

**Sustainability of the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of
Social Services (CIDSS) Program in Mindanao
November 2001**

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I. Introduction

The majority of the Philippines' poorest provinces are in Mindanao and any poverty alleviation measure is a welcome opportunity to the island group. However, given the scant resources the government has, such measures have to be effective and sustainable, to make a palpable impact on the target communities.

Moreover, the existence of armed conflict in Mindanao, as well as the reality of poverty and inequality being prevalent among marginalized groups, specifically, Muslim and indigenous people communities, suggest that poverty alleviation strategies being implemented therein must be flexible enough to respond to such particularities.

The Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) is a program that is being implemented on a national level by the government and, notwithstanding its documented success nationwide, has to be competent enough to weather the storms of Mindanao's multifaceted predicament. In order to adequately address poverty in Mindanao, the CIDSS must be an enduring program. It must also relate to the unique socio-cultural phenomena existing in the island region, which contribute to poverty and underdevelopment.

II. Objectives

This paper aims to evaluate the sustainability of the CIDSS in Mindanao and come up with recommendations for its continued implementation in the island region.

III. Methodology

A. Data Gathering

Data gathering was done through research of secondary data from related literature, CIDSS documents, data from the Department of Social Welfare and

Development (DSWD), data from the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), and through interview of CIDSS implementors and DSWD personnel from selected regional offices in Mindanao.

B. Scope and Limitations

There has already been an evaluation made on the CIDSS' impact on a national level. The National College of Public Administration and Governance of University of the Philippines, Diliman conducted this in 1999, for the DSWD. In the absence of an evaluation conducted on a Mindanao-wide level, this present project assumes that the conclusions of the aforementioned study are applicable to the Mindanao setting.

In view of data gaps in government offices assigned to monitor certain indicators of which this study is concerned with, it cannot be avoided that some findings and conclusions are tentative in nature. This explains the preliminary nature of the study. Nonetheless, enough information has been generated by the work to warrant arriving at certain conclusions and the formulation of recommendations which will lead to recommendations on CIDSS implementation in Mindanao.

This study has also been limited to only Mindanao, the aim being to ascertain the program's sustainability in the island given the factors pertinent to its continued implementation. This will be expounded on in the subsequent chapters.

Furthermore, as focus is given in this paper on its implementation in Mindanao, the CIDSS is necessarily juxtaposed to the specific characteristics and conditions of the island group. This paper will describe briefly the conditions unique to Mindanao, mainly, the existence of the armed conflict and the related issue of cultural disparities. This paper will not dwell on the roots or causes of the conflict, but simply recognize the existence of such and the undeniable relation to the reality of seclusion of minority groups.

In view of the need to come up with specific indicators for the unique conditions in Mindanao, the data gathering procedure limited its indicators to the aspects of the program's flexibility in relation to: (a) the armed conflict; and (b) the incidence of cultural diversity.

While most of the secondary data are, as much as they were available, national in scope, the interviews were conducted among representatives of program implementors and DSWD personnel in Mindanao.

The existence of CIDSS – Zones of Peace, although evidently an integral aspect of the program's implementation in Mindanao due to its focus on conflict-affected areas, does not figure eminently in this paper. This is due to the lack of documentation on the Zone of Peace system and its exclusion from the NCPA study.

No attempt was made to discuss gender and environmental concerns in the areas studied.

IV. Poverty in Mindanao

A. Why Mindanao?

Compared to all other island groups, poverty incidence is the highest in Mindanao (see Table 1). While only 23 percent of the country's population reside in Mindanao, its contribution to total poverty is approximately 31 percent. As reported by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) through its Technical Working Group (TWG) on Income statistics, of the 4.5M Filipino families living below the poverty threshold¹ of P11,388, 1.4M Mindanaoan families were not able to meet the minimum food requirements for survival. Families in Mindanao also receive the least amount of essential services².

¹ Minimum income required by a family to satisfy the nutritional requirements of 2000 calories and other basic needs.

² Asian Development Bank. 2000. Poverty and Well Being in the Philippines with a Focus on Mindanao.

Table 1. Poverty Incidence and Percentage Contribution to Total Poverty by Region, 1998.

Region	Percentage of Poor		Percentage Contribution to Total Poverty
	Value	Rank	
Ilocos	38.7	4	5.8
Cagayan Valley	39.0	5	4.1
Central Luzon	21.0	2	5.9
Southern Luzon	25.0	3	9.1
Bicol Region	54.1	14	10.4
Western Visayas	43.7	7	10.1
Central Visayas	50.2	12	10.0
Eastern Visayas	49.8	10	6.9
<i>Western Mindanao</i>	<i>52.4</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>5.6</i>
<i>Northern Mindanao</i>	<i>47.6</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>5.0</i>
<i>Southern Mindanao</i>	<i>44.4</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>7.6</i>
<i>Central Mindanao</i>	<i>49.9</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>4.5</i>
NCR	11.3	1	4.4
CAR	39.5	6	2.0
ARMM	56.7	16	4.3
<i>Caraga</i>	<i>36.7</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>4.3</i>
Philippines	36.7		

Source : ADB 2000. Poverty and Well Being in the Philippines with a Focus on Mindanao.

Note : Mindanao Regions are italicized

B. The Severity of Poverty in Mindanao

Poverty in Mindanao is not only reflected in the number of impoverished families concentrated in the island, it is also reflected in the severity of destitution existing therein.

A recent study by the Asian Development Bank³ revealed that there are sharp regional disparities in terms of poverty depth and severity in the Philippines. Poverty is least severe in the NCR while it is most severe in the Caraga Region. Despite having the largest contribution to total poverty, Luzon ranks lowest in terms of poverty depth and severity. Poverty is deepest and most severe in in Caraga and Western Mindanao. The poverty gap ratios and severity indices for all six (6) regions in Mindanao are higher than corresponding figures for the whole country. These findings reveal that

³ Ibid.

compared to other regions, the poor in Mindanao are among the poorest in the nation.⁴

Table 2. Poverty Depth and Severity by Region, 1998.

Region	Poverty Gap Ratio		Severity of Poverty	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
Ilocos	13.4	5	6.5	6
Cagayan Valley	11.9	4	5.2	4
Central Luzon	6.5	2	3.1	2
Southern Luzon	7.8	3	3.4	3
Bicol Region	19.4	12	9.1	12
Western Visayas	13.9	6	6.1	5
Central Visayas	20.9	13	11.1	13
Eastern Visayas	18.0	10	8.8	10
<i>Western Mindanao</i>	<i>22.1</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>11.8</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Northern Mindanao</i>	<i>17.9</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>8.7</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Southern Mindanao</i>	<i>17.2</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8.9</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Central Mindanao</i>	<i>17.9</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>8.7</i>	<i>9</i>
NCR	2.5	1	0.9	1
CAR	15.7	7	8.1	7
ARMM	18.8	11	8.5	8
<i>Caraga</i>	<i>23.0</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>11.9</i>	<i>15</i>
Philippines	13.0			

Source: ADB 2000. Poverty and Well Being in the Philippines with a Focus on Mindanao.

Note: Mindanao Regions are italicized

C. Socio-cultural Phenomena in Mindanao Related to Poverty

1. Poverty and Inequality Among Cultural Minorities

The provinces with the largest proportion and deepest levels of indigence are those with a preponderance of Muslims and indigenous peoples or *lumads*⁵.

Mindanao Muslims refer to the 13 ethnolinguistic groups of the Maranao, Maguindanao, Tausug, Sama, Sangil, Iranun, Kalagan, Kalibugan, Yakan, Jama Mapun, Palawani, Molbog and Badjao. The Kalagan, Palawani, and Badjaos are partly Muslim.

⁴ Estrella, Marisol. July 2000. *The Other War in Mindanao*. Political Brief. Vol. 8 No. 7. Institute for Popular Democracy.

⁵ Term coined for indigenous peoples in Mindanao, e.g. T'boli, B'laan, Manobo

Table 3. Muslim Tribal Groups in Mindanao.

Muslim Tribal Group	Majority Location / Area
1. Maranao	Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Marawi, Iligan, Caraga, Davao
2. Maguindanao	Cotabato City, Gen. Santos City, South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Maguindanao Province
3. Tausog	Jolo, Sulu
4. Iranon	Maguindanao Province
5. Kalagan	Davao City, Davao Oriental, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Comval, Gen. Santos City, South Cotabato
6. Samal	Siasi, Sulu, Tawi-tawi
7. Yakan	Basilan
8. Badjao	Sulu Archipelago
9. Sangil	Balut Island, Sarangani Province

Source: Office of Muslim Affairs

The *lumads* cover the 18 ethnolinguistic groups indigenous to Mindanao, namely: Ata, Bagobo, Banwaon, Bla-an, Bukidnon, Dibabawon, Higaunon or Talaandig, Mamanwa, Mandaya, Mang-guwangan, Manobo, Mansaka, Subanon, Tagakaolo, T'boli, Tiruray, and the Ubo.

Table 4. Lumad Tribal Groups in Mindanao.

Group	Majority Location / Area
1. Subanon	Misamis Occidental, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte
2. Mandaya / Mansaka	Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental
3. Manobo	Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Bukidnon, North Cotabato, South Cotabato
4. B'laan	North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Sultan Kudarat
5. T'boli	South Cotabato
6. Higaonon	Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Misamis Occidental, Bukidnon
7. Tiruray	Maguindanao Province, Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato
8. Bagobo	North Cotabato, Maguindanao Province, Davao City, Davao del Norte, Sultan Kudarat
9. Bukidnon	Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental
10. Banwaon	South Cotabato, Agusan del Sur, Misamis Oriental
11. Tagakaolo	Davao del Sur
12. Dibabawon	Davao del Norte, Agusan del Sur
13. Ubo	Agusan del Sur, South Cotabato
14. Manguangan	Davao del Norte
15. Talaandig	Davao del Norte

Source: Alternative Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM)

The historical neglect and inequitable partitioning of resources against these ethnic minority groups have exacerbated the social cleavage between them and the majority Filipinos, as well as fuelled the armed conflict raging in Mindanao.

Aside from the fact that the deepest levels of poverty are found in the provinces in Regions IX, XII, and the ARMM, where Muslims and *lumads* mainly reside (see Figure 1), the distribution or sharing of economic, social, and political resources is lopsided against these groups. The Muslims and the *lumads* also have the least access to physical, financial, social, and political infrastructure facilities and services, resulting in their below par social and economic performance.⁶

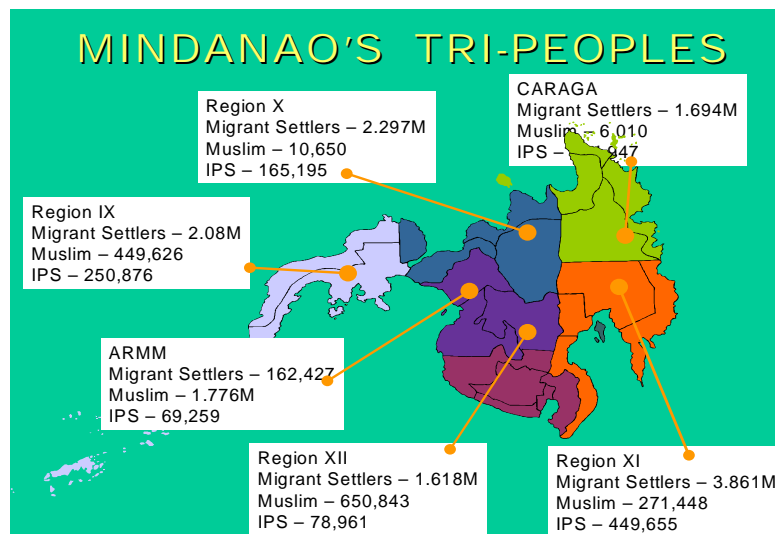


Figure 1. Mindanao Tri-people's distribution

The historical lack of attention has naturally led to these marginalized groups' own admission of poor faith in government, as well as distrust in its motives.⁷

⁶ Peace and Reconstruction Imperatives for Mindanao's Enhanced Development (PRIMED): A Suggested Public Sector Agenda for 2001-2004

⁷ This general assumption has been drawn from some views of Muslim and *lumad* people in various consultations and fora.

2. Armed Conflict

The armed conflict in Mindanao is related to the social delineation based on ethnic, religious, and cultural differences. It is a deep-seated one with strong historical undertones tracing as far back as the 16th century in the beginning of and during the Spanish colonization.⁸

The Mindanao conflict's running along ethnic, religious, and cultural lines is partially caused by the common and shared experiences of these ethnic groups, consequently uniting them in various forms of struggle for self-determination.

The present armed conflict is mainly between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). However, prior to the MILF, it was the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the MILF's precursor, which principally waged war on the government. This conflict lasted for 26 years and involved three (3) government administrations (Marcos, Aquino, Ramos).

When the Estrada Administration launched its offensive against the MILF (which broke away from the MNLF in 1984) in early 1999 up to 2000, which is the most recent major conflict between this group and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), directly affected were Regions IX, XII and the ARMM, which accounted for around 45% of the total population in Mindanao. (Table 5).

⁸ Ibid

Table 5. Population in Mindanao in 1995.

Region	Pop. 1995	% Share Tot. Mindanao Pop.	Projected Pop. 2000	% Share Tot. Mindanao Pop.
IX (W. Mindanao)	2,794,659	17.25	3,149,580	17.25
X (N. Mindanao)	2,483,272	15.32	2,785,011	15.28
XI (S. Mindanao)	4,604,158	28.41	5,265,326	28.89
XII (C. Mindanao)	2,359,808	14.56	2,690,809	14.76
ARMM	2,020,903	12.47	2,209,451	12.12
Caraga	1,942,687	11.99	2,126,025	11.67
TOTAL	16,205,487	100.00	18,226,202	100.00

Source: NSO

The recent conflict in Mindanao created an enormous impact not only the economy of the island, but more deeply, on the quality of human and social conditions in the island.

The war forced residents to flee their homes, and many were faced with the reality of death, injury and separation before reaching the evacuation center. Scores of children died due to hunger, excessive heat, or exposure to crossfire.⁹

Notwithstanding the difficulties experienced by evacuees from the disparate conditions of evacuation centers, these sanctuaries, as a government measure to assist the victims of war, have failed to even provide for the needs of the whole lot of refugees. For example, from the number of evacuees in Central Mindanao and the ARMM housed in such centers, the majority of whom are Muslim women and children, the DSWD was only able to serve 49.37% (Table 6).

Table 6. Number of Evacuees and Those Served by the DSWD

Area	Total Number of Housed Evacuees	Number Served by the DSWD	Percentage Served
Central Mindanao	395,966	202,060	51.03
ARMM	282,038	132,716	47.05
Western Mindanao ¹⁰	225,384	No data	
TOTAL	903,388		

⁹ Philippine Daily Inquirer, September 13, 2000

¹⁰ Only one evacuation center existed in a province in Western Mindanao, which housed 225,384 internal refugees.

V. **Background on the CIDSS**

A. Brief Description of the CIDSS

The Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) is one of the ten (10) flagship programs under the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act (Republic Act 8425) and a proven grassroots level development strategy in reducing the unmet minimum basic needs of disadvantaged families and communities.

The Program has ushered in milestones in the field of poverty alleviation particularly in the areas of people empowerment, development management and local governance. Through its four-pronged approach of community organizing, total family approach, convergence and focused targeting, it has managed to empower targeted families and communities to enable them to meet their minimum basic needs (MBNs).

Under the program, families and communities are enabled to identify their minimum basic needs, set their priorities, develop the confidence and the will to work at these needs, and take action with respect to them. MBNs refer to survival (health, food and nutrition, clothing, water and sanitation); security (income and livelihood, shelter, peace and order / public safety); and enabling (basic education and literacy, family care/psycho-social, people's participation in community affairs) needs.

The CIDSS utilizes the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) Approach in catering to the needs of target communities through the convergence of social, economic, and development administration projects.¹¹

¹¹ Dept. of Social Welfare and Development. 2001. CIDSS: A Proven Poverty Alleviation Strategy. <http://www.dswd.gov.ph/ssspu>

Apart from these strategies in CIDSS, other strategies in the MBN approach are considered as integrated in the CIDSS framework, mainly: convergence of resources and services among government, Non-Government Organizations / Peoples Organizations (NGOs/POs), and the private sector to sustain the effort in the application of the intervention; social mobilization through community organizing; focused targeting; and the Total Family approach, which concentrates on the needs and requirements of marginalized members of the community, starting at the family level.

Spearheaded by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the CIDSS program also includes participation from other government agencies, the Local Government Unit, and institutionalizes the cooperation of NGOs/POs, development agencies, and the private sector. Business, academe, church, media, and the rest of civil society share in the responsibility for social reform and human development.

Through these, the CIDSS strives to transcend the dole-out and fragmented orientation of past programs on poverty, and come up with a total and integrated solution to poverty alleviation.¹²

Based on the study conducted by the National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines for the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in 1999, the CIDSS has made a positive impact on the quality of life of these communities, although in varying degrees. This is confirmed by the qualitative observations of the stakeholder-respondents of the study and the data on percentage change of unmet MBNs from the study's baseline year vis-à-vis the most recent assessment in 1998.

¹² Bautista, Victoria. 1999. Combating Poverty Through the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS). National College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines.

B. CIDSS Implementation in Mindanao

1. Municipalities in Mindanao Under the CIDSS Program

Mindanao, at present has 408 municipalities and. As of 2000, 327 municipalities/cities and 927 barangays were engaged by the DSWD for CIDSS implementation. During the program's inception phase in 1994-95, 138 municipalities were initially covered. This later increased to an additional 42 municipalities in 1996-97.

In 1999, the Australian Agency for International Development - Vulnerable Groups Facility (Aus-AID-VGF) assisted the CIDSS program in its further expansion to by subsidizing 142 municipalities in the six regions of Mindanao. Under this expansion phase, some 52,400 of the country's poorest families have been able to access basic social services in a period of three years. A total of PhP 85.53 million program grant is being distributed by the AusAID-VGF in the six (6) regions of Mindanao. The AusAID-VGF assistance will terminate next year.

Table 7. CIDSS Implementation in Mindanao.

Region	Total No. of Mun./ City	Total No. of Brgys	1993 Income Classification						CIDSS Year of Entry			
			6 th	5 th	4 th	3 rd	2 nd	1 st	94-95	96-97	1999	2000
IX	61	183	13	42	5	1	0	0	23	7	31	
X	50	150	12	33	5	0	0	0	20	7	23	
XI	39	117	1	11	23	1	0	2	25	8	5	1
XII	40	120	11	16	12	1	0	0	24	4	12	
XIII	58	174	15	35	7	1	0	0	20	7	31	
ARMM	79	234	60	13	3	0	0	0	26	9	41	3
Total	327	948							138	42	142	4

Source: CIDSS National Report, 1999

In the municipality of Tampakan, province of South Cotabato, the DSWD forged an agreement with the Western Mining Corporation (WMC), to redirect and strengthen the community development program, structures,

systems, and process of four (4) B'laan tribal communities using the CIDSS approach. As of this writing, there is no final reported schedule yet for termination of the WMC project.

As exhibited in Table 7, the CIDSS program implementation in Mindanao has extended beyond the 5th and 6th class municipalities. The program has expanded even to the 4th and 3rd class municipalities. As of last year's accomplishment, the program has already covered all the municipalities in Mindanao.

2. MBN Reduction

Based on the study conducted by the National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines for the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in 1999, the CIDSS has made a positive impact on the quality of life of these communities, although in varying degrees. This is confirmed by the qualitative observations of the stakeholder-respondents of the study and the data on percentage change of unmet MBNs from the study's baseline year vis-à-vis the most recent assessment in 1998.

Table 8. Summary of Reduction Percentage of the Beneficiaries' MBN, 2000.

Region	Number of Families Served	Percentage of Reduction
IX	33,255	68.25%
X	23,542	70.75%
XI	15,658	62.68%
XII	25,252	72.35%
XIII (Caraga)	35,325	76.33%
ARMM	18,989	49.38%

Source: MEDCo 2001, CIDSS National Secretariat

Tangibly, five out of the six regions in Mindanao have posted more than fifty (50) percent reduction rate of the beneficiaries' minimum basic needs. As one of the CIDSS implementers summarizes, indicators show that the program has created a great impact in improving the quality of life of the program beneficiaries.

Qualitatively, the needs being reduced by the CIDSS range from basic survival needs of health through the construction of community health

centers, water, and sanitation through the construction of water systems, water tank reservoirs and sanitary toilets, to increasing their income through the provision of small-scale livelihood activities and cooperatives. It has also addressed the enabling needs of the community through the construction of Day Care Centers, Drug Rehabilitation Centers and Crises Centers.

3. CIDSS – Zone of Peace

The CIDSS – Zones of Peace focus on areas affected by armed conflict in Mindanao, which need restoration and rehabilitation. Examples of these are the CIDSS areas in Brgy. Bunao, Municipality of Tupi, South Cotabato, and Brgys. Sapu Masla and Daliao, Municipality of Malapatan, Sarangani Province.

VI. Indicators for Sustainability

Sustainability, as applied in the context of this paper, is defined as the program's ability for maintenance of its implementation.

A. Operational Aspect

Financial resources and institutional arrangements are reviewed here, as these shall determine the program's longevity and continued existence.

1. Funding

Through the years, from its inception to the present, the CIDSS program availed of increasing allotment for its implementation. As exhibited by Table 9, the project showed an increment of 18 percent from CY 1999 to CY 2000.

However, only a 3 percent increase was enjoyed by the program from CY 2000 to 2001. The national budget circular of not approving a new budget for CY 2001 but instead re-enacting last year's budget brought this about. Nonetheless, as per consultation with the program secretariat, it was only the

CIDSS program that was not given any budgetary cuts viz. other national programs.

Table 9. Comparative Fund Allocation Table

Region	1999	2000	2001
IX	18,785,258	21,457,752.68	21,636,000.00
X	14,254,235	16,796,000.00	16,591,591.00
XI	7,587,568	11,109,325.95	10,378,894.00
XII	14,154,235	16,480,259.00	19,481,476.00
Caraga	17,875,698	20,106,946.00	20,370,721.00
ARMM	21,251,235	25,372,883.50	26,933,669.00
Total	93,881,229.00	111,323,167.13	115,289,342.00

Source: MEDCo, 2001, DSWD Regional Reports

Other sources of funding, like the Aus-AID and the WMC, are not sustainable sources, given the Aus-AID-VGF's imminent termination and the relatively small coverage of the WMC counterpart. These, however, are potential models for replication.

2. Structural and Institutional Arrangements

a. Inter-agency Convergence

The CIDSS program has employed an effective mechanism of convergence of agencies with the participation of all sectors of the society. It is even imperative to note that the project has institutionalized the participation of non-government and people's organizations. Through the program's creation of multi-layered structures in national, regional, provincial, municipal and barangay levels which interplay with the loose organizations and individual beneficiaries in the community level, it has in an indirect way embedded the participatory approach of planning and development, which thus assures the sustainability of the project. Further, the participatory nature by which the structural arrangement employs has also somehow trained the beneficiaries to plan and implement projects by themselves, as one of the implementers puts it. The practice of training the beneficiaries through actual participation in the planning and implementation process is a clear-cut example of technology transfer, which is essential in project sustainability. In the final

analysis, after all, once the project commences, it is the beneficiaries who protract what has been started.

b. Integration in Regional Development Plans

In the Regional Development Plans for 2001 to 2004 of all the Regional Development Councils (RDCs) in Mindanao, the CIDSS program has been incorporated as a major strategic program in the Human Development Sector.

3. Favorable Policy Reforms

a. Executive Order 443

Unlike other special programs undertaken by the national government, the CIDSS program is unique, in a way, since it has already been institutionalized through Executive Order 443, Series of 1997. With an EO backing up the program, it assures of allocation in the national budget and, consequently, assured of sustainability. Finally, the DSWD has already incorporated the CIDSS in its regular program.

Moreover, since its inception, the CIDSS has expanded considerably and has recast its stipulated objectives from the original goals embodied in Department Order No. 54, Series of 1994, to the CIDSS' updated mandate directed by Executive Order No. 443, Series of 1997.

The CIDSS was proclaimed by then President Fidel V. Ramos as a National Policy of the government in Executive Order 443 "Providing for the Adoption of the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services as the National Delivery Mechanism for the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) Approach." Since then, the DSWD has implemented this program despite the subsequent changes in administration.

b. The KALAH I Program

The Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (KALAH I) Program is the latest comprehensive social program of the government to combat poverty. It was instituted recently by the Arroyo Administration. The CIDSS is being adopted under this overall program. In fact, the KALAH I is patterned after the CIDSS framework.

B. Adaptability of CIDSS Approach to the Mindanao Context

The Mindanao setting offers a broad range of development challenges that the CIDSS Program must not discount. Unique conditions like the Mindanao conflict, historical neglect, and cultural diversity, which are integral to the Mindanao situation, must be taken into consideration as these are contributory to poverty and underdevelopment in the island region.

Given the backdrop of Mindanao's complex situation, the CIDSS must be adaptable enough and, in fact, suited for the island region's unique circumstances, like cultural differences, political intervention, and the increased occurrence of security problems, crimes against person and property, internal refugees, and other risks associated with the armed conflict.

1. The Effect of Incidents of Armed Conflict on CIDSS Implementation

There is no data to show that the program was not implemented in barangays mainly because of incidents of armed conflict, although a criterion in selection of target barangays includes stability of peace and order conditions¹³.

Assuming, however, that the DSWD rigorously applied its criteria in selection of target barangays in Mindanao, it would then have failed to effectively administer the needed assistance to communities that needed it

¹³ Executive Order 443 Implementing Rules and Regulations

most. Furthermore, in the identified conflict areas in Mindanao, no barangay is effectively immune from armed encounters and skirmishes.

In fact, some barangays were documented to have experienced spates of armed disturbance during the course of CIDSS implementation (i.e. project implementation could not be conducted because all the barangay residents were in evacuation centers).

In the interviews with CIDSS implementors, all the respondents were unequivocal in saying that armed groups did not deliberately sabotage CIDSS projects. One main reason cited by the respondents was that the CIDSS at least partially addressed the cause of the armed conflict, specifically, the issue of lack of resources and basic needs.

Another reason forwarded by some respondents is the people-based characteristic of CIDSS projects. The residents allegedly have a sense of ownership of the projects being implemented and would willingly defend it from assailants. In some cases, the presence of AFP detachments in the vicinity of the CIDSS area was cited as a deterrent to incidents of armed encounters.

However, the perception of the majority of the respondents did say that peace and order conditions still constituted a problem for CIDSS implementation.

Generally, it can be said that despite the occurrence of armed conflict, the CIDSS was implemented, even in municipalities identified as conflict areas.

2. CIDSS Implementation in Muslim and Indigenous People Communities

All respondents said that initial acceptability was the main problem concerning CIDSS implementation in barangays with Muslim and Indigenous People residents. However, this phenomenon is not

necessarily exclusive to such communities as this was also documented in a number of barangays with Christian residents.

There was a documented case wherein the program had to withdraw from a Muslim community because PhP 675,000 intended for the purchase of fishing boats was not properly accounted. In fact, the amount was not used for its intended purpose. Though the incident happened in a Muslim-dominated area (and an MILF village, at that), the failure could be traced to improper implementation of the identified project and deficiency in adhering to the policies and procedures involved in disbursement of funds and monitoring of projects.

In areas with mixed communities, apart from the normal instances of differences among ethnic groups in terms of cultural practice, implementation of the CIDSS was largely unaffected by this factor.

Largely, cultural diversity has not made a negative impact on CIDSS implementation. In an interview with a CIDSS Technical Assistant, he attributed this to the project-based nature of the CIDSS. In the CIDSS, the basis of unity is the project, thus, making cultural differences a non-factor in determining the project's success.

VII. Conclusion

Based on the indicators cited in this paper, the following conclusions were drawn:

- A. CIDSS sustainability in Mindanao is assured with the integration of the program in the DSWD's mandate, as well as in its adoption under the KALAH I program, which is the latest overall government social program to combat poverty. With these developments, continued budgetary allocation for the CIDSS is guaranteed. Its inclusion as a major strategy in the 2001-2004 Regional Development Framework Plans of Mindanao RDCs ensures its continued implementation at the local level, at least until 2004.

- B. Despite the incidence of armed conflict and the circumstance of divergent ethnolinguistic groups, the CIDSS has proven itself flexible enough and with the necessary attributes to overcome such challenges. Nevertheless, some arrangements must be instituted for the CIDSS' more effective and extensive implementation in Mindanao, and in order to safeguard the lives of CIDSS program implementors.

The establishment of the CIDSS – Zone of Peace is a positive step towards making the CIDSS more responsive towards Mindanao's Peace and Order situation.

VIII. Recommendations

A. Review of EO 443

Given the nature of municipalities in Mindanao which need the CIDSS, stable peace and order conditions can't be a criterion for selection of target barangays. The unique situation in Mindanao warrants that the CIDSS must be implemented in barangays even with unstable peace and order conditions.

Instead, mechanisms must be conceptualized to ensure the unrestrained execution of CIDSS activities in barangays with unstable peace and order conditions. The Municipal Inter-Agency Committees must include the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) or the Philippine National Police (PNP) to develop mechanisms for the maintenance of security and safeguard the lives of CIDSS program implementors.

B. Conduct of a comprehensive evaluation of CIDSS implementation in Mindanao

In order to better assess the success of the CIDSS and its implementation in Mindanao, given the island's unique circumstances related to peace and order, the DSWD must conduct a comprehensive evaluation of CIDSS

implementation in Mindanao. The study must include as a parameter the existence of the Mindanao conflict.

In addition, the DSWD must come up with comprehensive guidelines for the CIDSS – Zone of Peace if it is to be a specialized component of the program to address the needs of conflict-affected areas in Mindanao.

C. Increasing CIDSS funding to cover more barangays in Mindanao

Budgetary constraints limit the CIDSS expansion to more barangays in Mindanao. Under the present set-up, approximately two (2) to three (3) barangays per municipality are being subjected to CIDSS implementation. The Aus-AID can be requested to prolong its assistance to the DSWD by extending its VGF program to hitherto CIDSS-untouched barangays. The Aus-AID-VGF can also be used as a model for replication in advocating to other donor agencies funding of the CIDSS in Mindanao, and in supporting the necessary structures for more extensive CIDSS implementation. Likewise, other existing Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs, like the Growth with Equity in Mindanao's Livelihood Enhancement and Peace (GEM-LEAP) Program, can be tapped for convergence to the CIDSS.

D. MEDCo to monitor CIDSS Implementation in Mindanao

In order to ensure CIDSS implementation on a Mindanao-wide level, island-wide agencies, like the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo) must coordinate with the DSWD through the Mindanao Task Force on Poverty Alleviation (MTFPA).

Likewise, the MEDCo can assist the DSWD in advocating to donor agencies to help finance the CIDSS in Mindanao, using the AusAID VGF as a model.

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