Working Paper 2003-05

Improving Local Governance through a Community-Based Monitoring System

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May 2003

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This work was carried out with the aid of a grant from the *International Development Research Centre* (IDRC)-funded *Poverty and Economic Policy* (PEP) research network [www.pep-net.org].
CBMS Philippines Research Paper

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This work was carried out with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada.

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The decentralization of government functions in various countries in Asia and Africa brought forth a great demand for regular, up-to-date, and more disaggregated information for development planning and policy/project impact monitoring at all geopolitical levels. This in turn signals the need for an information system for a more systematic, efficient and better-targeted allocation of very limited resources especially at the local level.

Research and advocacy work under the Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP) Program of the International Development Research Centre on the development and institutionalization of community-based monitoring system (CBMS) in the Philippines intends to address the aforementioned information gaps for national and local policy-making. Over time, expected benefits from the system include improved governance and a more empowered and involved local constituency in achieving development goals. In particular, CBMS is aimed to be a complementary tool for the continuing effort of the Philippine government to track the welfare conditions and alleviate the plight of the vulnerable sectors of the society specifically the poor.

The Proposed MIMAP-CBMS

Data relating to the different dimensions of poverty in the Philippines are traditionally obtained from national censuses and surveys conducted by national statistics offices. However, these surveys and censuses are conducted infrequently and at irregular intervals. Moreover, they are conducted at different time periods thus making it difficult to come up with a comprehensive picture of the different aspects of poverty at a particular point in time.

Furthermore, data from these sources are too aggregated. The available national, regional and sometimes provincial data are not sufficient for the use of local government units, particularly cities/municipalities and barangays. They need disaggregated information for diagnosing poverty at the local level and identifying eligible beneficiaries for targeted programs. The proposed community-based monitoring system (CBMS) seeks to address the existing gaps in the statistical system.

An initial design of the system was proposed by Florentino and Pedro under the MIMAP Phase II Project in 1992. The succeeding project phases of MIMAP, and currently under the CBMS International Network Project brought forth, continuous refinements of the system to incorporate recent socioeconomic developments.

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The MIMAP CBMS seeks to provide policymakers with a regular and frequent information on the possible impacts of macroeconomic adjustment policies on the welfare of households, particularly those belonging to the vulnerable groups.

Specifically, CBMS seeks to provide the following:

- an organized system of collecting information for policymaking and program implementation at all geopolitical levels;
- up to date information on the welfare status and needs at the community and household levels;
- a tool in monitoring and evaluating the impact of projects and programs; and
- a tool for better local governance.

**FEATURES:** The CBMS combines the best features of existing monitoring systems and incorporates new essential attributes.

**LGU based**

- adopts the concept of mobilizing and developing the capability of communities for data generation and utilization
- disaggregates the collected information into functional groups
- reports the data collected to the higher geopolitical level for immediate intervention to address welfare gaps among vulnerable groups, and ultimately reaches macroeconomic planners in order to influence adjustment programs
- creates and maintains databanks at each geopolitical level
- utilizes the information generated by monitoring systems already in place as a support indicator system
FIGURE 1: CBMS Flow of Information

Tap existing LGU personnel as monitors
The monitors are expected to supervise the collection of primary data, collect primary data, consolidate the data available at the provincial/municipal and barangay level, and maintain the databank at their level (Figure 1).

At the barangay level, the proposed monitors are:

- the barangay health workers (BHW);
- the barangay nutrition scholars (BNS);
- barangay council members; and
- other community volunteers.

At the municipal level, the monitors will come from the Municipal (City) Planning and Development Office led by the Municipal (City) Planning and Development Coordinator.

The Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator (PPDC) will lead the Provincial Planning and Development Office staff as the monitors at the provincial level.

National level consolidation and monitoring will be done by either the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) or the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). The NAPC is the agency tasked with coordinating all poverty reduction policies and programs while the DILG has the mandate to supervise and enhance the capabilities of the LGUs for self-governance, and implement plans and programs on local autonomy.
Has a core set of indicators

The indicators have been chosen based on the multi-dimensional character of poverty and have been confined to output and impact indicators. These fourteen (14) MIMAP core indicators corresponding to the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) which cover aspects of social welfare in (a) health; (b) nutrition; (c) housing; (d) water and sanitation; (e) basic education (f) income; (g) employment; and (h) peace and order (Table 1).

TABLE 1: List of Core Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASIC NEEDS</th>
<th>CORE INDICATORS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Health</td>
<td>1 Child mortality rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Nutrition</td>
<td>2 Malnutrition prevalence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Housing</td>
<td>3 Proportion of households living in non-makeshift housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Proportion of households who are not squatters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Water and Sanitation</td>
<td>5 Proportion of households with access to potable water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Proportion of households with access to sanitary toilet facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Basic Education</td>
<td>7 Literacy rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Elementary participation rate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 Secondary participation rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Income</td>
<td>10 Proportion of household with income above the poverty threshold</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 Proportion of households with income above the food threshold</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 Proportion of households eating 3 meals a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Employment</td>
<td>13 Employment rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Peace and Order</td>
<td>14 Crime incidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LGUs can add other indicators that are regarded as relevant to their communities. For example:

For areas with armed conflict: Proportion of households affected by armed conflicts

For areas prone to natural disasters: Proportion of households affected by natural disasters (volcanic eruption, typhoons, flood, earthquakes, lahar, etc.)
For agricultural communities: Proportion of farm households who are landless.

For indigenous people communities: Proportion of households with access to ancestral domains.

For unenergized areas: Proportion of households with access to electricity.

To be able to explain the observed trends in welfare status, these indicators have to be supplemented by barangay, municipal and provincial profiles and secondary data.

THE CBMS PROCESS: CBMS, which is a participatory process of data collection, processing and utilization of information, involves crucial steps at the local level. The process involves collection of data through a household survey to be conducted by trained community officials and volunteers, processing and consolidation of the data at the barangay, municipal, and provincial level, and validation of survey results through community dialogues, and consultation meetings with local officials to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the gathered information. From thereon, CBMS data can be used by the barangay, municipal and provincial governments in their annual planning exercise as well as for specific program impact assessment.

DISSEMINATION AND USE OF CBMS DATA: The information collected will be made available to the planning bodies, program implementers and other interested organizations through data boards at all geopolitical level, computerized databanks at the municipal and provincial levels, and publications. This aims to provide relevant inputs in formulating programs and policies.

The information from the CBMS may be used:

- To monitor regularly the welfare conditions of households and individuals
- To provide inputs to development plans and socio-economic profiles
- To provide the basis for resource allocation
- To help identify target beneficiaries for programs and projects
- To provide inputs for program design, implementation and monitoring

CBMS and GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM: CBMS likewise complements the utilization of recent database management software innovations. For instance, data on socio-economic characteristics of the households derived from CBMS mapped through use of geographic information system (GIS) is found to be an effective tool for policy-makers and program implementers to visually locate their constituent
needs as well as compare socioeconomic conditions across puroks, barangays, municipalities and provinces.

**CBMS Palawan Experience**

The CBMS experience in the province of Palawan, a pilot collaboration between the Provincial Government of Palawan and the MIMAP-Philippines Project Management Team, has drawn interest from the national government agencies and LGUs as well.

The provincial government of Palawan formally operationalized the province-wide implementation of the CBMS in November 1999 through a joint effort with the municipal government units of Palawan as signified in the Executive Order No. 15 issued by former Governor Salvador P. Socrates. MIMAP-Philippines Team provided technical assistance in terms of training the CBMS key persons at the provincial level as well as key players in selected municipalities and barangays. All the direct costs in the implementation of the CBMS was shouldered by the provincial government. The CBMS household survey was conducted in the first quarter of 2000 initially covering 354 out of the total 426 Barangays in 21 out of the total 23 municipalities.

Through the results of the CBMS survey in 2000, the provincial government was able to assess the status of socioeconomic development conditions in the province and identify the respective disparities across municipalities. The data has served as inputs in goal formulation, target-setting, for impact monitoring specifically on its effect on people's welfare condition, and for development goal and policy adjustments. Another major breakthrough during this phase was the premiere publication of the province’s first human development report which was mainly based from information gathered through CBMS.

Because of the benefits of the information system, the provincial government restructured its local development planning to incorporate the use of CBMS data as benchmark for the design of development plans and programs. The significant role of CBMS information as a pillar for development planning in Palawan was formally institutionalized by Executive Order No. 3, issued in January 2002 by the Honorable Joel T. Reyes, governor of Palawan, which mandates the following:

(a) the use of CBMS data as a basis for planning;
(b) synchronizing the time frame of planning activities; and
(c) the allocation of 20 percent development fund of all LGUs to CBMS-based plans.

Meanwhile, at the provincial level, CBMS data is being used as inputs for project impact monitoring by Provincial Development Council and by the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO). PPDO for instance has conducted an evaluation of the impact of the comprehensive integrated delivery of social services (CIDSS) on selected areas using CBMS. Data for CBMS had likewise been used by municipal development councils during their respective development planning sessions, and in turn in the preparation of their annual investment plans.
CBMS survey for the year 2002 is currently being completed in Palawan under the supervision of the PPDO and corresponding municipal planning and development coordinators. Survey has expanded coverage in areas not included during the earlier round. A major achievement in the current phase of CBMS implementation in the Province is the participation of the City Government of Puerto Princesa. Initially, CBMS was adopted in 12 out of its 66 barangays in 2001. For the year 2003, coverage shall be expanded to 27 more barangays. In the case of Puerto Princesa, CBMS is currently being used for the preparation of profiles of the 12 pilot CBMS sites.

Linking Up with National Agencies and Non-Government Organizations

Data from CBMS was also found to be useful for monitoring project sites of both national government and non-government organizations. CBMS data, in fact, had already been used by selected agencies in the preparation of profiles of their respective project sites in Palawan. The experiences of some of these organizations have been documented as follows:

a. Philippine National Red Cross-Puerto Princesa

The CBMS data was used by the agency in its Integrated Community Disaster Planning Program (ICDPP). In particular, the data served as inputs for guidelines for the selection of project sites and areas in the municipalities of Quezon and Coron.

The ICDPP was able to use the CBMS data (on demographic/population/household characteristics, resources available to the community livelihood, access to potable water, and methods of garbage disposal) in the preparation of the profile of the municipality of Quezon, Southern Palawan. The CBMS data supplemented by other information from the RHUs served as inputs in verifying priority problems in the community discussed during community assemblies (focused group discussions). Among the priority projects identified in the municipality as a result of the use of CBMS data 2000 is the development of water system in Calumpang (construction of 2 deep wells and 13 dug wells), and Tabon (construction of an elevated water tank-Level 2). Furthermore, other community projects relating to health were also identified.

The process of utilization of CBMS is currently being replicated in the municipality of Coron.

b. Palawan Tropical Forestry Protection Program (PTFPP)

PTFPP is a special project by the European Union (EU) which started in 1995. The main thrust of the project is forest protection through livelihood.

CBMS data has served as input to the preparation of PTFPP strategic management plan for Southern Palawan which covers the municipalities of Quezon, Brookes’ Point, Rizal, Española and some portions of Bataraza. In
particular, PTFFP noted to had used PPDO’s data on HDI (which made use of CBMS as baseline information in its computation), and also the municipal profile of Quezon (which likewise was based from CBMS data).

PTFPP suggests to further process the CBMS information in a way that will show difference in socioeconomic conditions between lowland and upland communities. Specifically, PTFPP has expressed interest in using data from the sitio level (in the upland communities).

c. **Conservation International**

The CBMS data was noted to have been useful for Conservation International (CI) in the preparation of socioeconomic profiles of the Calamianes group of islands (Busuanga, Coron and Linapacan) where a project on resource economy (*study on live reef fish trade; the study also looks at the use of cyanide for fishing vis a vis other methods*) is currently being conducted. Among the CBMS data initially utilized were those on demographic characteristics and migration.

CI will utilize the other information in the CBMS survey i.e. fishing and farming as soon as they have processed them (they borrowed the questionnaires from PPDO). They are planning to encode the latter first.

d. **Center for Renewable Resources and Energy Efficiency (CRREE)**

The Center for Renewable Resources and Energy Efficiency (CRREE) aims to promote renewable energy through capacity building among communities. Among its activities are training on renewable energy technologies, education & awareness building among barangays and local government units, renewable energy development, and electrification of communities by providing hardware support (done through partnership with private organizations and other interested groups).

The CBMS data is being utilized by CRREE in its project referred as “Palawan New and Renewable Energy & Livelihood Support Project”. In particular, the data on infrastructure and utilities, population and household characteristics, education and literacy, and livelihood are being used as baseline information for the preparation of profiles of possible project sites in Palawan. The said document serves as supporting documents for validation of data during consultation with local government units.

e. **Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)**

The national office of the DSWD have noted the usefulness of the CBMS data in monitoring of the improvements and unmeet needs in areas covered by the
Comprehensive Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) Program in the province of Palawan. CIDSS is among the national government’s social program to alleviate poverty.

Concerned national government agencies have acknowledged the potential usefulness of CBMS as a complementary tool in the government’s quest for better delivery of social services, and in turn in poverty reduction efforts of the government. As such, the National Anti-Poverty Commission, lead convenor of poverty alleviation initiatives in the country, has proposed for the institutionalization of a local-poverty monitoring system. A review and assessment of existing local poverty monitoring systems such as the Minimum Basic Needs-Community Based Indicator System (MBN-CBIS), Minimum Basic Needs-Community Based Poverty Indicator and Monitoring System (MBN-CBPIMS), Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP), and the MIMAP Community-Based Monitoring System was undertaken which resulted to a consensus of establishing a comparable core set of local poverty indicators that took off from the gains of the different systems already in place at the local level. The proposed system shall embody the significant features of the existing monitoring systems including that of the CBMS being proposed by MIMAP. A guidebook for the operationalization of the said system has already been developed. In this regard, a memorandum circular has been signed and issued by the Secretary of the Department of Interior Local Government (DILG) which details the guidelines for the adoption of the proposed core local poverty indicators by local government units.

Other dynamic LGU leaders have continued to express their interest for the adoption of CBMS in their respective localities. The newest partner of MIMAP-Philippines Team (now also referred as the CBMS International Network Coordinating Team) in line with this initiative is the Municipal Government of Labo, Camarines Norte led by Hon. Mayor Winifredo Oco. Said municipality has already completed its data collection in all of its 52 barangays, and is halfway through with the processing of the survey data. Results of the survey shall be used by the municipal development council of Labo in their preparation of their budget starting this July.

Initiative in the municipality of Labo has opened doors towards the implementation and/or possible adoption of CBMS in the remaining 11 municipalities in the province as well. As of date, CBMS data collection is on-going in the municipality of Sta. Elena. Six other municipalities have already requested for the orientation of their key municipal officials. A series of CBMS training workshop on data collection in the said municipalities will start by June 2003. Likewise, the Governor of the Province as supported by its Provincial Planning and Development Office has expressed strong interest to implement CBMS province-wide thus a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Province and the MIMAP-CBMS Team is currently being processed to formalize arrangements on the technical support to be requested by the Province from MIMAP. Said MOA would also contain the responsibilities of the Provincial Government to facilitate the implementation of the said system. Meanwhile, talks are also underway in line with the possible adoption of the system in selected cities in other provinces as well. Among these are Mandaue City in the Province of Cebu, and Davao City in the Province of Davao del Sur.
References:


