

THE DLGCD

Teaching the barrios to help themselves

When the Government Reorganization Plan was implemented middle of last year, it gave birth to a new office — the Department of Local Government and Community Development (DLGCD). Its role is to help transform the barrios into fully developed and self-reliant communities.

The department, says DLGCD Secretary Jose A. Roño, "provides the management machinery and the leadership through which improvement of local government administration may be achieved so that with local government participation, the people may increasingly avail of self-help techniques and cooperative association in developing local communities and transforming them into viable instruments of progress."

Its other functions are to help the President exercise supervision over local governments, encourage them to govern and carry out development programs and to assist them in drawing up programs for urban and rural community development and organizing cooperatives.

With the creation of the DLGCD, the Presidential Arm on Community Development (PACD) and the Local Government and Civil Affairs Office under Malacanang were abolished and their functions absorbed by the new office. The DLGCD has three bureaus, namely community development, local government and cooperatives development.

The work of the three bureaus are interrelated. Once the local governments are trained to manage their affairs effectively and efficiently, they can later undertake and carry out their own programs for community and cooperatives development.

The DLGCD has fielded 4,000 experts through its 11 regional offices to attain these objectives. These experts train local government officials how to develop the barrios into

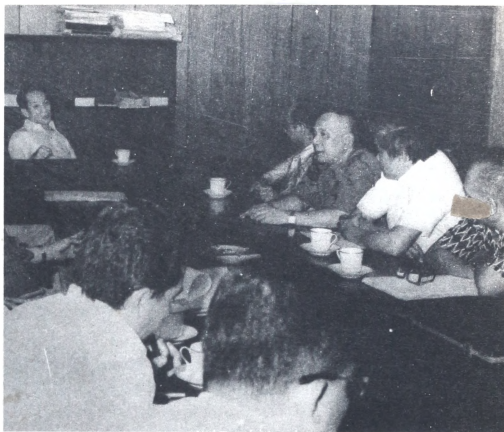
functional, active and viable government units. They teach them how to prepare development plans and raise the needed funds to implement them.

But the most important role of the DLGCD is the creation of cooperatives and the organization of barangays or citizens' assemblies. The cooperatives movement assumed greater importance with the implementation of the land reform act. Organization of Samahang Nayon or Barrio Associations, the forerunners of cooperatives, is one of the pre-conditions for the distribution of land to the tillers. Some 96,000 volunteers are working under the Bureau of Cooperatives Development to help supervise the organizational phase of cooperatives.

Another major role of the DLGCD is the organization of the barangays or citizens' assemblies. A prototype of the barangays was the barrio assemblies formed under the provisions of the old Barrio Charter. The formation of the barangays led to the successful holding of the first national referendum that saw the ratification of the new Constitution last January and the second referendum by secret ballot yesterday.

One problem now being tackled by the DLGCD is the restructuring of local government units. Discussions are being held as to what form these barrio governments would assume.

One proposal is for the government to be run by professional administrators or managers. Another plan is to retain the present setup and instead work for the upgrading of the skills and adjustment of the attitude of local officials through intensive in-service training. Clerks, collectors, policemen and other employees of the barrio governments will also undergo the same exhaustive training. While the first proposal is drastic, the second seems to be the more acceptable plan.



Secretary Roño with staff: A strategy of self-reliance

Assisting the DLGCD in the search for a realistic solution is the UP Local Government Center headed by Dr. Raul P. de Guzman who is also the assistant secretary of DLGCD. Already, the DLGCD, the UP Center and the Provincial Development Assistance Program (PDAP) are starting to hold orientation seminars for provincial governors, vice governors, treasurers, health officers and assistants.

A local government code is also being prepared to comply with the constitutional requirements. The new Constitution authorizes the National Assembly to enact a code defining a "more responsive and accountable local government structure with an effective system of recall allocating among the different local government units their powers, responsibilities and resources and providing for the qualifications, election and removal, term, salaries, powers, functions and duties of local officials and other matters relating to the organization and operation of local units. . . ."

The new charter also stops the practice of gerrymandering whereby

barrios are subdivided for political expediency and empowers local governments to create their own sources of revenue and to levy taxes. So far the Department of Finance has started implementing its plan of distributing internal revenue allotments to local governments. Under this program, the local governments are automatically given their share of funds periodically. The department, for instance, recently released P518,197,723 in internal revenue allotments for local governments to be spent for labor-intensive projects like construction of roads, bridges, public markets and school buildings.

At the end of the year, the department and other agencies of the government are geared toward implementation of Section 10, Article 11 of the Declaration of Principles and State Policies in The New Constitution which states: "The State shall guarantee and promote the autonomy of local government units, especially the barrio, to ensure their fullest development as self-reliant communities."

CEBU TOWNFOLK

Portrait of a new breed of Filipinos

Manoy Janding was once a corn-machine operator at the General Milling in Lapulapu City. He was earning P48 a week. Deductions for his contributions to the Social Security System, transportation expenses between work and home in a government-donated piece of land, plus his snacks and lunch allowances, bit deeply into his weekly wage.

Manoy would always end up with a measly P20, barely enough to feed nine children, much less send one to high school and three to the grades.

He would go home to Pasil, a slum district in Cebu City — with its narrow streets and dark alleys littered with hunger, rape, petty thievery, murder.



Manoy Janding: New life

He would go home to a paradise — for smugglers, hoodlums and delinquents.

Only too often, in Pasil, lawbreakers did not surrender. Enforcers almost always die.

Martial law has since brought changes to Manoy's Pasil. The changes have meant much to a people long in disquiet. Unemployment has not completely disappeared but has reached a new low with the industries, small and large, beginning to hum with workers and machines. Illiteracy did not die away. Peace and order have not reached a perfect rating. But each has improved enough to allow children some degree of a future and commuters some amount of ease when passing through alleyways.

Manoy Janding still had his financial worries. But at this point in Pasil's history, the people had begun to live new lives, to search and discover a native wealth: fish in Pasil waters.

Manoy gave up his job in the corn-machine, woke in the early dawn and worked until 10 in the morning, sliced fish, tended a stall in the market and earned at least P8 on ordinary days and P15 to P18 on others. For his customers, he had the town and

city folk who paid 30 to 50 centavos for each sliced fish and restaurant owners who paid P1 to P2.

His wife, Yaya, rented a small "turo-turo" (eatery) and cooked, with wood-lighted fire on clay-fashioned stove, for customers who kept coming back. Their children washed dishes and attended to customers. He sold fish intestines. They raised pigs in a corral underneath the house.

With the income, Manoy's daughter will likely finish high school and go to college. His sons are given decent food and clothes and may likely go to school, too. With a little more money, Manoy may rent a better stall for a better eatery for Yaya.

Today, in Pasil, one goes to the marketplace and meets fishermen, restaurateurs, buyers and sellers, housewives and plain fish aficionados out to get a dose of morning "sinugba" (broiled fish), "tinola" and "kinilaw." Over curses and haggles, one hears the thud of knives striking on fish-flesh and wood. All the sounds and movements seem to say: Manoy and Pasil have found a new lease.