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Yolanda Permanent Housing Projects Turnover Engagements towards Safe and Sustainable Shelter Foresight

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ABSTRACT

Housing ensures that everyone in society has a place to live. This study explored the engagement of the Local Government Units (LGUs) in Capiz in the turnover of Yolanda Permanent Housing Projects (YPHP) toward safe and resilient shelter under Participatory and Capacity Development framework. A descriptive-qualitative approach leaning on intrinsic case study design was utilized. Data collection was through Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and observations. The participants were three (3) Municipal Mayors, one (1) NHA Region VI Resettlement and Development Officer, and seven (7) Heads of Offices and Housing Coordinators of LGUs in Capiz. The LGUs' readiness and acceptance of YPHP were linked to participation, capacitation, and engagement. LGUs participation was in the form of attendance at meetings, consultations, and dialogues. Turnover experiences were in planning, implementation, administrative capacity of NHA, and stakeholders' representation and participation. LGUs capacitation and engagement were drawn from the establishment and operationalization of Local Housing Office and Local Inter-Agency Committee. The findings revealed that LGUs participated minimally, were non-agreeable to housing design, not consulted about the project, "Risgos" or risk-takers occupied the units, beneficiaries selling their units, project transition from the past administration, disagreements on beneficiaries' listings, and limited NHA manpower. There were social and economic service provisions for beneficiaries like access to food, health, transport, fire, police services, and livelihood projects but no sustainability in economic services. A safe and sustainable shelter foresight framework, which the researcher developed, is recommended for further participation, capacitation, and engagement of the stakeholders in the housing projects.

Keywords: Turnover, Yolanda permanent housing projects, Engagements, Sustainable, Shelter, and Foresight.

INTRODUCTION:

Housing, whether it is a house or another type of accommodation or shelter, ensures that all members of society have a place to live. The authority for housing, often known as a housing department, is a government agency for shelter production. The combined factors

of population growth and urban migration as well as a rapid rise in housing needs brought by housing displacement due to natural calamities have increased the challenges that confront the Local Government Units (LGUs) in implementing programs for provi-

sions of adequate shelters in their respective localities. The passing of the Local Government Code or Republic Act 7160 in 1991 devolved the responsibility for the provision of basic services and facilities from the national government to the local government. Devolution is the act by which the national government transfers authority and control to local governments for the performance of activities and responsibilities previously done by the national government in the delivery of services and facilities. These provisions in the Code strengthened the mandate of LGUs to provide for the housing needs of the poor and vulnerable sectors of their communities; however, in many localities, the problem continues to persist (Sayos *et al.*, 1998; Rasheduzzaman *et al.*, 2020).

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Yolanda, internationally known as Haiyan, brought destruction, thousands of deaths and unprecedented damages to six (6) regions, fourteen (14) provinces, and one hundred seventy-one (171) towns were severely affected and approximately 550,000 houses damaged and 580,000 units destroyed (Shelter Cluster Philippines, 2014). According to President Rodrigo R. Duterte's authorized Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan (CRRP), the National Housing Authority (NHA) has to construct 205,128 stable housing units to accommodate these Yolanda-affected families (Cailao, 2015). According to the NHA report, a total of 11,588 Yolanda Permanent Housing Projects (YPHPs) were built in Capiz as of May 30, 2022, out of a total target of 12,561. As the YPHP nears completion, President Duterte directed the NHA to fully hand over these housing units to the LGUs. As mandated in the Local Government Code or RA 7160, Chapter 2, Section 17 (a), this devolved function clearly defines the LGUs' obligation to accept the management and administration of the housing projects from the national government. A Deed of Donation and Acceptance (DODA) between NHA and LGU, which both parties sign during the turnover activities stipulates the local government's function to wit (NHA Template of DODA):

“There is a necessity to transfer the completed project to the “LGU/DONEE” including the award, transfer/allocation, and cause the occupancy of the units to the beneficiaries to enable said government unit to administer, operate, main-

tain the completed components and utilize, maintain and/or improve the same by its role and duties about such facilities”.

With the above provisions of a Deed of Donation and Acceptance (DODA), the Local Government Unit (LGU) is compelled to accept the turnover of management and administration of said housing project whether they are ready to accept it or not. This study generally explored the engagement of the LGUs in the province of Capiz in the turnover of Yolanda Permanent Housing Projects (YPHP) towards safe and resilient shelter under the framework of the Participatory and Capacity Development Approaches. This study also utilized foresight as a major tool in tackling sustainable development in preparation for sustainable strategies and policies in housing. According to Stofa, (2010) in this changing world, the aim of foresight is sustainable development. Sustainability is therefore the end goal of strategic planning.

METHODOLOGY:

This study utilized the descriptive-qualitative research leaning on intrinsic case study design, which the experiences of the individuals or group of individuals were comprehensively gathered, summarized, and analyzed. According to Sandelowski, (2000) descriptive-qualitative research seeks to address the following questions in the study: what, who, where, when, and how, but not why. Conferring to Kothari, (2004) qualitative research will be effective in examining and comprehending a central phenomenon. It will also let the investigator to ask broad and general questions of the participants, collect thorough responses, and analyze the information provided. The case study method also served as an inquiry method for this research. For Stake, (1995) this is a study of inquiry, in which the investigator scrutinizes the in-depth program, event, action, or process of individual/s. Sometimes, a case is chosen to learn about the precise case. There is something unique about the case that makes it worthwhile to investigate. Such circumstances are known as intrinsic cases. According to (Taber, 2014) a case may be intrinsically intriguing since it is unique and different from others - and hence we want to explore it because of its uniqueness. The study was conducted in Capiz, comprising its 1st and 2nd districts with Yolanda Permanent Housing Projects (YPHPs). The study's

subjects were the municipalities in the 1st and 2nd districts of Capiz, specifically Roxas City, Panay, Pontevedra, Panitan, President Roxas, Pilar, Ivisan, and Sapián. The informants were the discussants/ interviewees during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews: the three (3) Municipal Mayors, one (1) National Housing Authority (NHA) Region VI Resettlement and Development Officer, and seven (7) Heads of Offices and Housing Coordinators of the LGUs of said municipalities. The participants were chosen since they were involved or had actual and hands-on experience on the implementation and turnover of YPHPs in their respective municipalities. The data generation focused on discovering the engagement of LGUs in the turnover of YPHPs by NHA. The data collection utilized a broad to general, structured, open-ended questions, Key Informant Interviews, FGD, and observations. Name codes were generated, particularly during the data collection from the participants and the answers of the coded participants were analyzed to generate practically implemented recommendations. A deliberate sampling, also known as the purposive or non-probability process, was utilized. The purposive or deliberate objects were chosen that would represent the participants with actual and hands-on experience in the carrying out and turnover of YPHPs. For Kothari (2004), sampling method involves the purposive or deliberate selection of specific units of the universe that constitutes a sample that represents the universe. During the course of the research, the researcher kept ethical considerations in mind at all times. The participants were told about the study's objective and benefits, as well as the time and methods for keeping their data confidential. The researcher also requested formal authorization from the subjects to participate. Their anonymity was respected by withholding their identity and keeping their rights to privacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

During the FGD and interviews, most of the participants shared that there were active participation and attendance of LGUs in the YPHP activities. The result showed that most of the participants claimed that their LGUs conducted, participated, and attended in the carrying out and turnover activities of YPHPs. Six (6) of the participants affirmed that they had attended

meetings, consultations, and dialogues before and after the implementation and turnover of the project. Two (2) of the participants affirmed that they participated only in the turnover activities; three (3) of them asserted as involved in pre-planning or initial activities and participated in beneficiary selection and verification, validation/revalidation, raffle, and transfer of beneficiaries onsite; one (1) said that the involvement was in list of beneficiaries submissions, planning, site identification, coordination with lot owners, bidding process and reclassification of property, and processing of licenses, while the other one (1) got involved in carrying out the project and listing of beneficiaries. According to the Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Program (CRRP), as of 2014, only 64 LGUs in the Yolanda-affected corridors were in the process of formulating their Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs), while 49 LGUs were in the process of having their CLUP's approved (CRRP, 2014). This absence of approved CLUP prevented the swift identification of areas suitable for resettlement. Suitable areas require being located in safe zones and away from shores and fault lines. This absence of CLUP contributed to the delay in the implementation of the Yolanda Housing Projects (Cuaresma, 2016). Most of the participants affirmed that there was an operational Local Housing Office (LHO) in the municipality and a functional Local Inter-Agency Committee (LIAC) was created in-charge of beneficiary selection, awards, and arbitration. However, two (2) of the participants confirmed that Local Inter-Agency Committee (LIAC) was not created but there was an involvement of Provincial Administrator and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer and Staff in disseminating information to different barangays. There were also convergences, which the stakeholders attended to ensure their involvement and engagement in the program. There were meetings with the National Housing Authority (NHA), coordination with service providers like Capiz Electric Cooperative (CAPELCO) and Metro Roxas Water District (MRWD), coordination with the Presidential Commission for Urban Poor (PCUP) for homeowners' organization and possible provision of livelihood programs, active in the verification of beneficiaries before the turnover, Gawad Kalinga for the job, a community with the worker, and PAG-IBIG to fund, participation and

contribution to the conduct of training, and beneficiary transfer to the housing units. Majority of the participants claimed that the LGUs encountered different challenges during the implementation and turnover of YPHPs. One of them was the project transition from past administration, which includes political accommodations of beneficiaries. Some beneficiaries were difficult to reach out, specifically those without addresses and contact numbers. The “Risgos” or risk-takers occupied the units without legal documents. The originally awarded beneficiaries are selling their units. There were lapses on the contractor for the damaged housing units before the turnover as sub-standard materials were used. The contractor also made changes on the plans without conforming to the original submissions during applications for permits and clearances, which are still for resolution with the Municipal Planning Office of the LGU. There were also disagreements encountered with the Barangay Officials regarding the listings of the beneficiaries with several revisions until the lists were perfected. NHA manpower was limited. One personnel handled 15 projects, which limits the full capacitation of the various stakeholders. The findings corroborate Cuarema’s, (2016) findings that the technical capacity of the national agencies’ regional offices was found limited. The hiring of sub-contractors as well as the paucity of close monitoring during construction because of limited number of technical staff available contributed to substandard units and non-conformity to the set standard of construction by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). Provision for food and health services was present in all project sites. There were provisions for transport, fire, and police services in most of the project sites; however, in the case of Ivisan, the Local Government Unit (LGU) plans to put up an Administration Office on the project site, outpost and Bureau of Fire sub-station, and intends to fence the area for security reasons. As to economic services, there were limited livelihood projects but there were agencies like that of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Technical Education Skills Development (TESDA), Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), and other private organizations providing livelihood

assistance grant and offering livelihood training in partnership with the LGU. Active participation and attendance of the stakeholders in social preparation activities, capacity development, and engagement may be given heed to have a safe and sustainable shelter. The National Housing Authority (NHA) and the LGUs may look into a resilient natural disasters shelter, considering sustainable land relocation and housing structure standards. Inclusive settlement social and economic services may also be considered through the creation and innovation of business markets. The findings adhere to the National Housing Authority (NHA) Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 2016 - 088, which directs the abidance of the organization to the community empowerment program in housing development. This adherence to the community empowerment program emanated due to customers’ demand for participation in critical decision-making on housing matters that would affect them. Also spelled out in RA 7279, or the Urban Development Housing Act (UDHA), the LGU as the main implementing entity calls for effective people’s participation. This resulted in engaging the stakeholders to partner with the change agents - the NHA. This development became the pillar for promoting increased partnership with LGU and beneficiaries, contributing to their enjoyment of the housing benefits. The NHA affirmed its adherence to the Participatory Approach since its creation 47 years ago and continues its commitment to the promotion of the people’s planning process. This Memorandum Circular identifies the opportunities in achieving the ultimate goal of building lives in new communities, which would involve engagement with the stakeholders like the LGU, contractors, and beneficiaries in all phases of housing development to attain maximum contribution as partners. The responsibilities of these stakeholders must be determined and considered as the bases of partnership. Even the structure, and implementation processes must be created and formed and the capacities of these partners must be developed for productive collaboration. Conferring to NHA Community Empowerment Manual (2015), the adherence to the participatory approach has proven the value of engaging the LGUs to promote involvement in the planning phase. The Republic Act 7279, or the Urban Development Housing Act of 1992, Section 3, stipulates and defines the process of consultation as the

“constitutionally mandated process, whereby the LGU or the public on their own or through people’s organization may have a chance to be heard on issues concerning the protection and promotion of their collective interests. This should be constant through the planning principle of inclusive and Participatory Approach to settlement development and the LGU, as one of the stakeholders, should have active participation and engagement in all phases of housing development to elicit maximum inputs. The NHA adhering to its quality policy of Building Adequate, Livable, Affordable, and Inclusive (BALAI) Filipino communities has the mandate to provide basic services (water and electricity), community facilities (parks and playgrounds, road networks, covered courts). There was neither provision nor access to societal and financial opportunities to the beneficiaries to have viable improvement. As to the findings of this study, NHA only provided the basic facilities on the YPHP. According to NHA, their mandate is to only provide for the basic facilities as mentioned above. Despite the NHA’s aims and objectives towards the provision of quality housing, the project implementation is a long, tedious process that requires a big budget, strong drive, organized and systematic coordination, and commitment to have a well-organized and effective public service delivery despite the limited budget.

Safe and Sustainable Shelter Foresights that Can be Drawn from the Results

Results, transcriptions of interviews, and field observations presented facts, drawing the readiness and acceptance of the LGUs in Capiz for the turnover of the YPHP through active participation and attendance in social preparation activities, capacity development and engagement, for a safe and sustainable shelter. The NHA and LGUs may look into a resilient disaster and natural calamities shelter, considering sustainable land relocation and housing structure standards. Inclusive settlement social and economic services may be considered through the creation and innovation of business markets. The Philippines is a country exposed to natural disasters like storms, floods, earthquakes, droughts, and sea level rise. Located along the typhoon belt, it is battered by typhoons, floods, and cyclones annually, and being situated along the Ring of Fire, it is prone to earthquakes. These challenges of

nature add to the extent of housing needs and recurring housing back-logs of the country. This study encourages the government to quickly adapt and systematically addresses the challenges of the natural environment and climate change. Housing in the Philippines has been seriously hampered by inadequate financial, technical, and managerial capacities, specifically at the local level. Typhoon Yolanda’s devastation degree challenged the capacity of NHA as implementing agency to swiftly accomplish the task of providing houses to families affected by the said typhoon. Regional Offices of NHA lack technical people to closely monitor and oversee the project implementation. On the other hand, the LGU lacks technical capacity in large-scale Yolanda rehabilitation program implementation, specifically in infrastructure and projects on resettlement. Aside from these reasons, housing development is a long-term process and the local executive’s tenure is only three years. Housing development ceases to become a priority of the local government aside from the inadequate budgetary requirement to develop a resettlement project. Since the Philippines is a disaster-prone nation and climate change needs to be addressed quickly, the government must take action to create a department dedicated to disaster risk reduction management. Most housing interventions are reactive instead of preventive so the government must be more preventive than curative in dealing with environmental and climate change issues. Other housing production constraints include the limited land access due to unbalanced land markets resulting to poorly locate housing areas that are too far from opportunities on occupation and income, which discouraged the beneficiaries to occupy their units and instead returned back to their original houses unmindful that these are in the danger zones or unsafe places. The administration must work on addressing these land fair problems by reviewing the Commission on Audits’ (COA’s) guidelines on the pricing of land for government acquisition so it will be competitive with private developers or it would soon run out of land for resettlement projects. It should also properly manage land acquisition that is nearer to work and means of living, access to schools, hospital, and transport services. People’s participation should involve all stakeholders in the housing development processes, especially in the first phase of development that

involved social preparation as previously discussed, they should understand the processes and their roles in the project improvement, the ways to safeguard government resources, the probable conflicts and challenges to be encountered and how these stakeholders (LGUs, Barangay Officials, intended beneficiaries, and others) organized to confront the challenges with strong interaction and collaboration among these diverse stakeholders, whose interests are to be afforded equal chance for significant and effective participation. This collaborative planning can be time consuming, messy, contentious process because each participant will support their own interest and preserve their own values, including imbalance of knowledge, understanding, personal experiences, and power. Even after the consensus and the adoption of a community-based plan through a collaborative process are done, the power struggle still continues as shown by Barangay Officials and citizens' insistence to the availment of the housing units even if all units were awarded and majority were already occupied. The LGU can make a general pronouncement or conduct a convergence of Barangay Officials declaring that the housing units were already fully-awarded and all units are no longer available. The Beneficiary Selection Awards and Arbitration Committee (BSAAC) should enforce clear and predetermined rules to prevent any disputes over requests for unit awards and claims of awards.

The contractors continue to submit requests to LGUs for plan amendments and project approval subsequent to community plan adoption. It is another person's responsibility to continue participating in and keeping an eye out for any plan revisions that might have an impact on them as stakeholders. This collaborative, comprehensive community-based planning process aims to raise stakeholders' awareness of their decision-making power and the bearings of their involvement in planning that will help them learn of other sustainable development options available for the communities and engage them more fully with their LGU, both in community planning and in project development decisions that will directly affect them as project beneficiaries. People's participation can make better government and yield more legitimate, applicable, and practical policy that would benefit the public and the housing beneficiaries, in particular.

People's inclusion in comprehensive planning through Participatory Approach, involving gathering and analyzing the data, which public policy decisions are made for future growth and development will surely impact the communities, so the local government should look to people for input and always afford them opportunities in planning and policy-making processes. They should not have to compete with other stakeholders who appear powerful because they have strong authority to participate in decision-making and their choices are taken into account, nor should they struggle to get their voices heard. One difficult process that NHA encountered and led to the slower pace of long-lasting housing implementation was the finding of safe resettlement lands. The land that will be used for relocation should have a title and be approved for residential use, safe from flooding, landslides, storm surge, and tsunami, and not on an earthquake fault line. These obligatory rules highlighted that lands owned by local governments in the affected areas were not titled, and almost all of the island communities and coastal areas are unsafe and prone to geo-hazards. Building resilient disaster and natural calamities housing constructed on approved safe housing structure standards like a Low Rise Building (LRB) near the city could be considered by housing agencies as an option for mass or emergency housing due to scarcity and high cost of land areas available for acquisition. The housing/resettlement projects implementation is administratively subjected to mandatory adherence to bidding and procurement processes and the eventual securing of licenses and permits from various government agencies. For example, land conversion permit from Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) must be secured first if the land classification is agricultural land. There should be a clearance from the National Irrigation Authority if it is an agricultural land; environmental Clearance Certificate from Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), exemption on tax from the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR); and Development Permit from LGU. Based on this experience, government itself should facilitate and hasten the grant of such permits, clearances, and licenses. These permitting processes, which the housing can start, may last a very long time and take almost two to four years for any housing projects to take off on the ground. This long, tedious, expensive

process even gets interrupted by elections and other reasons. This study unveiled that the social services sector had been excluded from preparedness and emergency management efforts until recognized recently. The dreadful effects of Typhoon Yolanda to the vulnerable population demonstrated the significance of integrating social services as chunk of human recovery activities by the livelihood development and housing sectors. The Low Rise Building (LRB) as mentioned above could be located near the city to address the concern of accessibility to employment opportunities and other basic facilities like schools, hospitals, and other commercial establishments. This vertical integration involves cross-sector coordination, collaboration, and communication through the inter-agency committees or Local Inter-Agency Committee (LIAC). Disasters often resulted to increased demand of social services since the degree of impact to vulnerable populations due to displacement and interrupted service delivery and loss of livelihood and income, social services must be made an integral part of the community-based plan. When the schools and Day Care Centers are closed, the children are left with no safe space to play. They are also exposed to high risk of injury. In the government’s provision of housing, this basic service must be accessible to all. United Nations University (UNU) World Risk Report (2012) informs countries worldwide that “Natural hazards turning into disasters depend on the intensity of an event and crucially determined by a society’s level of development”. The national and local government’s ability in coping with disasters and mitigate their adverse effects in housing rehabilitation and construction showed to be low and slow. The country’s state of preparedness is highly vulnerable to disaster so it should prepare and effectively mitigate by building resilient homes away from danger zones. In relocation sites’ construction, it must strictly follow those standards established by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to lessen the impacts of these natural disasters. The LGU has yet to work on mainstreaming the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and the Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) measures into LGU’s plans, Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs), Zoning Ordinances and budget are still to be done. Practically, the LGUs need to be assisted in strengthening their disaster preparedness and miti-

gation capabilities. The people in the community must be engaged and get involved in the preparation of the comprehensive rehabilitation plan to generate a community-based plan, which could become formal public policy (Cuaresma, 2016). **Fig. 1** shows the framework of engagements in the turnover of YPHP, while **Fig. 2** illustrates a safe and sustainable shelter foresight framework the researcher framed (Nur *et al.*, 2021).

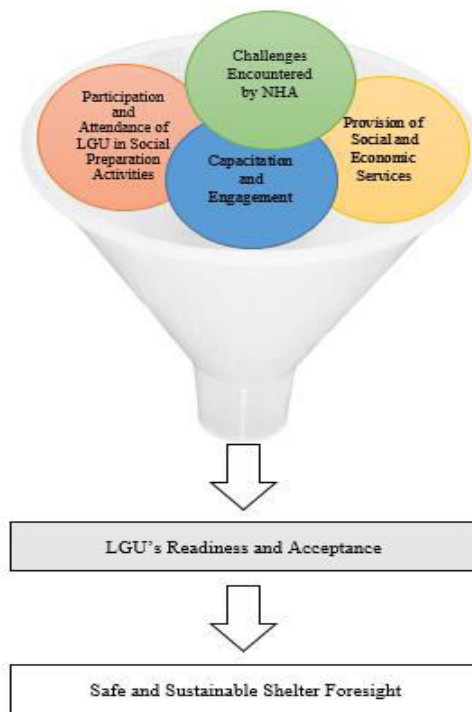


Fig. 1: Framework of engagements in the turnover of Yolanda Permanent Housing Project (YPHP).

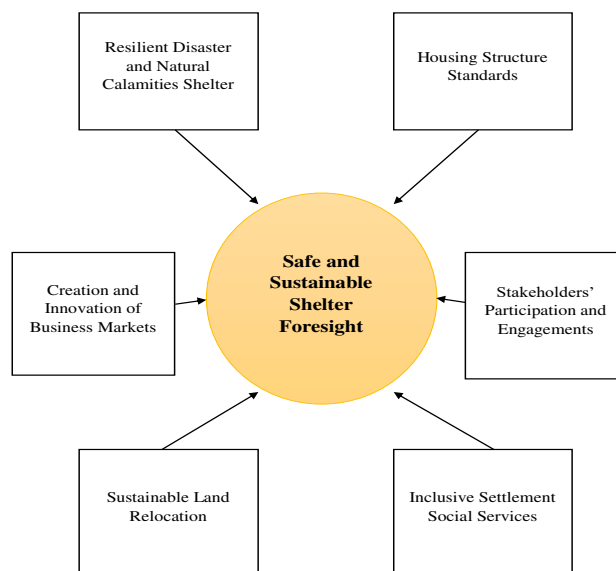


Fig. 2: Safe and Sustainable shelter foresight framework.

The focus of sustainable shelter foresight in development is housing with integration of social (provision of basic facilities and utilities) and economic provisions through job creation, livelihood provision and poverty elimination. The parents in turn get stressed about where to leave their children safely so that they could return to work and begin restoring normalcy in their lives. Social services providers are called upon to alleviate the human impacts of disaster and fill the gaps in resources and capabilities to include reestablishing access to food, shelter, and clothing provisions.

CONCLUSION:

The Local Government Units' (LGUs') readiness and acceptability of the turned over Yolanda Permanent Housing Project (YPHP) were linked to the participation, capacitation, and engagement of the LGU from the start of the implementation of the project up to its accomplishment. Participation was through the attendance at meetings, consultations, and dialogues participated by the LGUs with the National Housing Authority (NHA), contractor, beneficiaries, Barangay Officials, Municipal Social and Welfare Development, and Municipal Engineer. The participation was in the selection and verification, validation, raffle, and onsite beneficiary transfer, listing and submission of beneficiaries, planning, site identification, coordination with lot owners, bidding process and reclassification of property, and licenses processing. There was a creation and establishment of Local Housing Office and Local Inter-Agency Committee, which was in-charge of beneficiary selection, awards, and arbitration. There were also convergences attended by the stakeholders to ensure their involvement and engagement in the program. As to challenges, there were lapses on the contractor for the damaged housing units because of the usage of sub-standard materials and modifications to the plans, "risgos" or risk-takers occupying the units, the originally awarded beneficiaries selling their units, project transition from past administration, which include political accommodations of beneficiaries and difficulties in reaching out to the awarded beneficiaries not occupying their units without any addresses and contact numbers. There were disagreements encountered with the Barangay Officials regarding the beneficiaries' list. There was limited NHA manpower. Societal and profitable

services were provided to the beneficiaries. However, these economic services provided were not sustainable. Other beneficiaries still reside in their original houses due to close proximity to the source of income. The NHA and LGUs in Capiz may look into a resilient disaster and natural calamities shelter, considering sustainable land relocation and housing structure standards by considering the construction of low rise building.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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