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The Experience of the Province of La Union**

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Institutionalizing a Responsive Socio-Economic Profile: The Experience of the Province of La Union

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ABSTRACT

Planning is a very crucial requisite to any development process. However, before any planning activity could ever start, adequate, reliable and timely statistics/data should be made available for the planner's consumption. At the Provincial Government of La Union, development planning is heavily dependent on its Socio-Economic Profile (SEP), which outlines the socio-economic, demographic, physical, cultural, political and institutional characteristics of the locality. The SEP is one of the major outputs of the Office of the Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator (OPPDC).

The objective of this paper is to document the evolution of the SEP – from its humble beginnings in the '70s into what it is now. The documentation process also highlighted the problems encountered in the preparation of the SEP, which served as learning points in its enhancement.

The SEP, which was originally conceived as a hard copy for data users, became a "source" of other initiatives. It led to the production of the La Union in Figures, a handy publication, and Fast Facts, which could be accessed through the internet. Inspired by the impact of the SEP, which are more intangible as they come in terms of responsive plans for service delivery, the OPPDC is continuously improving the SEP.

I. RATIONALE

The passage of Republic Act 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, devolved powers and responsibilities from the national government to the Local Government Units (LGUs). Devolution has far-reaching implications on the LGUs' mandate to undertake development planning aimed towards self-reliance and effective local governance. Local development planning is indeed crucial to the development of LGUs. It is, therefore, essential that local officials and planners must recognize the value of information that is required in the formulation of local development plans. Statistics are invaluable inputs that enable LGUs to come up with sound and relevant long, medium and short-term plans.

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Executive Order No. 121 recognizes the need to maintain a decentralized statistical system characterized by independence, objectivity and integrity to make it more responsive to the requirements of national development. It also recognizes the need for a stronger mechanism to coordinate the decentralized government statistical services in order to promote the orderly development of a system capable of providing timely, accurate and useful data for the government and the public, especially for planning and decision-making.

With these, the Province of La Union, through the Office of the Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator (OPPDC), strived to respond to the emerging thrusts of the government. It continuously kept on improving its Socio-Economic Profile (SEP) from its crude beginnings into what it is now. The improvement of the SEP did not command any additional human, financial resources and even technical assistance. The SEP now came about as a result of the demand of data users and the commitment of the OPPDC to respond to the users' call. And, of course, to showcase the province of La Union.

II. SCOPE OF THE SEP

The SEP features the Province of La Union in figures. It is a rich source of information useful for development planning, program and project formulation, investment promotion and for general research purposes.

It outlines the statistical indicators for the Province of La Union and its municipalities and provides a general background of the Province. It also features major multi-sectoral data including MACRO; Environment and Natural Resources; Agriculture and Agrarian Reform; Education and Manpower Development; Health, Nutrition and Population Management; Social Welfare, Community Development and Housing; Infrastructure and Utilities; Trade, Industry and Tourism; Development Administration and Finance. These are presented in text, tables, graphs, charts and/or maps.

The major data items in the SEP and the possible sources are indicated as follows:

I. GENERAL

1. Brief History	PPDO
2. Geography	PPDO/DENR
3. Political Subdivisions	PPDO
4. Languages/Dialects by Municipality/City	NSO
5. Religious Sects by Municipality/City	NSO
6. Ethnic Groups by Municipality/City	NCIP/NSO
7. Citizenship	NSO
8. Marital Status by Municipality/City	NSO

II. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Population Characteristics	NSO
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1. Population	
2. Population Growth Trends	
3. Population Density (per sq.km.)	
4. Urban Rural Distribution by Municipality/City	
5. Sex and Age Structure	
6. Number of Households by Municipality/City	
7. Education and Literacy	DepEd
 B. Labor Force and Income	 NSO/DOLE
1. Labor Force	
2. Labor Force Participation Rate by Sex	
3. Employment Rate by Sex	
4. Unemployment Rate by Sex	
5. Underemployment Rate	
6. Employment Share Industry	
7. Employed Persons by Type of Industry	
8. Consumer Price Index	NSO
9. Inflation Rates	
10. Purchasing Power of Peso (PPP)	
11. Poverty Incidence	NSCB
12. Average Family Income	NSO
13. Distribution of Family Expenditures	NSO
 III. PHYSICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES	
 A. Topography and Climate	
1. Topography	DENR
2. Climate	PAGASA
 B. Land Area	 DENR
1. Land Use Distribution	
2. Status of land use (general)	
3. Status of land area classification	
4. Soil	
 C. Forestry	 DENR
1. Forestry Exploitation	
2. Reforestation Projects	
 D. Mineral Resources	 DENR/Prov.
1. Non-metallic Minerals	Treas. Office
 E. Fishery and Aquatic Resources	 Prov. Agri.
1. Fishpond by Municipality/City	

2. Fish Landed by Source, Kind and Point of Landing
3. Number of Fishermen by Municipality/City

IV. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- | | |
|---|--|
| A. Local Government Finance | Prov'l Budget/
Treas/Acctg. |
| 1. Revenue | |
| 2. Expenditures | |
|
B. Local Financial Institutions |
Local
Financial
Institutions |
| 1. Income Class and Revenue Tax Collection | |
| 2. Total Assessed Valuation of Real Property by
Municipality/City | Prov.
Assessor |
| 3. Efficiency of Real Property Tax Collection by
Municipality/City | |
| 4. Internal Revenue Collection by Municipality/City | BIR |
| 5. Number of Rural Banks | BSP |
| 6. Number of Commercial Banks | |
| 7. Number of Thrift Institutions | |
| 8. Specialized Government Banks | |
| 9. Local Insurance Agencies/Branches | |
| 10. Pawnshops by Municipality/City | |
| 11. Lending Institutions by Municipality/City | |

V. SOCIO ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| A. Agriculture | Prov. Agri. |
| 1. Palay Area and Production by Municipality/City | |
| 2. Rice Area and Consumption by Municipality/City | |
| 3. Number of Grain Farmers by Municipality/City | |
| 4. Fruit Trees Area and Production by Municipality/City | |
| 5. Number of Fruit Tree Farmers by Municipality/City | |
| 6. Leafy Vegetable Area and Production by
Municipality/City | |
| 7. Number of Leafy Vegetable Farmers by
Municipality/City | |
| 8. Fruit Vegetable Area and Production by
Municipality/city | |
| 9. Number of Fruit Vegetable Farmers by
Municipality/City | |
| 10. Legumes Area and Production by Municipality/City | |
| 11. Green Corn Area and Production by Municipality/City | |
| 12. Root Crops Area and Production by Municipality/City | |
| 13. Number of Root Crop Farmers by Municipality/City | |
| 14. Commercial Crop Area and Production by
Municipality/City | |

15. Bearing and non bearing Coconut Tree Production By municipality/City	PCA
16. Number of Coconut Farmers by Municipality/City	
17. Livestock and Poultry by Municipality/City	Prov. Veterinarian
18. Total Area and Number of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries by Sex by Municipality/City	
19. Land Acquisition and Distribution by Land Type by Municipality/City	DAR
 B. Manufacturing	 NSO/DTI
1. Establishments by Industry Classification by Municipality/City	
2. Number of Establishments by Municipality/City	
3. Existing and Potential Industries by Municipality/City	
 C. Commerce	 NSO/DTI
1. Number of Commercial Establishments by Municipality/City	
 D. Construction	 NSO
1. Number, Total Cost and Total Floor Area By Type of Construction by Municipality/City	
 E. Infrastructure and Utilities	
 E.1 Transportation	
1. Land Transportation	Bus Companies, LTO, DPWH, Engr's Office
2. Air Transportation	BCDA/John Hay
3. Sea Transportation	BCDA/John Hay
 E.2 Waterworks and Sewerage Facilities	
1. Sources of Water Supply by Municipality/City	DPWH- District,
2. Number of Water Districts	Water Districts
3. Population Served and Water Consumption	
4. Rate of Water Service	
5. Sales of Water (in cubic meter)	
6. Sales of Water in Pesos	

7. Price of Water (per cubic meter)	
8. Consumption by Sector/Customer Type	
9. Household with Access to Safe Water Supply by Municipality/City	Health Office
10. Irrigation Systems/Dams and Dikes	NIA/Masalip & Amburayan
 E.3 Power	 Elec. Co.
1. Power Consumption by User of Electric Power	
2. Power Distribution	
 E.4 Communication	
1. Number of Location of Wireless Systems	NTC
2. Mail Service	PPC
3. Telephone Systems	PLDT, DIGITEL, NorTelco
4. Publications	Publishing Co.
 E.5 Other Utilities and Facilities	
1. Machineries and Equipment	NFA,
2. Store and Warehousing Facilities	Prov. Agri Agri warehouses
3. Garbage and Waste Disposal Systems	LGUs
4. Other Facilities	LGUs
 F. Social Services	
1. Formal Education	DepEd/CHED
2. Non-Formal Education	DepEd/ TESDA
 F.2 Housing	
1. Number and Occupancy of Dwelling Units	NSO
2. Economic and Open Market Housing	LGUs
3. Squatter Problem	LGUs
4. Resettlement Projects	PPDO
 F.3 Vital, Health, Nutrition and Population	
1. Vital Statistics	PHO/NSO

2. Health Facilities	PHO
3. Distribution of Health Units by Municipality/City	PHO
4. Bed Population Ratio	PHO
5. Health Statistics	PHO/NSO
6. Nutrition	PHO/DepEd
7. Family Planning	PHO/ POPCOM
 F.4 Recreation	 DOT
1. Sports Facilities	
2. Other Recreational Facilities by Municipality/City	
3. Convention Facilities	
4. Shopping Centers	
 F.5 Social Welfare	 DSWD/ PSWDO
1. Social Services Offered	
2. Disabled Persons by Sex	
3. Children in Specially Difficult Circumstances	
4. Number of Children Served Under the Placement and Protective Services	
5. Clients Served Under the Center-Based Programme Services	
6. Women in Specially Difficult Circumstances served by Type of Program	
7. Number of Disadvantaged Women Reported by Type of Case	DSWD/PNP
 G. Other Services	
1. Police Services	PNP
2. Fire Protection	BFP
3. Private Security Agencies and Detective Services	PNP
 G.2 Professional and Personal Services	 LGUs
1. Personal Services	
 H. Tourism	 DOT
1. Tourism Attraction	
2. Tourism Accommodations	
3. Tourist Arrivals by Major Tourist Areas	
4. Annual Fiestas	PPDO/LGUs

VI. INVESTMENT POTENTIALS

1. Investment Generated	DTI
2. Exports Generated by Sector	DTI
3. Investible Areas	DTI

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY AND RELATED INSTITUTIONS

A. Local Development Management	HRMO/PPDO
1. Organization and Management	
2. Development and Planning Coordination and Research and Development	PPDO
3. Election Data by Municipality/City	COMELEC
C. Cooperative Organizations	Prov. Agri/ LGUs
1. Number and Type by Municipality/City	
E. Other Social Organization (Jaycees, Lions etc.)	NGOs/Sang. Panlalawigan
1. Number and Membership	

III. THE MAKING OF THE SEP

Prior to the year 1980, the Provincial Government had no existing SEP published in a form designed to facilitate data usage. Information contained therein was very limited so that data users had a very difficult time gathering data for the province. A researcher then had to go from one municipality to another, or from agency to agency to collect the desired information. The SEP failed to be the “one-stop-shop” source of information since its preparation and updating was the least of the LGU’s priorities then.

Under the administration of Governor Tomas M. Asprer in 1980, the maiden SEP was published under the Provincial Development Assistance Project (PDAP). The SEP was conceived to provide a comprehensive and reliable database for development planners, decision makers, researchers, private investors, non-government organizations (NGOs), government agencies and the general public. This, however, was not regularly updated and there was no standard format adopted in terms of contents and data disaggregation. So, data users had no basis in updating their plans and programs to reflect the current social, economic and physical developments and trends in the province.

At present, the Office of the Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator (OPPDC), under the administration of GOVERNOR VICTOR F. ORTEGA, has accorded priority in formulating and updating the SEP in recognition of the value of data and information in any development process. It has adopted a standard format prescribed by the Department of the Interior and

Local Government (DILG). The use of a standard format facilitated the updating of the SEP and provided a more comprehensive frame of reference for the data requirements.

Likewise, a statistical structure, the Provincial Statistical Coordination Committee (PrSCC), was organized through the Regional Statistical Coordination Committee to coordinate the statistical activities at the provincial level. Members of the PrSCC served as focal persons in gathering data from their respective agencies and units, which are submitted annually to the PPDO for the SEP. The commitment and efforts of the members of the PrSCC in providing the required data for the SEP is an indication of their increasing awareness of the value and importance of data.

Thus, the present SEP, which is more comprehensive, up-to-date and reliable, is a product of the commitment of the OPPDC, linkages/networking and technology. Compared to the preparation of the SEP in the 1980s and early 1990s, the processes involved and the output are thus far better.

IV. CHALLENGES

Before the present SEP was printed, the usual problems encountered were related to gathering of information. Some agencies were not responsive to the requests of the OPPDC for data. This resulted to a SEP which was very limited in scope containing minimal information. Information for the various sectors required was not sufficient to provide the whole picture of the province. Gathering information from various sources and from various places became a tedious and sometimes frustrating process and even an expensive exercise.

With the standard format prescribed by the DILG and the mechanism instituted through the members of the PrSCC, data gathering was made more systematic. It only entailed a little follow-up from the concerned agencies and units to get the required information. Research and information gathering about the province became almost effortless. The SEP has then become what it was envisioned to be, a “one-stop shop” of information about the province.

Problems on computations, compiling, recording and printing of information was encountered in the early stages in the 1980s when computers were more of a science fiction. Everything then was done manually with the use of crude technology like typewriters, adding machines, calculators and the like. It took time to do projections and consolidation of figures. This manual technology was prone to large errors which largely affected the accuracy and reliability of information.

In the advent of computerization in the 1990s, information gathering and consolidation was made easier for the computer did all the functions of the abovementioned (crude) machines with greater speed and accuracy. This enabled the OPPDC to create a more comprehensive SEP, which was close to impossible during the 1980s. The information gathered could be immediately encoded and disseminated by just one person. Preparation of tables, graphs and

charts, and calculations with the aid of formulas programmed on the computer to derive indicators and explain outputs could be done in a snap of a finger.

V. IMPACT OF THE INITIATIVE

A key impact of the initiative would mostly be felt by the data users who are the development planners, decision-makers, private investors, NGOs and researchers who need accurate, up-to-date and relevant information about the province and its municipalities. Data is made more accessible to them, thereby facilitating the preparation of their outputs with ease and accuracy.

The benefits go beyond the reduced transaction time and cost incurred by data users in their research activities. It also goes beyond the savings in terms of services by the personnel of the OPPDC who serve their clients. The most important benefits with the aid of the SEP are, however, intangible:

- development planners at the local level formulate better plans and programs aimed at improving the quality of life of the people, who are the ultimate beneficiaries in any development process;
- with better plans and programs, the government budget is rationalized and prioritized according to the people's needs, thus, ensuring efficient use of resources;
- better implementation of plans and programs which made the Province of La Union a recipient of 21 provincial/regional and national awards on Accounting, Health, Nutrition, Environment (Clean and Green), Agriculture and Governance during the last three years.
- local chief executives become better informed of the situation obtaining in their areas and become more responsive to emerging concerns;
- investors appreciate the benefits of investing with a showcase of information about the province;
- ordinary researchers like students preparing feasibility studies or theses/dissertations find the SEP informative and they are prompted to prepare better intervention programs and even infrastructure projects for the province;
- the preparation of the SEP has become an avenue for closer inter-agency and intra-government unit interaction and linkages. It also paved the way for the agencies/units concerned to organize their own data so that these are readily available.

VI. RELATED PUBLICATIONS AND PLANS

Inspired by the comprehensiveness of the SEP, the OPPDC published related materials – La Union in Figures and Fast Facts. The former publication is the more handy version of the SEP, which could be used by the Local Chief Executive in showcasing the potential of the province, particularly in investment and tourism, while the latter could be accessed through the internet.

Adopting current technologies, the SEP will continuously be improved in terms of the following:

- Socio Economic Profile will soon be available in Compact Disc (CD), for convenience and easier access. The CD would highlight systemized information dissemination with multi media features such as pictures, videos, sounds, graph, tables and diagrams.
- The internet will be used to develop linkages. The OPPDC, the different municipalities, provincial offices and government agencies, would conveniently be able to access, exchange and gather information from the SEP. A website for the SEP is being developed and will soon be accessible to the public.

With the abovementioned projects, the OPPDC would be able to provide an enhanced, accurate and reliable information, virtual or otherwise, to concerned data users at both public and private sectors.

Because of the effectiveness and efficiency of the SEP, other provinces may likewise adopt the method of information gathering and dissemination and may even enhance the processes. The SEP of the Province of La Union would then be a model for creating a SEP.