

"MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE: HOW CBMS CAN BE A POTENT TOOL TO DETECT AND ANALYZE CHILD LABOR AND ADDRESS ITS ROOT CAUSES"

[SALUTATION: Our synergetic partners from the National Government Agencies, Provincial Governors who are with us in this undertaking, fellow Municipal Mayors espousing the cause for our children and women empowerment, colleagues in public service and to all zealous participants in this 8th CBMS National Conference... a vibrant and gracious day to all of us!]

In every gathering like this, I always find it rewarding to consider our connection, and perhaps our significance in the field of local governance. Today a new meaning is yet to unfold through our joint efforts to witness how each Local Government Unit responds to every predicament that impedes our destiny towards genuine development.

First and foremost, allow me to give you a bird's eye view of our town. The Municipality of Laoang is located at the northeastern part of the province of Northern Samar, which is at the northern portion of Eastern Visayas or Region VIII. We are a Second Class Municipality covering 56 barangays with a total population of 59,025 and 11,865 households as per 2011 CBMS Survey.

Before I assumed into office in 2007 as the Local Chief Executive, our Local Government Unit could hardly generate a database of poverty indicators to measure the responsiveness of our programs and produce a better portrait of how our municipality looks like in terms of diagnosing poverty at the municipal, barangay and even household levels and designing appropriate policy and program interventions based on the empirical data provided.

I share with you today how we work double time to achieve its desired results using the data from our Community Based Monitoring System in planning and budgeting and how we utilize Community Driven Development processes in making sure that our development agenda are sourced out from the felt needs of every barangay through their Barangay Development Plans.

My presentation will focus on the issue that is most often treated at the peripheral level, the vulnerability of children particularly those involved in CHILD LABOR. I will be showing you the results of the 2006 CBMS survey and the ILO-IPEC Time-bound baseline Survey in 2010

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD WORKERS

The International Labor Organization-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC) conducted a survey in two barangays in Laoang, Northern Samar in 2010. Results show that 40% of the children aged 5-17 years old are working. About 46% of the working children in the selected 2 sites are aged 10-14 years old. The proportion of males and females do not differ much though males do still constitute a bigger proportion (59.3%) than females.

In 2006, the first round of the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) survey has been implemented in the municipality. The data show that almost 3 percent of the entire children population aged 5-17 years old in fifty-six (56) barangays are considered working children. This time, 77% of the working children are aged 15-17 and majority of the working children are males with 75%.

In the two barangays covered by ILO-IPEC, less than 2% are considered working children based on CBMS 2006 Survey. Though not easily comparable, the results from the ILO-IPEC Baseline Survey suggest that the proportion of working children in these two areas have gone up. Taking it further, it can also mean that there is a possibility that the proportion of working children in the entire municipality have gone up as well. This apparently indicates that child labor is an issue to be tackled.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILD WORKERS

The average size of households with child workers is 7 based on the CBMS Survey results of 2006. In the two barangays studied for the IPEC Survey, the average size of households with working children is 6. Household heads are usually elementary undergraduates with 51.9%. Household heads are mostly employed as fishermen, farmers and forestry workers with 82.7%. Out of the 436 households with working children, 85.6% belong to poor households. About 14% working children come from female-headed households. Data on access to sanitary toilet show that 42% of households with working children have no access to sanitary toilet facilities. Almost 50% of households with working children have no access to safe water. 29% of the households with working children have experienced food shortage. Less than 6% of households with working children are living in makeshift housing. A little over 3% are considered squatters.

IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS

The results covered by the ILO-IPEC Baseline Survey need to be taken into consideration: 23% of the working children are not attending school and 61% of those who not attending school are males, that's because there are more male working children.

According to CBMS survey, less than 6% of the working children are illiterate in the municipality. Almost 92 percent of the working children in all barangays are not attending school.

Based on the CBMS Survey in 2006, most of the working children are involved in the following industries:

Agriculture (44.5%)

Fishing (14.2%)

Social and Personal Services (10.6%)

Majority of the working children work as farmers and fisherfolks

Based on the IPEC Survey in 2010, most of the child workers are employed in the following industries:

Domestic work (35%)

Agricultural activities (3.6%)

Deep-sea fishing (2.9%)

The results show that these working children are deployed in domestic work since these 2 barangays are situated in the urban area.

In the selected sites of the IPEC Baseline Survey, around 57% are involved in at least one job categorized as hazardous and a little over 43 percent are involved in at least one job perceived as hazardous.

A little over 68% of Child workers usually work for less than 20 hours per week and majority of these children earn less than Php 300 which is usually spent on food. While a big proportion of working children in the selected sites of the IPEC Survey are in the middle quintiles and 86% of the total population of working children in all barangays are considered poor.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Since the enactment of the Local Government Code of 1991, the need for a database of information has dramatically increased especially that each Local Government Unit has given responsibility of bringing the services to the people. It is for this reason that the demand for a management system to meet the information needs of the government has also increased over the years. Through our 2 cycles of CBMS implementation, we were able to gain adequate data in the field of program planning and budgeting because we can already identify where our people are coming from. It gives us a picture of what poverty is like in our municipality and what program interventions are needed to respond to the problem.

Taking a closer look, these working children as generated in the CBMS survey offered us information on how we can address the problem. Their households belong to income below poverty threshold, experienced food shortage, do not have access to sanitary toilet, and the children are no longer attending school. This in effect compels these children to work at a young age. They work for their subsistence as their future is compromised.

With the data in place, a better situation analysis is generated and development issues are properly identified. In fact, in our 2011 Annual Budget as reflected in our Annual Investment Program, we allocated more than 13 million pesos to our social services to ensure the protection of children and the empowerment of women. On the other hand, the Municipality of Laoang has also been a partner-implementer of the DSWD Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan - Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDDS: KKB) since 2006 and a recipient of incentive grant from the Makamasang Tugon Project in 2010. It has successfully completed 135 sub-projects implemented by Barangay Project Management Committees (BPMCs) in 53 barangays out of the municipality's 56 barangays. The total sub-projects completed in four years (2006-2010) costed Php 97,705,477.64 with grant fund allocation from the World Bank.

In addition, various programs on social welfare, health, education, and other development concerns are also implemented. These are the following:

- Day Care Service Program with 1,978 3-4 year old children-beneficiaries in 59 Day Care Centers;
- Conditional Cash Transfer thru Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) with 5,556 beneficiaries;
- Partnership with Miriam College on capability building of teachers and day care workers
- Provision of appropriate intervention to disadvantaged children & youth and promote their protection, development, and participation;
- Improvement of family relationships such as empowerment and Re-affirmation of Paternal Abilities Training (ERPAT) and Enhanced Parent Effectiveness Services (EPES);
- Operation "Tulong sa Kalusugan para sa Mamamayang Mahirap";
- Establishment of Lying-in Clinic;
- "Operation Timbang" through the implementation of quarterly weighing to all children 0-17 months;
- Provision of micronutrients supplementation and regular deworming;

- Assistance to Individual in Crisis Situation (AICS);
- Provision of medical assistance to indigent families;
- Conduct of training for parents on food production and food preparation, food fortification, and feeding program;
- Promotion and intensification of health programs through Barangay Health Volunteers and Barangay Nutrition Scholars;
- Development and expansion of Local Housing Program for indigent families;
- Dispersal of animals, seedlings, fingerlings, fishnets, and fishing paraphernalia;

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Although our municipality already implemented a number of programs aimed at improving the conditions of the people, however, there are still gaps and problems. One of the key recommendations is the improvement of targeting of beneficiaries in all the programs rolled out by the municipality; Below is a list of specific recommendations:

- Strong will of LGU in the enforcement of existing child labor laws
- Inclusion in the Annual Investment Plan (AIP) programs that would counter child labor-related problems.
- Harmonization of efforts of all LGU's service agencies to effectively implement programs for children.
- Reactivation of Municipal Council for the Protection of Children (MCPC)
- Strengthening of Family Development Sessions to parents to enhance their parental capabilities
- Reactivation of Municipal Council for the Protection of Children (MCPC) and the BCPCs.
- Continuous monitoring of programs and projects related to children to ensure sustainability.
- Passage of ordinances/resolutions to combat child labour issues

What I have shared with you is a crucial glimpse of our governance in the Municipality of Laoang with gratifying, frustrating, and challenging stories. In our experience, we have fully utilized in local government planning the Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS) and the MDG's 13+1 Core Local Poverty Indicators as references in policy formulation, planning, budgeting, and decision-making process.

Fellow servant leaders, let the child in us touch our lives... for unless we lived with a heart of a child we cannot ever promote and defend LIFE.

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Municipal Mayor