

The League of Municipalities of the Philippines
LEADING OUR MUNICIPALITIES IN FULFILLING THE
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDG)

1,502 municipalities are at the frontline of the silent battle against poverty. They compose the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) which role is vital in rallying the municipalities towards governance reforms and delivery of services to the people.

Accomplishments and Upcoming Initiatives

The following presents the involvement, current initiatives as well as the directions the LMP is taking with regard to the MDG:

1. *Building municipal awareness on the MDG, Human Rights and Gender Empowerment and leading the MDG localization in municipalities*

The involvement of the LMP on the MDG began in 2005 in building awareness of all municipal mayors on the concept and principles of the MDG, human rights and good governance via three major island conferences held from June to August 2005. To ensure support for the MDG, the MDG needs to be aggressively advocated to ensure municipalities align their vision and actions towards the attainment of the MDGs as they serve as overarching goals for all municipalities across the country.

Thus, in order to cause a concerted effort against poverty, the LMP, together with national government agencies and other institutions, will be organizing a nationwide campaign in November 2006 called the *World Arts Experience: Bringing the MDG to the People*, which theme will center on the 8 goals of the MDG. This grand event aims to deepen the awareness of the LGUs and the public on the importance of the MDG and gather their support for its attainment. It will involve municipalities, local and foreign artists and mobilization of different sectors to express unity for the MDG as a nationwide commitment and vision. The LMP will also be circulating an issuance calling for all municipalities to adopt and support the MDG.

2. *Spearheading the MDG localization and monitoring*

Recognizing the important and strategic role of the LMP, the LMP has been recently chosen to act as the lead agency or responsible party for the localization and monitoring of the progress of the MDG in the country. Under the UNDP Programme Document entitled *Fostering Democratic Governance* which will begin implementation in March 2006, the LMP will be overseeing the implementation of this component and will be collaborating with other government agencies and civil society organizations on MDG localization beginning in 16 pilot municipalities.

3. *Initiating national level partnerships and institutional arrangements*

In preparation for the MDG localization and monitoring tasks, the LMP met other agencies concerned on the monitoring of the MDG. In February 2006, LMP met with the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) where they found common interests in terms of using the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) as the main tool in poverty diagnosis and local development planning. The same is being pushed by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Because of this common purpose and desire to avoid duplication and achieve convergence, it was agreed that a Memorandum of Agreement be crafted between LMP, NAPC, DILG, NEDA, CHR, NCRFW, CBMS International Network and other national agencies concerned including other leagues to identify points of collaboration, roles of these major stakeholders in the MDG localization and monitoring and formalize the adoption of the CBMS.

As the primary agency responsible for monitoring the MDG, the LMP will be establishing the MDG Database Monitoring Center where it will work with other MDG implementors to provide data/information on local and national poverty and MDG status.

The LMP has initiated organizing the MDG Technical Working Group and on March 27, they are set to hold their first meeting to begin work on the MDG monitoring database and national MDG localization action plan

3. *Strategies to achieve the MDGs at the local level*

The CBMS, which will be adopted in all MDG municipalities, is crucial in the monitoring of the MDG as it contains 14 poverty indicators that are related to the MDG and it provides detailed information on the level of poverty of municipalities, their barangays and households. This will play an important role in local decision-making and strategy application to truly address local poverty issues

The LMP strongly believes in pushing the municipalities to adopt the CBMS in order for them to have evidenced-based plans and enable the LGUs to become effective implementors and service providers and truly become responsive to the needs of the people. Their ability to uplift the conditions of the people at a level where people can enjoy a decent life that they deserve hinges on their ability to focus on priorities and bring the interventions to the intended recipients.

In communicating the MDG, inputs on HR and gender empowerment will be integral subjects.

For 2006, under the said UNDP Project, the MDG localization will begin in 16 municipalities. Localization is defined not just in terms of advocacy to support the MDG, but building partnerships between the municipalities and civil society groups in order to bring the voice, interest and aspirations of the basic sectors into the development plans and works of the localities. This way, the LGUs are also guided on how best they can serve their constituencies and for the people to participate and work with their LGUs on poverty issues and programs. By this, the following impacts are hoped to be achieved:

- Focused poverty targeting at the municipal and barangay levels
- Reduction in the level of poverty in the MDG areas of coverage and improvements/attainment of the other goal indicators
- Harmonization and convergence of the anti-poverty efforts of all stakeholders/agencies for the municipalities
- Develop strong inter-governmental linkages that ensure cooperation, coordination, and complementation of activities in line with the achievement of MDGs
- Enhance an improved partnership between LGUs and CSOs as well as the private sector and the citizenry
- Mainstreaming of human rights and gender empowerment as a crosscutting concern

Challenges and Recommendations

1. The monitoring center will be housed at the LMP building as the LMP's counterpart. However, the center lacks equipment, particularly computer units which are needed for the data storage, processing and output production.

2. Monitoring and localization of the MDG will be covering 16 municipalities which represent different LGU classification and geographic setting and location. All these municipalities were chosen based on the high commitment of LGUs to achieve development. Replication is considered a challenge that is being thought of early at this stage since the LMP intends to expand coverage in the coming years in order that more municipalities will embrace the ideals of MDG/HR/gender empowerment, CBMS and adopt proven good practices to benefit communities. However, the current resources under the UNDP project is very limited. To address this, the LMP will be organizing a meeting with the international community hopefully to address the resource gaps. Municipalities are expected to provide counterpart resources in order to build their CBMS capability.
3. How can we bring in more support for the communities that are affected by poverty and how do we ensure their gains become sustainable? How do we empower them so that they can also help themselves in the process? We recommend that there be a community development component in implementing the MDG. There are needs to assist the communities and even the basic sectors to understand their role in development and organize themselves. There should also be inputs for the communities to capacitate them on good citizenship and certain skills/technologies that will help them become empowered and self-reliant.
3. There is a need to rationalize the planning process at the local level to bring about convergence. The LMP intends to bring about a process where municipalities will undertake MDG assessment and action planning in order to identify the priorities based on the CBMS results and cause a resource matching between the community, LGUs (municipal and provincial), line agencies in the regions and other stakeholders. A policy on convergence will be required (at least for the pilot areas) in order to test out the effective process to realize this.

MDG Pilot Municipalities	Income Classification	With Existing/ On-going CBMS	For CBMS Installation
LUZON:			
1. Guiginto, Bulacan	2 nd	0	
2. Torrijos, Marinduque	4 th	0	
3. Narra, Palawan	1 st	0	
4. Labo, Albay	1 st	0	
5. Aroroy, Masbate	2 nd	0	
6. Luna, Apayao	3 rd		0
VISAYAS:			
7. Dolores, Eastern Samar	4 th	0	
8. Naval, Biliran	4 th	0	
9. Jordan, Guimaras	4 th		0
10. Concepcion, Iloilo	4 th		0
11. Bindoy, Oriental Negros	4 th		0
MINDANAO:			
12. Kabakan, North Cotabato	2 nd		0
13. Malalag, Davao del Sur	3 rd		0
14. Sto. Nino, South Cotabato	4 th		0
15. Lantawan, Basilan	4 th		0
16. Kapatagan, Lanao del Sur	6 th		0