

Editors' Notes

This issue of the *Journal* is devoted to five case studies and an integrating paper on the implementation of the MBN approach in different barangays scattered in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

The Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) Approach permeates the Social Reform Agenda (SRA), the overarching presidential directive encompassing the delivery of all basic social services of the government. At the local level, the MBN Approach emphasizes the participatory mode in the implementation of basic services. A total of eight strategies is subsumed under the approach and propagated to the local government units (LGUs). These are: minimum basic needs approach, convergence, focused targeting, community-based, social mobilization, capability-building, setting up community-based information system and enhancing local financial management. In each of these approaches, it is assumed that people's organizations (POs) and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) participate in the process. In the application of the MBN approach, the most critical implementors are the ones based at the barangay level.

On the basis of the criteria spelled by the Local Government Academy-Department of the Interior and Local Government (LGA-DILG) on I SERVE MBN (Innovative Response of Vibrant and Empowered Municipalities to Basic Needs), three of the municipalities had been selected. These criteria were that: (1) the LGUs already conducted MBN Profiling; (2) the project/intervention identified was endorsed by the community; (3) at least 20 percent of the project's resources was sourced from the LGU; and (4) the project/intervention started between 1994 and 1996. The areas suggested and pre-identified with the assistance of the DILG were: Mandaon, Masbate in Luzon; San Julian, Eastern Samar in the Visayas; and Rizal, Zamboanga del Norte in Mindanao. Two other areas from Luzon were included in the case study: Naujan, Mindoro Oriental, a *Galing Pook* Awardee for the locality's initiative in the implementation of MBN; and Barangay Pantig (not the real name) as an example of an unsustainable experience in MBN implementation.

I SERVE MBN Project envisioned the preparation of case reports in these areas on the processes applied in MBN approach. A local selection committee or board, which was constituted from representatives of leagues (municipal and barangay), NGOs/POs, basic sectors, private/business sector representatives, line agencies and the Institute for Local Government Academy (ILGA), identified the project areas through the assistance of the Regional Office of the DILG. The SRA/MBN Localization Teams served as the mobile team which monitored the series of sharing in order to document the showcases. These case studies therefore complement the case reports being prepared by the DILG.

Included among the techniques of data collection was the conduct of interviews or focus group discussions (FGD) of key informants composed of local executives, members of the technical working groups in MBN, and leaders of NGOs and POs. Secondary data were also gathered in order to determine processes applied in the implementation of MBN. In particular, the specific

procedures included: (1) obtaining information at the national office (LGA-DILG) through interview of key informants and secondary materials containing data on specific criteria for site selection, persons responsible for the identification of the municipality, how the selection team was identified, and basic profile of the municipality; (2) conducting dialogues with the mayor and the Municipal MBN Technical Working Group (TWG) or a comparable group to help identify a most successful barangay; (3) discussing with the MBN TWG at the municipal and barangay levels specific details about the introduction and implementation of MBN; (4) conducting interviews or FGD with NGO/PO representatives about the importance of MBN for them and their role in the process, among other details; (5) interviewing barangay captains to establish their basic profile, occupations held and significant contributions/innovations as well as to get acquainted with certain facts about the barangay; and (6) gathering secondary data on MBN results.

Each case report delves on the background of the study; the context—the rationale for selecting the barangay and the processes for introducing MBN; the leadership initiatives in the processes of SAPIME (situation analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation); profile of the leader; value of MBN to the community; and the lessons learned in the case. The case studies draw lessons from the experiences of the barangays as they affirm the importance of involving civil society in local development management, specifically in applying the MBN approach. The problems and difficulties to be identified could point directions for policymakers and program implementors to improve the implementation of MBN and the interface of the civil society in the local development process.

The first article entitled “Leadership Matters in MBN Implementation: Highlights of Case Studies” written by Victoria A. Bautista fills a void in literature dealing with local leader-citizens relations. The author argues that the qualities of local leadership can determine to a large extent a certain program’s success. By focusing on the MBN technology, Dr. Bautista examines in a fascinating fashion the attributes that make an effective leader. She goes on to discuss the factors that can hinder or facilitate the local leader’s advocacy and offers learnings and recommendations drawn from the case studies.

Pamela I. Gallares-Oppus discusses the realities surrounding the successful implementation of the MBN Approach in Barangay Cabitan, Mandaon, Masbate in the article “Convergence: Aligning Sociopolitical Thrusts for Local Development Management.” Ms. Oppus attributes the program’s success to the convergence of efforts, policy thrusts and pooling of resources.

Eden Valmonte-Santiago describes the transformation of a poor rural barangay to a more affluent community in her article “MBN Implementation: Barangay Casoroy, San Julian, Eastern Samar.” The commitment and determination of all sectors, both at the barangay and municipal levels, provided the inertia that moved the entire community to come up with more responsive development activities focused on meeting the minimum basic needs of the marginalized sector.

Eleanor E. Nicolas discusses in rich details how the local chief executives of the municipality and the barangay paved the way for the creation of the necessary social infrastructures and support system that would facilitate the implementation of the SRA/MBN Approach in the communities in the article "Leaders' and Citizens' Interaction in Localizing the MBN: The Experience of the Municipality of Rizal, Zamboanga del Norte." The author further zeroes in on two barangays with distinct experiences on the operationalization of the MBN Approach in their respective localities.

Rosa R. Cordero discusses another success story in "The MBN Approach: The Case of Barangay Sto. Niño in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro." From relative indifference to the MBN Approach, the chief executives of the locality had a change of heart as a result of the exposures and orientations they were given by major advocates of the approach. Committed leadership and local implementors were instrumental in mobilizing grassroots support for the program.

Victoria A. Bautista discusses in the article "MBN Implementation in Barangay Pantig" how a community that enjoyed a headstart in implementing the MBN technology has failed to meet up to the expectations. In contrast to the rest of the articles, this case report delivers the caveat that an autocratic top-down leadership style could alienate the leader from the people. Initial success in early phase of project implementation could hardly be sustained because of the leader's failure to enable people's interface in MBN implementation.

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