





Population Metro Manila (1980): 5 million
Population Saarland 1 (1986): 1,000

Saarland Village I provides low-cost and secure homes for 110 squatter families from Manila. It is the first project sponsored by the Domus Mariae Foundation Incorporated (DMFI), a non-governmental organization (NGO) especially created for this purpose in 1983. Eight months later, 110 houses were completed and families were moving in. Saarland I is 30 kilometres from Manila near the town of Antipolo.

A second DMFI project has been built nearby and was occupied in 1986: Saarland Village II provides homes for 250 additional families. This is the sequel to Saarland I, providing an important example of co-operation between NGOs and government. A second scheme would not have been possible so quickly if finances had to come from costs recovered from the first scheme. But a government-initiated scheme of home finance and secondary mortgages purchased the Saarland I mortgages and reimbursed DMFI for its expenditures. Those funds then financed Saarland II.

The setting: Metro Manila

Metro Manila, created in 1975, combines four cities, including Manila, and 13 municipalities. It contains 12 per cent of the country's population and 33 per cent of the

urban population. In 1980 Metro Manila had 5 million inhabitants and the population is doubling every 15 years.

Between 1 and 2 million squatters

The squatter population of Metro Manila is estimated at between 1 and 2 million people (about 30 per cent of the population). Squatter settlements are the first homes for rural migrants coming to the city to find work and a better life. They offer cheap accommodation, nearness to jobs and a quick orientation to city ways.

Squatters are often violently evicted from sites, to make way for development: private or government. They are dumped onto relocation sites, far from their low-paid jobs, making commuting impossibly expensive. Sometimes they manage to organize, and with help from both NGOs and government agencies, to gain secure tenure and improved homes. More often, they lead a life of continuous harassment, fear and insecurity. After so much struggle and suffering, the focus of the Philippine government is now on renewal rather than relocation.

Abbreviations:

DMFI	Domus Mariae Foundation Incorporated
KMPC	Kaunlaran Multi Purpose Centre
PAG-IBIG	government home finance fund and secondary mortgage system
	literal translation: Love

PHOTO : PATRICK CROOKE



Typical Manila squatter settlement, subject to eradication.



The evolution of Saarland I

Saarland I is located on what was formerly a rural squatter settlement (barangay or barrio) near the town of Antipolo. The one hectare site, donated by Mrs. Orosa, is on a high and hilly terrain and safe from flooding.

From insecurity to Saarland I

The 1,000 residents of Saarland I are made up of 110 families. This includes the family of a community social worker employed by DMFI as resident estate manager. Most people came to Saarland I from the Santa Ana and the San Andres Bukia districts of Manila. Their story is typical of the long struggles of landless, low-income Philipinos to obtain secure and decent homes and therefore defines the context in which Saarland I occurred.

Area A, Santa Ana is a half hectare site in southern Manila where 127 families lived, 18 of them since 1921, 24 who came after the Second World War. 52 families owned their homes while 33 were renters. Ethnically, they were a mix of Tagalogs, Warays or eastern Visayans and Bicolanos.

They built their small shanties of salvaged materials. The only running water was from their leaky roofs and there were no sanitary facilities or toilets. The site was muddy and pitted, with many deep hollows which filled

with water during the rainy season. Garbage and refuse were thrown into ravines or 'esteros'. Heavy rains might carry the garbage downstream, but otherwise, it piled up and rotted in the stagnant water, creating a pervasive foul smell. But it was a cheap place to live and near to the job opportunities of Manila, so people wanted to stay there.

Since before the Second World War, Area A residents had paid land rent to the corporation which owned the land. Later, the site was mortgaged to the Philippine National Bank, and in 1968 they foreclosed, refusing to accept the people's land rent. Negotiations began with a buyer, and she began threatening the residents with eviction.

The Kaunlaran Multi Purpose Centre (KMPC) was started in 1971 to work with the urban poor in Manila, enabling them to handle their own land and housing problems.

At this point, KMPC sent a community worker to help Area A residents in finding a solution. They had formed a tenants association the year before, but it was ineffective in dealing with the threats. A core of officers was formed and the community worker conducted leadership training sessions. An election was held and a new constitution and by-laws were drafted and approved.

They appealed to their city councillor who stopped the eviction order. The bank then terminated negotiations with the prospective buyer.



Typical squatter relocation site 40 kilometres from Manila.

PHOTO: PATRICK CROOKE



In February 1972, the tenants' association petitioned the city government to expropriate the land and to resell it to them by instalment payments. It was officially approved by the city council in December 1975, but no tangible moves were made to carry it out.

By 1976, KMPC's community worker pulled out of the area, feeling that people were now able to handle their own affairs.

In 1977, the tenants' association were informed that a supermarket chain had bought their site to build a new store.

In November 1979, a demolition team arrived with a city permit to demolish the houses. People were shocked and alarmed. They petitioned for postponement of the eviction to March 1980, which was officially approved.

To stop the eviction completely, residents brought the case to court, requesting help from an assemblyman and obtaining certification of Area A as a residential zone.

Still insecure, the residents approached Sister Lydia Kalaw for support. In June 1980, Sister Lydia and His Eminence Jaime Cardinal Sin invited the Vice-Governor of the Metro Manila Commission to a blessing ceremony. Afterwards, tenants discussed their problems with him, and he promised to help. But in August 1980, the second demolition team arrived. Sister Lydia accompanied tenant leaders to the Vice-Governor, pleading with him to suspend demolition, which he did.

Meanwhile, the tenants' association filed a second case in the courts against the supermarket chain. Their lawyer charged a minimum fee and was willing to pursue the case up to Supreme Court level, if necessary.

The tenants' association asked both the Mayor of Manila City, Ramon Bagatsing and Metro Manila's Governor, Imelda Marcos, to implement the original resolution already approved back in December 1975 - to expropriate the land and to sell it to them.

The court decided to evict Area A's residents, and to demolish their houses with no relocation or financial compensation. An appeal was made to the Supreme Court. While it was pending, the third demolition team arrived in March 1981. This time, they met fierce opposition when women and children formed a human barricade to stop them. This action, together with a temporary restraining order from the Supreme Court prevented the demolition.

The Supreme Court advised the tenants' lawyer that the evictions would only be permanently stopped by

expropriation of the land by the City. The tenants' association asked Sister Lydia to pressure the City Mayor in April 1981. When informed of the Supreme Court's advice, the Mayor finally agreed to expropriate the land, sending an official letter in May.

The City government planned to use Area A for a socialized housing scheme for both house owners and renters.

Cardinal Sin visited Area A and agreed at once that something practical must be done by the Catholic Church. The Domus Mariae Foundation Incorporated was founded in 1983 to develop housing and training for residents of a new scheme, Saarland I. The Cardinal was its Chairman and President, and Sister Lydia Kalaw, its driving force, was Executive Vice-President and Operations Officer. Many residents of Area A applied for housing in the proposed new scheme.

The seed capital

The one-hectare site in Antipolo, donated by Sister Lydia's friend, Mrs. Orosa, became the initial capital investment for Saarland I. Foreign contributions amounting to a total of P2.75 million (Philippine Pesos) were raised by Sister Lydia from Nigeria Hilfswerk-Emmersweiker Stiftung, Menshen und Missionare in Not, the German Embassy, the Share and Care Apostolate for the Poor Settlers, the people of Saarland State in the Federal Republic of Germany (for whom the project is named) and a number of local donors.

Selecting the residents of Saarland I

Selecting 110 beneficiaries from nearly a thousand applicants is not easy. Three different levels of criteria were devised to narrow down the applicants. These criteria were housing need and no other house ownership, income sufficient for the monthly payments, 5 years' residence in Manila, character and family acceptability, readiness to participate, number of dependents, family head under 40 years old, members of the government's home finance fund and secondary mortgage system. The final screening prioritized families facing eviction and members of the local network with at least 5 years' residence in priority areas.

Prospective residents attended seminars to educate them for life in Saarland I. The community social worker enforces certain rules to keep up the standards set for the project. Selling or subletting, adding improvements without



her permission, having guests for periods longer than one month and other infractions of the rules are dealt with by the community social worker.

Planning the project

DMFI contracted an architect, Fr. Jorge Anzorena, S.J., to do the subdivision and building plans with some advice from voluntary consultants who had experience of low-cost housing development projects in India, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Site development and construction were contracted out to a professional building firm. Plots are 50 square metres, larger than the minimum 40 square metres, to allow space for extensions. The basic houses are 21 square metres with reinforced concrete hollow-block walls, galvanized iron roof, capable of supporting an added second floor. All houses are built with shared party walls to cut costs. There is piped water, electricity, toilet, shower and sanitary fixtures. Each house cost P25,000 including the land

(donated) and infrastructure. Monthly amortization payments start at P230 over a 25-year period.

Participation starts after moving in

Families move into a completed house. The basic core house has one bedroom, and an open space which serves as combined living/dining room and kitchen, along with a toilet and shower. Electricity and piped water are available. Participation comes later when they can afford to add another storey or an extension. Half the families are either extended or combined households averaging 6 persons. Therefore, 69 per cent of residents have built extensions, investing from P11,000 to P15,000.

Sewage is collected in septic tanks and disposal is through a closed pipe system into a nearby creek. Garbage collection remains an unsolved problem, since people dump it in a vacant lot while others throw their waste into the creek, but take the trouble to clear it in the rainy season.



Saarland Village 1 street: basic units provided shortly after completion.

Sponsors, organizers and Saarland community celebrate together.





PHOTOS: MARIAN HOUSING FOUNDATION, PHILIPPINES



A small business set up with a loan to compensate for secondary income lost on moving from previous inner city location.



69 per cent of residents have built extensions, investing on average about a year's income.

SAARLAND VILLAGE

Family jobs and incomes in 1983

Most people work in low-paid jobs as labourers, technicians and craftsmen in private business or as clerks in government offices. But 14.7 per cent hold managerial positions or are professionals, while those with the highest income (2.8 per cent) had family members working abroad. Male spouses were 10 per cent unemployed compared to 45 per cent of female spouses.

When they moved into Saarland I in 1983, 58.9 per cent of the families earned between P1,000 and P2,000 per month.

Comparing Saarland I residents' incomes with the monthly incomes in other regions places them among the poorest of the poor. Only 2.9 per cent in the Philippines have such low incomes. The subsistence or poverty line wage is estimated by two government sources at between

P1,214.00 and P2,248.50. By contrast, in Metro Manila, the average monthly income is P3,418. (Philippine Pesos 9.17 are equal to US\$1.)

To continue to receive an income, Saarland I residents have had to become commuters and they remain more strongly linked with Manila than Antipolo. They travel to their jobs in Manila by public transport along the Sumulong Highway or the Marcos Highway, picking up buses and jeepneys where the two highways intersect. The point is half a kilometre from Saarland I itself, reachable by a rough track which is only negotiable on foot or by tricycle.

Weekend residents of Antipolo include wealthy people from Manila who do not find it difficult to drive there in their cars to enjoy the clean air and to escape the city's pollution at their weekend cottages.



Community spirit

Residents are now organized into a Home-owners Association responsible for maintenance, social projects and helping to collect monthly amortization payments which start at P230 a month for a maximum of 25 years. Membership dues for the Association are P50 a month which goes toward maintenance expenses. The Association has erected a perimeter fence, steel gates and street lights and do night patrols for their common protection. A nursery school was opened in June 1986. Social activities include an annual fiesta, a block rosary, dance parties, bingo socials and athletic competitions.

Evaluating the project for satisfaction

Family perceptions indicate that since moving to Saarland I, they spend 58.8 per cent more money on food, electricity, gas, water, education, children's allowance, clothing, housing, transport, and other items.

Increased income since moving to Saarland I was reported by 31 per cent of residents, due to pay rises, children sending money from working abroad, and small-scale income-producing activities. Decreased income was suffered by 17 per cent due to measures taken by industrial firms during the country's severe economic crisis, and higher transport costs for the journey to work. But 48 per cent of families reported no change in their incomes.

Three years after moving in, residents expressed satisfaction with the physical and social environment, but less with the difficult access and high cost of transport. The half-kilometre of unpaved road presents opportunities for extortion, when tricycle drivers charge the same fare

for this distance as a jeepney fare to Manila 30 kilometres away. With their own funds, residents have finally managed to pave some of it but cannot afford the cost of materials required.

Markets, schools, health centres, police and fire stations are within a kilometre, but residents were used to the city's convenience. They missed the city job opportunities where they could earn money as hawkers, sidewalk vendors, shoe polishers, bookers for jeepney and bus passengers. To compensate this loss of income, DMFI obtained finance for small income-generating projects from the government. Twenty-five per cent of families took small loans of P500 to P3,000 to finance small businesses (often in their homes) such as food shops, beauty parlours, bakeshops, cooked foods and sewing for dress manufacturers.

But 96 per cent said that they preferred to stay in Saarland for the rest of their lives. One resident said that moving to Saarland: "...made me feel like a real person. I can now be proud of myself because I have my own house and a lot to show my friends. Weekends are happy events as relatives and friends from the city come for a visit."

NGO and government work in partnership

Saarland I has now been followed by Saarland II. Under the government's PAG-IBIG home finance fund and secondary mortgage system, DMFI sold the mortgages to the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation, using funds obtained from PAG-IBIG. DMFI was then reimbursed for the initial capital spent and immediately invested it in the second scheme, Saarland II.