ANSA-EAP

ACTIVITY REPORT

Activity: **GEOTAGGING TRAINING FOR THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION**
Date: June 20, 2014, 8 am – 5 pm
Venue: Ateneo School of Government, Ateneo de Manila University

BRIEF DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND OF THE ACTIVITY:

The use of geotagging as an innovative and inexpensive project visualization tool was introduced to the Civil Society Organization representatives during the March 11, 2014 Geotagging Sharing Event hosted by the World Bank.

With the learningon the use of a cost-effective tool for project management and contract implementation monitoring, using inexpensive GPS-enabled android cellphones, freely available applications and Google Earth imageries, and the wide successful use of the tool in the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and National Irrigation Administration (NIA) it was agreed that a basic training on the geotagging will be delivered on June 20, 2014.

The March 11 CSO attendees were in chorus that the planned training on the use of the tool would be very useful and strategic to them in view of Government's Open Data initiative, and which would allow the CSOs to closely monitor the use of public funds in whatever location in the country.

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES:

1. Train CSOs on the basics of Geotagging application through "learning by doing"
2. Demonstrate to CSOs the use of technology as a decision making tool in planning and monitoring including geotagging functionalities in the PRDP website
3. Brainstorm on the potential DA and CSO collaboration, and sustainable CSO monitoring
4. Plan on how geotagging can expanded / institutionalized linked to citizen engagement

At the end of the training all of the participants are expected to understand the basic principles and the "how to" of geotagging as a transparency and project visualization tool.

PARTICIPANTS:

There were 35 registered attendees representing seven network organizations, DA and the World Bank.

The CSOs include:
ANSA-EAP

Ateneo School of Government
Boy Scouts of the Philippines
Catholics for RH
NAMFREL
PAKISAMA
PHILSSA
Philippines Institute of Civil Engineers

Representatives of the World Bank and the Department of Agriculture's PRDP-NPCO served as resource persons.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ACTIVITY:

1. The activity began at around 9:20 a.m., with ANSA-EAP Director Don Parafina delivering the welcome message. In his message, ED Parafina pointed out how technology, geotagging specifically, can potentially transform the way government projects are managed, implemented and monitored. He also emphasized that civil society groups can also take advantage of this technology in order to reinforce and make the present government efforts more transparent, pervasive and sustainable.

2. As a form of leveling of expectations, participants introduced themselves and the organizations they represent. They each shared their interest in geotagging and how they think it can be used in their respective organizations. Almost all of the participants said that they find geotagging applicable in their organizations especially in ensuring the delivery of goods and services in remote areas.

3. The first lecture was given by Mr. Noel Sta. Ines of World Bank. Mr. Sta. Ines lectured on **Geotagging as a Transparency Tool**. Some important points in his lecture:

   a. The technology of geotagging is not new but how we use it is what is new.
   b. Our traditional modes of project supervision involve many drawbacks that are addressed by using geotagging. Some traditional project supervision tools and their disadvantages:
      i. **Combination of maps and progress photos** – these maps and photos are easy to produce and can be made readily available but whether or not the photos were taken at the actual location of the projects is not easily ascertainable.
      ii. **GPS + Drones** – cannot be used in high-risk areas like the Mindanao area. Drones are normally shot down because they are perceived by the locals as threat to their security.
      iii. **High definition imageries and satellite images** – very expensive, hence, not practical for low-cost projects.
   c. Geotagging answers the question: **IS THE RIGHT ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTED AT THE RIGHT PLACE?**
   d. Geotagging in the Philippines is a revolutionary and inexpensive approach to using ICT and GPS applications for accurate visualization of sub projects.
   e. The device required for geo-tagging is only a GPS-enabled Android cellphones and access to freely available applications.
   f. Geotagging is easily replicable for mainstreaming in other government institutions.

      g.   Geotagging can be used in any location-specific services provided by the government, whether they are on land or under water.

      h.   Mr. Sta. Ines also posed questions to the participants to ponder on:

          i.   Are we communicating effectively? Is the civil society seeing the information being disclosed by the government?

          ii.   What is missing?

          iii.   Can geotagging empower civil society organizations and ordinary citizens through enhanced participation, transparency and accountability?

          iv.   Can ICT-enabled citizen feedback improve the delivery of projects?

4.   At the end of the lecture, questions were entertained. Among the questions raised was how come other agencies are not yet adopting the use of this technology. Mr. Sta. Ines said that one possible reason is that other agencies are probably not yet able to correctly appreciate the technology.

5.   The next lecture was on the Procurement Observer's Guide which was presented by Omar Costibolo, a World Bank consultant on procurement. The lecture focused on how CSO's can participate in the bidding process of government projects and some problems identified why CSO participation is poor. Among the problems identified by CPAR are the lack of funds of CSOs and the lack of accredited CSOs. CPAR recommends the possibility of accessing a national procurement fund for the participation of CSOs in the procurement process.

6.   Department of Agriculture Director Arnel de Mesa followed, sharing the experiences of DA in the use of geotagging during the implementation of the Mindanao Rural Development Program Phase II. He stressed that geotagging helped them in the following aspects of the project:

      a.   Verification of overlapping of projects

      b.   Verification of splitting of subprojects

      c.   Review of LGU bid evaluations

      d.   Subproject supervision, management and quality monitoring

7.   The training proper was facilitated by Engr. Sam Belamide of DA. He began by explain the system and the system workflow. The Applied Geotagging Technology employed by DA makes use free digital infrastructure from the storage web server/host, to GPS applications and the Windows Google Applications. The workflow starts from recording, documenting and tracking the project site using the android-enabled device; then exporting the track data and geo photos to a laptop; then uploading data and geo photos to a cloud system using Picasa3 and then making the data available on Google Earth where the public can already view, organize, annotate, share and archive the information on the project.

8.   Engr. de Mesa provided a step by step classroom lecture on how to go about the process of geotagging farm-to-market road projects while the participants try them out on their own devices.

9.   When the participants were already familiar with the applications, the participants went out of the lecture room to geotag collect data at the Ateneo grounds. The participants geotagged the vicinity around the Ateneo School of Government which has a distance of more or less 250 meters. Five participants were able to successfully geotag the area and collect the necessary data. Others were unsuccessful either because the applications did

not work on their devices or they did not have android-enabled devices. After the actual geotagging and data collection, the participants then processed the data. At least two were able to successfully upload the data to Google Earth and complete the process.

OUTPUT/RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS:

1. After the training proper, ED Parafina posed this question to the participants:
   How can I engage my community-based organizations to adapt geotagging tools to monitor government projects?

2. Each participant gave at least two responses, which can be summarized as follows:
   a. Capacity-building
      At least four people floated the idea of conducting geotagging trainings at the local level through the local CSO partners and volunteers
   b. Creation of pool of geotaggers
      Around eight responses were centered on the creation of pool of volunteers from the communities by tapping local organizations as well as educational institutions/universities. Participants from the Boy Scouts of the Philippines manifested their willingness to reecho what they learned from the training to their local councils. Another suggestion was for NSTP students and student councils to be taught the technology.
   c. Third-party monitor
      The participants also suggested empowering a third-party monitoring team from CSO's and end-users to monitor government projects.
   d. Defined goals
      It was also pointed out that the people should be made aware of the benefits of the projects that are to be geotagged for them to fully appreciate the importance of monitoring the project and the advantages of geotagging as a monitoring tool.
   e. Other uses
      There was a suggestion to usegeotagging during elections.
      Another participant also raised the idea thatthe PR value of geotaggingbe maximized.

NEXT STEPS

1. Share the documentation report of the Geotagging 101 training with the participants.
2. Plan for Geotagging 102, which will be an onsite project application of the technology.