

UN-HABITAT

THE CHALLENGE OF SLUMS



Civil Society Organizes against forced evictions in Metro Manila

When local government didn't respond to protests over large-scale forced evictions in Manila, Philippines, an association of poor people's organizations, known as DAMPA, called on the Japanese government to investigate the violations of the rights of people displaced by a Japanese-funded public project. The project included a highway flyover, an aqueduct, a railway extension and an airport expansion. (The Philippines and Japan are both signatories to international treaties that prohibit funding of projects that violate the rights of displaced residents.)

In March 1996, a Japanese fact-finding team, including church, academic and nongovernmental organization (NGO) representatives, made a much-publicized visit to Manila. They found that: people were evicted without prior consultation or notice; in relocation sites, people were left without basic services, water, electricity, schools and hospitals; people lost jobs in the relocation process; people were taken to relocation sites without the choice of where to go, resulting in community disorganization; and implementing agencies reneged on promises of compensation and support services.

The mission's findings were publicized in all of the local newspapers, along with its recommendations to the Japanese government: affected people, especially the poor, must be included in planning relocation programmes, and some of the project budgets should be allocated for relocation of displaced residents. The Japanese government subsequently decided to cancel funding for projects involving involuntary resettlement, and to investigate complaints of affected residents and rights violations.

Source: Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (1997) 'Creatively fighting transport-related forced eviction in Metro Manila', cited in *Habitat Debate* (2001) 7(3): 10.

Aviles Spain: Integration of slum households within existing neighbourhoods

Aviles is a city on the coast of Asturias with an area of 25 square kilometers and a population of 85,000 inhabitants. In 1950, Aviles was an agricultural and stockbreeding area with a population of 21,000 inhabitants. During the 1960s, it became an industrial (iron and steel industry) city with a sharp economic growth that generated unplanned immigration. This migration brought urban speculation and the consequent socio-spatial segregation of the population. When the gypsy community arrived in Aviles, they settled in six shantytowns near the newly created housing states.

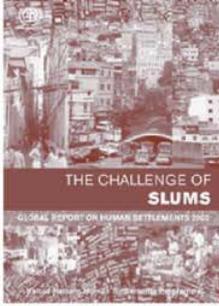
The gypsy community (about 500 people) progressively settled in certain impoverished areas with difficult access to basic services (housing, education, training and employment, health services). Since 1989, the eradication of the shantytowns and the integration of this group within the city has been one of the main political and social concerns. The Aviles local authority is working to achieve social inclusion by the end of 2003 and the figures show that from the 500 people who lived in six different shantytowns, currently there are only 125 living in four different shelters, and 160 are living in a 'promotional city'. The aim is to accommodate all of them (including the ones living in the promotional city) in 'normalized' conditions all over the city in order to ensure not only their access to decent housing, but also their access to other services and resources (for example, health, education and employment), thus facilitating social integration and multicultural coexistence.

The most important results are the resettlement of 75 families accommodated in 'normalized' housing all over the city and the eradication of two shantytowns (Villalegre and Divina Pastora). Others are the coexistence between the gypsy and non-gypsy population, induction into mainstream health care and education provision, and the creation of gypsies' associations – in particular, women and youth associations.

Among the contributing factors that have fanned the development of this project are social participation that is all inclusive, consensus within the community and, ultimately, the confluence in one territory of several plans, programmes and projects with complementary intervention objectives and strategies, involving different administrations and institutions.

1200

6
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Singapore: A successful public housing programme

A great deal has been written about Singapore's successful public housing policy – for example, eh (1975), Wong and Yeh (1985), Pugh (1985, 1987), Castells et al (1990) and Lee et al (1993). It is one of the few countries that practices whole-housing sector development, with housing policies and institutions advancing systematically and comprehensively with the economy.ⁱ

By 1959, rapid population growth and neglect had led to deplorable housing conditions. As with most middle-income countries, market failure in mortgage finance was partly responsible.ⁱⁱ The Housing Development Board (HDB) was set up in 1960 to 'provide decent homes with modern amenities for all those who needed them'. Construction is tendered out to private companies. Slum and squatter settlements were cleared to make way for mostly high-rise apartment buildings.

Today, 82% of Singapore's housing stock has been built by the HDB. These dwellings are primarily sold to eligible households on a 99-year leasehold basis. Apartments have one to five rooms, including about 50,000 executive apartments and condominiums. They can be purchased, using funds from the Central Provident Fund (CPF), a forced savings scheme that receives a compulsory 20% of wages from all employees and 10% from employers. About 90% of the resident population have become owners, mostly through the HDB.

The CPF also provides mortgage loans, at concessional interest rates about 2% below the market rate, of up to 80 or 90% of the apartment price, which is also subsidized.ⁱⁱⁱ It invests its money in government bonds. The private finance sector has also grown in recent years; but 63% of loans still originate from the public sector. From 1999, the HSB intended to start issuing bonds to meet 25% of its building programme.

There is a waiting list of about 2.5 years, and flats may not be resold for five years in order to curb speculative activity. Since 1994, one-off grants of about S\$25,000 are available to eligible households to purchase resale flats. The public sector also dominates the land market, doubling its holdings to 80% of the island under the provisions of the draconian Land Acquisition Act of 1966. This was necessary to head off speculators who hoped to profit from public activity.

About 10% of the stock is held as minimum standard housing for the lowest-income households (less than US\$5000 a year) and those awaiting apartment allocation.

An average of 9% of gross domestic product (GDP) per year has been allocated for housing (compared with around 4% in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – OECD – countries). Savings have run at about 50% of gross national product (GNP) since 1975, most of which went into capital formation until the late 1980s. Housing expenditure has been used to pump-prime the economy in times of slowdown.

As in other countries with a large public building programme, by 1990, the stock of small apartments was inadequate to meet the needs of an affluent population. Entire blocks have been repossessed for retrofitting to larger size and higher quality.

The costs of retrofitting apartments are shared with the owners.

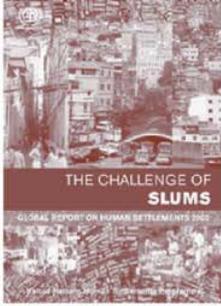
The option also exists for households to combine two adjoining small flats.

Notes: i Most of this description is from Phang (2001). ii Singapore was a middle-income country, at the time. Per capita GNP in 1997 was US\$33,000, the fourth highest in the world. iii Prices are pegged to ensure that 90% of households can afford to buy a three-room repurchased flat or a four-room new flat.

GRHS/03/Box2

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The first global assessment of slums: their problems and prospects

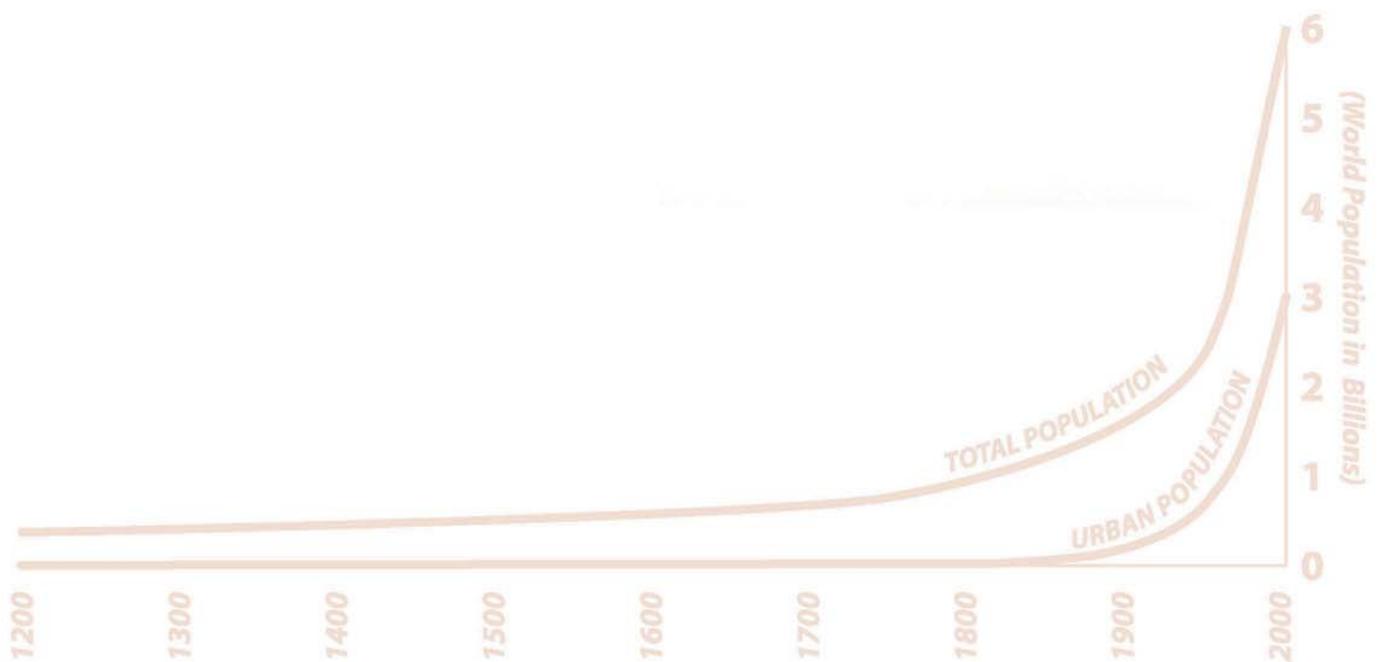


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