

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: INVOLVING CITIZENS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

A Consultation with Government Champions at the Baragay Level

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATION

The barangay is the basic territorial and political unit of government and the most accessible to people but the least prioritized by anti-corruption initiatives. The lack of effort to protect government resources at the barangay level is based on the mistaken assumption that the Barangay Council has limited funds. People generally assume that if corruption exists, the amount concerned is nothing (as Filipinos say, "*barya barya lang*") compared to the amount being stolen in higher echelons of government. Few are aware that the over 42,000 barangays in the country are authorized by the 1991 Local Government Code (LGC) to disburse some **P53 billion** for local development projects and services.¹

Since October 2010, the Northern Luzon Coalition for Good Governance (NLCGG) has tried to install mechanisms to protect barangay resources through greater citizen participation in and monitoring of barangay governance through the Participatory Local Governance in Northern Luzon (PLG-NL) Project. The project seeks to ***strengthen citizen-government partnership at the barangay level through joint monitoring of the public financial management cycle***. Hence, a series of community-based capacity-building efforts toward this end has been implemented, culminating in the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or accreditation with at least 23 Barangay Councils all over Northern Luzon. NLCGG members and partners are now in the process of assessing and monitoring the budget performance of their partner Barangay Councils.

Since it is rare to witness elected officials who are open to citizen scrutiny and participation, it would be good to gather at least 15 Barangay Captains of the areas covered by NLCGG to provide a venue for them to discuss strategies that would reinforce each other's efforts and gather greater support. It would also be good to gather the perspective of the Barangay Officials on citizen participation and monitoring. Specifically, a consultation with Barangay Captains would enable them to collectively:

1. Level off on what is good governance;
2. Identify the opportunities and challenges to ensure good governance and greater citizen participation and monitoring at the barangay and municipal levels;
3. Determine strategies to address the challenges; and
4. Commit to (a) address the challenges in their areas and (b) solicit support from other elected officials at the barangay and municipal levels.

¹ Philippine Daily Inquirer, October 2010, <http://www.rightsandwrongs.co.uk/asia/philippines/5390-asia-philippines-barangay-captains-election-tainted-by-corruption-money-changes-hands-for-votes>, accessed on January 30, 2011

TARGET GOVERNMENT CHAMPIONS

At least 15 Barangay Captains will be invited to the consultation. Representatives from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) from Region 1, 2, and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) would also be invited.

There is great likelihood that the target participants will attend the event as their Barangay Councils already have existing MOUs with NLCGG members.

PROGRAM OF THE CONSULTATION

Time	Activity	In-Charge/Facilitator
8:31 to 9:00	⇒ Registration of Participants	Secretariat
9:01 to 9:30	⇒ Opening Rituals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening Prayer/Reflection - Welcome Remarks - Introduction - Setting of Expectations - Presentation of Objectives and Flow 	Secretariat
9:31 to 10:00	⇒ LEVELING OFF: What is "Good Governance"? What are the indicators of good governance?	Ester S. Alkonga
W O R K I N G B R E A K		
10:01 to 11:00	⇒ WORKSHOP 1: Opportunities and Challenges for Greater Citizen Participation (Good Governance) at the barangay and Municipal Levels	Annie Baltar
11:01 to 12:00	⇒ WORKSHOP 2: Strategies to Address the Challenges	Fr. Clay Bagano
L U N C H		
PM Session		
1:01 to 2:30	⇒ COMMITMENT BUILDING: Addressing the Challenges	Cora Pindog/ Jimmy Galingan
2:31 to 3:30	⇒ Closing Rituals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation - Closing Remarks - Closing Prayer 	Secretariat

GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR THE CONSULTATION

WORKSHOP 1: What are the challenges and opportunities for greater citizen participation and monitoring at the barangay and municipal levels?

Possible Areas for Participation/Monitoring	Barangay Level		Municipal Level	
	Opportunities	Challenges	Opportunities	Challenges
Planning				
Budgeting				
Project/Program Implementation				
Expenditure Tracking				
Ordinance Formulation				
Evaluation/Performance Audit				
Others				

WORKSHOP 2: What can be done by citizens and Barangay Officials to help address the challenges?*

Possible Areas for Participation/Monitoring	Strategies to Address Challenges	
	Barangay Level	Municipal Level
Planning		
Budgeting		
Project/Program Implementation		
Expenditure Tracking		
Ordinance Formulation		
Evaluation/Performance Audit		
Others		

- * A manifesto or covenant would be drafted from the outputs and the participants would be asked to sign the manifesto during the commitment building session

OUTPUTS/NEXT STEPS OF THE CONSULTATION

1. Manifesto or covenant to adopt the strategies to address the challenges for greater citizen monitoring and participation, signed by the participants
2. Follow through activities with the Barangay Captains/Councils concerned (to monitor if the manifesto/covenant is being upheld and shared)
3. Replication of experiences in other barangays (2010) and or Replication of workshop to other provinces (if workshop will be held in just one province)
4. Expansion to municipal level partnership and monitoring (to be explored)