



PARTICIPATORY ENUMERATION AND STDM IMPLEMENTATION IN THE RURAL SETTING

The Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) is a pro-poor, gender responsive, and participatory land information system developed by Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), as facilitated by UN-Habitat, and other partners.

STDM has been developed to bridge the gap between formally-registered land and land that is not registered. It is a pro-poor, gender-responsive, participatory, and affordable land tool for representing a person-to-land relationship along the land continuum. The land tool has been developed in recognition of the need for legal pluralism and a broader recognition of person-to-land relationships.

STDM was already used in customary areas in some countries in Africa, but it was first introduced in the Philippines in the urban context. The tool was again used in the rural setting in the project, *“Improving Tenure Security of Smallholder Farmers in Select Areas in the Philippines,”* jointly implemented by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) and the Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. (XSF). The project is part of the bigger *Secure Access to Land and Resources (SALaR)* project of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) with support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic and Development Cooperation (BMZ).

The project was implemented in three indigenous people (IP) areas in Bukidnon, in the southern island of Mindanao. STDM was used in the project to complement the legal process of applying for Certificates of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT), an effort to enhance the tenurial security of the IPs.

After series of enhancement trainings on STDM techniques, encoding, and on integration to digital tablets, 20 volunteer enumerators from the partner communities, mostly women and youth, were deployed to the three areas covered by the project. Brimming with enthusiasm, the volunteer enumerators set about their task of gathering data from 2,500 households.

NAMAMAYUK enumerators: youths up to the challenge

Twelve enumerators were tasked to cover Barangay (village) Bacusanon, the NAMAMAYUK area, which includes the sitios of San Guinto, Bugwak, Balmar, and Migbadiang.

Box 1: Knowledge, skills and attitude required for enumerators

Trainees have been assessed by XSF and will be deemed eligible to be enumerators if they meet the following criteria:

On Knowledge

- ✓ Able to deliver clearly the goals and objectives of the project to her/his respondents
- ✓ Able to answer the questions clearly and confidently when someone asks her/him about the project output
- ✓ Assures the respondents safekeeping of the data collected with utmost confidentiality
- ✓ Understands the different practices of the target communities (culture sensitivity)

On Skills

- ✓ Able to complete the enumeration for three households per day
- ✓ Able to deliver high quality data consistently and accurately in household survey questionnaire and mapping
- ✓ Able to use the camera, global positioning system (GPS), and the tablet accurately and precisely
- ✓ Able to speak *Talaandig* and *Manobo* or *Bisaya* language

On Attitude

- ✓ Can carry out the basic etiquette prescribed for enumeration specially to the respondents
- ✓ Can handle both enumeration and land tenure mapping pressure with the time limitation
- ✓ Is open to objective criticism from the GLTN staff and would-be enumerators
- ✓ Has the initiative and can work independently with minimal supervision
- ✓ Has the immediate right decisions when he/she encounter difficulties in the field
- ✓ Shows leadership and professional approach to his/her would be co-enumerator
- ✓ Can demonstrate stewardship of the kits and gadgets issued to him/her

“We were excited on our first day because we were curious to discover what the community’s situation is, and what they need,” Melvin Pongautan, one youth enumerator for NAMAMAYUK, said.

Even with limited equipment, the challenging terrain, slips and slides, and difficulties in getting respondents to understand their questions,¹ as well as being able to receive useful answers, did not dampen the enumerators' morale.

As the area is located on the slopes of Mt. Kalatungan, most of the farms are on high elevations, and the enumerators were required to hike up steep slopes just to reach some of the farm lots. Once they are there, they have to be careful when conducting the survey or else they might fall off cliffs or ravines.

Aside from conducting the survey, the enumerators often became farmworkers themselves, as they had to clear the area of tall grasses just so they could see the boundaries. However, throughout the enumeration activity, the landowners started clearing off their farm lots for ease in mapping out the area. With this gesture, the enumerator's work became quite easy.

On the first day, Melvin and fellow enumerator, Relvin Roy Dumpasan, were only able to complete the survey of four farms, due to the challenging terrain. Their second day was better as they were able to survey 17 hectares.

In sitio Migbadiang, Melvin was able to complete the enumeration of 25 households and survey 43 hectares of farm lots.

He was particularly elated at how the community accepted them. At first, the people were apprehensive because no survey activity has ever been done in the area. But after the enumerators explained the purpose of the activity and the participative process that it involved, the people warmed up to the initiative. They even gladly went with the enumerators to their difficult-to-reach farm lots.

Of all the enumerators for NAMAMAYUK, Roy had the scariest experience. In one of their survey activities, he and Melvin had to separate to cover more ground. However, upon completing the survey of a six-hectare farm lot, the owner told Roy that he would be staying for the night in the farm as he also lives there.

¹ See Annex A (pages 55 to 61) for the household questionnaire used in the participatory enumeration.

Thus, Roy had to go down to the sitio (hamlet) proper alone. Unfamiliar with the area, he had to pick his way along the trail in the dark, guided only by the distant lights of the sitio proper below.

“The trail was hard to find because it is a forested area. I heard all sorts of noises and I was already thinking of various scary scenarios in my head. But I just focused on the distant lights of the sitio. I just told myself that this will end and I will be home,” Roy narrates.

When the trail became broad enough for a carabao cart to pass through, Roy knew he could relax. However, he knew that he still had to cross three streams to get to the main road where, hopefully, he would catch up with Melvin’s group.

Eventually, Roy caught up with Melvin’s group. But the drama did not end there. As he was approaching the group, he did not notice that there was a snake in his path. Luckily, one of the respondents saw the snake and killed it with his bolo.

Another challenge that enumerators shared is the difficulty of the respondents understanding the questions, as many of the community members are not able to attend school or have only reached elementary level.

“Many of the respondents had difficulty understanding the questions. The more you try to explain, the more they are confused.”

“Many of the respondents had difficulty understanding the questions. The more you try to explain, the more they are confused. But since we needed to get the information, we just have to be patient with them until they finally understand what we needed to get from them,” Shara Bueno, one of the enumerators, explained.

It is also not uncommon for a parent, especially the father, to not know the birthday of a child. In these instances, the enumerator has to wait for the mother to arrive or return when she is available.

The enumerators also expressed that the job could be tedious, even boring, as you have to ask the same questions over and over again to a number of people each day. But they just told themselves to think of the exercise as just talking to people, or just like making gossip.

Romerey “Rey” Suclatan, the son of Datu Elpidio “Imbay-ao” Suclatan, head of the tribe and Chairperson of NAMAMAYUK, shared the same issues and concerns. He was particularly shocked to note that most lot owners did not have Transfer Certificates of Title (TCT). However, he had one story with a positive twist.

“In one of my interviews, there were many people around listening to the conversation I was having with the respondent. After the session, they asked me how they could join the organization (NAMAMAYUK). We checked the ancestry and found that they were part of the tribe. The enumeration session became a recruitment activity as well,” Rey shared.

Another problem shared by the group is, due to the sloping terrain, many polygons cannot be closed because it would be too dangerous to go near the cliff or ravine. This issue they hope to remedy during the encoding stage.

The NAMAMAYUK group was able to enumerate and survey 250 households in 13 days. This is quite a feat considering the terrain, the level of education and understanding of the people, and the lack of equipment (one handheld GPS device was shared by two enumerators).

Portulin enumerators: compartmentalizing work to cover more ground

In the area of the Portulin Talaandig Tribal Association, Inc. (PTTA, Inc.), they had four enumerators and one surveyor. PTTA Inc. adopted a different approach of the enumerators just doing the interviews

and one surveyor doing all the surveys since it is a close-knit area and the surveyor, Datu Richard Dawatan, is a trained forest ranger.

The PTTA, Inc. enumerators adapted a team approach to their tasks. The four of them would go to an area together and conduct their enumeration activities. Like their counterparts in NAMAMAYUK, they also encountered difficulties in using the equipment. However, their biggest issue during the start of the work was the weather.

“When we got to the area on our first day, it was raining hard. Roads were slippery and dangerous, so we were only able to survey a few houses – those that were adjacent to each other,” Emily Samson, one of the enumerators, said.

Unlike their NAMAMAYUK colleagues, the PTTA, Inc. enumerators did not encounter difficulties with the respondents since they already knew them or were related to them somehow.

“It also helped a lot that Datu Johnny Guina, head of tribe and Chairperson of the PTTA, Inc., already talked to the people and explained what we were about to do,” Theresa dela Cruz, another enumerator, explained.

They also had issues taking family photos since most of the time the families were not all in their residence, and expressed apprehension that they will not complete the survey and enumeration of 250 households, since the number of households owning house lots or farm lots may not reach that number.

“We don’t know if we can complete 250 households because we only prioritized those who own land, either house lot or farm lot,” Merly Vinuya, another enumerator, shared.

They also expressed concern over security issues in the far-flung sitios of New Eden, Concepcion, and Utah, which are known “critical” areas due to the presence of New Peoples Army² regulars.

² The New People’s Army (NPA) is the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is dedicated to achieving power by means of revolutionary insurrection.



MILALITTRA, Inc. enumerators: women power at work

On the other side of Mt. Kalatungan, in the municipality of Talakag, lies the villages of Mirayon, Lapok, Lirongan, and *sitio* Tinaytayan in the village of San Miguel. Collectively under the association called Mirayon Lapok Lirongan Tinaytayan Talaandig Tribal Association, Inc. (MILALITTRA, Inc.), it is the biggest of the three project areas, and with only six enumerators supposed to cover 2,000 households, is the most challenging.

Like their PTTA, Inc. counterparts, the group also adopted a team approach. They went to their scheduled area as one. Their first stop was the farthest area, *sitio* Tinaytayan.

Shenine Deconlay, one of the enumerators, recounts how she was inches away from a snake as she surveyed one farm lot. *“The grass was so high that you cannot see anything by your feet. Luckily, the snake was not aggressive and just crawled away,”* she recalled.

In a nearby *sitio* Mabinay, the group encountered a very steep trail where again they saw a snake, a bigger one this time. The group ran away from the snake and was not able to complete the survey.

Shenine shared that aside from the challenging terrain, they did not encounter any difficulty with the respondents because they know each other.

For Leizel Jane Pacana, another of the MILALITTRA, Inc. enumerators, the experience has had more good than bad times. They were happy with the way they were received during their survey of four *sitios* in Lirongan village.

“We did not have a hard time in Lirongan because the people were very cooperative. They showed the way to their farms, admonished family members not to leave since we still had to take their photo,” Liezel shared.

Although there were a few who did not want to be surveyed since they already have titles to their lands, there were more who were not on the list who were willing to be enumerated and surveyed.

For team leader Jonamie Lupiahan, the whole exercise was a test of patience. She laments that in some areas, there was not enough groundwork done to orient the people about the project, resulting to hesitation and doubt among the community members.

“There were instances when we were accused of being fake surveyors, that we would take their land from them,” she said.

“People in some areas distrust foreigners. They would say that since the project is funded by foreigners, then it is not for the good of the lumads (natives),” she added.

As a result, the group did not meet their target of 500 households in the area as they were only able to complete 300.

This is in stark contrast to the case of Lirongan village, where Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. (XSF) was able to conduct an orientation before the enumerators even set foot in the area. Thus, the project was very much welcome and the group could no longer accommodate the number of additional households who wanted to be surveyed.



The group even encountered a case of intra-family conflict over land. In this case, the eldest invited them to survey their farmland. When they got to the property, his siblings wanted the survey to be done in parcels, which could not be done because the land has not been subdivided yet. The siblings raised their voices at each other and the group just left.

“They thought we could do a subdivision survey, and have their land subdivided without spending money (gusto makalibre),” Jonamie revealed.

A schoolteacher by training, Jonamie is thankful for the project for teaching her patience, which she can put to good use when she starts teaching.

For Perjoy Abunda, another enumerator, the work was fulfilling even though it was filled with a series of unfortunate events.

There was a time that she had to relieve herself in the cemetery because the subject did not want to be interviewed, and did not let her into the house.

On a different occasion, she was stung by bees, drenched in rain, and forced to eat lunch under the gaze of a line of respondents patiently waiting for their turn to be enumerated.

“Sometimes we cannot even take a break for lunch because of the number of people we are scheduled to interview,” she shared.

At times they even have to work on Sundays because that is the day when the family is complete (for the taking of photograph).

All in all, despite the difficulties, the group is one in saying that the experience made them know and understand their co-villagers better. ■