LOCAL GOVENMENT BARANGAY LEVEL MONITORING SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT: MEASURING TARGET 11 OF THE MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

April 2006 - March 2007

The project was initiated with a grant from the European Union-Philippines Small Projects Facility. The project adapts the design and promotes the use of the UN-Habitat indicators for measuring Target 11 of the Millennium Development Goals at the barangay level. Target 11 is: Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. The project provided a foundation for an unambiguous measured analysis of the urban environment and general quality of life of informal settlers in the National Capital Region of the Philippines.

In January 2006, the European Union-Philippines Small Projects Facility awarded a grant for 65,570€ to ALTERPLAN and its partner the Foundation for Integrative and Development Studies (FIDS). ALTERPLAN and FIDS used this grant to develop a monitoring system for Target 11 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) at the local or "barangay" level in the National Capital Region of Manila, Philippines. Target 11 is: "Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020."

Developed by the United Nations, the MDG are broad goals for the entire world. The goals address several dimensions of poverty and their effects on people's lives; focusing on issues relating to poverty reduction, health, gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. By accepting these goals, the Philippines and other UN member states have made a strong commitment to the world's poor and at risk populations; and in precise terms, by establishing quantitative targets.

Target 11 is a tactical entry point to the MDG for the local governments. Since it focuses on the close living environment of slum households – which constitute 1/3 of the world's urban population – it naturally involves collateral enhancement of other key goals. This project aims at fostering the understanding of the MDG as a useful tool to assist cities and barangays in line with their actual shelter and urban environment programs.

The MDG Target 11 barangay monitoring project adapts the design and promotes the use of indicators established by the UN Commission on Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) to measure the level of basic development and quality of life at the barangay level. The barangay is the grassroots level of local government in the Philippines and is usually the scale at which shelter and urban development initiatives are located. A vital goal of the project is to embed the monitoring mechanisms into the local government machinery; making it not a one-time effort but a cyclic process. The first cycle drew a specific figure of the current status of shelter and

environment related issues, often inexistent at this level. This new data was immediately useful in targeting development priorities; while later on, it will also serve as a baseline for evaluating the success of policies and projects. Public dissemination of this data should also help in rendering local governments accountable to civil society.

UN-Habitat key components of shelter and settlement conditions

This project, which focuses on shelter and settlement issues, used as raw material five key dimensions identified by UN-Habitat as general indicators of housing conditions. They were recommended after an Expert Group Meeting was held in Nairobi in November 2002 on Defining Slums and Secure Tenure. Experts agreed on the following definition of slums: "A slum is a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognised and addressed by the public authorities as integral or equal part of the city." Therefore, they concluded that monitoring of Target 11 should be undertaken through the five following components that characterize slums: Insecure residential status; Inadequate access to safe water; Inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; Poor structural quality of housing; Overcrowding.

Each of these categories addresses an individual aspect of the community, but when brought together establish an aggregate picture of its well being. These key dimensions were purposely designed in a general enough manner to be adapted to local contexts. This system allows for maximum compatibility and analysis of global progress.

A participatory development process

Having in mind the importance of fostering the sense of ownership over the monitoring system for the local governments, a participatory process was used to adapt and further develop locally specific indicators and monitoring tools. In August 2006, the process was initiated with project orientation sessions followed by workshops on research methodologies. Participants from key departments of the two pilot cities (Marikina and Quezon City) and their four pilot barangays were invited.

For Marikina, the pilot barangays are Fortune and Marikina Heights. Other participating agencies are the City Planning and Development Office, Office of the City Administrator, Marikina Settlements Office, City Health Office, Center for Excellence, MIS-GIS-Call Center, Association of Barangay Chairpersons, Budget Office, Legal Office, City Council Committee on Housing, and the barangays of Concepcion Dos, Parang, Malanday, and Industrial Valley Complex.

For Quezon City, the pilot barangays are Holy Spirit and Baesa. Other participating agencies are the City Planning and Development Office, the Urban Poor Affairs Office, Barangay Operations Center, City Health Department, Subdivision Administration Unit, City Personnel Office, and the barangays of Tandang Sora, Sta. Monica, and Bagong Silangan.

By involving users themselves, it was assured that the tools developed would be adapted to local realities and government machinery. If political will was essential to launch the project; it is also considered of the utmost importance to involve the professional staff of the local governments to ensure continuing impact beyond next elections. The overall goal is to bring stakeholders together to build a shared understanding of the MDG monitoring project.

Locally specific indicators and monitoring tools

Apart from building consensus on a monitoring framework and appropriate research procedures, the concrete objective of the workshops on methodologies was to localise and develop further the survey questionnaire that has been used on the field for data gathering. A preliminary draft of this instrument, set up according to UN-Habitat indicators, was first presented to the extended project team for comments. While Alterplan and FIDS collaborated on the development on this first draft, they stepped back during the workshops process, using feedback from the members as the primary input source for improvement of the instruments. Meanwhile, they dedicated themselves to ensuring the rigorous consistency of the instruments and procedures with the project goals.

The actual survey questionnaire roams largely around the questions of shelter and urban environment. It allows for extensive quantitative and qualitative data collection on the critical issues of:

- Household Information

  Structure, Gender, Education, Livelihood

- Access to Water

  Affordability, Sufficient quantity, Quality, Effort and time to obtain

- Access to Sanitation

  Access to sanitary toilet, Sufficient sewerage system

- Secure Tenure

  Documentation of secure tenure status – Eviction of men and women in the past 10 years – Perception of protection from eviction in the next 5 years – Organizing of communities – Affordability

- Durability of Housing

Non-hazardous location – Materials used and protection from extreme climatic conditions – Compliance with building codes, ordinances – Disaster awareness and preparedness

- Sufficient Living Space

  Overcrowding – Orderliness

- Environmental Management

  Solid waste disposal – Drainage system

- Access to Other Services

  Electricity and Fuel – Employment and Livelihood opportunity – Health services – Educational institutions – Marketplace – Transportation and Road system – Peace and Order – Priority of problems

The quantitative indicators for categories 2-6 originated from UN-Habitat's five key dimensions and were further localised through the workshops on methodologies. However, the whole of categories 7-8 and lists of qualitative indicators came from the participants themselves. From their point of view, it was essential to inform these issues in order to get a complete picture that could be useful in defining appropriate urban planning strategies. This upgraded system now offers indicators for both quantitative and qualitative data that provide a comprehensive picture of shelter and urban development trends.

Implementation of workplan

The resulting workplan involved staff from both Alterplan-FIDS and local governments working in two correlated teams: one going on the field to gather data, and the other encoding it in the office. Participation of the extended team members (from the local governments) in the pilot test provides the opportunity for both training on the use of the instruments and monitoring the application of the agreed procedures.

Pilot cities, barangays and sample survey size

A strict methodology was employed to determine pilot cities, barangays and survey sample size. Selection criteria specified that cities needed to have existing settlement and housing plans, programs for the urban poor and informal settlers, available staff and information system infrastructure, and the political will to participate in the project.

Indeed, the two selected pilot cities, both within the National Capital Region (NCR), have already implemented quite remarkable urban planning strategies oriented towards solving the issue of informal settlements.

Pilot city – Marikina City

The city of Marikina, often dubbed as the "Shoe Capital of the Philippines", suffered from fifty years of heavy urban migration mostly caused by its large export industries' park. From this phenomena, resulted a high population of informal settlers in various colonies scattered over the city on both public and private land [1]. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, the city created the Marikina Settlement Office (MSO) and implemented its "Squatter-Free Marikina" project with the strong determination to overcome the crisis. The objective was to provide the urban poor with both basic services and security of tenure by supplying them with affordable house-lots and appropriate infrastructure [2].

After only a few years, the city had acquired over 106 hectares of private land to be developed as legitimate settlements, and adopted a Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) to guide the utilisation of the city's land resources [3]. The ideal strategy was on-site improvement of the communities but, when impossible, whole colonies were resettled within the city territory. By the end of 2005, more than 25% of the city's households (24 907 families) had benefited from the project and, officially, only 661 squatters families were left to be relocated [4]. Hence, Marikina is the city within Metropolitan Manila that reduced its number of informal settlers with the most efficiency.

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Pilot city – Quezon City

Quezon City, on the other hand, is both the most populous city in the Philippines and the one with the largest territory in the NCR [5]. With its vast area of idle or vacant spaces and its proximity to Metropolitan Manila's core, it has been, and still is, a favourable destination for squatters [6]. In 2001, some 15 years after the creation of the Urban Poor Affairs Office (UPAO) with the mandate to design and implement socialized housing and resettlement programs [7], the problem in Quezon City was still of huge proportions with close to 160 000 poor households, distributed in more than 700 slum colonies, and over 20 000 homeless [8]. Deciding to confront this issue, the city government revised its Shelter Development Framework Plan and issued a Comprehensive Land Use Plan with the goal to assess the current shelter situation and determine the land, shelter and financial needs to overcome the problem [9]. Like in so many big cities around the world and even with considerable means – Quezon City is the richest city in the country [10] – the housing needs seem to grow faster than the social housing production. Consequently, Quezon City remains the city within Metropolitan Manila with the highest population of informal settlers.

Survey methodology

Because the figure drawn from the pilot test needs to be large enough to pinpoint eventual adjustments to the monitoring instruments, existing data was also used to determine which barangays, within the pilot cities, potentially offered the widest diversity of answers, while having a high population of informal settlers.

FIDS, who already has a wide experience in social research, developed a methodology to determine the survey sample size according to acknowledged research procedures. The overall objective remains to gather the most accurate data, thus drawing out a figure highly representative of the barangay.

Analysis and instrumentation of collected data

The next step of the project, which began early December 2006 with the design of analysis tools, rendered collected data operational. Until then, quantitative and qualitative data was archived in a database built upon the categories of the survey questionnaire. This user-friendly database software works as a tool to easily archive in a standard way the gathered data. But still, as raw material, it remains useless.

A first effort has been to get basic statistics, for each question, about the surveyed population. This information, available for the first time, was already very useful in beginning to shape the figure of the barangay. However, it was critical to design tools to analyse and reveal a deeper reality behind the statistics. This included, among others, segregation by variables – gender, age, education, income, settlement type, household structure – same topic comparison, and cross-category analysis.

The resulting figure is more complete, providing a way to understand the structure of shelter and urban environment problems and solutions. The local governments now have access to precise information about urban poverty, urban human development, barangay investment potential, urban environment, urban governance, and overall quality of urban life. These analysis tools were integrated to the database as a way to help the local governments to compile, analyse, publish and use data in a standardised way. It is also compatible with the UN DevInfo database, in an effort to monitor the worldwide status of the MDG.

Project objectives

By the end of the project, in March 2007, the following objectives have been reached for the extended team members:

- Training of local government personnel to utilise the MDG monitoring system

  The training of professional staff is expected to facilitate embedding the system in the government mechanics while being low-cost.

- Input for the local development plan

  Based on the results (data sets) of the first application of the monitoring system, its implementation is expected to bring about results on the MDG indicators.

- A MDG monitoring system

  Pilot tested and well documented, it can be easily adopted by other local governments.

Dissemination of monitoring tools and methodologies

To widen the reach of the action, two publications were issued. The goal is to facilitate replication of the experience at a larger scale. The first is a training handbook (manual for implementation) about the Barangay Level Monitoring System, constituting the primary source of training material to be distributed to other local governments wishing to install a similar monitoring system. It will come complete with monitoring methodologies, procedures, survey questionnaire, as well as custom database and analysis instruments. The second publication issued consists of a discursive monograph, providing space for critical analysis of the whole project, comments on local adaptation of UN-Habitat indicators and analysis findings. It shows that by contributing to the measurement of barangay development, the project is providing the foundations to enable an unambiguous measured analysis of human growth and development in the Philippines.

Contact us if you are interested to replicate the experience in your community.

Download the resources developed by ALTERPLAN and its partners during this project.

1. QUESTIONNAIRE	2. DATABASE
Original Tagalog Version Draft English Translation	Original Tagalog Version Microsoft Access Required
3. SUMMARY REPORT TEMPLATES	4. SUMMARY REPORT HANDBOOK
Total - English Version Gender Segregated - English Version	Original English Version
5. MANUAL FOR IMPLEMENTATION	6. DISCURSIVE MONOGRAPH
Original English Version	Original English Version

Click here to read an article about the project

that was published in Manila's Business Mirror on April 25, 2006

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[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/marikina_city.html, Marikina City, October 23, 2006

[2] http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/wdscontentserver, Filipino Report Card on Pro-Poor Services, Chapter V: Housing, Box 3: Local Government Housing Initiatives, April 25, 2006

[3] (ibid)

[4] Marikina Settlement Office, in http://www.marikina.gov.ph/facts.soc.house.do, updated January 2006

[5] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/quezon_city.html, Quezon City, October 23, 2006

[6] QC Planning & Development Office, Quezon City Development Plan, Quezon City, circa 2001

[7] Quezon City Office of the City Mayor, Executive Order No. 7, S-86 – Creating the Office of Urban Poor Affairs and Defining the Scope of its Functions, Quezon City, May 1986

[8] QC Planning & Development Office, Quezon City Shelter Development Plan, Quezon City, revised July 2001

[9] QC Planning & Development Office, Quezon City Development Plan, Quezon City, circa 2001

[10] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/quezon_city.html, Quezon City, October 23, 2006