Housing for the Poor - A Tripartite Approach

(A Case Study of A Tripartite Approach to Address the Growing Demand for Decent Affordable Housing for Low-Income Families, the City of Muntinlupa, Philippines)

Summary

City of Muntinlupa in Metro Manila develops the industrialised area for commercial and industrial establishment. Due to the urbanisation, there has been an increase in the population from 65,057 in the 1970s to 399,846 in 1995. It is expected that approximately 42% of the growing population are in poverty, which is estimated as approximately 24,388 families.

City of Muntinlupa regards that lack of entrepreneurship ability, influx of migrants to the city, over-population, low education, lack of self-initiative to improve the life's status and unemployment as the causes of poverty. They have pointed out that the current urban poverty programmes are still not enough to alleviate the poverty due to lack of funds and foreign support. It also considers that there is a need to emphasise on legitimating of security of tenure and permanency of employment. Therefore, the City has continued poverty alleviation programmes as one of the main issues to be tackled.

City of Muntinlupa has been implementing various poverty programmes including urban agriculture and food production and processing, education and vocational training, job creation and placement, medical services, micro-credit system and enterpreneurship programme.

In order to tackle the problem of housing of the poor, the City of Muntinlupa has initiated the programme of management of human settlements in partnerships with an NGO and People's Organisations. The programme was derived from a successful experience of the work done by the City of Muntinlupa and an NGO, the Muntinlupa Development Foundation (MDF) on housing the poor in the community.

Through the tripartite approach implemented by the three key actors, there have been many great impacts. The programme has definitely helped the poor in terms of security of tenure, and mutual partnership between the local government, NGO and community organisations was built up. The programme of Management of Human Settlements received the Gawad Galing Pook Award, and is regarded as one of the best models of excellence in local governance.

Project Initiator
- City of Muntinlupa

Main Actors and Their Roles
- City of Muntinlupa (local government) – to review and assess requests for assistance; to conduct an initial meeting with the officers and/or group members to determine the validity of the request and extent of assistance required; to provide technical assistance; to prepare the necessary recommendations and endorsements for deliberation, decisions and fund allocation; to facilitate the release of funds; to conduct public hearings; and to approve funding requests.
- The Muntinlupa Development Foundation (MDF) (NGO) acts as an institution builder and originator – to provide technical support for capacity building of officers and members of associations; to facilitate the preparation of policies, systems and procedures pertaining to the effective management of the project; and to facilitate the transfer of land titles from the association to individual member-families.
- People's Organisations (POs) in the Priority Development Area (CBO) – to identify opportunities to change their status as squatters to that of legitimate owners; to mobilise identified participants into an organised entity and develop plans of action; to negotiate with landowners on price, terms and conditions of payments; to present organisations' requests in writing to the local government; and to mobilise internal and external resources.
- National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC) (national government) – to provide loan.

Nature of Co-operation
The nature of co-operation fundamentally based on the concept of partnership between the actors, a local government (the City of Muntinlupa), an NGO (MDF) and a CBO (People's Organisations). They form a tripartite relationship with mutual understanding of their aims and objectives.

Characterisation of the Problem
City of Muntinlupa is both the gateway to the industrialised area, CALABARZON and the entry point to Metro Manila, and hence, it is the place for commercial and industrial development. This attracted the rural migrants, and the population has increased from 65,057 in the 1970s to 399,846 in 1995. Among this growing population, it is said that approximately 42% are in poverty, which is estimated as approximately 24,388 families. The urban poor families usually live in the area known as Priority Development Areas (PDAs) located in eight of the nine barangays in the City. As of September 1994, 60.69% of the urban poor in the city are registered in the Human Settlement Programme. The people in the poor communities do not have adequate drainage facilities, proper access to water facilities, electricity, etc.

The Mayor has always believed that it is necessary to implement a programme partnered with private organisations including NGOs and CBOs. Based on the idea, the City has formed the tripartite organisation consists of the Muntinlupa local government, MDF (NGO), and the people's organisations to implement the housing programme.

Process of Project Implementation and Management
In 1984, the former Mayor of the City of Muntinlupa, Atty. Ignacio R. Buyne got involved in the land acquisition efforts of the Bangong Paraiso Community in Barangay Bayanan. Then in 1988, when he became the Mayor, the local government of Muntinlupa supported the Putatan Urban Poor Association with 219 member-families for purchasing a piece of land through the Community Mortgage Programme.

In 1991, the Muntinlupa Development Foundation (MDF), one of the biggest NGOs in Muntinlupa, assisted a group of 27 member-families in the Samabang Magkakapitbahay ng Purok-6, Tunasan to acquire their land. This particular groups could raise P300,000 for advanced payment to the land owner. They also asked the local government of Muntinlupa for P50,000 interim financing for the Capital Gains Tax. The money was later used as additional payment for the land they were acquiring.

Another group called the Putatan Hillside Neighbourhood Association including 150 member-families asked the Mayor for the support, and the Mayor asked MDF for assistance in terms of negotiating with landowners. With the support of MDF, the community could interact with the landowners of their resettlement site. The local government provided engineering help and interim financing of P300,000 to the group. This group finally received the amount of P718,000 for the resettlement site. The success of these two projects implemented jointly by the Muntinlupa local government and MDF further led to the formation of partnership and combining their resources.

In 1995, the local government of Muntinlupa allocated P17 million for meeting housing needs of the poor. Repayments of these loans can be used as a revolving fund, MDF also has a revolving fund of P911,650. The programme of Management of Human Settlements with the partnership of the local government of Muntinlupa, MDF and other community organisations or People's Organisations has assisted about 8% of the total of 14,801 registered beneficiaries of the socialised housing programme of the city.

Ultimately, the tripartite partnership has helped at least 246 families, and approved a total of P13.9 million for interim financing, P10.2 million from the local government, P1.7 million from MDF, and P2 million raised by the beneficiaries. It is reported that loan payment is 95%.

Strategies Used

- Provision of community mortgages for off-site and on-site development, land banking, land swapping, and socialised housing.
- Giving financial assistance to the poor for interim financing to pay for the land and/or site development.
- Offering technical assistance on legal matters, planning, design and engineering, preparation of the subdivision plan, environmental requirements, etc.
- Organising community to enhance the management skills of the peoples' organisations.
- Giving specific functions to each component of the "tripartite organisation" to ensure the process flows smoothly.

Key Successes and Lessons Learnt

- Strong and committed leader.
- Good partnership of the actors with open communication and mutual understanding of the goals and objectives.
- Great participation and maximisation of resources through the efforts of all sectors.
- Building awareness of the inter-dependence of different sectors of the community.
- Active community participation in the identification and analysis of community problems and need.
- People's empowerment together with a higher sense of responsibility were achieved to take control and shape their own future.
- The importance of networking is self-evident. Through the networking, City was able to get outside professional and technical assistance.

(May 2000)