

The Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF), the Makati Business Club – Coalition Against Corruption (MBC-CAC), and the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA EAP) have embarked on a joint project called Enhancing Transparency Impact (ETI). The project aims to enhance the results from citizen monitoring and transparency efforts at the local level by strengthening communities of practice through knowledge sharing and grant support

For its first year, the project partnered with three (3) citizen groups in northern Luzon. These are the Responsible Citizens, Empowered Communities In Solidarity for Social Change (RECITE), the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance (CCAGG), and Kalinga Apayao Religious Sector Association (KARSA) in Abra, Kalinga, and Pangasinan. Each grantee has developed its own line of interventions in bringing the social accountability practice at the local level.

YEAR ONE: The grantees and their interventions

Enhancing Transparency Impact (ETI) project

Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance



For more than two decades now, CCAGG has been in the frontline of promoting good governance in Abra, evident in their continuing engagements with national government agencies and local government units to monitor public projects such as road construction and other infrastructures. Under the ETI project CCAGG worked on promoting the concept and practice of Participatory Planning and Budgeting in the nine (9) barangays of Penarrubia, a fifth class municipality of Abra and home to the Tinguians— an indigenous mountain tribe.

Based on their findings from a previous research, CCAGG sought to address the following problems in the target barangays: 1) Lack of people participation in the current barangay planning and budgeting processes (with many residents not aware of their rights to take part in such processes, or the ways by which they can do so); 2) Local plans and budgets are often drafted by the barangay captains, sometimes with intervention from higher local government units (such as the municipal government); and, 3) Some barangays simply do not have a coherent development plan, based on validated local needs and priorities. To address these problems, CCAGG proposed to train both barangay residents and officials on how they can work together and come out with their barangay plans and budgets.

Seeing the potential of young people in this kind of initiative, CCAGG tapped their youth arm, the Young Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (YCCAGG) for its capacity building interventions. These youth volunteers were initially taught how to engage and support barangay officials and residents in the barangay planning and budgeting process. They then served as organizers and co-facilitators of the CCAGG training on participatory planning and budgeting.

The ETI project provided CCAGG with its first opportunity to jointly train local public officials and community members on participatory governance approaches. Reflecting on their experiences, CCAGG leaders noted how such strategy proved to be an effective one in terms of kicking off collaboration between the two parties. The collaboration has produced substantive outputs, including common barangay vision statements, collectively identified problems, and agreed priorities and projects which they have all integrated into the barangay development plans. Residents also formed citizen groups with the view of seeking accreditation for membership in the Barangay Development Council.

Kalinga Apayao Religious Sector Association



KARSA is a local citizen group comprised mostly of church leaders and community volunteers that has been active these past years in monitoring government projects, mostly infrastructures like road and building construction, in the provinces of Kalinga and Apayao in northern Philippines. It has taken on a visible role in peace building efforts as well, and is often requested by provincial governments to mediate in local conflicts among indigenous groups and communities. Recently, the organization has also been active in environmental advocacy efforts in the Cordillera region. KARSA has been a firm proponent of participatory approaches towards strengthening local democracy and good governance, and improving development outcomes. It is currently an accredited member of Tabuk City's planning and development council, and the city's environmental committee. It also sits in the Kalinga Provincial Planning and Development Council. Since 2008, KARSA has been a part of the Provincial Monitoring Committee.

For the ETI project, KARSA worked on promoting adoption of participatory local governance approaches by conducting training on participatory planning and budgeting, social accountability and good governance, and citizen monitoring approaches and tools, with barangay officials and residents in five (5) target barangays in Tabuk City, Kalinga. The initiative builds on previous engagements with other barangays in Tabuk involving identification of barangay development projects, preparation of barangay budgets, and subsequent citizen monitoring of these projects. Apart from capacity building of stakeholders, KARSA's interventions under the ETI project included voters' education campaigns and candidates' fora during the last local and barangay elections, partnership building with barangay officials, and formation and mobilization of citizen monitoring teams in the target barangays. The barangay monitoring teams were composed of individual volunteers from the women, senior citizens, and youth sectors, and part of their tasks was to sit in the mon-thly sessions of the barangay council.

Some barangay officials who partnered with KARSA for the project initially had apprehensions on the capability of the citizen monitoring teams to engage with the barangay council members towards developing the barangays' development plans. But through continuing dialogue and KARSA's capacity building support, both barangay officials and citizen volunteers are slowly discovering the value of participatory approaches to local governance.

Responsible Citizens, Empowered Communities In Solidarity for Social Change



RECITE is a local non-government organization based in the municipality of Mangaldan, in Pangasinan. Since its formation in 2008, the organization has been involved in various initiatives aimed at promoting social accountability and good governance approaches at the local level. These included assessing local governments' plans and budgets, building capacities of community groups and residents in engaging with local governments, and training barangay officials on participatory governance approaches and social accountability. A recent partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) involved training of parent leaders (PLs) of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) to facilitate the Family Development Sessions (FDS) with other beneficiaries, and development of an active citizenship module aimed at raising program beneficiaries' awareness of their rights and roles as citizens.

RECITE's interventions under the ETI Project focused on replicating their work with PLs and other 4Ps beneficiaries in Mangaldan. An added strategy involved mobilizing the 4Ps beneficiaries to monitor the delivery and quality of health services in the thirty (30) barangays of Mangaldan.. Using the community score card (CSC) approach, RECITE and the PLs facilitated engagement of 4Ps grantees with the Municipal Health Office (MHO) and barangay health service providers to rate the performance of local health facilities, and chart ways of addressing emerging problems and issues. In preparing for the engagements with local officials, RECITE and the PLs also organized candidates' fora and voters' assemblies during the last local and barangay elections, and subsequently secured the commitments of local candidates to community visions and identified priorities through a social contracting process.

A total of 2,922 4Ps beneficiaries in Mangaldan are now attending monthly Family Development Sessions (FDS) co-facilitated by the 97 PLs trained by RECITE.

Being a parent-leader opened a door of experiences for the beneficiaries as "facilitators of change". They learned about their entitlements as well as their roles as a citizen. They experienced speaking in front of groups, and were thus able to improve their own capacities to negotiate with barangay officials and participate in the programs and activities of the barangay. Lessons from RECITE's training and the ETI Project's knowledge sharing sessions motivated them to ask their barangay officials about the barangays' Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), schedules of barangay assemblies, and barangay expenditures.

*"Bilang isang lider ng grupo, napagtanto namin na hindi sapat ang kaalaman sa pamumuno upang maging epektibong lider. Mahalagang matutunan at maunawaan namin na kami bilang lider ay may tungkulin din na makilahok bilang tagapagpadaloy ng pagbabago. At bilang isang tagapagpadaloy ng pagbabago mahalaga na mag-umpisa sa amin mismo ang pagbabago.
(As a leader of the group, we realized that knowing how to lead is not enough to be an effective leader. It is important for us to learn and understand that as leaders, we have a responsibility to participate as a facilitator of change. And as facilitators of change, it is essential that change starts with us.)"*

-Elizabeth Magalong and Jonathan Moreto, parent-leaders

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