

## **Journal of Politics and Governance (JOPAG) (Vol.6, Special Issue, September – December, 2016)**

**Publisher** College of Politics and Governance (COPAG), Mahasarakham University

### **Background Information**

The College of Politics and Governance (COPAG), Mahasarakham University, as a political science academic unit, recognizes the importance of the publication of academic researches and other scholarly works. Accordingly, the Journal of Politics and Governance (JOPAG), first published in September 2010, aims at publicizing scholarly oeuvres on politics and governance with national and international standards, and thereby strengthening COPAG's academic reputation.

### **Objective**

1. To publish quality academic and research works that will contribute to the development of new theories or a new body of knowledge, not to mention the applicability to real-life issues in the political and social science fields.
2. To provide an academic service the society in the form of a forum for scholarly exchanges among scholars, researchers, students and the general public in the field of politics and social sciences.

**Publication scheduled:** Twice yearly – No. 1 issue: January - April; No. 2 issue: May - August; No. 3 issue: September – December

**Dissemination:** The publication will be disseminated to members, libraries of educational institutions, and on-line journals through websites.

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### Editor's Message

Thai special issue covers public policy which applies social science theories and concepts to significant political, economic and social issues and the ways in which public policies are made. Its articles deal with topics of concern to public scholars in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Myanmar which are selected as the best articles in the Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Magsaysay Awardees: Good Governance and Transformative Leadership in Asia.

**Mechai Viravaidya** who received Magsaysay Award in 1994 describes his work in the Population and Community association in Thailand from elaborating a comprehensive rural development strategy by empowering the people as a people-centered approach to help villages with local economic opportunities and a decent sustainable income, with the cooperation with the private sectors. More interesting in this paper, Mechai develops the Mechai Pattana School, known as the Bamboo school with the aim of providing boarding school for children from rural household. All his successful works come from his strategic planning to active his goods and vision.

**Sanjiv Chaturvedi** who received Magsaysay award in 2015 indicates the corruption of many organizations in India which will be the lessons learned to Asian countries in policy reform.

**Dr. Cyntia Maung** who established Mae Tao Clinic describes her works with clients from Myanmar living along the Thai-Myanmar border for over 25 years. She works with local government health and public health since the beginning. Her policies of successful works on health services with international aid agencies have mobilized to provide life – saving care to their community

**Maria Fe Villamejor – Mendoza** describes and explores the policy reforms in public sector which are emphasized on public services in the Philippines.

**Kristoffer B. Berse** describes and analyses the strategy and adaptation of climate change in three communities in Malolos City, Bulacan, Philippines. He explores the aggravating impacts of climate change on the everyday risks faced by children and suggests the policy of protection the children's welfare

**Bussabong Chaijaroenwatana** and **Usman Whangsani** examine the roles of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) cooperated with the government's Project Development in Pak Bara Area, Southern Thailand, for sustainable development in development plan. Pak Bara Village is a populated area with a fishery sea port, fish open markets and tourism ports. The authors revealed that the networking of government agencies and CSOs try to drive different issues within the communities

and provide members opportunities to share ideas and seek cooperation from outsiders as the driving force for policy of changes in communities for sustainable development.

**Maria Faina Lucero Diola** presents the organizational development analysis undertaken for the National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) in the Philippines by adopting a knowledge management framework within a strategic change management process which will be the lessons learned to rural development in Asian Countries.

**Jocelyn C. Cuaresma** assesses the implementation of the policy, program and budget response of the national government to address the rehabilitation and recovery needs of Yolanda-affected areas which will be the lessons learned to Southeast Asian Countries.

**Michael Tumanut** explains the two rare cases of municipal merger using the theory of consolidation with the interesting suggestions by using the existing statistics and government records.

**Danilo de la Rosa Reyes** addresses and examines the performance of LGUs in the Philippines under the Local government Code of 1991, particularly problems of capacities, financing and how they responded to crucial issues of poverty alleviation.

We hope that this issue will be served academic scholars who are interested in researching the issues and served the public decision makers at all levels of government.

*Sida Sonsri*

Sida Sonsri

Editor - in - Chief

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## The Population and Community Development Association in Thailand<sup>1</sup>

*Mechai Viravaidya\**

When I returned to Thailand in 1965 after studying in Australia, I learned in a very unusual and personal way the value of publicity. A relative of mine asked an unusual favor. She was chaperoning a young Thai woman who had just won the Miss Universe beauty pageant to a number of congratulatory functions, and she wanted me to accompany them. I accepted, not knowing that the Thai people would go crazy about this. Because I went everywhere with them and was frequently photographed, I also became a kind of celebrity.

Shortly thereafter, I got a job with the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), where several years later I became chief of the evaluation section. This often required me to travel up-country to the rural areas to assess and report on development progress. Everywhere I went, there were so many children; I could see that population growth was just eating away at whatever progress we made in terms of our development. A study asked people, “Do you have enough for your children—enough education, enough facilities, everything you need as an adult?” The answer was almost always “no.” A World Bank study calculated that annual population growth was about 3.3 percent at the time, but there was no population policy or program.

We needed either to speed up the development process or slow down population growth, or both. I was not in much of a position to speed up a bureaucracy’s attempt at development. But I was able to see some of its problems. One was a tremendous lack of communication between the government and the people. The NESDB was the planning authority in Thailand and part of the prime minister’s office, but implementation was in the hands of the line ministries who did not communicate their development objectives to the people. I, however, spent a lot of time talking to the farmers, which was not very common in those days. Farmers had some very different views from those of the government.

Introducing improvements was made more difficult by the fact that people in the rural areas did not have a role in shaping development; everything was supposedly done for them by the government. Unfortunately, I had trouble convincing the bureaucracy that this was a problem. I wrote several reports on the situation, but they didn’t get published, possibly because they presented views too directly. So I decided to write a

<sup>1</sup> Published in *Reasons for Hope*, edited by Anirudh Krishna, Norman Uphoff and Milton J. Esman (Connecticut: Kumarian, 1997)

\* Chairman of Mechai Viravaidya Foundation and PDA., Keynote Speaker in The 4th International Conference on Magsaysay Awardees: Good Governance and Transformative Leadership in Asia, 31 May 2016.

Resource person of PDA.

weekly column in a leading Bangkok newspaper. I used the column to write about Thailand's development problems: the sparse conditions in the countryside, the difficulties faced by farmers and the fact that development thinking in the country was heavily influenced by people who weren't aware of what the country really needed. Aside from development, I wrote about population, corruption, the environment and rural poverty-issues otherwise being ignored.

Although it was controversial, or maybe because it was, the column was widely read. At this time I was also teaching at Thammasat University, which has since become known for its commitment to democracy, and I also had a nightly radio show. Later I Played leading roles in a series of soap operas based on best-selling novels. The magic of it all was that these opportunities came quite by accident, but they were important for helping me learn about communication. These various channels of communication enabled me to reach quite a wide audience, people who normally did not communicate with one another. I reached the intellectuals, planners and politicians through the newspaper column, while the radio program brought ideas to the average educated person. The soap operas put me in touch with the common person on the street. These experiences working with the media were invaluable once I turned my efforts more directly to the pressing matters of family planning and poverty reduction.

Surprisingly, given the heterogeneity of my audience, virtually nobody challenged me. At functions and at dinners at which I spoke, or on the street, the reaction was the opposite. Many told me they agreed that the problems I spoke about were the urgent questions of the day, although they had been obscured by an authoritarian government. Sadly, no moves were being made to rectify the problems being highlighted. People were concerned, but most were not doing anything constructive to help. It was clear that people accomplished nothing by sitting around and talking about problems. Some action needed to be taken, so I moved into the nonprofit sector to work on certain projects, since I could not be very original within the government.

## **GETTING STARTED AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL AND GETTING ATTENTION**

In 1971, the government approved a notional family planning policy, but its impact was limited. After serving two years as secretary-general of the Family Planning Association of Thailand, I founded an organization called the Community-Based Family Planning Service (CBFPS) in 1974. I was convinced that we had to change people's attitudes about the member of children they should have and to establish a contraceptive delivery system in rural villages. Such a change would contribute to some long-term good, or at least get us out of the deep hole being dug by massive population growth.

The government's top-down approach to rural people as well as its regular health service delivery infrastructure was not achieving the reduction in the birth rate that was needed in rural areas, so a different approach was called for. I realized that family planning was a sensitive subject, one that was not supposed to be discussed. But if we



took into account the Thai people's attraction to *sanuk* (having fun), we could overcome their traditional reluctance to confront embarrassing or contraceptives issues in public. So, I used humor to bring the condom and contraceptives out of the closer and into the open.

Gradually, we made condoms as familiar as playthings. Once, when I was speaking to 2,000 teachers on the importance of lowering the birth rate, I showed them a condom. Suddenly I had an impulse to blow it up like a balloon. It was like magic. One minute they were sitting there looking stiff and self-conscious, and the next they were roaring with laughter. Condoms could become multicolored balloons; they could be filled with water and thrown; we had condom blow-up contests and water balloon festivals. If you take the ring off the end, I pointed out, they can make wonderful hair bands. To encourage Thai men to have vasectomies, we organized vasectomy festivals on the King's birthday, at which time men could receive the service for free. I liked to joke that Winston Churchill's "V for victory" sign during World War II really meant "stop at two." Today, this is one of the many messages emblazoned on T-shirts that our association sells, along with other humorous slogans, images and condoms memorabilia such as condom flowers, condom coffee mugs and key chains.

My experience with the mass media enable me to promote the family planning campaign far and wide, with the approach adapted for different audiences. The message was brought into schools, factories, shops, even taxis, which helped to spread awareness in the cities. At the time, though, the great majority of population lived in villages on the countryside. This required a difference response. To make the campaign succeed, we had to get both information and contraceptive means to the people, plus we definitely needed a structure that allowed people to participate.

In those days, contraceptive were distributed be doctors, nurses and midwives at government hospitals and health centers, which saved only about 20 percent of villages. I became convinced that any solution to the population problem had to begin at the village level. The people had to feel a sense of participation, of not being directed by some far-away government. For leadership we looked to the people who mattered to villagers-teachers, monks and other village leaders-to disseminate the information. For distributing contraceptives, we looked to those who were well situated in terms of village traffic, such as shopkeepers. They were ordinary villagers, but they were essential in helping us make contraceptives readily accessible to communities in more than 25 percent of the country. To help spread the message, we also trained 320,000 rural school teachers within five years.

Each distributor of contraceptives was chosen carefully after reviewing the person's standing in the community, support for family planning and record-keeping ability. These persons received more training in record keeping and were given basic family planning information, such as about contraceptive use. CBFPS trained them and gave them a big depot sign to hang outside their shops. They returned home with supplies of birth control pills and condoms that they could sell in their villages for a small commission. Each of our field workers looked after about 100 distributors and went around once field workers looked after about 100 distributors and went around once a month to check records, collect the money from contraceptives sold and deliver new supplies.

This network relied on the distributor's hard work, good faith and pride in being selected as the distributor. The payment of a commission added incentive, but nobody agreed to distribute contraceptives in order to get rich. Instead, most distributors regarded it as a high honor to be chosen. Eventually the network encompassed over 16,200 villagers who distributed contraceptives and information. We tried to go everywhere, but we went first to areas where the need was greatest. The northeast was the poorest area and had the highest fertility rate, so most of our efforts went there at first. But we also worked in the north, which was also poor, in part of the center and part of the south. It was a national campaign. By its fifth year, the program was totally self-financing. The money from the sale of contraceptives donated by the International Planned Parenthood Federation and U.S. Agency for International Development was recycled to cover all costs of operating the network.

Surprisingly, there was not much opposition even though the campaign was very visible, and it started having quite a wide impact. To allay the concerns of monks, we cited a teaching of the Buddha that "many births cause suffering." We never had any political problems and not much in the way of general opposition either. The very few people who opposed us I never confronted. I always listened to their suggestions and comments and thanked them. I apologized for the things they did not like and then just continued the way we had been doing things.

Perhaps we minimized any widespread opposition by not talking about sex education. Instead, we talked only about population and family planning, saying that parents should be the ones to discuss sex education with their kids. In that way, people never thought of us as violating the family's responsibility. We also made the subject lighthearted and festive rather than important thing was to make people think about it.

## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS AND THE NEED TO EXPAND OBJECTIVES

Objectively, the national family planning campaign in Thailand can be judged a success. Our NGO program is widely credited with helping the government reduce the nation's population growth rate from about 3.3 percent in the early 1970s, to 1.8 percent by 1982, to 1.2 percent in 1994. Concurrent with this decrease has been a dramatic increase in the number of eligible couples practicing family planning, from 11 percent in 1971, to over 60 percent by the early 1980s, to over 78 percent today.

Thailand's success is the envy of many other developing nations that are struggling with high birth rates. The key to success was good cooperation between the government and NGO sector—the ministry of public health supported our efforts, and we contributed to the achievements of the national family planning program; a wide range of contraceptive choices; grassroots participation; and full voluntarism (no coercion). In isolated and very poor areas, where education, incomes and family planning acceptance were low, we introduced a system of community incentives, in about 50 villages. In some of the most remote villages, we set up a community fund into which was paid \$200 for every vasectomy performed, \$175 per female sterilization, \$100 per IUD, and \$75 for using the pill. These funds were available for loans to village members whether or not they participated in family planning, with



loans made and collected by an elected village committee. These revolving funds were mostly very well managed and maintained. Elsewhere we paid into a community fund \$5 for every month that a woman was not pregnant. In order not to privilege some more than others, every woman, old or young, could "contribute" \$60 a year to the community fund this way. We also offered households where the wife was not pregnant agricultural credit at favorable rate. If the bank rate was 10 percent, contraceptive users could borrow at half that rate, while other villagers could borrow at 10 percent—still much lower than the 60 to 130 percent paid to private moneylenders.

Our practice was to promote family planning as something that is in people's interest, not something we would try to "bribe" them to accept. Material incentives cannot explain the fundamental changes in attitude which the campaigns brought about. Our bold and often humorous approaches have helped turn one of the most private subjects into something that people can now discuss openly with little embarrassment. We can take much satisfaction in this transition in attitudes and behavior.

However, we also came to realize that we should not try to solve population growth problems in isolation, since our real goal was to improve people's lives. The more deeply we got involved in our family planning campaign, the clearer it became that this, by itself, would not be enough to develop the rural areas and reduce poverty in Thailand's many villages. Accordingly, in 1977, the name of CBFPS was changed to the Population and Community Development Association (PDA for short). This reflected our broader goal, and PDA began establishing programs on a district-by-district basis. From our work with villagers on family planning, we learned that their health was one of the best ways of convincing them to have fewer children. Parents would have fewer children if they knew that the ones they did have would be healthier and would be more likely to survive and thrive. This led us to look more closely at the need and opportunities to improve rural health by preventing illnesses.

## **IMPROVING VILLAGE WATER SUPPLIES**

One of the main obstacles to improving health was a severe lack of water resources in the villages. Most poor villagers simply did not have enough water, especially drinking water. Because of inadequate supply, particularly during the dry season, many families were forced to drink unsafe water. In response, PDA set up a water tank program based on the idea of capturing rainwater from the roofs of houses and storing it in large water jars and water tanks. Particularly in the northeast, rain does not fall throughout the year, but only in some months. This made getting ground water difficult, and piped water was out of the question because neither villagers nor the government could afford this. The water tank program proved to be both practical and feasible, however, as an alternative source to ground water. We worked with

households to build water tanks about three meters tall and two meters wide, with a capacity of about 11,000 liters of water. This was enough to supply drinking and domestic water for a family for the seven-month period of water shortage.

Where did the money to finance the tanks come from? At first, we got grants from the German foundation, Agro Action. Construction costs were reduced by forming groups of fifteen families to cooperate in contributing the labor. Within fifteen days a group could install fifteen tanks. We made the program self-sustaining by requiring that every family that got a water tank would sponsor another family, repaying the money for its own water tank over a period of time. The money stayed in the district as a kind of revolving fund. If a grant enabled us to construct 1,000 tanks over ten years, the number of tanks could be increased to 7,000 under this system. This multiplying effect made the program quite effective. It improved hygiene and reduced disease, while saving households (especially women) time and greatly improving quality of life.

A water committee was set up in each village to handle collection of the money owed to the revolving fund. Most everyone was surprised that there were so few defaults. This was partly because if a villager did not repay his or her loan, this would prevent a neighbor from getting a water tank. PDA's efforts were initiated to expand upon government efforts to bring water to rural areas. Where it was apparent that the government would not by giving things away. We always required some amount of local contribution. Our program ended up building more water tanks than all of the government's programs, thanks to workings of community management and self-help.

## **ELABORATING A MORE COMPREHENSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

We started thinking about how to launch still larger projects that could help an even greater number of people. If PDA could get funding for 100,000 home water tanks, which would cost about US\$35 million at that time, within ten years our program could get over 700,000 tanks installed, which would have covered the entire northeast part of country. We fashioned a three-step approach to village development. First, we started with family planning efforts, which we followed up with water and sanitation programs. Then we introduced what we called community-based integrated rural development. This also had three steps: first, improve technology for the villagers; second, resolve resources constraints and increase commodity production; and third, market their products.



By now, most people had accepted that too many children made them poor, and they were ready to stop adding to the number of mouths they already had to feed. The new question became: how to make life better for them, giving them a chance to get their fair share of life's necessities? PDA became involved with them, giving technical and economic assistance and also advice and cooperative-like marketing opportunities. First we selected farmers from one district at a time, allotting about 20 million baht (US\$1 million) per district, mostly derived from foreign grants, to be invested in household-level improvement. We had three models in mind: intensive, which provided about 6,000 baht (US\$300) per household; and light, which cost 3,000 baht (US\$150).

The basic activities were animal raising, all forms of agriculture and some kind of water resource development, for example, constructing wells or ponds and fertilizer and by helping villagers begin fish raising. For animal rearing, villagers raised chickens, ducks, geese and rabbits. We encouraged them to plan to use one activity to benefit another, capturing wherever synergies were possible. For instance, geese can be introduced just before the grains left behind in the field, getting a good healthy start, after which they can manage by foraging and scavenging around the village.

We also tried to promote appropriate technology at the village level by emphasizing renewable energy, simple farm tools and reduction of energy waste. We encouraged people to use animal waste rather than charcoal for cooking by converting it into biogas. Another innovation was recycling chicken droppings to be fed to the pigs, with the pig's manure in turn fed to fish, and residues then used to produce biogas. Fertilizer could also be obtained from this process. We also experimented with other technologies such as using solar energy to dry foodstuffs.

Sometimes the techniques villagers were already using were basically sound, but small changes could earn them more money. We introduced a lot of small improvements. For instance, many villagers were already raising chickens, which were a main source of nutrition for rural households. In the past, as many as 90 percent of the chicken might die from disease. We learned this was due largely to inbreeding. By getting villages to exchange their roosters, and by introducing vaccination, survival rates dramatically increased. The villagers also went into commercial production, both for egg laying and selling poultry meat. Later, we encouraged them to expand into pig raising, which was more complex, due to the different types of diseases. This also involved determining, on a village by village basis, how many families could best raise pigs and how many would raise chickens.

While PDA encouraged villagers to become organized, it has not set up PDA organizations at village level. A variety of special-purpose organizations have been established for managing activities sparked by PDA, such as the village committees organizing water tank construction and handling repayment. We wanted to be sure that villagers perceived the organizations as their organizations. So a variety of cooperatives, farmer groups, associations and handicraft companies have sprung up, encouraged, and in some case financially backstopped, by PDA. The main task for PDA staff, including the managers and directors, was, and continues to be, spending time sitting and what they are willing to commit themselves to for their own and their children's betterment.

PDA has aimed to achieve income increases of about 30 percent a year, and it has used routine evaluations to gauge the effect of what has become one of the most integrated development programs for Thai villages. We went beyond measuring income to assess whether project activities were succeeding. We also sought to learn the perceptions of the people. We asked them if their lives were now better, and if so, in what ways? Our measurement device, called the "Thai bamboo ladder," started from zero and went up to ten. We asked questions such as: "What is the I deal situation you would like see in your community?" they would answer, "Enough water, a school for my children, good health, no robberies, and a fair price for my crops." We called this the Ideal, which we valued at ten.

We then asked what was the worst possible situation they could imagine themselves in, and this was termed zero on our scale. Then we asked them where they thought they were on the ladder at the time. Some said five; others said six or seven. We asked them to indicate where they were before PDA got involved in their village, and some pointed to two or three. Finally, we asked them where they thought they would be in three or four years' time, and they pointed to eight or even nine. This revealed to us how the villagers evaluated their own progress within their own value system, and that they looked forward to improvements---a brighter future in their community.

One of the most important steps was to let villagers know where they could look for help. PDA taught the villagers to identify their needs and to figure out ways to get them met, through their own means and with our help. PDA set up special centers in a number of districts that were particularly poorly served where villagers could come to get supplies and learn valuable information. Some information was especially important for helping farmers market their product at a fair price instead of getting cheated by middlemen. This gave them more control over their economic performance. We tried to make the villagers strong enough to stand up to the businesspeople, not trying to cut them out, but providing the villagers with real alternatives.



## A PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH

Another key was participation. We didn't work with villagers as their masters but rather as their equals. This was crucial to their sense of self-worth and represented a tremendous social change in their lives, building their confidence and initiative over time while our staff worked with them. The great majority of the villagers were honest with us because they knew that if they cheated us, they were really cheating themselves. This contributed to much progress since heretofore changing villagers' impressions about development assistance had always been difficult. To us, development did not necessarily mean more roads, more electricity or more whatever-it meant changing people's attitudes and behavior, to help them become more capable of self-help.

Participation also means no handouts. PDA firmly believes that handouts breed passivity and indifference, and that villagers will be more committed to the activities and possessions that they have an investment in. When PDA moves heavily into water resource development-tackling one of the greatest threats to livelihood for farmers-villagers paid for their water jars and water tanks after purchase through a loan program. The same principle generally applied to villagers who started to raise chickens or pigs and money from a community fund to buy their first animals and materials to start the business. When they repaid the loan, the money went into a common revolving fund that stayed in the community and funded other villagers looking for loans for their needs.

In retrospect, we see that PDA's approach to development did help villagers to become more self-sufficient within two to four years, although in some poorer areas, development took longer. The key was to get the villagers started on the path to a better life through their own efforts. This then continues until they both met their basic needs and established a firm footing of economic security. For instance, when building up water resource to enable the villagers to farm year-round, PDA sought also to deal with urgent issues such as the need for off-season income to provide for families' needs while new systems were being planned or built and when their farming income ran out.

Many villagers had already turned to small cottage industries as an alternative. PDA took the cue and built many new programs based on existing village skills and knowledge. For example, the cloth-making industry offered good opportunities. But it was important that villagers not only know how to make cloth, but, more importantly, how to make it with attractive designs so that it could be marketed in urban areas or exported for higher prices. The same was true for villagers making Thai handicrafts to sell. We encouraged households to go beyond producing primary commodities and to add value to their own work. Instead of selling only fresh bananas, they learned to market dried bananas all year round. Food processing and vegetable pickling helped them earn income and add value to garden crops. We also taught them how to make cheap baskets and bricks. In place of the traditional approach of only growing just rice and other farm produce, they learned how to produce other things, to be more imaginative.

The underlying benefit of increasing off-season employment and income generation in rural communities is that it gives people a greater economic stake in their communities. If villagers can derive more inclined to stay there instead of moving elsewhere, or migrating to Bangkok to seek jobs before and after the harvest. They will try instead to improve the situation around their homes and businesses. Basically, we tried to turn small farmers into small businesspeople, and to open up cooperative where the farmers could gain. PDA continues to promote this strategy of broad-based villager participation, similar to what was expressed twenty years ago when the organization was founded. Our approach requires looking to the people themselves for solutions, going into villages and finding out what people want and what their ideas are in dealing with their problems.

PDA has evolved from its rather modest origins—in a crowded, cluttered converted shop house on a little street off the busy thoroughfare known as Sukhumvit, to occupy currently an eight-story office building and compound containing a restaurant, cafeteria, health and sterilization clinic, handicraft store and staff housing. In addition, it has expanded and opened fourteen field offices in the north and northeast, from which the various project activities are launched. From a staff of 25 in 1974, PDA has grown to having 600 staff.

This expansion has not come without much time, effort and, of course, money. The total annual budget reached US\$12 million a year at its peak, when PDA was involved in a lot of refugee work. The present level is closer to US\$9 million, but this supports probably more development work than at the peak of funding. To share its experiences, PDA has now established an Asian Center for Population and Development, which has already given training to over 2,000 people from forty-seven countries.

Most PDA projects have been funded by Western donor agencies, foundations and governments, which have come to trust the PDA's community based implementation approach, its experience in managing large-scale programs, and its commitment to benefiting the rural poor majority. PDA funds up to 40 percent of its annual expenditures through a variety of private businesses, some under the auspices of the Population and Community Development Company Ltd. (PDC). PDA holdings include the now-famous "Cabbages and Condoms" restaurant chain, started in Bangkok, with four branches in Thailand and one in Beijing, China. Plans are being drawn up to expand into other parts of the world. PDA also has a handicrafts store in Bangkok, which Mobil Oil and Oxfam helped to start, as well as numerous development companies located at its field offices. PDA profits go entirely to help fund PDA's work. Apartment rents, honorariums and fees that I often receive for speaking or serving as director of companies also go toward PDA's activities.

Noting the steady decline in foreign development aid and knowing that Thailand's rural development needs are still far being met, PDA has diversified to meet future needs through the Thai Business Initiative for Rural Development (TBIRD). This was conceived in the late 1980s and was further developed during a year I spent as a visiting scholar at the Harvard Institute for International Development. The program



recruits private businesses to finance the costs of development in individual rural villages. At the same time, employees of the companies work with the villagers to teach them basic finance, marketing and other business skill they will need to sustain themselves in the future.

Although the principal aim of the scheme is to provide villagers with local economic opportunities and a decent sustainable income, a corollary aim is to cultivate the private sector to assume part of the cost of rural development in Thailand, especially as foreign aid declines. Since its launching in 1998 with pioneering commitments by Volvo and Bangkok Glass, the program has grown to include projects in over 120 villages in the north. It increases the effectiveness of donor aid by recruiting private companies to bear much of the actual cost of rural development work in villages, making tax-deductible contributions through PDA. Companies have helped villagers to start an array of cottage industries, including silk weaving and basket making. Many of these are now independent and self-sustaining.

TBIRD has also been able to recruit companies to relocate part of their production base to rural areas, taking machinery to the people rather than vice versa. The most successful venture so far is that of Bata, the Canadian shoe manufacturer; 45 percent of its school shoes—six million – are produced in factories owned by rural cooperatives established with the help of PDA. Bata's success has helped convince other companies also to move production to the rural areas. Now the government is encouraging other companies to follow suit, for producing garment and leather goods, processing semiprecious stones and assembling electronic components. Not only has this stopped outmigration from villages where production has started up, but young men and women are returning home to their villages from Bangkok.

In 1996, a system of minimarkets is being established in villages, where village shopkeepers are organized to own 40 percent of a central supply company. In turn, these shopkeepers are encouraged to hold equity capital supply in the new factories being relocated to rural villages. All shopkeepers and factory owners will contribute 10 percent of profits to village activities for the less privileged. Some Bangkok companies have agreed to allocate 3 – 5 percent of their profits, of directors' fees and of directors' and staff bonuses toward expanding PDA activities mechanisms, PDA is achieving multiplier effects well beyond those that were first launched with its water jar program years ago. Of course such development efforts are all the more successful when the villagers are able to participate as owners and can watch the value of their investments grow over time.

**Note:** I would like to thank Pamela Mar, program officer with the Thai Business Initiative for Rural Development, for her assistance in preparing this chapter.



## The Mechai Pattana School: A New Road to Education Provision in Rural Thailand<sup>1</sup>

The Mechai Pattana School, known as the Bamboo School, is a secondary school located in Lam Plai Mat district in Buriram. The school was established in 2009. It was co-founded by the Mechai Viravaidya Foundation and the Population and Community Development Association (PDA) with the aim of providing a boarding school for children from rural households.

The Mechai Pattana School was designed to be a lifelong learning center and the center for the improvement of quality of lives of rural people. It aims to bring up 'good' people who value honesty, equality and sharing and have life skills, professional skills, and management capabilities. Furthermore, the school works to help parents and villagers in the communities in the vicinity to have a better quality of lives and higher incomes.

In order to achieve the aforementioned purposes, the Mechai Pattana School develops three crucial factors for education achievement including the development of subject areas, the improvement of teaching methods, and the adjustment of the school's role to provide 'a lifelong learning center and the center for the improvement of quality of lives of rural people'. In details, parents and villagers in the communities in proximity can access to professional trainings offered by the school such as skill trainings for agricultural businesses and techniques.

The school's buildings and dormitories are made of bamboo. Students from all over the country can apply for the recruitment in which senior students choose the freshmen through interviews with the applicants and their parents. Nowadays, the students are from 22 provinces in Thailand. They do not have to pay tuition fees. Instead, they are required to do good deeds for society for at least 400 hours and plant at least 400 trees annually. Moreover, the students must participate in the school's administration in various ways such as welcoming and introducing their school to the visitors, taking part in the school's equipment purchasing processes (the monitoring process included), recruiting teachers, and evaluating the teachers' teaching performances. The committee of the student leaders engages in looking after the students in general.

The Mechai Pattana School focuses on enhancing its students to think, ask and research. Also, it encourages the students to think outside the box but, at the same time, live on Thai valuable culture and living their ways of lives in harmony with nature. These principles aim at supporting the students to learn with joys among changes in societies. They also respond to Thailand's education policy an aim of which is to enhance people's sustainable quality of lives and learning in the 21st century. To

<sup>1</sup> Summarized by Sopit Cheevapanich, Lecturer, College of Politics and Governance, Mahasarakham, Thailand.



build up the students' capabilities, the school arranges outside-school learning activities in various places particularly in the international schools. The Meechai Pattana School is unique in providing courses for an enhancement of students' life and professional skills especially the social entrepreneur skills. It believes that possessing these skills, the students will have good jobs and lives in the future. They will live in their families and communities with happiness. Also, they will not abandon their hometowns to find jobs in the cities.

In order to be prepared as a social entrepreneur, the students are given the opportunities to be trainees in various private companies during semester breaks. In addition, the school establishes a fund through which the students self-organised as groups can access loans for businesses. Students can also access loans to run businesses with their families and the elderly. This is because the school believes that it has a mission to help the students' parents to get out of poverty. Apart from a provision of business and agricultural trainings for students, the school offers trainings for villagers and the elderly. The trainings include doing businesses and growing crops in new ways, household accounting, learning about solar powered households and hygiene, and building water reservoirs for agriculture.

From the concrete success of the school program, the school has been accepted as one of a few schools in Thailand for its "educational innovative". Recently, the school has assisted the Ministry of Education in supporting the small-size schools especially the schools with the marginalized groups of students and those located in rural areas (76 schools and 146 villages) under the School-based integrated Rural Development Project (School-BIRD) and Village Development Partnership (VDP), funded by private and educational sectors.

Under the school's development project, more than 150 public schools have requested Meechai School to support the agriculture projects, 76 of them with 50-250 students have received the support. In addition, Meechai School has worked for the ethnic students in the border area, the disabled students, the marginalized groups of students with funding from the private sectors. Most of the funding has been spent on the agriculture project to eliminate the poverty and set a fund for the students and the families who live in poor conditions.

Meechai School plans to support 60 schools by 2016 and covers more ethnic students and the students from neighboring countries such as Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia who live in the border area so that the students and their families could practice life and working skills as one of Meechai School's strategies. The supported schools will become a life-learning center for the community members and people in the rural areas including the establishment of the local enterprises and be a business opportunity for the students, families and the community members in order to create a good living conditions and be a sustainable way.

Such project comprises of 5 main components:

1. Participation in the school's activities and strengthening the community
2. Training on the agriculture business and farming in form of local enterprise

3. Training for the development of teachers, students, families and community members
4. Developing a loan fund and saving for students and families
5. Developing the school's facilities, hygiene and water for students

Village Development Partnership (VDP) conducted by Meechai School is the development project for the village aimed to eliminate the poverty. The project does not rely on the social work but rather strengthening the villagers to have a business skill, while developing living conditions of the villagers based on the participation approach.

Co-development project aims to create the partnership between the villagers and the donors through Meechai School. The activities have run through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which provides various forms of activities based also on the corporate policy, resource and the specialization upon their support. The knowledge on doing business has empowered the villagers to start their small and local business which is the main mission in developing the rural area and integrate the business skills of the corporate and the social skills of Meechai School.

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## Fighting Corrupt Nexus of Politicians-Civil Servants in a Democracy: Case Study of India

*Sanjiv Chaturvedi*<sup>\*</sup>

### Background

India became a free country, after years of British Colonial Rule, on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947. After independence, India adopted a constitution on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950, after lengthy deliberation in the constituent assembly, having representation from all the communities and religion and consisting of some of the greatest intellectual minds of the time who had also played a very active role in the peaceful and non-violent freedom struggle against the Britishers. The Indian constitution is the largest constitution of the world and it has elaborate provisions on each and every subject of polity and governance including fundamental rights, directive principles for the government, separation of powers between Judiciary, Legislature And Executive, distribution of resources between Center and Provisional Governments, division of subjects under jurisdiction of Center and Provincial Governments etc. Even after more than 65 years, the constitution is working successfully and has stood the taste of times. The constitution adopted by the country was a federal one in which major issues concerning the life of citizens including land, law and order, health and education were put into exclusive jurisdiction of State Government while the subject of defense, foreign affairs, railway and tele-communication were put into union list. However, at the same time in view of the historical realities, certain unitary features were also adopted into the constitution, giving control of the union over the states (provincial governments).

The feature of 'All India Services' is one such feature of the constitution. Under the Indian system of polity, there are three kinds of services – a) Provincial services, officers of which serve only under the concerned State Governments, b) Central Services, officers of which serve only under the Central government for e.g. Indian Foreign Service, Indian Revenue Service, Indian Railway Traffic Service etc. c) All India Service, consisting of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service(IFS), which are recruited by Central Government to serve in both Central and State Governments and occupy all the strategic positions in both the governments. Their final control and disciplinary power rests with Central government. The concept of All India Services is a unique one to the India. The founding fathers of the constitution had great faith in these services as expressed by Sardar Patel, the first Union Home Minister in Constituent Assembly

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<sup>\*</sup> Deputy Director of AIIM, India, Honorable Speaker in The 4th International Conference on Magsaysay Awardees: Good Governance and Transformative Leadership in Asia, 31 May 2016. Resource person of PDA.

***“The Union will go- you will not have a united India. If you have not a good all-India service which has the independence to speak out its mind, which has a sense of security that you will stand by your work and that after all there is the Parliament, of which we can be proud where the rights and privileges are secure..... This Constitution is meant to be worked by a ring of Service which will keep the country intact.”***

India has a system of permanent civil services. Under Indian constitution there is a separate chapter on matter of ‘Services’. The constitution provides proper safe guards to check arbitrary/mala fide sacking of civil servants and has laid down certain mandatory conditions involving principles of natural justice to be followed in such cases. In case of All India Services, the officers are recruited by Central government through Union Public Service Commission and State Governments have very limited powers regarding disciplinary matters of these officers including suspension and imposition of departmental penalties. Even in these limited matters, Central government has complete powers to overrule the State Governments.

In Indian system, the secretariat of various ministries of the Central Government is run by officers belonging to Central Services and All India Services, on a deputation basis where any officer belonging to any service can be posted in any department for a fixed period of deputation which is maximum upto 5 years. In case of All India Service officer, they are eligible for such central deputation after completion of 9 years of service in their respective state cadre allocated to them. Under various constitution provisions and statutes governing the disciplinary matters of officers, elaborate procedures for initiation of departmental penalty and serving of departmental chargesheets has been provided. The cardinal principle is that delinquent official should be given proper opportunity to explain his version and only the officers in the rank of or superior to the appointing authority can impose departmental punishments. There are two kinds of departmental penalties- a) minor penalty, which includes Censure, stoppage of increments and recovery of losses caused to the government and b) Major penalty, which includes removal/dismissal/ compulsory retirement from service and demotion. The process regarding imposition of major penalty is much more elaborate, involving appointment of an enquiry officer of appropriate rank and proceedings are analogous to the court proceedings. Similarly in case of transfers also, fixed minimum tenures of two years have been notified in most of the State Cadres and Central Services. Further there is a detailed system of writing of Annual Performance Appraisal Reports(APAR) in which efforts have been made to make it as objective as possible and based upon the delivery of target by concerned officers.

However even after such an elaborate system of permanent civil services, wherein they have not only been provided security of tenure but also very strong safe guards against arbitrary removal from the service, corruption in the public services has become a rampant issue, particularly in past few decades. A powerful nexus of corrupt bureaucrats and politicians has emerged over the years, which has robbed financial and natural resources of the country with almost perfect impunity. It is because of this corruption that despite being a resource rich country in terms of water resources, soil,



mineral, bio-diversity and having the largest youth population of the world, the country has a very pathetic situation when it comes to the basic human development indicators like sanitation, drinking water, health services and access to the education. There have been many efforts to control and check the rising menace of the corruption, which includes bringing a very effective yet simple and user friendly transparency Act (Right To Information, Act, 2005) and intervention of judiciary through the instrument of Public Interest Litigation(PIL). The RTI act is a universal act and the entire government, under central and State Government, are covered under it. There is a statutory time limit of 30 days to provide the information failing which penalties may be imposed upon the concerned Public Information officers and in extreme cases disciplinary proceedings may also be recommended against them. Under this Act, there is a mandatory clause of self-disclosure of information related to the budgetary allocation, and functioning of the concerned government organization. This Act has given a sense of empowerment and also a sense of participation to the general citizen in Government affairs. Similarly, public interest litigation has also emerged as a powerful instrument to check and punish the corrupt. Under the constitution, the judiciary has been given vast powers and it is perhaps one of the most powerful judiciary in the world. The High Courts at the level of provinces and Supreme Court which is the highest court of the land have been given powers of writ jurisdiction, which also includes Writ of Mandamus under which courts have power to give directions to the government to perform their statutory duties. The instrument of PIL has its genesis in the decade of eighties when the Supreme Court took cognizance of a petition sent through post card. In later years, many landmark judgments were passed by the Supreme Court and the concerned high courts on the issue of corruption, environment protection, human rights, status of prisoners, food security, criminalization of politics etc. At present all the major corruption cases including 2G scam and Coal scam, are being investigated under monitoring of Supreme Court.

Regarding anti-corruption mechanism, at the level of State Government, cases are registered and investigated by State Vigilance Bureaus. At the level of Central Government, this function is performed by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is supervised by Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). CBI can take over the investigation of cases related to the State Government only with their consent or with orders of High Court/Supreme Court. In every Ministry/Department/Autonomous organization of the Central Government there is a post of Chief Vigilance Officer which works under supervision of CVC in matters of corruption involving government employees. The CVO is nodal co-ordinating authority for disciplinary proceedings against them and on the basis of his preliminary report, CBI initiates detailed criminal investigation.

## **A. Issues in Environment Sector Encountered During Tenure in State Forest Department (August 2005-June 2012)**

### **1. Case of Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary, Kurukshetra**

During the very first posting, as Divisional Forest Officer, of Kurukshetra district (October 2006-May 2007), this case was encountered. This was the largest protected area of the state spread over thousands of acres and home to rare species of flora and fauna, including Hogdeers. In year 2007, the State Government of Haryana, which was state cadre allocated to me, decided to build a canal, a substantive portion of which was supposed to pass through this sanctuary. This project was simply a, political stunt as there was no provision for source of water into the said canal, which was under litigation between three neighboring states in Supreme Court. Further this canal had potential of change of natural drainage system of the local area which resulted in heavy floods in coming years. Even then on political consideration and to benefit influential contractors, this project was given a go ahead under the blessings of Chief Minister of the state which is the highest functionary of the State Government. Because of the blanket political support the contractor of the irrigation department, wreaked havoc in the wildlife sanctuary area, falling thousands of green trees, causing habitat destruction and indulging in poaching of rare species of Hogdeers. I tried to stop this destruction and criminal cases against the contractors under the provisions of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 was registered. However, the State Government became annoyed with me because of these actions and immediately after this, I was shunted to a remote station called Fatehabad, in June 2007. The issue even did not leave me at this new place of posting and in July 2007 I was served a proper official warning by the State Government for this so called 'defiance' in stopping the work of project. After my removal from the scene, the matter was taken up by an NGO called Wildlife Trust of India, based on media reports on my removal. A case was filed by them before Central Empowered Committee (CEC) constituted by Hon'ble Supreme Court to monitor the cases of violation of forest and wildlife acts and the related orders of Supreme Court. The CEC passed final orders in July 2008 in which it found the State Government guilty of various violations and ordered them to deposit an amount of rupees one crore as compensation for the destruction caused in the wildlife sanctuary to be used for the conservation work inside the sanctuary. The State Government complied with these orders and after this judgment, the State Government did not dare to repeat the same illegality in any other protected area of the state.

### **2. Case of corruption in Fatehabad, Herbal Park.**

The State Government had made a very ambitious scheme for popularization of Herbal trees and plants through establishment of herbal parks in every district of the state on Government Lands. However, in case of fatehabad district, the work of development of herbal park which involved expenditure of crores of rupees of public exchequer was deliberately undertaken on a barren and difficult land belonging to a very influential and political powerful leader of ruling party of the state, who later on



became independent legislature, supporting minority government from outside and was made chief preliminary secretary of forest department also. Thus this case was a direct example of creating private assets with public funds as all the assets including civil structures and plantation being developed on the said private land, would have naturally belonged to the owner of the land. When I stopped this illegal work and reported the entire matter to the head quarter, I received threatening calls and finally even head quarter, after formally recording the annoyance of forest minister, directed me to immediately continue this work. Later on, I was even placed under suspension in August 2007 for so called insubordination in both these cases. After my suspension this issue was taken up by another NGO called Ekta Parishad which filed a PIL before Supreme Court in year 2008 from where it was referred to the CEC. In this case also, fearing adverse judicial orders, State Government had to declare this private land as a protected forest area under section 38 of India Forest Act, 1927 and had to transfer its management to the state forest department in February 2009.

### **3. Jhajjar Plantation Scam**

The state of Haryana has one of the lowest green covers in the country and so there are number of afforestation projects going on in the state with funding from multi-lateral agencies like Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA), European Union, World Bank and also with the funds from Central government. Because of depleting green cover, the table of ground water has fallen to dangerous levels in most parts of the state and having direct impact on the agriculture, which is the main profession of the people of the state. Apart from this, the green cover is also very important for the state to prevent its desertification, from western side. In Jhajjar district, in year 2009, when I joined, a large scale project, for afforestation and poverty alleviation through formation of self-help groups of women, was being undertaken, with funds from JICA. After joining, in January 2009, when I made a Ricci survey of the entire area, I found that most of the plantation was only on paper and even the seed capital money deposited into the accounts of women forming self-help group, was siphoned away with connivance of the field staff and village committee. Since the entire field staff of the district was involved in this scam, hence it was extremely difficult to initiate action and under these circumstances I persuaded the authorities at the head quarter to form checking teams comprising of senior officers from neighboring districts. These checking teams carried out comprehensive checking for 2-3 months which finally substantiated my initial reports regarding massive corruption. On the basis of these reports, around 40 field officials were placed under suspension and departmental charge sheets were issued to them, which was one of the largest such action in the history of the state and was carried out inspite of intense political pressure as the son of the then state chief minister was contesting parliamentary election at that time and the said area fell within his constituency and so there was enormous political pressure. However I was able to continue at that place because of election code of conduct of parliament being in force and therefore I had to work on a war footing to ensure that all the field checking and paper work is completed in any case by May 2009, the time by which this code of conduct was effective. After lifting of the code of conduct, the chief minister of the state himself

ordered to transfer me to another district. However by that time all the departmental chargeheets were served and therefore subsequently large amounts were recovered from the salary of delinquent officials after conclusion of disciplinary proceedings.

#### **4. Subsequent harassment and intervention of Central Government, Supreme Court and President of India.**

a. Because of my anti-corruption actions hitting the nexus of powerful politicians and bureaucrats including my senior officers, I was transferred twelve times in five years 2005 to 2010 and was even put without any work for many times. The maximum tenure enjoyed by me was of seven months in Kurukshetra district. I was also placed under suspension in August 2007 for my so called 'insubordination' in stopping illegal destruction of Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary and illegal expenditure of public funds in creating a private herbal park at Fatehabad District. On the same issues I was also served a major penalty departmental chargeheet in September 2007, which if succeeded, could have resulted in my dismissal from the service which was my only source of livelihood. Again in year 2013 I was served a second major penalty departmental chargesheet, trying to implicate me in the same jhajjarplantation scam which was exposed by me only. The departmental chargesheets are a very favorite instrument in the hand of politiciansto break the morale of honest officers as during the pendency of departmental chagesheets, all the career prospects of the officer, including promotion, deputation, foreign assignments, etc. are denied which is a very frightening scenario for any career bureaucrat. Besides this, the State Government also tried to downgrade my grading in Annual Performance Appraisal Report which if succeeded could have prevented my subsequent promotions, again a very damaging possibility.

b. Apart from the above actions, I was subjected to numerous false criminal cases. First of such case was got registered in Fatehabad District in December 2007 on the charges of theft of a petty ornamental tree. The incident was shown to take place in February 2007 while I had taken over the charge of Fatehabad District in June 2007 and hence the Police was forced to file the cancellation report, however, no action was taken against the persons responsible for registration of this FIR, under political pressure. Before that, a false vigilance case was got registered in May 2007 on the basis of complaint of an influential hotelier, whose encroachment on forest land was removed under my orders. In this case also vigilance authorities had to file closure report in my favor and State had to prosecute the encroacher. The most dangerous case was registered against me in December 2009 on the very serious charges of abetment to suicide under section 306 of IPC, which is a cognizable and non-bailable offence, when dead body of one of the forest range officers suspended in multi crorejhajjar plantation scam was found at his residence. Initially his father,



complained to the police this as a case of murder by his girlfriend but police acting under the political pressure of the then Chief Minister, registered it as case of abetment to suicide and inserted my name as one of the main accused though my name was nowhere in the complaint filed before the police. I had to suffer this case for six years during which five special investigation tem (SIT) were formed and I was harassed to the hilt but no evidence was found against me. Even the high court of the state was misled by these elements into ordering the formation of sixth SIT in February 2015 without hearing my side. However after my submission wereput on record the high court recalled its earlier order. Besides these cases, some other false cases/complaints and even a criminal defamation case was lodged against me in year 2012, however all these cases were dismissed by Courts subsequently finding no merit. Even then these cases resulted in tremendous mental harassment and wastage of time and resources, just to defend myself.

c. After these harassments, went beyond a limit I submitted an extra ordinary Memorial to the Central Government which constituted a two member enquiry committee to investigate the matter in September 2010. The committee gave its exhaustive report in December 2010 wherein it found all my allegations true and severely indicted the then State Chief Minister, State Forest Minister, and senior politicians and bureaucrats in the case. The committee recommended comprehensive criminal investigation against them by Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI). However the State Government did not agree for the CBI investigation and hence I had to move a direct writ petition before the Supreme Courtin November 2012. The Supreme Courtadmits direct Writ petition in only rarest of rare cases but it admitted the said case in view of the gravity and substance of the case and issued notices to Central government, CBI and State Government. The Central government and CBI supported CBI investigation before the court but the State Government because of involvement of senior politicians and bureaucrats of the State, opposed CBI investigation. Now the matter is listed for final decision.

d. In my case, a record number of four orders were passed by President of India, against the illegal orders of State Government in my service matters, which is a record in case of any officer, in the history of independent India. The first Presidential order was passed in January 2008, quashing the suspension order, second Presidential order was passed in January 2011, quashing the departmental chargesheet issued by the State Government and similarly the third Presidential order was passed in October 2013, quashing the second departmental chargesheetissued by the State Government and fourth Presidential order was passed in January 2014 though which my annual grading ofappraisal report was restored back to the Outstanding after this was brought down to zero by the highest authorities of the State Government. Apart from these

record number of Presidential interventions, even Prime Minister officer sought report of the case from time to time.

e. Because of the continuous and unending harassments from all sides in the State Government, I decided to join deputation under Central government and applied for the same in year 2011. After an elaborate process, I was selected to work as Deputy Secretary and Chief Vigilance Officer in Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in Central Government, in May 2012. However the annoyance of the State Government was such that it even refused to relieve me for the central deputation assignment. Once again in an extra ordinary order, overruling the State Government, the Central Government ordered my direct relieving. All these developments, including the above mentioned four Presidential orders took place when the same party was ruling in both Central and State Government and therefore this episode reflects resilience of Indian Democracy also. Finally with the intervention of the Central government I was able to join in June 2012 as Deputy Secretary and CVO in All India Institute of Medical Sciences(AIIMS), New Delhi, under the central ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

f. Throughout this anti-corruption campaign, I got tremendous support from general public, lots of media coverage, support from some very genuine NGOs and even the matter was repeatedly raised in the state assembly by the opposition parties. During all these struggle, frequent use of RTI Act was resorted by me and it was only through the documents, correspondences and the file noting received under RTI Act that I was able to prove my case effectively before the courts and the Central Government. However my reputation of anti-corruption, proved to be my biggest weakness when I applied for the central deputation as no ministry was agreeing for my placement and it was only after the support of some well- meaning senior officers that I could get posting in Central Health Ministry.

#### **B. Issues in Health Sector, Encountered During Tenure as Chief Vigilance Officer in AIIMS, New Delhi (June 2012-July 2014)**

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is the most premiere medical institute of the country, which is visited by around 10,000 patients on a daily basis. It is an autonomous body established under a parliamentary statute and its budget is of thousands of crores of rupees and besides that its heavy extension work is going on in bordering state of Haryana involving seven thousand crore rupees civil works including largest cancer center of the country.

Because of my earlier reputation in anti-corruption work, the Department related Parliamentary Committee attached with Central Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and having representations from all the major political parties, had taken a



written commitment from the then Union Health Secretary to make me CVO of the institute, to check rampant corruption there involving senior institute officials and doctors.

The very first case I encountered was, a very difficult one having connections with highest level political functionaries. A private chemist shop was allowed to be operated into institute premises, whose owner was an ex-legislature belonging to ruling party and was infact selling dubious medicines into institute premises, to the poor patients visiting the place and one such consignment worth crores of rupees was caught by Delhi police but main accused were let off under political pressure. When I received a number of complaints regarding ill effects of the medicines sold from this shop, I issued notices to them and the result was that, my premature transfer proposal was sent by the ministry to Civil Services Board(CSB). However, CSB headed by cabinet secretary, did not approve the said proposal and instead sought explanation from health ministry for sending this premature transfer proposal when tenure was fixed for four years. When parliamentary committee came to know of this development, it also issued notice regarding apparent breach of privilege to the senior most functionaries of the ministry. All this prevented my removal for the time being.

In next two years, I successfully concluded action in a number of corruption cases, against senior institute officials, the details of which are as below:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Case</b>
VineetChaudhary, IAS, 1982 Batch Himachal Cadre then DD(A), AIIMS and now Additional Chief Secretary, Himachal Pradesh.	Case registered by CBI on 09.01.2014 for illegal extension of Superintending Engineer Mr. B.S Anand to supervise 3750 crore rupees expansion project and for other financial irregularities in Engineering works; major penalty proceedings got approved by then Union Health Minister on the basis of investigation done by Applicant, for various corruption cases including appointment of consultants, in engineering works, misuse of official vehicle at the rate of 150 km per day consistently for a period of two years and treatment of pet dog at Cancer Center.
Sh. ShaileshYadav, IPS, 1993 Batch, Tamil Nadu Cadre, now Police Commissioner Trichi and then DD(A), AIIMS	Multi crore scam in giving tender to a favourite private security agency on the basis of forged documents; CBI case registered in September, 2013 and Major Penalty proceedings of ShaileshYadav got approved in May, 2014.



All India Medicos (Private Chemist Shop) opened into the institute premises	As per documents sent by Delhi Police and Ministry of Home Affairs, it was owned by Mr. Ashok Ahuja, Ex. MLA and having very influential political links; used to sell dubious medicines and a consignment of crores of rupees of spurious medicines, also seized by Delhi Police in April, 2013; the shop got evicted and performance guarantee of Rs. 52 Lac forfeited on account of various violations.
Mr. B.S Anand Superintending Engineer	Got terminated in March, 2013; had very strong political nexus and was given extensions in blatant violations of AIIMS Act to supervise 3750 crore rupees expansion project by the then Union Health Minister, despite his basic degree being of ITI and that too in the area of air conditioning and refrigeration.
Mr. Raju Singh, Chief Medical Officer	Departmental Chargesheet for major penalty proceedings issued for forceful deployment and harassment of an institute employee, for domestic work; regular inquiry concluded in February, 2013 and the matter is to be put up before Governing Body for final approval.
Mr. V.P. Gupta, Ex Registrar	His encroachment of government accommodation was evicted forcefully in February, 2014 and major penalty proceedings at last stage for massive corruption in academic section.
Mr. R.C Anand, Ex. Medical Superintendent	Entire pension and gratuity forfeited on corruption charges.
Mr. Rajiv Lochan, Deputy Chief Security Officer	Suspended and CBI case registered for financial irregularities in tendering to a private security agency on the basis of forged documents.
Mr. Attar Singh, Chief Administrative Officer	Major penalty proceedings initiated for favouritism in recruitment-post retirement benefits withheld.
Mr. C.S Bal, HoD Nuclear Medicine	Penalty imposed for unauthorized foreign visit to France and Turkey without any intimation to the institute.
Sh. S.S. Bhaduria, Store Officer, CN Centre	Penalty of compulsory retirement and deduction of 50% in pension for a period of 5 years imposed in a case of financial irregularity related to purchase of store items detected during a CBI raid.



Sh. S.P. Vashisht, Sanitation officer	Penalty of compulsory retirement imposed in a case of financial irregularity related to purchase of store items detected during a CBI raid.
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In none of these cases, any of the accused officials could get any relief from any court of law. Apart from the cases of corruption, the action included cases of unauthorized absence, insubordination and sexual harassment. In some of the appropriate cases, even summary proceedings were successfully applied. During this period around twenty cases were referred to CBI and central vigilance commission (CVC) for criminal investigation. However a very powerful section of politicians and bureaucrats was annoyed with all these anti-corruption actions which choked there source of illegal income. During this two year tenure, apart from large number of successful actions in individual corruption cases a number of systematic changes were also introduced to streamline purchase processes, to check misuse of fake proprietary certificates, problem of absenteeism etc. A new free generic medical shop was got opened into institute premises, to be operated by a Public Sector Unit. A transparent system for the payment of wages and other benefits to the thousands of contractual employees of the institute was successfully implemented where salary slips were issued to each of them having complete break up of all the entitlements with proper system of monitoring.

Because of enmity of these powerful vested interest, I had to be removed by the ministry in August 2014 from the post of the CVO of the institute. There was large scale hue and cry in the media on this removal and even Prime Minister of India had to seek report on this issue. Around 250 faculty members wrote to the Prime Minister for bringing me back as CVO apart from Student Union and Employees Union.

The subsequent period was very troublesome and in many ways a repeat of what I had to face in state of Haryana. This can be understood from the fact that between February 2015 to February 2016 I had to approach the service tribunal around six times on various issues ranging from promotion, appraisal reports, work allocation and deputation proposals. Meanwhile after getting a land slide majority in elections of Delhi Assembly in February 2015, the new Chief Minister Mr. Arvind Kejriwal, who is also a recipient of Magsaysay Award, sought my services as officer on special duty (OSD), however even that request did not find favor with concerned authorities and even after the repeated interventions of tribunal the matter is still pending. In almost all the cases, pending before the tribunal, decision came in my favor, and because of their intervention I got promotion last year and also my State Cadre was changed from Haryana to Uttara hand after the Tribunal quashed the orders of Appointment Committee of Cabinet (ACC) head by Prime Minister against me.

Regarding the corruption cases initiated during my tenure and still pending, a PIL was filed by one of the most reputed advocates of the country Sh. Prashant Bhushan, on which notices were issued by Delhi High Court to Central Government, CBI, CVC, AIIMS and Union Health Minister in his personal capacity.



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## Health Systems in Burma: Creating Unity, Peace and Sustainability

*Cynthia Maung\**

### **Introduction:**

#### **Conflict, Health and Peace Building Among Burma's Border Populations**

Communities in Eastern Burma have been living with civil war for over 60 years. Protracted conflict and widespread and systematic human rights abuses have had severe impacts on the health of civilian populations, with health indicators from these areas highlighting a 'chronic emergency'.

Even with the current ceasefires and the resulting reduction in conflict in Karen State, health organisations working with populations on the Thai Burma border are treating a mobile population which moves back and forth across the border in order to access their basic needs including safety, work, education and health.

Mae Tao Clinic has been working with clients from Burma living along the Thai Burma border for over 25 years. It has worked with local Thai government health and public health since the beginning. There is a massive disparity between health services in Thailand and those in Burma, which is why about half of our clients travel from Burma to access health services. In Burma, there is a similar level of disparity between health service access availability in the urban and rural areas. Access for rural communities is extremely poor due to both the lack of facilities and health workers, as well as prohibitive costs. In Thailand, many migrant workers have come looking for work in Thailand, in order to pay the health bills of family members living in Burma.

When envisioning a nation of healthy citizens in Burma, the social determinants of health need to be addressed and communities need to feel empowered to address their health needs, by improving living conditions such as ending conflict, removing land mines, having access to land, work place safety, safe water, safe housing, minimising financial risks and improving access to education, health, legal and social services.

At the same time essential health services are not a privilege, but a basic need. People need to know how to protect themselves and to promote their own healthy communities. The current proposal for Universal Health Coverage is not sustainable and does not empower communities. Tax reform may be the first step in revenue generation for building a health system, however, working with communities to empower them to engage with the issues that affect them is a step that must be made at the same time.

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\* Director of Mae Tao Clinic, Myanmar. Honorable Speaker in The 4th International Conference on Magsaysay Awardees: Good Governance and Transformative Leadership in Asia, 31 May 2016.

In the absence of government health services, and in a context where international aid agencies were denied humanitarian access, indigenous health workers in ethnic minority areas have mobilised to provide life-saving care to their communities. With the changing political situation and fledgling peace in Burma, these health workers now face new opportunities and challenges. Health has the potential to play a key role as a bridge to peace in Burma.

### 1. Community health systems in Burma's conflict areas

Decades of civil conflict and widespread and systematic human rights abuses had severe impacts on the health and wellbeing of communities in Burma's border areas. Health indicators from Burma's eastern border areas have been found to be far worse than those reported for the country as a whole.

	Eastern Burma 2004	Eastern Burma 2013	Burma (National)	Thailand
Infant Mortality per 1,000 live births (IMR)	91	94.2	26.7	11
Under 5 Mortality per 1,000 live births (U5MR)	221	141.9	34.9	13
Child malnutrition %	15.7	16.8	7.9	
Maternal Mortality per 100,000 live births (U5MR)	1,000-1,200	721 (2008) <sup>3</sup>	230	48
Maternal malnutrition %	16.7 (2008)	11.3		
Backpack Health Worker Team. 2004. Chronic Emergency Backpack Health Worker Team. 2004. Chronic Emergency HISWG. 2014. Long road to Recovery – Ethnic and community based health organisations lead the way to better health in Eastern Burma. <a href="http://hSWG.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/The-Long-Road-to-Recovery-2015_Eng-1.pdf">http://hSWG.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/The-Long-Road-to-Recovery-2015_Eng-1.pdf</a> Parmar PK et al. Health and human rights in eastern Myanmar prior to political transition. BMC Ministry of Health. 2013. Health in Myanmar World Bank. Data – Indicators. <a href="http://data.worldbank.org/indicator">http://data.worldbank.org/indicator</a>				

Over the past twenty-five years, a network of indigenous healthcare providers has grown into a strong system for health service delivery in Burma's conflict-affected borderlands. Working as part of ethnic health organisations or of community-based health organisations, indigenous health workers have provided primary healthcare for displaced and conflict-affected communities.



The **ethnic health organisations (EHOs)** were initially established under the authority of armed ethnic groups, and are the building blocks of healthcare provision in areas that were historically controlled by these armed groups. The Karen Department of Health and Welfare, Shan Health Committee, Mon National Health Committee and Karenni mobile Health Committee all recruit and train local health workers, and support the delivery of healthcare services in their respective areas. Services are provided through a mix of both village outreach and community clinics, with a focus on preventative and primary healthcare.

The **Back Pack Health Worker Team (BPHWT)** was established in 1998. BPHWT is a multi-ethnic community-based organisation, which provides mobile healthcare services to communities who have little no other access to health services. With over 300 health workers, BPHWT now serves a target population of approximately 250,000 villagers in Karen, Karenni, Mon, Shan, Kachin, Chin and Arakan State, and in portions of Pegu, Tanintharyi, and Sagaing Divisions of Burma. Each team of 3 to 5 medics serves a target population of 2,000 villagers. The teams work in partnership with a network of over 300 Village Health Workers and over 700 Traditional Birth Attendants. Over time, the organisation has developed a community health care system in its different target areas. The teams can access very remote and unstable areas; they refer severe cases needing more advanced care to clinics run by the ethnic health organisations or to hospitals in Thailand and Burmese Government Township and sub township hospitals.

The **Burma Medical Association (BMA)** was established in Karen State in 1991 by a group of health professionals from Burma under auspicious of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). Over the years, BMA has supported community health worker training, health education outreach, collaborative forums, and technical assistance and training. BMA now serves as the leading body for health policy development and capacity building for the provision of quality healthcare services in ethnic areas of Burma. In 2015, BMA supports 42 clinics serving more than 500 villages, providing primary healthcare services including reproductive and child health services, medical care and community health promotion education to approximately 180,000 people across six states in Burma.

Over the past 25 years, these ethnic and community-based health organisations developed primary health services for more than 600,000 people living in conflict-affected and isolated communities in Burma. Services provided by the ethnic and community-based health organisations are based on a comprehensive primary healthcare model, and include: basic medical services, reproductive and child health, community health and disease prevention, and specialised health programmes. There are now around 250 primary healthcare clinics and mobile outreach teams, and a handful of secondary care facilities. Ethnic and community-based health organisations have a workforce of approximately 2,000 staff – medics, maternal and child/reproductive health workers and community health workers.

Since their beginnings, ethnic and community-based health organisations have found ways to work together, recognising the importance of developing common health policies, standards and protocols, and of standardising their health information systems and health worker training curricula. Together, these ethnic and community-based health organisations have worked to build a sustainable community-level primary healthcare system, which could provide health services and education in a context of civil war.

## 2. A fledgling peace and new challenges for local communities and health service providers

### 2.1 Ceasefire discussions, Burma's elections and ongoing insecurities

With the November 2015 elections and the signing by some armed ethnic groups of a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and the election of Burma's first civilian President, there is now much hope that Burma will finally see genuine political change and peace.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) won the November 2015 elections by a landslide. However, constitutional issues will continue to limit the power of the government, and the military will maintain a high degree of control. Tension between the military and the government is likely, and may cause further instability in the country.

In October 2015, the month before the elections, the Burmese government and eight armed ethnic groups signed a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. Yet this is a fragile peace. Throughout the negotiations, conflict continued between government forces and the Kachin Independence Army in Kachin State. The National Ceasefire Agreement is also not as inclusive as it needs to be, with only half of the recognised armed ethnic groups signing on, and the Kachin Independence Army, the Shan State Army and the United Wa State Army being notable absences. And while 14 out of 16 ethnic armed groups now have bilateral ceasefire agreements with the government, these ceasefires have not yet led to a political resolution to the conflicts in Burma.

The ceasefires have resulted in a reduction in fighting and increased freedom of movement for many people in eastern Burma. On the ground, the ceasefires are also making travel, communication and accessibility to health services easier, creating more stability for the work of service providers. Yet this fledgling peace also presents a number of new difficulties for local communities and service providers.

Local communities in eastern Burma face increasing dispossession and displacement driven by foreign investment and development projects, as well as ongoing human rights abuses. There has been growing encroachment by the military into areas previously controlled by armed ethnic groups. International investment in development projects is going ahead without public consultation, and there are still no



real protection systems for communities at risk of dispossession and displacement. Existing legal frameworks and the enforcement of these do not protect against land confiscation for development projects. There are currently plans for six dams to be built on the Salween River in Shan, Karen, and Karen States. Land confiscation often involves violence, as well as separating communities from their homelands and livelihoods. This is a growing driver of protest and unrest, potentially undermining the peace process.

The election of a new NLD government and the appointment of a civilian President brings some hope for the changes necessary for building a healthy nation. Yet, the government has huge barriers to overcome to bring about lasting peace and to build a genuine federal democracy with the empowerment of communities at its heart.

## **2.2 A highly centralised government and healthcare system**

Within this current political situation, the ethnic armed organizations are continuing to strive for a federal system of government. However, there is an on-going disconnect between the ceasefire negotiation process and ethnic peoples' aspiration for a federal political structure. Meaningful constitutional change will be a slow process and until then the Burmese government will have a highly centralised administrative, legislative and financial system. Without decentralisation, effective improvements in health and education, as well as justice and protection, will be minimal.

Burma's official health system is highly centralised. The central government has exclusive legislative power over health policymaking, with state/region governments having only a coordination role. All the financial, legislative and administrative powers are central. Healthcare facilities are directly administered by the Ministry of Health, and are centrally funded, with fiscal authority resting with parliament and Ministerial-level officials. The Ethnic Health Organisations are therefore trying to negotiate for devolution of powers

Additionally, and while providing the backbone for primary health service delivery in remote border areas, ethnic and community-based health organisations are still not officially recognised in Burma. Some 2,000 skilled primary healthcare providers have no official recognition and are not legally allowed to provide healthcare in their communities. Yet their work remains essential for communities in Eastern Burma.

Historically, international donors and Non-Government Organisations had funded the ethnic and community-based health organisations, as a way to support healthcare for local communities who had little to no other access to even basic services due to government disinvestments in health and restrictions on international humanitarian access. However, since Burma's 2010 elections, a number of major donors have withdrawn support from these systems, preferring to work with the Burmese government and to fund aid programmes that are implemented with government approval. As a result, ethnic and community-based health organisations have faced an increasingly precarious funding situation. Although a number of donors and INGOs

continue to support these systems, there is a risk that indigenous healthcare providers will be increasingly side lined, rather than gaining official recognition and accreditation as service providers in their communities. With increased optimism in the new government, the risk of losing funding community health services has only increased.

In Thailand, on the other hand, the Thai MoH is embracing collaboration with community health workers, as evidenced in their Border Health Master Plan. They are working with health workers from Burmese ethnic health organisations and community organisations in order to maximise their access to border communities, thus strengthening disease outbreak response, vaccination coverage and disease prevention campaigns.

The Burmese ministry of health has the potential to play a key role in peace building by collaborating with ethnic and community health organisations, as is already being done in Thailand. Indeed, although many challenges lie ahead, health can play a critical role as a bridge to peace in Burma.

### **3. Health as a bridge to peace in Burma? Current efforts and opportunities**

The ethnic and community-based service organisations view future opportunities for coordination and cooperation with the Burmese government as critical to improving the lives of people in eastern Burma. The concept of expanding and enhancing services through increased coordination between ethnic service organisations and the Burmese government has been broadly defined as “convergence”.

Over the past five years, ethnic and community-based health organisations have made concerted efforts to build dialogue and cooperation with those within official government systems, and to develop models of what “convergence” with government health systems could look like. There have been a number of practical examples on the ground of peace building and convergence in healthcare systems. Yet these examples also highlight current challenges to health truly becoming a bridge to peace in Burma, as well as difficulties and issues that need to be taken into account in the peace process.

#### **The Health Convergence Core Group**

These include the establishment of the Health Convergence Core Group in 2012, a group of ethnic and community based health organisations working in Mon, Karen, Karen, Shan, Kachin and Chin State. The HCCG aims to explore policy options for achieving the convergence of ethnic, community-based, state, and national health systems through political dialogue. The HCCG defines “convergence” as follows: *Convergence is the systematic, long term alignment of government, ethnic, and community-based health services.*



In many ways, HCCG members have led the way so far in engaging the government on health issues, having had multi-level stake holder meetings. An initial seminar held in 2014, bannered as 'Health as a Bridge for Peace' was held by HCCG actors and their technical partners on the Thailand-Myanmar border. The event was attended by 96 participants including MoH Kayin State department officials and others from central Burma such as the NLD Health Network, Myanmar Medical Association and Myanmar Health Assistance Association. A similar meeting was hosted in March of 2016.

So far, discussions with the Myanmar MoH have progressed and allowed collaboration in these key areas:

- The establishment of health coordination offices in four state capitals by ethnic health organisations
- Skill sharing and joint trainings with participants from both the Ministry of Health and ethnic and community health organisations
- Joint activities in mixed administration areas to address specific infectious disease threats: measles, rubella, filariasis and leprosy
- Cooperation to address the common threat of drug resistant malaria.
- Coordination to address geographic gaps and overlap in maternal and child health service provision, with particular efforts addressed at extending vaccination coverage.
- Inclusion of ethnic and community health representatives in important policy consultations such as Universal Health Coverage.
- Certification of some health workers as auxiliary midwives, and the adoption of national curriculum for the Certificate of Public Health Course for mid-level staff in the ethnic and community health system.
- Greater transparency of ethnic and community-based health organisation health care provision in areas of mixed authority

As a result of broader changes in the country, health organisations and their staff have benefited from improved transport links, supply chains, communication and security in the less isolated areas where they are working. While there have been small skirmishes throughout ceasefire negotiations, and reports of land rights violations, this has not affected service delivery, or the overall mood of cautious optimism in the peace process, including the opportunities it presents for expanding health programs.

### **Recognition and accreditation of health workers**

The recognition and accreditation of health workers from ethnic and community-based health organisations is essential to ensuring that medics aren't at risk of arrest, and that they are recognised as equals to government healthcare professionals. It is also a natural early step towards convergence, and to developing a joint approach toward addressing shortages of professional health workers in ethnic minority areas.

Steps in this direction have been taken, with for example, a partnership between ethnic and community-based health organisations, the Myanmar University of Community Health (UCH) in Magway, and Thammasat University in Thailand. Through the partnership, Ethnic Health Organisations and Community Based Health Organisations health workers are able to undertake courses with the UCH curriculum to receive UCH Public Health Service Accreditation. To date, a total of 140 health workers from ethnic and community-based organisations have been trained and accredited with the UCH curriculum.

While there are numerous potential avenues for further cooperation, inconsistencies between the types of health worker recognised by the Myanmar MoH and by the ethnic and community-based health organisations remain an obstacle for full standardisation. The MoH's priority in healthcare provision and training is disease-centred and hospital-focused, and centred on patients as individuals, rather than on healthy communities. In contrast, the systems of the ethnic and community-based health organisations are based more closely on a public health approach, emphasising a greater focus on population wide programmes, preventative care, and elements of population and social sciences. Decisions to prioritise earning MoH accreditation therefore potentially involve a trade-off of immediate practical benefits in favour of more long-term convergence aims.

### **Birth Registration**

One example of increased dialogue and cooperation between the government and community-based health organisations concerns birth registration. Officially, only accredited midwives can deliver babies and provide birth certificates. However, there is a chronic shortage of accredited midwives across the country, and none present in non-government controlled areas. Therefore auxiliary midwives and EHO trained MCH Workers who did not have official accreditation are not entitled to provide legal birth certificates, and many children in ethnic minority areas could not obtain legal documents. However, in a pilot project, BPHWT negotiated with state-level authorities, who have now allowed auxiliary midwives to obtain birth certificates by working together with government midwives.

### **Mapping of Health Services**

With the on-going peace-building, ceasefire and election processes, the country has opened up to international development and humanitarian assistance. The work of INGOs, is controlled by Naypyidaw with MoUs signed by the central government for work in specific areas. Because of the disconnect between the government and the ethnic health organisations, the programmes permitted by the government often ignore the existing services provided by ethnic health organisations. For decades, ethnic community health services have been the sole providers in conflict-affected communities, and the community health workers often have a high level of trust with villagers. There needs to be mechanisms in place to ensure that the skills and experience of EHOs and community organisations are not over-looked.



MoUs for international agencies are usually targeted at selected townships or at vertical programming such as malaria, or maternal health. Health programming needs to look at the comprehensive services required throughout the country, and this kind of isolated programming will just result in overlap or the creation of gaps. A national mapping of services, together with the communities, is a process that can prevent overlap and gaps, as well as promote community voices for understanding their own health needs.

Since 2015, a pilot convergence programme in Kawkareik, Karen State has begun, aiming to promote cooperation between government health centres and the ethnic and community-based health organisations, and to strengthen health systems in the programme's target areas.

The programme has involved the mapping of health services in Kawkareik, in order to identify and locate services provided by the government health centres and the ethnic and community-based health organisations. The programme also aims to standardise Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials as well as protocols for antenatal care, post-natal care and referral of obstetric emergencies.

The programme is still in its infancy. There have been some initial challenges in the mapping process, particularly since this involves overcoming decades of mistrust. This mistrust results from a history in which members of community and ethnic health organisations were considered "illegal" by the state and were detained and imprisoned. In areas of active conflict, health workers were killed because of their association with non-state actors. Health facilities and supplies were also destroyed, in a clear violation of medical neutrality.

In Burma, there are also more general discrepancies in information management and mapping, notably with ongoing divisions and lack of information sharing between the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) and the Health Information Systems Working Group (HISWG) of HCCG. These divisions are also linked to Burma's history of conflict and distrust. However, the gradual mapping of services in Kawkareik has already led to greater understanding and clarity in the provision of healthcare, as well as paving the way for further potential information sharing and trust building.

Mapping services can be seen as an essential component of building trust and lasting relationships between communities and government health services. After initial distrust, as mapping continues, so does openness and transparency about the work that is going on in each township. This openness will result in better health services, since overlap can be minimised and instead new health developments can focus on complimenting the already existing services. If the mapping is done together with the communities, then communities are also empowered to identify their own health needs. At the same time, deepened understanding of what services are available can result in health service referral systems and therefore widen the access to health care of communities. When health workers operating from the border areas and those

operating from the towns get together and discuss what is happening at the community level, they become able to share resources and develop important relationships.

### **Task-Shifting Approach**

By mapping services, it is possible for the government and communities to shed light on the reality of the extremely limited capacity of government health task forces and authorisation systems. Until now, Burma's health system has been strongly hierarchical with an official dependence on a severely diminished supply of officially accredited health personnel such as doctors, nurses and midwives. There is a significant urban-rural divide in the availability of health workers, and the disparity is more acute in non-Burman majority areas.

In the next stage of national health sector reform, a participatory national mapping exercise would help to recognise the potential of working with the thousands of local community health workers and auxiliary midwives who have been filling the gaps resulting from a neglected and under-funded health system. There needs to be a joint effort to recognise and utilise the existing skill sets in the country. Recognition of the role of community health workers will also empower the community role within the health system. Until now health workers have felt discriminated by and isolated from mainstream health systems. Examining and realigning the role of all the health professionals in Burma is necessary to build unity and cohesion among health professionals.

### **4. Ongoing challenges to health as a bridge for peace**

Key challenges to the vision and aims of the ethnic and community-based health organisations stem from the continuation of a centralised model of government administration in Burma. Health service delivery in Burma is still organised along a very top-down model, which does not allow for decision-making at more decentralised level, nor does it recognise the systems, resources or authority of ethnic and community-based health organisations.

While steps taken so far towards convergence represent significant milestones, the state remains on course to expand rapidly during the ceasefire period, and presents a number of risks to peace building. Development strategies pursued by the MoH with the backing of international donors and INGOs appear to be moving ahead with little space for input from those on the ground. This has resulted in service overlaps and gaps, in local human resources being poached by INGOs that offer higher salaries, as well as clashing with the strong community-managed primary healthcare approach that has been developed over the past decades in these areas.

Clinics are being constructed in numerous cases by INGOs in territories where the government has limited stable control, without consultation with community and ethnic health organisations. Five such cases have been confirmed and corroborated by a number of stakeholders in Thandaugyi, Hlaingbwe, Myawaddy Kawkareik, and Kyain Seigyи townships of Karen State. Meanwhile, some areas in Myawaddy and



Hlaingbwe townships appear to have attracted overlapping programmes of numerous INGOs, all guided towards specific areas rather than being part of a comprehensive primary healthcare approach. Such issues have been raised by community and ethnic health organisations in talks with the government, but have failed thus far to lead to a solution, and demonstrate a clear area for improvement.

Ultimately, the ethnic and community-based health organisations risk being further marginalised as the government increases its grip on national and international resources and continues to push forward a centralised model of healthcare provision.

### **5. Conclusions: ongoing challenges, the need for recognition and for trust building**

For health to act as a bridge to peace in Burma, health workers from the ethnic and community-based health organisations and from the government need to work together in joint efforts addressing health policy, health systems strengthening, and service delivery. Conversely, peace building concepts and practices need to become an integral part of health policy and planning.

With more than 20 years' experience and trust already built with communities inside Burma, ethnic and community-based health organisations are best placed to take the lead in working to strengthen the existing primary health care services in their areas. However, concrete solutions need to be found, whereby the systems and resources of the ethnic and community-based health organisations are recognised and provided with the authority necessary to operate legally in ethnic minority areas, instead of simply being co-opted by the central government.

The recognition of existing health systems in the different ethnic minority areas is therefore essential, not only for the future of Burma's healthcare systems but also for peace building in Burma. As part of this process, there is also a need for:

- Clear principles of partnership between the government health system and the ethnic and community-based organisations, increasing transparency and accountability in formulating and implementing health projects of central government and international health organizations
- Transparency and a clear understanding of systems and services provided by each the ethnic and community-based organisations and by government health systems, as well as the health status and access needs of these communities
- Dialogue between the ethnic leaders and the government during the transition process about the recognition, financing and integration of health systems supported by the ethnic and community-based organisations
- As part of health sector reform, a devolution of power to regional and local levels, strengthening and development of community participation and networks, in order to ensure a accountable, community-based and community-managed health care system
- Recognition of the role of community health workers and task shifting, and the development of strategies to attract and retain higher cadres of health workers in ethnic and remote areas of the country.

Ultimately, underlying these issues is the need to rebuild trust after decades of conflict. And having provided healthcare in their respective areas for decades, with the state representing a hindrance, a long process of trust-building will likely be necessary before a single health system becomes possible.

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## Policy Reforms to Improve the Quality of Public Services in the Philippines

*Maria Fe Villamejor-Mendoza\**

### Abstract

The last decade has witnessed significant government focus on quality service delivery and good public administration. Significantly driven by two broad factors: public sector inefficiencies, and liberal economic ideology, these reforms have emphasized public service that is high in quality, efficient, continually improving and responsive to the needs of the people and provided in a manner that is transparent, accountable, participatory and predictable, in terms of the application of the rule of law.

Against this background, this paper examines recent (2010-2016)<sup>1</sup> policy reforms in the public sector in the Philippines, which aspire to improve the quality of public services. These include governance reforms that aim to curb corruption, improve the delivery of public services especially to the poor, and enhance the business and economic environment of the country as a whole. Focus will be on reforms in government procurement, bottom up budgeting, seal of good (local) governance, anti-red tape, and citizen satisfaction index system.

The paper will be descriptive and exploratory, relying mainly on secondary materials on the topic at hand. It will study the nature and progress, challenges and concerns of these policy reforms, with the end in view of recommending ways forward to better and higher quality delivery of public services.

**Keywords:** Policy reforms/ Quality of Public Services/ Philippines

### Development Challenges

The Aquino III administration took office at the time when corruption was perceived to have undermined the economy and the credibility of the country (<http://www.gov.ph/aquino-administration/good-governance-and-anti-corruption/>). The President believed that the nation needed transformational change and a vision of governance beyond political survival and self-enrichment (<http://www.gov.ph/about/gov/exec/bsaии/platform-of-government/>).

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<sup>1</sup> During the President Aquino III Administration

Turning these challenges as opportunities to change mindsets and systems, the administration instituted a comprehensive set of policy reforms and good governance initiatives that aspires to engender a culture of integrity, accountability and transparency in the country. This was anchored on Aquino III's campaign slogan of "tuwidnadaan" (literally translated as "the straight path") arguing that "kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap" (, i.e., "if there is no corruption, there are no poor").

Recently, such strategy seems to have bore fruits. The Philippines has been among the dynamically emerging markets in the region with its sound economic fundamentals and highly skilled workforce. Growth in the Philippines is on average about 5% since 2002, significantly higher than the rate achieved in the previous two decades (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/philippines/overview>).

Amid global uncertainties and a string of calamities that hit the country that included typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda), the economy posted 7.2% GDP growth in 2013, driven by the robust services and industry sector, and boosted by strong household consumption and government spending. Growth momentum was maintained at 6% in the first half of 2014, and remained one of the fastest in East Asia region, surpassed only by China (7.4%) and Malaysia (6.3%) (Ibid)

While the country is making headway in the economic front, inclusive growth is not yet felt by many of the Filipinos in the bottom of the pyramid. Also, some 25% of our population is still poor (Philippine Statistical Authority, 2014). Thus the Philippine government needs to intensify efforts in reducing poverty, achieving universal primary education and in improving child and maternal health. It also needs to address the lack of good jobs among low- income earners, especially those from rural area where many poor people reside (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/philippines/overview>). It has also to deliver public services to its growing population not only efficiently and effectively, but also satisfactorily better in the new norms of good public administration and governance.

These challenges have been approached based on the Aquino III's philosophy of "good governance is good economics", which as earlier mentioned, is anchored on his campaign slogan of "kung walang corrupt...walang mahirap."(Fig. 1). Literally, this means, "if there is no corruption, there are no poor."

This basically summarizes his Social Contract with the Filipino people, which subscribe to good governance and anti-corruption as prerequisites to inclusive growth and poverty alleviation and all the progressive collaterals of development, e.g., lasting peace and the rule of law, integrity of the environment. A Governance Cluster within the Cabinet was also formed in 2011under E.O. 43, which was tasked to pursue the following:

1. Upholding transparency in government transactions and commitment to combating graft and corruption
2. Strengthening of the capacity of government institutions to link their respective budgets with performance outcomes and enabling citizens and civil society to monitor and evaluate these

3. A professional, motivated, and energized bureaucracy with adequate means to perform their public service missions
4. Improvement of public sector asset and resource management and revenue performance
5. Establishing an improved policy and regulatory environment that will reduce the cost of doing business in the country and improve competition (E.O. 43 s 2011).

This governance framework focuses on quality service delivery and good public administration. Significantly driven by two broad factors: public sector inefficiencies (corruption and low credibility) in the past, and liberal economic ideology, New Public Management, e-governance and New Public Service, these reforms have emphasized public service that is high in quality, efficient, continually improving and responsive to the needs of the people and provided in a manner that is transparent, accountable, participatory and predictable, in terms of the application of the rule of law.

Figure 1: The Governance Framework of the Aquino III Administration, 2011-2016



Source: NEDA 2010. Good Governance Cluster Plan 2011-2016

Against this background, this paper examines recent (2010-present) policy reforms in the public sector in the Philippines, which aspire to improve the quality of public services. These will include governance reforms that aim to curb corruption, improve

the delivery of public services especially to the poor, and enhance the business and economic environment of the country as a whole. Focus will be on reforms in government procurement, bottom up budgeting, seal of good (local) governance, anti-red tape, and citizen satisfaction index system.

The paper will be descriptive and exploratory, relying mainly on secondary materials on the topic at hand. It will critically study the nature and progress, challenges and concerns of these policy reforms, with the end in view of recommending ways forward to better and higher quality delivery of public services.

### **Policy Reforms and Good Governance Initiatives**

#### **A. Open Government**

The Philippines is one of the eight founding members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The OGP is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In the spirit of multi-stakeholder collaboration, OGP in the Philippines is overseen by a Steering Committee composed of representatives from government, business and civil society organizations (Governance Cluster, 2014).

For the second OGP Plan (2013-2015) nine commitments were included which adhere to the core principles adopted by OGP- transparency, citizen participation, account ability, use of technology and promotion of public accountability innovation (Mangahas, 2014; OGP 2013-2015 Assessment Report).

To promote transparency, the Philippine government committed to disclose key plan and budget documents at the national and sub-national levels, develop a single portal where government data can be accessed in open formats, and support the passage of an access to information law.

For mainstreaming citizen participation, initiatives that engage civil society in sub-national planning and budgeting, and audit of key infrastructure programs were implemented. Commitments to promote public accountability include a law that protects whistleblowers, as well as participatory audit. As part of its commitment to utilize technology for transparent and efficient processes, the government will enhance its electronic procurement system through the addition of e-bidding functions (Ibid.)

While these commitments are independently implemented by various government agencies, they collectively address the three main OGP challenges such as 1) increasing public integrity; 2) more effectively managing public resources; and 3) improving public service delivery.

All these are embedded in the Governance Cluster and the Good Governance Initiatives under the Aquino III administration.



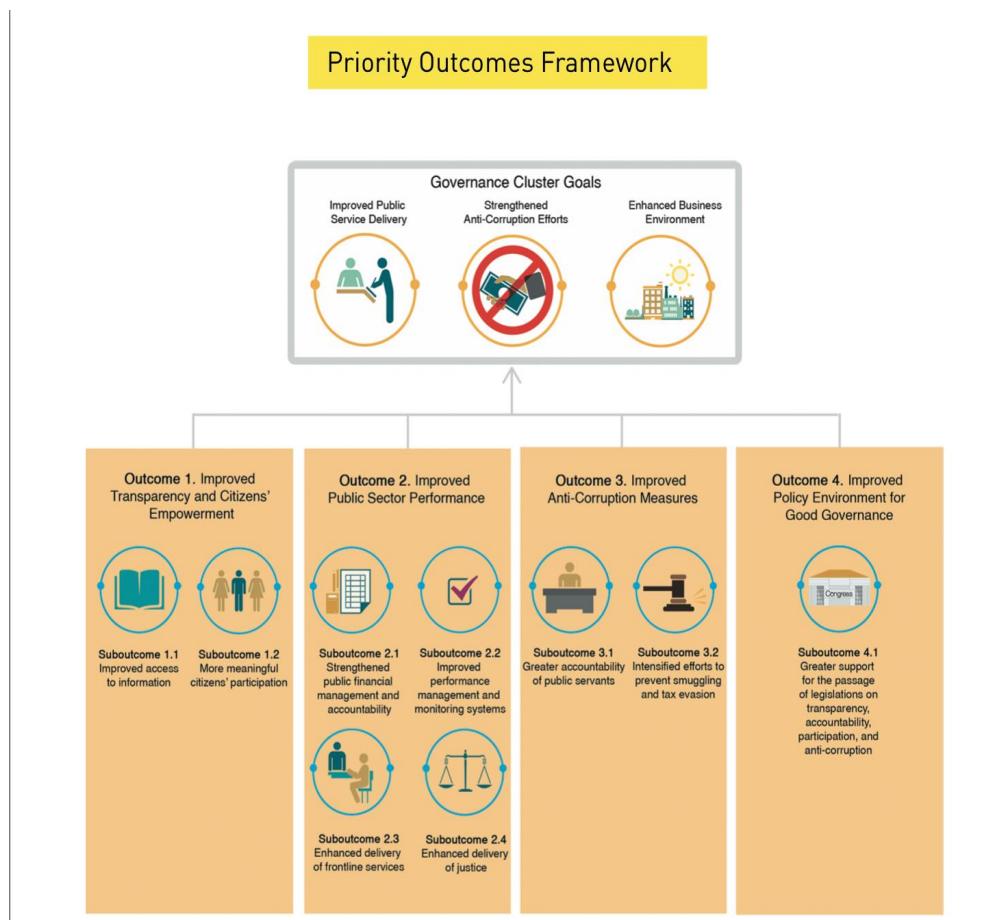
## B. Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Goals

To achieve the goals of the Cluster, an Action Plan was crafted that outlines the key reform programs or initiatives of the Aquino administration in pursuit of good governance (NEDA, 2011). This includes the goals of the Governance Cluster of improved public services delivery, curbed corruption, and enhanced business environment, with the following priority outcomes identified for 2013-2016:

1. Improved transparency and citizens' empowerment
2. Improved public sector performance
3. Improved anti-corruption measures
4. Improved policy environment for good governance

For each outcome, sub-outcomes were identified. Indicators for each sub-outcome are tracked for the corresponding initiatives included in the Plan. These goals and outcomes are shown in Fig. 2 below:

Figure 2: Policy Outcomes Framework of the Philippines, 2011-2016



Source: Cabinet Cluster on Good Governance 2014 Good Governance Initiatives of the Aquino Government 2013-2016 A Primer

### C. Outcomes

As explained in the Governance Cluster Action Plan for 2011-2016, these outcomes in Fig. 2 are below:

#### Outcome 1. Improved transparency and citizens' empowerment.

Transparency, as defined, is the exercise of openness in government processes, actions, and decisions through regular disclosure of pertinent information to the public, ensuring citizen's access to information on government affairs, and effectively communicating to the public (UNDP, 1997).

In its broadest sense, empowerment is the expansion of freedom of choice and action. It means increasing one's authority and control over the resources and decisions that affect one's life. As people exercise real choice, they gain increased control over their lives (Governance Cluster, 2011)

##### Sub-Outcome 1.1. Improved access to information.

Access to information as mandated by law (Article 3, Section 7 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution) is a requisite for good governance. Further, various policies have been issued that mandates LGUs to make local plans, reports, and budgets publicly accessible. These include provisions from the Local Government Code and the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information disclosure is not an end in itself, but elements of transparency should be considered, such as accessibility, timeliness, and quality of disclosed information.

Sub-Outcome 1.2. More meaningful citizens' participation in governance processes. Good governance entails opening as many areas of governance as possible to the participation of stakeholders, particularly civil society groups, grassroots organizations, business, academe, and development partners, among others. Crucial areas for participation are the planning and budgeting process and monitoring government performance.

#### Outcome 2. Strengthened public sector performance.

Sub-Outcome 2.1. Strengthened public financial management and accountability. Public Financial Management (PFM) is a system of rules, procedures and practices for government to manage public finances. It encompasses budgeting, accounting, auditing, cash management, management of public debt, revenue generation, and public reporting on public sector financial operations. PFM seeks to address the key challenges of controlling government spending and making agencies operate efficiently and effectively. It drives government policy-makers, managers, and implementers to ask: Is government spending within limits? Is it spending on the right things? Does it obtain best value for money? In the long run, a sound PFM contributes to better delivery of government services to the people (Governance Cluster, 2011).



**Sub-Outcome 2.2. Improved performance management and monitoring systems.**  
Performance monitoring, evaluation, information, and reporting are essential components of an effective and efficient performance management system. Crucial to measuring performance is how it leads to results and how these results contribute to a higher order goal. One mode of performance management is through an incentives system where good performance is rewarded.

Similarly, good performance of the public sector leads to effective and efficient delivery of services to the people. This could pertain to frontline services of national and local governments that are regularly accessed by citizens for personal and business concerns.

**Sub-Outcome 2.3. Enhanced delivery of frontline services.**

As defined in the Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) of 2009, frontline services refers to the process or transaction between clients and government offices or agencies involving applications for any privilege, right, permit, reward, license, concession, or for any modification, renewal or extension of the enumerated applications or requests. Enhancing the delivery of these services is a change that will be directly felt by the citizens. Improving business-related services such as registering a business name and securing permits is an effective method to attract investors, thereby contributing to economic growth.

**Sub-Outcome 2.4. Enhanced delivery of justice.**

When good governance is practiced, it ensures that those who are in power exercise fairness in managing public institutions and resources. It necessitates a system that not only enforces order but deters wrongdoing of citizens through punishments. Efficient delivery of justice translates to adherence to the principles of equitable, fair, and impartial administration of justice. It also entails a system that is adequate, inclusive, responsive, and sensitive to the rights of victims, accused, offenders, marginalized or vulnerable groups, and the general public.

**Outcome 3. Improved anti-corruption measures.**

**Sub-Outcome 3.1. Greater accountability of public servants.**

According to Robert Klitgaard (1998), monopoly of power, when combined with discretion and absence of accountability, will result to corruption. Thus, the formula  $\text{Corruption} = \text{Monopoly} + \text{Discretion} - \text{Accountability}$ . Article XI of the Philippine Constitution outlines provisions for the accountability of public officers. Further, Republic Act No. 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act defined what constitute corrupt practices. These may include persuading, inducing, or influencing another public officer to perform an act violating any rules or regulations duly promulgated, or receiving any gift in connection with any government contract or transaction.

**Sub-Outcome 3.2. Intensified efforts to prevent smuggling and tax evasion.**

As defined in the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, smuggling generally refers to the importation of prohibited commodities, as well as the mis-declaration/misclassification/undervaluation of imported goods or products. On the other hand, tax evasion refers to an illegal practice where a person, organization, or

corporation intentionally avoids paying its true tax liability. Both smuggling and tax evasion practices reduce government's revenues that will affect the capacity of government to provide for the needs of its citizens.

Outcome 4. Improved policy environment for good governance.

Sub-Outcome 4.1. Greater support for the passage of priority legislations on transparency, accountability, participation, and anti-corruption Policies provide the enabling environment to deter corrupt practices. Policies are necessary to make good governance more enforceable—that is, mandating transparency, accountability, and participation in government operations. Further, one of the modes to sustain good governance practice is by institutionalizing the reforms in our government processes. Existing policies need also to be amended to adapt to a changing political, social, and economic environment (Governance Cluster, 2014).

**D. Good Governance Initiatives**

In sum, the Governance Cluster goals aspire to “institutionalize open, transparent, accountable and participatory governance.” These could be achieved through various initiatives that could address the goals of again, curbing corruption, improving the delivery of public services especially to the poor, and enhancing the business and economic environment (Governance Cluster, 2014).

The 2013-2016 Governance Cluster Action Plan consists of 30 initiatives and 9 priority legislative measures. These include, among others, reforms in government procurement, bottom up budgeting, seal of good (local) governance, anti-red tape, and citizen satisfaction index system. The list and description of these initiatives are in Figs. 3 and 4 below.

Figure 3: List of Good Governance Initiatives  
Under the Aquino III Administration, 2011-2016

Initiatives	Implementing Agencies
<b>Outcome 1. Improved Transparency and Citizens' Empowerment</b>	
<b>Sub-outcome 1.1. Improved access to information</b>	
1. Transparency Seal	DBM
2. Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) Software Modernization	DBM
3. National Government Portal	PCDSPO
4. Open Data-Philippines	PCDSPO, DBM, OPS
5. LGU Disclosure Portal	DILG
6. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)	DOF
<b>Sub-outcome 1.2. More meaningful citizens' participation in governance processes</b>	
7. Citizens Participatory Audit	COA
8. Grassroots Participatory Budgeting Process	DILG, DBM, NAPC, DSWD, NEDA
9. Civil Society Engagement in the National Budget Process	DBM
<b>Outcome 2. Improved public sector performance</b>	
<b>Sub-outcome 2.1. Strengthened public financial management and accountability</b>	
10. Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS)	DBM, DOF, BTr, COA
11. Comprehensive Human Resource Information System (CHRIS)- National Payroll System (NPS)	DBM, DOF, COA, BTr, DOST
12. Local Government Units Public Financial Management (LGU PFM)	DBM, DILG, DOF, NEDA, COA
<b>Sub-outcome 2.2. Improved performance management and monitoring systems</b>	
<i>Monitoring Initiatives:</i>	
13. Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)	DILG
14. Anti-Red Tape Program	CSC
15. Citizen Satisfaction Index System (CSIS)	DILG
16. Medium-Term Information and Communication Technology Harmonization Initiative (MITHI)	DBM, DOST, NEDA
17. Monitoring and Evaluation of Government Services	NCC
18. Cabinet Performance Contracts	OCS
<i>Incentive Systems:</i>	
19. Performance Challenge Fund (PCF)	DILG
20. Results-Based Performance Management System (RBPMs)	AO25 Task Force (DBM, OES, NEDA, DOF, PMS)
21. Philippine Quality Award (PQA) for the Public Sector	DTI, DAP
<b>Sub-outcome 2.3. Enhanced delivery of frontline services</b>	
22. Business Permit and Licensing System (BPLS)	DILG, DTI
23. Gameplan for Competitiveness	NCC
<b>Sub-outcome 2.4. Enhanced delivery of justice</b>	
24. National Justice Information System (NJIS)	DOJ
25. Justice Sector Initiative	SC, DOJ, DILG



<b>Outcome 3. Improved anti-corruption measures</b>	
<b>Sub-outcome 3.1. Exact greater accountability of public servants</b>	
- Prosecution of High Profile Corruption Cases	IAAGCC
26. Revenue Integrity Protection Services (RIPS) Program	DOF
27. Income and Asset Declaration System Project	OMB
<b>Sub-outcome 3.2. Intensified efforts to prevent smuggling and tax evasion</b>	
28. Run After the Smugglers (RATS) Program	DOF-BOC
29. Run After Tax Evaders (RATE) Program	DOF-BIR, DOJ
30. Bureau of Customs Reform Project	DOF-BOC
<b>Outcome 4. Improved policy environment for good governance</b>	
<b>Sub-outcome 4.1. Greater support for the passage of priority legislations</b>	
1. Amendments to the Ombudsman Act	OMB
2. Freedom of Information Bill	PCDSPO
3. Civil Service Code	CSC
4. Uniformed Personnel Pension Reform Bill	DBM, DND
5. Whistleblowers Protection Act	DOJ
6. Amendments to the Witness Protection, Security, and Benefit Act	DOJ
7. Fiscal Responsibility Bill	DBM
8. Criminal Investigation Bill	DOJ
9. Criminal Code	DOJ

Source: Cabinet Cluster on Good Governance 2014 Good Governance Initiatives of the Aquino Government 2013-2016 A Primer

**Figure 4. Brief Description of the Good Governance Initiatives Under the Aquino III Administration, 2011-2016.**

**9. Civil Society Engagement in the National Budget Process (DBM)**

An initiative to enhance the policy framework and capacities of CSOs to participate in the national budget process. Select national government agencies (NGAs) and GOCs have been mandated to hold public consultations with civil society on their proposed annual budgets.

**OUTCOME 2. Improved Public Sector Performance**

**Sub-outcome 2.1. Strengthened Public Financial Management and Accountability**

**10. Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (DBM, DOF, BTr, COA)**

An integrated IT solution that will improve efficiency in the use of public resources through real-time online accounting, monitoring and control of public funds, an improved cash management system, and a more systematic recording of all real and contingent liabilities of government



**11. Comprehensive Human Resource Information System-National Payroll System (DBM, DOF, COA, BTr, DOST)**

An integrated system encompassing the full cycle of human resource management—from recruitment and hiring to retirement—initially focusing on a National Payroll System that will remove ghost employees in the government payroll, as well as ensure the timely payment of government employees' insurance premiums

**12. LGU Public Financial Management (DBM, DILG, DOF, NEDA, COA)**

An initiative that seeks to enhance fiscal and expenditure management among LGUs and selected national government agencies with oversight functions

**Sub-outcome 2.4. Enhanced Delivery of Justice****24. National Justice Information System (DOJ)**

A system linking the processes and databases on law enforcement, corrections, and judiciary for a holistic approach to crime prevention and resolution

**25. Justice Sector Initiative (SC, DOJ, DILG)**

Conduct of priority reforms in the justice sector, including the harmonization and simplification of criminal justice processes and inter-agency anti-corruption efforts and enforcement procedures, such as the monitoring of high-profile corruption cases

**OUTCOME 3. Improved Anti-Corruption Measures****Sub-outcome 3.1. Greater Accountability of Public Servants****\*Prosecution of High-Profile Corruption Cases (IAAGCC)****Subsumed under the Justice Sector Initiative**

Harmonization of inter-agency anti-corruption enforcement processes that are expected to result in the filing of strong cases—particularly against high-profile government officials suspected of corruption—in a collaborative and expeditious manner

**26. Revenue Integrity Protection Service Program (DOF)**

Enhance the capacity of RIPS to detect and investigate allegations of graft and corruption within revenue agencies

**27. Income and Asset Declaration System Project (OMB)**

Development of an IT-based system for electronic filing and disclosure of SALN of government employees

**Sub-outcome 3.2. Intensified Efforts to Prevent Smuggling and Tax Evasion****28. Run After the Smugglers Program (DOF-BOC)**

Program that focuses on monitoring or profiling, case-building, and prosecution of smugglers

**29. Run After Tax Evaders Program (DOF-BIR, DOJ)**

Initiative to identify and prosecute high-profile tax evaders, including deterring tax evasion through an extensive information campaign and periodic news reports on the prosecution of prominent individuals or entities engaged in tax fraud schemes

**30. Bureau of Customs Reform Project (DOF-BOC)**

Implementation of key reforms in the Bureau of Customs (BOC) that started with the appointment of new Deputy Commissioners and the creation of two new offices in DOF that will review the current system and propose policy and procedural reform to improve revenue collection and enable BOC to comply with international trade agreements

**OUTCOME 4. Improved Policy Environment for Good Governance****Sub-outcome 4.1. Greater Support for the Passage of Priority Legislations**

1. Amendments to the Ombudsman Act (OMB)
2. Freedom of Information Bill (PCDSPO) 
3. Civil Service Code (CSC)
4. Uniformed Pension Reform Bill (DBM, DND)
5. Whistleblowers Protection Act (DOJ) 
6. Amendments to the Witness Protection Act (DOJ)
7. Fiscal Responsibility Bill (DBM)
8. Criminal Investigation Bill (DOJ)
9. Criminal Code (DOJ)

Source: Cabinet Cluster on Good Governance 2014 Good Governance Initiatives of the Aquino Government 2013-2016, A Primer.



The detailed profiles and targets for 2013-2015 of each initiative are shown in the full Report of the Governance Cluster Action Plan 2013-2016. For the purpose of this paper, focus will be on the on reforms and initiatives in government procurement, bottom up budgeting, seal of good (local) governance, anti-red tape, and citizen satisfaction index system. These were selected because of the their greater potential in achieving the goals of civic engagement, promotion of transparency, curbing corruption and improving the delivery of public services.

#### E. Snippets of Good Governance Initiatives

##### 1. Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)

The PhilGEPS is an electronic bulletin board of bid notices and awards. The web portal seeks to establish an open, transparent, efficient and competitive marketplace for government procurement. The current PhilGEPS system was designed in 2004 and there is a need to re-design the system to include additional functionalities and related system integration, configuration and maintenance services. The initiative for 2010-2016 is a modernization of the software that aims to achieve the following: 1) Provide a total e-Government Procurement solution to achieve transparency in all stages of government procurement, i.e. from procurement planning to project management/contract implementation, 2) Ensure that the PhilGEPS can be linked with the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) for tracking budget and expenditure (Governance Cluster 2014).

The new system will be developed in phases:

Phase 1 – Installation of Base System Requirements	Phase 2 – Development of Management Information System	Phase 3 --Installation of features for e-Contract/Project Management (Contract Implementation) and linkage with the GIFMIS and other e-government systems
1. Annual Procurement Plan 2. Dashboard 3. Central Registrations Facility for System Administrators and Procuring entities 4. Site Administration 5. Government of the Philippines Official Merchant Registry 6. Electronic Bulletin Board 7. E-bid Submission 8. Bid opening, Bid	1. Pre-bid Conference 2. Procurement Management Information System (PMIS) 3. Financial Management Information System 4. Feedback Mechanism 5. Mobile Application for Android and IOS tablets and smartphones	

evaluation and Post-qualification 9. E-payment for the E-bid Submission 10. Security and Audit Logs 11. Integrated Notices Publication 12. Virtual Store (Common Use Goods) E-payment for Virtual Store		
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The Plan was for Phase I of the three-phase Software Modernization Program be completed by 2014. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is the lead agency for this initiative (Governance Cluster 2014 pp. 11-12).

## 2. Bottom Up Budgeting

Bottom up budgeting or BUB is now called Grassroots Participatory Budgeting (GPB). The initiative's main development objective is the empowerment of the citizenry in the focus municipalities for poverty reduction so they are able to participate in governance and benefit from inclusive and sustainable socio- economic development and sound political systems in their communities and the broader society. Grassroots organizations are mandated to take part in the crafting of Local Poverty Reduction Action Plans through their inclusion in the Local Poverty Reduction Action Team.

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), particularly its Office of the Undersecretary for Urban Poor, Informal Settler Families and Other Special Concerns, is the lead implementing agency, together with the DBM, the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) (Governance Cluster 2014, pp. 16-17).

## 3. Monitoring Mechanisms to Improve the Delivery of Public Services through

- a. The Seal of Good Local Governance
- b. Anti-Red Tape
- c. Citizen Satisfaction Index

### a. *Seal of Good Local Governance*

The DILG, in its unwavering commitment of scaling up interventions to elevate the practice of local governance that values development outcomes into institutionalized status, introduced the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) in 2014. The SGLG distinguishes exemplary inclusive local governance by putting premium on



performance measures, which are results-oriented. The SGLG aims for a condition where an LGU:

1. Sustains the practice of accountability and transparency, and espouses a proactive financial management (Good Financial Housekeeping);
2. Adequately and effectively prepares for the challenges posed by disasters (Disaster Preparedness);
3. Is sensitive to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized sectors of the society like Women, Children, Indigenous People and Persons with Disabilities (Social Protection);
4. Encourages investment and employment (Business-Friendly and Competitiveness);
5. Protects the constituents from threats to life and security (Law and Order and Public Safety)
6. Safeguards the integrity of the environment. At the minimum, comply with the mandates of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Environmental Protection) (Governance Cluster 2014, pp. 20-21).

The Seal of Good Housekeeping is in line with the Department's commitment to aggressively scale up interventions aimed at elevating the practice of good governance that values desirable development outcomes into institutionalized status. Recipients of the Seal are eligible to access the Performance Challenge Fund (PCF), a support fund to finance local development initiatives in furtherance of national government goals and strategic thrusts (DILG 2015).

*b. Anti-Red Tape.*

The Philippine Congress, recognizing the pervasive impression of inefficiency, passed Republic Act No. 9485, better known as the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007 (ARTA). The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has started implementing the Anti-Red Tape Program (initially via the Report Card Survey) in 2010. Since then, other program components have been added. The major activities of the program are as follows:

Conduct of ARTA-Report Card Survey (RCS) in high density/most complained agencies Section 10 of ARTA subjects all offices and agencies providing frontline to a Report Card Survey (RCS) to be initiated by the CSC, in coordination with the DAP, which will be used to obtain feedback on how provisions in the Citizen's Charter are being followed and how the agency is performing. Further, ARTA outlines that the RCS will also be used to obtain information and/or estimates of hidden costs incurred by clients to access frontline services which may include, but is not limited to, bribes and payment to fixers. Thus, the CSC has developed evaluation tools for the RCS and has drawn up plans for the conduct of the survey.

Surprise visits to government agencies in coordination with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (ARTA WATCH). The ARTA Watch, aside from being a mechanism to promote awareness and level of compliance of government agencies with the Act, also serves as a support to the ARTA RCS. The spot check is aimed at providing measures to agencies to correct/improve their frontline service delivery

based on the observations obtained during the visit, particularly on the posting of the agency's Citizens Charter, observance of the "No Noon Break Policy" and Anti-Fixer Campaign. The ARTA Watch Team also provides general information on the ARTA, CSC Seal of Excellence and Service Delivery Excellence Program during said visit.

Conduct of Service Delivery Excellence Program (SDEP) to agencies, which failed in the ARTA – RCS. The SDEP is one of the programs of the CSC designed for agencies to review systems and procedures and identify appropriate interventions to address concerns, if any. The result of the RCS will be the basis of the level of SDEP assistance to agencies. It is aimed at providing immediate solutions and assistance particularly to agencies, which failed to comply with its Citizen's Charter.

Awarding of the Citizen's Satisfaction Center Seal of Excellence to agencies with excellent rating on ARTA- RCS. The Citizen's Satisfaction Center Seal of Excellence Award is conferred annually to government agencies, which were subjected to the RCS and have demonstrated excellence in public service performance as selected by the CSC. It is awarded to agencies that passed all the areas of the RCS with an overall score of 90 – 100 points or a descriptive rating of Excellent and have passed the two-phased validation process.

All activities are undertaken on a service office level. For the purpose of this program, a service office is defined as an office under a government agency offering an array of face-to-face transactions/services to the public. Central, regional, provincial, city, municipal, district, satellite, branch and extension offices offering frontline services are all considered service offices.

The key performance targets and indicators of this Program are as follows:

Key Performance Indicators	Targets		
	2013	2014	2015
Percentage of surveyed service offices passing the ARTA-RCS	85%	95%	98%
Percentage of agencies with "Failed" rating provided with SDEP	100%	100%	100%
Number of offices assessed under ARTA Watch	614	820	1,023

Source: Governance Cluster 2014, pp. 21-22

c. *Client Satisfaction Index System (CSIS)*.

The CSIS is a set of data tools designed to collect and generate relevant citizens' feedback on local governments' service delivery performance. It conceptualizes the citizen as the center of local government performance. The CSIS will gauge the delivery of LGU services in the following areas:

- a) Health
- b) Education



- c) Social welfare
- d) Governance and participation (responsiveness of officials and local agencies, participation in local assemblies, peace and order)
- e) Public works and infrastructure
- f) Environmental management
- g) Agricultural management
- h) Tourism support services.

The CSIS data complements the Local Governance Performance Management System of the DILG. A target city or municipality has a sample size of 150 respondents regardless of population, with a +/-8% margin of error. Multi-staged random sampling is utilized wherein barangays, households, and respondents are randomly drawn in order to have a population-representative sample. Data gathering is administered by field interviewers using questionnaires, rating boards, and show cards (Governance Cluster 2014, pp. 22-23).

### **Progress and Accomplishments**

Based on self-assessment of the Aquino III government, the following are the (self-proclaimed) achievements of the good governance initiatives as of 2015 (Fig 4.).

Figure 4: Achievements on Good Governance of the Aquino III Government, 2011-2013

<b>Improved Transparency</b>	
	All 22 line departments complied with the mandate of posting a Transparency Seal in their websites where major information on budget and plans are posted.
	PhilGEPS now includes an e-bulletin board for posting of procurement activities and documents, automatic bid matching, and a virtual store for commonly used supplies.
	DILG adopted the full disclosure policy which mandates LGUs to post plans, budgets, and fund utilization reports in a designated web portal, print media, and in conspicuous places. As of 2013, 43% of LGUs have fully complied with the policy, while 57% have partially complied.
	The Electronic Transparency and Accountability Initiative for Lump-sum Funds (e-TAILS)—a page in the DBM website where citizens can access information on lump-sum funds—was also developed.
	An interactive website, Budget ng Bayan, was launched to help citizens learn about and access information on the national budget. The website features an interactive people's budget, budget cycle, and citizen's portal. The People's Budget, a less technical version of the national budget, was also published in print and electronic form and disseminated to the public in 2012 and 2013.

### Deepened Citizens' Participation

Budget Partnership Agreements (BPAs) were forged between government and civil society organizations (CSOs) as part of participatory budgeting initiatives. In 2012, six national agencies and three GOCCs were included in this exercise. This was expanded to cover twelve national agencies and six GOCCs in 2013.



More than P8.3 billion worth of priority poverty reduction projects for 595 cities and municipalities were identified through a grassroots participatory budgeting process. These have been incorporated in the 2013 National Budget and are currently being implemented. Furthermore, 1,226 cities and municipalities carried out participatory budgeting for the 2014 budget preparation process, and allocated roughly P20.0 billion for identified local projects in the 2014 national budget.



### Enhanced Accountability and Performance Measurement Systems



A performance-based incentive system (PBIS) was implemented on a pilot basis in 2012. Participation rate of national government agencies in the PBIS in 2012 is at 96% with more than 945,000 government employees granted with the performance-based bonus.



Activities to monitor the compliance of government agencies in the Anti-Red Tape Act have been conducted. In 2013, 725 out of 929 (78%) surveyed government service offices got Excellent or Good ratings in the 2013 ARTA Report Card Survey (RCS).



Seal of Good Housekeeping is conferred to LGUs that exercise transparency and sound fiscal management. In 2012, 1,365 or 86% of LGUs were awarded with the Seal.



As one of the building blocks for the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), the account code structures of government were unified and used in the preparation of the 2014 national budget. The design and implementation plan for the integrated system was also finalized in mid 2013.



Significant progress was made in resolving and going after corruption-related high profile cases, including the successful impeachment of the former Ombudsman and Chief Justice, as well as the pursuit of cases involving the former President, the former COMELEC Chair, and the dismissal from service of PNP officials involved in the anomalous procurement of helicopters, Senators and Congressmen involved in the PDAF scam, among others.

Source: Cabinet Cluster on Good Governance 2014 Good Governance Initiatives of the Aquino Government 2013-2016, A Primer

These numerous initiatives benefited from consultations with various stakeholders who recommended the streamlining of these initiatives to commitments with greater impact, wide reach and directly adhere to the Open Government Partnership principles.



As of 2014, the 30 or so initiatives were reduced to nine, as follows:

Commitment	Initiative/Program	Implementing Agencies
Sustain transparency in national government plans and budgets	Transparency Seal (National) Full Disclosure Policy (Sub-national)	DBM DILG
Support for the passage of legislation on access to information and protection of whistleblowers	Freedom of Information Bill, Whistleblowers Protection Bill	PCDSPO, DOJ, PLLO
Engage civil society in public audit	Citizens Participatory Audit	COA
Enhance performance benchmarks for local governance	Seal of Good Local Governance	DILG
Enhance the government procurement system	PhilGEPS Modernization	DBM
Strengthen grassroots participation in local planning and budgeting	Bottom-Up Budgeting Program	DILG, DBM, DSWD, NAPC
Provide more accessible government data in a single portal and open format	Open Data Philippines	PCDSPO, DBM, OPS
Initiate fiscal transparency in the extractive industry	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative- Philippines	DOF
Improve the ease of doing business	Game plan for Competitiveness	NCC

Source: Governance Cluster 2015. Philippine OGP Action Plan 2013-2015, Assessment Report Draft.

With the reduced number of initiatives, tracking of progress, reporting of progress and addressing the challenges should have become more effective.

### **Challenges and Prospects and Some Concluding Notes**

The scanning of assessment reports on the policy reforms and good governance initiatives of the Aquino III administration left the author with mostly self-assessments (and therefore more favorable reviews), interim reports and preliminary reviews. In fine, these assessments paint a favorable picture of successful or succeeding initiatives, with almost 75% of the targets met.

As of the last quarter of 2014, the Governance Cluster (2015b) reported that of the 30 initiatives that aim to curb corruption, improve service delivery and enhance the business and economic environment, 15 were on-time in their implementation and

with Good Performance (75-100% of milestones/KPIs are achieved); 12 were delayed in their implementation (by 3 months or less) and with average performance (50-75% achieved milestones/KPIs); and 3 were very delayed (for more than 3 months) with poor performance (less than 50% of milestones/KPIs).

Among the poor performers is PhilGEPS as the Phases 2 and 3 of the software modernization are not yet completed and additional functionalities have to be installed by 2015 (Governance Cluster, 2015b). Among the very good performers are on the Seal of Good Local Governance and the Integrated ARTA. This may be explained by the fact that these are mainly monitoring mechanisms that are tied up with incentives and awards. Local governments scoring high in the Seal are eligible for the Performance Challenge Fund (PCF), a P1-million support fund to finance local development initiatives in furtherance of national government goals and strategic thrusts. High scorers (excellent ratings) in the ARTA-Report Card System are awarded the Citizen's Satisfaction Center Seal of Excellence, which could be bragging rights of public agencies and service centers.

The interim report (Mangahas, 2014) meanwhile, raised some concerns such as more work has to be done; participatory road map has to be designed; "selectivity" in the choice of CSOs to be engaged in the processes has to be corrected; project is slow moving and disbursements were 'clouded with controversy' (e.g., the BUB appears to be politically infected and there is a need to insulate the process from partisan politics; in addition, the budgeted amounts for the BUB projects have to be verified because "it seems to be a discretionary fund like pork barrel,..."); lack of capacity for such participatory audits. In addition, particularly for the Seal, it needs to be validated by independent assessors or citizens and stakeholders at the town level in order not to make the award "a dime a dozen"; it is also "incentivized" by a grant of P1 million even as the requirements are "very low," that is, financial disclosure online of a few public funds documents, and getting Commission on Audit reports with no adverse findings.

The 'adverse' observations are basically to improve the implementation of these initiatives and enhance the capacity of stakeholders to do their parts in these reform initiatives. These are not harsh criticisms or very bad reviews. This may mean that the policy reforms and good governance initiatives are perceived to be successful or working well. This is complemented by the sustained high trust ratings of the present administration, despite recent controversies in the country (the Supreme Court ruling on the unconstitutionality of the pork barrel funds of the Legislature-Priority Development Assistance Fund or PDAF and to some extent, that of the Executive-Disbursement Acceleration Program or DAP; the Mamasapano incident and the peace process in Mindanao).

To be fair, though some of these initiatives have started as early as the Ramos and Macapagal administrations, these recent reforms have been perceived and accepted as good governance initiatives that work. Reports have it that good governance has contributed to some extent in curbing corruption, engaging citizens in governance, improving the delivery of public services as well as improving the trust and confidence of stakeholders, particularly investors, in government.



Consequently, the country's credit rating and competitiveness have improved. Our fiscal and macroeconomic fundamentals have improved as well, contributing to increased revenues and savings, greater economic and other gains. To what extent these are verifiable or have indeed trickled down to the poor, promoted the rule of law or contributed to inclusive growth is however another matter.

Nevertheless, fine-tuning and correcting infirmities as observed above have to be done in order to ensure that these initiatives are done more properly, consultatively and transparently. Alternative assessments of these initiatives are also needed. In addition, with the coming changing of the guards in 2016 as the present administration's term expires that year, efforts have to be exerted to sustain the gains in these policy reforms so that the quality of public service is continuously assured and the agenda of reforms for true and honest government continues. We should accelerate the momentum for the sake of our present and future generations.

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## In between the Everyday and the Invisible: Climate Change Perception and Adaptation among Filipino Children

*Kristoffer B. Berse\**

### Abstract

Children are highly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change (IPCC 2014) not only because of their limited physical, emotional and mental capabilities, but also because of the overall socioeconomic conditions that they are exposed to. However, there has been little information as to how children themselves understand and cope with the impacts of climate change and how other stakeholders—the city government, school, and households—provide “protective” services to address their unique vulnerabilities and capacities.

This study looked into the wide spectrum of climate-related risks affecting children in three communities in Malolos City, Bulacan, Philippines. Specifically, it explored the aggravating impacts of climate change on the “everyday risks” faced by children and their corresponding coping mechanisms following Lazarus and Folkman’s coping theory (1984). It then analyzed the measures being undertaken by the city, barangay, schools and families to protect children’s welfare. Upon identification and discussion of attendant gaps and issues, the paper ended with a set of recommendations to strengthen the resilience of children in the midst of a changing climate.

Primary qualitative data were collected through a series of focus group discussions and key informant interviews involving children, city and barangay officials, school teachers, and parents. Windshield surveys and non-obtrusive observation were also conducted in the study areas between September and October 2014. Secondary data were likewise culled from official documents provided by the Malolos City Government.

**Keywords:** Climate Change Adaptation/ Risk Perception/ Urban Children/ Philippines

### Introduction

As reported in the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), children are among the marginalized sectors that are highly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change (Oppenheimer et al., 2014), due primarily to their relatively limited physical, mental and emotional capabilities to cope with deprivation and stress. Their situation—and that of other health-compromised sectors—can be exacerbated by poor access to infrastructure and

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transportation, low incomes, limited assets, and dangerous location (Moser and Satterthwaite, 2009) affecting most notably their health, security and education.

This makes climate change highly discriminatory against those who have less capacity to adapt to the realities of changing temperature and precipitation patterns, sea level rise, and extreme weather events. As pointed out by Bartlett (2008: 1), “events that might have little or no effect on children in high-income countries and communities can have critical implications for children in poverty.” Indeed, the IPCC has noted that the coincidence of diseases and malnutrition in “areas of compound risk”<sup>1</sup> can have serious implications on the well-being of children. (Oppenheimer et al., 2014; Woodruff and McMichael, 2004)

The situation is aggravated by the fact that mainstream approaches and theoretical debates on disaster risk management tend to ignore the role of children and young people (Mitchell et al., 2009; Back et al. 2009; Peek, 2008). Current research tends to assume that children are passive victims of disasters with no substantive role to play in risk communication or disaster risk reduction planning (Ansell, 2005).

It is for this reason that in the Philippines, where about 45 percent of 5-17-year old children reside in urban communities (PSA, 2001), various organizations have started to look into the plight of Filipino children in the face of climate change. For instance, in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda which struck the country in November 2013, UNICEF conducted a five-day Youth Camp to raise awareness among children on climate change, disaster preparedness and how to care for the environment.<sup>2</sup> Child-centered disaster risk reduction is also now part of the program of work of many international non-government organizations operating in the Philippines, such as Save the Children, Oxfam, Christian Aid, and Plan International.

Yet despite growing anecdotal, project-based evidence on engaging children in various aspects of disaster risk management, an analytical understanding of how children view and respond to climate change risks remain nascent (Mitchell et al., 2009). This is particularly true and critical for the Philippines, which has a young demographic base and is highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change, ranking 4<sup>th</sup> worldwide in long-term climate risk index from 1995 to 2014 (Kreft et al., 2015).

This paper is a small contribution to fill this gap, using qualitative data from a case study on Malolos City commissioned by Save the Children - Philippines.<sup>3</sup> The study sought to understand the impacts of climate change on children and their corresponding perception and coping mechanisms. It then analyzed the adaptation measures being undertaken by the city, *barangay*, schools and families to boost the

<sup>1</sup>The IPCC defines an area of compound risk as “a region where climate change-induced impacts in one sector affects other sectors in the same region, or a region where climate change impacts in different sectors are compounded, resulting in extreme or high-risk consequences.” (Oppenheimer et al., 2014:1057)

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, “Empowering children and youth to be disaster-ready” in <http://goo.gl/06VTMT>.

<sup>3</sup>It must be noted that the findings reported herein do not reflect the position and opinion of Save the Children, but of the author only. The study is part of larger regional project on Climate Change Risks and Resilience in Urban Children in Asia, available at <http://pubs.iied.org/10738IIED.html>

adaptive capacity and resilience of the children. Upon identification and discussion of attendant gaps and issues, a set of recommendations were put forward to strengthen the resilience of urban children.

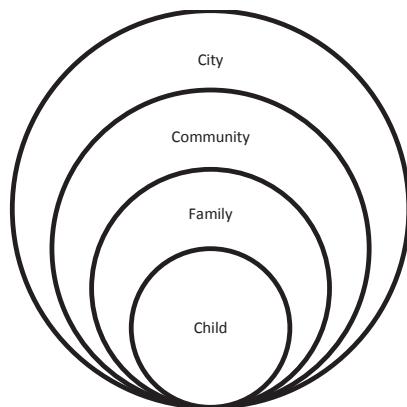
### Methodology

Malolos City was preselected by Save the Children as the site of the study, which was conducted in parallel with other city-level case studies in Danang, Vietnam and Khulna, Bangladesh. Within Malolos, three communities (i.e. *barangays*) were chosen for in-depth investigation, namely, Bangkal, Longos and Pamarawan. These areas were selected on the basis of their having a high concentration of children and regular exposure to flooding and other hydro-meteorological hazards.

Primary qualitative data were collected through a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIIs) involving children, city and *barangay* officials, school teachers, and parents. A total of eight FGDs and three group and individual interviews were undertaken involving 45 children and 38 adults. Among the children-participants identified and recommended by the *barangays*, 27 were males while 18 were females.

Non-obtrusive ocular surveys were also conducted between September and October 2014 as part of the research design to collect ground information and triangulate findings from the FGDs and KIIIs. Figures were culled from existing official documents such as the city's latest Ecological Profile and draft Shelter Plan, among others. Secondary sources on Malolos and the three *barangays* were mostly limited to what the city government provided through informational brochures and the city government website.

The study is guided by a four-level child-centered view of climate change adaptation. As shown in Figure 1, the children are placed at the core of the concentric circle to indicate their level of coping and self-protection based on their own understanding of climate change. The level of adaptation expands across social institutions, from parents at the household level to community officials and school teachers to the city government.



**Figure 1.** A four-level framework for child-centric adaptation to climate change.



## Review of Literature

### ***Children and climate change***

Climate change affects children in many ways. These impacts may be categorized into primary and secondary as suggested by UNICEF (2011). Primary impacts may be seen in the form of injury from disaster events and incidence of infectious, vector and water-borne diseases as a direct result of precipitation and temperature changes. It can also be indirect in the form of rising food prices and escalation of conflicts over scarce natural resources. Secondary impacts, on the other hand, would involve lifestyle and behavioral changes, migration and new livelihood practices normally outside the control of children.

As shown in Table 1, changes in precipitation patterns, temperature and sea level all have substantive effects on the socio-physical environments of children. Extreme weather events associated with climate change, such as floods, droughts, typhoons, heat and cold waves, and coastal storms and storm surges, have equally disruptive consequences on their lives, often leading to disproportionate loss of lives (Mirza, 2003).<sup>4</sup> In many developing countries, children comprise a big bulk of the death toll from disasters (Wisner, 2006).

In the long run, climate change has significant implications on children's health, safety, protection, education, play and recreation and social development (Chatterjee, 2015). In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, the expected decrease in crop yields by 2050 is expected to stunt malnutrition reduction efforts in the said regions even if economic growth is taken into account. (Lloyd et al., 2011) Children are likewise threatened by the increase in waterborne (Woodruff and McMichael, 2004) and vector-borne diseases due to rising temperatures (Van Lieshout et al., 2004; Rogers and Randolph, 2000), as well as by respiratory illnesses caused by indoor consumption of biomass fuels (Emmelin and Wall, 2007) and other climatic factors (Hashimoto et al., 2004).<sup>5</sup> In the context of urban areas in low- and middle-income countries, child mortality in informal settlements has been linked to extreme temperatures (Egondi et al., 2012, as reported in Revi et al., 2014) Outside of health and nutrition, children also suffer from the immediate and long-term human security impacts of displacement and migration due to climate change-related disasters, not to mention loss of livelihoods and eventual breakdown of economic structures in highly vulnerable areas. (UNICEF, 2008)

It must be noted that some children's groups are more vulnerable than others. Generally, children who are from poor families are at higher risk than their relatively well-off counterparts (Bartlett, 2008) due to limited access to infrastructure and services (Moser and Satterthwaite, 2009) that can boost their adaptive capacity. It has

<sup>4</sup>It has been reported that as much as eighty-five percent of deaths during disasters are women and children (CRED, 2000).

<sup>5</sup>See also Sheffield, P.E. and P.J. Landrigan, 2011; Watt and Chamberlain, 2011; and Ebi and Paulson, 2010.

been pointed out that among children, migrant children, children living in informal settlements, children living and working on the streets, child laborers and children with disabilities are the most vulnerable to climate change impacts (Chatterjee, 2015).

### ***Climate risk perception and coping***

Generally, there is a prevailing notion that children are simply passive victims of disasters that need protection from adults (Ansell, 2005). Empirical evidence, however, suggests that they can be effective partners in communicating risks, making decisions for reducing disaster risks, and even in other aspects of disaster risk management (Peek, 2008).

Key to tapping children as partners for disaster risk reduction particularly in the context of climate change is to understand first how they perceive the impacts of climate change in their localities. In a participatory action research conducted by Tanner (2010) in a Philippine community, risk perception was found to be related to gender and age differences. For example, “extreme weather” figured more prominently among children than adults as it directly affects their schooling and playtime. Global environmental problems were also observed more predominantly among children, primarily due to lessons that they learn in school.

It has been said that there are generally two coping strategies among children, namely, emotion-focused and problem-focused coping, which affect their well-being. The former aims to get rid of negative emotions or stressors such as through denial, avoidance and distancing; while the latter involves confronting the problem head-on by looking for information in order to form one’s own understanding of the situation (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Recently, a third approach has been proposed: meaning-focused coping (Folkman, 2008). It is also emotion-based but instead of removing negative feelings, it emphasizes “positive re-appraisal... finding meaning and benefits in a difficult situation, revising goals, and turning to spiritual beliefs” (Ojala, 2013: 2193). The relationship between these strategies and well-being has been found to vary across different contexts (Clarke, 2006; Folkman, 2008; Hallis and Slone, 1999; Landis et al., 2007; Ojala, 2012b), although it has been observed that children are less likely to employ problem-focused coping than adults (Ryan-Wenger, 1992).

**Table 1.** Impacts of climate change on children

Exposures due to projected change in climate	Consequences for children's socio-physical environments in cities	Implications for children's health	Implications for children's safety, protection, education, play and recreation, and social development
Warm spell/heat waves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Increased heat island effect</li><li>■ Declining urban air quality</li><li>■ Water shortage</li><li>■ Decreased water quality</li><li>■ Power outages</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Heatstroke</li><li>■ Asthma and allergic disease, bronchitis</li><li>■ Renal disorders from heat-related dehydration</li><li>■ Water-borne and food-borne diseases: diarrhoea, malaria, dengue, cholera</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Children living and working on the streets are most vulnerable to heat stresses</li><li>■ Children working in factories without proper ventilation and cooling for long hours are subjected to multiple health hazards</li></ul>
Heavy rainfall events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Flooding, strong winds and landslides</li><li>■ Disruption of public water supply and sewer systems, and adverse effect on quality of surface and groundwater</li><li>■ Damage and losses to physical assets and infrastructure: houses, public facilities and utilities</li><li>■ Disruption of transport, commerce and economic activities</li><li>■ Withdrawal of risk coverage in vulnerable areas by private insurers</li><li>■ Potential for population migrations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Drowning, injuries;</li><li>■ Ingestion of contaminated water leading to communicable water-borne and water-washed diseases: diarrhoea, cholera, hepatitis, leptospirosis</li><li>■ Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in populations displaced through natural disasters, which is often manifest in children through increased bedwetting and aggression</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Young girls and boys are at highest risk of flood-related fatality</li><li>■ No safe play spaces</li><li>■ Children living in unsafe housing in informal settlements without proper drainage are at most risk from non-communicable and communicable diseases and injuries</li><li>■ More children out of school due to illnesses</li><li>■ Poor children likely to drop out of school and engage in paid work to augment family income</li><li>■ Separation from families including due to death of family members, migrating on their own, child trafficking</li><li>■ Migrant children are more vulnerable: least likely to attend school; more exposed to violence; typically unreached by child protection services</li></ul>
Intense tropical cyclone			

Drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased water demand put stress on water resources; declining water quality</li> <li>■ Land degradation with lower agricultural yields and increased risk of food shortages; dust storms</li> <li>■ Potential for population migration from rural to urban areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Malnutrition</li> <li>■ Diseases related to poor hygiene and inadequate sanitation as water sources get depleted: diarrhoea, scabies, conjunctivitis, trachoma</li> <li>■ Pneumonia, measles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Forced migration occurs due to water stress and food shortage</li> <li>■ Internally displaced persons typically seek refuge in marginalised urban areas and in urban poor settlements</li> <li>■ Increased resource conflict exposes children to violence; girls and women especially vulnerable</li> <li>■ Increase in cost of food leading families to adopt adverse coping strategies such as removing children from school, selling assets, and compelling children to work</li> </ul>
Extreme high sea level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Permanent erosion and submersion of land; cost of coastal protection versus costs of land use relocation</li> <li>■ Decreased groundwater availability because of saline incursion into aquifers</li> <li>■ Increased effects of tropical cyclones and storm surges, particularly coastal flooding</li> <li>■ Loss of property, enterprises, livelihoods; damage to buildings from rising water</li> <li>■ Potential for population migration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased risk of deaths and injuries by drowning in floods</li> <li>■ Physical and mental trauma</li> <li>■ Highest health risks from salinisation of water supplies; long-term developmental implications for children</li> <li>■ Diseases related to poor hygiene and inadequate sanitation as water sources get depleted</li> <li>■ Water-borne, water-washed and food-borne diseases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Influx of displaced refugee children in cities</li> <li>■ Loss of habitat, loss of sense of belonging to place, loss of favourite places and friendship and social networks, loss of cultural identity, loss of play and recreation opportunities</li> <li>■ Disruption of children's everyday routines, healthcare and school attendance</li> <li>■ Increasing vulnerability for children in poverty, migrant children, girls in poverty; reduction in protection</li> </ul>

Source: Chatterjee, 2015.

In the context of climate threats, studies on how children view climate change is rather limited. Ojala (2012a, 2012b) reported denial-like coping strategies among children, as well as meaning-focused coping. Among Swedish adolescents and 12-year old age-groups, those who de-emphasized the seriousness of climate change (i.e.



emotion-focused coping) were found to be less likely to feel a high degree of environmental efficacy and demonstrate pro-environmental behavior (Ojala, 2012b; Ojala, 2013).

In contrast, in the same study among 12-year olds, it has been found that those were engaged in problem-focused and/or meaning-focused coping were more likely to report “high levels of environmental efficacy, pro-environmental behavior, optimism concerning climate change, and a sense of purpose” (Ojala, 2012b, as cited in EERB, 2013:8). However, there coping mechanisms were also observed to have contrasting effects on children: those who were pre-disposed to problem-solving were more likely to report negative feelings such as depression and anxiety; while those who resorted to meaning-focusing coping were more likely to experience life satisfaction and general positive effect.

## Results and Discussion

### *Disaster risk profile of Malolos City*

Malolos City is located in the Central Luzon region and shares territorial boundaries with different municipalities from all directions except in the south where it faces Manila Bay. Due to its geographic location, topography and climatic conditions, it is exposed to a number of hydrometeorological and geophysical hazards, including typhoons, storm surges, earthquakes, floods, and tsunamis.

Between 2006 and 2009, records from the Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) show that the province was visited by ten (10) major typhoons, leaving a death toll of 45 people. In September 2011, it was hit by Typhoon Pedring which flooded 23 barangays for almost a month, displacing 9,633 people and causing damage to 227 residential units and five school buildings. It was hit again by another strong storm in July 2014 (Typhoon Glenda), although the damage has not been as extensive as in the case of Typhoon Pedring.

The city is also highly susceptible to flooding. Its gently sloping terrain of 2.17% makes certain areas prone to inundation. Continuous heavy rainfall, typhoons, high tide, storm surges and dam water releases have been the causes of flooding in the city. Excessive run-off brought on by heavy rains and storms can easily cause water overflow in any of the city's 11 major rivers and 15 creeks, affecting surrounding communities. Additionally, coastal barangays, which are naturally low-lying, are particularly prone to a type of flooding that is caused by high tides from Manila Bay.

Fire is another hazard that Malolos faces. It can be triggered by human negligence or as a secondary hazard from earthquake or a result of extreme heat (e.g. grass fires). Between 2010 and 2012, the Bureau of Fire Protection- Office of the City Fire Marshall of Malolos reported 316 fire incidents affecting buildings and other structures with an estimated cost of damages amounting P27 Million.

Children in Malolos are not only vulnerable to climatic hazards, but also to the so-called “everyday risks” associated with urban poverty. These “everyday risks” aggravate the vulnerability of the poor sectors of the city.

As of 2011, a total of 2,410 households with 10,932 members have been classified as poor in Malolos. This accounts for about 5 percent of the total population, if based on 2010 census data. Among the poor, 22 percent are in the selected study sites—Bangkal, Longos and Pamarawan—comprising of 507 households with 2,429 members. The biggest number of urban poor is in Bangkal, a relocation site where 1,730 people live below the poverty line. (Table 2)

**Table 2.** Number of urban poor in Malolos, 2011

Barangay	Households	Persons
Bangkal	352	1,730
Longos	51	226
Pamarawan	104	473
Sub-total	507	2,429
Rest of Malolos	1,903	8,503
Total	2,410	10,932

Source: MCG, Draft Local Shelter Plan 2014-2021

Lastly, the city's Disaster Risk Management (DRM) plan considers human health and diseases as a threat to the safety and resilience of the people. Diseases that may turn into epidemics are being monitored by designated rural health units (RHUs) in each barangay. In its Climate Change Action Plan 2014-2019, it was noted that the increase in temperature and precipitation can lead to increased incidence of communicable diseases; respiratory illnesses due to degraded air quality; and increased incidence of vector-borne diseases (e.g. dengue, malaria, leptospirosis, etc.). The city further acknowledges that health concerns like sanitation and malnutrition increase in times of disasters such as floods. This may lead to disease outbreaks in evacuation centers due to the close proximity of large numbers of people and the difficulty in maintaining safe and clean sanitation.

Among the disaster risks faced by the city, flooding is considered to be the most serious, as it regularly take place in costal and other low-lying areas of the city. However, it is seen more as a developmental problem, rather than directly related to climate change. According to most of the interviewed city officials and community members—adults and children alike—although the flood events in Malolos have been induced by natural hazards and processes such as typhoons, storm surges, and high tides, these are believed to have been triggered primarily by the consequences of human decision and action (e.g. clogged drainage system, improper solid waste disposal, encroachment of structures and silted waterways).

The situation is expected to get worse as the impacts of climate change create more stresses on the urban system. There is already a burgeoning water crisis in the selected study areas, while the demand for energy, proper drainage and sewerage and other urban infrastructure and services continues to grow in magnitude and complexity.



Among those who receive the brunt of slow-onset and sudden disasters are children, especially children of poor families. In Bangkal, a relocation site, livelihood opportunities are very limited, limiting the capacity of poor families to invest in better housing, education and healthcare. This has led to some children needing to work after school, if not drop from school altogether, just so they could help their family eke out a living.

In the course of their work, children had to face some challenges. They reported the risk of getting hit by cars when they pass by major roads and highways as they have to sell their products from house to house, from one community to the next. They also have to endure the sweltering heat which causes them headache. According to them, this has worsened over the years, although fortunately, they have yet to hear of a co-worker child who completely passed out due to the heat. Typhoons and floods also get in the way of their work, forcing them to stay indoors and result in loss of potential income.

Children with disabilities were also believed to have been affected by climate change impacts. For children with disabilities, parents were generally concerned with the day-to-day safety and security issues. The common aggravating factor to the condition of children with disabilities is the worsening heat. Parents believe that because of changes in the weather and the increasing temperature, children get sick easily.

### **Climate risk perception and adaptation of Malolos children**

Children's knowledge about the impacts of climate change and other hazards come from mass media such as television, radio and newspapers. They also learn from their teachers, especially in science subjects, but this appears to be dependent on the knowledge, interest and personal advocacy of the teacher. When pressed for their understanding of climate change, the schoolchildren had different ideas but were mostly spot-on in relating it to changes in the climate, as manifested in the form of El Nino and super typhoons. Some mistakenly related it to earthquakes, tsunami and volcanic eruption as well, indicating the level of consciousness of the children when it comes to disasters in general.

To the children, it is clear that the floods are not only caused by the climate change-induced heavy rain and typhoons, but also by the clogging of drainage and waterways in nearby creeks, canals and rivers. Flooding is a regular occurrence in Bangkal and Pamarawan but for different reasons. Children in these areas have already adapted to the situation by doing what they can but they also lamented the government's insufficient support to alleviate the problem. The children cited the following activities as their contributions in light of the risks that they face:

- Proper disposal and segregation of wastes
- Tree planting at school and in own backyard
- Recycling of old materials
- Non-burning of wastes
- Cleaning of immediate surroundings

Moreover, older children (14-17 years old) help their families in times of typhoons, floods, and strong rains. They know that when it starts to rain hard, they have to help carry and put important belongings on top of the bed or any higher part of the house in anticipation of floods. However, many of them, especially working children, reported helplessness and exasperation in performing micro-level interventions with little corresponding support from the community to alleviate the situation in the long-run. This lends support to the findings of Ojala (2012b) in the case of Swedish children.

In the fishing community of Pamarawan, members of the YDC believe that the changing weather patterns contribute to the reduction in number, if not extinction, of certain fishes and other sea creatures. There is a feeling that while they can do little things for now to alleviate their situation in the island, chances are the young people will eventually look for ways to find greener pastures and leave the island, a form of meaning-focused coping that looks to better conditions in the future.

The older children particularly in Pamarawan were also able to link climate change to increasing severity of typhoons and the new “normal” of unpredictable and shifting weather conditions. According to them, the sources of these changes are anthropogenic, particularly by the way people are polluting earth’s water and air.

#### *Sudden-onset large disasters*

The recurrence of typhoons and floods in the study areas have made the children aware of the danger that such hazards bring. Between the two, however, typhoons have been singled out by them as more terrifying because of the strong winds that it usually comes with. The sight of roofs being blown away, trees being uprooted, and “tidal waves surging inland” (i.e. storm surge) are some of the vivid images they think of when there is a strong typhoon. With these in mind, they normally stay indoors on their own discretion, with or without the advice of older members of the family.

For working children, street vending also becomes impossible and dangerous in the event of a typhoon or flood. The same is true for older family members (e.g. parents) who are daily wage earners. Taken together, this loss in potential income severely affects the capacity of the family to bounce back from the disaster or at least return to normalcy. In areas where the water takes days or even weeks and months to subside, the problem becomes very serious, as the loss of income and other resources exacerbates everyday risks related to poverty.

Moreover, classes are also suspended normally a day or some hours before landfall. This affects the regular school calendar in many of the inundated school districts. In the case of Longos, they had to allot for make-up classes even on Saturdays and Sundays to make up for cancelled classes. Sometimes, such as what happened in 2009, 2012, and 2013, floodwater went inside the classrooms, reaching as high as about 1 meter from the ground. In last year’s flood disaster, floodwater only became passable after one week in Longos. In Bangkal, floods were only up to ankle-level, but the problem has been the long time it takes for the water to recede.



As in many other areas in the country, there are no indoor playgrounds in Malolos. Playtime is restricted indoors, if possible at all, depending on dwelling structure and conditions. City officials also claimed that they have been very active in stopping children from playing in flood waters during the rainy season. School grounds can also serve as evacuation areas for those who get stranded by floodwater. This was the case in 2012 when a family was forced to stay in the elevated stage of Longos Elementary School as water rose up to about 1 meter from the ground.

While younger children are generally safe by staying indoors in times of typhoons and floods, some teenagers (i.e. aged 15-17 years old) had to take over certain responsibilities to ensure the safety of the family. They reported helping in securing the roofs to make sure that these will not get blown away easily by strong winds. They also help in cleaning up canals or manually removing stagnant water off the streets in the aftermath of a typhoon or flood. These pose health and physical risks to the children, although none of the children interviewed reported having suffered from or heard of accidents under such circumstances.

The children's experience in evacuation due to sudden onset disasters like typhoons and floods also leaves an imprint on their consciousness. They had mixed feelings from being scared to sad to having a difficult time adjusting to the rationed food, limited space, and generally chaotic environment in many temporary shelters. This applies to the children in Longos, but not to Bangkal who have yet to experience evacuation.

Although non-climatic in origin, some parents from Bangkal fear earthquakes more than typhoons and floods. This is because Bangkal itself is a reclaimed area, a former farmland, hence, the soil is believed to be soft or prone to liquefaction.

#### *Slow-onset disasters*

Drought has not been reported as a major issue by the city officials, community members, and parents interviewed. This is probably because many of them do not rely on farming as a main source of livelihood, Malolos being an urbanized area.

Saltwater intrusion, however, has been a major headache for many Malolos residents who participated in the FGDs. Piped water is available in the study areas, but the water is mostly not potable. They complained that the water smells, is salty, and sometimes murky, so they had to resort to buying distilled water from filling stations. This problem, apparently, has been going on for many years already.

Water stress was also felt in schools where there is no drinking water available for children. In Longos and Bangkal, children usually bring their own water to school.

Moreover, in Pamarawan, some children also believe that constant weather changes contribute to the death of fishes, seashells and other sea creatures, affecting the community's main livelihood. The loss or reduction in number of certain species has been affirmed by the parents who reported that fishes such as "balay" and "bilakong" are no longer available in the area since around the 1990s. Unlike the children,

however, they attribute this to the dumping of wastes in the ocean and the use of commercial feeds in nearby privately-owned fish pens.

*Heightened everyday hazards*

In Bangkal and Pamarawan, children lamented how everything needs to be purchased, even drinking water and firewood, unlike before in their community along the railway. And worst, there are no immediate livelihood opportunities for their parents as they are quite far from the construction projects and factories in the city center.

These circumstances have forced some of the children to supplement family income by plying food products usually after school (i.e. after lunch) under the sweltering heat of the sun. One child said that sometimes it becomes extraordinarily hot that her head begins to ache. In such cases, she simply tries to take a rest under a shade until the headache becomes bearable. There were also stories about children passing out as a result of heat stroke, although these are not too many.

To cool down the heat, many children frequent the so-called “patubigan” --a 1-meter wide irrigation canal that stretches along the main road of Bangkal. They use it as their mini-swimming pool especially during summer. The water quality exposes them to skin-related health risks, not to mention that it poses serious risks to drowning and other swimming-related accidents.

Children also lamented how the design of residences in Bangkal, which puts houses right next to each other, and the lack of trees contribute to urban heat. They also attribute the former to more frequent squabbles among neighbors, a common serious concern mentioned by all children from the area.

In Pamarawan, members of the Youth Development Council echoed the observation that it has gotten hotter in recent years. They attributed this primarily to the decrease in number of trees as a consequence of land reclamation projects. They also believe that typhoons are much stronger now, creating much stronger storm surges and destroying their pre-stationed fish nets.

As already mentioned, working children are also exposed to occasional bullying as they sell their goods within and outside their community. In Bangkal, there are also petty “crimes” like children throwing stones at unsuspecting peers at night for no apparent reason.

In Pamarawan, flooding due to high tide is a regular occurrence. It can be from ankle-deep to as high as 1 foot, although it could get worst if the tidal flood coincides with a typhoon or just strong winds (i.e. storm surge). Unlike in Bangkal and Longos, however, the flood water does not stay longer than 3 hours. Under “normal” tidal flooding, classes are not suspended so children have to wade through the water just to reach the school. The children believe though that the water is getting deeper these days, as if the “land is sinking.”

In the island community of Pamarawan, other security concerns of the children are the areas where there are no lights at night (e.g. bridge, dike area). Another important



issue for children is the rise of early pregnancy and drug addiction in their communities, and this is common in both Bangkal and Pamarawan. According to the barangay officials in Pamarawan, unwanted pregnancies happen even among high school students, as a result of lack of better or more productive activities outside the school system.

#### *Health-related climate risks*

Dengue, diarrhea, and respiratory problems are believed to be increasing, according to the interviewed city officials, parents and community members. They are aware that stagnant water can cause dengue outbreaks and that hotter weather can trigger asthma attacks and similar health concerns. Given this, they believe, for instance, that fumigation is not effective anymore; rather, what is needed is a thorough and regular clean-up of everyone's backyards.

For instance, at least one parent also reported that due to the unpredictability or changing weather patterns—i.e. alternating hot and cold—her asthmatic child has been having more frequent attacks. Others also relayed that they had to rely on air conditioning and electric fans more often just so to keep their children from getting sick.

Moreover, the parents and pupils are acutely aware of the diseases that one can get from wading through dirty flood waters. They are also aware of how stagnant water can serve as fertile breeding grounds for dengue- and malaria-carrying mosquitoes, although for the people of Pamarawan, there is a widely-held misconception in Pamarawan that they are free from the threat of dengue simply because dengue-carrying mosquitoes do not breed in saltwater—which is the main cause of inland flooding in the community. In Longos, there is stagnant water at the back of the classroom of Grade One students, which has long been a major concern not only of the pupils and teachers, but also of the principal. The water comes from the wastewater generated from the households adjacent to the school.

In Pamarawan, the temperature has affected children's playtime. For instance, whereas before they could still play outdoor basketball until around 12 noon, but now, they could no longer do it due to the extreme heat. In Longos Elementary School, the rooms are already equipped with 4-6 electric fans but these are still not enough, with children complaining about the sweltering heat inside the classroom.

Parents further added that the weather changes have led to children getting sicklier than before, such as colds and cough. Also, walking through floodwaters has been pointed out by the parents as the reason for skin diseases among their children.

*Other “small disasters”*

Fires are few and far between in Malolos. In Bangkal, the children could recall only one incident this year—a fire that gutted two houses but fortunately did not hurt anyone. It apparently was caused by a candle, as it happened during a brownout.

In Longos, children talked about a neighbor’s house which accidentally caught fire due to an electrical accident. There were also reports of grassfires at the onset of summer in 2014, March to April, but these were easily contained by the community. In Pamarawan, at least one house was gutted by fire but this was a long time ago.

In Bangkal and Pamarawan, the children reported at least one house in their community which collapsed without any apparent reason. According to what they have heard, it was due to shallow and soft foundations. In both incidents, no one was hurt.

Other concerns in the study areas include lightning accidents and petty crimes like neighbor squabbles. Traffic accidents were not reported to be very prevalent in all communities, since the communities are not located in the city center or along major thoroughfares. Nevertheless, it is seen as a grave concern especially by the parents from Pamarawan and Bangkal, where the roads are very narrow.

**Adaptation services for children**

In response to the challenges posed by climate change and disaster risks in general, the City Government of Malolos has started to adopt key policies and plans laying down the framework for climate change adaptation-disaster risk reduction (CCA-DRR) in the short- to medium-term. These include the city’s Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan; Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP), 2014-2019; Disaster Operations Manual; Contingency Plan for Flood; and Contingency Plan for Earthquake. The city is also currently in the process of updating its Comprehensive Land Use Plan to be more sensitive to climate change and disaster risks. A Local Shelter Plan 2014-2021 is likewise being finalized, as part of the government’s efforts to integrate climate change adaptation and risk reduction in land use and development planning.

A number of programs, projects and activities has been indicated in the city’s LCCAP addressing temperature increase, flooding, sea level rise, and typhoons. These include interventions in health, agriculture, water and water resources, environment, and coastal areas amounting to Php513 million between 2014 and 2019. More than 90 percent of those were allotted for environmental and coastal PPAs.

**Table 2.**General CCA-DRR measures to address flooding

Structural	Non-structural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Declogging of drainage system</li><li>• Relocation of Informal settlers</li><li>• Ripraping of waterways</li><li>• Continuous dredging of waterways</li><li>• Upgrading/construction of drainage system</li><li>• Construction of dikes/levees in coastal barangays</li><li>• Improvement of water level gauge</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creation of DRRERD</li><li>• Functionality of DRRMCs</li><li>• Implementation of Waste management laws/ordinances</li><li>• Trainings and seminars on proper waste disposal</li><li>• Creation of irrigation Task Force for activation when the need arises;</li><li>• Implementation of existing related laws and ordinances</li><li>• Updating of CLUP/Zoning ordinances</li></ul>

Source: MCG, Contingency Plan for Flood

Moreover, the city government has put in place the necessary organizational structure and institutional coordination mechanisms to deal with disasters, as provided for in RA 10121, otherwise known as the Philippines' Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010. CCA-DRR activities have been funded through the city's Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRMF), General Fund, and MOOE under the City Administrator's office. In relation to flooding, the city's CCA-DRR measures are listed in Table 2.

At the community level, there is little awareness among most children on CCA-DRR measures being undertaken by the government, whether at the city or barangay level. They have known of the government's response in times of disasters such as typhoons and floods, especially in the context of relief distribution. However, many of them have neither heard of nor participated in a government activity that deals with enhancing the capacity of their community prior to a disaster.

Main problem common among the study sites is lack of livelihood opportunities once the children becomes legally eligible to join the workforce. In Pamarawan, those who don't get engaged in fishing will have to explore other options abroad or in Metro Manila, depleting the potential social capital of the community. In Longos, inadequate educational qualification is generally considered to be the main barrier to landing a good and stable job. The ongoing "brain-and-labor drain" will eventually have significant impact on the level of resiliency of the community vis-à-vis disasters and climate change.

In terms of structural interventions, children from Pamarawan were aware of the dikes that have been constructed by the barangay with support from the city government. This has proven to be effective as artificial barriers during storm surges. However, the children perceive that in recent years, infrastructure projects are more concentrated on the establishment or repair of basketball courts rather than on the expansion or strengthening of dikes.

Children have heard of climate change from school, particularly in their science subject, although they could vaguely recall the specific details about why it is happening. Many of them usually attribute it to the cutting of trees, and do not automatically relate the phenomenon to the severity of typhoons and floods. It was also found out that the extent of how climate change and disasters are taught at school depends largely on the knowledge, interest and personal advocacy of the teacher.

In Longos Elementary School, climate change is being taught at least in Grades 5 and 6 in certain subjects. In social science and history class, it is part of the news sharing segment especially when there are typhoons elsewhere in the Philippines, while in Science, it is part of the lesson on carbon cycle. Climate change per se is not in the textbook; the decision to teach it is purely based on the interest of the teacher. Most of the materials that they use are sourced through the Internet and old DVD videos (which were unfortunately flooded last year). Floods, along with earthquakes and volcanoes, are discussed in the textbooks prescribed by the government as natural hazards, with nary a mention of its relation to climate change.

Earthquake and fire drills are also regularly conducted in all schools, as part of a nationwide program for disaster preparedness. These exercises are normally headed by the principal and teachers, with all students required to participate.

In terms of training, the teachers—and community officers—said that they have attended at least one seminar related to disaster risk management but not specifically on climate change adaptation and mitigation. It was four years ago (2010) and at that time, the teachers recalled that the discussions then were too broad, with no localized or contextual application. At best, they were taught about first aid and rescue, and nothing more. A local school also sponsored a one-time screening/seminar on climate change for teachers but that was it. There has been no program on climate change from the barangay either.

Beyond teaching, there have been efforts to “climate-proof” the school buildings. In anticipation of more frequent flooding, new buildings in Longos Elementary School were now elevated higher than the older structures; while in Bangkal, the school grounds are practically flood-free, not to mention that the buildings themselves are multi-level.

In terms of emergency response capacity, there are several early warning systems for flood strategically located throughout the city. These include rain gauges, weather station, water level marker, and other improvised warning signals installed in different areas of the city. In collaboration with other partners, one siren has been stationed in Pamarawan while zone leaders in other communities have a roving tricycle patrol



equipped with siren and megaphones as a means of informing the populace of impending hazards. IEC materials are also distributed to inform the public on what to do and what systems and procedures to be followed in case of emergencies.

In Bangkal, there is a health center where residents can go to. Children, however, complained that the center does not even have medicines to simple health concerns such as boils. In Longos and Pamawarawan, they do not have a hazard map but the barangay officials claim to know which areas are vulnerable to flooding.

Also in Bangkal, some of the parents mentioned that disasters in general have not been discussed at the community level. There are no household plans as well. Because of this, they do not know exactly where to go or what to do in the event of extreme flooding, for instance.

During typhoons and major flooding, the major concern, especially in the island community of Pamarawan, is food. As an island barangay that is reachable only by boat, relief goods are not easy to come by. The restoration of services is also problematic. For instance, because of their location, they are one of the firsts to be affected and among the last to be serviced when electricity is cut off.

The children have received training in schools on first aid and evacuation protocols as part of the annual earthquake and fire drills. However, these have been specific on earthquakes and fire. In Pamarawan, external organizations such as the Bulacan State University and Philippine Red Cross also came to provide orientation training and seminar on first aid.

Another important concern raised by the barangay officials from Pamarawan is the absence of a fire truck in the community. What they have is just a portable fire hose that is already old and no longer in use.

At the household level, the parents and community members interviewed understand climate change primarily in the context of changing weather patterns. Other than this, they do not necessarily equate events like floods and typhoons as related to climate change. Floods, especially, are seen generally as a product of new villages or subdivisions with improper drainage and sewage systems in the area. As such, it is closely related to planning and solid waste problems.

As to climate change per se, they see it as a consequence of pollution from industries and cars. They believe that since it seems nothing can be done anymore to stop the climate from changing, then they have no choice but to adapt to the changes and leave everything else to God, a form of meaning-focused coping strategy identified by Folkman (2008).

The resilience of families seems to be influenced by their socio-economic circumstances. Most poor families, particularly the migrants in Bangkal, do not have any preparedness kit, not even a simple flash light that they can use in case of a brownout. This is particularly important especially since electricity is not usually available at the height of and immediately after a major typhoon. In the relatively

better off community of Longos, children reported that their parents prepare a preparedness kit before they go to evacuation areas if necessary, like what happened in 2013 when monsoon rains submerged a large portion of Bulacan province including Malolos. The kit typically contains medicines and other first aid paraphernalia, some clothes, canned goods, and a flash light.

However, the ability to bounce back can also be aided by external factors. For instance, the strength of informal social ties among neighbors in a community can be very valuable in getting back on one's feet. This is the case of the parents from Pamarawan who shared that life is easier there because they help each other even on day-to-day hardships. This is attributed to the fact that they know each other for so long already, which unfortunately is not the case in Bangkal where most of the residents have just moved in to the community five years or so ago.

In the context of increasing temperature, the children reported that they have to use fans or electric fans more and more when indoors. Sometimes, they could see the roof or pavement emitting some kind of smoke due to extreme heat. In such cases, they reputedly pour the area with water to cool down. Parents share the same idea, believing that "summer" is now longer than before, and that even when it rains, it is still hot.

The interviewed parents said they have not heard of any program or activity on climate change that is catered specifically to children. However, those from Pamarawan said that they have attended at least on one occasion a seminar as arranged by the city government. Climate change was also tackled in one of the parent's catechism classes. In general, it can be said that what they know about the impacts of climate change is based on what they have heard from mass media.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The study has found out that Malolos is not only vulnerable to large-impact climatic risks (e.g. major storms and massive flooding), but also to the so-called "invisible" risks. In disaster studies, "invisible" risks are associated with so-called extensive risks: events with low or moderate intensity that are highly localized in nature but have debilitating cumulative impacts over time. Extensive risk is often associated with poverty, urbanization and environmental degradation. (UNISDR, 2009) By their nature, these small-scale events are not usually treated as disasters; hence, their impacts are generally underestimated, if reported at all. To Wisner and Gaillard (2009), these events fall under the category of "neglected disasters."

Moreover, not a few children and their families were also exposed to so-called "everyday" hazards. These are the daily living struggles of people which can be a combination of economic, food security, health and education issues, as in the case of youth from Madagascar (Biskupska, 2014), and may result in premature death or injury (Bull-Kamanga et al, 2003). In the case of Malolos, certain children were unduly placed in constant threat from harm primarily because of the need to eke out a living even in precarious situations (e.g. under extreme heat or in the middle of a storm). Aside from poverty, everyday hazards can also be exacerbated by the



topographical characteristics of the area where the children reside, such as in the case of Pamarawan. These vulnerability becomes even more pronounced in times of disasters wherein poor households who subsist on daily wages are deprived of the means to get by and survive, making it even more difficult for them to bounce back. This lends support to the assertion that interventions for climate change adaptation, or disaster risk reduction for that matter, should not be divorced from socio-economic realities of vulnerable sectors (Wisner et al., 2003).

Among those who receive the brunt of these disasters are children, especially children of poor families, children with disabilities, school children, and working children. It affects their safety and security, as much as it disrupts opportunities for learning and playing whether at school or in the community. Emotion-focused coping that hinges on denial or distancing does not seem to be prominent among the children.

As in other studies (Ojala, 2012b, 2013), many of them were instead predisposed to problem-focused coping as they try to cope with the impacts of climate change in their immediate environment. This can be partially explained by their view that climate change impacts are local in nature. The older children from Palawan also exhibited meaning-focused coping as many chose to look on the brighter side, highlighting their positive contributions and the strong social capital in the coast community.

In the face of challenges posed by climate change, different levels of adaptation have been adopted by the city government, communities and schools, households and children themselves, informed largely by their own understanding of climate change. Many of these, however, were found lacking as they do not explicitly and meaningfully address the perspectives and needs of children.

In light of the foregoing, the following recommendations are put forward to further strengthen the adaptive capacity of Malolos and ultimately protect the welfare of children from the impacts of climate change:

### ***Confronting “invisible risks”***

Tidal flooding has become a way of life for children and families who live in the coastal communities of Malolos such as Pamarawan. On the other hand, children from Bangkal face perennial inland flooding due to poor drainage system in the area. This confirms findings from the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which noted, among others, that inland flooding is one of the major threats to children and other marginalized sectors in large, low-income informal settlements who have limited means to cope and adapt to the challenges of extreme precipitation.

While there is excess water runoff on one hand, there is also a growing water stress in Malolos on the other. Two out of the three areas covered in the study exhibited signs of saline intrusion into the water distribution system. Changing rainfall patterns and high possibility of drought will have serious impacts on the agricultural productivity of the city. The same is true for the continuing acidification of ocean water which is

beginning to affect the economic resilience of fishing communities. Given the looming water shortage, the government's plan to provide more shallow tube wells and construct additional water sources should be supported, especially in schools where children spend most of their time during the day.

These recurring, low-impact events are generally considered to be “invisible risks” as they do not get to be included in disaster assessments conducted by the government. However, studies have also shown that in the long-run these “neglected disasters” actually cost more and have more lasting impacts on communities than one-time, large-scale events such as a major earthquake or an Ondoy-type of storm.

The children have been doing their part in living with these so-called extensive risks through problem-focused and meaning-focused coping, but it has also lead to anxiety and feelings of hopelessness among children. While they have adapted to its impacts through years of accumulated knowledge and experience, the government both at the barangay and city levels should intensify their DRR/CCA efforts and start looking taking into account the needs and potential of children in these areas beyond mere tokenism. For one, climate risk parameters must be thoroughly integrated in the design, upgrade and repair of drainage and sewage systems, as well as road networks.

Children with disabilities and their families face compounded difficulties in times of floods, typhoons and other disasters. Special considerations and a concrete action plan must be given attention to improve availability of and access to critical facilities, including schools, clinics, and evacuation centers, among others. Parents and guardians must also heighten their awareness and improve their skills to take care of children with disabilities before, during and after disaster events.

### ***Tackling “everyday hazards”***

Poverty has forced the families of many children to continue to live in the same risky locations that are susceptible to recurring, small-impact flooding. Other children had to eke out a living as street peddlers under dangerous conditions in order to help the family survive on a daily basis. While there were only few cases of working children covered in the study, their number should not be any reason for neglect.

It goes without saying that socio-economic resilience should be addressed to protect the welfare of children vis-à-vis disaster risks and the impacts of climate change. Sustainable livelihood options and entrepreneurship opportunities must be explored and be made-accessible to strengthen the ability of families to adapt to a changing climate and recover from the effects of a disaster.

It must be noted that in the face of food insecurity, the urban poor usually resorts to coping strategies that have adverse impacts health implications especially on women and children. (Cohen and Garrett, 2010) The current LCCAP of Malolos has already identified the needed budget for its socio-economic interventions, although it is not yet clear where the funds will come from. Social capital at the community level must also be promoted and strengthened.



Another “everyday hazard” that confronts children and mothers is the issue of health. Being exposed to constant flooding, vector-borne diseases are expected to escalate, especially with a changing climate. Efforts must be intensified to eliminate breeding grounds of dengue- and malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

Respiratory problems due to changing weather conditions and extreme heat must also be given a second look to prepare for worst case scenarios in the future, especially as it relates to housing conditions (Bartlett, 2008). Information and Education Campaigns (IEC) at the community and household levels must be sustained, along with capability building/training to improve epidemic preparedness and health-related response mechanism. The IPCC has reported that the most effective vulnerability reduction measures for health in the short term are improvements in basic public health measures such as the provision of secure essential health care services for children. (IPCC, 2014)

### ***Tapping children as partners***

In all these, it is of paramount importance to view children not merely as beneficiaries of CCA-DRR programs and projects, but more importantly as partners in various stages of the project or activity cycle. As pointed out in Tanner (2010), children can play an important role in all aspects of DRR/CCA, from risk analysis to risk communication to mobilization and actual implementation of risk reduction measures. Children’s insights on climate change and disaster risks provide a unique perspective in planning based on their own knowledge and experience of specific hazards in the community. Also, with proper training, they can be good communicators given their own understanding of climate change and its impacts. Community-based youth development councils can also be tapped to explore the potential contributions of children in the monitoring and evaluation of CCA-DRR interventions. Children and youth, after all, have the right to participate in determining their safety and security.

The continuous mainstreaming of CCA-DRR in schools and the school curricula must be vigorously supported. The educational system stands to be a good and credible source of learning on climate change for the children. Climate change and disaster education is currently based only on the interest, knowledge, available resources and personal advocacy of teachers. Likewise, educational materials must be provided to support these interim initiatives at the local level.

Lastly, while the current CCA- and DRR-related plans of the city, such as the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (LDRRMP), Contingency Plans for Flood and Earthquake, Local Shelter Plan, and LCCAP, takes into account the need of vulnerable groups and communities, they do not explicitly give due attention to the needs and potential role of children in CCA-DRR. A more detailed analysis and integration of children’s issues and strengths will be valuable to ensure that children’s rights and welfare are protected in an era of a changing climate.

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## Networks of Civil Society Organizations dealing with Government's Project Development in Pak Bara Area, Southern Thailand

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### Abstract

Two main purposes of this study are 1) to examine networks and roles of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) dealing with government's developing project in Pak Bara area. 2) to recommend directions for the CSOs' further participation in developing the Pak Bara area. The research used a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative which include non-participatory observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, workshop discussions, and a survey. It was found that there are 10 active CSOs and 2 NGOs. Their participation in development could be classified into three levels: local, provincial, and regional as well as international. They demand appropriate ways of conserving and managing the natural resources are more beneficial than the economic growth expected by the government and international traders. They attempt to drive the consequent problems to the level of resources and income sources, relocation due to land expropriation, air pollution, loss of public issues that need people's participation in policy- and decision making: loss of natural traditional ways of life and collapse of society, and destruction of tourism. This research has two recommendations. First, at local level, the networks should add more religious and cultural dimensions in driving activities, and strengthen relationships between networks and communities around Pak Bara with the cooperation of community leaders. Second, at the national and international level, the networks should enhance understanding and cooperation with communities.

**Keywords:** Pak Bara Area/ Satun/ Networks in Satun/ Civil Society Organization/ NGOs/ Andaman Deep Sea Port/ Southern Thailand

### Introduction

In Thailand a search for an alternative to the transportation route that has to go through Malaysia's Malacca Strait can date back as far as the reign of King Narai of the Ayuddhaya period. Up to the mid-twentieth century the efforts to reduce time and cost in international trading focused on the digging of the Kra Isthmus in Ranong. After innumerable failed attempts due to different causes including sources of funds, national security, and separatism in the deep South, it was in 1970 that the Songkla-Satun route was identified for the first time as the most optimum route by TAMS Corporation hired by Chao Chaokwanyhuen and Co. (under the name of Lhamtong Pattana Co.). However, this discovery did not receive much attention from investors or the Thai governments for decades; the Kra project still got supports, more or less,

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from such leaders as General Chatchai Chunhawan (1988), Police Lieutenant Colonel Taksin Shinawatra (2001) and the Senate (2005) (Prasertsri, 2009).

In the meantime, there has been an interest in connecting the Andaman Coast with the Thai Coast in the Gulf of Siam so as to facilitate shipping from the Middle East as well as Europe and East Asia as well as the Pacific, respectively. Therefore, a section in the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1981- 1986) specifies concerns about economy in Southern Thailand and its solution through the Songkla Deep Sea Port Project.

In 1989 General Chatchai started to implement the Songkla Deep Sea Port Project. There were also references to the Southern Seaboard Project and the Land Bridge Project, which is to link the Second Songkla Deep Sea Port and the Satun Deep Sea Port. These two projects were to be in accordance with the Development Strategy Plan for the South, the Development Strategy Plan for the Southern Border Provinces regarding Songkla-Satun Cluster, and, particularly for the Satun Deep Sea Port, the Satun Province's strategy to be "the Port of the Andaman Coast." However, the implementation of the development projects for the two sea ports were stalled because the country was facing an economic crisis in 1997. Four years later when Police Lieutenant Colonel Taksin Shinawatra became the Prime Minister, he declared a policy encouraging both Thai and foreign investors to carry out the deep sea port projects in order to stimulate employment and economic growth in the area and to be in conjunction with the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) (Manager on Line, 2009). In the new development plan for economic growth, the two deep sea port projects are included in the National Strategies in Developing Communication and Transportation Infrastructure (Ministry of Finance, 2013), which requires a foreign loan of ₧ 2.2 trillion to be committed by the Ministry of Finance (Proposed Bill for the Government Infrastructure Project, 20..). The Thai Deep Sea Port Project and the Andaman Deep Sea Port Project are supposed to cost more than ₧ 15,400 millions of the total loan.

The Second Songkla Deep Sea Port will be situated at Tambon Naa Tub, Chana District, Songkla. The Andaman Deep Sea Port Project will cover the area of La-Ngu, Tungwa, and Manang Districts of Satun. The strategic site where the deep sea port is designated to build is located in Pak Bara Village, which is one of the eight villages of Tambon Pak Nam, La-ngu District. Hence it is called the Pak Bara Deep Sea Port. Since the project is meant for international transportation, it entails several other projects, namely a dual-track train system to bridge the Second Songkla Deep Sea Port with the Pak Bara Deep Sea Port, the Satun-Perlis (Malaysia) Tunnel Project, the Oil Refinery and Pipeline Project, the Dam Construction Project, and the Power Plant Project. All these projects including related industries require an enormous piece of land and extensive geophysical alterations. In addition to sand digging right in front of the Pak Bara Village and land filling in the ocean, 1,892 acres of the Petra National Park, which links the village with the Tarutao National Park, will be requested for those purposes. It is very likely that the villagers' land will be expropriated with payment as well. From the local people's perspective and the environmentalists' studies the devastation will be incomparable with the financial gain, especially in the



long term. That is, there will be immeasurable destruction of natural resources, coastal ecology, seafood resources, fruit orchards, clean fresh air, marine tourism around the Petra and Tarutao National Parks, together with the loss of local communities and earnings and collapse of their way of life. Indeed, all these negative effects are against the province's pronounced direction in developing sustainable environment and culture with a focus on the conservation of natural resources and tourism. Undoubtedly, there have been objections and protests against this deep sea port project since its conception.

In Satun there are civil societies (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to follow up with the development plans of the province and the South. Their roles are to educate local communities concerning development projects and their consequences. NGOs in Satun have been active since 1985(Nasae,1997). The civil societies in Satun such as community organizations or activity groups have participated in the movement to learn, to establish rapports, and to emphasize "the common problems of Satun." The guiding approaches of these CSOs and NGOs focus on the management of natural resources, historic sites, and spectacular tourism destinations. They have formed the "People's Networks for Monitoring the Development Plans of Satun" with the support of local people to express a determination to encourage sustainable development and maintain natural balance for later generations. So far the "People's Networks" have followed the moves of the province's development plans and organized campaigns for correct understanding of the local people, community organizations and general public ("People's Networks," 2011). Because the Pak Bara Deep Sea Port Project and other related projects which are not suitable to the locals' ways of life have a tendency to cause conflicts and violence in society due to diverse opinions, the CSOs' and NGOs' recommendations for development plans which will not have adverse effects on the communities and socio-cultural aspects as well as their implementation methods are worth a close investigation.

## **Objectives**

1. To examine the networks and roles of civil society organizations in developing the Pak Bara area
2. To recommend directions for civil society organizations' further participation in developing the Pak Bara area

## **Research Methodology**

This research focused its study on the roles of the "People's Networks for Monitoring the Development Plans of Satun" and the "Ruk Jung Satun Network" [Love You So Much, Satun] from October 2012 – December 2013. It used a mixedmethodology. Its qualitative method was for studying the data concerning the work of CSOs and NGOs about the development of the Pak Bara area, their approaches in determining development directions and driving the plans together with people's learning process, understanding and cooperation. Its quantitative method was for surveying the local people's opinions about the NGOs' work in order to elucidate collected data. Non-

participatory observation, interviews, in-depth interviews, focus groups, survey of opinions, and workshop discussions were used in this research.

## Findings

Pak Bara Village is a populated area with a fishery sea port, fish open markets, and tourism ports. Its population is 4,115 while that of the whole Tambon is 10,478 (Empowerment Project of the Network of Community Organizations for Development of Tambon Pak Nam, Satun, 2014). The construction of a deep sea port, its platform, and subsequent industries will limit the villagers' ways of making a living and threaten tourism industry of the province. Therefore the community members, local CSOs and NGOs cooperate in continuously informing the communities there, organizing meetings with different associate members, seeking consultation, and sharing information with external alliances.

As for cooperation with the CSOs', participants come from the governmental sector, private sector, and the local communities. They try to drive different issues within the communities and provide members opportunities to share ideas and seek cooperation from others outside the communities (Puangsumlee, Chansomwongs, and Kosolsaksakul, 1999; Jitnirut and Saksung, 2000). CSOs are the driving force for changes. The cooperation varies in terms of formats according to space and group formation, participants' background, issues, and activities. The cooperation of the CSOs originates from love, concerns, and compassion which result in solidarity and community formation regardless of geographical boundaries.

NGOs form another group which helps resolve problems for communities affected by the government's projects. Their principal roles consist of developing the communities' civic consciousness; promoting group formation and development; researching, publicizing, and campaigning; and recommending and pushing alternatives for sustainable development.

The participation of organizations in Pak Bara Village could be classified as follows:

### **1. The kinds of CSOs and NGOs networks which have been continuously active in the area.**

There were 22 organizations in the "People's Networks for Monitoring the Development Plans of Satun" and the "Ruk Jung Satun Network." This research studied 12 organizations which could be divided into 2 groups.

For civil society organizations, there were 10 of them: Coordinating Center for Researches for Local Sustainability in Satun, Community Organizations Development Institute, Local Fishery Association, Political Development Council, Community Organization Council of Tambon Pak Nam and Community Organization Council of La-Ngu District, Health Promotion Hospital of Tambon Pak Nam, Association of Political Science and Public Administration of Southern Thailand, Consumer Protection Networks, Reef Guardian Club, Pak Bara Bay Conservation Group.



As for non-governmental organizations, there were 2 of them: Association of Thai Seas Protection and Andaman Foundation. They have worked together in coastal Tambon of La-Gnu, Ta Pae, and Mueng Districts since 2010.

## 2. The roles of CSOs and NGOs

Their roles in activity supporting can be divided as performed in areas and in networks as shown in the following Table.

Organization/group	Roles in communities	Roles in networks
Coordinating Center for Researches for Local Sustainability in Satun	Supporting communities in conducting researches concerning occupations, education, tourism, disaster management, public health, traditions, culture, and folk wisdom	Being an associate member in supporting educational programs for local target communities, creating activities and group formations to strengthen the communities
Community Organizations Development Institute	Providing a common space to support cooperation of community organizations at the levels of Tambon, district, and province	Supporting activities of Community Organization Council of Tambon Pak Nam and activities at Tambon level such as Secure Housing and Community Financial Organizations
Local Fishery Group	Developing communities and leaders, developing members' occupations, managing debt, coordinating for cooperation between fish farmers and various agencies	Being a local community organization covering three villages of Tambon Pak Nam, La-Ngu District; and all coastal communities of Satun
Political Development Council	Developing politics education and participation, monitoring government's exercise of power, encouraging people's politics of good practice to be the institution for harmony at all levels	Supporting space creating activities with a focus on developing leaders' potential, supporting data presentations of CSOs in Satun
Community Organization Council of Tambon Pak Nam Community Organization Council of La-Ngu District	Being a platform connecting community organizations to exchange ideas and experience, and connecting with Community Organizations Development Institute to strengthen communities and encourage them to solve problems by themselves	Encouraging community unity and activities for local problem solving, providing financial supports
Health Promotion Hospital of Tambon Pak Nam	Providing medicinal services, coordinating the cooperation between governmental agencies	Providing human resources, venues, and information for health management and

	and people, encouraging participation in continual health care	communities, supporting local village volunteer networks
Association of Political Science and Public Administration of Southern Thailand	Providing academic and research data, providing community services, proposing opinions concerning policies about the South to the government and the public	Providing supports for data management and academic cooperation with communities
Consumer Protection Networks	Publicizing information for consumer protection, relaying complaints, driving forth public policies, mobilizing participation, encouraging consumer's rights, and coordinating consumer protection networks	Supporting activities for well-being and consumer protection in both La-Ngu District and the Satun Province
Reef Guardian Club	Conserving coral and sea grass by tourism operators and guides	Supporting activities and group formations for natural resources protection and local tourism
Pak Bara Bay Conservation Group	Being community volunteers and activity groups in guarding the local area, participating in observing changes in three villages of Tambon Pak Nam	Being community network in managing and restoring coastal resources of Pak Bara Bay by connecting with the Local Fishery Club of La – Ngu District
Association of Thai Seas Protection	Conserving natural resources and encouraging fishermen to have their own organizations to protect their interests	Being an associate member in educating local target communities, creating activities and group formations to strengthen communities
Andaman Foundation	Providing supports to strengthen communities particularly coastal communities, encouraging communities' rights in managing coastal resources, following up with fishery policies	Being an associate member in educating local target communities, creating activities and group formations to strengthen communities

From the Table, it is obvious that the “People’s Networks for Monitoring the Development Plans of Satun” and the “Ruk Jung Satun Network” had the CSOs and NGOs as their principal cores in driving the community members’ learning process in different aspects. Besides, they coordinated with governmental and local agencies in carrying out activities such as La-Ngu Hospital, Administrative Organization of



Tambon Pak Nam and Municipal Administrative Organization of Tambon KumPaeng, Pak Bara Tourism Operators, Association of Deputy Chiefs of Tambon in the Satun Province, Islamic Committee of Satun, Club of Imams in Satun, Association of Teachers in Public and Private Schools, Artists Groups for Communities, Community of News Reporters and Journalists in Satun,etc.

Besides the networks in the local area, the “People’s Networks” also had external network organizations as alliances in providing supports in various aspects such as data base creation, platform creation for experience sharing, and public relations promotion. Organizations which took part in these activities included the Administrative Organization of Tambon Naa Torne, Tungwa District; National Health Assembly, Association for Tidying Up the Town, Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organization, the Faculty of Political Science and the Institute for Peace Studies at Prince of Songkla University, and other organization groups. These cooperative activities gave the research team opportunities to participate and observe with numerous organizations to fulfill its understanding of the participatory process in developing the Pak Bara Area of Satun as well as to gather the networks’ situational movements against adverse development projects for further reports.

### **3. The networks’ working process in developing the area**

The aims of the networks were to enhance the communities’ understanding about development of the area, to object and protest the construction of the Pak Bara Deep Sea Port and the government’s development of heavy industries, and to campaign for the protection of local natural resources. There were different processes in driving forth activities at three levels as follows:

3.1 Working processes within communities there were 3 main areas.

1) Providing the communities with new body of knowledge and enhancing their skills through community forum arrangement, VDO presentation, and dissemination of information about development projects of the nation and the Pak Bara area via such media as leaflets, books, Siang Satun newspaper and other social media. Besides, they exchanged ideas and opinions with the governmental sector and shared information through communities’ key persons.

2) Cooperating with communities in arranging activities, for instance youth camps, fishing contests, community seminars, and collective fasting. These activities were for developing and creating participatory process as well as rapports among members.

3) Campaigning for local natural resources conservation in the form of marching, using symbolic green flags, guarding the area and observing any encroachment for the government’s development projects, using the communities’ measure “Enter? Ship out!”

3.2 Working processes outside communities There were 2 major activities to link the local area with the external:

1) Building networks at the levels of province and region to get supports from networks by working and sharing problematic issues with other CSOs and NGOs such as taking part in organizing assemblies at province level or, in the name of “Ruk Jung Satun Group,” participating in organization networks at province level.

2) Asserting stand points by presenting the problems in general public and pushing them to be public issues in order to drive forth in a wider circle such as

submitting documents of protest to governmental agencies or publicizing activities and body of knowledge though different conventional media and social media. The methods used in driving forth their operation included monitoring the government's administration regarding development projects in the local area, strengthening communities' learning process and body of knowledge, campaigning and protesting the government's development projects of expansive industries, publicizing problematic issues in general public and cooperating with external organizations at both provincial and regional levels.

#### **4. The communities' reactions to the development of the Pak Bara area**

The research team used a stratified sampling survey with 400 members of three villages (Pak Bara, Talohsai, and Ta Malai) for their opinions of and needs from two types of developments, namely the Pak Bara Deep Sea Port Project with related large-scale industry projects and those of the "People's Networks for Monitoring the Development Plans of Satun" and the "Ruk Jung Satun Network." The gathered data can be summarized as follows:

4.1 The people's opinions of and needs from the Deep Sea Port Project and related industries regarding awareness of the projects, impacts, and the government's development directions are presented here in a descending order. The community members learned about the projects mostly from friends (32.5%) and from the other sources such as brochures, billboards, internet news, and Facebook 30.2%; family members or relatives 29.1%; NGOs 27.7%; and community leaders 19.5%. More than half (54.6%) of the subjects used to participate in the networks' activities. The perceived negative impacts were higher than the positive impacts as illustrated in the following descending order: loss of natural resources and income sources (78.8%), the villagers must be relocated due to land expropriation (75.5%), air pollution (73.8%), loss of traditional ways of life (70.0%), and destructive effect on tourism destinations (69.8%). As for suggestions for the government's development projects, the appropriate directions should be in this order: tourism and services (73.1%), fishery (59.3%), natural resources (53.3%), agriculture (19.8%), trading and investment (18.0%), and industries (9.3%).

4.2 The people's opinions of and needs from the "People's Networks for Monitoring the Development Plans of Satun" and the "Ruk Jung Satun Network" regarding problems in the area, levels of trust in agencies with effects on communities, frequency of communities' participation in agencies' activities, and trust in activity participation are presented here in descending orders.

The first five problems in the area were narcotics (74.3%), Deep Sea Port Project (63.8%), unemployment (37.5%), poverty (35.5%), and youth's quarrels (30.8%).

As for the communities' trust in agencies or organizations active in the area could rank as follows: religious leaders (3.75); teachers (3.69); doctors, nurses, public health officials, and health center officials (3.67); educators and university lecturers (3.45) and the "Ruk Jung Satun Network" (3.44).



As for the frequency of communities' participation in agencies' activities in the whole previous year, it was found that more than half (66.4%) used to join such activities and some part of the subjects (33.6%) never attended any activity or project. The agencies which the local people joined their activities were the Ministry of Public Health, hospitals and health centers (26.5%); the "Ruk Jung Satun Network"(18.0%); and the "People's Network" and local administrative organizations (17.8% each);

As for the agencies or networks of which activities were trusted by the community were that of public health officials, medical doctors, nurses and health center officials (3.04); the "Ruk Jung Satun Network" (3.03); People's Network for Monitoring the Pak Bara Deep Sea Port Project (3.00); and the People's Network for Monitoring the Development Projects of Satun (2.94). The agencies that approached the local people at the "low" level were district social developers and the officials of the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center.

### **5. The Networks' directions in carrying out activities in the Pak Bara area**

There were 3 levels of work as follows:

5.1 Community Level There should be a continuity of the followings: 1) organizing activities which alert the local people to take part in activities of good causes; 2) distributing activities at the community level with a focus on activities which are not simply campaigning but which encouraging the people to recognize and treasure the natural resources and good things in their society; 3) continually providing them with new, reliable, and factual knowledge and information which is related to the impact of the government's large projects on the people and their ways of life; 4) seeking approaches to increase cooperation among community leaders, religious leaders, and the local people so that they will have the same understanding about approaches in developing the area; 5) supporting the cooperation of the local people with networks as direct stakeholders in order to drive the development directions of the area; 6) encouraging the new generation to creatively participate in assertion and drives for the benefits of the local area and pushing local youth to get higher education and return home to develop their home town

5.2 Local Organization Level There should be plans for the followings: 1) developing body of knowledge and sets of information which will benefit the area to strengthen the drive that is based on knowledge, data, and the local people's facts; 2) seeking new approaches to increase the number of participants, motivating them and adjusting activity formats with an emphasis on activities related to the development of people's living conditions in the present context so as to have updated data base for further application for development, concentrating on forming new local mass to bear the torch of the present generation; 3) strengthening the cooperation with the local key persons, explaining, and finding approaches which concentrate on responding to the people's needs through providing them with opportunities and space for expression their opinions and needs in development as much as possible together with trustworthy and understanding mentor organizations; 4) forming basic groups which are related to people's ways of life such as fishery groups and tourism groups together with the networks' supports in laying foundation and driving their demands with emphasis on each group's own decision and operation.

5.3 Network Level There should be supports for the followings: 1) creating networks to work at the provincial level in order to help support and encourage cooperation at a wider level with the existing “Ruk Jung Satun Network” as the core driver of sustainable development of the province; 2) distributing roles and duties in organizational networks in order to elicit potential and strength of each organization in the “Ruk Jung Satun Network” to develop the area, be it of governmental sector, private sector, or CSOs; 3) increasing cooperation with CSOs and NGOs in the South in order to exchange experience and push their works to be public issues and to cooperatively seek more varied approaches to development; 4) using media to reflect the campaigning issues in a wider circle of Thai society; 5) increasing the cooperation with local administrative organizations in order that they will be effective and efficient agencies officially recognizable by governmental authorities; 6) developing cooperation with educational institutes and agencies in order to have more systematic and reliable sets of information.

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

The roles of CSOs and NGOs in developing the Pak Bara area can be classified in terms of space and networking. The organizing of activities in the area reflects the communities' perceptions of common problems with a goal towards the creation of civic consciousness in the network management system (Supawongs, 1998). Their common roles are developing and creating consciousness, encouraging group formations and dissemination campaigns, and driving policy proposals ([www.thaingo.org](http://www.thaingo.org). 2012). As for the participation of CSOs and NGOs, it can be divided into three levels. The small level (S) refers to the organizations which operate their activities in the area around the Pak Bara Bay or in the Tambon Pak Nam. The medium level (M) refers to the organizations whose operations cover the area of the Satun province. The large level (L) refers to the organizations which support activities or join certain activities of the governmental sector, private sector and educational institutes. The findings of this research agree with the observations of Mitchell and Reid (2001) who explain that people's participation in the development and decision making on different aspects of development can occur only when the local communities can benefit from such participation and the participation does not affect their traditions, ways of life, and values recognized in such society. Also the people's participation can occur when the government listens to its people's needs and the government must encourage the people to join in decision making with regard to the government's activities. At the same time, the governmental officials must genuinely emphasize and encourage the people's participation. (Carpini, Cook and Jacobs, 2004).

There should also be encouragement of communication to strengthen communities and create participation so that the local area will recognize the significance of a peaceful co-existence, reduced violence, and harmony in society. The CSOs and NGOs should play their roles at two levels. First, at the community level, the networks should use religious and cultural dimensions in driving forth activities and increasing good relationships between networks and communities which must be promoted by community leaders. Second, at the organization and network level, there should be cooperation in explaining to and coordinating with the communities with



the “Ruk Jung Satun Network” as the cores in organizing platforms for information dissemination. They should also create cooperation at the local, provincial, regional, and international levels in order to support works in the area for genuinely efficient operation of the organizations and restoration of peace in the area.

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## **Interviews**

Abdulrosak Hemwang	member of Political Development Council	Interviewed on stage on Oct. 7, 2012
Aree Tingwang	Local Fishery Group	Oct. 7, 2012
Huddeen Usma	Leader of Pak Bara Bay Conservation Group 3	Oct. 7, 2012
Jehna Wuttanapun	Tamalai villager	Interviewed on May 3, 2013
Kraiwut Chusakul	Tourism Industry Group	Interviewed on Oct. 7, 2013
Nuttapol Benden	Tour Guide Network	Interviewed on Oct. 7, 2013
Napawan Juan-mai	Talohsai villager	Interviewed on Mar. 20, 2013
Samut Iad-trong	Community Organization Development Institute	Interviewed on Mar. 20, 2013
Somboon Kamhaeng	Andaman Foundation	Interviewed on stage on Oct. 7, 2012
Somyot Toh-lang	CSO Network	Interviewed on stage on Oct. 7, 2012
Wichokesak	Human Rights	Interviewed on Oct. 7, 2013
Ronnarongpairee	Sub-committee member	



## Organizational Development Assessment of a Collaborative Rural Development Initiative: Knowledge Capture and Strategic Change Management

*Maria Faina Lucero Diola\**

### Abstract

An organizational development analysis undertaken for the National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) in the Philippines adopted a knowledge management framework within a strategic change management process. The results yielded important strategic issues and strategies as options for the future of this government rural development initiative.

Based on knowledge capture employing action research the potential looks optimistic for NCI as an institution that will mainstream Convergence as a strategy for sustainable rural development in the countryside and even in other areas in the country, towards poverty reduction, increased incomes, and management of life forces. Such potentials outweigh NCI's current weaknesses. This study therefore recommends that the NCI adopts knowledge management in a strategic change management process to act towards transforming its current state of organizational management into a more effective institution, thereby working towards its stability as an organization and a precursor of development strategies within the local areas.

A seemingly muddled understanding of function, role and mandate of NCI and other organizational weaknesses expected of a collaborative initiative show the need for knowledge capture through review, reflection, and taking action in a regular strategic planning process. Some options are offered by the study towards a vision and action of institutionalizing Convergence as a strategy for rural development, which can be adopted through a strategic change management approach.

**Keywords:** Strategic Change Management/ Knowledge Management/ Organizational Development Analysis/ Participatory Action Research/ Convergence/ Rural Development/ Philippines

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## Introduction

### Reform and the Concept of Change in Public Management

In the Public Administration parlance, “change” has often been associated with reform. Some scholars have considered the newer models or paradigms of Public Administration as “Reformist” as these aim to assess public administration systems in terms of effectiveness and the outcomes they produce, more than just the outputs of program or project or activity implementation. These include the Reinventing, Reengineering, and the New Public Management.

In the last two decades, Osborne and Gaebler (1993) have called on governments to radically change the ways they provide services from the bureaucratic model to a more entrepreneurial type, characterized by flexibility and creativity. Relatedly, Hammer and Champy (1993) championed the reengineering process in government organizations. Similar to Osborne and Gaebler’s reform reinventing government model, their idea of reform is that of a “fundamental rethinking and redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality service, and speed” (Hammer and Champy, 1993, p.32).

However, most scholars of Public Administration have reckoned the concept of reform in the general taxonomy models of “New Public Management” (EROPA Local Government Center, 2004, p. iii). In the same vein, Ocampo (2003, p. 151) has hinted somewhat on the “superiority” of the New Public Management model over the Reengineering and Reinventing models since the former (referring specifically to Business Process Reengineering), he says has “limited application in the public sector, quoting Drucker as saying that government is “not a business”.

Dunleavy and Hood (1994) contend that New Public Management is concerned with the best use of resources in pursuit of objectives that are subject to change. Hence, this outlook characterizes “management” as a “new” way of conducting the functions of the state as opposed to traditional “administration”, which is more concerned with the review of law in an area of public life, its enforcement, and the making of decisions on cases that are submitted to the public service. In this regard the term Public Management is preferred when discussing changes in structures and processes and organizational development, as in this paper. Corroborating this, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004, p. 8, cited by Ongaro, 2009) refer to Public Management Reforms as consisting of “deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to run better.”

No doubt, change has been an underlying theme in organizational development and studies on reform and considered by practitioners as a necessary route towards growth for organizations, including public organizations. Managing for change has been a rational and deliberate strategy adopted by managers in order for organizations to stay germane and to become a dynamic learning model that continuously reinvents itself.



## Managing and Planning for Change

In managing organizations and any type of reform program steered towards any theory of change that an organization decides to adopt in fulfilling its functions, one popular approach has been the system, or more specifically, the open system concept. Katz and Kahn (1966)'s theoretical model for organizations is that of an "energic input-output system in which the energetic return from the output reactivates the system". In other words they consider organizations as open social systems whereby the inputs of energy in the system and the conversion of output into further energies loops back into further energetic input, initiating a renewed cycle. The foundation of this energetic nature of the input-output system of an open system theory can be traced to Bertalanffy's postulate, which associates systems with "wholeness" (Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 37). A systems approach to analyzing a change situation is expected to give meaning to the problem owner of a change situation, according to Paton and McCalman (2000). In their definition, the systems approach to change management refers to the "analysis of change situations based on a systems view of the problem" (p. 76), involving not just the physical aspect of change but also the processes and structures.

In analyzing the change situation, Paton and McCalman expound on the necessity for clearly defining the change situation in systems terms so as to etch the nature of the change, such as those to be affected by the change, the scope of the change and the relationships that are to be affected by the change. To this end, the authors introduce a systems-based intervention strategy, which they consider a "powerful" management tool (p. 82).

When planning for change is linked to planning and implementation and to manage an organization in a strategic way and in an ongoing basis, it is considered a *strategic management process*. Pointer and Streib (1999, cited by Bryson, 2004, p. 31) contend that doing strategic management is an expression of a commitment to the organization's vision and mission. Achievement of this vision and mission entails a diagnosis of organizational development and an understanding of the dynamics of changes occurring internally and as a result of the organization's interaction with its environment.

## Understanding the Changing Situation of a Collaborative Government Initiative on Rural Development

In the Philippines, a collaborative initiative of the national government towards sustainable rural development was assessed in 2014 in terms of its implementation of programs and activities over the years<sup>1</sup>. The National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) was created in 1999 through a Joint DA-DAR-DENR Memorandum Circular that recognized the necessity to develop and operationalize a common framework for sustainable rural development (SRD) to

<sup>1</sup> Diola, M.F. (2014). *Unpublished report of an organizational development assessment study commissioned by the GIZ-PH and the NCI-SRD*.

facilitate the convergence of the resources of the three agencies and enhance their impact on countryside development.

Given the changes in the policies and moves to restructure the staffing patterns of the individual pioneer convergence government agencies involved, i.e., the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the agency's Rationalization Plans, the management deemed it vital that an organizational analysis of the NCI-SRD (NCI for short) be conducted to reassess the role of NCI as an inter-agency approach and at the same time sustain its initial gains and ensure the continued participation of NCI-SRD implementers in the convergence efforts, especially on the ground.

### ***The Conception and Birth of NCI-SRD (1998-2000)<sup>2</sup>***

Revisiting the changing legal framework for the NCI-SRD, it will be noted that this government initiative was conceived with the issuance of Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No.1 (1999), under Joseph Ejercito Estrada's regime. This was a product of a 1998 World Bank study, which recommended the merging of the concerned three national line agencies due to *duplication and overlapping of functions resulting to wastage and diffusion of resources, fragmentation, inefficiency and confusion in implementing rural development efforts*. Instead of actual merging, a Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) framework was devised to be carried out through a *Convergence Strategy*. SRD Framework, as a typology of Sustainable Development Theory<sup>3</sup>, was to provide the common route of rural development, which primarily focused on sustainable agriculture. In order to meet the goal of rural development, the three key elements of SRD had been placed under the accountability and *under the responsibility of each agency* – the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) for managing agrarian reform communities and social capital formation (**people**), Department of Agriculture (DA) for managing rural economies and market destinations (**economy**) and DENR for managing life forces (**environment**). Some of the original features of the NCI-SRD:

1. In effect, this design has integrated existing national laws such as the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) under DA, Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of DAR, and environmental laws of DENR. DENR established the approach of the strategy, dubbed as watershed or river basin management approach. In the initial stage, nine (9) sites were identified as pilot *convergence* areas to establish models of implementation of the strategy across ecosystems, production systems, rural poverty sector and small producers in the long run. The strategy is expected to optimize resources in the short run.

<sup>2</sup> This account was based on a material provided by NCI's original principal players. Ms. Luz Balibrea

<sup>3</sup> Originally, the Brundtland Commission in "Our Common Future" defines sustainable development as "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."



2. **DAR took the lead of convening the committee and its secretariat**, which is composed of the Department Secretaries. National Economic and Development Authority, through its Director General, served as the representative of oversight agencies. The Steering Committee (SC) decided on level of policy, which includes site selection and review of sustainable rural development adherence of programs. The SC was and currently still is composed of the Secretaries as Principals or Undersecretaries as Alternate Members. The Technical Working Group (TWG) is concerned with the actual implementation or the operation of the SRD initiative, focusing on the adherence of projects and programs to its goals, and having a recommendatory function to the SC. The TWG is composed of Assistant Secretaries as Principals or Alternate Members – Director for Planning and Monitoring Service (DA), Special Assistant to the Secretary for Countryside Development (DAR) and Director of Forest Management Bureau (DENR).
3. The same memorandum required the creation of a Secretariat that was to compose of personnel from each department that will do technical and administrative support to the strategy. The legal mandate further stipulated that the **SC must define a coordinating base** among the departments; the Secretariat was to be based at the DAR. This also extended the recognition of the involvement of consultants to periodically assist the NCI. Furthermore, the active participation of Local Government Units (LGUs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the business sector, other stakeholders and other National Government Agencies (NGAs) was also to be sought by the initiative. Hosting of meetings and workshops were rotated among the agencies and presided by whoever had the highest rank of the scheduled agency.
4. Added to the 1999 JMC, the criteria and definition of **Convergence Model Sites** were stipulated, which stated that the sites must be chosen based on their *strategic importance* and *potential* to contribute to the model-building of sustainable rural development. The following considerations are given that are parallel to DENR's *ridge to reef approach*:
  - Completeness of ecosystems/landscape
  - Combination of high productivity zones, in between areas and agropolitan centers
  - Combination of sites across major crops
  - Combination of site across major poverty groups
  - Potential for high impact on increasing farm productivity and income of the rural poor
  - Presence of development-oriented local government leaders
  - Presence of NGOs, POs and an academic/research community

**DA-DAR-DENR**  
**National Convergence Initiative**  
**For Sustainable Rural Development**  
**(1998 - Present)**



Source: NCI Presentation Materials 2014

Fig 1. The Ridge to Reef Framework adopted by NCI

***The Reactivation and Expansion Phase (2000-2004)***

JMC No.1, dated 18 October 2004, was issued by the concerned line agencies, which primarily expanded the scope of JMC No.1 (Series of 1999) to become nationwide, mandating all provinces to identify convergence areas. The structure and processes of NCI were substantially carried over and recognized by this new memorandum. The criteria for site identification was extended, having two additional criteria that were aligned with the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) of 2005-2010 *Goal No. 1* of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's regime, which then demanded that 2 million hectares of new lands be earmarked for agribusiness, to create 2 million jobs of a targeted 10 million. As recognized in the new Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016, through the efforts of the three rural development agencies under the NCI (DA, DAR, DENR), 1,835,509 ha of lands have been developed for agribusiness, generating about 2.67 m jobs between 2005 and 2010.

Each concerned agency then were to carry a **site-specific leadership** as follows: DAR for Luzon, DENR for Visayas, and DA for Mindanao. The lead convenor focal point was transferred to DA during this period. The memorandum required the Regional Level structure to be aligned with the National Level Structure of NCI. This also emphasized and included the identification of a Focal Person and staff for each of the three departments in the NCI that will serve as additional member of the Regional Secretariat. The following mandates were then expected from the Secretariat:

1. Organize the convergence teams composed of DA, DAR, DENR and concerned LGUs
2. Organize workshops as deemed necessary in respective areas
3. Organize the local Convergence Team meetings once every two months (or as the need arises) to monitor the progress of program implementation
4. Provide administrative, logistical and technical support to the Convergence Teams
5. Document and prepare minutes of meetings/workshops proceedings and safekeep program documents



In 2004 and 2005, NCI activities were allotted with *no specific budget*; rather the funds would have to emanate from the regular budget of the concerned agencies. Thus, it was required that regular programs and projects for NCI will only be considered as such if primarily this involved complementation of time and focus of services in the convergence sites.

At the Regional Level, TWG was to be organized by the concerned agencies and a Presiding Officer assigned in their site of convergence. Meetings then were to be chaired by the Presiding Officer or the Focal Person of the assigned department in his/her absence. Further, the TWG had to choose a Chair among the members in case of absence of a Focal Person. LGUs were considered important, thus they were to be represented during regular meetings. Other personnel of the concerned agencies were also expected to mobilize and take on program- related tasks in agreement with the SC or TWG. Costs of workshops and other activities would have to be charged to the budget of the host agency. It was also during this period when a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the NCI and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP).

In November 2004, DA, DAR, and DENR signed a Joint Resolution (no.1, s. 2004) to tap the rural development and natural resources management program of the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) to support the Convergence Strategy of the three focal agencies. Since then major activities supporting policy advocacy, capacity-building, knowledge management, and agro-enterprise clusters development was supported by GIZ. The structures of the sub-national structures were to mirror the national component activities.

#### ***The Current NCI Focus and Set Up (2010 to date)***

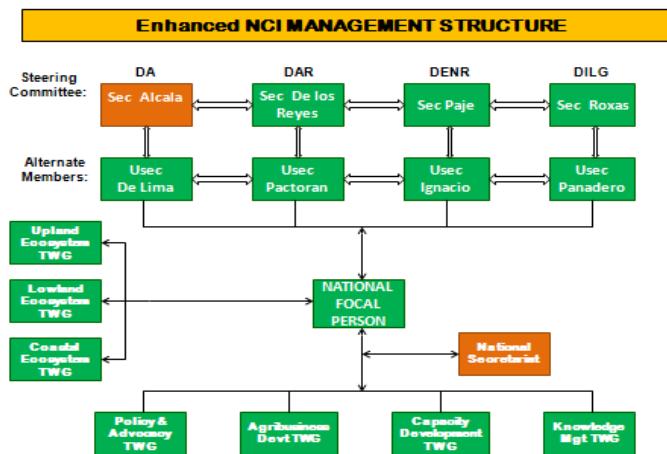
Carrying over the initial objective of achieving sustainable rural development and poverty reduction, the most recent JMC No.1 (dated 17 November 2010) highlights the importance of the agricultural, agrarian reform and natural resources (AARNR) subsector. Countryside development is considered a poverty reduction strategy of the current Benigno Aquino regime. This was an offshoot of the reported 1.82 million hectares of land or 89% of the target 2.05 of the MTPDP, translating to 2.65 million jobs of the targeted 2.87 million.

In 2011, 10 Local Convergence Agro-enterprise Clusters (LCAECs) were launched. However, with the impact of Climate Change, the use of the Integrated Ecosystem Management (IEM) approach was re-emphasized, and the launching of LCAECs was stopped. Through a memorandum the *watershed and ecosystem management approach* was adopted. This management approach entails holistic, collaborative, multiple use and sustainable management of resources, though regulatory, management and jurisdictional mandates remain distinct.

At the national level, the National Steering Committee (NSC) retained its function as the highest policymaking body in the implementation of the SRD Framework and in approving the selection of convergence agro-enterprise clusters. With this Memorandum, the NSC was to be chaired by the DA Secretary with the Secretaries of

DENR and DAR as co-convenors. Undersecretaries of each agency may be appointed as representative. The NCI TWG retained its advisory function to the NSC in terms of implementation. It is headed by a National Focal Person (NFP) together with Chairpersons of the four component teams and Secretariat Head. Component Working Groups (CWG) or teams correspond to the four components of NCI-SRD i.e., *Agribusiness and Agro-enterprise Development Clusters, Policy Advocacy, Knowledge Management, and Capacity Development*, which were to be manned by directors from the three agencies, DA, DAR, DENR, and a Chairperson and a Coordinator to be identified from the same agency.

The Memorandum (JMC 1) mandates that the NCI Secretariat was to be chaired by DA with a Coordinator of each CWG as members plus permanent members from each agency. Support Government Line Agencies and Offices are to work together closely with the NCI as an Organization. For the sub-national level, regional, provincial and municipal TWGs are to be created in parallel with the NCI TWG. Regional Directors of the three agencies comprise the RCI TWG plus a Regional Focal Person. The Regional body may include Provincial LGUs if necessary. At the provincial level, the TWG may be headed by provincial heads of DAR or DENR, co-chaired by the Provincial Governor with Provincial Officers for Environment and Natural Resources, Agrarian Reform and Agriculture, and Planning and Development Coordinator. At the municipal level, TWG may be chaired by Municipal Agrarian Reform Officer or Community or Environment and Natural Resources Officers, co-chaired by the Mayor with Municipal Officers for Environment and Natural Resources, Agrarian Reform and Agriculture, and Municipal Planning Coordinator. The current set-up for the enhanced NCI structure is shown in **Fig. 4** below.



Source: Balibrea, L.B. NCI Presentation material for the NCI Pre-Summit  
(March 18-19, 2014)

Fig. 2. Current set-up of the Enhanced NCI

Funding for the program was to come from the budget of the concerned line agencies, while also considering funds coming from grants, donations and assistance either public or private in nature. LGUs are encouraged to take part on the implementation cost. Monitoring and evaluation would have to be executed based on performance



indicators to be developed in accordance with the Monitoring for Development Results (MfDR) approach. This design will be based on an agreed common *plan*. The plan must ensure attainment of MfDR goals and objectives.

### **Defining and Assessing a Change Situation**

With the NCI's ultimate aim of sustainable convergent rural development in mind, an organizational development assessment of the NCI was conducted in 2014 to: (1) take stock of the current understanding of Convergence as an approach and the NCI-SRD as the platform for sustainable rural development and to (2) offer policy recommendations for possible changes in NCI's implementation strategies and structures.

To capture current understanding and make sense of the organizational development of the NCI, management concepts of strategic planning and change management are applied in this study. The objective of this paper is to highlight and explore the possibility of proposing a framework that merges knowledge management concepts within a strategic change management process in assessing and understanding the organizational development of an organization. The study proposes that the first important step in any change management would have to be the capture of available knowledge in order to understand and define the change situation and then to eventually transform this knowledge into practical knowhow to make decisions about future action.

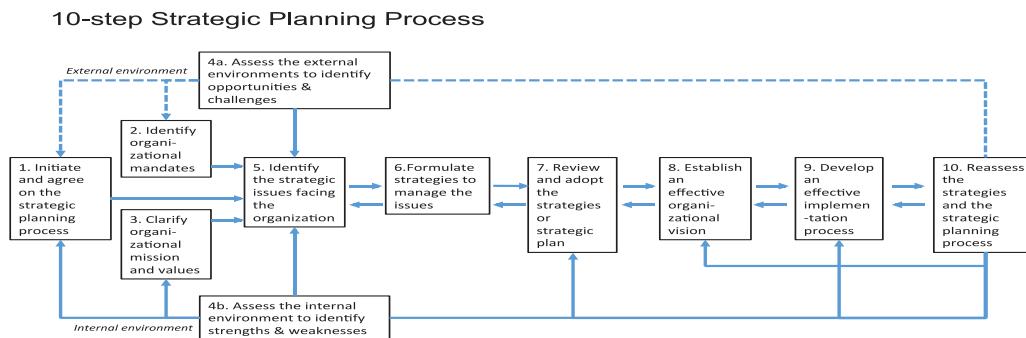
Applying this framework to the NCI organizational development diagnosis, the following research question is framed: based on the present situation of the NCI, how can it transform operationally into an ideal organization that adopts Convergence as an approach in attaining its vision of sustainable rural development and management of natural resources?

### **Strategic Change Planning and Knowledge Management as Analytical Frameworks**

Moore (1995) cited in Bryson (2004, p.8) mentions that searching for "public value" can be one purpose of strategic planning. Denhardt (1993) further says that a strategic planning's purpose is to "pursue significance". In fact it can be surmised from various literature reviewed on strategic planning that redefined or clarified organizational goals based on strategic planning can help foster or guide organizational innovation and effectiveness.

With regard to the management of change, one of the more effective and comprehensive strategic planning approaches is the *Strategy Change Cycle* by Bryson (2004, p. 31), which encompasses different types of organizations, services and communities. The 10-Step Strategic Planning Process by Bryson outlines the following steps: (1) Initiate and agree on the strategic planning process; (2) Identify organizational mandates; (3) Clarify organizational mission and values; (4) Assess the external and internal environments to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; (5) Identify the strategic issues facing the organization; (6) Formulate

strategies to manage the issues; (7) Review and adopt the strategies or strategic plan; (8) Establish an effective organizational vision; (9) Develop an effective implementation process; and (10) Reassess the strategies and the strategic planning process. Below is an illustration of this model (Fig. 3).



Source: Bryson (2004)

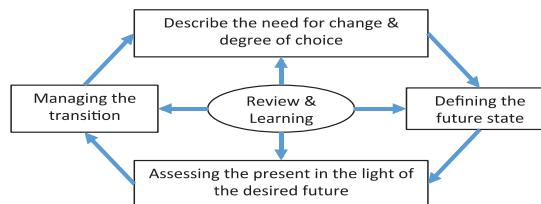
Fig. 3. Bryson's 10-Step Strategy Change Cycle

As clearly illustrated above, the 10-step strategy change follows a cycle, implying an iterative process. Not only is the process cyclical; it is also intended to be the foundation for stability of an organization, which implies a results-orientation. As can be deduced above, important thinking processes are to be engaged in and results produced before the next steps are propelled and appropriate action undertaken. For example, identification of organizational mandates, mission and values (steps 2 & 3 above) imply defining a desired future state. However, before taking action to reach a desired state, defining a transition change needs to be planned.

Corollary to strategic change planning, Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p. 78-79) in their planning for action research book stress on the importance of the process of defining a future state in order to manage a transition or change situation. They cite Buono and Kerber (2008) in describing three approaches to change: (1) *directed change*, where there are tightly defined goals; (2) *planned change*, where the leader devises a road map based on a clear goal and vision of the future and influences how it is reached; and (3) *guided changing*, where the approach to change approaches that of postmodernism founded on dialogue and conversation about change.

A planned change management approach (no. 2 above) is thus adopted in this paper because of its goal-orientation focus; its emphasis on assessing the internal dimension of the organization, which this paper primarily examines; and determination of work or action to be done. Fig. 4 below shows the simple model illustrated by Coghlan and Brannick (2014), depicting four major phases of planned change by Beckhard and Harris (1987) and Beckhard and Pritchard (1992), which effectively encompasses the 10-steps of strategic planning, but portrays the management of change or transition and the centrality of a learning process.

### The Process of Change



Source: Coghlan and Brannick (2014) depicting Beckhard's 4 Phases of planned change

Fig. 4. Four Phases of Planned Change

However, it should be noted that in working towards a desired state, an Implementation Plan or a Plan of Action is needed where clearly defined strategies are formulated as indicated in Fig. 5 below.

### The Strategic Change Planning Process with Outputs

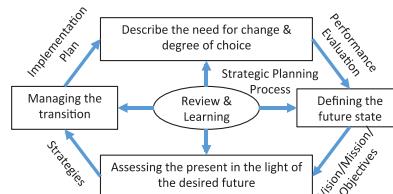


Fig. 5. Strategic Change Planning Indicating the Need for Developing Strategies For an Implementation Plan

Clearly, a learning process is central to the management of change as shown in the figure above. This paper thus suggests that knowledge management or managing the learning process is an appropriate step and is an inevitable process that needs to be given attention in managing change that an organization wants. From Fig. 5 above, this knowledge management is labeled as review and learning processes, a major focus in managing for planned change.

The organizational development assessment of the NCI conducted in 2014 aimed at taking stock of the current understanding of Convergence as an approach and the NCI-SRD as the platform for a convergence approach towards sustainable rural development and offering policy recommendations for possible changes in implementation strategies and structures. With this as aim, the paper proceeds with adopting knowledge management as framework.

Using knowledge management literature as references, a seminal work used by this paper is that of Dalkir (2005, p. 26) who contend that in order to solve problems, such as the identification of change or reforms needed for an organization; make decisions; or act based on the best possible knowledge foundation, effective knowledge management is a must. It requires that an organization identify, generate, acquire, diffuse, and capture the benefits of knowledge that will bring a definite and strategic advantage to an organization, according to Dalkir (2005, p. 26). To show how knowledge management can intertwine with strategic planning for change, the Fig. below is illustrated, drawing from Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) basic 4-phases of the Process of Change:

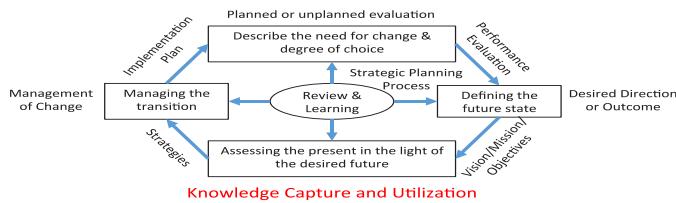


Fig. 6. Knowledge Capture and Utilization in the Strategic Planning Process

Dalkir (p.50) describes some of the more holistic approaches to knowledge management in terms of being comprehensive, i.e., taking into consideration people, process, organization, and technology dimensions; having been reviewed and discussed extensively in knowledge management literature by scholars, practitioners, and researchers; and in their having been tested for validity and reliability are: the von Krogh and Roots Model of Organizational Epistemology (1995); the Nonaka and Takeuchi Knowledge Spiral Model (1995); and the Choo Sense-Making Model (1998), that is largely based on Weick (2001), knowledge creation by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and decision making, largely based on Simon's (1957) bounded rationality.

Dalkir's (2005, p. 43) own integrated model of knowledge management lists three major stages: (1) knowledge capture and/or creation; (2) knowledge sharing and dissemination; and (3) knowledge acquisition and application. Dalkir explained that in the transition from knowledge capture/creation to knowledge sharing and dissemination, knowledge content is assessed. *Knowledge capture* is a particularly critical phase in knowledge management in Dalkir's model as it is the "initial stage" of identification and subsequent codification of existing (usually previously unnoticed) internal knowledge and know-how within the organization and/or external knowledge from the environment. See Fig. 6 above to refer how knowledge capture can be a significant process in the management of change.



## Action Research as Overall Methodology in Understanding a Change Situation

This paper's main goals were the proposition of a theoretical framework for Knowledge Management (in particular knowledge capture) or a process design to better implement or improve on a Convergence approach to sustainable rural development. This study is a work-in-progress that is part of an ongoing strategic management process. This study also demonstrates how action research can be applied in making sense of collaborative development projects when planning for change.

Action research stresses not so much a methodology as a type of orientation to inquiry, to which Barbury is cited by Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p. 43) as declaring that action research belongs to a “family of practices of living inquiry...”. One of the significant features of this approach is its capacity and intention for practical knowing. As traced by Coghlan and Brannick, the origins of action research can be attributed to Kurt Lewin, one of the founding fathers of social psychology (Burnes and Cooke, 2012), and the likes of Paolo Freire's emphasis on consciousness-raising (Chevalier and Buckles, 2013) and the more Marxist and feminist (Brydon-Miller et al, 2003). However, the extensive work of Coghlan and Brannick on Action Research (2014, p. 46) single out Kurt Lewin's and his co-scholars work for their emphasis on a collaborative and cyclical process of defining a change situation or problem, gathering data, taking action and again fact-finding about the results of an action and a spiraling action taking. The authors declare that the action research uses a scientific approach to “study the resolution of important social or organizational issues together with those who experience these issues directly” (p. 46).

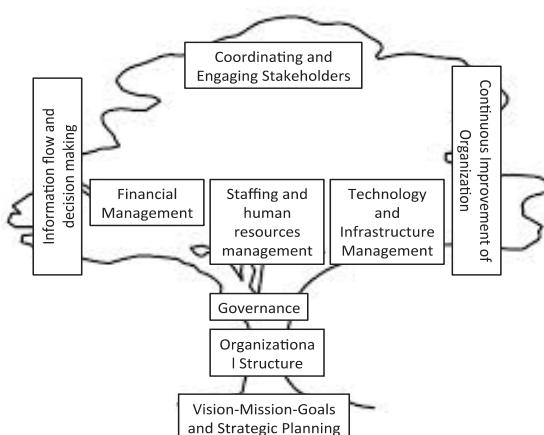
Since this study assesses organizational development of the NCI, action research is considered an apt approach. This presupposes the involvement of the members of the organizational system in the research. The interaction with and participation of the members was born from the insight that it is not enough to try to explain things, but that one had to try to change them. The way to get better data and to effect change was to involve them.

Thus the data gathered for this research has involved a series of activities and data collection methods involving some of the members of the NCI-SRD organization, mainly through focus group discussions; review of related documents and literature and desktop analysis; eight (8) key interviews and two phone patch interviews with NCI focal persons who were not available in a face-to-face encounter; analysis of returned questionnaires; observation at the NCI Pre-Summit last 18-19 March 2014 and interaction during NCI workshop. A technical assistance study in the form of a **rapid appraisal** and **sense-making** (a general approach of knowledge management) of the NCI-SRD experience over the past 15 years was conducted starting last March 18-19, 2014 (Pre-NCI Summit) and formally completed by 15 May 2014. The study posits that “Convergence” as an approach or strategy to rural development is the way to go and therefore natural resources can be managed more effectively by adopting “Convergence” as a strategy. As planned by this researcher, the results of this study shall continue to be validated among members of the NCI-SRD.

As a continuing research process, specific Convergence Initiative cases from the ground (i.e. Regional Convergence Initiatives and other local Convergence Initiatives) are expected to be subsequently done and validated in order to come up with future emerging frameworks for defining and understanding better the “Convergence” approach to rural development – as a commitment to participatory action research. However, the scope of this study has not permitted the review and analysis of actual planning and implementation of Convergence Initiatives (CIs) in Local Convergence Areas (LCAs). Partnerships at local level have not been investigated and analyzed and therefore not included in the report.

### Organizational Development Analysis: Results of the Performance Assessment of NCI in Achieving a Desired State

Performance analysis towards the achievement of a desired goal as depicted in Fig. 6 above is an important phase in knowledge management and strategic planning process. In order to assess how the NCI has performed as an organization in trying to achieve its desired goals and towards knowledge capture on the NCI, the figure below was constructed, approximating a systems approach to organizational diagnosis, but still focusing on internal dynamics. As already explained above, a planned change management approach was adopted in this paper because of the study's goal-orientation focus and its emphasis on assessing the internal dimension of the organization.



Source: F.L. Diola constructed for the organizational development analysis of the National Convergence Initiative 2014. Core pillars adapted from Mines Action Canada (n.d.)

Fig. 7. Organizational Development Core Pillars

The framework described above was adapted from the Mines Action Canada (n.d.) tool, with some of the pillars renamed to suit the objectives of this study. In diagnosing the general strengths and weaknesses of the NCI, the tool was used based on the theory of organizations, basically premised on the organizational development of an entity, referring to an internal capacity development process that the organization undergoes in order to sustain itself. Note however, that some of the



pillars, especially ‘engaging the stakeholders’ denote an organization’s interaction with the external environment. This is because the systems approach to organizational development analysis also adopts a systems approach. The ‘continuous improvement of the organization’ pillar implies the fundamental need for change.

As mentioned above, for this study the Organizational Development Analysis toolkit developed by Mines Action Canada was adapted to be able to go through the Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses, and to be able to extract Policy Issues and give Policy Recommendations, as appropriate to the NCI experience. Note that in the OD Pillar No. 6 on Coordinating and Engaging the Stakeholders, for example, the Goal and sub-goals stipulated in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016 was added as indicators. The nine pillars of Organizational Development are portrayed in Fig. 7 above, which the researcher adapted for this study. These nine pillars, where some have been renamed for this study, as follows:

1. Vision-Mission-Goals and strategic planning
2. Organizational Structure
3. Governance
4. Information flow and decision making
5. Staffing and human resources management
6. Coordinating and engaging stakeholders
7. Technology and infrastructure management
8. Financial management
9. Continuous improvement of organization

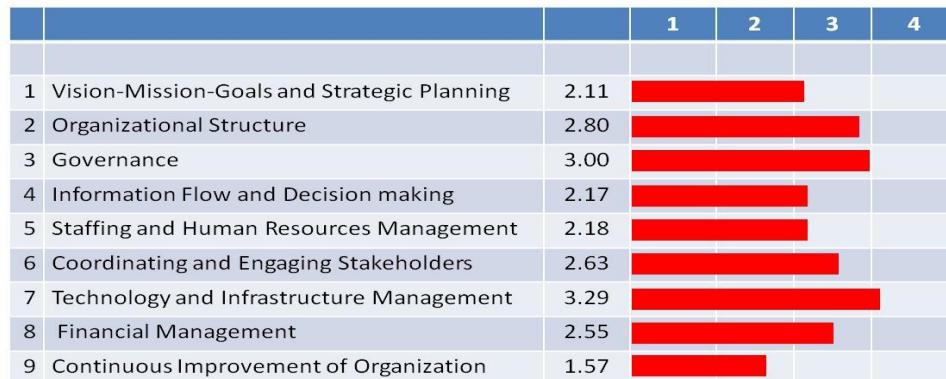
Two approaches to action research were adopted in this study in its knowledge capture analysis: *appreciative inquiry* focusing on what already works (Reed, 2007; Ludema and Fry, 2008, cited in Coghlan and Brannick, 2014, p. 56) and a *clinical inquiry approach*, emphasizing in-depth observation of learning and change processes; emphasizing the effects of interventions; operating based on models that may illustrate ideal functioning and deviations from such ideals; and building theory and empirical knowledge through the development of concepts that capture the situation (Coghlan and Brannick, p.57).

The Organizational Development (OD) Analysis of the NCI , considered as performance analysis in this study, adopted a self-assessment tool adapted from the Mines Action Canada (n.d.) and illustrated in Fig. 7, culling out the **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** of each pillar, based on the OD Analysis, which basically is a result of a meta analysis of six data sets from previous meetings and conferences and this study’s own results. The following rating scheme for a qualitative analysis of findings was devised for this study:

1	None
2	Traces exist but not explicitly expressed
3	Exists but not fully understood / implemented / operational
4	Exists and fully understood / implemented / operational

Using the rating above, results for each pillar yielded the following scores below.

**Table 1.** Summary of the Organizational Development Assessment of the NCI-SRI



### **Summary of Strategic Issues Derived from Organizational Assessment**

As discussed in the Introduction, strategic management for change entails devising strategies to be laid out in a Plan of Action or in an Implementation Plan. The following have been culled out as strategic areas for intervention for NCI-SRD:

#### **Defining Convergence**

Convergence, in a sense, has been in a sense incorrectly perceived as the framework rather than an operational scheme. In general, it is argued as an *approach* and a *platform*. There is no clear delineation as to when *convergence strategy* enters the dynamics of the three agencies in service delivery. Thus, in effect, the “programs” tagged under NCI-SRD are evaluated in terms of *convergence* as response or conduct of particular offices. As a consequence, targets are not achieved and have been loosely identified. An operational meaning for what may be considered as Convergence needs to be immediately formulated.

#### **Area Identification in the NCI-SRD**

The goals and focus of the NCI-SRD has changed or shifted in many cases – *agribusiness* in 2000 to 2004 and *integrated ecological system* or *watershed framework* from 2010 to date. This is a manifestation that the NCI-SRD is loosely defined in terms of its framework and strategy. Nevertheless, there are common points as to where NCI-SRD is applied or perceived to be applied, which are on: areas of the poorest population segment and area where all agencies are with concerns or



operations. The above illustrates that NCI-SRD is still considered as the way or manner to resolve the existing issues on public management of services. Area identification must be properly conducted that it is aiming to resolve poverty and inefficiency on public service delivery.

However, even with proper area identification, services provided by each agency may still be restricted by the agency's particular mandate, i.e., DAR only caters to ARCs, nearby sites serve as *catchment*. These restrictions, may have led to the specific program/intervention designs, which can be an indication that the implementation of NCI-SRD is not conducted in a genuine idea of complementation and integration. Area identification is primordial in the implementation of NCI-SRD. Thus, issues on scope and jurisdiction must be settled on the onset of programs or projects. The instruments used in delineations must be revisited, i.e., all areas over 18 slope is under DENR.

### **Program-based NCI-SRD**

Appraising NCI-SRD without proper appreciation of the SRD as framework and Convergence as a strategy entails program-based appraisal. These programs require specific qualifications to be considered under NCI-SRD, thus not all programs/projects can be qualified as convergence initiatives. The current trend shows that programs attributed to the NCI-SRD are just offshoots of particular agency rather than a product of workshop/planning among concerned agencies, i.e., Balik Probinsya Program (BPP) is conceptualized by DENR and been appraised under the NCI-SRD without consensual agreements before its operation. There is no systematic manner as to how NCI-SRD programs are conceptualized and 'selected'. Further, programs under the NCI-SRD Secretariat are usually forum-type, while those implemented on site are managed by a particular agency. Reports on these on-site projects are crafted by the certain concerned agency. Programs must be designed under the NCI-SRD and developed as a result of genuine collaboration and complementation processes.

### **Funding for NCI-SRD**

Funding for NCI-SRD is solicited among the concerned agencies. Budgeting must be program-based aligning with the Department of Budget and Management, relinquishing the output-based budgeting. Per program budgeting will lead to particular and shared accountability, and will encourage more interest. Commodity-based budgeting in the case of most DA-led activities must be aligned with the focus of the identified NCI-SRD sites.

### **LGUs' Role in the Convergence**

Existing local plans in the municipal level, such as Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP), must be taken into consideration in the identification of sites and formulation of Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP), as provided for in the Manual of Operations. On the other hand, National Government Agencies (NGAs) with programs that are aligned with the NCI-SRD

realm must be absorbed. Convergences in the LGUs are usual of its operations for its small area and limited resources. There are postulations that NCI-SRD must be managed primarily in the regional or provincial level for its scope a larger area and budgeting sources.

Empowerment of TWGs in the regional level will likely ensure the implementation of NCI-SRD. Further, the Secretariat must be led by an Undersecretary, preferably in the Operations Division, so as to have more budget flexibility. Thus more focus and direction must be given to TWGs at the regional and local levels.

### **On Policies and Legal Basis**

Memorandum of agreement provides loose mandate to NCI-SRD. An Executive Order (EO), and eventually a Republic Act (RA), will forge the institutionalization of NCI-SRD. At the local level, special orders are released and a sufficient basis to hold accountability. However, a local executive order is still the preferred for any individual appointment to the NCI-SRD TWGs.

### **Identified Fundamental Issues on the Implementation of Convergence Strategy**

The **programs** of DA, DAR and DENR initially experienced duplication and overlapping, which in the end still resulted to *gaps* at the level of **delivery of social services**. Differentiation on the primary mandates of each agency provides issues on jurisdiction and scope, depending on the particular laws that define these programs or services. This ‘disintegration’ plays as an agency-specific response, while complementation under the NCI-SRD is the move towards integration. In effect, DA caters to the AFMA, DAR has pushed for CARP/CARPER, while DENR espouses all environmental laws. This aligns to the issues identified by the 1999 JMC that created the ***Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) as a framework*** and ***Convergence as a strategy***. The 1999 JMC had been carried over on the succeeding issuances of JMC to reaffirm and continue the so called “NCI-SRD”.

### **Options for the Future: Desired Organizational Structure and Mandates For NCI**

The potential for NCI as a driving force to mainstream Convergence as a strategy in pushing for sustainable rural development in the countryside and even in other areas in the country, towards poverty reduction, increased incomes, and management of life forces, outweighs its current weaknesses, based on reflections on the assessment of NCI’s performance viz-a-vis its goals. Hence this study recommends the utmost support from the Executive Branch of the government to ensure NCI’s stability as an organization as precursor of development strategies from the local areas. Stemming from what appears as confusion on the functions, role and mandate of NCI and clarifying these roles, below are options towards the future institutionalization of NCI.

**On NCI's mandate****Table 2.** Proposed Mandate of NCI

Mandate	Proposed Services	Proposed NCI Lead Office
Policy and Advisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Advisory</li> </ul>	Legal Office
Capacity Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• HR support, headhunting</li> </ul>	Human Resources Office
Knowledge Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IEC materials</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>	Knowledge Management Office
Agro-Enterprise Cluster and Agribusiness Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation</li> <li>• Project management</li> </ul>	A separate office / Project Managers and Facilitator/Coordinators*

\* Agro-Enterprise Cluster and Agribusiness Development. Since this appears to be one of NCI's main function in rural development, the nature of the work of NCI must be clarified / decided. Three options are offered as regards NCI's roles:

1. NCI as **Lead Institution** in developing convergence areas (CAs), actively planning for and implementing plans for the development of CAs
2. NCI as **Implementor** of the PPAs in convergence areas, implementing selected PPAs
3. NCI as **Facilitator**, being a part of the Management Team of each PPA, looking after the implementation of convergence strategies

**Table 3.** Proposed NCI Functions and Performance Measures

NCI Functions/ Roles	Service	Measures/Outputs	NCI Lead Office
As Resource Center for Convergence	Policy Advisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoAs facilitated</li> <li>• policy recommendations arising from resolution of policy conflicts or overlaps</li> </ul>	Legal Office
	Capacity Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of trainings conducted/facilitated</li> <li>• assistance in identifying resource persons</li> </ul>	Human Resources Office
	Knowledge Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IEC materials produced</li> <li>• Summits/seminars organized</li> </ul>	Knowledge Management Office
As Convergence Facilitator	Project Facilitation, Project Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoAs facilitated</li> <li>• CI-PPA monitored</li> <li>• CI-PPA closed-out</li> </ul>	NP Coordinators (to be hired)
As Convergence Initiative (CI) PPA Implementor	Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of the PPA outputs and impacts</li> <li>• MoAs facilitated</li> <li>• CI-PPA monitored</li> <li>• CI-PPA closed-out</li> </ul>	Professional Managers (to be hired)

Illustrating the possible future organizational structure for NCI-SRD, depicting its possible functions, offices, personnel and overall expected outputs, Fig. 8 is constructed. Fig. 9 is a quick look at a possible national level organization structure for NCI-SRD.

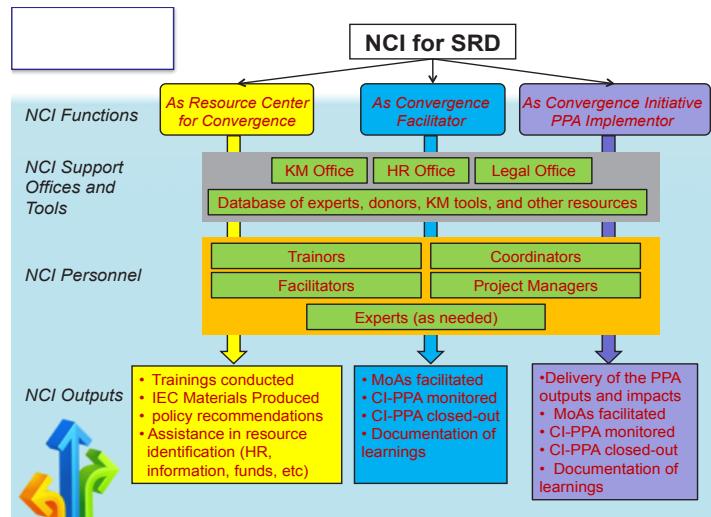


Fig. 8. NCI Functions and expected outputs

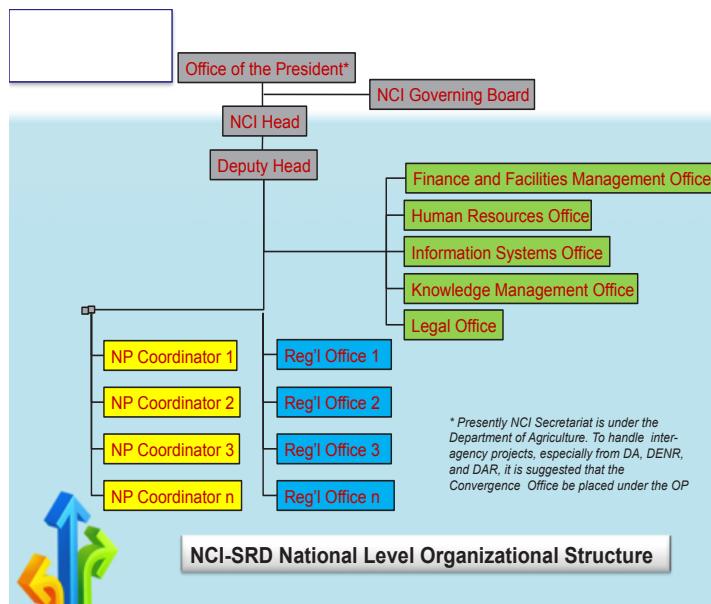


Fig. 9 Proposed NCI-SRD National Level Organizational Structure

## Conclusion

This study has shown the significance of adopting knowledge management; in particular, knowledge capture and utilization, within a strategic change management process. In particular, a desired goal (NCI's mandated tasks under the Philippine Development Plan and based on various policy documents) was defined and the NCI's organizational development performance towards the achievement of the goal of sustainable rural development was assessed.

The following framework is thus proposed as a nexus for knowledge management (knowledge capture and utilization with desired outputs) and strategic change management, which could be used in assessing performance of organizations and devising strategies for change management. The Strategies can then serve as main inputs for an Implementation Plan. The basic framework is adapted from Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) process of change model:

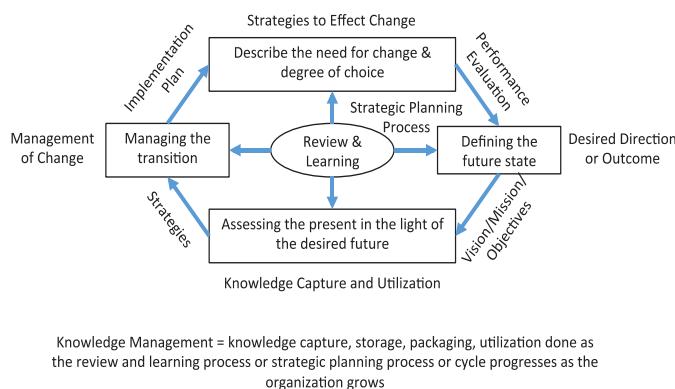


Fig. 10. Knowledge Management Approach in Strategic Change Management

Referring now to the devised framework above, the following main phases of knowledge capture and utilization have been adopted in this study:

1. The **need to conduct an organizational development assessment was communicated**, with specific terms of reference for the required outputs.
2. Organizational performance assessment was conducted to evaluate and make sense of the current strengths and weaknesses and **describe or define the desired direction for the organization**
3. **Strategic issues** were identified for the NCI to come up with options with regard to the future.
4. Proposed **implementation plan** for a future NCI structure and mandate.

Through a learning orientation, initiatives that have been already adopted and issues faced in the NCI are surfaced. This study has shown how knowledge capture could possibly be done in a strategic change management process. Systematic problem

solving, constant sharing of new insights with other members of the community, and adoption or experimentation of new or improved strategies are elements of the knowledge culture. Managers who want to be more effective in preparing strategic change management plans and need to instill a knowledge culture within the organization and among its stakeholders, preferably through action research planning, which presupposes a iterative process of reviewing, reflecting, and engaging members of the organization or through constant validation.

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## Assessment of the Implementation of the Typhoon Yolanda Rehabilitation Program<sup>1</sup>

*Jocelyn C. Cuaresma\**

### Abstract

Typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) struck the country on November 8, 2013 leaving behind 6,300 dead persons, 28,689 missing and 1,061 injured. The government estimated the total damage at Php89.598 billion. Under the Yolanda Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan approved by the President in August 2014, the government planned to spend Php170.916 billion over a period of 3 years to recover, rehabilitate and reconstruct damaged facilities and rebuild the lives of the affected population, guided by the principle of build back better and building resilient communities. Two and a half years since the event of Yolanda, the government's rehabilitation program implementation is partly achieved but is not without flaws and weaknesses. This paper reflects on the implementation of the rehabilitation plan in the Yolanda affected areas. In a nutshell, the lessons show that rehabilitation is a long, tedious process that requires systematic coordination, commitment and drive to efficiently and effectively deliver public service. The level of accomplishments remain insufficient and slow to significantly reduce the vulnerability of people in high risk areas, raise the level of preparedness, coping ability and adaptation of people in high-risk situations and in times of great disasters. Much remains to be desired in institutionalizing disaster preparedness and mitigation mindset into the systems of government agencies and the people.

**Keywords:** Typhoon Yolanda/ CRRP/ Expenditure Program/ Philippines

### Acronyms

*CA – Continuing Appropriations*

*CARAGA – Region XIII composed of the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur and Dinagat Islands*

*CDP – Comprehensive Development Plan*

*CLUP – Comprehensive Land Use Plans*

*CRRP – Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan*

<sup>1</sup>*This paper is based on the research on Tracking the Yolanda Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Budget, conducted in 2015 and sponsored by the Social Watch Philippines, Inc. and Christian Aid. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the sponsoring organizations.*

<sup>\*</sup>*Ph.D. Associate Professor, University of the Philippines, NCPAG and a Fellow of Social Watch Philippines, Inc. (SWP).*



*CSOs – Civil Society Organizations*  
*DAR – Department of Agrarian Reform*  
*DAP – Disbursement Acceleration Program*  
*DENR – Department of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*DPWH – Department of Public Works and Highways*  
*DSWD – Department of Social Welfare and Development*  
*ES – Executive Secretary*  
*ESA- Emergency Shelter Assistance*  
*EVRMC – Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center*  
*GAA – General Appropriations Act*  
*HUCs – Highly Urbanized Cities*  
*LGUs – Local Government Units*  
*LIACs – Local Inter-Agency Committees*  
*MIMAROPA – Region 4-B, referring to the provinces of Mindoro Occidental, Mindoro Oriental, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan*  
*NCIP – National Commission on Indigenous Peoples*  
*NDRRMC/F – National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council/Fund*  
*NEDA – National Economic and Development Authority*  
*NHA – National Housing Authority*  
*OPARR – Office of the Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery*  
*PDAF – Priority Development Assistance Fund*  
*PDNA – Post-Disaster Needs Assessment*  
*PPAs – Programs, Projects and Activities*  
*RAY-BBB – Rehabilitation Assistance for Yolanda-Build Back Better*  
*RAY-I4R – Rehabilitation Assistance for Yolanda-Implementation for Results*  
*RRPF – Rehabilitation and Recovery Program Fund*  
*SAA – Supplemental Appropriations Act*  
*SC – Supreme Court*  
*HLURB – Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board*  
*DepEd – Department of Education*

## **Overview**

Revisiting the Yolanda rehabilitation experience is valuable exercise to generate lessons that must be learned to help humans cope with the challenges of disaster. Typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) struck the Philippines on November 8, 2013. After two and a half years, not only the people directly affected by Yolanda should continue to be reminded of the widespread destruction and the life the affected population had to live thereafter. The Philippines ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> among 173 countries in

terms of high exposure to natural hazards such as earthquakes and typhoons and to climate change (World Risk Report 2012:11). While some countries like Japan and Netherlands are similarly highly exposed to disasters, their level of vulnerability is very, very low. Unlike Japan and Netherlands, the Philippines' faces high vulnerability<sup>2</sup> and susceptibility<sup>3</sup> to the adverse effects of natural hazards owing to the existence of significant poverty, poor and inadequate infrastructure, limited social and economic support to the highly vulnerable, and corruption (Ibid:20). Thus given situations of high exposure to natural disasters, the adverse effects can be mitigated and lessened. Having known the occurrence of typhoons since time immemorial, the high time is past to truly prepare ourselves for natural eventualities. The paper highlights lessons learned from the experience of the implementation of the Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan (CRRP) and assesses the accomplishments in terms of their contribution towards lessening vulnerability and raising the coping and adapting capacity of people in the Yolanda affected areas.

This paper assesses the implementation of the policy, program and budget responses of the national government to address the rehabilitation and recovery needs of the Yolanda-affected areas. It begins with an overview of the Yolanda rehabilitation efforts of the national government. This is followed by a discussion of the lessons learned from the Yolanda rehabilitation experience.

### Framework of Analysis

The paper proceeds with twin premises: (1) the government's rehabilitation plan and the national budget are connected; and (2) the government and its partner agencies are all committed to the goals of achieving capability in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation. The embodiment of these premises into government policies is evident in Section 2 Declaration of Policy, particularly (c), (g) and (h) of RA 10121, which states that:

- (c) principles of disaster risk management ... are incorporated in national, regional and local sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, policies, plans and budgets;
- (g) disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation shall be mainstreamed in policy formulation, planning, budgeting and governance;
- (h) policies, structures, coordination mechanisms and programs on disaster risk reduction shall be institutionalized with continuing budget appropriation

<sup>2</sup> Vulnerability refers to social, physical, economic and environment-related factors that make people or systems susceptible to the impacts of natural hazards and adverse consequences of climate change. (UNU World Risk Report 2012:16).

<sup>3</sup> Susceptibility refers to the likelihood of harm, loss and disruption in an extreme event triggered by a natural hazard. (UNU World Risk Report 2012:17).

from national to local levels with the intent of building disaster-resilient communities and nation.

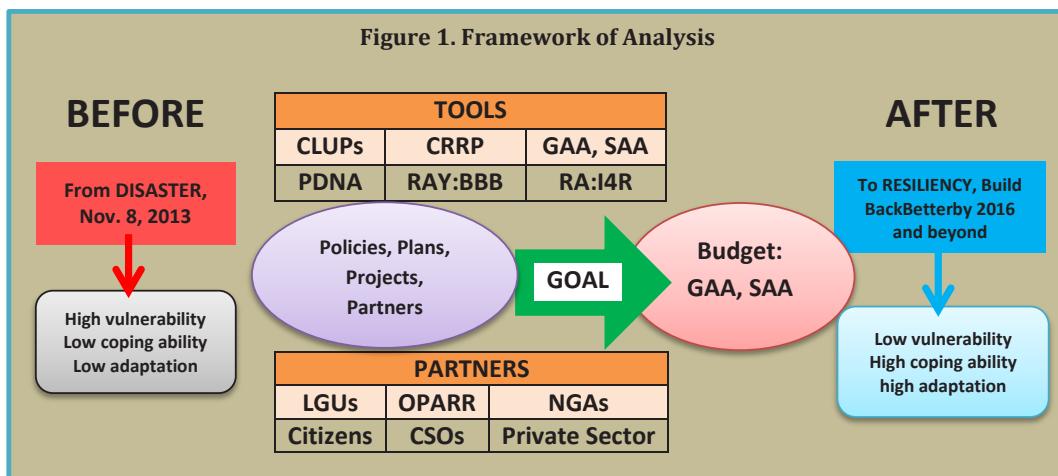


Figure 1 shows the Yolanda rehabilitation plans served as tools for rehabilitation, supported by the national budget. The national government implementing agencies, the local government units, the Yolanda victims themselves, civil society organizations and the private sector are put to task in the rehabilitation effort to build back better and create more resilient communities. The specific tools adopted by government to achieve resiliency are the various land use plans of local governments from which the CRRP was based, and with inputs from the PDNA prepared by the Office of Civil Defense and the RAY documents produced by the NEDA.

### Aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda

#### *Extent of Damage*

Typhoon Yolanda (with international name Haiyan) is one of the most devastating typhoons ever to hit the country, as it moved at the speed of 315 kph, displaced 60,000 families, and damaged an estimated Php89.598 billion<sup>4</sup> (US\$2.057 billion) worth of infrastructure, social, and cross-sectoral resources. It entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) on November 6, 2013, made its first of six land falls swept on November 8 in Guiuan, Eastern Samar, inflicted its fury over nine regions, left an unprecedented devastation over six regions, and made its sixth landfall over Busuanga, Palawan before it finally exited the PAR on November 9. The total of 3,424,593 families (16,078,181 individuals) in Regions IV-A, IV-B, V, VI, VII, VIII,

<sup>4</sup> The peso-dollar exchange rate in November 2013 was Php43.55 per US\$1.

X, XI and CARAGA were affected, of which 890,895 families (4,095,280 individuals, equivalent to 26%) were displaced. The total number of persons who died due to Typhoon Yolanda reached 6,300, and an additional 28,689 injured, and the 1,061 missing. The total of 1,084,762 houses was damaged, of which 489,613 were totally damaged and 595,149 were partially damaged. The NDRRMC estimated the total value of damage to the infrastructure, productive, social and other sectors to Php89.598 billion. (NDRRMC Update, April 17, 2014).

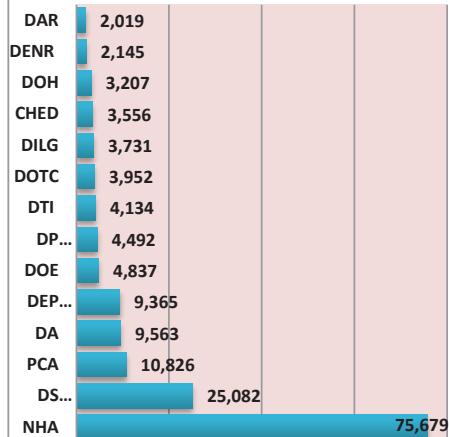
### ***Yolanda Rehabilitation Funding Requirements***

Three government agencies acted within their mandate to assess the damage and/or plan the rehabilitation and recovery of the Yolanda affected areas. The National Disaster Coordination and Management Council (NDRRMC) conducted the usual post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) and recommended the rehabilitation funding needs at Php104.644 billion. The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) formulated two rehabilitation plans: the Rehabilitation Assistance on Yolanda (RAY): Build Back Better (BBB) and RAY: Implementation for Results (I4R) and set the funding requirement at Php360.894 billion.

President Aquino issued Memorandum Order No. 62 dated 6 December 2013, and appointed Former Senator Panfilo Lacson as Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery (PARR) to oversee the Yolanda rehabilitation efforts. Upon its creation, the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery (OPARR), immediately tasked itself to formulate the Yolanda Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan (CRRP: 1 August 2014). The CRRP set the rehabilitation budget for Yolanda at Php170.916 billion, which was later reduced to Php167.864 billion. Anchored on the principle of build back better, the CRRP's total funding requirement is distributed into four clusters – Infrastructure, Resettlement, Livelihood, and Social Services – and further divided among the implementing agencies and the most affected provinces on the basis of the needs assessment results embodied in the CRRP.

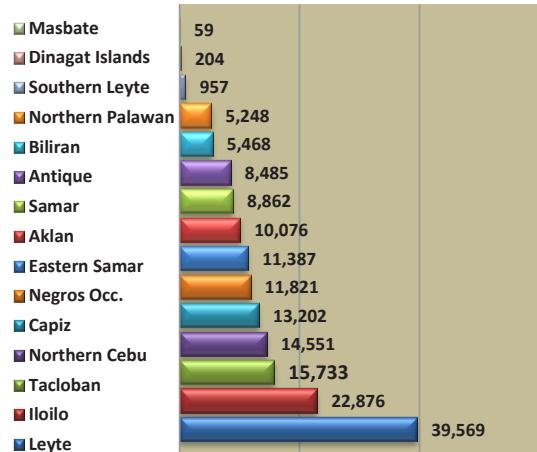


**Figure 2. Consolidated Funding Requirements for Yolanda Rehabilitation, by Implementing Agency, Million Pesos**



**Total: Php170,961,432,663  
[reduced to Php167.858 billion]**

**Figure 3. CRRP Total Funding Requirements of 15 Yolanda-Affected Provinces, Million Pesos**



Sources of Data: CRRP 2014.

Figures 2 and 3 summarize the Investment Requirements in Yolanda-affected areas under the CRRP by implementing agency, by cluster, and by province. The Resettlement Cluster is planned to have the highest appropriations during the period. Among the provinces, Leyte is expected to receive the highest appropriation, particularly for Livelihood, Infrastructure and Social Services. Iloilo Province is similarly expected to receive the biggest appropriation for Resettlement.

## Yolanda Funding Commitment and Fund Releases

The DBM The government distributed the release of the Php167.86 billion Yolanda fund into three years (see ES Memo dated 29 October 2014).

2014 – Php47.12 billion,  
2015 – Php 80.31 billion, and  
2016 – Php38.93 billion  
From NGOs – Php1.498 billion

-----  
Total for 3 years – Php 167.858 billion\*

[\*The original amount was Php170.961 billion]

Figure 4. Yolanda Funding Requirement (DBM)

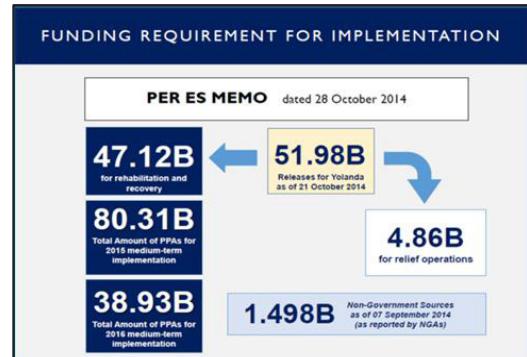


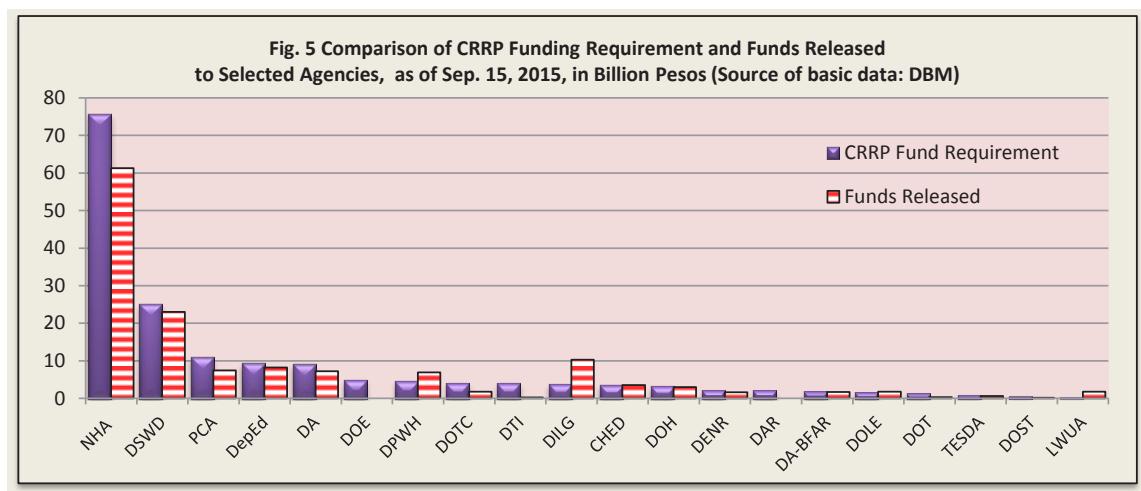
Table 1.CRRP Funding Commitments vs National Government Fund Releases

AGENCY	CRRP Funding Commitment, Million Pesos	FUND RELEASES*, as of Sep 15, 2015, Million Pesos	% of Releases to Fund Requirement
NHA	75,678.680	61,261.98	80.95
DSWD	25,082.106	22,986.91	91.6
PCA	10,825.629	7,468.69	69.0
DepEd	9,365.453	8,203.96	87.6
DA	9,128.592	7,194.56	78.8
DOE	4,837.467	0	0
DPWH	4,492.383	6,919.52	154.0
DOTC	3,952.277	1,778.17	45.0
DTI	3,920.377	246.97	6.3
DILG	3,731.129	10,305.14	276.2
CHED	3,555.621	3,552.24	99.9
DOH	3,206.950	2,970.48	92.6
DENR	2,144.734	1,596.91	75.5
DAR	2,097.555	0.10	0
DA-BFAR	1,831.198	1,696.70	92.7
DOLE	1,652.866	1,814.18	109.8
DOT	1,341.767	337.47	25.2
TESDA	959.644	650.50	67.8
DOST	532.107	195.88	36.8
LWUA	380.106	1,742.33	458.4
Other	2,199.791	9,107.05	414.0



Agencies			
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	170,916.432	150,029.74	87.8

Source: Abad, DBM: September 15, 2015.



One year after Yolanda, as of October 21, 2014, the DBM said to have released Php51.98 billion for Yolanda rehabilitation. However, the same Memo of the Executive Secretary(ES) reveals two deficient claims. First, Php4.86 billion was actually released for relief operations, and not for rehabilitation. Second, the Php47.12 billion was not all intended for rehabilitation and recovery of the Yolanda-affected areas, but was partly disbursed to fund rehabilitation efforts related to other calamities such as the Bohol earthquake, Zamboanga Siege, Typhoon Sendong, etc. Based on the details of the ES Memo, only Php34.807 billion or about 67% was clearly directed and released for YolandaPPAs. The agencies and amounts of releases to agencies are listed in table 1.

As of September 15, 2015, the national government has released 87.8% of the Yolanda funding requirement. Funding for permanent resettlement through the NHA, for instance, is 80.95% released based on table 1 and figure 5. Fund release for social welfare services likewise reached 91.6%. It is also observed that releases to some agencies are more than the planned allocation for Yolanda rehabilitation. Thus it appears that the government is on track in the release of Yolanda rehabilitation fund.

Table 2. Fund Sources for Typhoon Yolanda (FY 2013-FY2016), in Php

Fund Source	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015		FY2016	TOTAL
	Released			Proposed		
<b>FY2012 GAA, RA10155</b>						
Calamity Fund, Continuing Appropriations (CA)	76,971,739					76,971,739
<b>FY2013 GAA, RA 10352</b>						
Calamity Fund	991,538,261					991,538,261
Calamity Fund, CA		1,727,949,086				1,727,949,086
Regular Budget/ Savings/ Realignments w/in Agency	4,385,175,891					4,385,175,891
Regular Budget/ Savings/ Realignments w/in Agency, CA		2,325,707,265				2,325,707,265
Overall Savings	19,576,939,731					19,576,939,731
Unprogrammed Fund	1,705,720,000					1,705,720,000
<b>RA 10634, SAA 2013</b>		6,247,570,838				6,247,570,838
<b>FY2014 GAA, RA 10633</b>						
NDRRMF		11,170,300,000				11,170,300,000
NDRRMF, CA			41,026,336			41,026,336



Regular Budget/Savings/Realignments w/in Agency		554,897,493				554,897,493
Regular Budget, CA			751,932,518			751,932,518
Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Program (RRP) Fund		6,326,527,595				6,326,527,595
RRP Fund, CA			3,781,845,028			3,781,845,028
Quick Response Fund		161,604,000				161,604,000
Overall Savings		4,265,880,000		10,007,281,625		14,273,161,625
Automatic Appropriations		2,155,595,486	100,153,773			2,255,749,259
Unprogrammed Fund (Support to FAPs)		1,788,392,000				1,788,392,000
RA 10652, SAA 2014			10,084,458,000			10,084,458,000
FY2015 GAA, RA 10651						
NDRRMF			160,335,755			160,335,755
Unprogrammed Fund-RRPF			9,314,000,000			9,314,000,000
Unprogrammed Fund-Support for Infra.			6,180,520,000			6,180,520,000

Projects & Social Programs						
<b>FY2016 GAA</b>						
Regular Budget					<b>27,252 ,147,058</b>	<b>27,252,147,058</b>
Special Purpose Fund					<b>18,895 ,530,522</b>	<b>18,895,530,522</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>26,736,345,622</b>	<b>36,724,423,763</b>	<b>30,414,271,410</b>	<b>10,007,281,625</b>	<b>46,147 ,677,580</b>	<b>150,030,000 ,000</b>

Source: Abad, DBM: Sept 15, 2015.

Table 3. Summary of Yolanda Fund Releases, Billion Pesos

Fund Source	Amount
NDRRMF/Calamity Fund	14.17
Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Program	10.11
Regular Budget (including savings & realignments)	8.02
Quick Response Fund	0.161
Savings	23.84
Automatic Appropriations	2.26
Unprogrammed Fund	18.99
FY 2014 & 2015 Supplemental Budget	16.33

Furthermore, the amount of fund releases announced by the DBM as of September 15, 2015 included some Php10.007 billion proposed to be released in 2015 and Php46.148 billion proposed to be released in 2016. In effect, the more accurate amount of budget releases from the DBM is Php93.881 billion as of October 31, 2015 (see table 3), which is equivalent to only 54.92% of the total Yolanda CRRP funding requirement for 3 years. Based on this latter figure, budget releases for Yolanda is delayed by approximately Php10 billion.

### Assessment of Project Accomplishments

Two-and-a-half years after Yolanda, many projects have been completed, yet many more are in the pipeline or yet to be started. This part of the paper focuses on the implementation of the Yolanda rehabilitation projects. Table 4 shows the number of projects completed, ongoing, in the stage of procurement and not yet started as of November 2015.

**Table 4. Highlights of Implementation of Yolanda Rehabilitation Projects, as of November 2015**

Clusters & Projects	Target	Completed	Ongoing	Procurement Stage	Not yet started
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>					
National roads reconstructed/rehabilitated	106.700 km	60.286 km	38.415 km	7.346 km	0.65
National bridges reconstructed/rehabilitated	1,852.53 lm	1,117.64 lm	640.09 lm	94.80 lm	
Flood control structures reconstructed/ rehabilitated	110 projects	77	17	8	8
Airports rehabilitated		35		1	1
Seaports facilities rehabilitated		23		32	2
Classrooms newly constructed	2,313	1,026	928	54	305
Classrooms rehabilitated	17,335	5,457	4,239	1,037	4,155
School furniture	292,166	121,950	0	0	
State colleges & universities rehabilitated	606 projects	412	191	3	
Municipal facilities rehabilitated (municipal halls, public markets, civic centers)	25 bldgs	2	14	9	
Barangay facilities rehabilitated		430	683	2,262	313
Irrigation systems restored		84	41		
<b>LIVELIHOOD PROJECTS</b>					
Fishing boats repaired/replaced		48,995	9,446		
Fishing gears & paraphernalia distributed		76,598	4,779		
Farm tools distributed		17,269	3,706	531	2,198
Tractors & other machinery provided		138	9	9	20
Rice & corn seeds distributed		94,020	12,253	0	3,435
Coconut areas replanted		44,500	0	11,034	44,466
Coconut intercropping areas established		52,951	0	47,794	181,255
Starter kits distributed		3,765	0	623	13,092
Entrepreneurship training conducted		292	11	10	61
Livelihood assistance & CBLA		55,502	0	0	304,935
Skills & livelihood training conducted		31,130	0	0	17,603

<b>SOCIAL SERVICES</b>					
Textbooks & learning materials provided		3,780,661	2,689,817		
ESA provided	1,028,329 families	987,545 served			
<b>PERMANENT HOUSING</b>					
		13,335	79,219		112,574

Source: <http://yolanda.neda.gov.ph/#about>.

### Infrastructure Cluster Accomplishments

Led by the DPWH, the status of accomplishment of the infrastructure projects are in various stages of implementations of November 2015 and much remains to be completed.

- The rehabilitation of the damaged portions of 60.286 km of national roads (out of 106.700 km physical target, or 56.5%) is completed. A total of 1,117.64 lineal meters of national bridges (out of the targeted 1,852.53 lm, or 60.3%) have been rehabilitated. All 1.700 km of access roads targeted for rehabilitation has been completed.
- The rehabilitation or reconstruction of damaged sections of 77 flood control structures (out of 110 physical targets, or 70%) is completed.
- The reconstruction, rehabilitation and repair of buildings and facilities of 403 out of 606 (or 68.04%) state universities and colleges and one (1) CHED Regional Office VIII are completed. Another 191 SUC facilities are ongoing implementation.
- All departments and operating rooms of the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC) are now functional. The construction of the new EVRMC building 1 is 45% and building 2 is 33%. Medical staff (17 doctors, 1,058 nurses and 593 midwives) were deployed to supplement EVRMC's human resource.
- The repair and rehabilitation of 292 out of 309 (or 94.5%) local government facilities (town halls, public markets and civic centers) is completed.
- The DILG has completed and distributed the 'Build Back better Operations Manual' and the 'After the Storm: Two Years On'. The latter is a collection of stories to mark the second year commemoration of Typhoon Yolanda.
- For the Department of Education (DEPED), the construction of 1,026 new classrooms out of the target 2,313 (or 44.4%) are completed. The rehabilitation of 5,457 out of 17,335 target classrooms (or 31.5%) are completed. A total of 121,950 classroom furniture (out of 292,166 target, or 41.7%) was delivered.



The extent of the devastation in itself challenged the capacity of implementing agencies to swiftly accomplish their tasks. Regional offices of implementing agencies lack technical people to monitor and oversee project implementation. Local governments, whose officials and employees suffered equally from the devastation, lacked human resources and equipment. The onslaught of Yolanda made more recognizable the limited technical capacity of LGUs in the area of preparation of plans and programs. These constraints were addressed by the immediate hiring of engineers and other technical people.

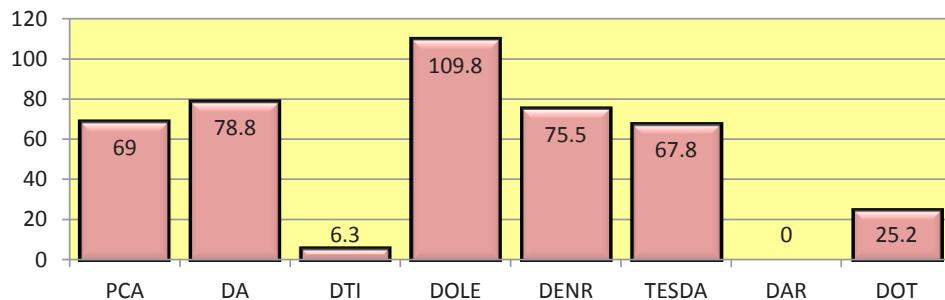
### **Livelihood cluster Accomplishments**

The accomplishments of the Livelihood Cluster are highlighted as follows, as of October 31, 2015:

- Livelihood Seeding Programs, and Basic Entrepreneurship were conducted, attended by 3,719 beneficiaries from Regions 6, 7 and 8, who were also provided with livelihood starter kits, and start-up capital (grant in kind assistance). The beneficiaries have (re)started their sources of livelihood including a sari-sari store, trading, handicrafts, food processing, food vending.
- 24,535 Livelihood skills training were held in Palawan, Cebu and in Region 8, with 31,130 beneficiaries in attendance.
- 18 Negosyo (Business) Centers were established in the Yolanda affected areas to ease in doing business and to facilitate the access of MSMEs to government processing of permits, licenses and technical assistance.
- A total of Php417.99 million in loans to MSMEs through the Small Business Corporation has been released.
- 2,559 farmers were given insurance for their crops, livestock and poultry.

The implementation of livelihood projects for Yolanda victims generally faced limited amount of fund releases to the Livelihood Cluster agencies listed in figure 6, e.g., Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Tourism (DOT), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), Department of Agriculture (DA), and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). The fund released to the DTI is only 6.3% of its budget requirement, and below 1% in the case of DAR.

**Figure 6. Percent of Budget Releases for Livelihood Projects, by Agency, as of October 2015 ([www.dbm.gov.ph](http://www.dbm.gov.ph))**



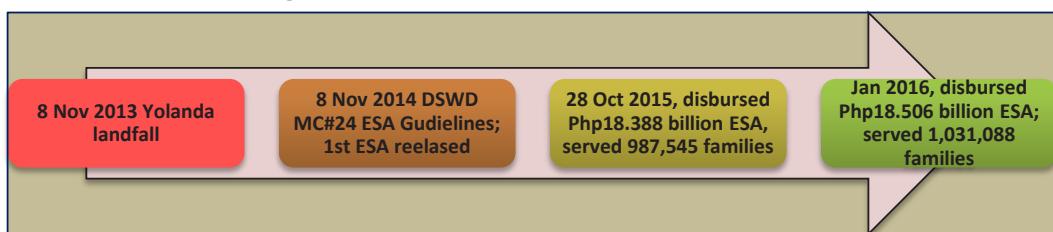
### Social Services Cluster Accomplishments: DSWD ESA

The Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) managed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is, by nature, an emergency assistance and temporary relief to enable affected families to immediately put a roof over their heads. It involves a cash grant of Php30,000 each to families whose houses were verified to be totally destroyed, and Php10,000 each to family whose houses were verified to be partially damaged, to cover the cost of housing materials. The total budget requirement for ESA is Php20.01 billion to benefit a total of 1,028,329 families as shown in table 5. Some 87.4% of the families whose houses were destroyed live in Regions 6 and 8.

The first release of the emergency assistance happened one year after Yolanda (see Figure 7). The very much delayed release of ESA contradicts its very nature as an emergency temporary shelter assistance fund. As of November 2015, the DSWD reported to have assisted 987,545 families (or 96%) out of the total target of 1,028,329 families with damaged houses (Cabrera 2015) and released 91.9% of the total ESA funding requirement. Refer to table 5.

**Table 5. DSWD Emergency Shelter Assistance, DSWD (Cabrera 2015:5)**

Region	Target Number of Families	Actual Number of Families Served	% of Families Served	Budget Requirement, in Php	Amount Disbursed, in Php	% of Amount Disbursed
<b>IV-B</b>	8,389	4,833	57.6	165,590,000	82,410,000	49.8
<b>VI</b>	465,363	468,833	100.7	8,238,725,000	8,169,330,000	99.2
<b>VII</b>	120,900	98,196	81.2	2,413,345,000	1,941,080,000	80.4
<b>VIII</b>	433,677	415,683	95.8	9,192,990,000	8,195,650,000	89.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,028,329	987,545	96.0	20,010,650,000	18,388,470,000	91.9

**Figure 7.ESA Distribution Timeline**

Cabrera (2015:11) cited two major issues that agencies in the social cluster sector had to face: (1) unreleased funds for HLURB intended for technical assistance in the formulation of climate-proof CLUP amounting to Php51.3 million; (2) unreleased funds for the Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) and permanent shelter for indigenous peoples amounting to Php34.5 million; and (3) complaints raised against local government units in the ESA implementation.

While typhoon Yolanda did not choose its victims, the ESA guidelines defining the qualification of beneficiaries are highly selective and exclusionary. The DSWD excluded many victims of Yolanda from benefiting from ESA, to wit:

- Affected families with a monthly income of more than Php15,000 a month. This rule practically caused double injustice to victims whose monthly may just be a little above P15,000.
- Families who received housing assistance from international or local donors are ineligible to get the ESA. This rule does not consider whether or not the foreign assistance is sufficient to build a decent permanent housing unit for the family of the Yolanda victim.

- Families who have already rebuilt or repaired their houses on their own are excluded. The rule does not take into account whether or not the materials used are makeshift and come from rubles.

As reported by NEDA (as of January 2016), 10,625 families (first batch) out of the targeted 16,613 families received the ESA as of October 2015 or two years after Yolanda. The second batch of families received the ESA in December 2015. (<http://yolanda.neda.gov.ph/yolanda-january-2016-updates/>)

### Resettlement Cluster Accomplishments: Permanent Housing

The number of Yolanda affected families qualified to receive assistance in permanent resettlements number 205,128 families living in unsafe zones located in 14 provinces in 6 heavily affected regions. With a total funding requirement of Php75,678.680<sup>5</sup> inclusive of community facilities. The housing units were planned to be constructed in 153 sites. A total of 1,367 hectares are needed for resettlement (at 150 housing units per hectare). As of end of October 2015, some 17,641 housing units have been substantially completed, according to the NHA. Also as of 31 October 2015, Php26.996 Billion has been released to the NHA to cover the costs of 92,554 housing units set to be completed by December 2016. ([www.nha.gov.ph/news/2016](http://www.nha.gov.ph/news/2016))

The National Housing Authority (NHA) targeted to complete 92,544 housing units or 45.1% of total housing needs by December 2016. As of October 2015, only 13,335 housing units have been completed and more than half of the number of total housing needs is yet to be started. These data are shown in figure 8 and table 6.

**Figure 8. Target Completion Dates of Yolanda Resettlement projects**

Total Housing Needs: 205,128	by December 2015	by June 2016	by December 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total targets: 92,544 up to December 2016</li> <li>• 45.1% of total housing needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21,455 housing units</li> <li>• 10.5% of total housing needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 42,566 housing units</li> <li>• 20.7% of total needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28,533 housing units</li> <li>• 13.9% of total needs</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> The budget requirement for permanent resettlement is Php61.252 billion excluding community facilities.



**Table 6. Status of Fund Releases for Yolanda Resettlement Projects, as of October 2015**

Dates of Fund Releases	Amount Released, Billion Pesos	No. of Housing Units Funded	Status of Housing Projects		
			STARTED	ON-GOING	COMPLETED
Dec 2013	2.382				
14 Oct 2014	11.0	46,129	44,070	23,523	15,153
12 Feb 2015	7.999	27,313	25,666	16,434	2,425
18 June 2015	1.30	4,439	2,116	2,109	63
28 Sept 2015	4.314	14,673	2,533	500	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26.995</b>	<b>92,554</b>	<b>74,385</b>	<b>42,566</b>	<b>17,641</b>

Source: [www.nha.gov.ph/news/2015](http://www.nha.gov.ph/news/2015), NHA News Release, November 4, 2015.

It is undeniable that the construction of housing units can take more than a year. This can be attributed to the sheer number (total of 205,128 housing units<sup>6</sup>) that have to be built in a period of three years to meet the permanent needs of all Yolanda victims. It is worthy to note that each NHA housing project is comprised not only of the housing units, but rather comes with community facilities, water and power lines, space for school buildings, tricycle terminals, police outpost, Materials Recovery Facility, health center, covered basketball court cum multi-purpose center.

In the Province of Negros Occidental, 83,950 families (or 396,590 individuals) were devastated by Yolanda. The worst hit places were the cities of Cadiz and Sagay. The NHA earmarked 27,055 housing units for the whole province. As of December 2015, the NHA has completed 650 typhoon-resilient houses for Yolanda victims and set for occupancy by June 2016. The 650 houses cost a total of Php188.5 million at Php290,000 each. A total of 300 houses are meant for beneficiaries listed in the Villa Luisa Yolanda Permanent Housing Project at Sitio Canibungan, Barangay Luna, Cadiz City. But Cadiz City needed 8,700 housing units to house Yolanda victims. Another 350 housing units were intended for residents of Barangay Old Sagay, Sagay City. Still, Sagay City needed a total of 7,000 housing units. In these two barangays, land acquisition was not a problem; private land owners were willing to donate their land for resettlement purposes or sell to government at a cheaper price. Of the 27,055 housing units allotted to the Province of Negros Occidental, 12,000 are already in the construction phase; the remaining 15,000 housing units have not been started and bidding is yet expected to commence in 2017. ([www.sunstar.com.ph](http://www.sunstar.com.ph). December 16, 2015.)

<sup>6</sup> Each housing unit has a minimum lot size of 40 square meters and individual septic tank/vault. Loftable housing units in row houses have a size of 22 square meters.

## Lessons in Implementation and Conclusion

This portion highlights the lessons learned from the Yolanda rehabilitation experience in the areas of planning, budgeting, project implementation, administrative capacity of implementing agencies, and citizen representation and participation, among others.

### Lessons in Planning and Budgeting

The government's responses to the planning and budgeting for the rehabilitation of the Yolanda affected areas can be said to be more systematic and comprehensive compared to government responses to previous disasters. For one, it is only in the case of typhoon Yolanda that three rehabilitation plans were formulated (RAY-BBB and RAY:I4R by the NEDA and CRRP by the OPARR). Secondly, the President committed his administration to the funding of the CRRP and its implementation for three years up to 2016.

Unexpectedly, budgetary allocations for Yolanda rehabilitation PPAs are not clearly indicated in the budgets of agencies. The budgetary support for Yolanda projects is uncertain despite the presence of duly approved rehabilitation plans. More specifically, the CRRP is not fully budgeted in the national budget. The annual funding requirement for Yolanda was not fully legislated in the 2013 Supplemental Appropriations Act (SAA), which was passed speedily by Congress precisely to provide for a legal funding source to cover immediately the needs of Yolanda rehabilitation, in the 2014 SAA as well as in the 2015 General Appropriations Act (GAA). For 2016, the required funding needs for Yolanda budgeted in the 2016 GAA amounting to Php46.148 billion does not complete the full funding requirement of the CRRP.

As of November 5, 2015, the budget intended for the HLURB for technical assistance in the formulation of climate-proof Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) amounting to P51.3 million have not been released. Likewise, the budget for the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) for Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) and permanent shelter for IPs amounting to P34.5million (Cabrera November 2015:11).

### Lessons from Local Government Responses

The (lack of) technical capacity of LGUs was cited as a limiting factor in the implementation of Yolanda rehabilitation program, particularly in the implementation of infrastructure and resettlement projects. Local governments' capacity to implement projects and monitor implementation is likewise doubted. The LGU's limited or lack



of technical capacity is mirrored in the absence of a duly approved Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The CRRP documented that, as of 2014, only 64 LGUs in the Yolanda affected areas were in the process of formulating their CLUPs while 49 LGUs are in the process of having their CLUPs<sup>7</sup> approved (CRRP 2014:44).

The absence of an approved CLUP, or more specifically a climate-proofed and Sanggunian-approved CLUP, prevented the swift identification of areas suitable for resettlement and delayed the implementation of permanent housing projects in the Yolanda affected areas.

Mainstreaming DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) measures into LGU plans, CLUPs, Zoning Ordinances and budgets is yet to be done. Before this can be done, LGUs have to be assisted in the development of their respective CLUPs, and these CLUPs have to contain disaster resiliency measures. Simultaneously, LGUs are yet to be helped in strengthening their disaster preparedness and mitigation capabilities. Mainstreaming activities is rendered difficult by a combination of factors including: (1) inactive Local Development Councils; (2) Unsupportive Sanggunian; (3) weak plan-to-budget linkage; (4) LGUs efforts dissipate in complying with the production of multiple plans<sup>8</sup> including 27 plans mandated by national government agencies (Gotis 2008:4).

### **Lessons from the Capacity of Government Agencies**

The OPARR<sup>9</sup> was created as a body to coordinate the implementation of Yolanda programs and projects. However, as a coordinating body, it has budget to finance the Yolanda projects and no control over budgets of implementing agencies. At the regional level, the technical capacity of national government agencies' regional offices was found limited, particularly for the assessment, validation and preparation of engineering requirements which have to be done immediately.

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<sup>7</sup> Nationwide, all the country's 145 cities and 1,489 municipalities have to formulate their own CLUP, Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Development Plan. The 81 Provinces have to review the CLUPs and Zoning Ordinances of component cities and municipalities in their jurisdictions and adopt their respective provincial CDPs, CLUPs and Zoning Ordinances. Highly-urbanized cities (HUCs) have to formulate their respective CDP and CLUP and Zoning Ordinances.

<sup>8</sup> The various LGU plan documents include Local Poverty Reduction and Alleviation Plan, ICT Plan, Forest Management Plan, Traffic Management Plan, Plan for the Elderly, Food Security Plan, Disaster Management Plan, Solid Waste Management Plan, Tourism Development Plan, Revenue Generation, Gender and Development, etc.

<sup>9</sup> Former Senator Panfilo Lacson resigned his post as OPARR Chief on February 10, 2015.

### Permanent Resettlement Areas for Permanent Housing

The establishment of safe zones and identification of areas safe for permanent housing requires local government units have to have climate-proof, Sanggunian-approved, and Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB)-approved Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs). Prior to Yolanda, all the affected provinces and towns did not have pre-approved CLUPs. This highlights the vital importance of a duly approved and climate-proofed CLUP. Some LGUs (low income ones) do not have a duly approved CLUP.

The lack of suitable lots and/or resettlement areas and the inability to identify alternative areas (in the absence of LCUPs) hindered the speed at which the permanent housing plan for Yolanda victims was implemented. Suitable lots are those located in safe zones and are away from shores and fault lines.

It was necessary that the land identified for resettlement should be titled and declared safe for residential use, i.e., not susceptible to flooding, landslides, storm surge, tsunami, and not on earthquake fault line. These rules, which are obligatory, highlighted the fact that lands owned by local governments in the affected areas were not titled, and the fact that almost all of island communities and coastal areas are unsafe and prone to geo-hazards. This practically put a limit on land available for resettlement. (CRRP 2014:18).

The implementation of housing/resettlement projects is administratively subject to the mandatory adherence to bidding and procurement processes and the eventual securing of permits and licenses from various government agencies, i.e., land conversion permit from the Department of Agrarian Reform if the land is classified as agricultural land; clearance from the National Irrigation Authority if the land is agricultural; environmental Clearance Certificate from the Department of Environment and natural Resources, tax exemption from the Bureau of Internal Revenue; and Development Permit from the LGU. Based on this experience, government itself should facilitate and hasten the grant of such permits, clearances and licenses. President Benigno Simeon Aquino issued Administrative Order No. 44 on October 28, 2014, to require agencies concerned to hasten the grant of clearances and permits.

### Citizen Participation is not Sufficiently Tapped

Citizen participation is enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, in RA 7160 the 1992 Local Government Code, in RA 9729 Climate Change Act of 2009, in the RA 10121 National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, and in the CRRP. The government's general policy framework therefore mandates to



systematically bring in people/civil society into government planning and implementation processes.

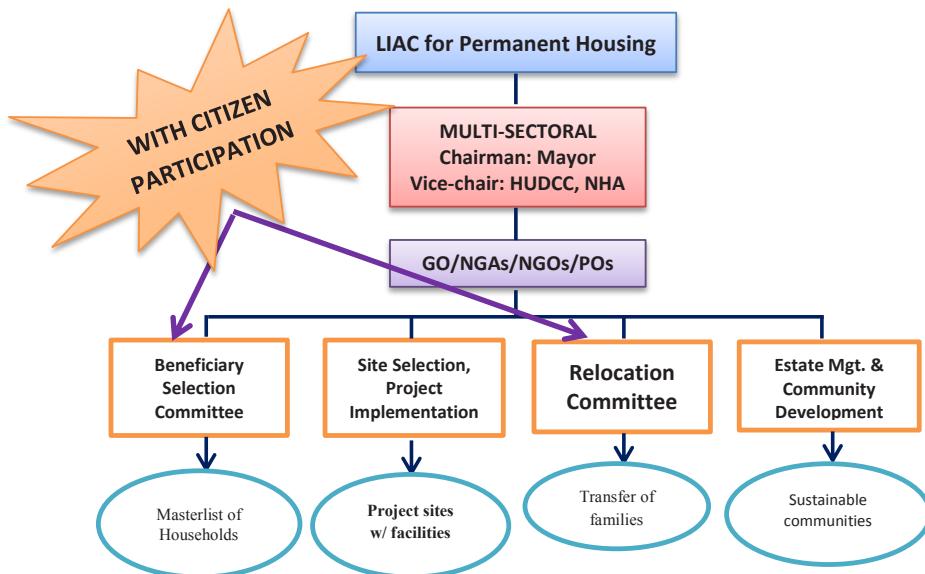
The CRRP specifically mandated that the participatory approach shall be adopted in the implementation of resettlement projects through the creation of the Local Inter-Agency Committees (LIAC) in every city or municipality in the Yolanda affected areas. The LIAC serves as the policy making and coordinating body to ensure the harmonized and efficient implementation of projects related to resettlement and relocation of affected families. Its creation is to be initiated by the NHA/HUDCC, but the Mayor is the one mandated to issue the executive order creating the LIAC. The LIAC is to be co-chaired by the Mayor and the NHA and is designed to serve as the policy-making and coordinating body to ensure the efficient implementation of activities related to relocation and resettlement projects.

It is found that citizen representation is necessitated only at the level of sub-committees and in only two out of four sub-committees, to wit:

- a. Beneficiary Selection Arbitration and Awards Subcommittee – tasked to conduct the housing survey, validate the list of family beneficiaries, formulate the Code of Policies<sup>10</sup>, resolve requests for inclusion and claims, prequalification of households, recommend the final list of beneficiaries;
- b. Site Selection and Project Implementation Subcommittee (no citizen representation) – tasked with site selection, site acquisition, securing of clearances and provision of basic services and facilities;
- c. Relocation Subcommittee - tasked to disseminate information, issue transfer notices, conduct community assemblies, prepare work plan, budget and logistics for physical transfer of families to resettlement site;
- d. Estate management and community Development Subcommittee (no citizen participation) – community organizing, livelihood program implementation, collection of monthly amortization.

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<sup>10</sup> The Code of Policies outlines the guidelines in the identification and validation of families qualified to be awarded housing units under the program, the procedures for request for inclusion for those families not in the Masterlist of Beneficiaries or possible delisting of those found to be unqualified based on the guidelines (e.g., beneficiary of other housing programs), and process for the award of housing units to qualified beneficiaries. (OPARR, Annex D- Resettlement Cluster Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan, 2014:22).



Citizen participation can be further strengthened if brought to the level of decision making. In Palawan, the LIAC subcommittees have not been activated, hence preventing the affected families from participation in the making of decisions on resettlement projects that affect them most (Briones and Cuaresma 2015:88). Citizen could have been made operational had the Local Interagency Committees (LIACs) been activated.

Families and victims of Yolanda proved themselves worthy of participation and representation by organizing themselves (also with assistance from nongovernment organizations). For instance, affected families formed the Kusog sang Pamuluyosa Panay, SagupaSinirangan, and People Surge to demand the DSWD to amend, revise or scrap the DSWD policy on the ESA, which the affected families found limiting, discriminatory (<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/737617/p18-4b-in-yolanda-emergency-aid-distributed-late>). The SagupaSinirangan, and People Surge reported on the victimization of ESA applicants by loan sharks in cahoots with unscrupulous DSWD personnel. The loan sharks advanced the ESA money to potential beneficiaries and the DSWD official will then release the ESA to the loan shark (<http://www.manilatimes.net/probe-yolanda-shelter-aid/211322/>, August 20, 2015)

## Conclusion

Without doubt, the implementation and completion of the Yolanda rehabilitation programs and projects represent only the initial efforts towards building or rebuilding resilient communities. The CRRP's goal of build-back-better and resiliency cannot be achieved by 2016, but must be continued through more systematic planning, full budget allocation, raised capacity of implementing agencies and LGUs,



acknowledgement of the importance of genuine citizen participation and representation, and the presence of an overall manager to oversee the rehabilitation plan implementation. Measures to achieve low level of vulnerability, high coping ability and putting in place highly adaptive mechanisms may have been initially achieved, but efforts must be exerted continuously to maximize and sustain the gains in achieving resiliency.

Moving forward, it is imperative that government plans and budgets must be set for the long term and formulated within the framework of climate change. The climate proofing of CLUPs and Zoning Ordinances must now be undertaken with speed on a national scale. The national government's Philippine Development Plan over the long term, the Comprehensive Development Plans of LGUs and government budgets at the national and local levels must speak the language of climate change. Mitigating the adversities brought about by climate change is a development challenge and goal in itself. All development aspirations of government and all efforts towards achieving the sustainable development goals cannot possibly be achieved without simultaneously addressing issues of climate change.

The high exposure of the Philippines to natural disasters (earthquakes, storms, floods, droughts and sea level rise) has been a known fact and has been long established. The Philippines is battered annually by typhoons, cyclones, floods it being located along the typhoon belt, and prone to recurring hazards such as earthquakes it being situated along the Ring of Fire. This strongly suggests that there is no other way but to adapt and systematically address to the challenges of the natural environment and climate change.

While exposure to natural disasters is a fact of life in this country, our ability to cope with disasters and mitigate their adverse effects proved to be low and slow. In part, the considerably high level of poverty among the population disables the poor to cope on their own in a disaster situation. This exposes the state of preparedness (read as state of development of local communities particularly those with high exposure to natural calamities. The UNU World Risk report 2012 informs countries worldwide that:

*“Natural hazards turning into disasters depends not only on the intensity of an event but is also crucially determined by a society’s level of development”*  
*(UNU World Risk Report 2012:13)*

The examples of Japan and The Netherlands show that some highly developed countries can be highly vulnerable but can have very low levels of exposure to natural danger, high levels of coping mechanisms and high adaptability to disaster

situations(UNU World Risk Report 2012:8). The Philippine government should focus on lowering the vulnerability of the people to natural hazards, by lowering people's susceptibility, raising people's capacity to cope with disasters, and raising people's adaptive capacity. As proved by highly developed countries such as Japan and the Netherlands, countries like the Philippines that are found to be highly vulnerable to natural disasters can also possibly prepare themselves and effectively mitigate and lessen the adverse impacts of natural disasters.

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## The Politics of Municipal Merger in the Philippines

*Michael Tumanut\**

### Abstract

Contemporary municipal merger is an extraordinary case in the Philippines. The two rare cases of merger are explained using the Theory of Consolidation, but is found inadequate in explaining consolidation in the Philippines. Using an institutional choice framework, the following propositions were raised and substantiated: resident-voters will likely support merger if local elected leaders are united, and if there is no strong opposition from the community; local councils will likely support merger if their respective mayors with same party affiliation support merger, and if they see it as opportunity to stay in power, and mayors will likely support merger if they see it as opportunity to stay in power, and if they belong to the same party as the congressman, the reform agent. Interview with 58 key respondents is the primary method employed, complemented by the use of existing statistics, government records and other secondary materials.

**Keywords:** Municipal Merger / Territorial Reform / Decentralization / Theory of Consolidation / Institutional Choice/ Philippines

### Introduction

Fragmentation predominantly characterizes local territorial reform in the Philippines. At least 30 cases of municipal fragmentation have been recorded since the implementation of the 1991 decentralization law, as opposed to only two cases of municipal consolidation. There is at least one accessible literature on municipal consolidation in the Philippines: Zipagan (2007) argues that consolidation does not guarantee financial viability. Although the impact of consolidation has been explored in many developed countries, it has not been thoroughly examined in the Philippines. Likewise, the rationale and politics of consolidation are uncharted territories in Philippine literature. Municipal consolidation, therefore, needs further investigation in the Philippines, since it is possibly the only democracy in Southeast Asia since the 1990s to have exhibited an extreme case of territorial and political consolidation at the municipal level through direct democracy, i.e., plebiscite.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are as follows: (1) to describe the dynamic decision-making process of municipal consolidation in the Philippines; (2) to develop and empirically examine, using case studies, factors that may explain association between behavior of key stakeholders (politicians and voters) and decision to consolidate; and (3) to test, criticize and suggest new propositions to the Theory of Consolidation.

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## Review of the literature

The term consolidation is used in this study to refer to both merger and annexation. The former represents the formation of territories by combining at least two independent territories, whereas the latter, the process of territorial enlargement through addition of contiguous territories. A cross-country comparative study on this area has yet to be undertaken, as studies on political motivations and dynamics, while abundant, are country-specific. Some refer to the politics in voluntary consolidation, such as those that require public participation either through petition, consultation or referendum, while some to limited dynamics (mostly in central or regional government) in forced or top-down consolidation. The United States has one of the largest literatures on local government consolidation, whether forced or voluntary. A theoretical model of successful consolidation has been proposed since 1974. Outside the US, the politics of consolidation has not been extensively examined using empirical data.

Kawaura (2010) investigated the incentives for local Japanese politicians to decide to merge with neighboring municipalities. His proposition is that long-serving mayors of small villages will be reluctant to merge with larger municipalities. The study used 549 cases of consolidation, with 418 identified dominant municipalities and 925 subordinate municipalities, using population as criterion. Results show that long-serving mayors are potential obstacles in consolidation if it could jeopardize their political career.

Using a different approach, Yamada, Horiuchi and Saito (2009) recognized electoral motivations and local politics as important segments of national politics in municipal consolidation in Japan. Using empirical tests, they hypothesized that the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) used municipal consolidation as a quasi-gerrymandering strategy. The authors constructed a dyad dataset of 1,880 cases of mergers from 1998 to 2006. Using a bivariate probit model, results show that LDP-dominated areas are more likely to consolidate. Yamada et al. conclude that perpetuation of LDP power, or change in the balance of power, through reallocation of votes and resources from rural to urban areas is a very strong motivation for consolidation.

Sorensen (2006) found similar results on power perpetuation and party politics at the local level, using position and influence as the operational definition of power. He studied the impact of political transaction costs in municipal amalgamation in Norway, by looking at revenue disparities, central government grants, diverging policy preferences, and elite interests. He conducted a survey in 120 municipalities and used data on the preferences for merger of all elected politicians and administrators. He observed that high-income municipalities will tend to not merge with poor municipalities; small municipalities are more unwilling to merge, particularly when there are expected changes in party strength; and senior politicians are more likely to oppose merger due to changes in position and influence.

On the other hand, the study by Sanctor (2003) showed no internal political dynamics at the municipal level in Canada. In his quest for academic explanations on municipal amalgamation in Canada, he identified three possible answers: forces of globalization,

internal political forces, or provincial government forces. His study analyzed the experiences of Halifax, Toronto and Montreal in early 1990s to early 2000s, based on events that occurred, decisions taken, and policies adopted by key actors, while comparing these to experiences in the US. Results show that the recent amalgamations in Canada occurred due to strong provincial governments, whose leaders advocated such policy fit for the circumstances with very little or no public demand.

### Theory of consolidation

The processes and politics of local consolidation have been well discussed in the United States. The comparative case study of Rosenbaum and Kammerer (1974) led to the development of the Theory of Consolidation. Although several other comparative studies had been conducted,<sup>1</sup> the growing literature remains a “patchwork of theoretical concepts and causal models that lack careful synthesis” because many factors were identified to affect decisions (Leland & Thurmaier, 2004, p. 5).

Consequently, Leland and Thurmaier revised the Rosenbaum and Kammerer (R&K) model based on criticisms and suggestions<sup>2</sup>. The model’s predictive power is assessed as moderate-to-low due to inability to extend beyond agenda-setting stage, minor attention to role of civic elites, neglect of peculiar situation, legal context and social structure. Thus, their revision engendered the city-county consolidation hypothesis (herein referred to as C<sup>3</sup> model), where a referendum campaign stage was added. Thus, the consolidation process was divided into two as evident in the focus on both elite agenda-setting activities that culminate (or not) in a consolidation charter proposal, and in campaigns for and against the proposal.

Leland and Thurmaier (*Ibid*, P.10) also expanded the crisis climate by including institutional framework, included voter alienation as one alternative government response in R&K model, and emphasized impact of provisions of proposed charter on attitudes of interest groups. Lastly, they highlighted the role of civic elites “both in leading . . . [the] charter proposal and in the campaign to gain voter approval” and their stance, whether they are united or divided. Their comparative study included 21 cases of attempts since 1970 in 13 areas: eight cases are successful city-county consolidation, of which one case is city-city consolidation; there are also 13 failed attempts in five areas. They acknowledge the bias toward southern states because of the presence of state-enabling legislation. They see the consolidation model as a process-based theory that tends to analyze “the cause-effect mechanisms at each stage or step of the process to the neglect of a more general analysis of the model” (p. 291). Moreover, crisis climate was absent in some cases, thus the identification of alternative explanations for successful consolidation: tax burden disparity, vision for economic development, normal progression of various events leading to the idea of consolidation, all of which never translated into major crises. They concluded that the

<sup>1</sup> For example, Leland and Thurmaier 2004 cited the works of Messinger, 1989; Durning and Edwards, 1992; Fleischmann, 2000; and Feiock & Carr, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Other than their own, Leland and Thurmaier cited the suggestions of Messinger, 1989; Johnson & Feiock, 1999; Feiock & Carr, 2000; and Fleischmann, 2000.



agenda-setting aspects of the C<sup>3</sup> model do not strongly predict consolidation as evidences are mixed in the influence of crisis climate, and evidences on the necessity of accelerator events are limited.

### **Rewriting to the revision**

Such weaknesses had led Leland and Thurmaier to shift discussion from developmental to constitutional politics. Two major challenges for elites were identified: “crafting a charter that meets economic development needs without losing political support,” and “crafting a campaign message that resonates with ordinary citizen-voters instead of alienating them” (p. 303). Thus the academic debate shifted its focus to charter provisions, which matter more than power deflation or accelerator events (Johnson, 2004a). These provisions include the sheriff, public employees, taxation, status of minor municipalities, council structure and the mayor.

They further explain that referendum campaign is not about outspending opponents. The message of campaign is key to campaign either for or against consolidation. On the part of consolidation supporters, power deflation is still necessary, not before, but after charter proposal is set and referendum is defined. Put differently, voters must be convinced that governance must be altered through consolidation to allow for economic development. As for opponents of consolidation, they can neutralize argument on economic development, and be successful so long as they are supported by local officials. Table 1 summarizes the predicted results in campaigning for or against consolidation based on the strength of arguments (rhetoric) and group composition.

After testing, they accordingly modified the model to put more emphasis on how elites set the agenda and on how campaign for consolidation is structured. They note that the importance of elites lies in their ability to define a bigger economic development vision, to determine inadequacy of current political structure to support and implement such vision, and to convince citizens that benefits accrue to all and not only to a few elites.

### **Critique to the revised theory of consolidation**

The original C<sup>3</sup> model was further criticized by Feiock, Carr and Johnson (2006), who discussed the use of heresthetics in campaign for consolidation as opposed to rhetoric. They explain that the latter simply intends to persuade people, whereas the former is used to induce voters “to change sides, not by persuasion, but by reinterpretation of the issue” through these tactics: introduce new dimensions to the debate, suggest alternative proposals to divide majority group, and attempt to control the decision-making process (Riker, 1990, p. 49 as quoted in Feiock et al., 2006, p. 275). The first two tactics were evident in some cases in Leland and Thurmaier. The third was acknowledged by Leland and Thurmaier but did not include the internal processes where decisions can be influenced through strategic use of institutional rules.

Moreover, whereas Leland and Thurmaier implicitly prescribe economic development as key factor in consolidation, Feiock et al. see it otherwise: it is “about political losers trying to be

winners and the current (2001, P.278) winners trying to prevent this turn of events" (p. 278). Thus, they highly advocated use of heresthetics as a framework for consolidation efforts to strengthen theoretical basis and generalizability of the model.

Thurmaier and Leland (2006) concurred but replied that such is the central argument in their revision of Rosenbaum and Kammerer's Theory of Successful Consolidation. They note the critique on rule manipulation as an interesting point, which was only evident in one case. They also disagree to the comment by Feiok et al. that manipulation of attitudes is more central than economic development: there is "no evidence of latent community attitudes toward consolidation," and that "substance of the argument matters" (Ibid, p. 280).

Other lapses and weaknesses were highlighted in Seroka's (2005) book review. The identification of myriad variables and the limited number of cases constrained empirical analysis. While emphasis on elites' role was placed, there was no common effect or principle to demonstrate its impact on consolidation. Furthermore, while a clear and common framework was used, "tendencies rather than empirically-based generalizations" emerged on decisions to hold referendum. Although failed attempts were included, there was no hypothesis on the number of attempts to achieve consolidation.

The study by Savitch and Vogel (2004a, 2004b) in the consolidation of Louisville-Jefferson County, Kentucky formed part of Leland and Thurmaier's compilation of case studies to test and improve the R&K model. They argue that the motivating force of power is an overlooked factor. Their case study emphasizes the power dimension of consolidation by examining three variables: shifts in territorial boundaries, management reforms, and political rules. Their case demonstrates that political realignment best explains consolidation through a logic of opportunity (political and monetary), where advocates are mostly politicians, business leaders, professional firms, and newspapers.

Similarly, the study by LeDuc (2003) shows that referendum campaigns in general are dominated by political parties, who in turn influence opinion formation of voters by providing partisan cues through campaigns. He conducted a comparative study on national and state referendums in 39 countries from 1975 to 2000, examined 22 cases and two state models of referendum, and found that voting results are more unpredictable in referendum than in elections because issues in the former were not accompanied by strong opinions compared to the latter. Campaigns, as in regular elections, matter in referendum, because "the short-term impact of opposing campaign strategies and tactics can easily make the critical difference" (Ibid, p. 173). He argues that voters depend on campaigns and require time to decide "when parties are split or when the ideological alignment is unclear" (Ibid, p. 174). In investigating voting behavior and outcomes, he illustrated in a continuum the relevant variables that may influence stability or volatility of referendum voting (see Figure 1).

LeDuc explains that the impact of these elements vary according to issue in the context of referendum. Thus, not all variables appear or become prominent in each referendum. When elements at the left side of the continuum are predominant,



referendum results will be more predictable as they are driven more by voters' predispositions. Conversely, when campaigns or other elements on the right end predominate, voting results will be more unpredictable.

Elements from both sides of the continuum were the subject of the micro-level analysis of Butzer and Marquis (2002), who showed the significant impact of elite among the factors affecting ballot outcomes in referendum. Using Zaller's receive-accept-sample model, they examined 32 federal referendums (1981-1996) in Switzerland and used advertising campaigns and voters' opinion. They found that voters' decisions—considering their awareness, ideology or political predispositions—were influenced by elite discourse in campaigns. Although voters are not completely ignorant, they likely mirror the position of their elites.

The gap in the growing literature on the politics of consolidation is the apparent lack of application of the theory outside the United States to further test its generalizability. More specifically, as previously discussed, literature on the behavior of politicians and voters in the context of direct democracy in the Philippines needs further exploration, description and explanation, which this study aims to achieve.

An institutional choice framework, embedded in the theory and models of consolidation, is adopted. Consistent with the framework developed by Feiock and Carr (2001, 2000) and Feiock (2004) in the examination of boundary change as a collective action. Inherent in this framework is the free-riding problem, which, according to them, can be resolved by enacting laws that do not require public participation (e.g., referendum, petition signatures), by presence of special groups to pursue territorial reform, or by presence of an elite group (entrepreneur) to spearhead reform. The framework is consistent with the two-stage process found in C<sup>3</sup> model: agenda-setting and decision-making, where the key actors are the public officials, business associations, and residents, all of whom behave according to their collective and selective goals (see Table 2).

Inherent in this framework is the assumption that individuals are rational and self-interested beings. Geddes (1994, p.11) explains that politicians' behaviors are influenced "by the incentives shaped by party politics or higher-level party officials." She adds that patronage acts as an anchor of success for politicians, whose career depends on reelection, thus future votes are always calculated in their actions.

### **Reformulated hypotheses**

Although the C<sup>3</sup> model is tested and criticized in this study, new hypotheses, inspired by the institutional choice framework, are proposed in accordance with the decision-making process in the Philippines. Due to the multi-level and multi-player nature of local politics in Philippine municipal consolidation, the dependent variable "decision to consolidate" is operationally defined for this study in a four-stage successive progression (see Figure 2).

For each stage, two key political factors affecting the behaviors of the decision-makers are identified. At the preliminary agenda-setting stage (where the mayors of affected municipalities decide to support or reject consolidation), the variable “opportunity to stay in power” (defined as term in office) is selected due to the rational self-interests that guide mayors’ behaviors to prolong term in office. In the Philippine context, a change in political jurisdiction may allow them to run anew with a clean slate. Additionally, outgoing officials are more likely to support unpopular or controversial policies, such as consolidation or cityhood. Equally important is the variable “political party affiliation” (i.e., same party as the congressman or not). Congressmen are bearers of pork barrel funds for local development projects, as well as funders of local electoral campaigns. Hence, if opportunity to stay in power can be improved through affiliation with supra-municipal<sup>3</sup> elected officials, particularly congressmen, then mayors will likely stand behind such officials for political survival. Conversely, mayors who are not aligned with the congressman and/or are newly elected in office will likely oppose.

For the local legislation stage, which is considered the final agenda-setting stage (affected local councils decide whether or not to pass a resolution to support consolidation), same variables are employed but with different operational definition. The variable “opportunity to stay in power” is defined as rank in council, whether elected as first to fourth or fifth to eighth councilors, according to election results. The rationale for such division is as follows: as only four out of eight seats in the council would remain after municipal consolidation, councilors at the lower half of the council ranking will likely resist consolidation as they will likely lose in the next elections, i.e., seeing their rank in previous election results as an indicator of their ‘winnability.’ Hence, as they consider their political survival, those who are aligned with the pro-consolidation mayor or congressman will likely support the proposal to merge, thus the inclusion of the variable “political party affiliation” (same with mayor or not). Conversely, councilors who are affiliated with opposing mayors will likely reject consolidation.

At the final stage (where citizen-voters decide to ratify or reject consolidation through local referendum), two elements are examined: “position of the mayor and the council” and “consolidation campaign.” As for the former, as discussed by LeDuc, political party and leaders are important elements in elections: voters take partisan cues from their elected officials during campaigns, thus, when they are united and supportive, voters will likely mirror their stance. Alternatively, if they are divided, voters will likely reconsider taking cues from both sides. Thus, the latter variable, which is drawn from the C<sup>3</sup> model, is crucial particularly in opinion formation of voters. It has two criteria: presence or absence of opposition group, and strength of campaign (measured as use of special tactics, media, rhetoric or heresthetics). Table 3 summarizes all variables investigated in this study.

The hypotheses in this study are drawn to reflect succession and relationship with each other against a backdrop of complexity of decision-making process in the Philippines. Given the nature of politicians and local politics in the Philippines, where

<sup>3</sup> These are elected officials above the municipal level, such as congressman, provincial governor and provincial board members.



prominent political families play a pivotal role, the following propositions are made:

1. Residents will likely support the law to consolidate if their local elected leaders are united *and* if there is no strong opposition from other stakeholders.
2. The local councils will likely support the proposal to consolidate if their respective mayors with same party affiliation support the proposal *and* if they see it as an opportunity to prolong power.
3. Mayors will more likely support the idea of consolidation if they are on their last term, i.e., seeing it as opportunity to perpetuate power, *and* if they belong to the same party as the congressman who proposed the idea to consolidate.

### **Methodology**

This study is bounded by core questions: why and how did municipalities in the Philippines consolidate? The previous chapter shows the development of new propositions based on the existing models of consolidation and in accordance with the multi-level, multi-player decision-making process in the Philippines.

All two cases of consolidation in the Philippines were examined, a case study protocol was designed, data were collected and triangulated through archival research and interviews, propositions were used as guides in case study analysis, and strategies of pattern-matching logic and cross-case synthesis were applied. This study employed a two-case study design, as there are only two cases of municipal consolidation in the Philippines since 1991: the Island Garden City of Samal and City of Sorsogon. These two cases have five embedded “sub-cases,” i.e., the five former municipalities that decided to merge. Case study approach is deemed as most appropriate method to document and investigate the rare phenomenon as it allows examination of multiple variables, use of multiple sources of evidence, and detailed and concrete reporting of cases.

The author gathered preliminary information, particularly history of the cities and their respective socio-economic profiles, through archival research and desk review, which were then verified in the field. Key informant interview (face-to-face and telephone) is the principal method of inquiry. Investigation employed both data triangulation—by the use of archival records, documents and interviews—and respondent triangulation, by selecting 58 respondents, representing various positions on the issue, and positions in the community in all five former municipalities.

### **Results and discussion**

The two cases share many similarities. The Island Garden City of Samal was created in 1998 from the merger of Babal, Samal and Kaputian towns. Under the same legal framework of the 1991 Local Government Code, in 2000, Bacon and Sorsogon towns replicated the success of Samal to create Sorsogon City. Both congressmen belong to political families, which are just some of the prominent clans in their respective provinces. Both have relatively homogeneous communities, and have history of shared identity: in the former, most of the inhabitants came from Samal tribe, whereas many Sorsogon residents trace their roots in Bacon, an older settlement area.

Geographical condition is favorable in both cases: in the former, all three towns are situated in Samal island, whereas in the latter, both are coastal towns sharing geothermal energy. Economic performance was relatively similar in the former, while in the latter, Sorsogon town was more developed than Bacon..

In the investigation of the question “why would municipal governments consolidate,” the answers lie on the behaviors of key decision-makers, primarily at the level of plebiscite or local referendum. In the Philippines, where plebiscite results are binding, the residents are final decision-makers. Residents will likely support the law to merge if their local elected leaders are united *and* if there is no strong opposition. In testing this hypothesis, results show that position of elected local officials, presence of opposition groups and strength of their campaign all influenced the voting results of the plebiscite (see Table 5).

In Babak and Samal—where the key political entrepreneurs, i.e., the mayor and the whole council, were all supportive *and* there was no strong opposition—the affirmative votes in the plebiscite were very high, above 80 percent. In Bacon, where the mayor and the whole council were supportive but some village leaders opposed and campaigned against consolidation, the affirmative vote only garnered 63.2 percent. In Kaputian, where the mayor and majority of the council were supportive but an opposition emerged, a much lower affirmative votes were garnered: 61.8 percent. Lastly, in Sorsogon where the council was split, the mayor opposed, and opposition was strong, the affirmative vote recorded the lowest among five municipalities: 60.9 percent.

Thus, the share of affirmative votes varied according to position of elected local officials, whether united or divided, and the presence and strength of opposition campaign. This effect was salient when results (i.e., margin of votes) were compared among the three towns in Samal island.

However, when results are compared in Bacon and Sorsogon, there was no significant difference (2.3 percentage points) in the margin of affirmative votes, although the mayor and the whole council in Bacon were supportive, whereas, in Sorsogon, the mayor and half of the council were opposed. This result may be explained by the effect of the presence of strong opposition group in Sorsogon, whose anti-consolidation campaign reached the electorate of Bacon, largely through radio. The divided position of key local officials in Sorsogon, particularly the provincial governor, may have contributed to low voter turnout. The other plausible explanations were the heavy rain during the plebiscite day and a misinformation of voters as observed in Bacon.

Regardless of position of elected local officials, presence of opposition groups and strength of campaign, the affirmative vote won in both cases, i.e., more than 50 percent of the votes. This finding is consistent with Leland and Thurmaier's predicted results based on the use of arguments. The use of issues of increase in internal revenue allotment or IRA (i.e., block grant from central government) and economic development—which are strong arguments, according to Leland and Thurmaier—in framing the rhetoric of the pro-consolidation group helped garner more affirmative votes, but not overwhelmingly due to the presence of strong opposition groups in Bacon (63.2 percent), Sorsogon (60.9) and Kaputian (61.8).



The use of heresthetics, as suggested by the same authors, was not reported, except in Sorsogon. Doloiras, then-president of business chamber in Sorsogon counterattacked the issue of increased IRA by reinterpreting the issue and adding the dimension of corruption: IRA increase “is unnecessary if not used wisely” because “we know it would go to their pockets,” he explains. Additionally, the use of efficiency as an argument for pro-consolidation campaign was absent in both cases.

The findings are also consistent with that of Rosenbaum and Kammerer's: campaign is more likely to succeed—in this case, to make a marginal difference in plebiscite results—when civic elites are involved, as shown in the case of Kaputian (i.e., *Kaminos*) and in Bacon and Sorsogon (i.e., business chamber and other political elites). Specifically, as shown in Table 5, the stance of “their elites,” which was rendered into rhetorics or heresthetics in referendum campaigns, was taken and mirrored by the voters, similar to what Butzer and Marquis observed in Switzerland.

The findings also bear similarities to the observations by LeDuc on the strong influence of political parties and their leaders in referendum campaign. In all five embedded cases, the congressman's political party was influential in the decision-making by local councils. Additionally, the window for opinion formation for voters in both cases were described by some respondents as “fast” and “abrupt,” thus the plausible application that, as shown in Figure 2, the prominence of key elements of *political party* and *leaders* made the referendum stable in Babak and Samal (i.e., similar and predictable overwhelming results as indicative of their support to the law authored by their congressman), whereas the presence of opposition campaign in Kaputian rendered the results volatile and eventually garnered significantly lower affirmative votes than in its other neighbors in the island. Similarly, the presence of strong *opposition* groups and *campaigns* as well as use of *media* in the Bacon-Sorsogon case made voting results in that area unpredictable.

But how do pro- and anti-consolidation groups form? These groups were organized by members of the local council. The local councils will likely support the proposal to merge if their respective mayors with same party affiliation support the proposal, *and* if they see it as an opportunity to stay in power and/or build political career. This hypothesis is confirmed.

As shown in Table 6, all top-ranked councilors<sup>4</sup> in five municipalities, except three in Sorsogon and two in Samal, were supportive of consolidation/cityhood. The ranking was a key factor in their decisions as it served as gauge for their “winnability” in the next elections. Besides, only four seats per district (i.e., former municipality) were approved in the charter, except for Sorsogon, which retained eight.

Here, a puzzle emerges: why would top-ranked councilors in Sorsogon vote negatively? A plausible explanation is their affiliation with the mayor/governor who opposed. In Samal, two top-ranked councilors were not affiliated with the administration party (party of mayor and congressman). Table 6 shows that council opposition was strong when mayor (and governor) opposed consolidation/cityhood, as demonstrated in Sorsogon. In the case of Kaputian, two out of three anti-consolidation

<sup>4</sup> Those elected and ranked first to fourth in the election of council members.

councilors had low rankings in the council. The other opposition was an ex-officio member (i.e., representing the youth population).

In the end, both councils, decided, not unanimously, to support cityhood through municipal consolidation. If their decisions are partly influenced by mayor's position and party affiliation, then why would mayors support or oppose consolidation?

Mayors will more likely support the idea of consolidation if they are on their last term and see consolidation/cityhood as opportunity to stay in power, *and* if they belong to the same party as the congressman who proposed the idea. This hypothesis is confirmed in both cases. In other words, opportunity to stay in power and party affiliation strongly influence municipal consolidation in the Philippines. As shown in Table 7, in both cases of consolidation, the affected mayors who supported the consolidation/cityhood were all aligned with their respective congressmen and were all on their last term. The lone opposition mayor of Sorsogon was on his first term and was not affiliated with the congressman. The result of this particular hypothesis is comparable to the findings by Kawaura (i.e., political survival of mayor) and Yamada et al. (i.e., perpetuation of power through reallocation of votes).

### **Examination of rival explanations**

In general, this study minimized threats to construct validity, which is also a rival explanation, by employing the method of data and investigator triangulation. However, the triangulation method faced threats from possible poor recall of key respondents because the phenomenon is at least ten years old for both cases, as well as from absence of data due to poor records management system.

This study identified economic factor, i.e., economic incentives from increase in IRA and faster economic development, as a plausible direct rival for three hypotheses. The rival hypothesis “economic incentive will likely influence the local politicians and voters to support consolidation” is tested based on documents and interviews. Both authors (congressmen) of consolidation indicated faster economic development as key justification of the bill. Such development would be possible due to significant increase in the share in IRA, the financial incentive for cityhood through merger. Such incentive was used in their rhetoric to garner the support of local leaders.

Among the interviewed political leaders from both camps, 11 out of 16 cited the benefit of increase in IRA and the promise of faster economic development in the area as key deciding factors. Among residents and employees, 19 out of 42 indicated increased budget and economic development as reason for affirmative vote. However, the economic incentive is not the only factor when decisions were made at all three levels. Among the interviewed elected local officials, at least three cited party loyalty or support to mayor/congressman as key factor in decision, while two local leaders thought consolidation was designed to “accommodate” politicians. Among residents and employees, three cited support to mayor/congressman as reason. One respondent declared “*bayad utang na loob kay del Rosario dahil sa kuryente*” (paying debt of gratitude to [Congressman] del Rosario due to his electrification project in the island) as her justification for her affirmative vote on the issue (Tumanut, 2013). As initially



observed by Timberman (1991 as cited in Rood, 1998), such is an indication of the Filipino value of *utang na loob* as being ingeniously invoked in campaigns.

When asked why politicians advocated consolidation, at least three voters identified strong personal motives of the politicians. For instance, in the case of Samal island, according to Camporedondon and a few anonymous residents, the del Rosario-Floirendo families own properties and businesses in Samal island. Cityhood would therefore increase valuation of their real properties, as well as improve income for their resorts and other businesses.

In summary, economic factor was explicitly stated by many respondents, both politicians and residents, due to nature of consolidation: to be qualified for cityhood, which in turn would increase IRA share and trigger economic development. Hence, it can be argued as a necessary condition in decision-making. However, it is neither the sole nor a sufficient condition for consolidation. If it is, then more cases of consolidation would have emerged. Instead, an increasing number of municipalities have been continuously converted into cities without resorting to consolidation or any territorial reform.

Thus, the direct rival hypothesis is rejected (i.e., economic factor by itself does not result to consolidation) but is considered a commingled rival. The interplay of both political and economic factor explains municipal consolidation in the Philippines. Bundling of goals/issues of consolidation *and* cityhood allowed for both factors to influence decision-making. Moreover, the effect of these factors on result must be placed under several assumptions or contexts, where municipal consolidation was achieved: democratic country, unitary system of government where one legal framework applies, culture of patronage and clientelism, and presence of political dynasties (see Table 9).

Another rival or threat to validity is the possible reverse causality in the first hypothesis: “local leaders will likely unite and support consolidation if they think their residents will agree,” vis-a-vis the original proposition “residents will likely support the law to merge if their local elected leaders are united.” Such reverse causality is plausible according to the logic of representation of people's will as well as of gaining support or votes for reelection, but this rival is rejected by the following procedural and behavioral/institutional reasons: (1) according to case study reports, positions of local officials were taken even before consultation with and campaign among their constituents were made (i.e., the councilors' positions were immediately taken in the form of council resolution to justify the bill in Congress), thus it was unlikely for them to gather the residents' initial opinion; (2) accordingly, the residents' opinion formation was largely dependent on campaigns, as discussed by LeDuc, which in this case had been conducted afterwards (and inadequately in some areas); (3) the multi-level, multi-player decision-making process had given local officials the leeway for their decisions to be influenced more by their rational self-interests instead, because, in any case, voters make the final decision through referendum, the final stage of decision-making process; (4) moreover, at least four residents/employees cited support to local officials (either mayor or congressman) as key factor in their decisions; (5) in interviews with political leaders, the position of the people was never

explicitly identified or alluded to as a factor in their decisions; (5) and lastly, due to rampant electoral fraud (as well as a culture of clientelism), the rationale behind the reverse causality is further weakened because local elected officials *can* influence voters behavior and/or election results.

### Testing the R&K theory and C<sup>3</sup> model

Evidences in the two case studies in the Philippines confirm the findings of Leland and Thurmaier regarding the inapplicability of the R&K Theory of Consolidation. In the Philippines, all key variables in the three-stage model of Rosenbaum and Kammerer were absent, and are therefore proven to be unreliable predictors of municipal consolidation. These variables are: presence of crisis climate, inadequate or inappropriate local government response, power deflation, and presence of an accelerator.

As for the first variable, a crisis climate did not lead to the idea of consolidating municipalities in the Philippines to create new cities. Instead, the consolidations were designed with the collective goal of “ensur[ing] the holistic human development and ecological integrity” in the island of Samal and of attaining “the benefits of agro-industrialization that will come as a consequence of urbanization” in Sorsogon. The second and third variables become irrelevant without a crisis climate to refer to. As for the final variable, an accelerator event or situation was not evident in both cases, as the consolidation process followed legal procedures, schedules and actions as required by law (e.g., readings in Congress, justification of bill through council resolution, campaign period).

Findings in the case study also show the weaknesses of the original C<sup>3</sup> model, which wholly subsumes the R&K model and adds nine more variables: institutional framework (V1), treatment of taxes (V6), law enforcement (V7), council structure (V8), executive (V9), status of minority voters and districts (V10), status of minor municipality (V11), pro-consolidation campaign (V12) and anti-consolidation campaign (V13).

As for the first of the additional variables, the institutional context or environmental factors (V1) has many embedded variables: homogenous communities, similar economic performance, favorable geographical features and location, history of shared culture and identity, presence of elites, among others. As discussed above and shown in Table 16, both cases have relatively homogeneous communities. The economic performance is relatively similar among the three towns in Samal, whereas Sorsogon had substantially higher economic output and activity than Bacon. Moreover, although political elites were present and influential in all five municipalities in two cases, the other civic elites were not as organized and influential in all municipalities, except Sorsogon. Nonetheless, these elements generally represent the conditions or context under which municipal consolidation is possible.

As for the second variable (V2 or emergence of either united civic elites with economic development vision for community or divided elites), which is an enhanced variable from the R&K model is the subject of further exploration in this study. While



this variable is an important indicator of consolidation, elites may not refer to civic elites in general (e.g., politicians, media, academe, etc.), but may only refer to political elites. Hence, this variable is reintroduced and reinterpreted as “position of the mayor and council” as well as subsumed in the variable “consolidation campaign.” As elaborated in the subsection *Testing New Hypotheses*, this variable, alongside campaign, affect the margin of votes in plebiscite results.

Four of the next six variables, which pertain to the key details of the proposed charter, were found to be significant issues discussed during the campaign at various levels (i.e., elected municipal officials, employees, and residents in general). These elements of the proposed charter or bill could have been subsumed in the variable of referendum campaign, as these are the issues used to convince other local officials and the voters to support or oppose consolidation through the use of rhetoric or heresthetics. Nonetheless, this study examined whether these key details were included in the proposed bill in the Philippines cases, as well drew criticism, apprehension, discussion or resistance.

As for the issue of taxes (V6), a five-year tax moratorium was immediately proposed by the congressmen in both cases to allay the fear of tax increase by the residents, particularly the businessmen. Law enforcement (V7), particularly the jurisdictions of law enforcers, was absent in both cases due to differences in the authorities and structures in local public safety between the US (the source of the model) and the Philippines. As for the council structure (V8), legislators in both cases proposed the creation of special districts: three in Sorsogon City (one in Bacon and two in Sorsogon), and three in Samal (one for each former municipality). However, the crucial and residual issue was the number of seats per district, which affected the local councilors in all municipalities, except Sorsogon, which had two districts (due to larger population) and retained eight seats in the city council.

The issue of executive (V9) was corollary to the issue of consolidation, as the latter would result in one seat for mayorship. The other crucial issue in the executive division was the consolidation of offices, and position and salary of employees. Consolidation was expected to affect the ranks of employees, but all regular employees were guaranteed placement in the proposed city organization and management. An option for early retirement program was also proposed, while employees also expected their remuneration to significantly increase to city-level salary grades. As for the status of minority voters and districts (V10), prior to consolidation/cityhood, such minorities were absent in both cases. However, in a related variable (status of minor municipality or V11), inclusion of Bacon, a minor municipality in Sorsogon-Bacon consolidation, did generate some discussion and opposition. Even in the relatively comparable towns in Samal island, Kaputian was viewed as the minority due to its population, geographical location, and political maturity.

For this study, the variables pro-consolidation campaigns (V12) and anti-consolidation campaigns (V13), were not treated as discrete variables and, thus, were combined to create a variable “consolidation campaign,” which is found to be a strong indicator of municipal consolidation, i.e., it influences the margin of votes in plebiscite results.

In summary, some variables in the revised C<sup>3</sup> model, which has never been tested before, are now proven to be insignificant (i.e., unreliable predictors) when tested using the two cases of municipal consolidation in the Philippines.

In general, these models were developed under several assumptions: (1) government is democratic (i.e., public participation is present), (2) referendum is the final decision-making process of consolidation, and (3) civic elites are present and active. However, democracy in the Philippines or in other countries are not as stable or as liberal as in the United States, such that civic elites (aside from political elites) may be present but not necessarily active at all times as exhibited in the case of Samal, Babak and Bacon during the campaign leading to the referendum for consolidation and cityhood.

On the two-stage process in the C<sup>3</sup> model: since the Philippine government and politics are patterned after the American system, the two-stage process of consolidation (i.e., agenda setting and referendum campaign) is also evident in the Philippines. However, it was modified to fit the Philippine process of municipal consolidation, which resulted in the development of an original analytical framework (see Figure 2).

## Conclusion

The redemocratization in 1987 and decentralization in 1991 have ushered in an era of transformed institutions in the Philippines. However, evidences are not forthcoming in all areas. The politics of municipal merger and the local referendum it entails are uncharted territories in the Philippines, whereas literature on this area in other countries, such as the United States, is rich. Accordingly, this exploration, documentation and explanation aimed at charting such domain.

The discussions in the preceding chapter have demonstrated how local elites strongly influence local decision-making process of municipal merger in the Philippines. Analysis has confirmed that local politicians behave according to their rational self-interests. While this study has corroborated local political dynamics that is familiar and predictable in Philippine socio-political milieu, it has empirically shown a set of causal mechanisms linking the multi-level decisions regarding municipal consolidation to the behaviors of multiple key decision-makers in the Philippines: largely influenced by referendum campaigns of both sides, the voters' decisions mirror the stance of their respective political elites (particularly the local councils and mayors), whose decisions, in turn, are largely influenced by partisanship (particularly the party of the congressman who introduced the bill to consolidate) and selective goal of power perpetuation through control of local office. In addition, the rational behaviors of all key decision-makers in municipal consolidation are likewise influenced by economic incentive of increased revenue share from the national government.



Equally important, consolidation of municipalities in the Philippines was successfully accomplished twice under historical, legal and social contexts: public participation is mandated and practiced, where referendum is binding and is the final decision-making process of consolidation; civic elites are present; culture of patronage/clientelism is rampant; and political dynasties abound. Moreover, this study has demonstrated how the American consolidation models are not best suited to explain municipal consolidation in the Philippines. As previously discussed, the three-stage model of Rosenbaum and Kammerer are proven to be unreliable predictors of consolidation as key variables were absent in all the embedded cases examined in this study. The C<sup>3</sup> model (both original and revised) is also found insufficient in explaining municipal consolidation in the Philippines due to the inclusion of many variables, most of which were context-dependent. Both models also highlighted the general step-by-step process and dynamics of consolidation, rendering inadequate the identification and explanation of the predictors of elite behaviors in the context of municipal consolidation.

However, two central variables from consolidation models, i.e., the “emergence of civic elites” and “referendum campaigns,” were reinterpreted, tested and found significant in this study. Therefore, a set of causal mechanisms between context-specific incentives, behaviors and decisions is the contribution of this research to the ongoing discourse on municipal consolidation in general and to Philippine local politics and democracy in particular.

While the findings of this study have reflected the rational behavior of decision-makers in the context of municipal consolidation, they also pose several normative/policy questions: Should national governments deliberately use incentives and promote municipal consolidation to inject impetus towards local economic development? In an era of ballooning government expenditure, should pro-consolidation actors also aim for efficiency? In democracies, should governments mandate the use of referendum as final? If so, should local referendum require a minimum threshold of voter participation?

In the Philippines, the specific policy implication on the distribution of the internal revenue allotment among various local government tiers is striking. The economic incentive of increased revenue share from the central government is present and substantial only if consolidation will result in the creation of a new city. Accordingly, cityhood through this route will alter the pool of revenues shared among the different local government units in the Philippines. Therefore, promotion of municipal consolidation, and the new cities it will create, may be detrimental to cities that are highly dependent on IRA.

This study also raises possible areas for future research. The reformulated hypotheses developed in this study may be tested in other local governments in the Philippines that recently exhibited local territorial reform, such as the creation of new local governments through division or fragmentation, as well as the conversion of municipalities, or several *barangays* of municipalities, into cities. Additionally, this study encourages testing the new propositions in other democratic and developing countries that use binding referendum, and possibly in any local territorial reform characterized by multi-level, multi-player decision-making process.

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## Appendix

Stability			Volatility
Social cleavages			Campaign events
Groups			Government actions
Ideology			Media
Core beliefs	Leaders		
Political parties			State of the economy

Source: LeDuc (2003, p. 179)

Figure 1. Elements leading towards stability or volatility in referendum voting

**Table 1. Predicted results for combinations of consolidation campaigns**

Pro-consolidation campaign		
Anti-consolidation campaign	Strong arguments	Weak Arguments
Strong opposition	Even odds	Fail
Weak opposition	Pass	Fail

Note: Economic development is example of a strong argument; efficiency, equity are examples of weak arguments

Source: Leland & Thurmaier (2004, p. 316)

**Table 2. Definition and goals of boundary actors**

Actor	Definition	Collective goals	Selective goals
Public officials	Municipal elected officials County elected officials Government employees	Community leadership Community leadership Public service	Political power and reelection Political power and reelection Job protection and greater autonomy
Business associations	Chamber of commerce and merchants, media Manufacturers Developers and contractors	Community image and status Economic development Economic development	Financial gain Financial gain Financial gain
Resident/citizen organizations	Civic groups, good government organizations Academics and professional organizations (ASPA) African-American community, racial and ethnic minorities Homeowners associations; tax control groups	Accountability and “good government” Progressive reform and “good government” Representation Lower taxes, greater access, and efficiency	Status, prestige, and membership Influence and program expansion Greater influence, access to government Lower individual taxes, exclusion

Source: Feiock, 2004, p. 299; Feiock & Carr, 2001, p. 393

**Table 3. Variables and operational definitions, according to level of decision made**

Level of decision	Variables	Operational definition
<i>Decision level no. 1 (Agenda-setting stage 1: Mayors)</i>		
Dependent variable	Decision of mayors to support consolidation	Yes or no
Independent variables	(1) Opportunity to stay in power	Term in office (whether first, middle or last)
	(2) Political party affiliation	Same party as the congressman who proposed the consolidation or not

<i>Decision level no. 2 (Agenda-setting stage 2 or local legislation stage: Local councils)</i>		
Dependent variable	Decision of local councils to support consolidation	Enacted a council resolution or not, i.e., majority 50% + 1 vote; and individual votes, whether yes or no
Independent variables	(1) Opportunity to stay in power	Rank in council, whether elected as first to fourth or fifth to eighth councilors
	(2) Political party affiliation	Same party as mayor/congressman or not
<i>Decision level no. 3 (Legislation stage)</i>		(Not included in the study)
<i>Decision level no. 4 (Referendum stage: Citizen-voters)</i>		
Dependent variable	Decision of citizens to support consolidation	Plebiscite results (in percentage)
Independent variables	(1) Consolidation campaign	Presence or absence of opposition group; Strength of campaign (according to use of issues in rhetoric/argument, use of special tactics and media)
	(2) Position of the mayor and council	Whether united or divided (according to the number of support or opposition in council)

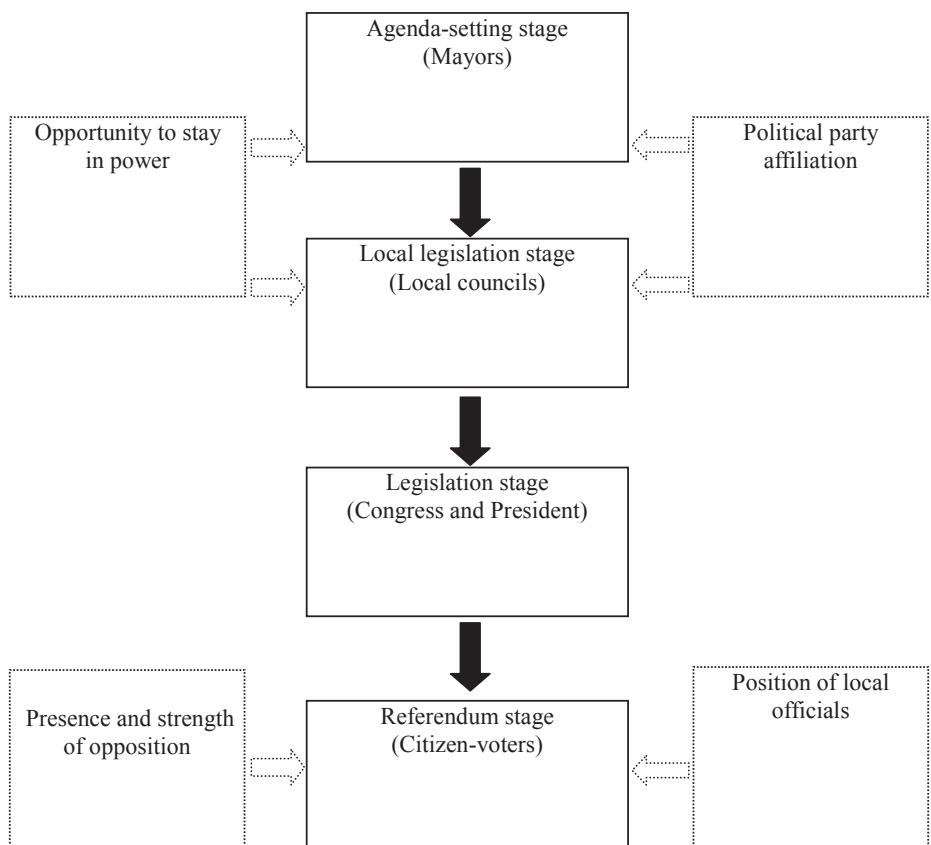


Figure 2. Visual model of successive progression of decision-making process in Philippine municipal consolidation

Table 5. Plebiscite results, unity of local officials, presence of opposition group, and strength of opposition campaign

Municipality	Share of yes votes	Pro-consolidation local officials	Anti-consolidation group	Strength and reach of pro-consolidation campaign	Strength and reach of anti-consolidation campaign
Bacon	63.2	Mayor and whole council	Incumbent governor, former governor, a few <i>barangay</i> leaders	Strong campaign (support of congressman, mayor) and moderate-to-wide reach (due to proximity and access to media from Sorsogon, and support of many <i>barangays</i> ) Argument: IRA increase and more development projects; faster economic development; increased employment opportunities	Moderate-to-strong campaign (due to semi-organized group in Sorsogon and the opposition of the provincial governor) and weak-to-moderate reach (due to proximity and access to media from Sorsogon) Argument: loss of identity for Bacon; increase in social problems; Bacon will become minority area and will be left behind; tax increase; more resources for corruption
Sorsogon	60.9	Half of the council	Incumbent governor, former governor, mayor and other local officials	Strong campaign (support of congressman and some councilors) and moderate-to-wide reach (due to presence and use of media) Argument: IRA increase and more development projects; faster economic development; increased employment opportunities	Strong campaign (due to semi-organized opposition from local officials) and moderate-to-wide reach (due to presence and use of media) Argument: loss of identity for Bacon; increase in social problems; Bacon will become minority area; tax increase; more resources for corruption
Babak	83.0	Mayor and whole council	None	Strong campaign (support of local elected leaders and congressman), moderate-to-wide reach (due to organized meetings in every <i>barangay</i> ) Argument: IRA increase; faster economic development; more investments; improved tourism	Nonexistent-to-weak campaign (due to absence of opposition group and media)
Samal	*80 - 95	Mayor and whole council	None	Same as above	Same as above
Kaputian	61.8	Mayor and majority of the council	<i>Kaminos</i>	Same as above	Moderate campaign (due to organized but small opposition) and weak-to-moderate reach (due to organized meetings in some <i>barangays</i> )



					Argument: Kaputian will be the minority area and will be left behind; increase in social problems; citizens are not ready; tax increase; loss of identity
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Sources: Various documents and interviews

Table 6. *Local council decision, opportunity to stay in power and partisanship*

Municipality	Decision of council	No. of anti-consolidation councilors (out of 10)*	No. of anti-consolidation councilors who were ranked 5 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> in the council	No. of anti-consolidation councilors who were under the same party as the mayor	Mayor is champion of consolidation
Bacon	Affirmative (unanimous)	0	0	0	Yes
Sorsogon	Affirmative (split)	5	4	4	No
Babak	Affirmative (unanimous)	0	0	0	Yes
Samal	Affirmative (unanimous)	0	0	0	Yes
Kaputian	Affirmative (majority)	3	2	0	Yes

Source: Various interviews; \*including two ex-officio members

Table 7. *Support of mayor, opportunity to stay in power and partisanship*

Municipality	Support of mayor to consolidation	Term in office	Under same party affiliation as the congressman
Bacon	Yes	Third (Last)	Yes
Sorsogon	No	First	No
Babak	Yes	Third (Last)	Yes
Samal	Yes	Third (Last)	Yes
Kaputian	Yes	Third (Last)	Yes

Source: Various interviews

## Issues and Problems in Decentralization and Local Autonomy in the Philippines: A Preliminary Assessment of Impact and Challenges\*

*Danilo de la Rosa Reyes*\*\*

### Abstract

Among the policy initiatives towards engendering good governance and sustainable development in the Philippines is a major legislation enacted on October 10, 1991, providing for local autonomy for local government units (LGUs). Republic Act 7160 of the Republic of the Philippines, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, is a broad legislative policy mandating the grant of comprehensive autonomy to local government units in the Philippines by devolving critical national government functions of delivery of services in agriculture, environment, health, and social services.

The intent of this extensive policy is to strengthen local government capacities so that, as front-line governments based at the community level, they can address critical gaps in the delivery of services in habitually neglected areas, particularly in aspects of poverty alleviation and in stimulating development activities. As the Code reaches its 25<sup>th</sup> year of implementation in 2016, a basic review of its impact on poverty alleviation and other aspects of local governance, as well as the performance of local government units, has become compelling, particularly on the need to fill in loopholes and gaps in the statute as originally constructed. Some important issues and questions need to be asked: Has the Code responded adequately towards improving capabilities at the local levels? What are the problems and challenges facing LGUs and the national government today towards fulfilling the aspirations of viable, effective and responsive local autonomy in the Philippines?

This paper thus seeks to provide cursory analysis and assessment of these issues by examining the performance of LGUs in the Philippines, under the Local Government Code of 1991, particularly problems of capacities, financing and how they responded to crucial issues of poverty alleviation.

**Keywords:** Decentralization / Devolution / Local Government Units / Local Government Code / Philippines

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## Introduction

Over the years, the problematic of highly centralized structures and systems of government among newly-independent nations has spawned numerous challenges and issues on the delivery of basic services particularly to remote peripheral or isolated communities. Inherited as legacies of the colonial periods, these configurations have likewise brought rigid, hierarchical and often generally ritualized policy responses to strategic areas needing intervention. As such minute decisions on matters of localized concern have been habitually referred to and made at the national levels which are oftendetached from these communities.

During the past decades, there has been a marked widespread and endemic clamor and movements for more substantive public sector reforms in both developed and developing societies as citizens become more alienated to their governments because of discontinuities and dysfunctions in the delivery of services that have been compounded by issues of corruption, inefficiency and incompetence. The decentralization of these highly centralized and rigid systems of government in the aftermath of the colonial periods has been one of the adopted response to improve the delivery of public services and the management of public affairs among newly-independent nations.

There is today the acknowledged consensus that decentralization has become “an almost universal feature of modern states,” and that “almost all countries are on the wave of decentralization” even as academic concern has been largely drawn to continue assessing other practical policy alternatives (Lee, 1996: 102).

Brillantes, Jr. asserts that governments have adopted to decentralization because of the merits of facilitating speedy “decisionmaking processes by decongesting central government and reducing red tape” while at the same time increasing citizens’ participation and empowerment to engender “a more open and democratic government” (Brillantes, 2003: 324).

Evolving as late as the early 1960s as part of the package of prescriptions to streamline the government and administrative systems of countries that underwent decades of centralized colonial rule, decentralization has emerged today as a staple streamlining prescription towards improving administrative processes and reaching out to local communities. As such, decentralization emerged as a movement of sorts contained in such propositions as development administration in the mid-fifties, and spanning even under current public sector reform propositions such as reinventing government and new public service (NPS) (Gant, 1979; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992, Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is a burgeoning literature on decentralization initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region as reflected in country experiences compiled in various publications of the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA). See for example the compilation of papers on country experiences in S. Kurosawa, et.al. (eds.). 1996. *New Trends in Public Administration for the Asia-Pacific Region: Decentralization*. Tokyo: Local Autonomy College. See also Klaus Preschle and Edmund Tayao. (eds.). 2009. *Envisioning a Federal Philippines*. Manila: LOGODEF; Gaudioso Sosmena, Jr. 1991. *Decentralization and Empowerment*. Manila: LOGODEF.

Along these lines, the Philippines embarked on launching an extensive and comprehensive decentralization policy in 1991 framed within the context of devolution and local autonomy to local government units (LGUs). After decades of failed embryonic decentralization and local autonomy policies, this all-embracing law was enacted under Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the “Local Government Code of 1991” as approved on October 10, 1991 (hereinafter referred also alternately as the Code or the LGC).

The intent of this extensive policy is to strengthen the capabilities of local government capacities so that, as front-line governments based at the community level, they can address critical gaps in the delivery of services in habitually neglected areas, particularly in aspects of poverty alleviation and in stimulating development activities.

As the Code celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> year in 2016,<sup>2</sup> a basic assessment of its impact on poverty alleviation and other aspects of local governance, as well as the performance of local government units, has become compelling, particularly on the need to fill in loopholes and gaps in the statute as originally constructed.

Some important issues and questions need to be asked: What salutary gains have been made towards strengthening local government units and the spirit of local autonomy? Has the Code responded adequately towards improving capabilities at the local levels? Has it helped in alleviating poverty and contributed to inclusive growth of communities? What are the problems and challenges facing LGUs and the national government today towards fulfilling the aspirations of viable, effective and responsive local autonomy in the Philippines?

This paper thus seeks to provide cursory analysis and assessment of these issues by examining aspects of the performance of LGUs in the Philippines, particularly problems of capacities and how they responded to crucial issues of poverty alleviation. At the outset, this Study must be treated as a work in progress because the many ramifications involving this milestone legislation and its impact on communities in the Philippines cannot be reasonably captured and fused in a single paper.<sup>3</sup> It is however a considered view of this Paper that more studies and research have to be conducted to understand and appreciate the full impact of the Code and how it could be further strengthened to respond to the challenges of development.

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<sup>2</sup> The Local Government Code of the Philippines was approved on October 10, 1991, but was implemented officially the following year as provided for in its provisions. This paper however marks 1991 as the period to reckon in assessing the impact of the Code.

<sup>3</sup> This Paper is part of a larger study being undertaken by the Philippine Society for Public Administration (PSPA) which involves the conduct of a rapid field appraisal (RFA) on the impact of the Code on the 14 regions of the Philippines. The points maintained here are thus, at best, tentative and may be revised and expanded depending on incoming data.



This Paper first provides a brief background of the early initiatives for decentralization in the Philippines as characterized by the passage of different pieces of legislation. It then proceeds to provide a brief overview and description of the Local Government Code of 1991. Having explained these, the gains and challenges are then offered next, identifying the benefits and problems confronting the LGC and its implementation during the past 25 years.

### **Initiatives towards Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Governments in the Philippines**

The Philippines probably had one of the longest history of colonialization in Asia. Beginning in 1521, the country has been under three colonial rules, from Spain up to circa 1896, the United States from 1899 to 1941 and from Japan, from 1942 to 1945. The country gained its independence in 1946 from the United States which helped liberate the country from Japan. As such, the centralized system of government installed during colonial times had been firmly entrenched so much as so that after the grant of independence, decentralization and any semblances of it have been granted in piecemeal fashion as marked by various pieces of legislations.

The Philippines follows the presidential system and is a unitary state headed by a president elected at large every six years without re-election. It maintains three co-equal branches of government – the executive, a bicameral legislature and the judiciary.

The structure of local government units in the Philippines follows more or less, three tiers: provinces, cities and municipalities and the barangays or villages, the latter being considered the lowest political unit. There has been established, of late, several other political units though such as the Metro Manila conurbation, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and the Cordillera Autonomous Regions (CAR). There are at least 81 provinces, 144 cities, 1,477 municipalities and 42,025 barangay units.<sup>4</sup>

Decentralization, as defined by de Guzman, involves the “systematic and rational dispersal of power, authority and responsibility from the center to the periphery, from top to lower levels, or from the national to local governments” (as cited in Brillantes, Jr., 2003: 324). The Local Government Code provides decentralization through devolution, which it describes under Sec. 17 (e) as referring “to the act by which the national government confers power and authority upon the various local government units to perform specific functions and responsibilities.”<sup>5</sup>

Over the years thus, from the independence period thru the difficult years of reconstruction and rehabilitation following the post-World War 2 era, there had been

<sup>4</sup> These are the recorded number obtained from various sources. See also Brillantes and Songco II, 2011: 359.

<sup>5</sup> This is found in Book 1, Chapter 2 – General Powers and Attributes of Local Government Units. The provisions in this Chapter provide the basis for the creation of local government units, as well as the basic services and facilities entrusted to provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays.

a series of episodic yet embryonic initiatives in the form of legislation intended to decentralize the governmental system in the Philippines. For so long, the aspiration of an authentic decentralization policy within the framework of local autonomy languished in the rhetoric of advocacies of policy makers, national and local government officials, commentators and the academe.<sup>6</sup>

But while Congress enacted various fragments of legislation that sought to provide for greater decentralization, it was evident however that “financial control...remained very strongly with the national government,” and which in a way, perpetuated dependency and control over local units (Tapales, 1995: 396).

These pieces of legislation involved such issuances as the Local Autonomy Act of 1959 under Republic Act No. 2264 (hereinafter referred to simply as R.A.) which provided local units powers in local zoning and planning; the Barrio Charter Act under R.A.No. 2370, as amended under R.A.No. 3590; R.A. No. 5676, which recognized and provided, among others, powers and responsibilities for village units in the Philippines then called as “barrios;” and the Decentralization Act of 1967 under R.A.No. 5185 which allowed local government units to supplement efforts in agricultural extension and rural health functions.

With the declaration of martial law in the Philippines in 1972, Presidential Decree (hereinafter referred to simply as P.D.) No. 1, which implemented the Integrated Reorganization Plan then pending in Congress, provided for decentralization by way of deconcentration or the transfer of functions and responsibilities to lower level administrative units from the center. P.D. No. 1 also renamed the barrio to become “barangays,” which is now the label used for village governments in the Philippines.

In 1983, a local government code, *Batas PambansaBilang 337* (National Law No. 337) was also enacted by the legislature operating under the martial law regime, and which attempted to codify all laws and issuances governing local government units. This statute was subsequently repealed with the enactment of the present Local Government Code of the Philippines under RA 7160.

During the martial law period in the Philippines (1972-1986), several decrees were signed into law by then President Ferdinand E. Marcos in the form of presidential decrees (hereinafter referred to simply as P.D.) pertaining to or attempting to strengthen local government units.

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<sup>6</sup>Among the early advocates of decentralization and local autonomy was the then University of the Philippines College of Public Administration (UPCPA), now U.P. National College of Public Administration and Governance (UPNCPAG), which lobbied for the creation of a Local Government Center within its wings to conduct studies, researches and policy proposals on local governments and on decentralization. The LGC was established by act of Congress in 1965 under R.A. 4223, June, 1965. Now renamed as the Center for Local and Regional Governance (CLRG) under the UPNCPAG, the Center recently celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary and continues to pursue the advocacy of greater and substantive local autonomy.



Using his law-making powers which he arrogated upon himself under his regime, Marcos issued such policies as P.D. No. 76 which required natural and juridical persons to file sworn statements of the values of the real property they owned or were administering, and thereby adjusted the rates of real property assessment;<sup>7</sup> P.D. No. 144, which provided for the distribution of internal revenue allotments (or IRA which represents the share of tax collections made by the national government to local units; P.D. 231 otherwise known as the Local Tax Code which laid down the sources of revenues for local government units; P.D. No. 426 which further amended the local tax code, to establish policies on national-local relations; and P.D. No. 477, which provided policies and rules on local fiscal administration (Tapales, 1995).<sup>8</sup>

### An Overview of the Local Government Code of the Philippines

As conceived, the Local Government Code of the Philippines under R.A. 7160 can be said as a major breakthrough, the culmination in the long and difficult journey towards local autonomy in the Philippines. It is intended to engender local autonomy through devolution or the transfer of power and authority to lower level political or local government units.

R.A. No. 7160 is a fulfilment of the provision of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which provides among others, that Congress shall enact a local government code that will institutionalize a system of decentralization (Sec. 3) whereby local government units shall be extended more power, authority, responsibilities and resources.<sup>9</sup>

The Code is considered a historic legislation because it is comprehensive and extensive, encompassing many aspects of powers and authority devolved to local government units that have not been captured in previous laws. Its policy is well-defined under Sec. 2, Book I which provides that LGUs “shall enjoy genuine and meaningful autonomy to enable them to attain their fullest development as self-reliant communities...”

<sup>7</sup> *The Real Property Tax is generally recognized as the major source of income or revenue by local governments in the Philippines. If properly administered, it is claimed that they can contribute as much as 30 % of total local government income in the Philippines. See Cuaresma, 2013; Llanto, 2009.*

<sup>8</sup> *There is not enough space here to discuss and examine the provisions of these statutes in detail. The discussion however stresses the point that a series of attempts to institutionalize decentralization by way of either deconcentration or devolution has been a long and arduous journey. See also Brillantes, Jr. and Sonco II. 2011; Brillantes, Jr., 2003; and Tapales, 1995. Discussions on the concepts of the variants of decentralization, i.e., deconcentration, devolution and debureaucratization are discussed in Brillantes, Jr., 2003).*

<sup>9</sup> *The 1987 Philippine Constitution, ratified by the Filipino people following the end of the martial law regime in 1986, (and supplanting the martial law 1973 Constitution), outlines under Article X (Local Government), 21 Sections which identify powers, policies, structure and administrative organization, subdivisions and other provisions pertaining to local government units. Again, there is not much space here to discuss the many ramifications and facets of these provisions in the Philippine Constitution in detail.*

As it is, the LGC covers a vast and bulky enumeration of policies and mandates provided in four books divided into 536 sections to transform local government units into self-reliant communities.<sup>10</sup> It is thus a complex codified body of legislation that capture the many facets and aspects of local governance that had been neglected, if not conveniently ignored through many attempts because of vested interests in the legislature and in the national government, which has been disinclined to share power and authority.

Under Sec. 17, Book I of the Code, several basic services and facilities have been devolved to LGUs, namely, agricultural extension and on-site research, community-based forest projects, field health and hospital services, public works and infrastructure projects derived from local funds, school building programs, social welfare services, tourism facilities, housing projects for provinces and cities and such other services pertaining to industrial support.

Llanto provides a somewhat capsulized description of the services and responsibilities devolved under the LGC to local governments in the Philippines:

“But before the enactment of the Code, local government units have limited spending, taxing and borrowing power. Yet, local government units are now responsible for the following areas: land use planning, agricultural extension and research, community-based forestry, solid waste disposal system, environmental management, pollution control, primary health care, hospital care, social welfare services, local buildings and structures, public parks, municipal services and enterprises such as public markets and abattoirs, local roads and bridges, health facilities, housing, communal irrigation, water supply, drainage, sewerage, flood control and inter-municipal telecommunications” (Llanto, 2009: 73-74).

As can be seen, the Code has given the local government units with far-reaching and enormous responsibilities to give them more leeway in managing the communities under their jurisdiction.

The regulatory powers, on the other hand, that were devolved to the LGUs include the reclassification of agricultural lands, enforcement of environmental laws, inspection of food products, quarantine, enforcement of the national building code, operation of community public utility conveyances (tricycles), processing and approval of subdivision plans and the establishment of cockpits and the holding of cockfights.

<sup>10</sup> *It is extremely difficult here to discuss in detail the various provisions of the Code, which made it compelling for this paper to isolate salient points pertinent to our discussion. Admittedly, it is extremely difficult to fully exhaust and absorb appreciation and analysis of the many ramifications of the Code, even after 25 years! This is therefore a continuing study to incrementally identify gaps and weaknesses of the Code and which this Paper precisely seeks to do.*



The LGC also provided for greater citizen participation in local governance with provisions for the mandatory participation and membership of the private sector and non-government organizations in local special bodies, such as local development councils, local school and health boards, the local peace and order councils and the local prequalification, bids and awards committees.

As to sources of incomes, the LGC authorized locally generated revenues, aside from the real property tax, such as taxes on incomes of banks and other financial institutions, forest products and concessions, mines and mineral products, licensing, permits and other fees and charges. The LGUs were also given authority to adjust tax rates once every five years but not to exceed 10 percent of the rates prescribed in the Code, and the power to grant tax exemption privileges.<sup>11</sup>

As such, local government units under the Code have been vested with greater taxing power as against that before the LGC. Corollary to this, they are also now authorized to borrow from banks, float local bonds without the need of securing authority from the Department of Finance as required prior to the Code (Llanto, 2009).

### **Impact of the LGC on Local Governance: The Gains**

After 25 years of the implementation of the local government code, what has been the impact and gains on local governance in the Philippines? Obviously, the Code sought, first and foremost, to address the problems of local governments so that better local administration can be put in place. But it must be pointed out here, at the risk of editorializing, that the LGC is a reform measure that was conceived as a response to the growing clamor for greater autonomy at the local levels.

Based on a rough and preliminary assessment, the following could be identified as some of the recognized salutary gains of the LGC during the last 25 years:

1. ***Grassroots empowerment and greater citizens' participation in the communities.*** The provisions of the LGC have provided several mechanisms for participation by the populace and the different sectors such as women, workers, and special groups like ethnic and the urban poor segment. It established policies on plebiscites, referenda, people's initiatives and recall, where the citizenry are allowed to take direct participation in the creation of local units, abolition or merger of existing ones and directly propose or amend local ordinances through the petition of at least 1,000 registered voters in the case of provinces and cities, 100 in municipalities and 50 in barangays as mandated under Sec. 122 of the Code (Chapter 2 – Local Initiatives and Referendum, Title 9, Book 1). Under this provision, “such proposals through the system of initiative shall not be repealed, modified or amended by the Sanggunian within six months” (Tapales, 1995: 404). The citizen power of recall, on the other hand, provides that registered voters in a locality can express loss of confidence on elective local officials during their term of office so that they can be

<sup>11</sup> The basic features of the LGC are also briefly outlined in bullet points in Nolledo, 1991, and which this paper also used as reference.

recalled. There is a lengthy and complex process on this provided under Sec. 69-75 under Chapter 5, Title two. Thus, as Ilago and Lopos (2013: 175), “participation has been one of the hallmarks of decentralization efforts.”

**2. Greater Involvement of Civil Society and People’s Organizations and the Private Sector in Policy-making and in the Management of Public Affairs.** Under the Code, civil society organizations and the private sector are mandated to be represented in special local boards and council, particularly local development councils. Under Sec. 34 (Book 1, Title 1, Chapter 4 – Relations with People’s and Non-governmental Organizations), local government units are directed to promote the establishment and operation of people’s and non-government organizations (NGOs) as active partners in development. In the local prequalification, bids and awards committees of every province, municipality or city, it is mandated that a practicing public accountant from the private sector to be designated by local chapters of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA) should be appointed (Sec. 37, Chapter 5, Book 1, Title1). Likewise, two positions are reserved for NGOs in the local development councils while citizens’ groups must also be represented in local school boards, the local healthboards and the local peace and order councils. Thus, it could be said that the LGC has taken to recognize the active roles of NGOs and the private sector in the governance of local communities (see also Tapales, 1995).

**3. The Rise and Strengthening of Inter-local Cooperation Through the Establishment of Leagues of Local Government Units and Elective Officials.** Under Book 3, Title 6, Chapters 1 and 2, Sections 491-510, the Code provides for the leagues of local government units and of elective officials. These involve organizations or leagues of barangays, municipalities, cities and provinces. Leagues and federations of elective officials – vice-governors of provinces, vice-mayors of municipalities, cities and barangays and members of the *Sanggunian* (legislative councils) of LGUs are mandated to organize themselves into leagues and federations, which enhances inter-local cooperation, exchanges of experiences and insights, as well as bench-marking among local units. As a result, benchmarking as an ingredient for local good governance has been a major contribution of the Code (Brillantes, et. al., 2013).

This also paved the way for the establishment of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) which was formed on September 3, 1998 and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of the Philippines as duly bona fide body that will serve as the umbrella organization of all leagues of local government units, as well as leagues and federations of local and appointive officials. The ULAP was organized as a body where local officials are given the opportunity to exchange views and perspectives in discussing local and national issues. It was officially recognized as such under Presidential Executive Order No. 351 dated August 17, 2004.

**4. Consciousness on the Rights of Local Government Units and Greater Transparency.** As a result of the various provisions outlined in the Code, LGUs in the Philippines have become more conscious and assertive of their rights and powerstowards articulating their concerns and has provided greater vigor to the Union



of Local Authorities of the Philippines as an umbrella organization of the leagues and federations of the LGUs. This consciousness has given attention to greater and renewed transparency and accountability among LGUs that emphasized the significance of democratic decentralization (Cabo, 2013).

**5. Recognition of Best Practices under the GalingPook Awards (Excellent or Best Localities) Program.** The Code has somehow also served to establish the *GantimpalangPanglilingkodPook* or *GawadGalingPook* (Service Award for a Locality or Award for Excellent Practice of a Locality) which was launched as a pioneering awards program that recognized innovation and excellence in local governance, as well as the replication of innovative and excellent practices in local governance and citizen awareness on these programs.

(<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan030407.pdf>).

**6. Anti-Poverty and Development Initiatives at the Local Levels.** The advocacy that is most pronounced in the Code are the formation of self-reliant and sustainable communities. Basically, the spirit that has generally been attached to decentralization and local autonomy is the empowerment of local levels to make them self-reliant, independent and self-sustaining. Within this framework lies a compelling advocacy towards fighting poverty that has become endemic at the local levels, particularly far-flung communities that have been habitually and systematically marginalized and neglected because of the concentration of attention, and therefore of resources, given to the urban centers.

The Code has helped ushered some degree of development orientation among local officials, posing a challenge for them to stimulate economic activities and attract investments, create livelihood opportunities and employment and bring its citizens into the mainstreams of economic activities. A controversial provision for instance in the Code is the power vested to LGUs to enter into credit and other financial transactions for local projects, which allowed them to borrow from private banks (but not foreign sources) and adopt credit financing schemes. They are also authorized “to secure and receive financial grants or donations subject to the approval of the relevant national agency” (Tapales, 1995: 403). The intention here, of course, is to help them pump-prime the local economy amidst the problematic of the challenges of the local officials’ capability to wisely invest or use these resources.

**7. Participation in local elections by the citizenry remained strong, if not strengthened.** Based on a rapid field appraisal in the different regions of the country conducted last year,<sup>12</sup> most of the reports indicated that voting turn-out in the communities remained high, registering as high as 80 per cent. While it could be

<sup>12</sup> I am citing here a Study conducted last year under the auspices of the Philippine Society for Public Administration (PSPA) with support from the UNDP and the Department of Interior and Local Government. The Study was done mostly by faculty members and researchers of various higher education institutions in the regional subdivisions of the country. The report of Study, while being integrated and nearing completion at the time of this writing, is titled “Decentralization, Democratization and Development: An Agenda for Reform. A Rapid Field Appraisal,” and hereinafter referred to simply as the RFA or Rapid Field Appraisal, 2015.

claimed that voting participation in the Philippines has been generally high over the years, it could also be maintained that the citizenry continue to be interested in electoral processes in spite of perceived infirmities such as election fraud and violence, vote buying and disenfranchisement.

**8. Women leaders are on the rise.** The role of women in governance is well-defined under the Philippine Constitution. During the past 25 years, it is reported by the RFA studies that women participation in policymaking and public management has increased with many women leaders emerging in the different provinces, municipalities and cities during the past two decades.

Certainly, much more can be added to this brief inventory of positive developments that resulted in the implementation of the Code in the Philippines. As it is, a broader study is to be conducted to identify the concrete contributions to local development of this piece of legislation. But there are dysfunctions that have likewise become evident as assessment of the Code are made to define gaps and weaknesses of this signal legislation, which comprehensive as it may appear, have not yielded the intended outcomes. The next discussion provides for these.

### **The Challenges to LGUs: The Problematic of Implementation**

The Code, as pointed out earlier, was conceived to respond to an advocacy that has lingered for sometime in the Philippines for decades. Its passage in 1991 brought much optimism to liberate local political units from extreme reliance and dependency on the national government. The rhetoric contained in many of its more than 500 sections and provisions expressed the shared aspiration to strengthen and empower LGUs to be at the helm of forging their futures, especially in the aspects of fighting poverty, engendering development, self-reliance, consolidating good governance practices and reinvigorating democracy.

But it can also be acknowledged perhaps that it should not be regarded as a nostrum or a cure-all, one-size-formula that will correct the many multifarious problems that beset communities. It is not a panacea that can shape magical solutions to enduring problems that have mutated and metastasized for many years. But as can be shown here, the problems are interlocking and interrelated. The following list, again, tentative and preliminary, provides some of these dysfunctions:

**1. The Problematic of the Absorptive Capacities of LGUs has not Matched the Demands of Responsibilities Entrusted by the Code.** As highlighted in previous discussions of this Paper, much responsibilities and functions have been devolved to LGUs under the Code. Many of these functions require technical skills and preparation, and of which many LGUs in the Philippines may not have. Such technical activities as solid waste management, environmental management, pollution control, primary health care and many other functions require not only technical expertise but adequate and skilled manpower which many LGUs, particularly those in the peripheries or the rural areas, are ill-equipped to maintain. As can be expected, skilled manpower tends to gravitate in the major urban centers, if not abroad, as a factor conditioned or dictated by income. While training programs have been



launched in some LGUs, these remain to be inadequate because of the periodic turnover of local personnel who may opt to seek employment in other countries or in the national government. Brillantes, et. al. (2013:297) is thus emphatic that “[b]ecause of the massive devolution of powers to local governments, capacity building should be high in the priority agenda for local governance.”

**2. The Financial Capacities of LGUs Leave Much to be Desired.** Closely related to the problem of absorptive capacities is the dilemma of financial capabilities among LGUs. As pointed out by Llanto, the principal challenge faced by LGUs “is finding the means to mobilize adequate financing for local government” (Llanto, 2009: 76). Similarly, Brillantes, et. al. (2013:296) point out rather tersely and emphatically that “[d]ecentralization of powers without financial decentralization is meaningless.” It is also asserted that local tax collections have been grossly inadequate so as to effectively cover the LGUs’ fiscal obligations because “[a]vailable revenue sources are significantly restricted” and that “local government revenue effort was an average of 0.08 percent of GNP in the pre-Code period, an average of 1.2 percent from 1992 to 2003, and 1.1 percent of GNP in 2004-2007. (Llanto, 2009: 82-84). Generally therefore, many LGUs, particularly poor fifth and sixth class municipalities do not have a rich tax base and therefore hard put to finance the requirements of service delivery and fully assuming of the functions of those devolved to them. A report by the national government’s Department of Finance and the Bureau of Local Government Finance revealed that of the 144 cities in the Philippines, with particular reference to those with more than 10 years of cityhood, at least one for every two cities “have not fully realized their local revenue potential” and that “[l]ike provinces, the mandatory shares from the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) and other national government revenues make up most of the regular income (PDI, 2014, A-13).<sup>13</sup>

**3. Many Local Governments Continue to be Dependent on their Shares of the Internal Revenue Allotment.** It is quite evident that the LGUs remain to be dependent on the Internal Revenue Allotment. A study undertaken by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2008 and cited by Llanto (2013)<sup>14</sup> points out that for the period 2002-2006, the “IRA has been the biggest source of revenue of LGUs, contributing on the average, 63% of the total revenue” with locally sourced revenues comprising of tax and non-tax sources amounted only to 31 percent in 2002 and 33 percent in 2006. Given this situation, many provinces and municipalities are highly dependent on the IRA, which in some extreme cases can account to as much as 95 percent of local revenues (Llanto, 2013: 85-86). The major source of local revenues is the one derived from real property taxes (RPT). But the problem in the RPT is that the market values of the RPT are not revised periodically with many LGUs revising their schedules as far back as 1991. For many years, LGUs have also been remiss in revising their tax codes “even if some tax rates are not indexed to inflation” (Llanto, 2013: 81).

<sup>13</sup> See also <http://iskor.blgf.gov.ph/#>

<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, Llanto was not able to cite the details of the JICA study cited.

On top of this, as Cuaresma maintains, that [d]espite having a clear tax base, RPTs are poorly administered," and that problems occur in all stages of RPT administration as reflected by audit reports, where RPT delinquencies of revenue are lost either from tax evasion or inability of the LGU to collect (Cuaresma, 2013: 254). While the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has been time and again recommended to improve the tax information system, not many LGUs have acquired the technology to employ the technique.

It is must however be noted that during the past twenty years of the implementation of the Local Government Code, only 32 cities have updated their real property tax schedules, as contained in a report by Department of Finance and the Bureau of Local Government Finance (PDI, 2016). This means that of the 144 cities in the Philippines, majority or 112 other cities continue to use outdated schedules of market values of real property taxes and thereby limit their revenue generation capacities.

**4. *The National Government Continues to hold and control the Bulk of Productive Sources of Revenue even in the Post-Code period*** (Llanto, 2013). As explained by Llanto (2013), the inability of LGUs in the post-Code period to generate financing is conditioned by the reality that the central government continues to control revenue sources and other resources including those that should be legitimately transferred to LGUs. The amounts appropriated for a given year are not necessarily disbursed, and in fact records from the national government's Department of Budget and Management (DBM) show that amounts appropriated, for example from 2005-2007, have not been fully distributed.

Remittances of special shares of LGUs can be withheld even with an appropriation cover, such that there is no assurance that LGUs will receive their entitlements for a given year (Llanto, 2013. Citing Castel, 2008). Under the Code, LGUs are entitled to shares from revenue collected from the utilization and development of national wealth within the LGUs jurisdiction, in this case, in mining, energy resources production, royalties from mineral reservation, forestry charges and other such fees, taxes and charges. Under special laws, LGUs are entitled to shares from the value-added tax (VAT), the gross income taxes paid by businesses and enterprises within the declared economic zones, franchise taxes for horse racing, special privilege tax paid by hydro-electric power developers and collection from excise taxes on locally manufactured Virginia-type cigarettes of the tobacco producing regions in the Northern provinces (Llanto, 2013, 90-91). The releases of these shares are also dictated by political considerations such as political party affiliation. It thus makes sense as Briones (2015) suggested that these shares, including the IRA, be automatically downloaded to LGUs, although this may entail special rules and guidelines that may require complex processes and procedures.

Briones (2015) points out bitterly that in the face of these realities, what the Philippines is moving towards greater "administrative decentralization" of national programs, and that on the fiscal side, there is a creeping accelerated centralization and tightening of fiscal control where release of funds have to be negotiated with the President or the DBM. She asserts that allocations for government services are still coursed through the regional offices of the national government and that LGUs are



being made to compete with each other and other national government agencies. It is also significant to cite here that of the Pesos (Php) 3 Trillion (US\$63.8B) 2016 budget under the general appropriations act, what the LGUs will receive will be only about Php 428,619,518 or roughly US\$9.1B.

**5. There is a Wide Disparity in the Distribution of Government Personnel Between the National Government and the LGUs.** It should also be noted here that there is much concentration of government personnel at the national level even in the post Code period. A report by the Civil Service Commission shows that in an inventory of government personnel in the Philippines, there is a total of 1,409,660 government employees as of 2010. Of these, 25.9 percent or about 365,725 are employed in LGUs, which, in turn, are divided in provinces, cities and municipalities. This suggests around 74 percent are assigned in the national government. This is also reflected in another independent study by Quora which claimed that there are 63.6% national government employees, 7.2% government owned and controlled corporation (GOCCs) and around 29% for local governments (<https://www.quora.com/Philippines/How-many-government-employees-are-there-in-the-Philippines>). It should be noted that these figures are well within the post-Code era. And this is somehow confirmed by an earlier study done by Sto. Tomas (2003) which showed that only 26% of the total number of government employees are in local governments units. Given this glaring disparity, and aggravated by financing issues, it stands to reason that LGUs will be hard put in fulfilling the devolved functions even with the many provisions of the Code.

**6. The Poverty Incidence has not been contained.** Poverty, which continues to be endemic even if it has somewhat declined during the 25 years of the implementation of the Code. Briones (2015) stresses this with apprehension by saying that the Philippines had missed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) it has set by falling short of the target of 17.2% by 2015 or half of the poverty incidence recorded in 1991, the year of the enactment of the Code, of about 34.4%. As of the first semester of 2014, the poverty incidence was estimated to a high of 25.8%. While the slow decline in poverty incidence cannot be entirely attributed to the Code, it is significant to emphasize here that the Code, by supposedly strengthening LGUs which are at the forefront of contact with the community, primarily was envisioned to be one of the major responses of government in fighting poverty.<sup>15</sup>

**7. Political dynasties remain well-entrenched in the various provinces, cities and towns of the country.** Political dynasty here refers to the control of elective political offices and positions by one family in a community or locality. Members of the same clan or family – husbands, wives, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters and other relations – hold elective positions simultaneously as provincial

<sup>15</sup> Briones (2015) cites data taken from the National Development Authority (NEDA) and the United Nations Development Programme. 2014. *The Philippine Fifth Progress Report – Millennium Development Goals*. Pasig City: NEDA; also from the Philippine Statistical Authority – National Statistical Coordination Board. 2015. *MDG Watch: Statistics at a glance of the Philippine Progress based on the MDG Indicators*. Accessed August 8, 2015 from [http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/mdg\\_watch.asp](http://www.nscb.gov.ph/stats/mdg/mdg_watch.asp).

governors, town mayors, representatives of Congress, council and board members of local legislative bodies. As such, other leaders are denied the opportunity to offer alternative agenda of governance in the different communities effectively controlled by a ruling family. The issue is further aggravated if the ruling family is not oriented towards good governance and more focused towards preserving their hold on power. It appears that the enactment and implementation of the Code has not at contained the prevalence of political dynasties

### Concluding Remarks

To be sure, many of the issues that have been cited here have likewise been observed and noted by several competent analysts and experts of local government in the Philippines (Brillantes, et.al. 2013; Brillantes and Songco, 2011; Llanto, 2009; Brillantes, 2003; Tapales, 1995). As such, there appears to be an emerging consensus towards forging an agenda of streamlining not only the provisions of the Code itself, but other concatenated and concatenating issues and concerns that somehow serve to impede on the full and unhampered implementation of the spirit of the Code and the aspirations of authentic local autonomy.

It is however conceded here that there are still many issues that need to be addressed and which this brief and passing overview have not sufficiently covered. These issues and problems involve such matters as political dynasties at the local level or the control or stranglehold of political leadership by one family or clan in a locality or community. Also important are questions of human rights violations, peace and order and the many, multifarious aspects of development, as well as inter-governmental and inter-local relations. This Paper admittedly also has not given extended attention to the legion of problems attached to poverty alleviation and the programs that have been launched both by the national government and the LGUs.

These are the limitations of this Paper which, as pointed earlier, remains to be a work in progress. At best, this Study therefore, focused on the major concerns that have somehow impeded and compromised the full realization of genuine local autonomy in the Philippines during more than two decades. There is therefore now a compelling agenda to scrutinize and examine more attentively the big issues and big questions on why local autonomy is not working within the ideals and aspirations that it was supposed to fulfill.

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## Book Review

College of Politics Governance Mahasarakham University. **Proceedings of the Conference the 4th International Conference on Magsaysay Awardees: Good Governance and Transformative Leadership in Asia**, 2016. 1211 p.

*Sida Sonsri\**

The aim of the 4th International Conference on Magsaysay Awardees: Good Governance and Transformative Leadership in Asia is to provide a platform for Internationals, national and regional policy makers, practitioners and academic to share their experiences, exchange ideas and explore avenues to enhance further the development of good governance experienced by the Magsaysay Awardees across Asia.

This was achieved through a critical examination of 16 subthemes and 78 papers presentation.

The morning session was Introductory and Welcome Remarks by Prof. Sida Sonsri, Dean of COPAG and Chairman of the Conference followed by the Opening Rewards by Prof. Dr. Sampan Rittidech, President of Mahasarakham University.

This Conference is the great event than past three International Conference that we had, because at this time done in the 5 Honorable MAGSAYSAY AWARDEES who are considered as an Asia equivalent to the Nobel Prize in Asia had addressed their works that they have been the past and in the future. All of them served more and more people whether the immediate community or all of society which provided the lessons learned for us and shared their knowledge of best practice related to good governance and transformative leadership.

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\* Dean of College of Politics and Governance, Mahasarakham University.

Keynote Speaker in the morning session is Chairman Mechai Viravaidya who received the 1994 Ramon Magsaysay Award for public service in 1994, the Board of Trustees recognized his mounting creative public campaigns in Thailand to promote family planning, rural development and a rigorous, honest, and compassionate response to the plague of AIDS. He addressed Four Decades of Development Endeavor which encompassed his works since 1965 to start a job with the National Economic and Social Development Board and getting started at the Community Level by founding the Community-Board Family Planning Service (CBFPS) in 1974 which was very successful in reducing population in Thailand until today by his own initiative as transformative leadership.

Moreover, he initiated the health program for the poor village and elaborating a more comprehensive rural development strategy by promoting appropriate technology at the village level by emphasizing renewable energy, simple farm tools and reduction of energy waste and increasing income by telling villagers know where they could look for help through identify their needs. This is the people-centered approach that led to the success of PDA. More than that the Mechai Pattana School was set up as a new road to education provision in rural Thailand.

The second Honorable Speaker is Founder of Gawad Kalinga (GK), Antonio Meloto. He received the 2006 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership. His harnessing, the faith and generosity of Filipinos to confront poverty in their homeland and to provide every Filipino the dignity of a decent home and neighborhood was recognized by all over the world.

This is his Builder of Dream. His primary goal was to review what was lost and to bring the best out of it. It transformed the ever known Bagong Silang in Caloocan City into a neighborhood that endowed new, safe, and attractive homes for needy; unlike how it looked like before- where gangsters, young and old and crimes sickened the place. He shared how his action paved way for rehabilitation of the youth who had led wayward lives. He revealed his heart-melting sacrifices just for the accomplishment of his vision.



As a transforming leader of Gawad Kalinga, the growing social movement involved housing for the poor, community development and nation-building in the Philippines by his vision and values “to give care” that is a slum-free, squatter-free nation through simple strategy for providing land for the landless, homes for the homeless, food for the hungers, by Tony and his fellows GK volunteers and as a result, provided dignity and peace for every Filipino. His works is the lessons learned for the transformative leadership all over the world.

The third Honorable Speaker is Director Dr. Cynthia Maung who received Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership in 2002. She concentrated her works on Health Systems in Burma by creating unity, peace and sustainability. Mae Tao Clinic has been founded by her mission and vision to work with clients from Burma living along the Thai-Burma border for over 25 years. She stressed the community health systems in Burma’s conflict areas, a fledgling peace and news challenges for local communities and health service providers, health as a bridge to peace in Burma, current efforts and opportunities and ongoing challenges to health as a bridge for peace. She concludes that for health to act as a bridge to peace in Burma, health workers from the ethnic and community –based health organizations and from the government needs to work together in joint efforts addressing health policy, health systems strengthening, and service delivery. She further addressed that the recognition of existing health system in the different ethnic minority area is essential, not only for the future of Burma’s healthcare systems but also for peace building in Burma.

The fourth speaker is Mr. Sanjiv Chaturvedi who was elected as Ramon Magsaysay Awardees for Emergent Leadership in 2015. He is recognized as his exemplary integrity, courage and tenacity in uncompromisingly exposing and painstakingly investigating corruption in public office, and his resolute crafting of program and system improving to ensure that government honorably serves the people of India.

He addressed his issues in fighting corruption cases in environment sector encountered during tenure in State Forest Department (August 2005-Juine 2012) and issues in health sector encountered during tenure as chief vigilance officer AIIMS (The All India Institute of Medical Sciences).

Although he was successful in anti-corruption in many cases, he still faces the problems in fighting for corruption from the high ranking officers who are the stakeholders, while he gets tremendous support from general public, media courage and NGOs.

The last Honorable Speaker is the Commissioner Laode Muhammad Syarif (KPK) from Indonesia who is the representative of KPK (the Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi). The KPK was elected to receive the Magsaysay Award in 2013 as an independent and successful against corruption in Indonesia.

He mentioned that KPK is an independent government body enabled by a strongly crafted law premised on the conviction that corruption is an extraordinary problem that needs to be tackled by extraordinary means. Thus KPK has a far-reaching mandate, exercising exceptional powers that range from investigation and prosecution to prevention and the coordination of agencies authorized to combat corruption. It can conduct searches and seizures, freeze assets, impose travel bans, compel cooperation from government agencies, and even intercept communications without prior judicial approve. It carries out audits on officials, undertakes public awareness campaigns, and studies government management systems to reduce the potential for corruption. Its accomplishments have been impressive from 2003 to 2012 which has handled 332 high profile cases involving top government officials.

Panels in the afternoon parallel sessions covered 16 themes and 77 articles as follows:

1. Local Government/ Local Administration/ Decentralization
2. Governing Freedom of Expression in the Philippines and Thailand
3. Environmental Governance/ Climate Risk Change
4. Public Policy/ Public reform
5. Strategic Management/ Social Responsibility



6. Education Governance in ASEAN
7. Political Leadership/ Democracy Governance
8. Woman's Leadership
9. Civic Political Culture/Interest Groups
10. Peace Process/ Local Communities/ ASEAN Disputes
11. Law and Good Governance
12. Growth and Development
13. Local Wisdom/ Tourism Management
14. Role of NGO in Japan and Southeast Asia
15. Constitution/ Referendum
16. Social and Economic Development in Laos-PDR

For concluding, all of these topics led to good governance and leadership which encompass strategic direction, plans and policies, effective oversight, regulation, motivation, and partnership that integrate all governance to active results.

Leadership involves strategically developing and implementing plans and policies with accountability and transparency good leadership, which requires the ability to face challenges to achieve results in complex conditions, can and should be practiced at all levels.

This proceeding is a good systematic writing that together in one volume the accumulating knowledge of what is to be known of contemporary global society and internal factor of each country which will be the lessons learned the problems of governance to be good governance.



## Submission Requirement

1. The manuscript should be Academic article or Research article in Political Science or related fields
2. Manuscript components;

**Title:** Title should not exceed 25 words.

**Abstract:** The abstract is limited 350 words in both Thai and English (if the manuscript in Thai) and summarizes the key components of the manuscripts.

3. Keywords: Include 3-5 keywords that best suit the topic of the manuscripts.

4. Main Text ;

Heading are text only (not numbered) and should not exceed 15 pages including the bibliography.

5. It must be double space all text. Text should be set 12 - point Times New Roman: Title, 14 - point, Footnote, 10 - point for English manuscript. For Thai manuscript : Text should be set 16 - point Angsana New, Title 20 – point, Footnote 12 - point.
6. Citation and Bibliography must follow the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition.
7. Manuscripts should indicate name, surname, position, workplace, telephone number and e-mail and must be sent through website only.
8. Website Journal: <http://www.copag.msu.ac.th/journal>
9. Every article in this Journal is double – blind peer review all. Articles of this Journal are all rights reserved.
10. Views and opinions expressed in each article are solely the authors which the Editorial Board may not necessarily agree.



## Sample of Citation and Bibliography ( APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition)

### 1. Book

#### - Single author

**Citation:** (Michael, 1996, p.45)

**Bibliography:**

Michael, J.G. (1996). **Environmental Change in Southeast Asia**. New York : Routledge.

#### - Two author

**Citation:** (Parnwell & Evana, 2001, pp.30-40)

**Bibliography:**

Parnwell, M.G., & Michael, J.G. (1966). **Environmental Change in Southeast Asia**.

New York : Routledge.

#### - 3 -5 author

**Frist author:** (Monroe, Evana, Smith & Hensly , 2003 , p.5)

**Subsequent author:** (Monroe, et al., 2003 , p.5)

**Bibliography:**

Monroe, R.L., Evona ,D.J., Smith, C.T. , & Hensly , Brown. (2003). **Co-Management of Natural Resource in Asia : A Comparative Perspective**. Nias Press.

#### - The author with title or rank

**Citation:** (Robinson, Ken, Sir, 2009 , p. 265)

**Bibliography:**

Robinson, Ken, Sir. (2009). **The Elements**. New York : Penguin Group.

#### - Editor, compiler

**Citation:** (Smith, 1983, Chap. 5)

**Bibliography:**

Smith, A.D. (Ed.). (1983). **Psychology : Principle and Practice**. New York : Thieme.

## 2. Chapter in book

**Citation:** (McLennan, 2001, p.49)

### Bibliography:

McLennan, G. (2001). *Maintaining Marx*. In **G. Ritzer and B. Smart** (Eds.). **Handbook of Social Theory**. (pp. 43-53). London : Sage.

## 3. Thesis

**Citation:** (Kirwan, 2004)

### Bibliography:

Kirwan, B. E. (2004). **The Incidence of U.S. Agricultural Subsidies on Farmland Rental Rates**. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology United States of America.

## 4. Chapter in Journal

**Citation:** (Opasa, 1998, pp. 11-20)

### Bibliography:

Opasa, Antonio. (1998). *Environmental Conflict and Judicial Resolution in the Philippines*. **Asian Journal of Environmental Management**, 6(1), 11-20.

## 5. Journal article online (Internet-only Journal)

**Citation:** (Bernstein, 2002)

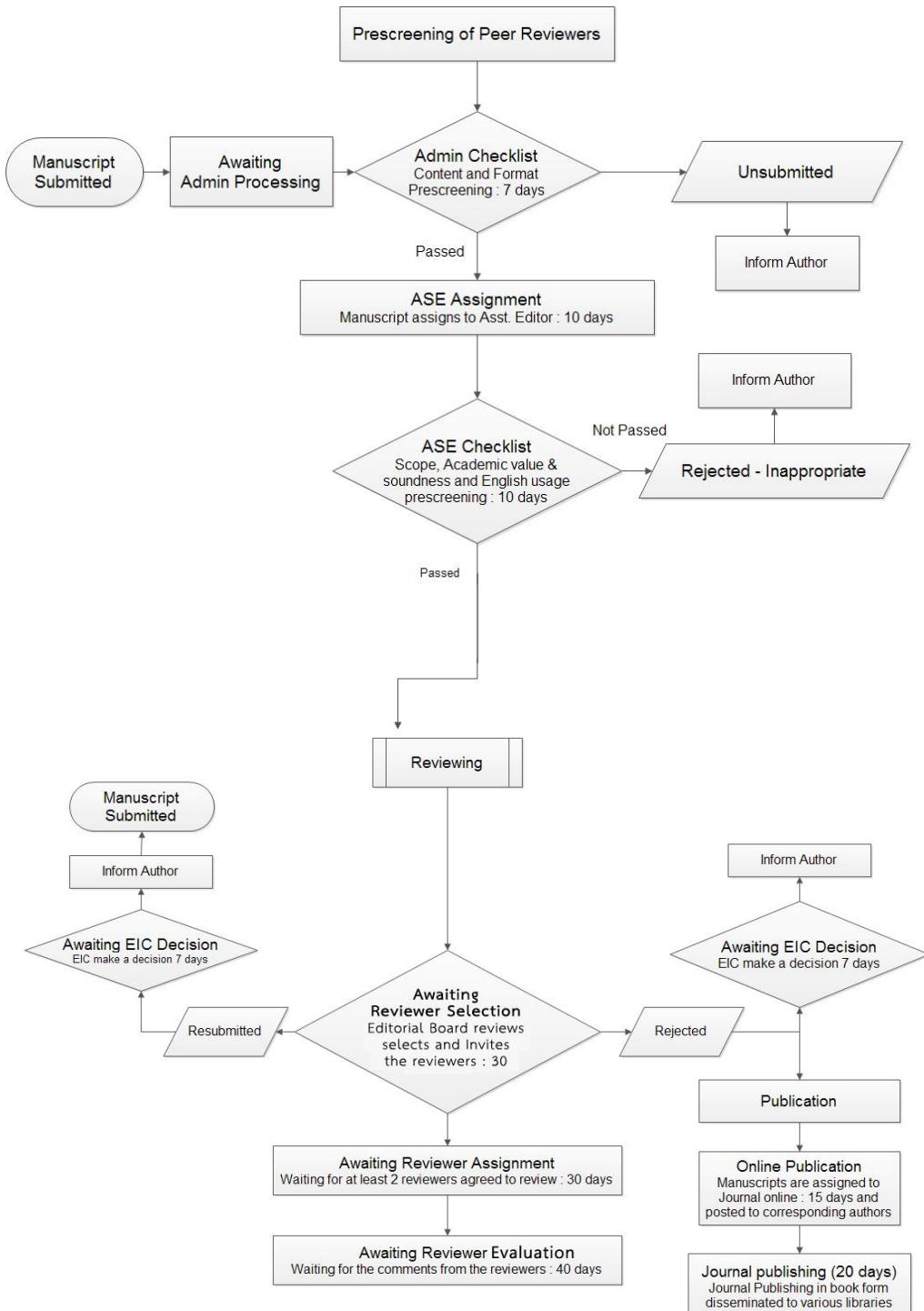
### Bibliography:

Bernstein, M. (2002). 10 Tips on writing the living web. *A list Apart : For People Who Make Websites*, (149). Retrieved May 2, 2006, from <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>



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