

Fr. Jorge Anzorena, S.J.

SELAVIP
NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER

Journal of Low-Income Housing in Asia and the World



Fr. Josse van der Rest, S.J.

April 4, 2014 - July 24, 2020

Published with the generous assistance of the

JESUIT EAST ASIAN ASSISTANCE

by

PAGTAMBAYAYONG FOUNDATION, Inc.



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1978-2001: without pictures

2002-mid 2018: with pictures

Fr. Anzorena's Selavip Newsletter is issued twice a year, every year since 1978, without fail.

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NETWORK

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

United Nations

‘Inequality defines our time’: UN chief delivers hard-hitting Mandela day message

Inequality, an issue which “defines our time”, risks destroying the world’s economies and societies, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in a hard-hitting speech on Saturday.

Mr. Guterres was delivering the 2020 Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture, held online for the first time, in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The lecture series, held annually by the Nelson Mandela Foundation, on the birthday of the first democratically-elected President of South Africa, aims to encourage dialogue by inviting prominent personalities to discuss major international challenges.

The COVID-19 spotlight

Mr. Guterres began by noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has played an important role in highlighting growing inequalities, and exposing the myth that everyone is in the same boat, because “while we are all floating on the same sea, it’s clear that some are in super- yachts, while others are clinging to the drifting debris.”

Global risks ignored for decades – notably inadequate health systems, gaps in social protection, structural inequalities, environmental degradation, and the climate crisis – have been laid bare, he said. The vulnerable are suffering the most:



those living in poverty, older people, and people with disabilities and pre-existing conditions.

Mr. Guterres pointed out that inequality take many forms. Whilst income disparity is stark, with the 26 richest people in the world holding as much wealth as half the global population, it is also the case that life-chances depend on factors such as gender, family and ethnic background, race and whether or not a person has a disability.

However, he noted that everyone suffers the consequences, because high levels of inequality are associated with “economic instability, corruption, financial crises, increased crime and poor physical and mental health.”

The legacy of colonialism and patriarchy

Colonialism, a historic aspect of inequality, was evoked by the Secretary-General. Today’s anti-racist movement, he said, points to this historic source of inequality: “The Global North, specifically my own continent of Europe,

imposed colonial rule on much of the Global South for centuries, through violence and coercion.”

This led to huge inequalities within and between countries, including the transatlantic slave trade and the apartheid regime in South Africa, argued Mr. Guterres, and left a legacy of economic and social injustice, hate crimes and xenophobia, the persistence of institutionalized racism, and white supremacy.

Mr. Guterres also referred to patriarchy, another historic inequality which still resonates: women everywhere are worse off than men, and violence against women is, he said, at epidemic levels

‘Everyone must pay their fair share’ of tax

Turning to contemporary inequality, Mr. Guterres said that the expansion of trade, and technological progress, have contributed to “an unprecedented shift in income distribution”. Low-skilled workers are bearing the brunt, he warned, and face an “onslaught” from new technologies, automation, the off shoring of manufacturing and the demise of labor organizations.

Meanwhile, he continued, widespread tax concessions, tax avoidance and tax evasion, as well as low corporate tax rates, mean that there are reduced resources for social protection, education, and healthcare - services that play an important part in reducing inequality.

Some countries have allowed the wealthy and well-connected to benefit from tax systems, but “everyone must pay their fair share”, said Mr. Guterres, and governments need to tackle the “vicious cycle” of corruption, which weakens social

norms and the rule of law, and shift the tax burden from payrolls to carbon, which would help to address the climate crisis.

A New Global Deal

Although climate change is a global problem, the effects are felt most keenly by those countries which are least to blame. The issue is likely to become more pronounced in the coming years, and millions risk malnutrition, malaria and other diseases; forced migration, and extreme weather events.

The only way towards a fair and sustainable future for all, he suggested, involves what he called a “New Social Contract”, which allows young people to live in dignity; women to have the same prospects and opportunities as men; and protects the vulnerable, and a “New Global Deal”, which ensures that power, wealth and opportunities are shared more broadly and fairly at the international level.

As part of the New Social Contract, labor market policies would be based on constructive dialogue between employers and workers, and would ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Secretary-General called for new social safety nets, including universal health coverage, the possibility of universal basic income, boosted investment in public services, and, to reverse long-standing inequalities, affirmative action programs and other policies to address inequalities in gender, race or ethnicity.

The UN chief explained that quality education for all, and the effective use of digital technology, will be crucial to achieving these aims. This would mean doubling education spending in low and middle-income countries by 2030 to \$3 trillion a year: within a generation, all

children in low- and middle-income countries could have access to quality education at all levels.

Governments also need to transform the way children are taught, said Mr. Guterres, and invest in digital literacy and infrastructure, and help them to prepare

Internet by 2030, and “Giga”, an ambitious project to get every school in the world online.

‘We stand together, or we fall apart’

The UN chief ended his major strategic vision statement, by invoking the path to follow. The choice presented by Mr. Guterres, is between “chaos, division and inequality”, or righting the wrongs of the past and moving forward together, for the good of all.

for a rapidly changing workplace that is being upended by technology.

The Secretary-General outlined some of the ways that the UN is supporting these efforts, including The Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, launched at the United Nations in June, which promotes ways to connect four billion people to the importance of international cooperation and solidarity. “We belong to each other”, he said. “We stand together, or we fall apart”.

The world, he concluded, is at breaking point, and it is time for leaders to decide which.

For further information:
UNnews

Environment

Love one another

(1 John 4:7)

If it is love that activates relationships, and if it is the love of God that sustains them, that says something vitally important about the Christian God, namely that not only is the human made in the image of God but, more importantly, that the human is made in the image of love in virtue of the Christian definition of God as love. The

human carries in her being the imprint of love and this hallmark of love is stamped upon the being of every person. Love is not just another dimension of the human; love is at the core of human identity and human flourishing because we are made in the image of a God who is love.

Excerpted from
'Theology and Ecology in Dialogue:
The Wisdom of Laudato Si'
by Dermot A. Lane
(P.46)

Greatness of Spirit, Compassion and Service in Time of Covid-19 (Part 5)

Voices of Hope in the Midst of Covid-19

From a few individual cases that were confirmed last December 2019, the COVID-19 disease has grown into a global pandemic that has paralyzed many societies. The pandemic has challenged communities, organizations, companies, the health care systems, and governments in unprecedented ways. The world as we know it has certainly turned upside down.

But responding to the seemingly unending crisis is what transformative leaders do. The Ramon Magsaysay Awardees continue to carry the torch of hope in communities and societies as we all grapple with the chaos brought by the pandemic. They continue their crusade of advocating and promoting truth and fairness within their communities so that justice and goodness shall prevail.

These transformative leaders have used the influence of the pen, and the power of the media, culture and theater

arts to amplify voices of optimism and courage, and to spread the true meaning of Greatness of Spirit!

These courageous leaders have begun dissecting the human rights dimensions to COVID-19, and calling out and reporting those who are responsible to strengthen the health care systems. They put forth stories that would help protect at-risk communities, mount creative events that would remind us of our common humanity and connectedness. And above all, they continue to reinforce the fact that human rights are truly fundamental values, more so when the adversary is invisible and knows no boundaries.

Here are the stories of how our Magsaysay laureates who are challenging broken systems that impede social justice and human progress, especially during these unprecedented times, through the powers of the pen and their platforms:



● 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee **RAVISH KUMAR** (India) talked about the plight of India’s millions of migrant workers affected by the pandemic. KUMAR shared his sharp insight that those comparing this tragedy with 1947 partition are wrong because India was a very different country back then. “We neither had enough resources nor the manpower to make sure that people crossing the border could do it safely. The situation, now, is very different but the condition, worse.”

In his daily primetime show on NDTV, he further addressed the helplessness of

the workers, who cannot stay in metro cities because they do not have money but cannot travel either because of inter-state travel ban. “It's like they have become ‘illegal’ in their own country.

Many of these people are surviving on just a few biscuits per day,” shared KUMAR. He also touched upon how these people have become a mere number and have been dehumanized to a point where it seems like their existence does not even matter to the government. KUMAR, once again, has given a voice to the voiceless migrant workers.



Thousands of migrant workers, stranded after lockdown was announced on March 25, had been desperate to go home for weeks (huffpost.com)



- In India, 2007 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee PALAGUMMI SAINATH continues to shed light on issues being faced by the marginalized sectors amidst the pandemic. With India’s mainstream media giving just 0.67% of its front page for news of rural origin, where 69% of the population live, SAINATH’s *People’s Archive of Rural India (PARI)* covers these news 365 days a year, and migrant workers’ plight is one of India’s hot button issues during the pandemic.

SAINATH, in an interview with Democracy Now, a leading Indian news website, shared that, “The government of India passed an order for a nationwide curfew between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. You know what that does to the migrants on the highway going home to their small villages, the millions of people on the highway? It means that they can only now march between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. in temperatures

ranging — you know, in temperatures ranging from 103 to 110 degrees Fahrenheit. That’s what the marchers are now — the people on the highways are now doing. (The government) makes rules to protect the beautiful people, and it has no part for the marginalized.”

One example, the case of young Jamlo, a 12-year-old girl, Indigenous person, who had gone with a party of people from her village in the red chili fields of the neighboring state of Telangana. When the lockdown came and everyone was thrown off their jobs and their work, Jamlo walked 140 kilometers in three days. And she fell dead 60 kilometers from her home, in exhaustion and from muscle fatigue.

How many Jamlos have we now condemned the migrants to, when we bring in a curfew that says you can only, individuals — movement of individuals is strictly forbidden between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.? How many more Jamlos are we pushing over the edge? The entire process of what’s going on is so utterly barbarous and, you know, shows what we have made of people,” he continued.



A young girl lies on a piece of luggage as she and her family awaits transportation to her



• 2000 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee ARUNA ROY (India) spoke with the prominent Indian digital news site, The Wire, that further highlighted the subcontinent's migrant worker crisis during the pandemic. ROY called this injustice, further exacerbated by the Indian government's moves to centralize power, a ruthless attack on democratic rights and constitutional rights. She called on the government to focus on these five things immediately:

1. The stranded workers need to reach home;
2. Their return has to be subsidized by the government;
3. Free or heavily subsidized rations as per the National Food Security Act (NFSA) should be universally available for rural and urban workers for the duration of the lockdown;
4. The MGNREGA should be extended to 200 days a year with full payment of wages in compensation for work denied by

MORE FOR MIGRANTS

The second part of the "economic stimulus" package focusses on migrant workers and farmers

- Close to **8 crore** migrants, who are not covered under the food distribution system, will be given **5 kg of grains** per person and **1 kg chana** per family per month for **two months**
- Affordable **rental housing** complexes planned under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
- Interest subvention worth **₹1,500 crore** announced for MUDRA-Shishu loans of up to **₹50,000**

- 'One Nation One Ration Card' to be used to enable access of PDS across country; 100% national coverage expected by March 2021
- Funds worth **₹6,000 crore** to be used for boosting employment for Adivasis and tribals
- A scheme worth **₹5,000 crore** to facilitate easy access to credit for street vendors

- **63 lakh** agriculture loans worth **₹86,600 crore** approved between March 1 and April 30
- Concessional credit for **2.5 crore** PM-KISAN beneficiaries worth **₹2 lakh crores**
- Centre had released **₹11,000 crore** to States on April 3 to augment funds in their State Disaster Response Fund for setting up shelters for migrants

- **14.62 crore** person-days of work generated under MGNREGA as of May 13

Source: [The Hindu](#)

physical/social distancing for the period of the lockdown; and, A young girl lies on a piece of luggage as she and her family awaits transportation to her village.

5. Children’s schooling suspended at a critical time of the year when examinations are held must be addressed. Health check-ups must be made free and access to public health universally expanded.

In April, Aruna and a colleague from the Rajasthan’s people’s organization, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), filed a PIL in the Indian Supreme Court for ensuring payment of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). “We filed the PIL in the beginning of April primarily demanding that MGNREGA workers with active job cards be paid full wages during the lockdown, or else provide work that followed norms of ‘social distancing’.

Though the Ministry of Rural Development had issued guidelines

allowing MGNREGA work, they were in contradiction of the lockdown order of staying at home and/or maintaining distance and work was not possible for almost a month of the lockdown. In a context where unemployment is going to skyrocket even after the lockdown ends, the PIL also asked for the number of days of work guaranteed by raised from 100 to 200 to support rural livelihoods during the impending economic crisis.”

She pointed out that during these times of crisis, people’s needs in the informal sectors, including migrant workers, are not loans immediate relief through direct cash transfers. “We need to universalize food and cash transfers to a great extent. Many activists, academics, bureaucrats and policy-makers have made suggestions of the amount that would be needed to keep the economy afloat and provide security for the vulnerable,” shared ROY.



- 2009 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee **MA JUN** (China), founder of Chinese non-profit organization, *Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs* (IPE), has leveraged his media clout and talked to US-based TV network CBS to highlight the worsening problem of air pollution, even during lockdown, in China.

With air pollution in China's industrial regions higher in April 2020 than it was during the same month last year — the first such year-on-year increase for any month since the COVID-19 disease started prompting widespread closures. China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) said that one key measure, the

concentration of tiny airborne particles known as PM2.5, known to be extremely dangerous to human health, was up 3.1% in April to an average of 33 micrograms per cubic meter in almost 340 cities across the country. The rebound appears to be driven by industrial emissions, as China has permitted most economic activity to resume.

“Large-scale enterprises in construction and manufacturing are understandably desperate to resume production as urged for economic recovery. Though the risk it's posing to environment shouldn't be overlooked and strict supervision is required,” shared MA.

China's economic recoveries from previous calamities have been associated with surges in air pollution and CO2 emissions.

MA said the Chinese government's "COVID-19 stimulus package is posing a threat to the environment. Any hopes of a 'green recovery' could be challenging, given China's current priority is the economy." He urged officials not to miss an opportunity, and to "come up with innovative solutions for the long run."

"The worst is yet to come for Beijing," MA predicted. MA urged officials and companies to let employees continue working from home as much as possible, at least in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, to help ease traffic conditions even after travel restrictions are dropped. ‘

These are some of the ways our Magsaysay laureates have been contributing to ensure that the basic rights of people from the margins are not taken for granted in the period of the pandemic.



Equally important during this crisis would be a positive reminder of the power of our common humanity and connectedness. Here are the stories of how our Magsaysay laureates are using media as their platform to amplify voices of hope and positive mindset in the midst of COVID-19 and spread greatness of spirit for the greater good:



- Since the start of the lockdown restrictions in key parts of the Philippines, 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee **RAYMUNDO PUJANTE CAYABYAB**, more popularly known as Ryan Cayabyab or Mr. C, has been using the joy of music to bring happiness to others, and much needed help to those in need.

His successful fundraising efforts, *Bayanihan Musikahan*, a series of online concerts live-streamed over Facebook, brought together the best and brightest

talents of the Philippine music industry to both entertain those in quarantine, and raise donations for basic needs of millions affected by the pandemic.

“Through *Bayanihan Musikahan* we want to uplift the spirits of Filipinos everywhere with music and critical support,” said CAYABYAB. CAYABYAB CAYABYAB and his many collaborators in *Bayanihan Musikahan* have raised a staggering Php70 million to be used for COVID-19 relief.



- Another recipient of Asia’s premier prize from the Philippines has been continuing

their mission, albeit using a different medium.

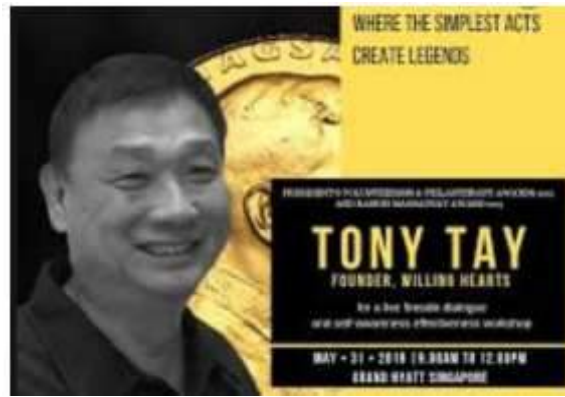
With all theater productions on hold indefinitely, 2017 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee **PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL THEATER ASSOCIATION** or **PETA** (Philippines) tapped on their creativity to be able to continue creating safe spaces of learning and storytelling through the arts by using the digital stage.

PETA began to produce online content during quarantine in mid-March, beginning with its online workshop series, *Let's Get Creative*, before branching out to other activities like live music jams, live streams, webinars, and a more immersive online workshop for kids called *Let's Get Creative PLUS*.



● In Pakistan where smart lockdowns are imposed on around 500 COVID-19 hotposts, a Ramon Magsaysay Awardee organization is using alternative means to educate children in the country. **THE CITIZENS FOUNDATION (TCF)**, who received Asia's premier prize in 2014, is producing and presenting a 45-minute colorful and engaging show for kids, "*Ilm Ka Aangan*" (*The Learning Courtyard*). This effort is part

of TCF's COVID-19 Response Appeal – a Rs. 500 Million fund established to raise funds to battle the devastating impact of the coronavirus. TCF is providing immediate relief to impacted families in its school communities, providing essential medical equipment and protective gear to medical professionals and is ensuring continuity of learning for children currently forced to stay out of school due to the pandemic.



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● **2017 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee TONY TAY** (Singapore) has been feeding over 6,000 of Singapore’s hidden hungry without fail, even during the lockdowns. But TAY has upped his game by signing up to be a

mentor for a unique program in Singapore called *Mentor for Hope*.

Mentor for Hope, officially launched last May 18, is calling founders and aspiring entrepreneurs based in Southeast Asia to take part in a month-long fund-raising campaign that will see mentors offering their time to guide other business founders affected by COVID-19 crisis.

TAY, together with other mentors such as captains of industry from Sequoia India, Vertex Ventures, Insignia, Openspace as well as industry leaders from Google, have pledged their time to mentor and support 1,000 startup founders from early stage to growth stage and raise \$50,000 donations for Willing Hearts and TechSG’s Beyond Social Services’ Covid Family Assistance Fund.



For further information:
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From WIEGO Waste pickers

Waste Pickers and Corona Virus

Waste pickers fear losing important gains made with municipalities for recognition and contracts due to inability to operate during this period. Mounting fear that contracts could be given to private waste collection companies after the crisis (South Africa, Colombia, Brazil).

In Ghana, sanitation workers are classified as essential workers and are exempted from the ban, but waste pickers fall in a grey area. Small groups are able to work because they live on or near the dump site in Accra. The majority are at home because they are either afraid of getting sick or do not think they can pass through security checkpoints.

Those who continue to work have no market for their products – the buyers are gone, leading to a total loss of income (Ghana, Peru, India). In Ghana, they are stockpiling goods for when the lockdown ends.

In Argentina, waste pickers are classified as essential workers and are receiving a stipend from the government to

support their work. Many have stopped or lessened work to run community soup kitchens. Large companies have asked waste pickers to step up collection of cardboard as there is a local shortage.

From South Africa CORC

Just dropping you a note to hear how you doing. It has been a while since we last connected.

We are doing well on this side of this world, despite the lockdown due to the COVID-19 who is upsetting the whole apple cart.

It is affecting the recycling business very bad, with some of the suppliers closing doors. This after the project really got traction and was growing. They were operating three trucks with cranes and were collecting 450 tons of glass per month services over 600 pickers per month.

For further information:
www.wiego.org



BANGLADESH

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

In Memory of Fr. Richard William Timm, C.S.C.

Educator, Zoologist and Development Worker



The Board of Trustees, Officers, and staff of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation express deep sympathies to the bereaved family and relatives of FR. RICHARD W. TIMM, 1987 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for International Understanding.

Fr. Timm passed away last Friday afternoon (September 11) at the Holy Cross House in the University of Notre Dame campus in South Bend, Indiana, USA, at the age of 97.

His life as a Catholic missionary in Bangladesh is considered legendary – Fr. Timm, American Catholic priest and religious of the Congregation of the Holy Cross (CSC), was an educator and scientist who dedicated his whole life to the proclamation and witness of the Gospel in Bangladesh. He was one of the founders of

Notre Dame College and served as its sixth principal.

Fr. Timm lived in Bangladesh for more than 66 years and set an outstanding example of love and service in the field of education and social justice. He was known as a scientist, teacher, intellectual, social worker, speaker, writer and most of all as a man with a great soul.

An internationally renowned zoologist, he discovered over 250 species of nematodes. Among the many varieties of Nematodes he discovered, the Marine Nematode *Timmia parva* was named after Fr. Timm himself.

He was an author of many books and publications. The Textbook of College Biology is a writing of Fr. Timm that served as a textbook for East Pakistani-Bangladeshi schools for many years.

Social development work

Fr. Timm could be considered the Father of NGO (mainly for development) in Bangladesh. His activities served as the initiating force for the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), the Coordinator Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB) and South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR). He was a consultant for Caritas Bangladesh and a board member of several Caritas projects as well as the projects of other NGOs.

Issues of social injustice was one of his major concerns. Through the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church, Fr. Timm investigated the exploitation of tribal minorities, and exposed the harmful working conditions of the poor and landless women employed as domestics, health workers, and in the garment, tea and cigarette industries. After a series of conferences on these problems, working women in 1986 urged him to organize the Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh.

Disaster response

When a great cyclone and massive tidal wave struck the coastal areas of East Pakistan in November 1970, and killed at least 50,000 people, Fr. Timm mobilized relief operations. Together with the students from Notre Dame College, The Christian Organization for Relief and Rehabilitation (CORR later named Caritas) and HELP (Heartland Emergency Life-Saving Project), Fr. Timm conducted several relief expeditions in the affected areas – distributed emergency food, blankets,



medicines, seeds and work animals. The response was considered among the biggest of those taken by non-government people. On other disasters, including the great flood of 1998, Notre Dame College and Caritas both participated in the relief effort both in and out of Dhaka under the initiative, participation and influence of Fr. Timm.

Having seen and encountered brutal communal conflicts, rural power struggles, the harsh realities and uncertain world of the Bangladeshi villagers, Fr. Timm decided to forsake teaching and devote himself wholly to rehabilitation, rural development and the reduction of communal tensions and social justices.

Tributes

He was at the helm of Notre Dame College and, for his extraordinary educational contribution, a six-story building of the College was named after him in 2015.

In response to his activities for social development, Fr. Timm was honored with the citizenship from three different governments.

Fr. Timm touched the lives of many students and the people of Bangladesh. He will be remembered for many years to come.

Fr. RICHARD WILLIAM TIMM was bestowed the 1987 Ramon Magsaysay Award for International Understanding by the board of trustees “for his 35 years of sustained commitment of mind and heart to helping Bangladeshis build their national life.”

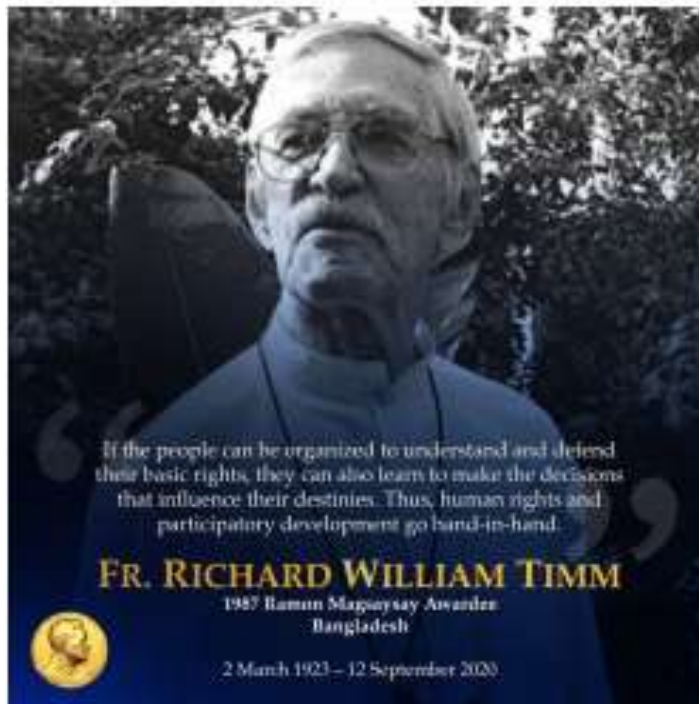
Funeral Mass and Burial

The Funeral Mass was held at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA, on September 18, 2020.

Burial was in the community cemetery at Notre Dame.

For further information:

Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation
rmaf@rmaf.org.ph



CHILE

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020



Father Josse van der Rest, S.J. Founder of SELAVIP

Left to meet God on July 24, 2020 at 96 years of age in Santiago, Chile

Fr. Josse firmly believed in the presence of Christ in the marginalized people of the cities. He always fought for the right to land and decent housing for all human beings, particularly the poorest of the poor. Until the beginning of this year, already 96 years old, he continued to visit the Selavip office in Chile twice a week. Yes, until the very end, he continued to give his life to defend the right of the poor to a world with greater justice.

Anyone who met Fr. Josse before can never forget an extraordinary and powerful father who always had a very kind smile on his face but also clearly having uncompromising anger seeing how the poor was treated unjustly and forced to live so poorly, oftentimes facing unjust evictions. Many still remember his thunderous voice during Habitat 1 in 1976 lamenting that “52% of the world is without housing.” It was his way of denouncing the overcrowded conditions suffered by most people everywhere. It is a situation that sadly continues and now made more tragic by the Covid-19 pandemic.

But not just with words. Fr. Josse van der Rest, of Belgian origin, comes from a family of wealthy construction industrialists. Together with his family, he set up the SELAVIP Foundation in the early 1970s. SELAVIP, meaning Latin American, Asian and African Service for Popular Housing, provides housing assistance to many groups, including Pagtambayayong.

Fr. Josse visited Cebu in 2006 or 2007. He carried with him a model of one of the 500 thousand *mediaguas*, a prefabricated social housing that was already built at that time with SELAVIP assistance.

Fr. Josse has done so much, one of the greatest of our time. He was a dedicated priest working for and working with the poor and the homeless in the world.

He taught us, he inspired us, he supported us. He will continue to accompany us.

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INDIA

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

Dharavi Vs Virus

India went into a 21-day lock down to maintain social distancing on March 24, 2020. How is this top down mandate being followed by people living in high density settlements? Our collaborators, friends and colleagues have been updating us about the ground realities.

People were asked to work from home and go out only to get the essentials. They were also told to wash their hands frequently. Prior to this announcement, the inter and intra state transportation was restricted. These were part of 'crucial' efforts to curb the spread of the novel Covid-19.

There is no doubt that the lockdown was necessary, though the entire class-biased machinery that was initiated was by no means sensitive to a majority of people. It is true that the urgency to respond to the spread of this dangerous virus, the lockdown, was maybe the only known and globally sanctioned solution. However, the instructions given during the announcement and the four-hour window before it took effect were inconsiderate to a large population of urban dwellers. Only people who could afford to stay 'home', maintain 'social distance' and manage to buy weeks-worth of groceries all at once could follow the mandate.

In spite of all this, it was heartening to hear the stories of people from Dharavi fighting the spread of the virus. They took it upon themselves to help each other. Some residents pooled their resources to feed

starving laborers. For many, the fear of death due to starvation is more real than the threat from the virus itself.

Local youth and leaders are organizing food and other essentials for people as grocery stores are running low on supplies. Ration shops are being advised to take stock of listed mobile numbers and message ration card owners to come in allotted time slots. These precautions are being taken to prevent large gatherings of people in the narrow lanes outside these shops. Dharavi's multiple small scale manufacturing industries have diverted their resources to manufacturing masks that can be used during the crisis. These are all self-organized, local, user -driven responses to implement the mandate.

Of course, there are huge challenges as well. In Dharavi, the inside and the outside are coterminous. Living spaces and work spaces often overlap. People often only congregate to sleep at night. Day time is spent at an outdoor or indoor workplace. In houses of 10 ft X 15 ft there are often more than 5 people living, making it impossible to stay indoors the whole time. Some rooms do not have proper light and ventilation and depends on the availability of exhaust fans to provide some respite. These are not optimal conditions for a quarantine and lockdown which prohibits people from stepping outside. It is a huge challenge though several families manage to do it.

The impossibility of implementing a strict mandate in Dharavi has led to events

whose outcomes defy the whole purpose of the lockdown. A few days ago, 7-10 boys had stepped out of their homes to go to the playground - much needed respite from poorly lit and ventilated spaces, this escalated into police control and retaliation that ended up shoving 50 young men into jail!

It's an accepted fact that, during difficult situations people depend on their social capital, which they have harnessed through social networks, especially the groups that are most vulnerable. Many people in Dharavi operate within dual household networks, with homes and families back in their villages. The lockdown made them anxious because of the curtailed train service within the country. Some managed to go back to their village before the lockdown was imposed. The ones who couldn't are desperately waiting for the train service to resume and go back to their ancestral homes. Many of these people are mistakenly perceived as migrant labor, but in reality work seasonally, shifting between employment in urban centers and their villages. Returning home is routine and regular. The difference this time was that it was all at once for millions of such workers all over the city (and the country) complemented by restrictions on the main mode of mobility - trains - leading to a breakdown.

Dharavi has a huge number of tool-houses - spaces that double up as work and living quarters. In some cases, this was super helpful as workshops could actually produce masks - something that even cities like New York found it difficult for some time. This ability of Dharavi to be locally resilient through its internal arrangement is something that definitely needs to be highlighted! Besides, for many workers, the

tool-houses also became their residences and helped them collectively manage some degree of social distancing in the way a family does.

Of course, working from home is not always an option for many other people. The vast numbers of women from Dharavi, who work as domestic help in neighborhoods outside, have been unable to work. While some of their employers can afford to pay them their monthly salary, most cannot. Many are worried that there could be a lasting backlash of vilifying Dharavi as an unhygienic settlement, making many people choose not to hire people from Dharavi due to a fear of contracting the virus.

Dharavi made it to international headlines when a resident tested positive and subsequently died. It is undeniable that access to preventive and palliative healthcare is in short supply for most residents of Dharavi, exposing the inequalities in our healthcare system. Medical experts and local residents had warned about the danger Covid-19 would bring to homegrown settlements (nearly half the population of the city). However, despite early warnings, it took the first death in Dharavi to sound the alarm. The neighborhood is now being branded as a "ticking time-bomb" in the media. Understandably, this has spread more fear among the residents of the neighborhood and the surrounding places. The authorities announced that they would deploy 4000 health workers to test suspected cases. On the ground though, it was reported that some civic workers were reluctant to visit the interiors of Dharavi and only ended up disinfecting buildings on the periphery.

The neighborhood has other pressing health concerns which have been neglected

for years. In the light of the lockdown the most obviously contagious places in Dharavi are the public/community toilets. These toilets do not even have running water supply and each toilet caters to more than 300-400 people. While the lockdown requires people to stay in their homes, how can one stop the use of community toilets and deny people access to basic sanitation? In spite of this, people have managed to self-regulate, practice social distancing when waiting in queue and made sure a supply of soap was regular.

All of these emerging incidents are inevitable when a government announces a lockdown without a nuanced understanding of its population's needs, behavior and coping mechanisms. And, more importantly, without having adaptive strategies that can respond to ground realities of the millions of people without gainful employment. While many organizations have risen to the occasion, responding to the crisis in real-time would have been more effective if there had been a thought out preparatory program with inputs coming from the neighborhood itself. Dharavi has a lot of self-organized networks and local leaders who could have been strong players in such a scenario - and helped reduce any extreme repercussions.

Residents in Dharavi know well that living in close knit communities, both spatially and socially, has implications on the spread of the virus. But some of them also point out that high density conditions can be found in other habitats as well. A crisis can just as well prevail in a crowded elevator of a high rise apartment. Global

mobility and the relatively unregulated entry of infected residents from elsewhere need to be foregrounded in this particular health crisis as much as dense conditions!

Historically, we have seen how narratives of health have been used by urban planning discourses selectively. Many policies get justified using that discourse. It is a trap in which one should not fall. Roots of colonial urban planning lie in segregationist strategies. The traditional way of dealing with disease by colonizers has been to keep a safe distance from the local population considered to harbor all kinds of diseases. We need to question why health allows us to justify further segregation and firewalling rather than focusing on improvement of living conditions for all?

We cannot be selective about who is taken care of, everyone is in the same boat regardless of caste, creed or income. This current crisis has demonstrated in heart-breaking ways the negative impact of a top-down mandate. Our learning is that we need to trust local networks, capacities and systems more as they are best equipped to implement and regulate realities on the ground - no matter how challenging and seemingly impossible. At the same time - we need to constantly strive towards improving the quality of life of neighborhoods by partnering and working closely with exactly those local resources.

For further information:

<https://urbz.net/articles/dharavi-vs-virus>

JAPAN

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

“A Cup of Love Rice” Program

"Please help! I've lost my job because of the Covid 19 and am having trouble living!"

Background of the Program

Covid 19 problems began in Japan at an early stage. Perhaps from January of this year, people living in Japan began to be aware of the effects of corona. As a result, stockpiling became more intense since February.

I have many opportunities to come into contact with Vietnamese Catholic youth living in Japan, and I contact them almost every day through social media and Facebook. The fear of Covid 19 is widespread in the Vietnamese community in Japan, with young people almost every day exchanging information about where to buy rice and where to buy toilet paper. I thought this was a normal reaction to a disaster, so I didn't pay much attention.

However, while looking at such information, a question arose in my mind. It was a question of how people without money could buy what they needed to live. The number of young Vietnamese people studying and working in Japan is increasing rapidly each year. Because they send money to their families in Vietnam and need to repay the debt incurred by coming to Japan, they cannot afford to live. Perhaps every month, many people use up all the money they earn. And since many stores and restaurants - where they earn money by doing part-time jobs - have been closed due to the Covid 19 disaster, their income is almost zero. Most of them are living alone so when they are in trouble,

they have no parents, no friends, no money, so it pains me just to imagine how troubled they are. I felt I had to do something for them but I did not come up with anything concrete.

At the end of March, news of the Japanese government's "emergency statement" spread and people, especially many foreigners in Japan, panicked. The influence of Covid 19 was right there in front of our eyes. I started receiving messages from here and there. "Please help! I can't even buy food because I don't have a job. I'm in trouble not only materially but also mentally. I'm so afraid of being affected by the corona virus." In this situation, I came to realize that the thoughts I had must be put into practice, to support not only Vietnamese youth but also other foreign youth in Japan.

However, I knew I couldn't do anything on my own, so I called Father Hien, a Vietnamese priest belonging to the Tokyo Archdiocese, who has been taking care of the Vietnamese Catholic community for many years. He said that he would cooperate. At that time, neither Father Hien nor I knew what to do to support them. The next day, I happened to see the Facebook of Sister Maria Lang, who works in the Diocese of Saitama, and found out that Sisters were giving rice and food to the homeless. Immediately I contacted Sister Maria Lang and she said that she would support my idea and would cooperate. That

day was Thursday of Holy Week. Thus, “a cup of love rice” was born.

Providing Assistance

Even after speaking with Father Hien and Sister Maria, I couldn’t come up with any good

idea about how to support these people, but I decided to give it a try. Sister Maria had proposed the idea of providing a certain amount of food for one person: 5 kg of rice, 1 liter of frying oil, 1 bottle of fish sauce, 5 bags of noodles, 1 kg of sugar. First, we prepared such basic food for 30 people. We also decided to announce the program through social media and Facebook, and at the same time call for donations. To avoid corona infections, we also decided to have a small group of Vietnamese Catholic youth help and deliver by courier every Saturday. After sending the news of the program, applications flew in from all over the country, and the first shipment was for 91 people. I realized that there are many people who are in trouble. Within two weeks of starting the support project, about 1,000 applications came from all over Japan. I knew that I couldn't do it all in one place, and I received the advice of Father Kajiyama, director of the Tokyo Jesuit Social Center, and decided to call for the help of Hosoe Church and Shimonoseki Labor Education Center. Then, Father Hy of the Divine Word Fathers, who works in the Diocese of Nagoya, and Father Kazukoshi Binh of the Conventual Franciscans in the Archdiocese of Osaka, decided to join us. Through these movements, we have been able to support this “cup of love rice” for about three months. We prepared and shipped food for 1,000 people every week at these four locations. This program ended with the final shipment on June 21.

Results of the Program

First of all, the number of people we were able to support came to about 6,000. They live all over Japan, from Hokkaido to Okinawa. As for the breakdown, 90% are Vietnamese, and the remaining 10% are from Bangladesh and Nepal. Of course, there are still many people who are in trouble, but we ended this support program with the hope that the “emergency declaration” will be lifted and people will gradually be able to return to their normal lives.

A total of 5,760 packages have been shipped. Some of them are packed for two or four, but the cost for one person is about 6,100 yen including shipping charges. A simple calculation shows that it came to 35.16 million yen in support activities. We sent 28,800 kg of rice, 46,080 bags of noodles, 15,680 masks, 5,760 liters of fish sauce, 5,760 liters of fried oil, and 5,760kg of sugar, etc. All of this is thanks to everyone who donated money and food. We were simply the distributors.

Lessons

As mentioned earlier, this program was made possible by everyone. In other words, the success of this program was the result of many people’s cooperation. We have learned a lot from this program that we initiated.

First, at times when we are in trouble, we can help one another. Before we started to help, we were worried about many things. Of course, we were wondering how to help those in need, but we were also worried that no one would make a donation because everyone is in trouble. However, many people sent me money and food right from the beginning of the program.

At first, we didn't know how much we could do, so we decided to support only the Vietnamese community and call for donations only within the Vietnamese community. As a result, many people wanted to be sent food, and at the same time, many people sent donations. Most of the donations I received around this time came from the Vietnamese community. Many of the people who made donations were in trouble themselves. Most of their donations were 2,000 yen or 3,000 yen, but we were impressed that this was like the widow in the Gospel (see Mark 12:41-44).

I also learned how important local cooperation is. When the program gradually expanded and money and food were decreasing, I asked for donations through the Jesuit Social Center and we received a lot of donations from the Japanese Catholic faithful, not to mention Bishop Matsuura of Nagoya and Bishop Yamanouchi of Saitama, as well as St. Ignatius parish of Kojimachi, Asakusa, Nigawa, Hosoe, and Hamadera parishes. The religious received a lot of donations and food from the Salesian Sisters and the Chofu Salesian community. In addition, a total of 1 ton or more of rice was sent from Yamano Farm, a food bank in Nagano

Prefecture. In the latter half of the year, most of the support was provided by donations from Japanese people. We don't usually have much contact, but when we are in trouble, we are able to feel the universality of the kingdom of God through many people who help those in need regardless of nationality or religion.

Finally, I have learned to work with others through this program. I've been studying for a long time, so my field experience was very shallow. In particular, I wasn't so confident in working with others. This program was an opportunity for me to work with many believers and non-believers, including the priests and religious who worked with us. This was a real treasure for me. Not only with this program, but as a priest, I now have the opportunity to continue working with other people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who worked with us and also those who believed in us by opening their hearts to apply for help from this program.

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SOUTH KOREA

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

A Tribute to Mayor Park Won-Soon

The Board of Trustees, Officers, and staff of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation express deep sympathies to the bereaved family and relatives of MAYOR PARK WONSOON, 2006 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Public Service. He served as the mayor of Seoul City, South Korea from 2011 to 2020.

He was 64. He is survived by his wife, a daughter and a son.

Prior to being elected mayor, Park was a community and social justice activist. A noted political donor in Seoul, Park donated to political organizations and think tanks that advocated for grassroots solutions towards social, educational, environmental, and political issues.

In 1994, he founded the non-profit watchdog organization “People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)” which monitors government regulatory practices and fights political corruption. Park’s PSPD also championed the rights of minority shareholders in Korea’s domineering business conglomerates and filed lawsuits against executives for illicit transactions and insider trading.

In 2000, it mounted a controversial blacklist campaign naming eighty-six candidates “unfit to run” for seats in parliament. Fifty-nine of them were rejected by voters. By that time, PSPD had become a national force.

In 2002, Park stepped down as head of PSPD to lead The Beautiful Foundation, a PSPD offshoot. Aiming to rekindle Korean

habits of generosity and to popularize philanthropy, Park challenged individuals and companies to donate just one percent of their income or time. More than twenty-six thousand people have done so.

The Foundation redistributes the money to the needy and to local public-interest groups. Meanwhile, in the Foundation’s chain of Beautiful Stores, volunteers recycle donated goods and clothing for sale to low-income shoppers.

In 2006, he founded the Hope Institute as an offshoot of The Beautiful Foundation. Hope Institute is a think tank designed to promote solutions arising from grass roots suggestions for social, educational, environmental, and political problems.

In 2005, Park served as part of South Korea’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address the history of human rights violations in Korean history – from Japan’s rule of Korea in 1910, up until the end of Authoritarian Rule in Korea with the election of President Kim Youngsam in 1993.

As a lawyer, he won several major cases, including South Korea’s first sexual harassment conviction. He also campaigned for the rights of comfort women who were forced to work in Japan’s military brothels before and during World War II.

In 2006, Park Won-soon received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service for “his principled activism fostering social justice, fair business practices, clean government, and a generous spirit in South

Korea's young democracy." He donated his Magsaysay Award prize money to CODE NGO (Caucus of Development NGO Networks), the largest coalition of development NGOs in the Philippines, because he was a firm believer in people-to-people solidarity movements to build a better society.

Park Won Soon, the Mayor

Park was one of South Korea's most influential politicians pursuing a slew of policies promoting gender equality. He provided affordable housing for single working women during his decade in office. He championed city welfare projects and became a symbol of reform in a city which had a population of around 10 million.

Seoul

- A City of the People, For the People

When Park won the mayoralty seat in 2011 on the campaign slogan "Citizens are the Mayor"—a direct response to the tension and distrust that had built up over decades between the government and the people, he immediately set things in motion and implemented changes in the mayor's office. Just as he had done as an activist, Park quickly established a listening culture, making the people of Seoul his primary advisors. This was concretized by a literal "Big Ear," an elephantine aural sculpture designed by artist Yang Soo-in symbolizing Park's pledge to listen to his constituents. South Koreans have actually lined up to speak their woes or to voice ideas for civic improvement into this immense ear. The sculpture records the words that it "hears" and plays them over speakers in a citizens' affairs bureau located inside the basement of Seoul's City Hall.

In September 2012, under the leadership of Park, the Seoul Metropolitan Government launched the Sharing City Seoul project, to implement sharing projects closely related to the lives of citizens and to establish and broaden the foundation for sharing. As a result of the successful implementation of the plan, Park is recognized in Korea and internationally as a leader of the Sharing City concept.

In 2014, an integrated, online complaint and suggestion filing system, called Eundapso, merged all the independent complaint and suggestion channels into one. This provided a means for consolidating all citizen views received. In addition, city operations were made more transparent through citizen involvement in the city's urban planning initiative called "Seoul 2030." Almost 50 billion won (USD \$47 million) was allocated to the Residents' Participatory Budgeting System, a special fund allowing citizens to secure and allocate up to 5% of the city's budget to help realize needs-based projects of their own choosing.

Through this participatory approach, Seoul citizens learned that balanced composition of committees, fairness, and transparency of the decision-making process, together with citizens' voluntary involvement are all vital for the success of their city's system. Indeed, participatory budgeting was not just a tool to get the required budget. The most crucial aspect of the process was to provide citizens with a venue to understand and discuss issues faced by the community in which they lived, and to come up with solutions to these issues for the benefit of all. Indeed, Seoul was to be a city of the people, for the people.

In 2018, it was a city for the world to emulate. Seoul was awarded the year's "Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize." The jury's citation lauded it "as the role model for megacities with a will to change. With a leadership that dares to take bold decisions and a government that devises innovative problem-solving methods, the city has successfully turned itself around from a highly bureaucratic top-down city with rising tensions between the government and its people, into the inclusive, socially stable, and highly innovative city found today. As shown in Seoul's successful and impactful high quality projects to repurpose urban infrastructure, the city has proven itself as an excellent example where leadership, commitment to citizen

engagement, data-supported problem solving decisions, and creative designs can transform the built environment, add vibrancy and improve quality of life."

This is the legacy of Park Won-soon to the people of South Korea, to the citizens of the city of Seoul. He is and will remain to be the people's servant leader. A visionary, who with his own unique brand of selfless service and greatness of spirit, will always be remembered as someone who is always searching for ways to best serve the interest of the public, for the greater good!

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PAKISTAN

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

Post Covid Planning

By

Arif Hasan, May 09, 2020

(The writer is an architect.)



BEFORE the corona virus arrived, the directions for the development of Karachi had already been set in keeping with neoliberal thinking. The city was going to be 'gentrified', which meant taking away space from the poor both within the built city and in the rural areas for the use of elite functions. This also meant the development of fancy public spaces, parks and other follies that require heavy investments, both in terms of construction costs and subsequent maintenance, as well as create difficulties for poor communities in accessing these facilities.

Gentrification has also meant the removal of Karachi's street economy, which provides incomes to about 80,000 families and serves the needs of almost the entire city population of 16 million. It meant the demolition of over 15,000 homes and small businesses without compensation or relocation, and along with this the demolition of schools, madressahs and ancestral graveyards. It meant the capture of heritage for elite purposes and the

eviction from it of people who have lived there for decades. With their departure, the intangible heritage of the communities that lived there would also be destroyed. It meant the continuous expansion of 'semi legal' elite gated settlements, mostly for speculative purposes at the cost of weak rural communities who are the original owners of this land.

In promoting this form of development, capitalists, their architects/planners and dependents have come together and parts of the academia have unwittingly supported the process. Those who have opposed this development have been dubbed by the powerful government-capitalist-architect/planner nexus as 'enemies of development'.

However, the pandemic has taught us that this inequitable development in the post-Covid-19 period will only increase poverty, crime and social unrest, especially when according to official estimates 18.5m jobs will be lost. Given these figures, it is easy to appreciate the dangers of living in a world of increasing poverty and deprivation.

What should be the objectives for Karachi?

So what should be the objectives for the future planning of our city so as to promote a better physical and social environment? First, the ecology of the

region in which Karachi is located has to be respected, which means the protection of its natural drainage system, its water bodies (especially its coastline and its flora and fauna), expansion of its existing green areas, limiting extraction of water from its aquifers, and disposing of its sewage and solid waste. All of this can be done in a low-cost manner without large foreign loans and expensive consultants. The concepts for much of this, and in some cases details, already exist. This will also give our institutions a sense of pride in their work and establish a culture of self-sufficiency.

Second, there should be no demolitions of existing settlements without relocation in areas near to their original places of residence. Land for this already exists: it has to be clearly identified and surrendered for this purpose. Also, a policy for regularizing the street economy of the city should be framed in a manner that strengthens its role since it is the only way in which the jobless can provide for themselves in the immediate future.

Without the protection of land from the greed of the developer and speculator, equitable development for Karachi is not possible. Policies to kill speculation would include a non-development fee on vacant land and property, and the enforcement of an urban land ceiling act preventing an individual from holding more than 500 square yards of urban land.

The virus has also identified the weaknesses of our public and curative

health services. The location of hospitals has to be closer to low-income groups, with health centres within the settlements, and school curriculums have to be devised to promote a scientific understanding of preventive health methods. Light, ventilation, density and hygiene-related building regulations need to be reviewed keeping in mind the lessons that the virus (and climate change) has taught us.

So far, we have not had any people's participation in the planning of our cities. It is essential that such participation is developed by meaningful public hearings, display of all plans for the city at a public space, leading to comments and suggestion from citizens and interest groups, and inclusion of a majority of civil society and community members on all the city's planning, management and utility boards.

But this cannot be done without the political will to develop the institutions required for it: institutions where decisions are not taken on the basis of nepotism, and which do not promote a culture of wastage of public money in extravagant offices and vehicles. But is this possible given the present culture of governance? If it is not, then we will go back to a situation far worse than before the virus, and await the consequences that follow.

Published in Dawn, May 9th, 2020

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PAKISTAN

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

WHAT Has Emerged From 30 Years of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP)

By Arif Hasan

Summary

The causes of what has emerged from 30 years of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) can only be understood through understanding the factors that have shaped its evolution. The OPP was established by Akhtar Hameed Khan whose experience-based thinking and theorization has shaped the project philosophy and methodology. Situated in Orangi Town in Karachi, Pakistan, the project has motivated local communities to finance and build their own neighborhood infrastructure while encouraging the local government to build the off-site infrastructure such as trunk sewers and treatment plants. The project expanded to other areas of Pakistan with the OPP's Research and Training Institute, training local communities in surveying, estimating materials and labor required for construction works, and motivating communities in building their sanitation systems and negotiating with local government to build the off-site infrastructure. The project methodology has been adopted by local governments and bilateral and international development agencies. The philosophy and methodology have also become a part of universities' and bureaucratic training institutions' curriculum. So far, households on over 15,560 lanes all over Pakistan have

built their sanitation systems by investing 412 million rupees (Rs). According to the OPP 153rd quarterly report in 2018, the total number of households in these lanes is 272,506. The model shaped the sanitation policy of the government of Pakistan and also influenced policies on housing and informal development, which has results in the upgrade in a much greater number of households in urban areas such as Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Kasur, Narowal, Sargodha, Nowshera, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Rawalpindi, Muzaffargarh, Swat, Lodhran, Kehror Pakka, Dunyapur, Khanpur, Bahawalpur, Khairpur, Jalah Arain, Yazman, Vehari, Uchh, Multan, Alipur, Gujranwala, Jampur, Sanghar, Amanullah, Parhoon, Mithi, and Sinjhor, as well as 128 villages.

The project suffered a major blow with the assassination of its director and one of its workers and an attempt on the life of its deputy director in 2013. Due to the resulting insecurity, project programs and various linkages with government and international agencies and nongovernmental organizations suffered. However, due to the OPP's reputation of capability and its roots within the community, the project has survived (against all predictions) and is in the process of expanding its work and expertise.

The full article of
Oxford Research Encyclopedia on
Global Public Health
can be accessed through this link:

<https://oxfordre.com/publichealth/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190632366.001.0001/acrefore-9780190632366-e-150>



PHILIPPINES

E. J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

EDSA, Neoliberalism, and Globalization

By Walden Bello

(Delivered at Coalesce Conference,
sponsored by Ateneo Lex, Ateneo de Manila, March 18, 2017)

Most of you had not yet seen the light of day when the EDSA Uprising took place in February 1986. To my generation, this event was a memorable step in the Philippines struggle for democracy. The three decades that followed were marked by the reign of liberal democracy as the country's political regime. Those thirty years coincided with the rise and dominance of neoliberalism as an economic ideology and globalization as an economic trend.

It is now clear that those three decades constituted a lost opportunity for the Filipino people, that the promise of the EDSA Republic was subverted by the neoliberal and pro-globalization policies that were adopted by the administrations that reigned between 1986 and 2016. It is also evident from the tumultuous events of the last year that what we now call Duterteism is to a great extent an angry and resentful reaction to the EDSA Republic's failure to live up to the promise that accompanied its birth.

My focus in this talk will be on how neoliberalism and globalization combined with the continuing gross inequality in the distribution of income and wealth to subvert the promise of EDSA. I would like begin, however, by briefly discussing the

failure of EDSA to deliver on the political front.

Unhealthy Birthmarks

There were three unhealthy birthmarks that marred the EDSA Republic: the role of the military, the intervention of the United States, and the leadership of the elite. The prominent role of the military rebels in triggering the insurrection gave them a sense of having a special role in the post-Marcos dispensation. Only after seven failed coups was civilian constitutional role stabilized. But, in retrospect, military discontent was not as damaging to the EDSA Republic as US patronage and elite hegemony.

The US was not only a player; it was a decisive player. Even before the Aquino assassination in 1983, Washington sought to nudge Marcos and the elite opposition to arrive at some compromise. These pressures escalated in 1985, resulting in Marcos' calling for the snap elections that became the vehicle for the mobilization of the middle class and some of the popular sectors against the regime and paving the way for the military mutiny. At that point powerful forces in Washington overcame President Ronald Reagan's reluctance to cut Marcos loose and moved to directly

remove the dictator from the scene. At an off-the-record briefing at the State Department on April 23, 1986, to which I was mistakenly invited, Undersecretary of State Michael Armacost openly boasted of how the US moved during Marcos' last months in power: "Our objective was to capture... to encourage the democratic forces of the center, then consolidate control by the middle and also win away the soft support of the NPA [New People's Army]. So far, so good."

The US role in serving as midwife led it to consider the EDSA regime as a protectorate. While the opposition of the Senate majority to the new bases treaty was disconcerting to Washington, it got what it wanted from the government in virtually all other areas. It got Cory Aquino to make repayment of the foreign debt—especially that owed to US banks—the top priority of the new government. And it eventually brought its overwhelming military presence back with the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, where Cory's son, President Benigno Aquino III, agreed to allow Washington to set up US bases in nominally Philippine bases.

The third flaw of the EDSA Revolution is that it was an uprising whose direction was set by the anti-Marcos factions of the elite. Their aim was to restore competition among the elites while containing pressures for structural change. The 1987 Constitution enshrined the rhetoric of democracy, human rights, due process, and social justice, but these aspirations were frozen in amber owing to the dearth of implementing laws and actions that would translate them into reality. Via periodic electoral exercises the factional monopoly of power under Marcos became a class monopoly, open to intra-elite competition

for the most important national, regional, and local offices but virtually closed to the lower orders as money politics became the order of the day.

The Neoliberal Debacle

Despite its political shortcomings, the EDSA regime would probably have retained a significant amount of support had it delivered on the economic front. Indeed, it would be an understatement to say that the EDSA system failed to translate its promise of delivering less poverty, more equality, and more social justice into reality.

Perhaps the key tragedy of the EDSA Republic was that it came into being right at the time that neoliberalism was on the ascendant as an ideology and globalization became the flavor of the month for capitalism. Even before the February 1986 uprising, the Philippines had become one of four guinea pigs of the new structural adjustment program unveiled by the World Bank, which aimed to bring down tariffs, deregulate the economy, and privatize government enterprises.

As noted above, under the administration of Corazon Aquino, pressure from the International Monetary Fund and US banks made repayment of the foreign debt the top national economic priority, and Washington and the IMF ensured that succeeding administrations would follow suit by having Congress adopt the automatic appropriations law that made repayment of the state's debt the first cut in the national budget. Over the next three decades, debt servicing would take up to 20 to 45% of the annual government budget, crippling the government's capacity to invest and stimulate economic growth and provide essential social services.

With the 1992-98 administration of Fidel Ramos, neoliberalism reached its apogee: tariffs were radically cut to zero-to-five percent, deregulation and privatization were sped up, and the Philippines joined the World Trade Organization — to “benefit”, it was said, from the tide of corporate-driven globalization. Under Ramos and later administrations, the contours of the EDSA political economy were firmed up: pro-market policies, relentless privatization, export-oriented development, export of labor, low wages to attract foreign investors, and conservative monetary and fiscal management. As the Philippines’ neighbors retained high levels of economic protection, neoliberal policies contributed to the Philippines’ having the second lowest yearly average growth rate in Southeast Asia from 1990 to 2010. Even the second-tier ASEAN economies of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Burma outstripped it.

The sad reality is that liberalization was a program of unilateral disarmament that resulted in the destabilization of almost all sectors of manufacturing, resulting in deindustrialization. Let me cite the sad plight of our once world-class shoe industry. In the 1960’s and 1970’s, our shoe industry based in Marikina was very dynamic, with some 2000 factories. Owing to liberalization and smuggling, there are only some 100 factories left today. And with the demise of the industry, the leather and tanning industry that serviced the shoe industry whose center was Meycawayan, Bulacan, also virtually disappeared.

Let us briefly touch on our agriculture. Before we joined the World Trade Organization in 1995, we were a net agricultural exporting country. Free trade turned us into a net agricultural importing

country, with cheap imports eroding all sectors of the industry from vegetables to grain to poultry and meat. The crisis of our farmers stems not only from the continuing unequal distribution of land but also from the deprotectionization of our agricultural economy.

Deindustrialization and agro-destabilization were one face of globalization. The other was our conversion into a remittance dependent economy as we were pushed into an international division of labor in which we became a prime exporter of cheap labor to the global economy. In short, globalization involved the disintegration of our domestic economy and our integration into the global economy as a provider of low-wage unskilled and semi-skilled labor. To a great extent, education has become a process of preparing workers for export abroad. As the former Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Overseas Workers, who witnessed firsthand the tremendous insecurity of our migrant workers, I can tell you that this was a bad bargain.

Let me continue. Although the economy registered 6-7% growth rates from 2012 to 2015, there was no “trickle down” to counter the legacy of stagnation bequeathed by neoliberal policies. At nearly 25% of the population, the percentage living in poverty in 2015 was practically the same as in 2003. The gini coefficient, the best summary measure of inequality, jumped from 0.438 in 1991 to 0.506 in 2009, among the highest in the world. For many Filipinos, the statistics were superfluous. Extreme poverty was so wretchedly visible in the big urban poor clusters within and surrounding Metro Manila and in

depressed rural communities throughout the country.

Corruption and Class

The neoliberal paradigm was not, however, the only cause of the EDSA regime's failure to address the deepening social crisis. Corruption was a problem, as it was in the Philippines' neighbors. The administrations of Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo became synonymous with unbridled corruption.

But even more consequential than corruption was class. Just as they had forced Marcos to halt his land reform program in the 1970s, the landed class successfully resisted the implementation of Republic Act 6657, Cory Aquino's already watered-down land reform program. A civil society push to reenergize the program, which was passed in 2009, bogged down under the Benigno Aquino III administration owing to lack of political will and presidential indifference. By the end of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program with Extension Law (CARPER) in 2014, about 700,000 hectares of the best private land in the country remained in the hands of landlords, violence against land reform beneficiaries was common, and rural poverty remained stubbornly high.

Unaccompanied by structural reforms, the World Bank-supported Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) anti-poverty program of the Aquino administration, though it eventually covered some 4.4 million families, or nearly one-fifth of the population, could barely make a dent on poverty and inequality.

Over the Cliff

Class callousness, double standards, and inept governance finally drove the EDSA Republic to the edge of the cliff during the Aquino III period. Popular support had steadied the EDSA Republic when it was challenged by military coups in the late eighties. By 2016, however, three decades of disillusionment had made it a tired, discredited system waiting to be pushed over the cliff, and it was, by the electoral insurgency that brought Duterte to power and provided legitimacy to his brazen moves toward fascism. Duterte is EDSA's vengeful offspring even as the administration has not broken with the EDSA Republic's failed economic policies. That is, however, another story.

So let me just end by saying that neoliberalism and globalization have been discredited globally, especially after the 2008 global financial crisis. Our experience is not unique. And the response has been, as in the Philippines, a turn towards fascist or authoritarian populist solutions. The challenge to us at this point is to break with this failed economic model and junk the old mantras about the so-called benefits of globalization. That won't be easy, but we have no choice.

Thank you.

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PHILIPPINES

E. J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

Philippine Parish Opens Food Stall for Poor amid Pandemic

By Mark Saludes

Through the program, parishioners are not only helping themselves but also the source of the products they sell

A Catholic parish in the Philippine capital has launched a program to provide livelihood and easy access to food for the poor during the pandemic.

The Santuario de San Vicente de Paul Parish, which is run by the Congregation of the Missions in Quezon City, opened food stalls offering a variety of products from the provinces.

The program, dubbed Entengpreneuers from the word “Enteng” for Vincent and entrepreneur, is managed by the parish’s office for Basic Ecclesial Communities.

On October 28, the parish inaugurated three stores in within the jurisdiction of the

parish. It has earlier launched an online counterpart of the program.

Father Geowen Porcincula, C.M., said the project is an improvement of the congregation’s response to the pandemic to assist Catholic communities emerge from the crisis.

The priest, who heads the COVID-19 response program of the congregation, said “the program is now geared toward a more sustainable way to aid communities.”

“It is basically a livelihood program but instead of individuals, the entire BEC is running it. It is a layer of creative pastoral response and has a dimension of social



Members of the Basic Ecclesial Community of the Santuario de San Vicente de Paul Parish in Quezon City pose for a photograph during the opening of food stalls under the COVID-19 response program of the Congregation of Missions on October 28.

work,” he said.

Through the program, BEC members are not only helping themselves and the community by providing access to cheap and quality products but also help other sectors.

Lita Asis-Nero, BEC coordinator of the parish, said they buy their products directly from farmers in and sell these with “minimal profit.”

She said they sell rice from farmers affected by the low market price of unmilled grains and raw honey from the indigenous peoples.

As part of its charity program, the parish has hired eight homeless people as delivery personnel, providing them with bicycles and uniforms.

Community leader Marissa Tinao said they allocate 10 percent of the net income for charity. “Every week, we organize a

community kitchen for children and the elderly in poor communities,” she said.

“The pandemic caught all of us unprepared. We do not want that to happen again, so we make sure that the BEC has money to support its members during the crisis,” she said.

“We’ve seen how the program is helping the community battle the impacts of the crisis without relying mainly on dole-outs,” said Father Porcincula.

The priest, however, said the primary goal of the program is not to profit but to develop “collaboration, trust, and commitment among community members.”

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PHILIPPINES

E. J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020



Calixta Camajalan Abella

Mader Caling died on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 5:25 in the afternoon.

She died very peacefully and no longer with pain, thanks to all of us.

Mader Caling was an urban poor community leader from Alaska, Mambaling, Cebu City. She helped prevent the forcible demolition of her community in 1969. Since then, she devoted her life working in her own community and with other urban poor communities, despite being poor and despite a family with four children, including a son who is paralyzed.

Mader Caling was very humble, very sweet and very generous, yet purposeful, hardworking and loyal. It saddened us so much to hear a few weeks ago that she was very ill and in great pain. Many immediately responded. With medicines. With good words. With prayers. With Food. We even celebrated all saints day on November 1 with her, some physically with lechon, many via zoom.

Among her last request was to go to confession. I said to myself, what for? Has she not already extinguished her sins with her generous life and the excruciating pain that she has for a long time endured? But confessed she did. When we left her, she was praying. This is my last image of her - praying, probably to prepare herself for the last judgment, but most likely for those she is leaving behind.

Why there remains so much poverty and homelessness?

Her daughter Elbeth described her last moments with her family around her as very peaceful. "Nanay died smiling! No fuss...Breathing just slowing down and stopped."

When we die, I wish that like Mader Caling, each of us will also be smiling and able to say: "I have lived a good life. I have kept the Faith.

Surely the crown of glory and perfect peace await me."

So happy for Mader Caling although so sad for all of us who were so blessed by her. Very humble, very sweet, very generous, yet purposeful, hardworking and loyal.

- Pagtambayayong Foundation
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SRI LANKA
E.J. Anzorena, S.J.
October 2020

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

In Sri Lanka, we are supporting 150 MHPSS practitioners with access to translation/adaptation of MHPSS resources, facilitating collaboration around psychological first aid, online single-session counseling, public messaging for adults and children, advocacy and more! This is a useful priority framework for country-level responses. <https://app.mhpss.net/resource/information-note-on-how-to-include-mhpss-in-humanitarian-response-plans-and-country-plans> as well as broader global guidance <https://app.mhpss.net/resource/interim-iasc-briefing-note-addressing-mental-health-and-psychosocial-aspects-of-covid-19-outbreak>

This illustrated children's book was produced with the inputs of children around the world (including my own) and developed by mental health professionals - and is translated (and still being translated) into multiple languages around the world. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/my-hero-you>.

I am also curating a Flipboard magazine with articles and posts related to MHPSS in COVID19, which currently has nearly 1000 stories/links of relevance to practitioners and policymakers, which is an easy way to keep up with upcoming resources and commentary.

<https://flipboard.com/@agalappatti/mhpss-4-covid-19-mental-health-psychosocial-support-in-the-covid-19-outbreak-h8s8tggjz>

The demand for MHPSS services, resources & guidance in the COVID19 context has been overwhelming at times, but it has been heartening to see practitioners locally and globally step up to meet these needs. With so much to do, solidarity and cooperation have never been more vital.

If any of you need access to materials related to mental health and psychosocial support in this time, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best,
Ananda

Note: The Ramon Magsaysay Awards Foundation Board of Trustees recognized in the year 2008 Mr. Ananda Galippatti's spirited commitment for bringing effective psychosocial services to survivors of war and natural disasters in Sri Lanka.

Ananda is the Director of the MHPSS Network. The MHPSS Network is a growing global platform for connecting people, networks and organizations, for sharing resources and for building knowledge related to mental health and psychosocial support both in emergency settings and in situations of chronic hardships.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

Amid a Global Pandemic, the Christian Story of Easter Shows Us the Power of Hope

In the spring of 1963, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was engaged in a campaign to defeat Jim Crow laws in Birmingham, Alabama.

As they approached the Easter weekend that year, no victory was in sight. But Dr Martin Luther King Jr knew there was something in the logic of Easter that suggested the way to victory might be counterintuitive. He decided to go to jail on Good Friday and stay there through the Easter weekend. He would not be free to preach a sermon on the holiest day of the Christian year, but he would pen his famous Letter from a Birmingham Jail as he waited to see a way forward.

In the midst of this world's deepest darkness, the Christian story of the resurrection points towards the power of hope. As we weather a global pandemic, Easter offers a moment for us to reflect on the role of suffering and the possibility of radical solidarity.

Over the past month we have entered a new reality where despair is ever-present and fear pervasive. The death toll keeps rising, and instead of honest leadership we have a president who uses press conferences as political rallies. Trump might remind us of Pontius Pilate, who came from a well-known family and oversaw a tense, violent relationship with the Jewish minority of Jesus' day. America today is not unlike the Roman Empire in which Christ

was crucified as an insubordinate revolutionary.

Suffering is not anathema to Christians. In the Christian story, Jesus – the son of the creator of the universe – willingly undergoes a painful, bloody, public death. It is the last sacrifice, so that others do not need to continue the bloodletting. This is an astounding idea, a reversal of all our dominant values, our hunger for immortality, for power, for pleasure above all else. The crucifixion is the story of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice and solidarity with the world.

But the story does not end with death. It ends with resurrection, an unbelievable miracle, and with the Holy Spirit persisting in a global community.

Can we come together as a global community today? As we take hope in the Easter story, we must also take the lessons of Christ's life, which was spent in radical communion with the poor and sick.

The Poor People's Campaign:

A National Call for Moral Revival has taken up the campaign begun by Martin Luther King Jr. and others in 1968, which was itself a revival of the early church's commitment to the least of these. We stand for the 140 million poor and low-income people who were left out of Congress's Covid-19 relief package: the 60 million workers who do not have paid sick

leave, the 25 million with no health insurance, the 72 million who already have medical debt, the 8 million to 11 million people who are homeless, the 11 million undocumented immigrants who will receive no support. Often, in the midst of America's obsession with the middle class, we forget those who have nothing. But Christ did not forget them.

And, as we seek solutions to this virus at home, we must remember its global reach. India's 1.3 billion people are all in a 21-day lockdown. In Africa, the difficulty of social distancing in dense areas, paired with underlying conditions caused by malnutrition, could portend a devastating toll. As developing countries become harder hit, people are faced with the choice of infection or starvation.

Meanwhile, there is little interest in the United States for increasing aid abroad. On the contrary, industrial nations expect to bring in tens of billions in debt payments in 2020. The International Monetary Fund, aid organizations and world leaders are calling on creditors to suspend these payments. But there is much more that could be done. Many of the same leaders, including the IMF leadership and Nobel laureate economists, have called for the IMF to help countries through this crisis by providing, as it did in 2009, large amounts of debt-free special drawing rights. We could end the illegal sanctions on countries like Iran and Venezuela, which target civilians and have caused tens of thousands of deaths. Or we could make a commitment to ensuring that when a vaccine is found, it will be available to all.

American leaders have not taken any of these actions – and we should not be

surprised. This is the way of a civilization that has lost touch with its own humanity. It is the sign of a civilization that cannot last. But Christ's life and death reminds us that we must continue the struggle. The resurrection reminded Christ's followers that the death of the body is not the ultimate evil. On the contrary, it is the death of the soul, the death of our ability to see clearly what is right, which is far more devastating.

Christ's life was an indictment of the Roman Empire and ultimately he was executed for his revolutionary protests. Pontius Pilate washed his hands before ordering the crucifixion, much like western governments might wash their hands today as they turn away from the suffering they could have avoided.

This Easter, the resurrection offers an indictment of empires and leaders that have become cruel in their hunger for power. But it also offers us a path forward. Though empires rise and fall, our ability to love and care for one another persists. When we press on in solidarity with those who are suffering, even when a way forward is not clear, we prepare ourselves to receive the good news of this season.

William J Barber II
is president of Repairers of the
Breach and co-chair of the
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VIETNAM

E.J. Anzorena, S.J.

October 2020

Street Kids Are Becoming Five-Star Chefs

Jimmy Pham was born in Vietnam in 1972 and moved to Australia as a young child with his mother and siblings, growing up in Sydney. He was interested in tourism and travel, and studied hospitality at school. With a temporary assignment as a tour operator he went back to Vietnam.

Strolling through the streets of Ho Chi Minh City, he encountered some street children. He saw the poverty so visibly there that he was touched. "I saw a little girl crying – her father was an alcoholic, her mother a gambler." That night Jimmy ended up taking 60 kids out for a bowl of noodles. Then, after a period of reflection, Jimmy moved to Vietnam in 1999 to help the youth set up a sandwich stall manned by nine street youth called KOTO. KOTO stands for "Know one, teach one". It means that learning should be passed on; knowledge is meant to be shared. This is the essential idea of KOTO's Vietnamese-Australian founder, Jimmy Pham. Twenty years later, almost 1, 000 graduates now include executive and sous chefs, hotel and resort general managers, business owners as well as university graduates. All are contributing to their families and society.

KOTO is a unique, non-profit social enterprise that aims to train and empower at risk and disadvantaged Vietnamese youth. From a sandwich stall manned by nine street youth in 1999, KOTO has grown into an internationally recognized and award-winning non-profit social enterprise providing a 24-month intensive vocational

training program in life skills, English language and restaurant hospitality for at-risk and disadvantaged youth in Vietnam. This is delivered through KOTO's national training center and campus in Hanoi and its training restaurants in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. KOTO has graduated nearly 800 trainees who form the extensive KOTO Alumni Association (KAA) and at any given time there are 180 trainees enrolled in the training program.

In addition to the Foundation arm that focuses on raising funds to support its cause through charitable activities and initiatives, KOTO also operates an enterprise arm, which serves as a platform for real life hospitality training and also a source of income to support the training and welfare of our students.

About Jimmy Pham

"I didn't want to give handouts, I wanted to give hand ups!" says Jimmy Pham, founder of Know One, Teach One in Vietnam. He tells us why he believes social enterprise can be even more effective than charities.

Jimmy Pham was born in Vietnam, but left with his family when he was only two years old, eventually settling in Australia. After getting a job in the tourism industry, he returned to Vietnam when he was 23 on a work assignment. Whilst there, he met the "street kids" – homeless youths living on the streets of Hanoi. After initially supporting them with his wages, the kids eventually told Jimmy that they

needed more than just money: they needed skills and a job.

Jimmy decided to set up KOTO to help them, which stands for “Know one, teach one”. The project began as a humble sandwich shop with only nine children, but has since grown into an internationally recognized social enterprise, with two training restaurants and a cooking school.

Why do you love what you are doing now?

I kind of fell into it, I never in my wildest dreams imagined that I would end up managing a social enterprise, the very first in Vietnam in this space. I think it’s something that I love so much that it almost found me. I came back to Vietnam and I saw a need which I acted on, and 20 years later I’m still doing what I do and still loving it.

My work presents more challenge than just the good bits though: everyday you’re in the chaos, and living in Asia and working in Vietnam is a challenge. I’m doing something relatively new, and the community is only beginning to know about this particular topic. If I had to say one thing that I enjoy most about it is waking up, going to work and getting great big smiles from all the kids, which I interpret to be almost a “thank you for my future”. I just feel very humble to be able to be of service.

Why have you chosen to pursue your goals via social enterprise?

To answer that question, you have to go back to the origins of why I started KOTO in the first place. I spent the first three and a half years after I came back to Vietnam helping a whole bunch of kids. I was young and arrogant, and didn’t want to go through any NGO’s but instead help them directly. I learnt the hard way about the proverb “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime”.

After three and a half years, I realized that giving someone a fish to eat every day was not the way to help someone. The street kids I had been helping told me that they needed something more: they needed a job. I didn’t know very much or have much experience in that area, in development, in psychology, in helping with street kids or in the Vietnamese language.

The one thing I did know at the time when I set this up was that I wanted to create a family for these kids. I knew that everybody needs to eat, so I chose hospitality skills as the most transferrable skills you could give someone.

For further information:
www.koto.com.au › *about-koto*





Local struggles
for housing rights,
in the context of climate change,
urbanization and
environmental degradation

MISEREOR
IHR HILFSWERK



The Global Initiative
for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Impressum

Published by

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October 2020

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Graphic design by

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In cooperation with:

ASSOAL, CIDAP,
Community Organizers Multiversity, FUNDASAL,
Pagtambayayong and Spaces for Change

These partner organisations provided the case studies in this publication and take full responsibility for the content of their case study.



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Housing and Climate Crisis

By Leilani Farha and Julieta Perucca

Securing the right to housing for the 1.8 billion people across the world who live in inadequate housing, homelessness and informal settlements will depend on the world's success in combatting climate change. In fact, it already does. Climate-fueled disasters were the primary driver of internal displacement during the past decade, affecting the right to housing of millions of people. Those lacking access to resilient or secure housing are the most adversely affected, as they often live in areas that are vulnerable to floods, hurricanes and cyclones, storm surges, mudslides, earthquakes and tsunamis. Data shows that extreme heat and cold is increasingly resulting in death for those living in homelessness – in both the global South and global North. Climate-fueled disasters have driven an average of 20 million people per year from their homes over the last decade.

The climate crisis and housing crisis converge in devastating ways, with studies indicating that 39% of global energy-related emissions are caused by the building and construction sector. If governments are to secure the right to adequate housing for all and upgrade informal settlements by 2030, as per their obligations under international human rights law and their commitments under Sustainable Development Goal 11, Target 11.1, they will need to shift their approach to how hou-

sing is constructed, developed, and maintained. This requires a new approach to housing, one that is not rooted in the commodification of housing and moves away from using conventional building materials such as cement, steel and aluminium. The use of existing – often empty – buildings and conversion should be considered always as priority over demolition and new construction.

This new approach must be based in human rights and it must provide coherency in the way governments tackle the two most pressing issues of this generation: housing and climate change. To achieve this, governments must adopt human rights-based strategies for housing and the upgrading of informal settlements.

A human rights approach offers a distinct approach to the development and upgrading of informal settlements. This approach builds upon the inherent capacities of communities, neighbourhoods and residents. It understands that the solutions to housing lies with residents themselves when they are supported and enabled to become full participants in the planning of their housing.

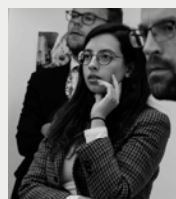
A human rights approach to informal settlements is based in the recognition of residents' legal right to participate in all stages of the development or upgrading process. The same is applicable for climate mitigation or adaptation policies that should protect rather than harm people living

in informal settlements or precarious housing conditions. In addition to being a human rights obligation, governments must recognize that the full participation of residents is the most sound and efficient policy approach. Failure to involve residents in planning and implementation means that residents' understandings of local challenges, and insights into how to address them, will be lost. Moreover, residents' full participation builds local capacity for governance, promotes resourcefulness and efficiency, encourages adaptation to local conditions and local ownership, and contributes to the achievement of sustainable and long-lasting results.

The following report, "Local struggles for housing rights, in the context of environmental degradation, urbanisation and climate change" highlights the ways that community-led approaches are fundamental to securing the right to housing, while also central to addressing and mitigating climate change. This report will be an important contribution to the international political discussion on housing and climate change. It contributes deeply towards the shift away from housing as a commodity, guided by international building standards driven by corporate interests and profits, towards an understanding that community knowledge and participation will be central to meaningfully addressing both the climate crisis and the housing crisis. ■



Leilani Farha is the Global Director of The Shift, an international movement to secure the right to housing. She was UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing from 2014–2020. Leilani has helped to develop global human rights standards on the right to housing, including through her topical reports and the first UN Guidelines for the implementation of the right to housing.



Julieta Perucca has been working alongside Leilani Farha as UN Special Rapporteur for the last four years. She is a law graduate, an experienced researcher and human rights activist. Julieta is Deputy Director of The Shift and leads the work on housing and climate change within the movement.

Local struggles for housing rights, in the context of climate change, urbanization and environmental degradation

By Lucy McKernan and Clara-Luisa Weichelt

Across the world, the right to adequate housing is under pressure from climate change, urbanization and environmental degradation. The urban population is growing, also because more and more people are moving to the cities, including as a consequence of climate-related push factors. Today, more than half of the world's population lives in cities and 24% of those live in so called "informal settlements", characterized by insecurity and extremely poor and unhealthy conditions. It is estimated that 1-2 billion more people will be living in informal settlements by 2050.

Informal settlement dwellers and people living in poverty are particularly vulnerable to the increasing impacts of the climate crisis such as natural disasters, increasingly severe storms and sea level rise. 14% of city dwellers are living in low-elevation coastal zones and are therefore particularly at risk from flooding. Often poor communities are forced to settle on precarious land at the coast, on the banks of rivers or hillsides, or land that is subject to flooding. This increases their vulnerability to climate-induced disasters such as mudslides, flooding and extreme storms or slow-onset climate impacts such as sea level rise.

Vulnerability factors for informal settlement residents include: the fragile nature of the physical structures of their homes; the precarious locations in which they are forced to settle; the poor infrastructure and services (e.g.: lack of water and sanitation services); over-crowding; lack of social protection; and their lack of political voice and in-

fluence in policy-making. Extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall or heat waves and droughts can have devastating impacts for people lacking robust and safe housing and adequate infrastructure and services, such as access to drinking water or health care.

Further, although they are the most affected, more often than not poor communities and informal settlement dwellers, do not receive any support to protect themselves from climate change impacts, health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, or to address environmental degradation. This neglect is often a consequence of not being recognized as rights-holders by society or the state. For example, often informal settlement residents are not counted in the official census and their settlements are not specified on official maps and land regi-

Often poor communities are forced to settle on the banks of rivers or land that is subject to flooding.



Photo: Harms/MISEREOR



Photo: Schwarzbach/MISEREOR

Adequate housing with access to water, sanitation and other necessary infrastructure and services, is a crucial element of crisis resilience.

stries. When homes are destroyed in disasters, those without security of tenure are left homeless and without access to safe land to rebuild their homes and their lives. Further, climate change and disaster risk reduction are increasingly being used as excuses for demolitions and evictions of informal settlements to make way for modernization and development projects, without adequate resettlement programs for displaced persons.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of adequate housing and related rights such as the rights to water and sanitation and has brutally revealed the inequalities in the realization of these rights. Persons living in poor, cramped housing conditions without access to water and sanitation services and without any economic security or social protection, have suffered more severely under State confinement policies. Forced to work or seek livelihood opportunities and food, they have not been able to stay at home nor practice social distancing or regular hand washing, to protect themselves against infection. Adequate housing with access to water, sanitation and other necessary infrastructure and services, is a crucial element of crisis resilience, both in response to pandemics and to climate-induced disasters. Further, experience shows that well-organ-

ized communities are more resilient in these types of crises.

States must urgently put in place measures to ensure that the rights to housing, water, sanitation and social protection are respected, protected and fulfilled, including from the most disadvantaged in society, taking into account the impacts of climate change, urbanization, environmental degradation – and global health. They must start by engaging directly with poor communities to understand their needs and begin working with them to design sustainable solutions. Participation of affected communities is key: the only way for policymakers to understand and address the challenges faced by rights holders is by including them directly. In most cases, communities themselves are best placed to design solutions to the habitat and housing rights challenges they face. In addition, local solutions, such as housing co-operatives, where people themselves take the lead, are more likely to be sustainable in the long-term.

It is equally crucial that States increase their ambition to tackle climate change and environmental degradation in order to prevent future crises and further harm to rights. Therefore, States and donor institutions, including development and climate finance mechanisms, must ensure co-



Photo: Lucy McKernan

Participants meet with the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Ms Leilani Farha (March 2020)

herence and mutual reinforcement between their housing and climate policies and that their policies are inclusive and rights-respecting.

This publication is a joint initiative of the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, MISEREOR, and six civil society organizations who are working on the right to housing and related issues at the national and local levels:

- Fundación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo y Vivienda Mínima (FUNDASAL), El Salvador
- Association pour l’Amour du Livre et le Développement Local (ASSOAL), Cameroon
- Pagtambayayong, the Philippines
- Community Organizers Multiversity (COM), the Philippines
- Centro de Investigación, Documentación y Asesoría Poblacional (CIDAP), Peru
- Spaces for Change, Nigeria

The publication aims to show how the right to adequate housing and related rights (e.g.: water and sanitation) are threatened by climate change, increasing urbanization and environmental degradation, by highlighting ground-level experiences from Africa, Asia and Latin America. It aims to encourage an integrated approach to policy-making and to present examples of community-led tools and solutions from five countries: Cameroon, El Salvador, Nigeria, Peru and the Philippines. The publication follows a series of events in March 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland, where civil society representatives briefed the UN human rights mechanisms about the housing situation in their country, the implications of climate change, urbanization and environmental degradation, and their respective approaches to dealing with these challenges.

The report includes case studies from Cameroon, the Philippines, El Salvador, Peru and Nigeria. These case studies detail how persons living in poverty are pushed to the most marginal land in cities, which is the land most vulnerable to climate change-induced floods, storms and landslides. The case studies also show how policy measures and community-led solutions can empower those communities to transform their lives and build their resilience to future crises. The report concludes with recommendations to national governments, local governments and the UN human rights mechanisms. ■



Lucy McKernan is a human rights lawyer and advocate for the human rights of persons living in poverty. She is currently the Geneva Representative for the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR) where she represents

the organization before the UN human rights mechanisms.



Clara-Luisa Weichelt works on urban development and climate change in the Department Policy and Global Challenges at MISEREOR, the German Catholic Bishop’s Organization for Development Cooperation. Together with partner organizations in the Global South, she is advocating for socially and ecologically just cities for all, especially considering the impacts of climate change.

CASE 1

Photo: Erik Cleves Kristensen, Map: iStock.com



Rainclouds engulf San Salvador, the capital and largest city of El Salvador. 35% of households in the country live in multidimensional poverty.

between the communities' poor living conditions and their vulnerability to possible extreme natural events. Not everyone is affected equally and people's abilities to resolve and rebuild are limited.

El Salvador is a country in Central America with a population of 6,642,000. 62% of its inhabitants live in urban and 38% in rural areas. More than half (53%) of the population is under 30 years of age. 35% of households live in multidimensional poverty (approximately 606,000 households). Of these households, 71% suffer from a housing deficit (14% quantitative and 86% qualitative) and 41% live in overcrowded conditions.

For this case study, we will focus on the qualitative housing deficit in informal settlements and how these conditions largely affect families in terms of the consequences of climate change. We will also highlight a number of solutions that have emerged from within the population itself.

El Salvador

By *Jacqueline Ivón Martínez*
and *Alma Daysi Rivera, FUNDASAL*

Background: Housing Situation

It would be impossible to talk about informal settlements in El Salvador without mentioning the historic debt owed to a number of families that have been displaced more than three times now – either by armed conflict (1970-1992), extreme natural disasters, or social violence. In reality, however, we are talking about poverty, injustice, inequality and vulnerability, all structurally rooted in society, and where there is a direct relationship

1 Overcrowding is determined as a percentage of households residing in dwellings with three or more persons per exclusive bedroom. Exclusive bedrooms are rooms in the home intended exclusively for sleeping, hence there are dwellings that report not having any exclusive bedrooms at all.

Human Settlements and Climate Change

Informal or slum settlements largely comprise dwellings built using poor quality, perishable or recycled materials. This results in increased temperatures inside the houses, which are furthermore unable to withstand heavy rain. A lack of windows and conditions of overcrowding have a negative effect on people's health. These homes are in no way suitable for the swings in temperature that are increasingly being experienced in our country. In addition, these settlements are mostly located in areas subject to physical hazards such as landslips or flooding - risks that are increasing in both magnitude and scope. A lack of, or inadequate, infrastructure for rainfall and wastewater evacuation, together with little access to clean drinking water, pose a major threat not only to the safety of families but also to their health, particularly in the face of diseases such as COVID-19.

El Salvador's Water Crisis

Since 2019, El Salvador's water crisis has deepened in both qualitative and quantitative terms, affecting mainly disadvantaged families. This is an historical problem characterised by the poor quality of tap water intended for consumption. In addition, access to water in rural settlements is contracting due to reduced flows from major sources, poor infrastructure and other areas, such as tourism, being prioritised for this service.

There are inequalities in access to and enjoyment of the right to water. This can be seen in the public officials' lack of interest in adopting a proposed General Water Law. This has been promoted by civil society and seeks to regularise and prioritise water as a human right. Meanwhile, large housing developments for the wealthy continue to be approved in aquifer recharge zones.² This is in addition to the rising temperatures and droughts being caused by the climate crisis, which only exacerbate the situation.

Storm Amanda and Cristóbal affects around 30,000 families in 2020

The impacts of climate change are being increasingly felt, for example in the frequency of extreme natural events. Nearly 30,000 Salvadoran families were affected by Storm Amanda and Storm Cristóbal between 31 May and 6 June 2020, in which 30 people died. 9,278 people had to seek refuge in 258 shelters, 392 schools were damaged and thousands of *manzanas*³ of land planted with subsistence cereal crops for domestic consumption

were destroyed. The World Food Programme⁴ estimates that 350,000 people are now food insecure in the municipalities most affected by these two tropical storms.

The government has invested in protective works to limit the force of the stormwater but has no comprehensive strategy for reducing the impact of climate change on informal settlements. It fails to realise that most of these people are workers whose incomes are insufficient to obtain a loan from traditional banks or from government programmes.



Almost 30,000 families were affected by storms which hit El Salvador in early June 2020.

Photo: FUNDASAL

Community-led Solutions: Improvement of Neighbourhoods, Community Organization and Housing Cooperatives

Some of the families have come up with their own solutions, however, and these are demonstrating excellent results. These solutions are economical and environmentally sustainable as well as appropriate to the capacities of the people involved. They have not only transformed these people's physical but also their social condition since they have become the protagonists of their own transformation. One solution is the improvement of neighbourhoods, in defence of the right to the city. Families are not only improving their living conditions but have also transformed high-risk areas into

² Amaya, Carolina (2019) and ARPAS (2020)

³ One *manzana* = approx. 1.736 acres [Trans. note]

⁴ Naciones Unidas El Salvador (2020)



Civil society groups have managed to get the use of local materials (such as earth) included in El Salvador's official building regulations.

spaces for recreation and communal life. Another aspect is the coordination between families and the community organisation, via a National Commission for Informal Settlement Dwellers. They are thus lobbying local government and other public institutions to legalise their communities, for the right to water and for a housing law for disadvantaged sectors.

The Housing Cooperative for Mutual Aid is another solution that has helped families obtain legal security over their homes and access to basic services. These solutions are reducing the social and physical risks, helping to reduce the impacts of climate change, and also strengthening the social fabric. The costs are manageable for these families, who are mostly informal street vendors.

“Cradle of Peace”: Low-Emission and Cooperative Housing Project

One example is the “Cradle of Peace” project. It was built using a low-emission system in line with cultural traditions. Local materials were used, based on an earthquake-resistant system. This form of construction has become possible through the efforts of civil society, which has managed to get the use of local materials (such as earth) included in the country's official regulations for single-storey buildings.⁵ The project also includes a resilient community centre made from adobe and which includes a rainwater harvesting system. This water is used to maintain a communal organic vegetable

garden and an area of pine forest next to a river. Trails and viewpoints have been created to promote ecotourism which could, in future, generate an income

for families and improve visitors' environmental awareness. There are also plans to establish a handicrafts workshop and a place where food can be provided in harmony with the landscape and the traditions of the place. The model being promoted by the residents will help 64 families, and their work and efforts are opening up possibilities in the face of barriers to accessing adequate housing, such as: land speculation, individualism, climate change, lack of access to financing, and the struggle for daily survival. It takes time and effort to get involved in a community project but these families are working to create their own decent and sustainable living environment.

There is a strong link between climate change and housing as it has a direct impact on the land and its natural assets, affecting people's limited livelihoods and impairing their quality of life. An integrated and coordinated approach is therefore necessary between different actors at the local and regional levels, prioritising the situation of informal settlements and supporting community solutions. ■



Jacqueline Ivón Martínez, FUNDASAL:

Jacqueline is a sociologist who has been working with FUNDASAL on social and organisational processes for the past 12 years, seeking to improve living conditions in informal rural and urban settlements. She is

Head of the Department for Social Promotion with responsibility for a multidisciplinary team working to develop and support social and organisational processes, advocacy, livelihoods, climate change, and food sovereignty with communities aimed at defending human rights and decent housing.



Alma Daysi Rivera, FUNDASAL:

Alma is a social worker who has been working with FUNDASAL for the last 19 years on housing and living environment programmes. She is Head of the Planning and Studies Unit, with responsibility for a technical team working on

social research, programme and project formulation, strategic and operational planning, monitoring and evaluation, process organisation, and publications that bear witness to the experiences and proposals emerging from knowledge management.

⁵ Punto Focal Argentina (NN)

CASE 2



Civil society initiatives and advocacy for better access to social services such as education, health and potable water, have led to improvements in many communities, for example in Yaoundé and Douala.

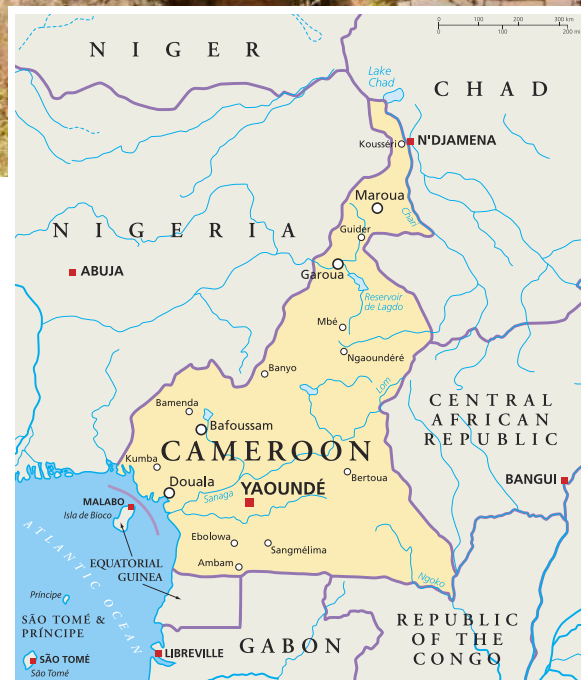
Photo: Carsten ten Brink, Map: iStock.com

Cameroon

By Jules Dumas Nguebou, ASSOAL

Background: Housing Situation

In Cameroon, urban policies have been wholly inadequate in addressing the needs of persons living in poverty, particularly with respect to social housing. In fact, informal settlements make up 90% of the urban area and poverty affects more than 40% of citizens, who work mainly as rural producers. There is a housing deficit in Cameroon of 2,400,000 homes. Evictions continue to be a problem with 15,149 households evicted between 2011 and 2016 and no alternative housing provided. This is a clear violation of Cameroon's obligations with respect to the right to adequate housing, under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Another great concern is Cameroon's law that criminalizes non-payment of rent, such that people who find themselves unable to pay their rent, are imprisoned. Pu-



blic budgets and Local Development Plans do not take account of the right to adequate housing, nor the urgent needs of communities for access to water, energy, education and social protection. The lack of avenues for citizen participation makes it difficult for people to voice their concerns to government.

Human Settlements and Climate Change

Climate change, environmental degradation and uncontrolled urbanization significantly increase the vulnerability of Cameroonians living in poverty,

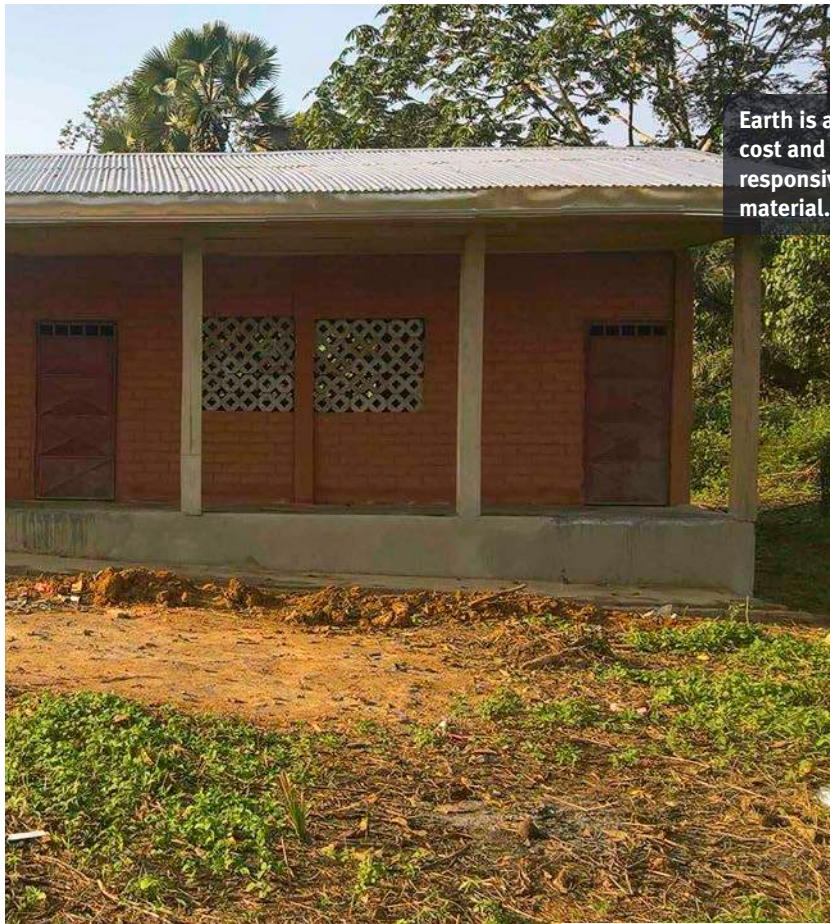


Photo: ASSOAL

Earth is a low-cost and climate-responsive building material.

and compromise their right to housing. Due to the lack of alternatives, poor people have been forced to settle on unused land, which is frequently prone to flooding and located on swamps, hill slopes and river banks. Many people are forced to take resources from forests to build shelters. In addition to the devastating practice of the timber industry, uncontrolled construction contributes to the acceleration of deforestation in the region. Climate change is bringing more frequent floods and landslides which destroy vulnerable homes and pollute the water sources of the marginalized population. Poor governance, corruption and mismanagement of climate and urban policies leads to pressure on land resources, evictions, land grabbing and conflicts. The evictions have led to the impoverishment of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, whose livelihood activities have been disrupted.

Community-led Solutions: Low-cost, climate-responsive Housing, Participatory budgeting and Citizen's Budget

In this context, civil society organizations have lobbied government and advocated for more inclusive, participatory, climate-sensitive policy-making and for the right to housing for all Cameroonians.

Many successes have been achieved, including in relation to participatory and climate-sensitive social housing policies. For example, a pilot project implemented by ASSOAL shows how to build low-cost and climate-responsive homes using local materials, such as earth. The creation of green spaces through planting trees is part of this cooperative housing project in the capital Yaoundé and other local areas.

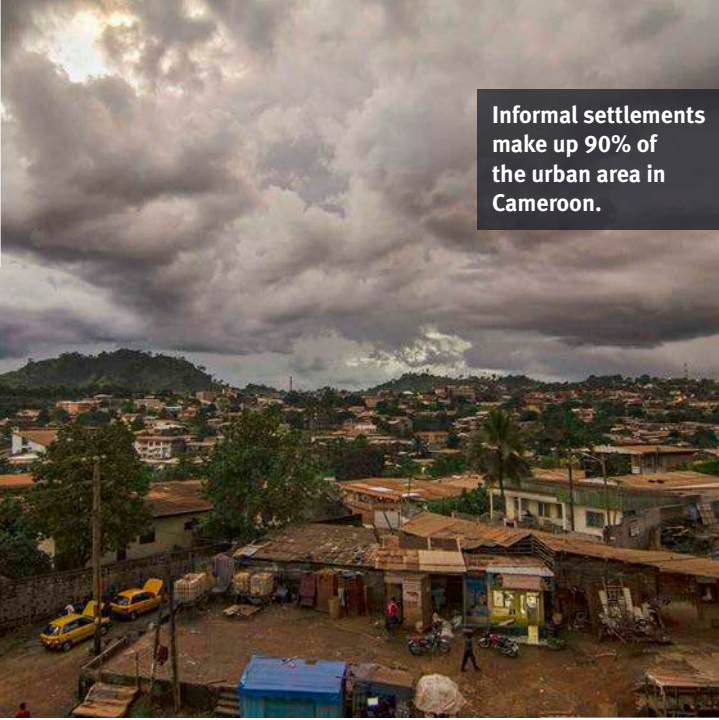
Following civil society's call for governments to establish participatory budgeting for housing and other economic and social rights in more than 150 municipalities, the government introduced it in its new decentralization code in December 2019. Participatory budgeting helps to align national and local resources to local priorities including housing and basic social services for informal settlements. A Citizen's Budget, was also developed with the assistance of the Local Finance and Local Budget Observatory and the Citizen's Call Center for ESCR and Local Governance. The Citizen's Budget is a simplified version of the State's budget and aims to make the budget more accessible for all citizens.

was also developed with the assistance of the Local Finance and Local Budget Observatory and the Citizen's Call Center for ESCR and Local Governance. The Citizen's Budget is a simplified version of the State's budget and aims to make the budget more accessible for all citizens.

Civil Society Initiatives for Social Housing and Against Evictions

Civil society initiatives and advocacy for better access to social services such as education, health and potable water, have led to improvements in many communities, for example in Yaoundé and Douala. For instance, civil society submitted 12 citizen proposals for social housing, which were then discussed with the government and included in the new housing policy. Civil society, led by the National Observatory for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, also drew the attention of international human rights monitoring bodies, to the housing situation in Cameroon and succeeded in eliciting strong recommendations from the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the government to address the dire housing situation.

Finally, ASSOAL and its civil society networks, campaign against land grabbing and evictions and have accompanied several hundred victims



Informal settlements
make up 90% of
the urban area in
Cameroon.

Photo: Ludwig Trölller

who have challenged evictions and land grabbing before the courts. Recently, several communities refused to leave their properties despite the eviction threats and two communities were successful in retaining their land.

In many of these civil society initiatives, housing cooperatives and victims collectives have played an important role as advocates for their communities. They have offered crucial insights into community needs and local solutions.

In response, the government has moved forward on several initiatives: a draft of a new social housing law; a decree on housing cooperatives in Cameroon; a housing policy paper for Cameroon; a decentralization code; and co-ownership and local finance laws. However, some of these legal frameworks still lack the operational procedures necessary for them to be implemented.

Gouache District in the City of Bafoussam: Landslide buries community

The morning of 29 October 2019 was a brutal awakening for the city of Bafoussam because during the night, a landslide in the Gouache district, buried 60 people, 43 of whom died, including women and children. 104 families lost their homes.

In Bafoussam, the housing shortage leads poor people to settle wherever they can find space and often in dangerous sites, such as hillsides, swamps and areas where construction is prohibited. This exposes people to the effects of climate change such as floods and landslides, which are becoming more frequent.

Gouache is located on the side of a hill with a swamp below. On October 28, residents were surprised by the heavy rain, which hit the neighbourhood and caused a landslide that swept away the houses and buried the occupants. The neighbours, firemen and military engineers worked for 3 days to extract the buried people from under the rubble and mud.

Gouache is a disadvantaged area of the city of Bafoussam, where people live on less than 2 dollars a day with no connection to drinking water and no local services (hospitals, schools, etc.). The inhabitants of this district are mostly small traders in the informal sector, farmers and housewives, but also unemployed people living with the help of family or neighbours. After the disaster, the government did not allow those who had lost their homes to rebuild, because it was considered unsafe. Civil society mobilized to denounce the treatment of the residents and to provide temporary housing and other support.

After this disaster, the victims and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood became poorer. Whilst 986 people were affected by the disaster and in need of re-settlement, the authorities have not provided assistance for the families to rebuild. So far, approximately 50 families have been temporarily housed by patrons and some families have received material support (sleeping mats, blankets, soap) and financial support from donors and social organizations.

Cameroon's housing shortage is partly responsible for this disaster. The government failed the victims of the Gouache disaster, not only by failing to provide suitable emergency housing immediately after the disaster, but also through years of neglect of the needs of poor communities for adequate housing in safe locations. The Gouache disaster demonstrates why it is essential that the government take into account the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation in housing policy-making and work with communities who are at risk from climate impacts. ■

Jules Dumas NGUEBOU is a human rights defender and associate teacher at the University of Yaoundé. He is the second Chairman of the Executive Board of ASSOAL, a Cameroonian Civil Society Organization established in 1998. ASSOAL engages in participatory democracy, promoting equal access to social housing and advocates for social, economic and cultural rights in Cameroon and Africa.

CASE 3



Photo: Schwarzbach/MISEREOR, Map: iStock.com

Philippines

By Francisco L. Fernandez, *Pagtambayayong*

Background: Housing Situation

Most of the land in the Philippines is privately owned by a few because of our colonial past. Under Spanish rule, most of the lands were claimed by the colonizers. When the Americans successfully invaded in 1899, they instituted a land titling system that only benefited the elites, who were able to acquire the remaining public lands. The remainder of the population became landless tenants or illegal occupiers of land with no security of tenure. This system was maintained even after independence in 1946.

The landowners were able to consolidate their economic and political power. This is why in the Philippines, there are a few who are very rich, while most are very poor. More than 30% of the urban population lives in slums that are very dense, unsanitary, and unsafe. The urban popula-



tion will nearly double during the next three decades, from 50 million, to 93 million in 2050 which will make it even more difficult for the cities to cope with the challenges that they are already facing. Many poor people are forced to illegally occupy lands and they are tolerated until the land value increases and the landowner evicts them. Landowners pay very little tax on their properties,



Due to its geographic location, the Philippines ranks among the top three disaster-prone countries in the world.

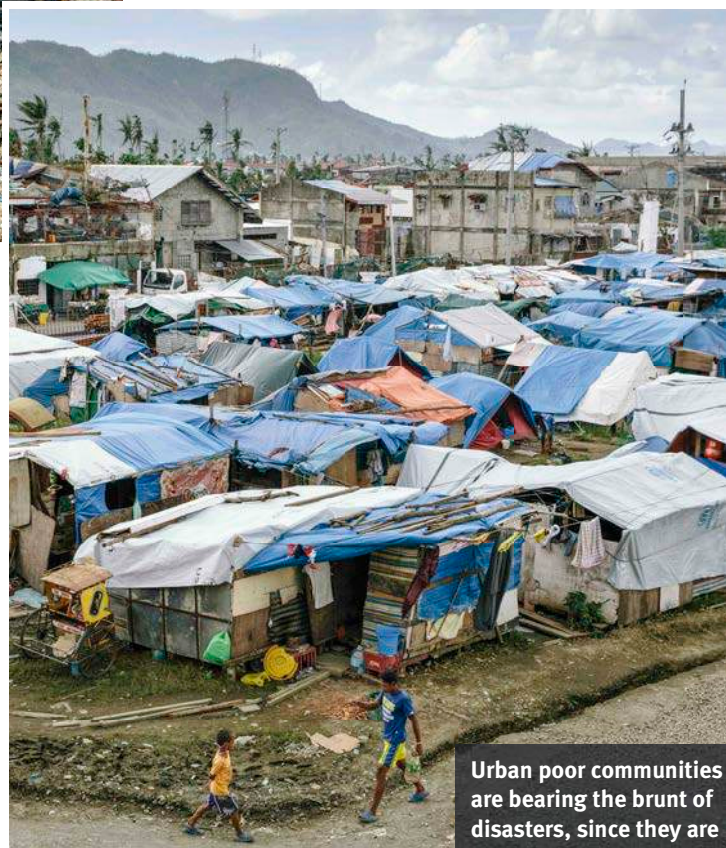
Unfortunately, many of the climate adaptation programs adversely affect the poor. For instance, it is necessary to re-habilitate the waterways of Metro Manila so as to protect against flooding, which is

worsening as a consequence of climate change. This will require the relocation of 104,219 families who are occupying the riverbanks that are subject to dangerous flooding. To provide for their relocation, the government set aside 50 billion pesos (US\$ 1 billion). But despite much effort to convince them to voluntarily relocate, only 29,511 families or 28% agreed due to the poor location of the relocation site. Whilst the project's policy was that people should be relocated close to the original site, the "in-city relocation" was very expensive

even if these properties remain idle. This already terrible housing situation is made much worse by climate change, environmental degradation, urbanization and recently, pandemics.

Human Settlements, Climate Change and Climate Policies that affect the Poor

Due to its geographic location, the Philippines ranks among the top three disaster-prone countries in the world. It is experiencing increasingly frequent and severe extreme climatic events such as floods, droughts, fires and storms and slow-onset events such as sea level rise. Urban poor communities, particularly informal settler families, are bearing the brunt of these disasters, since they are forced by their circumstances to live in unsafe houses, in unsafe locations and under unsafe conditions. These communities are at extreme risk due to the impacts of more frequent and severe natural hazards such as typhoons or storm surges. Their homes are washed away in floods and they experience water shortages and fires during the frequent droughts.



Urban poor communities are bearing the brunt of disasters, since they are forced to live in unsafe houses and locations.

and slow. Therefore, most of the available relocation sites were far from the urban centers and livelihoods of residents who mostly worked in the informal sector, such as street vending. The families felt that they had to make a choice between the unsafe housing or their livelihoods food and other necessities. As a consequence, many of the relocation sites remain empty. Since most plans

Photos: Schwarzbach/MISEREOR

and programs in the Philippines depend on the President, this project was suspended by the new President in 2016. A big portion of Metro Manila continues to suffer serious flooding due to heavier and more frequent rainfall and typhoons. At the same time sea level rise is an extraordinary risk for Metro Manila as most of the city lies below sea level.

The Right to Housing in Times of Pandemic

Housing is a basic right, at all times, but especially during the current pandemic. Among the first COVID-19 cases in Cebu City was a person infected in Barrio Luz who was advised to isolate himself by staying at home. Unfortunately, his home was a small 15 square meter house that he shared with 20 others. Despite a very strict lockdown in Barrio Luz that was guarded by soldiers with a tank, the pandemic spread, including to other communities. The stay at home practice requirement during lockdowns is not possible in urban poor communities. As of June 7, 2020, sadly more than 90% of the 2,618 confirmed cases in Cebu City come from urban poor communities.

Solutions: Community Advocacy and Social Housing Programs

Following strong advocacy by urban poor groups many gains have been achieved that protect housing rights. An example is the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992, that was a citizen's initiative, primarily of the urban poor and their friends including NGOs as well as academic institutions, the Church and high officials in the government. Although still recognizing the almost absolute rights of landowners, the law acknowledges that informal settlement dwellers have rights and that forcible evictions must follow certain procedures and must be implemented in a just and humane manner. The law also mandates that local and national governments must pay attention to underprivileged and homeless citizens in urban and housing development. Although very often violated, this law has made it more difficult to forcibly demolish the homes of the poor. An interesting provision of this law is the re-

quirement for 'Balanced Housing' which requires commercial developers to dedicate a portion of their investments to social housing: 15% for horizontal developments and 5% for vertical developments such as high-rise condominiums.

The Community Mortgage Program (CMP), a social housing program, which replicated the experience of Pagtambayayong in Cebu in 1988, provides long term low interest loans to organized urban poor community associations to buy land, develop the site and build houses. Further, non-governmental organizations are supported to help organize and assist these community associations.

Social Housing Project: Sto. Tomas Group Homeowners Association

In 2018, when the homes of 64 families, who had lived there for the past 26 years, were forcibly demolished by virtue of a court order obtained by the landowner, the families got together to form the Sto. Tomas Group Homeowners Association (STG), an urban poor homeowner's association. It took the families almost a year to look for land near their previous homes, that was for sale. When the landowner refused the tedious process of CMP and demanded payment in cash, the association went to Pagtambayayong who in turn linked them with Cebu LandMasters, the biggest developer of hou-

Families got together to form the Sto. Tomas Group Homeowners Association.



sing condominiums in Cebu City. LandMasters agreed to pre-finance the project under the Balanced Housing rules. The community association, with the help of Pagtambayayong, implemented the project. The 64 families now possess a permanent home with all of the basic amenities. Since the project is community driven, the house and lot package per unit is only 290,000 pesos (US\$ 5,625), which is barely 50% of the price ceiling allowed for social housing projects.

Local Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

There are also good laws and programs that promote climate change adaptation and mitigation. For instance, Local Government Units must also prepare a Climate Change Adaptation Mitigation Plan and set aside 5% of their budget for this purpose. This plan must be approved by the Local Development Council that is represented by civil society and community organizations.

The problem is that the existing laws and programs are not properly implemented. Therefore, urban poor communities are demanding housing rights and climate justice. For instance, they make Disaster Risk Reduction Plans and they prepare contingency plans for when disasters occur. These communities lobby the relevant government agencies to support their plans, through early warning systems and infrastructure such as retaining walls.

Urban Transformation Movement in Metro Cebu

Pagtambayayong together with other civil society groups are promoting the Urban Transformation Movement that advocates fighting the climate emergency while ensuring justice and social development for all. In addition to urban poor communities, the multi-sectoral movement is composed of faith-based groups, students, labor unions, civic groups, the middle and upper classes, academia, business and government. Since cities account for more than 70% of CO₂ emissions, the battle against climate change must address emis-



Photo: Pagtambayayong

Social Housing Project: 64 families now possess a permanent home with all of the basic amenities.

sions from cities. The UTMovement advocates that the cities of Metro Cebu should comply with the legal requirement to adopt a Sustainable Development Plan via a participatory process which includes representation from civil society in different sectors.

Our goal is that both the government and its citizenry implement a sustainable development plan that addresses the challenges of pandemics and that is inclusive and climate sensitive, making Metro Cebu a model for urban transformation: reduced carbon emissions, inclusive, sustainable and livable urban spaces and infrastructure and adequate housing for all. ■



Francisco L. Fernandez: He began his career as a community organizer in 1968. Together with four other community organizers, he founded the Pagtambayayong Foundation in 1982. Pagtambayayong, which in a local Filipino dialect means “carrying a burden together,” organizes and supports the organization of communities for social justice and sustainable development.

CASE 4

Photo: Harms/MISERERE, Map: iStock.com



The urban poor in the Philippines are often forced to establish their homes in precarious locations like riverbanks and low-lying land that is prone to flooding.

Philippines

By Luz B. Malibiran,
Community Organizers Multiversity

Human Settlements and Climate Change in Metro Manila

The present urban poor population in Metro Manila is a generation of post-World War II migrants from the countryside, who do not know what life in the countryside is like and who have had to struggle from one eviction to another. The government asserts that Metro Manila's river banks, roads and estuaries are dangerous. Therefore, they say the evictions are being conducted for the safety and welfare of the urban poor and for the greater good of the population. It is true that the swelling of rivers and storm damage are becoming more frequent because of climate change and that the urban poor are particularly affected because they are often forced to establish their homes in precarious locations like riverbanks and low-lying



land that is prone to flooding. Where relocation is necessary, the communities have called for an in-city or near-city resettlement. However, distant relocation without the accompanying supporting basic social services is still the government's response and the most convenient way to legitimize the use of land in the city for commercial purposes at the expense of the poor.



The members of the Alliance of People's Organizations Along Manggahan Floodway presented a "People's Plan" to the local and national governments.

Manggahan Floodway in Pasig City: 'From danger zones you are bringing us to death zones'

In the case of a community along Manggahan Floodway in Pasig City, the great flood that hit Metro Manila in 2009 brought about by Typhoon Ondoy, was given as the reason for the numerous eviction threats from the local and national governments. The members of the Alliance of People's Organizations Along Manggahan Floodway (APOAMF) resisted. For every eviction threat, APOAMF demanded an in-city relocation site that is safe and has access to basic amenities like jobs, health facilities, educational facilities, water and electricity. The demand for in-city or near-city relocation was reasonable as the distant relocation areas offered by the government are even more dangerous because of the reality of landslides, earthquakes and drought. Even more daunting was the absence of jobs or livelihoods in the distant relocation sites, which made the people say: 'From danger zones you are bringing us to death zones'.

Community-led Solutions: People's Plan for a fair Relocation Process

From the constant fight against forced eviction, the "People's Plan" was conceptualized. The "People's Plan" is a community alternative to forced eviction presented to the government. Developed through a 'bottom-up' participatory consultation process by the people living in informal settlements, the 'People's Plan' documents their recommendations for a fair relocation process.

APOAMF presented a "People's Plan" to the local and national governments which was both

scientifically and technically sound, since it was the joint effort of CO-Multiversity, APOAMF's NGO partner, community architects, a team composed of a geomorphologist, an engineer, government allies and the APOAMF community. The "People's Plan" was made to be responsive to the requirements of a climate-resilient, people-friendly and inclusive habitat concept. For climate resilience, for instance, the engineers and representatives from the Bureau of Mines and Geosciences who responded to the people's request, conducted a soil stability test to ensure buildability. As typhoons and flooding occur often, it is necessary to know the character of the soil to be able to develop appropriate engineering solutions. Further, the architect designed the buildings to respond to the people's inputs on the required functions of the buildings and the open spaces. For example, the people said: there should be a space for children and youth for play and other physical exercise; that the first floor would be for families with elderly members or persons with disabilities; and that there should be provisions for corridor lights for the safety and security of women and girls.

After negotiation processes with government that resulted in the construction of 15 low-rise buildings that have already accommodated 480 families, with 420 more to occupy their own housing units soon, APOAMF's community has been designated by the National Housing Authority (NHA) as a pilot area for Estate Management. The prevailing practice of the NHA after the people have moved in to the housing units is to manage the day-to-day operations like sewage and garbage disposal, water and electric service and peace and order in the housing project. In the case of AMPOAMF, however, these day-to-day operations

Steps for a bottom-to-top 'People's Plan'

- a) Formulation and consensus on a community vision
- b) Land research
- c) Housing design options
- d) Community validation
- e) Public presentation
- f) Negotiation with the government on the People's Plan
- g) People's Plan implementation
- h) Moving in
- i) Estate management



15 low-rise buildings responsive to the requirements of a climate-resilient, people-friendly and inclusive habitat concept.

Photo: COM

were part of their “People’s Plan”. Taking over these public services for the Housing Project was not voluntarily given to the people by NHA. Eventually, NHA conceded to the people’s demand, after they had struggled and negotiated for it.

Local Government and People’s Alliance: Cooperation during COVID-19 Pandemic

So far, the organization is doing well in the management of its organizational affairs. To cite an example, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, APOAMPF has transacted with the local government efficiently in terms of government food assistance during the COVID-19 lockdown period. APOAMF representatives provided the local government with the names and profiles of the housing unit occupants. This organized submission of data by the leaders themselves ensured transparency and facilitated the distribution of the food packs. (rice, canned goods, groceries) and financial assistance to families during the lockdown period.

The urban gardening project initiated a year ago has now provided the members with vegetables in the lockdown period. While it does not yet provide a significant amount of vegetables to the people, the strategic goal of APOAMF is to produce enough vegetables to the families by utilizing the maximum available space on the ground and vertically on the walls of the buildings for urban gardening.



Urban gardening has provided community members with vegetables in the lockdown period.

Photo: Schwarzbach/MISEREOR

The organization continuously develops initiatives that are in-line with climate consciousness. Among the organization’s plans is putting up a rain water catchment to augment water resources in the community. They have built two water catchments already. The project will involve youth and children in order to provide a training opportunity for the next generation and to continuously engage the government and other stakeholders as APOAMF charts its organizational direction to what will be a “new normal” when the COVID-19 pandemic is over. ■



Luz B. Malibiran: Community Organizer and Executive Director of Community Organizers Multiversity (COM) in the Philippines. COM is a training and organizing institution for people’s empowerment. They train community organizers and development practitioners.

CASE 5

Photo: Kopp/MISEREOR, Map: iStock.com



Settlements around the outskirts of Lima lie in high risk areas due to the weakness and/or morphology of the ground.

Peru

By Silvia de los Ríos, CIDAP

Background: Housing Situation

The housing deficit in Peru affects between 1.6 and 1.8 million families. 36% of these lack sufficient housing (quantitative deficit) and 64% are living in unfit buildings that require improvement to bring them up to standard (qualitative deficit). Lima, the capital of Peru, lies on the Pacific Ring of Fire, a geological formation that causes intense seismic and volcanic activity. 70% of Lima's urban area has significant vulnerability to disasters.

Human Settlements and Climate Change in Lima

Inhabitants without access to the property market live in slum dwellings in the historic center or in informal settlements around the outskirts of the city, areas which lie in high risk areas due to the weakness and/or morphology of the ground. More than



155,000 people in the metropolitan area of Lima live in areas exposed to flooding¹. Those become more vulnerable to disasters when rainfall is heavier than normal. Their houses are not well built and have no containment infrastructure such as retaining slopes or walls. Urban vulnerability is further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change: increased rainfall; land, mud or stone slides; heat waves; the flooding of rivers, for exam-

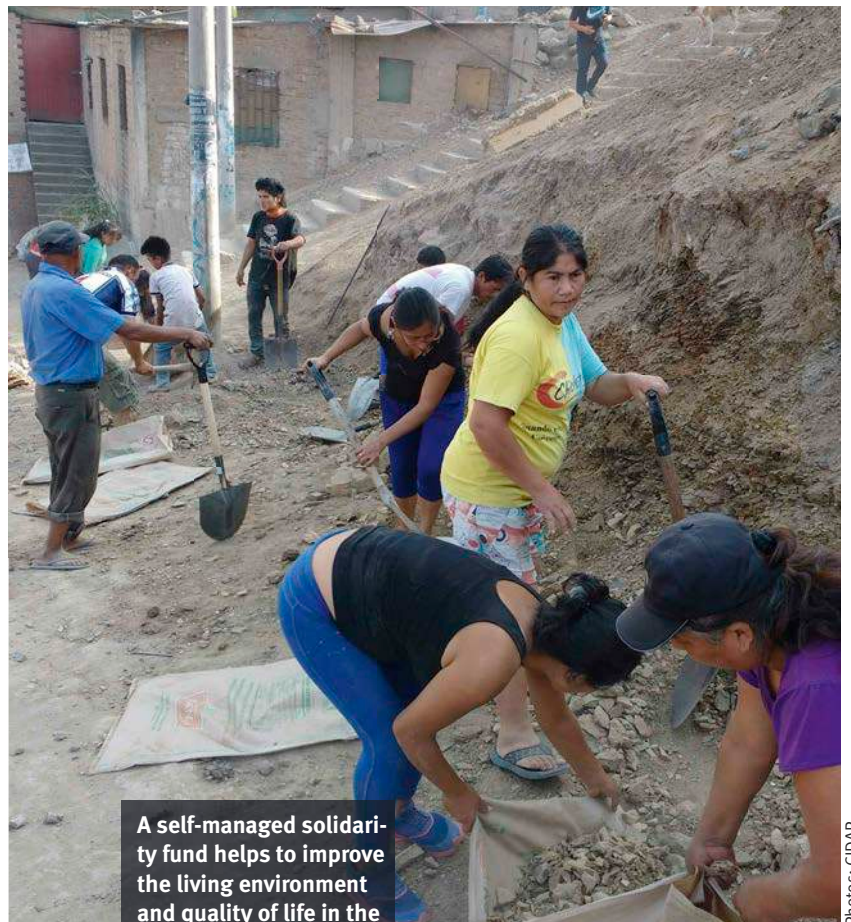
¹ CENEPRED (2019)

ple the Rímac River that runs through the historic city centre; and the authorities' inadequate disaster risk management. The CIDAP team has been working alongside the organised inhabitants of emblematic *barríos* (neighbourhoods) in Lima's historic centre and in Lomas de Carabayllo to develop strategies and community actions that will improve their access to the city and to adequate housing as a human right.

Community-led Solutions: Community Alert System for Disaster Prevention

Together, communities are fighting to prevent people from being forced from their homes due to climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic or other disasters. One of the outcomes of the communities' "Climate without Risk" project has been the installation of a Community Alert System in two of Lima's neighbourhoods. The system involves community communication as a means of contributing to disaster prevention, mitigation and response in poor urban neighbourhoods. A group of leaders identified as "community watchmen/women" are responsible for managing and mobilising to ensure that the community itself is able to tackle the day-to-day problems affecting it.

These leaders communicate with residents by phone to share information on disaster risk reduction actions, for example: roof and road reinforcements; the community purchase of fire extinguish-



A self-managed solidarity fund helps to improve the living environment and quality of life in the settlements through community works.

Photos: CIDAP

hers; and the insulation of exposed electricity cables to prevent fires. Other examples of information that can be shared, include rain forecasts, as well as photos and videos of housing or neighbourhood emergencies that may be able to help the emergency services (Fire Department, Civil Defence, etc.). Those affected are identified so that humanitarian aid can be channelled to where it is needed, along with other urgent response actions. The Community Alert System, launched in two neighbourhoods of Lima, has found that "connectivity" can play a significant role in mitigating disaster within vulnerable communities.

Public Solutions: Disaster Risk Management Information System

The community watchmen/women also help manage government tools such as the public platform, Disaster Risk Management Information System, SIGRID. A public national app alerts both the general public and the authorities to sectors at risk of disaster. This practice was highly successful, for



'A group of leaders, identified as the 'community watchmen/women' help the community to tackle their day-to-day problems.'

example, during the El Niño phenomenon in 2017 when heavy rains caused the Rímac River to burst its banks, affecting the outskirts of the Barrios Altos neighbourhood in the historic centre. The inhabitants shared warning images, thus raising awareness of threats to their neighbourhood in real-time and enabling their mitigation. The residents were also able to get in touch directly with the public agencies and get them to call and visit the neighbourhood to address the impacts of the disaster.

Participatory Mapping of Informal Settlements

Another advocacy tool is the Cities for People Observatory on the CIDAP website, which hosts maps of settlements, which are not formally mapped and registered by the government. The maps are developed by the communities themselves in a participatory manner and provide information with which to report inadequate living environments and advocate for risk-free environments and ecosystem conservation. One example is the

map outlining the settlements of Lomas

de Carabayllo, an area for which there is no complete land registry². Another is the “Public Works Replacing Residential Areas” map of Lima’s historic city centre³. The observatory has achieved a response from the authorities. They are now working together with the communities to find joint solutions. This includes, for example, the latest Master Plan for the Historic Centre, approved by the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima with the aim of reducing vulnerability.

Self-managed Solidarity Fund to Reduce Vulnerability to Climate Change

The community watchmen/women have also agreed an initiative to create a Community Revolving Loan Fund (CRLF) in each neighbourhood – a self-managed solidarity fund to improve their living environment and quality of life through community works. The fund is made up of local community resources, local and national government contributions, and international cooperation con-

Thousands of vulnerable families live in high-risk areas in poor urban neighbourhoods in Peru.



Photo: CIDAP

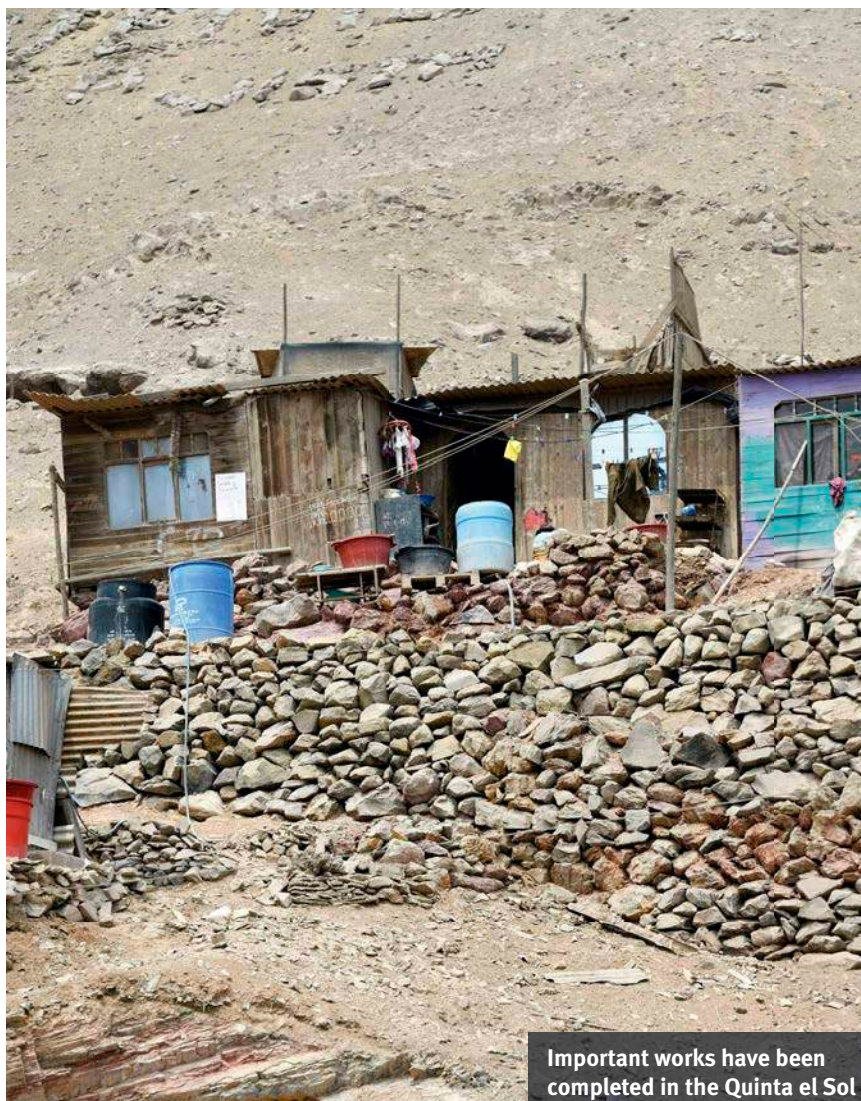
² CIDAP Map 1 (2020)
³ CIDAP Map 2 (2020)

tributions and is aimed at encouraging people to save and offering loans and community credit to the neighbourhood's most vulnerable families. It is especially intended for those who are unable to access the private (banks, finance, etc.) or public (municipal banks, etc.) finance sectors. Communities select and implement the necessary works in their communities based on criteria they have themselves decided upon. The community watchmen/women in each neighbourhood are responsible for managing the CRLF, with technical advice from CIDAP. The works are carried out by means of collective, interest-free loans.

Through the CRLF, important works have been completed in the Quinta el Sol and Quinta Virgen de Lourdes housing associations, helping to reduce vulnerability to climate change phenomena. For example: floors have been improved to avoid rainwater infiltration which has a negative impact on the stability of buildings; dilapidated drainage pipes have been replaced so that they can also collect rainwater and prevent water from seeping into the ground and underground; and the main corridors through the settlements have been improved to ensure proper evacuation of rainwater.

Impact of COVID-19 on Public Policies

The COVID-19 crisis has caused the Peruvian government to reconsider some areas of public policy, including its housing policy. Up until 30 December 2020, for example, mortgages have been made more flexible under the programme TECHO PROPRIO (=OWN HOME), removing the usual requirement of prior savings to be able to access the programme's loans. We are calling for these policies to be made permanent, along with other subsidies that can ensure the habitat and housing necessary for families to be able to cope with the vulnerabilities resulting from climate change and unhealthy conditions.



Important works have been completed in the Quinta el Sol and Quinta Virgen de Lourdes housing associations, helping to reduce vulnerability to climate change phenomena.

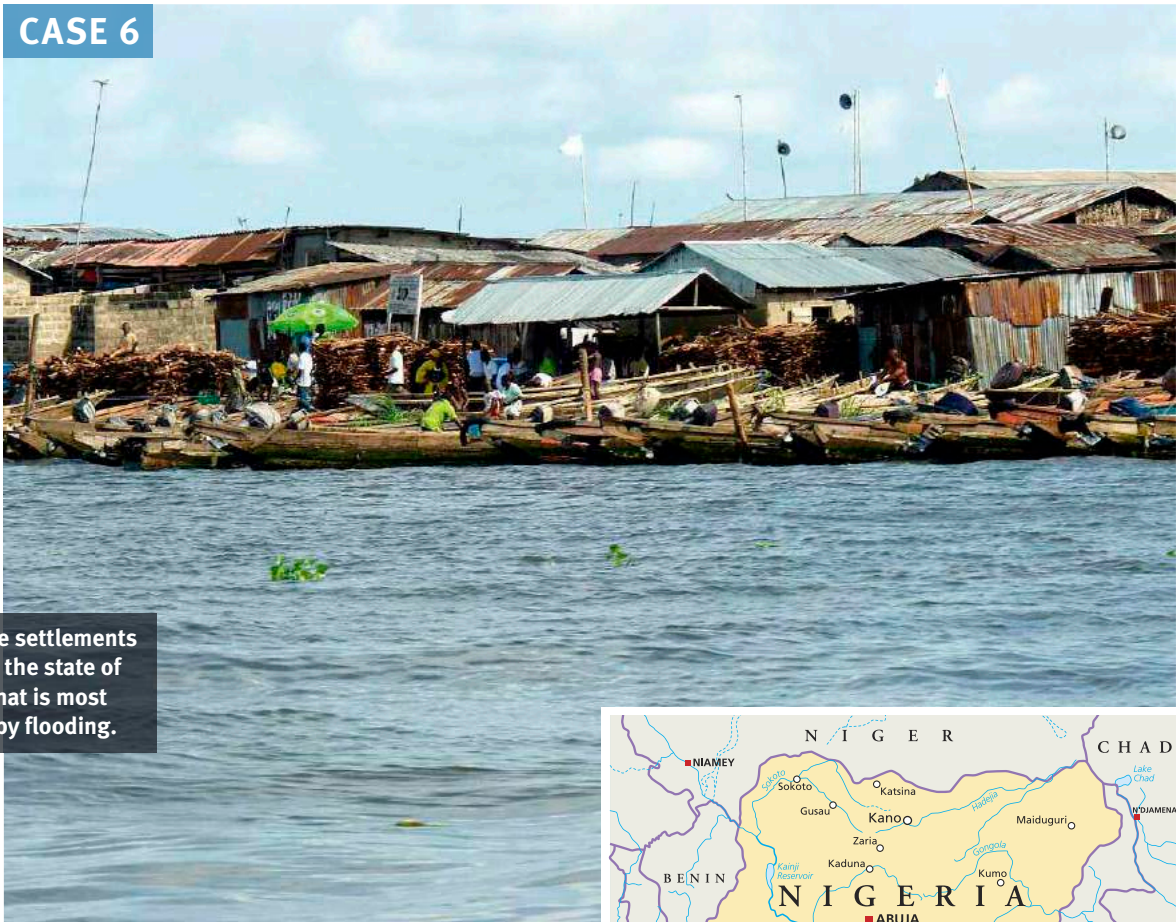
Photo: Kopp/MISERECOR

Adequate housing and habitat as a universal human right, is essential for every family to be able to live well and be protected from the impacts of climate change and other risks and disasters. Thousands of vulnerable families living in slum settlements and high-risk areas in the poor urban neighbourhoods of Peru must also be able to enjoy this right. ■



Silvia de los Ríos B. – CIDAP Peruvian architect and urban planner. Since 1998 she has been a consultant to CIDAP, a Peruvian non-governmental organisation working to overcome poverty in cities. CIDAP negotiates people's right to live in inclusive and sustainable cities in a participatory manner and seeks urban solutions to climate change.

CASE 6



Waterside settlements in Lagos, the state of Nigeria that is most affected by flooding.

Photo: Rainer Wozny

Nigeria



By Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri and
Aizighode Obinyan, *Spaces for Change*

Human Settlements and Climate Change

‘Massive floods are coming. Relocate from your homes!’: Nigeria’s Hydrological Services Agency issued this warning recently, advising residents of flood-prone areas to relocate immediately ahead of the massive floods that will sweep through many parts of the country between September and October 2020, with the potential to displace many, and destroy lives and properties. As is the case every year, Lagos tops the list of states that will be badly hit by the floods, with about four local governments—Lagos Mainland, Mushin, Ibeju-Lekki and Ikorodu—and 16 other local councils predominantly housing the city’s informal and rural settlements, identified as “highly probable flood risks in 2020”. With an estimated population of over 23.3 million people and an annual

growth rate of 3.2%, preventing and mitigating the impacts of perennial flooding in Lagos state is obviously not an easy task. This is exacerbated by climate change, which is causing an increasing frequency of heavy rainstorms, ocean surges and sea level rise in Lagos. These disasters are particularly destructive for informal settlements, which are most often located in the low-lying, more flood-prone sections of the city and are home to large numbers of the city’s low-income and poor populations. Most of these areas either lack drainage and canals or have had existing ones blocked by heaps of uncleared refuse.

State authorities have often responded to the heavy flooding by ordering the demolition of buildings and structures allegedly built on flood plains and on drainage channels. Informal settlements across the state, are the usual targets of flood-induced demolition policies.

Climate change is also leading to the rapid erosion of the Lagos coastlines. Along Bar Beach in

Victoria Island, the situation threatened many parts of low-lying island neighbourhoods with the collapse of the Coastal Road, Ahmadu Bello Way in 2005/2006. In response to the threats posed by climate change, Lagos State Government set up the Lagos State Resilience Office in April 2019 and unveiled a Resilience Strategy which outlines the state's approach to "combat flooding incidents, stop haphazard urban planning, improve emergency response, provide quality healthcare services... and deliver a robust, multimodal and integrated transportation system, without excluding the poor and vulnerable."¹

Isale-Akoka Waterfront Community: Illegal refuse dumping increases risks of flooding

Isale-Akoka community in Bariga Local Council Development Area is one of such settlements ravaged by incessant flooding, a situation compounded by environmental pollution, lack of basic amenities, and eviction threats from state authorities and private parties, who see the waterfronts as prime real estate for new developments. The fishing and low-income waterfront community of approximately 3,000 residents, was built on land reclaimed from the river banks using rubbish and coastal sediments. In the absence of basic amenities, including sanitation and sewage facilities, local residents rely on cart pushers and unlicensed refuse collectors to collect their waste. The cart pushers and unlicensed refuse collectors dispose of the waste indiscriminately on the river banks and drainage channels close to peoples' homes, obstructing the free flow of water during rainfall and creating public health dangers. Aggravating the situation is the menace of local thugs issuing fake permits to cart pushers to dump refuse on the waterfronts. Despite community pleas for environmental protection, the Lagos State Ministry of Environment has been unable to halt illegal refuse dumping.

Lagos State's Waterfront Infrastructure Development Law: Demolitions and Forced Evictions

As with most flood-prone communities in Lagos, residents of Isale-Akoka community live in perpetual fear of forced displacement. In August, 2011,

Climate change is causing an increasing frequency of heavy rainstorms, ocean surges and sea level rise in Lagos. These disasters are particularly destructive for informal settlements.

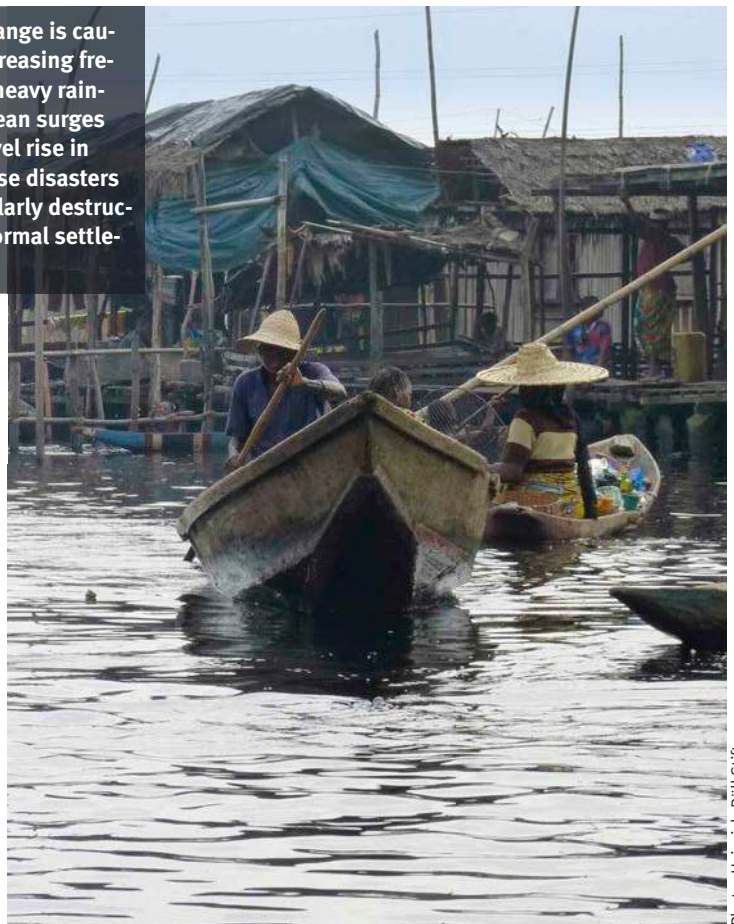
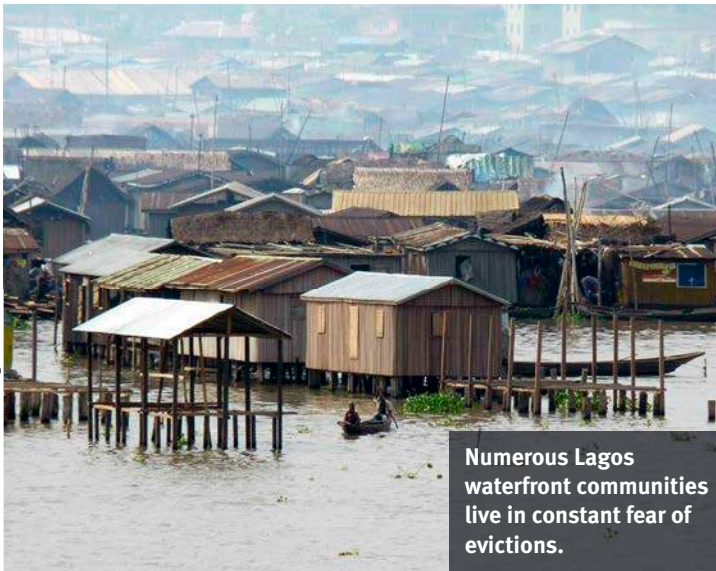


Photo: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

state authorities ordered the demolition of scores of houses built on stilts at the waterfront, which were allegedly erected without obtaining operations permits. According to the Lagos State's Waterfront Infrastructure Development Law 2009 (WID), any structure erected along the waterfronts without obtaining an operations permit may be demolished after service of a 7-day Demolition Notice. Therefore, waterfront communities, most of which are informally organized and occupying the land without operations permits, are considered illegal squatters, with the consequence that the state can legally demolish their homes without the payment of compensation. This means that numerous Lagos waterfront communities like Isale Eko, Tarkwa Bay, Ajegunle, Okun-Ayo, Agbagbo, Ebute-Oko and Ogogoro, live in constant fear of evictions.

Another problem with the WID Law is that it gives the state absolute ownership and control of all the waterfronts in the city. It does not recognize the historical title and customary tenure of the indigenous inhabitants of the waterfronts even though they have lived on the land for decades, long before the law was enacted. The law also prohibits residents from building any new structures. Without operational permits or any title documents to prove the legitimacy of their occupation

¹ Lagos State Government (2020)



Numerous Lagos waterfront communities live in constant fear of evictions.

of the waterfronts, locals are often unable to claim compensation for forced evictions and the demolition of their properties.

Community Advocacy for Change

SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C has been working with Communities Alliance Against Displacement (CAD) to push back on the series of attacks on informal communities carried out in the name of flood control and urban renewal, among other official reasons. Under the banner of CAD, a grass-roots movement spearheaded by S4C in 2017, 22 urban slums in Lagos that have either been displaced or targeted with demolitions are joining forces to unleash the power of solidarity and collective action. United by the sheer determination to keep their homes, these communities are working with a common vision to tackle forced displacement by engaging various government departments on critical policy issues and urban challenges confronting their communities. Through reflexive education, community workshops, town hall meetings, focus group discussions, onsite legal clinics, media outreach, formal and semi-formal training sessions, S4C and CAD have expanded the awareness, consciousness and capacity of individuals and local communities to protect themselves from the widespread violation of their rights.

Success: Access to Potable Water

In Isale-Akoka, residents bemoan the lack of basic amenities, particularly potable water. For many years, they have borne the exorbitant cost of purchasing water from informal vendors for their daily needs. In nearby communities, children walk long distances to fetch water. As one resident explained “Children go to school late or go to bed late at night due to the arduous task of fetching water on a daily basis”. Through the CAD, the community called on the government to provide access to

affordable potable water services in the waterfront communities.

Following advocacy during the high-level panel, ‘Integrating Community Rights, Priorities, and Expectations into the Lagos Resilience Agenda’, which S4C organized at the Resilient Lagos Week in April 2019, the Lagos State Water Corporation requested the nomination of two informal communities that could be considered for immediate connection to the state’s pipe-borne water network. Two waterfront communities—Ago-Egun and Igbo-Alejo—were selected for the project having satisfied the project’s criteria. Critical talks between the State Water Corporation and the selected communities are underway regarding project design and implementation.

The urban challenges may persist, but the collective resilience of communities is outstanding. The communities have been equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to embolden them to claim, protect and contend for their own interests. They are continuing to advocate for the state to adopt a human rights approach in its housing and urban planning strategies, with a specific focus on ensuring the access of both urban poor and rural dwelling communities, to water, land and housing. ■



Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri is the founder and director of research and policy at Spaces for Change, a non-profit organization based in Nigeria that conducts cutting-edge research and advocacy focusing on strategic sectors such as urban governance, gender inclusion, energy policy and defending the civic space.

In her 15 years of legal career and involvement in social and economic rights research and advocacy, she has traversed four continents: Africa, Europe, North America and South America, leading research investigations, documenting and exposing human rights violations, formulating and analyzing social and economic policy at national, regional and international levels.



Aizighode Obinyan organized communities at Spaces for Change to resist forced displacement and tackle the challenge of inadequate housing confronting impoverished slums and informal settlements in Lagos. She also coordinated community organisations, facilitated policy dialogues and multi-stakeholder engagement with a broad spectrum of state and non-state actors as part of the drive towards sustainable cities in Nigeria.

Housing Rights in the Context of Climate Change, Urbanization and Environmental Degradation

- 1 Guarantee secure access to land and the right to housing for all.** Implementing the right to adequate housing is a crucial means of protecting people from environmental and climate change impacts and from other crises, such as pandemics. It includes living in security, free from the threat of forced eviction, and having access to essential services, such as water and sanitation.
- 2 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable as agreed in SDG 11.** National and local governments must develop integrated strategies to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals agreed in the 2030 Agenda. All measures must be community-centered and based on human rights.
- 3 States must increase the ambition of their climate policies to limit global warming to 1.5°C.** The climate crisis is one of the biggest threats to human rights. States must put in place ambitious and robust policies to cut carbon emissions to move towards a zero-carbon future in order to prevent the most serious and life-threatening impacts of climate change.
- 4 Recognize the role of urban areas and cities in creating a socially just and ecologically sustainable future.** Cities are key to improving the living conditions of poor communities and to enabling them to live in a healthy environment. They are also key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in the fight against climate change and compliance with the Paris Agreement.
- 5 Develop coherent, specific and integrated strategies to reduce the impacts of the climate crisis on human settlements.** Climate change mitigation and adaptation must be part of local development plans. They must be rights-respecting and include processes for the participation of civil society, particularly affected communities. States must ensure coordination and coherence across different sectors and different levels of government.
- 6 High-emissions States with a historical responsibility for climate change, donor organizations and the United Nations, must ensure access to (climate) finance** for the development and implementation of protection measures against natural disasters and slow-onset climate impacts, such as sea level rise. Priority must be given to the marginalised and most affected populations and to long-term assistance for informal settlement residents who suffer the impacts of natural disasters.

¹ These recommendations are deduced from the case studies presented in this report. They are directed towards State Governments while at the same time aiming at informing UN human rights mechanisms and institutions about necessary conditions that have to be achieved at the national and local levels. We give some selected examples with reference to the respective case studies. Each case study contains many more experiences and tools that cannot all be reflected in this section.

7 Do not use climate risks as an excuse for evicting people from their homes! Climate action must fully comply with human rights, including the prohibition against forced evictions. Relocation must be the last option. States must support communities to stay where they live whenever possible. If there is no other alternative than resettlement, people must be supported to stay living close to their livelihoods and within their community. (See: *People's Plan for a fair Relocation Process, Case: COM, Philippines*)

8 Make public policies more inclusive, participatory and climate-sensitive. The solutions to housing and climate change challenges lie with people themselves. Communities need to be supported and enabled to become full participants in all stages of the development, planning or upgrading of their habitat and housing. Authorities must ensure the inclusion of women in policy-making, including by paying attention to any barriers to women's participation.

- **E.g.: Shift to a circular economy, enable the sustainable use and re-use of low-carbon intensive and locally available building materials**, such as earth, wood, bamboo or natural stone. For example, by recognizing and learning from local (traditional) knowledge and mandating the use of local materials (such as earth) in the country's official building regulations. (See: *"Cradle of Peace": Low-Emission and Cooperative Housing Project, Case: FUNDASAL, El Salvador and Cooperative Housing Project in Yaoundé, Case: ASSOAL, Cameroon*)
- **E.g.: Participatory and citizens budgeting** can help to align national and local resources to local priorities, including housing and basic social services for informal settlements. Further it can help to avoid corruption and mismanagement in urban and climate policies, that leads to pressure on land resources, evictions, land grabbing and conflicts. (See: *Participatory Budgeting/Citizen Budgets, Case: ASSOAL, Cameroon*)

9 Support communities to self-organize to deal with, and propose solutions to, the damaging impacts of climate change, pandemics and other disasters and risks. Experience shows that well-organized communities are more resilient in crises. Further, when communities self-organize, they are better placed to communicate and co-operate with government authorities, by providing coordinated information about peoples' needs and focal points for authorities to convey important information. (See: *Communities Alliance Against Displacement, Case: Spaces for Change, Nigeria*)

- **E.g.: Providing public grants and low interest loans** to organized urban poor community associations can enable them to buy land, develop the site and build houses. (See: *Community Mortgage Program, Case: Pagtambayayong, Philippines*)
- **E.g.: Housing Cooperatives** have helped families to obtain legal security over their homes and access to basic services. These solutions reduce the families' vulnerability to social and physical risks, help to reduce the impacts of climate change, and also strengthen the social fabric. (See: *"Cradle of Peace", Case: FUNDASAL, El Salvador*)
- **E.g.: Self-managed solidarity funds** can encourage people to save and offer loans and community credit to the neighbourhood's most vulnerable families to improve the living environment and quality of life through community works. (See: *Community Revolving Loan Fund, Case: CIDAP, Peru*)
- **E.g.: Digital solutions, such as community alert systems, can help** vulnerable communities to reduce the risk of disaster and increase their capabilities to cope in disasters. (See: *Community Alert System & Disaster Risk Management Information System, Case: CIDAP, Peru*)

10 Enable monitoring and data collection, both quantitative and qualitative, on the housing situation of all rights holders, including those living in informal settlements or who are homeless. This is a basic condition for addressing the needs of communities. States should also support with communities who are initiating their own monitoring, mapping and data collection projects.

- **E.g.: Participatory mapping** that provides information with which to report on inadequate living conditions and risks for rights holders (See: *Cities for People Observatory, Case: CIDAP, Peru*).

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CIDAP Map 2 (2020)

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MISEREOR
● IHR HILFSWERK



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