

Editor's Note

The imperative need to solve the problems of housing, environmental sanitation, education, income and transportation raised by slums and squatters in the Philippines behooves the governments of developing countries to develop more potent approaches to slum improvement other than resettlement. In line with this, certain international organizations, notably the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have provided developing countries with financial and technical assistance to initiate projects demonstrating more satisfactory approaches to housing the urban poor.

The articles in this special issue present the attempts of various developing countries in meeting the severe problems of housing.

De Guzman and Reforma present the Philippine government's search for a more realistic approach to the urban housing problem. As of now, the present Philippine approach is based on these premises: housing should include water, sanitary facilities, social welfare facilities, and the opportunity for producing employment; housing should be available at a cost that can be afforded by the different income groups; that there should be full recovery of all costs of development from the beneficiaries; and housing should be the concern of the national and local governments and the private sector.

Reforma's three papers discuss the showcase of Philippine urban renewal — the Tondo Foreshore Dagat-Dagatan Development Project. Her first article looks into the rate of turnover of residents in the project site. Reforma's second article is on the Tondo Code of Policies defining the use and distribution of benefits among the project site residents. Her last article looks into the changes in the housing characteristics of Tondo families.

Jimenez provides a summary statistic to estimate the changes in the housing quality of the Tondo squatters.

Lindauer looks into the question of whether the beneficiaries of the Tondo project belong to the specified poverty group.

Ocampo and Sanchez look into slum and dwelling improvements, this time not in Tondo but in Barrio Escopa, Quezon City. Aside from the detailed narrative account of the project, the authors attempt a cost-benefit evaluation and provide reflections on the lessons of Barrio Escopa's experience.

The second set of papers looks into the experiences of El Salvador in its First Sites and Services Project, of Korea in upgrading existing dwellings and, finally, of Zambia in its First Lusaka Upgrading and Sites and Services Project.

The different articles on housing all point to the fact that housing the urban poor is a major concern of governments in the developing world. Unless decisive moves are made, the cities of the future may become the slums of the future.