

Land Tenure Security Innovations in the Philippines – The Case of ‘Good Enough Land Governance’ in Muntinlupa City

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Key words: access to land, Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration, security of tenure, Social Tenure Domain Model, informal settlements, land management, low-cost technology.

SUMMARY

The growth of cities through the process of rapid urbanization delivers both positive and negative outcomes. Cities have often been described as engines of economic growth, but neither all cities, nor all residents within the city necessarily benefit from the potential dividends of urbanization. It is in these cities too where slums/informal settlements are prevalent, and whose inhabitants struggle with insecure tenure and continuous threats of eviction, overcrowded houses which offer little resistance against winds and heavy rains, scant access to basic services such as water, sanitation, schools, and health care, and where residents have insecure and underpaid jobs. The Sustainable Development Goals aim at solutions to the broader global challenges caused by a lack of good land governance and efficient land administration systems. Governing land in urban areas and the urbanization process is about dealing with urban people, and urban-to-land relationships. Hence, information regarding the people-to-land relationships is crucial, including the value, use and the possible forms of land tenure types that exist. In the Philippines, approximately 37% of the country’s population was reported to live in informal settlements as of 2018 (World Bank 2018). The proliferation of informal settlements is aggravated by the rapid increase in population and consequently growing housing demand. Most informal settlements develop in once vacant land, along seashores, riverbanks, railway tracks, on pavements, garbage dumps, mountain side, highways, roads, and reclaimed land earmarked for development projects.

This paper will draw experiences from the community mapping interventions in the Philippines, one of the fastest urbanizing countries in the East Asia and Pacific region. It interrogates, in the context of ‘good enough urban land governance’, how the community mapping interventions, steps, actions and decisions, have influenced the improvement of tenure security as well as urban policy and practice in Muntinlupa city, a first-class highly urbanized city in Metro Manila. Through a mixed-method approach, this paper will provide a detailed account of the assessment of projects implemented over a period of four years and three months, with the aim of improving processes on land tenure security, inclusive planning and informal settlement upgrading in the city of Muntinlupa. The research will draw lessons from this case study to inform other similar interventions in the country, and elsewhere.

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The world is undergoing the largest wave of urban growth in history. It is estimated that by 2050, 68% of the world population will live in urban areas with close to 90% of this increase taking place in Asia and Africa (UN DESA, 2018). The concentration of recent population growth in the developing regions, and in Asia and Africa in particular, has posed challenges to the ability of countries within those regions to attain progress in development, including towards the internationally agreed development goals and targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Having declined by about 20% between 2000 and 2014, the global proportion of the urban population living in slums or informal settlement globally reversed course by registering a 23.5% increase in 2018. Consequently, the number of people living in informal settlements grew to over one billion, with 80% attributed to three regions: 370 million in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, 238 million in sub-Saharan Africa and 227 million people in Central and Southern Asia (UN DESA, 2018). While cities continue to command an increasingly dominant role in the global economy as centers of both production and consumption, rapid urban growth throughout the developing world is outstripping their capacity to provide adequate services for their citizens (Cohen 2006). Governments, development agencies, policy makers and social actors are also faced with an enormous task in terms of providing secure tenure and housing. The paradox of ‘urban’ in these cities is witnessed in many developing countries where urban growth is expected to conjure images of skyscrapers and fast-moving transport system but instead portrays the opposite, i.e., informal settlements and slums that are the loci of increasing poverty, pollution, disease, and social inequality (Redman and Jones, 2005).

The Philippines, with its 7,641 islands and a land area of 300,000 square kilometers, is one of the fastest urbanizing countries in the East Asia and Pacific region. In the past five decades, the urban population grew by over 50 million people, and by 2050, it is projected that approximately 102 million people (more than 65% of the country’s total population) will be residing in cities (Singh and Gadgil, 2017). Approximately 43% of the Philippines population was reported to live in informal settlements as of 2018 according to World Bank collection of development indicators. The proliferation of informal settlements is aggravated by the rapid increase in population and consequently growing housing demand. Informal settlements provide accommodation for large sections of the low-income population—informal settler families (ISFs)—who are part of the sum and substance of the country’s fast urbanizing cities. Most informal settlements in the Philippines develop in once vacant land, along seashores, riverbanks, railway tracks, on pavements, garbage dumps, mountain side, highways, roads, and reclaimed land earmarked for development projects.

Manila, the capital of the Philippines, is a densely populated bayside city on the island of Luzon, which mixes Spanish colonial architecture with modern skyscrapers. The term "Manila" is commonly used to refer to the whole metropolitan area, the greater metropolitan area. Metropolitan Manila (often shortened as Metro Manila), and officially the National Capital Region (NCR) is the seat of government and one of three defined metropolitan areas in the Philippines. Urban poverty in the Philippines has remained

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largely unchanged because of the inability of urban areas to keep pace with the rapid urbanization. Multi-dimensional poverty in urban areas is deepening and widening. In-migration into cities from rural areas to urban centres (due to concentration of economic activities and as such employment opportunities with better pay) has caused surges in demand for jobs, housing, infrastructure, and basic services. Within the metropolis, it is estimated that about 18% of informal settlers live in hazard prone areas along waterways and the coastline (Morin et.al, 2015). The choice of where ISF live is usually a tradeoff between what is affordable and proximity to income earning opportunities. Land in Metro Manila is very expensive and not affordable for these families. The areas affordable are typically on hazard-prone lands, in areas that are deemed undesirable to others. According to a World Bank report in 2017, government's poor enforcement of land use planning and regulation has enabled many slums to develop near water bodies (Singh and Gadgil, 2017). This exposes ISFs to recurrent floods, costly damages to housing and assets, and increased health risks due to prolonged exposure to water pollution. Thus, in addition to the threat of eviction and demolition, ISFs must also cope with frequent floods, and typhoon disasters visited upon the Philippines; an average of 20 typhoons every year, some of which are very destructive.

Informal settlements vary from place to place, but the most critical factors associated with informal settlement development are the lack of affordable legal options, poverty, intense land and housing demand, inappropriate standards and regulations concerning urban development and a lack of savings and investment institutions geared to the needs of the poor. The World Bank observes that the growth of ISF in Metro Manila and major urban centers has partly been the consequence of weak planning and ad hoc spatial development, and the rapid property development that has increased land prices beyond affordability. In addition, the informality is exacerbated by the limited information the government has about ISF populations, hindering efforts to provide services and assistance. Guidelines and standards for socialized housing are weakly enforced, and there have been systematic barriers in mobilizing government lands for people residing in the informal settlements (Singh and Gadgil, 2017)

Unequal access to land and natural resources is a central issue that cuts across both the rural and urban sectors in the Philippines. Access to land ownership and tenurial rights are limited to certain segments of the population (Reyes, Gamboa, Rivera, et.al 2018). The World Bank notes several challenges that affect land use in urban areas, which are binding constraints to the overall competitiveness of Philippine cities including, weak land administration and management system, outdated and ineffective land use planning and regulations, increasing informality in major urban centers, and weak and highly politicized property taxation and valuation practices which negatively impact the financing for urban development, (Singh and Gadgil, 2017).

The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides for comprehensive land reforms of which the most notable are: i) the 1988 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) and ii) the 1992 Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA). The UDHA is hailed to have created a legal framework and/or appropriate contexts for innovations in tenure security for the urban poor by being responsive to the need for housing and land security. Key provisions include the prohibition on summary evictions and demolition of dwellings without due process and adequate resettlement, and the provision of government loans to low-income households through the Community Mortgage Program (Porio and Chrisol, 2004). Further, the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 devolved considerable powers and responsibilities to local governments, including that of providing basic services. It also redefined the roles of government agencies, urban poor communities, and the civil society groups in governance like NGOs and CBOs and changed the performance and relationships of stakeholders in the housing and land sector.

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However, even with the above progressive legal provisions, challenges on managing rapid urbanization and its effects abound, not least in terms of poor housing, insecure tenure, and inequalities in access to utilities. As alluded earlier, the increasing urbanization of Metro Manila has resulted in the unregulated development of informal settlements on public and privately owned lands and usually on dangerous and risky areas such as those near seashore or flood zone (swampy areas), or on grounds prone to landslides after heavy rainfall. To improve security of tenure for the urban poor living in the informal settlements, three key approaches have been employed by the government, namely, resettlement, slum upgrading and mortgage financing, (Porio and Chrisol, 2004). Parallel to this are civil society initiatives, (NGOs and CBOs) that negotiate for the rights of informal settlement families in the cities through self-help initiatives such as savings and allied strategies, and go on to buy land, build their own homes, improve livelihoods.

What is “Good-enough urban land governance”?

Governance entails the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Participation, transparency, accountability, equity and efficiency are considered building blocks of good governance (UNDP, 1997). Governing urban land is about dealing with urban people-to-urban land relationships. As a concept, “good enough land governance” considers different set of options for delivering tenure security for all, including for the poor, women and vulnerable groups. As an approach, it mirrors the Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration (FFP LA) principle, which advances pragmatic solutions to deliver tenure security at scale. It is also flexible to accommodate different types of land tenure, (documented as well as undocumented, formal as well as informal, for individuals as well as groups, including pastoralists and residents of slums and other settlements, which may be legal or extra-legal), and can be upgraded when economic opportunities or social requirements arise. It includes three fundamental characteristics. Firstly, there is a focus on the purpose before designing the means to be most “fit” for achieving it; secondly, it requires flexibility in designing the means to meet the current constraints; and thirdly, it emphasises the perspective of incremental improvement to provide continuity. Further, “good enough urban land governance” includes (i) technical tools for spatial data acquisition and recordation where affordable technology is used to build the land administration framework that accommodates a variety of spatial units and land tenure arrangements; and (ii) efficient and effective legal policy tools whose formulation and implementation, and the influence of the cadastre combine to support the achievement of land tenure security for all.

Box 1: Good enough’ urban land governance

Muntinlupa City

Muntinlupa city is a first-class highly urbanized city with a land area of 3,975 hectares, ranking as the 7th largest local government unit in the National Capital Region. The city is composed of nine barangays (also known as neighborhood, district, or ward and the smallest official administrative division used in the Philippines) and is politically divided into two legislative districts: District 1 and 2. District 1 is comprised of four barangays in the south: Bayanan, Putatan, Poblacion, and Tunasan. District 2 is comprised of five barangays in the north: Alabang, Ayala-Alabang, Cupang, Buli, and Sucat. As of 2021, the population of Muntinlupa city was estimated to be 543,445 people. Muntinlupa lies adjacent to Laguna de Bay, the largest freshwater lake in the Philippines. It is characterized by high-rise buildings and gated villages of moderate- and high-income citizens and the informal slum settlements of those citizens living in poverty. Muntinlupa experiences rapid urban growth, high population densities, increasing poverty and an escalation of land prices. These forces have led to a critical shortage of affordable land for housing, leaving most of the urban poor to live in squatter settlements under a

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constant threat of eviction in unauthorized settlements (Porio, 2011). Most of these settlements in Muntinlupa are located along water bodies and most of the households living therein have low-incomes, and do not have adequate access to potable water, electricity, health, sewerage, and sanitation facilities. Most of these households also suffer from losses during the rainy seasons due to typhoons, floods, and tidal/storm surges.

Community Mapping in Muntinlupa City

Background

In October 2013, the Technical Assistance Movement for People and Environment Inc. (TAMPEI) and Homeless People's Federation Philippines, Inc. (HPFPI) under the umbrella organization of the Philippines Alliance (a group of non-government institutions working with urban poor communities through capacity-building initiatives that promote the participatory processes of settlements development), together with the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) as facilitated by UN-Habitat, organized a learning event on innovative fit-for-purpose land tools and approaches that could be adopted to support and complement existing land administration systems to promote and improve land tenure security in urban, peri-urban and rural contexts. Among the tools promoted was the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM), a pro-poor, gender responsive, participatory, and affordable land information system for capturing person/s to land relationships along the continuum of land rights. STDM supports all forms of land rights and claims (formal, intermediate, and non-formal) and has been tested and accepted internationally for being practical, fast, and affordable in facilitating land tenure security especially for the poor and vulnerable communities.

The learning exchange which included a training on the STDM informed the potential of the tool in assisting communities to manage their own tenure information at the community level. Based on this exposure, the HPFPI and TAMPEI proposed the implementation of STDM activities with participation of professionals, particularly geodetic engineers, and representatives of urban poor communities as a follow-up to the learning event and as a way to facilitate consolidation of information currently being gathered in the communities through mapping and enumeration activities. Additionally, TAMPEI was supported by GLTN to purchase equipment such as global positioning system (GPS) devices and computers to collect data and subsequent analysis from select pockets of different informal settlements in Manila. The resultant data was used to familiarize the team with the tool in preparation for future interventions.

In December 2014, the Philippine Alliance and the World Bank co-organized a learning exchange to introduce a new concept, the *Citywide Development Approach* (CDA) which culminated to a project implemented between December 2014 and December 2015 in three pilot cities in Metro Manila, namely, Quezon City (District 6), Caloocan City (Barangay 177) and Muntinlupa City (District II). TAMPEI and HPFPI took the lead in conducting all project activities in four barangays of Muntinlupa District II namely Sucat, Buli, Cupang and Alabang.

Following the implementation of the CDA project, TAMPEI negotiated with GLTN/UN-Habitat to provide funding for a similar approach that was to be implemented in District 1. It is important to note that the CDA project focused on District 2 only and hence the need to cover District 1 to reflect information on informal settlements for the whole city on Muntinlupa. In September 2015, TAMPEI, began implementing a citywide project aimed at mapping all informal settlements and families in the

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area towards an integration of solutions to land and housing problems with strategies to improve the socio-economic status of the informal settler families (ISFs). The intervention was mainly anchored on the original process undertaken in District II and was operational up to April 2017. During this time, a total of 103 ISF communities were mapped in District I: 34 in Putatan, 12 in Tunasan, 41 in Poblacion and 16 in Bayanan.

Following the successful implementation of this pilot project, two other projects were implemented between November 2017 and April 2018 and between January 2019-December 2019. These projects centered on collecting data from the informal settlements and on building the capacity of stakeholders on innovative land tools and approaches to mobilize the full potential and resources of all the actors i.e., public organizations, the private sector (both formal and informal), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and most importantly, the ISF in Muntinlupa to create a transformational effect in the informal settlements. The comparative advantage of these tools is that they are pro-poor, participatory, cost effective, gender-responsive and facilitate practical ways to deal with land-related issues in the informal settlements while attempting to unlock the key blockages to the delivery of land and housing tenure security.

Table 1 below elaborates on each step of the community mapping processes as adopted during the activities in Muntinlupa’s informal settlements.

Table 1: Community mapping processes in Muntinlupa

Steps		Particulars
1.	Courtesy call	TAMPEI and HPFPI make a formal visit to the Barangay office to introduce the project and its particulars.
2.	Barangay Assembly	A meeting is held at the Barangay level to orient community leaders and Barangay officials about the project. Informal settlements to be profiled and mapped are identified during this meeting.
3.	Identification of settlement profiling and mapping team	This activity is done by HPFPI facilitators. The team is selected from the informal settlements (residents of the settlements)
4.	Training of community on settlement profiling household surveys and community mapping	Community members are taught how to operate the GPS devices, how to conduct household surveys and community profiling.
5.	Area visit/s	The core team moves to the selected informal settlements using GPS devices to locate settlement boundaries. The spatial coordinates are then imported into Google Earth to generate large base maps. Afterwards, the Team continues mapping key structures such as landmarks onto the base map
6.	Settlement profiling conducted	Profiling is done to gather succinct but comprehensive overview of all the relevant physical, socio-economic dynamics that affect the settlement through a spatial lens. Data is collected using FGDs, and interviews with knowledgeable persons of the community.
7.	Community mapping and household survey	Using the base map generated during the area visits, house structures are mapped out. Surnames corresponding to these structures are also indicated on the map.
8.	Data encoding	All data gathered using settlement profiles, household surveys and community mapping is encoded. Survey data is fed into excel; spatial data is directly exported

		into STDM. Other data collected using FGDs and interviews is also saved into folders according to the enumeration questions in preparation for data analysis
9.	Data analysis using STDM and interpretation of the data	All collected data is assigned meaning after analysis. It is then organized in a way that it can be easily consumed by the stakeholders (community, local government etc.)
10.	Data validation	The data is taken to the community for their viewership and to ascertain its truthfulness. The information is displayed on charts on community assembly points where community converge and discuss. The dissonance is noted to be adjusted in the final dataset
11.	Savings orientation and community organizing	The HPFPI usually conducts mobilization of new groups during and after the validation sessions.
12.	Finalization and presentation of data to Barangay and City level	At this stage, data prior collected is revised based on the views at the first validation session. It is then presented back to the community for the final round of validation, after which it is finalized and prepared for presentation at the Barangay and City level.
13.	Regular updating of the data	This is done by the community data team who are well versed on the community mapping and data analysis processes. It is done on a continuous basis.

Methodology

As introduced earlier, this work aimed at examining, in the context of ‘good enough urban land governance’, how the community mapping interventions, steps, actions and decisions, have influenced the improvement of tenure security as well as urban policy and practice in Muntinlupa city over the five year period. To realize this, a mixed-method approach was employed. In collaboration with TAMPEI and HPFPI, research questions were developed along prior agreed themes, with reference to how these areas have been influenced by the implementation of the community mapping interventions. These are: tenure security; provision and/or improvement of basic services, mitigation against hazards and disasters; community organization and livelihoods; and, influence on urban policy and practice. The main questions sought to examine: (i) whether the implementation of the community mapping interventions had facilitated land tenure security improvement, and if so, how? and, (ii) whether the implementation of the innovative land tools had contributed to changes in urban policy and practice, and how?

The assessment used qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to enhance validity and reliability in the findings. A review of secondary data and literature review was also conducted to validate the primary data. Secondary data assessed the project reports, published project papers, web articles, and video documentation evidence from the different phases of the Project. Further, the research also used non-participant observation during the online FGDs.

A questionnaire was developed and administered to gather quantitative data. A purposeful sampling technique was considered to target respondents that played specific roles in the project, with the guidance of both TAMPEI and HPFPI. The questionnaire was administered using an online survey tool called Survey Monkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com> accessed on 14th December 2021) and the Google Survey Form accessed on 17th February 2022). The survey questionnaire employed open-ended questions to allow for more information, useful, contextual feedback on questions as well as Likert-scale questions that were easy to understand on the part of the respondents and to assist the researcher while

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drawing conclusions on the findings. The results of from the Google Survey Form were then merged with those from the Survey Monkey tool to create a spreadsheet for analysis.

The assessment also included qualitative data collected through online focus group discussions to incorporate the views of community members who are beneficiaries of these projects, in their own words, and provide further depth to the quantitative findings. Three (3) focused group discussions, targeting the communities from the select informal settlements in Muntinlupa were conducted to understand their experiences and reactions in their interaction with the community mapping project during the implementation as well as the emerging outcomes from the interventions.

Primary Data Collection

Online Survey

The data collection exercise was conducted between December 2021 and March 2022. Respondents included local government officials, the academe, key shelter agencies, community leaders, community members, enumeration and mapping teams, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations. A pre-test was also carried out before the actual data collection exercise using the final draft of the questionnaire to check for any cases of distress, for instance whether the questionnaire was too lengthy, repetitive or time consuming. This ensured reliability of the exercise because such elements observed during the pre-test were accordingly dealt with while adjusting the final tool used in the survey. During the pre-test stage, it was found necessary to translate the tool from the English language into the Filipino language which is spoken widely by the target respondents.

The intention of the survey was to gather views and opinions of the target respondents (beneficiaries and stakeholders) on the community mapping activities and their contribution to improving tenure security in Muntinlupa, as well as to identify any indications that demonstrate influence on urban policy and practice.

A total of 54 participants responded to the survey as shown in the table 1 and comprised approximately 76% women and 24% men. About 35% of the respondents were members of the enumeration and mapping team who are well versed with the community mapping project. At least 30% of all respondents have been involved in the mapping project for about three to five years, in the period 2013-2020. About 56% are still involved in the post-community mapping work.

Respondents	Number	Percentage
Member of enumeration or mapping team	19	35.19%
Member of CSO or NGO	11	20.37%
Community leader	10	18.52%
Local government official	6	11.11%
Community member	6	11.11%
Academe	1	1.85%
Key Shelter Agency	1	1.85%
Total	54	100%

Table 2: Distribution of survey respondents and their roles in the mapping activities

Focused group discussions

Online FGDs were conducted with community members where each group comprised an average of eight participants, both male and female. Participants were sourced from District I and District II. The

third group comprised of a mix of mapping and enumeration team members from different barangays of Muntinlupa. The selected participants had all participated in the community mapping activities hence conversant with the themes of the research. Additionally, this selection increased the possibility of generating meaningful discussions and opinions, aimed at understanding the areas under interrogation better and at a deeper level. The three-hour sessions were held on the 29th January, 11th February, and on the 19th February, 2022.

The table below shows the various settlements where the participants of the FGDs were sourced.

Group One (enumeration and mapping team)	Group Two (District I)	Group Three (District II)
<u>Composition of settlements:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southville HOA • Langyaw HOA • Samahan ng Purok 4 HOA • Smart Tower • Samahang Magkakapitbahay ng Sucat Purok 2 & 3 • Samahang Magkakapitbahay ng Sitio Aplaya 	<u>Composition of settlements:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samahang Nakatira sa Area Priority Development 1, Purok 6, Brgy Bayanan • Unity Neighborhood Association • Samahang Kapatiran Homeowners Inc. 	<u>Composition of settlements:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sto. Niño HOA • Samahang Magkakapitbahay ng Munting Nayon • Samahang Nagkakaisa ng Magkakapitbahay Tungo Sa Pagsulong ng Block 35 Excess Lot • Buli Neighborhood Association • Pinag-isang Samahan ng Buli Neighborhood Association

Table 3: Composition of FGD participants' settlements

Results

The analysis of the survey responses entailed compiling the results using the survey monkey tool and then exporting the data into a spreadsheet format. The data were organized and categorized into a tabular format and were grouped according to the research questions. For the focused group discussions, analysis was guided by the key themes agreed upon at the initial stages of the research i.e., tenure security; provision and/or improvement of basic services, mitigation against hazards and disasters; community organization and livelihoods; and influence on policy and practice.

Research Limitation

Since the survey was administered online, it was not possible to interact with the respondents to follow-up on the research responses that would have improved the analysis of the quantitative data. For the qualitative data, the views presented here are ideally limited to a small number of community members in Muntinlupa. Further, due to the covid-19 pandemic, the FGDs were conducted online thus limiting the observation aspect and physical interaction with the participants which could have added great value to the findings. However, the online FGDs allowed for non-participant observation in which the researcher was able to objectively take notes during the discussions.

Research Findings

This section presents the research findings based on the two key areas: (i) whether the community mapping interventions influenced improvement in tenure security; and (ii) whether the mapping activities influenced a shift in urban policy and practice. The findings combine observations from both quantitative and qualitative data.

In the survey, respondents were asked to state whether the community mapping projects had contributed to increased tenure security in their settlements. Out of the 52 respondents who attempted the question equivalent to 96% of the respondents, approximately 81% affirmed this statement, of which 17% were strongly in agreement. Still, about 15% of the respondents were indecisive while about 4% disagreed with the statement. It is important to note that during the focused group discussions, some respondents acknowledged that they had acquired a piece of land where they intend to settle permanently following the community mapping exercises hence enhanced tenure security. (Refer to box 1 for more details on this).

Subsequently, in a multiple-choice question, the respondents were asked to indicate what could be the reason/s for the perceptions of improved tenure security following the implementation of the community mapping Project. Out of the 52 persons who attempted this question, representing 96% of the respondents, several responses rated high: increased access to settlement and household data and maps at 71% equivalent to 37 responses, facilitating community empowerment (61%); increased interaction between the community and the local government (56%); enhanced acceptance of community data by local authorities (56%); facilitating more organized and cohesive communities (52%); and, increase in the overall confidence and perception of tenure security (50%).

In a related question during the focused group discussions, participants were asked to list some of the benefits realized – direct benefits or otherwise, from their participation in mapping activities. Their responses can be inferred under this question and some of them are included the below.

“We now have a map of our settlement. We used to not have a map of our settlement. I only knew about the map of the barangay and the city. After mapping, we were able to recognize how our community looks like.” Community FGD 11th February 2022

“Yes, through the group activities, we have been able to acquire land tenure security” Community 11th February 2022

Additionally, during the focused group discussions, a question was asked to establish if there had been projects/programs in the settlements that had been set up as a result of the community mapping project activities. The participants listed the projects below:

Location	Service Area	Name of Government Program/s
Barangay Putatan	Water	Deep well
Barangay Sucat	Sanitation	Public toilets
Barangay Tunasan and Barangay Bayanan	Health	Pandemic response and recovery such as Social Amelioration Program (SAP), vaccination drives, mobilization of barangay health workers
Barangay Cupang	Electricity	Elevation of electric wires in the settlements to avoid potential health hazards
Barangay Bayanan	Disaster risk awareness/education	Lifesaving training
Barangay Buli	Livelihood	Sponsored livelihood programs, e.g., dishwashing making by PCUP, baking via Congressman Biazon, dishwashing by DA, and another by Mayor Jaime R. Fresnedi
Barangay Tunasan and Barangay Bayanan	Others	Path walks construction and maintenance, pathway upgrading

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Table 4: Projects established in Muntinlupa's informal settlements after the community mapping project

The research also sought to find out the respondent's views on whether the implementation of the mapping projects had contributed to influencing changes on land related policies and practice. Approximately 96% of the respondents answered this question of which 80% agreed that the project had influenced changes on policy and practice, of which 67% (equivalent to 35 responses) agreed while 13 % strongly agreed. About 17% were indecisive on this matter, i.e. neutral, and 2% disagreed with the statement.

Next, in a multiple-choice question, the survey explored the different factors that could have influenced the views reported above. Out of 52 respondents attempting this question, 38 persons (73%) identified the support given by local government on the community mapping project, including the endorsement of the different phases since 2015 as a main indicator of change or a shift on land related policies and practice. Other responses above 48% were as follows: local government's use of the settlement data for planning, relocation, decision-making and other development purposes (62%); local government improved interaction and engagement in improving the settlements (56%); local community and local authorities are supporting the management and/or maintenance of mapping data (54%); marked improvement in the relationship between the community and local government (48%); and, increased number of land-related multi-stakeholder meetings, conferences and workshops considering the experience on community mapping project (48%).

A question related to the above was asked during the focused group discussions seeking to establish if the information collected in the community mapping activities had influenced government responsiveness to different issues in the settlements. The responses suggest different perceptions in that some participants felt that the mapping interventions had contributed to a change in government-to-community interactions to a certain degree. Below are some responses from the participants.

"Yes, some of the information was used by the local government and the mapping was recognized by the city government, but this was not felt by at the community level." Community focused group discussions, 11th February 2022

"Yes, government now has more accurate data when it comes to disaster response, relief, and recovery." Community focused group discussions 11th February 2022

"Yes, the LGU provided a community development office but it is not well maintained." Community focused group discussions, 29th January 2022

Still other participants had different opinions as shown in the below responses.

"No, the Annual Investment Plans that we proposed to the city were not approved. The issues presented before were not properly addressed." Community focused group discussions, 19th February 2022

No, during the pandemic, they did not use the data from the mapping because they still visited us to get data." Community focused group discussions, 19th February 2022

Discussion

This section aims to provide insight to the preceding section, i.e., the findings of the research, and link these with the assessment objectives. It is evident that the community mapping interventions in Muntinlupa have positively contributed to the improvement of tenure security or at most the notion of improved tenure security over the five-year period. Also, the project has influenced government authorities’ response to matters that affect the informal settlements in Muntinlupa in different ways.

The community mapping project in Muntinlupa and its influence on improvement of tenure security

Access to secure land and housing is a precondition for reducing poverty, a situation that is prevalent in the different informal settlements of Muntinlupa. Although security of tenure is at times equated with ownership and formal titles of house plots, this assessment considered tenure security based on the continuum of land rights framework, a concept that offers a powerful and practical alternative to the dominant focus on titling by advocating that tenure can take a variety of forms along the continuum, and that land rights do not lie on a single line, and they may overlap. It promotes increase of security across the continuum, with opportunity for movement between tenure forms. The findings revealed that the community mapping interventions had resulted to improved tenure security and the factors attributed to this include increased access to settlement and household data and maps, community empowerment, increased interaction between the community and the local government, enhanced acceptance of community data by local authorities, more organized and cohesive communities and increase in the overall confidence and perception of tenure security. Additionally, communities in Muntinlupa’s informal settlements are increasingly engaging in land conversations to push for secure land rights and this is viewed as a positive step on the continuum of land rights.

Additionally, several projects were identified by participants during the FGDs as having been established in the different settlements following the mapping exercises in the areas of water and sanitation, health, livelihood, and disaster management (see table 7). This is a case of incremental recognition of tenure and an example in which informal settlements are recognized as integral part of the bigger city. Moreover, significant directives taken by the government such as the elevation of high-voltage transmission lines in *Sitio Sto. Niño HOA* settlement in Barangay Cupang to reduce the risk of hazards and diseases associated with close proximity to electromagnetic fields could also be identified as one way in which the government has recognized the existence of these informal settlement and in the same way other informal settlements within Muntinlupa.

The mapping projects have facilitated the recognition of communities through the information generated from their settlements that is central both for their own knowledge and when interacting with the government. It is also noted that there has been enhanced acceptance of this information by the local authorities. For example, in some settlements, data collected during the mapping activities was used by the barangay local government to provide relief to the most affected during the covid-19 pandemic. A short account on this is provided in box 1 below.

	<p>In March 2020, the Philippine Government passed the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, No. 11469 to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19 pandemic-related policy measures. This included the provision and implementation of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), worth PHP 200 billion, through various national line agencies. The programme was to provide cash transfers to 18 million low-income families nationwide ranging from PHP 5,000 – PHP 8,000 per family based on prevailing regional wages. Additionally, SAP was to dispense wage subsidies to displaced low-wage earners in the formal sector. The intended beneficiaries of the SAP were/are poor families with people with disabilities, older people, pregnant mothers, single parents,</p>
<p>Land Tenure Security Innovations in the Philippines – the Case of ‘Good Enough Land Governance’ in Muntinlupa City (12036) Hellen Ndungu, John Gatao (Kenya), Lunalyn Cagan (Philippines) and Danilo Antonio (Kenya) FIG Working Paper 2022 Protecting Our World: Combating New Frontiers Orlando, Florida, USA, 28 May – June 2023</p>	<p>displaced informal workers and other vulnerable groups. During this time, community leaders from various informal settlements in the cities of Muntinlupa, Davao and Iloilo, (most of whom belong to the Philippines Alliance) negotiated with Local Government Units to utilize the spatial and socio economic data collected during the community mapping exercises, to identify and locate the most vulnerable households within their respective communities. The data on household incomes facilitated community leaders to help the Social Amelioration Programme. The data was also used in assessing the community’s savings funds to augment food security and sanitation through the procurement and provision of food supplies and disinfection kits to all households.</p>

Box 2: Relevance of the community data during the Covid-19 pandemic

In one settlement, *Samahang Magkakabitbahay ng Munting Nayon*, the community has been able to engage the barangay and the city government to acquire a piece of land where they plan to stay permanently. Using data generated from the mapping activities, the community began working towards a subdivision plan for their settlement. This was eventually done and presented to the city government who approved it as noted by some of the participants from that settlement during the FGDs. This arrangement falls under an alternative tenure approach in the Philippines; the Community Mortgage Program (CMP). Through the CMP, the government lends funds to informal settlers organized as a community association, making it possible for them to buy a piece of land that they can occupy permanently. The land can be on-site, presently occupied by the community, or an entirely new site to where the community intends to relocate (UN-Habitat, 2012). The community is currently working to pay all the amortization fees so as to be handed the deeds of sale over the land. (See the detailed account in Box 2)

In 2015, community members of the *Samahang Magkakapitbahay ng Munting Nayon, Inc. Homeowners Association* joined the Muntinlupa's citywide mapping activities after being mobilized by TAMPEI and the HPFPI. Led by the Association's president Ms. Jermelyn Penalosa, the community members took on different roles as community mobilizers, enumerators, mappers and on data entry, and were heavily invested during the data collection activities in their settlements. Engaging in these activities brought their community together, especially during the numerous meetings where discussions on improving their lives, i.e. housing, sanitation, health etc. took centre stage. Further, the members continued thinking on how to secure their future; they shared a vision of settling on land that was uncontested, where they would be free from the constant eviction threats and a place to call their forever home. Around the same time as the mapping activities were taking place, the Association began to physically search for land and engaging the city government and private landowners to establish if the parcels they had identified were legitimately for sale. This guarded against unscrupulous property dealers who have increased in number and in tune due to the scarce land in Metro-Manila resulting to fraudulent, overlapping, and duplicative land titles. After identifying the suitable land, in consultation with the city government, the community engaged the landowner and a successful resolution was reached for the sale and transfer of land at PHP 6 million (approximately USD 113,340). However, the community did not have sufficient funds to purchase the land instantly. Hence, they engaged the city government under the Community Mortgage Programme for a loan. Since *Samahang Magkakapitbahay ng Munting Nayon, Inc. Homeowners Association* had already met the required criteria to facilitate the loan, the city government approved the loan and advanced the funds to the landowner. The loan granted is payable monthly for up five (5) years at zero percent interest per annum. The period of payment was recently extended to six (6) years after negotiations with the city government. The extension was necessitated by the negative effects the Covid-19 pandemic had had on resident's livelihood/income sources. The land purchased serves as collateral for the loan. So far, as of February 2022, the community has managed to pay a total of PHP 4.2 M. The Association is now working to repay the remaining monthly amortization fees by regularly reminding their members on this financial responsibility while also enforcing sanctions on community members who may default on paying the fees because any default in payment by a member is a liability of the entire Association. Already the Association is looking into ways of substituting some community members who have defaulted in paying the fees to assume the rights and responsibilities of those no longer able to service the loan and enable the completion of the loan repayment. In 2021, the city government agreed to shoulder the capital gains tax of the sale. Further, with the assistance of the government, the community is liaising with a lawyer to facilitate processing of the the deed of sale after the demise of the original landowner.

Box 2: The Samahang Magkakabitbahay ng Munting Nayon community journey towards secure land and housing tenure security

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The Community mapping project and influence on urban policy and practice in Muntinlupa city

The research revealed that the community mapping interventions had influenced the response of government authorities to urban issues in Muntinlupa's informal settlements. Factors attributed to this include: the support rendered by government (barangay and city level) to mapping activities; the acceptance and local government's use of the settlement data for example (i) during the covid-19 pandemic relief efforts, (ii) elevation of high voltage power lines in the settlements (iii) approval of subdivision plans (*Samahang Magkakabitbahay ng Munting Nayon settlement*); marked improvement in the relationship between the community and local government for example (i) regular interaction between the government and homeowners associations, (ii) signing of Memoranda of Agreement (MoA) between the government (at both city and barangay level) and the Philippines Alliance; and, increased number of land-related multi-stakeholder meetings, conferences and workshops considering the experience on community mapping activities.

To address land issues in urban expansion and development, the Philippines government has put in place several policies and legislation. These include the protection of the rights of urban poor dwellers and informal settlers by providing socialized housing in urban areas making it the policy of the government to prioritize in-situ and in-city resettlements. One of these is the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), which was signed into law in 1992 as Republic Act 7279, was the first legislation to formally confer housing rights. It established as state policy the provision of “decent housing at affordable cost” to “underprivileged and homeless citizens” (UN-Habitat, 2012). Through the efforts of the community mapping interventions, some settlements have been able to negotiate with local government units guided by the provisions of this legislation, and other accompanying components such as the Community Mortgage Programme (CMP). For instance, they have used the data generated by the project to facilitate the subdivision of their parcels (*Samahang Magkakabitbahay ng Munting Nayon*) or parcels they would want to relocate to. Other communities are using this data to commence negotiations to purchase parcels for their community such as the case of *Unity Homeowners Association in Barangay Tunasan* (see section 4.3, part v/ii). In the *Samahang Magkakabitbahay ng Munting Nayon in Barangay Putatan* community, the subdivision plan was approved by the city government. The government went ahead to assist the community in acquiring a piece of land where they will relocate permanently once they complete payment of the monthly amortization fees (refer to Box 2).

The assessment also revealed that government authorities play a pivotal role in community projects. Their support means the achievement of project objectives and as such the other broader national objectives, programs, policies in land and housing tenure security, basic services, health, etc. On the other hand, failure to get this support from government authorities could lead to stalled processes or projects and negligence and disregard of community efforts. Community proposals which require input and support of government authorities gather dust and often fail to progress whenever there is reluctance on the part of the government to support community efforts, eventually frustrating the community. In the assessment, some community members felt that change in elected leadership in some settlements affected the responsiveness of the already collected data generated by the community mapping project. Others shared that due to no support from the government, the mapping activities could not continue to cover as many informal settlements in Muntinlupa as possible.

“When the barangay captain changed, mapping data was not recognized anymore.” Community FGD, 19th January 2022.

“There is no support from the Barangay to be able to continue with the mapping activities.” Community FGD, 29th January 2022

It therefore means that the community must constantly build relationships with new government leadership whenever a change in leadership occurs due to political elections or other government processes, as well as lobby and negotiate for government support (financial and technical) on community activities.

Conclusion

The interventions focused on improving tenure security in informal settlements of Muntinlupa through the implementation of innovative gender-responsive, fit-for-purpose land tools and approaches to address land tenure issues while facilitating partnerships with relevant stakeholders at the national and local levels with the aim of influencing existing urban policies and legislation to be more responsive to the communities living in the informal settlements. Through the implementation of innovative local solutions, and as shown in the foregoing, there has been a degree of improvement in land and housing tenure security as evidenced by several factors such as: availability of a reliable database of the communities living in the informal settlements generated through a community driven process, the provision of government services and infrastructure/establishment of projects in the informal settlements, goodwill by the government in the form of assisting communities to purchase land through alternative tenure approaches (Community Mortgage Program, usufruct agreements), and improved interaction with both the local and city governments. The Project has also used provisions of existing urban policies to push for tenure security through alternative tenure approaches and is continually supporting community organization to build saving programs, accumulate funds and in this way enable the purchase of land for the community. Further, the mapping interventions in Muntinlupa have led to similar initiatives in other cities of the Philippines, such as in Davao where three communities i.e., San Juan Seaside Settlers Association, (SAJUSSA), Nalum Ville, a community located in Barangay Baliok and Samahang Matute at Soliman Homeowners Association (SAMASOL HOA), are in the advanced stages of pursuing their tenure rights on the lands they occupy. The community in SAJUSSA has been granted free patent of the land (*land grants awarded to natural-born Filipino citizens in actual occupation and cultivation for at least 30 years of alienable and disposable lands not more than 12 hectares, and have paid the corresponding real property taxes*), where as the community in Nalum Ville has begun paying for installments based on the total price of the land they occupy which they have been able to acquire through the Community Mortgage Program. Also, community members in SAMASOL were granted a piece of land as a relocation site and they are in the process of paying the fees through the CMP arrangement.

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