

Responsive and Evidence-Based Community-Driven Mapping as a Catalyst of Change Towards Disaster-Resilient Communities: a Case of Muntinlupa City, Philippinesa Case of Muntinlupa City, Philippines (UN-HABITAT GLTN)

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SUMMARY

The Philippines ranks third among most disaster-prone countries worldwide (World Risk Report, 2017). Its exposure to natural hazards is compounded by lack of coping and adaptive capacities such as high poverty rate, uncontrolled settlement in danger zones, failure to implement construction standards, and degradation of natural resources. The brunt of these challenges is largely felt by the 27.6 million Filipinos belonging to the marginalized sector including informal settler families (ISFs).

Traditionally, disaster risk reduction management (DRRM) initiatives such as the Oplan Likas has been carried out by government authorities, with greater efforts focused around disaster preparedness and response, instead of prevention and mitigation (National DRRM Plan, 2011). Little participation is generated from ISFs who in fact possess deeper and better understanding of their own physical contexts and struggles. Furthermore, their socio-economic conditions seem to trap them in a never-ending cycle of disaster, displacement and rebuilding. For a developing country like the Philippines, a proactive risk management approach is imperative.

The launch of the Citywide Development Approach (CDA) to upgrading informal settlements in 2014—a multi-stakeholder collaboration of the national and local government agencies, civil society groups and people’s organizations—marked the introduction of community-driven data collection, mapping and profiling and planning of informal settlement communities in the country. The CDA is seen as a clear alternative to the usual unsystematic, project-based and top-down planning of cities that emphasized the participation of all stakeholders, especially the ISFs. The CDA was tested in three pilot cities in Metro Manila, including Muntinlupa City where the Homeless People’s Federation Philippines Inc. (HPFPI) and its partners facilitated community-driven data gathering initially in 83 informal settlements across four barangays in

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District II. The participatory, community-led nature of the CDA has placed community members at the heart of the process that doubled as a research agenda and a mobilizing tool for communities. The Muntinlupa experience presents opportunities for grassroots communities to scale-up community-driven initiatives to inform a responsive, evidence-based DRRM planning and policies from city to national level.

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