The World Bank

Environment and Social Development Unit

East Asia and Pacific Region
Filipino Report Card on Pro-Poor Services

SUMMARY

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The World Bank
The Filipino Report Card Team

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Luisa Sambeli Española provided excellent production support. Brian James J. Lu designed this summary edition. Most photographs came from the collection of Tilak Hettige.

A Note to the Reader

This booklet contains the summary of the Filipino Report Card. It also includes the table of contents for the full-length report, which is available at the Public Information Center of the World Bank Office, Manila. For more information on the Filipino Report Card, please visit the websites at www.worldbank.org/participation or www.worldbank.org.ph.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions are those of the report team and should not be attributed to the World Bank, its Board of Directors, or any of its member countries.
I believe in listening to and learning from those whom I serve. I will ensure that my organization creates and respects genuine mechanisms for regular feedback from our citizen-customers, and subsequently uses this feedback to render better service to them.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

INTRODUCTION

What is the Report Card?

The Report Card is a way for citizens to provide systematic feedback to public agencies about their performance. It elicits information about users’ awareness of, access to, use of, and satisfaction with public services. It is an important follow-up to the World Bank’s Philippines 2000 Poverty Assessment. It complements the expert analyses and findings in the Poverty Assessment with a “bottom-up” assessment of pro-poor services in five key sectors: health care, elementary education, water supply, housing, and subsidized rice distribution.

The Report Card identifies the key constraints that Filipinos face in accessing public services, their appraisals of the quality and adequacy of public services, and the treatment they receive from service providers, especially government officials. It offers several recommendations on sector policies, strategies, and programs to address these constraints and improve service delivery, especially to the underserved and the poor.

The Report Card is based on a national client satisfaction survey undertaken by the World Bank in collaboration with the Social Weather Stations (SWS), a premier survey organization in the Philippines that is independent, nonpartisan, and credible. The survey was carried out between March 26 and April 17, 2000. It covered 1,200 households, distributed nationwide in four broad regions: the National Capital Region (NCR), Luzon excluding the NCR, the Visayas, and Mindanao. In keeping with global best practice, client satisfaction with public services in the Philippines was measured by comparing it with satisfaction with services provided by the private sector.

Why Prepare a Report Card?

There is a growing concern in the Philippines about the performance and accountability of public agencies that deliver services, especially to the poor. Most accountability mechanisms for public agencies focus on inputs (e.g., number of personnel, facilities, and expenditures). They occasionally report on broad outcome indicators such as literacy and mortality rates. Beyond this arithmetic, little is known about the quality of services delivered by the State. It is thus difficult to identify specific areas where these services could be improved.

Service providers and experts have undertaken a number of evaluations of pro-poor programs in the Philippines that often identify program-specific problems. The studies explore issues that do not, however, connect or cut across the various sectors. Moreover, very few of the evaluations are done from the perspective of the clients. The Report Card initiative was launched so that citizens could rate pro-poor public services, based on their experience as recipients. The Report Card also helps to pull together the myriad individual problems facing the various programs into common sectoral issues. It draws attention to the worst problems and to good practices in the five selected sectors. By ranking and quantifying issues, it brings into the limelight the concerns that trou-
ble Filipinos most.⁹

To be effective, traditional public accountability systems need to be strengthened through innovative approaches that involve public participation. Those at the receiving end -- Filipinos who use the services -- are well placed to provide systematic feedback on government actions intended to benefit them. Most recipients cannot comment on complex technical matters. But they are eminently qualified experts on whether the public services meet their needs and expectations. They can say with authority whether specific aspects are satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and whether the concerned agencies are responsive, reliable, or accountable.

The Report Card is a timely initiative: it should help demonstrate the renewed commitment of Filipinos to a democratic, transparent, and accountable State¹⁰ responsive to the needs of the people, especially the poor. This commitment was reiterated by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who required her Cabinet members to sign a pledge to be accountable to eleven service standards. The pledge includes responsiveness to client feedback.¹⁰

This shift to thinking about Filipinos as clients rather than beneficiaries requires that their "voices" count in the design, delivery, and assessment of public services. Private firms operating in a competitive environment make use of this approach. They utilize the data from client surveys to redesign their products to better meet customer needs and enhance customer loyalty. User feedback is especially important for agencies providing government services as they often operate as monopolies, i.e., with no competition. In this situation, people, especially poor people, may have few viable and affordable alternatives.¹² Citizen feedback is a much-needed corrective in this setting. It can be used by reform-minded champions in the Government as a trigger for public pressure to improve performance.

What is in the Report Card?

The Report Card presents people’s perspectives on pro-poor services. These are not always captured in traditional evaluations by experts and in the routine reports of agencies providing the services.¹³ The client assessments bring forth valuable insights on pro-poor services from different service providers (e.g., government, the private sector, and other sources). They probe into such critical dimensions as awareness, availability, and affordability. These dimensions of service are presented from the perspectives of different population groups.

They are differentiated by geographic region, rural and urban residence, level of household expenditure, and by gender. These should be key inputs in the design and improvement of effective service delivery programs. They should be seen as complementing the findings of expert evaluations and agency reports. The insights derived from the Report Card can shed light on the degree to which pro-poor services are reaching the target groups, the extent of leakages, and the factors that contribute to such misdirection of resources and services. They help identify issues that constrain the poor from accessing and using the services, like physical availability, quality, and cost. They uncover possible ways to rectify the situation. The latter include suggestions by citizens about the types of programs that might provide better service delivery.¹⁴ Further, the Report Card results help test from the clients’ standpoint some of the policy conclusions reached in other analytical studies.¹⁵ Thus, it presents a "bottom-up" perspective on the analytical work of the World Bank and others.

How Did the Report Card Identify the Poor?

The primary measure of poverty in the Report Card is based on household expenditures.¹⁶
SUMMARY

Households with expenditures in the bottom 30% are classified as poor. Those with expenditures in the middle 30% are considered middle-income. Those with expenditures in the top 40% are regarded as the rich. The incidence of expenditure poverty in the Philippines is about 30% according to official estimates, so households with expenditures falling in the bottom 30% should cover virtually all, if not all, households that are below the official poverty line.

How Participatory is the Report Card?

The Report Card began with consultations with key stakeholder groups in government, the private sector, civil society, and academe. Their inputs were actively solicited and incorporated in the design of the survey questionnaire. After the fieldwork was completed, preliminary data tables were prepared. The initial findings drawing upon the tables were presented to stakeholder representatives in regional workshops in June 2000. The participants helped validate the preliminary results and suggested areas for additional tabulations and further analysis. They identified a number of nuances that were helpful in explaining the perceived discrepancies between the Report Card results and sector level data.

Detailed tabulations, analyses, and interpretation of the survey responses took place during the succeeding six months. World Bank sector specialists and national experts prepared the write-ups on the five sectors, utilizing the final data tables. They married Report Card findings with other sector-level data to present a comprehensive picture of the situation in the sectors. The detailed data tables and draft sector write-ups were shared with the Government through the National Economic and Development Authority. This encouraged independent scrutiny and validation of the analysis by the Government.

Initiatives and actions are already underway to address some of the constraints identified by the Report Card respondents. Report Card recommendations are already incorporated in the new Medium Term Development Plan and revised poverty strategy of the Government. Many of them were mentioned in the President’s 2001 State of the Nation Address. The findings are also being used by the World Bank as key inputs into the design of a new country strategy and future lending operations.

The draft Report Card was finalized based on feedback from different stakeholders. The next step is to stimulate informed dialogue and follow-up actions by development partners. Dissemination efforts will focus on three target audiences: the service providers, the Congress, and the general public. Different versions of the Report Card will be produced and disseminated to cater to the needs of various target audiences. The follow-up dissemination actions include:

- Individual consultations with concerned public agencies on the Report Card results;
- Consultations between public agencies on common citizen concerns that cut across sectors;
- Consultations between citizens and service providers (public, private, and civil society organizations);
- Targeted dissemination to the legislative branch of the Government;
- Dissemination of the main findings of the Report Card through the media and regional stakeholder workshops; and
- Distribution of the Report Card data and findings on user-friendly compact discs.
SUMMARY FINDINGS

The Filipino Report Card captures citizen assessments of public service provision in five key sectors: health care, elementary education, water supply, housing, subsidized rice distribution, and the Lingap para sa Mahihirap (or Caring for the Poor) Program. The assessments and key implications for sector findings are summarized below.

Health Care

The health facilities assessed in the Report Card included barangay (village) health stations, rural health units/urban health centers, government hospitals, private clinics/hospitals, nonprofit clinics/hospitals, and traditional healers.

The nonpoor use health facilities more than the poor. More than three fourths of the respondents have utilized a health facility in the 12 months preceding the survey. Urban residents visit the facilities more than rural residents. A larger proportion of the better-off visit health facilities, compared to the poor, although poor Filipinos are more likely to suffer from ill health. Those who did not go to health facilities gave absence of illness, self-medication, and the high cost of medical care as reasons.

Public facilities are low in cost but inferior in quality. Publicly provided health services are used mainly by those who cannot afford the widely preferred private services. Compared to government facilities, clients rank private facilities superior in all quality aspects (care, facilities, personnel, medicines, and convenience). The only advantages of government facilities over private facilities are their low cost (of treatment, medicines, and supplies), and flexibility of payment (Figure 1).

Primary facilities are frequently bypassed. Government primary health facilities (barangay health stations and rural health units/urban health centers) appropriately provide preventive health services and treatment for minor illnesses/accidents. However, a sizable number of Filipinos bypass them, even when they are highly accessible, in favor of government hospitals and private clinics/hospitals (Figure 2). Thus, government hospitals end up providing the same services as primary facili-
facilities do so because they are dissatisfied with their quality. In fact, satisfaction is lowest for frontline barangay health stations and grassroots rural health centers. Diagnosis is poor, necessitating repeat visits. Medicines and supplies are inferior and often unavailable. Staff members are often absent, especially in rural areas, and are perceived to lack medical and people skills. Waiting time is long, schedules are very inconvenient, and facilities are rundown.

**Primary facilities are used mostly by the poor.** Private clinics/hospitals are more likely to be visited in Metro Manila and in other urban areas, and by the nonpoor. On the other hand, residents of Mindanao and rural areas, and the poor, are more likely to visit government primary facilities and traditional healers.

**Improving primary facilities is pro-poor.** Since public primary facilities are mostly frequented by the poor, improving their quality, and stressing services needed by the poor, would make them more pro-poor. This would also reduce the inefficient use of public hospitals. The *Sentrong Sigla* program of the Department of Health, which issues a seal of approval to facilities that meet quality standards, should be strengthened. Targeted assistance to upgrade the quality of primary facilities should focus on poorer, isolated communities.

**Government hospitals require quality upgrading, too.** While clients rate government hospitals higher than public primary facilities, there remains a significant quality deficit in government hospitals compared to private facilities, especially in the NCR. This is particularly disconcerting, since a large share of the national government budget for health is spent on government hospitals in Metro Manila. The priority is to improve service quality in government hospitals through financial autonomy and market pressure.

**The poor pay more, but get less.** Median
annual household expenditure on health is PhP 1,180 (about $25), and, in absolute amounts, the rich spend ten times more on health care on average than the poor. This is largely due to patronage by the poor of cheaper, lower-quality government services. However, the modest health care spending of the poor absorbs a larger share of their income than does the health care spending of the rich (Figure 4).

The poor especially need insurance coverage. Insurance coverage could lighten the medical burden of all Filipinos, especially the poor. While one third of the population is protected by health insurance, less than 1% of the poor are covered. Thus, payments for health care by the poor are almost entirely out of pocket, effectively limiting their use of care for catastrophic illnesses or for quality (private) care.

High prices of medicines are a burden. Medicines and supplies account for the largest share of household medical expenses, at 49% (Figure 5). This is even larger than the 33% share that goes for hospital stay and the 10% share for consultation and treatment. It is urgent to cut the prices of medicines, which are significantly higher in the Philippines than in the rest of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Hence, the Government has initiated parallel importation of cheaper drugs from countries such as India. Competitive bidding procedures have also helped cut the prices of some drugs by half.

Implement the Health Sector Reform Agenda. The Health Sector Reform Agenda (HSRA) proposes to make the health care system in the Philippines more pro-poor by (i) expanding health insurance coverage for the poor; (ii) improving the quality and accessibility of health care for the poor in public primary facilities; (iii) reducing the cost of medicines and hospital stays; and (iv) improving quality in government hospitals by giving them financial autonomy. If successfully implemented, the HSRA could respond to the aspirations and concerns of Filipinos.

Elementary Education
Elementary education in the Philippines is provided by public and private (including sectarian) schools.

Elementary school enrollment is almost universal, and mostly in public schools. More than nine out of ten school-age children are enrolled in elementary schools, and 88% of them go to public schools. Access to public schools has improved overtime.

Dropouts are mostly from poor families. About three fourths of the dropouts belong to poor households. They are most often located
in rural areas. Two out of five Filipino children not in school are Mindanao residents (Figure 6). Boys tend to drop out more often than girls. Of those children who drop out of elementary school, 60% do so in grades 4 and 5.

**FIGURE 6**

Most Children Not in School are from Mindanao

![Bar chart showing regional distribution of children not in school, with Mindanao having the highest percentage.](chart)

Base: All children not in school

**Children drop out for health and economic reasons.** Poor health (or disability) is the main reason for dropping out, followed by economic reasons, like the high cost of education, or the need for the child to work. A small proportion drop out due to poor grades.

Filipinos recommend the following programs for helping poor families keep children in school: in-school health care; full exemption from miscellaneous fees; and more qualified, and better trained, teachers. Scholarships for poor families, specifically targeted at children in rural areas, are also recommended.

**Public schools are low in cost, but inferior in quality.** A significant majority of private and public school patrons agree that private schools are better in quality than public schools (Figure 7). On the other hand, public schools are rated higher by clients on their low cost and convenience of location. Those who can afford to pay send their children to private schools.

**Tuition fees of private schools are ten times those of public schools.** Because they are out of the reach of poor and most middle-income households, private schools are mainly patronized by rich, urban households, and residents of Metro Manila. Unsurprisingly, these schools are more often located where the better-off live.

**On the other hand, public elementary education is far from free.** Public education is supposed to be free. In fact, families spend about 2% of their total household expenditures on each child enrolled in a public elementary school.
FIGURE 8
Public Elementary Schools: Lowest Ratings for Class Size, Facilities, and Textbooks

Class size, textbooks, and facilities are rated poorly in public schools. Public school patrons are most satisfied with location, perhaps because of the successful implementation of the long-standing “one barangay, one school” policy of the Government. However, they are least satisfied with class size, availability of textbooks, and school facilities (Figure 8). Average class size in the Philippines (45) is much higher than the average teacher-to-student ratio (35), largely due to poor deployment of teachers. Five students, sometimes more, share a single textbook. And the condition of most public school buildings is poor.

There has been a drop in client satisfaction with private schools. The fall is related to tuition fee increases, slipping teachers’ performance, and deteriorating school facilities. The lower rating for teachers’ performance should be of particular concern to private schools, as this has been their main comparative advantage over public schools. Unless private schools are able to arrest this decline, they are likely to lose more students. This is bad news for public schools, too, as it puts additional pressure on already strained resources.

Parent-Teacher Associations are widespread. Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) are found in 98% of public schools, and two thirds of the parents are PTA members. Participation of the poor is higher than the national average -- three fourths of poor households are PTA members (Figure 9) -- and has improved over time. Four out of five private schools have PTAs, and their numbers too have risen over time.

PTAs are a potent force for reform. Almost all of the poor say they are well represented in PTAs. Public school PTAs are equally concerned with education and fundraising, and members feel they have considerable influence.
while 3% get water from vendors. This means 37% of the consumers devise their own ways to get water. Self-provisioning is the last resort of poor households. They are forced to collect water from contaminated sources. They store it in containers (such as clay pots, plastic cans, or tins) that are not regularly cleaned, and drink it without treatment.

**The poor are excluded from Level III water service.** Only one quarter of the poor get water piped to their homes (Figure 10). The access of the poor to home-piped water is less than half that of the rich. The poor are three times more likely than the rich to access water from wells, springs, and communal faucets. Of the poor with no house connections, more than two thirds want such access. Figure 11 shows the distribution of water sources for the poor.

**Rural communities and Mindanao are underserved.** Urban households are four times more likely to be served by Level III systems than rural households. More than four out of five households in the NCR enjoy access to

**Water Supply**

The Government provides water through three formal levels. Level I is a point source (without any piped distribution), like a spring or protected well. It serves around 15 households within 250 meters. Level II is a piped system with community faucets, serving four to six households within 25 meters. Level III is a full waterworks system with individual house connections. When water is not piped, responsibility for improving quality is transferred to the consumer. Level I and II water has to be stored for a longer time, at greater risk of contamination.

**Two out of five Filipinos do not get water from formal sources.** Only 64% of Filipinos get water from the Level I, Level II, or Level III systems. One third rely on self-provisioning,
Level III services. Level III service is least available in Mindanao. A majority there get water from communal faucets (Level II) and point sources (Level I), and one third rely on self-provisioning.

Level III service is unable to meet consumer demand. Hence, consumers are forced to get water from other sources. Among those without access to home-piped water, two thirds want to get it, but 95% have not applied for such service. The main reason cited is absence of the service in their area. Water services should be provided based on what the clients want and are willing to pay for.

Households with Level III service consume more water than others. Median water consumption for Level III households is more than the combined consumption for those with Level I and Level II access (Figure 12). Higher consumption levels and convenience are indicators of greater welfare, and the survey confirms that Level III systems are preferred. Even the poor consume more water from Level III systems, compared to any other source.

Water consumption by the poor is unacceptably low. Half of all poor and rural households consume less than 41.6 liters per capita per day. This is a meager amount, given that 30 liters barely meets human water requirements. Among the poor who buy water from vendors, median consumption is just 20.8 liters. The poor and rural households are more vulnerable to diseases like malaria, gastroenteritis, dengue fever and typhoid induced by scarce, contaminated water.

Water supplied by all sources is considered unsafe for drinking. Almost all households incur additional expenditures on water treatment and bottled water, and such expenditures are often substantially higher than those paid to the water utility. The quality of water provided in the rural areas appears worse than that in urban areas, as seen in the higher treatment costs in the countryside.

Low water quality especially hurts the poor. Rural residents spend more than twice as much on treating water as they do on their utility bills. Urban households spend an almost equal amount on bottled water, a source in need of improved regulation. The poor scrimp on wa-
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The poor pay more, but get less. Outlays on water vary from 2% to 9% of total household expenditure. Self-provisioning and vended water show the highest shares. On average, poor households allocate proportionally more of their monthly expenditure to water than do the rich. The poor can afford only limited amounts of (low-quality) water, and have very little money to treat it. They should receive priority in new service provision.

The poor spend the most on low-quality vended water. Clients give the lowest quality and service ratings to vended water. Almost one tenth of Metro Manila residents, many of whom are poor, get their water from vendors. The Filipino poor who rely on vended water as their main source devote 9% of their household expenditure to buying water (Figure 13). This is the highest share among all categories and sources. They should receive top priority for targeted interventions.

The rich are subsidized more than the poor. Level III systems, which often get the largest State investments and subsidies (in capital and operational costs), serve mainly the urban nonpoor. Therefore, these groups benefit more from government subsidies.

Housing

The Report Card sought citizen assessments of their current housing as well as the housing assistance services they received from both public and private sources. Information on current housing provides a context for better interpreting the experiences of Filipinos with housing assistance programs.

The poor are extremely dissatisfied with their housing. Half of the respondents rate their housing as inadequate (Figure 14). Another third consider their housing as borderline-inadequate. In Mindanao and Visayas, where poverty is more widespread than Luzon, nearly two out of three households regard their housing as inadequate. Dissatisfaction with housing is higher in rural communities, where more poor Filipinos live, than in urban areas. However, the urban poor are extremely dissatisfied

FIGURE 14
Half the People Rate their Housing as Poor

![Graph showing housing satisfaction by region and living area.]

Base: Households that rely on vended water as main source of water
compared to their wealthier urban counterparts.

**Location is linked to satisfaction.** Urban residents, especially the poor, are more satisfied than rural Filipinos with the location of their house relative to their place of work, public facilities, and public services. Because the urban poor value access, distant, out-of-city relocation is ill-advised. There is also a need to bring jobs, public facilities, and public services closer to rural communities, that give low grades on access. Community upgrading and provision of basic services, like water and sanitation, will improve their quality of life.

**Land tenure is vital to housing satisfaction.** In the Philippines, house ownership (at 78%) is more common than residential land ownership, at 58%. Among the expenditure groups, the poor have the lowest proportion of households owning residential land (Figure 15). They are also the least satisfied with their housing. As such, programs that focus on security of land tenure, like the Community Mortgage Program, are in high demand and should be strengthened.

**FIGURE 15**
Residential Land Ownership is Lower among the Poor

![Graph showing residential land ownership by income group](image)

Base: All households

The poor are capable of building their own shelter. The Report Card finds that although residential land ownership is lowest among the poor, house ownership is highest, compared to middle-income and rich households. This reflects the capacity of the poor to build their own shelter. To improve housing for the poor, the Government's priority should be security of land tenure and the provision of essential services, leaving people to build their own houses.

**Access to housing programs is very limited.** Out of the five basic services included in the survey, housing assistance offers the lowest access. Only one tenth of the respondents have ever applied for housing assistance. Of this number, one third had to do so because of government relocation drives. The three main reasons for not applying for housing assistance are lack of awareness about housing programs and ways to access them (50%); lack of need (20%); and high transaction costs, at 7% (Figure 16). As a first step, service providers should inform the public, particularly non-NCR, rural, and poor households, about the programs. They should streamline application procedures, set reasonable waiting times, and establish responsive complaint mechanisms.

**The private sector hardly participates.** Three fourths of those who get housing assistance obtain it from the Government. A majority of the rest get it from informal sources like relatives, moneylenders, religious institutions, cooperatives, and non-government organizations (NGOs). The private sector is a minor player in housing assistance. An option that could raise the flow of private funds into housing is to develop a secondary market for mortgage-backed securities. This would require legal, regulatory, supervisory, and tax reforms.

**Government housing assistance benefits mostly those who need it least.** About 95% of the beneficiaries of government housing as-
The poor are excluded from housing associations. The SSS, GSIS, and PAG-IBIG programs require that participants contribute for at least two years before they qualify for assistance. Such requirements discriminate against the poor and those employed in the rural and informal sectors. Since only 3% of poor households are members, most applications come from the nonpoor. Even the poor who are members are often unable to access assistance, because of unrealistic payment requirements and corruption among lending officials. A separate and transparent housing assistance window targeted at the poor, with more favorable terms, is recommended.

Client rejection of housing assistance is high. Applicants reject more than half the assistance offered to them by housing agencies. The assistance appears to come too late, as respondents complain of long waiting times. Rural Filipinos display a higher rejection rate than urban Filipinos. This may be due to the additional transaction costs of traveling long distances to urban centers to make monthly payments. Reforms would require the decentralization of housing services and capacity building for local governments.

FIGURE 16
Information on Public Housing Assistance is Lacking

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Low-cost rental housing can benefit the poor. The Philippine Constitution calls for adequate shelter for all, not home ownership for all. Affordability is a major issue, so alternatives to ownership are necessary. Rental housing can improve housing quality and security of tenure, without conferring ownership. The Rent Control Law should be overhauled to make the rental housing market work for the poor. The destitute homeless may require special hostels offering beds and toilet facilities.

Distribution of Subsidized Rice

Rice is important for the welfare of the poor. The Report Card reconfirmed the importance of rice as a staple food, particularly in rural and poor communities. It also showed that 84% of Filipinos bought rice in the market, while only 13% produced the rice they consumed. Even in the rural areas, approximately 71% of the respondents bought rice. To this end, if the Government is serious about addressing the needs of the poor, it should ensure that affordable rice is available and accessible to the poor.

Availability of National Food Authority rice is limited. The Government, through the National Food Authority (NFA), has been subsidizing rice, not necessarily to tackle food poverty, but to ensure stable prices and supplies. The survey found that the majority of respondents are aware that the NFA sells subsidized rice. Yet only 15% of the respondents buy NFA rice, which is consistent with the level of NFA participation in the market.

The poor self-target NFA rice. Despite the NFA’s limited participation in the market, it appears to have disproportionately reached the poor, with 27% of the poor buying NFA rice, compared with 16% among the middle-income group and 6% among the rich. However, this does not appear to result from any deliberate government targeting, since anyone can purchase as much NFA rice as stocks allow.

NFA rice is low in cost, but inferior in quality (Figure 18). Purchasing decisions are based largely on price and quality. Given the poor quality of NFA rice, those who can afford to pay a higher price buy better quality non-NFA rice; while the poor, who do not have adequate income, resort to lower-priced NFA rice. The nonpoor appear to buy NFA rice mostly for domestic helpers and pets.

The nonpoor benefit more from the rice subsidy. While proportionately more poor people buy NFA rice, the absolute number of the nonpoor who buy NFA rice is not very different from the absolute number of the poor who do so. Because the middle-income and rich households purchase more NFA rice than the poor, the nonpoor enjoy a bigger subsidy (Figure 19). This appears to be a misallocation of scarce resources for a Government concerned with improving basic services for the poor. To this end, the Government should consider targeting rice support to the poor, rather than providing a general rice subsidy for all.
The nonpoor patronize Enhanced Retail Access for the Poor stores more. Client feedback on the Enhanced Retail Access for the Poor (ERAP) stores, which are supposed to be located in areas where the poor live, is not encouraging. The survey found that middle-income and rich households are more aware than the poor of the ERAP stores, which are intended to provide the poor with access to basic commodities at subsidized prices. Moreover, the survey showed that more middle-income and rich households patronize the ERAP stores than do poor households (Figure 21).

Mindanao is excluded. Among all the regions, Mindanao has the highest proportion of households for whom no NFA rice is available. It also has the fewest ERAP stores in the country. As a first step, more stores should be located in disadvantaged areas, especially Mindanao, to enable the poor to avail themselves of low-priced basic commodities, including NFA rice.

The Government is testing geographical targeting plus ID passbooks. Government is proposing a Targeted Low-Priced Rice Distribution Pilot Program to make available low-priced, good-quality NFA rice to poor families. This is expected to pave the way for discontinuing the general rice subsidy. The pilot program uses geographic targeting but further limits beneficiaries and the purchase of rice through the use of passbooks, a form of ID system. Combining geographic targeting and IDs may reduce leakage more significantly than the application of either one alone.

Review the subsidy level. The NFA pilot program offers rice at the same price as the generally available NFA rice. However, a key survey finding is that the amount of NFA rice subsidy is modest and makes only a marginal difference for the poor. Therefore, NFA may wish to consider adjusting upwards the price for generally accessible stocks. The savings obtained from adjusting the price of generally accessible...
stocks could then be redirected to increase the coverage and the subsidy to the poor in the pilot program.

**Differentiate price and quality.** According to the survey, respondents were dissatisfied with the quality, smell, taste, and color of NFA rice. In the targeted program, NFA should take steps to assign different prices to different qualities of rice sold, improving consistency of stocks, and eliminating the need to mix stocks of various qualities.

**Reconsider the entitlement level.** The pilot program limits the entitlement of rice allocation per person. However, respondents are least supportive of food stamps to buy subsidized rice, due to the implied quantity limits on buying rice. To this end, NFA may wish to review the entitlement level, following the pilot phase.

**Lingap para sa Mahihirap Program**

The Lingap para sa Mahihirap (Caring for the Poor) Program, which aimed to benefit the 100 poorest families, was launched as the flagship poverty reduction program of the Estrada Administration. It aimed to reduce the number of poor Filipinos from 24 million in 1997 to 17 million by 2004. Initially, 16,100 poor families were identified to receive assistance; these were selected as the 100 poorest families in each of the 78 provinces and 83 cities. Support to poor families was channeled in the form of a package of assistance with (i) food, nutrition, and medical assistance; (ii) price supports for rice and corn; (iii) protective services for children and youth; (iv) rural waterworks; (v) specialized housing; and (vi) livelihood development.

The poor and rural residents were not very aware of the Lingap Program. About two thirds of the respondents had heard of the Lingap Program. This is impressive, given its short history. However, rural residents were much less informed about the program than their urban counterparts. Awareness was lowest among the poor, at 57%, compared with 63% for the middle-income group, and 69% for the rich.

**Purse strings were controlled by legislators.** About two thirds of the Lingap funds were to be disbursed with the approval of members of the Senate and House of Representatives. Further, the legislators were represented in the program advisory boards in each of the implementing agencies. This subjected the Program to the pressures of political patronage. That is why the Report Card looked into poverty targeting.
**SUMMARY**

The nonpoor barangays benefited more. The proportion of households responding that their barangay was listed for coverage under the *Lingap* Program was almost the same for the poor, middle-income, and rich groups. In fact, the number of poor households that indicated that their barangay was included for coverage was less than half of that of the nonpoor.

The nonpoor households benefited more. While 16% of the poor counted themselves as eligible to receive benefits from the *Lingap* Program, so did 16% of the middle-income group and 11% of the rich. This reveals ineffective targeting. Worse, the nonpoor listed as eligible to receive benefits outnumbered the poor by a ratio of almost two to one (Figure 22).

The poor are less connected to legislators. One quarter of the respondents said that they knew a Congressman or a Senator who would recommend their household to be included in the *Lingap* Program. The proportion of poor households having such connections is lowest (19%), compared with the middle-income group (23%) and the rich (27%). This put the poor at a disadvantage (Figure 23).

**FIGURE 22**

*Lingap* Program Benefited the Nonpoor More

![Graph showing the number of households covered by the *Lingap* Program for poor and nonpoor groups.](image)

Base: All Households

**FIGURE 23**

The Poor Have Less Access to Members of Congress

![Bar graph showing the proportion of households in Rich, Middle-income, and Poor groups.](image)

Base: All households

The *Lingap* Program should be overhauled or terminated. At its inception, a majority of Filipinos believed that the *Lingap* Program would have no impact on poverty reduction. After the first year of implementation, the bulk of the benefits of the *Lingap* Program were going to the nonpoor. The mechanisms for beneficiary selection seem to facilitate this leakage. To this end, the program requires a major overhaul, or termination.
REPORT CARD

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE REPORT CARD

Why Institutionalize the Report Card?

The Report Card provides client assessments of selected government services based on citizens’ experiences. It is expected that the service providers will consider the Report Card findings in adjusting their programs. However, many past assessments did not have a lasting impact on service delivery, because they were one-shot exercises with no effective follow-through. It is necessary to run the Report Card periodically to gauge improvements in service delivery from a “bottom-up” perspective. Service providers may be motivated to respond with concrete improvements if they know they will be tracked again. Hence, the Report Card mechanism should be institutionalized: it should be repeated periodically, say, at 12- to 18-month intervals.

Global Experience with Report Cards

While citizen report cards are new to most governments, they are now being used to rate the performance of public agencies in Canada, Denmark, Ghana, India, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It is instructive to review their institutional arrangements while exploring options to institutionalize the Report Card in the Philippines.

The institutional arrangements may be categorized under three main types or models. Report cards may be prepared (i) by an independent civil society organization; (ii) by a government service provider agency; and (iii) by a government coordinating agency, collaborating with an independent civil society organization.

Under the first model, the initiative for preparing the report card comes from a civil society organization, often a policy research and advocacy institute. A primary example of this is the Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore, Karnataka State, India. The advantage of this model is that it is independent of government, so it enjoys greater credibility. On the other hand, its links with service providers and public coordinating agencies are tenuous. Service providers may resist the results and/or even undermine the findings. Moreover, the report card may not be sustainable in the medium and long term: regular funding for it is uncertain, and the rigorous technical requirements may be burdensome for some civil society organizations.

Under the second model, the initiative for the report card comes from a government service provider. The agency contracts out the actual survey and the preparation of the draft report to a private sector group or civil society organization. The draft report is vetted by the agency, finalized, and sometimes disseminated to the public. The focus of the report card may be confined to a single program or service, or a facet relevant to a program. Examples of countries using this model include Canada and the United Kingdom. A major strength of this model is the ownership of the exercise by the public service provider, while preparation of the report card by an outside firm brings some degree of independence to the exercise. The preliminary results are available to the agency and its views and feedback are included in the final report.

The same factors may become weaknesses in the model when viewed from a different perspective. The service provider being assessed sponsors the preparation of the report card and oversees its implementation. This arrangement may lead the public at large, as well as legislators and government coordinating agencies, to question the objectivity of the findings. In addition, the information collected is usually tailored to meet the requirements of the public agency. It may not be packaged for the con-
SUMMARY

Institutionalizing the Report Card in the Philippines

Discussions with key stakeholders indicate that the third model would be the most desirable for adoption in the Philippines, with appropriate modifications. In fact, the pilot round of the Filipino Report Card incorporated many of the positive attributes of the third model. \(^3\) It is highly advantageous to institutionalize the Report Card as a way of obtaining regular user feedback on key public services. It is expected that the incentive for service providers to respond to client feedback will be enhanced if they know they are being monitored regularly by the DBM, using the report card tool as one of the three mechanisms to assess performance and allocate resources.

The DBM has agreed to contract out the client survey, the analysis of findings, and the preparation of the report to a credible and independent civil society organization with substantial expertise in such activities. \(^3^3\) An advisory panel will be convened to guide the Report Card exercise and its integration into the budgetary process. It will comprise representatives of ser-

Under the third model, a government coordinating agency engages an independent organization to design and prepare the report card. This work is done in consultation with -- but independent of -- the public service agencies. The experience in the United States (US) is instructive in this context. The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 requires the executive branch to report to Congress on the performance of government agencies. The General Services Administration (GSA), a government coordination agency, is charged with assessing the performance of federal agencies.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), developed jointly by the University of Michigan Business School, the American Society for Quality, and Arthur Andersen Consulting was selected as the tool for assessing performance. \(^3\) The GSA engaged the three-party consortium to undertake the 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey of Federal Agencies in the United States. The survey focused on 29 federal agencies, which covered 90% of the government’s customers. The survey assessed service provision by public agencies using the private sector as a benchmark. The results of the survey were presented to Congress during budget negotiations, thus linking citizen feedback with resource allocations.

Among the three models discussed above, the third model is the most comprehensive in terms of product and process. Legislation set the mandate for the report card and resources were allocated for it. An independent and credible consortium of institutions was recruited to prepare it. A well-established methodology was used to assess the performance of federal agencies. Client satisfaction with public services was assessed using the results of services provided by the private sector for comparison.
vice providers, key government oversight agencies, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

**Improving the Report Card**

Continued assessments of the concepts and measures used in the pilot Report Card should be undertaken to further improve the tool.\(^3\)\(^4\) For example, the sampling frame and phrasing of some questions will require refinement during the next round. Further, the Report Card coverage should be expanded gradually to encompass a larger array of public services. Eventually, the customer services provided by all government agencies should be covered, along the lines of the US model described above.

The first (pilot) round of the Report Card spread the net wide and tried to cover as many facets of service delivery as possible within its budget. On the basis of the lessons learned, it is recommended that the scope of future Report Cards be limited to a few principal performance indicators. Ideally, the performance indicators selected for the Report Card should have a significant overlap with those used by the DBM in monitoring outputs and processes. This would facilitate the triangulation of the results obtained from the three perspectives (i.e., outputs, processes, and client feedback) and provide a comprehensive picture of agency performance.

The need for revision of the questionnaire is another important lesson emerging from the first round of the Report Card. First, there are some overlaps in the survey questions that should be minimized or eliminated. Second, some of the questions need to be phrased differently to be clearer to the respondents. Third, other questions should be eliminated, as they do not seem to elicit useful/important findings.\(^3\)\(^5\) Fourth, the questionnaire should be augmented in some areas and the process of selection of households modified to cover those groups that have been left out in the first round.\(^3\)\(^6\) Finally, the main focus of the questionnaire should be tailored to the selected principal performance indicators used for monitoring outputs and processes by the DBM.

Revision and refinement of the questionnaire should bring about considerable savings, as the cost of the survey depends critically on the number of questions. This should make it more cost-effective and sustainable. Also, limiting the scope to a few principal and common performance indicators should focus the attention of service providers and key policymakers, and result in concrete actions. Above all, it should further focus attention on improved service delivery to the poor.\(^3\)\(^7\)

**Last Word**

It is recognized that no single sample of 1,200 households, no matter how carefully selected, can fully represent a country as large and diverse as the Philippines. Nevertheless, the Report Card does provide valuable feedback from a wide spectrum of Filipinos on pro-poor services.

The client assessments have been collected by means of sound and well-tested survey techniques that meet international standards.\(^3\)\(^8\) The results are subjected to rigorous standard error analysis, which shows the findings to be statistically significant.\(^3\)\(^9\) Admittedly, the Report Card tool is not perfect at entry. Many of the concepts and measures used in this pilot phase will undergo iterative refinements as the survey is institutionalized. But what matters most is that the Report Card provides a channel for citizens to voice their concerns and priorities.

Much can be learned already from this pilot Report Card about its potential to improve public service delivery and accountability to citi-
zens. Recognizing this, similar Report Card initiatives are being launched in the Philippines. These include the preparation of a Report Card on municipal services in the 17 municipalities of Metro Manila, thus localizing the instrument. Other countries, like Albania, Argentina, Ethiopia, and Vietnam, are also showing considerable interest in preparing report cards based on the Philippine model, to capture citizen feedback on public services.
NOTES

1. The responses on satisfaction are captured on a five-point structured scale, in which “very satisfied” is accorded a score of plus two (+2); “somewhat satisfied” is accorded a score of plus one (+1); “undecided whether satisfied or dissatisfied” is accorded a score of zero (0); “somewhat dissatisfied” is accorded a score of minus one (-1); and, “very dissatisfied” is accorded a score of minus two (-2). The weighting helps distinguish the variations in the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.


3. These five sectors were selected because they were the focus of the flagship Lingap para sa Mahihirap (Caring for the Poor) Program of the Estrada Administration. Thus, the five sectors not only ensured breadth of pro-poor services provided by the Government, but also relevance.

4. If service providers or program implementers had undertaken the client survey themselves, the independence of the results could be questioned by oversight agencies, legislators, and civil society. On the other hand, if advocacy NGOs were engaged to conduct the survey, service providers could question their “agenda.” In contrast, the SWS is recognized and respected by many as an independent and credible nonpartisan organization. The local respect accorded to their work was a critical factor in the selection of the SWS to undertake the survey.

5. The household (family) was selected as the unit of analysis because it is the basic unit of focus of most development interventions by the Government, the private sector, and civil society organizations. It was also the intended recipient of pro-poor public services covered under the Lingap para sa Mahihirap program of the Estrada Administration.

6. Further disaggregation of the four regions (e.g., into provinces) would considerably reduce the number of sample households per disaggregated unit (province), given the overall sample size of 1,200 households.

7. For example, see Federal Agencies Government-wide Customer Satisfaction Report for the General Services Administration, University of Michigan Business School, American Society for Quality, and Arthur Andersen, December 1999.

8. The following quote from a service provider representative is a good illustration: “We have always been evaluated by outside consultants and experts. It is high time that our clients evaluated us. After all, who knows us better?” Comment from a government representative at a stakeholder workshop arranged to discuss the preliminary findings of the Report Card, Manila, June 13, 2001.

9. Ranking and quantification used in the Report Card are arguably superior to anecdotes in focusing the attention of policymakers, service providers, and the public at large.


11. See quote from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at the beginning of this Summary. Former President Joseph Estrada had also made a similar commitment to “treat each citizen as a customer in much the same way as the best private companies treat their clients.” See Intouch, a Newsletter of the World Bank Country Office, Manila, Volume 5, Number 2, March 2000.

12. For example, quality of services, timeliness of service delivery, and responsiveness of agency personnel may leave much to be desired. However, market pressure (through, for example, competition in service provision at
comparable prices) is missing to rectify the deficiencies.

13. For example, some of the new insights emerging from the Report Card include high participation of the poor in Parent Teacher Associations and the high dissatisfaction of rural households with their housing. These findings deserve further scrutiny and follow-up.

14. Each of the sector modules in the Report Card includes questions seeking client views on alternative pro-poor programs that were under consideration by the Government at the time of the survey (for example, the proposed Low-Priced Rice Distribution Pilot Program of the National Food Authority).

15. For example, the recommendation in the *Philippines Poverty Assessment* to abolish a general rice subsidy and criticism of the weak performance of the *Lingap* Program.

16. In addition, two other poverty measures are used in the Report Card. The first is based on self-rating of the status of households as poor, borderline, and not poor. This is a bottom-up assessment of the household by the respondent(s). The self-rated poverty measure has been used by the SWS for the last 15 years in its quarterly social surveys. The second poverty measure classifies households into A, B, C, D, and E groups, based on the enumerator’s observation and assessment of their housing and living conditions. This has been a useful poverty measure for market research in the Philippines.

17. The Report Card obtained information on household expenditures by including the expenditure module of the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS). This helps link the quantitative poverty information from the expenditure module of the APIS with client feedback on pro-poor services.

18. The participants represented central government officials, local government units, private sector providers, and civil society organizations.

19. For example, according to official data, the teacher-pupil ratio is lowest in Mindanao, while the Report Card results show that large class size is a problem in Mindanao. The Report Card findings were confirmed and explained by participants from Mindanao as being the result of the poor deployment of public school teachers in Mindanao by the Government.

20. For example, the implementation of the Health Sector Reform Agenda, which addresses several constraints identified by the clients, has begun, albeit on a modest scale. Similarly, the implementation of the targeted Low-Priced Rice Distribution Pilot Program has begun, incorporating the Report Card findings.


22. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s first State of the Nation Address was delivered on July 23, 2001, to a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Philippine Senate.


25. For example, busy policymakers may require a short note summarizing the key findings, along with selected data tables and graphs. On the other hand, sector specialists may require more in-depth analysis as presented in the sector chapters in the main report. Ordinary citizens may value yet another form of the Report Card, perhaps a “folksy” version, in local languages, which demystifies service provision and provides information in a simple form.

26. The Report Card findings have been covered extensively in the local press, with more
than fifty front-page articles and editorials in national newspapers.

27. The Lingap para sa Mahihirap program has already been terminated by the new Administration, based partly on results of the Report Card.

28. A number of dissemination and advocacy actions are proposed to facilitate responses from the service providers.

29. The work by the Public Affairs Centre is exceptional. The Centre is a nonprofit and professionally competent organization that is well recognized both within the country and outside. Its credibility with the Government and the public is high. The report card findings are taken seriously by a wide range of stakeholders. This is a testimony to the stature of the Chairman, and a result of his vision and dynamism. The limitations of this model relate to the difficulties in replicating this unique situation.

30. For example, see Income Security Programs Client Service Study: Report to Human Resources Development Canada, Center for Market and Survey Research, Canada, August 1998; and see Department of Social Security, Research Reports, United Kingdom, February 15, 2001.

31. The independent consortium developed the ACSI in 1994 as an economic indicator of satisfaction with quality, which has since been used for assessing client satisfaction with the services provided by major private companies.

32. For example, obtaining client feedback on public services, which is at the core of the Filipino Report Card, has strong support from the highest levels of the Government of the Philippines. The SWS, an independent and credible institution, was engaged to undertake the design and execution of the Report Card survey instrument. A consultative process was adopted in designing the survey, involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including government service providers. Service provision by public agencies was assessed using the private sector as a benchmark. The Report Card findings are being shared with the service providing agencies, the Congress, and the public, as well as fed into the budget allocation process through the DBM.

33. A number of independent organizations competent to undertake the survey exist in the Philippines. These include the SWS, Pulse Asia, and others.

34. For example, the expenditure poverty measure could be refined by constructing regional poverty lines to tabulate poverty-related information for the four regions. In addition, client satisfaction measures developed in other countries, such as the ACSI, could be drawn upon.

35. For example, some of the questions on quality in the subsidized (NFA) rice module seem to overlap. Some questions in the housing module may require clarification. The sets of questions on corruption did not bring forth significant findings and could be revised in subsequent rounds.

36. For example, the design of the housing module and the selection of households from among permanent structures seemed to have resulted in under representation of the informal settler population, including squatters, in the sample. Similarly, access to health insurance by different groups could be better covered in the health module. To this end, the questionnaire and the household selection process will be modified/adjusted for the next round.

37. The budget deficit in the Philippines is projected to be as high as PhP200 billion. Thus, limited resources allocated for basic services should be used judiciously. In particular, this means ensuring that scarce public resources are
directed toward providing for the priority needs of the poor.

38. The national sample size of 1,200 is standard in the survey industry. It is larger than that used in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

39. The major sector tables with the standard errors can be obtained from the Report Card team by interested users. Please contact bbhatnagar@worldbank.org.

40. The preparation of the Report Card on municipal services in Metro Manila is being undertaken by the Development Academy of the Philippines, with assistance from the Asian Development Bank.

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