Lessons learned from a resettlement in Colombia, South America: The Gramalote case

JUANITA LÓPEZ PELÁEZ, PhD.
Disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change specialist
Independent consultant and researcher
100 Ha. – over 1,000 families displaced (3,400 people)
Fuente: Universidad de Pamplona (2013). “Mapa de organizaciones sociales y comunitarias del municipio de Gramalote”
The new site, December 2016
1. Finding the right place to relocate

- Geologic stability: hazard maps and geotechnical studies
- Environmental impact and ecosystem services
- Urban-regional and urban-rural relations

- Accessibility
- Public utilities: water availability
- Time needed for construction

Source: Fondo Adaptación
2. Institutional and governance framework

- Who is in charge?: Centralized execution and institutional coordination
- Trust building and dealing with institutional capacities and practices
- Decision making scheme: The Gramalote Working Group
- Participatory processes, key for success. Some milestones are:
  - Urban design
  - House design
  - Survey validation
  - Spatial planning: “Esquema de ordenamiento territorial”
  - House assignment: collective neighborhood agreements
  - Community and family life plans

Gramalote Working Group: Office of the Mayor, the Governorate, the Personería, the Municipal Supervisorship, the Fondo Adaptación, the Community Action Boards Association, the parish priest, and a representative from the Community

House assignment process (Source: Aecom, 2016)
Chosen neighborhood distribution
3. Exhaustive survey for establishing base line, impacts and necessities

- Detailed Socio-economic characterization of each household (before and after the event) and impact assessment (physical, environmental, social, psychological, economical, institutional)
- Title deeds and plot studies in the original site in order to define measures accordingly (swap mechanism for owners, public housing program for tenants)
- Validation of the survey before final adoption: establishing a transparent mechanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of land possession</th>
<th>Owners living in the urbanized center of Gramalote before the disaster (2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owners</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holders</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holders</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holders of rights and shares</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holders of rights and shares</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupants of vacant lots</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupants of vacant lots</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple occupants</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple occupants</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total families</td>
<td>1,110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Tradicional
- 12 manzanas
- 164 viviendas
- Promedio área lote: 251,6m²
- Promedio área construida: 155,4
- IO promedio: 0,62
- IC promedio: 0,87

### V.I.S.
- 6 manzanas
- 77 viviendas
- Promedio área lote: 83,96m²
- Promedio área construida: 52,79m²
- IO promedio: 0,47
- IC promedio: 0,63

### Variación de la tradicional
- 11 manzanas
- 225 viviendas
- Promedio área lote: 201,17m²
- Promedio área construida: 121,5m²
- IO promedio: 0,48
- IC promedio: 0,63

### Bordes
- 17 manzanas
- 229 viviendas
- Promedio área lote: 228,7m²
- Promedio área construida: 87,64m²
- IO promedio: 0,32
- IC promedio: 0,39

### Aisladas
- 6 manzanas
- 45 viviendas
- Promedio área lote: 258,6m²
- Promedio área construida: 69,11m²
- IO promedio: 0,31
- IC promedio: 0,36
Swap mechanism

606 owner families

At risk property value (before disaster) up to 135 SMMLV (National Minimum Wage)

Entrega de la propiedad o el derecho real que tenga sobre el bien al municipio para el manejo del antiguo casco urbano

VCV = VUR - VPR

Fondo Adaptación

Unique recognition value (Valor Unico de Reconocimiento)

70m2 houses in 150m2 (up to 135 SMMLV)
4. Need of a comprehensive impact based relocation plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENTS</th>
<th>PROGRAMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Access to a safe and sustainable habitat</td>
<td>Selection and purchase of a secure location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land use change approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consolidation of the new administrative center in Miraflores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to decent housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reconstruction of the social fabric to build a resilient community</td>
<td>Collective support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Economic development with a regional, comprehensive, sustainable approach</td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic recovery <em>(urban and rural)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Governance and strengthening local government</td>
<td>Management of the former urbanized center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support to strengthen the Gramalote Municipal Risk Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive municipal territorial management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective municipal public administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal information system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Prevention and mitigation of impacts on the host population</td>
<td>Actions to mitigate impacts on the population in the Miraflores area (host population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Effective and permanent communication mechanisms</td>
<td>Design and implementation of a system of communication and information for the Gramalote community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Financial issues: budget, funding sources and sustainability

- The plan should be formulated accordingly to the available financial resources.
- A proper budget should be based on detailed designs (geotechnical measures, infrastructure, roads) in order to avoid miss estimation of costs.
- Post-relocation stabilization phase should be taken into account.
- There should be a balance between infrastructure and social and economic support programs.
- Financial adjustments and fund raising are needed all the time: unforeseen expenses may reduce initial scope (often priority is given to infrastructure at the expense of social or economic components).
- Funding can’t come exclusively from the State: Private sector, church, donations, inhabitants.
- One of the big challenges is to reestablish the market and economic dynamics: have plots available for private investors, services (bank, cellphone company, etc.), local business; incentivize rural development and reestablishment of rural-urban-region economic relations.

**Gramalote:** USD$180 million – 1.110 households – 3.400 people
5. Simultaneity of different stages

- Flexibility and adaptation to changing conditions during the process (political, legal, financial) are essential
- Planning while doing
- Strong support to the community during the transition is fundamental (6 years): psychological, income generation, social fabric strengthening
5. Is not easy to synchronize people expectations with legal, financial and technical constraints

- Shared responsibility should be established from the beginning (i.e. “Unique recognition value VUR”, old site acquisition mechanism, maintenance of utilities and public buildings, insurance)
- Regulations should define public responsibility when relocation is needed for risk or disaster (who pays what, conditions for access to housing, legal tools for providing economic aid, management of the old site, land acquisition fast track)
- Time is a huge challenge: being realistic based on technical elements is not always compatible with social vulnerabilities and political priorities
- Restrictions vs freewheel: time will tell
- There are always unexpected issues to deal with.
- Town development is a long term process
- Permanent communication mechanisms are essential
5. Knowledge management

• Knowledge management mechanisms should be established from the beginning
• Advance public policy from experience
• Institutional framework, methodologies, good practices and lessons learned should serve to other cases
• Is necessary to mitigate the impact of learning curve lost due to frequent changes of decision makers and professionals involved
• Relocation projects are more than public housing programs (but many housing programs are relocation projects themselves)
• Use of installed capacity for new cases is desirable (i.e. Mocoa)