

Perween Rahman Fellowship 2014

Community Onsite Reblocking and Incremental Housing Development Barangay Canumay East, Valenzuela City, Philippines

The project is an onsite reblocking and incremental housing development for United Libis Homeowners Association [ULHOA] in Valenzuela City. It will be constructed on a land with a total area of 15,688 sq. m. benefiting around 342 families. This project will be the first to document a process of an onsite and housing reblocking through people's process.



Existing main road in ULHOA

The members of ULHOA have been living in the area for 33 years. They had partially acquired the land using their savings and a community loan in 2010. The site has an existing power transmission line that cuts across the center of the site, which requires a 10-meter "no build" easement on both sides. This issue caused for many of the existing structures to be subjected for demolition, and people will be relocated either within or outside the site. In addition to this, they were required by the Local Government Unit (LGU) to provide a reblocking plan in order to approve their subdivision plan. In 2013, their subdivision plan was approved by the LGU, and based on the plan the whole area will need to be reblocked because of the adjustments made on the road widths as required by law and due to the 20-meter total easement caused by the transmission line.

ULHOA sought technical assistance from TAMPEI to come up with a reblocking process wherein the structural stability of the existing structures shall be secured. They will also need to provide housing plans which are required in securing building permits.

TAMPEI conducted a workshop on Onsite Reblocking and Housing Design last January 2014 with the community. This was joined in by some architecture students from Bulacan State University after the Dean of the College of Architecture and Fine Arts took interest in having the community as one of their case studies in their Housing subject. The students were asked to provide housing designs based on the needs of the community members and site development options based on the need and present condition of the site. Their solutions were presented to the community.

Process, challenges and experiences with the community

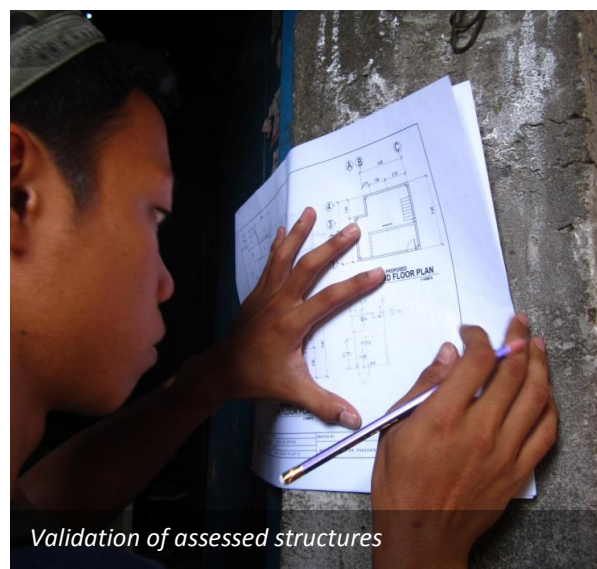
After the workshop, the community identified 22 members for the piloting of the reblocking process. They were the ones ready and willing to take on the process and to apply for housing loan. The community leaders saw this as a way to start the process and encourage other members to prepare themselves because either way the total reblocking will push through.



Individual assessment of existing houses. All existing structures in the community has no technical plans and building permits, so we conducted an assessment of their existing houses in order to know which part of it will be affected by the reblocking. And if reblocked the question will be, is it still structurally sound?

During this process, we get to know the manner of construction the community did to build their houses. Some of them have no structural columns but with existing beams, others were already deteriorating. Aside from the structural components, we also get the chance to check their sanitation and electrical connections during this process. Wherein we saw the need to also fix or improve its existing conditions.

Validation of plans vs. existing structures. After the individual assessment of each structure, we draft the as-built plans. Then we go back to the community to validate if the drafted plans were accurate in accordance to the existing structure. We check if it is correct and if there were parts missing or have been added that was not in existence.



Validation of assessed structures

During this process we also did consultations with the owner. We explain the as-built plan and which part will be affected by the reblocking. We explain how critical or easy will it be for their structures. We also seek their insights and take some inputs on how to re-plan their houses. We asked them what they want to add or which part is essential for them to improve given the fact that a part will be removed. In this process, we managed to gather inputs on how we will do the re-planning or redesigning of their houses base on their needs.



Presentation of model designs for the exterior.



Drafting of schematic designs and presentation to the community. Base on the inputs given by the community, we provide schematic designs showing the new layout of their houses. In this process we formalized the ideas they provided and draft it technically. Then after drafting the designs, we present it to the community for them to check if we captured their ideas correctly or almost near to it.



During this process we get to understand more the thoughts of each housing participant. Why they came up with that kind of design? For what the purpose of it? We also provided them with estimates and explained it so that they will have an idea how much it will cost to build their houses. In this process they saw the realistic side of their designs given the budget constraints.



One of the challenges we encountered was how to create uniformity in the design given the fact that the planning of each house will be based on the existing. On the part of the community they also desire to have at least a common design that will create an identity for them. So what we did, we made different model designs of the exterior façade. We presented it to them and

Miniature models showing exterior designs of the structures (pictures on the right)

explained the concepts how it can relate to the community and how they can improve its appearance in the long run. The association also presented it to all the members during their general assembly, and they made their choices. The design they choose will be the common exterior design to be adapted in the entire community.



Finalization of plans. After the presentation and consultation on the schematic designs, we drafted its almost final designs with complete details on architectural, structural, electrical and plumbing. These plans if the structure owners would already agree, it will be drafted as final for building permit application.

During this process we still made consultations with the structure owners to finalization the plans and explained to them that this final output will

be the design to be implemented during construction. We also finalize the cost estimates for each structure and explained to the owners the total construction cost.

Project Impact

Tangible	Intangible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 22 out of 342 families were identified as the pilot in 2014 for the project. ▪ A Site Development Team was formed composed of the officers, community builders and technical professionals from the community who will focus in the implementation of the project. ▪ The community's application for CMP loan was approved by the Social Housing Finance Corporation due to the start of the reblocking process in the community. ▪ 5 architecture students from Bulacan State University volunteered as YPs to continue their involvement in the project after having it as the case study in their Housing subject. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This project sets openness on the part of the academe as the Dean of the College of Architecture and Fine Arts in Bulacan State University wants to continue the process in other communities, and planning to create a program wherein Community Architecture can be integrated in the curriculum. ▪ It strengthens our engagement with the academe. It opened a venue for TAMPEI to present to the university about community architecture and participatory process. And it gave the university a chance to explore and be involved in community-related activities. ▪ People in the community continued and improved their savings. ▪ Most of the community members are now less resistant to the process because they now understand how the reblocking will be implemented.

Partners in this Project

TAMPEI have worked with some organizations and institutions in this project. They focused on different aspects that contributed to the progress of the project like in organizing, savings mobilization, capacity building, researches and technical assistance. Our partners were,

- Homeless People's Federation Philippines Inc
- Valenzuela People's Organization Network
- Bulacan State University – College of Architecture and Fine Arts
- Foundation for the Development of the Urban Poor

Next Steps

TAMPEI plans to continue assisting the community until the completion of the project. For 2015 we plan to:

- Finish all building plans by the end of December and the community can submit it for building permit application in the Office of the Building Official.
- Conduct a procurement workshop and materials familiarization by January 2015 in preparation for their construction.
- Start with construction by February 2015.
- Conduct an orientation to the Architecture students of Bulacan State University, especially those who are graduating, to gather more student volunteers / interns who can assist during construction.
- Create a process documentation of the project.