

MEASURING PROGRESS IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

November 2004 - Ongoing

This is an ongoing project initiated in November 2004 by ALTERPLAN and Canadian interns sponsored by Rooftops Canada/CIDA. The project involves research, survey data collection, and capacity building for the adaptation of the UN-Habitat development indicators in project planning and implementation of NGO-led shelter initiatives. More recently, the resources already developed were integrated in the MDG Target 11 Monitoring System Development project which constitutes a great move forward in integrating human development progress monitoring in the local governments programs. Earlier, participating project sites included Habitat for Humanity in Taguig NCR, Children International housing project in Quezon City NCR, and SAFRAGEMC Village in Agusan del Sur, Mindanao.

In November of 2004, ALTERPLAN intern from Rooftops Canada Patrick Klassen began work on the Measuring Progress in Human Development (MPHD) Project. This project involves the micro level adaptation of the United Nations Habitat Agenda based on the measurement indicators of the Istanbul +5 format. A set of indicators have been formulated to measure change in quality of life resulting from human development projects while maintaining the format designed to measure progress towards the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

The first phase of the project involved the development of a survey to measure the indicators and its successful pilot test in the Habitat for Humanity Medium Rise Building (MRB) project in Taguig, Metro Manila. The survey includes questions regarding income, connection to household services, and proximity to community facilities among many others.

In September of 2005, ALTERPLAN intern Jennifer Bloom initiated the second phase of the project – the survey's application to a larger sample at the Children International (CI) Housing Site in Novaliches, Metro Manila. The second phase had two main objectives related to the distribution of the survey: first, to work with the CI community as partners in every aspect of the surveying process; and second, to employ a gender segregated analysis of the data.

The first step in the project involved reviewing the survey for clarity and consistency in its interpretation. On November 9, 2005, ALTERPLAN staff Imee Biron and Jennifer Bloom tested the survey with two CI community volunteers. Volunteers were pleased to contribute to the project in the hopes that it could help other communities in future housing projects.

A training session was held for the community surveyors in mid November, 2005. A highly organized community association is in place at the CI site and community leaders were eager to volunteer to administer the survey. All three surveyors completed the survey themselves and offered suggestions for improvements. Because of this and the previous consultation with community members, several changes were made to the survey, making it easier to understand and more relevant to the lives of the CI community.

A simple, random sample of 30 houses was drawn for surveying from the site, representing almost 50% of the total number of homes. Surveying took place November 16 to 30, 2005 with every household in the sample completing the survey. Without doubt, this is due to the efforts of the community surveyors who are well known and trusted throughout the small housing site.

An informal review session with survey administrators took place at CI on November 28, 2005 and a formal review session took place at the Alterplan office in December. These sessions gathered suggestions from the community for further improvement of the survey, surveying methods, training session, and training materials.

Important positive findings from the survey include reports of improved community aesthetics by 100% of respondents and improved quality of life among 94% of respondents. Other positive results were seen in better tenure status, durability of housing, and solid waste disposal, all indicating an improved quality of life among the beneficiaries as a result of the housing project.

The CI housing site is a bustling, well cared for community and residents indicate that they are very happy with their new homes. However, the results of this project also highlight the importance of considering the effects of human development projects from a gendered perspective. Households headed by women may merit a second look in terms of equity of benefits to be derived from a housing project. This is an important lesson for future project planning and implementation.

As in its first phase, the indicators project has proven to be a valuable tool not only for measuring areas of success but also for identifying areas for further development and policy focus.

Take a look at the recently completed [MDG Target 11 Monitoring System Development project](#) to see how earlier work on this project has now a broader impact by being integrated in local governments' urban planning programs.