

## Philippines: Transport data on barangay Caramay (IFRTD)

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These case studies are being compiled to draw lessons from the experience of a wide range of organizations. They are considered as works in progress and will be updated periodically. Comments on the cases are welcomed, as are suggestions on additional cases which could be included in the series.

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### TRANSPORT DATA ON BARANGAY CARAMAY, ROXAS PROVINCE OF PALAWAN, PHILIPPINES

The data collected by the author for this study makes a start in the assessment of gender and transport issues in the rural areas of the Philippines. It should be taken in comparison with the second of the case studies from this region, looking at a second rural 'barangay', which together offer a basis for further study.

Barangay (a district encompassing a number of villages) Caramay is located along the shores of Northern Palawan. It is bounded on the north by Barangay Salvacion, on the south by Barangay Nicanor Zabala, on the west by Barangay Caruray of the Municipality of San Vicente,--portions of Caruray Central Ranges and Stripes Peak, and on the west by Sulu Sea. It is 115 kms. away from the city of Puerto Princesa and about 32 kms. from the town proper of Roxas, Palawan.

It has a total land area of 7,899.34 hectares and encompasses 10 sitios, namely: Bonatan, Tabuyo, Upper Bonatan, Imtag, Baled, Caruray, Kabatakan/Nanabo, Poblacion,. Upper Baled and Busuang. Based on their 1997, Barangay census Caramay has a total population of 2,174 people or 480 households, with an average size of 5 people per household. Nanabo or Kabatakan is a sitio principally inhabited by the Bataks, one of the non-Christian groups native to Palawan. The Majority of the residents are Cuyunin and Tagalog speaking with some Cebuano, Ilocano, Agutaynon, Bicolano and Ilonggo.

#### I. Economic Activity

Farming is the major economic activity in the area with rice and coconut as principal crops. Ten per cent of the total cultivated area, both plain and upland, is planted to rice. But rice production is still way below the rice demand of the barangay because of the absence of irrigation. Coconut on the other hand is the main export and income-earning crop of Caramay. Cashew, coffee and rootcrops are also cultivated both for domestic and commercial use. With such a large area planted to coconut underneath abounds rich grazing for cows, carabaos, horses and goats raised to supplement domestic needs and for market. Poultry and pigs are also raised both for household use and for selling to buyers from Luzon. Agricultural support such as milling facilities are available in the barangay, with eight rice/corn mills to serve the requirements of farmers. Smoking stacks/dryers for copra making on the other hand, are almost always found in the coconut-planted areas owned and operated by the farmers themselves.

Fishing also supports the coastal residents aside from their agricultural source of income. The Sulu Sea provides a rich fishing ground bordering the barangay. An annual average catch of 1, 174 tons of fish caught by the fishers of Caramay find their way to the tables of families in the barangay, while-.the rest are directly marketed to Puerto Princesa City and Manila.

There are about 25 home-based small scale retail stores (selling a range of goods from household provisions to motorcycle spareparts and lubricants) and 5 rice retail stores located in the barangay. A single

bakery, located at Sitio Caruray, produces bread for the entire village and nearby barangays. The barangay market located near the poblacion sells vegetables, rice, canned goods, spices, sugar, coffee, and local snacks. Aside from farming and fishing, occupations held by other residents include teaching, clerical work in government and private offices, and crafts such as dress and basket making.

The entire barangay still depends on kerosene fueled lighting since the services of the local electric co-operative is still limited to the municipal center. However, some residents who acquired electrical appliances like karaoke machines and stereos operate these using car or truck batteries. Water supply source in the barangay is limited to open dug wells, the Caramay River and a nearby stream. But with the recent El Nino weather effects, some wells and streams have dried up, prompting the residents to dig the bed of the stream for alternative source of water supply.

Caramay has its own elementary school, high school, kindergarten and day care center. The majority of school age children in the barangay attends these, walking approximately 1-4 km from the different sitios of the barangay. A government tertiary institution, the Palawan State University (PSU), has a campus located in the municipal center of Roxas for college students from Caramay. Based from the Province Profile, the child and youth literacy rate in Palawan is 93 per cent, while female literacy rate is at 90 per cent.

A satellite health center is located in the poblacion near the barangay hall and is attended by a midwife and a trained barangay health worker. The health unit is open three times a week, in between days the midwife is assigned to other barangays. For minor surgery, hospital facilities and service of physicians, residents can go to the Rural Health Unit and the Medicare Hospital located at the municipal center, 32km from Caramay. For major operations and other health services, patients have to go to Puerto Princesa City 1/ 5 km from the barangay.

The barangay has 2 dirt barangay roads, 2 gravel provincial roads and 1 feeder road. A newly constructed bridge, the Caramay Bridge, crosses the 25km Caramay river. Inside the barangay, the poblacion area is connected to Caruray by a hanging bridge, while a number of small wooden bridges, built across dried up streams, dot the sitios.

Since the barangay's founding in 1905, a number of women have served in their barangay council. While the number of women in the barangay leadership only ranges from 1-3 through the years, their participation in community politics showed the Caramay women's interest in leadership roles. At present there are two women council members and three women purok presidents. There is a women's organization, which was previously engaged in livelihood-earning projects, but appears to be inactive at present.

#### A. Existing modes of transport in the community

- passenger-jeepneys - Puerto - Roxas and Caramay - Roxas poblacion routes
- motorcycle - between 30 to 50 units
- bicycles – approximately 50 to 60 units.
- motorized bancas (pump boat)
- non-motorized bancas
- walking

#### B. Uses/needs for different transport modes in performing gender roles and responsibilities

1. jeepneys - used by the general population to transport themselves from Caramay to the provincial center in Puerto Princesa City or to the municipal center of Roxas and points in between. Jeepneys are used to transport produce and animals to be sold in the town market or in the bigger market. in Puerto Princesa by both men and women, to access services (communication facilities like phones and mails, attend tertiary school, medical services, etc.) in the center, to purchase goods and equipment not available in the barangay (wholesale shopping of products for retail goods, fresh meat, medicines, clothing, motorcycle parts and gasoline, etc.), to go to work to government offices and private establishments, to visit friends or relatives not living within the barangay, or to process papers in government offices (municipal hall, provincial

government and local/regional branches of national agencies).

2. motorcycle - mostly owned by individual residents and used as a private means of transport around the barangay or to the municipal center of Roxas. It is used by men and women in going to work, it was also noted by residents that a number of women teachers in the *barangay* high school use motorbikes in going to school. Even teenage boys and girls are seen around the area in motorcycles performing household errands like fetching water in covered containers, delivering animals to be butchered for the barangay feastday, purchasing fuel, fish, rice, etc., or delivering messages to neighbors. Families attend religious services on their motorbikes, even in their Sunday clothes. Two male fish vendors travel around the barangay on motorcycles. A man who delivers bread in the small stores dotting the barangay does his morning rounds on his old motorcycle.

3. bicycles - approximately 50 to 60 units. This particular mode of transport is used by both men and women to move about in the community, to fetch water, to transport laundry from their house to their water-source, in marketing, socializing with neighbors or friends from the other end of the barangay and for boys and girls to play. The people in the community use this mode of transport in performing a number of activities basically the same as they use the motorcycle, except when going to destinations further than the nearby barangays, because the dirt and gravel roads within the municipality are hard to negotiate.

4. Motorized bancas (pump boats) - This mode of transport is used basically by the fishermen in the community to transport themselves to the fishing grounds within the barangay waters. But aside from this, motorized bancas are also used to fulfill some domestic chores, especially associated with the procurement of water or activities that need water, like doing the laundry and bathing. This was observed among a number of families with the males in the family transporting women, probably their wives or sisters and children, in the unpolluted section of the Caramay River to bathe early in the morning and to wash clothes in the river before fetching water for their homes. The occurrence of the prolonged dry spell, have made water-sourcing a serious problem. This practice was more of a coping strategy on the part of residents, but has become part of their everyday activity. Bancas are also used by families for other leisure activities like picnics and swimming in the nearby islands.

Old women residents recalled going to the municipal center in Roxas and Puerto Princesa via the sea route using pump boats or *lantsa*. But since the government has opened a main dirt road, transportation has become land-based and the commercial pumpboats slowly disappeared from Caramay.

5. Non-motorized bancas - also serve most of the functions outlined above, but operate only within a limited distance and areas because of human-powered nature. Men and small boys usually make use of this mode of transport to travel the length of the Caratnay River to fetch water, or to fish within the barangay waters. Also used to move around the community or for leisurely sightseeing.

6. Walking - the majority of the residents carry out their everyday activities by walking. Women walk to the poblacion market to buy provisions for the household, both men and women walk to fetch water and to take a bath. Women and men also walk to the health center to church, to neighbors to exchange news and stories. They also walk to go to other sitios, especially in the upland section of the community, to work on their patch of *kaingin*, to gather cashew nuts, to plant rice and to take care of these. Children walk to attend school and some of their teachers do too. From the national road going to the sitios, people walk towards the interior of the barangay since there are no tricycles to transport them to their final destination. There are no designated walking trails within the barangay since the entire area has accessible walking paths underneath coconut trees. Even the barangay roads are still dominantly used by pedestrians.

### C. Preference or differential use by men and women

Based on interviews and observations carried out by the researcher, there seemed to be no marked difference in the use and access of both men and women in almost all of the available modes of transport in the community. Jeepneys plying the routes Roxas – Puerto Princesa and Roxas - Caramay are uniformly used by both men and women with regularity and almost the same frequency. As to comfort this particular mode of transport is relatively comfortable and does not impose restrictions on women's seating location

e.g. to sit or stand up inside or to sit on top, called top-loading.

Motorcycles and bicycles are also used by both men and women with almost the same regularity but with frequency in favor of men, owing to the fact that many of them are the owners. But in terms of accessibility, women and even young girls enjoy the same access to these transportation appliance. And for this reason, both women and young girls are seen to be at ease in the use and operation of this mode of transport in their everyday activities whether for personal enjoyment, fulfillment of errands, social functions or workrelated/economically productive activities. Familiarity with these transportation technologies removes women's awkwardness in using them, observed from how they carry themselves and assure their comfort even in their manner of dressing while riding motorcycles.

Of all the available modes of transport the *banca* or boats, whether motorized or non-motorized, are the least-accessible to women since its use is still basically associated with fishing activities dominated by men. This is maybe due to the fact that boats are almost always socially acknowledged as owned by men even if it is a family property. From observations, these modes of transport seem to be reasonably accessible to women.

#### D. Factors affecting performance of men and women (frequency, costs, comfort, safety, reliability, availability of service, ownership.

1 - Passenger jeepney - Jeepneys ply the Puerto Princesa to Roxas route beginning as early as 8:00a.m. and a last return trip leaves Puerto at midnight- Jeepneys coming from Roxas town to Puerto Princesa begin its earliest trip at 7:00a.m. and its last trip at 5:00p.m. These vehicles, which resemble oversized jeeps with the motor engine of a truck, have a seating capacity of 50 but accommodates around 75 people when fully-packed. They are relatively reliable and follow a predictable schedule which people can count on. A ride from Puerto Princesa to Caramay. and vice-versa takes around 3-4 hours on a dusty, bumpy, rough road and costs P60.00 one-way. The trips are relatively safe and comfortable but hot and overcrowded. Quite a number of jeepneys service these route mostly owned by residents of Puerto Princesa.

On the other hand, jeepneys servicing the route Caramay to Roxas town start and load passengers at the poblacion and leave the barangay as early as 6:00 a.m.. The next trip comes at 9:00a.m., 12:00 noon and another trip in -the afternoon. There are about 6 passenger jeepneys on this dusty and bumpy route which takes around 30 - 45 minutes to reach its destination. A one-way trip costs around P. 15 to P.20. All the vehicles on these routes are owned by male Caramay residents.

#### D. Is this affordable?

2. Motorcycles - since motorcycles are privately owned and used for personal purposes

by its owners, these vehicles are as good as long as they are serviceable. Necessary costs

in maintaining this personal means of transportation include fuel, parts, repairs and in the

case of Caramay residents, monthly installments that ranges from P1,900.00 - P2,400.00 a month (depending on brand and model) since majority of them are acquired by installment. Ownership usually depends on who acquired and pays for the unit which can be either men or women.

#### E. Owners

1. Passenger jeepney - public utility, commercial

2. Motorcycles - privately owned, for personal use

3. Bicycles - privately owned, for personal use

4. Motorized bancas - for private use of fishermen and their family
5. Non-motorized bancas - for private use of fishermen and their family

F. Level of development and access by men and women to communication and information structure

Since there is no electricity and newspapers do not reach the community, information and news reaches the Caramay only through the transistor radios. But despite this, people are up to date on what's happening at the local and national levels because of the regular flow of information through residents who frequently travel to the municipal center and the provincial center in Puerto.

Women also share an important role in this area since they occupy important positions at the Barangay and Purok levels as keepers of records, documents, information and as disseminators of the same. Even wives of male barangay council members are instrumental in circulating information or news relevant to the entire barangay. These are carried out through formal means during meetings or informal activities such as storytelling or in conjunction with the performance of their domestic activities like fetching water.

Access to other communication infrastructure like mail and telephone services are also available in the municipal center and in Puerto Princesa.

## **II. Social Infrastructure**

There are no existing organizations in the community that respond to transportation issues. But the barangay Council plays an active role in the community ranging from the social aspect to those that touches on fisheries and marine conservation, and infrastructure needs of the area. A newly-organized group established with the assistance of HARIBON-Palawan involves fishermen and their wives, and is supported by the Barangay. A women's organization, on- the other hand, established during the term of their old congressman has been inactive for some time because of the absence of funds which the congressman promised to provide.

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