

# Aligning Sociopolitical Thrusts for Local Development Management in Barangay Cabitan, Mandaon, Masbate

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*Convergence takes on various modes. In Barangay Cabitan, convergence was manifested in plans which shared the congruence of activities for common targets as well as pooled resources for agreed targets. The case draws insights from the realities of managing and achieving convergence. In its pursuit, aligning political thrusts emerges as key in defining a local development agenda and pooling resources for its implementation. Here, the outlook of the leader performs a significant role.*

## Background

### *The Study*

The Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) Approach has gained popularity from among the development managers at the national and local level. It was introduced as a **UNICEF strategy for children's concerns as the Area-Based Child Survival and Development Program (ABCSDP) in the 1990s, rethought and repackaged as the Integrated Approach to Local Development Management (IALDM)<sup>1</sup>** by the then UP College of Public Administration (CPA) in 1992, then advocated as a national strategy for the Social Reform Agenda by the Presidential Commission to Fight Poverty (PCFP) in 1994.

In operationalizing national and local political and socioeconomic agenda, the barangay serves as the funnel. As such, the barangay captain emerges as the platoon leader on whom the success of programs is anchored. This study, therefore, looks at three dimensions: (1) how MBN was managed at the barangay level, with the *purok* and the community at large, as final gauge of success; (2) how a barangay leader's traits and values influence his performance as a leader and manager, and how these roles empower communities; and (3) how a leader's personality and innate values, management style, and surrounding environment favor development. Ultimately, the study zeroes in on the factors affecting leadership with the MBN as the context.

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### *The Beginning of MBN in the Province of Masbate*

Masbate was among the top 20 priority provinces targeted by the Social Reform Agenda<sup>2</sup> (SRA). It was also a convergence area for UNICEF's Fourth Country Program for Children (CPC IV). Both SRA and CPC IV advocated the adoption of the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) Approach. The Governor was the lead advocate, assisted by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

A week-long advocacy and capability-building activity started the MBN process. A two-day kick-off event engaged the governor, the mayors and the sangguniang bayan members in a forum, and the remaining days gathered all municipal Technical Working Group (TWG) members for a training managed by the DILG.

Even prior to the launching of the MBN Approach as SRA's poverty alleviation strategy in 1994, the LGA conducted a writeshop for the multidisciplinary team<sup>3</sup> of DILG where the MBN principles (then tagged as the Integrated Approach to Local Development Management—IALDM) were operationally defined alongside the five components of the Integrated Capability Building Program (ICBP)<sup>4</sup>. This move to operationally integrate MBN in DILG's flagship strategies was reinforced by succeeding training activities ran by LGA through CPC IV, and the Presidential Commission to Fight Poverty (PCFP) and the Associated Resources for Management and Development (ARMDEV) for SRA. These preparatory activities took place in early 1995. Needless to say, built-up skills in the operationalization of the MBN Approach aided DILG's discharge of functions as the agency tasked to localize the MBN.

Thereon, the province of Masbate embarked on a hundred percent province-wide MBN survey in 1995, making it the first province to accomplish this task. In 1996, roughly two years since MBN was introduced, the Governor once again gathered the municipal mayors for a sharing forum entitled "*I Serve MBN*".<sup>5</sup> The forum's threefold objectives were: (1) to check at which stage the municipalities were in the MBN process; (2) to follow-through on the process of using the MBN data in planning; and (3) to reinforce the commitment of implementors to adopt the MBN Approach by way of sharing the headways achieved. Among the sharers,<sup>6</sup> the Municipality of Mandaon was the first to have reflected MBN in its local development plan.

### *Introducing MBN in the Municipality of Mandaon*

Mandaon is a fifth-class municipality located at the northern part of the province, 64 kms. away from the provincial capital. It has a population of 33,728 and an income of P17,712,127 (based on 1997 data). Major economic activities are farming and fishing. Facilities include nine barangay health stations (BHS), thirteen complete elementary schools, twelve primary schools, one state college, two high schools, and 28 day care centers. Its service personnel are composed of two doctors, nine midwives, two nurses, and 81 BHWs.

Mandaon is being run by a second-termer, Mayor Erly Hao. Before his stint as mayor, he served as barangay captain as well as ABC (Association of Barangay Captains) president. He convenes the local development council quarterly meeting of 26 barangay captains, 1 sangguniang bayan (SB) representative (SB for Appropriations Committee), 1 representative from the office of the congressman, and 9 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), namely: MAKITA (Mandaon Kabuhayan Investment Tools Association), Dayao Irrigator's Association, Farmers' Cooperative, Senior Citizens, Persons with Disabilities, Cattle Raisers Association, the Municipal Agricultural and Fisheries Council, and the Barangay Water System Association.

In August 1995, Mayor Hao, along with his fellow mayors and SB members, were called on by then Governor Espinosa to a two-day meeting. The governor enjoined them to adopt the MBN Approach. Upon the mayor's return to base, he issued an executive order formally organizing the MBN TWG in his municipality. He designated the municipal agriculture officer as the chairperson, and the local government operations officer (MLGOO), the social welfare officer (MSDWO), the planning and development coordinator (MPDC), and the health officer (MHO)<sup>7</sup> as members.

After organizing this structure, the DILG conducted further briefing on the SRA/MBN to enjoin the barangays to adopt the approach. A special session with the municipal government functionaries, sanggunian bayan members, and the barangay captains was convened by the mayor to reinforce the advocacy on the MBN. The officials initially resisted the call to action thinking that this was another program forced down the throats of the local government unit (LGU).

The mayor persistently hammered the benefits of MBN into the minds of the barangay captains. With the guidance of the Municipal TWG, the barangays recruited community volunteer monitors (CVMs). Training and data gathering followed. Since there was no appropriation for this activity in the municipal budget, an amount of P300 for each CVM per week was allocated by the barangay. The available funds limited the number of CVMs who were trained. Thus far, three cycles of MBN have already been conducted: the first round in August 1995, the second in September 1996, and the third in October 1997.

### *Profile of Barangay Cabitan*

Barangay Cabitan is in central Mandaon, 12 kms from the poblacion, covering an area of 1034 hectares. As of the last MBN survey (October 1997), its total population was 3,049 (1,629 males and 1,420 females) or 465 households. Majority thrive on farming as their main economic activity. The barangay's Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) for 1998 was P475,000, registering an 18 percent increase from 1997's P404,244. An additional income of approximately P6,000 came from commercial tax.

Residents have access to such facilities as a barangay health station, day care center, market, a rice/corn mill, a complete elementary school, high school, and an

agricultural state college, although admission to high school poses a problem for residents because of quota requirements. The barangay's service personnel are composed of a midwife, two day care workers, and seven BHWs. Transportation to and from Masbate average at ten trips a day. Before the roads were improved, trips averaged at three daily. In contrast from the improved road network, other basic utilities are still wanting. Electricity is only available during night time. Water sources, on the other hand, are artesian wells, open wells and shallow wells.

Organizations in existence are the Senior Citizens' Group facilitated by the social welfare officer, and the 4H Club managed by the Department of Agriculture. According to informants, these organizations are perceived to be not "totally" functional.

Another organization is the *purok*, which was put in place by the Department of Education and Culture and Sports (DECS) in the 80s. Structurally, there are seven *kagawads* (councilors), each managing a *purok* composed of about 50 to 70 households each. Each *purok* has a leader and a set of officers elected by the households. However, the dearth of activities hardly made the system functional. This changed upon MBN's entry.

Apart from *purok* meetings which serve as channels for participation, assemblies are called on by the barangay captain, as well as emergency meetings for *purok* officials and *kagawads* through which announcements are made. General meetings were noted to garner 80 percent participation.

**Among the barangays in the municipality, Barangay Cabitan was assessed by the Municipal TWG as a success case in MBN implementation.** The assessment was based on the extent to which: (1) the barangay imbibed the MBN Approach as a management tool; (2) local resources were provided to address priority needs; (3) the barangay captain enhanced team work in meeting the MBNs; and (4) the community members regarded the barangay captain as a leader. In a relatively short period, the barangay was observed to have implemented tangible projects and enabled community members to take part in community affairs. Such was a welcome change after long years in limbo during the past barangay administration.

#### *Profile of the Barangay Leader*

Mr. George Bunan is a married man in his late thirties and is childless. He is an engineering graduate from Bicol University and served the Provincial Engineer's Office (PEO) from 1981-1988. Apart from being a public servant, George Bunan is also a businessman. He ventured into tricycle driving, after which the business flourished into a bus liner. This enabled him to contribute to the barangay's access to the provincial capital as a private citizen long before he was elected as barangay captain in 1994.

His intention to institute change in the barangay, coupled with his seven years of service with Governor Espinosa, challenged him to vie for the post, but humbly admitted that he had no prior notion on how to go about it. He was elected into office in 1994 and became president of the Liga ng Barangay in July 1997.

As an individual, the *kagawads* and Municipal TWG members characterize Mr. Bunan as a good listener. He is described as generous, despite his serious mien and shy nature, a trait not typical of an elective official. Work-wise, he is dedicated and does what he says, backed up by adequate educational and financial capabilities. His mother, a retired principal who serves as barangay coordinator and whose opinions he seeks and respects, describes him as somebody who puts a premium on friendship. Beyond official duties, the barangay captain responds to personal concerns (such as death, baptism, weddings etc.) without complaint.

As a manager, the barangay captain is regarded as a negotiator and good coordinator. When he joined the barangay as an elective official, the *kagawads* were split into two parties. However, the opposition members volunteered to join his party in the elections of 1994. This gives us an insight on the degree of trust the *kagawads* bestow the barangay leader since getting people on one's side without force needs trust (Bennis 1988). The former oppositionists were asked about problems with decisionmaking. They disclosed that they were first consulted on issues and concerns, then a discussion with the majority ensued. Majority decision always prevailed, without imposition on the part of the barangay captain. Such transpired during **planning sessions which officially took place every month.**

The leader is furthermore characterized as a power-sharer. The barangay council is regarded as an advisory group and because of this, the *kagawads* are entrusted with a significant role in carrying out the thrusts of the barangay. Apart from serving as teammates in crafting the barangay development plan, they also stand as a lynchpin between the barangay captain and the community.

In recognition of personal limitations and needs, the leader occasionally consults with the DILG on various management matters. Among them is the use of the 20 percent development fund. For vague processes in the implementation of the MBN Approach, he consults with the other members of the Municipal TWG. On rare opportunities, he gathers the community to an assembly (at least twice a year) and convenes *purok* leaders for special sessions. On a more regular basis, he consults with his mother, a retired principal, who not only acts as the leader's adviser, but as a barangay coordinator who backstops the barangay captain in his absence.

Ultimately, Barangay Captain Bunan is reported to be resourceful. He persistently seeks means to get things done. For example, whenever a problem arises in the release of funds, he engages in cordial negotiations with the persons-in-charge. He engages in problem-solving activities, i.e. with the municipal accountant and with the DILG. In other instances, he voices out barangay concerns during the MDC

meetings, or sits with the Mayor after official hours to discuss problems pertaining to barangay operations. To complement these actions, he lobbies for additional resources and consciously harmonizes barangay plans with municipal developmental thrusts. Mr. Bunan triumphantly admitted that the strategy works in getting things moving. Of course, the pre-existing friendship between the mayor and the barangay captain, as well as ties with Governor Espinosa, contribute to his performance.

### **Managing the MBN in Barangay Cabitan**

#### *Situation Analysis*

Barangay Captain George Bunan first heard about the MBN Approach when Mandaon's municipal Mayor Erly Hao enjoined them to implement the MBN Approach. After the special session, community volunteer monitors (CVMs) were selected composed of a kagawad and two leaders per purok. They underwent a two-day training conducted by the Municipal TWG. The training largely touched on the interpretation of the indicators, consolidation of the MBN results, and setting up of community data boards.

After the two-day training, the community volunteer monitors (CVMs) proceeded with data gathering which took an average of two weeks. This was the average duration for all rounds of survey. Logistics for the first survey were shouldered by the barangay, with manpower as its major counterpart. The MBN forms were donated by UNICEF. Logistics for the second and third rounds were covered by the municipal government. The third round employed a revised set of forms endorsed by the National Statistics Office (NSO), and the shift caused confusion among the CVMs.

Three sets of MBN data were generated starting in 1995. Table 1 shows the Top 10 Unmet Needs of the baseline year (1995) and how these needs rank in the succeeding years. The needs cut across survival, security and enabling needs. The top five relate with water and sanitation facilities, income and livelihood, and durable housing where more than fifty percent of the households were affected. In the second and third rounds, day care appeared in the top five, and housing plunged down the list. Persistently, water and sanitation and people participation did not drop out of the list of top five needs.

At a quick glance, the drastic fluctuations reflected in the MBN data across the three cycles could not solely be attributed to interventions. The fluctuations in the ranking may have been affected by the confusion in the interpretation of indicators that yielded questionable results for some indicators. Add to this was the change of MBN forms which were reported to be too complicated for even a teacher to fathom.

**Table 1. Top Ten Unmet Needs**

<i>Indicators</i>		<i>1995</i>			<i>1996</i>			<i>1997</i>		
<i>Total Population</i>		<i>2527</i>			<i>2572</i>			<i>3049</i>		
<i>Total Households</i>		<i>425</i>			<i>441</i>			<i>465</i>		
<i>Ind. No.</i>		<i>Rank</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
13	No access to potable water	1	384	90.4	1	352	79.8	5	303	65.1
17	Housing not durable	2	348	81.8	5	141	31.9	9	106	22.7
24	Income below threshold level	3	314	73.8	10	37	.8	2	369	79.3
29	No involvement in PO	4	286	67.2	3	216	48.9	3	358	76.9
14	No sanitary toilets	5	277	65	2	314	71.2	6	291	62.5
23	Members 18 years and above not gainfully employed	6	244	57.4	6	123	27.8	1	394	84.7
25	3-5 year olds not attending day care	7	190	44.7	4	163	36.9	4	311	66.8
27	13-16 year olds not attending high school	8	153	34.6	8	60	13.6	7	275	59.1
11	Couples practicing family planning	9	21	4.9	7	108	24.5	8	158	33.9
3	Mothers not provided with iron and iodine	10	103	24.2	9	21	4.7	10	14	3

Source: MBN Data (1995-1997)

For all three surveys, the MBN data were consolidated by the barangay team, with the assistance of the midwife and the teacher. Only after the second round were the MBN data used. Jointly, the municipal and barangay actors sorted out the top ten priority unmet MBNs based on the percentage of households affected. (See Table 2.)

The list was later trimmed down to five based on availability of resources to realistically institute programs that match these needs. Immediately after, a planning session ensued at the municipal level where a counterparting scheme with the province and municipality was proposed.

**Table 2. Comparison of Barangay Priorities and Municipal Priorities  
(September 1996)**

<i>Top 10 Unmet MBNs of Barangay Cabitan which cannot be immediately addressed</i>		<i>Top 10 Unmet MBNs of the Municipality of Mandaon</i>	
1. Access to sanitary toilet facilities	79.8%	1. Access to sanitary toilet facilities	75%
2. Access to potable water	65	2. Access to potable water	79.8%
3. Income within threshold level	.8 %	3. Access to day care	62.13
4. Employment	27.8%	4. Income within threshold level	25.5
5. Access to day care	36.9%	5. Employment	35.9
6. Housing durable for at least 5 years	31.9%	6.	
7. High school education	13.6%	7. Participation in people's organizations	58.3
8. Access to family planning		8.	23 %
9. Access to elementary education	14.3	9. High school education	21.8
10. Participation in people's organizations	47.2	10. Housing durable for at least 5 years	36

Note: The municipal priorities were based on a consultation between the municipal and barangay leaders.

#### *Planning and Resource Mobilization for MBNs*

**As takeoff to planning, the shortlist of ten unmet MBNs was sorted further by the planners into three categories: (a) those which can be immediately addressed by existing interventions such as health, nutrition, family planning; (b) those which need appropriations from the barangay budget such as toilet and water facilities and livelihood; and (c) those which need ample resources such as housing. Note the homogeneity between the barangay's and the municipality's priorities in Table 2.**

A major follow-through activity that reinforced the barangay's efforts in MBN was the *convergence planning* with the province and municipality. The barangay captain, along with the members of the MDC, met with the Governor for a counterparting pledging session. This is in cognizance of the reality that the services could not be afforded by the barangay alone. As a result, the province filled in the resources needed to complete the projects, with the barangay providing at least 33 percent of the total share. (See Table 3 for the MBN Convergence Plan.)

An interview with the kagawads and the barangay captain revealed that upon return from the convergence planning activity, the kagawads agreed on a set of programs and echoed this to their purok leaders. After the validation with their purok members, barangay officials engaged in a consensus-building exercise to prioritize programs that address the unmet MBNs. Extra barangay resources were allocated to other concerns such as the radio handset and school perimeter fence. This whole process of consultations was an improvement of the old process. Before the MBN



**Table 3. MBN Barangay Convergence Plan (February-December 1997)**

<i>Programs, Projects and Activities (PPA)</i>	<i>Households</i>	<i>Barangay</i>	<i>Municipal</i>	<i>Provincial</i>	<i>% of Barangay Counterpart</i>
Provision of toilet bowls	Hole-digging	5000 used for labor	5000 used for cement	50 bags of cement	50%
Construction of Deep Well		5000	15000	25000	33%
Kabuhayan		10000	15000		40%
Advocacy (no POs)					
Construction of day care Extension of day care services		5000 5000	15000	xxxxx	40%
Provision of Family Planning Supplies			midwife to get additional supplies from DOH		

was introduced, the barangay captain prepared the development plan for approval of the sangguniang barangay. No consultation transpired.

Thus, the plan contained the following projects to address the unmet MBNs, namely: the installation of potable water facilities, construction of sanitary toilet, the establishment of a day care center, and the introduction of livelihood opportunities. Since the causes were obvious to the planners, no actual cause-analysis took place and such constrained the barangay to spell out complementary measures, i.e. IEC campaign, to support the MBN services.

The influence of MBN as a barangay planning tool is reflected in the local development plans of 1996 and 1997. (See Table 4). The shift from infrastructure projects (construction of roads and markets) to projects addressing MBNs (water and sanitation, day care, livelihood) can be gleaned by comparing the two plans.

**Table 4. Comparison of 1996 and 1997 Barangay Development Plan**

1996		1997	
<i>Name of Project</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Name of Project</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Construction of feeder roads to Sta. Fe	54,697	Kabuhayan	20,000
Acquisition of 1 unit of radio handset	10,000	Shallow well	5,000
		Toilet Bowl	5,000
		Day Care Maintenance	5,000
		School Perimeter Fence	40,569
		Antenna (radio Comm. Set)	4,000
20% IRA	64,697	20% of IRA	79,569

Source: Barangay Development Plan of Cabitan, 1996 and 1997

### *Implementation of Services*

The interventions for MBNs are categorized into two: direct and indirect services. Direct services cater directly to identified unmet MBNs. Indirect services harness the barangay's capability to address MBNs.

*Direct Services.* Four key services were mainstreamed by the barangay in response to deficiencies in access to water and sanitation facilities, livelihood opportunities, and day care services.

#### 1. Water and Sanitation

Approximately 90 percent of the households was deprived of access to water in 1995, which was later trimmed down to 65 percent in 1997. This unmet need consistently appeared in the list of top five over the three-year period which prompted the stakeholders to address this need. Thus far, six water pumps have been installed in the barangay that were projected to benefit at least 53 percent of the target beneficiaries. Alongside the water pumps was the installation of toilet bowls in their respective homes. Despite the installation of water pumps, continuous access to water was constrained by the unavailability of water source, compounded by the drought that dried up the water table. Because of this, the 250 meter accessibility rule defined in the MBN list could not be applied. Consequently, sanitation has been affected by this problem.

The resources for water and sanitation were pooled from multilevel stakeholders (Please see Table 5). For the water system, pumps were bought from municipal and barangay allocations, and bags of cement from the province. For the construction of toilet bowls 25 percent of the P20,000 budget (or P5,000) was taken from the barangay coffers to procure 136 concrete bowls and cement. In addition, steel bars were donated by the provincial government, and labor was provided by the beneficiaries.

**Table 5. Extent of Delivery of Services and Barangay Counterpart, 1997**

<i>Services</i>	<i>Targets<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Served<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>% Reached</i>	<i>Status (Prov. and Mun.)</i>	<i>PAF<sup>3</sup></i>
Shallow well	303	162	53	6 jetmatic pumps in 1997 installed but did not comply with 250m accessibility due to location of water source	20000 to be released in 1998 (after elections)
Sanitary toilets	291	144 (only 80 actually installed based on the barangay leader's recall)	56	178 bags of cement (ongoing) from the province used to install the toilets	134 cement bowls constructed and dispersed from the 50 bags of cement accomplished in 1997
Kabuhayan	371	94	25		
Day Care	311	55	18		P99,000 to be released in 1988 after elections

Source: Municipal Local Government Operations Office

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Targets were based on 1997 MBN Survey. Apparently, no targets were set before service delivery.

<sup>2</sup>HH reached was based on units delivered.

<sup>3</sup>PAF counterpart not reflected in the convergence plan.

The matching of services with beneficiaries shows us realities in addressing MBNs on the ground. The MBN masterlist validated the collective need of the barangay for sanitation facilities. However, since more than half of the families demonstrated this need and resources could not cater to all, other modalities had to be applied in the actual matching. For this, a combination of three modalities took form. One was on a first-come-first served-basis where a dug hole was required by the barangay captain. A second was through demands channeled via the BHW or kagawad. A third was through referrals by the midwife who had a clear view on the community's health condition.

In the prioritization of targets, one criterion used was the location of households. Priority was given to those who live near the center since proximity of dwelling places has implications on waste management. According to informants, households who live in far-flung areas still have the option of using grazing land as waste disposal for the meantime.

In anticipation of probable conflicts in the phased coverage by this service, potential beneficiaries were made to understand that additional toilet bowls would have to be procured since the funds were too limited to reach the originally identified beneficiaries for that year. Thus far, 46 percent of the target beneficiaries have been reached by sanitary facilities, while only 56 percent of the target actually installed the toilet facilities, according to monitoring reports.

## 2. Livelihood

Based on the MBN survey, at least 70 percent of the barangay fell below the income threshold defined by the MBN list. To address this, seed capital was given out to fish peddlers amounting to ₱2,000 each in 1997. The project was designed to enable the borrowers to turn in a 20 percent interest to the barangay treasurer at the end of the year. Unfortunately, no payback took place.

The granting of seed capital came in two modes. One was through the barangay captain who exercised discretion on a first come-first served basis. In this mode, demand and local knowledge were used as basis, rather than the masterlist.

The other mode tapped other livelihood channels such as the Department of Agriculture (DA). For instance, interventions for the 4-H Club (youth sector) was enrolled as a SRA intervention. Their beneficiaries were assumed to be included in the 70 percent affected by this need. Therefore, the use of the masterlist to actually identify beneficiaries was not really maximized.

Despite these interventions for livelihood, the MBN data reflected a non-reduction; in fact, the figures increased by six percentage points. Assuming that statistics are reliable, the failure of these interventions to address this need could be attributed to such factors as resource management vs. payback that could have helped expand the beneficiary-base of seed capital; rollback of capital vis-à-vis sustainability of livelihood projects; weak social preparation and accountability; the lack of resources to invest in medium-scale projects; or simply the refusal of targets to avail of opportunities. As of the last monitoring, roughly 25 percent was reached by this livelihood resource. Unfortunately, this was not reflected in the 1997 MBN survey.

## 3. Day Care Services

Access to (which can also be argued as availment of) day care service was expressed by more than half of the families as unmet. Because of this, the barangay established a temporary day care center made of light materials. Unfortunately, no regular day care worker delivered this service. Add to this is the fact that mothers exert extra effort to take their children to the center considering the distance, when they can tend to their children themselves. This probably explains why this need increased from 45 percent in 1995 to 67 percent in 1997. As of the time of the research,

funds amounting to P99,000 have yet to be released after elections for the construction of a day care center.

*Indirect Services.* The activities that will be cited in this category cover barangay management schemes, special events, and support programs that enhance the response to MBNs.

To ensure effective dispatch of barangay duties, the barangay captain devised the "officer of the day" scheme where kagawads take turns in manning the barangay hall. This is aimed at bringing government closer to the people by ensuring that an official is always present to attend to barangay concerns all the time. This scheme opened the gate for increased communication and interaction between the barangay and the community.

Apart from this management channel that could enhance people's participation, complementary events to survival, protection and enabling needs were designed. One is the rice festival (a yearly thanksgiving) which Bgy. Captain George Bunan sponsors since he assumed office. This ceremony highlights the significance of food security and the value of gratitude. Every year, he mobilizes the puroks, through the kagawads. He also solicits support from municipal and provincial actors. Thus far, thanks to his credibility, he was able to raise funds which were spent on a barangay park.

Another personal commitment of the leader is the awarding of scholarship grants. He sends scholars to the Agricultural State College charged to his personal account.

A seasonal MBN surfaced during the third quarter of 1997. The municipality was hit by an epidemic due to the drought, the "el niño." Thus, in his capacity as president of the *Liga ng Barangay*, the captain succeeded in convincing all barangay captains to allocate their five percent calamity fund for medicines. This was augmented by the DA in the form of medicines for animals. Thereafter, a series of *pulong-pulong*<sup>8</sup> among residents ensued to educate them on the measures to address the epidemic.

One factor of poverty is accessibility. Thus, the leader improved road networks and infrastructure facilities as a gateway to development. The physical improvements in the barangay were notable developments that the interviewees cited as evidence of positive change during the term of Mr. Bunan. Physical accomplishments were borne by his negotiations with the congresswoman and the governor. Apart from the roads, he also put up street lights using his personal funds to ensure safety in the streets. The resources also enabled him to finish the barangay hall and *talipapa*<sup>9</sup>.

These headways enticed the Barangay Integrated Development Nutrition Initiatives (BIDANI) to enter the barangay. The barangay was chosen as a target for BIDANI which took off in January 1998. The Municipal TWG partly attributes the selection of the barangay by BIDANI to the willingness of the leader to accept the

program and to his leadership skills. Add to this is the barangay's proximity to a state college, its stable peace and order condition, and its accessibility to implementors.

BIDANI designated the barangay captain as chairperson. Asked about his perception, Mr. Bunan regards the BIDANI as a reinforcement to the MBN Approach since it is also concerned with monitoring MBNs, though more focused on health and nutrition. With the purok system made functional by MBN, and monitors enskilled with certain competencies, BIDANI's groundwork will be relatively smooth.

### *Monitoring the MBNs*

Purok databoards were constructed after the second round of MBN data gathering. This was funded by barangay funds, and prepared with the assistance of the midwife. The barangay data board, however, has not been installed because the amount of P1,000 provided by PAF 1 could not cover the requirement set out by NSO. Unfortunately, the purok databoards were not updated. Instead, MBN results were tallied in sheets of paper accessible through the midwife.

Apart from the data board, three other mechanisms were tapped to monitor the management of MBN. One was through the BHWs. The barangay captain asked them to spot-check whether holes had been dug before the toilet bowls were distributed. Then, before the toilet was given out, the beneficiary had to present a certification from the kagawad. Then, another follow through ensued to check whether toilet facilities have indeed been installed.

A second was through informal evaluation. The barangay captain takes the time out to talk with the kagawads and beneficiaries to check whether their needs have been satisfied. And since the purok is oftentimes characterized by kinship, local knowledge is easily cultivated. Thus, generating information on one another's status has been more informal, but manageable.

A third mechanism was the Municipal TWG. It served as the monitoring committee for SRA projects and activities. Thus far, the most number of target beneficiaries were for shallow wells at 53 percent. A striking finding is that no meaningful comparison of the three sets of data had been done. The report on the extent to which unmet needs have been met was based on the outputs produced (as in the case of toilet bowls), and not based on the difference between the first round and the most recent round of data gathering. The Municipal TWG admitted this gap, and this points to the issue of frequency of monitoring: Is a yearly monitoring (or worse, semestral for CIDSS) of MBN realistic or not?<sup>10</sup>

### *Outcomes of MBN*

*On the Leader.* The MBN approach at work gave the leaders an opportunity to get together and align their resources on common programs. The convergence planning activity that assembled the elective officials allowed them to plan together, negotiate and agree on doable projects to address MBNs like water and sanitation facilities and day care centers. Using the MBN data as reference in aligning resources on programs seen by the leaders as priority investments, the barangay leader adhered to the consensual agreement and, in turn, rallied the support of his barangay constituents to implement the programs. The leader was closely affiliated with the municipal and provincial political party which eased compliance on his part—a factor favorable to MBN. This, coupled by the homogeneity of unmet needs across municipalities, was key in crafting the convergence plan.

Beyond the confines of the barangay, the leader scouted for means to augment existing barangay resources. Through patient solicitation from political affiliates, the leader succeeded in tapping additional resources to fund infrastructure needs that will complement basic needs on the long term.

Lastly, the leader showed his sincerity and mass-based support when he himself assisted the households in installing the needed facilities. This gesture manifested his attitude towards poverty alleviation—that households should get involved in addressing their own needs, than waiting for government to deliver everything on a silver platter.

*On Barangay Governance.* The outlook offered by MBN, as manifested in the alignment of leaders' thrusts, influenced barangay development planning and management. As professed by the leader himself, MBN introduced the channels for consultative planning and team-up between purok representatives and kagawads. The MBN provided the avenue to tap the potentials of the purok system for community involvement, though much is still wanting in terms of enabling puroks to initiate projects.

In the same light, the MBN system enabled implementors to rationalize the targetting of beneficiaries. While the masterlist eased the identification of deserving families for interventions, the concept of demand-driven counterparting by the beneficiaries became key considerations in the actual delivery of services. Such criteria somehow trimmed the doleout mentality of target groups. (See Table 6.)

*On the Community.* A number of related outcomes were noted resulting from the entry of MBN. Following is an account of the effect of MBN on the community.

MBN paved the way for community participation. Purok members and health volunteers participated in data gathering and consolidation. They also took part in validating the top unmet needs of the barangay. For some purok members, data

gathering became a gelling and fun activity when their husbands accompanied them from house to house. Thus, apart from it being an exercise, it became a channel for bonding.

Key to the use of the data were the kagawads and purok leaders (some of them used to be BHWs) who had direct interaction with the households. Kagawads interacted with the puroks since each was assigned a purok to head. Thus, inputs to and outcomes of the plans were fed back to the purok leaders onto the members "informally."<sup>11</sup>

In the delivery of services, purok leaders played a key role in disseminating the information to community members. For instance, in the construction of toilet facilities, bayanihan was evident as the kagawads, household members and the barangay captain himself took part in the construction. For health, the mothers took their children to the health center every second week of the month for immunization. On these scheduled occasions, BHWs and the midwife exchange notes and jointly deepen the mothers' appreciation of MBN.

The BHWs who were interviewed acknowledged that the MBN Approach upgraded their skills on data gathering and widened their perspective on health. Although a similar interview was undertaken for health before MBN, enumeration was limited to families with children aged 0-6, and questions focused on health matters alone. Thus, their understanding of health was confined to immunization and nutrition. Through MBN, their view expanded to include the other facets of quality of life. This added knowledge and skill gave them a lead on how to better serve their constituents.

Apart from broadened understanding of quality of life, the team-up between the purok leaders, the BHWs and kagawads for the MBN gathering and consolidation of MBN data initially sparked partnership for barangay governance. The constant interaction enhanced the communication line between the barangay and the purok. Purok members developed a mechanism to air their concerns to government through the purok leaders who, in turn, communicated with the kagawads. The kagawads, meanwhile, articulated these sentiments during weekly sessions. Such gave the kagawads an impetus to meet regularly.

The increased exposure of purok members and leaders to meetings and MBN activities enriched their level of awareness on government services. This, coupled with actual services filtering down the barangays, paved the avenue for empowerment. Here, empowerment is initially indicated by the ability of purok members to articulate their concerns and demand for MBN services.

Principally, this groundwork on community participation in governance gave life to the years-old purok system. The value of tapping the potentials of the purok system was affirmed when the Barangay Integrated Development for Nutrition Improvement (BIDANI) targetted Barangay Cabitan. BIDANI is a community-based approach to



nutrition improvement which capitalizes on purok organizations as enabling management tools. The barangay was chosen to be covered by the program because of the notable improvements that transpired upon Mr. George Bunan's assumption to office, not to mention the barangay leader's credibility and positive attitude towards development. In essence, the MBN prepared the barangay for the entry of BIDANI.<sup>12</sup>

Thus far, the outcomes of the MBN Approach relate with increased participation as a nucleus for widened awareness for the individual, increased competencies for the health workers and leaders, and partnerships and teamwork for barangay and purok representatives. Such outcomes may be superficial but if contextualized within an environment where the benchmark for community involvement is zero, then these outcomes produced in three years are something that a leader can be proud of.

To further justify this statement, potentials for these initial process outcomes are laid out in Table 6 and 7. The third column of both tables outlines the manifestations relative to the implementation of MBN vis-a-vis the factors that promote community organization and participation, as well as factors that promote participation in government programs (Alfiler 1993). The indications lead to a brighter track of a bottom-up MBN. This, along with the complementation of BIDANI, may complete the MBN process.

**Table 6. Factors that Promote Community Organization and Participation**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Promoting Conditions</i>	<i>Manifestations</i>
Community Structure	More homogenous communities are easier to organize as people are not affected by community class structures	Income level: 79 percent earn an income ₱5,000 and below.
Experience in Community Organizing	A community which has experience or has active community associations will definitely be easier to organize.	Purok system in place since prior to entry of MBN. BHWs are trained.
Economic Status of Community	Communities which have regular sources of income and are not bothered with survival can attend to participation better.	Major source of income is farming.
Community Leadership Selection	Community leaders who are elected by the community can facilitate the organization process.	The barangay captain and the kagawads won by majority vote. Purok leaders are elected by household members in the purok. More often, purok leaders who are elected have harmonious relationship with the kagawads.
Leadership Style	Community leaders who actively involve the community members promote participation.	Barangay leader consults kagawads before the plan is drafted. The kagawads interface with the purok leaders regarding MBNs and other purok concerns. Purok members air these concerns to the kagawads, who in turn, raise these concerns during barangay planning.

**Table 7. Factors that Promote Participation in Government Programs**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Promoting Conditions</i>	<i>Manifestions</i>
Measures of performance	There is greater emphasis on whether citizens' or the communities' needs are met by the services/goods delivered.	The services delivered addressed the identified top priority needs of families. Communities see that their MBNs are being addressed.
Plan approach	Bureaucrats prepare flexible plans which allow them to modify procedures and rules according to the demands of community.	Plan components shifted from infrastructure to MBNs.
Nature of program	Programs which meet what the people consider their priority needs get more sustained participation.	MBN Approach relates to family needs.

Needless to say, the Barangay Captain introduced a major change in rousing a long sleeping barangay when he assumed office as a barangay leader. The innovations in management and the flow of services prior to the introduction of MBN reflects off-hand the kind of leader that he is. His leadership was enhanced when the MBN provided him a handle to better manage his barangay, manifested in the change in the local development planning process. His highly consultative nature was complemented by the opportunities for consensual decisionmaking with purok leaders and which kagawads were ushered in by the MBN Approach.

Improvement in the quality of life is noted in the increased access to water and sanitation facilities in a span of three years. In the account of the leader's initiatives, one can conclusively say that this achievement is not solely attributed to the leader's initiatives and willingness to synergize with provincial and municipal thrusts. A recognizable factor also is the technical assistance provided by the municipal TWG. Other enabling factors relate to higher LGU support. On the downside, failure to avail of services may be due to the beneficiaries' refusal to do so, along with socioeconomic constraints.

Suffice it to say, the barangay captain has innate qualities that make up a leader. Not only is he a good soldier, but a father to the barangay constituents. Background counts, as well as family influence. All these contribute to the leader's credibility which is a driving force to garner support. However, while sharing his authority with barangay officials is a rightful step towards broad-based participation, the barangay captain may need to exert effort to reach out to his constituents more and establish rapport with the grassroots.

## Lessons Learned

The influence of the MBN Approach in honing the barangay captain as a leader and vice-versa unveils interrelated variables that make or unmake a leader.

### *Leadership, Enabling Factors vis-a-vis the Application of MBN Strategies*

*Obedience, Interpersonal Relations and Social Mobilization.* The extent to which the barangay leader was mobilized, and the barangay leader has mobilized his constituents to embrace MBN, may be attributed to the leader's sense of obedience, *pakikipag-kapwa*<sup>13</sup> or *pakikisama*<sup>14</sup>, and credibility or *dangal*.

It was evident that the barangay leader complied with the executive order issued by the mayor. This trait may also be rooted in our historical trait of obedience which dates back to the Spanish era where respect for the kingship was ingrained. However, one cannot overlook that the mayor and the barangay captain are close friends, and this leads us to believe that *pakikisama* strengthened compliance beyond authority.

On mobilizing the barangay itself, the barangay captain's credibility and the community's high regard for his leadership projected by concrete accomplishments on the ground as well as his good public relations, enabled him to command respect and harmonized teamwork to make MBN work. This can also be attributed to his depiction as a *figure head and father*, the barangay being traditionally characterized by kinship (Alfiler 1993).

His *pakikipag-kapwa* bred a highly consultative relationship among barangay officials and with constituents. This resulted in an understanding of the leader's duties and responsibilities, and stronger camaraderie among community members. Thus, projects initiated by the leader garnered support because sincerity of intent was evident. The sphere of influence is widened as credibility is strengthened.

Family support is radiated as the barangay captain manages his unit. His mother, a retired school principal, serves as a barangay coordinator and backs up the leader. (However, if family relation is allowed to breed nepotism at the expense of public participation, it may also result in pitfalls if not guarded closely.) Further, the family's accessibility (the house being adjacent to the barangay hall where members go in and out at any time of the day) signals to residents that the family can be counted on. This helps build the leadership's credibility.

*Openness to Learn, Surrounding Influence and Capability-Building.* The municipal technical working group has been persistent in its mission to render assistance to the barangay in the form of coaching, monitoring, and brokering with municipal actors. This is an added value as far as pursuing the MBN Approach in Bgy. Cabitan is concerned.

The leader's consultative nature opened the doors to capability-building. Apart from the municipal TWG, he consults his mother for sound advice on how to run day-to-day activities. Needless to say, the credibility of the advisers surrounding him helps mold his thought processes and attitudes vis-a-vis barangay affairs.

On the part of the area-based volunteers, their realization that the MBN reinforces previous skills is a good takeoff point for them to appreciate and apply the MBN Approach.

*Cooperative Spirit and Convergence.* Convergence is brought about by multilevel actors. The proactive move on the part of the provincial and municipal governments in counterparting spelled a big difference in motivating the leader to perform, and vice-versa. A multilateral help-line was established, and interdependence was introduced.

In addition, a major realization relates with segregating unmet MBNs that can be immediately addressed by the barangay (such as health, nutrition) from those which need allocation from barangay funds and incorporation in the barangay development plan (such as water and sanitation facilities). This brings us to the point that the midwife, the social worker, and the nutrition officer play a key role in convergence planning at the barangay level as they serve as link between their mother units (DOH, DSWD, DA) and the barangay, and can provide inputs as to which services can be attended to.

The value of convergence was further manifested in the manner by which barangay development programs were managed. The introduction of BIDANI whose thrust relates with nutrition, an MBN, built on the purok structure tapped for MBN. This way, instead of duplicating structures, the tapping of the same structure enhanced the purok and barangay as management structures.

Convergence was also harnessed at the community-level which will be discussed in the ensuing subtopic on community-based approach.

*Practical Sense and the Local Information System.* A popular notion about the local information system (LIS) concerns the data board. If this was the outstanding indicator that the LIS is in place, the barangay will fail since the data boards are not being updated and their use not maximized. However, an indicator meaningful to local governance is the extent to which the information gathered on MBNs is being used in planning and focused targetting, and communicated to the residents, especially the affected families. For the former, the change of plan components before and after the MBN is a fine indication that the MBN data were indeed used in barangay planning.

A major use of the LIS was proven when the BIDANI was introduced. Baseline information was already provided for nutrition-related indicators. The data resulting from the quarterly monitoring activities of BIDANI are seen to reinforce and complement the MBN data gathered yearly.

*Resourcefulness and Financial Management.* Since the bulk of the 20 percent barangay development fund was allocated to addressing MBNs, and additional income from local taxes is minimal, the fund-raising schemes and negotiation skills of the leader helped augment the resources to cater to other barangay projects (i.e. funds from the congresswoman, provincial governor, rice festival). Needless to say, the generosity of the leader in catering to the personal needs of constituents bodes well for resource mobilization.

*Empathy and Focused Targetting.* The actual implementation of this strategy reveals some interesting realities since it is in the barangay where actual matching of services and people (as opposed to municipalities where beneficiaries are barangays) takes place. In the operationalization of this strategy, the interplay between and among discretion, empathy and a systematic targetting based on the masterlist is gleaned.

Specifically, the manner by which focused targetting was applied yields four major considerations: (a) willingness on the part of the target beneficiary to accept help (e.g. capital for livelihood); (b) demand-driven vs. wait-and-see attitude in tandem with local knowledge on the most needy; (c) use of local criteria (such as waste management implications); and (d) an established referral system.

Ideally, recipients should follow the rank/order in the masterlist. However, local factors came in the actual delivery of services. One was the willingness of the beneficiary to avail of loans. Refusal on their part disabled focused targetting. Second was related with the demand-driven principle (or first-come/first served basis). Beneficiaries who were enthusiastic to avail of the service were catered to first, as long as they gave their counterpart and the leader knew that these "walk-ins" fell within the criterion of "no or low income." Here, empathy factors in as an indigenous public service value in service delivery.

Third is a practical consideration on waste management where households near the capital and are built close to each other are given priority over the far-flung areas. Thus, priority beneficiaries in the distant areas may not actually receive the service.

Last is the use of a referral system where delegation and trust on the part of the leader come into play. Kagawads play a crucial role in bridging objectivity and the "*padrino*" system. In this regard, the masterlist was used to validate the beneficiaries in line, rather than as a basis for selection.

The value of "*pag-asa*" (hope) among community members, coupled with the leader's credibility, fosters patience on the part of target beneficiaries not reached by the service yet.

*Bayanihan Spirit and the Community-Based Approach.* Built-in characteristics pave the way for a more thorough operationalization of MBN at the purok level. The purok system had been installed years before the MBN Approach was introduced in

the barangay. The MBN Approach reinforced its functionality as it provided activities as venues for it to work.

Convergence in service delivery is evident as kagawads aid the households in constructing the toilet facilities. Again, the spirit of bayanihan is shown in this move.

Clients as co-producers (bayanihan) is made visible as beneficiaries turn in their counterpart to complete the service. A most common form of counterpart is labor, without which the construction of toilet facilities cannot be completed.

### *Gaps and Areas for Improvement*

*Funds/Resources.* As always, lack of funds at the barangay level constrains the comprehensive delivery of services to meet MBNs and to reach all beneficiaries. Compounding this is the quarterly release of the IRA which delays the completion of projects until the end of the fiscal year. In short, the actual completion of projects (and subsequently meeting the unmet MBNs) is somehow influenced by the release of funds, thus the leadership cannot be penalized for this.

Resources likewise dictate the extent of participation at the purok level. Echoing the learning points by the barangay TWG to fellow purok officers will require supervision from the Municipal TWG. Investments for capability-building will have to be increased at the outset for a broad-based participation.

*Homogeneity and Political Dynamics vis-a-vis Barangay Needs.* A barangay which has an IRA of P475,000 and 3,049 people to serve leaves the leader a working fund of P155 per person. This allows little chance to address unique needs. Note that additional activities came from the leader's personal funds, and from the funds of other politicians by virtue of the leader's personal connections. With such a resource base, the need to harmonize the barangay projects with those of the municipal and provincial government is imperative to maximize the use of meager resources, and this is where the influence of municipal and provincial political dynamics comes into the picture. If there is no homogeneity in needs and interests as well as in the identification of interventions, chances are that priority unmet MBNs of the barangay will not be addressed.

*Planning for SRA/MBN Constrained by Local Funds.* Municipal and barangay management needs to embrace a more holistic perspective of the MBN Approach. Resource pooling may extend beyond the local revenues. Programs of national government agencies such as the DA for livelihood, DSWD for housing and livelihood may be phased in to meet the MBNs. There is a need to widen the coverage of interdependence to include the national agencies since the initial steps were limited to local governments.

*On the Participation of POs.* The people's organizations such as the Senior Citizens and 4-H Club are still very much sectorally oriented and their non-interface with the barangay is understandable. An informant disclosed that membership in said organizations is very much driven by the perceived benefits. Bringing them into the mainstream of MBN implementation is desirable. An orientation that is area-based, as opposed to agency-based, will have to be made part of the system. To maximize people participation, the agency facilitators need to phase in with the barangay to ensure that these organizations harmonize their activities and resources with the barangay through the MBN tool.

On the other hand, the satisfaction from MBN exuded by barangay implementors and their enthusiasm to participate in BIDANI strike a positive note. After a series of workshops for BIDANI, purok members and barangay officials have begun to see the complementarity between the two programs. In fact, they claim that the MBN Approach has laid the foundations for BIDANI because of the following reasons: (a) the puroks have been activated through the MBN data gathering, consolidation and service delivery; (b) barangay officials have already seen the significance of giving premium to MBNs in local governance; thus, advocating the relevance of nutrition will not start from scratch; (c) on the part of community members, the importance of nutrition improvement will be reinforced by center-based activities through the midwife and BHWs, coupled by the MBN Approach; (d) purok leaders and kagawads have had initial training on data gathering and teamwork between barangay and purok can be channeled through this partnership. This signifies the level of awareness and appreciation of the community towards the MBN process.

*Capability-Building and Follow-Through.* Much as the municipality has succeeded in orienting the barangay on MBN planning, much has yet to be done in terms of deepening the barangay's appreciation of bottom-up and community-based (purok) needs identification, planning and monitoring. This is where the presence of a full-time community organizer comes into play since the midwife and the MTWG cannot be on full-time immersion in community organizing. The community organizer may come from POs or community volunteers.

*Communicating the MBN to Constituents.* A nagging challenge is the need to aggressively communicate MBN to the grassroots. While the MBN as a management tool has been appreciated and used by the barangay officials, the MBN processes have to permeate down to the purok and household level. This way, the information reflected in data boards can relay messages to households and help them address their own needs. This will also enable them to participate more actively in community affairs, this being one of the top unmet needs.

*Monitoring and Evaluation.* Yearly monitoring of MBNs seems to be a wasteful investment considering the pace at which identified priority MBNs are addressed. Thus, a select number of indicators may be pulled out for a semestral or yearly monitoring (such as health and nutrition), a system being undertaken by the midwife and the BHWs.

In addition, the results of the data gathering phase and the monitoring activities (for the second and third rounds) do not seem to help target-setting. In fact, no targets are set since the impoverished barangay is very much resource-dependent and reactive in planning.

### *Implications for Capability-Building and Sustainability*

*Local Development Tools.* Additional resources from national agencies need to be aligned with the barangay needs. In this regard, the barangay may need further assistance on project development and fund-sourcing. Coordination with the municipal government will have to be strengthened for this purpose.

*Leadership vis-à-vis Technical Advice.* For a leader who is service-oriented but who admits a gap in technical know-how, guidance on the part of the municipal TWG will have to be strengthened. Aside from the MBN Approach, a visioning exercise may be in order for the leadership to lead the barangay. As it is, the barangay captain functions as a manager as he is able to delegate and harmonize activities to get things done. He may want to align current systems towards the attainment of a unified vision, both as a barangay captain and as president of the Liga ng Barangay.

*Value of a Full-time Community Organizer.* SRA/MBN has succeeded in mobilizing local governments for MBN. One can say that the policy advocacy has legitimized community participation in local development planning. The challenge is to transform micro-communities within the barangay through the purok, and to achieve this, the barangay needs a community facilitator who will not only provide the puroks with skills on MBN analysis and planning, but also in making sure that the puroks interface with the barangay. The barangay cannot rely on the MTWG nor the widwife to devote full-time attention to community organizing because other barangays demand their services, too, not to mention the pull from national government (i.e., monitoring, training). Along this line, the BIDANI can serve this purpose.

### **The Barangay Leadership and the MBN Approach: A Synthesis**

The lessons culled from the case of Barangay Cabitan shed practical insights on how the ideal is approximated as far as operationalizing the MBN strategies is concerned, factoring in local enabling and constraining factors within and beyond the barangay. The transformation in planning practices manifests a positive contribution of the MBN Approach. Convergence planning highlights the interdependence of the various levels of local governments with the barangay as end-user. Here, one can glean the powerful influence of politico-administrative dynamics on the barangay leadership, either for want of a handle to manage its constituents, or for need to harmonize thrusts due to minimal resources, both of which are being offered by the MBN Approach.



Of all the strategies, an interesting revelation is the manner by which focused targetting actually transpires given the local flavors unknown to the proponents of the approach. A key realization is that not all deprived, depressed and underserved households are willing to receive services. Striking a balance between objectivity and the "padrino system" and the first-come-first-served style of service delivery is challenged. For the latter two, the use of the masterlist is for validation—a facet of focused targetting which was not anticipated. Overall, local knowledge overpowers the use of a masterlist, especially if members have common service deficiencies and purok kagawads and leaders have been part of the needs appraisal. This is indicative of the leader's knowledge on the socioeconomic conditions and needs of his constituents. The manner by which the matching of services with clients is done, is greatly influenced by how the leader delegates authority, balanced with politico-administrative realities.

On the part of the community, building on existing knowledge and mechanisms elevates the value of the MBN Approach. One headway is the extent to which the partnership between the kagawad and the purok leader is established (akin to bridging the barangay and the purok). Needless to say, the existence of the purok mechanism and the built-in skills of area-based health workers facilitated the entry and acceptance of the MBN Approach. More importantly, the quick response to a felt need has strengthened the credibility of the leader which, in turn, can garner him a sturdier support for his programs.

Findings point out that the bottom-up attribute of the MBN has not permeated the purok organizations *yet*. This cannot be totally blamed on the barangay leadership alone. Other factors relate to the absence of a full-time community organizer to facilitate the transformation process at the purok level. Another is time—there is no such thing as a one-shot development process. Certainly, "institutionalizing" synergy between government and community takes time.

The crux of the case ushers us into the significant interplay of innate leadership qualities vis-a-vis the implementation of the MBN Approach. These built-in characteristics facilitate capability-building processes to allow the MBN Approach to sink in as a management tool. Thus, it is not sufficient for a leader to be technically equipped. It is more important for a leader, specifically a barangay leader who interacts directly with his constituents (kins), to be service-oriented, consultative, trustworthy, open and credible as a start-off so that management techniques can be absorbed with relative ease. At this level, the indigenous values of *pakikipagkapwa* (value of solidarity and empathy), *damay* (empathy), and *dangal* (dignity) should serve as building blocks since the barangay is an extension of the family, and the MBN Approach is family-based. Other enabling factors such as educational attainment, financial capability, family support, technical support and other political connections can come into play in reinforcing leadership for MBN. Ultimately, a shared vision will definitely guide the leader to where the community wants to go.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Apart from the ABCSDP, the IALDM also reviewed other related strategies like the Barangay Integrated Development Approach for Nutrition Improvement (BIDANI) and Local Resource Management (LRM).

<sup>2</sup>The Social Reform Agenda identified twenty priority provinces in 1994 as focal targets for poverty alleviation.

<sup>3</sup>The multidisciplinary team is a mix of DILG technical staff, each of whom is assigned an area of specialization.

<sup>4</sup>These components cover legislation, financial management, management systems, community mobilization, and development planning.

<sup>5</sup>"I Serve MBN" was a component of CPC IV's Capacity Building Component implemented by the LGA and DILG.

<sup>6</sup>Sharers refer to local government representatives who articulated their experiences and innovations in MBN operationalization.

<sup>7</sup>Note the modification on chairmanship from what was prescribed in the MBN Guidelines (LGA 1995). Logically, the planning and development coordinator should serve as chairperson because of the nature of his task. Such adjustment is provided for in the guidelines to give the local executive a leeway in managing the MBN.

<sup>8</sup>Small group and informal meetings.

<sup>9</sup>market

<sup>10</sup>The CIDSS Process recommended for semestral monitoring through the administration of the MBN checklist. The Non-CIDSS MBN Process, on the other hand, requires yearly monitoring.

<sup>11</sup>"Informally" means information is coursed through small group gatherings and chats.

<sup>12</sup>The purok setup was modified, enabling purok kagawads to assume chairmanship of one sector, and purok leaders and members to criss-cross membership in one sector, increasing their jurisdiction from organization-based to sector-based. The setup enabled kagawads to increase interaction with their colleagues outside of their respective puroks and expands their awareness of felt needs of beneficiaries and deficiencies on the part of the barangay. This information serves as a takeoff for action.

<sup>13</sup>"A Filipino value of solidarity and empathy. It is the Filipino practice of treating or dealing with people on equal terms. It is also the inner mechanism which enables the Filipino to operate efficiently in a changing world, the capacity in somebody else's situation, an expansive and adaptive self-system, ready to incorporate new roles and the Filipino tendency to sympathize with and support the less fortunate..." (Orendain 1989: 184-185).

<sup>14</sup>It is uniting one's will with the will of others for the sake of camaraderie. This is the practice of yielding to the will of the leader or to the group so as to make the group's decision unanimous... (Orendain 1989: 185).

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## Key Informants

Jesusina de los Reyes	Kagawad and BIDANI Chair for Health and Sanitation
Deoto Caballero	Kagawad and BIDANI Chair for Infrastructure
Melga Marin	Kagawad and BIDANI Chair for Education
Perlito Laurino	Kagawad and BIDANI Chair for Food Production
Revis Lapida	Kagawad and BIDANI Chair for Peace and Order
Merly Guiriba	Kagawad, BIDANI Chair for Income Generating Projects, Barangay Health Worker
Elvie Rodelas	Kagawad
Edna L. Romano	Rural Health Midwife

Nancy Rodelas	Brgy. Treasurer
Iremo Alarcon	Brgy. Secretary
Victoria Bulanon	Brgy. Nutrition Scholar
Rosalina Guadalupe	BHW
Estela Bunan	Brgy. Coordinator, PPIC Co-Chairperson and Purok Leader
Console Arizola	SWO
Eleanor Mortel	Mun. Agriculturist
Efren Oliva	LGOO V
Ralphy Mabatu	President, 4-H Club
Pedrito Davao	Beneficiary/tricycle driver
Nonato delos Santos	Purok President and BIDANI PPIC Coodinator