

## SUSTAINING URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN A POST- CONFLICT SETTING: REBUILDING ZAMBOANGA CITY

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the urban development pattern of Zamboanga City in Mindanao and describes the post-conflict rehabilitation process among the coastal communities affected by the 2013 siege on the city by the Moro National Liberation Front. The narrative underscores the role of the local community and especially the women in the entire recovery and urban development process as well its efforts to “build back better.” Other local government units can learn from the consultative, collaborative approach used in Zamboanga to sustain the development of a socially diverse city.

*Keywords: urban development, post-conflict rehabilitation, Zamboanga City, women in recovery and transformation, coastal communities*

### A RAPIDLY URBANIZING CONTEXT

WITH THE ASCENDANCE OF A PRESIDENT of the Philippines from Mindanao, a first in history, there has been renewed attention on the Mindanao island and its development path. Given that Mindanao has long been an underdeveloped region, the current leadership believes it will be a strategic move to refocus resources to this neglected part of the country.

Any progress in Mindanao island has been led by the regional capital cities, particularly Davao City, Cagayan de Oro City, and Zamboanga City. This paper examines the urban growth and population patterns of one of these cities, Zamboanga City, especially given its post-conflict context, particularly the 2013 siege on the city by the Moro National Liberation Front. The narrative also underscores the role of the local community and especially the women in the entire rehabilitation and urban development process.

Mindanao is undergoing stark changes in its economic base and spatial

structure, largely brought about by investments in agribusiness as well as in the construction of major infrastructure benefitting its resource-based industries. These changes have driven urbanization, and as a result, urban sprawl and extensive peri-urban development have prevailed in many cities across Mindanao. Sprawl implies that the average Mindanawon travels farther to go from home to work and to other places, resulting in a longer and more expensive commute.

The effects of urbanization, however, have been lopsided. Urbanization in Mindanao, like the rest of the Philippines, has seen some of the poorest agricultural regions falling behind cities in terms of progress. Only the urban areas, the so-called drivers of economic growth, received serious attention from the government in terms of infrastructure funding. In response, private sector investments poured in favored cities, adding to the unbalanced spatial distribution of development. It is unsurprising that the most advanced regions are also the most urbanized and the densely populated. On the other hand, the least developed regions are mainly rural and sparsely populated, and are often outmigration areas.

In the Philippine context, urban areas and cities are centers of economic growth, accounting for 75 to 80 percent of the country's gross domestic product since 2000, with Metro Manila alone contributing nearly a third of total GDP. The services sector makes up over half of GDP. Services, trade, and communications have been the fastest-growing subsectors in the urban areas (Asian Development Bank, 2014). The attraction of urban areas and cities is that these provide economic opportunities, enticing millennials to live in these urban spaces, rather than stay outside cities where jobs are dwindling.

Recent census data show the emergence of secondary cities or small cities where much of the urban growth has happened in the last 10 years. These small cities are defined by the United Nations as cities of 500,000 - 1 million residents. Sixteen of the 20 most populous cities in the Philippines can be classified as small cities. These include three cities in Mindanao: Zamboanga City, with a total population of 861,799; Cagayan de Oro City, with a population of 675,950; and General Santos City, with a population of 594,446.

Table 1. Twenty Most Populous Cities, Philippines, 2015

Rank	City	Region	Population
1	Quezon City	National Capital Region (NCR)	2,936,116
2	Manila	NCR	1,780,148
3	Davao City	Davao Region	1,632,991
4	Caloocan	NCR	1,583,978
5	Cebu City	Central Visayas	922,611

Rank	City	Region	Population
6	Zamboanga City	Zamboanga Peninsula	861,799
7	Taguig	NCR	804,915
8	Antipolo	NCR	776,386
9	Pasig	NCR	755,300
10	Cagayan de Oro	Northern Mindanao	675,950
11	Parañaque	NCR	665,822
12	Dasmariñas	CALABARZON	659,019
13	Valenzuela	NCR	620,422
14	Bacoor	CALABARZON	600,609
15	General Santos	SOCCSKSARGEN	594,446
16	Las Piñas	NCR	588,894
17	Makati	NCR	582,602
18	San Jose del Monte	Central Luzon	574,089
19	Bacolod	Negros Island Region	561,875
20	Muntinlupa	NCR	504,509

Source: 2015 Census of Population, Philippine Statistics Authority

Looking at the population growth patterns, it is apparent that urban areas are growing faster than the rural areas since 2007. From 2007 to 2010, the population in urban areas grew at an average of 3.59 percent per year, while that of the rural areas declined at -0.33 percent. From 2010 to 2015, both urban and rural areas grew in population size, with urban areas increasing slightly faster at 1.82 percent, compared to the rural areas at 1.77 percent.

Table 2. Urban-Rural Population Growth Rates, Philippines, 2007-2015

Census Year	Population			Population Change		Growth Rate	
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
2000	36,756,881	39,747,196	76,504,077				
2007	37,579,591	50,984,862	88,564,453	822,710	11,237,666	0.32%	3.56%
2010	41,855,571	50,479,542	92,335,113	4,275,980	(505,320)	3.59%	-0.33%
2015	45,842,660	55,138,777	100,981,437	3,987,089	4,659,235	1.82%	1.77%

Source: Various Censuses of Population, Philippine Statistics Authority

What drives the urban system? The general agreement is that natural increase and migration are the primary sources of urban growth, followed by

reclassification of rural areas to urban areas. About 60 percent of the urban population growth in developing countries, including the Philippines, is attributed to natural increase, or the excess of births over deaths (UN-Habitat and UN ESCAP, 2015). The remaining 40 percent is due to rural-urban migration and reclassification of rural to urban areas (Montgomery, 2008). Nonetheless, the share of these three drivers of urban growth – natural increase, migration, and reclassification - has been shown to fluctuate over time in the cities of developing countries.

Rural-urban migration is estimated to contribute some 20-30 percent of urban population growth in Asian and Pacific cities. Its exact contribution, however, is difficult to measure, as migration itself takes many forms: short-term, seasonal, annual or permanent. Although migrants often plan to return to their place of origin, most do not go back, at least not permanently (UN-Habitat and UN ESCAP, 2015).

In the Philippines, urban planners observe a continuing urbanward movement of rural residents (Racelis and Collado, 2008), especially to large urban centers. Young men and women have been moving in droves from the periphery to the center, that is, from farms to towns and cities, in search of employment. While the national government jump-started decentralization by building industrial centers in the administrative regions of the country, the rural working age populations flocked to major urban centers within the region.

In addition to migration, the reclassification of rural to urban barangays drives urban growth. As migrants move to growth centers, the economic base of barangays is transformed from agriculture- to urban-based industries. Rural villages are subsequently reclassified urban. Population increase and changes in the economic structure occur simultaneously: as migrants move to urban centers and add to the resident population, the jobs shift to urban-based occupations, and as in a cycle, these urban employment centers attract more migrants.

The fact that cities are favored by majority of the population as live-and-work areas can be a two-edged sword, so to speak. On one hand, huge numbers of young, working-age men and women provide an eager workforce in an urban economy. On the other hand, a large poor and unemployed segment in dense cities with limited resources can be fertile ground for unrest or conflict.

Such disruptions negate the benefits of local urban development. It will be instructive to examine the actions that national and local governments have taken in order to achieve sustainable urban development. This study uses the case of Zamboanga City, a rapidly urbanizing city in Western Mindanao to make certain propositions about planning an emerging locality in a post-conflict setting. Unlike Metro Manila cities, which are fully urbanized, and where an overhaul or redevelopment are usual strategies, Zamboanga City is an area which can still be planned sustainably and whose urban growth can be managed.

Zamboanga City makes an appropriate case in showing how urban development can be sustained in spite of the reputation of the city as a security hotspot. This case study posits that human security in a post-conflict, vulnerable city should be enhanced as a basic requirement of resilient urban development.

#### URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF ZAMBOANGA CITY

Zamboanga City is a rapidly growing city located at the southernmost tip of the Zamboanga Peninsula in Mindanao. It is bounded on the west by the Sulu Sea, on the east by the Moro Gulf, on the north by Zamboanga Sibugay Province, and on the south by the Basilan Strait and Celebes Sea. The total land area of Zamboanga City is 148,338.49 hectares or 1,483.38 square kilometers.

The urban development of Zamboanga City is propelled by its rapid population growth in the last two decades. Its population in 2015 was 861,799, with a population growth rate of 2.98% for 2000-2010. This rate is higher than the Philippine population growth rate of 1.90% for the same inter-census period. The population growth in Zamboanga City was driven mainly by immigration from nearby towns and municipalities in Western Mindanao. In fact, the Zamboanga population is almost twice as large as the combined population of the four cities in the region, namely Pagadian, Dipolog, Isabela, and Dapitan.

Table 3. Total population, Zamboanga City, 1990-2015

Census Year	Census Reference Date	Population
1990	01 May 1990	442,345
1995	01 September 1995	511,139
2000	01 May 2000	601,794
2007	01 August 2007	774,407
2010	01 May 2010	807,129
2015	01 August 2015	861,799

*Source: Various Censuses, Philippine Statistics Authority*

Table 4. Population Growth Rates, Zamboanga City and Philippines, 1990-2010

Reference Period	Average Annual Population Growth Rate Zamboanga City	Average Annual Population Growth Rate - Philippines
2000-2010	2.98 %	1.90 %
1990-2000	3.12 %	2.34 %

*Source: 1990, 2000, 2010 Censuses, Philippine Statistics Authority*

Zamboanga has been officially classified a highly urbanized city since 1983. More than half (56.01%) of the residents of Zamboanga City live in urban areas (Philippine Statistics Authority 2010). This level hovers near the Philippine urbanization level.

The city has 30 urban barangays and 68 rural barangays. The urban barangays occupy a total land area of 6,782 hectares, which is only 4.57% of the city land area. This indicates an unbalanced distribution of urbanization, in which urban development has occurred in less than five percent of the total area of the city. In the last few decades, much of the urban development of Zamboanga City has occurred within the 7-km radius from the urban core, in only 20 of the 98 barangays of the city. This area has also been the preferred business location of investors.

The growth of the city has generally occurred in emerging barangays, of which many were eventually reclassified from rural to urban barangays. These urban villages converge in the central business district, which has a quick access to business and employment activities. The airport and seaport are within three kilometers from the city hall in the urban core: the airport is 3 kilometers from city hall, while the port is less than a kilometer away from the city center.

The urban district, occupying about 6,400 hectares, is generally flat with a gentle slope in the interior, ranging from 0 to 8 percent. This urban core radiates from Rizal Park, across the Zamboanga City Hall, and comprises 4.3 percent of the total land area of the city. About 38,000 hectares of the city land have slopes between 18 and 30 percent, while some 52,000 hectares, or 30 percent of the total land area, have slopes of 30-50 percent, which are categorized forest areas. These high slopes limit the buildable area of Zamboanga to those outside of the expansive forest areas.

### *Land use change*

The steady urbanization of Zamboanga City has been sustained, as manifested in the land use change from agricultural or forest uses to non-agricultural and non-forest uses. The 2006 Comprehensive Land Use Plan shows that the size of timberland or forestland areas has declined since 1972. From 45% of the total land area classified forestland, only 40% remained in 1983. At the same time, built up areas increased from 3,952 hectares in 1972 to 5,424 hectares in 1983, representing a 37% increase. In 2012, the built up areas expanded to 11,977 hectares, or 20% of the total land area (Zamboanga City Socio-Economic Profile 2014).

However, even as the urban areas are expanding, the rest of the barangays remain undeveloped raw land. In the 2012 land use distribution, the built up areas comprise only about 20 percent of the total land area. The rest of Zamboanga

City is composed of forest or agricultural land, in addition to watershed areas, natural parks, protected areas, fishponds and salt beds (Zamboanga City Socio-Economic Profile 2014).

The 2013 land use profile of Zamboanga City lists a proposed watershed area of 33,516.23 hectares, which occupies 22.59% of the total city land area (Zamboanga City Land Use Profile 2013). Urban development in watershed areas is regulated by environment laws. However, as in other areas in the Philippines, settlements have been built indiscriminately in the middle of watersheds and floodplains. This is exemplified by the southern coastal barangays of Mariki, Rio Hondo, and Zone 4, Kasanyangan and Talon-Talon, which are marshlands, logponds, fishponds and mangrove areas. In short, these areas should have been left free of permanent settlement structures.

The pattern of land use change of Zamboanga shows a city that is urbanizing, and at the same its local economic base is still agricultural, that is, farming and fishing sectors supported by value-adding manufacturing activities. Zamboanga also has a robust nature-based tourism industry. This implied a huge demand for accommodations, restaurants and commercial enterprises that address the needs of tourists and visitors to the city.

### *Social mix*

In terms of social diversity, Zamboanga City is a melting pot of ethnicities and religious groups. Nearly four of every ten residents reported Zamboangueno-Chavacano as their ethnicity. The others belong to Tausug (22.2 percent), Bisaya (20.7 percent), Sama/Samal (4.4 percent), Yakan (3.4 percent), Sama Bangingi (2.9 percent), Hiligaynon/Ilonggo (1.8 percent), Tagalog (1.6 percent), Cebuano (0.9 percent), Subanen/Subanon (0.8 percent) (Census of Population 2010).

In terms of religion, about 60.8 percent are Roman Catholics. The next largest religious affiliation is Islam, accounting for 34.2 percent of the population. This is followed by the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (2.0 percent), Iglesia ni Cristo (0.8 percent), and Seventh Day Adventist (0.4 percent). These ethnic and religious groups appear to co-exist peacefully in the city. Certain barangays are the domain of ethnic groups, and this arrangement is respected by both the local population and government. Social integration is also manifested in the fact that there are few gated subdivisions in Zamboanga City, an impressive situation, given the social diversity of its residents.

Zamboanga City can thus be considered a melting pot of sorts, where people come to live, trade, and build communities among its rich natural resources.

*Fishing communities in the city*

Along the coast of Zamboanga City live fishing communities and seawelling ethnic groups. Zamboanga is a good example of a highly urbanized city with traditional fishing communities at its urban core.

The coastal residents are generally poor: the average monthly income of fishermen, for instance, is only P3,000 (Zamboanga City Roadmap to Recovery and Reconstruction 2014). Their means of livelihood are typically fishing, seaweed farming, aquaculture of bangus, tilapia and shrimp, fish drying, vending, trading, and buy and sell of goods. A few are in government and private sector employment, mainly in sales and services. In the small barangay of Sta. Barbara, the educated sector of the population work as nurses, office clerks, factory workers, sales ladies and messengers. Those without formal schooling are engaged in the selling of cigarettes, vegetables, fruits and cooked food, while a few drive pedicabs, tricycles and jeepneys.

In the coastal barangays of Kasanyangan, Mariki and Rio Hondo, Talon-Talon and Sta. Catalina, residents are reliant on fishing and aquaculture. Barangays Mampang and Arena Blanco are known for seaweed farming, marine fishing, and subsistence fishing. These areas, however, are exposed to tidal action, the city being located in the tsunami- and storm surge-prone Moro Gulf area.

Zamboanga City has one of the longest coastlines in the country, at about 300 kilometers of coastline. This not only exposes communities to flooding, tidal action and tsunami; the extensive coastline is also a security issue, opening the city in many fronts to criminal activities such as smuggling, kidnapping and abduction of persons who are taken to the nearby island provinces of Basilan and Sulu.

The sea-based families live in what was to be “ground zero” of the Zamboanga armed conflict in September 2013.

#### THE ZAMBOANGA SIEGE

The 21-day conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front in Zamboanga City in September 2013 centered on the seven highly dense barangays of Rio Hondo, Sta. Barbara, Sta. Catalina, Zone IV, Mariki, Kasanyangan and Talon-Talon. These areas are located near the coast and with an easy access to the central business district and the city hall.

On 9 September 2013, fighting broke out between a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, affecting these villages and spreading to the nearby island province of Basilan. As a result of the firefight, majority of houses in the coastal settlements were totally damaged.



The brunt of the damage occurred in Rio Hondo, particularly Bangkero, Pattah, Hongkong, Lupa-lupa, Kabingaan, and Laud-laud areas; Mariki, especially Sahaya Water Village; and Kasanyangan, centering on Buggoc (Office of Civil Defense, 2013). Most of these dwellings were wooden houses-on-stilts that easily caught fire.

Barangay Mampang was directly affected by the siege as the MNLF Misuari faction rebels accessed Zamboanga City through its shores and proceeded to try to occupy city hall. To the east of Mampang is Arena Blanco, where military and police choke points were eventually set up to control the siege. Because of its large area, Mampang incurred primary economic sector damages worth 3.79 million pesos and losses amounting to P4.01 million pesos (Office of Civil Defense, 2013).

The armed conflict occurred in the heart of the city where the central business district as well as major government facilities were located. During the siege, a curfew was imposed, businesses, financial institutions, schools, hospitals, and major transport infrastructure such as roads, port and the airport were closed. Much of the damage to structures were from the artillery and the burning. The siege killed 400 persons and injured thousands. About 10,000 residential and commercial establishments were burned or damaged, and more than 110,000 persons were displaced (Office of Civil Defense, 2013). Zamboanga suffered billions of pesos in losses as the local economy came to a halt.

On September 28, the government declared the uprising over. (Philippine Star, “The Zamboanga City Crisis”). Soon after that, the arduous task of rehabilitating a damaged city began.

### *Build back better*

At the end of the armed conflict, then President Benigno Simeon Aquino III instructed the Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary Rogelio L. Singson to lead the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected areas. The department thereafter commissioned the UP Planning and Development Research Foundation, or UP PLANADES, to prepare a roadmap for the recovery and reconstruction of Zamboanga City. This plan is called the Zamboanga City Roadmap to Recovery and Reconstruction, or Z3R.

The preparation of the roadmap entailed consultations and validation with many sectors. The PLANADES team worked closely with the Crisis Management Committee, particularly the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Cluster of Zamboanga City. At the same time, discussions with affected groups provided inputs to the Z3R conceptual plan as well as the site development plans. The team provided technical advisory services in the proposed rehabilitation of roads and infrastructure as well as environmental and socio-economic

interventions. Both the National Housing Authority and the Region IX office of DPWH facilitated the community consultations, detailed design preparation, construction services procurement and management of component projects.

The resulting Z3R road map consisted of a conceptual plan, which was completed in November 2013, three months after the siege. The plan was shared and enhanced in a series of stakeholder reviews and public consultations in Zamboanga City. The conceptual plan was revised, and the fifth version was agreed upon by stakeholders in December 2013. The budget for the master conceptual plan was drawn up and presented to the national government, eventually becoming the basis for the budget allocation for the recovery of the city.

After the validation of the plan, engineers and architects drew up the detailed designs. This was followed by the implementation of the component projects, starting with the housing construction on site by the National Housing Authority, road project packages by the Department of Public Works and Highways, and establishment of security measures by Task Force Zamboanga. Many of these activities were done simultaneously, in response to the urgency of rebuilding from the ruin.

Site preparation took longer than expected because of the negotiations with landowners. Even as the construction units had been procured and ready, engineers had to wait until the site was identified and ready. The preference for resettlement sites was inevitably for the urban center of the city, where trade and business activities flourished. This created some challenge for the government in identifying and acquiring lots for housing construction in a city where alienable and disposable land is limited.

The Zamboanga City Roadmap to Recovery and Reconstruction recommended, among others, rehabilitating the denuded mangrove areas in Mariki, Talon-Talon, Mampang and Arena Blanco. Moreover, a mangrove forest buffer was delineated in Rio Hondo and Mariki, starting from the edge of Lupa-lupa to as far seaward as may be allowed by the depth of the seabed, to protect families from coastal surge and tsunami (Zamboanga City Roadmap to Recovery and Reconstruction 2014). These mitigating measures were intended to protect both the households and the coastal environment from the impact of geohazards. The National Housing Authority was assigned to construct houses-on-stilts in the remaining area that is protected by the mangrove forest.

Local and national government had to strike a careful balance between reserving the traditional settlements of indigenous dwellers, often houses on stilts in coastal areas, and restructuring the dwelling units so that the families are protected against tsunamis and storm surges. Vulnerability is viewed in two fronts: on one hand, the families often have no secure tenure and rely on the natural resources around them for their livelihood; on the other hand, their

locations have been determined as exposed to geohazards. Dealing with these vulnerabilities entailed on-site rehabilitation, whenever feasible, of the housing units that were in sites exposed to these hazards. In addition, the houses that were destroyed by the burning and bombing had to be rebuilt.

Zamboanga City prioritized retaining the traditional settlements of the indigenous communities, but decided to “build back better” by improving local circulation and fixing the housing densities. Facilities were improved in order for families to have greater access this time to basic public services such as water, sanitation, and transportation.

In certain cases it was necessary to resettle the residents living along the shoreline who were exposed to tidal action or who would be displaced by the delineation of the mangrove forest buffer. Settlements in the outlying coastal areas of Layag-layag in Barangay Talon-talon, Liya-liya in Barangay Mampang, and Sumatra in Barangay Mariki were particularly susceptible to tidal action. Although the houses in these areas were not burned, residents had to be relocated to a safer area in Barangay Kasanyangan, which was less than one kilometer away, with an approximation of their houses-on-stilts and restoration of access to their water-based livelihood.

The sea-dwelling households were made more resilient by reducing their exposure to tidal action and coastal surge and retrofitting their dwelling units to withstand coastal surge and strong winds.

Table 5. Estimated demand for housing in new sites for acquisition

Total Demand (families who lost their homes to fire)	7,248
Less: families that may be accommodated in redeveloped existing sites	2,931
Balance needing housing units in new sites	4,317
Less: families opting for housing materials assistance	1,661
Net Demand for new housing	2,656
a. on land (net of housing on stilts)	665
b. on stilts (based on actual count of the LGU)	1,991

*Source: Zamboanga City Roadmap to Recovery and Reconstruction 2014*

Priority in the restoration of dwellings and livelihood was given to the most vulnerable displaced groups such as Badjao and Sama-Bangingi fishermen. They numbered more than 2,000 households, often with no formal tenure documents. This made them among the most vulnerable among the dwellers.

The corresponding government action was to take the initial steps to ensure the security of tenure of these families and reduce their vulnerabilities. Towards this end, the Zamboanga City Housing and Land Management Division Office started to establish permanent settlements in safe areas, in

Table 6. Housing Beneficiaries, by ethnicity and barangay

<i>Housing Program Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Mariki</i>	<i>Rio Hondo</i>	<i>Sta. Barbara</i>	<i>Sta. Catalina</i>	<i>Kasanyangan</i>	<i>Talon-Talon</i>	<i>Zone IV</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Sama-Bangingi / Yakan (on stilts)	345 40%	814 40%	181 20%	164 20%	26 20%			1530
2. Badjao (on stilts)	259 30%	408 20%						667
3. Formal settlers (for socialized housing)	86 10%	202 10%	272 30%	327 40%			100 50%	897
4. Informal settlers	173 20%	612 30%	452 50%	327 40%	103 80%	47 100%	10 50%	1,724
<i>Total</i>	863 100%	2,036 100%	905 100%	818 100%	129 100%	47 100%	20 100%	4,818 100%

Source: Zamboanga City Roadmap to Recovery and Reconstruction 2014

coordination with the National Housing Authority. City planners integrated the construction and repair of social infrastructure such as schools, health centers, day care centers, mosques, and madrasahs in the rehabilitated settlements.

Reducing vulnerability to coastal flooding required freeing natural waterways from obstruction, such as informal shanties and solid wastes from households. A large portion of Ayer Village, for instance, which was destroyed by fire, is located along a major waterway. Several houses were observed to be obstructing the flow of water. It was decided to revert this portion of Ayer Village into a waterway and relocate settlers to nearby sites.

It was necessary to revisit the Barangay Development Plan of the affected barangays, especially in the attempt to recover livelihood activities and infrastructure. Planners reviewed the proposed programs and projects listed in the community plans. The intention was to support whatever barangay plan was in place and was approved by the barangay council, and not to start anew in terms of disaster recovery and rehabilitation.

The pre-conflict conditions in the barangays were characterized by low-quality housing, including informal settlements, extremely high densities, poor sanitation, lack of usable open spaces, blocked waterways, flooding, and exposure to environmental and geo-hazards, all of which create a generally low grade urban environment. Recovery after the uprising entailed building back better from this situation.

## THE INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN IN RECOVERY AND TRANSFORMATION

Women played a special role in the recovery after the armed conflict, especially through the leadership of the Zamboanga City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, which is headed by the city mayor, Hon. Ma. Isabelle Climaco-Salazar. Mayor Beng Salazar steered the DRRMC in humanitarian and capability building activities of displaced groups. With the assistance of UNHCR and UNICEF, she made sure that child and women friendly spaces were set up in both transitional sites and permanent settlements. Even the design of the dwelling units and resettlement plan benefitted from consultations with local communities, such as the Dar ul Ifta, IDP Volunteer Action Center and Al Mu' minaat Foundation, a Muslim women's organization.

Mayor Beng Salazar supported the organization of internally displaced persons and had frequent consultations with affected groups, such as the Partabangan ha Kasisi, chaired by the Hon. Councilor Myra Abubakar. In dialogues with Muslim women's organizations and IDPs, Mayor Salazar herself led the discussions and addressed issues raised by them. This hands-on approach was critical in a post-conflict situation where the displaced communities needed to be assured by a credible leader that the humanitarian efforts will be fair and fast. She was apparently trusted by the residents, having consistently supported child protection and women empowerment issues in her early days as a politician. The mayor issued instructions for the Z3R shelter plan and housing designs to integrate the women's concerns, especially access to their livelihood.

The selection of housing beneficiaries was made in collaboration with the city housing office and women's groups, and reviewed for transparency and fairness by the Commission on Human Rights as well as by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. The site selection for permanent settlements was critical. Local government and the National Housing Authority had to negotiate with the communities in keeping them safe and away from areas exposed to geohazards such as storm surge and tsunami and at the same time ensuring the accessibility of their source of livelihood.

The internally displaced women worked with the men in restoring their means of subsistence and returning to their traditional occupations. Damaged structures were rebuilt, on site and in resettlement areas, with a keen consideration of recovering precious livelihood. Since many of the communities relied on the sea or the mangroves for their livelihood, their main concern was to return to their traditional economic base, and had to negotiate with city officials for a "safe return to their places of habitual residence." (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2014). This appeal was in view of some areas designated as "no return" zones due to natural hazards and security threats. The mayor listened to their concerns and brought them up with the Local Inter-Agency Council, which was

tasked to implement housing and resettlement plans. An agreement was reached eventually. The dialogues were important in creating compromises, especially in balancing the right to traditional shelter and the need to enhance disaster resilience and human security.

The experience showed that resilience has to be established in all areas, that is, in recovering quickly from an armed conflict, reconnecting access to livelihood, and knowing what to do before, during and after a manmade or natural disaster. Building resilience heightened human security as well. This exemplifies the concept of resilience as defined in the Hyogo Framework of Action, which is the “the capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure” (UNISDR, 2005b, 4).

The displaced families themselves were key to ensuring human security in a post-conflict area. Public spaces and streets were replanned such that social interaction is encouraged. The men, women and children became the collective “eyes on the street” that made the community feel safe. Safety and security are critical concerns in a mixed society that has bustling trade and tourism industries.

It was critical, however, for traditionally marginalized groups, especially the women, to be heard, and their concerns to be integrated in building resilient communities. The women expressed their wish to the woman mayor for their families to recover from the disruption in their occupation and in their children’s schooling. It took several dialogues as well as national and international assistance to assist the most vulnerable groups. Part of the rehabilitation was assisting the informal housing sector in attaining security of tenure, which meant women had to be enabled in getting the necessary documents to legitimize the tenure process.

The Zamboanga City siege shows that the recovery process becomes transformative when conflict-affected groups are integrated in the development of the city, not isolated from it. The story of rehabilitation showed that various ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups can work together through consultative planning of resilient settlements, in manifestation of “one flag, one nation, one Zamboanga.”

Today in Zamboanga, the local government and the residents have not only recovered from an armed conflict, but are transforming into a community that is able to respond to human security issues and is prepared to deal with future challenges.

## BEYOND REHABILITATION

Zamboanga City has risen from the ashes of the 2013 armed conflict, and remains the most important city in Western Mindanao. Its economy is vibrant again, and its population booming. Given its regional importance, the city is positioning itself in relation to emerging towns around it, and building the necessary infrastructure to link them.

Local planners intend to develop growth areas in rural barangays, install basic services, and spawn income generation opportunities. They are aware that rural areas in a city must not be left behind, because development in either rural or urban area affects the urban-rural continuum. The city is promoting economic diversification and competitiveness in farming and fishing areas, hoping to manage rural-urban migration by developing infrastructure as well as generating economic opportunities in less developed, less urbanized, and less populated barangays. The objective is to provide economic opportunities to all residents.

The city will continue to be a magnet for migrants. Rural dwellers within the city and within the province are expected to flock to the urban center. Without planning, a city can breed or deepen social inequity. It remains a challenge for city leaders to harness the benefits of urbanization as a catalyst for inclusive growth. Sustaining urban development means that vulnerable, underrepresented sectors such as women, ethnic groups, internally displaced persons, youth, persons with disability, the poor, and migrants are supported in their “right to the city” through opportunities for socio-economic development. When these rights are respected, opportunities are made available to all, and human security is enhanced.

Mayor Beng Salazar herself has made it a priority to tap the strengths and talents of marginalized sectors in both urban and rural communities in Zamboanga City. One of her first actions as mayor was to mobilize a women-led local economic development team, which has launched strategies to empower the local workforce in developing value-added agri-processing, fishery and mariculture products (UN Habitat, 2014). The team is positioning Zamboanga City as an economic zone for processed rural-based agriculture products in a city setting.

These economic and spatial strategies are not new; in fact, these have been adopted by previous national administrations (see for instance, Medium Term Philippine Development Plan 1993-1998, which features “Philippines 2000,” the Fidel Ramos strategy to achieve Newly Industrialized Country Status by the year 2000). What is novel about the Zamboanga City experience is that, first, it has recently emerged from an armed conflict situation, and second, its consultative, collaborative approach has been tried and is currently used to

further the development of a socially diverse city.

Perhaps other emerging cities in the Philippines can learn from this consultative leadership style, which positions “silent” groups such as women at the forefront of attaining sustainable urban development. It will give Filipinos, men and women alike, a chance to participate in their own development and to be ready for a decidedly urban future.

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