

Research on social mobility of the urban poor and the establishment of new relationships in relocation sites

Year: 2014

Place of fieldwork: Republic of the Philippines

Name: Zenta Nishio

Key Words: Urban disaster, urban poor, relocation site

- Research background

Metro Manila has often experienced the impact of huge disasters. The lack of infrastructure and urban poverty extends the scope of these impacts. In urban areas, the most vulnerable people belong to impoverished urban communities that live by rivers, lakes, and coastal areas. In the study of disasters and disaster management, the community is considered essential in recovery and reconstruction.

- Research purpose and aim

After a disaster in urban poor community, people were required to relocate to a site in Metro Manila. Recovery and empowerment at the community level proved to be difficult. This phenomenon is not limited to the Philippines but also occurs in other counties, particularly in urban areas. Therefore, research on social mobility after a disaster and methods of establishing new relationships in relocation sites are important in considering the impact of disasters. This research focused on families who had had their homes in Navotas, which was destroyed by Typhoon Pedring, and were relocated to San Jose del Monte City and at the edge of Navotas City.

- Fieldwork results and achievements

A survey was conducted in San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan, and Navotas City. From the field survey, I collected several cases on how relocated families adapted to the relocation site.

In San Jose del Monte City, women and their children joined in a bingo game from 3 pm to 6 pm for 2 days during the field survey. They had different backgrounds and got to know each other after being relocated. They gambled in the bingo game; three bingo cards were worth 1 peso. One set of the game finished in just 5 minutes, and then they repeated this many times until sunset. During their bingo games, they talked about their families and

neighbors. For three hours, they shared much information about themselves. This contributed to building new relationships in San Jose del Monte City.

In the relocation site in Navotas City, families that relocated had formed relationships before the relocation, given that the relocation site was close to their original place of residence and because the site was small. This situation, however, made it more difficult for some families. Families related to those in the management of the relocation site were involved in corruption, which led to some other families being treated unfairly. Complaints were then lodged against corrupt leaders.



Photo 1: Bingo game in the afternoons



Photo 2: Relocation site in Navotas City

- Implications for future research

In this field survey, I examined the activities and communication of relocated families in San Jose del Monte. I found that existing relationships sometimes created difficulties and facilitated corruption in Navotas City. Continuing the survey, I hope to reveal other recovery strategies at the community level. The findings may have implications for disaster management activities worldwide.



Photo 2: Garden built by relocated families near the river