

Land conflict in the family

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From the ancient myths, we know that in the beginning, people lived happily together in simple harmony. However, this golden age of peaceful coexistence sadly did not last. As time passed, people divided the land among them, and rendered it into private property, which they continue to fight over with another to this day.

In one of my encounters as a local enumerator in *Barangay* Nabaliwa, I witnessed that even though people belong to the same bloodline, they still argue and fight over pieces of land.

The elder sibling, who is my respondent, has a conflict with his siblings due to overlapping and false claims. The younger siblings claim that the boundaries of their elder siblings overlap with theirs. According to my respondent “That is not true. They are the ones who trespassed even when our parents were still alive. We divided the eight-hectare lot into two hectares for each sibling.”

The elder sibling has claims of more or less two hectares over their inherited eight hectares. However, he did not till his share because he works in Cagayan de Oro City. When he eventually returned home and decided to engage in farming, a feud with his siblings over land ensued.

He wanted to hire a land surveyor way back in 2005 to at least know if his share is really two hectares, but he hesitated because his younger siblings might disagree. For many years, their relationship changed. He wants to assert what is right, but he does not want to end up being the bad guy.

In 2020, a solution was offered with the help of our team of local enumerators from Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. (XSF). As part of the project “Enhancing Tenurial Security for Smallholder Farmers in Northern Mindanao, Philippines,” together with my fellow enumerators, we surveyed their land using the techniques that



we learned. Aided by technology, a more accurate reading of the size of the area was generated. We have recorded pertinent information through enumeration process, validated the data we gathered with support from the family members and their respective neighbors. Eventually, the conflict was resolved given the processes we went through.

Thus, the siblings are thankful for XSF and the local enumerators as their relationships improved.

Land conflicts are indeed a widespread phenomenon, and can occur at any time or place. Greed and fear makes things worse. But the important thing we should remember is that disputes over land or any other property should not be allowed to damage relationships.

In the end, we cannot bring our property to the next life. ■