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**Improving Local Governance in the Philippines through
CBMS**

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and Strategies for Poverty Reduction and Improving Local
Governance



IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNANCE THRU COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING SYSTEM

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I. Introduction

In the Philippines, CBMS started its implementation in the early 1990s under the Micro-Impact of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP) project which was intended to provide policy makers and program implementers with information base for tracking the impacts of macro-economic reforms and various policy shocks. After almost two decades, it is now widely used among local government units nationwide in various applications.

The birth of CBMS implementation coincide with decentralization process espoused by the passage of the Local Government Code (LGC) in October 1991 which devolved to LGUs the primary responsibility of the provision of social services lies with the Local Government Units (LGUs). The LGUs take prime responsibility for the delivery of various social services and public goods that were previously under the domain of the national government such as the promotion of health and welfare, infrastructure for education and related social services, ecological balance and economic prosperity.

Consequently, Republic Act 8245, Local Poverty Reduction Reform Act further mandates LGUs to take the frontline role in the fight against poverty. Furthermore, in light of the Philippines' commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the LGUs are encouraged to pursue more appropriate local interventions to contribute to the attainment of MDG targets.

The delegation of more functions to LGUs increased the demand for regular, up-to-date and more disaggregated information essential for development planning, policy making, project development, and impact monitoring at all levels for local governments. The importance of having accurate information becomes even more pronounced in view of need to put to right investments the limited resources of local government units.

CBMS filled-in the existing data gaps at the local level, and supported the decentralization process by capacitating LGUs to collect, analyze and use data in various phases of local governance.

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II. Improving Local Governance thru CBMS

From the experiences of our local government units, CBMS has proven its usefulness even beyond poverty monitoring but in improving local governance as well, as it provides critical information for the various phases of local governance:

1. Impact monitoring and tracking progress on poverty reduction efforts including our commitments on the MDGs
2. Development planning and investment programming
3. Resource allocation and investment mobilization
4. Program identification and beneficiary targeting
5. Disaster-Risk Reduction and Management, and
6. Local Government Performance Monitoring

CBMS is an empowering tool that equips our LGUs with information to address the needs of the people more efficiently and effectively. It strengthened the local statistical system by providing relevant and up-date information on the welfare conditions of the constituents and development status across the province, from the barangays to the municipalities. Such information accompanied by digitized maps are readily appreciated and better understood by local planners and decision makers.

Likewise, as its implementation necessitated the coordination and participation of different levels of local governments, the process facilitated the partnership and sharing of responsibilities and resources among different levels of local governments. The barangays are main actors during data collections providing the survey enumerators from their respective barangays, while the municipal units take charge of data encoding and processing the collected information. The provinces provide for the capacity-building of implementers and provide overall supervision during various stages of the systems implementation.

Furthermore, CBMS implementation led to the empowerment of the community. In view of their involvement during data collection as well as in results validation, the community is able to actively participate in planning. Armed with the information of their condition, they can recommend solution to their problems and even demand accountability and transparency on the part of government. Likewise, knowledge of their situation even made them realized solutions can be done within their control or just lies in their own hands.

III. Various Applications of CBMS in Local Governance

The CBMS being able to provide a comprehensive profile of various social demographic groups at specific points in time is able to serve various applications which emerged from the experiences of LGUs.

1. CBMS as poverty and MDG monitoring tool

The CBMS is good tool for monitoring poverty and is by itself an anti-poverty intervention. In fact, The CBMS has been adopted as a poverty monitoring instrument. The use of CBMS institutionalizes the Core Local Poverty Indicators (CLPIs) as the minimum set of community-based indicator for poverty assessment, monitoring and further serve as basis in the preparation of local level poverty reduction action plans and agenda.

Furthermore, with our commitments to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it becomes imperative to be able to monitor our performance vis-a-vis targets. CBMS allows the monitoring of achievements of these targets not just at the provincial and municipal but also at the barangay levels.

2. CBMS as input to local development planning and investment programming

As CBMS generates socio-economic information on individuals and household levels that are disaggregated at provincial, municipal even at barangay level, it provides ready-to-use source of reference for the preparation of Socio-Economic Profile and the multi-sectoral development plan, and investment program and even land use plan which are core mandates of LGUs.

In the planning guidelines of issued by the oversight agencies (under JMC 2007-63 providing for the harmonization of local planning, investment programming, and expenditure management), CBMS shall be among the main source of information for planning and investment programming.

The two rounds of CBMS survey have been the basis of the Province of Palawan in formulation/updating of the Barangay Development Plans, Municipal Land Use Plans and Human Development Report for past years.

3. Resource allocation and investment mobilization

Given the competing demand for meager resources of LGUs, available indicators on the core areas of welfare allows for a more efficient allocation and utilization of resources.

CBMS enriched project proposals and aided mobilization the support of partner organization. The CBMS Grant supported by Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF) and the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) are support grant for projects identified using CBMS.

In the case of Manibalac, Camarines Norte, they were able to solicit assistance of various partners to support priority projects based on CBMS results.

4. Program identification and beneficiary targeting

The use of CBMS data for evidence-based decision-making emerged as a widely-used application. CBMS guides LCEs and program implementers in identifying appropriate projects, type of intervention schemes needed most by target beneficiaries in a specific area. Conversely, it can also facilitate beneficiary targeting by providing information on who are eligible beneficiaries for specific programs, such as housing program, water supply provision, specific programs for disadvantage sector like people with disabilities, out-of-school-youths, women, and senior citizen.

Composite indicators were used to rank the poorest households in the village municipality for the selection of beneficiaries for health insurance program (Philhealth Indigent Program), and provision of appropriate livelihood assistance to poor families.

5. Disaster-Risk Reduction and Management

In view of the passage of new legislation on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, LGUs are required to put in place necessary measures to mitigate the effects of both disasters and climate changes.

CBMS NRDB map over-layed with hazard map, enabled the City of Olongapo to identify the households that are on high, medium to low risk hazard areas as well as identify houses made of light and makeshift materials which are potential fire hazard. It is also identifies households with persons with disabilities who need to be prioritized in times of emergency.

6. CBMS as input local performance monitoring

The CBMS data are also used as input data to the Local Government Performance Management System (LGPMS), a database management system designed as a self-assessment tool for Local Government Units (LGUs) to manage local productivity and performance. The outputs of LGPMS are State of Local Governance Report (SLGR) which measures local government performance based on LGUs key responsibilities, and the State of Local Development Report (SLDR) which describes the development gaps where the local government, national government and other sectors of the society can work together in addressing development backlogs.

LGPMS reports are a good reference material for LGUs in the preparation of their *Executive and Legislative Agenda* (ELA), a planning document that is mutually developed and agreed upon by both the executive and legislative departments of an LGU with the active participation of the people, and Comprehensive Development Plans.

Likewise on the national scale, LGPMS aids in fine-tuning plans and programs of DILG that impact on local government as its pursues its mandate of supporting the

capacity of development of LGUs towards self-governance and development, and its administrative oversight in advancing in the interest of public accountability.

IV. Growing Recognition of CBMS

In growing recognition of CBMS there have been several national policies supporting CBMS implementation.

1. National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) En Banc Resolution No. 7 (issued in March 2003) – directing LGUs to adopt the core local poverty indicators as the minimum set of community-based indicators for poverty diagnosis and planning at the local level.
2. Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Memorandum Circular 2003-92 (issued in April 2003) – setting the policy guidelines for the adoption of core local poverty indicators for planning.
3. DILG Memorandum Circular 2004-152 (issued in November 2004) – encouraging LGUs to intensify efforts towards the achievement of MDGs and enjoining LGUs to monitor and track their contribution using CBMS.
4. National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) Resolution No.6 Series of 2006 – recognizing and enjoining support to CBMS as a tool to strengthen statistical system in the local level. It also directs the NSCB technical staff to initiate and coordinate an advocacy program for the adoption of CBMS by LGUs.
5. LMP Memorandum Circular 27-2006 (issued in June 2006) enjoining municipalities to adopt and sustain the use of CBMS as a tool for poverty diagnosis and ensure incorporation of the MDG targets and utilization of CBMS data in the formulation of local development plans.
6. National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) –Social Development Committee Resolution 3, Series of 2006 – adopting the CBMS as an MDG monitoring tool and further enjoins the NAPC, DILG, other government agencies and LGUs to coordinate with CBMS Network in fast-tracking the full implementation of the CBMS.

V. Vision for CBMS

As a testament to our commitment in working for and promoting good, transparent, responsive and participatory governance, the DILG with CBMS Network is promoting and providing technical assistance to LGUs in cooperation with our development partners (UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNFPA and WB) and our regional partners thereby contributing to current status of CBMS coverage of 59 provinces, 31 of which is province-wide, 667 municipal-wide, 41 cities covering 17,244 barangays.

It is our vision to cover all provinces nationwide. It therefore our ardent desire to see other provinces, with their component cities and municipalities implementing CBMS to improve quality of local governance in the Philippines as a result of having better data-bases or benchmark information for local governance.

VI. Our challenges for scaling-up CBMS Implementation

If CBMS has indeed helped make a difference in implementing LGUs in the Philippines, we sincerely believe that the fruits of these practices will be best sustained through the sharing among other local governments of the lessons learned, innovations and strategies, tools and technologies that have proven successful. These are proofs that CBMS enhances local government capacities to deliver meaningful and need-based programs and projects that impact on the lives of their constituencies.

Our challenge is to sustain and scale up CBMS nationwide, and ensure its contribution in improving local governance.

1. Broaden the base of partnerships and cooperation

Scaling up CBMS to cover more and hopefully all provinces requires convergence of efforts among national agencies, development partners and Leagues of Local Governments. We will continue to engage our partners and solicit more support towards building the capacity our LGUs establish the system and eventually improve local governance. Project partners may be expanded to include the academic institutions to assist in data analysis.

Partnership and sharing of responsibilities among the provinces with its component cities, municipalities and barangays is important recipe for sustained implementation. Cost-sharing schemes and designation of responsibility-levels made CBMS implementation better appreciated and sustained.

2. Synchronize efforts of all stakeholders

It is imperative to harmonize efforts of agencies, and other partners in institutionalizing local monitoring systems at the local level.

There is need to synchronize conduct of CBMS rounds. Currently, we advocate that CBMS be conducted every three years to coincide with the term of office of local officials, however, there is no policy to synchronize conduct of surveys. This will facilitate setting up of the national repository of CBMS data and eventually the recognition of CBMS results as official data at the local level.

There might also be a need to harmonize certain information from the surveys of national statistical agencies with information that are generated by CBMS as

disparities exist in the survey results, therefore, we have to ensure the national statistical agencies coordinate the generation of data.

3. Expand the Pool of Resource Persons to Capacitate LGUs

There is need for continues capacity-building for LGUs on establishing the system, starting with collection, and processing data, maintaining the system and in analyzing the information. Therefore, to there is need to expand to pool of resource persons for local CBMS trainings. We need to muster the support of academic community to provide vital inputs in the conduct of various CBMS trainings and analysis of generated information.

In closing, I congratulate the organizers-Poverty and Economic Policy Research Network and all partners for the success of 8th PEP-NET conference. Let us seize this moment to take full advantage of this opportunity to learn from the wealth of knowledge that showcases exemplary and replicable practices, and offer an exchange of ideas in this forum.

Maraming salamat!
Mabuhay!