

## MONITORING OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY-PHILIPPINES MEDIUM-RISE HOUSING PROJECT IN TAGUIG

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A consultancy service to assist Habitat in managing, periodically assessing and improving the compliance of the on-going development to the plans laid out as to schedule, budget, quality and social development aspects. The completed project will total 108 units in nine three-storey buildings. Alterplan submitted its final report in early 2004.

Analiza Villegas is famous for her ice candy, which she sells to all the neighborhood children from her store in the Habitat for Humanity medium-rise building (MRB) project in Taguig, Metro Manila. She lives there happily with her husband and their three boys since relocating from a nearby neighborhood six months ago.

Prior to moving into the Habitat project, Analiza's family was renting a small single room apartment in conditions that were deteriorating the health of her children. "It was like a slum, the building was not fully constructed and the roof was extremely low and suffocating," says Analiza.



When asked of the concerns for her children's health her reply was that "there was no ventilation and my children were becoming sick because of the atmosphere and household conditions." Her house was located behind a construction yard with limited access to services, and no room for her children to play. Analiza tried her best as a housekeeper, but with limited income from her husband she was concerned for the wellbeing of her family.

After learning through a friend of the Habitat project being developed nearby she acquired an application through her local municipality and applied to the program. Her family was subsequently approved and among the first selected to participate in this innovative and breakthrough project; co-funded by the EU, it is the first Habitat for Humanity medium-rise building (MRB) project in the Philippines. Using innovations like concrete interlocking blocks, recycled particleboard and floor technology, this project, technically assisted by ALTERPLAN

(Philippine partner of Rooftops Canada), includes five 3-story buildings, providing housing for sixty families.

Through the 'Bayanihan spirit' (sweat equity), the Villegas family experienced a hands on approach to housing provision, contributing 400 hours of labor, laying the foundation and bricks that would later become their new home. Analiza says the use of sweat equity was an important aspect in the development process of their new community, "creating a bond with our neighbors through working together. We know each other now, we work together, it is a true community."

The new units are spacious, and include provision of all necessary services for growth. More importantly, Analiza says her children are healthy, safe, and happy now, providing her with a sense of wellbeing and security. There is a playground at the front of the building and a nearby school for the boys to attend. With secure tenure and the additional space of the unit, Analiza was able to open her own store shortly after moving into the project, where she sells her famous, and delicious, ice candy to all the neighborhood children.

Financially, as a result of this second source of income, the Villegas family is doing well. Supplementing the income her husband makes as a tricycle driver they are now able to send their three boys to school. Analiza says, "the dependence we had on my husband's income was very difficult, we had little money to provide for our family. Moving into the Habitat project gave us opportunity to grow." She adds that she feels privileged to be a part of the Habitat project, "Habitat for Humanity helps a lot of families with housing, and improving their lives."

Though projects such as this, and with the continued assistance from local authorities, international governments, and organizations such as ALTERPLAN, Habitat for Humanity is continuing its innovative approach to development. The success of this project has already paved the way for additional EU-Habitat MRB projects, providing opportunities for families like the Villegas' to improve their wellbeing and quality of life.