

UNICEF
Innocenti Research Centre

Innocenti Insight

MAKING PHILIPPINE CITIES CHILD FRIENDLY

Voices of Children in Poor Communities



INSTITUTE OF PHILIPPINE CULTURE
ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY



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Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|---|
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| ADDU | Ateneo de Davao University |
| APIS | Annual Poverty Indicators Survey |
| AusAID | Australian Agency for International Development |
| BASECO | Bataan Shipyard and Engineering Company |
| BCPC | Barangay Council for the Protection of Children |
| BFC | Barangay Family Council |
| BFWC | Barangay Family Welfare Committee |
| BNS | barangay nutrition scholar |
| BSDO | barangay security and development officer |
| CAYC | Civic Action Youth Club |
| CBO | community-based organization |
| CFC | Child Friendly Cities |
| CFM | Child Friendly Movement |
| CIC | Crisis Intervention Center |
| CIDSS | Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services |
| CMP | Community Mortgage Program |
| CNSP | children in need of special protection |
| CPC | Country Programme for Children |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CRP | Child Worker Rehabilitation Program |
| CSSDO | City Social Services and Development Office |
| CWC | Council for the Welfare of Children |
| DepEd | Department of Education |
| DILG | Department of Interior and Local Government |
| DLSU-SRDC | De La Salle University-Social Research Development Center |
| DOH | Department of Health |
| DOLE | Department of Labor and Employment |
| DPT | diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus |
| DSWD | Department of Social Welfare and Development |
| ECCD | early childhood care and development |
| ECPAT | End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes |
| ECPSR | Expanding Children's Participation in Social Reform |
| EHP | Environmental Health Project |
| ERDA | Educational Research and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc. |
| FGD | focus group discussion |
| FIES | Family Income and Expenditure Survey |
| FLEMMS | Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey |
| FORGE | Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. |
| GK | Gawad Kalinga (To Give Care) |
| HABITAT | United Nations Centre for Human Settlements |
| HSRT | high school readiness test |
| HUDCC | Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council |
| ILO-IPEC | International Labour Organization-International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour |
| IMR | infant mortality rate |
| IPC | Institute of Philippine Culture |
| IRA | Internal Revenue Allotment |
| IRC | Innocenti Research Centre |
| IUD | intrauterine device |
| JICA | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| LAM | Lactating Amenorrhea Method |
| LAMP | Land Administration and Management Project |
| LGU | local government unit |
| MCH | maternal and child health |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MMDA | Metropolitan Manila Development Authority |
| MMR | maternal mortality rate |
| NAPC | National Anti-Poverty Commission |
| NCR | National Capital Region |
| NDHS | National Demographic and Health Survey |
| NEDA | National Economic and Development Authority |
| NGO | nongovernmental organization |
| NHA | National Housing Authority |

| | |
|--------|---|
| NHMFC | National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation |
| NSAT | National Secondary Assessment Test |
| NSCB | National Statistical Coordination Board |
| NSO | National Statistics Office |
| PCNPC | Pasay City Network for the Protection of Children |
| PECCO | Philippine Ecumenical Council on Community Organization |
| PICSA | Prevention and Identification of Child Sexual Abuse |
| PIT | Prevention, Identification and Treatment |
| PNP | Philippine National Police |
| PO | people's organization |
| POG | Payatas Operations Group |
| RA | Republic Act |
| SK | Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) |
| SRTDO | Social Research, Training and Development Office |
| STDs | sexually transmitted diseases |
| TB | tuberculosis |
| UBS | Urban Basic Services |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UPA | Urban Poor Associates |
| VMSDFI | Vincentian Missionaries for Social Development Foundation, Inc. |

FOREWORD

In most developing countries, informal settlers account for one- to two-thirds of the population living in large cities. In the fast urbanising Philippines, over 40 million of the nation's 85.2 million inhabitants are located in urban areas. An estimated 8.4 million of this population are informal settlers mostly living in the three metropolitan areas of Metro Manila, Davao and Cebu Cities. About half of them are children. And, it is this population group that is targeted globally by the Millennium Development Goals, which, as part of the goal to ensure environmental sustainability, seek "to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020."

In most cities, the contrasts between the wealthy and the urban poor are glaring. Often, exclusive residential areas and ultra-modern skyscrapers are built against a backdrop of shantytowns. Moreover, social statistics are based largely on city averages which conceal wide socioeconomic gaps and pockets of discrimination between formal and informal settlements.

The environment of an informal ("slum") settlement prevents children from fulfilling their rights. Take the case of young people living in Payatas B's garbage dump slum in Metro Manila's Quezon City, where children and their families literally depend on the giant mountain of garbage for their survival. The dumpsite, from which the residents make a daily living, collapsed under torrential rains in 2000, and five hundred or more scavenger adults and children died, buried under the trash slide.

Children's natural sense of belonging to their living environment, and community, contrasts with the social stigma and discrimination attached to residing in a degraded area. Shanty houses lack access to

basic services, including water and adequate sanitation. In this environment, children are exposed to exploitative labour, drug addiction, sexual abuse and other forms of violence. Forced evictions leave entire households deprived of basic possessions, break families apart, and disrupt the daily lives of children, causing psychological traumas and increased family violence. Even then, children value their shanty neighbourhoods, where access to earning is easier than in rural villages from where their families came. The cost of housing is low, and friends join in community events and celebrations. To them, their home offers security and care. They appreciate the advantages as well as the shortcomings of their living environment and have ideas to offer for improving it, which are brought out on the pages of this study.

Generally, in situations where parents are not involved in decision making, opportunities for children to participate are at best tokenistic. Experience has shown that poor communities achieve improvements in their living conditions only when they organise and make collective claims. Similarly, for children to be able to contribute genuinely to decision-making processes, they need governance approaches that deliberately incorporate their rights into laws and development plans, institutional frameworks, budgets, impact assessments and evaluations. Local plans currently do not focus on serving the neediest or those who are more likely to remain unreached. In practice, city officials remain cautious about providing services to informal settlers. But even if the settlement is illegal, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, there are no illegal children. A city is child friendly, therefore, when it offers young citizens, who have no right to vote, a

physical, social and emotional environment that enables them to access basic needs, fulfill their rights and redress violations.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) provided the fundamental framework for developing a global Child Friendly Cities initiative, which is promoted by UNICEF worldwide, in low-, middle-, and high-income countries. More recently, the UN Special Session on Children (2002) highlighted the pivotal role of local authorities and governments in achieving global goals for children at the local level.

The Child Friendly Movement aims to translate the Convention on the Rights of the Child from a legal framework into a nationwide strategy for fulfilling the rights of the 33 million Filipino children under 18. Philippine Child Friendly Cities (CFC) involve mayors, the local government, the academic world, the media, nongovernmental (NGOs), faith-based and civic organizations, and young people in a grand alliance mobilised to fulfil children's rights and needs.

Making Philippine Cities Child Friendly: Voices of Children in Poor Communities documents and analyses how the Child Friendly Cities initiative has served as a framework for enabling Filipino children to fulfil their rights and access basic services, especially in poorer urban communities. A team from the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) of the Ateneo de Manila University, headed by Mary Racelis, along with research partners in two regional cities, initiated the study in twenty-eight poor barangays (neighbourhoods) of five metropolitan cities, namely, Manila, Pasay and Quezon Cities in Metro Manila; Cebu City in the Visayas; and Davao City in Mindanao. The main objective was to assess whether CFC initiatives were reaching the poorest and most vulnerable children. The enquiry was addressed not only to adult policy-makers and implementers, as well as community leaders and parents, but also to the main target group of the programme, the children and youth.

The action-research process was carried out in consultation with community members, partner researchers, NGOs and civil society organisations, and the local and central governments, with the support of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, UNICEF Philippines and UNICEF Headquarters New York. The research team engaged with children and young people's groups and encouraged them to speak openly about their conditions, opinions and aspirations. A profile of the perceptions of young people growing up in poverty emerges from the pages of this innovative study, along with the recommendations they themselves have made to improve their lives.

Special methodologies were developed to engage children in the research. According to their age group, drawing, collage making, play sessions, and discussions supported by flashcards and role-playing were used to encourage opinion sharing by the children and to generate their responses on special areas concerning child rights. The young people were involved in discussions on a voluntary basis and pre-research activities were carried out in the community to build a rapport of trust and confidence between children and

their families and the researchers. Children were classified by age and risk factors. Risk levels were identified with the help of children themselves who displayed intimate knowledge of and insight on the various degrees of poverty and vulnerability within the community.

The participatory action-research project did not regard community members and officials as mere informants. During feedback sessions, in fact, the results were presented to a community assembly to validate the research results and seek the community's suggestions for improving the report. Importantly, the consultations generated opportunities for the community residents and stakeholders to plan activities for children and youth, with a clearer focus on the most vulnerable groups.

At the next level, the data validated with the community were shared during intercity consultations, thereby providing key officials of the five cities with the opportunity to understand better the problems of the most vulnerable groups and improve strategies for reaching the unreached. The validation and sharing sessions helped in raising the awareness of families and policymakers alike of the gaps in fulfilling children's rights with regard to policy and programme practice, and in strengthening local organisations to address the situation. One concrete result of the action-research process was the drafting of plans of action by policy-makers and NGOs in partnership with community representatives. UNICEF Philippines has incorporated some of the major findings and recommendations into the 2005-2009 Programme of Cooperation with the Government of the Philippines.

Importantly, the process legitimised the recommendations brought forward by children and helped overcome the negative perception that parents and elders often have about adolescents being trouble-makers and disrespectful of parental authority. The youth could counter publicly that adults are often a source of abuse and negative role models, especially when they indulge in gambling and drinking. Appreciating young people's perceptions and developing channels to harness their energy and ideas, it was suggested, could also prove strategic in preventing youth from organising themselves into gangs and carrying out illegal activities.

The study reveals how the CFC initiative has helped communities become familiar with human rights concepts. In areas where the CFC strategy has been adopted, one finds that greater attention is paid to the most excluded and vulnerable groups and interventions are developed on a wider spectrum of children's rights. While there is still a long way to go, given the scale of poverty in informal urban settlements, CFC cities are exhibiting a determination that encourages renewed optimism in the years to come.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As of the year 2000, some 1.4 million families, or 8.4 million poor Filipinos, lived in urban informal settlements of major Philippine cities. Clustered in three metropolitan areas – Metro Manila, Davao City and Cebu City – these informal settlers, stigmatized as “squatters,” make up anywhere from 33 percent to 40 percent of metropolitan populations, nearly half of them (43 percent) children.

In the early 1980s, the Government of the Philippines-UNICEF Country Programme for Children (CPC), with strong support from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society groups, developed the Urban Basic Services Program to address those needs pertinent to children living in poor neighborhoods. This community-based approach was subsequently transformed into the Child Friendly Cities (CFC) program emphasizing rights specified in the 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and further promoted in the 1992 Philippine Plan of Action for Children.

The concept of Child Friendly Cities is anchored on nine building blocks: (1) children as active participants in decisions affecting them – with participation cross-cutting all the building blocks, (2) child friendly laws, (3) city-wide children’s rights strategies, (4) children’s rights units in government structures, (5) regular evaluations of the impact on children of city ordinances, policies and practices, (6) budget sections earmarked for children, (7) state-of-the-city report on children, (8) programs disseminating awareness of children’s rights, and (9) strong advocacy for children by civil society, government and other groups.

Creating and sustaining Child Friendly Cities has served as the primary bond of cooperation between

the Philippines’s largest cities and UNICEF, embodied in a sequence of five-year Country Programmes for Children (CPC I-VI) beginning in 1979 and projected to 2009. Four rights domains characterize this framework: survival, development, protection and participation.

Although significant strides toward child friendliness have been made by Philippine cities in partnership with UNICEF, a more targeted approach to poor children is now called for. This becomes all the more imperative because poverty reduction figures strongly in the programs of the current Administration. Accordingly, social scientists from the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Metro Manila, and their partner researchers in Cebu and Davao Cities, along with selected community residents, including children, formulated and carried out a study on children and youth in informal settlements of five Philippine cities that are implementing the Child Friendly Cities programs.

The overall aim of the research was to ascertain the extent to which these youngsters were being served by the Child Friendly Cities program. The specific objectives called for: (1) differentiating categories of poor and vulnerable children in urban informal settlements; (2) ascertaining the children’s own views of their daily lives, themselves, the environment, poverty, the rich, and their rights, problems and aspirations; (3) clarifying the perspectives on children held by poor adults and local officials in informal settlements, as well as of external stakeholders like government and civil society groups; (4) reviewing the Child Friendly City and poverty reduction programs of the five city governments, including civil society involvement; (5) developing concepts and methodologies for learning about urban poverty,

including participatory research with children and adults in informal settlements; (6) providing examples of community organizing approaches enabling children to gain access to their rights; and (7) enhancing the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre's global role in promoting research and data collection, information exchange and networking on Child Friendly Cities.

The research covered five cities with long-established CFC programs, namely, the City of Manila, Pasay City and Quezon City in Metro Manila, Luzon; Cebu City in the Visayas; and Davao City in Mindanao. Quick appraisals were done in 27 barangays, 16 of them CPC sites and 11 non-CPC sites. Intensive case studies were carried out in three of the twenty-seven barangays, with one barangay added¹ for a total of four case studies. The researchers held feedback sessions with local residents of these four communities, which helped validate the findings and conclusions.

The data gathered were also discussed at an Inter-City Conference with government officials, NGOs, community residents, including children who had been involved in the study, UNICEF staff, and other interested parties from the five cities. Researchers engaged in participant observation, interviews, focus group discussions and secondary data collection. The statements of children themselves on a range of topics, quoted verbatim in the report, became the centerpiece of the research.

An overview of children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation suggests that although nationwide progress has been favorable with regard to survival and development rights, many urban poor children are still left out. This is true for early childhood care and education, primary and secondary school access, and, especially noteworthy, the area of decent shelter and secure land tenure.

It is in the realm of protection that the poorest children's rights are often denied. Large numbers of them work full- or part-time, often in hazardous conditions. Many drop out of school or forego education entirely owing to their need to help support the family. Street children stream out of informal settlements, and the number of government or private sector programs set up to provide services and restore their rights is far below the critical mass needed. Children from indigenous cultural communities forced into cities by warfare or economic displacement are not only relegated to the worst portions of degraded urban settlements; they often lose their cultural rights. Youth from informal settlements who come into conflict with the law are disproportionately present in jails and courts. Domestic violence, neglect, sexual exploitation and drug abuse frequently figure in these children's lives.

Of all the rights clusters, those pertaining to participation are least understood or practiced. While parents and community leaders may welcome children as performers in sociocultural festivities, for example, adults are less open to young people's involvement in decision making. Adolescents feel this bias most intensely.

Children's survival and development rights are generally expanding in the five cities, but many poor

children remain on the margins. Achievement of protection and participation rights is greater in CPC barangays, and less so in non-CPC ones. The presence of NGOs is partly responsible for the positive results in CPC areas, especially if they collaborate effectively with the city government. Indeed, their presence can even reverse poor performance in non-CPC settings.

The most expressive group of respondents is that of the children themselves. Divided into four groups on the basis of age (4-6, 7-10, 11-13, 14-17), poor children speak eloquently about their lives and their aspirations. Ana, 14 years old: *"The children who are in the most terrible situations are those whose parents have abandoned them."* Susing, 10 years old: *"The poorest children are those who have nothing to eat, have parents who are lazy and do nothing . . ."* Marissa, 15 years old, on poverty: *"It is as if you are asking why there are storms! It just happens!"*

Narding, 13 years old: *"Those who sell drugs to children should be arrested."* Joseph, 13 years old: *"I wish to become a seaman someday but I only finished grade 2!"* Lina, 12 years old: *"The rich are turned off by street children, who they think smell bad!"* Rica, 14 years old: *"My older brother saw a baby without a head in a styrofoam."* Cita, 12 years old: *"We would like our school to be clean, with a playground, lots of trees and a clean toilet that doesn't smell!"* And on and on.

Themes emerging from their testimonies dramatize children's views of their surroundings, work and income, education, poverty and wellbeing, child rights, parents as promoters of children, and adolescents at risk. These views are analyzed in terms of how the five cities are addressing their children's survival, development, protection and participation rights. Although all the cities are implementing programs serving poor households, few residents, whether children or adults, identify positive programs affecting them. Moreover, the scale of need goes far beyond what city governments are able to provide. Children in the community do not speak of the rights they enjoy as much as they complain about being deprived of basic rights to food, schooling, land and shelter, a clean environment, nurturing parents, sympathetic officials, and a peaceful, safe neighborhood.

Children and women elaborate further on their concerns:

- Seling, mother: *How can I regularly follow the prescribed medical requirements if I cannot afford such medicines?*
- Edgar, 12 years old: *We buy water from big distributors with delivery trucks or from smaller ones with tricycles or carts. It costs P30 [US\$0.54] a drum.*
- Manila children, 9-13 years old: *[We need] education . . . so we can learn in school . . . so that when we grow up, we will be able to get a job . . . without school, we will become garbage collectors, domestic helpers, or beggars . . .*
- Pining, mother: *Their [the children's] meager earnings are not enough to buy food. So they just sniff rugby to stave off hunger.*

- Joven, 16 years old, a former street vendor: *Now that I am unemployed, it is very difficult because when I wake up in the morning, I have nothing to eat . . . it is very depressing. We eat only at noon and at night.*
- Carding, 17 years old: *Why don't they just give us this little piece of land at a price we can afford? We're willing to pay after all!*
- Ernesto, 16 years old: *I joined the gang to find company. If you have enemies, the gang will protect you.*
- Antonio, 17 years old: *Sexual encounters with women are just natural for male teens like us. When you are in a group, you are forced to engage in these activities.*
- Lito, 15 years old: *I really hate my father because every time I commit mistakes, he hits me. He is always like that . . . especially when he is drunk.*
- Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) official: *The SK is only a decoration . . . nobody pays attention to it. If there are no elections, goodbye.*
- Lisa, 16 years old: *We are not sure if we can fulfill our dreams because we are poor. Dreams are only for the rich.*

Government services entail a vast array of activities offered with varying degrees of success. These include health clinics, preschools, regular and alternative schools, educational scholarships, livelihood and income-generating programs, micro-credit, water and sanitation, sports activities, peace and order, training in children's rights, prevention and rehabilitation programs for victims of abuse, building capacities, and mobilizing people's participation in governance. The local government institutions charged with planning and implementing these activities are the Barangay Council with occasional special bodies, the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) and the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK or Youth Council).

Residents say that Barangay Councils give little attention to programs for children beyond token health services, feeding programs, educational assistance, skills training, drug abuse seminars, community police patrols, and sports and recreational activities for the youth. The Barangay Captain and councilors relegate young people's needs to the SK. Most SK leaders, however, complain about the lukewarm interest shown by barangay officials toward their organization, and call on the latter to release the SK share of the local budget. Instead of being supportive, say the youth leaders, barangay officials regard young people primarily as troublemakers and sources of problems. They would rather institute curfews or arrest recalcitrant youth than establish preventive programs or promote youth talent. Nor, with some exceptions, is the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children particularly active, given its unwieldy structure and overlapping mandate with the SK. All three institutions have great potential that still needs to be realized for children.

On the civil society end, NGOs, faith-based groups, academic institutions, donor agencies, peo-

ple's organizations (POs) and community volunteers actively engage in similar kinds of activities. However, because they work intensively at the community level and have greater flexibility than government in testing new and promising approaches with local groups, they have been able to develop a number of creative, successful programs for and with disadvantaged children and families. This becomes even more pronounced if the Barangay Captain and Council initiate consultations for the barangay plan, as NGOs, POs and other civil society groups can contribute significantly to its development.

Those city governments that actively encourage and facilitate civil society partnerships are also the ones most likely to reach larger numbers of children, with better targeting of the poorest among them. Cebu City is exemplary in this endeavor, largely because the NGOs and POs in the informal settlements have had a long history of organizing, making demands on and negotiating with their city government. Enlightened government leadership has in turn recognized the value of these partnerships, created supportive institutional mechanisms and incorporated people's participation into the governing process. Notable, too, are the well-organized community organizations and volunteers engaged in monitoring government performance in all four rights areas, but especially in dealing strongly with child abuse and domestic violence through referring cases to the courts. Similarly reassuring is the important role played by local women in exacting efficient service delivery and demanding accountability of government.

Davao and Pasay Cities have likewise developed favorable relationships with NGOs and faith-based groups, effecting pioneering programs that enhance children's protection and participation rights. Both cities offer educational assistance and scholarships, early childhood care and education, livelihood training, health and nutrition, information on HIV-AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, drop-in centers for street children, values education seminars and other capability building activities. A notable achievement in Pasay City is the very effective Network for the Protection of Children, which has made the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children functional.

Quezon City NGOs pursue similar activities highlighting children's rights and welcome the new Mayor's interest in active collaboration. The City of Manila chooses to run its own programs largely without NGO partnerships. Services are forthcoming in Manila's CPC barangays, but non-CPC barangays rely on NGOs for more innovative and effective efforts favoring children.

Community assessments of government interventions show the most popular programs to be health, especially immunization and free medicine, feeding programs, scholarship assistance, clean and green environments, and skills training for the youth. Yet many poor children lack access. Some cities respond better than others, with the differentiating factors being population size and area of the barangays, the number of poor children and youth, the interest and concern of the Barangay Captain and

councilors, the active presence of NGOs and faith-based groups working with the community, government's willingness to forge meaningful partnerships with NGOs and POs, the city's budgetary strength, and funding support from UNICEF. Those barangays not included as CPC areas and thus without access to UNICEF's added inputs have shown, nonetheless, that they can mount successful programs that promote children's rights if local leadership is active and NGOs are present to help out.

On the objective of ascertaining whether barangays which were part of the CPC had done better at realizing child rights than non-CPC barangays, the answer is yes, with some qualifications. A barangay could, for example, achieve creditable, if limited, successes in survival and development rights (except for land and shelter, which are not part of the CFC program) even if it is a non-CPC community. CPC communities exhibit more holistic perspectives in their understanding of all four sets of child rights and their implementation. Non-CPC barangays focus on survival and development rights, and some do better than CPC sites on immunization. Most non-CPC areas, however, show only minimal capacity for addressing protection and participation issues.

Both CPC and non-CPC residents generally equate child rights with service delivery, cast in the basic needs mode. The rights articulation emerges in CPC barangays as they move into the protection and participation domains. This is when one hears the language of entitlements, nondiscrimination, universality and accountability to children. Knowledgeable residents soon apply these concepts retroactively to survival and development programs. With some exceptions, though, the rights framework is still only weakly understood or applied by residents and officials alike. Increased coverage is still a major indicator of success rather than the ability to reach the poorest, left-out sector.

Looking at the five cities in terms of the nine building blocks of Child Friendly Cities, the notable differences in performance that place Cebu City in the lead and Manila at the tail end stem in a political sense from the openness of the city administration to civil society and private sector involvement and advocacy, a participatory process responding to grassroots voices, strong political will among elected officials and the bureaucracy, and government efficiency in targeting and enabling the neediest to gain access to resources and services. Although all nine building blocks exhibit a favorable impact on the situation of medium-poor and better-off children, only one of them – “developing a city-wide children's rights strategy based on the Convention of the Rights of the Child” – makes specific mention of the poorest children.

Recommendations from the major stakeholders are listed: poor children and youth, community adults, city and national government officials, civil society, and the IPC research team. These reveal several overlaps while keeping the mix and priorities distinct. The children propose recommendations around food and income earning; sufficient numbers of quality schools; clean, healthy and safe neighborhoods with ample

play space for children; secure land tenure; control over gang fights and drug distribution; sports, recreational and community cleanup activities for the youth, especially those out of school; better relations between barangay leaders and out-of-school youth; and a community united around championing the rights of children. Community adults make many of the same points on schools, jobs and land, but add improvement of health center services, checking performance of local officials and police with attention to corruption, and focusing on adolescents and developing good programs around their rights.

City governments and civil society consolidated their recommendations at an Inter-City Meeting of Child Friendly Cities, which was attended by representatives of community leaders – adults and youth. These could be summarized as follows:

1. Integrate child rights programs into the barangay development plan and budget for child friendly barangays. This entails Barangay Captains and Councils learning more about child rights and how to work effectively with NGOs and POs, as well as how to incorporate appropriate programs into barangay governance, with some kind of clear accountability for results.
2. Take concrete steps to enhance child and youth participation in decision making, including strengthening the Sangguniang Kabataan, the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children, and related local special bodies.
3. Target the more vulnerable youth, and gear the SK, the BCPC, and local organizations to give particular attention to their needs and rights.
4. Heighten advocacy and access to services for children; monitor performance in terms of unreached children.
5. Facilitate PO and NGO community organizing for people's empowerment and decision making.
6. Increase information, education and communication activities for child rights in the communities and citywide.
7. Coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders for children; foster stakeholder networks linking internal and external partners.
8. Set up and maintain a user-friendly database on the needs and rights of children and youth that is disaggregated by gender, age and levels of deprivation, and charge the BCPC with managing it.
9. Heighten political will for the CFC in city governments, as evidenced in higher allocations in the city budget for programs targeted to urban poor children.
10. Provide substantially more educational assistance to children and youth at the primary and high school levels.
11. Help parents and other adult household members obtain regular employment and livelihood; equip them with the skills and capital necessary to pursue business opportunities profitably, taking gender issues into consideration.

12. Establish mechanisms to guarantee informal security of tenure over the land informal settlers occupy; carry out slum upgrading and affordable housing, and, if relocation is necessary, select suitable nearby sites in consultation with the affected households.

The IPC researchers consolidated and complemented the above recommendations, as follows:

1. Adopt strategies aimed at reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged children. This entails participatory processes involving male and female community residents, including children, youth and adults; a user-friendly community-based data system; and training young people to handle modern information and communications technology.
2. Strengthen people's organizations to be autonomous, empowered civil society groups. This calls for collaboration with NGOs and other civil society groups.

3. Develop CFC programs together with POs, NGOs, and other civil society groups, emphasizing participatory processes in governance.
4. Activate and strengthen the capacities of official local bodies like the SK and the BCPC.
5. Take into consideration the differential sizes and characteristics of cities that affect child friendly programs.

The report closes with the observation that systematic ways of involving the private business sector in child rights attainment remain weak and need re-examination. Beyond that, the researchers reiterate that ultimately, emphasis must go to a distinct and targeted poverty focus that tracks vulnerable and deprived children, and that prioritizes actions to help them achieve their desired state of wellbeing. As Bituin Maglakas, a 12-year-old Payatas girl, points out, *"The right that I think is most important is to have our own dreams and ambitions."*

Note

- 1 Barangay Payatas in Quezon City, which was not one of the twenty-seven quick appraisal areas, was the fourth case study site.

1

BEING POOR IN THE CITY

Bituin Assesses Her Community

In July 2001, 12-year-old Bituin Maglakas, a resident of Payatas B, thought about what she would say to the President of the Philippines if the latter were to visit her neighborhood in the sprawling 13-hectare city dumpsite:

If President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo were to come here and ask us what she could do for us children in Payatas, we would say we want to go to school all the way through college. We would ask her for toys, and to give street children homes. She should rehabilitate children who use rugby and punish people who sell them drugs, who rape children and make them prostitutes. We want to have titles to our land. She should also put up a hospital, give us free groceries, fix the basketball court, and get rid of the beerhouse to build a playground there. Some of us would insist on getting rid of the dumpsite, but others say no, because they make their living from it. We want her to clean up Payatas, pave the roads, install streetlights, cover the open canals, collect the garbage more regularly, and install roving guards at night.

(cited in Racelis and Aguirre 2002, 107)

Bituin's wish list implicitly describes the conditions of 1.4 million families,¹ or 8.4 million people,² comprising hundreds of urban informal settlements, the vast majority of them found in three metropolitan cities: Metro Manila with a total population of 10 million, Davao City with 1.15 million and Cebu City with 719,000.³ Approximately one-third to two-fifths of the population of each city is made up of informal settlers.

Spanning fourteen cities and three municipalities,

Metro Manila features glaring contrasts between its super-modern skyscrapers, upscale malls, and wealthy, gated residential subdivisions, on the one hand, and its numerous informal settlements with their concentrations of poor people in badly degraded environments, on the other. In between lie working- and middle-class neighborhoods. Add to the residents another million or so workers and students streaming daily into Metro Manila from outlying provinces. They trade off two- to three-hour commutes each way in heavy traffic with more spacious environments and cheaper housing upon their return home. A variation of this commute is to opt for cheap, temporary living accommodations in the metropolis during the week with a return to the provincial home on the weekend. Cebu and Davao Cities experience their own share of crowding and pollution, but given their much smaller populations, Metro Manila far outranks them on this score.

In the context of a bustling and complex metropolis, how do poor urban children and youth live their lives and think about their community and its broader environment? Further, what steps can those charged with helping them achieve a better life take to realize that aim? This research report proposes to answer these crucial questions.

Informal Settlements: Problem or Solution?

One of the informal ("squatter") settlements intensively studied as exemplifying the inhuman living conditions of Metro Manila's poor is Payatas B in Quezon City. Its unenviable reputation as the largest operating garbage dump in Metro Manila – in the nation

for that matter – has been reinforced by the trash slide tragedy of 2000. Local officials estimate that some five hundred of its residents were buried in the garbage avalanche that followed days of torrential rains. Residents, however, insist that over a thousand people died that fateful day. Crushed under tons of garbage were men, women and children earning a living as scavengers. They were either working at the top of the four-storey high mound when it gave way or engulfed in their shanties at the bottom of the trash mountain.

The dual implications of living in communities like these can be agonizing for their residents, especially the children. On the one hand, the dumpsite offers poor residents income and therefore the prospect of some improvement in their lives; but it also threatens their physical wellbeing and invites derision and discrimination. Informal settlers everywhere face the same dilemma of recognizing the physical threats and social exclusion from living in crowded shanties perched on flood-prone riverbanks, strung along railway easements, or hidden under highway overpasses or bridges, while knowing of no alternative sites offering the equivalent income, cheap housing, conveniently located schools, hospitals and markets, and helpful relatives and neighbors.

The Payatas experience shows that tragedy sometimes brings out the best in people. The organized efforts of residents and local officials since the garbage slide, assisted by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based groups and international donors, have led to more effective relationships with city and national government authorities. Among the outcomes have been improved housing and social services in parts of the barangay.⁴ In its 2001 *Global Report on Human Settlements*, UN Habitat (2001, xxvi) praises the Payatas example as showing “the vital contributions that people living in poverty can make to improve their situation.”

BASECO, the other community intensively studied, occupies the shoreline right where the polluted Pasig River spills its contents into Manila Bay. A product of tidal deposits and landfills, the island settlement is linked to the mainland by one narrow isthmus and extends out to the sea over foul-smelling, barely submerged mud flats. Makeshift shelters on stilts create a maze of linked wooden walkways, which children and older persons learn to negotiate at their peril. This labyrinthine coastal settlement falls easy prey to the typhoons and giant waves that periodically engulf it.

Nor do shanty households get much respite from danger during the dry season, for that is when devastating fires raze the community in minutes. Usually occurring in the middle of the night, residents believe the fires are deliberately set off by landowners or possibly elements in the government itself in order to clear the land expeditiously for other uses. Cynical BASECO residents speculate that when they actively resist eviction for too long, it is only a matter of time before another conflagration decimates the area. All it takes is tying gasoline-soaked rags to a cat’s tail and striking a match. The terrified animal streaking through the community does the rest. It is to the Arroyo Administration’s credit that, prodded by orga-

nized community groups and their partner NGOs, and despite the ambivalence of City of Manila authorities, some BASECO residents are now gaining access to secure land tenure and improved housing.

Typical informal settlements in large cities of the Philippines feature narrow dirt roads and alleyways meandering through squalid and densely packed neighborhoods. Many informal settlers occupy open public land. Some converge in vacant private lots adjacent to warehouses and buildings whose outer walls form the single strong-material portion of the shanty. Or, they invade unguarded lots of still vacant middle-class subdivisions. If relatively undisturbed over time, and as their economic status improves, these urban settlers gradually upgrade their houses and their immediate neighborhoods. A guarantee of secure tenure accelerates this self-help housing activity. Unless they organize for wider slum upgrading measures, including reblocking and sanitation and drainage infrastructure, however, their communities continue to carry the stigma of unsightly and unplanned “squatter” settlements.

The visitor cannot help but feel overwhelmed at the staggeringly large number of children in the streets and pathways, running errands, hawking balut (boiled fertilized duck eggs), selling cigarettes and a few bottled drinks at a roadside stand, or simply playing in the few open spaces available. Adolescent boys monopolize the basketball half-court or simply hang out, smoking, sparring with one another or, for some, sniffing glue. Shacks frequently double as manufacturing sites for cheap luggage, boxes, emery boards, doors, windows, uniforms, baby dresses, floor wax or soap. Other households transform part of their space into *sari-sari* (variety) stores or work areas for welding, motor rewiring, shoe repair, tailoring, barbering, hairdressing and other income-earning activities.

Plastic hoses snake along the ground delivering water to interior households. In the air above them hangs a jumble of electric wires leading to “jumpers.” These are illegal electrical connections attached to a single household line, enabling the owner to justify charging a flat rate for each user-connection. Passers-by thread their way along unpaved paths that become muddy streams during the rainy season, stepping carefully over the garbage, plastic bottles and dog feces littering the area. Household wastewater runs off into open canals or rivers, while uncollected garbage piles up, attracting swarms of insects, flies and rats. By evening, residents must also swat away the mosquitoes carrying the dengue virus. Children and women avoid the darker areas that harbor drunken troublemakers, drug addicts and potential rapists.

These are the kinds of slums targeted globally for improvement under Goal 7, Target 12 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):⁵ “By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.” Since the Philippine government is targeting 880,000 households for upgrading by 2020, of which 61 percent, or 536,800, are informal settler families (GOP-UN 2003, 49-50), a successful effort would reduce the global

figure by 3,220,800 former slum dwellers.⁶ While this is a significant number, it may hide the still unmet housing backlog.

Despite the problems of living in degraded, foul-smelling and often dangerous surroundings, residents value their neighborhoods. Their income sources lie within walking distance or a one-fare ride, along with emergency hospitals, marketplaces and schools. Residents can usually rely on nearby relatives and neighbors to help them out in time of need, housing costs are lower than elsewhere in the city, and information sources and networks enhancing one's options are close at hand. Having a shelter they can afford rounds out the desirability of this residential location.

Moreover, the sense of community built up by events, like the annual fiesta celebration, block rosaries, sports festivals, dances, immunization drives, political rallies, street videoke singing and other bonding events, brings excitement, comfort and enjoyment to an otherwise dreary setting. Community life becomes even more rewarding when residents organize to pressure authorities into installing water taps, spraying against dengue-bearing mosquitoes, building and staffing health centers, withdrawing eviction threats, and turning over land to the residents. Victory is all the sweeter when recalcitrant government officials capitulate and respond favorably to their demands.

Bituin, her brother, Bayani, and other children like them in urban informal settlements across the country recognize the pluses and minuses of living where they do. They like their community even as they deplore it. For most children, the family, home and neighborhood offer comfort and stability but at the same time represent dangerous and violent surroundings. They denounce local gang fights, bullies and rapists, along with guns and killings linked to drugs and politics. If only, they sigh, these could be eliminated through caring, service-oriented government officials! If only jobs, services and onsite tenure security were available to their families and neighbors. Then their community could be just like any other decent neighborhood in the city. Pursuing the dream would mean that the stigma they suffer as "squatters" would give way to the respect and rights they seek as human beings.

Child Friendly Cities: A Conceptual Framework

Decades of experience with urban basic services programs in countries the world over, assisted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), have defined the features of Child Friendly Cities. With the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the shift from a needs-oriented approach to a rights-based one gained momentum. Because young people in informal settlements, far more than their more privileged urban counterparts, face lives that significantly deprive them of their rights to survival, development, protection and participation, Filipino advocacy groups brought these concerns to the attention of city mayors.

Initially, being child friendly meant a city govern-

ment's creating and sustaining environments fit for children. Since poor and informal settlers in many developing world cities make up anywhere from one- to two-thirds of a city's population, it stands to reason that the neediest children represented there – those most deprived of their rights – merit the greatest attention. While child friendly programs encompass all children, the rights perspective dictates a focus on the poorest and most vulnerable young people.

The global drive toward "A World Fit for Children," championed by UNICEF at the UN Special Session on Children held in New York in May 2002, further stipulated that young people themselves should have a voice in defining their present and their future. Thus, a child friendly city is not only a good city for children, but also one which children judge to be a good city for themselves (Riggio 2002, 45-46; italics ours). Children's participation in creating this kind of city is, therefore, crucial. In keeping with the principle that those closest to the problem should be part of its solution, any government or civil society group actively seeking to redress child poverty necessarily welcomes the involvement of the poorest children.

Yet, how likely is it that children will participate in decision making if their own parents and neighbors are left out of planning processes? The history of community organizing in the Philippines has established for the most part that only when communities of poor people organize themselves to make collective claims on tenure security, basic services, employment and a safe and peaceful environment do city officials respond. The literature is replete with accounts of people's organizations (POs) successfully struggling and achieving victories as informal settlers along Manila's Tondo Foreshore and Pasig River, Quezon City's Commonwealth Avenue, Cebu and Davao Cities' pier area, and Naga City's railroad tracks. The determination of affected groups to have a say about plans and programs affecting them has enabled them to demand institutional changes conducive to poverty reduction, to be taken seriously and, accordingly, to be treated with dignity (Racelis 2003).

Linking a rights-based approach to urban child friendly perspectives took a leap forward at the World Conference on Human Settlements, held in Istanbul in 1996 (also known as Habitat II or the City Summit). Four guiding principles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child were highlighted: (1) nondiscrimination, (2) the best interests of the child, (3) the right to life and maximum development, and (4) listening to and respecting children's views.

Cities that adopted the child friendly framework for action pledged they would work toward guaranteeing all young citizens their rights (Riggio 2002, 48, 50-53). To help transform these rights into practice, the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre laid out the following criteria:

- Influence decisions about their city
- Express their opinion on the city they want
- Participate in family, community and social life
- Gain access to basic services such as health care, education and shelter

- Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation
- Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse
- Walk safely in the streets on their own
- Meet friends and play
- Have green spaces for plants and animals
- Live in an unpolluted and sustainable environment
- Participate in cultural and social events
- Be supported, loved and cared for, and be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability.

All this can come about through urban governance approaches that deliberately incorporate children and their rights into laws, plans, institutional frameworks, impact assessments and evaluations, budgets, advocacy, capacity building and citizen participation. While ensuring the rights of all children implies that none will be left out, local government frameworks that traditionally factor in the collective needs of the citizenry at large do not necessarily focus on those left out. Yet, these are likely to be the poorest. Nor do city planning statistics analyze information on service provision in terms of whether the bottom quintile of the populace has in fact been successfully reached. Checking the outcomes on a disaggregated basis is not customary. Yet, one must ask of any program: Who has gotten the benefit? School-aged children? Infants and toddlers? Adolescents? The better-off families? Were more boys reached than girls? Were disabled children considered? Were working children sought out? And so on.

Indeed, unlike Cebu City officials and to some extent Davao City officials, Metro Manila administrators, with some exceptions, still appear apprehensive about providing services to informal settlers. Apparently, they fear that these pro-poor actions will only invite further invasions to their cities, already faced with huge urban poor settler populations. The prevailing line of reasoning still appears to be that people with “no right” to be there have “no right to city services.” Further, middle- and upper-class citizens often charge local officials with “coddling squatters” by condoning illegal occupation of private or government land, or by allowing them to preempt city sidewalks for their livelihood operations. Rarely do they examine the root causes of mass poverty – except when urban poor riots force elites to speculate as to why. Rather, business-as-usual attitudes blame the poor for their poverty.

Cebu and Davao Cities adopt a more progressive response to the needs of their poorer constituents, perhaps because they recognize that the vast majority come from their own rural hinterlands and form a legitimate part of the local government’s constituency. Further, both cities have attributed many of the successes of their child friendly policies to their shift from an earlier reluctance to deal with NGOs and POs, to active collaboration with civil society today.⁷ This improved relationship and the willingness to seek viable solutions may be partially attributed to the still limited scale of informal dweller presence in those

cities, as compared to Metro Manila. In any case, the differences in outcomes for poor children are substantial, with Cebu City and Davao City showing the way.

Nonetheless, even progressive city officials tend to assume that their programs for children will automatically cover the neediest ones. Expanding coverage is the mark of success. Little attention to monitoring and the weak measurement schemes in place cannot define which children are being reached, which ones are left out, and why. Concerned officials and civil society stakeholders have called for better methods of assessing the impact of poverty reduction initiatives on the most marginalized children, and of understanding the exclusionary practices that keep certain children and their families consistently at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy.

What does it take to convince local officials and the citizenry at large of the need to focus on children? The arguments are clear and stem from both the legal imperative of being a States-Party signatory to the Convention and the inherent rights of children themselves.

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2003) has clearly laid out the justification. Children are individual people, not possessions of parents, products of the State, or people-in-the-making. Their healthy development and active participation are crucial to the desired future of any city or society. Starting as totally dependent, children become independent with the help of adults. However, because of a long dependency period, they are affected more by the conditions under which they live. Government action or inaction has a more profound effect on children than on their elders. Indeed, the state of children’s wellbeing measures the state of a country’s social, economic, environmental and other developments.

Because children have no vote, without special arrangements their views will not count in government deliberations affecting them. The same potential powerlessness applies to seeking redress for violations of their rights. Unless they are supported by caring adults, poor children will suffer. In a more materialistic sense, one’s situation as a child has a significant bearing on the costs society may incur during that child’s adulthood or, conversely, the contributions he or she may make to society. The urban child’s present and future are thus bound up in how friendly the city is in which he or she is growing up.

A city striving to be child friendly can be identified through its commitment to setting in place nine building blocks in the urban setting: (1) engaging children as active participants – with participation cross-cutting all the building blocks, (2) child friendly laws, (3) a citywide children’s rights strategy based on the Convention, (4) a children’s rights unit or coordinating mechanism in the government structure, (5) regular assessments and evaluations of the impact on children of laws, policies, and practice, (6) a budget earmarked for children, (7) a state-of-the-city’s children report, (8) programs to disseminate awareness of children’s rights, and (9) independent advocacy for children by civil society and other groups actively supported by government (UNICEF IRC 2003).

The Government of the Philippines – UNICEF Country Programme for Children and Its Urban Dimensions: From CPC I to VI (1979-2009)

The UNICEF began its country collaboration with the Philippines in 1947 through a postwar child-feeding exercise. In the next three decades, the program expanded into a supply-driven one aimed at improving maternal and child health and nutrition throughout the country. In 1979, this humanitarian “top-down” orientation shifted to a country programming approach that is holistic, coordinated with government and NGO efforts, and linked to the major issues of development, capacity and resources affecting program delivery. This collaborative country program model has been the hallmark of UNICEF in the Philippines ever since.

Child survival and development, mostly through community and citizen mobilization, dominated CPC I (1979-1982). Given particular attention during this period were the creative and successful efforts of certain NGOs and church groups that were rallying concern for the growing numbers of children on the streets and those living in slums and informal settlements. It soon became clear that programming strategies for rural communities often did not fit urban poor communities. Thus was born the Urban Basic Services (UBS) approach, first pioneered by UNICEF in India and soon afterwards in the Philippines (Racelis and Aguirre 2002, 97-98; Porio, Moselina and Swift 1994, 133-159). UNICEF-assisted efforts in selected cities of the Philippines became famous worldwide because of the strong community participation, effective planning and the partnerships that evolved between NGOs and supportive city governments.

The next phase (CPC II, 1983-1987) addressed the challenge at the national level by building the capacity of key government agencies to backstop community efforts toward basic services delivery. The UBS was tempered by a sharper focus on mobilizing for growth monitoring, oral-rehydration, breastfeeding and immunization. Women were seen not only as mothers, but also as economic providers, community workers and local leaders.

CPC III (1988-1993) accelerated access to basic services by applying tested, cost-effective national-level interventions to selected depressed areas in rural and urban settings while fostering greater commitment to the needs and concerns of children. Advocacy at the highest levels of government, including a World Summit for Children, as well as among NGOs, churches, media and the private sector dominated the programming thrust. With the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990,⁸ followed by the Philippine Plan of Action for Children adopted in 1992, CPC IV (1994-1998) was ushered in. The long-established system for mobilizing around child survival, protection and development would now be reformulated into a child rights approach.

In keeping with this new orientation, CPC V adopt-

ed the Child Friendly Movement (CFM) as its basic strategy for 1999-2004 (GOP-UNICEF 1998). The road map to 2025 would draw on the *Philippine Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children 2000-2025, or Child 21*, as the basis for priority setting and resource allocation toward Filipino children’s rights (CWC 2002). Moreover, disaggregating the child population by stages in the child’s life cycle (infant, young child, school-aged child and adolescent) allowed more targeted support from families, communities, civil society, the private sector and government. Their efforts would be linked to three interrelated program components: (1) communication, (2) local policy and institutional development, and (3) program support for health, nutrition, education, child protection and gender concerns.

New opportunities appeared with the devolution of significant power to local governments in 1992, highlighting the importance of bringing provincial governors and city or municipal mayors on board. The strategy mix in the twenty poorest provinces called initially for major investments in advocacy, technical support and capacity strengthening, combined with model building and service delivery. Five cities from the three largest metropolitan areas would also be included in CPC V, since their informal settlements harbor millions of poor urban children and women.

Child Friendly Cities (CFC) have now taken over from Urban Basic Services as the strategic framework. Selected to pioneer the CFC approaches, and benefiting from UBS’s earlier work with city governments, were the following: in Luzon, Metro Manila’s Pasay, Manila and Quezon Cities; in the Visayas, Cebu City; and in Mindanao, Davao City. Inclusion in the CPC V urban program of cooperation followed four criteria:

- Magnitude of the poverty problem
- Size of the poor population
- Strategic links with major urban programs, like the Urban Health and Nutrition Program for Metro Manila and Metro Cebu
- Continuity of UNICEF assistance

The country program underway, CPC VI, 2005-2009, aims to reduce by at least 50 percent the disparities between the basic child indicators in twenty-four cities and provinces, and the national data by the end of 2009 compared to 2003 levels. Its action plan covers six programs: health and nutrition, education, child protection, HIV/AIDS, communication (to increase the people’s understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and local policy and institutional development to improve the situation of children in local government units. Moreover, CPC VI highlights once again the centrality of organized communities in urban and rural barangays actively initiating and carrying out child friendly programs. The strengthened commitment to community-based efforts as crucial to achieving program objectives for and with children and youth was significantly influenced by the findings of this study.

Urban Poor Children's Access to Their Rights

An Overview

Over the last twenty years, the Philippines has made the transition from a predominantly rural to urban society, with Metro Manila accommodating the largest share of rural to urban migrants. In 2000, 36.8 million, or 48 percent, of the country's total population of 76.5 million lived in urban areas, according to the Census of Population and Housing conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in May of that year. More recent estimates, however, state that the urban population is already 52 percent (Webster, Corpuz and Pablo 2002, 1, citing World Bank 2001b, 1). Thus, based on the NSO's projected population of 85.2 million for 2005, at least 40 million Filipinos – perhaps even 44 million – are urban dwellers at present.

According to statistics of the National Housing Authority (cited in Yabut 2005; Webster, Corpuz and Pablo 2002, 7), in the year 2000, about 1,408,492 urban households in the country, encompassing some 8.4 million people,⁹ were found in informal settlements or slum ("squatter") areas.¹⁰ More than half of them (51.6 percent) resided in Metro Manila (ibid.). In the fourteen cities and three municipalities comprising Metro Manila, 726,908 informal settler households (Yabut 2005), or 4.4 million people,¹¹ clustered in hundreds of depressed neighborhoods as of April 2000. This represents 34 percent, or a third, of the 2,132,989 million households inhabiting Metro Manila in 2000 (NSO 2003b).

Stigmatized for decades as "squatters," organized urban poor groups with their partner NGOs have over the past ten years pressured government, civil society and private sector groups to use the less pejorative term "informal settlers." If demographic predictions of rising urban proportions in the coming fifty years are accurate (80 percent by 2050) and the urban poor continue to make up one-third of city residents, the implications for resources, social unrest and quality of life become staggering (see table 1).

Urban areas account for 75-80 percent of all population growth in the Philippines, with 3 percent rates of increase, in contrast to rural growth rates of less than one percent. One million people move to urban areas each year, with the peak 5 percent increase occurring in the late 1980s. The area just south of Manila has experienced the fastest growth recently at 10 percent, a rate influenced both by in-migration and natural increase. Metro Manila, officially called the National Capital Region (NCR), accounts for 43.5 percent of economic growth, while virtually 100 percent of all employment expansion has occurred there, particularly in manufacturing and services (Webster, Corpuz and Pablo 2002, 1-2). At the end of the twentieth century, demographic patterns indicated an actual decline in Metro Manila's population growth rates in favor of the much more rapidly growing southern expanses of the metropolis. If this trend continues, the Manila mega-urban region, with a 75- to 100-kilometer radius from the city's core, will form a contiguous agglomeration of 30 million people by 2020 (McGee 1995, 5).

Table 1 - Urban population projections for selected years (Philippines)

| Year | Urban population | Urban informal settler population | Total population |
|------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2010 | 56,000,000 (60)* | 18,480,000 (20) | 93,000,000 (100) |
| 2020 | 82,000,000 (70) | 27,060,000 (23) | 117,000,000 (100) |
| 2050 | 127,000,000 (80) | 41,910,000 (60) | 159,000,000 (100) |

*Figures in parentheses denote the percentage equivalent.

Source: McGee (1995).

Cebu and Davao Cities showed remarkable economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s. This was fueled by correspondingly rapid in-migration until the Asian economic crisis of 1997-1998 cut short the economic boom. The Philippines now has 117 centers that qualify as cities by virtue of having a population size of over 150,000. Some 485 more cities are expected by 2020.¹² Even now, urban social infrastructure is already severely constrained. In education, an additional 30,000 classrooms are needed, mainly for students in the lowest 60 percent of the socio-economic scale. Similarly lacking are 118,000 hospital beds and piped water connections for 7 million urban households, while the housing backlog affects 4.5 million households, over half of them in Metro Manila. Less than 10 percent of urban residents are connected to city sewer systems, with a majority still relying on household septic tanks (Webster, Corpuz and Pablo 2002, 7-8).

Already inadequate health systems cannot begin to cope with the problems affecting urban poor residents. Infant mortality is three times higher in slums and informal settlements than in the rest of Metro Manila. Diarrhea and water-borne diseases pose a constant threat, given deplorable levels of sanitation. A 1996 Metro Manila study revealed that 66 percent of informal settlers lacked toilets and therefore resorted to open pits, defecation into waterways, or "wrap and throw." A 1991 study reported that unsafe drinking water contributed to the deaths of 7,610 people in Metro Manila, mostly children, and generated 1,049,910 morbidity cases over one year (Urban Poor Colloquium [2004]).

Researchers note that the lack of potable water and the high cost of locally peddled water have sometimes forced many poor people to opt for cheaper but sometimes contaminated bottled drinks. Coupled with poor dental hygiene (sometimes one toothbrush per family), the heavily sugared drinks threaten nutritional and dental health. Unable to treat multiple cavities, affected children and adolescents cover their mouths, embarrassed that their smile or laughter will reveal blackened or missing teeth. Add to this the availability of cheap "junk food," usually shrimp or corn chips, cookies or candy, which they eat to stave off hunger and substitute occasionally for regular meals.

Five times as many urban poor children suffer from malnutrition than do richer ones. Patronizing street *carinderias* (eating places) of dubious sanitation owing in part to insufficient water for washing hands and

utensils, or buying sometimes contaminated food from local housewives trying to augment their incomes, further undermines children's health status. One can thus understand why diarrhea affects twice as many of the urban poor, especially children, as it does the city's better-off residents. The incidence of tuberculosis is nine times higher than that in wealthier neighborhoods, while poor environmental sanitation and physical crowding heighten respiratory infections and gastrointestinal disorders (Urban Poor Colloquium [2004]).

Coughing and wheezing children afflicted by upper respiratory tract infections are not likely to find quick relief when they are exposed to rain and wind coming through the flimsy cardboard walls and leaky roofs of their houses. Illnesses also develop from the near-toxic levels of air pollution in Metro Manila – and to a lesser extent Cebu and Davao Cities as well – and from the constantly burning, plastic-saturated garbage mountains of scavenger communities. While all city residents are affected, their poorer neighbors suffer disproportionately.

Growing awareness of the plight of informal settlers and their right to better services and a decent life has emerged through the heightened actions of civil society and some enlightened city officials, effective global advocacy and the organized efforts of informal settlers themselves. Especially welcome has been President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's proclamation of government land for turnover to its informal occupants. She also assured informal settlers that they would no longer be evicted or relocated to distant unlivable sites but whenever possible be allowed to remain onsite, protected by legal instruments of tenure security, if not actual titles.

Some of her commitments to improve the situation of the urban poor are appearing in plans for substantial slum upgrading schemes funded through loans from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank. Included in these programs are infrastructure, capacity building for skills development, credit for microenterprise, community participation in local decision making, and pro-poor governance programs. Improved titling and land records management, which also incorporate the tenure security concerns of the urban poor, may achieve significant breakthroughs in Phase II of the Land Administration and Management Project (LAMP) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, supported by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the World Bank.

Moving from proclamation to actual tenure security or landownership certificates has proven far more elusive, however, than earlier envisioned. The institutional mechanisms and legal frameworks to clarify secure tenure rights and sustain urban land transfer initiatives have yet to be worked out. The delay causes anxiety among many urban poor families who fear that political favorites will reap the benefits.

Another threat on the horizon in 2003-2004 came from the new Chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA). Determined to address the deplorable traffic situation, he announced a plan to evict small-scale vendors from their sidewalk perches.

Soon, city personnel descended upon the vendors, confiscating their goods, and in some cases even burning or wrecking their equipment. The clearing actions won high praise from car owners, but elicited dismay and anger among the vendors and urban poor, NGOs, academics and human rights groups, and even some city and municipal mayors. Television channels and radio programs amplified the debate by featuring wide-ranging and disparate views.

Vendors protested their loss of daily income and the authoritarian, punitive character of these government actions. Vendors' associations announced they were willing to negotiate with the MMDA about moving to nearby market areas, provided rental rates were reasonable and enough clients would be attracted to purchase their goods. Urban poor groups feared the return of forced residential evictions. NGOs and academics criticized the MMDA's rationale for implementing the vendor clearance scheme. There was no clear evidence that sidewalk vendors were the cause of traffic congestion more than the proliferation of private cars used by the rich, their parking on city sidewalks, the encroachment by large establishments, including government structures on sidewalks and roadways, and the state of rutted city roads that forced vehicles to slow down to a crawl. Human rights groups deplored the violations of human rights in the shabby treatment of vendors and their goods.

Some local mayors battling turf issues refused to allow MMDA personnel to harass their vendors, pointing out that the latter were constituents and insisting that as city mayors they were better qualified to handle the problem. One declared an area of crowded streets exclusively for pedestrians and vendors, and off-limits to traffic. Another actually invited displaced vendors into his city, saying they added a sound economic base to it. In the end, the power of organized resistance spanning a wide range of indignant stakeholders forced the MMDA's Administrator to abandon his unilateral plan. Attempts are now underway in the individual cities and municipalities involving local authorities and vendors' associations, to find workable compromises acceptable to vendors and car riders alike.

Organized action by community groups often moves slowly, however, when recalcitrant officials resist popular pressures or delay the development of legal and institutional instruments to handle the new arrangements. Despite impressive participation of the affected community residents along the Pasig River, for example, ADB loan programs to the Philippine government for urban slum upgrading and tenure security in Metro Manila lag far behind schedule. Commitment fees are already affecting some of them, increasing the cost of the loan. Bank officials have even raised the disturbing prospect of actual loan cancellation, with serious implications for the country's credit rating. Frustrated by the slow pace of national and local government implementation of Metro Manila urban poor programs, external donors like the ADB have channeled grant funds directly to community-based NGO consortia utilizing the government's Community Mortgage Program (CMP). Notable examples are found in Alabang, Rizal on the fringes of Metro Manila, and Payatas, Quezon City, where upgraded

settlements are rising in some sections of barangays, complete with decent housing and community facilities (Veneracion 2004). Other multilateral donors are turning their energies and loan funds to the more progressive large-, medium- and small-sized regional cities rather than to difficult Metro Manila.

This is the roller coaster policy framework in which frustrated urban informal settlers, especially those in Metro Manila, continue to negotiate their improved wellbeing. What does this mean for their children and youth?

Initiating Research on Urban Poor Children

Because the Child Friendly Cities program has served as the mobilizing framework for enabling urban Filipino children to obtain their rights, it is important to ascertain the extent to which Child Friendly Cities have accomplished this. In 2001, the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) of the Ateneo de Manila University, along with research partners in Cebu and Davao Cities, took on this challenge by initiating a study in five metropolitan cities that were on the child friendly roster – City of Manila, Pasay City, Quezon City, Cebu City and Davao City. With attention to poor children gaining ground and a new UNICEF-Philippines country program, 2005-2009, underway, it became critical to determine whether children, especially the most vulnerable ones, were in fact benefiting from child friendly programs. Further, do urban poor children in Child Friendly Cities or Child Friendly Communities fare better than those in cities or communities not so designated?

In consultation with neighborhood contacts, partner researchers, NGOs, the government represented by then Secretary Corazon Juliano Soliman of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and former Secretary Teresita Quintos Deles of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), and with the support of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, and UNICEF Philippines and New York, the IPC organized an action-research project, “Making Philippine Cities Child Friendly: Voices of Children in Poor Communities.” Its immediate objective was to find out how well children’s rights were being served in Child Friendly Cities, and what could be done to enhance that process. More broadly, it sought to understand the lives of children in informal settlements so as to effect convergence between the reality on the ground and in children’s minds, on the one hand, and the actions of City Hall and collaborating civil society and private sector groups, on the other. This is in keeping with the perspectives of internationally known child and youth advocates:

Documenting the condition of youth living in cities and identifying interventions that are most successful in ameliorating the pernicious effects of urban poverty are the first steps to improving the life circumstances and opportunities of the vast majority of the world population. (Klaus J. Jacobs in his foreword in Tienda and Wilson 2002)

Quantitative and qualitative information focusing on urban poor children becomes all the more necessary in light of the national government’s commitment to reducing poverty. But beyond the rationale of equity and social justice, there is more that compels leaders and society to take heed. Sporadic riots by urban poor groups, such as those in 2001, whether or not fueled by the political opposition, can seriously damage the Administration’s capacity to govern, maintain nationwide stability, and prevent cities from becoming dangerous places in which to live. It is imperative that government, the private sector and civil society *listen* to the voices of the urban poor as a whole, and to their children in particular, and support the latter’s own efforts to organize around the issues most meaningful to them for the betterment of their lives. The challenge for us is to learn, to respond with empathy, and to act by working with them as they struggle toward that better life.

The six chapters that follow this one present the findings of the study. Chapter Two details the research problem, objectives, design and methodology. Chapter Three lays out the national situation regarding child rights according to survival, development, protection and participation norms. Chapter Four looks intensively at children in BASECO, Manila, and Payatas B, Quezon City, who through their voices tell us what it means to grow up poor in the city and what they believe should be done to change their lives for the better. These results are enriched by the views of residents in the two other case study communities, Leon Garcia and Sasa in Davao City. The themes emerging collectively from the children’s reflections round out Chapter Four. Chapter Five examines the same set of child rights discussed in Chapter Three, but this time in the five-city context, drawing on the results of quick appraisals conducted in twenty-seven of their barangays. Chapter Six reviews the various interventions of government and civil society to guarantee more children access to their rights.

The report concludes with Chapter Seven, which assesses child rights achievements in the five cities and highlights key points and recommendations for making Child Friendly Cities live up to their name. Rather than combine all the recommendations, the specific set given by each major group of stakeholders is laid out. Although many of the same recommendations reappear in the statements of the various groups, the authors feel there is particular value in this repetition. Not only does it highlight what is important to the entire body of stakeholders; it also disaggregates the views of (1) poor children and youth from (2) adults in the community and from (3) the city governments and civil society. In this manner, the reader better comprehends what is important to each. By emphasizing the mix and priorities favored by each stakeholder group, the researchers prepare the ground for more targeted solutions while offering important insights into the lifeworlds of poor community residents. The IPC researchers conclude the chapter with an integrated and complementary set of recommendations and accompanying rationales. Three appendices furnish the readers with specific information to supplement the text.

Notes

- 1 Based on 2000 National Housing Authority (NHA) figures (cited in Webster, Corpuz and Pablo 2002, 7; Yabut 2005).
- 2 Self-computed, based on an average household size of six members. While the average size of Filipino families is five, poor families tend to have larger family sizes than nonpoor families. According to the 2000 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the average family size of poor families is 6 whereas it is 4.7 for nonpoor families (Reyes and Valencia 2004, 4).
- 3 Based on the 2000 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO 2003b).
- 4 The barangay is the smallest geopolitical unit in the Philippines, akin to a town or village.
- 5 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) emerged from the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000, at which heads of state committed their countries to achieve specific targets related to advancing development and reducing poverty by 2015 or earlier. The eight major goals are: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (2) achieve universal primary education, (3) promote gender equality and empower women, (4) reduce child mortality, (5) improve maternal health, (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, (7) ensure environmental sustainability, and (8) foster global partnership for development. These eight goals are in turn supported by eighteen time-bound targets and forty-eight measurable indicators (Purdue 2004; UNDP 2003).
- 6 Self-computed, based on an average household size of six members for poor families (Reyes and Valencia 2004, 4).
- 7 In the Philippines, NGOs are considered as intermediate support or advocacy organizations, and are distinguished from organized membership groups at community or grassroots levels known as people's organizations. Elsewhere, POs are more commonly called community-based organizations, or CBOs.
- 8 The Philippines was among the first twenty countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, enabling the latter to come into force soon after its passage.
- 9 Self-computed, based on an average household size of six members for poor families (Reyes and Valencia 2004, 4).
- 10 The Asian Development Bank (1999) has a much higher estimate of the number of informal settler households in the Philippines – 2.5 million as against the National Housing Authority's official count of 1.4 million.
- 11 Self-computed, based on an average household size of six members for poor families (Reyes and Valencia 2004, 4).
- 12 Criteria for "highly urbanized cities" specify a minimum population of 200,000 and an annual income of P50 million (slightly less than US\$900,000; US\$1=PhP56). The Philippines's 7,100 islands are geographically clustered into three island groups, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Administratively, as of 31 December 2004, these were divided into 17 regions, 79 provinces, 117 cities, 1,500 municipalities and 419,745 barangays (NSCB 2005a).

2

STUDYING POOR CHILDREN IN URBAN SETTLEMENTS

The Research Design

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's promise to the urban poor in 2001 that they could look forward to a better life under her administration offered a golden opportunity to bring out the issues related to urban poor children's rights. For unless their specific wellbeing was addressed, they could easily be taken for granted and find themselves marginalized in the overall drive toward poverty reduction and improved wellbeing.

To ascertain the rights situation of urban poor children, who can better articulate their concerns than the children themselves? Helping them in this process were parents, neighbors, local leaders, government and NGO community workers, faith-based groups, police, association heads, teachers, principals, city and barangay officials, credit and service providers, small-scale manufacturers, entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals. Encouraging these knowledgeable persons or stakeholders to focus on children's needs and rights, and propose appropriate strategies geared to the children's best interests yielded important insights into how Child Friendly Cities should operate. Needed was information on whether mechanisms appropriately used by city governments to benefit urban children were being scaled up and sustained through new or revitalized institutional structures and procedures.

Any research on children in informal settlements will offer greater insights if it disaggregates "urban poor children" into significant subgroupings. Children themselves can help identify relevant socioeconomic hierarchies and clusters of vulnerability. Earlier studies have shown community residents to be capable of differentiating levels of poverty among families: (1)

poor but slightly better-off than others, (2) hard up, and (3) destitute/living from hand to mouth (*isang kahig, isang tuka*) (Racelis and Guevara forthcoming). Other criteria for disaggregation apply to gender, education, age, ethnicity or regional origin, religion, residential location, household type, work status, disability, special circumstances and other distinctions the community itself might emphasize.

The IPC study on urban poor children covered twenty-eight poor barangays in five metropolitan cities: Manila, Pasay, and Quezon Cities in Metro Manila; Cebu City in the Visayas; and Davao City in Mindanao (see figure 1). The definition of children followed the age standard of 0-17 years used by both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Philippine government's highest policymaking body on children's concerns, the Council for the Welfare of Children.¹

The aim of the research was to *listen to disadvantaged children and youth* in urban informal settlements and encourage them to talk about their material conditions, their feelings, opinions and aspirations. The results would generate an accurate and sensitive profile of this important group, along with its own recommendations for attaining better lives.

Noting the child friendly successes claimed by the five city governments working in collaboration with UNICEF, and given the strong poverty reduction and child rights focus of the Macapagal-Arroyo Administration, researchers examined the record and looked beyond the successes claimed by Child Friendly City (CFC) programs to ascertain whether they were reaching the most deprived children and youth. In effect, the study attempts to find out how child friendly the five designated "Child Friendly Cities" actually are for the poorest.

Research Objectives

1. Differentiate and classify subgroupings of poor and vulnerable children and youth in urban informal settlements found in large Philippine cities.
 2. Ascertain, according to differentiated categories, urban poor children and youth's self-definitions and self-descriptions of their basic characteristics and aspirations, their daily lives and their physical environment; perceptions of government and other programs; experiences and views of civil society organizations and the private sector; perceptions of middle- and upper-class children and youth; and suggestions for improving their own lives.
 3. Identify existing practices of families or households, local organizations and external associations, and other processes affecting the wellbeing of children and youth through the rights lens of survival, development, protection and participation. Accompanying concepts are advocacy, environment sustainability, good governance or, more negatively, abuse, neglect, violence, crime, drugs, child labor, family disorganization, and so forth.
 4. Review the Child Friendly City and poverty reduction programs of the respective city governments in terms of their impact on poor children and youth, as well as on their families and communities; in light of the emerging data, determine the requirements and procedures for the reorientation of local and national governments toward
5. partnerships with residents of informal settlements for the wellbeing of the poorest and most vulnerable children and youth.
 5. Serve as a pilot project in concepts and methodologies for understanding the needs and views of urban informal settler children and youth in large and smaller cities throughout the country and globally, with a view to enhancing the conceptual framework and methodologies of Child Friendly Cities, and increasing the efficacy of poverty reduction programs for the poorest and most disadvantaged children and youth. In this regard, involve the community, and the children and youth in particular, in the research process and, at the end of the data-gathering phase, seek their comments and suggested revisions at feedback sessions organized in their community settings.
 6. Inform and enrich UNICEF country programs in the Philippines and in other countries aiming to reach the poorest and most disadvantaged children and youth in urban areas; provide UNICEF with documented cases of community-based approaches and initiatives for urban poor children and youth and their linkages with city governments for possible dissemination to other UNICEF country programs.
 7. Enhance the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre's global role in promoting research and data collection, information exchange and networking on Child Friendly Cities.

Figure 1 - Map of the Philippines showing the five CPC cities



The Research Team

The IPC social scientists and research assistants handled the Metro Manila investigations, while in Cebu and Davao Cities equivalent teams with the addition of NGO leaders carried out the studies. In keeping with its commitment to foster partnerships with existing regional institutions rather than fielding Metro Manila researchers to the regions, the IPC entered into a collaborative relationship with two sets of academic and NGO colleagues. In Cebu, a senior sociologist affiliated with the University of the Philippines, and Lihok Pilipina, an NGO with programs and close ties to informal settler neighborhoods, undertook the study. In Davao City, the investigation was conducted by the Social Research Training and Development Office of the Ateneo de Davao University. Consultations among the three teams occurred frequently, with the co-project director in Manila making periodic visits to the two regional cities for coordination purposes.

Phases

The project was implemented in three phases. First conducted were the quick appraisals, followed by the case studies, and finally, analysis, report writing and stakeholder consultations. The quick appraisal phase applied to virtually all of the study sites (27 of 28), while the case studies were carried out only in Metro Manila and Davao City, each having two sites.

Quick Appraisal

Quick appraisals in twenty-seven barangays in the five cities examined the situation of urban children and youth with a focus on the poorest in relation to the twenty-four goals or indicators for survival, protection, development and participation rights. These are listed in the *Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children 2000-2025, or Child 21* (see table 2).

The researchers identified the existing CFC activities in a community and the groups that were engaged in them. Other initiatives for children and youth were likewise explored. Interviews with key informants at each site provided experiential accounts of the situation of children and youth in their barangays, and actions taken or programs introduced to improve their conditions. These informants were generally adult residents, like Barangay Council members, local government health staff, members of community- and faith-based organizations, and NGOs, but also included children and youth themselves (see appendix A for the Quick Appraisal Interview Guide).

The researchers then investigated the degree of awareness of these activities as expressed by the respondents. Those who knew of CFC and CFC-related activities were asked to assess these activities based on their usefulness and their impact on children and youth.

Case Study

The case studies featured a more intensive look at the situation of the cities' poorest urban children and youth. Funding constraints allowed a focus only on four communities: two in Davao City and two in Metro Manila. Selected for each city were one CPC site and one non-CPC site, the difference between the two being inclusion or noninclusion, respectively, in the GOP-UNICEF Fifth Country Programme for Children (CPC V, 1999-2004). Specifically, the CPC barangays were Leon Garcia in Davao City and Payatas in Quezon City, Metro Manila, whereas the non-CPC barangays were Sasa in Davao City and BASECO (Barangay 649) in Manila. The case studies allowed an in-depth examination of existing CFC activities and their impact on children and youth in these four communities.

As in the quick appraisals, all twenty-four indicators were reviewed. However, for the case studies, groups of children and youth from 4 to 17 years were specifically brought into the research through focus group discussions (FGDs), play sessions and individual interviews highlighting their perspectives and experiences. When the findings were consolidated, the research team returned to the communities and gathered several of the child respondents across the age groups to feed back the results and record their reactions. The period of time the researchers spent in a case study community was much longer than that for the quick appraisal.

Table 2 - The twenty-four indicators according to the four child rights components

| Child rights component | Indicator |
|------------------------|--|
| Survival | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children are registered at birth. All infants are exclusively breastfed up to about 6 months. All children are fully immunized against tuberculosis, DPT, polio and measles. All children 0-2 years old are weighed monthly. All children are well nourished. All children 1-5 years old are given vitamin A capsules twice a year. All births are attended by trained personnel. All pregnant women get at least four complete prenatal checkups. All mothers are fully immunized against tetanus. All pregnant/lactating mothers are given sufficient doses of vitamin A and iron. All pregnant women who are at risk get emergency obstetric care. All pregnancies are spaced at least two years apart. All families have safe drinking water. All families use only iodized salt. All families use sanitary latrine. |
| Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children 3-5 years old attend early education programs. All children 6-17 years old are in school and finishing their schooling (both in elementary and high school). All children graduating from elementary and high school pass the achievement tests. All out-of-school children are given alternative education. All illiterate parents/caregivers are enrolled in functional literacy programs. All fathers and mothers share in the care and rearing of children. |
| Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children are removed from exploitative and hazardous labor, prostitution and pornography. All cases of physical and sexual abuse and violence are eliminated in the home and the community. |
| Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children aged 12 to 17 years participate in sociocultural and community development activities. |

Analysis, Report Writing and Stakeholder Consultations

With the fieldwork, data analysis and reports of the first two phases completed, the final phase entailed analyzing the data and writing the overall report. Since the study was a participatory one that encouraged the involvement of community members, stakeholders and policymakers beyond merely serving as informants, feedback sessions were held in the four case study sites. There the results were presented to a community assembly, including children, the focus being on the findings from their barangay. This kind of interaction enabled the research teams to check their results and seek the community's suggestions for improving the report. The consultations also transmitted to community residents and stakeholders information that could help them plan activities and other community initiatives for children and youth, especially the most vulnerable ones.

Once the revisions of the reports, based on the community validation sessions, had been consolidated, UNICEF organized an intercity consultation around the findings. In these sessions, the individual city research teams, which included a local young person or community leader, presented the results of their portion of the study to key officials of the five cities. Field visits to the Cebu City community sites helped bring the findings into sharper focus. The lead researchers added the analysis, conclusions and implications for cities aiming to serve their most deprived children.

One clear outcome of the consultation was a giant leap forward in local awareness of the rights or deficiencies experienced by poor, younger citizens. This transformation stemmed in part from the actual information presented, but more so from the elaboration of the data, *by community residents themselves*. Unaccustomed to hearing poor adults and young people articulate their own local data so clearly, the impressed government officials overcame their initial surprise with enthusiastic affirmations of support for the community's proposals. Indeed, the powerful presentations had a dramatic emotional impact on the entire audience.

During the final session, policymakers, NGOs and other stakeholders – in consultation with the community representatives, to whom they displayed new attitudes of respect – worked out revised plans of action for the forthcoming final year of CPC V drawn from the study findings. Indeed, the youth representative from Quezon City proved so eloquent and articulate that the City Administrator offered her a paid position as youth adviser to the Mayor's Office then and there! Many of the other officials present cited the interaction with knowledgeable community residents as the highpoint of the consultation experience. They came away with a greater appreciation, even admiration, of informal settlers as fellow human beings and constituents.

The community feedback sessions at the end of the field investigations served to validate the researchers' findings and interpretations while making good their promise to share the findings and

analysis with the community, and even help them with action planning. These gatherings were attended by representatives of many different groups in government and civil society in the case study barangays. Not only did they learn a good deal about themselves and the situation of their children and youth; residents and barangay officials alike became more aware of programs and services intended to improve children's and family well-being. They looked forward to receiving copies of the report, as promised, once it was published.

The feedback sessions also legitimized the youth's questioning publicly the often negative judgments parents and elders made about adolescents especially. Criticized as lacking discipline, showing disrespect to parents, and generally being troublemakers, the youth countered that parents themselves were often sources of stress and abuse. Instead of giving nurturance and love, they punished their children heavily for even small infractions. Nor were adults always the best role models for their children, considering the gambling and drinking that went on in the community. If only parents and officials would try to understand the perspectives of youth, and provide acceptable ways of harnessing their energy, explained the young people, they would not likely venture into gangs, fraternities and illegal activities. Parents should accept that they, too, needed to learn how to communicate better with their children. Only in such an open setting, defined as "community analysis of data feedback" with the IPC research team, could young people have made these accusations in front of parents and officials and gotten away with them!

Selection of Research Sites

The twenty-five pilot areas of the GOP-UNICEF Fifth Country Programme for Children include twenty provinces and five cities. The researchers selected the same five pilot cities to serve as the research sites. Twenty-eight barangays from among Cebu, Davao, Manila, Pasay and Quezon Cities thus became the study areas for the quick appraisals and case studies.

Quick Appraisal Sites

Quick appraisals were carried out in all barangays but Payatas in Quezon City. Of the twenty-seven, sixteen were CPC and eleven non-CPC (see table 3). There were five barangays each in Cebu, Pasay and Quezon Cities and six each in the cities of Davao and Manila.

The CPC sites in each city were chosen by UNICEF based on their status as model or pilot barangays in the Child Friendly Movement. Cebu City elaborated on the criteria that led to the selection of its five model child friendly barangays: size of the urban poor population, low infant mortality, low prevalence of underweight children, high cohort survival rate, low number of families with children in need of special protection (CNSP), strong presence of day care centers, functional Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), good number of NGOs working in the area, peace and order, and strong political will measured by the barangay budget allocation for children's concerns.

The non-CPC sites in the Metro Manila cities (Manila, Pasay, Quezon) were chosen in consultation with government officials of the respective city governments as well as UNICEF. Similarly, the two non-CPC sites in Davao City were designated by UNICEF with the support of the research institutions slated to conduct the study there. The two non-CPC sites in Cebu City, however, were selected mainly because of their high population density and large proportion of urban poor families. However, these fell outside the category of model or pilot areas that characterized CPC sites.

Case Study Sites

Four barangays became the case study sites, with three of them also quick appraisal areas. Payatas, which was not one of the twenty-seven quick appraisal areas, was the fourth case study site. Two of the case study barangays were located in Davao City and the other two in Manila and Quezon City (see table 4).

The selection of CPC and non-CPC barangays was done in consultation with UNICEF, usually by the program officer assigned to the particular city.

Research Methods and Techniques

The study utilized primary data-gathering methods such as interviews, focus group discussions and observation throughout the project period, but mostly during the quick appraisal phase. Secondary data such as census materials, municipal data on the study communities, national and city government development plans for children, and previous research on children and urban poor communities were simultaneously gathered and reviewed.

Interviews

Researchers obtained primary data mainly through interviews with key informants in the communities, government officials and others who held significant positions in local organizations and groups. Where certain community data such as population, socio-economic and some health characteristics were lacking, particularly in the three Metro Manila sites, the researchers elicited the data through interviews. These proved to be an effective means of collecting the greatest amount of information on the broadest combination of topics. Most key informants in the community, including children, readily agreed to take part in the research and were even eager to be interviewed (see appendix B for the list of interviews conducted with children in the case study sites). This was not the case, however, with government officials. Their interviews often had to be rescheduled owing to their heavy workload and unavailability.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were conducted in the quick appraisal phase whenever possible but served as the primary technique for the case studies. Children, youth and adult members of the community in Metro

Table 3 - Project sites for the quick appraisal phase

| City | CPC barangay | Non-CPC barangay | Total number of sites |
|--------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cebu | Lorega Sambag II Tinago | Basak San Nicolas Inayawan | 5 |
| Davao | Agdao Centro Agdao Proper Leon Garcia | Buhangin Sasa Bangkerohan (5A) | 6 |
| Manila | 29 (Mabuhay) 177 (Isla San Juan) 836 (Jesus Extension) 576 (Riles) | 649 (BASECO) 275 (Parola) | 6 |
| Pasay | 201 (Kalayaan) 157 (Apelo) 165 (Malibay) | 37 (Leveriza) 193 (NIA) | 5 |
| Quezon | Bagong Silangan Batasan Hills Commonwealth | Bahay Toro Tagumpay | 5 |
| Total | 16 | 11 | 27 |

Table 4 - Project sites for the case study phase

| City | CPC site | Non-CPC site | Total number of sites |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Davao | Leon Garcia | Sasa | 2 |
| Metro Manila | Payatas (Quezon City) | BASECO (City of Manila) | 2 |
| Total | 2 | 2 | 4 |

Manila participated in the FGDs, as did government officials and organization leaders and members in Cebu and Davao City.

Researchers posed questions related to the twenty-four CFC indicators, as well as on awareness and descriptions of programs and activities for children and youth. Additional FGD techniques tailored to different age groups of children and youth were developed (see appendix C for samples of FGD modules for children aged 4-7, 8-11, and 12 years and above; and appendix B for the list of FGDs held in the case study sites).

Observation

The use of participant observation was undeniably crucial not only in gathering data but also in interpreting them. This approach enabled the researchers to generate sound data, as the perspectives of officials on the community situation differed greatly from the views provided by local children, youth and adults.

Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data were obtained from health centers, national and city government offices, local associations and libraries. Reports and other written and documented sources were examined for relevant

information. Gaining access to government sources posed a challenge owing to the tedious requirement of having to request permission for the release of certain information, including that on health and education. This was especially true in Metro Manila, where the researchers had to submit several letters of request for data filed in government offices. Bound reports were more readily available, especially if they were published. Internet sources were likewise consulted and enhanced the information already at hand.

Research on and with Children

Engaging children in research calls for creative approaches intended to hold their interest and generate their replies. Since this type of research is not common, we elaborate in some detail here on how it was conducted. Further details are contained in appendix C.

Because no single approach could be carried out that applied to the entire age span of 4 to 17, the IPC research team, with the valuable assistance of an experienced child psychologist, developed FGD techniques appropriate for each age cluster. These FGD modules were used in the case studies of BASECO, Manila, and Payatas, Quezon City.²

The case study phases in BASECO and Payatas in Metro Manila, and in Leon Garcia and Sasa in Davao City all began with their respective community consultations at which the research objectives and methodology of the CFC project were explained; in BASECO, this session included a report on the findings of the quick appraisal earlier conducted in the barangay. The consultation in Payatas lasted three hours and involved seventy men and women from the community, a third of whom were youth. Similarly, the two consultations in BASECO each took three hours to conduct and drew in a total of seventy to seventy-five participants. For Leon Garcia and Sasa, the Davao research team did not hold large community consultations, but instead pursued a series of consultative meetings with particular groups in the community (barangay officials and nongovernmental representatives; mothers; children and youth), with no more than fifteen individuals present at a session.

The community consultations or consultative meetings in all the four case study sites aimed to enhance the research design and tools (i.e., FGD modules), locate the areas in the community where the poorest children and youth were likely to reside, ascertain the characteristics of the more vulnerable and excluded children, and identify individual child and youth participants for the FGDs and key informant interviews. A community consultation with adults and young people in BASECO, for example, suggested that for a fairly representative sample, respondents from each of the thirteen blocks as well as from the fire-affected area should be selected. In one residential area, girls aged 8 to 12 years took the researchers around to meet children in the area and encourage them to join the focus group. Some mem-

bers of people's organizations (POs) or community groups attended the sessions to pretest the FGD modules and gave suggestions for improving them.

The stipulation that children join the FGD on a voluntary basis meant that the rapport and trust between them and the researchers had to be strong. The latter therefore spent a good deal of time and energy visiting homes and neighborhoods, hanging around playgrounds, reading to the children, listening to their stories, and simply chatting with them. The team circulated flyers about the project, inviting children to join.

Levels of cognitive development, or age, affected both the length and flow of the focus groups in BASECO and Payatas, where FGD participants were disaggregated by age. Children 4-6 years old had either very short or very long sessions. Silence marked the former because they could not understand concepts like poverty if too concisely explained. Long discussions stemmed from the problem of too extended an explanation. Questions thus had to be repeated for clarity. The 7- to 13-year-olds eagerly awaited the games and drawing sessions around children's rights. Focus groups with youth finished faster as the flow of conversation went smoothly. The children enjoyed the "icebreaker" activities utilized to accelerate the process and bring out very shy individuals. Observation and informal conversations with children on the part of the researcher, at a time when they were relaxed, added greatly to the reporting.

Since the venue of the FGD had to be spacious, properly lit, well ventilated, with a clean floor that the children could sit on (not easy prerequisites in a crowded settlement), and allow an air of informality, the sessions were usually held at the onsite office of an NGO, or a larger house, or the chapel, or a classroom. Children were invited to come at a certain day and time, and the collaborating PO or community group followed up. It was emphasized to them that participation was entirely voluntary. Also crucial was a correct understanding by the children and their parents as to the purpose of the information-gathering sessions. This explanation was given to preclude any expectations of future benefits, like participating in a feeding program or obtaining a scholarship.

Children and youth in four age groups, 4-6, 7-10, 11-13, and 14-17, joined the focus group play or discussion sessions centering on their particular needs and perspectives. Participants in the youngest groups (4-6) were selected according to their levels of risk. Low-risk 4- to 6-year-olds were classified as follows: those who eat three meals a day, attend day care, have intact families who care for them, and do not work full-time or only very irregularly. In contrast, high-risk young children are malnourished, do not attend day care, have problem families whose parents or caregivers do not actively care for them, and regularly work outside the home. Since the responses of the two sets reveal more commonalities than differences, discussion of the findings in Chapter Four applies to *both* high-risk and low-risk groups.

A total of fifty-eight girls and boys aged 4 to 17

years in Payatas, and eighty in BASECO, were consulted either as participants in focus groups or as key informants (see appendix B). For age groups that were difficult to convene, like the out-of-school youth, the researchers adopted the key informant interview approach. Except for the five individual interviews with nonschooling youth in Payatas, all sessions were carried out in groups. Participants were further classified into subgroups: high risk or low risk (4-6), schooling or nonschooling (7-10, 11-13, 14-17). Participants aged 14 to 17 years were separated according to gender. Owing to staff and time constraints, the research team limited the size of each subgroup to four or five participants for the 4-6 group, and five to fourteen for the rest of the age groups.

Poor children and youth expressed their views and perceptions of their situation through drawing, collage-making and play sessions, which encouraged them to explain what they had drawn. The female researchers, whom the children were encouraged to call "Ate" (Older Sister) – that is, "Ate E-anne" or "Ate Jaja" – sat on the floor with the children, maintaining an air of informality and play while raising questions with the groups in lively discussion and storytelling formats. Some of the more challenging tasks were to get the full attention of the children and keep them focused on the activity. Snacks and refreshments were served, a very important feature for poor children. They were easily distracted by noise and by other participants eating, drinking, talking and getting up to go to the toilet. Attention spans were short, calling for frequent repeating or reformulating of the questions.

This meant that the researchers had to document the session by using tape recorders rather than pen and paper, as the children's conversations and actions required the adults' full concentration. In recording these sessions on tape, the researchers sought the permission of the children. To retain the latter's interest, the researchers had to be prepared to shift to another technique, like using flashcards, playing games, or moving to another venue. Those children who had experienced a classroom environment or a community of other children even for a short time participated more effectively with higher-quality contributions. They could express themselves and articulate their thoughts better, and present more concrete ideas on what they wanted to draw and how they intended to use the colors. At the same time, one child with no formal schooling revealed astonishing in-depth knowledge of her situation and reflected soundly on her situation and her family's.

Group dynamics were such that researchers had to come to grips with domineering respondents who always wanted their way and who tended to answer all the questions until the researcher specifically invited others to comment or show and explain their artwork. Some participants would threaten their groupmates or bully children with physical disabilities. Girls were more responsive and had more to say than boys who were more playful but less expressive. Most participants behaved like typical youngsters, playing, poking fun at one another, arguing,

talking too much or too little, or being extremely shy.

The use of flashcards featuring actual pictures constructed to show selected child rights proved useful in eliciting active responses. Speculating excitedly on what the images meant, compared to talking abstractly about "rights," sparked the children's imagination. They greatly enjoyed the creative sequence in which they were asked to imagine themselves as some kind of animal or object, and explain why they chose it. The influence of animated programs on television was apparent here. Rather than think up an image and draw it, the children found it easier to react to and comment extensively on a picture already drawn.

It soon became clear that while drawing or reacting to pictures elicited enthusiastic commentary, other creative ways of attracting children's interest and responses were needed. This was because children who had not yet entered school or who, although older, had never been to school were unaccustomed to handling a crayon or pencil, and therefore felt uncomfortable participating. More appropriate techniques to be tested in the future are oral and visual techniques, like role play, drama and songs.

The entire process revealed that children possessed intimate knowledge of their own realities, problems and needs, and could furnish reliable information on these. The older children and adolescents, in particular, improved various aspects of the research design, for example, the distinctions between the high-risk and low-risk groups. They could point out in which parts of the barangay representatives of these two groups could be found. To them are also credited the identification of spaces more conducive to the FGDs than the ones initially selected by the researchers. This resulted in better facilities, more comfortable and quieter premises, and greater safety for gang members who did not want to be visible to rival gangs.

Since researchers encouraged children to help decide on aspects of the FGD process, a sharing of power between researchers and the children was established. With the children unused to being treated as peers, or equals, by adults, the situation was a novel and enjoyable one for them. Assessed against Hart's Ladder of Participation (see Chapter Five, page 181), this IPC research process "on and with children" falls between steps 5 (consulted and informed) and 6 (adult-initiated, shared decisions with children) (Hart 1992, 1997; Earls and Carlson 2002, 76). As in Hart's step 6, outsiders (IPC) planned the research and carried out the analysis, but involved children and the community through participatory methods and processes at certain stages of the research process.

Recapitulation

The research effort attempted to be comprehensive in merging standard methodologies with more innovative ones. Approaches combined quantitative and qualitative data collection, participation by community members, and community feedback sessions on the results involving children and youth, community

leaders, civil society workers, and local and city government officials. Tape recordings of the interviews and FGDs with consenting children, youth and adults enabled the researchers to reproduce their statements verbatim. Those spoken in Cebuano were translated into Tagalog/Filipino. An English transla-

tion was also developed for international readers of this report.

In the next chapter, we present the first data set featuring the national picture for Filipino children with regard to survival, development, protection and participation rights.

Notes

- 1 The age 17 marking the end of childhood is understood in the Philippines as encompassing the entire seventeenth year until the day before one's eighteenth birthday. Adulthood begins at 18.
- 2 In the two other case study sites – Barangays Leon Garcia and Sasa in Davao City – young children (ages 4-7) were not included in the focus group sessions, thus obviating the need to use the FGD module developed for this age group. Specifically, the three focus groups in Sasa involved only adolescents (13- to 18-year-olds; six to eight participants per

FGD), whereas the three sessions in Leon Garcia combined older children and adolescents (9- to 17-year-olds; six to eight participants per FGD). The Davao research team basically used the same module in all its FGDs in Leon Garcia and Sasa, which featured questions on children's experiences of stress and hardship, coping mechanisms, definitions and attributions of poverty, perceptions of middle- and upper-class children, views of government and nongovernmental (private) services for children and youth, and recommendations for improving their lives.

3

SURVIVAL, DEVELOPMENT, PROTECTION AND PARTICIPATION RIGHTS: A NATIONAL OVERVIEW

We are poor. We know that because we are not able to eat three times a day, we don't go to school and we don't have clothes. We can't buy things like a TV or radio, and we live in a squatter area. Children like us work to add to our parents' income, but sometimes we work because our parents don't have an income.
– Children in Leon Garcia, Davao City

The problems at home together with lack of supervision from parents may have led to some of the bad behavior among our teenagers. But you cannot lay the blame solely on us. Since many of us here are poor, we need to work doubly hard in order to survive. So we have very little time to really monitor the activities of our children. Programs for teenagers are very minimal, aside from the summer basketball league. The Youth Council is not functioning as the Chair has not been active since he began working. Nor does the Barangay Council do much to improve our children's lives.
– Mothers in Leon Garcia, Davao City

Child rights for the 33 million Filipino children under 18 emerge in programs on child survival, development, protection, and participation. The strategy calls for transforming the Convention on the Rights of the Child from a legal framework to a well-defined, nationwide Child Friendly Movement. The road-map, or *Child 21*, is a government document that offers guidelines for translating the *Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children 2000-2025*, into action (CWC 2000). Later

additions are the Millennium Development Goals, the achievement of which is expected to redound to the benefit of children and women (GOP-UN 2003).

In major metropolitan cities, along with smaller urban centers in thirty provinces, mayors are urged to take the leadership in mobilizing all sectors to place children at the center of public attention. The implications for cities joining the Child Friendly Movement are renewed drives to serve and guarantee the rights of millions of poor and marginalized children growing up in urban informal settlements.

Poor and Nonpoor Urban Children

Worldwide literature on the environmental health conditions of children in urban informal settlements shows distressing comparisons *within* city populations. Data comparing Metro Manila with Delhi and Karachi show interesting similarities and differences. Although the comparison is dated in citing infant mortality rates (IMRs) from as far back as 1992, it is nonetheless useful to see where Metro Manila fits in this Asian picture. In Metro Manila, the IMRs reported for nonpoor children in 1992 were 76 per 1,000 live births, but for poor children a high 210! This comes close to the rate in the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao, the country's poorest. For other Asian cities with similar distortions, the IMR differences between nonpoor and poor children were 18 and 180 in Delhi, and 32 and 152 in Karachi, respectively.

In 1992, Metro Manila's infant deaths happened 2.8 times more frequently in poor areas than in non-poor areas. The comparable information for Delhi was 10 times and for Karachi 4.6 times. Yet, the wider discrepancies between non-poor and poor in the

subcontinent hardly allow Filipino urban authorities room for complacency. The actual IMRs for the city's poor children during the the same period were substantially lower in Karachi (152/1000) and Delhi (180/1000) than in Metro Manila (210/1000). Further, the incidence of diarrhea among poor families in Metro Manila was twice that of nonpoor families, for typhoid four times, and for tuberculosis nine times (*EHP Capsule Report* 1996, 2, citing Silimperi 1992 and World Bank 1993).

More recent studies confirm the aforementioned finding that differences in IMR exist among socioeconomic groups in the Philippines. The 2003 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO) shows that the IMR of the poorest quintile (42/1000) is over two times higher than that of the richest quintile (19/1000) (NSO and ORC Macro 2004, 109). Even more distressing, the under-5 mortality rate of the lowest quintile (66/ 1000) is thrice that of the highest quintile (21/1000) (*ibid.*). Variations in under-5 mortality rates are also based on location, with rural areas worse off than urban areas. The under-5 mortality rate for rural areas, at 52 per 1,000 live births, is almost double that for urban areas at 30 per 1,000 (*ibid.*).

The updated IMR for Metro Manila based on the 2003 NDHS shows significant improvement at 24 per 1,000 live births (*ibid.*). This average is misleading, however. If this is multiplied by 2.8 for urban poor areas in Metro Manila on the assumption of virtually no change since 1992 between well-off and poor infants, the IMR would come to 67.2 per 1,000 for the latter. Even then the figure is probably understated since the 24 per 1,000 IMR already includes poor children.

The scarcity of data comparing the urban non-poor with the poor makes it extremely difficult to track levels of inequity over time, however. Thus, mayors cannot rest on their city's laurels, for example, in contributing to the national average of 82.4 percent for completed polio immunization, when the comparable figure for measles vaccination at twelve months still comes to only 38.6 percent. The number of measles cases and actual deaths are highest in the National Capital Region (NCR), with densely crowded poor urban neighborhoods likely to be the sites of major infection (CWC 2002, 19).

Thus, in assessing any basic services improvement programs, urban authorities must always ask the question, *who* were the children *not* reached, and *why*? And, *what* steps can the city authorities take to find those left out – probably the most deprived and vulnerable children – in order to rectify these glaring disparities and gross violations of basic rights?

The National Anti-Poverty Commission has affirmed that child and family wellbeing cannot be assured unless the roots of poverty and exclusion are simultaneously addressed. Its poverty reduction strategies speak of this by focusing on five basic elements disaggregated by gender: asset reform, access to basic services, opportunities for livelihood and employment, participation in governance and institution building, and social protection and security from

violence. These priorities were spelled out soon after President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office and reaffirmed during her 2004 inauguration. Despite a recent economic downturn in the wake of worldwide recession, political instability and terrorist threats, she pledged her administration would bring down poverty and establish a better life for millions more Filipinos. In the face of massive onslaughts on her leadership in 2005, she continues to affirm her commitment to poverty reduction.

As this study analyzes data on the situation and rights of children in five major Philippine cities (Chapter Five), it is useful at the outset to view Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao children within the overall national frame. In this chapter, the four basic sets of child rights are highlighted for Filipino children as *a whole*, thereby providing a backdrop against which to assess the urban poor children studied here.

Right to Survival

Child Health

Over the past decade, notable improvements have been noted in the health of 12 million children below 7 years of age. Infant mortality declined from 34 per 1,000 live births in 1990, to 29 in 2003, according to the 2003 NDHS (NSO and ORC Macro 2004, xxi). Mortality levels in urban areas are much lower than in rural areas (24/1000, compared to 36/1000) (*ibid.*). Under-5 child mortality rates have shown a similarly positive slide from 80 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 67 in 1995, and 40 in 2003 (*ibid.*). The Millennium Development Goals call for reducing under-5 mortality by two-thirds to 26.7 per 1,000 live births by 2015 (GOP-UN 2003, 33; GOP-UN 2005, 72).

The Philippines became polio-free in 2000 (CWC 2002, 15). Stunting (height for age) among under-5 children decreased from 34 percent in 1999 to 31.4 percent in 2001, but wasting (weight for height) increased slightly between 1998 and 2001, from 6 to 6.3 percent (*ibid.*, 23). The highest prevalence of malnutrition is found among one- to two-year-olds. This is when breastfeeding stops yet supplementary food is not sufficient to meet the child's requirements (UNICEF 2004, 3). Modest improvements appear in child nutrition, with 7 of 10 children well nourished (CWC 2002, 25). Although these positive developments merit praise, the new poverty focus directs attention to the still malnourished 3 out of 10, who probably belong to the poorest families.

Iron and iodine deficiencies remain high, judging from the incidence of anemia at 30.6 percent, and goiter among both children and women. Although awareness of iodized salt is a high 80 percent, only 25 percent of households actually use it. It is thus no surprise that moderate to severe iodine deficiency affects one-third of all children 7 to 12 (*ibid.*). Vitamin A deficiency among preschool children worsened from 35 percent in 1993 to 38 percent in 1998, this despite mass supplementation campaigns (*ibid.*, 24). Acute respiratory infections continued to plague one in ten children under 5, while only 57 percent of

mothers knew how to deal with pneumonia (GOP-UNICEF 1997, 63). Moreover, the incidence of asthma and other respiratory illnesses appears to be rising in Metro Manila, owing to the high, near-toxic levels of air pollution.

Disabilities affect one out of five children (CWC 2002, 60). The poor among them are most vulnerable to complications from illnesses that render them blind, lame or otherwise incapacitated. Not only are they readily exposed to epidemics in densely packed neighborhoods; they also lack access to effective preventive or curative care, owing in part to overcrowded, under-resourced government health centers and the economic inaccessibility of private medical care. The threat of HIV-AIDS adds to the vulnerability of the poor. Between 1984 and 2002, HIV infections in the country reported for children reached 38, while actual AIDS cases came to 15. Although the incidence appears low relative to neighboring countries like Thailand, the rising number of cases nonetheless calls for shattering complacency through effective information campaigns and prevention programs (ibid., 26).

Numerous initiatives are underway to accelerate children's acquiring their rights to a healthy life. Immunization programs have attempted to overcome declines in full coverage over the past decade. Stronger maternal and child health (MCH) programs are in progress in the fifteen most depressed provinces of the country. These aim for quality maternal care through improving health worker capabilities, promoting women's participation, and generating a more focused information, education and communication strategy. Basic supplies for field units, including basic obstetric kits for trained traditional birth attendants, augment the capacities of the health services now devolved to local governments.

Gaining ground is attention to the control of diarrheal diseases, largely through the widespread adoption by parents of oral rehydration therapy. Improved case management by mothers and other caregivers is key to controlling acute respiratory infection. Offering new possibilities, especially through the simultaneous promotion of women's education, is the integrated management of childhood illness. This approach tackles malnutrition, immunization and disease incidence as an interrelated cluster. Information and communication programs now also incorporate messages on HIV-AIDS to accelerate progress in this latest threat.

The significant expansion of water and sanitation services is being heightened by stronger links with health and hygiene education activities for elementary school children. Capability building of local government units has been identified as important for the proper management and monitoring of water and sanitation projects in town centers and outlying barangays.

Growth monitoring and promotion programs help detect early growth faltering and avert protein-energy malnutrition. These allow those in charge to establish the necessary institutional and human resource support for community-based approaches to tracking children's health and wellbeing. The effort is strengthened by the promotion of home and com-

munity food production and micronutrient supplementation through the distribution of vitamin A, iodized oil capsules to women of childbearing age and, to a lesser extent, iron supplements to combat anemia. An alternate approach to the elimination of micronutrient deficiencies appears in the food fortification of noodles, fruit drinks, margarine and others.

Goiter control and the avoidance of low intelligence and cretinism are still largely addressed through the distribution of iodized oil capsules rather than a cheaper and more efficient salt-iodation program. Unlike the twenty-six countries that in 1990 recognized a serious iodine deficiency problem and then proceeded to iodize over 90 percent of their salt, the comparable Philippine figure lags far behind at only 15 percent. Even that limited source has been unavailable to the average household, probably because iodized salt has been sold through the health agencies rather than through regular commercial marketing channels like wet markets and neighborhood sari-sari (variety) stores.

Maternal Health

How do I get by each day, you ask? I scrimp on our food. Instead of cooking a kilo of rice each meal, I use half, sometimes only a fourth. Never mind myself. I can get by with only a little. As long as my children have more to eat, it doesn't matter that I only get the soup. My children notice though that I leave so little for myself that they insist on sharing their portions with me. When that happens, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. I'm so touched that sometimes I can't stop the tears from falling. So I pretend that I have to go out to get something. Once I compose myself, I face them again. Nowadays you really have to tighten your belt. It's a good thing my children understand. My neighbors wonder how I am able to send my children to school. My strategy is to serve only shrimp paste with rice. It doesn't matter that my children don't get to eat good food, so long as they can go to school.²

– Aling Trining, 38 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Based on the 1993 and 1998 NDHS, the maternal mortality rate (MMR) continues to be high in the Philippines, despite having dropped from 209 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990, to 172 in 1998 (CWC 2002, 20; ADB 2005, 76).³ A leading health specialist encapsulates this information by saying that 10 Filipino women die everyday from childbirth and pregnancy-related causes (Tan 2005). In 1998, women aged 15 to 49 years accounted for 14 percent of all maternity-related deaths among women of that age (GOP-UN 2003, 35). In the National Capital Region, the MMR is much lower at 119 per 100,000 live births, but since urban poor women as a whole are believed to reach a staggering maternal death rate of 300 per 100,000 live births, Metro Manila's informal settlements may exhibit ratios at this level.

Generally, 7 out of 10 pregnancies are considered as high risk (CWC 2002, 20). Short birth intervals,

high fertility rates, childbearing when too young or too old, severe iron deficiency anemia, and induced abortions take women prematurely to their grave through postpartum hemorrhage, eclampsia and severe infection. All too often the newborn and not long after, even the next older toddler, may join her. Although 69 percent of urban poor women in one study made three or four prenatal visits to a health facility, the quality of care was judged as poor. Many did not receive proper internal examinations, adequate laboratory tests, iron tablet supplementation, or referrals for high-risk cases. Only a few women, not likely to be urban poor clients, received all twelve required elements of antenatal care (GOP-UN 2003, 35).

Even postnatal care proved unsatisfactory, with access to sound family planning remaining limited, whether through the natural methods approved by the dominant Catholic Church but still rarely available to women, or the “artificial contraception” condemned by the Church but available with limited efficacy in government clinics (but banned by the Mayor of the City of Manila). Some NGO and non-Catholic church groups try to make up for government lapses by offering quality family planning services to the urban poor. The need is far greater than their capacity to handle, however. Lacking sufficient and accurate information to be comfortable in making decisions about family planning alternatives, women hesitate to take the risk of side effects that pose added problems to their already precarious lives. For many, an unwanted pregnancy may be terminated in an abortionist’s office. Women in one poor community related incidents of self-induced miscarriage by inserting wire hanger ends or other sharp instruments into the body, or by jumping from walls or stairs during the early stages of pregnancy.

A fairly high frequency of abortions, even though they are illegal and prohibited by the Constitution, is probably one consequence of the limited reach of the government’s family planning program. Estimates fluctuate wildly, varying from 155,000 to 700,000 annually. Botched abortions make up one of the top three causes of admission in major public hospitals, and constitute 20 percent of hospital cases involving women of childbearing age. As early as 1980 in Cavite Province, 17 percent of rural women reported having had at least one deliberately induced abortion (GOP-UNICEF 1997).

A Metro Manila study of 1,169 women aged 25 to 44 years notes that one-sixth of them have undergone an illegal abortion owing to economic difficulties, problems with the husband or partner, the youngest child judged still too young to have a sibling, or a prospective mother not ready to handle the responsibilities of having the baby. Programs of safe motherhood and reproductive health, which give needed attention to women’s health as important in its own right as well as crucial for the wellbeing of children, offer bright prospects. The country has far to go, though, if it is to meet its avowed 2015 goal of reducing maternal mortality by three-fourths to 43 per 100,000 live births (GOP-UN 2003, 36; GOP-UN 2005, 74).

Family Wellbeing

On the more positive side, access to sanitary toilets has been increasing over the years, with the 2003 NDHS reporting that 85 percent of Filipino families have sanitary toilets (i.e., flush toilets or closed pits) (NSO and ORC Macro 2004, 16), and the 2002 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS) showing a comparable ratio of 86.1 percent (NSO 2003a, 18). However, it is difficult to say if the reality is indeed as rosy as the NDHS and APIS depict, especially where informal settlements are concerned. According to the *Filipino Report Card* (World Bank 2001a), only about half of the urban population is thought to have toilets at home, with poorly constructed septic tanks to collect human waste. The rest (which includes most of the informal settlers) relies on communal facilities and watercourses.

Access to electricity has likewise risen. The Family Income and Expenditure Survey or FIES reports an increase from 57 to 75 percent in the period 1985-2000 (Reyes 2002). According to the latest APIS (2002), the proportion of families with electricity is even higher at 79 percent (NSO 2003a, 16). However, only 55.9 percent of the bottom 40 percent income bracket has electricity at home (ibid.). Access to safe water has also improved, with FIES results indicating a 79 percent coverage in 2000, up from 70 percent in 1985 (Reyes 2002); the 2002 APIS reports a marginally higher figure of 80 percent (NSO 2003a, 94). Nonetheless, poverty-oriented programming calls for an investigation as to who the unserved 20 percent of families are. If they are the poorest, as is likely, targeted programs become even more essential. In fact, the 2002 APIS does show that only 70.2 percent of the poorest 40 percent have access to safe water, defined as an own-use or shared faucet, or an own-use or shared tubed/piped well (ibid.).

Housing and Secure Land Tenure: The Forgotten Right

Our biggest problem here is housing. We own the house but not the land. My family moved here twelve years ago but I could never overcome the fear that we might still be forced off. Eleven years ago, our house was demolished. All our struggles to build it were for nothing. When we first arrived, this place was all tall cogon grass and reeked of human excrement. Do you know that to clear the entire area, we barely took time to eat – for almost one week. I got sick for more than a month after that. Now we’re old, and I ask myself, “Will it be like this till my dying day?”

– Lola Consing, 62 years old, Payatas B, Quezon City

It is ironic that the main issue which urban poor settlers raise again and again with government – housing and secure land tenure – is rarely considered in assessments of child rights. Perhaps this is because the right to housing was formally affirmed as a general human right only in 1996, after a long and heated debate at Habitat II in Istanbul. Economists reviewing

Aling Gemma struggles to raise a large family in Manila

Aling Gemma is a 40-year-old mother of eleven children (seven boys, four girls). Her eldest, 22 years old, stopped schooling and is working temporarily as a tindera (saleslady) in a small bakeshop. The youngest is one year old. Among all her children, only one is still studying, her 11-year-old son, a grade 5 pupil at Beata Elementary School. Most of her children dropped out at the elementary level. The two children eligible to enter day care and regular school (ages 4 and 7) have not done so. They do not want to go to school because they would feel shamed by not having a baon (snack), or money to purchase it. Both have already lost any interest in enrolling, preferring to play in the streets and look for more exciting things to do.

Her boys, aged 11 to 19 years, mostly eat and sleep, and do not help around the house. They are gone the whole day, in only one case for schooling but mostly playing in the streets or perhaps looking for petty sources of income to buy whatever they want or need. Aling Gemma, who describes them as resourceful teenagers, feels she no longer has control over them. She does not meddle in their daily affairs. Sometimes, when they get into trouble, she leaves them to fix their own mess as she feels they will not listen to her anyway.

It is her 20-year-old daughter, the second eldest, whom she can depend on for housework. Susan cooks and cleans the house, and does the laundry of all her brothers and sisters. This is why she hardly leaves the house unless it is really important. She claims that she only gets as far as a couple of houses away from their own. When asked about projects and organizations in the community, Susan could not mention any. She seems not to have heard of even the most active youth organizations in the barangay. Her participation is nil, and she is virtually isolated.

Aling Gemma likewise reports that she has not heard of any programs and projects for children in their barangay. She only knows of a foundation called KAIBIGAN (Friend) but cannot give any details on this. All she knows is that the Foundation was formerly based in Paco and she learned about it some four years ago, when she was still living in Paco with her relatives. One of her sons used to receive educational support from KAIBIGAN, but she withdrew him from the program after he failed one grade level. Her son reportedly lost interest and motivation to continue schooling because he felt ashamed about failing. She adds, "It would be embarrassing if I continue to ask the Foundation for support, since my son does not want to go to school anymore. So I withdrew him from the program."

Source: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Quick Appraisal of the City of Manila, Field Notes, 2002.

the social sector typically include only health and education as components. Yet, anyone who actually relates to urban informal settlers knows that location near the worksite through affordable housing and secure land tenure constitute crucial elements for family survival and development. For urban poor households, a permanent place of residence is the single most important key to earning a living, to health care access, to meeting educational, information and communication needs, and to social capital, the reciprocal ties that bind communities together.

This blind spot in technocratic planning "for" the urban poor stems in part from narrow definitions of "housing" or "shelter." Middle-class officials and economists have favored a strong physical structure with amenities like water and electricity. For this reason, they have for decades made the mistake of pressuring or forcibly relocating shanty-dwellers to already built housing units or at least designated lots, far outside the city – even if the new site offers no real livelihood opportunities or easy access to services. In contrast, for informal settlers living under the constant threat of eviction, "housing" implies legitimate acquisition of the land that they currently occupy, preferably affirmed by a title or, less popular but practical, a secure long-term lease. The house itself can be constructed incrementally over time and improved as their earnings increase. Unless their tenure is reasonably secure, however, any spare funds for housing improvement will likely go into the purchase of furniture or appliances, which are movable in case of eviction, and only minimally to the house structure itself.

Children learn these priorities early, especially if they have already undergone the trauma of a forced eviction. Many of them will have experienced summary demolition of their house and eviction three or four times by the age of 12, often in the context of violence erupting as residents resist truncheon-wielding housing police. Young Bituin, one recalls from Chapter One, includes a land title as integral to her wish list. For stigmatized people, decent shelter means a permanent location with a reasonably strong structure near one's place of work and services. That arrangement provides not only economic security and support networks, but also the respectability so touchingly coveted by Bituin and her playmates.

The government record in allocating land or secure tenure to urban poor settlers has been spotty at best. Where positive signs have appeared, they have generally been the result of strong demands from the people themselves, realized through effective community organizing, supportive civil society partners, and sometimes sympathetic, enlightened planners and administrators. The earliest successes for the urban poor occurred in Manila's Tondo Foreshore in the 1970s. About 27,000 households along the Bay eventually obtained land titles either to the Foreshore land on which they resided, or to lots with new housing in Dagat-dagatan, some 8 kilometers north (Racelis 2003).

The NGO organizers belonging to the Philippine Ecumenical Council on Community Organization (PECCO) adapted Saul Alinsky's conflict-confronta-

Aling Osang's life of extreme poverty in BASECO

Everyone in BASECO agrees that Aling Osang, a 60-year-old woman, with her adopted 10-year-old child, belongs to one of the poorest families in the barangay. Her makeshift shelter, a ramshackle construction made from recycled materials, has a tarpaulin for a roof and no walls, and only a piece of plywood for a bed.

Aling Osang claims that she used to have a house, but she sold it a couple of years back, when she thought that they were going to be relocated to another area. When the residents were not relocated after all, she could no longer reclaim her house since someone else already lived there. She has remained in the area, unable to afford another house or even to rent a room or space. Having reached only elementary level schooling, her skills do not qualify her for a decent job. Unmarried, she is the sole income earner of her two-person family, selling cigarettes around the barangay. The income she receives is hardly enough to cover their food, she says. Luckily, her daughter is able to go to school through the benevolence of a local sponsor who funds the child's education at Almario Elementary School.

The sponsor recounts Aling Osang's earlier earning history: When she was younger, she was a snatcher [of handbags]. Once, she collected P1,000 (US\$17.86⁴) this way and used the money to buy packs of cigarettes to sell around the barangay. This has been her only source of income ever since. Aling Osang's daughter followed in her mother's footsteps, getting into trouble for stealing her classmate's things. The teacher told Aling Osang to discipline the child. Aling Osang apparently scolded her daughter, but the sponsor believes that she deliberately trained her daughter to snatch and steal petty things to add to their income.

Source: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Quick Appraisal of the City of Manila, Field Notes, 2002.

tion methodology to the Filipino setting, enriching it with the Latin American philosophical and theological frameworks of Paulo Freire and Gustavo Gutierrez. Nearly 30,000 poor households, or close to 180,000 people, with the help of PECCO organizers, overcame their sense of powerlessness and mobilized to acquire onsite or nearby land and housing. The success of this framework was all the more remarkable because it was carried out during the period of martial law under President Ferdinand Marcos, when any kind of protest could be considered as subversive. The movement with its organizers spread to other cities – initially Cebu, Naga and Davao – and helped generate numerous community organizing spinoffs once the Marcos dictatorship was overthrown.

Beginning with the Aquino and on through the Ramos, Estrada and Macapagal-Arroyo Administrations, experienced NGO leaders have taken key government positions and, under the current regime, Cabinet roles as well. Accordingly, the national government has been open since 1986 to progressive new outlooks. Among them is the longstanding Community Mortgage Program (CMP), initiated by former NGO leaders in the Aquino Government.

The CMP enables informal settlers or lessees to form a legal association, and then obtain a government loan that entitles them to collective titled ownership of the land, to be repaid in installments by each resident household. Envisioned as part of the three-phase scheme are infrastructure development and housing construction, but the members rarely have the added funds to pursue those options, too. The CMP areas have thus relied on their own upgrading efforts over time, in some cases supported by progressive local governments or concerned private sector and civil society groups.

In Cebu and Davao Cities, community groups have actively protested, discussed and negotiated the terms of reference for onsite or nearby upgrading, or

resettlement to more distant locations. Because these city governments are now more highly involved in housing their poor, they are beginning to tackle political, institutional and legal impediments to progress.

Once the President's land proclamation program is institutionalized into a form of titling or secure tenure contract, with the corresponding government institutional structures to manage and monitor the program, one can anticipate yet further examples of effective people-NGO-city government partnerships. The critical question then will be, given the huge numbers of urban poor informal settlers, can they accelerate the process to achieve in the coming decades the UN 2020 target of "cities without slums"?

For all the problems still evident in the housing and land sector, the recognition in government that poor people have rights is now becoming an established principle – even though many middle- and upper-class citizens recoil at this idea. Security of land tenure with decent housing will of course redound to the benefit of children once they need no longer fear forced evictions. That carries with it relief at the nondisruption of their schooling and the end of economic displacement among household earners. If beyond secure tenure they can also gain better access to their rights to basic services, like water, sanitation, health, education, shelter and information, the chances for enhanced wellbeing multiply exponentially.

Recapitulation: Survival

Even though the poor in metropolitan cities live in the shadow of the highest concentrations of hospitals and health facilities in the country, the kinds of exclusion they suffer impair access to survival rights for many. Their exceptionally unhealthy and unsafe environments, prone to epidemics, fires, air and water pollution, and accidents at home and on the street, in many ways make urban poor children more vulnerable to illnesses and deaths than their rural

cousins (*EHP Capsule Report* 1996, 1, citing Silimperi 1992 and World Bank 1993).

While significant progress has been made in reaching the urban poor with services, there is still far to go. Getting an early start in 2000 on the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, the Department of Health (DOH) began targeting urban poor neighborhoods, aspiring by 2004 to provide 90 percent access to quality MCH care, nutrition and other health services, 95 percent fully immunized infants, 80 percent access to safe water, and 70 percent access to sanitary toilet facilities (DOH 1999, 161-163). Many of these goals are faltering, given the still growing size of the urban poor population and the difficulties of catching up on basic services backlogs.

Similarly, the right of informal settlers to housing and secure tenure is gradually being recognized by government authorities after years of active pressure from organized urban poor groups. Nonetheless, the unmet need for land and housing remains glaringly evident, and until this lacuna is addressed, poor children's survival rights will continue to be severely compromised.

Right to Development

Early Childhood Care and Development

Information on national and regional averages is readily available but the figures are rarely disaggregated to distinguish between better-off and worse-off urban children. Again, an overview of the national picture is helpful for assessing later on the information derived from specific city studies.

Early childhood care and development (ECCD) is handled by some 40,000 day care centers run by government or civil society groups. Around 8,400 barangays still lack even one day care center, although a national law mandates at least one in every barangay. Seven out of 10 barangays have complied (CWC 2002, 11). The quality of day care centers is generally inferior, especially those run by local government units, owing to poor equipment, scant learning materials and financial limitations (UNICEF 2004, 3). Enrollment statistics vary widely from a highly questionable 75 percent to a possible 56 percent to a conservative 33.5 percent (GOP-UNICEF 2001a, 17; UNICEF 2004, 3). Despite legal directives, the number of children 3-6 years in urban poor neighborhoods far exceeds the number of slots available at day care centers.

Also mandated by law, the government's ECCD program attempts to deal with the multiple problems of poor health, nutritional and psychosocial development facing children below 6 and their parents. It caters especially to those young children in economically disadvantaged families, emphasizing the importance of good parenting skills for the child's first caregivers and identifying those children likely to drop out in the startup elementary grades (GOP-UNICEF 1997, 85). Early education programs are found in day care centers, school-based programs

designed to help young children make the transition, or home-based early childhood education.

Local governments increasingly encourage urban poor parents to enroll their young children and are reinforced in this by a social worker with special skills in child development. Preschool trainers are working with grade one teachers, who sometimes handle preschoolers, to move them away from inappropriate traditional methods of educating younger children. Equipping local government units (LGUs), especially cities harboring large informal settlements, with early childhood development skills is crucial for the life chances of deprived children.

Basic Elementary and High School Education

Based on the 2002 APIS, 9 out of 10 Filipino children aged 6 to 12 years, or 91.2 percent, are enrolled in elementary school, whereas the high school participation rate for children 13-16 is much lower at 77.1 percent (NSO 2003a, 101-02). The simple and functional literacy rates have reached 93.4 and 84.1 percent, respectively, according to the 2003 Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey, or FLEMMS (GOP-UN 2005, 56). The impressive retention, or cohort survival, rate of 80 percent reported by the Department of Education (DepEd) for the highly urbanized National Capital Region inevitably hides the disproportionate number of dropouts who come from urban poor neighborhoods (Reyes 2002). Despite the Philippines's avowed commitment to the goal of universal primary education, only 7 out of 10 students nationwide complete the six grades of elementary school (GOP-UN 2005, 52). This means that the 3 out of 10 who are dropouts as early as grade one, again probably the poorest, face a future crippled by functional illiteracy exacerbated by increased emotional insecurity and embarrassment about their deficiencies. This may in turn lead to voluntary self-exclusion and a surrender to the prospect of life as a lowly paid, unskilled laborer.

If the seven children who graduate from elementary proceed to high school, only five will graduate (Reyes and Valencia 2004, 6). For those who do, there is still cause for concern, given the results of the National Secondary Assessment Test (NSAT) showing barely 41 percent of seniors with passing grades (GOP-UNICEF 1997, 84). At the same time, overall achievement rates appear to be improving – from 46 percent in 1998 to 53 percent in 2001 (CWC 2002, 35).

Heavy dropout rates owe much to poverty. Although public school education is free, many parents cannot afford the required uniforms, school supplies, transport and snack or lunch money. Further, low-quality education discourages already hard-up parents from persisting with their children's enrollment. With sometimes as many as eighty Metro Manila students in a class, teachers must struggle to maintain a sound learning environment.

Add to this the scarcity of textbooks and instructional materials, poorly trained teachers, and inadequate physical facilities – with some students having to bring in their own seats. Even good teachers become demoralized when faced with two and some-

times three shifts per day in crowded urban classrooms, extending from 7:00 a.m. into the evening hours to accommodate the student overflow. Their resiliency in the face of these odds is a tribute to their dedication and professionalism. Although education commanded 32 percent of the national budget in 2004, expanding enrollments meant lowered investment rates per student – with negative consequences in coverage and quality.

Strengthening local government units, school teachers and principals for local decision making is seen as important for enhancing the situation of their children. Whereas small rural schools are being encouraged to develop multi-grade programs under a single teacher, larger city schools have to help teachers cope with heavy student overload and shorter school days to accommodate three sets of children daily or all-day classes held every other day for alternating batches of students.

In 2004, DepEd sought to improve the quality of education by mandating a bridging year between elementary and high school⁵ for those children ranked in the bottom 50 percent in a high school readiness test (HSRT). Given the loud outcry from parents hardpressed to add yet another year of expense to their financial burdens, the plan was withdrawn in favor of a mandatory pre-grade one “prep” year for 5-year-olds. Authorities pointed out that children who had completed early learning programs at day care centers tended to stay on in primary school.

Quality in secondary education is being fostered through staff and curriculum development, revision of learning materials, retraining of teachers and school administrators, research, school construction and upgrading of facilities. Non-formal education is aimed at children unable to continue formal schooling, with communities, local government units, NGOs and the private sector mobilized to sponsor alternate schemes, including a diploma-equivalency track. These seek to provide out-of-school youth with capacity building skills, functional education and literacy, and lifelong learning and school equivalency programs.

Right to Protection

Children and youth already affected by poverty become even more vulnerable when their physical safety and wellbeing are further eroded. This section looks at child laborers, street children, children from indigenous cultural communities, and children abused, neglected, sexually exploited, involved in substance abuse and in conflict with the law.

Child Laborers

The *2001 Survey on Children 5-17 Years Old* conducted by the NSO shows 4.1 million child workers aged 5 to 17 years nationwide, or 16.2 percent of the total number of children in that age group (NSO and ILO-IPEC 2003). Working boys number 2.6 million and girls 1.5 million. Sixty percent toil in hazardous conditions, while 23 percent suffer from work-related

injuries. Most vulnerable are the 12 working children out of 100 who fall into the 5-9 age category. There are 1.9 million 10- to 14-year-olds working, complemented by another 1.8 million 15- to 17-year-olds. Most working children combine their labor with formal education, but 3 out of 10, mainly boys, do not attend school at all. Another study of working children notes that 34 percent have dropped out of school, with some 22 percent saying their work interferes with their schooling. Government targets for 2015 call for a 75 percent reduction in the number of child laborers (UNICEF 2004, 5).

According to the 2002 APIS, 12.6 percent of total households, or 1.4 million families, have working children 5-17 years (NSO 2003a, 103). The strong relationship between child labor and poverty is confirmed by the APIS: 18.7 percent of families with working children belong to the lower 40 percent income bracket (the poor), whereas only 8.7 percent of households with child laborers come from the upper 60 percent (ibid.). The incidence of child labor is also associated with household size. Working children’s families tend to be larger (seven to eleven members) than those of nonworking children (two to six) (Del Rosario and Bonga 2000, 115).

The aforementioned *2001 Survey on Children* by the NSO cites the major reason why children say they work: “to help the family earn.” For many poor families, sending children out to earn represents a major household strategy. Among their many tasks, urban children help make brooms, furniture, boxes and fireworks. They prepare or sell food, newspapers and chewing gum, tend *sari-sari* (variety) stores, pluck chicken and duck feathers, shine shoes, wash dishes, set up bowling pins, stuff pillows, pulverize rocks in quarries, serve as waiters, janitors, domestic help and commercial sex workers. Exposure to hazardous working conditions means threats like heat and noise, or toxic effects from chemical exposure (6 out of 10). Exhaustion, stress, risk and/or boredom affect 8 out of 10 working children. Almost one-fourth suffer from work-related injuries, like cuts, wounds and bruises, or illnesses, like body aches and pains, and skin diseases, according to the survey (NSO and ILO-IPEC 2003).

A significant number of children simultaneously working and schooling have problems keeping up with the lessons. Low grades often follow. More than 9 out of 10 report that they have some free time from work, but one in twenty (more girls than boys) report never having time off for recreation or leisure.

The Philippines-UNICEF Child Labor Program Plan of Operations of the 1990s favored community-based initiatives to increase livelihood earnings for parents so that their children would not have to work. It sought to increase the children’s access to basic and other services. Policies and legal measures were formulated to protect working children. The National Manpower and Youth Council trains out-of-school youth 15-24 years in industrial skills and livelihood opportunities. Several NGOs carry out alternative education schemes, including tutorials for high school equivalency examinations, rescuing children

virtually imprisoned in the factories where they work, and training in job-related skills (Del Rosario and Bonga 2000). For all, the aim is to restore in children their right to childhood.

Street Children

Estimates of the number of street children vary widely, depending on whether one is counting all children who work on the streets, or distinguishes between those who work on the streets but go home to parents at night from those who work and live on the streets. Figures for 2000 cite 246,011 street children in the Philippines, of whom 45,000-50,000 are “highly visible street children” in major cities and urban centers of the country (GOP-UN 2004, 16, citing DLSU-SRDC 2002). Many of these children have parents or relatives but for various reasons prefer to live on the streets in bands of homeless youth. Government social workers admit that accurate figures of street children are nonexistent (GOP-UNICEF 1997).

A ten-city study conducted in 1998, and later corroborated by additional research, shows that far more boys than girls live as street children, with ages ranging from 6 to 17 years. Most are 11 to 14 years old, with some in elementary school. Approximately one out of four have never been to school, owing to poverty and the need to contribute to family income. Many face serious health problems and appear thin, pale and untidy, with runny noses, fresh wounds or scars, skin diseases, head lice, red eyes, dental cavities and speech difficulties. Eight out of 10 are malnourished, and suffer from periodic fever, colds, cough, toothache, headache, diarrhea and stomach and muscle pains. Yet, rarely do they seek, much less obtain, medical help (CWC 2002).

Most have migrated with their families from rural areas and live with one or both parents or with relatives. Another 10-15 percent live on their own, their parents having separated or died, or because of maltreatment and neglect at home. Strained relationships with their families, sometimes brought on by the presence of stepfathers or stepmothers, keep many of them from returning home, while rewarding peer influences through gang membership sustain their attraction to street life. Many work from six to fourteen hours a day earning P100-P300 (about US\$1.79-US\$5.36) (ibid., 48). An increasing number are welcome in the drug trade because they are obedient, more unobtrusive and quickly released if they are arrested or imprisoned (UNICEF 2004, 5). Most are unaware of the organizations that offer services to street children, while a few contact these occasionally.

The majority come from large families of six or seven members, with parents averaging less than four grades of education. While most of the children earn significant proportions of the family’s income by cleaning and watching cars, vending and doing domestic work, a smaller proportion fall prey to exploitative adults who engage them in commercial sex, pimping for prostitutes and drug trafficking. Seeking protection, children join gangs that teach them how to survive through house thefts or picking pockets, or introduce them to the world of drugs. In addition to sicknesses,

they suffer injuries from traffic accidents, street fights and police harassment, brutality and arrest. To a lesser extent, some also become victims of drug addiction and sexually transmitted diseases, incarceration in jails with adult criminals leading to beatings, sexual abuse, confiscation of earnings, and taking on the dirtiest jobs, like cleaning toilets.

Several NGOs cater to the needs of street children and youth through drop-in centers, where the youngsters can have a meal and a shower, first-aid medical treatment, educational and skills training, counseling and parent-child reunification. This more nurturing environment for street children was pioneered in the 1980s by a local Catholic college in Olongapo City, Central Luzon, and attracted concerned civil society volunteers. Attention focused not only on the children but on their high-risk, poor families as well, utilizing community-based action-research and monitoring. With UNICEF support, the program became central to its Urban Basic Services Program, and was subsequently extended to Cebu, Davao and other Cities, including Metro Manila (Porio, Moselina and Swift 1994).

As for the government, its National Project on Street Children has spread to several cities and towns, offering health and other services, along with elementary and high school equivalency programs that provide needed credentials for future employment.

The drop-in centers cannot, however, cope with the large numbers of children on the streets. Caregivers recognize that until massive anti-poverty programs are launched to increase employment and income, food and health, education, and housing and security of tenure, the face of extreme poverty will be that of children on the streets.

Children from Indigenous Cultural Communities

Only a minute portion of the 2.5 million children (UNICEF 2004, 6) belonging to about 140 indigenous ethnolinguistic groups (GOP-UN 2004, 17) wind up in cities. When they do move there, they do so because of civil conflict and warfare, and economic displacement from their once remote upland or coastal communities. Having virtually no access to basic services, or suffering from the impact of commercial logging and in-migration of lowlanders, some indigenous families have fled their ancestral homes for the comparative safety of urban settings.

Here they suffer from limited employment and income opportunities, compounded by discrimination and onslaughts against the indigenous culture that gave meaning to their lives. The children’s lack of a birth certificate, the prospect of child marriage, the unfamiliar slum surroundings, working and begging to keep the family afloat, suffering the taunts of children in the majority culture, and being dislodged from their cultural roots – all this makes life in cities extremely difficult for indigenous children. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) therefore encourages these groups to return to their homes whenever possible or, in collaboration with NGOs, locates suitable employment or income-generating activities and housing in the metropolis, while placing the children in school.

Children and Youth in Conflict with the Law

In 1999, some 3,747 children nationwide were recorded as being in conflict with the law. The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in 2000 listed 1,994 sentenced and detained minor offenders, 1,874 of them males and 120 females (GOP-UNICEF 2001b, 25). By 2001, reported cases had reached 5,905 (GOP-UN 2004, 16). Often victims of domestic violence, youth offenders were usually male, 14-17 years of age, elementary school graduates, a middle child from a low-income and large family, exposed to drugs or gang influences, and charged with robbery and theft. Almost half belonged to juvenile gangs and were drug users or alcohol abusers (Candelaria et al. 2000, 74).

More recently, the five pillars of the juvenile justice system (police, prosecution, courts, correction-rehabilitation and community) are being applied. In 2000, only 484 of 1,277 jails had separate cells for male offenders. No separate provisions were available for female offenders (GOP-UNICEF 2001b, 25). Attempts are underway to separate juveniles from adult offenders, bolstered by a bill pending in Congress for juvenile justice reform. This aims to reduce the period of detention pending trial, to improve food, sleeping, bath and toilet facilities, and spatial accommodations, and to address other glaring injustices suffered by jailed children. Currently being tested are programs to create a friendlier court environment and provide better treatment to young offenders through training programs for justices, judges and the police. Assigning judges trained for juvenile cases, with the assistance of child specialists, offers new opportunities. Promising innovative approaches are community-based rehabilitation programs redirecting the released offender to return to school and/or to obtain work (Candelaria et al. 2000, 90).

Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities nationwide total 158,300, mainly afflicted with hearing, visual and speech difficulties (UNICEF 2004, 6). Although data on adolescent disability are lacking, this age group is thought to have the highest prevalence rates. About 20 percent of children 0-6 years suffer from some form of impairment, with boys more affected than girls. It is estimated that 60 percent of the reported disabilities are acquired rather than inborn, and are thus preventable (GOP-UNICEF 2001b, 25-26). Urban poor children are especially susceptible to disability caused by malnutrition and accidents in the home and street. Often hidden away by parents conscious of the stigma attached to children with disabilities, the latter are exposed to public gaze only when a fire or other emergency forces parents to take them out of their homes and flee with them to safety.

Child Victims of Abuse, Neglect, Sexual Exploitation and Substance Abuse

Reports of child abuse almost tripled during the period 1995-1999, from 2,655 to 7,053, while sexual abuse doubled, from 2,344 to 5,269. The actual magnitude of physical abuse cases, however, is believed to be far higher (GOP-UNICEF 2001a, 23). It is difficult to

ascertain what proportion of this jump represents an actual increase in incidence, or whether victims and their families are simply more willing to report them. Multiple responses of abused children indicate sexual abuse and exploitation as the most prevalent (69 percent), followed by rape (31 percent), incest (16 percent) and physical abuse (10 percent) (GOP-UNICEF 1997, 129).

In more recent years, reported cases of rape where children are the victims have increased by 32 percent – from 2,348 in 1999 to 3,099 in 2004 (NSCB 2005b). Reported incestuous rape cases involving children rose from 284 in 1999, to 949 in 2000, and then to 970 in 2001 (an increase of 242 percent in just two years), before they started declining in 2002 (442 cases) (ibid.). Although the number of reported incestuous rape cases in 2004, at 229, is the lowest it has been since 1999, a stance of grave concern must still be maintained. There is strong reason to believe that even these already distressing numbers are grossly understated. Knowledgeable observers link the high incidence to the growing numbers of women from lower-income families who leave the country for a year or more to become domestic servants, entertainers or professionals in Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore or the Middle East. The departure of a mother, aunt or adult sister from the family circle undermines the protection she has provided to young girls and boys, rendering the latter more vulnerable to the advances of male predators inside or outside the household.

Commercial sexual exploitation affects a rising number of children, estimated at 60,000 to 100,000 in 1997 by the active NGO called End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT). Most are girls, 95 percent of them out of school, two-thirds of whom want to return to their studies. Many of the children had been sexually abused or victims of incest before becoming sex workers (GOP-UNICEF 2001b, 23). A recent study reports that child victims, almost all of them girls, are initiated into the sex trade as early as 10 years old. Peer influence manipulated by systematic recruiters is the main reason why girls join (60 percent), along with the need for money for themselves or their families (21 percent) and the desire to escape from family abuse carried out by household members (13 percent). The rest say they lack any motivation to leave the sex trade, owing to economic difficulties, shame or being too old to return to school. Most share quarters with friends or workmates, but express the hope of returning to live with their families in the future (GOP-UNICEF 1997, 123).

Abusive and disrespectful customers bother many (41 percent) of the sexually exploited children and youth, while health problems, like lack of sleep, fatigue, dizziness and headache, afflict others (26 percent), with one-fourth having also become pregnant. They fear contracting sexually transmitted diseases (69 percent), and encountering social stigma and pregnancy (40 percent). Indeed, a few have contracted sexually transmitted diseases. The threat of HIV-AIDS seems not to have entered their consciousness as they make no mention of it. Virtually children themselves, the young mothers have their infants liv-

ing with them (22 percent) or with a family member or relative (29 percent). The rest report that their babies had died (10 percent). Others simply do not give any information. Abortion was the solution for 14 percent (*ibid.*, 124).

The stresses and strains of the work have forced one-fifth of them to use prohibited drugs (*ibid.*). Few are aware of programs and services for them, although a small number do take advantage of emerging opportunities. Education is the way out of the sex trade, say 57 percent, with other alternatives, like parental care and love, alternative livelihood, recreation, health and legal protection, coming in as poor seconds (*ibid.*, 125).

Although there are relatively few NGOs and even government entities that address outright the children victimized through commercial sex, a number are carrying out educational programs, networking and referral schemes, community outreach, advocacy, and value formation, as well as rendering residential care and psychosocial services. The need for specialized services has been highlighted and an effective monitoring scheme based on reliable data recently installed. Again, the services offered by NGOs and faith-based groups in alliance with the DSWD are impressive. Most facilitate the children's rehabilitation once they have been victimized. But even they acknowledge that the problem is one of prevention and has to be attacked at its source – poverty and recruiters who readily take advantage of vulnerable families.

Substance abuse claims some 1.4 million youth (15-30 years) who have used or sold illegal drugs. The sequence for adolescent males is smoking at the age of 16, followed shortly by drinking, and a year later, at 17, by drugs. For adolescent females, the progression begins with drugs and moves on to smoking and then drinking. Studies done in 1994 and again in 2002 reveal that risk behavior among female youth has increased disproportionately more than among male youth, suggesting a "feminization in adolescent risk behaviors" (UNICEF 2004, 4). Of 700 Metro Manila street children surveyed, 40 percent admit using prohibited drugs: solvent/rugby (66 percent); cough syrup (14 percent); marijuana (5 percent); shabu, which is a cheap form of cocaine (2 percent); and other types of drugs (12 percent). Few alternatives for rehabilitation appear available to them (GOP-UNICEF 1997, 121-22, citing Lamberte 1996).

A key strategy entails building the understanding and capacity of national and local governments to launch a concerted effort around the needs of children, in collaboration with NGOs, faith-based groups and the private sector. The enactment of laws is important to guarantee children's rights, as stated in "The Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act" (Republic Act [RA] 7610 of 1992). So too will a better understanding of the cultural backgrounds and history of indigenous children and their legal rights help lawmakers and law enforcers deal more humanely with displaced families.

Since the 1990s, the Philippines has achieved

major gains in addressing the issue of violence against women and children through the passage of significant legislation. Aside from RA 7610, these include: (1) the 1995 Anti-Sexual Harassment Act (RA 7877), which declares sexual harassment unlawful in employment, education and training institutions; (2) the 1997 Anti-Rape Act (RA 8353), which amends the previous classification of rape as a crime against chastity to that of a crime against persons; (3) the 1998 Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act (RA 8505), which affirms the commitment of the government to provide assistance and protection for rape victims through the establishment of a rape crisis center in every province and city; (4) the 2003 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (RA 8505), which institutes mechanisms to support trafficked persons, and also to mitigate pressures for involuntary migration and servitude of persons, especially women and children; and (5) the 2004 Anti-Violence Against Women and Children, or VAWC, Act (RA 9208), which promotes the welfare of Filipino women and children who are victims of violence.

Recapitulation: Protection

The formation of the Inter-City Alliance for Children and the program to get mayors to be defenders of children highlights the Philippines's creativity and commitment to addressing children's rights. In noting the many progressive actions already underway in various sectors of society to reach disadvantaged children, one can feel reasonably assured. At the same time, the limited scale of the programs and the modest speed with which they are undertaken still fall far short of the need. One comment relative to economic growth strategies with poverty reduction measures may well apply to programs aimed at enhancing child rights: "The slow pace of improvement has not kept pace with the high population growth and this has led to an increase in the magnitudes of the poor" (Reyes 2002).

Even though child friendly programs are expanding, positive breakthroughs measured in percentages may actually hide the still growing problem in terms of absolute numbers. Moreover, in understandably highlighting the rising numbers of children being reached, one cannot ignore those still left out, almost surely the poorest.

Right to Participation

Of all the sets of rights accorded to children, the least developed one focuses on their participation. It has been difficult to convince parents that a more democratic family brings greater benefits to all. Many local leaders also remain skeptical about the community's listening seriously to its children and encouraging their participation in decisions affecting them. They enthusiastically applaud children performing in public celebrations – dancing, singing or reciting poetry. But involving them in serious planning or in decisions about their own lives, family concerns or community events is another matter entirely.

In 1995, a coalition of child-focused NGOs carried

out a project called Expanding Children's Participation in Social Reform (ECPSR). The group facilitated child and youth involvement in sectoral assemblies, capability building for leadership and value transformation, advocacy for children's rights, legislative lobbying, and monitoring of laws and ordinances on children. A series of national and regional consultations of children and youth led to the creation of their own sector in the National Anti-Poverty Commission, represented by a youth commissioner selected by the constituency. It also established representation in the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children. This multisectoral body complements at the community level the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK; Youth Council), established under the Local Government Code to promote youth participation in political life.

Several schools have likewise adopted the child friendly concept. Accepting children's active participation does not come easily to some teachers accustomed to authoritarian modes of interacting with the younger generation. Their more democratic counterparts have welcomed child friendly schools as empowering children to be aware of their rights as well as their responsibilities. Motivated students address issues like environmental protection, child abuse and adolescent sexuality, with volunteer child advocates pursuing a student-to-student approach.

Children and youth now attend public hearings on proposed legislation and learn how to facilitate meetings, handle abuse disclosures, engage in public speaking, counseling and mediation, and absorb the basics of journalism. The fruit of these developments is captured in the publication, *A Practical Guide for Promoting Effective Child-Youth Participa-*

tion in the Philippines (cited in CWC 2002, 64), based on an extensive study by the Institute of Philippine Culture of the Ateneo de Manila University on actual cases of child and youth participation in an array of institutional settings (Illo 2003).

Many working Filipino children joined The Global March for Child Laborers and the call to ratify ILO Convention 182, which defines and protects working children from the worst forms of child labor. Global March activities enabled working children to express their views publicly. They appreciated the opportunity to meet similarly affected children from other parts of the country, as well as Asia and the world, to protest child labor abuses and advocate their cause. This exposure to different cultural environments also had the effects of greatly expanding their worldviews and adding to their self-confidence and interpersonal skills (CWC 2002, 64).

It is in the light of these multiple efforts that Child Friendly Cities need to be examined carefully. Drawing attention to the growing number of children effectively reached is, of course, an appropriate cause for celebration. At the same time, unless urban authorities pay particular attention to children systematically deprived of large clusters of rights, notably the poor in the city's informal settlements, the neediest children will continue to be denied of their participation rights. Conscious strategies are needed to ensure that no child is left out.

Let us now turn to the voices of the children and youth themselves, as they view their physical and social surroundings, assess their city, reflect on their past, present and future – and render judgment.

Notes

- 1 As the youth counterpart of the local or Barangay Council, the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK, or Youth Council) promulgates resolutions and implements projects and programs for youth development.
- 2 Two quotations in this chapter are drawn from FGDs also conducted in Payatas in 2001, in connection with another IPC study (in progress), "Bridging the Social Divide: Urban Poor Profiles in Metro Manila," by Mary Racelis and Marita Concepcion Castro Guevara, supported by the Ford Foundation. The names of the respondents quoted have been changed to protect their identity.
- 3 The *Second Philippines Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals* raises the caveat that it is difficult to conclude that the MMR has truly declined, owing to large sampling errors associated with these estimates. The assessment of maternal health is made even more daunting

by the absence of new official data (GOP-UN 2005, 74). The ADB (2005, 76) adds that the data on MMR are conflicting: whereas the NDHS reports a reduction in MMR from 209 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 172 in 1998, the *Human Development Report 2003* (UNDP) and the *World Development Report 2004* (World Bank) cite a higher MMR of 240 per 100,000 live births in 1995.

- 4 US\$1 = P56.
- 5 The basic Philippine education has six years of elementary followed by four years of high school, for a total of only ten years – the briefest in Asia where the standard is twelve years (ADB 2005, 45). Had it pushed through, the Bridge Program would have instituted a mandatory seventh year of elementary education for students who fail the high school readiness test (HSRT).

4

GROWING UP POOR: VOICES OF CHILDREN

How do poor urban children and youth fare in Child Friendly Cities? Let us listen to what they themselves say.

A Child Friendly City is a place where children can play. It is clean, pretty, safe, has lots of animals, trees and flowers. There is fresh air and no garbage or pollution. No one fights, people are happy, they understand, help and love one another. The neighborhood is prosperous and people can earn and move up in life. Adults encourage children, treat us well and show real concern for us.¹

– Payatas children, 8 to 12 years old

Four barangays were selected for intensive study, two in Metro Manila (Payatas and BASECO) and two in Davao City (Leon Garcia and Sasa). The criteria for selection included: informal settlement, large population, socioeconomic considerations, receptive barangay leaders, and assurances that no evictions or demolitions would take place for at least one year. Two barangays (Payatas and Leon Garcia) were selected from those included in the GOP-UNICEF Fifth Country Programme for Children (CPC V, 1999-2004) and two (BASECO and Sasa) from those not included. The data and children's quotations in this chapter are drawn almost entirely from BASECO, Manila, and Payatas B, Quezon City, whose locations and layouts are shown in the maps that follow. Since far fewer testimonies from Leon Garcia and Sasa appear in the text below, maps of the Davao case study communities have not been included.

Profiles of the Case Study Communities

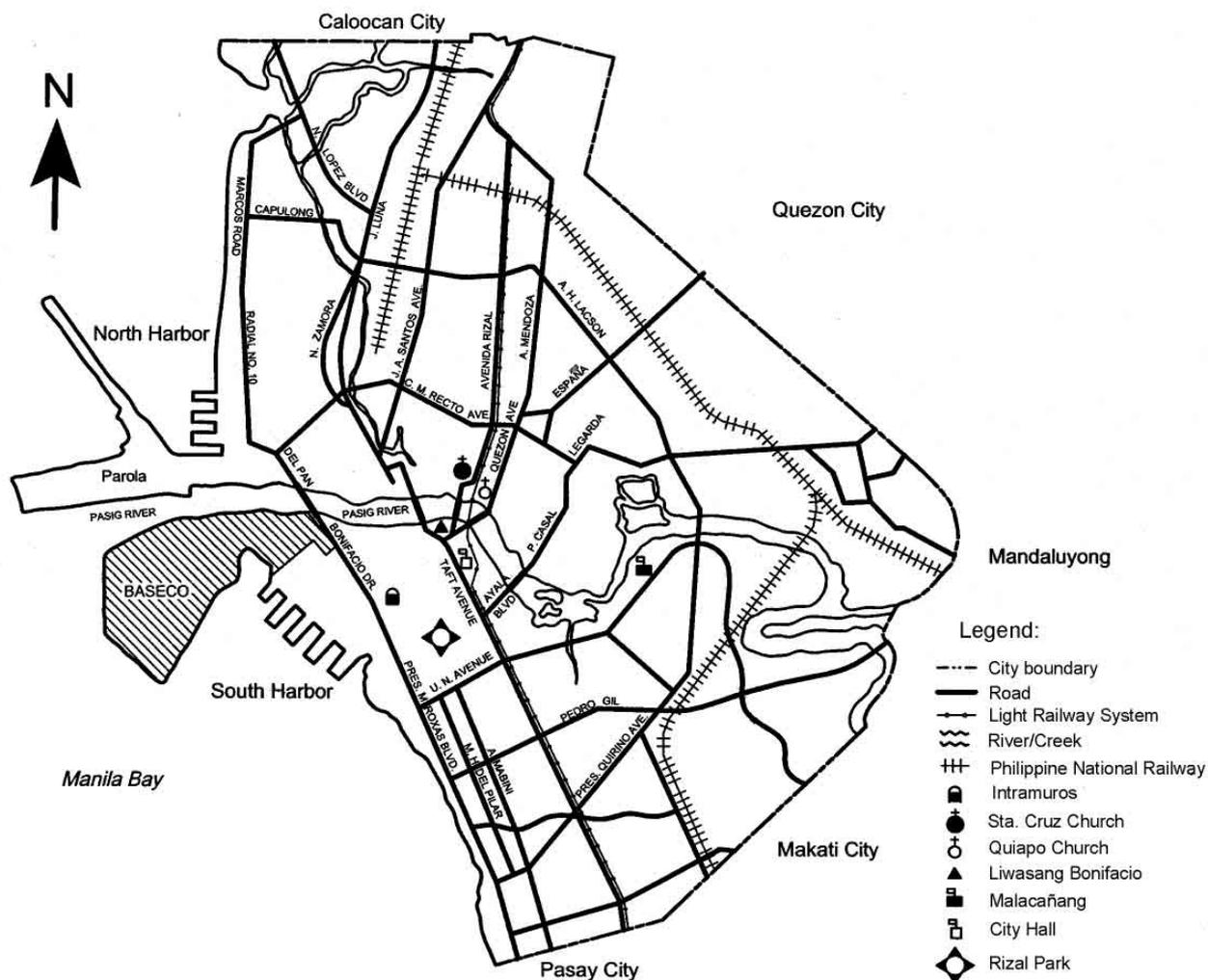
BASECO, City of Manila

The geographical characteristics that define BASECO highlight its coastal location on Manila Bay just south of the North Harbor (see figure 2). Built up from natural tidal deposits of mud, shells and floating garbage, the land was enhanced by manmade landfill, including discarded concrete blocks and construction debris dumped there by then Bureau of Public Works and Highways and the Bataan Shipyard and Engineering Company (BASECO). Government designated BASECO as a resettlement site in 1990 to accommodate masses of informal settlers who had been summarily evicted from other parts of the metropolis.

BASECO, or Barangay 649, Zone 68, as it is administratively identified, is bounded along the sea by natural rockwalls and jetties. Its three main areas, Isla Liit (Small Island), Isla Laki (Large Island), and Tambakan (landfill/dumpsite), form a crescent land mass around a shallow lagoon. Thirty-four blocks contain densely packed, makeshift houses on stilts mostly tall enough to forestall submersion during periodic floods or high tides. A network of open catwalks and footbridges over garbage-laden and foul-smelling mud flats links the shacks into a number of neighborhood clusters. Children learn to negotiate this daunting terrain early on, although several have died or been injured falling out of the houses or playing on the slippery rocks.

Add to these dangers the fires that periodically engulf large parts of the community and the diseases that all too often decimate vulnerable young residents. Children already at risk from poor nutrition

Figure 2 - Map of the City of Manila showing Barangay BASECO



fall easy prey to mosquito-borne dengue fever, pulmonary ailments from exposure to the elements, measles from faulty immunization programs, and typhoid and gastrointestinal ailments from contaminated water and food and raw sewerage.

The better-off residents occupy two-storey concrete structures along the entrance to the community close to the city proper. There, or nearby, are also found the barangay hall, school, chapel, basketball court, playground, health center, recreation halls, video game centers, market stalls and shops (see figure 3).

These facilities are patronized at one time or another by the 45,017 residents, or 5,515 households, listed in the barangay census of 2001. The male workforce earns income from driving jeepneys, tricycles, pedicabs (three-wheel human-pedaled vehicles), trucks, buses and taxis, or serving as boat operators and security guards, while the women become domestic helpers, engage in sidewalk vending or hawking, or run small stores and mini-businesses.

Given BASECO's severe shortage of open space and its high fertility rates, masses of children with minimal parental supervision converge in the very few, crowded play areas, roam barangay paths, rockwalls and streets, or wander out-side the community. Chronic hand-to-

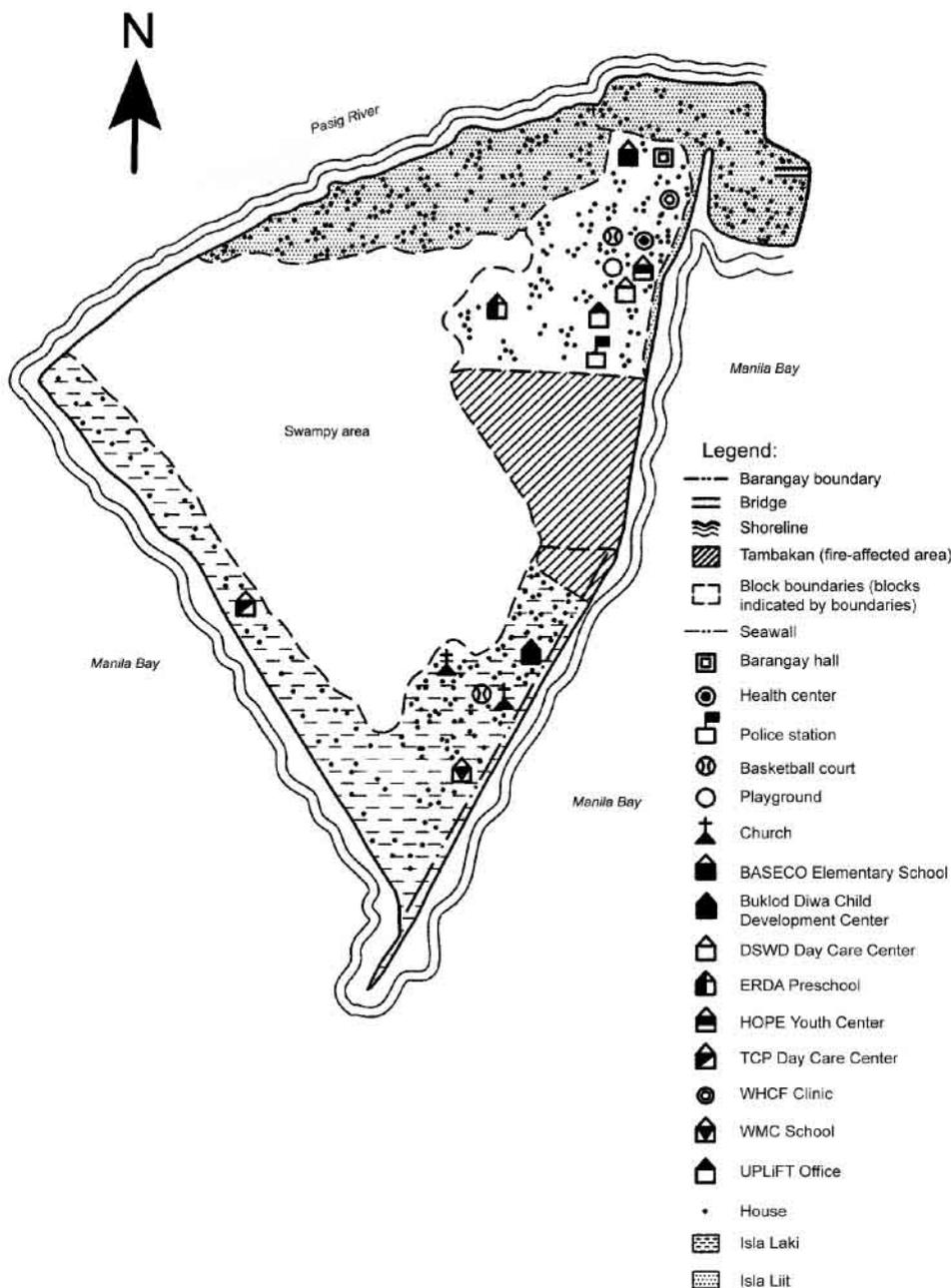
mouth poverty is more pronounced in BASECO than in Payatas partly because the former lacks a fallback income-generating source like the Payatas dumpsite.

Payatas B, Quezon City

Barangay Payatas is located in the northeastern corner of Quezon City. Its steeply sloping terrain near the Marikina River is crisscrossed by creeks, rivers, ravines and low-lying areas (see figure 4). A fault line runs through its eastern boundary. Within the 494 hectares of Payatas lie informal settlements, undeveloped areas, and a few legal housing subdivisions (PA LAMP 2002). Its most famous – or infamous – feature is framed starkly against the landscape in Payatas B: the enormous, unsightly and foul-smelling 13-hectare metropolitan dump that daily ingests 2,200 tons of metropolitan waste (Westfall and Allen 2004).

Located about 8 kilometers from Quezon City Hall, Payatas is easily reached by public transport along Commonwealth Avenue, a major highway leading to the Congress of the Philippines. Commuters take a jeepney at the Commonwealth Market terminal near the turnoff to Payatas, and ride along the paved Gravel Pit Road. A long concrete wall separates Payatas from the 2,574-hectare La Mesa Dam that serves as

Figure 3 - Layout of Barangay BASECO (2002)



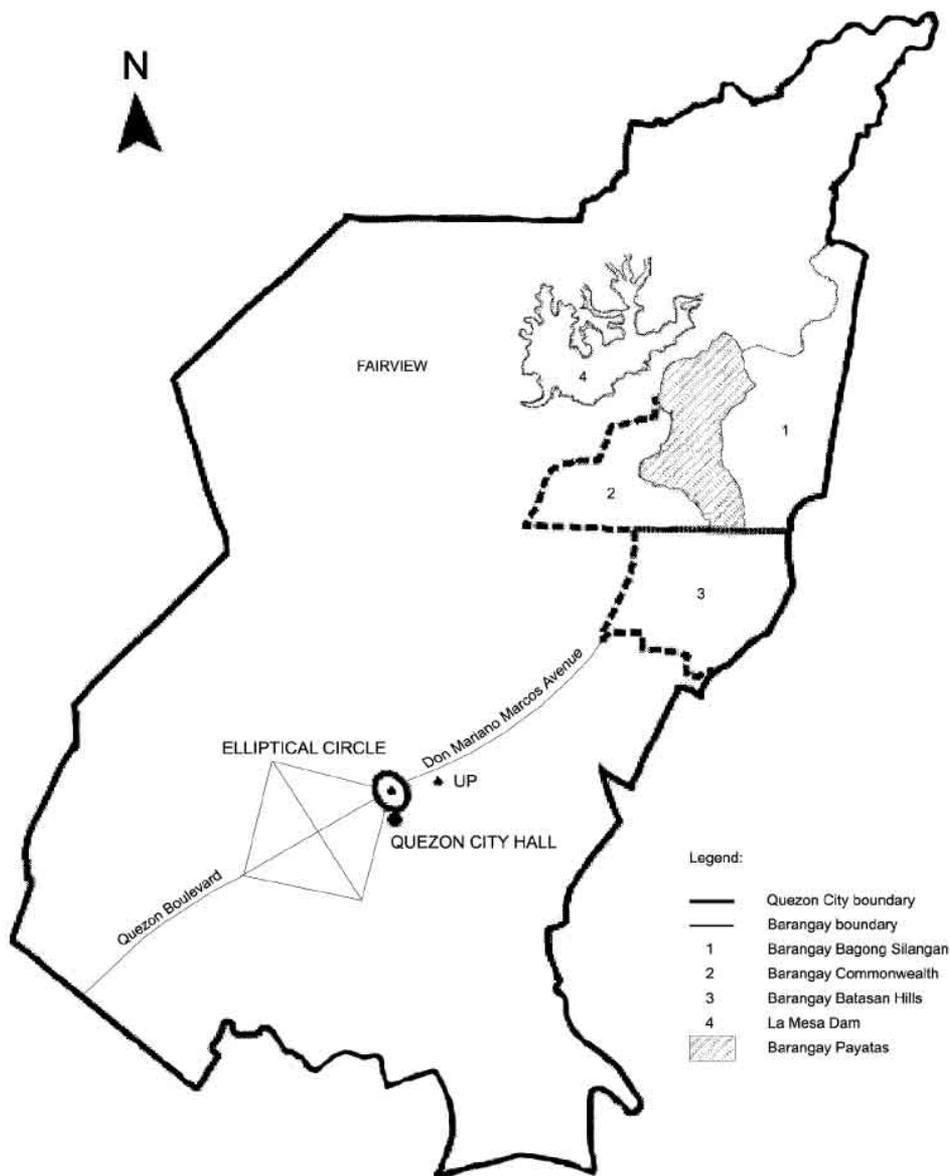
the major source of water of Metro Manila residents. Even before one reaches the giant garbage mound, the cluttered roadside spaces, junk shops along the way and clouds of dust presage the overpowering presence of the dump. Neatly sorted piles of discarded plastic, paper, cardboard, bottles, cans, metal, car parts, cloth, appliances, toys and anything salvageable await the bulk purchaser pickup.

Formerly part of the municipalities of Montalban-Rodriguez and San Mateo, Rizal Province, Payatas in 1976 became an independent barangay of Quezon City's District 2. Together with the three adjacent barangays plus Barangay Holy Spirit beyond, Payatas forms part of one huge cluster of informal settlements that span 2,488 hectares with a total of 441,212 people in 91,911 households as of 2000 (barangay data cited

in PA LAMP 2002). It still betrays its rural origins, though, in its occasional open spaces and views of grasslands and mountains in the distance. The first wave of inhabitants streamed in from the Visayas and Luzon to clear the land, banish snakes and rodents hiding in the tall grass and bamboo stands, and carve out space for a modest house complete with land for planting vegetables and raising pigs and chickens.

Barangay Payatas is divided into two major settlement clusters, Payatas A and the much larger, more highly populated and poorer Payatas B. This is evident in the latter's unpaved roads, many densely clustered shanties, and unemployed adults and out-of-school children and youth hanging around. Although most of the barangay schools and halls are located in Payatas B (see figure 5), its residents com-

Figure 4 - Map of Quezon City showing Barangay Payatas



plain that they have less access to services. They blame this on the area’s location farther from the main road and the Barangay Captain’s residence and office in the favored Payatas A.

Residents estimate that some 80 percent of families residing in the shadow of the towering dump and the already overflowing smaller ones derive their live-lihoods wholly or partially from picking through the garbage left by eighty-seven dump trucks every day, and recycling their harvest to junk shops. This Payatas B scene is replayed daily in nine other large dumpsites all over Metro Manila:

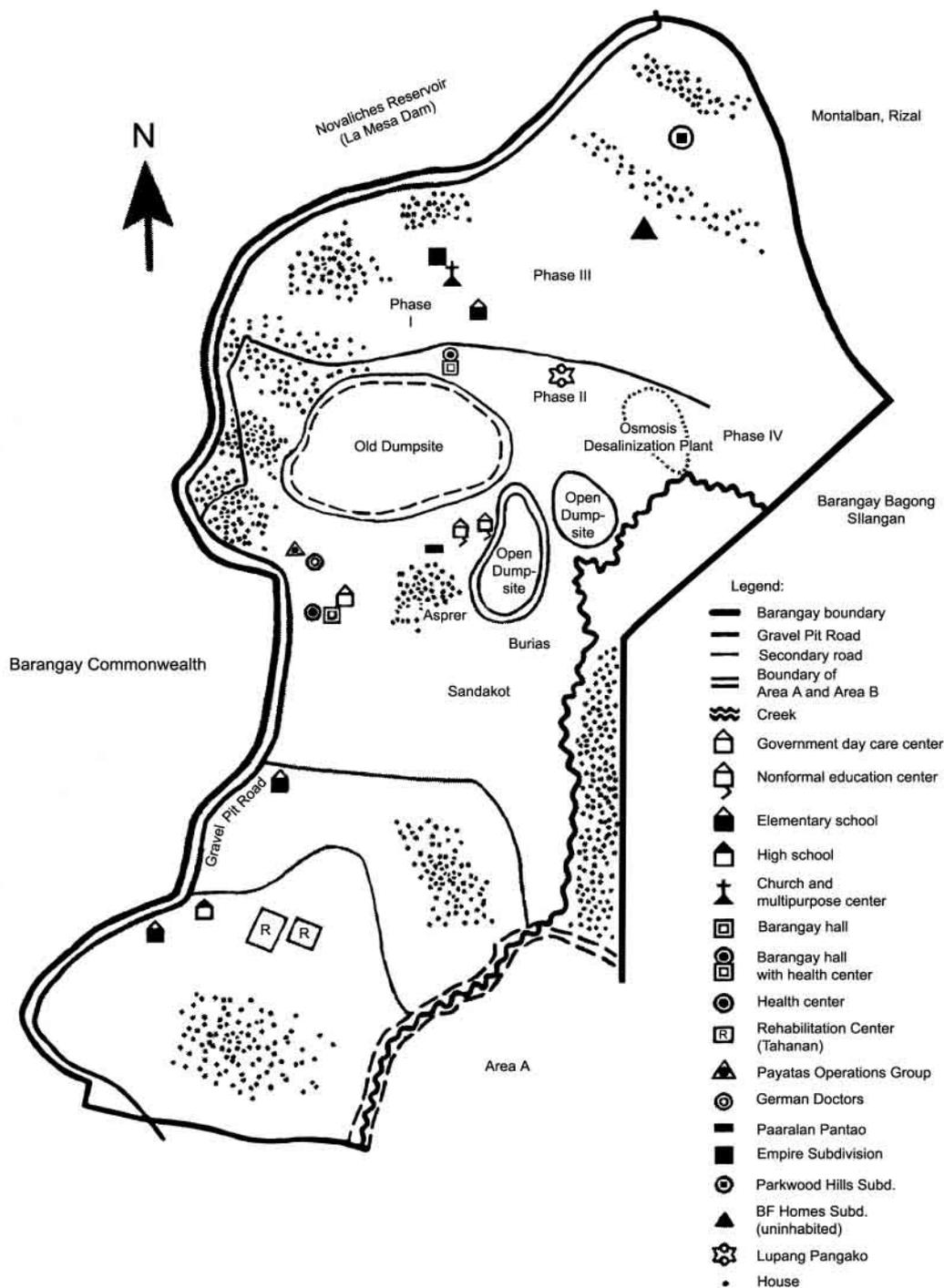
Thousands of scavengers and waste pickers live and survive on this waste, eking out a harsh existence on mountains of smoldering waste. Some are children as young as 5 years old. Taking account of their families, the hundreds of junk shops and their workers, the thousands of eco aides (garbage collectors), the thousands of garbage trucks and their

crews, and the tens of thousands of slum dwellers living on, around, and near the dump sites, an estimated 150,000 residents of Metro Manila know the sight and smell of garbage as an integral part of their daily lives. (Westfall and Allen 2004, 14)

Sasa and Leon Garcia, Davao City, Mindanao

Sasa is located by the airport and close to the wharf, a mixture of large commercial buildings and dilapidated shelters. The population of 42,000 in 7,200 households encompasses several ethnic groups.² Leon Garcia is also located near the airport and wharf. It too represents a mixture of light industry, dominated by tire and scrap iron businesses and high-density dwellings. Its population of 8,643 in 2,160 families is smaller but noteworthy because only 40 percent of children are in school.³ Both parents and children toil as factory workers and security guards. Both these communities appear to be slightly better-off than their Metro Manila counterparts.

Figure 5 - Layout of Area B, Barangay Payatas



Children Identify Their Poorest

The children who are in the most terrible situations are those whose parents have abandoned them. So, because they have to fend for themselves, they have to do things like scavenge all day. Some parents even sell their children! Other parents send their child out to work as a domestic servant who is often beaten if he/she makes even a tiny mistake. Others like them don't receive their wages.

– Ana, 14 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

The poverty associated with children growing up in urban informal settlements asserts itself strongly in the crowded and badly deteriorated settings in which they live, work and play. Most poor children have no option but to help earn family income. They observe that parents who do not nurture loving relationships with their children make family life miserable for them and deepen their sense of impoverishment. In Payatas B, children spend part or all of the day sifting through the garbage dump in search of usable or saleable items and recycling them through sales to junk shops. BASECO children also scavenge, but from the smaller refuse heaps scattered about the area. They also sell

cellophane-plastic sheets, collect payments for water distributors, catch crabs and small fish for food, and dive for mussels, then clean and sell them. Sasa children capitalize on their proximity to the seaport and airport to sell their wares, carry luggage and scout for tricycle passengers, while Leon Garcia children take advantage of the nearby market and commercial center to wash cars, carry loads, sell small items, and collect used tires and scrap iron.

We have neighbors who make their children work. They do not send them to school. I wish the parents would work; otherwise, they won't be able even to send their children to first grade. It's a good thing that at least now, these neighbors are sending their 14-year-old to start grade one. Children should go to school and not work because they are still children.
 – Salve, 9 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

These young observers readily identify the poorest or most disadvantaged among them: (1) child workers who are scavengers, out-of-school, and abandoned or neglected; (2) Rugby Boys (glue sniffers), *pok-pok* (promiscuous girls) and gangs; and (3) especially marginalized groups, like youngsters with disabilities, Muslim children and those whose houses perch on the

rocks at the water's edge at the farthest reach of the community (see table 5). One 8-year-old gives her opinion: *"The poorest children here are those who have nowhere to live. They don't have houses, so they sleep outside in the street."* A 16-year-old girl elaborates, *"Poverty for me is when I see children always in the dumpsite, with no money, always hungry. I think of them as children who lack love."*

Compounding the problem are multiple disadvantages, for scavengers can turn into Rugby Boys who are also abandoned; *pok-pok* or *bontog* girls may simultaneously be out-of-school and afflicted with disabilities; or fraternity members may be drug abusers as well. Abandoned children who work and suffer disabilities, remark the young respondents, deserve sympathy, care and protection, but the Rugby Boys, child prostitutes and gang members among them must take steps to end their harmful and antisocial behavior.

Children our age use drugs – rugby, shabu, marijuana – especially near the dumpsite. When they are on drugs, they start cursing a lot. They stop reciting in class, lose their concentration and begin to act differently, like talking rudely to their parents. Rugby is easy to get [from hardware stores] because they

Table 5 - Disadvantaged children and youth needing special protection, as identified by children (2002)

| Subgroup | Characteristics/Attributes as identified by children |
|--|---|
| Child workers Jumper Boys Bakal (Iron) Boys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scavenge at local dumpsites • Collect and sell scrap iron • Work in home industries, making foam pillows from recycled materials or other items from scraps • Sell food, flower garlands and other small items • Carry loads at pier or market, wash cars, and so forth |
| Out-of-school children and youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not attend school because their families cannot support their studies, or they have to work full-time • For some, have had training in carpentry, electronics, and so forth |
| Abandoned and neglected children and youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orphaned or abandoned by parents and families, and left to fend for themselves • Earn income from scavenging or on the streets • Left by parents or adult relatives at home or to play around the neighborhood |
| Rugby Boys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addicted to rugby (glue sniffing) • Work as scavengers, hawkers, and other income-earning activities • As young as 12 years old; innocent or naive – <i>"they still have traces of mother's milk on their lips"</i> |
| <i>Pok-pok, bontog</i> (promiscuous girls) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear mini-skirts, lipstick and heavy makeup • Identified by other children as commercial sex workers who perform oral sex with older men in parked jeepneys or dark spaces, especially at night; engage in noncommercial sex with neighborhood adolescents • Into drugs |
| Gangs and fraternities (D2, Angel Demon, BOP, Brother Gang, GLG, Lo-Lo Gang, Pantera, Salbahe, Demons, BLC, MMG, Molave, Tres, ANTRAX, or Anti-Terrorism and Remove All X [X=Wrong], Notoryus) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involved in riots and gang wars, which can lead to serious injuries, and even death; use weapons, such as <i>sumpak</i> (improvised homemade gun made of steel, using real bullets or gunpowder, with rubber band as trigger), marbles, rocks, and <i>sima</i> (arrows) • Addicted to prohibited substances, like rugby, marijuana, solvents and shabu • Into alcohol and unsafe sex • For some, resort to violence only when they have to protect their friends from rival gangs/fraternities |

say they will use it in [making or repairing] shoes. They say drugs make them feel good. It makes their problems disappear. Those who sell drugs to children should be arrested. Their houses should be raided and every corner searched to find the hiding places.

– Narding, 13 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Is it right that while working at the dumpsite, they still wear their short skirts? And they even sport spaghetti-strapped clothes! Some of their male companions wear many earrings. And it's obvious they're into drugs.

– Marietta, 16 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Focusing on children as a single group spanning the ages 0-17 obscures the wide variation in the ways they see their world. Listening to their voices, therefore, means doing so from the time they begin to articulate their views (4-6), through their younger (7-10) and older (11-13) childhood years, then as adolescent boys and girls (14-17). Case study participants belong to families with one to twelve children. They average six siblings, some of whom no longer live with their family. Most, however, remain under their parents' roof, while those who are orphaned or abandoned or whose parents are unable to take care of them reside with other family members, like older siblings, uncles and aunts, or simply move to the streets. The majority were born outside BASECO and Payatas and arrived in the area with their parents. The latter were attracted by the opportunities to earn at the harbor or dumpsite and acquire residential land.

Many of the schooling participants attend classes within the barangay or in adjacent neighborhoods. A number, mostly the very poorest, pursue alternative educational opportunities offered by NGOs or church groups. Among the out-of-school participants, one or two have never stepped into a classroom, while only a few of the youth aged 14 years and above have completed some elementary grades. Most express a strong interest in completing their education, at least through the secondary level.

Disparate as their perceptions are by age, common themes nonetheless emerge from children's testimonies as they progress toward older age levels. These revolve around their daily lives, self-conceptions and perceptions of their environment (both physical and social dimensions), of poverty and rich people. Rounding out these themes from the FGDs is the combined theme of rights, problems and aspirations.

The Testimonies of Children (4 to 17 years): Life in a Poor Settlement

Very Young Children: 4 to 6 Years

■ Daily Lives

Even at a young age, children are assigned household responsibilities, such as washing dishes, sweeping the

floor and caring for infants and toddlers. During their leisure time they play with cousins, neighbors and stray animals. Those at day care/early childhood centers or in grade one enjoy writing, drawing, singing and learning letters and numbers. Those not in school seem unsure as to why they are not enrolled. Many claim their mother says they are too young or that they have no one to accompany them there.

Apart from school, these very young children associate happiness with play-mates and toys. Jesus and Mother Mary are mentioned as the source of happiness for all children, whether rich or poor. The very young say their parents scold them when they misbehave. They may even get a spanking for playing instead of promptly attending to their household chores.

Their conversations indicate that they are often left without parental supervision for most of the day. Thus, they roam around and play while their parents are working or visiting with neighbors. When no one can watch over the young children in scavenger homes, parents or older siblings take mainly the boys to the dumpsite. At their tender ages, they are allowed to play and watch their family members work. Some already help sort items obtained from the refuse heaps. Others retrieve broken toys to be sold later with the rest of the family's collection. One boy cleans plastic film (PE) at the polluted creek.

When not at the dumpsite or in school, the children watch television at home or through the window of a neighbor's house, play with their friends, tend the family store or do household chores. Even at a young age, children seem aware that arguments and violence at home are not the way things should be. One child complains, "My father and mother fight a lot," while another goes further, "My parents are not nice because they hit me."

Children come to recognize the hazards of the dumpsite early in their young lives. Many people can get hurt, they declare, by being smothered in garbage, or run over by trucks and bulldozers. Most likely, their parents have warned them of these dangers in hopes that they will be more cautious or, better still, avoid the dumpsite altogether if their parents are not present. Despite these warnings, respondents confirm that many young children spend time at the garbage mound, playing or helping their parents with the easier tasks. Although not much is expected from them in terms of contributing to the family income, their early exposure to the garbage mountain serves as a means of anticipatory or early socialization toward the kind of life they are likely to lead in a few years. For young and old alike, when survival depends on the dumpsite, the mountain of garbage becomes central to their lives.

■ Self-conceptions

For children 4 to 6 years, concrete activities and possessions define their sense of self. When asked to draw themselves and their environment, they preferred to play with the toys the researchers had provided and to draw whatever they liked (e.g., flowers, simple human figures). This is to be expected because 4- to 6-year-old children are, as yet, unable

to conceive cognitively of themselves in terms of abstract characteristics.

■ *Environment*

The children describe their surroundings, even the dumpsite, as generally beautiful (*maganda*). BASECO is adjudged as picturesque because of the trees and plants surrounding it, and the sand by the shoreline. Considering that this is possibly the only environment they are familiar with, the positive perception is not surprising. Yet, several also mention with distaste the foul-smelling garbage strewn everywhere, the periodic floods and the constant noise from people arguing or shouting and children crying. Payatas children see many interesting things in the dumpsite and are probably already aware that it is the source of their family's livelihood. However, there are a few who perceive the dumpsite as "yucky" and "*kadiri*" (gross). In contrast most proudly describe their home as clean because they sweep the floor, wash the dishes and put away their belongings. One remarks that some houses are crowded, with too many people living in them. Others praise the swimming pool and playground run by a church group as part of the popular Child Worker Rehabilitation Program (CRP).

■ *Poverty*

Very young children rely on appearances as indicators of whether or not a person is poor. One Payatas child describes a poor person or a beggar as having torn clothes, with thighs and a face blackened by charcoal from wading in burnt out garbage piles. The poor have no money to buy anything, content themselves with old clothes and used things and cannot acquire their own house. When asked if they thought of themselves as poor, the children answered yes, citing their lack of money and their need to work.

Plain rice seasoned only with salt is a common meal, as for many, parents cannot afford meat or even fish and vegetables. These children still do not know what causes their poverty, although some do associate poverty with lack of income. Mostly they simply hear their parents say they are poor, perhaps in an attempt to explain why they cannot buy things for the household.

When the researchers probed further, the 4- to 6-year-olds say they see themselves as poor, "*because there is a dumpsite here,*" "*because we have been poor for a long time,*" "*because we do not sell fish.*" Being poor means having no toys and lacking clothing, food and basic household conveniences. "*When my father has money, he will make a bathroom . . . we will move [from our house] . . . and we will build a toilet.*" These simple, concrete responses attest to the children's rising level of cognitive maturity. It is also likely that they have developed these perceptions from their parents' explanations as to why they cannot buy certain things, and why, however young, they have to work.

■ *The Rich*

Holding the view that the poor are people with no money and have to make do with old things, very young Payatas children describe the rich as people

who always carry a lot of money and are thus capable of buying new things, who wear clothes that smell good and who are cared for by their parents. One girl describes a rich father who always looks out for his offspring. BASECO children add that rich people have both money and jobs. Again, these responses reflect the young child's focus on the concrete and observable aspects of poverty.

■ *Rights, Problems and Aspirations*

The youngest respondents expressed some awareness of children's rights when they were shown pictures depicting violations of them. While they had difficulty identifying their rights in a positive sense, they linked the concept with being happy because they have parents, eat good food, go to school, play and get medical treatment when sick.

The children described vividly the feelings of a child shown on a picture with two adults arguing angrily: "*The child is crying because his mother and father are fighting. It hurts him, and he feels it. It is frightening.*" All agree that it is wrong for parents to neglect their children. They resonate with the right to education, expressing a desire to attend school and learn. However, they still cannot specify whether these rights are being fulfilled or violated in the community.

The 4- to 6-year-olds are only mildly aware of institutions offering programs for them. The ones they know about are the preschools, one of which provides meals, uniforms, bags and crayons. From the barangay health center, they mention having gotten free immunizations, checkups and medicine.

Very young Payatas children are already well aware of the potential harm posed by the dumpsite in terms of accidents and diseases (mostly respiratory) associated with it. Thus, many think the dumpsite should be removed. They appear to have no opinion about government services; nor do they even recognize what the government is.

In speaking about their future aspirations, only a few of the children have an idea of what they want to be. The most common idea among the girls is to become a teacher, so they can help poor children learn how to read and write. To achieve this, comment the girls, one must be good, obedient and study well. They identify teachers as essential to the satisfactory school performance of students. Although many are unclear about their aspirations, much less how to achieve them, others dream of becoming rich, eating good food, having a complete family and entering a profession that will help other children. They see their mother as their primary means toward fulfilling their dreams, believing that, "*when she has thought of a way, she will send me to school!*"

Young Children: 7 to 10 Years

■ *Daily Lives*

Being in school or wanting to be there stands out as a key concern of 7- to 10-year-old children. Those not in school continue to hope that their family will earn enough to enroll them the following school year. Some dropped out long ago, while one 9-year-

old boy shares that he has never even set foot in a classroom. Others with the same experience explain that their parents could not produce a birth certificate or afford the expenses, or simply refuse to enroll them. The four-hour public school day developed to accommodate large numbers of students in three separate sessions totaling over twelve hours a day for the school, allows those who must also earn to spend four hours in school and work the rest of the day. Most would prefer to go to school, but others maintain that they would rather work than play *"because we have no food."* One girl feels pleased that she could work and help her parents, but another adds, *"Work here is not permanent. Where will I work [in the future] if I do not study?"*

In addition to outside work, children not in school handle much of the housework. One boy whose mother is dead and whose father is jobless washes dishes, cooks, does the laundry, cleans the house and cares for his nieces and nephews while his older brother is out working or with friends. Whether schooling or not, BASECO children say how happy they are to be able to play in the few open spaces or jump into the sea to swim. Payatas children frequent the drop-in center operated by the Vincentian Missionaries for Social Development Foundation, Inc. (VMSDFI) for its feeding, tutorial and recreational programs including a swimming pool. They consider the combination of school and play as ideal, but also recognize these as luxuries. Among the more deprived youngsters, their stoic accounts of everyday lives show school and play to be conspicuously missing.

Although most elementary school students in Payatas have to help with housework, many do not scavenge. Their parents prevent them from going to the dumpsite for safety and health reasons, reminding them that they may get hurt or sick if they work or play at the dumpsite. One boy claims that despite his parents' disapproval, he goes out to pick through the garbage because he wants to contribute to the family income. He believes that scavenging is necessary and that poor children have to work so they will have something to eat: *"I advise poor children just to scavenge [so] they will have money, even a little bit, to buy food."* Although this is one child in a group of eight, his sentiments are probably shared by others, who, like him, may have the opportunity to go to school but whose needs for money and food are also compelling. Schooling children express sympathy especially for the full-time scavengers because they believe these children are not cared for by their parents. The latter often come to hate scavenging or the work related to it, like sewing, stuffing and selling pillows or mattresses from discarded foam.

In addition to the stress brought on by work and/or school, a number of children face conflicts at home, giving graphic descriptions of being beaten and maltreated by their parents. One girl reveals that parental fights about money invariably end up with her father beating up her mother. In other cases, fights between parents are triggered by the mother's berating a drunken father. The children express sadness and distress at these situations, and want to stop the fight. Others admit they have gotten used to the

constant quarreling and try to comfort their younger siblings instead. Despite this, all respondents say they are happiest in the company of their parents, other family members and playmates. Most believe that their parents are taking good care of them.

■ *Self-conceptions*

To enable the 7- to 10-year-olds to reveal and concretize their sense of self, the researchers asked them to think of an animal or object with which they could compare themselves, or with which they share similar characteristics. Rather than being representative of themselves as a person, the children's responses pertain for the most part to the things they like and want to do. Specifically, they wish they could run freely and play (like a horse), walk and go to school to learn (like a cat), swim (like a fish), fly and be free (like a bird) and eat and grow healthy (like a plant). These characterizations reflect simple aspirations common to any child.

A few also mention their desire to help others, signified by a star bringing light or a child watering plants to help them grow (the plants being a metaphor for "other children"). Some children simply cite their favorite animal, object or color, but have difficulty conceptualizing themselves in relation to these. Such responses can be explained, perhaps, by their still developing cognitive ability to think of themselves in terms of abstract traits. At this stage, children are still developing their cognitive capacities and are more likely to envision concrete activities and things as central to their notion of self. The emotional tone accompanying the children's responses is invariably positive as well as reflective.

The nonschooling children respond similarly in play terms. At the same time, their self-conceptions center on their work and household responsibilities. "What kind of child are you" yielded responses like, *"I take care of my younger siblings, fetch water and carry out other tasks."* Further, they claim to be happy doing these chores. The reality of their family responsibilities has thus become an important aspect of their person.

■ *Environment*

Even though some of the Payatas children describe their homes as ugly, fly- infested, leaking from holes in the roof that let in the rain, and easily destroyed by typhoon winds, most of them regard their houses and their surroundings positively. They affirm their houses are clean and well kept, with plants and vegetables growing in the backyard. One child says that even if their house has holes, these are covered with cardboard or metal sheets so that outsiders cannot look in and rainwater will not readily penetrate. At the same time, they acknowledge the filth and foul smell emanating from the dumpsite.

They neither deny nor praise their deteriorated physical environment. Understanding fully well the unsavory setting and health hazards generated by the dump, they have grown accustomed to the situation. As with those in the very young age groups, they appear genuinely to like their overall environment and feel comfortable with it. This may stem

from the relatively low density of housing and sporadic open spaces and their having no other home or neighborhood with which to compare their surroundings. One girl who lives in Payatas but also has a home in the nearby government resettlement site, Erap City, emphasizes the differences between the two areas. She prefers Erap City because the air is fresher and the water cleaner.

BASECO children express an overwhelmingly negative view of their physical setting. They describe it as very dirty (*maruming-marumi*) and with an unpleasant smell (*mabaho*). Those families without toilets use the breakwater, they complain – the same area where fish are caught and mussels collected, and where they swim: “*We always get sick.*” They know fully well the ill effects of unsanitary living conditions on their health, but see no other options. The stilt village that constitutes most of BASECO leaves little space for safe play in open spaces, unlike Payatas. Moreover, the smell, dirt and danger from the dumpsite are tempered by its role as the major income source; the same cannot be said of BASECO.

The 7- to 10-year-olds condemn their environment as noisy and chaotic. They witness frequent and often violent fights among adults: “*His brother stabbed my father because he [brother] was drunk.*” Some believe it is better to live in the province or rural areas, where the environment is more peaceful, but they also recognize the lack of income sources there. Others remark that their flimsy shanties add to their ills, being easily destroyed by heavy rains and floods. Yet, those families that manage to keep their houses clean apparently add to the acceptability of BASECO. In the end, the children profess to being happy to live there, perhaps because it is the only home they know.

■ Poverty

The 7- to 10-year-old children define poverty according to their experience of it – as having no money and therefore begging in the streets or scabbling through garbage cans in search of food, eating only rice with nothing else, and having only a few or no material possessions. It means parents instructing their children to drink a lot of water so they will feel full despite their empty stomachs. Poverty comes from their parents’ unemployment and thus inability to meet the material needs of their families. Parents are said to be really poor when they have to steal in order to buy medicine for their sick child. This hand-to-mouth existence prevents children from going to school, and forces them to work and contribute to the family coffers. Nonschooling children tend to associate poverty more closely with the parents’ lack of education. In this age group, children are still unable to understand the causes of poverty beyond their parents’ inability to provide for their needs.

One child explains poverty as people’s simply being born poor: “*They are poor because their ancestors were poor; if they are rich, it is because their ancestors were rich.*” This suggests a disturbing resignation among these children, as they see no cause of or resolution to their deprivation. Others are more optimistic. Once nonearning parents find work by striving harder, the family will at last escape poverty.

Particularly poignant are the explanations that go beyond income to consider psychoemotional impoverishment. Also considered as poor are those children who lack love, care and attention from their parents. The young respondents criticize some parents for being lazy and therefore unable to feed their children. As one 10-year-old puts it, “*The poorest children are those who have nothing to eat, have parents who are lazy and do nothing, have no jobs, and, in times of need, have not enough savings.*” Other children chime in: abused, neglected and abandoned by their parents, the most deprived children live in the streets and resort to rugby sniffing or get seriously into drugs to overcome their hunger pangs and forget their problems.

These responses emphasize that children look to parents for their needs. To them, a child who lacks parental love is also likely to be materially poor. This view is consistent with the children’s opinion that it is all right for them to be poor and to live in Payatas or BASECO, so long as they are with their parents.

Most of the respondents see themselves as poor. Child scavengers, in particular, attribute their bleak situation at the dumpsite to their lack of material benefits. They realize they are poor because, according to them, their mothers have been telling them so. Moreover, seeing their parents working hard with little rest affirms their self-perceptions of their impoverished condition. Yet, some children in the community make an important distinction – they do not see themselves as poor compared to those who scavenge and beg, and whose parents have no jobs or income.

■ The Rich

According to the young respondents, rich children can afford to buy things like clothes and toys, while the poor can buy only the most basic items, like rice or milk. Rich parents give their children anything they want. They always have more than they need. Rich girls have money to buy a dress for a Christmas party. Then, they can put that dress away in the closet and wear other clothes on subsequent occasions. Therefore, rich children should give the poor their spare clothes, food and other material possessions.

In addition to having many possessions, rich children have food to eat, and big, clean houses, unlike the poor whose houses are dark and dirty (*madilim at marumi*). Rich children are clean (*malinis*), good looking (*maganda*), fair-skinned (*maputi*) and smell good (*mabango*). However, some are arrogant (*mapagmataas*), boastful (*mayabang*) and unkind (*masama ang ugali*). Further, according to the 7- to 10-year-olds, “*Rich kids talk in affected ways and always speak in English. It’s easy to fool them, like you can make them buy stuff for you.*” One girl in BASECO admits feeling envious of the material possessions of rich children: “*I envy them. . . I am sad because I do not have a Barbie doll!*” Others likewise express envy when they see well-off children riding their cars.

There are a few among the rich who are nice and generous to the poor, say some respondents. In general, they agree that the “good” (*mabait*) rich people share what they have with the poor while the “bad”

(*masama ang ugali*) ones do not pay attention to beggars and other poor people seeking their help. Moreover, according to a child in Payatas: "If the rich adopt a poor child, they give him/her his/her own food, own plate, own room. Just to avoid getting sick, he/she eats clean food."

■ *Rights, Problems and Aspirations*

Many of the young participants do not know all the children's rights when these were presented to them, but some recognized certain rights, having learned about these in school or at the drop-in center. Several project a sense that children need to be fed, educated, nurtured and protected, and that it is therefore wrong for children to be hungry, uneducated, abandoned and abused.

Once the rights are explained to them, the children elaborate on these in terms of violations. They claim that not all children in the community enjoy these rights, pointing to the number who do not eat proper food, go to school, or play. This happens because parents are poor, never bother to obtain the child's birth certificate for enrollment, or have abandoned them, leaving them to beg, root through garbage cans or simply wander in the streets. They speak of children who are victims of domestic abuse, whose parents hit them when they refuse to work or if they appear to be stubborn and unruly. The young discussants criticize adults or barangay officials who do not protect children exposed to crime, illegal drugs and violence in and outside their homes.

When asked what children needed most, the top choice was the love and care of their parents. This is consistent with their contention that poor working children suffer from parental neglect. In the children's eyes, parents should be the source of good things, so that given their love and care, it follows that they will strive to meet their children's material and other needs. Singling out working and scavenging children who are often tired and sick, they insist that especially these children need rest. Some mention the need to help their parents earn a living, which suggests that contributing to the family income forms a strong component of what children believe they should do.

The dirt and polluted air of informal settlements add to their illnesses, they explain. When asked who they approach for help when they get sick, or when they have other problems, the children replied that they simply go to their mother. While most of them are aware of the presence of various authorities and institutions in their community (e.g., barangay officials, barangay health center, Red Cross), they have not sought these services and are uncertain whether their mother has done so.

The hopes and aspirations of the children are quite typical. In an immediate sense, they want to go to school, learn how to read and write, be able to pay for the identification card, buy a toy and have an intact family. Their longer-range dreams include respectable positions in society, such as teacher, nurse, police officer, soldier and actor or actress. Others settle for having a regular job. One girl hopes a charitable institution will adopt her so she can attend

school. The children believe that only through education, hard work, persistence and parental support will they be able to attain their goals. Several of the non-schooling children admit with resignation that they may not be able to fulfill their aspirations. They explain that they have no one but themselves to rely on, and no alternatives aside from prayer if they are to attain their dreams.

Older Children: 11 to 13 Years

Scavengers like us go to the dumpsite every day after school, and all day on Saturdays and Sundays. We bring a rake, a sack and boots. Also food. We usually wear dirty pants, long-sleeved shirts and hats. On weekdays, we can collect enough to earn P20-P30 [US\$0.36-US\$0.54] and, on weekends, P80 [US\$1.43] each day. If we don't go to the dump, we won't have an allowance for the next week at school. Some of our parents also work at the site. We like scavenging because we earn from it. Sometimes, accidents happen, like when you get cut by the rake. When that happens, I bandage the wound with a clean strip of cloth. The house of a classmate of mine, also a scavenger, was buried during the landslide and he died. His whole family died too. I was very sad.

– Child scavengers, 11-13 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

■ *Daily Lives*

Most schooling 11- to 13-year-olds spend their day in school, help with the housework and home industries, and possibly work part-time outside as well. Those unable to complete the final year of elementary school or enter high school become the latest additions to out-of-school and working children. In Payatas, this means joining the scavenger group full-time, earning as little as P20 (US\$0.36) per day but often more, depending on the quality of the waste. Those who make pillows out of discarded plastic foam sell these at three for P100 (US\$1.79). If they are lucky and find buyers, they may earn that much on some days; on others, no sales means no earnings, and possibly no meal. One boy collects and sells empty soda bottles to a junk shop and boasts that he makes as much as P1,000 to P1,800 (about US\$18 to US\$32) a week. The variability and unpredictability of rewards for labor spur the children on to scavenge, in the hope of getting a lucky break.

Several of these older boys and girls state matter-of-factly that unless they scavenge, they will not eat. One girl picks up *pektus* or *sibak* (pieces of hard plastic) and sells these to a junk shop near the dumpsite. The P20 she earns every Monday (the only day she scavenges) enables her to buy rice for the family. A very poor boy gets up at dawn and goes to the dump without having breakfast. After scavenging for a few hours, he rests but soon begins again, skipping lunch. He continues working, until suppertime, when he has his first and only meal of the day. Some of the older children prefer to work elsewhere, citing the

dangers of the dumpsite, where one girl reports she was almost run over by a bulldozer. A Jumper Boy (one who jumps onto garbage trucks delivering scrap material) reflects on not only how tiring his work is, but how barangay security or Payatas Operations Group (POG) officers kicked and harassed him when they caught him. One 13-year-old boy wistfully remarks that he has never been to school, and can only read or write his name. He would, however, feel greatly embarrassed if he ever did get to school but without a school bag or snack allowance.

The children usually turn over their earnings to their parents to buy rice, deriving a sense of fulfillment from being able to help their families: *"We feel good!"* Others resent parents who use their hard-earned money for their own needs or wants, like clothes and cosmetics. This suggests that these children feel they have some right to decide how their earnings will be utilized.

Some parents reportedly punish children who do not prioritize work. Once out of the house, older boys and girls spend time with their friends swimming, watching television and singing in front of the *videoke* (an audio-visual sing-along machine). These recreational times constitute a luxury, however, and few have a chance to enjoy the privileges of leisure.

Domestic violence has become a regular part of many young lives. Children report suffering physical abuse from their mother, grandfather or older sibling. Two children recount similar stories. When their mothers criticized their fathers for coming home late following hours of drinking or gambling, the men would react by beating their mothers. Recalls one, *"He was going to stab Mama with a pair of scissors. We stood between them."* Eventually, one mother died, while the other left her family. Although these children are now under the care of their grandparents and an NGO, they still express anger toward their fathers, as well as sadness at having a broken family. The trauma of witnessing such violence has clearly affected their emotional wellbeing and social relationships.

Despite sometimes negative assessments of their working and home lives, the children report many happy moments, too. Like any child, many feel happiest when playing and in school. They value learning something and spending time with friends. One boy says he derives pleasure from eating and sleeping but, unfortunately, has to work in order to eat. The children also emphasize the advantages of working. Some attribute their happiness to having an intact family whose members get along well. Others associate a happy home with having food to eat everyday. One girl comments, *"We are happy because we can eat twice a day everyday and we eat together."* The psychoemotional wellbeing of the children and their families thus depends largely on their ability to satisfy their daily needs. A family that does not have enough to eat or money to cover basic needs experiences frequent stress, conflict and unhappiness.

■ *Self-conceptions*

Children 11 to 13 years demonstrate greater awareness of their internal traits than do the younger age

groups. The prevalent theme in their responses is being able to help and to contribute. In comparing themselves with an animal or object, one girl identifies with a turtle because she is slow about completing her household chores, while another describes herself as sensitive and, like a crab, pinches her playmates when they tease her. Another helps the family by looking for food, like an ant, or is hardworking, like a carabao, or is strong, like a horse. Others liken themselves to a bird that gives happiness to people and helps them forget their problems (as when children bring cheer to their parents who fight a lot); or a worm that enriches the soil and helps plants to grow; or a butterfly that beautifies its surroundings and nurtures flowers.

These responses reflect their daily round. Where life is hard, the children's contribution to family survival is crucial, and the beauty of plants and flowers is missing. The 11- to 13-year-olds display greater cognitive complexity and maturity not yet evident in their younger counterparts. A large number in this age group are able to think of themselves in relation to others and the larger environment in more abstract or symbolic terms.

The rest, especially their nonschooling counterparts, appear closer to younger children in their self-conceptualizations. They focus on their favorite food and activities. It is hard to ascertain whether their more limited responses compared to their schooling peers signal real differences in cognitive functioning or difficulties in the research process.

■ *Environment*

Through their drawings and experience sharing, the children describe their environment. Although a few think positively about it, the majority take strongly negative positions. Those in Payatas describe it as filthy and strewn with trash, human and animal waste, dead dogs, cats and even babies. Flies and germs abound. BASECO children complain that residents throw trash into the sea or all over the settlement. Except for a few appliances and ornaments here and there, their houses are shabby, dilapidated and prone to destruction from heavy rains, flooded interiors and blown away roofs. They feel unprotected from diseases and accidents, like garbage avalanches in Payatas and drowning in BASECO.

Unlike the younger age groups who regard their surroundings more favorably, the older children commonly rate their physical setting poorly: *"It is ugly and dirty, and overcrowded; houses are stacked against one another."* They yearn for more pleasant surroundings, remarking that the dumpsite area should be made cleaner and planted to flowers. After all, they continue, the lives of the people depend on the dumpsite so they should beautify it to the extent possible.

Beyond the deplorable physical environment is the dangerous social environment that threatens them with violence inside the household and crime on the streets. Their words say it all: *"fistfights and beatings . . . hair pulling . . . jailings . . . shootouts . . . stabbings . . . everyday there are people chasing one another."* One child recalls a rape that took place right

behind his house, where a 9-year-old girl was victimized by the respondent's own uncle "high" on drugs. Another complains that children learn to gamble at an early age because they see their parents and other adults doing it. Compounding the problem is the drug scene, with children sniffing glue or rugby and adults taking shabu (cheap form of cocaine). Chaotic situations brought on by gambling, cockfighting and drinking are matched by the noise from houses where the mother and father are constantly fighting.

This place is not safe. A lot of thieves steal appliances or food from local stores or groceries. When the dumpsite closed for a while last year even pots and pans were stolen. There are also killings. It starts with stone throwing but then they start stabbing one another. Innocent people get beaten up but don't know why. People even shoot each other with homemade guns because they hear that the other person had said bad things about them or beat up a friend. Rival gangs often have rumbles, like the Angel Demon.
– Nelia, 11 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

The shift in perceptions from positive to negative as the children get older is sobering, and reflects a growing awareness of the bleak future they face, especially if they have to work for their upkeep. Some have had greater exposure to the city beyond their community, so that disparities between them and better-off children their age have become more apparent. Television introduces them to the different but exciting lifestyles of young movie stars and well-to-do age peers. Such comparisons may create more wants and needs and, accordingly, higher levels of frustration at their unattainability.

Cognitively as well, 11- to 13-year-olds are better able to assess their environment from various perspectives, rather than in the unidimensional way characteristic of younger children. For instance, while younger children may judge the beauty of their surroundings based on the cleanliness of their own houses, older children notice the general dirt and filth as well as the social chaos within and outside their homes compared with other homes or places they have seen. It may be at this point then that children experience real dissatisfaction with and negative feelings about their situation.

When you're poor, life is hard. I have a friend who is pitiful because he has no mother, father, brothers or sisters – no one at all. He has nowhere to live, and collects discarded plastics to sell so he can eat. Yet, kids older than he grab his food and money, and even hit him.
– Elena, 11 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

■ Poverty

Older children associate poverty with the number of times they eat, their work and state of family togetherness. Most claim they eat only twice a day – lunch

and dinner. Some say they are happy if they have two full meals a day, adding that when money is scarce, they eat only at night. When they have no food at all, Payatas mothers instruct them to go to the CRP office located near the dumpsite, as it gives free lunches to working children.

Instead of eating rice for breakfast at 7:00 a.m., we have our first meal at 10:00 a.m.. Sometimes, instead of rice we make do with a small piece of bread.
– Boy Pio, 12 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

I am not able to concentrate on my studies as much as I wish because I have to wake up at dawn to go to the market, where I earn money as a porter so we can have something for breakfast. I attend school in the morning and when I am in class, I feel sleepy. I have difficulty understanding the lessons. So, I fail my subjects. I am in grade 3 for the third time!
– Jojo, 11 years old, Leon Garcia, Davao City

How will they eat if they do not work? Will they just depend on other people? Then they will say they will just pray so they can have something to eat . . . how will they eat if they do not work?
– David, 13 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

To Payatas children, a clear marker of poverty is scavenging. Yet, working at the dumpsite brings money to buy food, which is divided among family members. Many dislike having to work, but have no choice if they are to survive. BASECO children identify poverty with living on the streets, begging for money and food, being dirty and hungry, and having no parents to help or provide for their needs. It means living a hand-to-mouth existence, unlike richer folk, who can have whatever they want even without working. Being poor also symbolizes the degradation and insecurity of being "squatters": "When the land is about to be sold, the people living there are removed. They are thrown just anywhere."

Poor people, say these older children, are humble and willing to accept what they have and whatever is given to them, since they have no jobs. At times, though, poverty is attributable to adults' poor work performance or to plain laziness: "Some are hard-working, but others are just bums. They don't make a move to get off their behinds." Other children look further afield for explanations, like the economy: "Things are more expensive now. The price of rice is increasing." Or they take a more fatalistic position: "This is all that God has given us. If we are poor, then we are poor. If we are rich, then we are rich."

Schooling respondents point to government negligence as the cause of poverty. Moreover, these 11- to 13-year-olds believe that only a corrupt few benefit from government programs, while some officials get rich at the expense of the poor. The government, they assert, does not keep its promise of providing the poor with land and housing, good jobs and free education. Others are more noncommittal:

I do not know what to say about the government. If they have programs for us, well and good. My present concern is to be able to earn an income and hopefully be able to go back to school.

– Dodong, 11 years old, Leon Garcia,
Davao City

It is when the children turn 11, 12 and 13 that they begin to identify poverty with causes beyond the family or their parents. Perhaps this reflects their greater exposure to and understanding of the social world beyond their households. They are better able to grasp that the causes of poverty may be more complicated than their parents' mere inability to provide for their needs. These opinions may have been formed through media exposure and the conversations of adults around them. Some, however, still view poverty through the eyes of younger children, blaming it, for example, on parents who spend money on gambling or drugs.

■ *The Rich*

The social class perceptions of 11- to 13-year-olds differ slightly from those of younger groups. The rich eat at Jollibee (a popular fast-food restaurant) and throw away unfinished food, asserts one respondent. This simple comment aptly reflects poor children's belief that the rich have more than they need, do things and go to places that poor children only dream about. In distinguishing the poor from the rich, Payatas children have come up with perhaps the most glaring difference in their experience: the poor scavenge, and the rich do not.

In the minds of these children, the rich do not care about the plight of the poor. One child elaborates by stating that increases in the price of gasoline do not seem to bother the rich, while rising transportation fares seriously affect poor people. On the one hand, rich people are seen as clean, attractive and fair-skinned; on the other, arrogant and selfish. *"Being dirty is repulsive to them. . . the rich are turned off by street children, who they think smell bad!"* Some counter these negative assessments by saying they feel happy when they encounter rich people because they are nice to look at. Others mention being pleased at receiving assistance from rich people. Despite this perceived generosity, a number cite the experience of having been turned away. Further, they believe that rich children do not want to make friends with them, since the former think too highly of themselves.

It is unlikely that the majority of these young respondents draw such perceptions from actual experiences. Rather, the influence of their elders and exposure to media appear to have shaped their views. Moreover, the notion of the uncaring and unfeeling middle and upper classes may have been heightened during the acrimonious nationwide debate surrounding the ouster of former President Joseph Estrada in 2001. Many of the disadvantaged groups idolize him and his pro-poor image.

■ *Rights, Problems and Aspirations*

The 11- to 13-year-olds agree that children need and have the right to proper food, clothing, shelter, edu-

cation, play and protection from harm. They observe that not all of these rights are fulfilled in their community, citing the large number of children who have no homes or not enough to eat, who cannot go to school, who do not have the opportunity to play, and who do not receive care and attention from their parents. These violations of children's rights are highlighted by child scavengers living near the dumpsite, who they add, do not get protection from government. They note, for instance, the inability of barangay officials to stop drug abuse and stealing in Payatas. They charge the POG officers with allowing child scavengers to remain on the garbage heaps at the risk of being run over by trucks and bulldozers. BASECO children stress the right to education, adding that it is wrong for children to be out of school. Although they say that by working, and therefore not going to school, they help their parents and please God, their responses also betray a sense that work is not a normal part of a child's life.

Schooling children list some services offered by government, including free education, educational television, free medicine and medical services, and road repair. Nonschooling children claim to be unaware of any government services for them. This makes the following statement from a Payatas child particularly poignant:

I do not want [the dumpsite removed], as the children will go hungry. The children also scavenge; that is why they are able to eat. . . their parents have no jobs.

– Fe, 13 years old

What appears to alarm them most is the violence surrounding them. Most laud barangay efforts to arrest delinquent youth, particularly drug addicts and thieves. Putting these violators in jail, maintain the respondents, will teach these problem residents a lesson and discourage them from committing the same mistake. Those arrested will obviously see things differently.

But violence does not occur only on the streets; some children face danger in the hands of family members who are supposed to protect them. Several respondents admit to being victims of parental abuse, or having witnessed it at a neighbor's or relative's house. They know of an NGO that protects abused and abandoned children, as in the case of the child whose abusive father killed his mother. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Bantay Bata (Child Watch), an NGO, receive similar recognition for their assistance in this crucial area.

Other young girls resent the overprotectiveness of parents and negative opinions neighbors have of young girls who go out simply for fun. They deny engaging in casual sex:

My neighbors think of me as a flirt because I go to the videoke house with my friends. In fact, one of my neighbors told my mother about it. She confronted me and scolded me.

Since then, she has been strictly monitoring my activities, but I sometimes manage to escape from her. It really hurts because what they say is not true.

– Camila, 13 years old, Sasa, Davao City

Of the role played by barangay officials, a girl from Leon Garcia observes:

I know of incidents where some youth – I am not sure if they were really from this barangay – were arrested by community residents when they were found in the streets late at night. They were taken to the barangay hall and were scolded [by barangay officials] because they had been drinking. Their parents were called and were also reprimanded.

– Ichang, 13 years, Leon Garcia

The children's future aspirations revolve around service to others. They speak of becoming teachers to help children who cannot go to school, police officers or soldiers to capture the bad people in society, carpenters to help build houses, or doctors and nurses. Others think about going to Japan to become singers or entertainers.

I wish to become a seaman someday but I only finished grade 2. It would be hard for me to go back to school even if my parents support me. I would be embarrassed because I am already 13 years old.

– Joseph, 13 years old, Leon Garcia, Davao City

They see these aspirations as attainable if one studies hard, avoids drugs and has the support and guidance of parents, teachers and Jesus. Many of the school dropouts also have ambitions for the future, but they realize fully well that these entail returning to school and completing their studies – a dim prospect for many.

We would like our school to be clean, with a playground, lots of trees and a clean toilet that doesn't smell. There should be enough seats for all the children. We are about seventy children in one classroom. When school began, there were only twenty to thirty chairs and desks. Now everyone has at least a plastic seat but only some have a proper wooden desk and chair. Two students share one book; if I have it in the evening, my partner gets it in class. To make the classroom better, they should fix the chairs, put in electric fans, improve the library, fix and put locks on the doors and windows to avoid theft.

– Cita, 12 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Adolescents: 14 to 17 Years

■ Daily Lives: Adolescent Males

When asked what the most significant aspects of their lives are, male youth immediately listed bil-

liards, hanging out, arcade video games, television, videoke centers, basketball court, market and, in Payatas, jumping onto garbage trucks. This is not surprising, since these activities dominate their day-to-day lives, both in recreational and work terms. A few prefer to stay home and draw or sing than go out with friends. Payatas adolescents comment that the only difference between their work and that of younger children is that the latter pick up only what they can easily carry home, while stronger, older youth haul heavy loads of metal, plastic and crushed cardboard boxes.

At night, the adolescent boys play video games, billiards and basketball, or hang around with their friends. Schooling youth admit attending classes only about three times a week, skipping school for the video arcades in nearby malls.

After class, when I get home and find nothing to do, my friends and I go to the computer game shop. We enjoy playing games and sometimes we forget about the time. We usually stay for around two hours. The fee is cheap at P10 [US\$0.18] per hour so I try to save up from the meager allowance I get from my parents. I go home when I feel tired and sleepy and that is around 11:00 p.m.

– Gilbert, 16 years old, Leon Garcia, Davao City

I wake up at 8:00 a.m. and after breakfast, I immediately go to the computer game shop nearby. At times I wash the dishes and cook rice, especially when the other household members go to church. I go out with my friends at night and we hang out until 10:00 p.m.

– Oscar, 15 years old, out of school, Leon Garcia, Davao City

Helping with house chores (cleaning, washing dishes) seems almost like an afterthought. This is consistent with accounts of differing gender roles and expectations for men and women in Philippine society. While girls are socialized to spend more time at home and focus on household matters, boys are encouraged to engage in productive activities outside the home.

I do not like staying at home because of my brother. He berates me constantly, especially if I make mistakes in counting our earnings from a day of driving. He always tells me that I am lazy, but that's not true. He just can't understand my situation. I am not like him, that's why.

– Mario, 16 years old, Sasa, Davao City

A central part of their lives is their gang or circle of close friends (*barkada* or *grupo*). Group members help one another. At the Payatas dumpsite, this means collecting garbage, carrying heavy loads and sharing cold drinks "like brothers." They support and protect one another when problems arise or when there are fights or riots with rival groups. One young man explains the importance of his *barkada*: "You

have someone to approach who will protect you. You can run to your barkada if you need help. If your face has been cut or bruised, they will treat your wounds." The fellowship of the barkada is especially crucial for orphaned youth living at the dumpsite, as they feel they can only rely on one another.

My home is so problematic that I often seek the company of friends. With this group, I learned to smoke marijuana and sniff rugby. We were a tight group. If one is accosted by an enemy gang, we protect each other. But I realized that my life was not going anywhere so I have stopped going around with them.
– Gilbert, 16 years old, Leon Garcia, Davao City

Many adolescents, whether in school or out, join gangs mainly to avoid being harassed or victimized by other gangs. Several gang members recall being pressured by their peers into joining. If they continue to resist, recruiting gangs wait for them everyday outside of school and even go to their house. One out-of-school youth cites this as his reason for quitting school. If not for the gangs or fraternities, he says, he would have been able to continue his studies. "I want to avoid gangs, but I can't."

Troubles begin with the teenagers. They get into gang fights – the Rugby Boys versus the Addict Boys. Just a little slight, and a riot starts. The drug users get arrested. But if they can post bail, they get released right away. Someone just needs to fix things. More offenders are released than are behind bars. It's too bad because the P100 [US\$1.79] they spend on drugs could have been used to buy rice for their families.
– Rey, 17 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Apart from the pressure to join, becoming a full-fledged gang member poses continuing challenges. Loyalty to gangmates is severely tested through brutal initiation rites that include being beaten with wooden planks and burned by cigarette butts.

As is evident from the youth themselves, the barkada may also lead the adolescents to engage in delinquent and risky activities. This is common in informal settlements, where the youth are often idle and have limited access to constructive activities. Aside from skipping classes and hanging out with friends, one youth reveals that his group frequents the places where the pok-pok/bontog (promiscuous girls) congregate. He hints that they engaged in sexual activities but "only once" and "not with every girl . . . [as] the others smell bad." This misinformation about sex leads them to think that "doing it" once will not court infection from a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or pregnancy, since they can tell from a girl's smell whether or not she is infected with STD. Sexual activity usually accompanies initiation into a gang.

Gangs are notorious for taking part in riots, using as their weapons steel pipes, broken bottles and improvised shotguns made from metal tubes

(sumpak). But the respondents insist they engage in riots mainly to "get back at" rival groups that, they claim, initiate the fight. Aggrieved groups prefer to retaliate directly rather than seek the help of barangay officials. They know the latter will not sympathize with them but accuse them of fomenting trouble. Moreover, they protest, they do not intend to hurt rival groups but merely want to intimidate them. The fact is, however, that gang members have suffered serious injuries during rumbles. Gang members insist that they themselves do not engage in delinquent or illegal activities. Rather, it is their rivals who steal, use drugs and initiate fights. The rival groups make the same claims.

Other negative consequences of gang membership include disruption of school attendance (i.e., cutting classes or quitting school altogether) and, more seriously, drug abuse. Although none of the respondents directly admits using drugs, they say that several gang members sniff rugby, and use and distribute marijuana and shabu (cheap form of cocaine). One founder of a gang disbanded his group upon seeing that his members were not doing anything useful but were just getting "high" all the time. When he tried to discourage them, they would reply, "How come you know better, are you the one who's going to die?" Adolescent boys emulate their fathers and other adult males who drink or take drugs to reduce stress or forget their problems. Thus, a vicious circle is set in motion: hardship compels men to abuse alcohol and drugs, which in turn force them deeper into the mire of poverty, abuse and despair.

Conflicts among male teenagers typically begin with seemingly petty matters, such as what one is wearing, how he walks or moves, how he looks and carries himself overall (*porma*). A young man in the community must be careful not to seem like he is "showing off," or like he is better than others, otherwise, he will be taunted or harassed by members of rival groups. It is no surprise then that adolescent boys take extra care to maintain the proper *porma*. According to them, one's outside appearance and overall bearing reveal his inner person. One becomes an easy target of criticism and abuse if he appears boastful in his walk, clothing or speech. One's *porma* also affects how he comes across to girls.

Family life is hardly mentioned by teenage males, compared to the importance of peer groups in their lives. When asked, most described their family life as generally happy or "okay," but sad when there is not enough money for rice, medicine or their school allowance. Some reveal being scolded, slapped or pinched hard when their parents learn they have misbehaved in school or when they have not done their house chores. This is not seen as a form of abuse, but merely a routine approach to disciplining children. Yet, if parental patterns of treating children harshly become accepted as routine, there is a danger that when serious cases of child abuse occur, they are more difficult to recognize and thus go un-reported.

Family relations are more strained among gang members. These youngsters resent their parents' strictness, prohibitions and disapproval of their

barkada membership and the amount of time they spend with their friends. The respondents report that their parents often have heated arguments over money. Husbands typically arrive home with no money after gambling or drinking it away, and vent their frustrations on their wives. Sometimes, these arguments escalate into verbal and physical abuse. One youth admits: *"I am embarrassed because my parents are noisy; the neighbors hear them fighting."* Older boys feel protective toward their younger siblings: *"Sometimes I feel angry when they [parents] shout and curse each other. My younger brothers and sisters can hear them and may imitate them."* Some adolescents escape by staying with friends or relatives until the home situation has calmed down.

Many of the issues and problems in the male adolescents' lives are typical of their developmental stage. To some extent, close affiliation with one's peer group (i.e., formation of gangs, spending time with friends rather than the family) and the concern over *perma*, or image and appearance, are normative aspects of adolescent life. Peer groups serve to secure the teenager's sense of belonging and identity, and to provide a venue for exploration of alternative identities, as one strives to distinguish himself separately from the family and define his unique place in society. They can be a positive force in helping the teenager know himself better and develop intimate relations outside his family. Contrary to common belief, this viewpoint regards the *barkada* as not necessarily a negative influence in the adolescent's life.

The discussions with male teenagers underscore a culture of violence, drinking, gambling and drug abuse that has become a part of the young people's everyday lives. It should come as no surprise if as adults they adopt the same way of life, especially when no interventions are initiated to divert them from such outcomes. While it is important to recognize the necessity of peer groups and to support these peer affiliations among the youth, their energies and efforts at identity seeking, exploration and togetherness must be channeled to healthier activities, such as sports and other constructive recreation and learning activities linked to schooling, skills acquisition and employment.

■ *Daily Lives: Adolescent Females*

Both schooling and nonschooling adolescent girls have less time than their brothers simply to hang out. Parents rely on them for cooking, cleaning, laundry, child-minding and other domestic chores, in addition to working for limited income outside the household. The schoolgirls speak of studying and joining youth organizations organized by NGOs and church groups, like the BASECO Care Movement Youth, 4H Youth Club, Parish Youth Council and the government-initiated Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council).

Kaugmaon⁵ organizes activities for us, like camping. We enjoy it because we get to know other people. We sing, play the guitar, dance and have fun. Other than that, we get a chance to share our problems with other children and youth. Through the activity, we

become more informed about our situation and the issues that affect us.

– Glenda, 17 years old, Sasa, Davao City

Out-of-school adolescent girls hang out with their friends. They admit having lost their motivation to study once the lack of money forced them to quit school. Happiest when sharing problems and laughs and telling one another stories, they feel these somehow compensate for their not being able to continue studying. Their pastimes include playing volleyball or basketball, singing, dancing, watching television and reading pocketbooks. A few mention household chores but do not include these in their listing of regular activities, preferring to highlight their times outside the home with their group.

I go to the videoke house near the Sasa wharf with friends, usually in the afternoon after school. We sing there and have softdrinks. Sometimes, we drink beer. We enjoy doing that. Some of my friends already have boy-friends, and they usually meet there, too. It is so much fun because we are many. We tease those who sing out of tune. We go home very late at night because we forget the time.

– Norma, 15 years old, Sasa, Davao City

In Leon Garcia, groups of adolescent girls at a videoke house recount:

There are times when guys come up to us asking us to go out with them. Since there are many of us, we are not afraid to scold them. So they go away. When this happens, we leave the place immediately and go home.

– Rosie, 16 years old, Leon Garcia, Davao City

Tensions between parents and their teenage daughters characterize this stage in their life and encourage them to lean heavily on friends for support. This is especially true of nonschooling girls, who spend much of their time with friends, even staying at their homes for days.

When you talk to your parents, they put you down. They do not try to understand your point of view because their generation is different from ours. They don't give you the right to talk. This is why my friends get higher priority.

– Carmen, 16 years old, BASECO, Manila

I was accused of being a member of a gang that encourages sexual activities among its members. That really hurt me as it destroyed my image in the community. I just want to enjoy being with my friends. That is all we are doing at the videoke house. I wish they would understand that.

– Rosanna, 17 years old, Sasa, Davao City

The teenage girls in Payatas B identify several problems. Particularly disturbing are their *pok-pok*

age mates, promiscuous girls who, being idle, while away their time singing and shouting brazenly at passersby near the dumpsite. They dress provocatively and engage in sexual activity, sometimes for money or favors, but other times for free. *Pok-pok* are described as going around with boys who are drug users and spending their time in questionable places until dawn.

My older brother saw a baby without a head in a styrofoam... there, on the way to Dos . . . The promiscuous girls have sex on the tree; a panty was left hanging on a branch.
– Rica, 14 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Adolescent girls complain of the rampant violence among gangs and fraternities. Nonmembers, males and females alike, mention harassment and threats, especially if they look and act differently from gang members. Thus, in order to avoid trouble or to seek protection, some nonmembers capitulate to recruiters and ultimately join a gang.

Cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, they point out, are readily available in local stores. The barangay security development officers reportedly do nothing to protect the youth from these vices beyond night patrols. The girls believe these officials to be under the payroll of drug dealers and users, which, to them, explains why very few of these criminals are caught in their community. In the meantime, they see the youth fall prey to these vices, overwhelmed by family problems and peer pressure.

■ *Self-conceptions*

More than any other age group, the 14- to 17-year-olds manifest complex and abstract thinking about themselves when they share the individual traits that

they believe best characterize them. The boys cite more negative than positive traits, like being shy, slow, unfeeling and apathetic, but also quick and agile. The girls describe themselves as fickle-minded, yet friendly and approachable, and fond of music. These responses were delivered in a positive emotional tone and displayed self-awareness.

Certain comments from the girls suggest a negative self-concept, or at least the apparent formation of one. One Payatas girl feels outsiders look down on them. Another recalls how, in school, classmates gossip about her behind her back as smelling bad, perhaps because they associate her with the dumpsite. Another recounts how passersby jeer at their alternative school, Paaralan Pantao (People's School), calling it Paaralan Panghayop (Animals' School). These kinds of remarks humiliate and anger the poorer girls.

Friendships emerge as a major theme for adolescent boys and girls. The girls give greater importance to interpersonal and social relationships, and appreciate gaining strength and support from their peers. The nonschooling ones tend to prioritize friends over families, but there are a few who remain protective of their families and resent negative comments about them. Some define favored qualities as the opposite of what they dislike in others, such as dishonesty and hypocrisy (*"plastik"* or pretending to like a person who they actually dislike). They, therefore, prefer people who are honest, straightforward and easy to get along with. For the boys, appearing to their parents to be lazy, stubborn and disobedient is no cause for alarm, but one girl admits feeling uneasy about appearing stubborn and defiant toward her mother. Girls see themselves as quiet, shy, moody or aloof, but also fun to be with, talkative and good listeners.

Adolescent girls facing a future with few alternatives

Fifteen-year-old Jen stopped schooling when she was in second year high school. She has no immediate plans of returning because of the unruly atmosphere there generated by the fraternities or gangs. As she is *"napapabarkada"* (easily influenced by these peer groups), she finds it impossible to concentrate on schoolwork. Claiming to be a member of several gangs, she reports that, instead of involving the members in productive school activities, they become the initiators of fights, riots and other kinds of trouble. Being in and out of the police station has been an adventure-filled experience for her.

Jen is resigned to the idea that no one – not even the teachers, the police, the tanod (watch guard), the chairwoman, or the most feared kagawad (councilor) in the barangay – can control these young *"troublemakers."* She adds, *"You try to be a hero [championing good behavior], but nothing happens anyway, so, you eventually give up!"* Her brother is a member of the Bakal Boys or Watchamakukulit, another gang composed of seven boys, 11 to 17 years. With their close friendship extending beyond riots to include work, collecting scrap iron, they are like family to one another. In fact, Jen elaborates that the Bakal Boys sleep at their house almost daily – *"as if they have no parents."*

Jen dreams of becoming an entertainer in Japan. She mentions her close friend who is a commercial sex worker, picking up men near Del Pan Bridge. *"That's because no one pays attention to her at home. Her mother is too busy taking care of her younger brothers and sisters."* Jen started suspecting her friend of going into prostitution when she saw the latter looking more and more haggard. She discusses the issue of child prostitution casually, pointing out that those girls who work in bars along Roxas Avenue earn P300 (US\$5.36) per night. If a customer decides to take them home, they can charge as much as P6,000 (US\$107.14) a night, she claims. The easy money tempts a number of girls to try this profession.

Source: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Quick Appraisal of the City of Manila, Field Notes, 2002.

It is important to note here that it is at this stage where young people become particularly conscious about what others think of them. The perceptions of others are critical to a teenager's developing self-concept. Negative comments directed at teenage girls can thus be quite damaging to their self-esteem. A girl who had dropped out of school because she thought she was too old for her grade level appeared particularly shy and self-conscious, and seemed uncomfortable about being interviewed and having her answers recorded. Her uneasiness projected a sense of inferiority probably stemming from her low educational attainment.

■ *Environment*

Payatas smells bad and is dirty and noisy from the cries of infants and children, remark the adolescent males. But, they are quick to add, they have gotten used to their environment. At least they have houses to go home to and sleep in. Besides, they remember some happy moments when, for instance, they find something exciting at the dumpsite, like a ball. Yet, they also complain that the dumpsite brings misery. The spontaneous combustion of garbage from the sun's heat means it is burning constantly, generating fumes that attract all kinds of sicknesses. The mound of refuse slips and slides and causes flooding during the rainy season. It also generates conflict, as when people fight over their share of the pickings. Despite this, the boys think it is all right to have the dumpsite in Payatas because it is the livelihood source of many families.

Payatas in the girls' view is a place for dumping garbage. They describe their surroundings as dirty, foul-smelling and populated by people who do not have the discipline to clean their immediate environment, but even add to the trash that is already there. Exclaims one adolescent worker, *"Instead of doing something useless, why don't they just go to the dumpsite? It is not shameful."* Older girls generally feel that living at the dumpsite is acceptable so long as they are with their families and friends. One teenager has neither good nor bad opinions about her surroundings because, she explains, this was where she grew up and this is the only home she knows. Besides, the dumpsite is the major source of income for many households.

BASECO male youth adopt similarly negative opinions of their physical setting, describing it as unhealthy for young children, with garbage thrown anywhere on the streets and at the sea. Yet, unsightly and inhumane as their landfill island is, they deplore even more its social environment, citing the chaos, violence and dangers they face every single day. All have witnessed criminal acts, like stabbings and shootings, drug pushing and drug use. *"There are no upright individuals here. People do all sorts of questionable things. Some are addicted to shabu."* Further, the youth say, *"In every alley, people make improvised shotguns because they are afraid [for their safety]."*

Community dances in BASECO are frequently disrupted by drunken brawls or clashes between rival gangs. An adolescent male risks being harassed and beaten, for example, if he draws attention to himself because he is wearing "hip-hop" clothes, a bandan-

na and earrings, or if he dances "boldly" with a girl. As a result, the BASECO Barangay Council has banned dances. Given their number and dominance in the community, gangs serve as primary models of peer organization and fellowship among the youth. Schooling boys who do not belong to a gang feel unprotected and fear for their safety, especially at night. *"It is scary because drug addicts might just stab us."* Children as young as 7 years are already hooked on solvents, cigarettes, marijuana and shabu, all of which are readily available. Adults, say the youth, have turned a blind eye to the problem because they are reluctant to get involved in other families' problems.

The girls agree with the boys that BASECO is a disorderly community *"populated by many bums."* *"Whenever there is any trouble or commotion, inevitably, BASECO is in the limelight. There is always trouble here."* Much of the blame goes to youth gangs which harass children and clash with rival groups. The girls, however, distinguish between gangs, on the one hand, and fraternities or groups (*tropa* or *barkada*), on the other. Gangs are violent and engage in unlawful activities, while fraternities and groups generally avoid trouble insofar as possible.

A number of nonschooling girls in BASECO formalized their special relationship by giving their group a distinctive name, STG (Sitaw-Talong-Gabi, or Stringbean-Eggplant-Taro Root). Like other clubs, they participate in church, community beautification and other productive activities, unlike gangs, which in their view do nothing but create trouble and destroy property. Ultimately, all these groups attract members for the same reasons – emotional support and protection. All serve as venues for teenagers to explore their evolving adult identities. But some become the means toward exposing some young people systematically to destructive behavior that may condemn them for life.

■ *Poverty*

The lack of education and jobs makes people poor, say BASECO's adolescent boys who are used to seeing their parents and friends pushing wooden carts filled with scrap for sale to junk dealers. In addition, they have little food and water, and cannot afford to install a toilet in their house. Moreover, being informal settlers with insecure tenure on the land they occupy makes them vulnerable to forced eviction. Little wonder, continue the respondents, that poor children learn to be crude and rough at an early age. Given their dire straits, they grow up stealing money, toys and food where they can, and pilfering vegetables, fish and other small items in the public markets for resale. Thus, point out the youngsters, children's young minds and behavior can be corrupted by poverty.

Adolescent males also perceive poverty as going beyond material deprivation. It embodies more abstract and relative dimensions, too: *"Everyone is poor because of their problems. A rich person can be considered as poor when, even if his house is large, he cannot have [what he desires, like] children . . . Or, they may have to sell their possessions because times are hard."* At the same time, the respondents point out

that many adults in the neighborhood remain idle, accomplishing little else but drinking and gambling. Poverty here becomes both cause and effect.

Nor does the government escape their notice. Some follow their parents' lead in criticizing the Philippine President for her perceived insensitivity to the plight of the poor. Pro-Estrada sentiments remain strong, despite the "people power" ouster of the former president. Yet, others dispute this, saying it is not President Macapagal-Arroyo's fault that they are poor, since people are responsible for improving their own situations: *"If a person knows how to live his life, then it will get better. But here, instead of working hard, most people are selling shabu!"*

Adolescent BASECO girls appear more down to earth in their assessments. Like the males, they deplore the lack of water, electricity, education and jobs, and their vulnerability to typhoons, floods and fire. But they factor into their discussion references to corruption in government as a contributing factor. Most, however, believe that it is people themselves who make their lives. Some are lazy or do their jobs badly. Others marry at a young age, even though they have no means to support children. To the question on the causes of poverty, one retorts, *"It is as if you are asking why there are storms! It just happens!"*

Those who are members of youth organizations believe that no one is so impoverished as to have absolutely nothing. Through hard work and persistence, even the most disadvantaged people can improve their lives. Nor should being uneducated hinder individuals from taking on worthwhile occupations, as there are jobs that do not require a high educational attainment. The problem with some people, they continue, is their complacency and their willingness to rely on charity to survive. It is noteworthy that this group, despite the poverty of their families, has managed to attain higher education and higher status in the community. Their own experience of success imbues them with the conviction that poverty need not represent an impediment to achieving one's goals.

Interestingly, adolescent boys and girls in Payatas generally regard themselves as not poor. So long as they have the means to survive – food, shelter and work – they emphasize that they do not fall into the poverty category. The presence of the dump is like having money in the bank, they say, which can be withdrawn when needed. Given their sense of relative security on the economic side, poverty to them carries more intangible dimensions. There is the experience of abuse and neglect, or the loss of dignity and self-respect at the way they are treated by the outside world. The stigma of being identified as coming from Payatas and therefore automatically to be pitied or excluded, resonates deeply in their minds. They know that outsiders consider them as poor even though most residents do earn and can eat two to three meals a day, all because the criterion being applied is their negative status as scavengers.

■ *The Rich*

There is no difference between the rich and the poor, maintain male adolescents, adding that both groups

are human beings and appreciate good food. The former, though, are luckier than the latter. This may be the teenagers' way of upholding their own self-worth and rejecting the label "poor." Moreover, it reflects their conviction that the rich and the poor are on equal footing as human beings. Still, they acknowledge that rich people enjoy definite advantages, such as being able to eat three meals a day and complete their education all the way through college. They can afford telephones, cell phones, *karaoke* (sing-along) sound systems and cars. Their children go to private schools. One out-of-school youth comments that the rich do not have to work to earn as they can get money through other means. Besides, they can afford to hire house help, that is, maids and *yayas* (nannies). Although material wealth, in their view, is not the sole determinant of a good life, teenage boys envy rich young people because they can buy nice clothes and fancy cars. They are clean, look good and behave well. They have seen some rich people give food and money to beggars, but also others who look down on the poor.

The male youth believe the middle and upper classes to be snobbish, unapproachable and boastful. What angers them most is how judgmental these groups can be toward them. Rich people, they point out, are quick to assume that, based simply on appearance, poor children and youth are rough, uncontrollable and always *"looking for trouble."* Payatas youth have encountered better-off people in schools, shopping malls and passenger jeepneys who look at them in a disparaging manner, as if to say "yuck," "gross," or "smelly." At this point in their lives, when they are defining their identities and roles in society, such perceptions and demeaning attitudes of others toward them can be harmful and lead to the development of a negative identity – possibly one that confirms the rich people's worst expectations of them.

According to the girls, the rich differ from the poor in that the former can have whatever they want whenever they want it, with little or no effort, while the poor have to work and experience hardships before they can acquire anything. Differing levels of education add another distinction. The rich have the opportunity to complete their education and thus have better chances of getting good jobs that will enable them to support their families. In contrast, the poor have little or no means to finish school and are therefore unlikely to find work that will allow them to fulfill the needs of their families. Not knowing what it is like to be impoverished, the rich cannot empathize with the poor.

The girls generally hold negative views of the rich, commenting that they do not work for their wealth while the poor know the meaning of hard work and make sacrifices in order to reach their goals. In this sense, they conjecture, it is difficult to be rich (even if they themselves want to be rich):

The rich, when they lose their wealth, will have a hard time doing whatever they want, while if you are poor, even if you become poorer, you can find ways of dealing with the problem because you are used to struggle and hardship.

– Lexy, 15 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

The female adolescent respondents also believe the rich have unhappy families because the parents, being preoccupied with their businesses, tend to neglect their children. As a concrete comparison, one respondent points out that in a poor family, the mother takes her children wherever she goes; in a rich family, however, the mother leaves her children behind when she has to go out, promising, *"I will bring you a present when I come back."* They also think that rich children do not treat their parents well in the latter's old age, neglecting and distancing themselves from their elders. To do this to one's parents, according to the respondents, is to become poor in a deeper sense.

Given the belief that the rich do not value their families, poor female teen-agers surmise that their better-off counterparts are not necessarily happier than they themselves are. Wealthy youth are so preoccupied with their studies or are so closely monitored by their parents that they presumably lack the kinds of friendships poor people do. *"We can be together anytime. We can have fun even if we do not have money. We are happy even when doing nothing."* Rich teenagers are not thought to have such freedom. Moreover, they choose their friends on the basis of social class, although there are some rich people who seem to get along with the poor. The girls' perceptions additionally evoke images of wealthy, intrigue-ridden and unhappy families, as seen in televised soap operas or films. This suggests that media has a strong influence on how the rich and the poor perceive one another.

Teenage female respondents describe the rich as arrogant and judgmental, looking down on or belittling the poor. Poor youngsters claim to have experienced insults or derision from their better-off schoolmates for living in a degraded environment and for dwelling in dirty houses. They relate how their richer acquaintances boast of their own wealth, look upon them with disdain, and deride the squalor and small sizes of their houses. Nonetheless, one girl reports positive encounters with better-off people during workshops she has attended at her church. She relates how they made friends with her and seemed interested in seeing her house and the dumpsite. There are others, though, who seem nice only while dealing with her but express disgust once she turns her back. Still others conclude that the customs and attitudes of people, whether rich or poor, vary. Some are kind and generous; others are unkind and uncaring.

■ *Rights, Problems and Aspirations*

The schooling youth learn about children's rights in the classroom. In their view, consistently violated in BASECO are the rights to education, to nutritious and adequate food, and to parental love and care. Payatas children speak of being deprived of the right to play by having to work. Nonschooling youth immediately mention child abuse when the topic of child rights is raised. Most parents "use their hands" in disciplining their children, but others go beyond to hitting the erring child with blows from the fist or the belt. Community members rarely intervene. Says Kikoy, a 15-year-old male youth from BASECO, "To

each his own; no one interferes. Whether the child dies or lives, absolutely no one interferes."

Problems abound, which have already been amply discussed – gang and drug violence, material deprivation, inadequate public services, unemployment, early marriage and premature pregnancies.

I'm having a hard time finding a job, so I just hang around waiting to find ways to earn. I'll probably marry my girlfriend, who is 16 years old, and we will have a baby who will be the source of our happiness.

– Anselmo, 17 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

National and local government rice donations and feeding programs have benefited many, as have the free services of the barangay health center, including checkups, medicine and immunization for children. The youth want a housing program especially for fire victims, computer education programs for more viable jobs, a curfew for minors to regulate gangs and illegal activities, better sports and recreational programs, and family planning services for married couples. For some, however, having more children can bring greater advantages than disadvantages, since it means more workers for the family income. Teenagers lack education on sex and sexuality, which explains the high incidence of early pregnancies and marriages. This is avoidable, along with drugs and gangsterism, if one has self-discipline and access to information. Again, the causes of poverty are seen as the consequences of one's own actions, with little reference to the part played by the government or the society at large. The poor should have control over their own lives if they are to rise above poverty, asserts one teenager.

Marrying early contributes to a hard life. Girls who marry young have babies at an early age and keep having them until they're old. But if they marry when they're older, they'll have fewer children, won't they?

– Josie, 18 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

The cynicism toward public officials runs deep. Adolescents mistrust their local officials and police, charging them with exacting bribes and engaging in illegal activities. Being exposed to television, radio and the press with their daily litany of scandals, political controversies and crooked elections, the youth all the more deplore their unchanging lives, despite promises to the contrary by each succeeding presidential administration.

As for the national government, note the young people, *"All they know is politics, so the welfare of children is neglected. They concern themselves with small matters, when the youth have big problems."* Girls observe that barangay officials seem ineffective in curbing criminal activities, focusing as they do on catching Jumper Boys and child scavengers, instead of going after the more notorious drug abusers, thieves and drunkards. Indeed, some barangay officials are themselves thought to be corrupt drunkards.

You hear of young girls here who disappear at night, then find out the next day that they are already dead because they were raped. Their bodies are just thrown over the wall over there. So we get scared. We're not allowed to go out. When the rapists are arrested, our barangay officials put them in jail. But criminals are rarely caught. They go into hiding. Plus the police are lazy. Often when they are called, they don't respond. Some are doing their job but not others.

– Juancho, 15 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Concerns over their deplorable physical environment require a change in attitudes and behavior, say the schooling youth. *“People’s attitudes need to change. They need to be hardworking, to have consideration for their community. Funds for youth programs should be increased.”* Payatas respondents mention one small project involving a community cleanup that they judge as effective. *Harap Ko, Linis Ko* (My Environment, My Responsibility) promotes the practice of residents’ cleaning their immediate surroundings. Activities are limited to a small area, however, with only one woman resident spearheading this initiative.

Youth club members acknowledge the medical, nutritional and educational programs brought in by NGOs and other charitable groups. Livelihood projects have taught them how to make hollow blocks, straw flowers and a variety of handicrafts. If only the gangs, fraternities and other groups would collaborate on worthwhile projects for the community, they would accomplish far more than the moribund Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council), complain the respondents. Unity and cooperation are important.

The youngsters believe that parents play a major role in keeping their children from destructive activities, being the children’s primary providers of support, guidance and discipline. Peer groups are also important for advice on right or wrong. The respondents are not aware of any program in Payatas that specifically targets children and youth. But they know of some existing activities or interventions, such as free medicine from the Red Cross, scholarship programs by charitable local and foreign institutions, cleanliness projects of the community, and occasional training-workshops organized by the church, featuring acting, singing and dancing. They cite further the sports programs and intramural contests in schools. A youth organization in the nearby Erap City resettlement, they claim, has succeeded in changing negative attitudes among the youth, keeping them from fraternities and drugs by offering them more meaningful activities.

The schooling males dream of becoming engineers, pilots, doctors, lawyers or traffic managers for the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, and traveling around the world. Their nonschooling counterparts aim to be basketball players, boxers, police officers or seamen. Girl students aspire to become teachers, doctors, flight attendants, dancers, architects or secretaries. Out-of-school girls are uncertain about attaining their goals: *“We are not sure if we can fulfill our dreams because we are poor. These dreams are*

only for the rich.” Others simply want to have a job, live a simple life and raise a harmonious family. Realizing these ambitions, they insist, is possible if the person works hard and studies well. Sustaining them are parents and older siblings who furnish them with the financial support and inspiration to pursue their quest.

It should by now be clear that children and youth could articulate eloquently their images of what it means to grow up in a degraded and stigmatized urban poor community. They feel their marginalization intensely. The images of rich families, drawn from television or from glimpses of clean and well-dressed children riding to school in air-conditioned cars, bring out starkly their own levels of deprivation and elusive life chances.

Yet, poor communities are by no means homogeneous – far from it. A wide gulf can develop, for example, between those young residents attending school versus those who have dropped out. Although both sets may actually converge for income-earning purposes at the dumpsite or in other workplace, their group behavior differs. The schooling adolescents, seeing a better future for themselves, emphasize their pursuit of a peaceful life with their friends (*barkada*) and family. In contrast, their nonschooling peers, who are fully aware of limited employment prospects, are more prone to membership in gangs or fraternities that engage in destructive or illegal behavior. In the process, the latter frequently victimize the more peaceful groups. Both sets live in the community but in states of tension, anticipating occasions when their conflicting lifestyles and values may come to a violent head.

The resilience and hope that most children retain as they grow up, no matter what their circumstances, augur well for a better future, provided the family, societal institutions and the government come to their assistance in appropriate ways. The specific outlooks and needs of each age group need to be addressed separately. Unless this is done, by the time they become adolescents, cynicism and incipient despair will have set in, and possibly along with them, negative, self-destructive behavior. This is especially true for male adolescents who, in the absence of viable and positive opportunities, easily fall prey to gang initiatives. In the long run, it is important to remember that the reality of degraded and dangerous surroundings seems to recede to the background in the minds of children, happy at being part of an intact, caring and peaceful family.

Themes in Poor Children’s Lives

Listening to the voices of poor children from the time they begin to articulate their views clearly around the age of 4, and following their progress into adolescence, we glean insights into the impact of growing up in urban slum settlements. Common themes and subthemes emerge from their testimonies.

Theme 1: Their Physical Environment

1. Children in urban informal settlements dislike their physical surroundings intensely. They are

appalled by the filth, smells, flies, garbage, sewage and generally disorderly character of their neighborhoods. They also deplore the risks posed by physical threats to their flimsy shacks, like fires, floods, typhoons, rickety catwalks or pathways littered with glass, along with limited spaces for play and disease stemming from the unhealthy environment.

2. Also posing significant threats to children are gang violence, drug abusers, criminals and insecure land tenure leading to evictions.
3. Despite the physical disadvantages of their communities, children mention many positive features that make living there tolerable, even desirable. Chief among them are income opportunities such as those offered by the Payatas dumpsite, where children of all ages and their parents can readily earn. Other communities lacking such windfall prospects capitalize on their location in or near areas of the city offering income possibilities mainly in the informal sector.

Theme 2: Work and Income

1. All children, whether schooling or nonschooling, help with household chores, with girls taking a larger share of the responsibility than boys. The time they spend doing so increases if their parents, especially their mother, are working outside the home.
2. Almost all children work full- or part-time to augment the family income. Although their labor may compromise their wellbeing, it also develops in them a sense of competence, responsibility and self-worth.
3. Although most children feel they are doing something good by working and are even proud to be able to contribute money to the household, the full-time workers lament the tradeoff – not going to school. Most feel they have no choice owing to their family's impoverished state.
4. The 7- to 13-year-olds, in particular, express resentment at being out of school and having to turn over their hard-earned money to their parents. The adolescents 15 to 17 years are more reconciled to working, since they feel they are already recognized as major contributors to the household.
5. Those in school simply accept the need to work part-time, not only because they must assist the family but also because in doing so, they raise their own funds to help cover everyday school expenses – and therefore ensure that they can stay in school.
6. Children deeply resent being made to contribute income to the household if their own parents are not working hard, are living off their children's earnings or, even worse, using their children's income to engage in vices.
7. Meriting particular concern from the children's perspectives are the full-time child workers because they get little rest and often have to skip a meal or two, being from the poorest families.

Further, they are more vulnerable than nonworking children to accidents and other physical dangers while working at the dumpsite, in makeshift factories or on the streets.

Theme 3: Education

1. Poor families believe strongly that children should go to school and, if possible, "*finish*," which in their minds means graduation from college or the tertiary level. This conviction is linked to the perceived expansion of employment opportunities and respect that accompany education, and the corresponding improvement of the family's wellbeing.
2. Children also express a strong desire to go to school and "*finish*" if at all possible. In addition to offering promise of a better future, schooling is linked to having play time, many friends, the favorable status of being a student, being more self-confident and gaining respect.
3. Despite free tuition in public schools, the added costs of education – shoes, uniforms, school supplies, lunch, snacks, transportation, supplementary materials for projects, and school fund-raising drives – prevent many parents from enrolling one or more of their children the following school year. In some cases, parents do not even enroll their children in grade one of primary school, thereby adding to a small cohort of illiterate children in the community who have never been to school.
4. As out-of-school children get older, their initial desire to enter school or continue their interrupted education wanes, mainly because they are too embarrassed to join a class whose members are much younger than they. Moreover, some of them have gotten used to earning their own money and are reluctant to stop. Still others get discouraged by teachers who reprimand them for dozing off in class, or by classmates who tease them for their unkempt appearance. There is also the daunting learning environment of large classes, limited seats, few textbooks, unaccustomed discipline and out-of-school peer groups/*barkada*/gangs who discourage their return to school.
5. Adolescents already in high school, especially the young males, feel strong pressure from their neighborhood *barkada* to skip classes and hang around with them, sometimes engaging in delinquent behavior. Adolescent school-girls enjoy going out with other girl classmates to *karaoke* (sing-along bars) or similar places to sing, dance, eat and chat over soft drinks. The boys do the same, whether they are members of gangs, fraternities or ordinary *barkada*/groups, except that they are more likely to drink beer or local alcoholic beverages and possibly cap the night with sexual encounters.
6. Violence and harassment of children by gang or fraternity members take place while the children are in school or just outside; bullying of the weaker or marginalized students also occurs in schools but draws little notice from teachers and school authorities.

7. A few alternative schools have been set up in the community by NGOs or faith-based groups to cater specifically to out-of-school youth. The aim is to enable working children to follow a parallel and flexible curriculum that is approved by the Department of Education, and to obtain a valid elementary or high school diploma. Some give added focus to skills training that will help graduates get good jobs. However, in the eyes of those children in the community attending “regular” school, these alternative schools confer low status recognition on the children who attend them.
8. Preschool or early childhood education centers are often set up for the 3- to 5-year-olds, but their fees, especially if they are business ventures, are too high for most. Each barangay is mandated to have such a center, but even when one is set up, the number of children it can accommodate is limited, compared to the actual number of eligible children. These centers are thus seen as a desirable luxury patronized by the slightly better-off poor.

Theme 4: Poverty and Wellbeing

1. Children’s Conceptions of Poverty
 - Lacking basic material necessities – money, food, adequate shelter and items for home and school; not eating regularly or not eating three meals a day regularly
 - Having to work and undergo sacrifices to make ends meet
 - Living in degraded environments
 - Not attending school
 - Being neglected and not cared for by their parents (cited by children 10 years and below)
 - Having no house to sleep in; living on the streets
 - Bearing the stigma imposed on the poor (especially significant for adolescents)
2. Children’s Opinions on the Causes of Poverty
 - Parents’ lack of employment, income and education
 - Parents’ dissipated earnings through gambling, drinking and drugs
 - Individual failings of parents – laziness, incompetence, low motivation, limited persistence, lack of self-discipline
 - Corrupt, negligent and uncaring local and national officials (mentioned by adolescent respondents)
3. Children’s Views of Rich People
 - Enjoy material abundance (e.g., more than three meals a day, a lot of money, big house, many toys, beautiful clothes and gadgets)
 - Have good looks and light skin color, go to private schools, speak English well and land high-paying jobs
 - Have few worries; do not know the value of work and sacrifice
 - Are selfish and do not share their wealth with the poor

- Are unable to empathize with the poor; judgmental and arrogant
- Give little value to family; neglect children owing to the pursuit of wealth
- For some, share their wealth and genuinely want to help the poor, as in school and church outreach programs

Theme 5: Child Rights

1. All age groups (4-17) recognize that children have the right to eat good food, go to school, play, have adequate clothing and shelter, and be protected from crime, drugs and violence.
2. Children see rights primarily in terms of their non-fulfillment, pointing to homeless, malnourished or out-of-school children, to those unable to play, or to those subjected to violence and abuse.
3. Several out-of-school children know that they have not been able to enroll because their parents never obtained a birth certificate for them; this they interpret bitterly as sheer negligence.
4. With a few exceptions, most children are unaware of programs and organizations in the community working to benefit them – unless they actually receive these benefits directly, like feeding and health programs, scholarships and donations.
5. Children have more personal experience and familiarity with survival and development rights than with protection or participation rights.
6. The rights-based approach, emphasizing universality, entitlements, nondiscrimination, and government and societal responsibilities to ensure this, is best understood by school-going adolescents who have learned these norms and principles in school. It is far less clear among younger and out-of-school children.

Theme 6: Parents as Promoters of Their Children’s Rights and Wellbeing

1. The ways in which parents in poor families raise and treat their children vary greatly. Some expect or force their children to work full- or part-time, while others actively avoid doing so, the difference depending largely on the family’s financial situation.
2. Some parents provide their children with a secure and happy haven at home, even though they are poor, while others subject their children to a violent, abusive and chaotic atmosphere at home.
3. Children cite parental love and care as their greatest need. The vast majority state that they seek out their parents first whenever they have a problem. They consider, or would like to consider, their parents as their hope for achieving their aspirations.
4. Adolescents believe that parental guidance, support and discipline will help prevent drug use and gang involvement among the youth. They note that their peers who are enticed to try drugs are those with family problems, or those whose parents are constantly fighting and negligent or abu-

sive of their children. Continued schooling is possible only with parental encouragement and financial support.

5. Parents engaged in the daily struggle for survival and income often lack the time and energy to attend to the physical and emotional needs of their children.
6. Parents who drink, womanize and take drugs create apprehensions, even fear, among children anticipating that their mothers and/or they will be beaten.

Theme 7: Adolescent Youth at Risk

1. Many poor youth do not have the opportunity to prepare themselves for responsible adult roles. Those not in school rarely get involved in constructive community or youth organizations. Being idle and hanging out with friends become their lifestyle. Some move into destructive behavior, like theft, drug use, gang warfare and risky

sexual activities, and eventually join the group of juvenile delinquents that threaten the peace and order of the community and who are likely to be picked up by the police.

2. Adolescents themselves, especially those out of school, seek more constructive programs, like sports leagues, talent competitions, skills training and education for income earning, and job-search support.
3. Other young people at risk are those engaged in dangerous occupations, for example, scavengers at large dumpsites and “jumpers” on trucks delivering scrap material.

These are the themes that run through the lives of thousands of poor children and youth living in urban informal settlements. They have articulated their views clearly. Now it is time to study how the trends in child rights according to survival, development, protection and participation play out in the five cities.

Notes

- 1 This quotation and some others in this chapter are drawn from FGDs conducted also in Payatas, Quezon City, and BASECO, Manila, in connection with another IPC study (in progress), “Bridging the Social Divide: Urban Poor Profiles in Metro Manila” by Mary Racelis and Marita Concepcion Castro Guevara, supported by the Ford Foundation. Some of the quotations from Payatas and BASECO likewise appear in Racelis and Aguirre (2002). The rest come from

Sasa and Leon Garcia in Davao City. The names of the respondents quoted have been changed to protect their identity.

- 2 Based on barangay records for 2002.
- 3 Based on barangay records for 2000.
- 4 US\$1 = P56.
- 5 An NGO in Davao City that promotes awareness of HIV-AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

5

SURVIVAL, DEVELOPMENT, PROTECTION AND PARTICIPATION RIGHTS IN FIVE CITIES

Researcher: *Are children’s rights realized in your barangay?*

Benjie (Child advocate, Manila): *No . . . many parents hit their children . . . some use a steel pipe or broom. Other children are imprisoned inside an oil drum . . . That is wrong. Parents should simply talk to their children.*

Child 21, the short title for the *Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children 2000-2025*, uses the life cycle approach to ensure that every Filipino child will enjoy his or her rights. This framework emphasizes rights throughout the life cycle and at distinctive stages as they unfold: unborn (pre-natal period), infancy (0 to 2 years), early childhood (3

Table 6 - Selected key indicators for each life cycle period

| Life cycle | Indicators | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| | Health | Education |
| Throughout the life cycle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households with sanitation facilities Households with access to safe water | Basic literacy |
| Unborn prenatal period | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maternal mortality rate Tetanus toxoid immunization | |
| 0 to 2 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birth registration Underweight Infant mortality rate Full immunization | |
| 3 to 5 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-5 mortality rate Underweight | Early childhood care and development |
| 6 to 12 years | Underweight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation rate Cohort survival rate Completion rate Achievement rate |
| 13 to 17 years | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation rate Cohort survival rate based on grade one Completion rate based on grade one Achievement rate Dropout rate |

Source: Council for the Welfare of Children (2000).

Table 7 - Population of children (2000)

| Age | Total | Population Male | Female |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Philippines | 76,504,077 | 38,524,267 | 37,979,810 |
| 0 to 17 | 33,172,848 (43%) | 16,904,981 (51%) | 16,267,867 (49%) |
| 0 to 2 | 17 % | 51 % | 49 % |
| 3 to 5 | 18 % | 51 % | 49 % |
| 6 to 12 | 40 % | 51 % | 49 % |
| 13 to 17 | 25 % | 50 % | 50 % |

Source: National Statistics Office (2003b).

to 5 years), childhood (6 to 12 years), and adolescence (13 to 17). Key indicators are listed in table 6. Child friendly criteria for application in barangays and communities have also been developed (NEDA et al. 2001).

Children aged 17 years and below make up almost half (43 percent) of the Philippine population. Nearly two-thirds of them are of school age, 6-17, with slightly more boys than girls (see table 7). Sim-

ilarly, in the five Child Friendly Cities (Cebu, Davao, Manila, Pasay and Quezon Cities), children comprise more than 40 percent of each city's population (see table 8). Their absolute numbers are expectedly highest in the three most populous urban centers, led by Quezon City, then Manila and Davao Cities.

With more than half of the country's population now living in urban areas, at least a third of them as urban informal settlers, the situation of children in the poorest households demands special attention. One could surmise that if the child population of poor informal settlements were disaggregated from children in the rest of the city, the averages of 41 to 46 percent listed as "children" would be much higher in the informal settlements, where large families abound. Meriting particular concern are the poorest children living in the highly dense neighborhoods in Metro Manila Cities (Manila, Pasay and Quezon Cities), where land areas are generally smaller compared to regional Davao City (see tables 9 and 10).

Quezon City, while urban, retains some rural elements with large tracts of land classified as forestland until as recently as 2003, attracting the greatest number of informal settlers.

Table 8 - Population of children and youth in the five CPC cities (2000)

| City | Under 1 | 1 to 4 | 5 to 9 | Age group 10 to 14 | 15 to 19 | Total (1 to 19) | Total population |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|------------------|
| Philippines | 1,917,431 | 7,752,071 | 9,694,781 | 8,949,614 | 8,017,298 | 36,331,195 | 76,504,077 |
| Cebu | 18,090 | 65,862 | 78,134 | 73,701 | 79,329 | 315,116 | 718,821 |
| Davao | 27,296 | 111,375 | 133,414 | 128,099 | 127,366 | 527,550 | 1,147,116 |
| Manila | 38,448 | 140,783 | 155,705 | 142,137 | 163,893 | 640,966 | 1,581,082 |
| Pasay ^a | 30,316 ^b | 31,579 ^c | 58,948 ^d | 37,474 ^e | | 158,317 ^f | 354,908 |
| Quezon | 267,347 | | 229,631 | 196,170 | 209,498 | 902,646 | 2,173,831 |

^aData were obtained from the *Pasay City Development Plan for Children, 2001*. These were disaggregated based on age groups slightly different from those applied in the table.
^bAges 0 to 2.
^cAges 3 to 5.
^dAges 6 to 12.
^eAges 13 to 17.
^fAges 0 to 17.
Source: National Statistics Office (NSO) website (<http://www.census.gov.ph>).

Table 9 - Demographic information on the five CPC cities (2000)

| Data category | Cebu | Davao | Manila | Pasay | Quezon |
|---|---|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|--|
| Population as of 1 May 2000 ^a | 718,821 | 1,147,116 | 1,581,082 | 354,908 | 2,173,831 |
| Land area ^a (sq km) | 280.9 | 2,211.3 | 38.3 | 13.9 | 166.2 |
| Density as of 1 May 2000 ^a (persons/sq km) | 2,559 | 518.8 | 41,281.5 | 25,532.9 | 13,079.6 |
| Number of barangays ^b | 80 (46 in north district; 34 in south district) | 180 | 897 (6 districts) | 200 (7 districts) | 140 (37 in district 1; 28 in II; 37 in III; 38 in IV) |

^aNational Statistics Office (NSO) website (<http://www.census.gov.ph>).
^bOfficial city websites.

Table 10 - Land area and population of study barangays in the five CPC cities

| Child Friendly City | Land area (hectares) | Total barangay population | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | | Barangay Council records (year) | NSO Census of Population and Housing (2000) |
| <i>City of Manila</i> | | | |
| CPC barangays | | | |
| Mabuhay | 3.0 | 4,253 (2001) | 3,913 |
| Isla San Juan | 3.0 | 1,761 (2001) | 2,284 |
| Riles | no data | 2,150 (2001) | 2,733 |
| Jesus Extension | 4.4 | 4,264 ^a (2001) | 4,818 |
| Non-CPC barangays | | | |
| Parola | 6.0 | 35,000 (2001) | 18,682 |
| BASECO | 52.0 | 45,017 (2001) | 20,214 |
| <i>Pasay City</i> | | | |
| CPC barangays | | | |
| Apelo | 0.46 | 3,900 (2001) | 2,010 |
| Maliban | 2.0 | 3,646 (2001) | 3,646 |
| Kalayaan | 19.0 | 17,304 (2001) | 14,209 |
| Non-CPC barangays | | | |
| Leveriza | 4.56 | 1,140 (2001) | 671 |
| MIA | no data | 6,996 (2001) | 7,121 |
| <i>Quezon City</i> | | | |
| CPC barangays | | | |
| Bagong Silangan | 750.0 | no data | 32,497 |
| Batasan Hills | 517.38 | 111,830 (2001) | 109,723 |
| Commonwealth | 471.02 | 136,500 (1997) | 120,569 |
| Payatas | 494.0 | no data | 112,690 |
| Non-CPC barangays | | | |
| Bahay Toro | 284.13 | 53,968 (1995) | 54,118 |
| Tagumpay | 10.87 | 2,843 (1999) | 3,156 |
| <i>Cebu City</i> | | | |
| CPC barangays | | | |
| Lorega | 20.45 ^b | 11,388 (2004) ^c | 10,616 |
| Sambag II | 45.15 ^b | 14,200 (2004) ^c | 12,992 |
| Tinago | 24.40 ^b | 9,000 (2004) ^c | 8,190 |
| Non-CPC barangays | | | |
| Basak San Nicolas | 119.59 ^b | 50,000 (2004) ^c | 31,840 |
| Inayawan | 253.65 ^b | 17,769 (2004) ^c | 16,148 |
| <i>Davao City</i> | | | |
| CPC barangays | | | |
| Agdao Proper | 54.0 | no data | 9,611 |
| Agdao Centro | 53.6 | no data | 12,035 |
| Leon Garcia | 21.0 | 8,643 (2000) | 8,643 |
| Non-CPC barangays | | | |
| Sasa | 639.0 | 42,000 (2002) | 40,640 |
| Buhangin | 9,221.8 | no data | 42,657 |
| Bangkerohan | no data | no data | 24,073 |

^aThe Barangay Captain claims that the barangay population as of March 2002 has reached 8,098.

^bCebu City Government website (http://www.cebucity.gov.ph/city_gov/citydistrict.html).

^cEstimates only; based on telephone interviews with barangay secretaries of the five barangays.

Of the five CPC cities, Quezon City is the largest in terms of population size, compared (in descending order) with Manila, Davao, Cebu and Pasay (see table 9). Density is highest in Manila at 41,281.5 persons per square kilometer, followed by Pasay City (25,532.9) and Quezon City coming in a distant third

(13,079.6). Cebu and Davao Cities densities drop considerably to 2,559 and 518.8, respectively.

The figures are deceptive, however, as they reflect the ratio of total city population to its land area, which in Davao City's case is 2,211.3 square kilometers. That entitles it to boast that it is the largest

city in the world, even though its boundaries include many rural barangays in mountainous terrain. In reality, while Davao City may appear to have the lowest overall density of 518.8, its urban poor barangays are very large, with populations ranging from 8,643 to 42,657, based on the 2000 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO 2003b; see table 10).

Despite Manila's small land area of 38.3 square kilometers, it has 897 barangays, while Quezon City with 166.2 square kilometers has 140 barangays. The populations of CPC barangays for all five cities range from 120,569 (Commonwealth, Quezon City) to 2,010 (Apelo, Pasay City) (see table 10). All these figures must be taken with some skepticism, considering the very poor state of data recording. Discrepancies between Barangay Council records for 2001 and the 2000 NSO Census can diverge greatly, as in the case of BASECO, for example, listing 45,017 versus 20,214, respectively.

How, then, have poor children fared living as poor informal settlers in these five cities, and to what extent have they benefited from programs focusing on the twenty-four goals (see table 2 in Chapter II) that embody rights to survival, development, protection, and participation? This is what the quick appraisal phase of the study sought to answer.

Right to Survival

Going to the health center is very tedious at times because you are at the mercy of the medical staff. On certain occasions, the doctor is not around and there is no qualified medical staff to check the patient . . . so we need to return to the center again when the doctor is in.

– Poor mothers in Barangay Sasa, Davao City

In 1999, children in the five Child Friendly Cities were generally much better-off than their regional or even their national counterparts in almost all indicators: mortality rates, protein energy malnutrition, vitamin A supplementation, full immunization, access to safe water and sanitary latrines, and tetanus toxoid 2 for pregnant women (see table 11).

It is in comparing the cities that differences emerge. Davao outstrips Cebu City in virtually all indicators, except under-5 mortality. The high level of protein energy malnutrition in the former probably explains why, in 1999, Davao City's child mortality rate was the highest among all the five cities (40.7 under-5 deaths/1000). Young people in the three Metro Manila cities have greater chances of living healthy lives, judging from the very high percentages of fully immunized

Table 11 - Selected health indicators for the five CPC cities (1999)

| Health indicator | Philippines | Cebu | | Davao | | NCR | Manila | Pasay | Quezon City |
|---|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------|--------------------|
| | | Cebu City | Region | Davao City | Region | | | | |
| Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) | 48.93 ^a | 44 | 47.34 ^a | 29.30 | 51.83 ^a | 32 ^a | 27.59 | 28.28 | 18.63 |
| Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) | 66.79 ^a | 35 | 64.02 ^a | 40.70 | 71.59 ^a | 38.53 ^a | 32.67 | 33.63 | 23.07 |
| Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) | 172 | 168 | 158.15 | 109.70 | 160.43 | 119.07 | 109.85 | 115.10 | 100.23 |
| Protein energy malnutrition | 8.4 | no data | 8.8 | 13.28 | 8.30 | 5.6 | 4.6 | 2.8 | 5.0 |
| Vitamin A supplementation | 97.90 | 92.8 | 75.4 | 106.40 ^c | 101.9 ^c | 99.03 | no data | 93.3 | 92.7 |
| Tetanus toxoid 2 for pregnant women | 51.00 | 40.3 | 59.0 | 69.40 | 57.9 | 46.6 | no data | 74 | 59.1 |
| Fully immunized children | 83.60 | 82.8 | 82.82 | 92.80 | 86.4 | 101.1 ^c | 104 ^c | 87 | 103.6 ^c |
| Access to safe water | 79.50 ^b | 96.4 | 76.0 | 96.80 | 83.9 | 91 | 100 | 100 | 91.2 |
| Access to sanitary toilets | 69.10 ^b | 62.8 | 63.0 | 71 | 72.2 | 83.2 | 91.8 | 99 | 77 |

^aThe 2003 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) reports declines in the *infant mortality rate*: 29 per 1,000 live births for the Philippines, 28 for Cebu Region, 38 for Davao Region, and 24 for the National Capital Region (NCR). The same 2003 survey states a reduction in the *under-5 mortality rate* as well: 40 per 1,000 live births for the Philippines, 39 for Cebu Region, 47 for Davao Region, and 31 for NCR.

^bBased on the 2002 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS), *access to safe water* is about the same at 80 percent while *access to sanitary toilets* (such as flush toilets and closed pits) increased to 86.1 percent.

^cRates for vitamin A supplementation in Davao City and for full immunization in Manila and Quezon Cities are above the 100 percent target marks. Health officials attribute this to the increase in the number of mothers and caregivers, some of whom are not listed or registered with the health center or belong to other barangays or health center catchment areas, who have sought these services and consequently are included in the health reports submitted to health agencies.

Sources: Department of Health, *National Objectives for Health: Philippines 1999-2004*; individual cities' Local Plan of Action [Plan of Operations] for 1999-2003 developed by city governments in collaboration with UNICEF Philippines; National Economic and Development Authority Regional Office No. 7 (NEDA-7), *1999 Regional Development Report* – Chapter III: Social Development, available from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN002707.pdf>; Internet.

young children (Manila and Quezon Cities), and the fairly low infant and under-5 mortality rates.

Access to safe water and sanitary toilets is available to nearly all households in Manila and Pasay Cities, while Quezon City still has a distance to go for complete coverage. Both Cebu and Davao Cities lag even further behind in access to sanitary toilets. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that the 100 percent figures for access to safe water shown for Manila and Pasay Cities, and the slightly lower percentages for Quezon City (91.2), Cebu City (96.4) and Davao City (96.8) ignore the thousands of informal settlers who still depend on shallow wells, queue for water from public taps, buy water in contaminated containers from local vendors, or draw water from unsanitary hoses running along the ground, connected to private taps.

The metropolitan cities' relatively encouraging health scenario may in reality disguise the low health levels of their poor women and children. As Manila City Hall officials themselves admit:

When disaggregated by barangays, however, IMRs [infant mortality rates] tend to be higher in depressed and congested areas (slum areas) compared to nondepressed barangays. While IMR is low, there has been an increase in the incidence of postnatal deaths and in deaths among 1-4 years old. Diarrhea, pneumonia and measles remain to be the leading causes of morbidity while pneumonia is the leading cause of mortality. This is particularly true to overcrowded depressed areas of Manila despite persistent campaigns against these health problems. Congestion, poor sanitary conditions and poor nutrition contribute much to this situation. (City of Manila-UNICEF [1998])

In Pasay City, where some barangays reported more than 100 percent coverage in immunization and vitamin A supplementation, the near-perfect picture of health outreach turned out to be faulty – a case of underestimating the absolute number of eligible children. In Davao City, health officials belatedly pointed out that health figures covered several other barangays belonging to the same catchment area as the CFC study communities. For Quezon City health officials, conflicting reports on full immunization from the Department of Health and from Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys raised serious problems.

Particular factors may account for Cebu, Davao and Quezon Cities' falling behind Manila and Pasay City in regard to children's health. One of them would be the solidly urban character of the latter two cities, compared to the significant number of rural barangays that still fall within the boundaries of Cebu and Davao Cities. In addition, then, to harboring high concentrations of poor children in their urban areas, who are more prone to illness and death than better-off urban children, Cebu and Davao Cities have added burden of including in their administrative boundaries rural barangays with their attendant health problems. As for Quezon City, given its high concen-

tration of urban poor settlers, the largest in the Philippines, one can understand the correspondingly high levels of illness and death among vulnerable children.

While cities are able to present statistics and data that indicate the status of their children, records are generally poorly kept and the quality of their information often suspect. Moreover, rarely are the data disaggregated by barangay, and within that unit, by age, gender, income and other pertinent criteria related to ascertaining the status of the poorest and most deprived children. Thus, health and other local officials find it virtually impossible to develop targeted plans and programs that pinpoint which barangays, and which children in each barangay, must be reached ahead of others. Nor can they accurately monitor progress or the lack of it in government responses to children's needs.

As a consequence, those who most need services and care are most likely to remain unreached and unserved. They are the ones who fall in that remaining 16 percent not immunized, or the 2 percent lacking vitamin A supplementation, or the 50 percent of pregnant women not receiving tetanus toxoid 2. Even though the health workers are the most conscientious among all government functionaries in the barangay about gathering health-related data, their efforts are often unsystematic for effective targeting, monitoring and evaluation. Some of them mention earlier times when the national government had enjoined local authorities to adopt minimum basic needs monitoring at the barangay level. So long as the local authorities maintained their interest, the data gathering was successful and useful. But when the national government lost interest, the pressure on local authorities declined, and with it the continuing collection of basic community data related to child rights.

Child Health

The barangay health center gave me a prescription when I had measles but I had to buy the medicine. They should give free medicine.
– Cita, 12 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Sometimes, I feel that the medical checkup provided to my child is not really thorough. The nurse seems to be in a hurry when doing check-ups, and does not really assess the symptoms . . . especially if there are very many clients.
– Lumen, mother, Sasa, Davao City

Despite feeding, immunization and iron and vitamin A supplementation programs, the health status of disadvantaged children in informal settlements remains poor (see table 12). While these services are being distributed to the city's children, they are clearly not targeted at the poorest in informal settlements. Since reliable statistics are scarce, health workers and mothers in the five cities were asked in the quick appraisals to estimate the proportion of children in the barangay who were moderately to severely malnourished. Their responses listed one-third to less

Table 12 - Health status of poor children in the five CPC cities (2002)

| Indicator | Cebu | Davao | Manila | Pasay | Quezon |
|---|--|---|---|--------------------------|---|
| All children registered at birth | 80.9-100% | No data | Generally all | Almost all | Not all; part of child delivery package |
| All infants exclusively breastfed up to six months | 75-98% (High average) | 70% (Average) | Among nonworking and very poor mothers | 50% | 38-85% |
| All children fully immunized against TB, DPT, polio and measles | 90-110% | 57% | Less than half | Almost all | Few to about half in CPC sites; generally all in better-off non-CPC sites |
| All 0- to 2-year-olds weighed monthly | 50-100% | No data | Only for those interested and close to the health center or reached by health workers | Almost all | Not all; only in one non-CPC site |
| All children well-nourished (degree of malnutrition) | Mild: 23.2% Moderate: 8.2% Severe: 0.2% (for school-aged children only) | Mild: 11-22% Moderate: 2-7% Severe: 0.26% | Mild: 88.3% Severe to moderate: one-third to less than half | 10-26% malnourished | Mild: 88%; 2,454 cases Moderate: 74 cases Severe: 54 cases |
| All 1- to 5-year-olds given vitamin A capsules twice a year | 78-100% (Generally high) | 87-102% | Yes but no records | 78-100% (Generally high) | All who visited the health center, sought health workers' assistance, or visited by health center staff |

Sources: Quick Appraisal Reports (Individual City Reports) by the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 2002-2003 (Etemadi and Li Ye 2002; Fernandez and Serrano 2002; IPC 2002a, 2002b, 2003); National Economic and Development Authority Regional Office No. 7 (NEDA-7), Health, education, housing and social welfare profile of Central Visayas, available from <http://www.neda7.net.ph/cleofe/sep/social%20sector.pdf>; Internet.

than half in Manila, 10 to 26 percent in Pasay, 12 percent in Quezon, 100 cases of mostly under-2 children in Cebu's non-CPC sites, and 3 percent in Davao Cities. While these estimates are far from reliable, much less comparable, they illustrate Metro Manila perceptions of high malnutrition levels in poor neighborhoods.

Effective infant care calls for mothers to breast-feed exclusively for a period of six months. Many urban poor mothers do not follow this practice, however, except in Cebu, Davao, and possibly Quezon Cities, which boast substantial numbers of exclusively breastfed babies. Yet, according to the women who practiced exclusive breastfeeding, they do so not much for its health benefits to their babies, but because they have no money to purchase the preferred formula milk. For these poor women, switching to bottle feeding is advantageous in giving them a chance to leave the baby occasionally in order to work for added income. Health officials in Cebu find it difficult to promote exclusive breastfeeding among urban poor mothers. Not only is the women's knowledge of its advantages inadequate; the necessity of returning to work after childbirth prompts them to seek cheap milk substitutes.

Poor children in Cebu appear to be healthier than their Metro Manila and Davao counterparts. Effective community organizing through NGOs over the years has taught mothers how to demand improved health services for their children and even to review the barangay and city health budgets. This has resulted in nearly all children being immunized against the major child killers – tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio and measles. Except for Pasay City, the comparable rates for the other cities are dismal. Yet, Cebu City's child nutrition rate is at the same level for the most part as the other cities. In Davao, health workers report decreases in the number of sickly children with regular feeding and milk distribution.

A child's wellbeing relies on the level of care shown by parents and caregivers. This element appears to falter in Metro Manila cities, where only parents who assiduously seek access to health services for their children are able to obtain them. Many children remain unserved because their parents fail to pursue these services with equal zeal. Health workers charge them with being lazy and uncaring, but some parents excuse themselves on the grounds that health centers are too far away, sometimes outside the barangay, calling for transportation costs

and time they cannot afford. The same reasons explain the reluctance of mothers and caregivers to attend mothers' classes, seek prenatal care, or take their children for immunization and weight monitoring. Add to this the chronic shortage of free medicine, the inadequate medical facilities, the limited number of health personnel, and the often long waiting times for women who need to earn, and one begins to comprehend the inherent difficulties of making health services accessible to poor urbanites.

It is very hot inside [the health center], causing us to perspire a lot. Our kids are at times so uncomfortable that they get irritated and begin to throw tantrums.

–Teofila, mother, Sasa, Davao City

Some mothers are just so lazy. They are invited to immunizations or meetings on health, but they do not come. They are not doing anything. It is us who should always approach them!

– Barangay health workers, Pasay City

Even though the five-city comparisons place the City of Manila in the forefront (along with Pasay City) in overall health services provision, the quick appraisals focusing on *poor* children in Manila's informal settlements show the opposite trend. Children there receive the poorest quantity and quality of health services among the five cities, with less than half fully immunized, about one-third to almost one-half severely or moderately malnourished, young child weighing programs sought mainly by those mothers close to the health center, and no available records of vitamin A supplementation. Also worthy of concern are its mildly malnourished children (88.3 percent) who without proper intervention could join the third to less than half already in the moderately to severely malnourished category.

Those in charge of government and church/NGO feeding programs, however, believe the number of malnourished children in Manila is declining and their overall health status improving. Yet, they add, this achievement could prove illusory because some rehabilitated children revert all too soon to their malnourished states if their families lack the income to sustain their children's food intake and nutritional health. Quezon City health workers have made the same observation, pointing to severe cases that had been rehabilitated but then regressed, owing to inadequate or inappropriate food and nutrition care at home.

Although most births in these cities are attended by trained health personnel, including traditional birth attendants, or *hilot*, a number of children born to poor parents at home are not immediately registered. Even though the birth attendants' services usually include birth registration, these parents do not see the urgency of going through that process. Moreover, they do not know where to obtain the documents; or they cannot afford the fees, much less the penalty charges for late registration. Some prefer to wait until the government's free birth registration program is announced. In their view, birth registration only becomes necessary at school enrollment

time, when the child's birth certificate has to be presented. Cebu and Pasay Cities come closest to 100 percent coverage in birth registration. Again, Cebu's excellent record can be explained by the strong people's organizations conscious of their children's health rights and adamant about participating directly in local government community health programs. The case of Pasay City is linked to its being a pilot site for the Unregistered Children Project, implemented in cooperation with the National Statistics Office. Here, community volunteers notify and provide information to the city government on unregistered children in the barangays.

Maternal Health

Well, I am already used to such a scolding [by health personnel]. How can I regularly follow the prescribed medical requirements if I cannot afford such medicines? That is really my problem . . . and I have difficulty in obtaining free medicines from the barangay health center.

– Seling, mother, Sasa, Davao City

The poor health status of women in informal and slum settlements matches that of their children (see table 13). Owing to insufficient food, improper nutrition and poor access to health services, mothers too are anemic and malnourished. In three Pasay and Manila community health centers, the main causes of maternal morbidity recorded include anemia, pneumonia, infections of the upper respiratory and urinary tracts, tuberculosis, skin diseases and hypertension, some of which are life-threatening. No cases of maternal deaths, however, have been reported in any of these communities, but the lack of systematically kept health records does not allow complacency. In BASECO on Manila Bay, informants indicate that if any instances of maternal deaths had occurred, they would likely be found among the Muslim households. Often, Muslim women, reinforced by their husbands, resist patronizing local maternity centers, preferring to follow their own traditional practices during pregnancy and birth. In any event, the health center has no organized scheme for tracking maternal deaths.

As far as pregnant women in urban poor communities are concerned, making three visits to the health center is more than adequate, given their preoccupation with earning a living and attending to their many children. Making four or more prenatal visits is easy for those living close to the health facilities, but poses a problem to the more distant residents. They complain, what is the point of making that extra visit when medicines and health supplies are not enough for everyone, anyway? Besides, health personnel make home visits to pregnant women, so why bother going to the health center?

Those who do make initial visits to health centers are assured of at least getting the first dose of tetanus toxoid and vitamin A and iron supplements. Not all pregnant and lactating women receive full supplements of vitamin A and iron or get the second dose of tetanus toxoid vaccine. Completing the required doses depends on the availability of supplies at the

health centers. Among the cities, variations appear, with those living in CPC or pilot sites having access. In Cebu, only women in CPC sites have been fully immunized against tetanus and only one community, a CPC one, reports a 100 percent coverage in the distribution of vitamin A and iron supplements to lactating and pregnant women. Generally, only half of the women have received sufficient doses of these micronutrients. This finding is repeated in Manila, where only women from CPC sites are reached.

Across cities, Davao and Pasay report higher numbers of women who have received sufficient doses of vitamin A and iron, implying that perhaps these cities have enough health resources to cover their population. The Davao communities also report a generally high ratio of complete tetanus toxoid immunization, while the rest of the communities in the four cities fall far behind. In Manila, women in CPC sites are assured of getting complete tetanus toxoid shots more than those in non-CPC sites. In Cebu, community estimates in three barangays (all CPC sites) average a 51 percent coverage in tetanus toxoid immunization (ranging from 45 to 60 percent), while in Pasay, the estimates in two communities range from a low 50 percent to as high as 100 percent coverage.

The health center, given its inadequate facilities, is not capable of handling delivery cases. Pregnant women [in the community] already know this so they go immediately to Davao Medical Center for giving birth. They prefer

this facility because, being a public hospital, it is inexpensive. A majority of the women opt for the services of a physician, perceiving the latter as more skilled in handling their condition, especially since delivery is a dangerous and risky process.

– Babeng, mother, Sasa, Davao City

Although women generally seek the assistance of health professionals in child delivery, the longstanding practice of calling in the *hilot*, or traditional birth attendant, persists, especially in Cebu and Quezon Cities. It is interesting to note that women in non-CPC more than in CPC communities rely on trained health personnel for childbirth. In Cebu, this may partly be explained by the presence of a maternity hospital in the non-CPC community, which serves not only the residents of that barangay but also those of adjacent communities. Women in CPC communities in Quezon City prefer home births because they are less costly and offer more convenience than going to a hospital or maternity center. Many thus turn to the *hilot* for their delivery at home.

Family Wellbeing

There are areas along the river in Barangay Sasa where some households have no excavated pits so human waste is excreted directly to the river. Others have waste disposal pits, but when there is a flood, the pits overflow,

Table 13 - Health status of poor women in the five CPC cities (2002)

| Indicator | Cebu | Davao | Manila | Pasay | Quezon |
|---|----------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| All births attended by trained personnel | 50 -100% | 100% | Majority | Majority | Mostly trained in non-CPC sites; mostly untrained in CPC sites |
| All pregnant women have had at least four prenatal checkups | 50-100% | 40 -86% Low average | More than half to almost all in CPC sites; few in non-CPC sites | Majority | Majority and for those closest to the health center |
| All mothers fully immunized against tetanus | 45-60% | 35-112% High average | All in CPC sites; low in non-CPC sites (6-22%) | 50-100%; no data in three sites | Usually received if prenatal care is obtained |
| All pregnant and lactating mothers given sufficient doses of: | | | In CPC sites only | Majority received sufficient doses | Usually received if prenatal care is obtained |
| vitamin A | 60-100% | 91% | | | |
| iron | 54-100% (Generally low) | 74-102% | | | |
| All pregnant women who are at risk given emergency obstetric care | 4-7 cases | 19-23 cases | Referred to public hospitals | No data | Referred to public hospitals |
| All pregnancies spaced at least two years apart | 60-79% (Generally low) | Contraceptive pills and Lactating Amenorrhea Method (LAM) | Natural family planning methods only | IUD, contraceptive pills, injectables, condoms | Mostly contraceptive pills |

Sources: Quick Appraisal Reports (Individual City Reports) by the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 2002-2003 (Etemadi and LiYe 2002; Fernandez and Serrano 2002; IPC 2002a, 2002b, 2003).

contaminating the river and causing water-borne diseases among adults and children.
– Sanitary health inspector, Sasa Health Center, Davao City

Drinking water is a problem. We buy water from big distributors with delivery trucks or smaller ones with tricycles or carts. It costs P30 [US\$0.54] a drum. For bathing, laundry and cleaning, we draw water from the deep well or catch rainwater in pails. We wish we could have a water pump and our own faucets.
– Edgar, 12 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

The wellbeing of women and children is directly associated with health-seeking action, caring practices, income, education, and access to safe water and sanitation facilities. City health reports in 1999 indicate almost universal access to safe water facilities, yet this is not evident in the urban poor communities. Although a majority has access to safe water, defined as having one's own water connection or obtaining it through another household's connection, significant numbers of the poorest still rely on open or deep wells for the household's water needs. In Cebu, households lacking access to safe drinking facilities are more numerous in non-CPC sites (about 65 percent) than CPC sites (50 percent).

Community social capital enables the poorer populace to gain access to safe water systems through the network of neighbors and relatives who have individual connections. In the same manner, some households without sanitary toilet facilities work out ways of using those of their relatives or neighbors. Or, they get together with neighbors to build shared facilities, as in the case of some communities in Quezon City. Unsanitary toilets, like pit privies, however, are still in use in Quezon, Pasay and Davao Cities. Quick appraisals cite the 1999 city health reports for Cebu, Davao and Quezon Cities, which reveal low rates of household access to sanitary toilets. In Davao City, households without toilet facilities come to 14 percent, slightly more than those with unsanitary ones (12 percent).

Housing and Secure Land Tenure

The trouble is, we don't know who owns the land on which our house stands. So we might get thrown out anytime.
– Estela, 10 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Why don't they just give us this little piece of land at a price we can afford? We're willing to pay after all!
– Carding, 17 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Do we ever have a lot of land problems here! Take my family's case. The person who passed on our lot to us told us he owned it. Then someone else came, claiming both the land and our house. "Why did you build a house here illegally?" he demanded. After that, another person also came, claiming our lot.

We insisted, "No, this is our land!" And so it goes. The situation is always like that.
– Sally, 16 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

In informal settlements, impending or possible eviction inevitably looms as a major concern or persists as an undercurrent in any discussion of the family's future and wellbeing. Crucial to the stability that families need to chart their lives are security of tenure in the space they occupy and the retention of the housing structure that enables them to remain near their place of work, school, market and hospital facilities. Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child assures every child the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. While parents have the primary responsibility, the state is obliged to "take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing" (Article 27, No. 3, CRC).

Child and youth focus group respondents in Manila (BASECO) and Davao Cities (Sasa and Leon Garcia) consider themselves as poor because they live in a "squatter area" and suffer from its degrading physical conditions. Fire and other accidents, flooding, poor sanitation and health conditions, and the low quality of basic services, especially water and sanitation, which have caused deaths in the community, remain problems that affect their wellbeing. Children in Payatas, Quezon City, similarly deplore their degraded surroundings but are more ambivalent in their attitudes to living there, because the Payatas dumpsite provides a main source of income for many of them.

In Cebu City, a majority of program implementers and community members agree that children have rights, yet only a few are aware of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Perhaps the most commonly identified and violated rights are those linked to grossly inadequate levels of living as dumpsite community residents. A Cebu City quick appraisal account describes how the rights of children belonging to some three hundred dumpsite families are being literally crushed:

Children as young as 3 to 4 years old are already burdened to help provide food on the table. They would rush to meet the dump trucks and compactors that carry garbage even before the trucks make a complete stop. When they find time, the children take some rest or a quick nap, spreading carton boxes and paper on top of the garbage to serve as a mat. Accidents are thus inevitable, and some children get hurt. In fact, two children were crushed to death in the area because the drivers did not notice them resting on the pile of garbage. (Etemadi and LiYe 2002)

Quick deaths came to some other poor children who perished in two fires that engulfed BASECO in Manila during the course of this study. At about 9:00

p.m. on 30 March 2002, flames razed through Blocks 9 to 14, destroying 3,500 shanties and affecting 6,000 families. A year later (April 2003), Blocks 14 to 19 suffered the same fate. Residents who were protesting local government moves in BASECO suspect that the government had a hand in deliberately setting these fires. Traumatized young children are the most seriously affected by these conflagrations. Constantly fearful it would happen again, a youth respondent reports that her younger sibling became ill after the event and now has difficulty sleeping owing to anxiety attacks. Several of their few valuables, including important documents, were destroyed, like birth certificates and school records. Residents of areas that did not burn down took up the slack by hosting victimized families, thereby becoming more cramped in their homes than ever. The respondents felt sympathy, regret and sadness over the many losses caused by the fire and helped where they could.

Children in Aplaya, the poorest area along the BASECO shoreline, suffer from flooding during high tides and additional destruction during the rainy season, when their flimsy shacks fall easy prey to strong winds. Similarly, the houses of the most depressed families in Manila and Pasay cluster by the Manila Bay seawall; under concrete bridges; along clogged and dying creeks, major highways and the railroad tracks; and in a garbage collecting area, a petroleum storage warehouse, and the former dumping grounds for war victims and gunned-down criminals. Every time a major disaster forces families to flee their rickety dwellings for higher ground or temporary shelter in more substantial buildings, the children eat less and more irregularly, become prone to respiratory or other illnesses, and share the tensions of sudden displacement. They also stop schooling, simply because the school is usually the first public building to be taken over for housing displaced victims.

Residents have long sought land acquisition rights but more recently settled for secure tenure, in the conviction that this kind of permanence will allow them to upgrade their own surroundings gradually while attracting the interest of government, civil society and the private sector in helping them make their community a viable and attractive place. Indeed, these organizing efforts are beginning to pay off, with the proclamation of 18 hectares of land (recently cut down to 9 by the City of Manila and national authorities with no explanation to the community) for decent shelter and community upgrading, and the entry of faith-based NGOs engaged in building houses and infrastructure with poor community residents.

Right to Development

Researcher: *What do you think is most needed by the children and youth in your barangay?*

Manila children, 9 to 13 years old: *[We need] education . . . so we can learn in school . . . so that when we grow up, we will be able to get a job . . . without school, we will become garbage collectors, domestic helpers, or beggars . . .*

The 2000 national census shows two-thirds (65 percent) of the children as being of school age (0 to 17). In the five CFC cities as a whole, school-aged children comprise about 70 percent of the total child population. Presumably this is because parents from other areas send their children to school in these cities. Davao has the highest proportion of school-aged children at 74 percent, higher by 13 points than Pasay at 61 percent. Davao children and youth, 13 to 18 years, express their desire to complete their education, considering this as vital to their full development. However, many realize this is an unattainable dream, given their present financial circumstances. For some, acquiring a higher level of education is unlikely because of the poor support coming from parents, some of whom even expect their children to work instead of study.

My parents do not really expect me to reach college. For them, it is enough that I finish high school, as they want me to find work afterwards. They already told me that they might not be able to send me to college because it is too expensive . . .

– Sarah, 14 years old, Sasa, Davao City

Local government data for 1999 show that, except for Davao City, the proportion of elementary school-aged children enrolled in formal education in all cities compare favorably with the national rate of 94 percent.² Likewise, all cities enjoy higher literacy and cohort survival rates (proportion of children able to complete elementary school) compared to the overall Philippine ratios, at 94 percent and 69 percent, respectively. Achievement rates are lowest in Davao and Pasay Cities versus the national average, but at par in Quezon City and higher in Manila (see table 14). Manila has the largest proportion of children in school, with most of them performing better than those in the other cities. However, more children in Quezon and Cebu Cities complete their elementary schooling than in the other three.

Comparing cities with their regions, the former are better in some aspects and worse in others. Cebu and Manila have proportionately more of their children going to school compared to the rest of their regions. Students in Cebu and Davao have greater chances of completing their elementary education than their regional counterparts. Achievement and literacy rates for Cebu and Davao are also way above those of the rest of their regions. As for the Metro Manila cities, Pasay and Quezon Cities are at par with the rest of the National Capital Region in terms of participation and literacy rates. Quezon City's cohort survival rate also matches the NCR average, with Pasay and Manila lagging behind.

Early Childhood Care and Development

Goodbye! Goodbye! Thank you to you! Thank you to you! See you again tomorrow. Tomorrow is fun! Tomorrow is fun! Goodbye! Goodbye!
– Excerpt from a song at the day care school

Table 14 - Selected indicators for education (in percentages) in the five CPC cities (1999)

| Indicator | Philippines | Cebu | | Davao | | NCR | Manila | Pasay | Quezon |
|--|-------------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|--------|
| | | City | Region | City | Region | | | | |
| Elementary school cohort survival rate | 69 | 82 | 68 | 79 | 64 | 89 | 79 | 72 | 89 |
| Elementary school participation rate | 94 | 106 | 92 | 89 | 96 | 100 | 113 | 95 | 97 |
| Literacy rate | 94 | 97 | 93 | 98 | 95 | 99 | n.d. | 98 | 99 |
| Achievement rate | 81 | 80 | 68 | 74 | 55 | n.d. | 83 | 77 | 81 |

Sources: Individual cities' Local Plan of Action [Plan of Operations] for 1999-2003 developed by city governments in collaboration with UNICEF Philippines; Department of Interior and Local Government Regional Office No. 7 (DILG-7), "'99 Presidential Award on Cleanest and Greenest Highly Urbanized Cities in the Philippines," available from <http://www.ngkhai.com/pointcebu/devproj/presidential.htm>; National Economic and Development Authority Regional Office No. 7 (NEDA-7), Health, education, housing and social welfare profile of Central Visayas, available from <http://www.neda7.net.ph/cleofe/sep/social%20sector.pdf>; Internet.

Not all children 3 to 5 years are able to attend early childhood education programs, even if Republic Act 6972, passed in 1990, mandates the establishment of a day care center in every barangay. At best, only five communities (two CPC sites, three non-CPC sites) report satisfactory participation rates (average of 85 percent) for preschool-aged children (two each in Cebu and Quezon Cities, and one in Manila).³

Children in Cebu and Quezon Cities are more fortunate in the number of day care centers available to them. Some Cebu communities have three or four, unlike those in Manila that have one government day care at best. Quezon City has the largest number of centers run by the government, whether city, barangay or the Department of Education. Expectedly, CPC sites in Quezon City have more day care centers than the non-CPCs, which however prove more accessible, being situated close to or in areas where the poorest live. In Pasay, preschool-aged children in all communities except one (a non-CPC site) have access to free early childhood education provided by local governments and NGOs. Faith-based groups, NGOs and the private sector in all five cities have expanded the number of preschools, bringing early education programs to large numbers of their poorest children.

Nonetheless, barangay officials and parents alike deplore the shortage of day care education centers and, for those living at the periphery of the barangay, the usually central locations of these facilities. Even when there are funds to set up new centers, space limitations in already densely packed neighborhoods constrain barangay officials from setting up physical structures for children. Having limited space, however, is discounted as a problem by one Cebu City Barangay Chair who boasts, "Although we do not have enough space for a playground, we have the best day care center facilities" (Etemadi and LiYe 2002).

Lower than expected participation rates for poor children in early childhood education programs emerged across all cities. In Pasay City, one community (a non-CPC site) has no day care center in its poorest area; this despite requests from barangay officials and residents for the Department of Social Welfare and Development to set up one. Because the preschool population does not meet the minimum requirements of DSWD for building a day care center,

preschool-aged children in the poorest area have to forego free early childhood education. Going straight to grade one without it means difficulties in keeping up with classmates who have already developed initial reading and writing skills. In still another barangay in Pasay, an NGO with the help of volunteer parent-members of a local organization took the initiative of establishing a day care center. However, it cannot accommodate all barangay children and it is usually the children of the volunteer parents who join the day care program. Limited preschool facilities at the barangay level contribute to a low overall city participation rate (46 percent), as indicated in the Pasay City Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey conducted in 2001.

Several factors account for the low enrollments in early childhood education programs: poverty, low community awareness of their importance and benefits, the distance from the facility or lack of day care centers altogether. Parents, care-givers and day care workers in large cities like Manila and Quezon City often complain about the inadequate number of free centers. Given the growing population of preschool-aged children, many have raised the need for government to increase the number of day care facilities, as well as provide stimulating early education materials so that the latter need not be purchased by low-salaried workers using their own meager earnings.

Basic Elementary and High School Education

On days when we are broke, my younger children skip school twice a week so that their older siblings can attend classes and finish school.
– Sita, mother of five children, Pasay City

The teachers are mostly okay. They know a lot and teach straight, scolding those who copy or cheat on tests or don't listen. But some gossip a lot, come to school late and pinch or slap us. One teacher often falls asleep because she works all night and we have to wake her up.
– Manny, 14 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

When I look at my grade 2 brother's books, I have a sense that they've been used for years, because they're falling apart. There simply

aren't enough textbooks. Even my neighbor in first year high school and his classmates have to take turns using textbooks because there are only five books for every ten students.

– Norma, 17 years old, Payatas, Quezon City

Although basic education is free and easily accessible in most urban poor settlements, a significant number of children and youth do not attend or complete their elementary schooling. This stems primarily from the associated costs to the family of uniforms, shoes, school projects, lunch money, transportation fares and occasional fund drives. Community members and school officials blame financial difficulties, family problems, peer influence, poor quality of education, low motivation and sheer inertia as the main reasons for nonenrollment or dropouts.

In Davao and Pasay Cities, the child and youth respondents affirm that many of their nonschooling peers cannot go to school because of poverty. Those fortunate to be studying have their share of difficulties, like paying attention to their studies when they are preoccupied with multiple household responsibilities and part-time earning activities. Jenny of Pasay and Sarah of Davao explain how they spend a typical day:

I wake up, I fix my bed, eat breakfast, and do the laundry. I also help my mother with other chores at home. In the afternoon, I go to school.

– Jenny, 14 years old, Pasay City

I cannot study well because I spend most of my time caring for my younger siblings. I am expected to do this, being the eldest child, since my mother is often away working.

– Sarah, 14 years old, Davao City

This same pattern applies in Pasay households, especially where daughters belong to large families. Parents busy working outside the household depend on the older girls to help manage the family. Since the poorest families also tend to have the largest number of children, these girls take on major child-minding responsibilities that often curtail their own schooling opportunities for life. The boys augment family earnings by selling fish balls and *kikiam* (fried fish strips) after school.

It is harder for girls not to be able to go to school. Boys are more resilient in situations of hardship and can get a job easily.

– Jay, 14 years old, out-of-school male youth, Manila

Urban poor children generally enroll in grade one, judging from the high participation rates of communities included in the CFC study. Moving to each additional grade level becomes increasingly problematic, however, as parents struggle to find money for non-tuition expenses. To enable poor children to remain in school, various assisting groups, notably local government, NGOs, church-based and private sector groups, offer material and financial supplementation.

Participation rates for children in elementary schools are average to high in all CPC sites; and about half in non-CPC sites. Residents charge, however, that scholarships favor families with close connections to the barangay authorities or to community implementers of the assisting organizations. Merit thus appears to be tempered by personal influence.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development targets the poorest children for its preschool, elementary and high school scholarships. But given the size of the qualifying population, neither the DSWD nor other external contributors can begin to respond to all those children needing scholarships. Moreover, priority goes to preschool and elementary school students rather than high school enrollees. Although parents value this preference while their children are still in the lower grades, they deplore the declining availability of scholarships once their children are ready to go on to high school. Parents know that children who do not complete high school will have great difficulties in finding the kinds of regular wage-paying jobs that come with education. Barangay and school officials attribute lower high school participation rates to added costs without scholarships to help out. Thus, completion rates for elementary school are significantly higher than those for high school.

My mother also wishes me to finish college but says she cannot promise to support me since I still have other brothers and sisters who also have to go to school. I am the eldest and my mother expects me to help her [earn income] when I finish high school.

– Rosie, 16 years old, Leon Garcia, Davao City

Across the five cities, elementary school completion rates are well ahead of those at the high school level. In the Cebu study sites, the proportions of children completing elementary school range from 47 to 82 percent, with an average of 59 percent, whereas high school completion rates range from 16 to 60 percent, with an average of 42 percent. Interestingly, non-CPC sites show higher completion rates for both elementary and high school (46-70 percent, with the average at 56 percent). However, only half of those who graduated from elementary school passed the national achievement test, while the city score stands at 60 percent. As these figures are citywide, they again hide the proportion of poor children in informal settlements who did not enroll at all, or dropped out of school after a year or two.

Elementary school-aged children in Metro Manila CPC sites have access to child friendly schools located within the barangay or nearby. Only one school, however, has incorporated the Child Friendly Movement into its curriculum. The other schools cannot identify changes in the curriculum after the school has been declared child friendly, reporting that only the teachers and administrators attended seminars.

Nonformal Education

Despite the number of out-of-school adolescents hanging around or scavenging in poor communities,

many skills training programs designed for them draw only token participation. Interviews reveal that the potential young participants by and large do not know about these programs, especially those in non-CPC areas in Cebu, Manila and Davao. Moreover, males hoping for wage jobs show little interest in the subjects taught, most of which cater to women. In Davao, training has taken the form of cosmetology, speed sewing, soap making, dressmaking, smoked fish making, painting, and stuffed toy making, with only bartending, waitering and t-shirt-making seen as male-related skills. The added problems of capital to start a business and marketing skills to keep it going further fuel their apathy.

When the highly respected Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)⁴ conducted its Davao CPC training sessions co-sponsored by the barangay, the computer education and electrical repair training classes held in a nearby high school attracted only a few out-of-school youth. Low attendance was also noted in a similar skills training program in a Cebu barangay. This could be due in part to the TESDA requirement at the time that participants should have a high school degree. In two CPC sites in Manila, high school graduates and out-of-school youth with no means of obtaining a college education, along with interested parents, received lessons in computer skills on weekends, for a fee of P100 (US\$1.79). TESDA also supported the parish-run community social service program in Manila by giving free training to interested out-of-school youth and adults.

Even skills programs less demanding of formal credentials may face difficulties attracting young people with only a fourth grade education. Some may be too embarrassed to admit that they cannot even complete the application form properly. While opportunities for skills training are essential, they may be insufficient in themselves. Additional confidence-building mechanisms beforehand can motivate unemployed youth into taking advantage of the courses. This subject is well worth pursuing.

Parents, teachers and school officials in poor communities express the same complaints and share the same wishes about the educational system. As an example, in assessing two elementary schools in a non-CPC Davao community, concerned adults complained of the low teacher-student ratio, limited books in the library, and the lack of rooms for home economics and music classes. Teachers facing the new basic education curriculum had experienced so much confusion at the varied approaches of different textbooks that the school policy was eventually changed to mandate only one textbook for a particular subject. The lack of laboratory tools and equipment, textbooks, and new sports equipment was said to further hamper quality learning among poor children.

Not surprisingly, when asked how the problem could be solved, parents, teachers and school officials ticked off the following: construction of additional day care centers and schools, upgrading of school facilities and equipment, hiring of additional and competent teachers, educational assistance targeting the poorest, and livelihood opportunities for

parents. If only local governments, they added, would allocate adequate budgets and resources to local schools, then the rights and basic needs of all children, including the poorest among them, would be addressed.

Right to Protection

Overview

If cities are to protect children effectively, officials must know which children need what kinds of protection, where they are and why they are in that state. Regrettably, the database needed to develop effectively targeted programs either does not exist or is of extremely poor quality, even in major cities. Without an up-to-date, reliable information system highlighting special protection needs, the most vulnerable children cannot be reached with the right programs.

The information deficit leaps out when one reviews, for example, the five cities' individual action plans for CPC V. Manila's report barely touches on street children, despite the alarming number of boys and girls roaming the city streets at all hours of the day and night. It likewise ignores child abuse, despite the increasing incidence noted by community workers and residents. Each of the four other cities presents comparatively more protection data in their action plans, but even there, officials admit that their information base is incomplete and leaves out some disadvantaged groups. A number of NGOs help fill the gaps in care and protection, working closely with the city authorities, especially in Cebu, Davao and Pasay Cities. This explains in part why those three cities can at least identify the numbers or percentages of children needing special protection.

The 1999 records of the Child and Youth Section of the Cebu City Police indicate several cases involving minors: theft (1,116), rugby sniffing (148), begging (59), violation of curfew (59), vagrancy (23), and substance abuse, particularly drugs (16). The records of the Police Women's Desk show that, in 75 percent (49 of 65) of rape cases, the victims are minors. There are 21 incidents of child abuse, and 26 cases of lascivious acts, with 18 perpetrated on minors. Lihok Pilipina, Inc., a Cebu City NGO that addresses the needs and priorities of women from urban low-income households, has identified 1,100 abuse and violence cases and listed 13,000 commercial sex workers reached by NGOs. About 60 percent of sexual abuse cases involve victims below 15 years, 60 percent of them being family-inflicted. Given the absence of government reports on the number of child workers in the city, a federation of Cebu City NGOs has put together a master list showing 1,000 children involved in various hazardous activities, like scavenging, vending and commercial sexual exploitation.

The Davao City Social Services and Development Office (CSSDO), through its Crisis Intervention Center (CIC-Balay Dangupan), assists girl victims of sexual abuse – 288 in 1996, 279 in 1997, and 244 in 1998. Of 111 cases filed in court, 14 have resulted in convictions, with the death penalty meted out to ten of the

perpetrators. Tambayan (Center for the Care of Abused Children), a Davao City NGO, has recorded ninety-three children being trafficked for prostitution, most of them from General Santos City and Marbel in Mindanao, from Cebu, or even from places as distant as Cabanatuan and Tarlac in Luzon. Tambayan also documented three hundred cases of sexual abuse among minors. Rape is the most prevalent among the criminal cases committed against children, mostly girls, with 55 reported in 1999, up from 41 in 1998.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the CSSDO and NGOs in Davao City have identified 207 children rescued from hazardous and exploitative labor. Children working at the wharf as packers and haulers of fertilizers have further augmented the roster of child laborers in the city. With older children in poor families anxiously looking for work, unscrupulous employers quickly take advantage of them for cheap labor. Meanwhile, maltreatment or abuse remains the most common criminal offense committed against women in Davao City.

Similarly noted in the two other cities, Pasay and Quezon, is the increasing number of children in need of special protection juxtaposed against the city governments' limited provision of protection programs, services and facilities. In Pasay City, a number of children have been rescued from sexual exploitation (62) or child labor (12), while 1,175 out-of-school youth have been given vocational training and 57 of their families offered credit assistance for livelihood activities. Quezon City officials in turn report 2,000 street children, 432 children and youth in conflict with the law, and 170 child victims of abuse and violence. As in Cebu, there are no official figures for child workers. Indeed, statistics related to child protection remain highly suspect and are likely to be either under-reported or highly exaggerated. One cannot tell, given the poor quality of the child database.

How do poor children assess their rights to protection in these five cities? In an interview with an IPC researcher, Benjie describes the extreme punishments some parents mete out to their children:

Researcher: *What do the children do when these things happen?*

Benjie: *Some children threaten their parents, saying that they will call Bantay Bata 163 [the hotline for abused children].*

Researcher: *What does the barangay do?*

Benjie: *Children cannot tell the barangay officials because their parents threaten them further if they do . . . they are afraid that their parents will hit them in the head with a wooden plank.*

The poorest children are malnourished and out of school. Because they are poor, they seek work in any form and soon become victims of abuse and exploitation. Joining gangs, taking addictive sub-

stances and engaging in petty crimes are the usual next steps. Drawing the strongest expressions of concern from community members in all five cities are out-of-school, malnourished and working children, substance abusers, members of gangs and fraternities, and victims of physical and sexual abuse (see table 15). For these young people, conditions at home contribute substantially to the progressive deterioration of their safety and wellbeing.

In Pasay City, residents observe that the larger the family, the greater its demands, and the more urgent the need for additional income. The situation is especially difficult for single-headed households. In general, frequently ill or malnourished children have parents who barely earn; many are dependent on the generosity of in-laws and other relatives. Some children drop out of school when only one parent is working, or because of the temporary nature of the parents' jobs, leaving them with incomes insufficient to cover expenses for school projects. Extreme poverty and parental neglect drive children and youth to work in metal junk shops, snatch or steal things, prostitute themselves, or take prohibited drugs.

The limited information makes it difficult to ascertain the number of children in the community needing special care. Looking at the skimpy community reports of physical or sexual abuse, maltreatment or child labor, one might conclude that these situations occur only rarely, if at all. However, community members who have witnessed these situations think otherwise, claiming the numbers are high. Add to this the tendency of some barangay officials and community members to disown the affected children, claiming they come from neighboring barangays.

Children Needing Special Protection

The following sections highlight the difficult lives faced by each subgroup of children needing special protection and care.

■ Children Involved in Drug and Substance Abuse

An overriding concern of parents in all the urban barangays studied is drug and substance abuse afflicting children and even preschoolers. In a Pasay community, people report seeing children as young as 5 years old loitering and sniffing rugby while helping parents scavenge or sort garbage. Abandoned children, whom community members refer to as *palaboy* (vagrants), are also hooked on illegal substances, such as rugby, a strong compound with an addictive scent. Likewise, in BASECO, Manila, children as young as 7 are already hooked on solvent sniffing. These substances are easily obtained in *sari-sari* (variety) stores, along with other prohibited items, such as cigarettes, marijuana and shabu (a cheap form of cocaine). Idleness and lack of alternative activities, family problems, parental neglect and peer influence lure the youth to try these substances, which leads to dependency. Adults in the community reportedly turn a blind eye to the problem because they do not want to interfere in other people's lives.

Residents and police officials uniformly deplore the problem of drug and substance abuse among

Table 15 - Groups of children needing special protection in the five CPC cities, as identified by the communities (2002)

| City (no. of study communities) | Groups of children needing special care |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Cebu (5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims of physical and sexual abuse • Substance abusers • Child workers • Children in conflict with the law |
| Davao (6) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorest • Drug and substance users • Members of gangs • Out-of-school youth • Child workers • Bontog (child prostitutes) • Children and youth in conflict with the law • Victims of physical and sexual abuse |
| Manila (6 sites) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-of-school youth (all sites) • Members of gangs and fraternities, vagrants (4 sites) • Child workers, physically abused, malnourished (3 sites) • Abandoned, neglected, orphaned, children in conflict with the law, sexually abused, victims of violence, drug users (2 sites) |
| Pasay (5 sites) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-of-school youth, malnourished, working (all sites) • Maltreated or abused, gang members (4 sites) • Children in conflict with the law (3 sites) • Abandoned or neglected, tambay (bums), palaboy (vagrants), street children, rugby users (2 sites) |
| Quezon (6 sites) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-of-school youth, members of gangs and fraternities, malnourished (all sites) • Users of drugs or any addictive substance (5 sites) • Working, victims of physical and domestic abuse (4 sites) • Children in conflict with the law (3 sites) • Abandoned or neglected, street children, victims of sexual abuse (2 sites) |

Sources: Quick Appraisal Reports (Individual City Reports) by the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 2002-2003 (Etemadi and Ye 2002; Fernandez and Serrano 2002; IPC 2002a, 2002b, 2003).

children, but hold different views about the magnitude of the problem in their communities. Police officials consider drug taking as common to all kinds of youth in Metro Manila, while residents believe that only the few young people with money carry out this expensive habit. In three Cebu communities, some youth pretending to be scavengers or itinerant shoe repairers have supported their drug habit by robbing houses, snatching or engaging in petty theft. While community members in Cebu cite drugs as responsible for crime in the community, those in Quezon City blame the proliferation of gangs and fraternities in schools and communities. Aware of the negative effects of drugs on young users, children in the study sites claim they have no intention of getting into drugs. They admit knowing young drug users in their neighborhood, however.

■ *Child Workers*

I was still young when my mother asked me to become an ambulant vendor because we were very poor. I sold whatever I could. After some time, I began to take on heavy work. Now that I am unemployed, it is very difficult because when I wake up in the morning, I have nothing to eat . . . it is very depressing.

We eat only at noon and at night. It is all right for us if we have only boiled bananas on the table, as long as there is something to eat.
– Joven, 16 years old, Sasa, Davao City

For most community residents, child labor is a fact of life, rather than a violation of the law against child labor (Republic Act 7658, An Act Prohibiting the Employment of Children below 15 Years of Age in Public and Private Undertakings).⁵ Estimates of working children in communities vary. Although barangay officials and NGO workers in Leon Garcia and Sasa in Davao City claim to lack accurate figures on child workers, they nonetheless express alarm at the large number of working children. In one Manila barangay, some youth estimate working children at 30 percent of the barangay's total child and youth population.

Extreme poverty forces them to work. Young children take on the lighter tasks, such as washing meat trays, selling vegetables and bananas in the market, washing cars at the airport, or collecting used plastic, bottles and other recyclable items from the dumpsite and selling them to scrap dealers. As they get older, they assume heavier duties, like delivering goods to the market, tending food stalls at the dumpsite, waiting on tables in small eateries or restaurants, and

scavenging. Notes a female in-school youth in Manila as to why some children remain in those menial and sometime dangerous jobs, "Because they were unable to finish school, they are limited to these types of work."

In most Pasay City communities, children and youth work voluntarily to contribute to the family income, becoming car washers, garbage collectors or scavengers, and drivers of pedicabs (three-wheel human-pedaled vehicles). In Davao and Cebu, schooling children work in order to pay for their school expenses and/or to help their parents put food on the table. Some 20 to 30 children are drivers of *trisikad* (similar to a pedicab) in a community in Cebu; another barangay reports a similar number of child vendors, dispatchers of public vehicles, car washers and pier workers.

While child labor constitutes a violation of the Davao City Children's Welfare Code⁶ and the Child Friendly Movement, observers insist the practice cannot be completely eradicated because some children have to contribute to the family income or they will go hungry. Their own parents expect them to work. Many a police officer tolerates these children, being well aware of the imperatives driving them to earn. Apprehending working children is useless, remarks a police officer, because they resume their economic activities as soon as they are released.

Child workers engage in various jobs at the public market, like wrapping *chorizo* (pork sausage), washing meat trays, cleaning cars, carrying loads, selling plastic bags and spices, or minding the family's small store. For three hours of washing meat trays, children earn P50 to P60 (US\$0.89 to US\$1.07), part of which goes to the *sari-sari* (variety) store to buy a kilo of rice for the family. Full-time out-of-school child workers receive P120 (US\$2.14) a day. Very poor children in Sasa near the Davao wharf derive their income from whatever work they can pick up at the pier.

Working children usually operate in the streets or in public areas. In a Manila waterfront community, they come from very poor families. Some contribute to the household income or simply have to fend for themselves. Most of them engage in vending at the wet market, with boys and girls as young as 8 to 10 years old selling plastic bags or vegetables that have fallen from delivery trucks. Others hang out at the pier to collect bananas coming off boats from the south. Still others collect rotten or nearly spoiled food from the market and sell this as *kanin baboy* (pig feed) to pig raisers. Older boys of 15 to 18 years dive for *tahong* (mussels) along the seawall. After cleaning and repacking the *tahong* with family help, they, along with younger boys and girls of 8 to 9 years, sell these in small plastic bags for P5 (US\$0.09) per bag.

In non-CPC and relatively better-off Quezon City sites, working children help parents and siblings with income-generating activities, like driving public vehicles or hawking small items. A majority of working children in the CPC sites do the same, more of them boys, since the girls are assigned to care for younger siblings. Some assist their parents in the small family

business – the *sari-sari* store and *karinderia* (simple eatery). As sidewalk vendors, children aged 7 to 8 years sell a variety of commodities, from fruits, flowers and vegetables to plastic bags, clothes and electronic items, along major city roads. As illegal vendors, they risk getting caught daily by the police for violating the prohibition on sidewalk vending. In addition, they fall prey to accidents when hit by buses or other vehicles racing along the four-lane road. Responding to these dangers, a recent government directive bans children from selling on major city streets.

Although child labor is prevalent in Quezon City as a whole, the incidence is highest in Payatas, the barangay which houses the 13-hectare dumpsite. A magnet for urban poor settlers in the metropolis, the Payatas dumpsite offers a steady source of income to scavenging families and children within and outside the barangay. Children as young as 4 years old join other family members in gathering and sorting out rubbish, then selling the reusable remnants to junk and scrap dealers. A 9-year-old relates having to get up as early as 5:00 in the morning to get to work at the dump. At noon, he stops and shifts to playing video games. The sixth of seven children, this child has never stepped into a classroom. Although going to school has been his dream, the need to help his mother, a single parent, earn for the family demands higher priority.

■ Child Members of Gangs and Fraternities

All of my siblings live separately from us. I joined the gang to find company. If you have enemies, the gang will protect you. Once an enemy beat me, and my gang members sought retaliation.

– Ernesto, 16 years old, third year high school, Sasa, Davao City

Wherever I go, there is always somebody [a gang member] who attacks me. Even if you bribe them, they still hit you. Sometimes, they will forcibly take your P20 [US\$0.36], which is intended for your fare and snacks, and divide it among them. If you do not give them the money, all of them will beat you up. That is why I have stopped going to school . . . all children even at the elementary level are already members of fraternities . . .

– Monching, out-of-school youth, BASECO, Manila

Young people normally turn to their close friends (*barkada*) to gain a sense of belonging, support and protection. Their peer group is central to their daily lives. Members help one another collect scraps and refuse, carry heavy loads on the dumpsite, and share cold drinks like brothers and sisters. In some cases, the peer group brings trouble, too. One adolescent affirms that his friends make him happy; however, they can also distract him from worthwhile activities, like studying. Some admit that their peers influence them to engage in illicit or risky activities, ranging from drinking and drugs to petty thievery and unprotected sex.

A 16-year-old youth admits having tried shabu with his friends, saying he was only curious about the taste and is not hooked. Antonio, a 17-year-old high school student in Sasa, points out:

Sexual encounters with women are just natural for male teens like us. When you are in a group, you are forced to engage in these activities. Once the spirit of alcohol gets to you, you will not be able to resist sex. We do not really use condoms during sex because it is just a hassle. We use them only if the woman is a prostitute.

Loreta, a mother in Sasa, observes:

Children nowadays are stubborn and hard-headed. After school, they hang out with their peers and go home late at night. They engage in petty gambling, get into romantic relationships at an early age, join gangs and drink alcohol. If you warn them against doing these things, they answer back at you.

Community respondents identify street gangs and fraternities as youth groups needing special attention, because their members engage in violent fights, drugs and crime. In Manila, Quezon, Pasay and Davao Cities, joining gangs and fraternities is said to have become common among teenagers and even pre-teens. Notorious for their fights, Quezon City gangs and fraternities engage in nighttime activities featuring rumbles or riots, wielding deadly homemade weapons, like shotguns, steel pipes and knives. Their members are generally boys of 14 years and above. Some groups say they target for recruitment public elementary school children as young as 9.

In a Manila community, fraternities like ANTRAX (Anti-Terrorism and Remove All X [Wrong]) and Chinese Mafia have about fifty to one hundred members each. Ranging from 13 to 17 years, the youth who join neighborhood fraternities, who are usually also those in conflict with the law, are tested by violent hazing. Gangs in Manila communities adopt names that may seem strange to outsiders but for the members define their group's distinctive character.

Bakal Boys (Iron Boys) consist of 11- to 18-year-old out-of-school youth working in an iron junk shop. Sex Bomb includes six female out-of-school cousins, aged 12 to 16 years, who roam the barangay and surrounding areas, picking fights. Solben Boys are out-of-school youth aged 10 to 18 years who frequent the national highway and hole up in abandoned or parked trucks, sniffing solvent. Children who play or hang out in the park most of the day are called Batang Paraiso (Children of Heaven), the name of the park. Ten male members aged 12 to 20 years whose major preoccupation is to initiate trouble or fights is known as 14K. Palakpak Boys (Applause Boys), composed of twenty male members and their girlfriends, is considered as the most notorious group, along with 14K. Both are known for causing riots and gang fights near the train track. Most of their members are allegedly drug dependents.

In Davao, members of Notoryus, a gang named after a movie featuring a popular male actor, are seen by adult residents as exerting a bad influence on the community's young. They carry samurai and fan knives, and often engage in riots with rival gangs, Suspek and Excon. Rugby Boys sniff rugby, some of whom also use drugs and other addictive substances. Bakal Boys and Kalo Boys not only collect but steal iron (*bakal*) and baseball caps (*kalo*), respectively.

Their [the children's] meager earnings are not enough to buy food. So they just sniff rugby to stave off hunger. Their parents, who are also working, often neglect them. They are out of the house most of the day and have little time left for their children when they come home at night. Thus, their children are lured toward gangs and dangerous activities.
– Pining, poor mother, Leon Garcia, Davao City

While community members express displeasure and fear at the proliferation of gangs and fraternities, and *bontog* groups for girls, youth members of these groups take opposing views. They describe their group as a source of protection from other trouble-makers or gangs in the barangay. A male fraternity founder claims that he organized the group to control and discipline his peers, adding that the barangay authorities are incapable of handling them.

Other members, however, recognize that gangs and fraternities contribute to trouble in their community. "*We are arrogant,*" admits one. Although they claim to shun trouble, the teenagers explain that they cannot avoid street fights with other gangs that have taunted or victimized them. They need to retaliate, protect their turf and maintain their honor. Gang wars tend to be cyclical, then, as each group tries to "*get even*" with the other.

In Manila, girls aged 14 to 17 years agree that some youth foster the chaos, particularly gang members. They harass children and other adolescents, and get into fights with rival groups. The girl respondents, however, distinguish among gangs, fraternities, and "groups" (*tropa* or *barkada*). Gangs are violent, as seen in their initiation rites and their penchant for riots. They also tend to engage in illegal activities, such as drug use, theft and destruction of property. But there are also fraternities and groups that do not cause problems in the community and keep a low profile as much as they can. This is clearly true of those organized by girls. Some adolescent boys and girls are active in the church and get involved in beautification and other worthwhile undertakings.

■ *Child Victims of Domestic Violence and Physical and Sexual Abuse*

I really hate my father because every time I commit mistakes, he hits me. He is always like that . . . especially when he is drunk.
– Lito, 15 years old, Sasa, Davao City

Like Lito from Davao City, children aged 11 to 13 years know of parents who punish their children if

the latter do not prioritize work. Some point to children, themselves included, who are allowed to leave the house and join their friends only after they have finished all their household chores. Although they enjoy swimming, watching television and singing with the *videoke* (video sing-along component), more often than not, they have little time for these leisure activities.

When my younger sibling is already asleep and I am done cleaning and cooking . . . that is the only time I can leave the house.
– Evelyn, 13 years old, Manila

As already mentioned, many have witnessed domestic violence frequently in their daily lives. Pinches or a slap on the face when their parents learn they have misbehaved in school or when they have not done their household chores are not seen, however, as abusive since in their minds this is how parents discipline their children. As one youth remarks, “All children here are spanked or hit . . . if they are at fault, then they are punished.” The problem with this view, however, is that it tolerates parents’ power-assertive practices and harsh treatment of children. This makes it difficult for children or even neighbors to recognize and report serious cases of child abuse when they do occur. The Manila quick appraisal reveals that child victims of physical and sexual abuse constitute 8 percent of the total population of children in need of special protection.

A barangay official in Manila gives three reasons for the nonreporting of child abuse cases to higher authorities. One is the inconvenience of attending hearings and reporting to legal offices. The parents of the victimized children prefer to use their time for income generation, points out the official. Another is the fear of revenge once the perpetrator is released, compounded by a fatalistic attitude: “The case will not go anywhere, anyway.” Prospective complainants believe that they are lucky if they get out of the situation alive.

A third reason may be attributed to the absence of NGOs in the area. Normally, these are the groups that raise issues of child abuse and encourage the wronged child with adult supporters to take legal action. In one Manila community in 2001, the NGO presence facilitated the identification of seventy-nine cases of child abuse. A youth official estimates sexually harassed or abused children as making up 5 percent of the barangay children while 10 percent are maltreated. She believes that almost all incidents of child abuse are now reported. In a community that is aware of the issue, this is not surprising as the houses are situated close to one another. If the party involved refuses to report the abuse, there will surely be a concerned neighbor who will take the initiative.

Manila and Quezon Cities report a relatively higher incidence of child abuse than Cebu or Pasay Cities. In the case of Pasay City, reporting of physical or sexual abuse remains low or even nil. Pasay City residents are quick to dispute the low incidence, however, pointing out that minor violations not requiring

hospitalization are routinely ignored and thus not listed in barangay records. Often, mainly serious cases are reported to the barangay, and only if someone files a complaint. The prevailing notion is that one’s family occupies a private domain, and no outsider should interfere in its internal affairs. Individuals who do intervene are often rebuffed as meddling in the family’s private concerns. Discouraged by this attitude, most people tend not to push the issue further. The quick appraisal shows that only one of five barangays covered by the study in Pasay has on file reports on physical and sexual abuse: one physical abuse and three rape cases.

Cebu’s decreased incidence of abuse is attributed to the effective monitoring efforts of the barangay officials, and the outstanding program initiated by Bantay Banay (Community Watch), a local NGO devoted to eliminating abuse against poor children and women. The educational and motivational programs Bantay Banay has put in place, with barangay support, have significantly reduced abuse against children and women. Today, only one or two cases surface per barangay, with the victims allegedly not from the community but from other provinces, or brought to the city as uninformed, vulnerable housemaids. Thus, unlike Pasay City, where low incidence suggests poor reporting, Cebu City’s low incidence stems from its successful efforts at curbing and punishing perpetrators.

Quezon City communities reporting cases of child abuse fall into the CPC sites: four cases of rape in Bagong Silang; 66 cases, mostly incest, in Batasan Hills including three acts of lasciviousness with child and youth victims; and 10 incest and 2 sexual abuse cases in Commonwealth involving young girls (ages 2 and 10). In not a few instances, the perpetrators are family members of the victims. Gaps remain, however, in some communities, with a number of domestic abuse (physical and verbal) cases not being reported and filed. In some areas, domestic violence and abuse are considered as normal occurrences.

Right to Participation

They do not understand . . . they do not want to understand the issues tackled in the seminars. No one asks questions; they do not like to think. They do not want to meddle nor be bothered by others because they have so much work to do. There is no participation . . . for the development of everyone.
– Community volunteer, Manila

If apathy is the reason for this lament, it is not surprising that of the four sets of rights, the child’s right to participation remains the weakest in the community, even in CPC sites. Although child advocates, Children’s Summits, and Children’s Congresses have been organized and carried out in certain cities, promoting young people’s participation in decision making for development lags behind.

Popular Modes of Youth Participation

Social and cultural activities routinely welcome the participation of young people. Cleanliness and beautification, sports leagues, dances and fiesta activities (in celebration of the patron saint's feast day) are the popular modes through which young people in all five cities are drawn in. Attracting male adolescents are the basketball court, billiard hall and video arcade.

Basketball competitions in the barangay become great equalizers of in-school and out-of-school youth. Usually held during the fiesta or in summer, when in-school youth are on vacation, inter-barangay basketball competitions are seen by young and adult residents alike as an activity that keeps young people from drug abuse and gangs.

Community-wide cleanup and beautification activities are cited as important youth activities in all communities, with Davao youth respondents specifically mentioning their participation in cleaning open drainage canals to prevent flooding. Responding to the request of the women's group, they sprayed their surroundings with anti-dengue chemicals to protect the health of the community, especially the children.

Young people spontaneously form dance clubs, street gangs and fraternities, on the one hand, or join youth groups organized by NGOs, faith-based groups and schools, on the other. In Quezon City, community groups of children and youth organize dance and singing competitions, and spend their time learning practical skills, like setting up a small business and using money wisely. Members of school clubs and organizations take part in planning and implementing projects and activities.

In Pasay City, all barangays but one have a youth or children's club. The Department of Labor and Employment encourages the formation of youth clubs in CPC sites. A popular youth group in a non-CPC site is the Drum and Lyre Band, composed of children aged 9 to 12 years. The band joins the yearly inter-barangay competitions and is a source of pride of the community.

Compared with out-of-school youth, who are more likely to be attracted by gang or fraternity membership, in-school youth register higher participation rates in church-based and Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) projects, along with community activities like drug prevention or family planning seminars. Out-of-school youth complain of parents who restrict their activities and lament a setting lacking in learning and recreational opportunities for them to fill their idle time. Occasionally they participate in community events initiated by the Sangguniang Kabataan involving cleanliness drives and basketball competitions. It is worth noting that most of the above-mentioned activities cater to male adolescents. The closest that adolescent girls get to public recreational activities are the occasional volley-ball games organized for or by them.

Among younger children, venues for participation include parades, educational fieldtrips, the *Paligsining* (art contest) and dancing and singing contests for day care students. A popular series of events is the annual celebration of National Children's Week, capped by a children's presentation. Here the influ-

ence of local television shows featuring MTV style singing and sexy dancing comes out clearly, reinforced by applauding parents. Participating in these activities has enabled many children to develop their talent, confidence and social skills.

In Quezon City elementary and high schools, membership in clubs and organizations allows children and youth to meet fellow students who share the same interests, such as art, science and mathematics. In some barangays, students join school competitions, like quiz bees, medical missions, nutrition month activities and poster making.

The Barangay Councils claim that they give importance to children and youth in their communities, and recognize the government's role in supporting child- and youth-focused activities intended for their self-development. However, they rarely go beyond merely sponsoring the basketball league. Interested community leaders are left to organize the games. If fieldtrips, skills training and job fairs take place, it is largely civil society groups or associations, not the Barangay Council, that take responsibility.

Youth Council (Sangguniang Kabataan)

The SK is only a decoration . . . nobody pays attention to it. If there are no elections, goodbye.
– SK official, Pasay City

Generally, youth concerns are entrusted by the Barangay Council to the Youth Council, or Sangguniang Kabataan (SK). Composed of the chair, seven members, a secretary and treasurer,⁷ the SK is tasked to formulate policies, co-ordinate with appropriate organizations and agencies, and initiate and implement programs and activities designed "to enhance the social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical development" of the youth (Local Government Code of 1991, Book III, Chapter 8, Section 426).

The SK, however, is not popular with out-of-school or poor youth, who claim to be unaware of its projects. They see SK leaders as weak and lacking clear leadership. Those who have heard of the SK say they do not know what activities it has undertaken, except for the basketball league every summer and organizing those elements of the fiesta celebration that are aimed at young people, like community dances.

In Sasa and Leon Garcia, Davao City, the Youth Councils are judged to be largely ineffective. Because he is busy working, the SK Chair in Leon Garcia cannot attend to his duties. In Sasa, the SK focuses on sports, catering mostly to in-school youth teams. SK activities generally do not address the real and pressing concerns of the poorest out-of-school youth in the barangay, particularly employment or skills development. Even the reproductive health and gender sensitivity workshop for selected youth leaders of the *sitio* (subunits or neighborhood clusters in the barangay), the advocacy group on reproductive health, dancing and singing competitions, and the small library for children draw somewhat better-off, although still poor, children and youth. The only pro-

gram targetted at the poorest groups entails the free distribution of t-shirts to street children.

Moreover, since the SK members and activity organizers are better-educated individuals, some of the poorer, uneducated youth feel intimidated about interacting with them. Differences in socioeconomic status compound this feeling of alienation. The SK Chair confirms this assessment. But she points out that child and youth participation in community affairs remains minimal, if not nil, particularly in decision making. Despite youth representation in the Barangay Council through the SK, she complains that their voices are barely heard.

Youth Council members in other cities contend that the blame for SK inactivity lies elsewhere, not in their performance. SK projects depend on financial allocations from local governments, which, in turn, show a greater preference for infrastructure projects than strengthening basic social services for the youth. In a Pasay community, the SK Chair is not satisfied with just implementing sports, cleanliness and beautification projects. He wants to organize more activities but cannot do so because the SK is regarded as merely an ornament of the local government rather than a partner in community development. The SK's largely token participation in community development, for lack of encouragement and funds from the Barangay Council, is seen by some as the latter's deliberate strategy to avoid competition with its own projects.

An SK in Quezon City expressed genuine interest in adding more activities targeting a larger number of children and youth. Aside from basketball competitions, the SK proposed a drug awareness campaign and poster-making contest but, once again, funding constraints undermined project planning and implementation. Even though it is entitled to a budget from the local government, cumbersome rules and procedures hamper this process. The SK must, for example, obtain the approval of the Barangay Council and Quezon City Hall for allocations from the budget. Not wishing to be dependent on that process, this SK has undertaken its own fund-raising activities in support of its projects.

Youth Participation in Decision Making

The participation of the youth in the barangay is overwhelming . . . They are very much involved in the activities of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children [BCPC].
– SK Chair, Cebu City

To promote child rights, I approach mothers in the barangay and give them posters about children's rights. Some mothers get offended. They claim they already know about it . . . One time I noticed that my classmate in grade 5 was regularly absent. I paid him a visit at home to find out how he was. I saw that he had bruises, so I told the Barangay Council members and volunteers, and they spoke to the parents of the child.
– Benedict, 11 years old, child advocate, Manila

Not all SKs are moribund. Young people in Cebu and Manila have participated in citywide Children's Congresses. In Manila, although the Children's Summit was open to all children, SK organizers tended to favor the participation of children from prominent families, the recipients of educational assistance, or the standard names usually recommended by core group members. In Cebu, the participants came from both CPC and non-CPC communities.

Cebu Congresses are convened by two separate entities. The day care center initiates one annually that largely involves its clientele. The other is sponsored by the city government and includes children from different barangays, with each community invited to send fifteen participants. The barangay health workers, SK Chair, or leaders of the *sitio* choose three to five participants per *sitio*. These representatives are divided almost equally between out-of-school and in-school youth and between males and females. However, it sometimes happens that there are more out-of-school youth participants because the in-school youth need to secure permission from their parents and the school to join the Congress. The criteria used for the selection are not crystal-clear, and it appears that the barangay health workers, SK Chair, or *sitio* leaders have some discretion in making the choices.

This citywide activity is replicated at the barangay level. Of five communities involved in the Cebu study, only one, a CPC barangay, has initiated a biennial youth summit, with each of its *sitio* sending two representatives. The participants in the summit discuss issues, problems and programs for the youth, and formulate a two-year action plan. The conduct of children's congresses has reportedly enhanced the socialization skills of children and made them aware of their rights and responsibilities.

With the assistance of NGOs and church-based organizations, youth in Cebu City have become more creative and active in planning and implementing their own projects. As a result, energetic and confident youth groups able to plan, direct and evaluate their own projects readily form partnerships with the barangay to carry out community development activities.

Ultimately, child participation rights are envisioned as enabling young people to influence decisions that make an impact on their lives. The initial CFC monitoring scheme did include child participation as an indicator of child-friendliness. The manual developed by national agencies and local government units with UNICEF (*What Barangay Officials Can Do to Set Up a Child Friendly Locality*) cites an indicator of child participation, which is that "All children 12-17 years old participate in sociocultural and community development activities." This norm, however, is expressed in general terms and does not specify measurable or quantifiable outcomes, unlike in the areas of health and education. Gauging child participation is made even more challenging by the fact that modes of participation vary by age group: the ways by which younger children participate would differ from those of older children. Given the intricacies of monitoring child participation, how then does one assess this participation? Do poor children and youth in the five Child Friendly Cities now participate effectively?

As child researchers have pointed out, “The idea of rights has to be translated into action and measures, and new policies, perhaps new institutions, have to be established as a consequence of the actions shaped by the rights framework” (Earls and Carlson 2002, 62). They go on to advocate a new orientation to measurement that is able to elicit fairly subtle ways by which young people are able to gain control over their lives. Hart’s ladder of participation (see figure 6) highlights levels of child-adult engagement. He proposes a useful analytical tool for assessing children’s participation by identifying the five more desirable modes (assigned but informed, consulted and informed, adult-initiated shared decisions with children, child-initiated and - directed decisions, and child-initiated shared decisions with adults), then pointing out the less advantageous three shown at the bottom (tokenism, decoration and manipulation) (Earls and Carlson 2002, 75, citing Hart 1992; Hart 1997). Although each rung of participation on Hart’s ladder can be used depending on the circumstance, he urges supportive adults to avoid the bottom three as they do not embody genuine forms of participation.

It is noteworthy that this framework derives from the notion that while individuals necessarily take responsibility for their actions, societal institutions and policies can play a negative role in restricting and undermining young people’s capacities to make decisions about their own wellbeing. This makes it all the more imperative for adults to share their support and guidance with children initiating their own priority actions.

Hart (1992) puts it this way: “. . . participation rights recognize the importance of consistent and reliable support and guidance from adults in the exercise of children’s emerging capacity for participation.” Note the emphasis on evolving capacities rather than the more commonly evoked “special needs” of children. In the rights context, children are considered as citizens who exercise the right to participate with adults

in the deliberative activities of the democratic process. This in turn fosters the achievement by the young constituents of personal and socially sustainable wellbeing (Earls and Carlson 2002, 70).

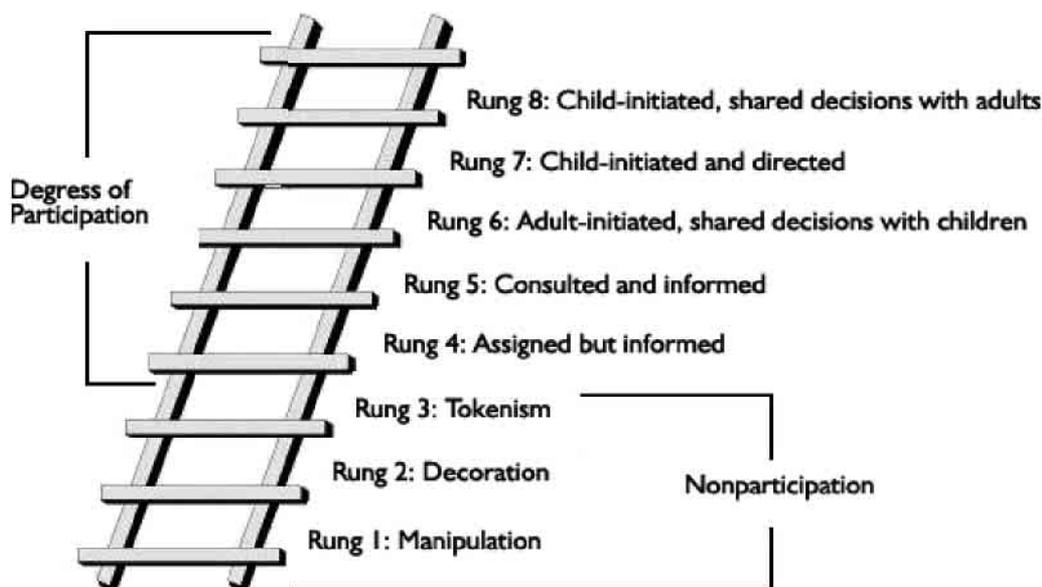
Degrees of Participation

Assessing the situations described by poor children and youth in the five cities according to the ladder above, one would conclude that the range of participatory levels spans the first six steps but rarely includes the top two rungs representing child-initiated and directed actions, whether or not shared with adults. Most of the interaction described by the respondents centers on adults, particularly local government officials, deciding what is to be done, sometimes consulting young people but usually simply informing them of that decision. Into this category fall the barangay basketball tournaments, dances, community beautification and clean-up drives. SK youth leaders eager to get more innovative and meaningful programs underway, with some exceptions, find themselves stymied by barangay officials who turn a deaf ear to their suggestions and reject any notion that the youth leaders should have any say, for example, on barangay budget allocations for the SK.

Only in Cebu is joint decision making apparent. More commonly, school teachers encourage and even designate which students should join contests, city-wide fora and clubs with a wide range of attractive but nonetheless predetermined activities. Depending on how the teachers handle this, the modes can range anywhere from the bottom non-participation steps of manipulation, decoration and tokenism, to higher steps on the ladder.

Interestingly, it is the civil society organizations working in communities that locate themselves more consistently on the sixth rung of adult-initiated, shared decisions with children. A few adult groups, mostly

Figure 6 - Roger Hart’s Ladder of Participation



Sources: Earls and Carlson (2002, 76, citing Hart 1992); Hart (1997).

NGOs and faith-based groups, also attempt to reach the top-rung norm of child-initiated and shared decision making by facilitating seminars that enable young people to articulate their views, decide on priority actions and ways of achieving them, and then carry out the action envisioned. UNICEF has been instrumental in advocating and supporting this approach in CFC program terms, as well as institutionally through the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children.

Regrettably, out-of-school adolescents tend to be left out of most government attempts, including those of the SK, to harness their energies in positive ways. This stems from the prevailing sentiment that they are up to no good and, if anything, must be watched lest they engage in illegal or problem-causing activities and punished if they are caught. NGOs and faith-based groups tend to take up the cudgels for them by promoting participatory skills development, and educational and community outreach schemes, sometimes in cooperation with more broad-minded barangay or city officials. Ironically, when adults deprive young people of opportunities for genuine participation, the latter show their capacity to make decisions nonetheless. This is apparent in their organizing gangs and carrying out planned activities without the assistance of adults, indeed often with the latter's outright objections.

Genuine youth participation includes their commitment to and interest in the action under consideration, increased understanding of the problem, growing trust, and sufficient space for creativity that enable young people to think, decide and act together in peer groups as well as with adults on matters of importance to the youth. These are some of the criteria that need to be considered in assessing whether Child Friendly Cities are truly promoting children's right to participation. At the same time, it is imperative to remember that children's rights to participation, like all human rights, are *inherently* theirs, not "given" to them by adults. It is thus the children's right to exercise them.

Recapitulation

Reviewing adult community leaders' perspectives on the four sets of child rights proved illuminating. Although adults acknowledge that children have rights, they cannot readily specify them. Once the rights are specifically mentioned to them, however, most affirm these. They are unequivocal in supporting children's

rights to nutrition, health, clothing, housing and shelter, education and protection, but more ambivalent about the children's rights to participation in decision making.

Communities' awareness of child rights comes largely from civil society groups rather than government entities. In Cebu City, community knowledge of child rights and the CPCV program would be minimal were it not for the strong advocacy and organizing efforts of NGOs, bolstered by the deep personal interest of a Barangay Chair. This trend appears even in CPC sites where only limited consciousness emerges if NGOs and other civil society groups are absent and the Barangay Chair is uninterested. In Davao City, people's awareness of the Child Friendly Movement's programs for *marginalized* children and youth is virtually nil. Young residents are familiar only with community-based programs for children and youth carried out by NGOs, such as Kaugmaon and the Development of People's Foundation in Barangay Sasa, a non-CPC site. In areas where no such NGOs are operating, as in Leon Garcia, a CPC site, the Child Friendly Movement falls into the category of "not strongly felt" by the local populace.

Quezon City children and youth envisage their rights to shelter, education and play as coming mostly through the school, while their elders emphasize the rights to protection and education. The latter often cite children's corresponding obligation of obedience to elders. In Pasay City, residents' awareness of child rights stems largely from the Bantay Bata (Child Watch) media advocacy campaign. Its hotline 163 enables listeners and viewers to report cases of child maltreatment and abuse. City of Manila communities show the lowest awareness of child rights, nor do their barangay plans include ways of increasing community awareness through information or advocacy activities.

Many efforts are underway, largely in CFC sites, to guarantee more children access to their rights. Those falling under survival and development are best known and least contested. The relatively recent emergence in the public eye of child protection as a key subject of concern probably explains why it is the area that draws most of the new and creative rights-based initiatives. Participation rights are also beginning to attract the attention of leaders and youth in poor communities. The next chapter reviews the many positive actions being carried out under government, civil society, academic and foreign donor auspices.

Notes

- 1 US\$1 = P56.
- 2 Data obtained from the Local Plan of Action [Plan of Operations] developed by each city in collaboration with UNICEF Philippines.
- 3 Owing to research limitations, neither quantitative data nor community estimates were obtained in Davao communities.
- 4 TESDA is the government's lead agency that promotes and strengthens the quality of technical education and skills development programs for global competitiveness.
- 5 Republic Act 7658 prohibits the employment of children below 15 years of age in public and private undertakings, except when they work directly under the sole responsibility of their parents or legal guardians, and where only members of the employer's family are employed; and provided that their employment neither endangers their life, safety, health and morals, nor impairs their normal development, including

- their pursuit of primary and/or secondary education.
- 6 The Davao City Children's Welfare Code enshrines the commitment of the local government to uphold the rights of children to survival, development, protection and participation. A landmark legislation applicable to all children, it also provides the mechanisms for a comprehensive children and family support system in Davao City. It mandates the City to appropriate 5 percent of its total annual gross income for children's welfare, with priority given to component programs in Early Childhood Care and Development, Child Protection and Children and Women's Health. Drafted by the city based on research and in consultation with various sectors, including indigenous peoples and Muslim groups, this ordinance was passed in 1994.
- 7 Except for the secretary and treasurer, all the SK officials are elected into office for a term of three years by registered barangay residents with ages between 15 and 21.

6

GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILD RIGHTS

Where is the government? Why are the poor made to suffer even more? Where is the concern that the government promises? Our highest officials say they are for the poor, and yet I don't see evidence of that to this day!
– Lola Consing, 62 years old, Payatas B, Quezon City

To answer the anguished cries of Lola Consing and others like her, a Davao City local planning and research officer exhorts government, civil society and the private sector to mobilize their efforts to reach every needy child – and soon:

For as long as there is a child wandering in Davao City without a home, the task ahead is still tremendous. For as long as there are still children who die because we failed to provide the necessary health services, our work is not over yet. For as long as there are still children who are forced to work to help augment family income, we can never be complacent. For as long as there is still a child who would just look at other children enjoying the benefits of being in school, the challenge remains. (Jacinto 2001)

The initiatives toward survival, development, protection and participation have come from individuals and groups within and outside the communities. Residents note, however, the assistance from local government units, city governments, national government agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based groups. Within the communities, the local Barangay Councils and volunteer police, health and social workers top the residents' "most active" list. Since survival and development

rights garner the highest priority, with protection important and participation less so, government and nongovernmental efforts focusing on the first two sets are of keen interest to residents. Children apparently give higher priority to the second two sets – their protection and participation – than do adults.

Government Interventions

National Government Agencies and City Governments

The most popular national government organizations with onsite interventions in all five cities are the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the city government. Community residents voluntarily mention DOH health centers for their free medical and dental services, and intensive periodic health campaigns in the communities. Free public education for children, skills training for out-of-school youth and illiterate community members, and assistance to street children, child sex workers, women and children as victims of abuse and violence are some of the programs attributed to DSWD.

Through their schools and health centers, Metro Manila governments render educational and health assistance to community residents. In Manila and Quezon Cities, people attribute supplemental feeding, free medicines and the construction of playgrounds to their city governments. Quezon City operates separate temporary shelters for male and female youth in conflict with the law, who are also often abandoned, roaming the streets and needing rehabilitation.

In most Pasay City sites, officials provide educa-

tional assistance to many students, furnish school supplies to preschool and elementary students, organize one-day feeding sessions and carry out medical missions. Residents, however, observe pointedly that these initiatives seem to coincide with election campaigns. The city also conducts as part of its 2000 CPC V implementation plan training sessions and workshops on children's rights for a wide range of staff. Included are barangay officials, the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), law enforcers; health center staff, youth group representatives; school administrators, teachers, students; and day care workers.

Cebu and Quezon Cities have set up special education programs in a few communities for those unable to attend regular school. The beneficiaries are children who are sickly, learning disabled, mentally challenged, financially destitute, domestic helpers and other working children. Listed as a home study program in Quezon City, the activities are carried out by a public high school singly or in partnership with a private academic institution. Targeting the poorest but deserving students, this alternative program combines weekly class instructions with home study, allowing those who need to earn or take care of younger siblings to do so while maintaining their proper grade level. This program may falter, however, if the student's home is too small, dark, crowded or noisy for effective learning. Hence, NGOs in some cities have rehabilitated the community library or alternative study spaces to accommodate these students.

In a Manila CPC community, a special education center catering to pupils with learning disabilities and mentally challenged adults was operating even before it became a part of the CPC program. While the Department of Education (DepEd) also sponsors alternative education schemes in some barangays of this city, only a few out-of-school youth have joined the programs. Either young people are unaware of its existence or feel they cannot sustain the regular involvement required. Possibly, too, the stigma attached to these alternative schemes by adolescents attending regular schools has discouraged their out-of-school counterparts from attending.

Local Government Units

■ *Local or Barangay Councils*

Local or Barangay Councils are expected to play a key role in implementing activities and projects to promote child rights in collaboration with city and national government agencies, NGOs, people's organizations (POs) and civic-minded individuals. Some do better than others.

In Cebu City, local residents take seriously the expectation that the city and barangay officials should take the lead in bringing services to their communities, but draw on PO and NGO strengths as well. Together with the Youth Councils, day care center staff and the city government, Barangay Councils mobilize the youth to participate in the annual Children's Congress and the sportsfest. Especially noteworthy in the CPC barangays are the Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPCs), whose

surveillance and attention to cases of abuse or exploitation are recognized with appreciation. Similarly heralded as responsive to children's survival rights are the barangay health workers.

In Davao City, among the initiatives carried out by Barangay Councils have been feeding and milk distribution to malnourished children, health education for their parents, educational assistance to selected indigent children and youth, including street children and child workers, and skills training for out-of-school youth. Funds have also been allocated for the construction of nutrition posts and communal toilets, seminars on drug abuse, and formation of roving teams of community police.

Barangay Councils in Manila, Pasay and Quezon Cities support health and sports activities. In addition to providing physical space, Manila Barangay Councils have earmarked funds for the construction of playgrounds and basketball courts, basketball competitions and community dances, supplemental feeding, and the operation of day care centers.

In Pasay City, some Barangay Councils collaborate with city government agencies and the DSWD in conducting parental effectiveness seminars and orientation sessions on the BCPC and children's rights. The barangay tanod (watch guard) takes care of roving and surveillance activities; the barangay health committee and health workers mobilize the community around health concerns; and the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK; Youth Council) and other youth groups organize sports and cleanliness activities.

While Manila and Pasay Barangay Councils support health and sports activities, their counterparts in Quezon City bolster these benefits with protection initiatives as well. The latter city has established special bodies to handle concerns linked to children, women, family, and the maintenance of peace and order.

In the absence of BCPCs, Barangay Council officials sometimes take the initiative to free the community of trouble and violence. The Chair, who is also the Councilor for Peace and Order, and the community police come together in attending to cases of abuse and violence against women and children. They draw on the services of the DSWD, the national police, and other concerned government agencies to mediate gang wars and monitor drug-related activities, apprehend drug users and pushers, and send youth offenders to rehabilitation centers. Thus, Barangay Councils can carry out some of the BCPC functions if they are so inclined.

In the lone Quezon City barangay lacking a BCPC, the *barangay* security and development officers (BSDOs) are well organized and maintain close links with the city police. Their patrolling the barangay regularly and inspecting suspicious houses and neighborhood sites have apparently lessened drug-related activities and assured the residents of a safer community. In Manila, the Barangay Chair, the designated kagawad (councilor) for peace and order, or the barangay tanod responds when reports of "trouble" reach them, or when someone lodges complaints of child abuse or maltreatment. The convenient location of the barangay hall in one community allows people

easier access to local officials. It also helps that the Barangay Chair himself sees to the strict implementation of the curfew ordinance, going around the neighborhood with a megaphone before 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. to remind children and youth below 18 to turn in for the night. Other local governments seek to clear the communities of drug users and gangs by organizing or sponsoring seminars on drug abuse.

In the non-CPC Manila barangays, the Barangay Councils take full charge with help from government agencies and NGOs. While the barangay handles petty cases (those which happen sporadically), serious incidents (described as deliberate and repetitive cases) are forwarded to the DSWD district office, which takes the appropriate legal action. NGOs advocate vigilance regarding physical and sexual abuse of children, and some have initiated a program of identifying and rescuing abused children.

So that residents will know who to approach to report incidence of violence and abuse, special bodies have been formed by Barangay Councils in two Quezon City communities: the Barangay Family Welfare Committee, Barangay Family Council, Women's Desk and the Center for the Protection of Children. Trained by NGOs in children's rights and pertinent Philippine laws, in procedures for dealing with abuse cases, and in the role of the barangay in promoting the welfare of children, these special groups gain the capacity to handle effectively cases of child and women abuse. The Kamalayan (Awareness) Development Foundation, for example, has played a strong role through its advocacy and rescue operations for adults and children in bonded labor, and their reintegration into the community with relatively better jobs. As abused women and children learn from actual experience that they can rely on NGO and government bodies to defend and protect them, a number of them have overcome their fears and feel more encouraged to come forward to report cases of abuse.

The Barangay Family Welfare Committee (BFWC) promotes and safeguards the wellbeing of the family, especially women and children, who are the major victims of domestic violence and abuse. A creation of the BFWC is the Center for the Protection of Children, a temporary shelter for some 40-50 children and youth who have been abandoned by or separated from their parents and relatives, neglected, orphaned or abused in their households.

Created by the Barangay Council to respond quickly to abuse cases, especially where women and children are affected, the Barangay Family Council (BFC) coordinates with the Barangay Women's Desk. The BFC receives reports of abuse and initiates the appropriate action, starting with having the victim undergo a medical examination. BFC personnel meet with the alleged perpetrator and refer severe cases, like rape or incest, to the Philippine National Police (PNP). The PNP then files the case with the appropriate judicial court and prepares documents to validate the complainant's testimony.

The BFC woman coordinator is also a member of the Lupon Tagapamayapa (Village Peacekeeping Force). In addition to handling cases, she counsels

the victims to help them deal with their trauma. She also coordinates with Bantay Bata (Child Watch) 163 for the appropriate care and rehabilitation of child victims. Her participation in seminars and workshops on children's rights and Philippine laws on children and youth has enabled her to perform her functions more effectively. However, she emphasizes the need for additional staff to assist her in handling cases, and is seeking a private space for the Women's Desk to assure victims of the confidentiality of their cases.

Protection initiatives of the barangays have served to ensure the safety and welfare of residents as a whole. These have included the deployment of BSDOs in areas notorious for gang wars and drug-related activities; the provision of temporary shelters for abused women and children; and, in some communities, the setting up of special bodies to respond to cases of violence and abuse. It is, however, the BCPC which is tasked to develop and implement programs safeguarding the rights of children and youth in the community.

■ *The Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)*

When CPC V started in 1999, records showed only a handful of functioning BCPCs mentioned in Local Plans of Action, all of them in Cebu and Davao Cities. Most of the BCPCs listed for the three Metro Manila cities were inactive. Pasay City officials offer an explanation: BCPCs there were organized only in barangays that registered a high incidence of child abuse (50 barangays out of 210, or one-fourth). In some, changes in political leadership through barangay elections had sidelined the program, while in others, BCPC committee members lacked the commitment and motivation to pursue their assigned tasks. The BCPC appears to have been promoted from the outside, with few barangay stakeholders championing it from within.

In 2001-2002, only the Cebu City barangays completed the formation of their BCPCs (see table 16). Except for two non-CPC barangays in Cebu City, and one non-CPC barangay each in Davao and Quezon Cities, the rest of the BCPCs are found in CPC barangays. Barangays without organized BCPCs are also non-CPC sites, such as those in Pasay and Manila. The Barangay Captain in Quezon City's non-CPC barangay claims he has not been informed of the policy directive to organize one.

Of the twenty-one BCPCs formed in the five cities, only nine are functional. The presence of NGOs with strong commitments to child rights in Cebu, Davao and Pasay Cities, which account for seven of the nine, seems to be the defining factor. Indeed, residents of these seven barangays affirm that energetic NGOs and religious, youth and other civil society groups have helped strengthen the capacity of BCPCs to carry out their mandates and be more vigilant about the rights of young people.

FUNCTIONAL BARANGAY COUNCILS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Well worth noting is the involvement of female and youth residents in handling cases related to the BCPC mandate. In a Cebu community, the Barangay Cap-

Table 16 - Status of BCPCs in the study sites (2002)

| City/Number of study sites (28)* | Number of barangays with organized BCPCs (21) | Number of barangays with functional BCPCs (9) |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Cebu (5) | 5 (3 CPC and 2 non-CPC) | 2 (CPC) |
| Davao (6) | 4 (3 CPC and 1 non-CPC) | 3 (2 CPC and 1 non-CPC) |
| Manila (6) | 4 (CPC) | 1 (CPC) |
| Pasay (5) | 3 (CPC) | 2 (CPC) |
| Quezon (6) | 5 (4 CPC and 1 non-CPC) | 1 (CPC) |

*The total number of study sites comes to twenty-eight because it includes Barangay Payatas, a case study site which did not figure among the sites chosen for the quick appraisals.

Source: Quick Appraisal Reports (Individual City Reports) by the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 2002-2003.

tain is proud of his woman volunteers. Having received training in crisis intervention, they readily respond to situations calling for emergency attention. As a follow-up measure to maintaining peace and order, barangay and youth officials in a Davao community have invited woman and youth residents to serve as volunteer policewomen and junior police, respectively, the first in the city.

The twenty roving policewomen are mostly mothers as well. Their primary motivation to join sprang from their desire to promote a safe and secure environment for their children. Calling themselves "*mga pakialamera na nanay*" (mothers who mind other people's business), these volunteer policewomen patrol areas other than their own for three- to four-hour shifts every night. Their efforts on behalf of the community are rewarded through a monthly honorarium of P200 (US\$3.57¹).

In another community, ten mothers who were formerly members of the Women's Brigade have formed a group to serve as foster parents to street children during the day and become policewomen at night (from 8:00 to 11:00 p.m.). They say they joined out of their concern for *bontog* (promiscuous girls) and street children, who feel threatened and intimidated when apprehended by the police. Working closely with the barangay-based association created by a religious group managing child abuse cases, they have helped mitigate the harsh treatment normally dispensed to marginalized children in conflict with the law. As a result of their proven concern, the City Social Services and Development Office insisted on their inclusion in the local BCPC.

The Junior Police Program is designed to keep the youth from joining gangs or causing trouble by giving them distinct community peacekeeping roles. Primarily targeting delinquent or wayward youth of 18 years and below, the Program's thirty to forty members are made up of youth volunteers and former gang members who created problems in their community. After training as undercover peace officers, they have carried out their main tasks of identifying and monitoring delinquent youth and members of street gangs, whom the barangay officials will then follow up. The effectiveness of this arrangement remains to be seen.

Making BCPCs fully functional is a challenging task. For residents in two Cebu communities, a BCPC is said to be operating and functional if meetings are held monthly, different committees (such as health and family) are formed and their leaders identified, committee reports are discussed at regular monthly meetings, seminars and training sessions are conducted, and planned programs and activities are implemented (e.g., health, sports, skills training). In Davao, quick action programs carried out by the BCPC to protect children and youth from abuse, drugs and street gangs led the city government to recognize the most outstanding BCPC in the city, not only once but for three consecutive years. Interestingly, this BCPC is located in a non-CPC site.

In Metro Manila settlements, BCPCs are less active, if not outright defunct. The one exception stands out in Pasay City, where an energetic youth committee is bringing a new dynamism to the barangay scene. According to officials, the youth themselves initiate projects and activities. They regularly propose new projects and are persistent about implementing these. Many of the youth in the barangay sit in the BCPC, participating in all stages of project planning and implementation. They claim to have drafted their own project proposal to combat drug addiction, with only minimal help from adults. Moreover, youth members of a Pasay BCPC have mobilized young people's participation in the barangay, including members of gangs and fraternities. Their outreach programs largely account for the reported dissolution of problem groups in the area, and are recognized as having augmented the spirit of cooperation and sense of community among the youth.

In Manila, only one BCPC may even be considered as "partially functional" in that at least one of the five committees is actively pursuing action plans. The committee on basic health and nutrition, social security and safety enhancement has carried out half of its planned activities, and already evaluated its initiatives. Headed by the barangay councilor for health, the committee is composed of barangay health workers and two barangay health volunteers, who help mobilize and inform residents of health and related activities. Working in close coordination with key members of the health center and officials from the DSWD and UNICEF, committee members have

conducted a mothers' class, updated the roster of children aged 0 to 6 years, monitored the weight of 0- to 2-year-old children, and cultivated a vegetable garden. A group of health volunteers was formed, which organizes and monitors these activities during its monthly meetings.

NONFUNCTIONAL BARANGAY COUNCILS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

One-third of the BCPCs reviewed are nonfunctional, perhaps because child rights appear to have the lowest priority among their barangay officials. Quezon City BCPCs have council members who are said to be preoccupied with "more immediate concerns," like peace and order or land rights, and who do not allocate financial resources to the BCPC operation. In Pasay, residents say politicking among barangay officials has deflected their attention from the BCPC, even though most of them are also members of the Council. Advocates cynically assess their lack of interest as related to election preparations receiving higher priority than developing useful interventions for children and youth. As a result, community awareness of the latter concerns remains low. Non-functional Manila BCPCs have representatives who are generally unaware of their duties or tasks, or who have not met since their formation or the creation of their subcommittees. Giving priority to other work and personal tasks emerged as the main reason for the barangay officials' inactivity. Nor do the lukewarm attitudes of higher-level city officials to the BCPCs give them reasons for acting otherwise.

The same explanations for BCPC inactivity are cited by residents of a Cebu barangay, who note that no follow-up activities have been held after the initial organizational meeting. Moreover, the Barangay Council is more interested in physical infrastructure projects that communicate immediately visible outcomes to the community residents than does the promotion of children's programs. A few also mention *sotto voce* that the former offer more opportunities for graft and corruption than the latter.

Even where BCPCs are deemed active, their capacity to continue functioning is debatable, as in the case of a Cebu BCPC, where the Barangay Captain is the sole participant. Despite the latter's efforts, barangay councilors, including the councilor in charge of the committees on health, children and women, fail to attend meetings. This apathy among many officials makes implementing projects for children and youth difficult, since no barangay councilor is available to endorse or author the official resolutions needed.

Young people in these barangays seem unfamiliar with the BCPC, although they are aware of activities to ensure peace and order in their communities. What they are more familiar with are punitive actions against them. They deplore these as ineffective, pointing to barangay officials themselves as abusive and corrupt. Especially galling are the arrest and jailing of child workers like themselves for vagrancy or other minor infractions, when drug users or pushers, thieves and troublemakers are left untouched. Some youth even accuse barangay officials of selling the

drugs they have confiscated, beating young offenders and soliciting bribes. The very few honest officials, says a female out-of-school youth, seem resigned to the problems of youth in the community, and virtually write off those who continue to engage in drug abuse, theft and gang wars even after repeated arrests. Mounting really effective preventive programs seems farthest from the barangay officials' minds, in the view of many youth.

SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN

Fund-raising activities, the summer *liga* (basketball competition) and barangay feast day activities are usually organized by the youth groups, led by the Sangguniang Kabataan or Youth Council, and partly funded by community and external sources. In Quezon City, the various SKs organize annual sports events for children and youth in all sites, special sessions on theater arts and taekwondo, quiz bees, and an art contest as part of their anti-drug campaign. They seek support from the Barangay Council in the form of funds, materials, equipment and venue. Some SKs are more successful than others in this regard.

In Pasay City, an SK Chair organized a youth club whose main goal is to improve the general condition of the barangay, mold the youth into responsible citizens, and keep them away from drugs and violence. Moreover, with BCPC youth members and other youth groups, SKs plan and implement projects to promote active youth participation in fiesta and other holiday celebrations. With the barangay, Youth Councils organize medical missions, waste management disposal seminars and cleanliness campaigns. Through all these sports and community cleanliness and beautification drives, barangay youth, including warring gangs, out-of-school youth and *tambay* (idle youth who hang around the streets), get involved in community development projects.

Civil Society Interventions

Nongovernmental Organizations

CPC sites consistently reflect a higher NGO presence, except in the city of Manila. However, some non-CPC areas also attract NGOs, as do BASECO in Manila and the area called Basak San Nicolas in Cebu. For other non-CPC sites, the absence of NGOs means communities must rely largely on government, business groups and individuals for assistance.

■ *NGOs in the City of Manila*

As mentioned, NGO presence is significantly higher in CPC sites in Pasay, Cebu, Quezon and Davao Cities, and, oddly enough, in Manila's non-CPC sites. Manila's divergent pattern where civil society groups are concerned may stem from the wary, sometimes even belligerent, attitude exhibited by the Mayor's office toward NGOs working at the community level in partnership with local people's organizations. Although NGOs and professional associations that bring in services are welcomed, like Couples for Christ with its housing and values-development programs, the overall reputation of the Manila City administration as

non-NGO-friendly has caused a number of community-based NGOs to prioritize non-CPC areas where city services and involvement are more remote, or simply choose other cities of the metropolis for their involvement. In the non-CPC Manila sites, only NGOs run programs and services, such as day care centers, educational scholarships and skills assistance for the poorest children and youth, and drop-in shelters for street children and out-of-school youth.

A media program of ABS-CBN Foundation, *Bantay Bata* (Child Watch), is also popular among Manila and other Metro Manila community residents for its efforts to rescue and rehabilitate sick and abused children, as well as its campaign for the protection of children's rights. Owing to the community's increased awareness of children's rights, a youth group in BASECO claims that almost all cases of child abuse are now being reported.

BASECO shows a strong presence of NGOs and faith-based groups, perhaps because of the large number of urban settlers there. A non-CPC site, BASECO reports more activities aimed at protecting children and youth from exploitation and abuse than in CPC sites. Programs with names like Prevention and Identification of Child Sexual Abuse (PICSA) and Prevention, Identification and Treatment (PIT) are examples of such initiatives. Child victims of violence receive support, protection and information on sexual abuse, on regaining their self-esteem, on developing their skills, and on becoming more aware of children's rights. In addition, NGOs are engaged in referrals, counseling, legal assistance, training in child abuse and leadership, and drop-in programs for street or working children and out-of-school youth.

The combination of an effective PO and two active faith-based NGOs, with the support of the barangay and city governments, has brought about astonishing changes in BASECO since 2004.² Some 800 new houses dominate the landscape. Drainage and flood control plans worked out with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are awaiting the approval of the city government and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA). School children are being tutored by college volunteers.

Immediately following the 2004 fire in which a third of the families in BASECO lost their homes, *Gawad Kalinga* (GK, or To Give Care), a massive housing scheme initiated by volunteers from *Couples for Christ*, a Catholic NGO, has generated the construction of a substantial portion of the new houses, in partnership with the fire victims. With free land and secure tenure guaranteed by the city, the houses are built through sweat equity contributions from the prospective residents and their neighbors, as well as GK volunteers. Supervised by skilled technicians, the family-GK teams put up about fifty houses a month.

Intrinsic to the program is a values-training component aimed at improving family life and establishing good neighbor policies. The rest of the 800 houses were built through *Habitat for Humanity*, whose Philippine program generally parallels that of GK, except that *Habitat* beneficiaries must pay P40,000 (US\$714.29) for the house. Still lacking are water,

drainage and lights, components whose absence becomes glaringly evident when the houses get flooded during heavy rains. This problem may soon be resolved assuming the government accepts the ADB's offer of slum upgrading assistance, including land reclamation and dike construction, to benefit all families in BASECO.

Instrumental to the mobilizing process has been *Kabalikat* (Partner), a people's organization which has actively negotiated with GK and *Habitat* on the terms of the project, and monitored the barangay authorities to ensure that housing allocations go to the actual fire victims rather than to political favorites.

While BASECO has always drawn large numbers of NGOs and faith-based groups, particularly promising is a new network of NGOs and community groups engaged in education programs, facilitated by *Urban Poor Associates* (UPA). Working with the local elementary school teachers, network members bring in volunteer college students to tutor local pupils. UPA and *Kabalikat* have fifty public school children in grades 5 and 6 participating in the program, while the other NGOs bring the total to several hundreds. By forming a network, they expect to work more effectively with the local school system. The benefits go beyond the primary aim of improved learning and school performance. The children come in contact, often for the first time, with young adults from middle- and upper-class families who care about and interact favorably with them. Soon they reject many of the stereotypes about "rich" Filipinos generated by movies and television soap operas. Their tutors, generally better-off young men and women, learn first-hand what it means to be poor, an experience that they expect to carry into their adult lives as advocates of poverty elimination.

■ *NGOs in Pasay City*

NGOs in Pasay City offer educational assistance and scholarships, engage in community organizing, and provide livelihood training, values education seminars and other capability building activities. The *Educational Research and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc.* (ERDA) addresses socioeconomic, political and ecological issues affecting children and women through alternative education, research, and training. *Inaanak* (Godchild) Foundation focuses on community development, health and nutrition, education, training and resource development, targeting urban poor children and women.

Pasay City working and street children receive special consideration in educational and rice assistance programs of NGOs, church-based groups and donor agencies like the *Australian Agency for International Development* (AusAID). Pasay's non-CPC sites also do well in drawing educational support, mainly from faith-based organizations, while CPC sites credit a mixed group of NGOs, private sector and donor agencies for providing substantial assistance in education. One CPC barangay reports that nearly all of its elementary and high school students have been recipients of scholarships or some other form of educational assistance.

Moreover, NGOs in Pasay have contributed significantly to raising community awareness of children's rights through information seminars, training and direct assistance to children and youth in need of protection. The drop-in center and shelter of Pangarap (Vision) Foundation, for example, welcomes street and working children and youth, and child victims of parental neglect and abuse. Volunteer street educators with tasks similar to a social worker's make regular house visits to the barangay and utilize their training to identify and rescue maltreated or abused children. Likewise noteworthy is the increased awareness of child rights, owing to the strong advocacy of Kabalikat ng Pamilyang Pilipino (Partners of the Filipino Family), an educational NGO advocating reproductive health and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Some youngsters in Pasay City have applied the training they have acquired from this NGO to become street educators counseling sex workers. They contact commercial sex workers, especially those aged 16 years and younger, on the city streets at night to discuss with and give them information and educational materials on STDs and, more recently, HIV-AIDS. Others serve as junior health workers providing first aid to street children.

Pasay City has an alliance of eight government agencies and thirteen NGOs, the Pasay City Network for the Protection of Children (PCNPC), which has made its mark in two CPC sites. It seeks to strengthen the BCPCs through technical assistance, capacity building and resource generation. This is achieved through conducting workshops on BCPC vision-mission-objectives setting and paralegal training, and organizing a seminar on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The creation and integration of a youth committee in the Apelo BCPC are attributable to the efforts of the Pasay Network. The committee has become more functional with the inclusion of an effective child advocate. Moreover, the PCNPC has trained BCPC members, including the youth, in preparing project proposals seeking assistance or resources. Owing to effective cooperation between the PCNPC and the community, the BCPC has been very active. It conducts its meetings every month without fail; hence, communication among the committees is maintained and reporting is regular, making project planning and implementation more efficient.

■ *NGOs in Quezon City*

The nature of NGO assistance in Quezon City BCPC sites generally parallels that in the other cities – educational and/or medical assistance, coupled with bible classes in some. The ERDA has organized and assisted a group of parents in building and operating a preschool in the poorest *sitio* for their children's easier access to early education programs. Kamalayan (Awareness) Development Foundation has carried out training and seminar-workshops on child rights and child rights advocacy, in partnership with the Barangay Councils and parents. It identifies child and youth advocates in the communities who can teach young people about rights, train them in self-expression, and instill in them the importance of being involved in matters affecting them.

One advocate expresses her appreciation for these sessions, having learned about her rights as a child, which helped build her self-confidence. This in turn enabled her to share lessons learned with other children and youth and even adults, and to represent her community in larger bodies dealing with children and youth concerns. As child rights advocates, they have grown increasingly aware of these rights, and what they can do to improve their own situation and that of their fellow children and youth. Developing their capacities for self-expression and effectively articulating children's voices in their barangays have now become part of their everyday round.

■ *NGOs in Cebu City*

In Cebu City, eight NGOs are highly visible in the CPC sites and to a certain extent in non-CPC sites, offering a variety of services and programs addressing child rights. Lihok Pilipina, Inc., for example, has organized *sitio* leaders and women's groups in Basak, San Nicolas, a non-CPC site. Bantay Banay (Community Watch), a program linked to Lihok Pilipina with its strong community organizing of women from low-income households, mobilizes residents to tackle cases of domestic violence. In a non-CPC site, community health volunteers critical of barangay programs for children which are all too often undermined by political wrangling observe: "*Our barangay does not have many programs for children. It has not addressed the problem of drug addiction . . . If not for other groups like Lihok Pilipina and DSWD, there will be no programs for children.*" It is no surprise then that residents rank Bantay Banay as running the most effective program, attributing to it the reduced incidence of violence and other forms of abuse in their communities. Given the vigilance of this community watch group, potential abusers are fearful of committing an offense.

In another Cebu community, supportive barangay officials laud the efforts of Lihok Pilipina, Free LAVA and FORGE (Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc.) for their significant contributions to child protection. The Barangay Councils have supported the training conducted by these NGOs in domestic violence and gender sensitivity, leading to a reduction of abuse cases in the area. Local officials especially laud the active involvement of woman volunteers in the *sitio*. As a result of their training in crisis intervention, they deal immediately and effectively with critical situations that arise in their neighborhoods. The Barangay Captain is fond of saying that he does not worry when he is away because, "*My barangay is in good hands. It is manned by women!*"

■ *NGOs in Davao City*

NGOs in Davao City figure prominently in addressing the protection rights of poor children and youth. In one Davao City case study site, young people express their appreciation for the efforts of NGOs, especially the Kaugmaon Center for Children's Concerns Foundation, Inc., for increasing their awareness of HIV-AIDS and STDs.

Action linked to participation rights of children and youth, while still minimal, is showing promising new

signs. In a Davao community, HIGALA Association, Inc., an NGO, has organized a group of peer counselors, mostly out-of-school youth, to convey to young people the reality of STDs and to urge them to have regular checkups. Peer counselors provide advice on the dangers of prohibited drugs and substances. Mothers believe these efforts to be effective in enhancing their children's knowledge of safe sex and the dangers of *bontog* life. The livelihood skills training of HIGALA further allows the youth themselves to engage in alternative income-earning activities.

The strong presence of competent NGOs responsive to children in need of special protection in the communities has been generally identified as the most important "enabling opportunity" in Davao City. Aside from their community presence, the strength of these groups – Kaugmaon, HIGALA, Tambayan, and Kabiba Alliance for Children's Concerns – comes from the bold and innovative approaches they take. In Davao City, NGOs and POs have become indispensable partners of the local government in the city's development. This collaboration between civil society groups and the city government has been somewhat jeopardized, however, by the growing antipathy toward an elected local official said to perpetrate human rights abuses against street girls and boys. Vigilante groups allegedly apply summary justice to those suspected of being drug addicts or commercial sex workers, and make them "disappear." The controversy has led to civil society pressures to withhold a third "Most Child Friendly City Award" to Davao City, pending verification of the allegations.

Faith-based Groups and Academic Institutions

Academic institutions, philanthropic business foundations and faith-based groups are active in many Metro Manila CPC sites, preferring to concentrate on the poorest residents. Quezon City church-based groups and universities are active in the most disadvantaged areas of Bagong Silangan and Payatas. Their faith-based counterparts in Manila and Pasay complement Bible worship and catechism activities with projects like medical outreach, feeding, cleanliness campaigns and educational assistance.

In Cebu City, a few universities work in non-CPC sites for experiential learning or outreach purposes, in that sense partially playing the role of missing NGOs. Their activities generally promote rights to education and housing.

Donor Agencies

Donor agency aid appears more prominently in CPC sites, partly because of the activities fostered through partnership between the city and UNICEF. Following UNICEF's lead, they often offer additional support for supplemental feeding, educational scholarships, seminars on parental effectiveness, child care and protection, equipment for the health post, upgraded day care facilities, children's summits, youth camps, seminars on basic photography, responsible parenthood and health education, skills upgrading, early childhood development training, drug awareness and prevention campaigns, and the construction of resource centers.

The poorest elementary students in two Pasay City sites have received rice assistance from the Australian Agency for International Development. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), in coordination with the Quezon City Social Services Development Department, sponsored skills training in dressmaking and sewing for female youth and adult residents of a non-CPC barangay.

Community Volunteers and People's Organizations

Community health and peacekeeping volunteers, especially those in CPC sites, figure prominently in local initiatives. The barangay health workers and some barangay *kagawad* (councilors) help with mothers' classes and child growth monitoring. Together with the barangay nutrition scholars (BNS),³ they mobilize the community to participate in health activities, such as mothers' classes and vitamin A distribution. The *tanod's* nightly patrol enables them to monitor youth compliance with the citywide curfew and detect activities likely to disrupt peace and order in the communities.

In their individual capacities, civic-spirited residents contribute to make the lives of poor children more pleasant. An adult volunteer in Manila conducts informal literacy and numeracy classes for children aged 3 to 8 years, and offers free tutorial sessions to interested students from preschool to high school, as well as to illiterate caregivers. A public high school registrar and a teacher have mobilized community members to set up a day care center in their area. One long-time female barangay health worker carries out feeding activities for malnourished children.

In Quezon City, a number of residents engage voluntarily in government, NGO and other development projects. Public school teachers assist at the day care centers; mothers help with the feeding activities; health volunteers visit various areas of the barangays to administer vaccine, weigh infants and children, and give health lectures.

Peoples' organizations, in turn, emerge strongly in Cebu and Pasay CPC sites, and to some extent, in certain Davao City communities. This trend is less evident in Quezon City and Manila, where only a few community groups focus on children and youth. The best examples in Manila barangays are two active community organizations. One sponsors leadership training for 14- to 21-year-old youth in three barangays, including Barangay 576 (Riles), one of the CPC study sites. The other makes alternative livelihood opportunities available to indigent families in the three CPC sites (Jesus Extension, Riles and Isla San Juan).

Other examples of active community volunteers are found in the membership of the Pasay Women's Rotary Club. They disseminate information on barangay activities, assist in identifying beneficiaries of educational assistance and other government projects, and encourage community participation in protection and health-related interventions.

Outside of the Sangguniang Kabataan, active and popular youth groups appear prominently only in CPC sites. In Manila, members of the Civic Action

Youth Club (CAYC) have developed the confidence and capacity to present their concerns to the Barangay Council. This has earned for them the opportunity to become the Council's active partner in implementing community activities or projects, including cleaning drainage canals, constructing the basketball court and grotto for the Virgin Mary, caroling at Christmas, and organizing sportsfests, community dances and fiesta activities. Owing to its members' enthusiasm and efficiency in carrying out its projects, the Barangay Council relies on the CAYC for assistance in community undertakings, since the SK Chair, already overaged, is working and thus cannot attend to his SK tasks or responsibilities. Another group in Manila, the Teatro Sambisig, does theater presentations within and outside the barangay, focusing on values education through theater arts. Some of its performances are fund-raising events. Fatima, a religious organization composed of youth aged 13 to 22 years, organizes processions, Catholic masses, and the annual fiesta and Holy Week activities.

In Quezon City, active Payatas youth groups organize activities, including leadership training, cleanliness campaigns and competitions (singing, dancing, pageants). Most other Quezon City sites do not diverge much from sports activities. Although children and youth frequently express a desire to form their own organizations, they lack the needed resources and support from their parents and barangay officials.

Assessment of the Interventions

Across all five-city communities, interventions for health and development prove most popular. Yet, many of the poorest children and youth are left out owing to accessibility problems or laxity on the part of parents and caregivers. In Quezon City, the problem of coverage is exacerbated by the vastness of the areas occupied by the poor and the staggering numbers of people needing government services.

Between CPC and non-CPC sites, urban poor children and their families residing in the former generally fare better since more programs addressing children's rights reach them. Manila CPC sites experience this partly because the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development also operates there. Non-CPC communities have programs and activities focused more narrowly on addressing children's survival and development rights, although with limited coverage. Activities and projects on children's participation rights receive the least attention largely because they fall under the aegis of the Sangguniang Kabataan, whose activities center on basketball competitions for the male youth. Fortunately, schools and a few active youth groups offer additional venues for child and youth participation.

Cebu community members and program implementers consider immunization, early education, the Bantay Banay, and the clean and green programs as the most effective initiatives. Because the immuniza-

tion program reaches large numbers of children, many young child deaths are seen to be averted. Moreover, the day care center's early education program gives younger children opportunities for learning and social interaction in a safe setting, while enabling parents and caregivers to carry out their livelihood and household activities. Residents rank Bantay Banay as the most effective child protection program because it has led to the reduction of violence and other forms of abuse in the communities. The vigilance of this child watch group inhibits potential abusers from committing any such offenses. The success of the clean and green program stems from its ability to elicit widespread community involvement, especially regarding local health and sanitation concerns.

Ranked second and third most effective interventions in Cebu City are the provision of medicines, feeding, and weight monitoring in relation to survival rights; skills training for out-of-school youth; and scholarships or sponsorships linked to the development rights. The working Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) is the recognized key to protection rights, while the Children's Congress and Youth Summit address the participation right.

Almost the same rating pattern surfaces in the three Metro Manila cities. As with Cebu residents, Metro Manila community members consider feeding, health education, and the package of free health services provided by the health centers as most helpful to them. Sponsorships and scholarship assistance, skills and values education, police and recreational facilities, child protection bodies (BCPC, BSDO, special bodies) and youth basketball leagues are highly appreciated for the benefits they bring to children and the larger community.

It would be worthwhile examining how residents of a particular CPC community in Metro Manila view the interventions and recent developments in their barangay. Payatas in Quezon City is a case in point. It shows that improvements are possible even in a community as depressed as this, if various stakeholders, especially the city and local governments, are committed to enhancing the lives of the poor.

All projects in the barangay development plan of Payatas for 2004 were implemented.⁴ In the forefront was the drive to reduce the stench and squalor of the dumpsite. Five footbridges constructed in different areas of the barangay reduced walking time and increased pedestrian safety. The barangay improved service delivery by acquiring an ambulance, dump truck, fire truck, multipurpose cab and four motorcycles. Equipment and supplies were purchased in preparation for the waste management project. Residents hired as street sweepers were assigned to areas near their homes. The once dilapidated barangay hall in Area B was improved and expanded. The Youth Council also purchased sports equipment and supplies for volleyball, basketball, dart and chess games.

The Quezon City government contributed to Payatas's improvement by providing partial funding for projects like expanding one elementary school to a three-storey building, paving the road, shoring up an eroding riverbank, installing drainage systems and

streetlights, constructing a women's crisis center, and connecting two schools with a footbridge to reduce accidents. There are now eleven day care centers run by the city government in the barangay. Planned projects include the construction of schools and a university, market, slaughter-house, cemetery, library, drugstore, playgrounds, youth center and a materials recovery waste management facility. The problem of limited space prevails, however, even when financial resources are available. Moreover, existing infrastructure cannot be easily demolished.

Young people's perceptions in 2002 are beginning to change because of the major Payatas facelift. Better waste management practices at the dumpsite and construction of roads have had the greatest impact. Male and female teenagers agree that life has improved: *"It's like living in the province, where there are roads, trees and open spaces between houses . . ."* People now want to go out at night to linger and socialize with friends and neighbors. No longer embarrassed by their surroundings, teenagers invite friends for visits or even sleepovers in their homes. Teenagers point to the safety measures at the dumpsite being instituted by the Payatas Operations Group (POG) through improved access roads and the posting of security men at strategic points to ensure that young children, jumper boys, and unauthorized groups and individuals are kept out.

Not all residents have been equally affected in such positive ways, however. Mothers living next to the dumpsite remain unimpressed by the physical changes in Payatas. They complain of trash, animal waste and dirty water from uphill households collecting at their doorsteps, robbing their children of meager play space. Their streets remain unpaved and unlit, making mobility difficult and dangerous especially for younger children. During the rainy season, floodwaters enter their homes, since drainage canals have yet to be constructed. Repeatedly expressing their grievances to the barangay has brought no significant results, they complain. Again, the needs of the poorest are marginalized. At the same time, it appears that the community that Bituin and her friends want is slowly being realized.

Planning for the Future

Future plans of community members, implementers and youth reflect the communities' desire to improve and expand existing activities, services and programs addressing all child rights components but targeting the poorest, the severely malnourished, the out-of-school and children needing special protection. Topping the list of priority projects of community leaders and implementers are activities for survival and development: supplemental feeding, weight monitoring, immunization, health education, scholarships, new or upgraded educational, recreational and health and related facilities, nonformal education, and training for livelihood skills. Participation is envisioned in terms of forming youth groups, still linked with the conventional cleanliness campaigns, sports activities and the purchase of equipment.

In addition to these regular activities, community members list specific needs and concerns. In Pasay City, community residents generally give priority to interventions aimed at improving the educational situation and increasing security in the barangays. One BCPC intends to develop a central database on children's needs by conducting an annual survey to monitor the children's situation, with immediate attention to children needing special protection. A health program for children with disabilities is the focus of an NGO working in another barangay.

Quezon City communities, in turn, prioritize information dissemination, advocacy and direct action/service. In one CPC barangay, the BCPC has listed five priority activities: production of a newsletter to promote respect for child rights, conduct of reproductive health and gender sensitivity programs, formation of youth groups, construction of a playground and provision of scholarships. Aiming to discourage gang wars in another CPC site, one local organization plans to identify and develop violence-free zones.

Of the various groups and individuals present in the community, only those directly working on children and youth's concerns, such as the Sangguniang Kabataan, health volunteers/day care workers and their NGO partners, describe concrete plans for children. Barangay Councils in the three Metro Manila cities appear to have no such programs in mind. Giving only token attention to child rights and interests, barangay officials in general leave these to the SK, with all its limitations, to handle youth issues.

Because Pasay City Barangay Councils show little interest in integrating child protection into their programs, DSWD and NGO members of the Pasay City Network for the Protection of Children have taken the initiative to plan activities for the benefit of the children. Seminars and training to increase community awareness of children's rights and counseling sessions for child victims of physical and sexual abuse form part of its initial plans. It has assisted a BCPC in drafting a twenty-five-year child development plan with a total of fifty-nine projects.

Other projects the PCNPC envisions are the following: orienting the community on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, identifying and training street educators, passing a barangay resolution against child labor, setting up a referral system for handling cases of child maltreatment and abuse, building a shelter for rescued abused children, offering counseling sessions, and setting up a rehabilitation center for drug dependents and alcoholics.

Unfortunately, in Manila, where children's concerns rank low in the Barangay Councils' lists of priority programs, there is not an equivalent civil society body able to perform the counterpart of the PCNPC. Perhaps the difference in size between the two cities and the scale of the urban poor contribute to that situation. A review of the various interventions listed in the City of Manila barangay plans yields no noteworthy projects to enhance the overall wellbeing of its children and youth. The closest expression of it comes from three Barangay Councils whose weak and unimaginative plans focus on fund-

ing supplementary feeding activities, finding a permanent space for the nutrition post and assigning two police officers to backstop the *tanod* on nightly patrols of dangerous areas.

The difficulty of preparing targeted plans stems in part from the lack of accurate and disaggregated data at the barangay level available to local officials and residents. They are thus hard-pressed to say whether or not their programs are making an impact on the situation of poor children especially. Researchers encounter great difficulties in ascertaining how many children have been reached by CFC programs, much less whether the poorest children are being served by the health and day care centers, for example. Respondents can only guess about information on reach, scope or coverage of services rendered to the community, and their assertions vary considerably. Some refer to “a majority” or “a few,” or indicate percentages which then require validation through extensive interviewing with key informants. The appalling state of data at the barangay level thus makes barangay-level planning and monitoring difficult, especially if the focus is to be on the poorest and most vulnerable groups.

Pasay City does the best job of data collection. Its documentation and data organizing are systematically and efficiently done, and may well serve as a model for the other cities. Information is synchronized so that the same data sets are available across communities, making possible a comparative analysis at the city level. Barangay data are easily accessed upon request from the DWSD City Office. Only a few communities in Pasay City still lack updated barangay profiles. Considering the limited attention given by the Barangay Councils to children’s needs and rights, however, it is clear that even the presence of good data is not sufficient to motivate uninterested officials to establish child-focused programs. The presence of active NGOs and civil society groups in Pasay City means better planning because they have access to an excellent database.

In most of the five cities, it is the barangay health workers and barangay nutrition scholars who generate and maintain some semblance of a database through scheduled house-to-house visits and follow-ups. Given the lack of a viable information system, the health and nutrition data offer the best alternative in the barangay for identifying the most marginalized households of children and youth. One could of course also ask the residents who fall into this category, but that would be time-consuming and possibly biased unless later validated.

Young and old residents, especially adolescents, expect government to assist more effectively, but many are cynical about the prospects. In fact, poor residents accept the reality of their having to pull themselves up by their own efforts, and the vast majority act according to that conviction. Indeed, most believe that they have the inherent capacity to improve their lives if they work hard. In their view, those who do not make the effort have only themselves to blame. In that sense, the government is spared their ire. But for how much longer?

Recapitulation

Community and government respondents mention hundreds of projects underway in the five cities directed at improving the conditions of children and youth. This plethora of active groups can easily lull the observer into the belief that many poor people are benefiting from their involvement. The number of initiators and recipients getting these benefits to the young is certainly impressive. Yet, judging from interviews and simple observation, these admirable efforts fall far short in the face of enormous need. The sheer scale of poverty in informal settlements leaves many deserving children and families beyond the reach even of the Child Friendly Cities program. Thus, although many are reached, questions must nonetheless be raised as to how sustained these efforts are, how far-reaching and equitably distributed they are, and what impact they have on reducing urban poverty over the long term.

Part of the solution lies in good planning. But the poor or missing planning processes at the barangay level make it difficult for the stakeholders – POs, NGOs, local officials, school personnel, faith-based groups, philanthropic business and others – to formulate and carry out targeted interventions in systematic, coordinated fashion. The tragedy here is that the most vulnerable and rights-deprived children are likely to be left out of the benefits track. Without an accurate database for proper targeting, one will never know for sure.

Some cities respond better than others, with variations in CPC performance attributable to a number of variables – overall population and area sizes of the barangays and the cities, the number of poor child and youth residents, the interest and concern exhibited by the Barangay Captain and councilors, the ability of people’s organizations to make demands of their barangay and city officials, the active presence of NGOs working with the community, the willingness of government to forge meaningful partnerships with NGOs and communities, the budgetary strengths of the city, and added support especially from UNICEF. While UNICEF technical and material support is a crucial factor for broader success, communities without access to UNICEF assistance can nonetheless achieve significant break-throughs if they have committed local leaders and work effectively with civil society groups.

Moreover, the multiplicity and overlapping of local government organizations with mandates to serve the needs of children and youth, such as the Barangay Council, SK, BCPC, Barangay Family Welfare Committee and others, add considerable confusion to the scene. The outcomes are diverse, untargeted programs that reach children, but not the poorest. Although NGOs and faith-based groups focus more on the specific needs of poorer families and their vulnerable young members, coverage nonetheless remains limited owing to their own resource constraints. These are the kinds of concerns that motivate government officials who, although already actively engaged in improving the lives of children, know that much more needs to be done. In

the words of the Davao City research and planning officer whose exhortation started this chapter: *“We have to continue to put priority on upholding the rights of the children, as the future of our city lies in their hands.”*

This chapter has featured the interventions of government and civil society to make cities more

child friendly in relation to children’s rights. In the following, concluding chapter, recommendations from community children and adults are presented together with those of government officials and others in the five Child Friendly Cities. The analysis and recommendations of the IPC research team itself will round out the chapter and the study.

Notes

- 1 US\$1 = P56.
- 2 The discussion on recent developments in BASECO, Manila, is based on information provided in February 2005 by Denis Murphy, coordinator of the Urban Poor Associates (UPA). An NGO that organizes informal settlers in Metro Manila, UPA was instrumental to the formation of Kabaliklat (Partner), a people’s organization in BASECO.
- 3 A barangay nutrition scholar (BNS) is a volunteer worker present in every barangay in the country to monitor the nutritional status of children and/or link communities with nutrition and related service providers. Each BNS is provided with a bag, weighing scale, t-shirts and a set of nutrition information materials as reference during nutrition classes or home visits (National Nutrition Council [2005]).
- 4 The discussion on recent developments in Payatas B, Quezon City, is drawn from an IPC study conducted in 2004 by Angela Desiree M. Aguirre, with financial support from Save the Children Sweden. It was subsequently published as an article entitled “Local governance, children and the physical environment: The case of Payatas in the Philippines” in *Children, Youth and Environments* 14 (August 2004): 1.

7

MAINSTREAMING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Children's Rights in Child Friendly Cities

Bituin, which means Star, spoke for many poor children like her when at the beginning of this account she thought out loud about what her ideal community would be like. Sadly, her vision diverges significantly from the current reality in which she lives. It also reveals a wistful impression that she has a right to expect the kind of neighborhood that better-off children take for granted. The many focus group discussions and individual interviews conducted in five major cities confirm similar aspirations among the many other Bituins and Bayanis living in urban poor settlements.

Resident children differ in their assessments of the extent to which their cities have fulfilled the criteria for Child Friendly Cities. Amply demonstrating this are the quick appraisal and case study results, drawing on the testimonies of local officials and civil society groups in twenty-eight barangays, and focus group play/discussions of children 4-17 years. The question here is whether there are any significant differences between those barangays participating in the urban component of the GOP-UNICEF Fifth Country Programme for Children (CPC V) and those barangays not included as participants in CPCV (non-CPC), even as they fall under the regular programs of the city governments.

Let us recall that CPC barangays have the benefit of assistance from UNICEF and added attention from the city government, all of this rendered in a child rights framework. The evidence indicates that in CPC barangays, children's rights are more substantially met than in non-CPC barangays. A barangay can, however, achieve creditable, if limited, successes in

survival and development rights, even if it is a non-CPC community. Further, CPC communities exhibit more holistic perspectives in their understanding of all four sets of child rights and in implementing them. Non-CPC barangays focus on survival and development, and show only minimal capacity to address protection and participation issues.

Both CPC and non-CPC residents tend to equate child rights with service delivery, cast in the basic needs approach. The language of the rights approach, however, unfolds in CPC barangays as they move into the protection and participation regimes. New terms enter the discourse, like entitlements, non-discrimination, universality and government accountability to children. Engaged residents soon begin applying these concepts retroactively to survival and development programs. Nonetheless, with some exceptions, this rights framework is still weakly understood or applied by residents and officials alike.

The roster of activities linked to child rights promotion in CPC and non-CPC communities as a whole is impressive. While certain basic elements can be found in virtually all the barangays, especially in health and education, each barangay addresses child rights in different ways. Immunization, for example, emerges as important in all barangays because it is a longstanding program of the city government independently of whether it receives special funding or not. The added CFC resources provided by UNICEF do enable health and nutrition implementers to carry out their tasks more effectively and extensively in line with the rights perspectives, channeling greater attention to the most excluded and vulnerable groups.

Yet, there are a few non-CPC barangays that show higher immunization rates than some CPC barangays.

The same pattern emerges for programs of feeding and weighing malnourished children, distributing vitamin A capsules, or addressing pregnant women and new mothers' needs. Here the difference may be attributable in large measure to the presence of NGOs or faith-based groups in the community, and the corresponding organization of local groups to address children's needs. It is thus safe to say that CPC participation helps a poor barangay reach more children in the wide spectrum of their rights, but that under certain circumstances, non-CPC sites may also show creditable achievement even if they fall outside the CFC program. The possibility of a ripple effect from CPC communities should also be considered.

Survival Rights

Health services in CPC sites are generally more favorably regarded by residents than are other government programs. Most residents are aware of the barangay health center, and many take their children there for consultation and treatment, or participate in outreach services. Parents with malnourished children appreciate the feeding and weighing programs that restore their children's vitality, but are less eager to participate in the nutrition training programs that accompany them. Part of the problem is time, they say, especially if they are working or looking for work. The picture is not altogether rosy, however, as many other vulnerable children and their parents fail to take advantage of these opportunities.

Community respondents fault government health centers for their frequent inability to provide free medicine – or any medicine for that matter. Accordingly, they complain about having to patronize expensive commercial pharmacies instead. That represents a substantial drain on their resources, leading many to fulfill only a portion of the prescription in hopes that the sick person will get better sooner and not need the remainder of the specified remedy. Further, adults deplore the frequent rotation of government clinic personnel. No sooner do they get to know and trust a nurse, doctor or midwife, they complain, than the person is transferred! Health staff members, too, deplore the sudden disruption of the bonding relationships they have so carefully nurtured. Receiving high praise, in contrast, are the few private health centers, usually run by NGOs or faith-based groups, that offer free medicine, remain open on evenings and weekends, and offer personalized, quality care. Although government health centers bear the brunt of people's criticisms, residents praise the outreach services of barangay health workers and local para-professionals active in the government's community outreach.

Because the most disadvantaged residents tend to live in the most remote or least accessible parts of the barangay, they voice their dismay at the distances they have to travel to get to the nearest health center. If the trip requires a tricycle or a jeepney ride, they may forego it altogether for lack of transportation fare. A long walk over difficult terrain while carrying a toddler proves daunting. Those in this situation frequently express the wish that the government would set up a health center nearer their neighborhood. Some of the health center staff members, how-

ever, dismiss these implied criticisms as evidence of parental laziness and of the low priority some parents give to their children's health needs.

Thus, while community health personnel are conscientious about following up families at risk, their efforts are generally not actively reinforced by a city administration more comfortable with the long-established center-based service delivery mode. In the latter case, increased coverage in immunization and vitamin A distribution, measured against an earlier baseline figure, is considered as evidence of success, even though the most vulnerable may be left out. The child rights approach searches out the most systematically excluded, and develops targeted strategies to incorporate them into the ongoing health system. The concept is that all children have the right to survive, and that health personnel cannot rest on their laurels until the last needy child is found.

Housing and secure land tenure rights hardly figure in discussions of the survival domain because these rights are not formal components of the CFC program. Nonetheless, organized groups in informal settlements, including children, raise their anxieties about the perennial threat of being forced out of their communities. For children, recurring traumas feature the demolition of their homes and the concomitant violence between resisting settlers and the police. Relocation to a distant, unfamiliar place with limited services far from friends and work adds further to their insecurity.

Fortunately, in recent years the Macapagal-Arroyo administration, along with some city governments, has reduced forced evictions, encouraged onsite upgrading, and improved resettlement sites. Moreover, her program of land proclamations has fueled occupants' aspirations of gaining a permanent and affordable residential site someday. Nonetheless, since evictions fall under city auspices, they still occur with a frequency linked to the social outlook of the incumbent mayor. If future CFC programs build in genuine participatory processes that encourage informal settlers to articulate their priorities, it is safe to say that housing and secure tenure will loom large in people's survival strategies.

Development Rights

With education so avidly sought by most poor families and by the children themselves, it comes as no surprise that primary school enrollment in grade one is high. Retention problems mount, however, from the start and as the children move into the higher grades. Not only are the costs of keeping them in school higher as more siblings enter school; an additional consideration emerges because the older children form part of the poorest households' earning teams. It is at this point that scholarships or educational sponsorships become crucial, funded by relatives, wealthier neighbors, government, NGOs, faith-based groups and corporate foundations.

While CPC resources focus on the quality of classroom instruction, learning environments and class materials, families have to deal with the costs of uniforms, school supplies, snacks and transportation. Since CPC communities with their high visibili-

ty attract outside assistance, they are more likely than non-CPC communities to receive scholarship benefits from organizations like the Rotary Club, Jaycees or Soroptimists, from foundations or philanthropic individuals.

Complaints nonetheless come from CPC and non-CPC residents alike around the comparatively few scholarships available, considering poverty levels and the very large number of children awaiting assistance. Local officials exacerbate the problem when they favor the children of their political followers or recommend unqualified candidates.

The institutions that receive uniformly favorable ratings from community members are the early childhood centers set up through the DSWD. Where criticisms are vented, they underscore the comparatively few centers available and the large number of children left out. Although NGOs and other civil society groups also run early childhood programs, even the minimal fees they charge fall beyond the reach of the poorest. Those centers run by CPC barangays have the advantage of upgraded facilities and better-trained teachers who offer enjoyable play and learning and socializing experiences for young children.

Adolescents and parents also favor programs for out-of-school youth that focus on acquiring marketable skills – all the better if these include school equivalency classes leading to a valid diploma. Alternative schools enabling children to catch up by joining grade levels commensurate with their normal age levels are few and far between, and are usually run by NGOs. Skills training for income-earning rather than back-to-school programs continue to dominate the current thinking as regards out-of-school youth. It is precisely in this challenge that CPC falters. Existing youth programs by and large have not dealt satisfactorily with the needs or rights of adolescent boys and girls. Hence, by the time children reach the age of 14, local gangs or fraternities have already claimed many of them.

The government's Sangguniang Kabataan, or Youth Council, rarely tackles programs beyond sports, dances, contests and sporadic community clean-up campaigns. Where Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPCs) are active, they are more likely to address the economic and values training needs of nonschooling youth. Strongly supported by UNICEF, active BCPCs are imbued with the child rights framework. But since very few BCPCs are working well, teenagers in poor communities are generally left to their own devices. Cynical youth assert that the only kind of attention adolescents get from the Barangay Council tends to be punitive. They wind up being arrested for vagrancy, glue sniffing, fights or other delinquent behavior, and dumped in jail cells with adult criminals for an indeterminate period. Serious prevention programs to create positive and productive environments for adolescents remain sorely lacking.

Protection Rights

It is in the area of protection rights that clear differences between CPC and non-CPC barangays surface. Schools are the major source of information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its rele-

vance to Filipino children. Further, because of the popularity of ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Bata (Child Watch) television program, both CPC and non-CPC adult residents are equally aware of the issues related to child abuse, incest and rape. The difference is that CPC residents are more likely to transform information on violations into action. Having attended seminars, workshops and even Children's Summits on child rights dealing especially with protection activities, they are prepared to go beyond mere reporting to developing systems of catching the perpetrators, charging them in court and seeing the case through to sentencing. Cebu City communities and NGOs set the tone here. Awareness is, therefore, less the issue; taking action is.

Unlike the energized calls to action that child abuse can generate, child labor takes on a muted response among informal settlers. For some poor urban families, sending their children to work can mean the difference between the entire family's eating another meal or not. Children represent important members of the household-earning team. Even 4-year-olds appear at dangerous local dumpsites, initially there so their parents can keep an eye on them but soon graduating into simple collection and sorting tasks. Other children are conscripted into minding the family *sari-sari* (variety) store, or joining their parents in selling various items on the streets, or accompanying parents and siblings to the neighborhood quarry to crush rocks. Those who work as domestic servants or assembly line apprentices, or in distinctly hazardous sites like match or fireworks factories, take pride in being able to contribute their meager wages to the family. Parents recognize fully well the dangers facing their children, but in light of the income generated, they take the risk that the potential for disaster will never be realized.

CPC community workers, often assisted by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), have adopted a dual strategy of convincing the family to withdraw the child from the workplace and get him or her back to school. This calls for encouraging the parents themselves to venture into skills training and credit programs to enhance their own income and free up their children for school. Others, like the Vincentian Missionaries for Social Development Foundation, Inc. (VMSDFI), take a more gradual approach, encouraging parents to send full-time worker-children back to school but condoning part-time work until the adults in the family can find other ways of compensating for the children's lost income. Some anti-child-labor advocates turn to institutions to help in the systemic elimination of child labor. At the Manila pier, where underage children regularly drive pedicabs, for example, an accord to stop the practice was recently reached among pedicab owners, labor unions, the city government, NGOs, people's organizations (POs), and the media.

Because the extent of poverty is obvious to all in CPC neighborhoods, many protection-oriented agencies bring financial and technical assistance and facilitate community-based actions to relieve the plight of working, abused and abandoned children. NGOs, faith-based groups and donors strive to reorient

obsolete or ineffective government programs in more realistic and equitable directions.

Participation Rights

Of all the four sets of rights, this one is least understood or accepted and draws the fewest initiatives, even in CPC barangays. While adults are comfortable with children participating in song or dance performances, the idea of the latter's taking part in decisions affecting everyday issues or development programs still lies beyond the range of local experience. Times are changing, however. In CPC communities, a number of participatory events have already taken place and gained adult approval, among them a Children's Summit at the city level, along with other similarly high-profile events in which children and youth have articulated admirably the issues affecting them.

Parents and children alike approve of the children's visiting new places and meeting other children. They realize that this will broaden young people's horizons and add to their self-confidence. But some are not sure whether the potential trade-off is worth it. Might it not encourage the children to question their elders? Or want to have a say in decisions considered as the sole prerogative of their parents? The appointment in some communities of children as child rights advocates provides parents with some assurances, since the children themselves allude not only to rights but also to responsibilities. From suspicion as to the implications for parental authority, therefore, these events have highlighted the positive elements of responsible participation, resulting in a growing number of proud parents and supportive community leaders.

In summary, CPC barangays generally perform better in child rights advocacy and implementation than do non-CPC barangays. To start with, simply being included in CPC V means operating in a child rights framework. Moreover, inclusion brings an enormous advantage in additional funds and resources for initiating effective programs for children. It allows fuller complements of government workers at the community level, jumpstarts the BCPC, encourages more NGOs and civil society groups to offer services and monitor local activities, and helps mobilize large sectors of the populace, resident or outsider, to focus on *all* children, especially those hardest to reach.

A cautionary note is appropriate, however. Not all CPC communities take full advantage of this potential. Indeed, some non-CPC communities do as well or even better than CPC ones, especially in survival and development, although largely still cast in the basic services mode. The CPC child rights framework has in some cases transformed survival and development elements into a rights perspective that champions *every* child's right to survival, development, protection and participation. The rights concepts of entitlements, nondiscrimination, universality and government's accountability to *every* child remain elusive. But in CPC communities, glimmerings of understanding and action are emerging.

The still weak understanding of the rights frame-

work stems in part from uncertainty regarding the criteria and instruments for monitoring and evaluating participation rights. Here, Hart's ladder of participation offers a useful start. Since child rights, as a set of guiding principles, are not yet solidly embedded in Philippine urban informal settlements, the notion of reaching *every* child still takes on the character of a fantasy rather than of something achievable soon.

The Nine Building Blocks of Child Friendly Cities

How child friendly in a "rights" sense are the five Child Friendly Cities? Consider the four guiding principles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child: nondiscrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life and maximum development, and listening to and respecting children's views. As these are rather general, let us turn to the more specific nine building blocks listed by UNICEF for measuring progress toward Child Friendly Cities. Bear in mind, however, that this study focuses on the *rights of the poorest and most marginalized children in urban informal settlements*.

Using the nine building blocks as criteria for assessing the child friendliness of the five cities proves enlightening (see table 17). Apparently, all of them fulfill the formal requirements for that designation as part of their inclusion in CPC V. Implementation is more varied, however. Cebu City usually takes a clear lead, followed by Davao and Pasay Cities. Quezon City comes in a poor fourth (although the new mayor is trying to reverse that trend), while the City of Manila generally brings up the rear. The differences lie in the degree of openness of a city administration to civil society and private sector involvement and advocacy, strong political will among both elected officials and the bureaucracy for children's rights, and efficiency in governance.

Even though some cities exhibit creditable achievements, they falter in terms of reaching or targeting the most excluded children, some more seriously than others. Hence, even though several projects for children enjoy high visibility in the city, their impact on the poorest children usually turns out to be negligible. Clearly, the process of formulating plans for and with children and communities must be viewed through pro-poor lenses, and the resulting diagnosis linked to targeted approaches aimed at maximum impact on the most disadvantaged groups.

Toward Friendlier Cities for Children: Recommendations

Although the Child Friendly Movement in cities is gradually – too gradually for advocates – reorienting parents to encourage their children to reflect and speak out, and government officials to bring children into the mainstream of decision making, authoritarian rather than democratic values still dominate adult thinking. All too often tradition justifies the case for children's being seen and not heard, children's being told what to

Table 17 - Assessment of the five CPC cities in terms of the nine building blocks for CFCs

| Building blocks for Child Friendly Cities | Impact of cities' actions | |
|--|--|--|
| | On medium-poor and better-off children | On poorest children |
| 1. Engaging children as active participants | Good in all five cities | Negligible |
| 2. Passing child friendly laws | Good in all five cities | Negligible, except Cebu |
| 3. Developing a citywide children's rights strategy based on the CRC | Good in all five cities | Good in Cebu, Davao, Pasay; negligible for Manila, Quezon City |
| 4. Installing a children's rights unit in government | Good (City Council for the Protection of Children); but weak implementation in Cebu, Davao and Pasay Cities; not implemented in Manila and Quezon Cities | Negligible |
| 5. Doing regular assessments and impact evaluations | Irregularly done in all five cities | Negligible |
| 6. Having a budget earmarked for children | Good in all five cities; but implementation not targeted or tracked, except in Cebu City | Negligible |
| 7. Preparing a state of the city children's report | Good in Cebu and Pasay Cities, as regularly done; poor in Davao, Manila and Quezon Cities, as irregularly done | Negligible |
| 8. Disseminating awareness of children's rights | Good in all five cities | Negligible |
| 9. Independent advocacy for children (civil society, and so forth) supported by government | Good in Cebu, Davao and Pasay Cities; poor in Manila and Quezon Cities | Negligible |

do by their elders instead of learning through self-inquiry and exploration, children's not being trusted on their own but obeying parental dictates, and children's being incapable of making sound decisions without awaiting the pronouncements of adults.

Adolescent girls and boys in informal settlements chafe at the narrow space allowed them for developing their own interests and capacities. They deplore the tendency of parents and barangay officials to consider them as "problems" or as "having problems," when in the view of many poor youth, these "problems" are generated by problem parents and problem local officials. Fortunately, the favorable experiences of child and youth participation generated by the CFC are making important and positive inroads into the consciousness of adults.

Perhaps one of the most important findings of this study is the need to disaggregate poor children into specific categories for policy recommendation purposes. This approach recognizes differences in needs and outlooks by age, gender, poverty levels, lifestyles and schooling/nonschooling status. One-size-fits-all policy recommendations will not fly. Very young children (4-6 years), for example, give priority to food and parental love, while school-aged children (7-13) focus on schooling and reduced workloads in contributing to family income. Adolescents worry about social ties in and outside school that include how they relate to *barkadas*, fraternities and gangs.

At the same time, one can generalize to a certain

extent across age groups, since many of the differences lie not so much in the substantive realities but in the priority each group attributes to aspects of their lives. Moreover, various stake-holder groups see the problem differently and formulate their recommendations accordingly.

Here we highlight the recommendations of the several sets of stakeholders: poor children and youth, adults living and working in their communities, city and national government officials and civil society, and finally, the IPC research team. The recommendations of children and youth in poor communities, followed by adults in those same settings, were derived from interviews and focus group discussions, and subsequently validated by community feedback sessions following the data collection and analysis phases of the research. The recommendations of city and national officials drew largely from interviews and an inter-city workshop that featured the findings and generated recommendations based on them. The IPC recommendations build on this rich compilation and our own broad experience with urban poverty issues in the Philippines and elsewhere.

Recommendations from the Community

■ Recommendations from Children and Youth

1. Help our parents find employment and income.

We can then eat three meals a day regularly, do not have to work full-time and so will be able to complete our schooling, hear fewer quarrels

between our parents, as well as reduce violence and abuse in our families.

2. Build enough schools and classrooms to accommodate all children and make them better places for us to learn well.
 - Increase substantially the number of scholarships for poor children so that *all* those whose parents cannot afford to send them to school can avail themselves of these benefits – cover the cost of uniforms, shoes, bags, school supplies, lunch, snacks and transportation.
 - Make the schools less crowded, with fewer students in each class.
 - Provide enough desks and chairs, clean toilets with water, and better ventilation and lighting; repair the buildings.
 - Let each one of us have his/her own textbook.
 - Lessen the number of projects that force us to buy expensive construction materials.
 - Get rid of gang and fraternity violence on the school premises.
 - Help teachers understand the plight of working children (tiredness, difficulty of going to school clean, bullying or teasing by other children because we are scavengers or street workers, pressures to join a *barkada* or fraternity).
 - Teach parents and barangay leaders to appreciate and support children's rights.
3. Create and maintain a clean, healthy and safe neighborhood environment with ample space for children to play.
 - Dispose of the garbage scattered about the premises; sweep the streets daily.
 - Spray the area against mosquitoes and flies; eliminate dangerous stray dogs from the streets.
 - Improve the government community health center with free or low-cost medicines; build more of them and place them in all parts of our barangay.
 - Have neighborhood patrols at night and install lights along the main roads and pathways.
4. Guarantee our families secure tenure on the land we occupy so that we can remain here and improve our houses; do not let the police force us to leave our homes and neighborhoods or wreck our houses.
5. Control violent gangs and gang fights in the neighborhood; go after those who peddle drugs in the area and ban them from coming here or put them in jail.
6. Develop education programs for our parents so that they will understand us better from the time we are small until we are teenagers; hold special sessions for parents who have serious drinking or drug problems, or who abuse their children, wives and other vulnerable individuals.
7. Expand programs for the youth that include sports, community clean-ups and recreational

activities, but also tackle other more important areas like skills development and job access, especially for out-of-school youth:

- Focus on helping out-of-school youth return to school or go to alternative schools where they can catch up and earn a diploma; offer skills and job training programs; find job placements and internships.
 - Overhaul the Sangguniang Kabataan and the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children to pursue improved programs for children and youth, especially those intended for the most deprived among them.
 - Introduce discussions about relations between young girls and boys, or teenage sexuality.
 - Encourage the active participation of children and youth in the creation, implementation and evaluation of programs affecting us.
 - Provide enough funding for youth organizations in our area that are carrying out programs to enhance the positive capacities and contributions of the members, while allocating benefits to them and others included in their projects.
8. Train barangay leaders in how to understand, assist and encourage youth instead of always trying to punish us; insist that they pay serious attention to the needs and rights of the children in our community and take the appropriate actions in consultation with young people; give us a chance, without danger to ourselves, to report local political leaders who are inefficient and corrupt.
 9. Bring the community together in solidarity in order to champion the rights of children and youth.

■ *Recommendations from Community Adults*

The recommendations of informal and formal adult leaders at the community level generally parallel those of the children and, indeed, probably generated some of the thoughts expressed by the younger generation. Adults expect much more from government, though, if they as parents and community leaders are to address effectively the rights of children and enable them to make a qualitative leap in improving their lives. To them, government should:

1. Develop job generation programs for poor people and credit for small-scale enterprises.

This is our highest priority recommendation as parents. If we have regular jobs and/or credit to sustain a business, we will have the income we need to put food on the table everyday, clothe and shelter our children, send them to school, and thus give them a promising future.

2. Turn over to us land titles or security of tenure certificates on the land we occupy; ensure that any payments are minimal and spread out over a long period of time.
 - Upgrade our areas to improve the quality of the neighborhood infrastructure, and provide clean water, sanitation, drainage and electricity to all households.

- End forced evictions, demolitions and involuntary resettlement to distant locations.
3. Increase the quantity and improve the quality of schools and preschools, so that our children will learn well and be motivated to study hard and graduate.
 - Cut down on unnecessary school expenses, like class projects that require expensive materials.
 - Get barangay officials to help in the acquisition of a birth certificate for those children lacking them for registration in grade one.
 4. Improve the quality of health center services.
 - Provide free or low-cost medicine.
 - Teach us about family planning.
 - Build more health centers and distribute them in places that are more accessible to unserved groups in the barangay.
 - Assign more staff members and do not rotate them just when we get to know them.
 - Expand the hours for consultation into the evening and weekends.
 5. With the participation of civil society groups, check the performance of local officials in service delivery and rights promotion; keep an eye open also for corruption in local government, as in favoritism and the siphoning off of public funds into private pockets.
 6. Improve police performance.
 - Control violent gangs and drug proliferation in the barangay.
 - Involve adolescents and young adults in community surveillance and safety programs; continue the curfews for young people.
 - Patrol the neighborhoods in the early evening and at night.
 - Understand child rights as they apply to youth in conflict with the law.
 - Train barangay *tanod* (watch guards) and help them in responding quickly to child abuse and domestic violence being perpetrated against women.
 7. Develop good programs for adolescents boys and girls, especially those out of school, featuring:
 - Part-time job placements and internships;
 - Skills training and money management;
 - School equivalency programs leading to elementary and high school diplomas;
 - Values orientation, including respect for parents and elders;
 - Counseling in sexuality, responsible parenthood and family planning; and
 - Sports, cultural and recreational activities.

Recommendations from City Governments and Civil Society

The following recommendations were proposed at the Inter-City Meeting on the Child Friendly Cities Ini-

tiative, "Building Better Cities with Children and Young People," held in Lapu-Lapu City, Metro Cebu, on 24-26 September 2003. The findings of the IPC study were presented to the participants, who included elected and administrative city officials, barangay officials, youth and adult community leaders, NGOs, faith-based groups and academics from all five cities. Field visits to urban poor settlements in Cebu City formed part of the meeting. This gave participants the opportunity to interact with residents of typical informal communities and listen to local leaders and youth describe their situations and recommendations regarding future programs and policies.

The participants from each city then held caucuses to assess the implications of the findings for them, and to make recommendations on how to build child rights programs more solidly into the next city plan and budget. The individual city proposals have been combined into a composite set of recommendations aimed at addressing the rights of poor and disadvantaged children and their families. The first ten recommendations feature ways of reaching poor children through effective governance and systemic reform, while the remaining two address improving the situation of parents as intrinsic to their children's well-being.

1. Integrate child rights programs into the barangay development plan and budget for child friendly barangays.
 - Build the capacities of barangay leaders and their constituencies to integrate child rights concepts and programs into mainstream local planning processes; institute the appropriate management information systems; reorient Barangay Councils' preference for infrastructure projects in favor of those fostering social or human resource concerns, including children's wellbeing.
 - Recognize NGOs, faith-based organizations, people's organizations, academic and other civil society groups as partners of the government in child rights and anti-poverty programs; facilitate their efforts to work with government for children and poor families.
 - Develop through consultative mechanisms effective tools for planning, implementing, monitoring, measuring and evaluating the impact and relevance of CFC activities to various vulnerable groups.
 - Establish systematic planning links between the barangay and the city government to coordinate and consolidate efforts toward a Child Friendly City.
 - Make the Barangay Captain and councilors accountable for failures or deficiencies in implementing child rights programs by an annual assessment of their CFC performance.
2. Enhance the participation of children and youth in decision making.
 - Identify venues where children and youth can articulate their views (BCPC, SK and others); encourage them to plan and implement their own activities and projects while collaborating closely with local officials and others working in the community.
 - Be conscious of the need for adolescent girls and

- boys to gain a feeling of importance, self-worth and responsibility, and to become effective leaders.
- Understand differences in female and male participation to ensure gender-sensitive programs and follow-up actions, ensuring nondiscrimination between girls and boys.
3. Target the more vulnerable youth, that is, those out of school, abused children, children with disabilities, child laborers, drug users and those in conflict with the law as members of fraternities and street gangs; offer them a range of opportunities; charge the SK, BCPC and Barangay Council with giving high priority to these concerns.
 4. Heighten advocacy for, and accelerate and target access to, services for children; monitor performance to ensure their effective and equitable distribution, so that the benefits reach the most vulnerable and needy children and/or those living in distant, hard-to-reach locations.
 - Coordinate effective linkages among stakeholders to increase benefits coverage, heighten efficiency and avoid unnecessary overlap.
 - Locate health centers, schools, communication and other facilities in areas that will allow prospective users in distant or hard-to-reach areas to gain easier access.
 5. Strengthen community participation by facilitating PO and NGO activities for people empowerment that incorporate children and youth concerns.
 - Develop effective consultative structures and mechanisms for incorporation into city governance.
 - Package programs and activities in ways that stimulate people's participation.
 6. Increase awareness, advocacy, and information/education/training activities for child rights in the communities and citywide.
 - In collaboration with civil society groups, including local children and youth, develop community-based systems of child protection that will hold the BCPC, the SK and the Barangay Council accountable for effective implementation.
 - Emphasize the importance of reporting and taking action against violators.
 - Reach barangay officials, health workers, NGOs, POs, homeowners' associations, teachers, parents and caregivers, children and youth, and other service-oriented groups.
 - Establish effective communication systems, including modern information and communication technology, to ensure two-way contact between government and the poorest households in distant or hard-to-reach areas.
 - Document and disseminate examples of "good practices" to inspire others and show them it can be done; encourage them to emulate these successes in ways appropriate to them.
 - Make a concerted effort to have mothers take their children to health centers and also learn how to take better care of their children through attending caregiver classes.
 - Encourage poor residents to interact as peers with local officials.
 7. Coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders for children to avoid duplication of beneficiaries, enhance collaborative programming, maximize outputs and spread the targeted benefits equitably; foster stakeholder networks linking internal and external partners.
 8. Set up and maintain a user-friendly database on the needs and rights of children and youth in the four rights clusters (health, nutrition and housing; education; protection; and participation).
 - Organize the database so that it is age- and gender-disaggregated, and distinguishes vulnerable groups in the community.
 - Charge the BCPC with setting up the database and developing a systematic monitoring scheme that allows overall assessment of the situation of children and women, as well as effective targeting.
 9. Heighten political will for the CFC in city governments, made evident in much higher allocations of the city budget toward targeted programs for urban poor children.
 - Train the city and barangay officials in child rights, addressing value transformation and programming challenges.
 - Build in security of tenure and housing concerns into city government deliberations and action, along with programs on child protection and participation.
 - Enable the BCPC to gain direct access to UNICEF-derived funds for the CFC and thus avoid bureaucratic red tape, and to lodge the allocation process squarely in the community.
 - Increase the honoraria of frontline workers, like the barangay health and day care workers, and nutrition scholars, to sustain their morale.
 - Sustain child rights programs from one city administration to the next, especially those known to be effective.
 - Avoid reshuffling government personnel in the middle of program implementation to avoid confusion and interruption of services.
 10. Provide substantially more educational assistance to children and youth in primary and high school.
 - Make provision for proper screening and coordination among donor groups to ensure that the intended beneficiaries are served.
 - Create additional day care centers to accommodate all young children, experimenting with mobile teams to cover all areas within the barangay.
 11. Help parents and other adult household members obtain regular employment and livelihood; equip them with the skills and capital to pursue business opportunities profitably, taking gender issues into consideration.
 12. Establish mechanisms to guarantee informal security of tenure over the land informal settlers

occupy, carry out slum upgrading, and help set up affordable housing; if relocation is necessary, select nearby suitable sites.

Recommendations from the IPC Research Team

■ *Philippine Poverty and Development: The Environment for Changing Poor Children's Lives*

The recommendations given by urban poor children, youth and adults as well as government and civil society stakeholders in the five CFC cities articulate clearly their interests and concerns. The IPC research team strongly supports these aspirations as valid representations of a societal agenda for *all* urban poor children to gain their rights. Targeted city programs will go a long way toward achieving this goal for children suffering the stigma and exclusion of being “squatters.”

Because social scientists try to understand urban poverty and its persistence from an empirical perspective, the IPC team must necessarily build on but go beyond the practical recommendations of our respondents by moving into social analysis. An overview of Philippine society and development is a first step toward framing the context in which recommendations are lodged and to be carried out.

Sustained pro-poor economic growth is President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's goal for her administration. She views poverty as multiple deprivations – economic, sociocultural, psychological, political and environmental. Accordingly, the National Anti-Poverty Commission anchors its poverty reduction strategy on redistributive reform, pursued using a holistic perspective that encompasses asset reform, employment and livelihood, human development services, participation in decision making and governance, and targeted social protection and security from violence (Racelis and Guevara 2003).

The Administration faces daunting challenges. According to the National Statistical Coordination Board, the poverty incidence of the population was 30.4 percent in 2003 while the subsistence incidence was 13.8 percent (Virola 2005). Although both figures declined from 2000 levels of 33 percent and 15.8 percent, respectively, the magnitudes of poor and hungry Filipinos they represent are staggering: 23,509,648 Filipinos were poor in 2003 or did not earn enough¹ to meet their minimum basic food and nonfood needs, whereas 10,670,897 Filipinos were food-poor or did not generate the minimum income² to fulfill their basic nutritional requirements (ibid.). To ensure that the most disadvantaged groups in the country are reached, President Macapagal-Arroyo has strongly supported the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015 of reducing extreme poverty by half. Making up the basic ingredients of this drive are targeted resource allocations, efficient management, involvement of civil society and business, and exacting political will at all levels of government, along with international assistance to fill the inevitable resource gaps. To reach possibly half a million subsistence poor children in urban areas by 2015

– as well as the other half in the decade after that – will require a quantum leap forward.

It will not be easy to reach all urban poor children. The Philippines faces serious poverty-related problems, despite its status as a middle-level developing country. Causes for serious concern abound: widening income disparities; extreme poverty levels that are much higher than those in other Southeast Asian countries (Balisacan 2005); stagnation of the rural economy generating in turn population movements to urban informal settlements; continuing warfare in the Muslim South; a natural-disaster-prone habitat; a high annual population growth rate (2.36 percent), a P3.81 trillion (US\$68 billion³) national government debt (GOP-UN 2005, 111; Remo 2005) coupled with an international debt payment crisis; a depleted forest environment; a deteriorated public education system; the prospect of HIV-AIDS infections; and significant global out-migration of skilled workers and professionals.

Against this backdrop, the numbers of urban poor in informal settlements nationwide continue to grow beyond the 8.4 million already in existence. The vast majority reside in Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao Cities, but informal settlements are burgeoning in other large and medium-sized cities as well. Given that 43 percent of Filipinos are in the age group of 0-17, one can estimate the number of poor children in informal settlements today at 3,612,000 nationwide.

The rapid urbanization that lodges them in the squalid settlements of major cities reflects the reality of impoverished, politically unstable and disaster-prone rural areas. Left with few options, rural poor families leave their homes in search of a decent life, looking to cities as future sources of employment and livelihood, basic services and relative safety. The children either accompany their parents at the outset or drift in gradually, temporarily joining relatives or hometown friends until the migrant family can manage on its own. This in-migration, coupled with natural population growth among those already in slum settlements, leads to ever expanding urban settlements, with children making up almost half the population.

It should be stated, however, that there has been a sea change in the government's orientation to the rights of informal settlers over the past two decades. Whereas “squatters” (now officially “informal settlers”) were once automatically deemed “illegal” by virtue of occupying open land, Presidential Decree 772 declaring squatting a crime was repealed in the early 1990s. From an attitude that judged urban informal settlers as illegal and therefore unworthy of assistance from government, the latter is now dealing with the urban poor in more humane and developmental ways. Today, many urban poor settlers can seriously aspire for land tenure security; onsite, nearby or decent out-of-city relocation; and participation in decisions affecting them. As the lives of families improve in this manner, the children stand to gain most of all.

As early as her State of the Nation Address in 2001, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced that she would proclaim government-owned land for transfer to 150,000 urban poor families each year from 2001 to 2004 (or a total of 450,000 household

beneficiaries of security of tenure). In addition, for the same period, her government would aim to provide 150,000 socialized or low-cost housing units annually, or a total of 450,000 shelter units in three years (GOP-UN 2005, 103).

The Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) claims that 382,285 urban poor families (ibid.), or 42.4 percent of the three-year target of 900,000, benefited from either security of tenure or housing units from 2001 to 2004, through the assistance of the government and the private sector.⁴ Slum upgrading is now considered as a desirable government option, while forced evictions and demolitions, and traumatic events experienced more than once by many urban poor children, have declined drastically. Increasing numbers of loans (a total of 59,456 from 2001 to 2004) (ibid.) mark the Community Mortgage Program, a government scheme that helps finance land acquisition and secure tenure implemented by organized associations of informal settlers, usually with NGO assistance. These measures greatly expand the chances of children's growing up reasonably comfortably in decent and permanent shelters.

This new orientation to urban poor settlers on the part of government came about not so much because officials became suddenly enlightened about their needs and rights. That learning process stemmed from pressures over the years from strong urban communities initially organized by NGOs and, to some extent, the political Left. Increased sophistication in communities about how to work out strategies and tactics around their interests has pressured government officials, often reluctantly, into recognizing the urban poor as a force to reckon with. Decades of mobilizing and challenging government to listen to their proposals or demands, with the potential threat of popular protest in the background, have enabled the urban poor to make their voices heard. The lesson is not lost on their children.

Other entities have contributed to the more favorable social environment for urban informal settlers and their children. They include the Catholic Church, in line with its orientation toward becoming the Church of the Poor, concerned academics, the increasing presence in government of socially oriented officials and politicians, and pressures from the international donor community. The UN Centre for Human Settlements, UNDP, UNICEF, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, certain bilateral donors, international NGOs and foundations have been influential in promoting a more humane approach to the urban poor, seen in their funding projects addressing the right to shelter and security of tenure.

Nonetheless, government's more enlightened approach to the poor does not permit complacency. For example, of the one hundred Proclamations issued nationwide by the President as of early 2005, only one people's organization (PO) in Metro Manila could claim a signed contract agreement with the government for land controlled by the Philippine National Railways. Although in several proclaimed areas the POs have fulfilled government require-

ments to develop a land use plan, reblock their houses and agree on boundaries, bureaucratic snags in pricing and other arrangements have delayed the final contract agreement. Often many of the national-level government pronouncements are not followed by implementing rules and regulations, leaving people hanging (Karaos 2002).

There is room for cautious optimism, though, in the increasing number of city governments, especially those outside Metro Manila, interested in making a real dent on urban poverty within their boundaries. They are in a better position to do so since the Local Government Code of 1991 gives them far more power, autonomy and funds than previously to solve their own issues and problems. Sizeable Internal Revenue Allotments (IRAs) from the national government help greatly. Quezon City's concerted effort to collect taxes, for example, has expanded the scope for basic services delivery. Further, progressive mayors and councilors are finding that partnerships with POs, NGOs, the Church and other civil society groups, as well as with socially responsible corporations, can significantly scale up their pro-poor efforts.

Women in informal settlements have dominated community efforts in behalf of the children, combining their mother roles with their income-generating and community-mobilizing roles. The increasingly open public debate on the moribund family planning program and slowly expanding access to contraception augur well for women's and parents' decisions to have the smaller number of children they want and thus pursue a life of quality for the children they have. A pilot Catholic natural family planning project in Payatas approved by the Church shows promising results but is still only a drop in an ocean of prospective users (Carroll 2005). Reforms in the educational system, as part of the government's focus on human resources, are underway.

Even the international brain and brawn drain of Filipino workers can be cast in a positive light for children, considering the sizeable remittances from abroad going back to their families for education, housing and family businesses. The negative aspect, though, is the disruption of family life and possibly growing child abuse especially in the absence of the mother. Attention to reducing corruption is gaining ground, which is in turn increasing the likelihood of children actually receiving government resources allocated to them. Finally, the continuing democratic openness of the Philippines, with its free press and active civil society sector demanding transparency in governance, means that national and local officials know they may be held accountable for their actions.

■ *Cities and Their Commitments to Urban Poor Children: IPC Recommendations (Complementing Those of the Community, Government and Civil Society)*

1. Adopt targeted strategies aimed at reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged children.
 - Support participatory processes that call for consultation with the people in the community, including children.

Locating who and where the most excluded children are marks the first challenge. They are likely to be residing in the least desirable areas: remote or difficult to reach parts of the barangay along creeks, marshy areas, and railroad tracks; near city garbage dumps or factories; along highways with heavy traffic flows; under bridges and overpasses; and in flimsy pushcart-homes parked for the night. These are the children most prone to danger from dengue, water-borne diseases, cuts and wounds, accidents and pollution. Where indigenous (*lumad*) and Muslim children are present, they often inhibit themselves from seeking services, like their parents, many of whom shy away from contact with the majority population.

- Establish a user-friendly community-based data system.

The first order of business here is to identify the most vulnerable groups of children and youth in every barangay, and monitor and evaluate the outcome and impact of interventions aimed at improving their situation. Disaggregate the data on children by age, gender, ethnicity, work status and disability, among others, and introduce relevant management information criteria for health, nutrition, education, housing, security of tenure, protection and participation, and qualitative outcomes like satisfaction levels, feelings of empowerment, and so forth. Transparency of data will also allow real monitoring of program developments in child rights.

- Utilize the community-based data system in local barangay and people's organization planning processes.

Unless the data are actually used by the communities for their own planning, implementation and monitoring, instead of merely sending reports to their city officials or the national government, this information system will not be taken seriously, gathered carefully or sustained. Combine data use, therefore, with learning how to organize barangay development planning sessions that are participatory and inclusive in nature. Academic institutions and NGOs can provide the needed training in data systems, like the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey or Minimum Basic Needs or other schemes, along with ways of installing and using a reliable information management system.

Moreover, if in consultation with all its constituent barangays, a city works out a standardized set of monitoring criteria, comparisons would be possible across barangays. This may introduce an atmosphere of friendly competition leading to accelerated attention to barangay actions for children. Monitoring various groups of children and taking corrective steps if they are faltering, or disseminating their successes where these emerge, can similarly turn the tide for especially vulnerable groups.

- Train Barangay Councils and other local groups to collect, assess and use data for planning and monitoring targeted programs and projects.

Include in the learning process how to allocate budgets more targeted toward improved outcomes for the most disadvantaged children and youth.

- Enrich local young people's knowledge of computerized data processing schemes.

This will not only enable them to build up their skills in modern information and communication technology, but also enlist them as important partners in CFC community assessments.

2. Strengthen people's organizations to be autonomous, empowered civil society groups.

Cebu City has been most successful in collaborating with the civil society sector. NGO-PO organizing in its poor urban communities has been so effective over the past thirty years that committees in the barangays monitor progress of child rights activities. This development received its impetus from earlier consultations linked to community planning efforts initiated by the people's organization in collaboration with the barangay. Among the most active organizers and managers of empowered grassroots groups have been local women. Insistent on having a say in decisions affecting them, they quickly descended upon a city official to protest when he programmed "their" 5 percent budget allocation for women's programs. These efforts enabled them to reclaim their prerogative to establish priorities and program directions together with the city government. Given this experience in effective mobilizing, a series of recommendations is in order.

- Encourage NGOs, cooperatives, trade unions, faith-based social-action groups, and others experienced in building capacity and enhancing the self-empowerment of the urban poor to work at the community level for this purpose.

- Integrate within community organizing frameworks ways in which POs can incorporate the concerns of disadvantaged children and youth.

Unless the prospective impact of projects or programs on children or poor families is specifically addressed, anticipated benefits may not necessarily reach them.

- Enable POs to engage with government in demand-driven approaches.
- Help POs understand how local government works.

This includes budget-planning processes, implementing rules and regulations, and so forth, for more effective interaction with government.

3. Recognize, draw in and collaborate with NGOs and other civil society groups in developing CFC programs.

The rationale for governments to work closely with NGOs, in particular, stems from the multiple roles the latter play in society and in the communities where they work. These entail community organizing, empowerment, value-change, advocacy and service delivery (Racelis 2004, citing Edwards 2004). On service delivery, traditional political leaders welcome NGOs that focus on welfare and service provision while making little or no attempt to change the

socioeconomic status quo. On the empowerment and value-change role, NGOs that organize communities and enable the resulting POs to re-examine their situations, question the inequities present, take action to promote their own interests, and eventually challenge existing institutions of power and decision making usually represent a threat to traditional officials.

Moving into the third dimension, NGOs that broaden the public debate through their advocacy and watchdog roles may occasionally represent prickly thorns in the sides of those government officials accustomed to unilateral decision making and authoritarian governance. Here, NGOs plunge into any number of potentially sensitive causes: reorienting government budgets, institutions and procedures toward pro-poor outcomes; bringing gender perspectives into local governance; monitoring government performance; and accusing governments uninterested in reaching poor children as tantamount to being human rights violators. Some political leaders may take the easy way out by labeling these active groups as “subversive,” worthy only of being shunned or even of detention by the authorities. Fortunately, such throwbacks to martial law days are fewer and far between.

Those cities that have collaborated with NGOs as partners – notably Cebu, Davao, and Pasay – show greater achievements in CFC outcomes, even though they still have far to go in terms of reaching the poorest. For their part, NGOs have learned a great deal over the past decades in engaging with local and national governments. The benefits of partnership are mutual, so long as government avoids interacting with communities in top-down, authoritarian fashion and favors instead a bottom-up democratic process.

Another ladder of participation (Arristein cited in Racelis 2003) spells out this continuum, starting with nonparticipation (manipulation and therapy) as the bottom rung, which he terms exploitative and disempowering, through tokenism as the next set of steps (information, consultation, placation), and, finally, citizens’ power (controlling and empowering) as the top rung of the ladder. A more detailed formulation in the context of urban services and infrastructure programs shows how government may regard participation quite differently from civil society (Plummer 2000):

Manipulation: Government interacts with communities with a view to obtaining free labor, cost recovery and political gain, keeping in mind also donor conditionality; improving people’s lives is considered as secondary or even ignored.

Information: Government announces its intentions to communities but controls the amount and type of information released; it does not encourage changes in its decisions. Its objectives are to get service in place and use, achieve cost recovery, and minimize community resistance to plans.

Consultation: Government favors community participation and group formation, organizes forums for feedback, and promotes some capacity building on an ad hoc project basis, but it does little to institutionalize these processes. Its objectives, in addition to those under Information above, are to enhance

community ownership, project sustainability, efficiency and targeting vulnerable groups.

Co-operation: Government promotes community decision making, some institutionalization of processes and incipient community empowerment. Its objectives include those under Consultation above, plus community capacity building and a degree of empowerment.

Mobilization by the community: Government accepts that communities control decision-making processes, responds favorably to initiatives defined by the community, or encourages its controlling its own initiatives. Its objectives focus on community empowerment and community-managed service delivery, which in turn reinforce ownership, sustainability, efficiency, targeting vulnerable groups, and achieving cost recovery, all done by the community itself.

When government adopts a collaborative rather than an aloof or a suspicious stance, the positive results of child friendly programs are likely to have a better impact on the community. NGOs bring the benefit of their technical expertise, for example, in child rights, child health and emotional development, early childhood education, child abuse, youth concerns, women’s empowerment, youth counseling, reproductive health, management information systems, and community organizing skills, among others. Where relations with government are cordial, NGOs conduct training-workshops and seminars that build government and community capacities alike for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. NGO participation in citywide consultations in the CFC process, especially in Cebu, Davao and Pasay Cities, has enabled them to affect priorities in government legislation and budgets. Quezon City is moving in this direction with its new mayor, but the City of Manila retains its reputation of being unfriendly to community organizing and empowerment NGOs, and suspicious of strong POs.

Regrettably, even though civil society groups in the more progressive cities have proven their service at the community level and thus have been invited to city-level consultations, they are still mostly left out in barangay consultations. Barangay officials apparently welcome them as do-gooders engaged in service provision but as having no role in planning for or with the community. This is ironic, considering that often NGOs long present in the local community in fact know its needs better than the barangay officials do. However, when barangays adopt the practice of planning with the community, often prodded by POs and NGOs, mutual suspicions break down and the people benefit.

Most NGOs aspiring to help communities and government adopt the community-mobilizing mode. This does not happen overnight, but rather through longer-term interaction between an NGO and the community, which can be divided into three phases: (a) NGO entry into the community, (b) partnering and building sustainability, and (c) planned withdrawal with sustainable impact (Fowler 1997). When communities learn how to mobilize around the rights of their children and youth, and adopt the demand or

participatory approach to governance for children, the future of the CFC program rests secure.

4. Activate the official local bodies charged with ensuring the people's wellbeing to give specific attention to the rights of their children and youth; reform and rationalize overlapping functions of the Sangguniang Kabataan and the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children.

Barangay Council. Where the Barangay Captain and Council promote children's rights programs, positive results are evident for those youngsters reached – even if they may not be the most disadvantaged ones. Urban poor residents, however, are cynical about their Barangay Captains and Councils, seeing them as the single greatest hindrance to creating and sustaining child friendly approaches. For many residents, barangay officials seem to engage more in “politicking” than developing programs for children, or at least encouraging priority attention to them. Barangay officials' involvement in youth matters addresses peacekeeping or anti-violence problems. Hence, they notice adolescent “troublemakers” and take a punitive stance toward them, asking the local police to go after the drug users and gang members among them. Some young people allege that the police themselves are profiting from the drug trade. Even if this is false, the belief itself conditions people's outlooks toward and faith in government.

Instead of prioritizing youth programs, local officials favor infrastructure projects that generate income for the barangay and, whisper critics, the pockets of some local officials. If the Barangay Captain is not interested or gives only lukewarm support to children's concerns, as is generally the case, those projects and programs simply do not “take off.” Budgetary funds and permits for children's activities suffer delays or never materialize. Soon any public interest generated by advocate's wanes into inertia and “business as usual.”

Further, even when Mayors and City Councils extol children's rights publicly – in part because to do so is politically correct and attracts outside funding – some tend to coast along with existing inadequate, untargeted service delivery programs. The tide turns only when pressures from local POs, NGOs and other civil society groups, or the national government often spurred on by donor organizations, force another stock-taking. If the Mayor then puts pressure on his or her Barangay Captains, they can revitalize the CFC – especially if they are in the same political party. When the Barangay Captain and Council actively support SK, PO or local NGO efforts for or with children and youth, child friendly barangays begin to emerge.

Sangguniang Kabataan. The same negative assessment applies to the SK and its weak or ineffective orientation to the rights and needs of children and youth. SK programs continue in the traditional vein of sportsfests, community cleanup campaigns, fiesta games and dances, and the promotion of art or photography competitions. It does not consider as its role the need to attend to critical youth issues, like preventing gang wars, drug use, dropping out of

school, unemployment, and sexuality among adolescents. One energetic SK Chair believes the Barangay Council fears competition or being shown up by a group more successful than they. He adds that the SK has become a kind of decoration for display, to be used only for election campaigning later on. Others point out that owing to the postponement of SK elections, some of the officials are no longer youth, but rather adults who already have their own children but continue to speak as “youth.” Further, some poor youth feel the SK Chairs do not understand or cater to their needs because the chairpersons come from less-poor families.

Calls to abolish the SK are mounting. Like community residents, national figures have spoken disparagingly of it (Ramos 2002). “[The] SK has not shown results in the past years,” comments former Press Secretary Silvestre C. Afable, Jr. Adds one youth critical of the politicization of the SK, “*The worst thing is, it is the children, relatives, or followers of incumbent officials who get elected to the SK.*” Another observes, “*SK officials do not know anything other than [to] hold sportsfests which, frankly, do not really lead the youth away from drugs.*” Congressman Edgar Erice agrees with the move to abolish SKs because they have become training grounds for corruption: “*I am afraid that our country will once again find itself in the Guinness Book of World Records for the dubious distinction of electing the youngest corrupt officials in the world.*” President Macapagal-Arroyo herself favors abolition of the SK: “*The youth's duty is to work and study.*”

But one young Manila youth protests: “*If the SK is abolished, it would be as if you are taking away our freedom to express ourselves.*” Other SK advocates point out that abolition is not the answer. Rather, give youth leaders proper information and training on how to initiate and carry out the mandate for developing programs “to enhance the social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical development of youth in the barangays” (Local Government Code of 1991, Book III, Chapter 8, Section 426). Considering that the SK is officially entitled to 10 percent of the barangay's Internal Revenue Allotment, the need for enlightened leadership and stewardship becomes all the more imperative.

From the IPC perspective, if the SK is abolished, then serious attention needs to go to the reform of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children as the alternate institution for carrying out the child rights mandate. If the SK is not abolished, then it, too, needs a drastic overhaul in order to perform its role as the youth arm of the Barangay Council. In that event, overlapping activity areas with the BCPC need to be sorted out in favor of complementary programs.

Barangay Council for the Protection of Children. With a few notable examples, the BCPCs function poorly. Many are still in the process of getting organized and competing over positions and programs. As a mix of local officials and civil society groups, the leaders claim they have difficulties in calling meetings of this somewhat unwieldy body. Moreover, since the funds and resources coming from the BCPC

are coursed through the Barangay Council, the same difficulties faced in the latter's more general programs infect the BCPC program. Inefficient and slow-moving bureaucratic procedures hamper the flow of funds and activities, and since the Chair of the BCPC is the Barangay Captain, the program rises or falls on his/her interest. Civil society members find themselves taking the initiative but without much barangay support. Clearly, a reform of the BCPC is overdue, especially if the SK is abolished.

5. Take into consideration the differential sizes and characteristics of cities that affect child friendly programs.

The study findings show that the regional cities of Cebu and Davao seem to do better at creating a Child Friendly City than the Metro Manila Cities. Of the latter, Pasay City does better than Quezon City, which in turn outpaces the City of Manila. Is this the result of the leadership, or is there something systemic at work here?

An analysis of the data indicates that while committed leadership counts, other factors also have a significant impact on the evolution of child friendly programs. These are (a) the area and population sizes of the city, (b) metropolitan governance and the overlay of national and city government functions, and (c) the presence of NGOs and POs. As the last topic has already been extensively discussed, we will elaborate here only on the first two topics.

The size factor: Area and population. The size and density of the city's population, together with its concentrations of poor and informal settlers, affect a city's capacity to reach them. Given the wide-ranging disparities in the five cities, one must exercise caution in attributing cause and effect. Nonetheless, certain points stand out. Applying standard performance criteria to Quezon City's urban poor CFC barangays of over 100,000 inhabitants each versus Manila's, averaging some 3,000 each, is of dubious value. Thus, for example, the injunction to have one Barangay Captain and Council, one BCPC, and at least one early childhood center has different implications for Payatas, Quezon City, with its 112,960 residents and Isla San Juan, City of Manila, with its 1,761.

This gives us all the more reason to query yet again why Davao together with Cebu and Pasay Cities harboring CFC populations ranging from 2,010 to 14,209 do better in their child friendly programs than the City of Manila with fewer people in CFC barangays. Quezon City's difficulties in reaching the most deprived urban poor children are far more excusable, considering their numbers and the enormous sizes of its barangays.

It is Quezon City in fact that faces the greatest challenge in terms of sheer numbers of poor people in informal settlements. Having to serve so large a clientele calls for a large and complex city bureaucracy trained to address children's rights. Davao, Cebu and Pasay Cities can better cope, having smaller population sizes and absolute numbers of urban poor people than Quezon City or Manila. The scale of the problem has not yet gotten out of hand, as may already be the case in Metro Manila. At the same

time, there is more to performance than population and barangay sizes.

Metropolitan governance and the overlay of national and city government functions. Although local residents speak of Metro Cebu and Metro Davao, which encompass several other cities bordering them, respectively, that is more a planning notion than a legal reality. Metro Manila, made up of fourteen cities and three municipalities, is united in loose fashion by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, headed by an Administrator appointed by the President of the Philippines to take charge of traffic and garbage collection. The Administrator must contend with seventeen autonomous Mayors who are expected to govern by consensus. Add to this the ambiguous situation brought on by the overlapping authority of national and local government entities – and bureaucratic confusion and inertia reign.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the situation of urban poor settlers on national government land located within the boundaries of Metro Manila cities. The two case studies undertaken for this research illustrate the difficulties. The classification of BASECO was the subject of a long-standing legal tussle among the Bataan Shipyard and Engineering Company, the national government, and the City of Manila. The city government won the battle when President Arroyo decided it should have jurisdiction over BASECO.

Most of Quezon City's informal settlers occupy the National Government Center, open land earmarked decades ago for buildings planned as the core of the proposed national capital there. The invasion of thousands of poor people into the area in the meantime has rendered moot the original plan, with only the Congress of the Philippines and a few government buildings occupying the site. Surrounding or interspersed throughout their terrain are several densely populated informal settlements, a few legal subdivisions and the Payatas dumpsite.

Until only the last decade, the two city governments took little interest in the informal settlers within their boundaries because they were on national government land and therefore fell outside their area of responsibility. As the settlers organized to fight evictions and demolitions by city demolition squads acting for the national government, and demanded basic services like water and spraying against mosquitoes, they realized that local officials could more readily be convinced to listen to them. This became apparent just before elections.

In contrast, officials at the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) or the National Housing Authority (NHA), for example, who have jurisdiction over their sites interpret their mandates to the people as technical rather than political. When communities feel frustrated by what they consider as the professional inflexibility of the more resistant national officials, they begin to turn to city officials for assistance. Sometimes that works, but other times not. All too often communities that have already developed their land use and reblocking plans, or agree to the location of public water taps, or identify the number of children eligible for enrollment

in early childhood centers find themselves caught in conflicting jurisdictions and turf battles linked to national and local bureaucracies. Alternatively, their multipronged proposals or demands would fall into a no-man's land where jurisdiction over their concerns is unclear, institutional structures to handle the issue are lacking and no government office would take the responsibility for decision making.

Having the national government on one's doorstep seems to generate different dynamics in governance. Metro Manila city governments find themselves so intertwined with the national government that these city officials have to reckon with national government perspectives in their own decision making. The landscape for bureaucratic fuzziness and competition is thus laid out. Not so for the Cebu and Davao Cities, where the national government is more remote and local authorities have long dealt with the urban poor in their areas.

Moreover, Cebu and Davao City officials seem to accept more readily the presence of and responsibility for informal settlers in their cities than do Metro Manila mayors. As already discussed, this is mainly because of the strong presence and advocacy of NGOs and POs in informal settlements. In Cebu City, for example, POs and NGOs like Pagtambayayong and Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. (FORGE) have had a long history of organizing, making demands on and negotiating with their city government. It is largely to the credit of these NGOs and POs that from 1988 to the early 1990s, the City Mayor appointed an NGO worker to head the Cebu City Commission for the Welfare of the Urban Poor. This Commission was institutionalized later as a department, with housing as one of its key thrusts up to the present.

Concluding Note: Making Cities Child Friendly

Child Friendly Cities work best when city governments enable stakeholder groups to mobilize around children's rights, and innovate, collaborate and foster community initiatives. This can bring about an explosion of energy, resources and creativity encompassing many people. City initiatives include policy statements, appropriate legislation, plans and budgets

that accommodate advocacy points for children. These mean institutional structures and processes that cater to and strengthen community programs and perspectives, a good management information system, periodic reviews, and an annual overall assessment with the various stakeholders present, children and youth prominently among them. The Barangay Captain and Council should be motivated and supportive, the Sangguniang Kabataan reoriented and the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children revitalized. Or as one respondent puts it, "*Politicking should not interrupt or suspend the implementation of programs for children.*"

Very much missing in most of the cities are systematic ways of having the private business sector invest in children and their future. This needs serious examination, especially in light of the growing interest in corporate philanthropy and social responsibility. Another looming problem is the decreasing funding base of NGOs for supporting their crucial activities in urban informal settlements. This impairs their roles as the driving force in raising awareness and catering to the special needs of poor children. If the Millennium Development Goals are to be reached in urban areas, national and international financial facilities need to be directed toward NGO and civil society activities.

Finally, a distinct and targeted poverty focus is crucial – one that tracks vulnerable and deprived children, and prioritizes actions to help them reach their desired state of wellbeing. Particular attention to the poorest and most vulnerable among the already poor and vulnerable is crucial in planning, implementing and monitoring pro-poor programs. Listening to the voices of the children and to their parents and community must be an essential part of this process.

To reiterate UNICEF's view, "A child friendly city is not only a good city for children, but also one which children judge to be a good city for themselves" (Riggio 2002, 45-46). Striving for their rights, gaining self-respect and self-confidence, and being treated with dignity point to a future of promise for all children. Appadurai (2004, 82) emphasizes the capacity to aspire and move away "from wishful thinking to thoughtful wishing." Our poster child, Bituin Maglakas, articulates it well: "*The right that I think is most important is to have our own dreams and ambitions.*"

Notes

- 1 The per capita poverty threshold/line for the Philippines is P12,267 (US\$219) a year, or P1,022 (US\$18) a month, based on 2003 poverty estimates by the National Statistical Coordination Board, or NSCB (Virola 2005).
- 2 The per capita subsistence threshold (or food poverty line) for the Philippines is P8,134 (US\$145) a year, or P678 (US\$12) a month, based on 2003 poverty estimates by the NSCB (Virola 2005).
- 3 US\$1 = P56.
- 4 The main government programs include the Asset Reform

Program of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), the housing programs of the National Housing Authority (NHA), and the Community Mortgage Program (CMP) of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC). The private sector, through the Couples for Christ's Gawad Kalinga (To Give Care) Project and the Habitat for Humanity Project, provided 4,995 and 3,984 houses, respectively, to slum dwellers from 2001 to 2004 (GOP-UN 2005, 103).

Appendix A

Quick Appraisal Interview Guide

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon/evening! I am from the Institute of Philippine Culture. It is a research and training organization of the Ateneo de Manila University. I am here to conduct a quick appraisal of your barangay as regards the Child Friendly Movement. May I have a conversation with you, sir/ ma'am?

Interview Proper

A. Overview of the Barangay (mostly secondary data)

1. Distance from city proper, modes of access
2. Boundaries (obtain/prepare barangay map showing boundaries, road network, settlement clusters, depressed areas)
3. Land area and uses
4. History, year established, significant historical events
5. Total population, population density, population by sex/by age group, number of households (data from different census periods)
6. Major ethnic groups, provinces/cities/areas of origin, religious denominations, languages
7. Major sources of employment/income of families/households (proportion/ number/estimate)
8. Presence of community organizations/associations
9. Presence of facilities and infrastructure (school, health station, hospital, clinic, day care center, chapel, church, barangay hall, water, electricity, telephone, green spaces, recreation/play areas, and so forth)

B. CRC/CFC and Related Projects and Interventions

Main Questions:

1. Have you heard about the Convention on the Rights of the Child? Can you mention at least three rights of the child?
2. What programs, projects, services and/or activities for children and youth have been undertaken in the barangay (To help the key informant recall, set 1999 as the time frame, since this is the year when CPC V began; programs, projects, services or assistance may cover child and youth health, nutrition, education, protection and participation)? What about those for the poorest children and youth in the barangay?
3. What programs, projects, services and/or activities are being planned for children and youth? What about those for the poorest children and youth?

Follow-up Questions:

For each mentioned program/project/service/activity for children and youth:

1. What is it all about? When did it start/end? Who/which group/s is/are undertaking/involved in the project? How are they involved?
2. For which groups/subgroups of children and youth (young girls/young boys) in the barangay is the project? Does the project, program, service and/or activ-

ity reach the poorest or most vulnerable group/s of children and youth? In what ways?

3. How is the project being funded? Implemented? Monitored and Evaluated?
4. What benefits are obtained by the children and youth (young girls/young boys) from the project? By the community as a whole?
5. Do you think the project is/was effective in enhancing/promoting the general welfare/wellbeing of children and youth, particularly the poorest? Why?
6. What problems were encountered? How were these problems addressed/resolved? What suggestions would you make to improve the program/project/service/activity?

C. Subgroups of Urban Children and Youth

1. What types of groups/subgroups of children and youth (young girls/young boys) are present in the barangay (e.g., according to age, gender, socioeconomic status, household type, education, ethnicity or regional origin, religion, disability, work status, special circumstances)?
2. What are the basic characteristics/attributes of each group/subgroup of children and youth mentioned?

D. Child Caring and Rearing

Main Question:

What are the practices and beliefs (e.g., breastfeeding, feeding, disciplining methods, socialization processes) that parents/caregivers observe/adopt in the caring and rearing of children and youth (young girls/young boys)?

Follow-up Questions:

1. In what ways do parents share responsibilities in caring and rearing? If they do not, why?
2. Are there, if any, other persons/guardians (e.g., helper/yaya [caregiver], relatives, day care staff) taking care of the children? What is/are their role/s? How do they carry these out?

E. Child Abuse

Main Question:

What are the cases of violation of children's rights (child exploitation [labor, prostitution, pornography], abuse [physical, sexual], and other forms of violence against young girls/young boys) in the community?

Follow-up Questions:

1. What cases/types of cases are reported? Not reported?
2. How are these cases addressed/resolved/managed?
3. What are the programs, projects, services and/or activities in your barangay (initiated, for example, by the Barangay Council, Barangay Council for the Protection of Children, NGOs, people's organizations, community associations, community members, neighbors, and so forth) that address these cases? In what ways do these programs, projects, services and/or activities respond to these cases?

F. Child and Youth Participation

Main Question:

What are the projects/programs/services/activities/events in the community that involve children and youth? For which age group/groups/subgroups of children and youth (young girls/young boys)?

Follow-up Questions:

1. For each mentioned project, service, activity, and so forth, what is the children and youth's participation or involvement? In what ways are/were they involved?

Refer to Hart's levels of participation:

| | |
|---------|---|
| Level 1 | Manipulation |
| 2 | Decoration |
| 3 | Tokenism |
| 4 | Assigned but informed |
| 5 | Consulted and informed |
| 6 | Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children |
| 7 | Child-initiated and directed |
| 8 | Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults |

2. What are the factors that facilitate child and youth participation?
3. What are the factors that hinder child and youth participation?

G. Maternal Care

What are the cases of 'at risk' or 'high risk' pregnancies in the barangay? How are these managed? Where do women receive emergency obstetric care?

H. Child Care

1. When or at what age are new births registered? Why? How is the birth registration done?
2. What were the usual problems encountered during immunization? How were these managed/resolved?
3. What are the characteristics of a well-nourished child (young girl/young boy)? When are children considered as nourished? Undernourished?

I. Education

Main Questions:

1. What are the early education programs in the community?
2. What are the alternative education programs available to out-of-school children and youth in the barangay? For which groups of children and youth (e.g., young girls/young boys)?
3. What are the functional literacy programs available in the community?

Follow-up Questions:

1. What are the types of activities and projects of each program?
2. Which groups of children and youth (e.g., young girls/young boys, according to age, gender, socioeconomic status) in the barangay are attending
 - a. early education programs?
 - b. elementary school?
 - c. high school?
 - d. alternative education programs?

Closing the Interview

Eliciting Comments about the Interview, Questions and Study

Do you want to add anything or do you have comments, reactions or questions regarding our interview or study?

Seeking Referrals

Who can I approach or interview for this? (Mention topics/data sets.)

Expressing One's Appreciation

Thank you very much for sharing your time with me. In case I missed something, can I still return?

Thank you again.

Appendix B

Focus Group Discussions and Interviews Conducted in the Case Study Sites

BASECO, Manila (August to October 2002)

| Session/Interview (11 FGD sessions, 1 group interview) | Date (10 days) | Age group/Classification | No. of participants (N = 80) |
|--|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| FGD 1 | 9 August | 14-17/Nonschooling, Boys | 8 |
| 2 | 17 August | 14-17/Nonschooling, Girls | 9 |
| 3 | 27 August | 4-6/High-risk, Mixed | 4 |
| 4 | 31 August | 14-17/Gang members, Boys | 8 |
| 5 | 1 September | 4-6/Low-risk, Mixed | 5 |
| 6 | 1 September | 7-10/Schooling, Mixed | 7 |
| 7 | 3 September | 7-10/Nonschooling, Mixed | 10 |
| 8 | 15 September | 14-17/Youth club members, Girls | 7 |
| 9 | 19 September | 11-13/Nonschooling, Mixed | 10 |
| 10 | 27 September | 14-17/Schooling, Boys | 4 |
| 11 | 6 October | 11-13/Schooling, Mixed | 6 |
| GI 1 | 6 October | 14-17/Schooling, Girls | 2 |

Payatas, Quezon City (May to June 2002)

| Session/Interview (8 FGD sessions, 5 group interviews) | Date (6 days) | Age group/Classification | No. of participants (N = 58) |
|--|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| FGD 1 | 3 May | 11-13/Schooling, Mixed | 14 |
| 2 | 9 May | 11-13/Nonschooling, Mixed | 7 |
| 3 | 9 May | 7-10/Schooling, Mixed | 5 |
| 4 | 14 June | 14-17/Schooling, Boys | 7 |
| 5 | 14 June | 14-17/Schooling, Girls | 6 |
| 6 | 20 June | 4-6/Low-risk, Mixed | 4 |
| 7 | 20 June | 4-6/High-risk, Mixed | 4 |
| 8 | 24 June | 7-10/Nonschooling, Mixed | 6 |
| GI 1 | 25 June | 14-17/Nonschooling | 1 |
| 2 | 25 June | 14-17/Nonschooling | 1 |
| 1 | 25 June | 14-17/Nonschooling | 1 |
| 2 | 25 June | 14-17/Nonschooling | 1 |
| 3 | 25 June | 14-17/Nonschooling | 1 |

Sasa, Davao City

| Session/Interview* (3 FGD sessions, 6 group interviews) | Characteristics |
|--|--|
| FGD 1 | Boys aged 13 to 18 years residing in Fatima |
| 2 | Boys aged 13 to 18 years residing in Fatima |
| 3 | Girls aged 13 to 18 years residing in Parola |
| GI 1 | Market vendor, aged 10 years |
| 2 | Market vendor, aged 12 years |
| 3 | Gang member |
| 4 | Gang member |
| 5 | Rugby user, aged 14 years |
| 6 | <i>Bontog</i> , aged 15 years |

*The FGDs had six to eight participants each, while all interviews were done individually.

Leon Garcia Sr., Davao City

| Key informant | No. | Data sets/topics |
|--|-----|---|
| Barangay officials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCPC Chair • Barangay secretary • Barangay councilors (2) • Former SK member | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barangay profile: physical features, brief history, socioeconomic features, and presence of organizations • Situation of urban poor children and youth: services and programs of the Barangay Council for the children and youth; problems in providing such services and programs; recommendations to improve the provision of such services and programs; gangs and fraternities, and juvenile delinquents; initiatives to protect children and youth in the community; problems in carrying out such initiatives; suggestions to improve the participation of children and youth in community affairs |
| City Social Services and Development Office (CSSDO) in charge of Leon Garcia | 1 | Subgroups of disadvantaged children and youth, their respective characteristics and conditions; services and programs for the participation and protection of children; networking activities to promote children's rights and welfare in the community; challenges in the implementation of programs and services |
| Health center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midwife • Barangay health workers (2) | 3 | Composition of medical staff at the health center; schedule of medical services; inventory of available health equipment; process of accessing health services; improvement efforts undertaken at the health center; problems in the implementation of health services and programs; individual and household population count; excreta disposal facilities of households; problems and concerns related to sanitation; available health indicators; recommendations to improve health programs and service provision |
| Public school (San Juan National High School) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance counselor • Faculty | 2 | Basic demographic data on faculty and students: total number of teachers; total number of enrolled students; comparative analysis of student enrollment; student dropout rate and reasons for dropping; available school facilities; inventory of classrooms per grade level; existing scholarship programs for disadvantaged children; problems and issues affecting children's education |
| Mothers who are health center clients | 8 | Views and perceptions of services provided by the health center; views and sentiments concerning problems in sanitation; views and sentiments regarding the enrollment of children at the day care center |

Appendix C

Case Study Modules

Children and Youth Aged 8 to 11 Years

The following module refers to a method of research for and with children. Through interaction in a manner sensitive to the children's situation, needs and level of development, the researchers hope to gain a valid, deeper and true understanding of the latter's perceptions and views.

Objectives of the Module

1. To develop a profile of children from urban poor communities that is a valid reflection of their personalities, experiences, aspirations, needs and views regarding their community.
2. To gather data in a manner that is sensitive to the children and that will entail their full participation.
3. To help children reflect on, clarify and express their insights on their situation.

Materials

1. Paper or cartolina
2. Pencils, crayons, markers, paint, and so forth
3. Magazines, newspapers, clay, and so forth

(Note: To save time and avoid confusion among the children, use materials sufficient for the number of children. If magazine clippings are to be used, prepare portions with pictures before giving them to the children.)

4. Tape recorder and/or notebook (for the facilitator)
5. Pre-chosen flashcards on children's rights (one to two cards depicting each right)

Method

- I. Introduction (10 minutes) (See guide in appendix C.2.)
 - A. Acquaint participants with one another; the use of nametags is most helpful.
 - B. Give a brief explanation of the session objectives. Ensure informed consent of all participants.
 - C. Explain session rules and regulations (e.g., listen to and respect one another's insights).
 - Use positive reinforcement to motivate the children to follow the rules and regulations (e.g., candy or stamp with stars).
 - Make use of reminders, such as a bell or an alarm, or point to the numbers on the watch (note that children do not have a concept yet of minutes or still may not know how to read time).
- II. Icebreaker: Who am I? (15 to 20 minutes)
 - A. Ask the participants to think of an animal or an object with which they can compare themselves or which they think best describes them. After a few minutes of reflection, have them share their animal or object with the group, and explain how this best describes them. (Variations: name game, e.g., Totoy-Lion, Enteng-Stone; charades; animal sounds.)
 - B. Processing/Conversing/Deepening:
 1. Why do you liken yourself to the animal or object you have thought of? What are your similarities?
 2. Why do you say you are (for example, brave)?

3. Researcher/Facilitator: Observe whether their self-descriptions are positive or negative, and whether they highlight strengths or weaknesses.

III. Visioning Exercise

A. What is our present situation?

1. Method

- a. Divide the participants into small groups based on their age; separate the younger participants from the older ones (e.g., 8-9 from 10-11). Each group must have no more than four members.
- b. Instruct the children to create a collage/drawing/image that describes their present situation, using the art materials provided. Use the games for reflection (refer to no. 2 below) to guide the participants in making their collage. Members of a group may help one another in collage making (which is more common among older children), or make their own pictures.
- c. Allot 20 to 30 minutes for reflection and collage making. Go to each group and guide the members if needed. Discuss and process the activity within small groups (refer to no. 2 below). When all groups have completed and processed their collage, gather the participants. Each group can be given an opportunity to show its collage (and, if necessary, follow up with further processing).

2. Guide for reflecting on and making the collage
 - a. How would you describe your community – the people who live there and the environment you live in? What activities keep the people busy? What typically takes place in your community?
 - b. What do you usually attend to, or what occupies your time on a typical day in your community?

3. Processing/Conversing/Deepening

The follow-up questions pertain to the children's stories. Make sure that their perceptions regarding their community and the people around them are well elaborated. Note the children's problems and hardships that are contained in their stories.

- a. What can you say about your environment? About the people who live there?
- b. You mentioned that your daily experiences are . . . (work, beg, play, and so forth). Do these activities make you happy? Do these make you sad or do these burden you?

4. Synthesis

Post all the collage/pictures on the wall. Synthesize or summarize the relevant points or themes gained from the children's sharing and processing.

B. Why is our present situation like this?

1. Method (group session, 20 to 30 minutes)

Explain to the children that they should talk about the reasons for their present situation or the causes of their poverty. Refer to the collage/pictures created by the group as an introduction to and guide for the sharing session (say, for example, “You described previously . . .”).

2. Guide for the group session

- a. What makes a person poor? Why do you think there is poverty? Why do you think you are poor? What causes your poverty? What or where will the solution to poverty come from?
- b. How do you solve or remedy the problems brought on by poverty? What do you do? Is there anyone who you approach or talk with about your concerns?
- c. How would you describe the children who are in a better situation – those who “can afford” or those who are well-off? Have you had any experience (encounter or interaction) with these children? What do you feel when you see them? Do they have any similarities with you? How are you different from them?

3. Synthesis

C. How will our present situation change or improve?

1. Method

- a. Once again, divide the participants into small groups based on their age.
- b. Instruct the children to create a collage/drawing/image that describes their aspirations and dreams, using the art materials provided. Use the guide for reflection (refer to no. 2 below) while the participants are making their collage. Members of a group may help one another in collage making (which is more common among older children), or make their own pictures.
- c. Allot 20 to 30 minutes for reflection and collage making. Go to each group and guide the members if needed. Discuss and process the activity within small groups (refer to no. 2 below). When all groups have completed their collage, gather the participants. Each group can be given an opportunity to show its collage (and, if necessary, follow up with further processing).

2. Guide for reflection and collage making

What do you aspire for? How would you like the future to be (for yourself, for your loved ones)? What do you want to be when you grow up? What do you want to achieve? What are your dreams?

3. Processing/Conversing/Deepening

The probe or follow-up questions must pertain to the children’s stories. Make sure that their perceptions of their needs and how these needs are met or should be met by the community are well explained.

- a. Do you think your dreams will come true? In what way? Who or what can help you achieve your dreams? (Note expectancy for success.)

- b. What do children like you need to be happy and healthy? What can help you achieve a bright future? Are you familiar with the rights of children like yourself (i.e., what the children need to be happy and healthy, and to achieve a bright future)? In your opinion, is your community able to provide you with the needs and rights of children (at home, in the barangay, and in school)? How?

- Use the children’s rights flashcards to explain each right and validate the answers of those who know. Once again, use the flashcards in discussing whether or not these rights are met based on the participants’ experiences. Which of these rights are fulfilled or which rights do you exercise? Can you compare yourself with any of the children depicted in the pictures? Which child?
- c. What are the programs or activities at home or in the community that help you improve your situation? What are the programs and activities that do not help?

IV. Conclusion/Deepening

- A. Present to the group the synthesis of the session (activities accomplished, topics discussed).
- B. Once again, present the objectives of the study in relation to the activities completed and topics discussed during the session. What was the purpose? What now? Why do we do these things?
- C. Thank all the participants in the session.

Appendix C.1

Module Modifications for Children Years and Above

1. The module may be in the form of a focus group discussion (FGD). Prepare icebreakers or designate a break time to make the activity more interesting and exciting. Resort to collage making in case the children or youth need a stimulus activity to begin the discussion.
2. Limit the number of participants to ten.
3. Conduct separate FGDs for the male and female participants, as well as for the members and nonmembers of gangs. (Remember that among younger age groups, the participants no longer have to be divided into subcategories.)

Module Modifications for Children Aged 4 to 7 Years

1. The flow and process of the module are the same as the module for children aged 8 to 11 years, except that it is simpler and the children are asked questions individually rather than as a group:
 - For the part “Who am I?”: Ask the child to draw himself or herself on a piece of paper. When done, ask the child to talk about his or her drawing (there may be other elements or people in the drawing; note these and probe further). Probe questions should be based on the child’s stories. However, include questions such as What is your name? Age? What do you

do or like to do everyday (e.g., go to school, play)?
What does your mother or teacher say about you?

- For the part “What is our present situation?”: Ask the child to draw his or her house and environment, including the people who live in the house. While the child is relating his or her story, ask who the people in the house are, their relation to him or her, and their activities. Ask the child if he or she is happy or sad at home, or in his or her neighborhood; if he or she is happy with what he or she sees around her; and if he or she regards his or her environment as pleasant or otherwise.
 - For the part, “Why is our present situation like this?”: Ask the child, Do you know what being poor is? What is a poor child (characteristics)? What does it mean to be poor? What does it mean to be rich? Are you a rich or a poor child? Why do you say so? Why do you think you are poor (or not poor)? What do you feel when you see children who are rich?
 - For the part “How will our present situation change or improve?”: Ask the child to make a drawing of his or her aspirations and future dreams. Use the following questions as guide: What do you want to be when you grow up? What do you want to achieve? How do you think you will become a (teacher, nurse, and so forth)? What do you need to do?
 - Once again, use the children’s rights flashcards to discuss children’s rights: Are you familiar with the rights of children like you (e.g., what children need to be happy and healthy, and being able to do what you like doing best now and when you grow up)? Here, let us look at the pictures . . .
 - Are the children in this picture like you? Are there people at home or around you who help you become happy and healthy? Who are they? How do they help you?
2. Limit the number of participants to three for every facilitator.
 3. If the number of participants is sufficient to comprise two subgroups, divide them between schooling and nonschooling.

Appendix C.2

Guide for the Introduction to the Session

(Reminder to the facilitator: Modify according to the age of participants. Speak slowly and clearly. Use actions to make the children listen and better understand what you are saying.)

Good day to you all! Before we start, we would like to thank you for participating in our activity today.

I am *Ate* [local term used to address an older sister] [...], a researcher at the [affiliated organization][...]. We are here because we are conducting a study regarding children and youth like you. We want to know how you see and feel about yourselves and your present situation; and what your aspirations and future dreams are. We will do this by making drawings and collage, as well as by sharing stories with one another.

Before we begin, there are some rules and guidelines we need to follow and remember.

First, we will be talking about your thoughts and feelings, so there are no wrong responses. Everything you say is right or acceptable. It is all right to have different opinions.

Second, speak one at a time. Otherwise, it might be too noisy and confusing. We should respect one another and should thus pay attention to whoever is talking. This way, everyone will be able to hear what the others have to say. When a person is done, another may take his or her turn to share his or her views. *Ate* and I will be in charge, okay?

Third, your participation is purely voluntary. Should there be questions you do not want to answer, or activities you do not want to take part in, you could leave, provided that you ask for our permission properly.

Is that okay? Does everyone understand our rules for this activity or session? If so and if there is nothing more you would like to bring up, let us begin with a game . . .

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