However, in some cases, the units to which they had been assigned when they arrived were not finished (no jalousies, no door, and rough floor) or had minor defects (leaking roofs).

Children who came from communities with constant threat of flooding expressed relief that they are out of harm’s way. A teenage girl said: “Nakakatulog na kami nang maayos kahit sa sahig lang (We can now sleep well even if we lie only on the floor).” For those who experienced flooding, relocation has given them peace of mind. This view is shared by one mother. She could not hold her emotions when she remembered how she and her children had to brave the rising waters and lost their house to the furious current of the Tullahan River. She was thankful that they were relocated in June 2014; otherwise, they would have been among the families who were affected by the heavy monsoon rains that occurred in September.

In their previous community, children endured the fetid odor of the river and complained about the trash scattered outside their homes. They said their new community is much cleaner, and there is more space to move around compared to the cramped situation in their old community.
Supply of electricity and water surfaced as a major concern among children. The families in Phases 2 and 3 have yet to have their own electrical connection. Temporary electricity is available from around 6:00 in the evening to 5:00 the following morning, so they could not watch their favorite morning and afternoon TV shows. Because they cannot watch television during the day, children loiter around while some parents pass the time playing card games or chitchatting with neighbors. Relocated families were told not to use refrigerators and other high wattage appliances to avoid power overloading. Heat inside their houses can be very oppressive during summer such that children recollected an old woman suffering a heat stroke. Another difference is that they now have to fetch water from the well or wait for the delivery trucks. Because families still do not have their own supply of water, they buy purified water for drinking and wait for the delivery trucks of the project builder that ration water for other uses. Even parents could not say when water will run through their faucets.

Children could not help but compare their new community to where they came from. While they have better houses and a more spacious place, recreation places (pasyalan) such as shopping malls, parks, and fast food stores are very distant. Public markets are not as accessible as those they used to go to in their previous place of residence.

Because construction is ongoing, dust can be intense under sunny and dry weather. When it rains, mud from an undeveloped part of the project site flows to some portions of Phase 2. Nevertheless, the children said these are tolerable compared to having to wade through floods in their old community.

![Figure 19. Relocated families are assigned units that are ready-to-occupy but no electricity and water supply.](image)

**Health.** Although Barangay Mapulang Lupa has its own health center, some relocatees prefer the public clinic in Barangay Bunsuran II. They reported experiencing discrimination from barangay officials and personnel of Mapulang Lupa, who regard relocatees as “squatters,” a derogatory term for many. (In one dialogue between the homeowners association and the barangay government officials, it was explained that the barangay was not “prepared” for the sudden increase in the population to be supported by health services. The number of relocated families far exceeded the household population of the barangay.)

Children view boys as more exposed to sickness because they are more physically active. They observe that there are quite a number of skinny children, because of poor diet and negligent parents.
In Phase 2, some parents attribute the skin rashes and itchiness of some children to the water they fetch from a deep well. Head lice have become common among girls. In terms of diet, some families eat rice with packed snacks, which cost one peso per pack; softdrinks are also a favorite of the children.

For older children, access to the market (to buy other kinds of food), health centers, and hospitals is necessary to ensure that children are healthy. A teenage girl who had gastrointestinal infection was brought back to Malabon because the parents could not afford the high cost of a medical check-up in a nearby private clinic. The girl explained that it is better to go to a public hospital in Malabon because doctors do not charge any fee and some medicines are given for free. The children added that even if life had been difficult in their previous place, it was easy for parents to look for food and ask for help from neighbors and relatives. One commented in jest, “Dati manok ang ulam, ngayon wala na (We used to be able to eat chicken but not anymore).”

**Education.** It took almost eight months until a row of housing units in Phase 2 was converted to an annex of the Mapulang Lupa Elementary School (MPES). The increase in the student population and the observed frequent absences of pupils from Phase 2 prompted the conversion. Children in Phases 2 and 3 used to walk long distances or spend five pesos on tricycles to go to the MPES, which is almost half a kilometer away from the gate of Phase 1. High school students are enrolled at the Virginia Ramirez-Cruz High School in Barangay Siling Bata, which can be reached by taking a tricycle.

It did not take them a long time for children to transfer to their new schools, although it meant a huge deal of adjustment to new classmates and the new environment. They note that the schools in Pandi pale in comparison to their former schools in terms of size of classrooms and facilities. They describe the elementary school as “parang sa probinsya” (like in the provinces), without realizing that Pandi is a second class rural municipality. High school students said they had to pay ₱300 for school fees and uniform.

In some classes in the main elementary school, pupils leave their textbooks so that those in the afternoon shift can use them. A boy who studies in the annex said in one of his classes, he shares...
one book with four others. A girl said that some parents have donated electric fans for students to feel comfortable.

Few older boys who either have no means or have become disinterested in going to school work as helpers in the construction sites. They carry hollow blocks or mix cement and sand.

Safety. Even when the basketball court in Phase 2 has been completed, the children said the streets will remain as their playgrounds, which for them are better and wider compared to where they used to play in their old place. After school, they play basketball and patintero (a game where players cross lines without getting caught), chase each other, and hang out with friends. For some, it is safe to play outside because only motorcycles and tricycles pass by, and children immediately move to the side. There was one incident though that a young girl got hit by a tricycle. In some blocks, children play with caution when dogs linger. In the evening, children are not allowed by their parents to play or walk around because street lights have yet to be installed by the project builder.

Older girls said that they do not feel secure in their new community. Unlike in their previous place where they could navigate easily and they know almost all their neighbors, the resettlement site is fraught with dangers because they would encounter idling boys who would tease them (nangti-trip). In their previous place, children reported having been teased by older children but the teasing did not reach the point of intimidation or harassment. Effeminate boys and boyish girls receive the most jokes in the resettlement site but the children try not to mind these remarks.

They have also heard stories of fighting neighbors. In one instance, a man pointed a gun and the other had an itak (a bolo knife). The children also mentioned incidences of theft and burglary, especially in remote blocks. They have heard of an incident of rape. They claimed these offenses are common among residents who used to live in Tondo, a place in Manila known for its reputation for crime.

Going to computer shops has become worrisome for high school students because unlike before where the shops are only a few steps away from their house, now they have to go outside the resettlement site to get to the computer shop along the main highway to use the internet when they have to do research or homework. For younger children, the forested perimeter of the resettlement
site—heightened by the absence of street lights—conjures up images of mystical and scary creatures (e.g., *aswang* and *multo*). This forces pupils to hurry home after school.

Until the project is finished, the project developer deploys a hired security force that guards the main gate and goes around the community. To augment the security force of the private developer (their main concern are the facilities and office of the construction company), the homeowners association mobilize “block leaders” who volunteer to ensure safety and security in their respective blocks. Residents, however, report more serious disputes to the officers of the homeowners association. In Phase 1, the president takes care of resolving spats, while the vice president responds to such problems in Phases 2 and 3. (In one visit, almost all of the officers of the homeowners association were busy attending to four children whose stepfather had been physically hurting them over wasted milk.) When the *barangay tanod* do their rounds and catch loitering children during the curfew period, the parents are summoned to fetch their children from the barangay hall.

**Coping strategies.** Many of the working family members, mostly fathers, retained their work in the place from where they were evicted. Children feel sad that they do not see their fathers as often as they did before; fathers usually go home on weekends to save on transportation expenses. Working family members either stay with relatives or sleep in whatever was left of their demolished houses. Other parents either ventured into tending a store, vending or other livelihood activities, or went jobless. Some children are aware of the difficulty their parents are going through to make ends meet given very few employment or livelihood opportunities. On this aspect, some children thought their families would be better off in their previous place, save for the risks posed by the river.

Because of the absence of the fathers, the mothers are the ones disciplining their children more often. As before, stubborn children are spanked with clothes hangers, belts, or slippers. Some mentioned their hair is pulled or they are pinched. Children said they would rather be scolded than be hurt physically.

They know of a few children who engage in paid work such as *pangangalakal* (collecting and selling) of plastics and bottles. One family in Phase 2 was among the few who were contracted to make floor mats and pot holders. Whenever free, some children weave rags and holders. Some boys, claimed to be as young as 12 years old, receive a few pesos for hauling wheelbarrows of sand and gravel or bringing hollow blocks to the construction site, which children consider as harmful.

To avoid skipping meals, some families borrow cash or buy on credit food such as rice, bread, canned food, coffee, milk, and even packed snacks from the *sari-sari* store. Some families have cultivated their vacant plots for growing vegetables like *sitaw* (string bean), *ampalaya* (bitter gourd), *talong* (eggplant), and *kamote* tops.

When their parents have money, they visit their relatives such as grandparents as well as their friends whose houses were not demolished. A teenage girl said she misses her group in their church in Malabon; she was a member of the Legion of Mary, an organization of Catholic volunteers, but there is no such group in Pandi.

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**G. Resettlement Site 2**

*Golden Horizon Resettlement Site, Barangay Hugo Perez, Trece Martires City, Cavite*

From the rotunda that marks the entrance of the resettlement project, a few hundred meters from the provincial road, Golden Horizon appears as a vast, rolling field of neatly aligned houses, which according to the NHA would number 7,000 when completed. As of May 2014, a total of 2,056 families had been relocated, and the household population has been increasing week by week as the local and national governments aggressively implement OPLAN LIKAS. As in any resettlement project of the government, occupants come from different areas. In Golden Horizon, residents come mostly from
the southern parts of Metro Manila, including Pasay, Parañaque, Makati, and Mandaluyong. Travel from Manila via the South Luzon Expressway (which includes taking a bus, then a jeepney from a terminal at a shopping center, and finally a tricycle from the main highway) normally takes one and a half hours.

Figure 22. Golden Horizon Resettlement Site is located on a hilly part of Barangay Hugo Perez. Note that not a single tree stands in the housing project.

Housing condition. Where they came from, the flood water could reach levels that can easily drown children. In Golden Horizon, the children feel safer because their houses are far from the creek, and the housing project is on the hills. In some blocks, however, rainwater collects at the backyard because of inadequate drainage. For those who used to live in shacks made of light and salvaged materials, the concrete, one-bedroom houses are much better. Some have small gardens in front of their units.

The surroundings are also much cleaner compared to their previous place. To keep at least one portion of the resettlement site clean, the Samahan ng Kabataang Maasahan (SKM or Organization of Reliable Youth), a group with more than 50 members, used to conduct weekly clean-up drives. However, because of organizational issues, the group has become inactive. Children worry, however, that as more families come in, more garbage will be generated and will cause problems if left poorly managed.

A boy in the focus group said he was very excited to relocate after losing their house in a fire in Makati. Some children admitted that at first they were not as excited because they heard that aswang (feared mythical creatures) linger in the resettlement site as they also heard that it used to be a cemetery. Upon their arrival, however, they said they were happy to see the spacious place and neat rows of houses. A 9-year old girl said she prefers their new house and would not want to go back to the “squatters’ area.”

Not all units have been installed with individual electric meters. Those without electricity are given supply through the main meter operated by the project developer from 6:00 in the evening to 6:00 in the morning of the following day. To avoid accidents due to power overloading, families are not allowed to use appliances other than light bulbs and electric fans. Children as well as parents noted
that there are days when the power supply is erratic and becomes available later in the evening. Supply had become regular in some blocks since February 2014.

Children also said that the market, medical clinics, churches, and hospitals are too far. These are located in the main city center which is about four kilometers away from the community. So that Catholics can attend Sunday mass, the NHA allowed the parish church to hold a mass once a month at the open space next to the headquarters of the NHA and the project developer. The main Catholic church and chapel of the Iglesia ni Cristo are in the city proper. Born Again Christians travel to Imus to participate in their weekly church service.

Education. At the time of the research, the construction of the three-story school building was ongoing. According to the NHA, the school is supposed to be finished by July or August 2014 but as of the latest information, children still go to the Hugo Perez Elementary School (HPES), which is almost two kilometers away from the community. Getting to the school can be an ordeal for children who used to go to their previous schools within shorter distance. If children have ten pesos, they ride the tricycle to go to school; they usually go in groups of four or five so that the driver can recover his gas expenses. Parents who can afford it contract tricycle drivers to ferry children to HPES usually for ₱400 per month. Others walk for 30 minutes and cross the busy highway to go to the school. The Trece Martires City National High School, which is located in the city proper, is much farther. High school students have to take a tricycle twice, and spend ₱18 for a one-way trip. Because there are no light posts along the road, it has become a rule for those who walk to return home immediately after school and usually with peers.

It took weeks for some children to transfer to their new school. One boy said his mother had to go back to Parañaque to get his school report card, which HPES requires from transferees. It took several days from the day her family relocated before one girl could attend school because her parents could not buy her notebooks, pens, and other school items.

Children were as surprised as the school administrators on the first day of the school year of 2014. In some classes, the number of students was as high as 90. Some resorted to using the basketball court
to hold classes. The problem was resolved a few days later after school officials figured out ways to even out the number of students per class.

College students stay with their relatives in their old community or, if their parents can afford it, live in boarding houses to continue their studies. Some children, because they were relocated in the middle of the school year, have to temporarily stay with their relatives in their old place until they complete the school year.

![Figure 24. As of May 2014, the school building was under construction.](image)

Health. The resettlement site does not have a barangay health center. One girl participant in the focus group had to be brought to the Genti Doctors Medical Center, a private hospital, after boiling water was accidently poured on her back. To get to the hospital, residents bring their patients to the main highway first by tricycle then by a jeepney. Neither the NHA nor the developer has an emergency vehicle that residents can use to bring patients needing immediate medical attention.

Colds, cough, headache, and sore eyes are among the illnesses that children identified as common among them. Some also complain of dizziness especially when the day’s heat is at its peak. Not a single tree can be found in the housing project, so sunny days would mean enduring the heat and their skin becoming darker. They heard a few children in the “yellow houses” (clusters are named based on the color of the outer walls) who had dengue. Children are aware that it is the lack of budget that forces some families to resort to eating rice with packed snacks, street food, salt, and soy sauce. Children with this diet, in turn, are less healthy than others. Nonetheless, others expect their health to improve because they are no longer living near a polluted river or a polluted highway.

Some families who cannot afford to buy purified drinking water, which costs ₱25 per five-gallon container, resort to drinking tap water. They heard of one child who had stomachache after drinking tap water, which they noticed is not clear and had an unpleasant odor. “Madumi pa… parang panghugas lang talaga siya ng pinggan at panligo (Not that clear… can be used only for washing dishes and taking a bath).”

Safety. According to the officers of the homeowners association, the vacant lots in front of the NHA satellite office will be converted to covered basketball courts, playgrounds, and a flea market. At present, children and adults alike use these spaces for playing basketball and volleyball. In the
meantime—and it is likely that this will continue to be the case—children use the streets to play. For many of them, the street in front of their houses is a great place to chase other children and play games. Some also play inside unfinished and unoccupied units. One boy, recounting his and his playmates’ need to get out of the *looban* to play outside their neighborhood before, remarked, “*Malaya po kami ditol*! (We are free here!)” Nevertheless, they are aware that vehicles, mostly tricycles, passing by as well as stray dogs supposedly prohibited by the NHA, pose a danger to them. Children do not discriminate on who they play with. The boys, for example, would allow boyish girls to play basketball with them, adding that these girls are more skillful.

The project developer has its own security force to which altercations are reported. An outpost was set up at the rotunda but it does not always have security personnel on duty. Starting at 10 in the evening, these hired guards patrol the project site to ensure peace and order. Despite this, children reported that robbery has become more frequent since their relocation. Children consider domestic quarrels to be a security problem. In one instance, fighting parents threw items at each other, and neighbors went to pacify them. They have also heard of stabbing incidents. One child said there are no more drunken men in Golden Horizon, and if there were and they would cause trouble, the security guards of the project developer will immediately come to maintain peace and order.

Older children, especially those who belong to a *barkada* (clique) gather in unfinished units or in the concealed spaces at the back of houses. Although none of the children in the focus groups had been apprehended by the guards for violating the curfew, they heard of other boys who were brought to the outpost and instructed to clean a long portion of the road as a punishment.

Children used to play and bathe in the river that surrounds the community until the NHA ordered the project developer to put up a fence of chicken wire to prevent children from going there. Early in 2014, a five-year-old girl from Parañaque City fell in the creek because she chased her slippers that got carried away by the water one rainy day. The girl died. This caused alarm among parents and sowed fear among children.

![Figure 25. Residents put up volleyball nets and temporary basketball rings (not in photo) in vacant spaces.](image)

They mentioned a group of boys who mug other children. “*Kapag dumadaan po ako d’yan sa baba, maraming bumabarag na bata sa akin… Hinijinga po kami ng pera… Marami po sila e, ‘yung iba po matatangkad, yung iba po hindi.* (When I walk there in the lower blocks, there is a group of kids who’d
block me and force me to give them money. There are many of them, some are tall, the others are not that tall." In their first months, children would not experience teasing but as they become more familiar with one another, teasing becomes more frequent. Name calling based on physical appearance and behavior is common. There were times that children physically hurt one another. “Aasarín ka po tapos papaluin ka pa… sa braso (They will tease then slap your arm).”

Children reported parents inflicting pain as a way to discipline them for misbehavior (not following errands) or stubbornness (going to the creek). Some had been hit with cable wire, wooden stick, bamboo stick, and clothes hanger. Some parents would twist their children’s ears or pinch them. One child shared a story of his cousin who was slapped so hard that he could no longer move. “Muntikan na po siyang mamatay. Malikot din kasi siya, eh… Tinulak siya ng papa niya para makagalaw, tapos sinigawan sa tenga para magulat. (He almost died. Well, he was stubborn to begin with… His father pushed him and shouted at his ears so that he could gain consciousness.)” It hurt one teenage child to be scolded and told that she was walang kuwenta (good for nothing).

Coping strategies. To feed their children, parents leave them to work in Metro Manila, either continuing with their old occupation or finding a new one. The NHA designated a space outside its office for announcements of job and employment opportunities in Trece Martires and surrounding towns. Skills training and livelihood seminars are also conducted for those who intend to have home-based enterprises. Whether these interventions have been effective is another story, but almost all children in the focus groups said that their parents are having a hard time finding work in the new community. One child said, “…Nawalan po ang papa ko ng trabaho [kaya] naging mas mahrap ang pagkakaroon ng pagkain (My father lost his job so having food on the table has become more difficult).” Earning money, no matter how meager, is easier where they came from. None of the children interviewed experience hunger but they know of others who skip meals or resort to eating fish crackers that lack nutrition. Some mothers are forced to borrow rice and sardines from the sari-sari stores (one can find at least one per block).

Earning money has become a challenge for many parents in Golden Horizon, and all children cited this as one reason for their dismay. In their previous place, one child said, “Masagana po ang hanapbuhay ng aming mga magulang sa dati naming lugar (Our parents earned well where we used to live).” One child said that at first she was excited but upon realizing the distance of the housing project to where her parents work, she got disappointed. “Masaya noong hindi ko pa po alam na walang hanapbuhay dito. (I was happy until I realized that having work is difficult here.)” Without sufficient incomes, families skip meals and neglect the children’s health and education. Another said, “Madali po ang pera doon, madali pong humanap ng trabaho” (It is easy to look for a job there and to earn money).

Some fathers who managed to get a job in the block under construction bring with them their older sons to also work. Children know of 14- to 16-year old boys, some of whom are out of school, who take home a few pesos after carrying hollow blocks and mixing cement. Work usually starts at 7:00 in the morning and ends at 4:00 in the afternoon. Others, mostly boys who are not attending school, go around the housing project to collect and sell to a roaming junk buyer items they have collected such as plastic packaging (₱15 per kilogram), tin can (₱5 per kilogram), and glass bottles (₱15 per kilogram). Younger children accompany their mothers in selling cooked food, which is very lucrative because residents would rather not travel to the distant market to buy food. Although they considered these activities as potentially dangerous—one can break an arm from carrying concrete blocks or might get infected when cut by tin or broken glass—they viewed these as helpful to the families, especially when parents have no work.

Children know no boys or girls who use drugs such as marijuana and shabu although some scavengers reportedly buy and sniff rugby to ease their hunger. ■
Chapter 4
Perceived and Actual Effects of Relocation on the Rights of Children

A. Access to medical services as well as basic services spells a difference in children’s health in both transition communities and resettlement sites.

Health risks in informal settlements, particularly those along waterways, are numerous for obvious reasons. Sanitation facilities, sewerage systems, drainages, and ventilation in these communities are far below the standards set for achieving an acceptable state of wellbeing. Further investigation, however, will be needed to determine whether children will be healthier if they are transferred from an environment with poor sanitation and exposed to pollution to a resettlement site which is cleaner and more spacious. For example, relocated children obviously benefit from better air quality in their new community in Bulacan or Cavite. A better drainage system could also mean reduced exposure to diseases. Also worth looking into is the health-seeking behavior among low-income families (for example, curative rather than preventive measures are normally sought and taken), which influences the extent parents prioritize children’s health vis-à-vis other daily needs. These are behavioral aspects, analyzed along with other dimensions such as household incomes and level of education, that beg for attention.

Nevertheless, the lack and inaccessibility of health facilities in resettlement sites, as was found in the two resettlement sites, should be taken as an indicator of the impact of resettlement on children’s health. Children and parents in resettlement sites mentioned the high cost of transport to be able to consult a doctor or get emergency health care. Aside from this, the financial capacity of parents, who mostly have unstable sources of income, if at all, and bury themselves in debt, undermine their ability to go to and avail of services in the clinics and hospitals, especially if the nearest ones are privately-run institutions. In transition communities, healthcare is largely within the families’ reach in terms of proximity being within walking distance, and affordability. The nearby public hospitals charge minimal fees, and some health centers provide free consultations and medicines.

The availability of safe drinking water and regular supply of electricity also impact on the children’s health. In transition communities, water, whether from the tap or bought from refilling stations, is available and generally safe to drink. In resettlement areas, water supply is irregular and the quality somewhat poor. Assuming that families pay their bills on time, electricity runs uninterrupted in the homes in transition communities unlike in resettlement sites where, at least in the first few months, families have to rely on scheduled and insufficient supply. Insufficient or contaminated water, as well as unreliable supply of electricity, can lead to poor health, illnesses, and added medical costs that will cut deep into the pockets of parents.

Aside from the issue of access to services and availability of water and electricity, the readiness of the local government hosting the resettlement sites also has to be taken into account when assessing how resettlement impacts on children’s health. Although the perceived discrimination against relocated families by the barangay officials in Barangay Mapulang Lupa in Pandi is not justifiable, the
concern raised by the latter about the lack of budget for medical services in the barangay health center is valid. OPLAN LIKAS does not include a budget for social services (except perhaps the construction of schools) that relocatees have the right to access and avail. Neglect of the provision of adequate and accessible health services is a persistent flaw in government resettlement programs.

The elimination of one health risk (e.g., air pollution, floods) is not the only rationale for a program that intends to keep families away from harm’s way. Unfortunately, the present program does not provide access to services that will allow them to have better health. In-city resettlement somehow prevents the occurrence of the problem of access to health services.

B. Resettlement poses a serious threat to children’s education.

As in the case of achieving good health, access is the primary issue to having quality education. Low-income families in the transition communities are constantly faced with financial constraints that have a negative impact on the children’s education. The presence of public schools where parents do not have to spend that much for education thus serves as some guarantee of greater chances for the children to attend school. And this is closely connected to the proximity of educational institutions—from elementary schools to colleges—to their communities. Many schools in transition communities are within walking distance or a jeepney-ride away from where the children live. It does not help that no schools are available inside the resettlement sites at the time of the relocation of the families to Pandi and Trece Martires. Relocated children either walk prohibitive distances to go to their schools or pay more than their families can afford for transport. More distant schools also expose relocated children to increased danger when crossing highways or passing by a dark street.

Moreover, although the research did not delve into this aspect, the quality of education in cities, especially in Metro Manila, is presumed to be better in general than those in the barangays where relocatees from Malabon, Quezon City, and Pasay were transferred. Relocated children were quick to mention the stark difference between their new and previous schools in terms of size of classrooms, adequacy of books, and overall environment.

The conduct of resettlement can also disrupt in the schooling of children. Although the law does not prohibit the conduct of demolition and relocation on weekdays when children have school, a day skipped in school means a missed opportunity. Not being able to transfer easily to a new school, as was the case for some children in the resettlement sites who were not able to present report cards or did not have money to buy school items, means days and even weeks of not having learned certain subject matters in school.

In Trece Martires, children spoke about boys as young as 14 years old working in the construction site. Numbers would be relevant to substantiate this point, but suffice it to say that dropping out of school is a reality in both transition communities and resettlement sites, and it emerges as a more difficult choice in the latter where the demand and opportunities for work and the need to supplement family income are greater.

C. Resettlement will keep children away from danger’s harm in the waterways.

For those in transition communities, the children expect to live in their own decent house in the resettlement area which is not prone to floods and will protect them from the adverse consequences of natural calamities. After all, as they have been told, these are the very reasons they are to be relocated in the first place. They look forward to wide spaces where children will be allowed to run around and play, and to clean surroundings since it will be a newly-developed housing site or community.

Those who have been transferred already, however, find the weather very warm in their new home and community, especially because of the absence of plants and trees around the area. “Mainit at
nakakatim” (It is so hot, and one could turn dark in complexion because of the exposure to the sun), commented the participants coming from both resettlement sites in Pandi, Bulacan and Trece Martires in Cavite.

D. Resettlement addresses certain safety and security concerns experienced in transition communities, but the new community also poses other risks to children and their families.

Having a house of their own, the children look forward to a more secure place, and less exposure to bad influences. On the other hand, they could not help but feel fearful or anxious since they do not know what kind of neighbors they will have. They hope though that there will be security guards or personnel around to ensure people’s safety in the community.

Those who have relocated shared that while they may feel safe from the perennial floods that frequently occurred in their previous community, some of the houses awarded are not completely done yet. Some have no doors or windows; anyone can hence easily enter the houses. Having no electricity yet, it is very dark when night time comes, and they worry about possible or occasional thefts.

Particular to the resettlement site in Pandi, Bulacan, the newly transferred families said that they felt some discrimination from those who came ahead to the place. They are dealt with differently, and passed judgment on by the earlier entrants in the community. The homeowners association president shared, “May diskriminasyon sa mga bagong dating. Kakaiba ang pakikitungo sa amin; parang may paghuhusga tungkol sa pinanggalingan naming lugar. (Relocatees experience discrimination. We are treated differently. We feel like we are being judged because of the kind of place where we used to live.)”

E. Relocation poses a threat to sources of income of already vulnerable families.

For children in transition communities, their foremost concern is the livelihood of their parents and sources of income for their family. With relocation, parents working in construction or driving utility vehicles in the city may lose their jobs; if they continued with their work, going to work would cost more in terms of travel time and fare. Fathers who depend on being a barker will ultimately have to look for another source of income.

If relocation poses a threat to the source of livelihood of the fathers, the same can be said for the mothers. Mothers, who accept laundry services in the transition communities, may temporarily stop taking laundry since water and electricity connection in the resettlement sites, as seen in the cases of Pandi Residences and Golden Horizon, are unstable and intermittent at best. This was also expressed by children in the community of Pinatag from what they heard about the resettlement site in Norzagaray, Bulacan. Children in Potrero saw how some parents from the relocation are able to return to their community to work, leaving their children in the care of neighbors. Sources of livelihood that depend on a reliable supply of electricity (e.g., operating computer shops) may also be disrupted.

There are also threats to the well-being of families moving to in-city relocation sites, albeit of a different nature. An example is the community of T. Gonzales where families are to be resettled in Ernestville which is within the same barangay. While parents may not lose their jobs because of the proximity of the new site to livelihood opportunities, a portion of the income of the family originally devoted for their daily basic needs will have to be allotted for the payment of the monthly amortization for the house. It was mentioned by one participant that not all families from T. Gonzales would be included in the Ernestville project since not all of them can afford the amortization. Another would be the expected increase in expenses in electricity if the previous electrical connection is not legal (i.e., “jumper”). Lastly, some internal regulations of the community association may also pose threats to the resident’s capacity to earn such as if there is a policy wherein only one store is allowed per block.
Now residing in the resettlement sites of Pandi Residences and Golden Horizon, parents have to travel back to the city to continue with their previous work, incurring increased costs for transportation. Some have changed their jobs while others lost their jobs altogether. Among those who have retained their work, staying in the city with a relative and going home in the resettlement site once or twice a week is the usual set-up.

With limited livelihood and income opportunities, parents borrow food from stores in the resettlement site. The older children work to help augment the income of the family by engaging in construction jobs within the resettlement site and collecting scraps to be sold. A participant in Golden Horizon even described their previous economic condition to be better than the current one.

F. Resettlement opens opportunities for participation of children, but in practice, children have not been involved in a meaningful way.

Children from the five transition communities source their information on relocation from informal conversations involving parents and neighbors. Some mentioned that their mothers told them about relocation. They have never attended any meeting that discussed the agenda of relocation. Information on the resettlement site and houses where they will be transferring are obtained from informal gatherings and pictures they have seen.

It is noted, however, that there are cases where groups of children are organized and participate in the action planning of the community. Examples include AKKAP and YMETCO which are youth organizations in Barangays 143 and 144 in Pasay City. The children who participate in the action planning activities are limited to the members of the organization.

Similar to the experiences in transition communities, the children from the two resettlement sites note that prior to relocation, no meeting was conducted to explain the purpose and process of the relocation.

In Golden Horizon, the children mentioned the presence of a youth organization called Samahan ng Kabataang Maaasahan. It currently has 50 members and was established in early 2014. The goal of the organization is to keep their surroundings clean (“maging malinis naman ang paligid”). According to the children, this youth organization conducts meetings and devotes their Saturdays for conducting a clean-up drive within the resettlement site. To be a member, a young person fills out a form. However, internal issues have prevented the organization from performing the weekly clean-up.

During the session on participatory data analysis, members of AKKAP and YMETCO, who have been resettled to Golden Horizon, expressed their interest to continue their activities as youth groups.
The process of resettlement involves not only the families or communities to be resettled but also other stakeholders such as the government, NGOs, and private groups. The various processes and activities undertaken and coordinated among these different stakeholders are intended to help the affected families realize an improved quality of life in their new community. Implementing the government’s relocation program, however, leaves much to be desired. Following a description of the actions taken by various stakeholders, gaps are identified for the purpose of enhancing the resettlement program of the government particularly in terms of promoting and protecting the rights of one of the most vulnerable population being affected—the children.

### A. Actions Taken

**Government** The aim of the government’s resettlement program is to provide safe and decent housing for families living along waterways. The Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) of 1992 provides that community consultations should be held prior to actual relocation. Indeed, families from both the transition communities and resettlement sites were consulted. However, the frequency and the quality of these meetings, facilitated primarily by the city government through its Urban Poor Affairs Office or similar bodies and with logistical support from the barangay office depend on the openness of government officials to engage with communities in a dialogue.

Household heads—or their spouses or partners if the household head is working—attend these meetings. In the sites visited, the children did not participate at all in the formal consultations; they learned about the plans only from informal conversations among neighbors and peers. In the case of Barangay 143 and 144, AKKAP and YMETCO were able to seek an audience with city government officials a month before their relocation. In this meeting, the children and their parents were able to raise questions to representatives of various local and national government sitting in the LIAC, which included the PCUP, NHA, DILG, the City Social Welfare and Development Department, as well as barangay officials. It was also a venue for affected residents, including children, to propose measures to make the conduct of relocation less distressing.\(^\text{10}\)

On the actual date of relocation, a Relocation Action Center (RAC) is set up primarily to facilitate the processing of required documents. Once their papers are complete, families are brought to the resettlement site, while their belongings and any useful materials from their demolished house are stacked in trucks. The RAC, however, does not respond to the concerns of parents about how easily their children can transfer to their new school or whether a sick son or daughter can conveniently receive needed medical attention in the resettlement site.

\(^{10}\)AKKAP and YMETCO, however, noted that some of the commitments were not observed during relocation.
Aside from transportation, relocated families receive relocation packages which normally include food packs (rice, canned goods, instant coffee, and noodles) from the local social welfare office, and medicine kits from the DOH. However, according to the parents, the supply food items did not last a day for most families. What they appreciated the most was the financial assistance amounting to ₱18,000 from the DSWD, which they received upon the demolition of their old houses on the day of relocation. This financial assistance—referred to as ‘disturbance allowance’ by the DILG—provides a short-term economic cushion for families who would, in all probability, have difficulty in finding a new job or experience disruption in their occupations. As shared by the children and some parents, the cash assistance was used for various purposes: setting up a small store, minor repairs of loose doorknobs and leaking roofs, purchase of new appliances that got damaged during relocation and grocery items to last for about one week, and to defray daily expenses such as school allowances. Few mentioned saving a portion for emergency situations. Only families relocated from the waterways are given this financial assistance.

School buildings in resettlement sites of the NHA are usually not yet completed at the time of relocation. This was the case in Pandi Residences and Golden Horizon. In the resettlement sites, construction of school buildings and coordination with the local DepEd under the receiving local government unit are within the purview of the NHA. But with schools still under construction, relocated children make do with the public school hundreds of meters away from the housing project. One action by the NHA in Pandi Residences was converting some unoccupied units to classrooms to serve as an annex building of Mapulang Lupa Elementary School. Since the units are not designed to be used as classrooms, pupils have to squeeze themselves into the small rooms to maximize the available space.

At the level of the local government, particularly the barangay, some families observed how differently barangay officials interacted and treated the families from the resettlement sites as compared to those who are long-time residents of the barangay (“Magkaibaang pagtrato ng barangay sa mga bagong lipat”). They noted how the barangay usually dilly-dallied when responding to the needs of the resettlement community especially the provision of health services in barangay health center and education in public elementary school.11

**Family and community.** Actions of the family and the community are considered crucial in preparing its members and in adapting to the kind of situation they will be facing in their new location.

In a community where community-organizations are present, parents were able to engage the local government unit (LGU) in a dialogue before relocation (as previously mentioned in the case of Barangays 143 and 144 in Pasay). Although the dialogue helped in clarifying what to expect in the resettlement sites and how the relocation would be conducted, some people from the community felt that their opinions or suggestions were often times dismissed.

After relocation, the working members of the relocated families choose to return to the city, and rent a space to be near their jobs. Some of the college students do the same to ensure that their studies are not interrupted. In these situations where the parents could only go home on a weekly basis, the eldest sibling serves as the guardian of the younger children, as shown in the case of some families coming from Pasay and relocated to Golden Horizon. Some noted how this interrupts the bond between the family members. It also increases the expenses being incurred by the family because of the need to pay the rent in the city.

In the resettlement sites, the creation of homeowners associations helps keep their communities secure, especially in cases where there is lack of support from the barangay. Because the barangay’s response to community issues is not always immediate, the homeowners association then plays a crucial role in advocating with concerned government agencies for the provision of basic services.

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11 This data was mentioned during the session on participatory data analysis of the study.
mobilizing resources from private groups, and helping maintain peace and order in the community so that the residents would feel safe. To cite an example, one action done by the homeowners association in Pandi Residences is to pool money in order to put up streetlights in the area to ensure the safety of the residents (“Nag-ambag-ambag ang mga tao para makapagkabit ng mga street light”).

For the families relocated from Pasay, the youth organizations AKKAP and YMETCO continue to organize themselves to safeguard the interests of their fellow youth and children. They work and coordinate with the homeowners association by becoming active in committees such as those concerning peace and security.

Waste management is another concern on which families in the resettlement sites have acted. They recycle food and things, especially those that can be sold and hence earn income from. They regard recycling the wastes as having a double purpose: they help the environment and at the same time earn money from what has been regarded as waste (“Yung puwedeng pagkakitaan, nakakatulong na sa kapaligiran, puwede pang kumita”).

**NGOs.** Support from NGOs comes in two forms of assistance during the relocation process: (1) action planning before relocation, and (2) livelihood and skills training after relocation.

During the course of the research, some communities conducted action planning for their impending relocation. SM-ZOTO as an organization provides such assistance in action planning. Aside from facilitation, SM-ZOTO also participates in negotiations with government offices at the barangay or local government level, and at the national level (i.e., meetings with the DILG) for issues concerning relocation, particularly advocacy in favor of in-city resettlement. Such actions may have helped in strengthening other organizations in the communities where they have members and in establishing coordination with the LIAC.

Barangays 143 and 144 used the data gathered by the research team of JJCICSI as inputs to the action planning of AKKAP and YMETCO to prepare the children for relocation to Golden Horizon in Trece Martires, Cavite. Save the Children’s intervention in the facilitation of the activity and provision of funds has also been helpful.

An NGO called No One In Need Movement provides trainings to both parents and children in Pandi Residences. Due to the absence of trees that provide shade or bear fruit, families and the entire community embarked on tree planting activities with the provision of seeds by the No One in Need Movement. Because the project is still at its early stage, the homeowners association of Pandi Residences could not say how beneficial the project is for the community. There are other projects lined up for the community in Pandi to be supported by No One In Need Movement.

Another NGO working in Pandi is the Pinagkaisang Lakas ng Kababaihan or PILAK. The organization gives seminars and training on skills development and livelihood, e.g. rug- and bag-making. The challenge, however, as noted by officers of the homeowners association in Pandi Residences, is to ensure a ready market for the products to be produced by the recipients of the skills training.

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12This data was mentioned during the session on participatory data analysis of the study.

13No One In Need is "a lay Catholic movement for the needy" connected with the Couples for Christ Foundation for Family and Life (CFC-FFL) with the mission to "encourage every parish to have work with the poor, leading to massive work of poverty eradication" (nooneinneed.com)

B. Gaps in actions taken

Children in informal settlements experience numerous vulnerabilities that undermine their rights, but families have nevertheless devised ways to cope with their situation and survive. After being resettled, it does not follow that providing security of tenure to the “poor” families would automatically result in filling the gaps in the other rights of children. Thus, the fulfilling the right to housing is an essential, but not a sufficient, condition for ensuring that the rights of children would be protected.

This section summarizes the gaps in the actions taken by different stakeholders—government, family and community, and some NGOs—before, during, and after the conduct of the resettlement process in relation to the fulfillment of children’s rights.

Right to Health and Right to Education. The RAC set up by the government to facilitate the resettlement process on the day of the relocation does not include representatives from the DepEd, since the department is also not part of the LIAC. With this, there is no adequate information, given to the parents to be relocated. There is also little coordination between the sending LGU and receiving LGU which has compromised the relocated families’ access to social services such as health and education. While the provision of education to the children should have been both the responsibility of the government and the parents, in the end, it is the parents who are left and burdened with the responsibility of transferring the children to their new schools.

Coordination among government agencies at both the national and local levels, as well as those in the sending local government and the receiving localities is weak. On the part of the receiving LGU, the dramatic increase in the household population will have tremendous impact on the fixed budget for health services such as checkups, essential medicines, and emergency aid. The problem of unavailability or insufficiency of services is compounded by the negative perception about the relocatees by the community. In Pandi, for example, some families would rather travel long distances back to where they used to live to consult a doctor or request for free medicines than endure insulting remarks from the “non-squatters.”

The children in the resettlement sites shared that they experience hunger more frequently in their new place compared to where they used to live. Food is not always adequate and healthy for the children in the city where most parents have regular work. This condition may have worsened in the resettlement sites because some parents have lost their jobs or spent more for transportation upon relocation, and thus are unable to keep up with the daily expenses and provide well for the family. To address this situation, some NGOs provide livelihood and skills training for the parents, such as in the case of PILAK in Pandi Residences. Assistance in finding markets for whatever goods are produced or managing the business or project well, on the other hand, may be the next possible interventions of NGOs if only to ensure that parents will be capacitated to provide for the needs of their children.

Right to a Safe Environment. The lack of urgent action by the barangay to address the security needs of relocated families seems to have heightened the perceived threat of being victimized in a new, unfamiliar neighborhood. Since most resettlement sites are vastly incomplete in such amenities as a regular supply of electricity or the presence of adequate lamp posts, children feel unsafe to stay outside at night. The lack of fences, gates, and guards to patrol the resettlement sites amplify the feeling of both parents and children about the lack of safety in the community.

Freedom from Discrimination, Abuse, Exploitation, Neglect and Violence. The lack of or weak coordination between the sending and receiving LGU or barangay government creates a situation disadvantageous to the relocated families. For instance, some respondents have observed differences in how the barangay dealt with the resettled families compared to the long-time residents. This situation raises a question as to whether the provision of basic services being by the barangay discriminates against the resettled families, and more importantly the resettled children, on the basis of their ‘newness’ in the barangay.
Right to Participation. Not all communities in the study are fortunate to have active youth groups such as AKKAP and YMETCO, or local government officials who spend time to attend community-initiated dialogues. Even some organized communities do not involve children in their planning for either off-city or in-city resettlement. In short, the voices of children are not heard in the present resettlement program. How they feel about their current situation, how they think their communities can be improved, or what they want to see in the resettlement site have largely been overlooked.

At the same time, more important to consider is the general complacency among children—except for those trained as child rights advocates in Pasay. Most children have no interest in participating in meetings or dialogues that discuss matters which they think their parents can decide on their behalf. This is an overriding attitude among children in the study sites.
Chapter 6
Issues and Recommendations

A. Major Issues Encountered

Efforts of the government to relocate families in danger areas to safer grounds are timely and appreciated given that typhoons and other disasters occur every year and seem to have become stronger each year. Implementation of relocation programs, however, leaves much to be desired in terms of improving the quality of life of the families and the children, who are among those most vulnerable in these situations.

Having gathered data from five transition communities and two resettlement sites, and following the participatory analysis of data with the different stakeholders, the research team hereby sums up the key issues in relocation programs with particular regard to the promotion and protection of children’s rights.

Absence of venue for children to participate in pre-, actual, and post-relocation activities. When asked if they were in any way consulted or directly informed by the authorities about having to transfer residences so they can live more safely, the children in all seven communities from where data were gathered said that they learned about having to relocate only from their parents. No meeting or any similar kind of gathering was held to involve the children in the planning or actual relocation processes and activities. On the other hand, not all families were as interested or could be involved in the process since many of them had to attend to earning their daily living first. They instead relied on their leaders or fellow community members to obtain information and updates on the relocation program or plan.

Difficulty of children to express their concerns within their own family. To begin with, children are not at all consulted by the elders in the family on pertinent matters, including resettlement. Be it owing to their young age and the perceived lack of experience or due to the culture of child-rearing of the Filipino family, it has not been customary for the parents or the older members of the family to ask the children how situations affect them.

Ill-equipped resettlement sites. The resettlement sites in Barangay Hugo Perez, Trece Martires, Cavite and Barangay Mapulang Lupa in Pandi, Bulacan are inadequately or badly equipped at the time the families were relocated in the said areas. There is no electricity, and no regular and convenient source of water up to the time of this writing. The relocated families have to pay at least two pesos per container of water, and a higher amount of ₱25 for drinking water. Because no schools have been built yet, some children had to stop schooling while some went to schools far from the resettlement sites. The health centers are unable to provide services for the large number of relocated families. It will take months before these facilities that provide basic services are built.

Lack of economic opportunities in the relocation areas. Being off-city resettlement sites, there are scant opportunities for jobs or employment in the areas. Some families ventured into livelihood
activities, mostly food vending, but the lack of capital and other resources resulted in meagre incomes which were not always enough to cover their daily expenses. This, in turn, has constrained further the capacities and resources of the family, the parents in particular, to provide for the growing needs of their children. The livelihood and training programs of government agencies such as NHA and DSWD or the local government unit, on the other hand, are not offered systematically or programmatically.

**B. Recommendations for the Stakeholders**

Underlying resettlement programs is the premise that affected families will be better off in their new site. Improved housing is but one aspect, and if other dimensions such as health and education of children as well as the ability of parents to provide for their children’s needs are overlooked, the resettlement program will likely result in further impoverishment of children in the long run. In light of the above issues encountered by the families who are relocated, and where the children are among those affected, the following recommendations are put forward in the hope that future relocation programs do not take the children’s situations for granted and in fact consider processes and activities that will promote and protect the children’s rights.

For the government. To reiterate, addressing housing and security of tenure is crucial in attaining an improved living standard for informal settler families, but it should not be taken separately from other needs and rights such as education, health, and safety. The National Government is in a position to mobilize public resources towards equally important services. With all the agencies involved in steering the resettlement program, it will do well if relevant agencies such as DepEd take part in the discussions and planning to raise issues concerning readiness of schools.

Cash compensation, while helpful to the families in the first few weeks, by itself is insufficient recompense for the potential long-term impact of resettlement. The cost of restoring the lost economic and social base of resettled families far exceeds the amount presently offered to them. To alleviate these hardships, basic and social services have to be in place prior to relocation or, at the minimum, made available at the soonest possible time. The DILG, as the overall supervisor of the program, needs to expand its focus of activities from calling meetings of concerned departments to ensuring that local governments, both sending and receiving, work together to effectively bridge the gaps confronting relocated families as a result of resettlement. Support for local governments overwhelmed by the influx of relocatees is also crucial, not only because they are financially crippled but more importantly because in the end, they, as the most immediate governance institution, have the most important role in making resettlement sites livable.

Because the effects of displacement and resettlement discussed earlier bring home the point that it is also the best interest of children that is at stake in the housing program of the National Government, it makes sense to incorporate child rights impact assessment in any resettlement plan. In current government practice, however, only foreign-funded infrastructure projects that cause massive displacement of families have Resettlement Action Plans (RAP). The purpose of a RAP is to provide an assessment of the impacts of the project, the compensation to be offered to affected families, general condition in the resettlement site, and implementation schedule, among other relevant information. In the case of the resettlement program for families along waterways, no such plan is being required.

Also given existing practices and attitudes, spaces for genuine participation of children in the planning and management of communities may thus be a tall order. However, efforts to engage children in resettlement programs can start slowly at the level of the community. After all, children stand to suffer the long-term consequences of any decision with regard to resettlement. Post-relocation dialogues can be held for relocated families and project implementers to discuss together concerns of parents and children as well as ways to collectively resolve issues. To this end, the NHA and community
organizations in the resettlement site have to work together to gather relevant data and information to be able to develop evidence-based actions; a document containing these should be understandable by children. A child rights based monitoring tool can be developed with the receiving local government.

The livelihood and training programs of government agencies such as NHA and DSWD should be offered systematically and programmatically to ensure restoration of the disrupted livelihood activities of relocated families. Aside from conducting skills training, it would be most helpful if the local government, specifically the Public Employment Service Office (PESO), would be strengthened to assist relocated parents in finding employment opportunities based on their existing skills. Getting employed at the resettlement site or somewhere nearby would increase the capacity of the parents to provide for the needs of the children. Moreover, they would not have to live separately from the children who need to be guided at this stage of their youthful lives.

Lastly, support for people-initiated, in-city housing projects should be consistent. The idea behind such approach is for families to remain in the city, where opportunities, no matter how small, as well as social services from schools, hospitals, and markets, are more accessible. In this regard, the DILG as well as the SHFC and NHA can provide the needed technical resources. Although the cost of land within cities is a major stumbling block, the experience of the communities in Barangay Gulod and Barangay Catmon demonstrate that such alternatives can work if given adequate support.

For NGOs. With the shortcomings in resettlement sites and gaps in the resettlement process, calling the government’s attention to address the issues, and holding it accountable for the effective implementation of the relocation program is within the purview of NGOs and children’s rights advocates. Aside from implementing projects in education, health, and livelihood training, these groups can serve as trusted allies of communities, especially for the children, in monitoring the progress of the construction of school buildings and provision of good education inside the resettlement site, delivery of medical and dental services for children, and measures to ensure road and environmental safety. With the need to recognize the voice of children in the entire resettlement process, NGOs are also the providers of knowledge and tools that will capacitate the children to bring their concerns on the table during discussions with government before and after relocation. For government officials, educators, health providers, community leaders, and parents to be aware of children’s rights, NGOs can give regular substantive orientation and seminars.

In the area of livelihood and employment opportunities, NGOs can assist by what they do best, e.g., training, capacity building, networking. Private groups such as foundations and microfinance institutions can also help by linking entrepreneurial residents to the market, or by providing funds on credit for working capital. Another possible intervention might be to introduce the practice of business or livelihood planning before the actual relocation. This would include counselling families (household by household) on their livelihood options after resettlement, taking into account the skills of the family members, the amount of capital they have or can borrow. Families have to be assisted proactively to plan their livelihood restoration strategy after relocation. This has to be done on a per family basis; the wholesale approach is in fact the current practice which is why the results have been dismal. This is an area where NGOs or corporate social responsibility efforts might help. Whatever assistance is rendered is meant only to complement the efforts of the government. All these interventions will hopefully capacitate the parents and other members of the family to earn more, and hence be able to respond to the growing needs of the children.

Prior to relocation, it may be useful to tap groups that provide counselling to psychologically prepare the children. Adjusting to a new community with new neighbors can be challenging, and hence would necessitate carefully programmed preparations.

In terms of policy recommendations, advocates can focus on making the UDHA more responsive to the needs of children. There are ongoing efforts by civil society groups working on housing reforms.
(including UP-ALL) calling for the amendment of the UDHA. In this regard, minimum standards can be set from site selection and social preparation to housing/site development (including basic utilities and social services). (Annex B provides a sample list of minimum standards developed by UP-ALL.) Moreover, civil society groups and organized communities can support the preparation of RAPs that take into account the needs and priorities of children, as well as measures to mitigate conditions that undermine the latter’s rights.

For the children, families, and communities. This research recognizes a huge gap in the aspect of involving children in the resettlement program. The present resettlement program and the processes undertaken are largely controlled by adults, but as the experience of children in Pasay illustrates, children do have opinions that matter. However, it requires enormous education and organizing efforts to engage children in planning and getting them to be involved in community affairs. Concerned groups such as NGOs and child rights advocates have to conceptualize and develop incentives and devise creative means to encourage and motivate children to contribute their ideas and energies in community issues that they themselves might not consider relevant. The task becomes more daunting in informal settlements, where children are already burdened with domestic roles and exposed to vulnerabilities that constrain or discourage any form of community involvement.

Education and organizing efforts on children’s rights and participation should not be limited to the children but should also concern parents in the community. The parents should understand that children are also stakeholders in the resettlement program. During the entire relocation process, the jobs of the parents are compromised, while the studies of children are interrupted. The participation of children is thus deemed significant. Their participation need not be limited to consultation on resettlement alone but may also be extended to matters or issues within the family and the entire community such as housing design to include important spaces for domestic chores, allocation of open spaces for safe places of play, etc.

Community organizations should take advantage of the avenue of the people’s planning to push for in-city relocation. Unfortunately, off-city resettlement seems to be carried out more frequently than in-city relocation, and in some cases communities might actually prefer the former. It is therefore necessary for community organizations to plan sufficiently in order to prepare its members for the challenges of living in the resettlement sites. In any case, participation by the community, which is one of the overarching principles of the law but rarely taken seriously by implementers and affected populations themselves, must be pursued if the best interest of children is considered a priority.

Once families are relocated, the homeowners association must strengthen its relationship and partnership with the barangay government. Together, they could take steps in improving the conditions in the new environment especially on matters of safety, security and provision of basic services. The homeowners association can also coordinate with the government (LGU PESO, NHA and DSWD) and NGOs, and serve as liaison between the implementers and families in the conduct of livelihood and skills training or in linking up with external groups for employment opportunities.
ANNEX A.1
GUIDE FOR CONDUCTING THE INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY AND COMMUNITY MAPPING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN (IN FILIPINO)

Background Information

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Instructions

1. Request participants to sign the attendance sheet.
2. Provide nametags to participants. Allow them to write their names or how they would like to be called.
3. Begin by introducing the team members (facilitator, documenter, and adult support staff)
4. Explain the objectives of the study (see introduction in the next page).
5. Review the information in the informed consent form.
6. After the introduction, ask the participants to introduce themselves, their likes and dislikes, etc.
7. Explain the instruction per activity. There are four activities for this FGD – game, drawing about the family, mapping, and group discussion.

Thank the participants for their cooperation.

Introduction


Ako si Kuya/Ate__________________. Ako ay mula sa ________________________. Kasama ako ng ni Ate/Kuya _____ na isang “researcher” mula sa isang NGO na ang pangalan ay JJCICSI. Ang trabaho namin ay pag-aralan at alamin kung kumusta na ang mga bata at mga pamilya na nakatira
sa tabing-ilog na planong ilipat ng ibang bahay. Gusto naming malaman: ano kaya ang mangayayri sa mga bata kapag sila ay nilipat ng tirahan? Ang pag-aaral na ito ay ginagawa namin kasama ang Save the Children, isang organisasyon nagtataguyod ng kapakanan ng mga batang katulad ninyo.

Napili kayo sa tulong ng (sabihin ang pangalan ng partner organization) para makibahagi sa isang maikling kuwentuhan. Ang mga ikukuwento ninyo sa amin ay malaking tulong para mapabuti pa ang mga programa ng ating pamahalaan para sa mga pamilyang nakatira sa tabing-ilog, pati sa lugar na paglipatan sa inyo.

(Note: Provide an overview of the information in the informed consent form.)

Unang Bahagi: Panimulang Laro: Mahal mo ba ako? 10 MINUTO

Mga gagamitin: Upuan

Proseso:

1. Magpatulong sa mga batang kalahok na ayusin ang kanilang mga upuan nang pabilog (dapat dikit-dikit ang mga silya).
2. Papiliin sila ng isang tayâ. Ang tayâ ay tatayo sa gitna ng bilog.
3. Ipaliwanag sa mga kalahok na dapat magtanong ang tayâ sa kahit na sino sa mga nakapalibot ng “mahal mo ba ako?”
   a. Kapag ang sagot ng tinanong ay OO, ang lahat ng mga kalahok ay dapat magpalit ng upuan at ang tayâ ay dapat makipag-agawan sa upuan hanggang magkaroon ng bagong tayâ.
   b. Kapag ang sagot naman ng tinanong ay HINDI, may kasunod na tanong ang tayâ “Eh, sino ang mahal mo?” Dapat naman sumagot ang tayâ sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng katangian ang mahal niya. Halimbawa: “Ang mahal ko ay yung mga nakasuot ng tsinelas” o “Ang mahal ko ay yung maiikli ang buhok”. Ang mga kalahok na may nasabing katangian ay magpapalit ng upuan at dapat makipag-agawan sa upuan ang tayâ hanggang magkaroon ng bagong tayâ.

Ikalawang Bahagi: Ang Aming Pamilya 30 MINUTO

Mga gagamitin: lapis, crayons, ruler, bond paper, markers

Proseso:

2. Pagkatapos ng 15 minuto, bigyan ang bawat bata ng pagkakataon na ipakilala ang mga miyembro ng kanilang pamilya.

3. Upang tulungan ang mga bata na maglahad pa ng tungkol sa kanilang pamilya sa pamamagitan ng ilang tanong gaya ng:

- Ilan kayong magkakapatid? May kani-kaniya ba kayong kuwarto?
- Sino-sino ang kasama ng mga bata sa kanilang tahanan? Kung hindi nila kasama ang kanilang tatay o nanay, gaano nila kadalas nakikita o nakakasama ang mga ito?
- Madalas ba kayong mag-away? Ano ang ginagawa ng mga magulang ninyo kapag kayo ay nag-away?
- Ano ang hanapbuhay ng iyong mga magulang? Anu-ano ang kanilang pinagkakaabalaan? Magkano ang kanilang inuuwi mula sa kanilang trabaho o kinikita mula sa kanilang kabuhayan, kung mayroon man?
- May mga bata bang tumutulong sa kanilang mga magulang sa kanilang trabaho o hanapbuhay? Anu-ano ang kanilang ginagawa? Kailan o gaano kadalas nilang gawin ang mga ito?
- May mga pinagkakaabalaan ba ang mga bata kung saan nakakapag-uuwi sila ng pera? Anu-ano ang gawain ang mga ito? Kailan o gaano kadalas nilang gawin ang mga ito?
- May mga kabuhayan ba sa kanilang pamilya na nais kunin para gumawa ng mga gawain? Anu-ano ang mga ito? Bakit mga ito?
- Maliban sa mga pagkakatao na nasaktan, may mga pagkakataon bang sila ay sinisigaw, minumura, o pinahihiya ng kanilang mga magulang sa harap ng ibang tao? Anu-ano ang kanilang karamdaman?
- May mga pagkakataon bang ang mga bata ay nasaktan ng kanilang mga magulang? Sa paanong paraan (halimbawa, pamamalà gamit ang patpat o sinturon, pananampalat)? Gaano ito kadalas? Anu-ano ang dahilan?
- Kung na-relocate:
  - May mga bata ngunit hindi nagtatrabaho? May mga bata na hinaharap ang pera? May mga bata na hindi nagtatrabaho ngunit nagdadala ng pera?
  - Kinalilangan ang kanilang trabaho? Kinalilangan ang kanilang inuuwi?
  - Kinalilangan ang kanilang inuuwi na wala ang kanilang inuuwi ng kasama ang kanilang mga magulang?
• Mga taong naglalaba
• Tindahan, talipapa, o palengke
• Mga bahay
• Daanan at tulay
• Mga sakayan
• Palaruan o bakanteng espasyo kung saan pwedeng maglaro
• Barangay hall
• Paaralan
• Pinanggagalingan ng tubig (hal. tangke at poso)
• Health center
• Simbahan o lugar sambahan
• Himpilan ng pulis, at iba pa.

Paalala: Kung may mga gusali na wala sa loob ng komunidad, itanong kung saan ang mga ito.

2. Pagkatapos ng 15 minuto, ipaskil ang drowing ng pamilya at mapa sa harapan. Sa pamamagitan ng pagdidikit ng emoticons, tanungin ang mga bata ang sumusunod:

• Saan-saan bahagi ng inyong lugar masaya at ligtas ang mga bata?
• Saan-saan bahagi ng inyong lugar malungkot, nahihirapan at hindi ligtas ang mga bata?
• Saan-saan bahagi ng inyong lugar natatakot ang mga bata?

😊 happy face 😞 sad face

3. Talakayin ang kanilang mga sagot sa tulong ng mga probing questions gaya ng “bakit?” o “paano mo nasabi.” Alamin din kung ano ang masasabi ng iba sa sagot ng ibang bata. Maaari ring itanong mga nasa ibaba:

Hint 1: Health center o ospital sa kanilang mapa
☐ Nasubukan na ba ninyong magpunta sa health center? Ano ang ginawa ninyo roon?
☐ May doktor o nars bang tumingin sa inyo?
☐ Nagkasakit na ba kayo? Nakahawa ba ang ito? Anu-ano ang dahilan ng sakit mo?
☐ May nagkasakit ba dahil sa kanilang kinain? Ano ba ang paborito ninyo nang pakainin?
☐ May mga bata bang kulong sa timbang? Bakit kaya?

Hint 2: Poste ng ilaw, poso, tindahan ng tubig o mineral water, drowing ng naglalaba sa daanan, etc.
☐ Saan galing ang tubig na inyong iniinom?
☐ Saan galing ang tubig na inyong panligo? panlaba? pandilig ng halaman?
☐ May kuryente ba sa bahay ninyo?

Hint 3: Daanan/ kalsada/ ilog
☐ Kung may malapit na sapa o ilog, malinis ba ito? Puwede bang maligo ang mga bata rito?
☐ Malapit ba ang inyong lugar sa tambakan o tumpok ng basura?
☐ Hanggang anong oras kayo puwedeng maglaro sa labas?
☐ May mga nasagasaan na ba ng nasakyan habang naglalaro?
☐ May mga aso bang nangangagat?
☐ Bumabaha ba kapag malakas ang ulan o may bagyo? Gaano kataas? Mabilis ba itong mawala?
☐ Lumikas ba kayo? Saan?
☐ May nagaganap na bang sunog sa inyo? Saan lumipat ang mga nasunugan?
☐ Kung na-relocate: ano ang kalagayan ng dati ninyong komunidad? Mas maayos ba sa lugar na ito?
**Hint 4: Mga bahay**
- Saan gawa ang mga bahay sa inyong lugar?
- Kapag may bagyo, nililipad ba ang mga bubong?
- May pumunta na ba sa lugar ninyo na nagpapaalis sa inyo at giniba ang mga bahay? Bakit daw?

**Hint 5: Police station**
- May mga pulis ba o barangay tanod na lumilibot sa lugar?
- Kapag may bata ba na dinala ng pulis sa presinto o ng tanod sa barangay? Bakit?
- Kapag may nagawang mali ang isang bata, may taga-barangay ba na pumupunta sa bahay at kinakausap ang magulang?

**Hint 6: Paaralan**
- Saan nag-aaral ang mga bata? Paano kayo pumupunta sa paaralan ninyo – naglalakad o sumasakay? Magkano ang pamasahé?
- May mga kaklase ba kayo na may kapansanan?
- May kanya-kanya ba kayo? Bukod sa mga bata, may kahati kayo?
- May kilala ba kayo sa lugar ninyo na hindi pumapasok sa paaralan? Bakit?
- Para sa mga nasa resettlement site na inilipat sa gitna ng school year: Dito ba ninyo itinuloy ang inyong pag-aaral? Gaano kadali ang inyong paglipat?

**Hint 7: Lugar kung saan naglalaro ang mga bata**
- Ano ang paboritong laro ng mga babae? ng mga lalaki?
- Saan kayo naglalaro ng mga kaibigan ninyo?
- Marami bang mga bata na nanunukso o inaasar ang iba? Ano ang ginagawa nila? Kanino kayo nagsusumbong? Anong ginagawa ng mga pinagsumbungan ninyo?
- Kapag may bata ba na rito na pilay, bulag, bingi, o may sakit? Nakakasali ba sila sa mga bata ng mga sakit? Nakakasali ba sila sa mga laro?

---

**Ikapat na Bahagi: Tungkol sa Paglipat o Relokasyon**

**Note:** Kung napapansing pagód na ang mga bata, maaari nang ipamigay ang kanilang meryenda. Kung hindi nakasasagabal, pwedeng isagawa ang ikaapat na bahagi.

**Mga gagamitin:** mga emoticons

- 😊 happy face
- 😞 sad face

**Proseso:**

1. Ipaliwanag sa mga bata ang ibig sabihin ng mga icons. Ipaliwanag sa kanila na itataas nila ang icons bilang tugon sa mga tanong ng facilitator.

   - May nabaitaan ba kayo tungkol sa paglipat ng mga nakatira sa inyong lugar sa ibang lugar? Ano ang nabaitaan ninyo tungkol dito? Saan o kanino ninyo ito nabaitaan?
   - Ano ang pakiramdam ninyo tungkol sa posibilidad paglipat ninyo ng tirahan? Bakit?
   - Ano sa tingin ninyo ang magandang mangyayari kung lilibat kayo sa ibang lugar?
   - Ano naman ang masama o malungkot na mangyayari kung lilibat kayo sa ibang lugar?
☐ Kung lilipat kayo ng tirahan, anong gusto ninyong makita roon? Anong klaseng bahay? Ano ang hitsura nito at ano ang nangyayari?

2. Ilagom ang sagot ng mga kalahok.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Huling Bahagi: Pagsasara ng Talakayan</th>
<th>5 MINUTO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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**Proseso:**

1. Buksan ang talakayan para sa mga dagdag na tanong ng mga kalahok tungkol sa research, at tugunan ang mga ito.
2. Magpasalamat sa mga bata dahil sa kanilang paglahok sa talakayan, lalong lalo na dahil sa mga personal na karanasan at pangtingin na kanilang ibinahagi.
3. Ibahagi sa kanila ang mga kaugnay susunod na hakbang na research team at ipaalam sa kanila kung sino ang responsable sa, at kailan ibabahagi ang, resulta ng research sa kanila.
4. Kung maari, mag-iwan ng contact number na maari lang tawagan kung gusto nilang magtanong tungkol sa research.
ANNEX A.2
FGD GUIDE

Background Information

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Instructions

1. Request participants to sign the attendance sheet.
2. Provide nametags to participants. Allow them to write their names or how they would like to be called.
3. Begin by introducing the team members (facilitator, documenter, and adult support staff)
4. Explain the objectives of the study (see introduction below).
5. Review the information in the informed consent form.
6. After the introduction, ask the participants to introduce themselves, their likes and dislikes, etc.
7. Explain the flow of the discussion:
   a. With the aid of emoticons, the participants will be asked what they think or how they feel about the statement printed on an illustration board and to be read by the facilitator (or the facilitator can ask one participant to read).
      - Somewhat agree/ Somehow happy "Totoo"
      - Somewhat disagree/ somehow sad "Hindi totoo"
   b. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers.
   c. Ask the participants to explain their answers which may be followed by a discussion. Use probing techniques to clarify previous statements (“Why?”, “What do you mean?”, “Can you please tell us more about it?”) or elicit more data (refer to the proposed probing questions).
   d. Give a brief summary of the discussion on one statement before moving on to the next.
      Confirm if the points were accurately captured, and ask participants if they have any other questions or clarifications.
8. Thank the participants for their cooperation.
Introduction (in a transition community)

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for coming. We also thank your parents for allowing you to join this activity.

I am _______, a researcher from the NGO John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues or JJCICCSI. We would like to find out how children and their families in your community are doing, especially now that there are plans to move them to a resettlement site. We are interested in knowing about how the relocation of families will affect children. This study is supported by Save the Children, an NGO that promotes the welfare of children and their rights. I am with ________ to help document our discussion – will that be fine?

You were invited by (state name of community organization) through (state name of adult support/child protection team member) to take part in this short discussion. The stories and insights you will share will help improve government’s relocation program for families living along the riverbanks, as well as for those in the resettlement areas.

***


Ako si Kuya/Ate ________, isang “researcher” mula sa JJCICSI. Nais sana naming alamin kung kumusta na ang mga bata at mga pamilyang nakatira sa tabing ilog na planong ilipat ng ibang bahay. Gusto naming malaman kung paano makakaapekto sa mga bata ang paglipat ng tirahan? Ang pag-aaral na ito ay naisasagawa natin sa tulong ng isa pang NGO na ang pangalan ay Save the Children, isang organisasyong nagtataguyod ng kapakanan ng mga batang katulad ninyo. Kasama ko si Kuya/Ate ________ para tulungan akong itala ang mga mapagkukuwentuhan – ayos lang ba ito?

Napili kayo sa tulong ng (sabihin ang pangalan ng partner organization) sa pamamagitan ni ________ (sabihin ang pangalan ng adult support/child protection team member) para makibahagi sa isang maikling kuwentuhan. Ang mga ikuwueto sa amin ay malaking tulong para mapabuti pa ang mga programa ng ating pamahalaan para sa mga pamilyang nakatira sa tabing ilog at sa mga lugar na paglipatan.

Introduction (in resettlement site)

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for coming. We also thank your parents for allowing you to join this activity.

I am _______, a researcher from the NGO John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues or JJCICCSI. We would like to find out how children and their families in this resettlement site are doing. We are interested in knowing about the changes children have experienced since transferring in a new community. This study is supported by Save the Children, another NGO that promotes the welfare of children and their rights. I am with ________ to help document our discussion – will that be fine?

You were invited by (state name of community organization), through (state name of adult support/child protection team member) to take part in this short discussion. The stories and insights you will share will help improve government’s relocation program for families living along the riverbanks, as
well as for those in the resettlement areas.

***


Ako si Kuya/Ate _______, isang “researcher” mula sa JJC/CSI. Nais naming alamin kung kumusta na ang mga bata at mga pamilyang inilipat rito sa (sabihin ang resettlement site). Gusto naming malaman kung anu-anong pagbabago ang naranasan ng mga bata nang lumipat sila ng tirahan. Ang pag-aaral na ito ay naisasagawa natin sa tulong ng isa pang NGO na ang pangalan ay Save the Children, isang organisasyong nagtataguyod ng kapakanan ng mga batang katulad ninyo. Kasama ko si Kuya/Ate ______ para tulungan akong itala ang aking mga mapagkukuwentuhan – ayos lang ba ito?

Napili kayo sa tulong ng (sabihin ang pangalan ng partner organization), sa pamamagitan ni ______ (sabihin ang pangalan ng adult support/ child protection team member) para makibahagi sa isang maikling kuwentuhan. Ang mga ikukuwento ninyo sa amin ay malaking tulong para mapabuti pa ang mga programa ng ating pamahalaan para sa mga pamilyang nakatira sa tabing-ilog, pati sa lugar na paglilipatan sa inyo.

**Theme 1: Survival**

**Statement 1: Children in our community are healthy.**

*Malulusog ang mga bata dito sa amin.*

Proposed probing question/s:

- How near or far is the health center or hospital from where you live? Is it within walking distance or do you have to take a tricycle/ pedicab/jeepney? How much is the fare?
- Have you tried going to the health center or hospital for medication or consultation? Are the services free?
- Are there doctors, nurses, or dentists in your health center?
- What are the common illnesses among children? Are these illnesses contagious? What causes these illnesses?
- Are girls more vulnerable to these health risks than boys? What health concerns affect girls?
- What types of food do children usually eat?
- Where does your drinking water come from? How much do your families pay for drinking water?
- Are there underweight children in the community?
- For relocated children: Compared to before resettlement, in your opinion, has the health condition of children improved, remained the same, or gotten worse?

**Statement 2: Our parents are able to provide for our needs.**

*Naibibigay ng aming mga magulang ang aming mga pangangailangan.*

Proposed probing question/s:

- Are there families who have to skip meals? What do parents do to ensure that children will not go hungry?
- What are the common occupations or jobs of parents in the community? Do they earn enough to be able to make ends meet?
- Are there programs for families who do not have stable incomes or unable to provide for their children’s needs?
- For relocated children: Compared to before resettlement, in your opinion, has your family income improved, remained the same, or gotten worse?
**Statement 3: Our community is safe and clean.**

*Ligtas at malinis ang aming komunidad.*

Proposed probing question/s:

- Are there sources of polluted air in or near the community?
- Is the community near a body of water? What is the condition of this body of water?
- Is there a nearby dumpsite?
- Do you feel safe in your community? Are there police or barangay tanods doing regular rounds to keep peace and order in the community? What are the sources of conflicts in the community? Does the barangay enforce curfew?
- Which parts of the community get flooded during a heavy rain or strong typhoon? Does the water recede quickly? How high was the highest flood water the community has experienced? How many families were affected? Did they evacuate? Why does the community experience flood?
- Has fire broken out in the community? How many were affected?
- When there is an emergency situation, is there a team from the barangay or city that responds immediately? How does the community help each other in such a situation?
- For relocated children: Compared to before resettlement, in your opinion, do you feel safer here in the resettlement site?

---

**Theme 2: Protection**

**Statement 1: Bullying is common in our community.**

*Maraming nanunukso, nang-aasar, at nanakot sa mga bata rito.*

Proposed probing question/s:

- What forms of bullying are common in your community?
- Are those who bully children of their same age or older?
- For relocated children: Did you also experience bullying in your former community? Is it more often in the resettlement site?

---

**Statement 2: We are afraid of our parents.**

*Takót kami sa aming mga magulang.*

Proposed probing question/s:

- Are there instances in which parents or guardians humiliate children in front of other people?
- What forms of physical punishment or abuse do children experience in the community? What are the common reasons?
- To whom can such incidences be reported?

---

**Statement 3: There are families in our community who were evicted and their houses demolished.**

*Nagkaroon na ng pagpapaalis ng mga pamilya at paggiba ng mga bahay sa aming lugar.*

Proposed probing question/s:

- What was the reason for their eviction? How many families were affected? Who ordered the eviction or demolition? Did this happen while children were studying in school? Where did they transfer?
- How do you feel about it?
### Statement 4: We help our parents eke out an income to meet our family's needs.

*Tumutulong kami sa aming mga magulang para matustusan ang mga gastusin namin sa bahay.*

Proposed probing question/s:
- What types of work do children do in which they get paid or earn money? How often or how long in a day do they do that? Do they still go to school?
- Are there enterprises in the community which prefer hiring children? Do you consider these activities dangerous?
- For relocated children: Are there children who were not working in their previous community but have to earn a living here? Did they have to stop going to school?

### Statement 5: There are children in our community that have been apprehended by barangay tanod or police officers.

*May mga bata sa aming komunidad na hinuhuli ng mga barangay tanod o kaya ay ng mga pulis.*

Proposed probing question/s:
- When a young person is caught to have committed an offense or have been involved in a criminal activity, to whom is he/she referred to?
- How does the community respond to this issue?
- Do you know if there is a Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)? Who are its members?
- For relocated children: Compared to before resettlement, in your opinion, are children more prone to violence and to committing offense?

### Theme 3: Development

### Statement 1: There are children in our community who have dropped out of school.

*May mga bata sa aming komunidad ang hindi na pumapasok sa paaralan.*

Proposed probing question/s:
- How accessible are the schools from your community? Do students walk or have to ride public transportation to get to their school?
- How many students are there in your class? Does each student have a desk and a complete set of textbooks?
- Are girls more likely than boys to drop out of school? Is early marriage a common reason for not going to school?
- Do you know of anyone who has never been to school? What do they do instead of studying?
- Do you know an out-of-school youth who is enrolled in alternative education programs?
- For relocated children: Were you able to transfer easily to your new school? How is your experience so far in your new school?

### Statement 2: There are places in our community where children can play and engage in leisure activities. *Nakapaglaro at nakakapaglibang kami sa aming lugar.*

Proposed probing question/s:
- What are the common recreational or leisure activities that children participate in?
- Are spaces for playing wide enough and safe?
Statement 3: Children who speak a different language, have different religion, who behave differently, or have disabilities or medical condition are ridiculed in our community.

*Madalas tinutukso at pinagtatawanan ang mga batang iba ang salita, ang relihiyon, ang pagkilos, at may kapansanan.*

Proposed probing question/s:
- Do children who come from the province and speak a different language often excluded in children’s activities?
- How do children treat those with sexual orientation different from what is usually expected?
- Are children in the community who have disabilities or medical conditions? How are they treated by fellow children? Can they move around freely?
- Are there separate classes in your school for children with disabilities? Are classrooms accessible?
- What are the places of worship present in the community? Are children with different religion discriminated?

Theme 4: Participation

Statement 1: Children of families who will be relocated participated in meetings and consultations.

*Nakasama ang mga bata rito sa amin sa mga miting tungkol sa isasagawang relocation o paglilipat ng mga pamilya sa aming lugar.*

Proposed probing question/s:
- Were children gathered together to inform them about the relocation program? If yes, what were discussed in the meeting? If no, where did you get the information about the relocation?
- What do you think is the aim of the relocation program?
- Were there consultations with children with disabilities, out-of-school youth, or CICLs?
- How do you feel about moving to a new community? Do you feel excited or anxious? What positive and negative changes do you expect? Were measures to allay your worries about the relocation discussed with you?
- What things that you have in this community do you think should also be present or accessible in the resettlement site?
- For relocated children: How did you feel about moving to a new community? Did you feel excited or anxious? What changes did you experience since transferring here? Has your situation become better or worse? Have you wished that your family stayed in your previous community instead of transferring here?
Four major aspects must be considered in providing relocation sites for displaced communities: Site Selection, Social Preparation, Housing and Site Development, and Basic Services.

### Site Selection
- Locations within municipalities and cities must first be considered as possible relocation sites. Only when all possibilities are explored that near city relocation be considered.
- Resettlement sites must be so geographically sound and away from health and environmental hazards.
- Resettlement must also be convenient for wage workers. In fact, the impact of transportation costs for wagers must be one of the criteria in selecting a relocation site.

### Social Preparation
- General assemblies should be organized at the barangay level with representatives from concerned agencies (LGU, NHA, barangay) present
- Enough time should be given between the scheduled demolition/relocation and the consultation with families
- Ideal: 6 months preparation & demolition during summer.
- Options for livelihood & employment in & near the resettlement site should also be discussed
- Affected families must be represented in committees form
- Receiving LGUs should be included in the planning & initial stages of the resettlement process
- Sending LGUs should give financial support to families moving out of their jurisdiction
- “Trippings” should be continued

### Housing Site and Development
- Ideal: ready-to-occupy housing unit (4 walls, roof, door, functioning toilet with septic tank) is available upon transfer
- Families must be allowed to stay in their place of origin if they will build their own houses; making people live in tents should be avoided
- Roads to & within the resettlement site must be passable
- Drainage must be functioning
- Solid waste/garbage in the site must be regularly collected

### Basic Services
#### Water and Electricity
- Clear timeframe must be given to families to meet the requirements to have the service connected; this must be indicated in a MOA with service providers (Meralco, Manila Water/MWSS)
- Electricity connection should come first as most water connections need electricity to function (i.e., water pumps)
- It is preferred that the NHA includes this in their budget & should be included in the computation of the families' monthly amortization
- It is suggested that 70% of the cost of having the electricity connected be shouldered by the developer.
- Meralco posts with transformers should be installed & “ready for use” in the relocation sites
- Water should be potable

**Education**

- New school buildings/classrooms should have been built & ready to accommodate additional students from the relocated families at the time of relocation
- Aim for the ideal teacher-student ratio of 1:40

**Health**

- One (1) health center for each relocation site with at least one (1) doctor, one (1) midwife, and trained health workers

**Transportation**

- Creation of a transportation route/system, otherwise cities must provide free shuttle service

**Livelihood**

- Plans for livelihood should be supported by corresponding budgets
- Livelihood programs must go beyond training & must be able to supply credit
- A livelihood credit facility, ready to be accessed by qualified families; rules for accessing the facility must be made known prior to relocation
- Tap & contact MFIs committed to extending credit to the poor
- It has to be ensured that mechanisms for job creation on site must engender permanent and secure employment
- Allocate funds/provide assistance to affected families for the inconvenience/disturbance resulting to their displacement