

Activity notes
Partnership building meeting
ANSA EAP-PTF-CAC MBC Enhancing Impact of
Citizen-Led Transparency Initiatives Project
Baguio City, Philippines
12 October 2012

Background and rationale

Sustaining social accountability initiatives at the local level

- The Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF), the Coalition Against Corruption-Makati Business Club (CAC-MBC), and the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA EAP) embarked on a two-year project aimed at building the capacities of citizen groups at the local level in sustaining transparency advocacies and citizen monitoring initiatives. The project involved partnering with networks of citizen groups in two (2) selected regions or provinces in the country, developing appropriate strategies in engaging with the local government, supporting citizen monitoring of local government performance, and sharing emerging knowledge on sustaining local social accountability and good governance efforts with other practitioners.
- Last 12 October 2012, Mr. Randee Cabaces, ANSA EAP Project Coordinator, met with around ten (10) representatives of the five (5) member-organizations of the Northern Luzon Coalition for Good Governance (NLCGG) Convenor Group at Cielito Inn in Baguio City to discuss the proposed PTF initiative. The citizen groups included the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance (CCAGG), Apayao People's Organization for Good Governance (APOGG), Community Volunteer Missioners (CVM), Igorota Foundation, and Responsible Citizens, Empowered Communities In Solidarity for Social Change (RECITE). The meeting served as follow up to the initial consultation with RECITE (now taking on coordination roles as NLCGG secretariat) in Pangasinan last 17 September 2012.

Proposed objective and agenda

Finalizing partnership arrangements with the network

The meeting was primarily for the purpose of finalizing the partnership arrangements with the NLCGG and member-organizations. Specifically, it had the following agenda:

1. Level off with decision-makers of the NLCGG on the PTF project framework, including its objectives, target outputs and result areas, approaches, and overall work plan;
2. Finalize partnership arrangements and mechanisms with NLCGG

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Finalizing partnership arrangements with the network

- towards successful implementation of the PTF project in selected LGUs in northern Luzon;
- 3. Continue discussions on focus geographic and thematic areas for the proposed pilot citizen monitoring, and on networking with stakeholders on the ground; and,
- 4. Start discussion on initial project activities, including the proposed strategic planning session on 29-30 October with implementers of the pilot monitoring.

Key discussion points during the meeting

Building a learning partnership on social accountability

- Current results framework of proposed PTF project aligns well with interest and aims of the NLCGG, specifically with that of promoting active citizenship and good governance. Most recent monitoring initiative of NLCGG members, done with support from PTF and ANSA EAP, focused on looking at levels of citizen participation in barangay governance. Some of the NLCGG groups have moved from orienting citizens and barangay officials on the functions of the village-level governance unit to actually participating in drafting the barangay development plans and proposing/passing barangay ordinances. Current PTF project could provide opportunities for following up on such work with LGUs.
- Key parameters that need to be considered for the proposed PTF project included the relatively small amount of grant for the monitoring, the need to focus on contiguous geographic areas to demonstrate impact, the project's goal of contributing to overall sustainability of citizen monitoring efforts, and the preference for building on previous social accountability initiatives with local government (expanding scope or raising the engagement to the next higher governance unit). There is a need, however, to broaden participation within NLCGG with regards to the actual citizen monitoring to help create substantive interest in learning and knowledge exchange among the members.

Agreements and identified next steps

Exploring pilot monitoring in Region 1 and CAR

The group reached consensus on the following points:

- Proposed pilot monitoring under the project would be opened to RECITE in Pangasinan, and two or three more organizations in CAR (to represent upland communities, and initiatives on local participatory planning and budgeting). CVM, CCAGG, and APOGG expressed interest

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in submitting proposals for the pilot monitoring. APOGG, however, later agreed to just participate in the learning events. The group also decided to invite the Kalinga Apayao Religious Sector Association (KARSA), another NLCGG member that was involved in the network's previous participatory planning and budgeting initiative, during the proposed strategic planning for the current PTF project.

- Piloting groups would be invited to send two to three representatives to the strategic planning workshop initially targeted for 29-30 October 2012. The workshop aims to outline key result areas for the selected project sites, and to further clarify the groups' project ideas for the pilot monitoring. Suggested venue for the workshop was Dagupan City in Pangasinan. ANSA EAP facilitators will send guides for the proposed local context and capacity building needs assessment. The group also agreed to invite speakers from similar citizen monitoring initiatives with local governments in other areas who could share lessons as take off point for discussions on the current PTF project.