Local Governments in the Philippines Use CBMS Data for COVID-19 Related Social Amelioration Program and Relief Operations

The implementation of the community quarantine and travel restriction policies in order to control the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus, among its other impacts, has resulted to work from home arrangements or work stoppage for some business establishments except for some essential sectors, with informal economy workers being greatly affected given “no work, no pay” employment arrangements, and inability of several low-income families and other vulnerable groups to meet their daily needs while facing the risk of falling deeper into poverty.

In light of the ongoing global COVID-19 crisis impact, local governments in the Philippines are at the forefront of implementing national policy measures to provide necessary assistance particularly to the most affected sectors of the population. Many LGUs, with established CBMS databases, were able to use their CBMS data for planning and implementation of social amelioration and relief programs particularly for identifying and prioritization of beneficiaries given resources available. The CBMS Network is likewise providing technical assistance to the LGUs seeking support and guidance for identifying and targeting beneficiaries in their localities given their CBMS data.

CBMS, being implemented by many LGUs (municipalities/cities/provinces) as a tool for local development planning and program implementation in the country since 2000 to present, generates and monitors household and individual level data on the different dimensions of poverty. This include income and livelihood, health, nutrition, education, housing, accessing to water and sanitation, and security indicators. It also generates data on access to programs, disaster preparedness and other community issues.
News Updates

Representatives from the City Government of Imus distribute food packs to household beneficiaries and vulnerable groups in Imus City, Cavite (Photo retrieved from: https://www.facebook.com/MayorELM/posts/3084448178241052)

Specific indicators. CBMS data can be disaggregated by sub-location (barangay/city/municipality/province), income class, age group, ethnicity, PWDs among others.

In Davao del Norte, the City Government of Tagum identified through their CBMS data around 28,000 households which qualify as beneficiaries for the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)’s Social Amelioration Program (SAP). Among the identified beneficiaries are poor households, senior citizens, PWDs, pregnant women, solo parents, IPs, and workers belonging to the informal sector, all of which were identified using CBMS data. In Tacurong City, the City Government prioritized distribution of relief goods to 8,468 poor families identified using the LGU’s CBMS data. In the Municipality of Orani, Bataan, the LGU was able to distribute the first batch of relief goods to 8,600 poor households. The LGU prioritized families of persons under monitoring (PUM) and persons under investigation (PUI), tricycle drivers, construction workers, and other daily wage earners identified using CBMS data. On the other hand, the Municipal Government of Apalit in the province of Pampanga was able to identify 19,000 households from their CBMS database for their provision of free rubbing alcohol.

In the Province of Oriental Mindoro, the LGU of the Municipality of Naujan was able to identify 23,108 households from the CBMS database of the LGU to receive relief goods while about 5,998 families was identified by the Municipality of Gloria as qualified beneficiaries for their social amelioration program.

Meanwhile, in the Municipality of Valderrama in Antique Province, the LGU’s available CBMS database is used for identifying indigent families as LGUs are required to provide a list to different national agencies as basis for distribution of financial assistance under the Social Amelioration Program (SAP).

Other LGUs that are using their CBMS data for COVID-19 crisis related program interventions in their communities include the Province of Dinagat Islands, Province of Oriental Mindoro, Province of Zamboanga del Sur, General Santos City, Iligan City, Municipality of Pangantucan in Bukidnon, Municipality of Naguilian in La Union, Municipality of Noveleta in Cavite, Municipality of Goa in Camarines Sur, Municipality of Bangua in South Cotabato, and Tabaco City in Albay, among others.

Even at the village level, village chiefs were able to use their CBMS data for relief operations. In Barangay 173 of Pasay City in the National Capital Region, village officials were able to provide relief goods and hygiene kits (procured using the barangay’s (village) funds) to all 600 households in the barangay. Meanwhile, a total of 367 household beneficiaries in the same barangay are set to receive relief goods (procured using the city government’s funds).

CBMS in the Philippines

The CBMS methodology, developed by Reyes (1993), is an organized process for collecting, processing and use of data for local planning and program implementation. It was designed to establish a regular source of data that can be used for policy making.
program implementation and in monitoring micro level impacts of various policy shocks to vulnerable groups of the society. As such, CBMS (1) Is LGU based, (2) Entails a census of all households using a structured set of data collection instruments and administered by trained local enumerators and field coordinators, (3) Monitors a core set of multidimensional poverty indicators while generating community-specific indicators (4) Uses freewares for data collection, processing, mapping and database management, (5) Establishes database at each geopolitical level for use in local planning and program implementation. The adoption of CBMS methodology was earlier developed and implemented using the pen and paper approach for data collection from 1999 to 2013. By 2013, the CBMS Network launched and deployed the use of tablet system for data collection through its CBMS Accelerated Poverty Profiling (APP) tools.

The CBMS, implemented by the LGUs in the country with technical guidance from the CBMS Network Office (earlier referred as MIMAP-CBMS PMO) of DLSU-AKI since 2000, is an organized process of data collection, data processing, validation and use of data through a structured set of tools, freewares, and training modules. By 2005, the CBMS Network Office established partnership with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) for providing necessary capacity building support for the expansion of implementation of CBMS in the country. A pool of personnel from the DILG at the central/regional/provincial/LGU levels have been trained and mentored by the CBMS Network on the CBMS modules who in turn provide local capacity building support to provinces/municipalities/cities for implementing CBMS since 2008 to present.

After several years of advocacy by key stakeholders and CBMS implementers on the usefulness and applications of CBMS, a law (referred as RA 11315-CBMS Act) was passed in April 2019 establishing CBMS in all cities and municipalities in the country as a tool for implementing poverty reduction and development plans. While the implementing rules and regulations for the CBMS Act is still being finalized, many LGUs that have earlier adopted CBMS continue to use and implement the system to generate local data requirements for preparation and implementation of development plans and programs. As of February 2020, more than half of the LGUs in the Philippines has already implemented CBMS. CBMS data has been used by local governments for preparation of comprehensive development plans, and implementing programs relating to poverty reduction, gender and development, migration and development, and monitoring the global goals (MDGs/SDGs), among others.

The development and pilot test of CBMS as a tool for a more evidence-based policymaking while empowering communities in the process was supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)-Canada as part of its Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP) research program that was initiated in collaboration with the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS). The CBMS research work, which started in the Philippines, was later expanded as part of MIMAP initiatives in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Burkina Faso and Senegal and other developing countries. The expansion of global coverage of CBMS research initiatives and enhancement of applications of CBMS methodology in the context of poverty reduction, and in fostering more inclusive and sustainable development and other thematic concerns continued to be supported by IDRC, and UK Department for International Development (UK DFID) through the Partnership for Economic Policy (earlier known as Poverty and Economic Policy) with technical leadership of the CBMS Network Office of the De La Salle University - Angelo King Institute for Economic and Business Studies (DLSU-AKI) Manila.

Officials in LGU Naujan repack relief goods to be distributed to 23,108 households in the Municipality of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro (Photo retrieved from: https://www.facebook.com/mayormarkmarcos/posts/3023683217697154)
Improving Women’s Financial Inclusion in Rural Nicaragua

Editor’s Notes
The research article featured below is lifted from the policy brief entitled “Improving Women’s Financial Inclusion in Rural Nicaragua” prepared by Milagros Romero and Guillermo Bornemann of Instituto Nitlapan in Universidad Centroamericana, Nicaragua.

Key Messages:

• Social and economic growth for women in rural areas of Nicaragua is restricted by a lack of financial inclusion

• Women in rural communities are concerned about their ability to pay back credit, face sociocultural constraints and often feel excluded by financial service providers

• Finance companies need to be educated about the challenges that these women face and adjust their policies accordingly

Rural Nicaragua left financially excluded:

A lack of access to vital financial services is restricting social and economic growth in rural areas of Nicaragua. For women living in these areas, this issue is particularly prevalent; gender exclusion is a huge contributor to a lack of financial inclusion in rural Nicaragua. To reverse this trend, more people should have access to useful and affordable financial products and services and not face exclusion by banks and lenders.

Currently, there is an insufficient offer of credit to people in rural areas and many are put off by the high cost of obtaining credit. Financial inclusion is a key point toward goal 8 of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The Analysis:

A team of local PEP researchers used Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) census data from 35 rural communities located in the north-west of Rio Blanco - a municipality in the center of Nicaragua (see Figure 1). The census was accompanied by a rider questionnaire that focused on credit and how much access each member of a household has to it. The research team wanted to analyze three main questions:

1. What barriers to financial inclusion do women from rural communities face?
2. Which characteristics lead to rural women struggling to access credit?
3. How relevant are support programs that combine technical assistance and credit for rural women?

Key Findings:

There is an overall lack of financial inclusion for people in rural areas of Nicaragua.
Less than 3% of rural households in Rio Blanco had recent access to credit. Women, in particular, are not accessing financial services.

Rural women often only seek financial inclusion if they receive support from their husband. Women must feel free enough to ask for extra financial support. This support can include training and technical assistance.

Women in rural areas still face psychosocial barriers at home. They are often too fearful of failure to create their own enterprise and worry about having to pay back loans. This low self-esteem is derived from the cultural patriarchy in which rural women live.

The women felt discouraged and uneasy when applying/trying to apply for credit. Almost half of the women who went to apply for credit felt that the language used by the credit officer was not easy to understand.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations:

A lack of family support, a lack of self-confidence to conduct business, and the fear of being unable to repay loans or credit are key reasons why women in rural areas of Nicaragua are not financially included. Additionally, financial institutions are not making an effort to make these women feel included. Their use of complex language and the procedures for assessing the suitability of potential customers lead to financial exclusion.

To address these issues and improve rural women’s financial inclusion, policies and initiatives are needed to:

- Educate credit providers so that they fully understand the psychosocial barriers that women from rural communities face when attempting to apply for a loan.
- Inform credit promoters that when judging whether a woman from a rural community should receive credit, they should consider her husband’s attitude and the material and emotional support he gives his wife. The credit promoters should work with the husband to encourage more support where needed.
- Adjust loan repayment guidelines for financial institutions with clients in rural areas, given the micro-income lifestyle of those living in these communities.
- Encourage credit providers to adapt their procedures for assessing credit applicants from different households such as single-parent households where the woman is in charge of her family without a partner. This female-headed type of household is increasing in number in rural areas.
- The credit policies and programs should place emphasis on addressing household dynamics to incorporate them into a set of indicators that promoters should monitor.
Reducing Rural Poverty and Gender Disparities in the Agricultural Industry in Togo

Editor’s Notes
The research article featured below is lifted from the policy brief entitled “Reducing Rural Poverty and Gender Disparities in the Agricultural Industry in Togo” prepared by Esso-Hanam Atake, Yevesse Dandonougbo, Djinta Litaaba-Akila, Dédé Kouevidjin, and Mazignada Sika Limazie of Center for Research and Training in Economics and Management (CERFEG) in Université de Lomé, Togo.

Key Messages:
Policymakers should:

- Sensitize communities, especially household’s heads, about the disadvantages of early marriage;
- Strengthen rural households’ access mechanisms to agricultural credit, commercial credit and other inputs to increase their income and to reduce poverty;
- Increase investment in education, health, drinking water and irrigation infrastructure;
- Promote equity in the distribution of endowments to equalize opportunities for disadvantaged or excluded groups, such as women; and
- Implement institutional innovations in agricultural insurance such as drought risk index insurance or natural disasters at the private initiative level, and encourage farmers to subscribe to them

Contributing heavily but barely rewarded; the agricultural industry in Togo:

The agricultural sector has a predominant role in the Togolese economy. It contributes about 38% to the real GDP and employs 40.7% of the total workforce (FAO, 2012). Despite this, levels of poverty were higher among households headed by farmers in 2015 (INSEED, 2016).

Poverty remains largely rural in Togo and farm households represent 95.8% of the rural population. It’s clear that many farm workers are not benefitting from their own industry, despite the amount it provides to the national economy. The National Agricultural Investment and Food Security Plan (PNIASA) was implemented in 2011 with the aim of increasing farmers’ incomes and improving living conditions for rural people. Despite these efforts, Togolese agriculture still faces huge issues. A lack of infrastructure, poor equipment and misguided governance all contribute to the ongoing problems. There also remains a disparity between men and women in terms of how much they benefit from investments in agriculture, their productivity at work and their overall living standards.

A team of local PEP researchers sought to assess the impact of agricultural investments on farming productivity and poverty reduction in rural areas, with the aim of informing new policies to improve the situation and ensure that both genders feel these benefits.

The Analysis:

The researchers gathered their information using the Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS) through which they surveyed over 4,500 households in four townships in rural areas of Togo. Alongside this, a rider questionnaire was issued to collect additional data. The study aimed to assess how investment in agriculture had impacted on labor productivity and poverty reduction in rural areas and determine any disparities among male and female farm workers. The study analyzed the effects of agricultural investments on productivity of plots managed by women as compared with those managed by men. Furthermore, it also examined the gender wage gap in the agricultural sector.

Key Findings:

The results of the analysis highlight the extreme poverty faced by those living in rural areas of Togo. In the rural townships surveyed, the proportion of households below the national rural poverty threshold was 78.43% and poverty incidence was higher among women than men. The study also revealed that about 75.60% of farmers have an average monthly income lower than the Interprofessional Guaranteed Minimum Wage (SMIG). Non-farmers’ average annual income is also higher than that of farmers. The research looked at the effects of investments in agriculture and found the following:

- Farmer’s productivity increased due to public or community and private investment. Such investment helped to reduce the number of farmers below the poverty line in rural areas.
- Public investments in health, education and telecommunication infrastructure improved the productivity of farmers.
- More than 90% of farmers do not practice new agricultural techniques and none of them have health or accident insurance.
Only 28.88% of farmers have land rights.
Only 3.08% and 3.75% of women and men respectively have access to credit.
The majority of women and men have no access to insurance from natural disasters.

Additionally, the research highlighted the following gender disparities from these rural (and predominately agricultural) communities:

- 3.1% of women are unemployed compared to 1.7% of men.
- More female farmers have no education (41.85%) compared to male farmers (15.10%).
- The estimated income gap between male and female farmers is 43.9%.
- The annual income for men is higher than women – for both farmers and non-farmers.
- 13.01% of female farmers have seen an increase in their income over the last two seasons compared to 16.92% of male farmers.

The study also reveals that amongst women aged 20-24, almost 3% were married before the age of 15. Furthermore only 23.34% of women have the right to make decisions in agreement with their spouses regarding their sexual and reproductive lives.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations:

The findings from this study highlight the need for policies that improve infrastructure in farming and increase public investment and encourage private investment in the industry. Additionally, farmers need to have more access to credit and there needs to be increased public investment in education, health and providing access to clean water for farmers. Policies also need to be in place to promote equality and equalize opportunities for disadvantaged or excluded groups, such as women. Policies and programs that could contribute to these aims include:

- Strengthen rural households’ access mechanisms to agricultural credit, commercial credit and other inputs to increase their income and reduce poverty.
- Invest in infrastructure and improve the technical capacity of farmers to meet international
standards so they can export their produce and increase their income.

- Put in place institutional innovations in the field of agricultural insurance (e.g., insurance against drought risk or natural disasters) and encourage farmers to subscribe to them to reduce the risks for borrowers and lenders and unlock agricultural finance.

- Create favorable conditions and incentives in rural areas to provide rural people with better access to savings and credit facilities.

- Increase public investments and encourage private investment in education, health, drinking water, and irrigation infrastructure.

- Educate and inform the agricultural industry about the contribution of women to food production and food security efforts, and facilitate the participation of women in further training in new agricultural technologies.

- Inform communities, especially parents, about the issues surrounding early marriage.