



# Community-based poverty monitoring: a pilot implementation in Vietnam's poverty observatories\*

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To help in assessing poverty changes and the impacts of poverty reduction policies and measures on communities and households, a community-based poverty monitoring system (CBMS) was recently piloted in Vietnam's poverty observatories.

Why and how the system was chosen, how it was implemented, what its results are, and how useful they are, are detailed in this article.

### Poverty in Vietnam: a situationer

Located in Southeast Asia, Vietnam is bordered by China on the north, Laos

and Cambodia on the west, the Gulf of Thailand and South China Sea on the south, and the Gulf of Tonkin on the east. The country, which consists mostly of mountains and forests, has a population of 79.9 million (July 2001), with an annual growth rate of 1.9 per cent (1995-2000).

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\*Excerpt from a CBMS Network Research Paper of the same title presented during the Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) Research Network Conference held on November 4-8, 2003 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

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### Editor's Notes

We are pleased to bring you the inaugural issue of the *Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) Network Updates*, the official quarterly newsletter of the CBMS Network. This publication takes over the former *MIMAP Project Updates* which took its final bow in the September 2003 issue.

The CBMS Network, which was officially established in October 2002, evolved from fundamental research and advocacy work on CBMS done under the Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP) project. It is composed of researchers and policy analysts across Asia and Africa and generally aims to further strengthen efforts in providing a good information base for policymaking and program impact monitoring through the development and institutionalization of a community-based monitoring system. The CBMS Network initiative complements global efforts to fight poverty by providing better statistics or benchmark information for evidence-based policymaking.

Aside from research findings and recent activities of the CBMS Network, subsequent issues of this publication will also feature related developments in the MIMAP-Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) Network. In this first issue, news about the general activities of the PEP Network as well as CBMS-related initiatives in Vietnam and the Philippines are featured.

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# Research Results

## Poverty monitoring...from page 1

In terms of poverty, the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) reported that in early 2001, the poor registered about 2.8 million households or more than 17 percent of the total households in the country. The poverty situation, however, is not the same among different provinces and ethnic groups. The mountainous areas have the highest rate of poverty. The great majority of the poor (90%) live in the rural areas while only 10 percent of the poor live in the urban areas. The disparity in income and living standard between rural and urban, mountainous and plain areas, among different strata, and between the poor and rich provinces tends to increase. Among the ethnic minority, meanwhile, about 45 percent or roughly one million households are poor, accounting for one third of the total number of poor households in the country.

There are about 2,300 communes or 22 percent of the total number of communes in the country that are in exceptionally poor situation. Apart from the lack of infrastructure, the quality of social services, especially in terms of healthcare, education, water supply and family planning in the poor areas and communes, is not being addressed adequately.

The standard of living of the majority of the population is close to and just above the poverty line. They are, however, always threatened to fall again

into poverty by any risk such as floods and natural calamities. Vietnam is located in an area where natural calamities and floods often happen and 80 percent of the poor are working in agricultural fields. Other factors that tend to contribute to the risk of falling into poverty are the effects of economic crises, failure in work, and diseases. Each year, there are about 20,000 – 25,000 households which fall again into the poverty situation.

### Keeping track on poverty

Collecting basic data through surveys is crucial to keep track, analyze and evaluate the situation and trend of poverty. There are at present two sources which provide data on poverty. These are the: (a) Vietnam living standard surveys (VLSS) carried out by the General Statistics Office (GSO), and (b) community-based poor household identification and reporting system conducted by localities under the guidance of MOLISA. MOLISA is the government agency responsible for the coordination of poverty alleviation and reduction programs.

The two abovementioned systems of poverty assessment exist side by side and are used for different needs.

Results of the living standard surveys, for one, are used in the analysis and design of macro socioeconomic policies and in making international comparison. They reflect the situation of the whole nation and large areas. However, the results do not directly serve the work at the grassroots levels.

Meanwhile, results of the community-based poverty assessment are used in the daily management of government procedures towards poverty reduction like the allocation of budget and other resources for poverty reduction targets in various localities, implementation of supporting methods for the poor and the evaluation of impacts of poverty reduction policies. All these are being based on the lists of poor households given by the localities.

The information on poverty based on reports from localities, though, cannot meet management requirements of the poverty reduction programs both in terms of quantity and quality due to some drawbacks such as:

- the localities are not able to collect comprehensive information on well-being and to conduct poverty monitoring surveys in the same period in order to compare the results in different areas, and
- the quality of reported information is limited because the method of data collection is based on reports from grassroots officers whose qualifications are limited.

In this regard, the management offices of poverty reduction programs at the central and local levels have to collect supplementary information, in particular, through small surveys and investigations in local areas. One of these is data collection in so-called poverty observatories. Poverty observatories are supposed to conduct annual small surveys in certain sites that are selected at random or through representative methods in order to assess poverty changes and impacts of poverty reduction policies and measures on communities, poor households and individuals.

Based on experiences drawn from past experiments, the managing office of the National Target Programme for Hunger

*Poverty observatories are supposed to conduct annual small surveys in certain sites that are selected at random or through representative methods in order to assess poverty changes and impacts of poverty reduction policies and measures on communities, poor households and individuals.*

Eradication, Poverty Reduction and Job Creation (HEPRJC), in cooperation with the Socioeconomic Development Research Center (SEDEC) which is the implementing institution of the Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP)-Vietnam project, selected and piloted a community-based poverty monitoring system (CBMS) in these poverty observatories. Under this system, surveys are to be conducted at the end of each year for three years (2002-2004).

## CBMS implementation and survey results

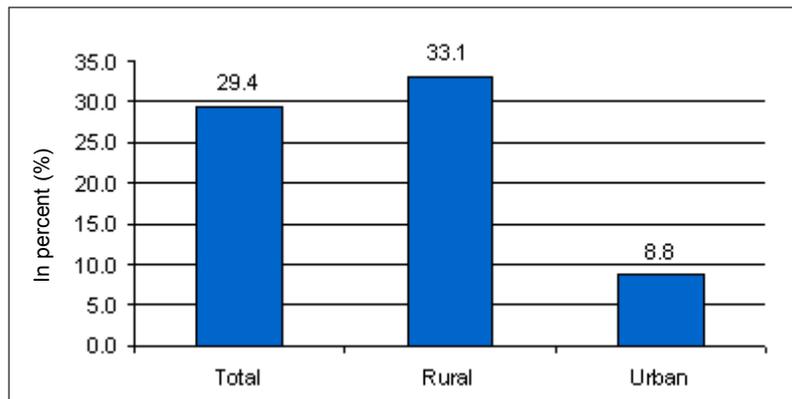
The households listed by communes as poor, based on MOLISA's classification and identification procedures, are the ones to be considered as "households of national poor status" and will get preferential support from government policies and poverty reduction programs.

Thus, to ensure the accuracy in identification, the CBMS set up in observatories aims to check the number of poor households being reported by the communes. The poverty line used here is based on the MOLISA standards. For comparison, the poverty line of the VLSS may be used to calculate the poverty rate of the survey sample.

In 2002, the CBMS<sup>1</sup> was implemented in 20 communes of 12 provinces that represent all large regional areas of Vietnam. Of these 20 communes, 17 are rural communities and three are urban areas. CBMS was applied in these communes to collect data from 4,029 households with a total of 19,710 people.

Based on the MOLISA poverty lines, the CBMS has identified 1,185 poor households or 29.4 percent of the total 4,029 surveyed households. The poverty rate

Figure 1. Poverty rate from CBMS survey, urban and rural, Vietnam, 2002



in rural areas is 33.1 percent while in urban areas, it is 8.8 percent, indicating that poverty in Vietnam is indeed a rural phenomenon (Figure 1).

### Who are the poor?

The average size of the poor households is 5.2 persons, larger than the average household size of the whole survey sample (4.9 persons). A deeper analysis of the collected data by CBMS would show who the poor are on the basis of different aspects like ethnicity, main occupation and certain basic characteristics of the household heads (gender, educational background, profession and others).

In terms of gender distribution, females make up 51.6 percent of the poor while males comprise 48.4 percent.

In terms of age of the household heads, young households (with the head of households being less than 30 years old) account for only nine percent of the poor households while those with older household heads make up 17 percent. The majority of heads of poor households are aged from 30 to 60 years old.

### How poor are they?

- *Housing.* Eighty-four percent of the poor households have houses of low quality. This rate is 2.5 times higher

than that of households that have temporary houses in the whole survey sample.

- *Electricity.* Thirty-six percent of the poor households do not have access to electricity while the average rate of the total sample is 13 percent.

- *Clean water.* Three percent of the poor households are using untreated water from ponds, rivers and streams for drinking. Water from dug wells accounts for 50 percent of total water used by poor households while the average figure of the total sample is 44 percent.

- *Lavatory.* Ninety-one percent of the poor households do not have sanitary lavatories (average rate of total sample is 60%). In particular, there are nearly 20 percent of poor households who do not have their own lavatories (average rate of total sample is 12%).

- *Video equipment.* Eighty percent of the poor households do not have radio sets, 53 percent do not have television sets and about 50 percent of the poor households do not have any audio-video equipment.

- *Private vehicle.* Twenty-seven percent of the poor households do not have any private vehicle such as bicycle and motorcycle. Only 19 percent have motorcycles and 54 percent, bicycles.

<sup>1</sup>For details of the CBMS methodology in Vietnam, refer to CBMS Research Paper of the same title.

# Research Results

## Poverty monitoring...from page 3

- **Education.** Twelve percent of the poor households have children of school age who do not attend school. The main reasons identified are the high expenses of education and lack of laborers in the family which necessitate the children to stay at home to help their family. Other reasons cited are health problems and poor performance in school leading to the children's dropping out.

- **Income.** On average, the income per capita per month of the poor households remains at approximately 70,000 Vietnam dong (VND), equivalent to only one-third of the average figure of the whole sample (216,000 VND).

The above numbers show that indicators of housing, and ownership of lavatory facilities, audio-video equipment, and private vehicles have a close relationship with the poverty rate of households. Other indicators such as access to electricity and clean water, meanwhile, depend more on local conditions and public delivery capability.

### Why are they poor?

According to the opinion of the poor households, the main reason for their general state of poverty is the lack of capital, with 71.8 percent of those surveyed indicating so. The other reasons, according to the importance given them by the respondents, are lack of knowledge and business experience (52.9%), lack of labor force and numerous dependent members in the family (42.8%), lack of agricultural land (32%), and health reasons (26.9%). Concerns relating to market and prices account only for eight percent due to the strong self-substitution concept in household economy. Only in regions where market-oriented production and market and price factors significantly influence the life of households do these concerns rank high. For example,

in the Central Highland where coffee production is the main means of farmers' livelihood, unfavorable prices in the world market made many households fall into poverty (23%).

Meanwhile, the number of poor households who consider natural calamities, accidents and risks as main reasons of poverty, registers only for three to five percent. Social evils such as alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling and others also lead a considerable number of urban households to poverty (4.5%).

In sum, the main reason for poverty lies in the lack of production factors such as capital, land and production knowledge. Human factors such as a large number of children, lack of laborers, chronic illness and others represent the second reason.

### Assessment of programs

Apart from identifying who the poor are and establishing their profile, the results of the CBMS were also used to assess the following poverty reduction programs: support for health care, education, housing, and credit. These pro-

grams represent some of the crucial interventions of the national government to poor households.

### Support for health care

In terms of support for health care, the Vietnamese government has set a policy of free health examination and treatment for the poor, provision of free medical insurance certificates to the poor, subsidy of a proportion of the transportation fee for medicines sent to mountainous areas, and upgrade of the grassroots health care infrastructure.

The CBMS results show that 32.5 percent of the poor households have access to free health examination and treatment, with the rate in urban areas higher at 61 percent than that in the rural areas at 30.4 percent. Although efforts are not wanting, the rate of poor households who cannot get access to medical service is still relatively high.

### Support for education

Besides general policies affecting education such as the building of schools, training of teachers, and raising of sal-



*Mong women, an ethnic group living in high mountainous areas, in a rural market in Lao Cai province, a CBMS survey site in Vietnam.*

ary and allowance of teachers who work in exceptionally difficult areas, there are also policies with direct support for poor students such as lending or giving out of textbooks, reduction of or exemption from payment of tuition and other educational fees and provision of scholarship to poor students in mountainous areas.

The results of the CBMS show the following:

- 48.8 percent of poor households have children who were given reduced tuition, in particular, in urban areas (75.8%), in high mountainous areas (70.8%), and in midland and low mountainous areas (53%).
- 34.7 percent of poor households have children who are exempted from other education fees, in particular, in urban areas, 60.6 percent, midland and low mountainous areas, 52 percent, and in high mountainous areas, 37 percent.
- 9.2 percent of the poor households have children who were given textbooks.
- 2.5 percent of the poor households have children who received scholarship, mostly in urban and suburban areas where financial resources can be raised from business and community sectors for charity purpose.
- Only 0.2 percent of the poor households benefited from free vocational training courses. In general, this kind of support is not of great concern since the rate of vocational training for students is quite low, especially in rural areas.

## Housing support

Housing support is a new policy of the Vietnamese government. It is being implemented only in some key areas. The rate of poor households that benefited from this support is 2.7 percent, of which 10.6 percent are in the urban areas. In general, the rate in rural areas is very low, partly because observatories are not located in the key areas

where housing support policy is being carried out.

Of the poor households that received housing support, the main type of support was provision of roof (1.1%) and building of a complete house (0.9%). One of the reasons for the low level of recipients is that the housing support is still a new policy and is not yet applied widely. Therefore, the poor households who received housing support are mainly those who suffered from natural calamities or the ones who belong to the most vulnerable groups.

According to the data reported by various provinces, the rate of poor households that received housing support in 2002 is 2.8 percent. The CBMS results, on the other hand, reported a rate of 2.7 percent, not much different from the latter rate.

## Provision of credit for poverty reduction purposes

As mentioned earlier, lack of capital is the biggest concern of poor households. Therefore, providing loans to poor households with preferential conditions (low interest rate and no collateral) is an important poverty reduction policy of the Vietnamese government. In 2002, according to the CBMS survey, 58 percent of poor households received loans with the average amount of 3 million VND. The rate in urban areas was quite high (83%) while in rural areas, it was just 56 percent. The midland and low mountainous areas showed the highest rate at 71.2 percent while in the high mountainous areas, it was 53.7 percent.

## Concluding remarks

On the whole, the results of the CBMS proved to be valuable since the processed information from the data collected provides additional information to the management of the National Program of Poverty Reduction. Many of the main indicators were found to be quite

identical to the real situation in the surveyed communes. This matching can be seen in the comparison of the CBMS results with the data stated by communes or the data collected by specialized governmental organizations.

According to the assessment of the HEPRJC managing office—the main user of the survey results—CBMS has provided a relatively valuable data set, including basic information of surveyed communes and households, and impacts of poverty reduction policies on poor households and communes in various regions. This is crucial information that provides baseline data for the assessment of the implementation and impact of poverty reduction policies in the future.

Although it was only the first round survey, the CBMS already provided a means to analyze the poverty situation and trends. In terms of data collection, the survey has served the initial intention of giving an active role to the localities so that in the next rounds, they can handle the task themselves.

In general, therefore, the results of the pilot implementation of the CBMS indicate that the collected data set, including the number of poor households and poverty rate, is acceptable for poverty monitoring and policy impact evaluation. Provinces should thus be encouraged to have more observatories.

Based on the comparison between the CBMS results at three observatories in one province and the annual poverty survey, which the provincial administration conducts in 30 communes with income method provided by MOLISA, it is thus being proposed that each province should have at least five poverty observatories to monitor the real situation of poverty at the provincial level. \*

# PEP Research Network holds second annual conference

The Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) Research Network held its second annual conference in Hanoi, Vietnam on November 4-8, 2003. The conference brought together policy researchers and analysts as well as resource persons of the three subnetworks of the PEP, namely, (a) Modeling and Policy Impact Assessment (MPIA), (b) Poverty Monitoring, Measurement and Analysis (PMMA), and (c) Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS). Participants in this year's conference came from Asia, Africa, North and South America, and Europe. Selected policy-makers from Vietnam, members of the donor community and nongovernment organizations also attended the conference.

The five-day event provided a venue for the presentation and discussion of the accomplishments and recent developments in research work as well as future activities of the three PEP subnetworks. Gracing the opening rites as keynote speaker was Vice Minister Tran Van Nhung of Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training. Also present to provide an overview about the PEP Network were IDRC-MIMAP Team Leader Mr. Luc Savard, PEP Co-Directors Dr. John Cockburn and Dr. Celia Reyes.

For the opening plenary session, the invited resource person was Dr. Martin Rama of the World Bank in Hanoi who presented his work on "Globalization and workers in developing countries." The plenary session likewise showcased

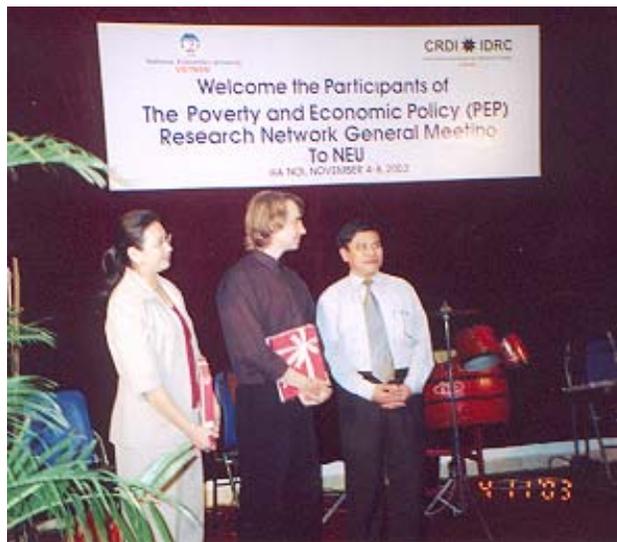
the following studies from the three subnetworks of PEP: "Adjustment costs in labour markets and the distributional effects of trade liberalization" by Dr. Nguyen Van Chan representing the MPIA work; the PMMA findings on the well-being of Indian households based on the MIMAP India project presented by Dr. Basanta Pradhan; and "Community-based poverty monitoring: a pilot implementation in Vietnam's poverty observatories" by Dr. Vu Tuan Anh and Vu Van Toan (featured as lead article in this issue). The application of the MIMAP poverty assessment to project monitoring in Vietnam was likewise presented.

The conference was jointly organized by the Angelo King Institute for Economic and Business Studies-De La Salle University, Manila, the CBMS Network

Coordinating Team, the Centre Interuniversitaire sur le Risque, les Politiques Économiques et l'Emploi (CIRPÉE)-University of Laval, Canada, the National Economic University of Vietnam and the Institute of SocioEconomic Development and Enterprise Management (SEDEM) in Vietnam. The conference papers and presentations are available for free online at [www.pep-net.org](http://www.pep-net.org).

The PEP Research Network generally aims to assist developing countries reduce poverty through better macroeconomic policies and microlevel interventions. Its three component subnetworks have their own specific objectives. The MPIA network, for one, aims to develop comparative research capacity, new concepts and methodologies in modeling, and assessment of impacts of macroeconomic policies and shocks on poverty and equity at the household and intrahousehold levels. The PMMA network, on the other hand, seeks to develop high quality national and comparative research capacity, and new concepts and methodologies in measuring, monitoring and analyzing poverty. And the CBMS network aims to provide

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*On behalf of the PEP Network, co-directors, Celia Reyes and John Cockburn (left and second to the left, respectively), thank the officials and members of the National Economic University for being the gracious host of this year's PEP convention.*

# NRDB spatial database training in Hanoi

As part of the CBMS sessions in the recently held second annual conference of the PEP Research Network in Hanoi, Vietnam, a one-day training on the Natural Resources Database (NRDB) program, a spatial database software, was held on November 7, 2003.

Dr. Celia Reyes, CBMS Network Leader, gave the welcome remarks and a brief background of the database program. She was followed by Ms. Jasmina Asirof of the CBMS Network Coordinating Team who shared the usefulness of the geographic information system (GIS) and the NRDB software in the CBMS implementation in the Philippines for visual data and spatial analysis.

Mr. Dirk Heinrichs, former technical consultant of the provincial government

of Palawan from the Center for International Migration and Development (CIM) Integrated Experts Program, provided a more detailed discussion on the Palawan experience on the use of the GIS and NRDB in land use planning and assessment of human welfare, among others. Mr. Heinrichs also cited the differences between the GIS and NRDB in that the latter is not a GIS but a database with mapping tools. Furthermore, he showed several examples of possible analyses using the GIS and several lessons learned from Palawan's GIS and NRDB experience.

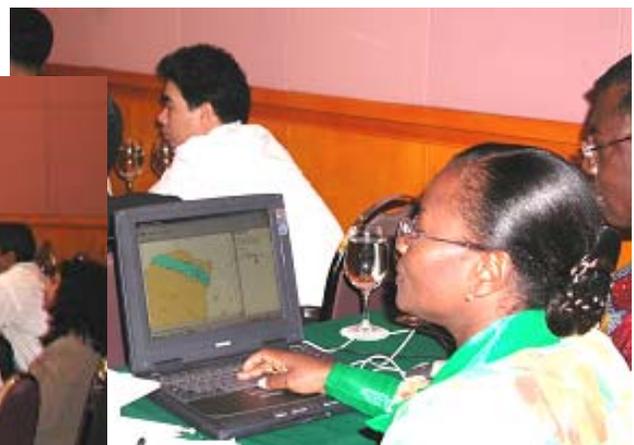
Mr. Richard Alexander, former technical consultant of the provincial government of Bohol and developer of the NRDB program, then discussed the database structure and functions of the

program, and cited several examples of thematic mapping analysis which can be done in the software.

There were two hands-on exercises for the participants during the training. The first one showed how to locate a new deep well site in a particular village. The step-by-step procedure was facilitated by Mr. Heinrichs, Mr. Alexander and Ms. Asirof. The second exercise gave an opportunity for the participants to work on another example at their own phase.

The training was attended by CBMS partners as well as participants from the Modeling and Policy Impact Assessment (MPIA) and Poverty Monitoring, Measurement and Analysis (PMMA) subnetworks. Some of the participants were so interested to use the program that a follow-up session was organized the following day where details in digitizing maps and database set-up were expounded on. A user group email service is also being developed to assist the participants in setting up and creating their own databases. *JPA* \*

▼ *Mr. Richard Alexander, developer of the NRDB software, discusses the database structure and functions of the program.*



▲ *Ms. Marie Odile Attanasso, CBMS participant from Benin, creates map layers in her simple database.*

As more local government units in different countries begin to appreciate and use the community-based monitoring system (CBMS) in connection with the preparation of their development plans, more national and regional institutions likewise want to know more about the CBMS and how they can help in bringing it to an even broader reach.

In recent months, the MIMAP-CBMS International Network, through its leader Dr. Celia Reyes, has been invited in a number of fora to present the framework, concept and set-up of the CBMS.

Below are two of these fora presentations.

### ADB-IDRC seminar

As part of the collaboration between the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)–Canada in key areas of mutual interest such as poverty reduction, a joint ADB-IDRC seminar entitled “Poverty, Trade and Growth: Issues in Sustainable Development” was held on October 29-30, 2003 at the ADB headquarters in Manila. The seminar focused on the different aspects of poverty reduction and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region and aimed to help policymakers and professionals consolidate the policy agenda and reforms in selected areas.

*Citing the increased responsibilities of local governments in a decentralized system of governance, particularly in the area of poverty reduction, Dr. Reyes presented the uses of the community-based monitoring system which enhances the capability of local governments in diagnosing poverty in their localities.*

## Presenting the CBMS before broader venues

Invited to present a paper in the session on “Monitoring Poverty Reduction Outcomes” was Dr. Celia Reyes, Network Leader of the MIMAP-CBMS International Network Project, a project funded by IDRC-Canada. Citing the increased responsibilities of local governments in a decentralized system of governance, particularly in the area of poverty reduction, Dr. Reyes presented the uses of the community-based monitoring system which, she further explained, enhances the capability of local governments in diagnosing poverty in their localities. She also shared the experiences of selected countries in the implementation of the CBMS and how it was able to give a comprehensive picture of the poverty situation in these countries.

### NEDA briefings

Meanwhile, Dr. Celia Reyes was also invited by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Region IV-B to present the CBMS in two separate meetings. The invitations were extended in line with the proposed region-wide implementation of the CBMS in the said region, which is composed of the provinces of Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Romblon, Marinduque and Palawan.

The first presentation was delivered during the Local Planning and Development Coordinators Meeting of Region IV-B held last September 25. Present during this meeting were selected Municipal/City Planning and Development Coordinators (MPDCs/CPDCs), Provincial Planning and Development Coordinators (PPDCs) and representatives from the state universities and colleges of the said region. NEDA Regional Director Mr. Oskar Balbastro explained how the CBMS can be a complementary tool for planning and monitoring activities at all levels of government.

The second presentation was held during the Sectoral Committee on Social Development (SCSD) meeting last November 14 also at the NEDA Region IV-B Office in Quezon City. The SCSD is one of the sectoral committees directly under the Regional Development Council. It is composed of regional line agencies, selected private sector representatives and the province of Marinduque. Representatives of state universities and colleges in the said region were also invited.

In her two presentations, Dr. Reyes described the framework and institutional arrangements of the CBMS as well as the technical assistance provided by the MIMAP-CBMS Network Coordinating Team to local government units on the implementation and utilization of CBMS. She likewise shared the experiences of Palawan and other CBMS sites on their successful implementation of the said system. LEV \*

# Camarines Norte CBMS updates

## Labo conducts training on socioeconomic profile writing

As one of the culminating activities in connection with the launching of the newly established local monitoring system in Labo, its local government unit, with the assistance of the MIMAP-CBMS Network Coordinating Team, conducted a workshop on the writing of barangay socioeconomic profiles (SEPs) last September 29-30 at the Bulwagan ng mga Alkalde, Sinagtala Resort, Brgy. Lugui, Labo, Camarines Norte.

The training started with the opening ceremonies and messages from Mayor Winifredo Oco, Vice Mayor Dindo Pardo, and selected Barangay Development Council (BDC) officials who all expressed their appreciation for their constituents' cooperation in the institutionalization of the CBMS in their municipality.

The participants included barangay captains, barangay secretaries and employees, and CBMS enumerators from the 52 barangays of the municipality.

Ms. Anne Bernadette Mandap, Research and Administration Officer of the MIMAP-CBMS Network Coordinating Team, facilitated the training. Among the topics discussed were the principles, guidelines and outline/format in writing a SEP, where the core indicators gathered and processed from the CBMS household profile questionnaire are incorporated. Also discussed were the guidelines and steps in analyzing and interpreting the figures attained and translating them into words in the profile.

*Barangay captains, secretaries, employees and other volunteers hone their skills in writing socioeconomic profile, using the CBMS data gathered and processed from their respective communities.*



Drafts of the SEPs were prepared during the two-day training and submitted to the Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO) for encoding in the computers.

Participants during this training were the CBMS enumerators who are familiar with the CBMS questionnaire.

Like the module used in other municipalities, the training included a sequence of lectures and practical exercises. Discussion about the nature of the figures was also incorporated to enable table validation and checking. More importantly, the interpretation of the indicators was also tackled to allow the participants to understand the meaning of a specific indicator.

## Basud proceeds to training on manual data processing

The Municipality of Basud proceeded with its training on manual data processing on September 29-30, 2003, after the initial training it held on data collection. Led by its Coordinator, Ms. Rosalie Lopez, Basud's Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO) conducted the training with the assistance of the MIMAP-CBMS Network Coordinating Team.

In concluding the training, Ms. Lopez stressed the importance of meeting deadlines and timetables and advised the participants to conform to the schedule.

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Camarines Norte CBMS...from page 9

## San Lorenzo sets up CBMS

In response to the continuing demand of the municipalities of the province of Camarines Norte to establish a local monitoring system, the local government unit of San Lorenzo, through the Municipal Planning and Development Office headed by Engr. Rico Brizo and with the assistance of the MIMAP-CBMS Network Coordinating Team, conducted a training on data collection on October 1-3, 2003.

The trainees included barangay nutrition scholars, barangay health workers,

barangay officials and other community volunteers from all the 12 barangays of the municipality.

Municipal Vice Mayor Julio Estravez formally opened the training and urged the participants to do their best since the information to be gathered will mirror the status of their locality and be the basis of the planning for their local government. Barangay Captain Oscar Factor also stressed the necessity of data in the barangay level, particularly in formulating development programs for the local people.

The workshop proper ended with an evaluation of the field exercise and discussion of problems encountered as well as ways to solve them. Engr. Rico Brizo also briefed the participants on their timetables and schedules.

## MIMAP-CBMS team conducts training on computerized data processing and indicator mapping

In line with the establishment of a local monitoring system in the province of Camarines Norte, the MIMAP-CBMS Network Coordinating Team provided training programs on Computerized Data Processing and on Geographic Information System (GIS) for Indicator Mapping on October 1-2 at the Databyte Computer School in Daet, Camarines Norte.

The participants included officials and employees of the following five municipalities: Basud, Mercedes, San Lorenzo, San Vicente and Talisay.

The topics discussed during the training sessions include:

- Introduction of the whole process—from encoding to indicator mapping—and its difference from the

manual processing system;

- Data encoding of accomplished CBMS household profile questionnaires;
- Computerized tabulation and ways of depicting errors during encoding;
- Basic training on CBMS Geographic Information System (CBMS-GIS) using the Natural Resources Database (NRDB);
- Installation and setting up of a database;
- Digitization of barangay spot maps;
- Import of indicators and numeric figures for mapping; and
- Display of indicators geographically.

The training programs aimed to facilitate the understanding of the users and local constituents on the welfare conditions of the community via visuals and geographical color coding. *JEB* \*

Upon the invitation of the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) of Palawan, the MIMAP-CBMS Network Coordinating Team, composed of Dr. Celia Reyes, Ms. Anne Bernadette Mandap and Mr. Kenneth Ilarde, attended a series of CBMS validation exercises in Palawan on September 15-19, 2003. The week-long activity was part of the ongoing efforts of the PPDO to document the community-based monitoring system (CBMS) experience in Palawan to validate the CBMS 2002 survey results and to prepare the publication of the Palawan Human Development Report for 2002. Led by the head of the PPDO's research and statistics division, Ms. Josephine Escaño, the group visited four municipalities, namely, Taytay, San Vicente, Sofronio Española and Brooke's Point.

### Municipal level validation in Taytay and San Vicente

The group held municipal level validation exercises in Taytay and San Vicente. Their first stop was Taytay on September 16 where they were welcomed by Mayor Roberto Rodriguez and the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator (MPDC), Mr. Rodolfo Morco. About 20 barangay officials from nine barangays and municipal officials of Taytay led by the CBMS coordinator, Ms. Marilyn dela Cruz, participated in the validation exercise.

Their next stop was in San Vicente on September 19 where a similar municipal validation exercise was conducted. On hand to welcome the group were Mayor Antonio Gonzalez and Mr. Jess Velete, MPDC of San Vicente. Barangay officials from six barangays participated in the validation process.

In both venues, CBMS results were presented and validated with the barangay officials and CBMS key persons in the community through maps generated using the geographic information system

# MIMAP-CBMS Network Coordinating Team joins Palawan in CBMS validation exercises

(GIS). After the validation exercises, similar exercises at the barangay level to further validate barangay-level data before being inputted in the planning process were recommended by the group.

## Barangay level validation in Brooke's Point and Sofronio Española

The group also visited Southern Palawan where they conducted barangay level validation workshops in two barangays there. Both venues took the opportunity to showcase household level CBMS information through maps generated using the GIS.

On September 16, the group visited Barangay Oring-orang in the municipality of Brooke's Point where they made a courtesy call on Mayor Cesareo Benedito Jr. and attended the validation exercise organized by the Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO) led by Ms. Arlene Piramide, Officer-in-Charge. About 30 participants were in attendance, including the barangay officials led by Barangay Captain Ibrahim Palampisi.

The group proceeded to the nearby municipality of Sofronio Española the next day to conduct a barangay level validation workshop in Barangay Isumbo upon the invitation of its MPDC, Engineer Rogelio Abiog. Held at the Isumbo Elementary School, the workshop was participated in by Isumbo barangay officials and selected barangay captains and officials of other barangays.

In both exercises, the officials were encouraged to use the results from CBMS in preparing their barangay development

plans and to implement programs which will address the needs of their community as seen from the CBMS results.

## Southern Palawan Planning Council's proposal to adopt CBMS

While in Sofronio Española, the group was informed by Engr. Abiog of the plan of the Southern Palawan Planning Council (SPPC) to integrate CBMS in a recent development initiative funded by the European Union, Conservation International, and Shell Foundation. In particular, CBMS is being considered as a tool for resource profiling in the aforementioned development initiative covering five municipalities in Southern Palawan. The SPPC is a governing body composed of mayors and MPDCs of five municipalities, namely, Bataraza, Brooke's Point, Quezon, Rizal and Sofronio Española. The area is also known as the Southern Palawan Planning Area (SPPA) which was formed in response to the realization that poverty is the major cause of bad land uses, particularly in the upland areas. The possibility of the integration of CBMS in the said project may pave the way for funding of the data collection and other CBMS-related activities in these five municipalities.

## Orientation and follow-up training on CBMS computerized processing

During the same week, Ms. Jasmina Asirof of the MIMAP-CBMS Network Coordinating Team conducted a training on digitizing and indicator mapping, using the NRDB,<sup>1</sup> for selected officials of the MPDOs of Sofronio Española and Brooke's Point. These training and orientation seminars were

done to help the abovementioned municipalities in their ongoing computerized data processing and mapping of their remaining barangays. Said data were gathered from the CBMS surveys conducted in 2002.

Ms. Asirof also conducted rebriefing and consultation sessions on computerized data processing and indicator mapping for selected officials of the City Planning and Development Office (CPDO) of Puerto Princesa City. The rebriefing was conducted to help the city in its ongoing work on data processing and mapping of the CBMS results from 20 barangays surveyed this year.

## Concluding remarks

The week-long validation activities provided the venue not only for verifying the accuracy of the CBMS data but more importantly for soliciting the people's view at the local level regarding the possible explanation on the observed trends of development in their community as shown in the results from the CBMS.

Based on consultations with the MPDOs and the barangays during the validation exercises, there is really a demand for household level information. And presenting the CBMS results through GIS maps is indeed very useful for local officials in knowing and monitoring community problems and pinpointing specific target areas for program interventions. *KCI/BEM* \*

<sup>1</sup>This refers to the GIS database of the CBMS socioeconomic indicators utilizing the Natural Resource Database (NRDB) software developed by Mr. Richard Alexander.

# News Updates

## PEP research network...from page 6

the national and local governments with up-to-date information for policymaking and program implementation through the development and institutionalization of a community-based monitoring system. Its initiative complements global efforts to fight poverty by providing better statistics or benchmark information for evidence-based policymaking.

The network activities, funded by a grant from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)–Canada, evolved from earlier work done under the Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP) program of the IDRC.

### Moving the CBMS forward

The second annual conference of the PEP Research Network in Hanoi convened old, new and potential partners of the CBMS Network. It provided a forum for updating the existing network members on the accomplishments of the network since its establishment in October 2002. CBMS work has been ongoing in Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Senegal and Viet-

nam. Work has likewise started recently in Cambodia and Pakistan and will soon commence in Benin and Ghana. Meanwhile, initial discussions have likewise been made on the possible technical collaboration with local partners in Lao and Thailand.

Among the accomplishments of the network for the period were the establishment of linkages with local partners in new CBMS sites, initial compilation and documentation of details of methodologies, utilization/experiences, and findings in existing CBMS sites, conduct of a focused study on vulnerable groups using CBMS data, and the development of the network website containing CBMS country reports and updates on network activities.

Other areas for potential application and expansion of CBMS work which were raised and shared during the roundtable discussions in the conference include the use of the Distribution Analysis/Analyse Distributive (DAD) Software developed by PEP partners in Laval University, engendering of the CBMS, development of composite indices, and the localization of the Millennium Development Goals. *BEM* \*

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