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## Challenges, Capabilities, and Proposed Initiatives for Capacity-building among Shelter Beneficiaries in Davao City, Philippines: A Case Study

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### Abstract

Shelter programs stand out as powerful drivers of development, recognizing the rights of the urban beneficiaries in determining their well-being. This study emphasizes the Davao City Shelter Code as the nation's pioneering local government-led shelter code initiative. The research utilizes a grounded theory approach, as it is well-suited for understanding complex, emerging phenomena within the shelter program and the challenges experienced by shelter beneficiaries. The study employed theoretical sampling and snowball sampling techniques to collect data while analyzing the challenges shelter beneficiaries face through an in-depth case study. For this purpose, 27 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted alongside 34 focus group discussions (FGDs) at four different resettlement sites. The findings underscore challenges linked to loss of livelihood due to displacement, skills training mismatch, and insufficient leadership skills experienced by the shelter beneficiaries. Despite these challenges, these shelter beneficiaries have illustrated their capabilities to start income-generating exercises with assurance to outlive, regularly with bolster from NGOs and private companies. Moreover, the inquiry recognizes proposed activities for capacity-building to improve protection conditions and advance the well-being of the recipients by and large. Finally, the researchers developed a theory for the shelter program that outlines the steps that link challenges, capacity-building social resources, and autonomous well-being, ultimately leading to the creation of the 'shelter-space theory'. This theory emphasizes sustainable networks and community development initiatives to improve living conditions, prevent dependency, and ensure active involvement among the shelter beneficiaries in Davao City, Philippines.

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The challenge of securing adequate housing remains a critical concern, particularly among impoverished urban populations. The existence of slums and informal settlements are poverty indicators in developing regions, driven by rural-to-urban migration in search of improved livelihoods and economic prospects (Asian Development Bank, 2014). UN-Habitat's (2018) assertion underscores the role of rapid migration in augmenting urban poverty and spurring slum growth due to the scarcity of affordable housing. Constrained by resource limitations, informal settlers often occupy undeveloped land to construct basic shelters.

In the Philippines, squatting presents a formidable social and economic issue, as legal barriers hinder the government's ability to relocate squatters from unlawfully occupied properties. Urbanization is both an opportunity and a challenge for sustainable development as highlighted by Palanivel (2017) reported in the United Nations Development Program. While urbanization can boost productivity in industrial sectors due to population migration, the challenge of providing adequate housing outweighs economic gains, leading to informal settlements beyond government oversight.

Davao City, a populous city outside Metro Manila, faces similar challenges. With an anticipated population of 1.95 million in 2023, 91.8% reside in urban areas (Philippines Statistics Authority, 2023). The City Government of Davao has prioritized the Shelter Program as a flagship initiative, aiming to address the needs of informal settlers as outlined in the Comprehensive Shelter Code also known as the City Ordinance No. 014-07 of 2007. Nevertheless, the Program's effectiveness is hindered by resettlement beneficiaries returning to slum areas due to location-related challenges and livelihood constraints.

The urbanization process has stretched the capacity of local government units, particularly in the shelter program designed to improve the capabilities of informal settlers. Proposed capacity-building encompasses a process of making a program more substantial and more able to achieve its goals. It can involve improving the Program's people, systems, and infrastructure. The goal of capacity building is to help the Program better meet the needs of the people it serves. As Sen (1999) outlines, it is crucial to recognize the intrinsic value and potential of these individuals. According to his research, capabilities represent the opportunities available to individuals to live a life they value, including access to education, healthcare, resources, and community involvement. While the focus is not solely on functional abilities, practical choices undoubtedly play a crucial role. Additionally, Nussbaum (2011, p. 20) refers to combined capabilities as the sum of opportunities for choice and action, considering a person's political, social, and economic conditions. The shelter program emerged as a governmental initiative to tackle the escalating issue of informal settlements.

Regrettably, in many resettlement sites, beneficiaries either abandon or sell the land provided by the government, eventually returning to their original squatting locations. The primary reason for returning to slum areas is the distance from downtown areas, adversely affecting livelihoods and access to necessities. This leads to underestimating the program's impact on addressing informal settlement issues. Consequently, recognizing and valuing the capabilities of beneficiaries, alongside capacity-building efforts, are crucial steps to address their challenges, as this study seeks to underscore.

## **Materials and Methods**

Given the inductive nature of grounded theory methodology, this study did not employ a predefined theoretical or conceptual framework (Charmaz, 2014). Rather, as Charmaz points out, theoretical insights and conceptual frameworks evolved repeatedly from the data analysis process, enabling the creation of new theoretical stances and viewpoints supported by empirical evidence. The strategy made it helpful in building a theory based on the challenges and capabilities faced by the shelter beneficiaries.

Additionally, nine (9) key informants with various viewpoints about shelter beneficiaries' experiences were initially selected through purposive sampling (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 96-120). These included shelter beneficiaries from Relocation Areas A, B, C, and D, the city planning officer, and the head of the housing and homesite division during the fourth quarter of 2019 (October 15 to 24, November 18 to 28, and December 14). Moreover, raw data collection used semi-structured interviews and field observations that helped study participants share in-depth narratives while offering contextual insights into their conditions, behavior, and environment (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 13-40).

As we analyzed the data further using theoretical sampling principles (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 96-120), additional participants were recruited according to emerging themes or concepts generated during the initial stages of data collection. Identifying emerging themes and concepts from the initial data was the key focus of this iterative process. Also, participants sought to explore these themes more comprehensively and refine the theoretical framework in progress using KIIs to 18 participants from 1st quarter of 2020 to the 2nd quarter of 2021 and facilitated 34 FGD from the 2nd quarter of 2022 to 1st quarter of 2023 collected from resettlement areas A, B, C, D, and other slums in Davao City.

In compliance with the grounded theory methodology tenets, such as constant comparative analysis and coding procedures, a qualitative research approach was used by Charmaz (2014, pp. 42-66), and data analysis followed. Open coding was carried out initially for identification and categorization of stylized behind emergent themes together with concepts. The next stage involved axial coding which entailed examining relationships between codes analyzed as well as developing higher-level categories alongside theoretical constructs (Charmaz, 2014, p. 60). The collection and analysis of data proceeded using a constant comparative method where new information was compared incessantly to previous facts while at the same time making changes to various codes or categories that required adjustment, thus refining the theoretical framework under construction (Charmaz, 2014). Also, the analysis is based on original participant responses expressed in the language they were most comfortable with, which were later translated for presentation in the article.

It enhanced the study findings' trustworthiness when several measures were considered: among these include member checking, peer debriefing, and reflexivity. Member checking included a process of sharing preliminary findings with participants in order to ensure accuracy and interpretation. Peer debriefing involved asking for comments from colleagues with qualitative research experience. Throughout the research process, the researchers maintained the concept of reflexivity by continually reflecting upon the study participants' assumptions, biases, and interpretations.

Given how respondents shared personal information, ethical concerns were paramount; protecting participants and their information at all costs was not just an obligation but also a profound moral obligation of the researchers to uphold such principles; essential to this was the researcher's adherence to such ethical standards as (1) participant protection against harm, (2) respect for individual dignity, (3) pre-study consent authorization, (4) confidentiality safeguards for participants themselves, (5) maintaining anonymity through pseudonyms and codes, (6) no deception or overstatement regarding the purpose of research, (7) disclosure of affiliations or possible conflicts of interest, (8) truthfulness in communication, and (9) no misleading or biased representation in any form if original purposes are considered during the writing and avoiding leading a false impression.

## Results and Discussion

The informal settlements, usually found in the cities of such countries as the Philippines, result from rapid urbanization. Such slums present problems such as low living standards and limited governmental support, even though some people engage in small businesses at home. Furthermore,

many people from rural areas relocate to urban areas or cities, seeking better opportunities, leading to urbanization problems. This section highlights the complexity of these problems as it underscores the importance of investigating Davao City's shelter beneficiaries to address their challenges and enhance their skills and well-being.

### **Profile of Davao City**

Metro Davao, pointed out by the Asian Development Bank (2012), is one of the most populous cities in the Philippines. It sits on the island of Mindanao, with an estimated 1.95 million people living in 2023, with most (91.8%) living in the city (PSA, 2023). It is a top spot for trading, business, and commerce in the southern part of the country, and it is seen as the central hub for the Davao Region.

The city covers an extensive area of 2,443.61 square kilometers (943.48 square miles), making it the biggest city in the Philippines regarding land size according to the National Economic Development Authority (2020). While it is geographically in Davao del Sur province, it is run separately from the province itself. Davao City is split into three parts, each with eleven smaller areas, called districts, which contain 182 smaller communities or barangays. Being highly urbanized, the city has many medium-sized businesses focused on farming as mentioned in the Davao Regional Development Plan, 2017-2022. It also serves as the home for government offices in the Davao Region, where many services and financial activities happen. It is also a place for learning and a popular spot for tourists in the southern part of the Philippines.

### **Davao City Ordinance No. 014-07, otherwise known as “The Shelter Code of Davao City”**

The Shelter Program stands out as a powerful driver of development, recognizing the rights of urban poor residents and enabling their participation, contributions, and access to program benefits—critical factors in determining well-being. Mindanews (2007) reports that the Comprehensive Urban Shelter and Services Development Code, or Davao City's Shelter Code, represents the nation's pioneering local government-led shelter code initiative. This ordinance is of significant importance, particularly for the urban poor sector that lacks land access. It empowers individuals with the ability to take control of their lives and secure a place they call home. This legislation is an essential step toward the city's goals of ensuring fair land usage and offering safe housing alternatives to its constituents. The shelter code encourages secure tenure, the growth of urban services development, and fair and dynamic land utilization.

The primary goal of this shelter code is to continue working in partnership with government agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and people's organizations. The Social Housing Program framework was jointly formulated by the City Government of Davao and the Housing Board, collaborating with national shelter agencies under the guidelines of R.A. 7160 known as the Local Government Code of 1991, and R.A. 7279 also known as the Urban Development Housing Act of 1992. As part of its responsibility to provide shelter for the citizens of the city, the local government unit adopted a range of housing program strategies, including (a) beneficiary census and tagging registration, (b) land inventory, (c) land identification, (d) urban land reform program for relocation; (e) on-site resettlement; (f) slum upgrading; (g) public rental housing; (h) livelihood framework, and (i) value formation for community building and development (Section 8 of the Davao City Ordinance No. 014-07, 2007).

In line with the findings detailed in the Comprehensive Development Plan for 2013-2022 (pp. 136-139), Davao faces a multifaceted challenge characterized by unregulated squatting, primarily in areas designated as hazardous and on privately owned parcels of land. This situation has led to a rise in informal settler households, exposing them to various risks, including floods, fires, and landslides. Notably, the city experiences frequent and severe flooding, negatively impacting residential areas and resulting in the loss of lives, property, and livelihoods.

Furthermore, the consultative process for the comprehensive data plan has revealed a troubling trend in Davao. The city grapples with a growing housing shortage primarily caused by squatting in high-risk areas and frequent severe flooding in residential zones and subdivisions (Comprehensive Development Plan 2013-2022, 2013, p. 138). This phenomenon has also increased land prices, leading landowners to prefer selling their properties to high-end developers rather than collaborating with the city or poverty-focused community associations. Consequently, this trend has resulted in a shortage of suitable housing sites, increasing the financial requirements for relocation projects. Additionally, the city's development landscape is transforming significantly, shifting from predominantly residential land use patterns to a more commercial orientation (Comprehensive Development Plan 2013-2022, 2013, pp. 139).

The Housing and Homesite Division of the City Planning Development Office (CPDO) closely collaborates with essential shelter agencies, including NHA, HUDCC, and HLURB, among others, to craft policies and programs that aptly tackle the challenges of informal settlers. In alignment with these efforts, the city ordinance stipulates the establishment and execution of a local shelter plan. This plan is designed to facilitate the relocation of informal settlers who inhabit government lands, those residing on private properties, individuals confronting eviction, and those residing in areas prone to hazards.

To address the significant challenges within the housing sub-sector, the city has implemented specific objectives outlined in Article 1, Section 2 of this ordinance. These objectives encompass several crucial aspects: Firstly, they aim to improve the living conditions of impoverished and marginalized citizens in urban and urbanizing areas by enhancing accessibility to urban shelters and services while keeping costs affordable. Secondly, they seek to ensure the rational and well-planned utilization of designated sites for relocation areas. Lastly, the objectives institutionalize community participation and representation in formulating and implementing policies about relocation shelters and urban services programs. This multifaceted approach reflects the city's commitment to addressing housing-related issues comprehensively and inclusively.

Per Davao City Ordinance No. 014-07 (2007) provisions, an ongoing mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the Program's effectiveness and operational status has been established within the Comprehensive Shelter Plan (CSP) framework. This mechanism involves the periodic issuance of a comprehensive and updated overview every three (3) years, as stipulated in Article 1, Section 3 of the ordinance. This overview encompasses several pivotal components, namely; (a) an in-depth analysis of the prevailing housing situation and associated challenges; (b) a strategic prioritization of social housing projects aimed at mitigating the housing backlog; (c) the meticulous identification, prioritization, and zoning classification of sites designated for social housing initiatives; (d) the acquisition of necessary resources and financing for the prioritized projects; and (e) the establishment of a sound organizational and management structure within the city housing office to facilitate the effective implementation of the plans and programs endorsed by the Housing Board.

### **Case Studies: Challenges of the Shelter Beneficiaries**

Challenges refer to the issues encountered by shelter beneficiaries. They represent situations requiring significant physical or financial effort, determination, and perseverance. The case studies presented here suggest that rural-to-urban migration often occurs due to poverty. People who benefit from housing programs lack viable income opportunities in rural areas, prompting them to seek better prospects in urban slums. However, this transition does not necessarily improve their living conditions; in many cases, it exacerbates poverty. Insights from interviews and group discussions support this perspective.

This study collected stories from people who now live in new places and others who might be

called professional squatters<sup>1</sup>, still in the city slums of Davao. These narratives highlight several vital challenges housing program beneficiaries face, including displacement of livelihoods, mismatches in skills training, and poor leadership skills. This section presents seven (7) case studies detailing the challenges encountered by beneficiaries of housing programs, gathered through theoretical and snowball sampling during fieldwork.

### Theme 1: Displacement from livelihood

#### Case 1 and 2: *Lino and Jerwin: The Fishermen's Tale*

Lino, not his real name, is 57 and a father of three. He grew up in Davao Occidental and was a beneficiary of Relocation B. He moved to the city to earn an average income and help his family in the province. Since he had no relatives in the city, he had no choice but to rent a small room. Unluckily, in 2015, the fire was caused by an unattended-overheated electric fan that led to an electrical short circuit. There were 51 affected renters, including Lino, and 41 house owners.

When asked about his living conditions before and after receiving the shelter from the city government, he described his difficulty in the relocation area as follows:

*“...It was in 2015 when we moved to the relocation area after the fire incident. I like it because we have a house and do not have to pay anything. I cannot say whether our situation is improving because I travel back to Sasa daily to fish. Just so you know, I only know how to fish<sup>2</sup>. Initially, we were happy because the government provided us with housing, but we became exhausted due to the distance and the daily commute. So, we put our house on rent and decided to return to where we came from...”*

Based on his statements, it is evident that he had poor access to income opportunities, which compelled him to leave the relocation area and drive back to squat again near the Sta Ana Wharf due to the distance between his home and workplace.

It is important to recall that securing adequate livelihoods is a central concern for impoverished people like the shelter beneficiaries. Much of the research on urban households and their means of making a living has drawn inspiration from studies of rural poverty (Chambers, 1987). In his book, Chambers argues that development biases are often urban-centric and focus on large-scale projects, which can harm rural people and their livelihoods. As argued by Chambers (1987), cited in Ravallion (2016), development interventions often fail to consider the needs and aspirations of rural people, which can lead to frustration.

Displacement from livelihood often results in losing essential assets, hindering a household's ability to secure a sustainable income, and such displacement can also lead to disruption in community cohesion, sense of place, and cultural practices related to production as emphasized by Adger et al. (2013). Such a statement is corroborated by UNDP (2020), who highlight the importance of both tangible assets (resources, investments, skills) and intangible assets (access to services, legal protections) for low-income households seeking to reduce vulnerability and build sustainable livelihoods where biocultural diversity plays a key role. This aligns with Amartya Sen's (1984) concept of entitlements, where access to essential services and legal protections are fundamental for individuals to achieve a decent standard of living (Robeyns, 2016).

Additionally, as Nikuze et al (2019) mentioned, relocating individuals from their informal dwellings can negatively impact their capacity to earn a living. Losing their home means losing the

<sup>1</sup>Professional squatters are individuals or groups initially allocated home lots or housing units by the government but subsequently involved in the unauthorized selling, leasing, or transferring of these properties. They often relocate unlawfully to the same area or different urban locations. It is important to note that this classification excludes individuals or groups who solely rent land and housing from professional squatters or squatting syndicates.

<sup>2</sup>Sasa is a barangay in the City of Davao where the city port and open fishing are allowed. Based on the city's integrated zoning map (2019-2028), Relocation B is approximately 34.5 kilometers via the Davao City Diversion Road and Davao-Bukidnon Road from Barangay Sasa.

necessities for their line of business, and it might be challenging to acquire new acquaintances or jobs in a new location. It could be more challenging for someone relying on odd jobs or street sales to make a fresh start elsewhere. Communities like the squatter's area should be given advance notice and support in finding new possibilities when relocating shelter beneficiaries so that individuals can move without enduring financial strain.

When the family chose to return to the slum area, anticipating better opportunities compared to the relocation site, they now live in constant fear due to the possibility of demolition because of the coastal road project, intended to serve as an alternative route in the city.

Suddenly, he broke down in tears while describing their difficulties:

*"...we are still unsure about the other entry points on the coastal road or whether the road will reach Sta Ana Wharf, which might help alleviate traffic in the city. I fear my family will go hungry, and my children will not be able to finish school if we return to the relocation area since fishing is the only job I know. I might sell my house and start anew in Malita..."*

With limited education, Lino aimed for stable and regular employment to provide for his family's necessities. He felt compelled to settle in the slum area, as it was the only place offering income and livelihood opportunities found only in the slum area.

Likewise, Jerwin, a 45-year-old beneficiary of Relocation C who sold his property, now lives in Relocation A and shares a similar narrative. He, too, was affected by the 2016 fire incident that destroyed around 60 houses in Bucana 76-A<sup>4</sup>. Jerwin recounts his experiences in the initial relocation area provided to him:

*"Every day, I had to commute to Bucana, which was too far away. Initially, there was no electricity or water and much chaos..."*

*"The city government only provided a piggery and a relocation lot. After a month of struggling to raise and feed the pigs, I sold the land I had acquired there and returned to Bucana, which is closer to fishing, my means of livelihood, and the only way I knew to earn income."*

Regarding individual income, it is commonly understood that earnings are traditionally associated with one's productive activities. This perspective emphasizes the pivotal role of productive endeavors in assessing economic well-being. However, it is crucial to recognize that this dimension is inextricably linked to a complex web of domestic and social relationships. These relationships play a fundamental role in how individuals access resources and participate in the broader economy, as highlighted by Crehan (1992) and Granovetter et al. (2020).

Drawing from the narratives of Cases 1 and 2, it becomes evident that they encountered difficulties in accessing basic necessities like not having enough to feed the family, not having a job to earn a living, and not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness, and exclusion of individuals, households, and communities. As emphasized by Chambers (1997), Alkire and Foster (2017), and Ravallion (2011), poverty surpasses mere lack of income; it encompasses multidimensional aspects, including social isolation. Being isolated due to inadequate or limited access to essential social services intensifies an individual's vulnerability. This isolation led Lino and Jerwin to experience helplessness, driving them back to their previous locations in hopes of securing improved access to basic services.

<sup>3</sup>Sta Ana Wharf is the point of origin of goods, services, and people transportation to the neighboring islands and regions. As of May 2024, the Times Beach to Roxas Avenue segment of Davao City Coastal Road is ongoing, while additional capacity for drainage capacity is also being constructed before it reaches Sta Ana Avenue.

<sup>4</sup>Bucana 76-A is a barangay in Davao, located in the 1st Congressional District. Based on the city's integrated zoning map (2019-2028), Relocation C is approximately 20.2 kilometers via City Coastal Road and Davao-Bukidnon Road.

Lino and Jerwin's experiences are examples of displacement's negative impacts on people's ability to sustain themselves. While their relocation might have satisfied some of their basic needs, it also separated them from the resources and long-standing social networks vital to their way of life. According to Bisht (2014, p.36), Perera (2014, p.6), and Chambers (1997), the nature of this displacement is more complex than a mere physical transfer; in the absence of equipment, capital, or even a physical site, they find it extremely difficult to generate income; additionally, because they operate in new areas, they require greater access to known markets or customers.

This lack of work opportunities has left Lino and Jerwin trapped in a cycle of poverty despite their best efforts to improve their living conditions. Their experiences remind them of the need to reestablish livelihoods and the necessity of relocation initiatives that provide basic necessities. This could facilitate skill development accessibility or support in reintegrating displaced individuals' source of income. Focusing on these components in relocation programs helps people do more than move; they can help people rebuild their lives and means of livelihood after being displaced.

### **Case 3: A livelihood we call our own: Kate's stories**

Kate, not her real name, is a housewife from Relocation C. She believes she can help with her family's expenses by running a small convenience store called a *sari-sari* store in their neighborhood. Kate's family includes four school-aged children, and her husband works as a construction worker. Running a *sari-sari* store is one of the simplest ways she can contribute to her family's needs.

*"...Our situation is challenging, especially since my husband relies solely on construction work..."*

*"...Most beneficiaries relocated and given land are far from their workplaces, so they do not stay long. I wish the government would focus on housing and livelihood, the kind of livelihood we can call our own..."*

Because her husband's work in construction is only available during certain times of the year, she believes that a livelihood program should be combined with housing support. Having reliable and stable sources of income is a key issue for the well-being of impoverished individuals. She envisions a program that can improve the livelihoods of the beneficiaries, leading to positive changes in society.

*"...with the difficulty of adjusting, we tried to join the livelihood training organized by the city for free. However, because this training is new, we learned other skills like dress-making and baking, but no starting capital was provided to us relocatees. Besides, people do not buy our products like bread or cake..."*

This statement reinforces that people are at the heart of development, not merely a means to an end. It is worth noting that Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) emphasize that a program aiming to address people's values should empower them to pursue their aspirations by providing the necessary capabilities. Also, training alone is insufficient in addressing the income gap, as it may not provide the necessary resources such as capital and marketing support.

While it is essential to give displaced beneficiaries like Lino, Jerwin, and Kate basic requirements like shelter, it requires addressing their challenges. Their capacity to make a living is often disrupted when displaced, placing them in a more vulnerable physical and financial condition. Consider the stories of the two fishermen, Lino and Jerwin, being uprooted from their source of income. Unfamiliar surroundings lessen their incomes, network of clients, and established persona. Kate's training, such as dress-making and baking, with no capital and her husband being a construction worker, loses their chance to earn more income than usual before transferring to the relocation areas.



These are not just isolated stories; they speak to the sad reality many displaced shelter beneficiaries must endure. Their financial status becomes unstable due to displacement, affecting their physical surroundings and economic ecosystem. Nussbaum (2011) stress the significance of safeguarding qualities that enable people to live with dignity rather than only surviving. In the context of displacement, this means helping people to rebuild their lives. Institutions can allow displaced people to reconstruct their lives with dignity and self-sufficiency by addressing livelihood restoration and basic requirements. Individuals profit from this, and it also helps the communities affected by displacement recover economically and socially.

## Theme 2: Skills Training Mismatch

### Case 4: *Lou's sentiments on limited options on profitable ventures*

A beneficiary's livelihood always holds significance as it pertains to their means of attaining the necessities of life. The story of Lou, a mother of two, who was relocated to Relocation B in 2015 due to escalating floodwaters in the river near the NHA Bangkal<sup>5</sup>, underscores this point.

She stated the barriers to training because of limited livelihood options, an almost similar response to Kate's:

*"...At first, we tried selling our homemade soap, but it did not work out. Because of a few buyers, we could not sustain it, so we stopped its production..."*

*"...It would have been okay because the soap cost 25 pesos, but the dishwashing liquid was costly. So, I went with my husband to Bucana because driving a tricycle has a higher income than selling homemade soap in the relocation..."*

As illustrated by the objectives of the Shelter Program, Chambers et al. (1992), Alkire (2016), and Sapkota (2021) emphasize that a livelihood becomes viable when it generates sufficient income to sustain its long-term operation. Additionally, households prioritize their livelihoods, indicating their preferences or priorities, which resonates with the sentiments of individuals like Lou, Lino, and Jerwin. Evaluating integrative approaches regarding commuting distances to livelihood destinations, known as spatial accessibility, is crucial. Chambers (1997) and Alkire (2016) argue that isolation contributes to the multidimensional poverty trap, underscoring the importance of viable accessibility for commuting to livelihood destinations and specifying that such accessibility is vital for breaking free from the poverty trap. The city government must consider beneficiaries' conditions in development to address their needs adequately.

Furthermore, a gap exists between beneficiaries' current and future livelihood participation, significantly influenced by distance from essential resources and opportunities, hindering the ability of displaced individuals to rebuild their livelihoods— longer distances from home to work link with lower income, and vice versa. Addressing the multidimensional aspects of poverty is essential to liberate vulnerable, marginalized, and impoverished individuals from the poverty trap (Alkire & Fosters, 2017). Whether residing in rural or urban areas, breaking free from the poverty trap requires addressing each dimension effectively. This underscores the necessity of addressing the multifaceted nature of poverty, particularly for vulnerable populations. Due to distance, displaced individuals in remote locations often need more access to job markets, essential services, and financial resources. The resulting transportation costs further strain their limited income, hindering their ability to participate in income-generating activities and access opportunities for improvement.

### Case 5: *Loloy's unappreciated training*

The beneficiaries' choice of livelihood only sometimes implies economic viability, as preferences

<sup>5</sup>NHA Bangkal area is a persistent flooding site along with Barangays Matina Pangi, Matina Crossings, and Matina Aplaya, with an approximate 16.6 kilometers distance going to Relocation B via Mintal Road and Davao-Bukidnon Road

may stem from factors beyond economic motivations. The government and NGOs have established opportunities through skill development and entrepreneurship training to provide sustainable livelihood options, focusing on recognized market connections.

Loloy's experience highlights this approach. A 43-year-old motorcycle driver and welder, he was affected by the 2011 Pangi River flash flood. In discussing the challenges of selecting suitable livelihood training, he emphasized the need for alignment between training and the beneficiaries' existing skills.

*"...For me, even if it is not your daily job/work but a job that you know and a job that sustains you. I hope that the training conducted is in line with our skills and livelihood because no matter how frequently we are trained, it is still difficult if it is not our field of work..."*

A significant impediment to boosting the well-being of shelter beneficiaries is frequently a mismatch between their skill set and the opportunities in the relocation area. Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) have noted that this limits their capabilities and prevents them from engaging in activities that improve their quality of life. Studies by Robeyns (2017) and Alkire (2016) bolster this theory by emphasizing the link between social justice and capabilities. The cycle of low pay and limited opportunities is further exacerbated when shelter beneficiaries require more resources to secure well-paying employment since skills training programs do not meet the demands in the area.

Chambers (1997) and Alkire & Fosters (2017) believe a multidisciplinary approach is necessary to address this challenge. Institutions must move beyond simply providing skills training to shelter beneficiaries. It is critical to identify individual capabilities, ensure training programs are beneficial and pertinent to beneficiaries' capabilities or skill sets, and provide supportive resources to help remove obstacles to participation. Institutions can enable shelter beneficiaries to obtain higher income and, eventually, create a sustainable future in the relocation by investing in skills training that corresponds with capabilities and local demands. This enhances their quality of life and helps create a just and equitable society.

Loloy then added:

*"...Regardless of how frequently we are trained, it will be difficult if the training is not aligned with our usual jobs..."*

Loloy chose to try different ways to make a living instead of using his former skills, realizing that farming was no longer a good option. Nussbaum (2011) have argued that people like him need to learn new things and get an education for better lives. If beneficiaries, like Loloy, do not improve their skills and become part of the community to join in productive activities, they will remain marginalized.

### **Theme 3: Poor Leadership Skills**

#### **Case 6: Leadership difficulties of a local leader**

Relocation B was made possible by the support of the City Social Services and Development Office (CSSDO) for Datu, who was not given his true name and was affected by the September 2012 fire in Isla Verde, Barangay 23-C<sup>6</sup>. He makes strong arguments on the value of freedom and how it may be used to enhance welfare.

He gave the following response when questioned about the difficulties he had in motivating other beneficiaries:

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<sup>6</sup>Isla Verde Barangay 23-C is located on the central coast of Davao City's poblacion with an approximate 28.3 kilometers going to Relocation B via Davao City Coastal Road and Davao-Bukidnon Road.

*“...Since transferring here, I have had many leadership challenges. It took us a long time to get used to problems like where to find food to sustain my family. I am the president of this village’s association. In addition to the lack of support and training for leaders regarding proper leadership techniques, I need to gain the ability to lead them...”*

Datu’s narrative highlights the City’s efforts to provide rudimentary housing, but it also highlights a critical weakness in relocation programs: enhanced beneficiary leadership development support. Datu acknowledges his limitations and the absence of training opportunities, prioritizing the importance of negotiation and collaboration skills highlighted by Greenhalgh and Lewicki (2015) for effective leadership. Also, the authors expounded that the program should acknowledge the importance of intraorganizational, multi-level dynamics, and the high degree of complexity in management negotiation, critical aspects often neglected in negotiation training. Chambers (1997) emphasizes the importance of assets and resources for individuals to achieve a decent livelihood. Strong leadership can be seen as a crucial asset in relocation. Influential leaders can mobilize resources, advocate for the community’s needs, and empower individuals to participate in decision-making.

Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2008) also argue that individual freedom is essential for human flourishing. Effective leadership can play a vital role in expanding the freedoms of those who have been displaced. Leaders can advocate for improved living conditions, access to services, and opportunities for participation. This enables individuals to make choices about their lives and pursue their well-being, reflecting Sen’s concept of individual agency.

Subsequently, Datu was asked how he communicated and participated with other city leaders or within Gawad Kalinga. He responded:

*“I am not sure how I do it. However, I can share a few examples for beneficiaries with nursery areas. They asked me to meet the City Mayor or the Gawad Kalinga head for dialogue. However, I faced challenges when it came to writing a letter, lobbying the community’s concerns, and having a participatory dialogue with the leaders about our plans to improve the land and request seedlings for planting...”*

This lack of leadership training hinders Datu’s ability to unite the shelter beneficiaries, advocate for their needs, and navigate challenges. The focus is on livelihood skills, not soft skills like leadership communication or other leadership capacities, and the consequences extend beyond Datu, impacting the collective well-being of the relocated individuals. The difficulties Datu has faced as a local leader—from securing food to receiving limited support in leadership skills and training—indicate the necessity for capable leadership that can effectively represent their interests and obtain necessary resources from the government.

Finally, Datu’s story aligns with Nussbaum’s (2011, p. 31) emphasis on the capabilities of living a dignified life. The limited training and support he and the community receive restricts the ability to develop leadership skills and effectively represent the needs of other beneficiaries. These concerns hinder the efforts to advocate for improved living conditions and well-being for the shelter beneficiaries.

### **Case 7: Yanong’s sentiments over the lack of guidance and unclear expectations**

The story of Yanong, a 43-year-old person with a disability (PWD), illustrates his experience as a beneficiary of Relocation B in 2013. He used to reside in the Center for the Handicapped, an NGO overseen by nuns; after such time, when the governing body relocated to Samal, the resident patients were instructed to return home. In response, the group of resident patients (PWDs) collectively composed a letter seeking assistance from the city mayor, eventually leading to their transfer to the relocation area.

When asked how they formulate institution-building activities for the well-being improvement of the shelter beneficiaries, he said:

*“...It is hard for us because we are not capacitated and do not have the facility to hold meetings. There may seem to be respect because not everyone has the same culture and mentality...”*

The provided statements offer valuable insights into opportunities for strengthening the leadership approach and ultimately enhancing the well-being of shelter beneficiaries. Despite acknowledging the possibility of misinterpreting cultural differences and underlying issues, the local leader's attention to external constraints enables them to look for novel solutions and actively involve the community in decision-making. Promoting beneficiary involvement in decision-making is essential for their welfare, as Chambers (1997) highlights the significance of “people's institutions” for sustainable lives.

Furthermore, the leader's approach can be strengthened by delving deeper into the root causes of potential respect issues. This is part of the recommendations of Chambers (1997) and Ravallion (2016), who emphasize the need for a “deep understanding” of shelter beneficiary needs. Participatory research and community engagement can provide insights and foster collaboration, leading to more effective solutions with support from the LGU, NGOs, or other institutions.

Finally, the local leaders can empower beneficiaries to voice their needs and concerns by facilitating open communication and encouraging resident participation in public discourse. These concerns, as stated by Nussbaum (2011), emphasize political deliberation and promote a social baseline that enhances the political relevance of beneficiary capabilities. Such an approach will empower residents to advocate for their well-being and contribute to shaping a more inclusive and responsive environment.

Subsequently, when asked how they managed to conduct dialogue on different community conflicts, he said:

*“...sometimes if there is a fight, we settle it in advance, so it will not be forwarded to Gawad Kalinga, but the problem is we are not skilled in handling a proper dialogue; we do not have a private facility to conduct a dialogue. Sometimes, we settle the issue in a small dining room in Sakadab Village, which our members do not want to go to or attend the said dialogue because other members can hear the discussion...”*

In the cases of Datu and Yanong, considering their cultural differences, the aspiration for respect within their respective areas becomes prominent, safeguarding the essential freedoms that secure each beneficiary's well-being. This reveals several areas for improvement in the leadership's approach. By empowering residents through participatory decision-making, actively addressing core challenges, and facilitating communication and collaboration, the leader can create a more inclusive and thriving relocation for the shelter beneficiaries.

### **Case Studies: Capabilities of the Shelter Beneficiaries**

This study encompasses not only shelter provision and challenges but also focuses on enhancing the capabilities and capacity of shelter beneficiaries across various relocation areas. In this section, we present two case studies (Case 8 and Case 9), delving into the capabilities of shelter beneficiaries.

Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) define capabilities as the fundamental freedoms individuals need to fulfill their potential, encompassing what they can and can be. This concept covers adequate access to necessities such as a healthy life, education, resources, social services for a suitable standard of living, and the ability to participate in community life. Capabilities refer to specific skills, processes,

and routines that shelter beneficiaries routinely employ to address daily challenges. Given their available resources and opportunities, they represent the actions and states that shelter beneficiaries can achieve. Capabilities reflect the range of choices and possibilities available to shelter beneficiaries.

### Theme 1: Creating Income-Generating Ventures

#### Case 8 and 9: Nanette's and Ella's determination to thrive in life

While resources undoubtedly play a crucial role in attaining a high quality of life, more than relying on resource-based measures for assessing quality of life might prove inadequate for several reasons. Firstly, numerous resources could be more valuable; they serve as a means to achieve other goals. However, the quality of life is not solely determined by the mere presence of resources but rather by how these resources empower individuals to act and live meaningfully.

The capability approach, developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, provides a more nuanced framework for understanding the relationship between resources and well-being. Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) argue that people's capabilities, or their fundamental freedoms to achieve their potential beings and doings, are essential for enhancing the quality of life. As Sen (1999, p. 25) aptly put it, 'the value of the living standard lies in the living, and not in the possessing of commodities, which has derivative and varying relevance.'

In the case of Nanette, aged 51, a mother of two residing in Relocation D, her experiences shed light on how she harnesses her capabilities to address the challenges she faces:

*"I go to Panabo<sup>7</sup> to get the fish I sell using a fish car. Sometimes, I climb a coconut tree to get nuts that I can sell so I can earn more to buy food and supplies for the kids. It is essential that I get home, relax, and contemplate what else I can do in life."*

Nanette's determination, resilience, and entrepreneurial spirit are readily apparent. She goes to great lengths to support her family and elevate their standard of living. The participant's comments also underscore the value of a house as a place to unwind and refresh. Nanette's statement illustrates her active pursuit of additional income through various means to support her family's needs and strive for an improved life status. Consequently, she demonstrates resilience and determination to thrive and seize opportunities in the relocation site. However, this approach may need to be revised as it assumes that resources perfectly represent valuable activities (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 23). As supported by Alkire (2016) and Robeyns (2017), the ability of individuals to transform resources into valuable actions differs significantly. As discussed earlier, people's capabilities are essential for enhancing their quality of life, and marginalized individuals often need to adapt their pursuits to what they believe they can achieve and engage in activities that improve their well-being (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 31).

Ella, not her real name, aged 47, and a mother of three residing in Relocation A, shares a similar determination to strive in life:

*"Sometimes, my children have extra jobs to earn an income... I also do part-time work, like selling vegetables and occasionally delivering them to my customers. I even take up utility work at the Barangay Hall."*

Ella's statements highlight conversion factors, indicating that different individuals possess varying capacities to transform resources (means) into meaningful opportunities (capabilities). When viewed through the lens of capacities, individuals' notions of home take on individual interpretations, as narrated by Nussbaum (2011), encompassing both the contributions each person makes to the living space and as supported by Robeyns (2017), what the living space offers to each person. In this sense, the idea of a home extends beyond that of a mere house.

<sup>7</sup>Panabo is a coastal component city in the province of Davao del Norte situated between two major cities, Davao City and Tagum City, Philippines, with an approximate 18-kilometer distance going to Relocation D via Daang Maharlika Highway.

While access to resources undoubtedly plays a role in improving living standards and generating income, the capability approach, developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, offers a more nuanced perspective. This approach emphasizes individuals' capabilities, or fundamental freedoms to act and live meaningfully, as crucial for well-being and income generation. According to Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011, pp. 20-21), more than just having resources, it is necessary for people to use them wisely and accomplish their objectives.

The case studies of Ella and Nanette show a sense of entrepreneurship and resourcefulness in making money, even in times of difficulty. As evidence of her ability to turn resources into successful endeavors, Nanette aggressively seeks more opportunities. To illustrate their adaptability and utilization of various abilities to generate income, Ella and her children also work odd jobs.

Nevertheless, as Robeyns (2017) and Alkire (2016) have demonstrated, there can be wide variations in people's abilities to turn resources into profitable ventures. The statements from the two respondents highlight the importance of understanding each person's unique abilities and the significant factors influencing their conditions in the relocation area. Furthermore, the capabilities approach's definition of home extends beyond a physical structure, as Nussbaum (2011, p. 23) highlighted. It encompasses both the positive aspects of living— such as generating income— and the negative aspects (such as opportunity and security). Through a comprehensive study of individual skills and conversion variables, housing projects can be devised to enable people to earn income, thus enhancing their well-being and quality of life. Housing is essential to this process because it allows people to use their abilities and attain their desired living standards.

## **Theme 2: Determination to Survive**

When things interfere with our learning, routines, and ways of living that make us feel good, individuals can find themselves in various situations. Nussbaum (2011) argues about the causes of poverty and how to alleviate it by providing people with more choices. Having choices means being able to select from different ways of living. They also state that instead of merely acquiring more possessions, becoming better at doing things can be a form of personal growth. This implies that individuals who are in poverty might have fewer choices because they cannot choose from a wide range of lifestyles.

Nonetheless, these individuals acquired a strong sense of determination. When discussing their experiences, some participants who resided at Relocation A and D were very emotional.

A 48-year-old female said:

*"... you need to strategize in life because if you do not do it, there is nothing you can achieve. Just strategize and pray a little..."*

A 38-year-old female said:

*"... what we need is a positive mindset that this shall pass. We need to be positive and strategize what to do. You just need to have a positive mindset because the outcome would also be positive..."*

A 41-year-old male said:

*"... then if it were not for my parents helping us, we would not survive..."*

A 47-year-old female stated:

*"It is one, sir, that I am just praying to the Lord that He will help me, especially when my children and family members get sick. I really pray that the Lord will be with us and guide us where to go. Just pray because He is also trying to get you out of trouble..."*

A 37-year-old male said:

*“...But if you have an idea how to survive, and if you can still ask someone to help you, I will approach them so that we can really survive our daily needs. I am trying to survive in these difficulties. At the same time, we need to go to whoever can help us to survive...”*

The participants' responses provided a narrative of resiliency and determination in times of challenges. These findings responded with the approaches of capabilities that Nussbaum (2011, pp. 20-21), Alkire (2016), and Robeyns (2017) have highlighted in their studies.

The first two responses demonstrate the participants' problem-solving capability and decision-making during difficult situations. As supported by Nussbaum (2011, p. 21), the statements are consistent with capability expansion, where shelter beneficiaries actively endeavor to increase their capability to live a meaningful life despite different challenges. Also, the response of the 37-year-old male's resourcefulness and flexibility in seeking assistance is consistent with Alkire's (2016) and Robeyns' (2017) notion that conversion factors impact an individual's capacity to navigate the relocation area. The participant's statement suggests seeking external support as a conversion factor to help them meet their needs.

The significance of faith and dependence on family and social networks as coping mechanisms are also emphasized in a number of the statements. Nussbaum (2011, pp. 20-21) bolstered these assertions by stressing the importance of “social bases”, emphasizing the interconnectedness and requirement for communities and support networks for well-being. These components are emphasized in phrases like “pray to the Lord”, “parents helping us”, and “approaching them to meet our daily needs”.

### **Theme 3: Strong Involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Privately-Owned Corporations**

When Davao City enacted the Shelter Code to foster a just, dynamic, and comprehensive land tenure security and urban services development program, it also adhered to the provisions of the Local Government Code of 1991, encouraging the involvement of people's organizations and NGOs in various levels of governance and decision-making within the city.

Organizations like the San Miguel Foundation (SMF), Gawad Kalinga, the National Housing Authority (NHA), and the Pilipinong May Puso Foundation (PMPF) serve as potential avenues for participation, facilitating interactions between privately owned corporations, NGOs, and the city government to engage in policy dialogues aimed at advancing shelter initiatives. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) proposal, endorsed by the Sangguniang Panglungsod (SP), would grant legislative authority for the city mayor to collaborate with NGOs on housing provision and environmental regulations enforcement. This MOA also encompasses sustainable livelihood and educational programs for housing project beneficiaries and their children.

Moreover, serving as the corporate social responsibility arm of San Miguel Corporation (SMC), SMF provided funding for shelter construction and played a central role in project implementation, including ongoing efforts at the Lasang relocation area. Concurrently, the NHA allocated a Php 24 million fund for land development during the project's first phase and offered technical expertise to aid in project implementation. Meanwhile, the PMPF was tasked with delivering livelihood opportunities and other forms of assistance to beneficiaries of relocation areas.

Lastly, Gawad Kalinga aggregated donations and partnered with Davao Light and Power Company (DLPC) to establish three villages named Alabama, Sakadab, and Virgia. Alabama Village features 22 duplex houses awarded to 22 families, Virgia Village encompasses 15 duplex houses assigned to 30 families, including those with disabilities. The Sakadab Village includes three separate

boarding houses for boys, girls, and married individuals and three duplex houses allocated to 34 families.

So far, Gawad Kalinga has plans to construct 28 more duplex houses to accommodate more beneficiaries, with the active participation of the community leader in Relocation B, who stated:

*“...The Gawad Kalinga helps end poverty by giving money. There are three ways a beneficiary can participate in building homes for the homeless and the poor— these are talent, time, and treasure. The three villages are lucky because we have Gawad Kalinga as our guide. Also, other NGOs come to help us...”*

Other participants in Relocation B supported these statements:

A 41-year-old male said:

*“...We are extremely thankful to Davao Light and Gawad Kalinga because occasionally they provide training and other means for us to get income...”*

A 39-year-old female said:

*“...Gawad Kalinga did not neglect to help us. They have instructed and guided us so we will not rely on others and can stand on our own when they are gone...”*

Participation in poverty reduction initiatives by NGOs and privately owned corporations has shown that these organizations are committed to reducing poverty and improving the well-being of their shelter beneficiaries. Aside from the GK Villages and Bayanihan programs of the Gawad Kalinga, the bakery business and dressmaking, where several members obtained their national certification (NC II) from TESDA, and the newly refurbished production facility in the community— which features improved lighting, a ventilation system, and more office supplies for product marketing— are just two examples of how these programs strongly emphasize community involvement. The building will house the cooperative's production and work spaces for its sewing and handicraft enterprises.

Ocampo (2015) found that Gawad Kalinga's programs positively impacted household income, employment, access to basic services, social capital, and community cohesion. According to separate research by Kelly and Ortega (2020), it was found that Philippines has increasingly relied on diaspora groups to promote development. One such group, Gawad Kalinga, collaborates with LGUs and businesses to set up programs related to housing projects making them highly valued partners due to their financial capacities. Gawad Kalinga's community-driven poverty reduction programs, which emphasize independence, participation, and empowerment, have also been a big help, as stated by Habaradas and Aquino (2010).

These narratives emphasize the collaborative approach adopted in the city to address shelter needs, from the enactment of the Shelter Code to the potential collaboration between organizations to facilitating poverty reduction programs, that collaboration leads to positive impacts on income, employment, and access to basic services (Ocampo, 2015). In some cases, entrepreneurship goes beyond the local community, with organizations shifting to a more secular approach to promoting entrepreneurship (Kelly & Ortega, 2020). The specific contributions of each organization like the Gawad Kalinga, demonstrate their commitment to working together to address poverty in the relocation areas. Also, Gawad Kalinga's involvement in constructing villages and encouraging community participation, as narrated in Habaradas and Aquino's (2010) observation of Gawad Kalinga's emphasis on participation and empowerment, highlights the various ways to collaborate with the government and the relocation areas, showcasing the positive impact of such partnerships in addressing poverty and improving the well-being of shelter beneficiaries.



## Capacity-building as a Strategic Process

In identifying and formulating solutions, the challenges and implementation issues identified during the Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were presented to the participants. These challenges included displacement from livelihood, skills training mismatch, and poor leadership skills. Subsequently, participants suggested capacity-building activities to address these issues.

As defined by Moore (2018), capacity-building refers to a strategic process that helps a program enhance its mission, strategy, skills, systems, infrastructure, and human resources to serve the community better or meet the needs of its beneficiaries. Moore discusses the importance of capacity building for government agencies to improve their performance and deliver better services to citizens. Government agencies need to achieve their missions and goals. He defines it as “the process by which government agencies develop and enhance the skills, systems, and structures they need to achieve their goals” (Moore, 2018, p. 190).

## Shelter Beneficiaries Proposed Solutions for the Shelter Program

### Capacity 1: *Rebuilding livelihood*

Based on the narratives, participants faced challenges related to the accessibility of their livelihood opportunities due to the unfavorable location and the difficulties of commuting to their work destinations. When asked for potential solutions to address these issues as beneficiaries of the Program, the participants proposed the following:

A 45-year-old male suggested:

*“...it is also difficult to access the sea here. I wish there were other programs for fishermen, like the backyard pond initiative...”*

A 41-year-old male proposed:

*“...we hope they will provide financial assistance for capital in our desired projects. Of course, additional training should be included to help us sustain our livelihoods. We admire the shelter villages supported by Gawad Kalinga...”*

A 36-year-old female mentioned:

*“...I wish the handicrafts we produce as PWDs could be DTI accredited so we can sell them in malls...”*

A 43-year-old male expressed:

*“...I hope we will receive the right assistance and they will understand the challenges we face living far away from our previous residences. Not all relocation areas have the support of NGOs...”*

Shelter program beneficiaries' narratives reveal a core concern beyond simply receiving shelter – the critical challenge of rebuilding their livelihoods after displacement. The lack of access to previous livelihood opportunities creates a significant hurdle. A fisherman, for instance, expressed his struggle to continue his work due to the absence of a sea in the new location (45-year-old male). Similarly, some residents lack the skills or resources to pursue new opportunities. This is evident in the request for financial assistance and training programs explicitly facilitating new projects (41-year-old male). Furthermore, limited market access restricts residents' ability to earn a living. This is highlighted by the desire for accreditation to sell handicrafts, suggesting challenges in reaching potential customers (36-year-old female).

#### The must or what should be done:

Section 29 of the Republic Act 7279 (Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992) sets the following provision that within two years, the local government units (LGU), in coordination with the National Housing Authority, shall implement the relocation and resettlement of persons living in danger areas such as esteros, railroad tracks, garbage dumps, riverbanks, shorelines, waterways, and in other public places such as sidewalks, roads, parks, and playgrounds. The LGU, in coordination with the National Housing Authority, shall provide relocation or resettlement sites with basic services and facilities and access to employment and livelihood opportunities sufficient to meet the basic needs of the affected families.

The beneficiaries' narratives emphasize the challenges encountered by residents. Limited access to previous opportunities, like the fisherman's inability to continue due to the lack of a sea (45-year-old male) and a lack of skills or resources for new ones, as evidenced by requests for training and financial assistance (41-year-old male), pose significant hurdles. Additionally, limited market access, highlighted by the desire for accreditation to sell handicrafts (36-year-old female), restricts their ability to earn a living.

Moreover, these narratives not only acknowledge the challenges but also propose solutions. Shelter program beneficiaries propose a shift in focus for relocation programs. Recognizing the difficulties in pursuing previous livelihoods suggests moving beyond simply providing shelter. Instead, the analysis proposes creating environments that foster livelihood rebuilding. This could involve supporting existing capabilities through training programs or facilitating access to resources, empowering residents to pursue their chosen livelihoods. The fisherman's suggestion of a backyard pond program exemplifies this (45-year-old male). Furthermore, addressing limitations in market access, as highlighted by the desire for accreditation for handicrafts (36-year-old female), could further empower shelter beneficiaries. By incorporating these narratives and solutions, relocation programs can be better equipped to support displaced individuals in rebuilding their lives and livelihoods.

#### **Capacity 2: Skill inventory and matching with local job opportunities**

Beyond relocation, a comprehensive plan addressing housing and livelihood opportunities is crucial. Initiatives like skills inventories and job market matching can connect the shelter beneficiaries with suitable work while ensuring access to affordable housing near those jobs, significantly easing their transition. During the FGD, participants were asked for their solutions to address the challenges faced as beneficiaries of the Program:

A 32-year-old male suggested:

*"...improving and aligning the training with our existing skills."*

A 39-year-old female recommended:

*"The LGU should do their inventory about our skill sets and any available jobs appropriate to our skills near the relocation area."*

A 43-year-old male expressed:

*"I hope there will be different training categories to help us improve our skills."*

Several participants, including a 34-year-old female, a 29-year-old male, a 41-year-old female, and a 44-year-old female, expressed the desire for government planning, including housing and livelihood projects for beneficiaries.

A 34-year-old female stated:

*"...It would be great if the LGU could plan ahead and not just focus on relocating us to our new homes. We need our jobs or source of income, too! They could work with local businesses to see what skills we need and then offer training programs to prepare us for those jobs. That way,*

*we would not have to worry about finding something that fits our skills or returning to where we came from, and businesses would not have difficulty finding qualified workers...*

A 29-year-old male agreed by saying:

*"...Exactly! And you know, some of us might have some skills already, but they might not be a perfect match for the jobs available here. So, maybe the city government could also do some skills inventory, see what we are good at, and then connect us with jobs that fit those skills, even if it means some on-the-job training..."*

A 41-year-old female then recommended:

*"...And let us not forget about housing either. It is hard to focus on finding a job if you are worried about where you will live. Ideally, the city government would have some plan that includes relocation or resettlement housing options and job opportunities accessible from that relocation..."*

Furthermore, finally, a 44-year-old female agreed:

*"...Yeah, that would be a big help. A comprehensive plan that cares for our conditions in the relocation area and job needs would give us more peace of mind and make it much easier to rebuild our lives here..."*

The narratives from shelter beneficiaries highlight a critical gap between the relocation efforts and the long-term goal of livelihood rebuilding. While relocation provides immediate shelter, beneficiaries like them emphasize the need for skills training that aligns with their existing skillsets and the job opportunities available in the new locations. This suggests a potential shift in focus for relocation programs. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach to skills training, grounded theory analysis suggests a model incorporating skill inventories and job marketing matching. This aligns with the suggestions from the beneficiaries, including the 34-year-old female's desire to collaborate with local businesses to identify skill needs and the 29-year-old male's request to connect existing skills with suitable jobs. By implementing such a model, relocation programs can move beyond simply providing shelter and actively supporting displaced individuals in rebuilding their livelihoods in the new location.

The must or what should be done:

*...improve the conditions of the destitute and underprivileged citizens in the urban and urbanizing areas by means of making more accessible to them urban shelter and services at affordable cost... secure and provide for the rational use and development of socialized housing sites... institutionalize people's participation and representation in policy formulation and implementation of socialized housing and urban services program (Ord. No. 0154-07, s.2007: Art. I Sec. 2).*

### **Capacity 3: Appropriate shelter space and leadership training**

By providing an appropriate space for interaction and offering a leadership training program, relocation programs can foster leadership capacity among the beneficiaries. This empowers them to address their challenges and advocate for the well-being of their community as a whole.

A 40-year-old male responded:

*"...we need an appropriate space where we can meet regularly, share ideas, and plan activities for the betterment of our community. This space could also be used for leadership training workshops to represent our needs and advocate our rights effectively..."*

A 43-year-old male building on existing response:

*"...Absolutely! An appropriate space would be a great starting point. However, additional training is necessary to build strong leadership within the community. A program focusing on leadership skills, like proposal writing, communication, and problem-solving, would equip us to advocate for ourselves and our community more effectively..."*

A 31-year-old female expressed:

*“...having an appropriate space is essential. It would provide a platform to come together, discuss issues, and develop solutions. Nevertheless, leadership training is also crucial. Learning to lead discussions, motivate others, and manage projects would empower us to take ownership of our community’s development...”*

The narratives of the shelter beneficiaries, particularly the response from the 40-year-old male and 31-year-old female during the FGD, reveal a desire for more than just physical relocation. Beyond the need for a permanent place to live, these narratives suggest a yearning for a space that fosters leadership development within the relocated community. The call for an appropriate space goes beyond simply having a meeting place. Their narratives emphasize activities, idea sharing, and community betterment, suggesting a desire for a platform that facilitates collaboration and empowers them to address collective challenges.

Also, the narratives on an appropriate space are further complemented by the participants’ expressed need for additional leadership training. The 43-year-old male explicitly mentions skills like proposal writing, communication, and problem-solving, indicating a desire for programs beyond simply having a meeting place. Their desired skills are all symbols of effective leadership, suggesting that the beneficiaries recognize the importance of developing these capabilities to advocate for themselves and their community.

Based on this grounded theory analysis, relocation programs can be more effective by moving beyond a one-dimensional approach focused solely on physical relocation. By incorporating the concept of appropriate space for interaction and providing leadership training programs, the city’s shelter program can empower beneficiaries to rebuild their individual lives and become active agents in shaping the future of their relocated community. This aligns with the constructivist grounded theory approach, which emphasizes understanding participants’ experiences and incorporating their perspectives into program design (Charmaz, 2014). By fostering leadership capacity and creating spaces for collaboration, relocation programs can empower beneficiaries to take ownership of their community’s development.

### **Synthesis of Themes: Shelter-Space Theory**

The Shelter-Space Theory, developed through grounded theory analysis, examines the evolving needs of the shelter program beneficiaries. It outlines an ascending framework where essential requirements like safe shelter and basic services form the foundation. Meeting these needs raises a sense of security and allows individuals to build a ‘home’ within the shelter space, promoting self-esteem and participation. The theory emphasizes ‘sustainable networks’ encompassing social, economic, and environmental factors and suggests that leadership development and collaboration can strengthen these networks and empower beneficiaries. The theory also highlights the importance of community development initiatives with strong beneficiary participation, drawing inspiration from Chambers (1997), Sen (1999), and Nussbaum (2011). This approach fosters a sense of ownership and prevents dependency, ultimately creating a foundation for long-term well-being within the relocated community.

The first level focuses on essential requirements like safe and secure shelter with a clear shelter code. This ensures that basic needs are met, and anxieties are reduced. However, grounded theory analysis revealed that program-related barriers and trust concerns can drain collective resources. Addressing these issues is crucial for fulfilling even the most fundamental needs.

Once basic needs are secure, individuals can build a sense of ‘home’ within the shelter space. This goes beyond the physical structure. It fosters a sense of security, belonging, and control. Beneficiaries can experience increased self-esteem, communication, and participation within the community.

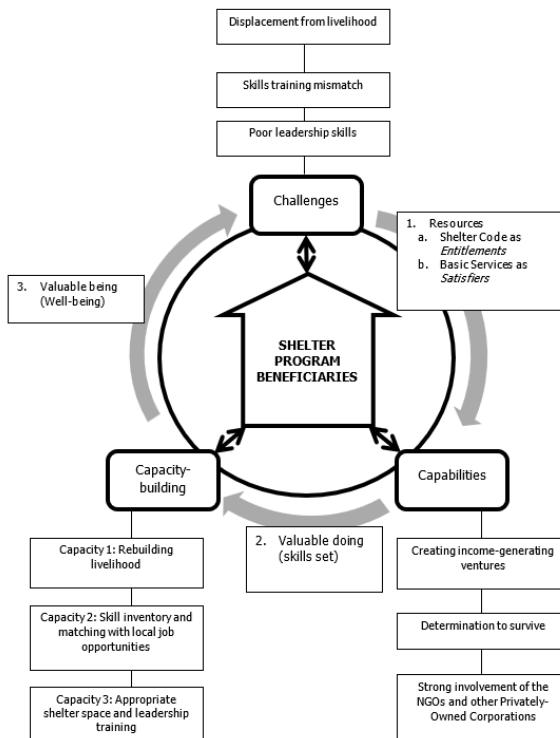
However, program limitations that fail to address broader socioeconomic and environmental concerns can threaten this sense of home.

Thirdly, the theory can culminate in capacity building. Social identity, networks, and access to public goods and services are strengthened here at this level. This aligns with the grounded theory analysis, where leadership training allows beneficiaries to connect with the community, advocate for their needs, and build a stronger support system. Developing these capabilities empowers individuals to lead more fulfilling lives and contribute to their community's development.

Thus, the Shelter-Space Theory, informed by the grounded theory approach guided by Charmaz (2014), provides a roadmap for understanding and addressing the evolving needs of shelter program beneficiaries. By prioritizing basic needs, enhancing capabilities, and building capacity with the beneficiaries' participation, programs can empower individuals to rebuild their lives and create a lasting foundation for well-being within their relocated community.

Figure 1

*Shelter-Space Theory among Shelter Beneficiaries in the City of Davao*



**Conclusion**

Focusing on the experience of shelter beneficiaries in Davao City, this study explored program components, encountered challenges, and necessary capabilities to enhance their well-being. Data was collected through 27 KIIs and 34 FGDs with beneficiaries from Relocation A, Relocation B,

Relocation C, and Relocation D, as well as other slum areas in the city.

Six major themes emerged from the study. The theme of displacement from livelihood underscores the multidimensionality of poverty, highlighting the isolation caused by limited access to basic social services. The emphasis on skills training mismatch reveals the importance of establishing basic capabilities to improve life opportunities and maintain human dignity. The poor leadership skills point to the need for stronger community participation and decision-making processes to ensure beneficiaries' voices are heard.

Moreover, beneficiaries identified creating income-generating ventures as a key strategy for achieving well-being within the safe and secure shelter provided by the city government. The theme of determination to survive emphasizes the human spirit and resourcefulness employed by shelter beneficiaries in challenging situations. Lastly, the decisive engagement of these NGOs and corporations highlights the importance of interdependent networks in meeting beneficiary needs. While some beneficiaries demonstrate a strong will to survive, significant concerns remain. These include achieving long and healthy lives, accessing basic resources, and fully participating in community life. Notably, some even returned to their original squatting locations due to the remoteness of relocated areas, negatively impacting their livelihoods and access to basic needs.

In addition, the developed theory 'Shelter-Space' focused on the evolving needs of shelter program beneficiaries and was considered an ascending framework with essential requirements like shelter and basic services as the foundation. Meeting these needs promoted self-esteem and participation while fostering sustainable social, economic, and environmental networks. It emphasized that leadership development and collaboration strengthened these networks, empowering the beneficiaries in the city. The theory also highlighted that community development initiatives with strong participation foster a sense of ownership and prevent dependency, ultimately creating a foundation for long-term well-being within the relocated community. Finally, it underscored those programs can empower individuals to rebuild their lives and contribute to their community's development by strengthening social identity, networks, and access to public goods and services, prioritizing basic needs, enhancing capabilities, and building capacity with the shelter beneficiaries' participation.

Hence, a comprehensive program evaluation is essential to address the challenges faced by shelter beneficiaries in Davao City. The findings suggest that the program may benefit from incorporating.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### **AI Disclosure**

We declare that this manuscript was prepared without the assistance of artificial intelligence. Hence, the content of this paper is original.

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