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CBMS in Ghana and Benin: a report on the pilot test results

Located in West Africa, Ghana and Benin are considered as countries in deep poverty. In Benin, more than one in two persons is poor or vulnerable to poverty. In 1999-2000, 29.6 percent of the population was counted as poor versus 28.9 percent in 1994-1995. Though the proportion of poor has remained relatively stable between the two periods, the severity of the phenomenon has increased. It is estimated that approximately 25 percent of the population in Benin is vulnerable to poverty. In terms of urbanity, one counted 30.4 percent poor in the rural population versus 24.2 percent poor in the urban population in the period 1994-1995. Both areas suffered from the same intensity and severity of poverty. In the period 1999-2000, incidence of poverty was higher in rural areas but inequality was more markedly felt by urban poor.

In Ghana, even though the percentage of poor population, taking the upper poverty line of ¢900,000, declined from 51 percent in 1991-92 to about 43 percent in 1998-99, the rate still remains high. Moreover, the decline is not evenly distributed geographically with reductions concentrated in only a few areas. In the remaining localities, poverty fell only very modestly. Meanwhile, in terms of urbanity, poverty is substantially higher in rural areas than in urban areas for both periods.

The governments of these two countries have implemented a number of programs aimed at poverty reduction. In Ghana, the government has put in place programs to stabilize the economy and promote growth while in Benin, the government has initiated (with the support of the international community) a series of economic reforms aimed at reestablishing sustainable growth, reducing internal and external imbalances, and improving its population's standard of living.

Parallel to the implementation of these programs is the adoption of decentralization in both countries, to ensure that local people are directly involved in the decisionmaking process and made responsible for their own development.

However, there is a lack of data at the local level to assist not only the local but the national governments, as well, in evaluating the conditions of the local people and in assessing the effectiveness of the poverty reduction policies and programs implemented. Noting the need to address this data gap, two organizations, Cellule d'Analyse Politique Economique (CAPE) in Benin and Center for Policy Analysis (CEPA) in Ghana, decided to implement and pilot test CBMS in selected sites in their countries to monitor and evaluate the poverty situation in their localities. The results have provided valuable information in evaluating actual community situations.

This issue will feature the experiences of both countries in pilot-testing the CBMS.

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CBMS for local governance in Ghana: The Dangme West District experience*

Ghana has implemented a number of programs to stabilize its macro economy, promote growth, and subsequently reduce poverty. In formulating programs to improve the lives of the citizenry, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) serve as vital tools to map out effective development and anti-poverty interventions. Prepared through a consultative process, PRSPs bring about the different perceptions and demands of the community especially the poor. To assess the success in the implementation of the PRSPs, poverty alleviation programs and policies undertaken by decisionmakers should be closely monitored and evaluated. Though Ghana has benefited from a number of monitoring programs, all adopted a top-down approach to monitoring and not the bottom-up approach, i.e., from the community to the national level. This is in spite of the existence of a decentralized local government system in the country which began as early as 1998.

Ghana's local government system is a three-tier structure made up of the regional, local and unit committee levels. Ghana has 10 administrative regions which are subdivided into local assemblies (Districts, Municipalities and Metropolitan governments). Local assemblies are further divided into smaller sub-units or "councils". The basic governance unit in the country is the unit committee where basic planning and administration takes place. Ghana's government structure aims to empower the people themselves as active participants in the decisionmaking process. District assemblies serve as venues to air out the pressing problems in their community and in the process, formulate means to solve them.

Rationale for CBMS

In order to effectively formulate plans to solve community problems, there is a great need for information and data on the actual conditions in the community. However, there are no consistent sources of timely data on poverty at the district and unit committee levels, thus making it difficult for the district assemblies to identify the needs of the local people and address them sufficiently.

The use of national-scale poverty monitoring systems in Ghana though has certain limitations as they barely scratch the surface of the poverty situation in the community and individual levels, making it difficult for the average Ghanaian to relate to the results. A community-based monitoring system (CBMS) could offer the district assemblies the opportunities to assess policies they have implemented at the local level, identify problems and basic needs at the village/community level and how best they can be addressed. Having a monitoring system at the grassroots level will help inform policymakers, on a timely basis, of the effects of policies on the standard of living of people at the community level. It will also help them prioritize projects, formulate effective plans and track development programs in the various communities.

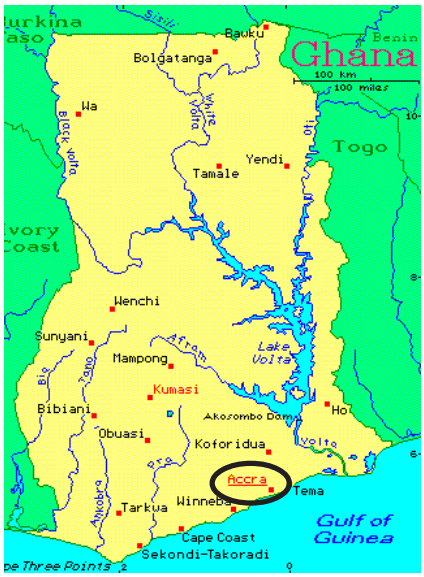
Methodology

Like most developing countries, the poverty situation in Ghana is multi-dimensional; characterized by low income, malnutrition, ill health, illiteracy, insecurity and isolation. Most of these indicators tie in with the Minimum Basic Needs Approach identified in the literature as capturing the multi-dimensional characteristics of poverty. The main areas of concern are health, water and sanitation, income and livelihood, basic education and literacy, shelter, peace and order, and political participation. The CBMS-Ghana team drafted a household questionnaire based on these prevailing aspects of poverty in their area. Workshops were conducted to draw comments and suggestions on how the questionnaire can be further improved and enhanced to effectively collect relevant information.

Pilot testing was done in three communities in the Dangme West District, an area located in the southeastern part of Ghana in the Greater Accra Region (Map 1). These communities were Dodowa, Prampram and Ningo. Local enumerators were selected from the electoral areas within the communities. The District Planning Office and the Deputy District Coordinating Director supervised the collection of data at the local level and the CBMS Ghana team provided training and overall supervision. Collection of data was undertaken through a survey covering all households in the 3 selected communities in the Dangme West District. Highly intensive and interactive train-

*This article is an excerpt from a report prepared by the CBMS-Ghana Project Team.

Map 1. Map of Ghana showing the Greater Accra Region (encircled): site of CBMS pilot communities



Source of map: http://tanguydlv.free.fr/Pays/Carte-Ghana.gif

ing sessions were conducted in each of the three selected communities by the CBMS resource persons. The sessions involved an exhaustive discussion of the 10-page questionnaire, which seeks to gather information on a number of indicators necessary to determine prevailing poverty levels within the communities so that interventions may be made to improve the living standards of the people.

Results from the pilot survey

Social and demographic characteristics

The total number of households surveyed in the three communities was 6730. The survey shows that the female population in the three areas exceeded the male population. Ningo had the highest mean household size of 4.12 while the lowest mean household size of 3.48 was recorded in Dodowa. Generally, 45 percent of the population had never married in all 3 communities while a third of the sample population were married and about 5 percent, widowed.

Education

In all the three communities, more than half the sample said they were literate or are able to read and/or write. The highest rate was in Dodowa and the lowest in Ningo. In all of the pilot communities, the percentage of females who cannot read and/or write exceeded the males. The level of school attendees was generally higher than the literacy rate in all the three communities. The percentage of females not attending school exceeded those of males. Generally, literacy and school attendance were lowest in Ningo while Dodowa was the most literate and had a high school attendance rate.

The net enrolment rate for basic education for the age range of 6 to 14 years old for both males and females was generally close in all the three communities. Whereas the net enrolment rate of boys in Dodowa and Ningo was greater than that for girls, in Prampram, it was the reverse with the net enrolment rate of girls being higher than that of boys.

The most frequently provided reason for not attending school was affordability. The decision of parents not to send their children to school was about a third of the reasons in all the three communities. About 10 percent of the school-going population in Prampram was not interested in attending school.

Political participation (electoral process)

Generally, the majority of respondents participated in the electoral process. The level of participation was 30 percent more in Prampram than in Dodowa and 12 percent more in Prampram than in Ningo. Females dominated in the electoral process than males in all the three communities surveyed. Female participation in the electoral process was highest in Prampram and lowest in Dodowa. Even though the participation was highest in Prampram, the percentage of females relative to males was the lowest.

Employment

Wholesale/retail trade and agriculture (including forestry and fishing) were the most important employment activities in the three communities surveyed. Trading activities had almost the same percentage of the population in all the three communities. Community/social service was the third most important employment activity in Dodowa, Ningo and Prampram.

Disaggregating the type of employment activity by gender shows that generally, males dominated in agriculture/forestry/fishing and construction while females dominated in wholesale/retail trade and fish processing

Health

Just over a quarter of the population in Dodowa and Ningo reported being ill in the four weeks preceding the survey. In both towns, the proportion of women who reported being unwell was higher than the proportion of men. Compared to the other two towns, Prampram had a significantly lower proportion of the population reporting illness, with a higher proportion of women reporting illness compared to men. The most frequently reported cause of illness was fever/malaria. Gastro-intestinal infection was the second. There was no significant difference between women and men in the pattern of illness.

In both Ningo and Prampram, the majority of reported cases of illness were attended to in a hospital (private, public or mission). With the exception of Ningo there was no significant differ-

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ence between the proportion of men and women who entered the hospital when ill. Second in importance as a place to seek medical attention when ill was the pharmacist or drugstore. Third in importance was the health center.

Reproductive health and child mortality

The proportion of women who have ever been pregnant increases with age. After the age of 40 years, there appears to be no significant difference among the age groups. Women in Ningo are more likely to have ever been pregnant compared to women in Dodowa and Prampram. When women are grouped into five year age-groups, the likelihood of a woman within an age-group being pregnant in the last 12 months increases and peaks for the 20-24 year-old age group in Ningo. Among women in Prampram, the incidence of pregnancy in the last 12 months peaks within the 25-29 year-old age group. In Dodowa, women within the 20-24 and 30-34 year-old age groups had the highest incidence of pregnancy in the last 12 months.

The proportion of women who had live births in the 12-month period peaked among the 20-24 year-old age group in Dodowa and Ningo, and peaked among the 25-29 year-old age group for women in Prampram (Figure 1). In Dodowa and Prampram, approximately three-quarters of the births were delivered in either a maternity home or health center. The proportion was significantly lower in Ningo. In contrast to the other two communities, a significantly larger proportion of the women in Ningo gave birth to their babies with the assistance of a traditional birth attendant or at home.

Almost all expectant mothers received ante-natal care. Attendance at post-natal clinics was relatively lower. The incidence of reported cases of maternal mortality by the households was lowest in Prampram. About 0.7 percent of households in Prampram reported losing a mother during childbirth compared to 1.5 percent and 1.6 percent, respectively, in Dodowa and Ningo.

Figure 1. Proportion of women that had live births by age group

Households were asked to indicate the age at which children died and if any were lost before birth. A significant proportion of pregnancies are lost before full term. Of children who survived childbirth, more than half of the mortalities in Dodowa and Ningo occurred before the first birthday. In Prampram the proportion was about 46 percent. The mortality rate for infants a month old is not significant particularly in Dodowa and Prampram.

Housing conditions

The majority of households in all three towns reside in compound houses. A larger proportion of households headed by women reside in compound houses compared to households headed by men. In the same instance, a smaller proportion of households headed by women reside in either detached/semi-detached houses or apartments. Not counting bathrooms, toilets and kitchens, more than half of the households in the three towns reside in single rooms. Households headed by women are more likely to have one room in addition to the utility rooms. The mean number of persons per room tends to be lower for households headed by women, suggesting that this category of households has a lower mean size. Most households in the three towns reside either in owner occupied or rental accommodation. In all three communities, a significantly higher proportion of households headed by women live in properties they own compared to households headed by men. Households headed by women are also more likely to be living in accommodation that is rent-free compared to households headed by men.

Provision of basic utilities

Electricity is the main source of lighting for most households although a significantly lower proportion of households headed by women use electricity for lighting. Wood-based products are the main sources of fuel for cooking in at least 80 percent of the households in the three towns. The majority of households obtain drinking water from either a pipe in the dwelling or an outdoor tap. Access to what may be described as safe sanitation is low in Prampram and Ningo.

Expenditure and livelihood

On the average, monthly household expenditures fall between ¢1,073,193 and ¢1,382,319 in Dodowa, Ningo and Prampram. Prampram has the highest mean monthly expenditures of ¢1,382,319. Food is the most impor-

tant item in the household expenditures followed by non-food expenditures at 46.3 percent. The share of remittances in total mean monthly household expenditures was the highest in Dodowa at 2.83 percent followed by Ningo at 1.83 percent and lastly, Prampram at 1.16 percent. The expenditure pattern reflects the type of employment activities the household engaged in. For example, Ningo has the highest percentage of population engaged in agriculture/forestry/fishing (53.1 percent) and thus has the highest imputed food expenditures (9.64%) among the three communities surveyed.

Disaggregating the mean monthly household expenditure by the sex of the household head shows that the mean monthly expenditure for male-headed households is higher in Dodowa and Prampram than for households headed by women. In Ningo, the mean monthly household expenditure is slightly higher for female-headed households than for male-headed.

Peace and order

Almost 7 percent of households in Dodowa and Prampram reported that at least one member had been a victim of a violent crime. The most frequently reported crime in Dodowa and Ningo was robbery. Land disputes were identified as the most frequent causes of conflict in the three towns. Marriage is the second most frequently reported cause of dispute in Ningo and Prampram while indebtedness is the second most frequently reported cause in Dodowa. When there is conflict, most of the cases are reported to the police station. Next in importance as a recourse for help is an elderly person in the community. Thus, both modern and informal conflict resolution mechanisms are utilized.

Access to social and community services and programs

In Dodowa and Prampram, about 40 percent of households have members who own a bank account. In Ningo, less than a third of the households have members with a bank account. Susu membership is lower than ownership of a bank account in the three towns. Ownership of a post office address is quite low in the three towns. However, almost 40 percent of households in Prampram have access to public telephones. The proportion though is significantly lower in Dodowa and Ningo. A very small proportion of the population have telephones installed in their homes. The ownership of mobile phones is much larger at approximately 16 percent.

A minority of households have members who have benefited from projects of the Social Investment Fund, Village Infrastructure Project or the Poverty Alleviation Fund. The first two are donor-funded projects that operate in every district. The low proportion of self-identified beneficiaries may be partly due to insufficient information about the project. Social programs sponsored by the district assembly or local community or NGOs benefit a limited number of households. Most households are aware of the national health insurance scheme but are not willing to register for a number of reasons.

Problems, challenges and lessons learned

Selection of enumerators

The most important challenge is the selection of enumerators within the district. Assistance from the District Assembly in the Dangme West proved invaluable since the CBMS team had no knowledge of what local capacity prevailed. The enumerators identified by representatives of the electoral areas had low educational levels and were inexperienced so teachers within the electoral areas were used to administer the questionnaire. The team focused on training local teachers as enumerators for two reasons. First, they are literate both in English and the local language and can therefore translate the questionnaire into the local dialect for households. Second, they are often well-known and respected in the various communities. Although the choice of teachers as enumerators is laudable, the main challenge for them arises when schools are in session and they have to juggle between the two responsibilities. Thus, the available times for administering the questionnaires are either after school or during the weekends.

Community demarcation

Community demarcation within the districts was not distinct in some of the areas surveyed. This created situations where the CBMS team either overestimated or underestimated the number of enumerators required for the fieldwork. This occurred in Dodowa and Ningo.

Multiplicity of surveys

Enumerators indicated that households are often inundated with various kinds of surveys, which do not result in the provision of or improvement in services within the communities. For instance, during the CBMS poverty survey in the Old Ningo community, another survey on district health insurance was also in progress.

Data verification and entry

There was no local capacity for data entry in all the traditional areas where the surveys were conducted. This placed enormous pressure on the team and necessitated the trainers to go through

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Piloting CBMS in Benin: a report on the preliminary results*

The Republic of Benin is situated in West Africa with an area of 112,622 square kilometers. In 2001, the country had an estimated population of 6,353,207 inhabitants. The economy of Benin is open and is strongly dependant on its large neighbor, Nigeria. Benin is classified as one of the Least Developed Countries (LDC's) and is eligible for the IMF initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC's).

An analysis of the economy of Benin reveals a weakness of growth incapable of reducing poverty, the major economic policy objective. Over the last 10 years, the average rate of growth of the economy has been 4.7 percent, which, accompanied by demographic growth of 3.2 percent, has proven insufficient for poverty reduction. In terms of Human Development Index (HDI), Benin was ranked 145th out of 174 countries in 1995. On the basis of the Human Poverty Index (HPI), close to 47 percent of the population in Benin is deprived of essential human services; that is to say poor in the sense of the international community. The high value of the HPI is explained by poor household living conditions. The proportion of individuals at risk of dying before the age of 40 is 39.7 percent, with a life expectancy at birth of 53 years (1997) versus 64 years in developed countries.

From a money metric point of view, more than one in two persons in Benin is poor or vulnerable to poverty. In 1999-2000, 29.6% of the population was counted as poor versus 28.9% in 1994-1995. Though the proportion of poor has remained relatively stable between the two periods, the severity of the phenomenon has increased. It is estimated that approximately 25 percent of the Beninese population is vulnerable to poverty.

Meanwhile, rural poverty is more widespread but less intense and less severe than urban poverty. In the period 1994-1995, one counted 30.4 percent poor in the rural population versus 24.2 percent poor in the urban population. Both areas suffered from the same intensity and severity of poverty. In the period 1999-2000, incidence of poverty was higher in the rural areas but inequality was more markedly felt by urban poor.

To achieve strong and sustainable growth, the government of Benin adopted the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). At the same time, they also implemented Decentralized Urban Management Program, a decentralization policy which calls on the city to take charge of the key social needs that would serve as inputs for decision-making and the formulation of projects.

The Observatory of Social Change (OSC) is the technical device chosen by the government of Benin for the evaluation of the poverty reduction strategy. Under the OSC, Beninese authorities will have the necessary capacities to (a) follow household living conditions and the phenomenon of poverty; and (b) formulate, target and evaluate public policies initiated under the PRSP.

The OSC will be a system of evaluating the PRSP at the national level. The idea itself of the creation of an observatory comes from the recognition of a need for basic information. Meanwhile, in the actual state of things, the administrative records do not provide sufficient coverage or reliability to be able to render such a service. Taking into account available human and financial resources, it is unrealistic to imagine that one could organize data collection on an annual basis that would be reliable, rapid and useful. Observatories in limited geographic locations or for limited sample populations will be able to rapidly furnish indicators of evolution and change. These indicators will be useful even if one will not be able to deduce from them data that are strictly representative of the nation as a whole.

To permit a real undertaking of the process and a real capitalization on the results, it is indispensable that local communities be associated at every step of the evaluation of the PRSP. For this reason, the participation of the target populations will be preferred during the evaluation process.

For the above reasons, Cellule d'Analyse Politique Economique (CAPE), a structure created by the presidential decree No. 95-366 of November 2001, in cooperation with the Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP)-Benin Project Team, decided to implement and pilot test the CBMS. The information that will be collected will aid in monitoring and evaluating the policies that were put in place as defined by the PRSP. It will also fill the need for increased information at the

* This article was based on the project proposal and on the report (original version in French) prepared by CBMS-Benin Project Team.

municipal level due to devolution which requires a follow-up of certain disaggregated indicators at the district level.

Pilot site

CBMS-Benin Team has piloted the CBMS in the 13th district of the town council of Cotonou (Map 1). The survey entitled Census on the Conditions of Existence of Households (CECEH), was implemented in the district of Houénoussou from 18 October to 3 November 2005. The census was carried out in the districts of AGLA, MISSITE, AÏBATIN II, GBEDEGBE, HOUENOUSSOU and AHOGBOHOUE, covering approximately 14,600 households.

Methodology

Recruitment and training of enumerators

Sixty enumerators, as suggested by the head of the 13th district, were hired to gather data. These enumerators have various training level backgrounds, the lowest of which was the BEPC. Ten enumerators came from each of the six districts.

Map 1. Map of Benin showing the town of Cotonou (encircled): the location of the CBMS pilot site

Source of map: http://us.i1.yimg.com/us.yimg.com/i/travel/dg/maps/90/750x750_benin_m.gif

The training of the enumerators was provided by Mr. Ambroise Agbota, Mrs. Marie Odile Attanasso and Miss Lea Tchobo. The enumerators were trained on the following modules: the household questionnaire, community questionnaire, the basic module, and the qualitative module.

Method of collection

The method of information collection used was the direct door to door interview. Information collection and some data processing were carried out by the local populace in the selected zones. The collection technique was based on a participative approach, with community members determining and following up the area-based poverty indicators.

Two statistical units were surveyed: (1) listed households, for which the respondent is the household head or any member of the household who can replace the household head; and (2) district heads.

The survey proper

Though planned for the period covering 18 October to 3 November, the census was instead finished towards the end of November because the enumerators encountered difficulties in the field which caused delays in survey completion. Even though data collection was extended, only 13,396 households out of the projected 14,600 could be surveyed.

Three questionnaires used to gather information were the community questionnaires, the household questionnaire and questionnaire on the qualitative aspects of poverty.

Information collected relate to indicators such as demographic characteristics, access to education, access to drinking water and to the types of toilets, access to health services, among others.

Following is a list of difficulties encountered during the data gathering:

- Some households thought that the survey was part of an election campaign;
- Difficulty in accessing zones located in marshlands;
- Lack of professionalism among the enumerators who were recruited from among the population;
- Seemingly short duration of the survey;
- Lack of preliminary activities to sensitize the population;
- Low involvement of district heads; and
- The politicization of the process.

Preliminary results

The results obtained from the qualitative module make it possible to assess local people's perception of poverty, the appreciation of the various strategies carried out to reduce poverty, and the level of minimum income desired by the population.

Poverty perception

Poverty is a phenomenon whose significance varies from individual to individual. It can be defined as being an unacceptable deprivation of the well-being of humans. This can include both physiological as well as social deprivation. A person can thus be regarded as poor when he/she cannot obtain for him/herself goods and services of sufficient quantity in order to satisfy his/her fundamental material or biological needs (food, health, education, and housing). On the other hand, the concept of social deprivation is broadened to include danger, vulnerability, lack of autonomy, powerlessness, and lack of self-respect. A dialogue with the

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population is thus needed to find out how they perceive poverty as well as how each community defines it.

The principal assumption on which the multidimensional analysis of poverty is based comes from the fact that analyzing the economic aspects of poverty is insufficient, income and consumption being indicators that are far from satisfactory in determining poverty (Martinetti, 2000)[1]. Health, longevity, education, social relations, and the state of serenity are components which should not be ignored if one is concerned about raising the level of well-being of individuals in the society.

Several specialists in the field of social sciences are interested in the multidimensional aspect of poverty. The approach of sociologists has led to the creation of several indicators.

Recently the economic debate in this field has been greatly re-energized, thanks to the works of Amartya Sen (1987, 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1997) which resulted in a capability approach. This approach is directly related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the target population as well as to their environment and the conversion of the resources and opportunities available into real goods. The multidimensional approach has the advantage of taking into account not only the material conditions of the individuals but also their general living conditions.

Definition of poverty by the target population

The qualitative questionnaire made it possible to review different perceptions of poverty from the Cotonou respondents.

Table 1. Definition of poverty

	Yes	No
Poverty = level of consumption lower than the min subsistence	74.7	25.3
Poverty = difficult material conditions	73.4	26.6
Poverty = low level of human capital	66.0	34.0
Poverty = marginalization	65.6	34.4
Poverty = vulnerability vis-a-vis with the various risks	68.3	31.7
Poverty = incapacity to influence its living condition	75.4	24.6

Source: CECEH, 2005

Three out of every four people questioned relate poverty to an individual's incapacity to influence his living condition (Table 1). This perception agrees with that of Amatrya Sen where the poverty of capacities is related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the people and their environment. The poor will become less poor if they acquire the capacities to take care of themselves. In spite of this perception, the local condition is such that the population is still unable to satisfy its basic needs. Approximately 3 out of every 4 people retained a consumption level below the minimum requirement for subsistence, a sure sign of poverty.

Other factors indicated as a sign of poverty are the marginalization of the individual and his vulnerability in the face of hazards.

Assessment of the household's standard of living

Faced with various perceptions of poverty, the population was asked to estimate the standard of living of their household. It is noted that the majority of the households (51.3%) live with difficulty, i.e., manages to satisfy their minimal needs with difficulty. Only 2.3 percent declared that they live well. Meanwhile, 47.1 percent of the sample were classified among the poorest 20 percent. On the whole, 87.1 percent of the sample consider themselves as belonging to the poor or moderately poor category.

This poverty compels the population to borrow money in order to provide for household needs. On the whole, 52.5 percent of the households surveyed said that the household heads borrow money to satisfy the needs of the household. Only 10.1 percent of these households manage to put a little money aside as savings. This situation is rather deplorable and deserves particular attention from the authorities. In this case, one could plan to establish microfinance institutions at a reduced rate to grant credit to individuals who need it.

Perception of the evolution of the households' standard of living

The uneasiness of the local population in the 13th district can be gleaned from the answers given in the evolution of the standard of living of the households: 68.4 percent of the household heads declared that their standard of living deteriorated in the last 12 months preceding the survey. Only 5.5 percent of the population saw an improvement in their situation. The assessment of the national trend on the level of households, however, shows a better situation among the households in the 13th district as compared to all the households in Benin.

The qualitative survey showed that housing conditions such as makeshift residences often rented without electricity and situated in a squalid environment (e.g., flood-prone, lack of access to water and absence of latrines) are the aspects of poverty in the 13th district.

[1] Enrica Chiappero Martinetti (May 2000). A Multidimensional assessment of well-being based on Sen's functioning approach.

The residents' difficult living conditions have an influence on their appraisal of the minimum amount needed to survive per month. As noted in the survey, 46.1 percent of the population want to earn incomes between 15,000 and 50,000 F CFA per month to survive, (which translates to an annual income ranging between 180,000 and 600,000 F CFA). Thus, the welfare index, i.e., the equivalent of the average annual consumption of an adult, is 318,300 F CFA in the urban zones and 211,100 F CFA in the rural zones, based on the 2003 Benin Questionnaire of Basic Indicators.

This estimate shows the state of poverty of the population of the 13th district insofar as this estimated amount must satisfy the households' food and non-food expenditures.

How the population assesses its standard of living

Satisfaction of food needs

The question of satisfying basic needs made it possible for the household heads to come to a conclusion on their satisfaction degree in terms of food and non-food consumption expenditure. Whatever the variable considered, the satisfaction of the needs varies according to the quintiles of poverty: the proportion of those who think that this condition is essential for well-being is always lower for those who were classified in the first quintile than for the others.

Concerning the level of satisfaction, it is in the second quintile where the largest proportion of households that declared themselves not satisfied or at all satisfied with their living conditions. As regards meat consumption, 83 percent of the households in this group were not satisfied; this could bring about food deficiency among the children of these households.

In the last quintile, i.e., the 20 percent richest, no household with unfulfilled needs was counted. The second quintile, which was made up of households labeled as moderately poor, aspired for a higher well-being since they were not completely poor.

Satisfaction of non-food needs

The same tendency is observed when considering non-food needs: it is always in the moderately poor group where non-satisfaction is most marked. The poorest households (81.3%) recognized that they do not manage to help their parents who are in difficulty. In fact, they were the ones who needed more support and had very few transfers of income.

The fight against poverty

The renewal of the analysis of poverty in Benin is related to the fact that the many economic policies implemented in an autonomous way or through the programs of Structural Adjustment or the Macroeconomic Program of Stabilization (PAS/PS) have very little success. As such, the preparation of the PRSP, which is the document of framework of economic policies in the African countries, should be based on a participative approach. This is an important aspect since based on the results of the survey, 88.6 percent of the surveyed population said that they were not informed on the development process of the first PRSP of Benin (2003-2005). Moreover, 94.1 percent of them did not take part at all in the elaboration of this document.

Meanwhile, very few think that the strategies of fighting against poverty have a clear orientation (8.8%). The disappointment of the population vis-à-vis with the deterioration of the living conditions is large: more than one out of two person regard that the current strategies in fighting poverty do not make it possible to reduce the level of poverty. It would be necessary that the population is more informed in the choice and the definition of the strategies of poverty reduction.

Use of data

The data collected can be used in the definition of the strategies of fighting against poverty at the national level through the activities of the various components of the Observatory of the Social Change.

Durability and dissemination

To have a continuum of the CBMS activities, there is a need to install the SSCP at the district level for a better definition of the development strategies of the local councilors. The SSCP, which is a device required by the local councilors, is a powerful tool for negotiation and plea for the mayors towards the development partners. Meanwhile, for wider dissemination, there is a need to post the results of the survey at the level of the districts chiefs of the 13th district and in the town hall of Cotonou.

Conclusion

These preliminary results show that there is a general uneasiness among residents in the 13th district with regard to perceiving their living conditions, and information is needed to enable local authorities to define the real needs of their citizens. The data gathering carried out in 2005 must be used as reference in order to appreciate the changes that local councilors intend to make during their mandate. This same census could be repeated after two years to determine the resulting changes. The indicators calculated must be used as measures of performance by the local authorities in view of addressing poverty at the community level. Finally, local officials can use these indicators as inputs for identifying and positioning the proper social infrastructure. k

CBMS team holds workshop on LLPMS*

In its continuing advocacy for the Local Level Poverty Monitoring System (LLPMS) in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) organized a local level workshop on December 29, 2005. The workshop was intended to disseminate the process and findings of LLPMS and to identify potential partner organizations for replicating the system.

Disseminating the process and findings of LLPMS. *In photo from left: Dr. Tofail Ahmed, Professor, Chittagong University; Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Director General BARD; Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Executive Chairman, PPRC; and Mr. Md. Mir Kashem, Director, BARD.*

The workshop was organized under the Chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Nazrul Islam, Director General of BARD with the assistance of Mr. Abdul Quader and Mr. Abdullah Al Mamun BARD Deputy Director and member of the research team, respectively.

The workshop was graced by Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Executive Chairman of People's Participatory Resource Center (PPRC) and Member of Board of Governors of BARD. Dr. Tofail Ahmed, Professor at the Public Administration Department of Chittagong University, served as key discussant. Mr. Md Mir Kashem, Director of Rural Economics and Management, BARD and Project Coordinator of LLPMS gave a brief outline of the project. Mr. Ranjan Kumar Guha, Assistant Director BARD and Project Leader LLPMS presented the keynote paper.

Dr. Ahmed appreciated the team's effort and suggested incorporating more information about the contribution of BARD in local level planning, as BARD has tremendous experience in this field. Pointing out the relevance of the initiative, he said that the workshop is very timely given that the national government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) underscores the necessity of a poverty monitoring system, and BARD has an experimental model that is ready for launching on a wider scale. He also mentioned that if the policy planners can be convinced on the project's merits, then it has huge potential for replication. He also called the attention of the event's guest of honor - who is also one of the personalities involved in preparing PRSP - to make it possible to have at least one union of each district serve as a site for project implementation. He offered Daukandi Upazila as a best practice case for LLPMS.

For his part, Dr. Rahman explained that PRSP has outlined an overall planning structure for the country, and acknowledged that system monitoring is an essential component of the PRSP. He noted three crucial aspects of monitoring, i.e., identification of indicators, the nature of information requirements, and methods of data generation. Information should be collected with the stakeholders' needs in mind otherwise the whole exercise will be useless. In terms of indicators, priority should be given to the development of proxy indicators which would create value in the real sense, and underscored the necessity of cross checking information. He appreciated the database developed using NRDB, and felt that the database has tremendous potential in Bangladesh with regard to analyzing social and household vulnerability in the country's poverty-stricken areas.

Mr. Nazrul Islam, BARD Director General said that the experience has proven that local people have the capacity to generate and process poverty data as key inputs to the planning process, thus making the plan more pragmatic.

During open discussion, the Chairman of neighboring unions expressed interest in the process and requested BARD to provide support services to develop a database for their respective unions. Meanwhile, officials of two NGOs showed their interest to partner with BARD for implementing the LLPMS, and agreed that if technical assistance is provided, the system can be integrated with their existing programs for strengthening local governance. k

*This article was prepared by the CBMS-Bangladesh Project Team.

CBMS project enters third phase*

The activities of the CBMS project, as it enters third phase, are more centered on the reinforcement of capacities in Yako and the start of activities for establishing CBMS in the new site of Diébougou.

Capacity-building in Yako

Now on its third phase of implementation in Yako, the CBMS project objective this time around is for the local people to implement the CBMS by themselves in terms of data collection and analysis. The CBMS team will intervene only during data processing and further analysis of data. This makes it possible for the team to test the capacity of the pollsters if they will be able to carry out the tasks themselves and collect reliable data with the participation of the Village Development Committee (VDC).

Given this objective, the following activities were undertaken at the level of all the villages and sectors of Yako:

- Re-sensitizing of the populations on the new survey operations;
- Selection of new enumerators in the localities where there were failures. It should be noted that because of the training that they received from the CBMS project team, some enumerators could find work in other projects during periods when there are no CBMS activities; this is why it was necessary to proceed with finding replacements for these enumerators;
- Training of new enumerators and rehiring of former enumerators and data processors. This operation took place on April 7 and 8, 2006, and was able to gather a hundred people from all the villages and sectors of Yako to serve as a training pool for enumerators and processors.

The survey activities have already started. It will be followed by a manual processing at the village level and a computerized processing by the CBMS team. The results of this second general survey will make it possible to see the evolution of the state of poverty or well-being of the populations in Yako, based on the CBMS indicators.

The CBMS team was pleased to note the acknowledgement of the data's practical impact among residents in Yako, as illustrated in the following examples:

- The use of CBMS data for developing land management programs under the PNGT2 (National Program of Land Management) of the relevant government agency;
- The use of the data from certain villages (Lilbouré) by a theater company for the staging of a play about development;
- Broad sensitizing of the village communities regarding questions on schooling, elimination of illiteracy, hygiene, health service provision, consumption of safe drinking water, etc.
- Increases in primary school registration, improved visitation rate in primary health care centers (CSPS), and improvement in personal hygiene practices.

Expanding CBMS in Diébougou

After making contact with the administrative authorities and the village persons in charge, project sensitizing in preparation for the project's pilot phase began in February 2006 in the five localities of Diébougou. Animation will continue until the CBMS is set-up in all the villages, along with the establishment of the Village Development Committees (VDC).

From March 13 to 15, 2006, the CBMS team went to Diébougou to conduct training for data processors and enumerators. The pilot survey was completed one week after the training.

After the enumerators and data processors did manual data processing, the results and survey forms were transmitted to the CBMS team for collation and consolidation. The processing, tabulation and analysis will then follow.

Aside from its partner organization CECI, the CBMS team also worked in collaboration with ASUDEC (Africa Sustainable Development Council), which is based in Diébougou. This collaboration extends beyond Diébougou because the CBMS was also requested for evaluating the impact of ASUDEC's activities, which is still in progress, in Gampèla, a locality of Ouagadougou. k

*This article was prepared by the CBMS-Burkina Faso Project Team.

The NIS takes over the helm of the CBMS project*

With the active cooperation of government and non-government agencies, the National Institute of Statistics, (NIS) Cambodia's central statistical office, will take over the second phase of the implementation of the Community-Based Poverty Monitoring System (CBMS) in Cambodia. The Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) implemented the project in its first phase in collaboration with the NIS and the Seila Program. The project consists of two parts and will be implemented over a period of 12 months in three districts of three provinces representing different levels of resources and capacity.

A total of 36,000 households in three provincial districts have been selected as CBMS sites. The sites under phase I will also be selected for this phase. These include six communes selected from two provinces. Three communes (Prek Norint, Samrong Khnong, and Prek Luong) were chosen from Ek Phnom district of Battembang province; three communes (Snuol, Khsem, and Sre Char) were from the Snuol district of Kratie province. In these old sites, the commune councils will be provided with minimal support and funding to re-conduct the census primarily on their own. This is considered a consolidation part. The second part of the project is the expansion to cover a full district in Kampong Thom, the second poorest province in Cambodia. The new site for system implementation is the Stoung District, which has 13 communes.

All the households in each selected commune will be surveyed under the project. To meet the long-term objective of creating a sustainable system to monitor poverty reduction at the local level over time, the project will place emphasis on institution and capacity building at the local level, and cost-effectiveness. Capable villagers will be recruited and trained to undertake the household surveys and process data manually under the management of the commune councils and the technical supervision of the Project Management Team within the NIS. The project will actively engage key partner institutions, to serve as Project Advisory Team. It is envisaged that this second phase will serve as a model for eventual nationwide implementation of the poor household identification and targeting system.

Learning from the pilot test experience

The pilot test[1] yielded valuable results in terms of adequately describing the different facets of poverty in the six communes of the two different provinces. The use of CBPMS data also allowed for the integration of provincial and national level planning processes.

The project was able to build the capacity of local authorities to implement the CBMS in their localities. Likewise, the CBMS provided a basis for the Ministry of Planning to draw on the experience of other NGOS in identifying poor households using qualitative methods, to build on efforts to establish a national system of identifying poor households. The Ministry of Planning has established a "Working Group on Poor Household Identification" (WGPHI) of which CDRI and NIS are members. The working group has been studying a set of indicators that best describe the poverty status of households, with the objective of establishing a simple, statistically sound tool that can be implemented to identify poor households nationwide, thus improving program targeting. k

Children on board a motorcycle on their way to school. *A low level of education was registered on this CBMS pilot site based on the results of the CBMS survey.*

*This article was prepared by the CBMS-Cambodia Project Team.

[1] For details of the pilot test results, see the March 2006 issue of this newsletter.

CBMS Team wraps up activities as project nears its completion*

The CBMS-Indonesia Project Team is busy continuously conducting CBMS activities as the project nears its completion.

Summary of CBMS activities

The CBMS-Indonesia Project Team completed data collection in June 2005, and data entry and processing were finished in September 2005. The CBMS research report was published in December 2005, after three months of draft writing. Production of the CBMS CD began in January 2006 and was finished in February 2006. This CD, together with the research report, is intended for distribution to district officials across Indonesia. Finally, a national workshop to disseminate the CBMS project results was conducted by SMERU in March 2006.

Production of information materials

SMERU prepared a research report, which acts as a guidebook, and a CD containing the results of the pilot survey. In the initial plan, the guidebook would have exactly the same content as the CD but would be sent to districts that do not have any computers. However, SMERU recently discovered that virtually every district office in the country has a computer. The CD and guidebook were thus redesigned to complement each other rather than substitute for one another.

The CD contains the rationale for conducting the CBMS pilot, a short description of PCA (Principal Components Analysis), the family questionnaire, and the visual results of the CBMS. Meanwhile, the guidebook - which is now called the research report - contains the steps taken during the pilot, from recruitment of enumerators to data processing, as well as the detailed PCA results and the qualitative and quantitative profile of each village.

National workshop

A national workshop was held on March 29, 2006 in Jakarta. Forty-three participants, consisting of 6 officials from 6 district governments in Java, 3 representatives from Statistics Indonesia, 3 BKKBN officers, and representatives from Bappenas, and the Ministries of Home Affairs, Health, and Agriculture, attended the workshop. Representatives from donor agencies such as Ford Foundation and USAID and staff members from local NGOs also attended the event.

Three presentations were given. The first one by Dr. Sudarno Sumarto, Director of SMERU and CBMS-Indonesia Project leader, focused on the rationale for conducting CBMS and the results of the pilot project. This was followed by a project team member's sharing of experiences as a CBMS enumerator. Finally, Mr. Daniel Suryadarma, SMERU researcher and member of CBMS-Indonesia Research Team, demonstrated the use of the CD.

An open forum followed after the final presentation, where questions ranged from how CBMS can be adapted to local needs, to questionnaire design processes. On the other hand, workshop participants gave their opinion on providing information on other qualitative community-based efforts by NGOs in several locales, and reiterating the importance of data collection in poverty monitoring.

Upcoming activities

After conducting the workshop, SMERU is currently distributing the research report and CD to district officials and NGOs around Indonesia. It is hoped that some districts would take an interest in adopting the system. As has already been agreed in the beginning, SMERU is willing to conduct training sessions and provide assistance to interested districts in designing a suitable CBMS for their locales. k

All in a day's work. ***An enumerator administers the CBMS questionaire while the respondent listens intently.***

*This article was prepared by the CBMS-Indonesia Project Team.

Dodoma Municipal Council is the newest CBMS partner in Africa*

Tanzania is the new partner of CBMS Network with the approval of their proposal for the implementation of CBMS.

Background

Since gaining independence in 1961, the Government of Tanzania has sought to encourage participatory, bottom-up planning with a focus on poverty alleviation. Attempts were made at different periods through various national strategies. For instance, in 2004, the Government developed the Opportunities and Obstacles to Development (O&OD) methodology, which defines a process to be followed by municipalities to achieve participatory planning and monitoring in the context of decentralization. The O&OD methodology is a holistic process which recognizes the role of local communities in the identification, preparation, and implementation of development projects. However, since it focuses on community groups, the methodology cannot address the socio-economic concerns of individual people and households, thus diminishing its applicability for poverty monitoring purposes.

In this regard, the Dodoma Municipal Council decided to implement a Community-Based Poverty Monitoring System (CBMS) which adheres to the O&OD methodology but goes further to the household level to monitor the poverty status of individuals in the selected pilot areas, and can subsequently be replicated in a wider area.

Methodology

The proposed CBMS will capture spatial, time related, and socio-economic data at the village, ward and municipal level. The system will be developed and pilot tested in two localities: the ward (urban area) of K/Ndege, which has approximately 2,396 households, and the village (rural setting) of Nala, which has approximately 2,444 households.

The selection is based on the fact that Dodoma Municipality has both urban and rural areas (30 wards and 42 villages respectively), with the latter rapidly urbanizing. The pilot ward has appropriate urban representative characteristics in terms of housing, infrastructure, and community functions. On the other hand, the pilot village manifests the lifestyle of rural communities that are being urbanized. Employment opportunities, the distribution of water points within walking distance, literacy, maternal services, passable roads, and agricultural extension services were a few needs identified in the pilot area. CBMS will be used as a tool for allowing rapid and frequent community profiling in order to qualify and quantify their needs, and thus pave the way for designing appropriate strategies for livelihood improvement.

Expected results

In the short-term, the project will install a CBMS that improves the knowledge of people and leaders in the community, ward, and council staff on the socio-economic realities of their areas. The accompanying training in database establishment and operation, coupled with revisions in the planning and budgeting process, will hope to build the capacity of community groups, council staff and councilors. There already exist a number of organized groups of marginalized women, widows and youth, that the pilot CBMS will be able to track and assist in terms of developing programs and policies to their immediate advantage.

Poverty profiles will be prepared for Nala village and K/Ndege ward (the pilot areas). These profiles will show who are the poor, where they are, and trends in their situation. Development plans for the two pilot areas will then be based on these poverty profiles.

In the long term (that is, three to five years), the following project results are expected:

- A comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date CBMS that incorporates spatial, time related and socio-economic data, as described in the O&OD;
- An improved planning process at the municipal level as the CBMS process will be integrated within the current planning framework;
- Improved program designs in the villages, wards and municipal departments; all of which resulting in better poverty alleviation initiatives within the municipality;
- Availability of poverty maps for identifying poverty pockets and targeting the alleviation measures; and
- A set of council staff capable of doing CBMS, as a result of the project's training of trainers component. This approach will enable staff and community personnel to effectively and efficiently carry out database information gathering as inputs for programs and policies. (a bottom-up approach to development planning). k

*This article is an excerpt from a project proposal prepared by the CBMS-Tanzania Project Team.

PDF report calls for 100% LGU coverage of CBMS by 2010

In a consolidated report which was presented to the dialogue body last month, the Working Group on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Social Progress of the Philippines Development Forum (PDF) called for an acceleration in the target and pace of institutionalizing the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS).

"The target of the Community-Based Monitoring System is 100% coverage by 2010. To date, with only four more years until 2010, the country has not reached half of the target and the pace of institutionalizing CBMS needs to be accelerated," the report of the Working Group said.

Chaired by the Philippine Government and the World Bank, the PDF is the primary mechanism of the government for facilitating substantive dialogue among stakeholders on the country's development agenda. It also serves as a process for developing consensus and generating commitments among different stakeholders toward critical actionable items of the Government's reform agenda.

The Government Lead Convenors of the Working Group include the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Health (DOH) for sub-group on health, and the Department of Energy (DOE) for sub-group on education. Meanwhile, the Development Partner Conveners include the UN Resident Coordinator (overall), EC/GTZ for sub-group on health, and Australia for sub-group on Education.

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) had earlier adopted the CBMS as a tool for generating the Core Local Poverty Indicators (CLPIs) and for tracking progress in meeting the MDG targets at the local level. The department is currently providing technical assistance to the pilot provinces of Marinduque, Camiguin and Masbate and the cities of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija and Tanauan in Batangas.

To scale up the implementation of CBMS in the country, the report enumerated the following interventions that may be supported: capacity building of LGUs for the CBMS methodology; develop a larger pool of CBMS trainors; provide hardware to facilitate the adoption of CBMS; provide grants to projects that have been identified through CBMS; and, recognize, through an awards system, of CBMS models.

The CBMS is currently being implemented in 15 provinces covering 157 municipalities, 12 cities and 4,279 barangays. k

Trainings for local partners

Agusan del Sur Province

- A total of 84 local planners, barangay officials, and technical staff from the 14 municipalities of the province of Agusan del Sur and the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) attended a 3-day writeshop on the "Preparation of Socioeconomic Profiles and Barangay Development Plans using CBMS Data" on May 8-10, 2006.
- Mr. Don Carney of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) remarked that barangay officials in the province usually engage the services of consultants to prepare their socioeconomic profiles to the tune of P50-100K per barangay. The results of the 3-day training showed that the barangays can prepare their own socioeconomic profiles. This will translate to a total of at least P15.7M budget savings since the province has a total of 314 barangays.

Bicol Region

- At least 21 representatives from 5 municipalities in the provinces of Albay, Camarines Sur and Sorsogon attended a 3-day training on CBMS Data Processing System (CDPS1) on May 17-19, 2006.
- The training was made possible with the assistance of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Region 5 Office, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and National Statistical Coordinating Board (NSCB).
- Reg. Dir. Blandido Macedo said that these LGUs are considered as "show windows of CBMS implementation in the area". He pointed out that their progress will be very vital in successfully advocating CBMS to other LGUs in the region. k

Research Results

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the accomplished questionnaires with each enumerator at the end of the field work to ensure that the questionnaires were filled correctly. Data was then transported to Accra for collation. It will be useful to provide minimum training in data collation to a selected team within the districts before districts can successfully engage in their own poverty monitoring.

Compensation

Enumerators demanded higher compensation for administering the questionnaires because they claimed they had to travel long distances to visit households and also had to visit households more than once in order to get complete information.

Conclusion

The census of households in Dodowa, Ningo and Prampram covered about a quarter of the population in the Dangme West District. The census has revealed similarities and diversities among the population in the three towns.

Meanwhile, the extent of variation within the district reveals the importance of spatially disaggregated data. Dangme West is located in the region that had the lowest headcount poverty index in 1998/99. However, some of the poverty indicators in the district like access to safe sanitation are not significantly different from indicators in poorer regions and districts. Effective planning must be informed by relevant and up-to-date data and information especially by spatially disaggregated data which are critical to ensuring that deprived households and locations within the district are targeted.

This pilot project has provided useful baseline data for poverty monitoring and evaluation. The value of such database will increase further if the CBMS exercise can be conducted at relevant intervals, possibly every two or three years. k

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