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The Rosario Habitat Program Experience: Part 1
by Ana Maria Rodriguez
and Adriana Salomón

The Rosario Habitat Program Experience:
Project Management Applied to Government[1, 2]

Part 1 of 3

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There are few documented cases of Project Management methodologies in Government projects in Latin America. There is a wrong belief on the impossibility of applying methodologies in environments strongly affected by political decisions. It is also wrongly believed that the specific characteristics of government projects make it impossible to apply international standards. It is real that the implementation of best practices requires political decisions that ease the environment for it, and it is also true that methodologies should be adapted to the particularities of each project. There is no doubt that well managed projects bring more benefits to populations and more transparency on funds administration; therefore the implementation of Project Management best practices should be seen as a need in all government areas.

The present article documents the experience of the Rosario Habitat Program, developed since year 2000 by the Public Housing Service (Servicio Público de la Vivienda), office of the City of Rosario (Argentina); numerous project management practices have been applied at RHP since its beginnings. The objective of RHP is to improve the quality of life of the population living in irregular settlements in Rosario, by promoting the physical and social integration of these areas to the regular city. The program's main characteristic is its unique focus that considers the problem of the so called "misery villages"[3] not only as a problem of lack of housing but also lack of access to health, education, and minimum services. This is why the program combines investment in infrastructure – focused on improving the habitat - with social actions, job initiatives, training, and income improvement.

1 – Background

By the end of the 1990's, there were ninety-one irregular settlements in Rosario, with almost 115,000 habitants representing 13% of the city's total population, placed in 10% of the total

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[1] Second Editions are previously published papers that have continued relevance in today's project management world, or which were originally published in conference proceedings or in a language other than English. Original publication acknowledged; authors retain copyright. This paper was originally published in *PM World Today* in November 2009. It is republished here with the authors' permission.

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[3] Villas Miserias

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urban area of the city in extreme poverty conditions. The Government of Rosario[4], through the Public Housing Service[5], managed an application process to a loan granted by the Inter American Development Bank (IADB). The Program was initiated in year 2000, with own funds and in 2002 the first funds from IADB were received. As a first instance, 5200 families from irregular settlements were included in the RHP, this means one third of the Rosario families in irregular housing situation. The total program budget was US$71 millions, 60% of the funds come from the IADB loan and the remaining 40% funded by the Government of Rosario.

The Rosario Habitat Program includes 11 projects; projects are delimited in a territorial basis. Each project works for the improvement of a particular settlement as its purpose. All projects implement the same deliverables (components of the program):

- Integrated urbanization: Construction of infrastructure Works, required houses (for a maximum of 30% of the families), construction of social facilities (clubs, health centres, and others), ownership regularization (houses in the name of the families)

- Integrated actions for children and adolescents and their families (social education, nutrition, recreation, food production, inclusion in the education system for young people)

- Work and income generation (youth training in trades, formation of micro-enterprises)

Program implementation posed clear challenges for the Public Housing (SPV): Firstly, the SPV historically functioned as an area in charge of housing, and the Rosario Habitat Program had a higher demand for services to the populations served. Second, given its financing and its impact on the city of Rosario the program has many highly influential stakeholders. Third, IADB requires some management regulations that required a particular effort to be completed. All this created a need to incorporate best practices in Project Management. Suggested practices were selected by the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), the same IADB, and some of the Project Management Institute as in the case of time planning and setting up a PM Office (PMO).

Even considering all these sources of methodology, for ease of understanding the present article is structured following the PMBOK knowledge areas provided by the Project Management Institute (PMI).

2 – Project Management Conceptual Framework

As explained above, the Rosario Habitat Program is implemented through 11 projects that are managed under a single coordinated program. This reduces risks, provides economies of scale, pooling resources, ultimately improving management skills.

Projects Stakeholders

One of the particularities of government projects is the large number of stakeholders that must be managed properly in order to achieve desired results. For RHP projects, the following stakeholders are clearly identified:

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[4] Municipalidad de Rosario
[5] Servicio Público de la Vivienda

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1. Residents of the settlement, who will be the direct beneficiaries of the Project.
2. Neighbourhood organizations, who will accompany the intervention.
3. Neighbours in the vicinity of the settlement, who will be indirect beneficiaries of the Project.
4. The National Government and the IADB, as financing sources of the Program are players that need to be informed and in some cases consulted for regular program execution.

As a sponsor, the city of Rosario is the one who drives the implementation of the Program, as part of its urban and social policies.

Program structure and functioning of each of its projects.

In order to cater adequately to the RHP, the Public Housing Service[6] (SPV) reorganized their work areas into a matrix structure that coordinated the activity of sectors and specialists with the needs of project management. The total program is coordinated and supervised by staff in charge of SPV. Each project is managed by a project manager who is in charge of a project team.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATRIX				
SPV GENERAL DIRECTOR				
PROGRAM COORDINATOR				
PROJECTS SPECIALIZED AREAS	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3	PROJECT 4
Land and Ownership regularization				
Housing and Infrastructure				
Sustainable Human Development				
Financial/Administrative				
Comunications				
PM OFFICE				

The Role of Project Managers has been strengthened as middle managers, prioritizing their leadership capabilities and their strategic vision over the technical knowledge. The project manager is responsible for a project team of collaborators; each team faces the challenge of improving the situation of a settlement. Defined areas ((Housing and Infrastructure, Land and Ownership Regularization, Sustainable Human Development and Financial, administrative) provide services and resources to project teams.

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[6] Servicio Publico de la Vivienda

The Project Management Office

A Project Management Office (PMO) has been established in the RHP, a unit within the structure that ensures the proper implementation of project management methodologies and centralizes information on project performance.

The PMO program works in three main areas:

1. Quality monitoring.
2. Planning and control of time.
3. Budgetary control.

For each of these fields, the work performed begins with information collection, processing, further analysis and interpretation, resulting in reports. These reports are used both to inform the program sponsors, and also for decision making regarding the implementation of projects.

The PMO also plays the role of documenting and communicating best practices across projects.

Stages of projects

The implementation of the Rosario Habitat Program in all the settlements in which work is carried out includes broad lines of action, which are adapted according to the particularities of each settlement. In this way, all projects are implemented in three phases:

1. **Initial formulation**

   The original formulation involves collecting data and information and its subsequent analysis to determine the feasibility and possible intervention strategies in a settlement. Thus, the IADB is requested authorization for the implementation of the Program in each specific settlement. At this time approximate cost of the project is estimated and key players are identified.

2. **Executive Formulation**

   At this stage begins the formal work of the Project Teams in the settlement; the RHP executive formulation stage is addressed as a participatory planning process in which expectations of the beneficiaries are received and documented. Based on this information, final drafts are developed, actions are defined and the overall operational plan is shaped, also ensuring economic viability.

3. **Project Execution**

   In this stage actions of all components that were agreed with beneficiaries and approved by the Inter-American Development Bank are implemented. Deliverables are produced.

Once the projects are initiated, projects remain in the planning - do (performance) - review and action (monitoring and control) cycle until project closure. Development of project lifecycles includes the following processes:

1. Initiating Process Group: The objective of this process group is the formal initiation of a project, generating a first deliverable as it is the initial formulation document. The following processes are included in the initiation of RHP projects:

    1. Surveys, and systematization of information
    2. Land acquisition.

    To achieve these products, the Project Manager is assigned; processes, procedures and historical information of the program that can be transcendent for the project are gathered; stakeholders are identified; the needs of the settlement, assumptions and constants are documented, among others.

2. Planning Process Group: The planning process defines whether the project is viable to run and find the best way for that purpose. The following processes are included in the planning of RHP projects:

    1. Participatory planning and accompanying socio-environmental accompanying
    2. Final definition of land subdivision, provision of infrastructure and housing solutions to be implemented

    These processes determine the Executive Formulation Document, which includes project management methodologies to be applied and also the baseline for all aspects of the project against which performance will be measured: scope, time, cost, resources, quality.

    In this instance roles and responsibilities are defined, also communication plans, risk analysis and definition of risk response plans, definition of project inputs, among others.

    Planning processes determine the mechanisms to be followed during project execution. These processes are iterative, since it is necessary to re-plan after starting the implementation considering results.   Re-planning modifies management mechanisms defined and revisions to the project baseline after appropriate changes approval process.

3. Executing Process Group: The object of these processes is to complete the work necessary to meet project objectives.   During execution the work focuses on managing the team and following definitions from the planning instances previously documented in the Executive Formulation Document. During Execution the selection and contracting suppliers happens. While implementation processes happen, it is vital to collect and receipt information related to change approval, and how changes should be implemented. In this group we include the following processes:

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1. Measurements, subdivision and land deed
2. Preparation of specifications and procurement of works
3. Execution of works
4. Family relocation, if required

Other processes implemented during execution refer to program components "Care of Children and Adolescents" and "Work and Income Generation", which are extremely important but do not contain actions that generate impact on the overall project delays.

4. Group Process Monitoring and Control: The processes of monitoring and control functions aims to compare the performance of the project as set out in the baseline of the Executive Project Formulation, identify the variations that arise, analyze the cause of them, and make decisions to prevent further happening. In addition, report performance of the project and generate projections of future performance. Based on this information, these processes focus on avoiding unnecessary changes and approve the changes necessary to maintain project performance according to their baseline. These processes can authorize changes in the baseline of the project if it is primary.

5. Closing Process Group: The objective is to ensure that the projects have been completed to fulfil all requirements and that information is properly collected for future use. The closure of the projects includes the confirmation that the work was done according to the requirement, and that deliverables are accepted by the user (this is the habitants of the regularized settlements), closure of contracts, documentation of lessons learned, the final compilation of the information on file with the project and the release of resources that are still participating in the project.

In parts 2 and 3, it will be explained how the Rosario Habitat Program implemented practices that addressed all areas within the PMBOK.

Images of the Rosario Habitat Program on next page

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Empalme Project - Before implementation of the Rosario Habitat Program

Empalme Project - After implementation of the Rosario Habitat Program

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Ms. Ana Maria Rodriguez offers consulting services to the Engineering and Construction Industry in Argentina, and is an adjunct professor of project management at the Universidad Nacional de Rosario. She is Founder of ERA Project Management. Colombian by birth, Ms. Rodriguez graduated with a Civil Engineering Degree from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota and from the University of Texas at Austin, USA with a Masters Degree in Construction Engineering and Project Management (MSE). She earned the Project Management Professional (PMP) and is a graduate from the Leadership Institute MasterClass of the Project Management Institute. Ms Rodriguez has implemented Project Management best practices and managed projects both in the government sector and in the engineering and construction private sector. Ms. Rodriguez is also an active member of PMI in Argentina, and is an international correspondent for PMForum and PM World Today in Argentina. Ms. Rodriguez welcomes contact at arodriguezdev@gmail.com also at https://www.linkedin.com/in/amrodriguez/

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