

# Turning enumerators into storytellers: The SALaR experience

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The Secure Access to Land and Resources (SALaR) project engaged the active participation of the youth in its activities, most notably as data-gatherers on land information using participatory enumeration and the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM).

While the project offered members of the partner communities the opportunity to become enumerators, regardless of gender and age, most of those who answered the call belong to the 15 to 24 age group. In most circumstances,

community members applied for the position. Others were willfully engaged by their respective *sitio* or community leaders and IP organizations through their Elders to represent the groups.

Most of the local youth enumerators were either in-between jobs, on break from school, or just out for the experience. Some are young mothers who saw the opportunity to be able to help their families economically.

The project primarily counted on literate individuals. Regardless of education, background, or experience, one can be an enumerator inasmuch as s/he is driven, willing to be trained, and is

inclined to share her/his determination and commitment.

As part of the initiative, the local enumerators completed a three-day training-workshop on basic mapping and GIS survey; encoding and data analysis; STDM and handheld devices; and narrative writing prior to field deployment. Coaching and mentoring played an integral part throughout the duration of the project. As such,

### **What does it take to be an enumerator?**

An enumerator's typical workday is not always an easy victory – every workday is different. Some days are ordinary, while other days would take them to toil harder.

*“Wala’y tao ang mga balay unya kapoy pa gyud kaayo kay init. Naa pu’y mga panahon nga galisod mi og enumerate ug survey kay sayo pa kaayo, ga-ulan na.”* (We would walk in scorching hot weather only to find empty houses. Sometimes, heavy rain falls early in the morning that makes it more difficult for us to conduct surveys.) - Ann-Ann Tandejon, 18 years old

An enumerator would require patience to deal with cultural differences; perseverance to walk for long periods of time on steep slopes and vast land areas; flexibility to stay over distant communities for several days; and commitment to the team so as to embrace collaboration especially with the shared vision in achieving a land tenure secured community.

*“Mas naingganyo sa pagpadayon isip usa ka enumerator kay nakita nako og unsa ka importante ang proyekto sa mga tao, labi na sa mga farmers ug sa mga kabatan-onan. Base sa mga training nga akong naapilan ug mga katigulangan nga akong naka-istorya, nakita nako ug unsa jud ka importante ang papel sa proyekto nga akong giapilan para sa kaseguruhan sa mga luna.”* (I became more engaged as an enumerator realizing how important the project is for the people, especially for the farmers and the youth. With the training courses provided, and for having been able to converse with the elders, I learned about the indispensable role we play in attaining a secured land tenure.) – Jerlyn Pedieras, 18 years old

*“Isip usa ka enumerator, dako akong pasalamat niining proyekto tungod kay gihatagan ug bili ang mga kabatan-onan sa nagkain-lain nga sityo nga mo apil niining kalihukan ilabi na alang kini sa kaayuhan sa mga katawhan kung diin adunay nagkalain-laing problema diha sa ilang yutang gikuptan. Matod pa, aduna’y nahitabong gubot ug wala pagtingganay tungod sa yuta. Tungod niini, ako mapasagarbuhon nga isip usa ka batan-on, nakatabang ko kanila.”* (I am filled with gratitude for this project, especially for providing such opportunity for the youth who come from different *sitios* or villages to take part in this initiative, aiming to address various land tenure issues and challenges. There have had been conflicting claims over land and being able to contribute in resolving such adversities gives me a strong sense of fulfillment.) – Fatima Redido, 26 years old

the project team established weekly monitoring and field evaluation to provide guidance to the enumerators as well as to address emerging problems accordingly.

On the average, each enumerator was able to cover 50 households in a week depending on the residents' availability, number of lots owned per household, land slopes and distances, and weather condition. In such short period of time, the enumerators were remarkably able to collectively enumerate a total of 1,572 households.

The idea for engaging the youth to write about the project using a “feature story” or anecdotal point of view actually started during the first phase. During the interviews for the publication *“Stories of Hope from Mt. Kalatungan: The Manobo and Talaandig experience in defending and conserving their ancestral lands,”* the interviewers noted that the youth of the communities had a lot of stories to tell — not only about their experiences in the field, but also their realizations and insights into their community's tenurial situation.

During the course of the enumeration, the young people most notably became more aware of land issues, in particular tenure security, ownership concerns, competing land claims, land use, and even conflicting laws and policies. They began to realize that what they thought was just a consequence of history

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was in fact brought about by various injustices levied upon their community throughout the years.

Thus, ANGOC and XSF decided that the youth will be the ones who will share their stories in the publication of case studies for the second phase of the project.

A virtual training on spotting the story and basic writing skills was conducted for the youth enumerators. After which, they were let loose and required to submit one story each. Fifteen enumerators submitted their work, which were fine-tuned by the designated editor, ANGOC, and XSF.

The stories in this book may be simply written, but are compelling in their rawness and honesty. It is hoped that this work will inspire more rural and indigenous youth to find their stories, because only in actively looking for stories in everyday occurrences can enlightened future thinkers be produced. And enlightenment is one of the tools against poverty. ■