

Philippine  
Public Transparency  
Reporting Project

# Pera Natin 'to!

CITIZEN ACTION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE



## What People Said About the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project

It re-awakens the interest of the ordinary citizens and made them understand better their stake and responsibilities in the community, in particular, and the country in general.

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*Salute to all your efforts to educate as many people and groups as possible on public finance and budgeting system and in putting in place local citizens' groups as watchdogs.*

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Realization that we can do more for this country if we are aware of what's happening and act; do something together for a better and transparent governance.

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*I think this a great time to unite and be part of building transparency in the government and fight graft and corruption.*

---

It raised the awareness of the media and civil society circles on reporting graft and corruption in the government, as well as the skills on how to report it.

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*Hope what has been started by this project will be continued and spread to wider areas. The local citizens' groups hopefully will multiply and positively help in curbing corruption at both local and national levels.*

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Stop piloting ... expand...extend...replicate if we wish see a big difference and sustained effort.

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*Great job. I wish this group can help set up a local corruption watchdog in the province of Ilocos Norte.*

---

It alarmed the corrupt officials in our locality and somewhat informed people that there is a venue for their grievances related to corruption.

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*Government officials became more conscious that they are watched and monitored and (are now) acting scrupulously in making decisions. Revenue collection increased by using a better and more transparent policy on tax collection.*

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Excerpted from results of electronic end-of-project survey.





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**Pera**  
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With an Introduction by

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## **Pera Natin ‘to**

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Published by the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project  
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Printed in Quezon City, Philippines

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## The Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project

**T**his project was built on the belief that corruption in public life will only ever be reduced when ordinary people are able to understand, monitor -- and ultimately have a say on where and how public money is spent.

It's our money (*pera natin 'to*). Every centavo lost to corruption is a centavo stolen from education, poverty reduction, social services and job creation. Ultimately, beating corruption will result in more inward investment, serious economic development and far fewer people leaving home in search of a better life overseas.

Transparency and accountability are the greatest enemies of corruption – yet despite repeated pledges of action by successive presidents since the end of martial law, neither has played any real part in government anti-graft strategies, until now. Precious few gains have been made with some polls showing people believing corruption was in fact getting worse.

Taking on these beliefs, partner organizations such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD), MindaNews, and National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), worked together

with the key objective of increasing the capacity of journalists, civil society and the public in selected areas in the Philippines to expose corrupt behavior in the public sector and to promote anti-corruption best practices through:

- Conduct of anti-corruption Information, Education, Communications (IEC) campaign, such as the website portal, reporting and confidential hotline to report corruption allegations
- Training of local media practitioners and civil society workers on reporting corruption and accountability
- Creation of anti-corruption network and constituency among media and civil society groups and others

Everybody can and should be involved. Too many anti-corruption initiatives have focused on just one group, interest or sector and failed to realize that real power and change stems from different and disparate communities and people coming together to organize, share knowledge, forge links, build pressure and collectively force change.

## Institute for War and Peace Reporting

The Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) helps support democratic development and the rule of law in regions of crisis and transition through professional media development. IWPR establishes sustainable networks and institutions, develops skills and professionalism, provides extensive reliable reporting, and builds cross-cultural and regional dialogue and debate.



IWPR provides intensive hands-on training, extensive reporting and publishing alongside other initiatives to build the capacity of local and regional media with a strong focus on human rights, international justice and the rule of law. IWPR was initially launched to help combat the rise of nationalist media and hate speech in the former Yugoslavia and now exists as an international network for media development, with four not-for-profit divisions in Europe, the US and Africa supporting training and capacity-building programs for local journalism, with field programs in more than 20 transitional states.



PPTRP implementing partners IWPR, CCJD, MindaNews and NUJP in a meeting

IWPR is registered as a charity in the United Kingdom, a non-profit organization under Section 21 in South Africa, and is tax-exempted under Section 501(c) (3) in the United States.

For more information, visit [www.iwpr.net](http://www.iwpr.net)



# Center for Community Journalism and Development

The Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD) is a media development organization that provides a platform for dialogue and exchange between local news media and citizens on matters and issues that impact on their communities through journalism for empowerment. The CCJD builds capacities in news reporting and in developing media-citizen engagement mechanisms. It likewise strengthens community-based media networks and journalism initiatives anchored on the principles of public journalism that promotes the idea that the news belongs to the people and that the news should lead to the solution of local problems.

It also works for the safety of community journalists through the Asia-Pacific office of the International News Safety Institute (INSI), a non-profit coalition of media organizations around the world dedicated to the protection of journalists everywhere by providing hostile environment, first aid and basic life support, and trauma awareness training and advocacy.

It is a founding member of the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists (FFFJ) which was established to provide economic and legal support to families of slain journalists.

The CCJD was registered on October 11, 2001 with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as a non-stock, non-profit organization.

For more information, visit [www.ccjd.org](http://www.ccjd.org)



## MindaNews

MindaNews of the Mindanao News and Information Cooperative Center (MNICC) is a cooperative of independent, professional journalists who believe and practice people empowerment through media. It believes that Mindanao is not all bad news and that the responsibility of its members as journalists and information providers is to ensure a mixed balance of reports beyond the usual fare published in national newspapers or aired on radio and television. Its mission is to professionally and responsibly cover Mindanao events, peoples and issues to inform, educate, inspire and influence communities.

It envisions being the leading provider of accurate, timely and comprehensive news information on Mindanao and its peoples, serving economically, politically and culturally empowered communities. MindaNews' services include the MindaNews publications, a one-stop-shop for books; MindaPrints, the coop's computer and printing services; MindaNews Video and Photo Bank; and training for media practitioners, journalists, students, communities, non-government organizations and cooperatives.

For more information, visit [www.mindanews.com](http://www.mindanews.com)

## National Union of Journalists of the Philippines

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) is a nationwide organization of journalists and media workers committed to securing the interests of the Filipino working press.



It binds journalists to a covenant to ethical conduct and commitment to public trust. It also seeks to promote and safeguard the economic interest and social well-being of the working press, upgrade professional skills, raise the standards of journalistic ethics, carry out welfare program for its members, and foster fraternal solidarity with all journalists everywhere.

The NUJP is active in campaigns against journalist killings, criminal libel and other forms of attack against press freedom. It also pushes for the people's access to information right through legislative action and education campaigns.

NUJP has an extensive training program for journalists which includes modules on conflict reporting, child sensitive reporting and crime reporting.

NUJP maintains a Safety Office in cooperation with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) to document cases of attacks against members of media, and provide safety training and assistance to journalists under threat. NUJP also has a scholarship program for children of slain journalists.

For more information, visit [www.nujp.org](http://www.nujp.org)



# Pera Natin 'to! Public Ownership of Transparency Initiatives

By Alan Davis

**T**he publication of this book marks the final output of the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project (PPTRP). When the four partner groups that made up PPTRP joined together to conceive, design and launch the project 20 months ago, governance in many respects looked quite different.

Yet in some respects too, things still look the same today. Structural change doesn't happen easily.

Undoubtedly, back then, the twin issues of transparency and accountability were not highly rated by the previous administration – and one of the first things we did in our project was to start meeting like-minded civil society organizations to suggest that whoever won the looming Presidential Elections of 2010, we should all come together and set out a collective agenda and roadmap on transparency and accountability for the new administration to seriously consider and hopefully incorporate for the sake of the Filipino people.

At the same time, we knew that good ideas and hope are never enough -- and that if we all simply waited for a new government to introduce necessary changes by itself, we could be waiting forever. Even governments with the greatest intentions can fail if they do not have the right strategy or engage in the right way.

The starting point of PPTRP has been that real and lasting transparency and accountability are best built from the ground up piece by piece and by ordinary people taking their responsibilities as citizens seriously. It is one of the reasons we subtitled the project and website “Pera Natin ‘to!” (It’s Our Money!). We wanted to help build public ownership in the issue. Our concern was – and remains still today – that changes introduced at the top by one administration – can so easily be taken away by another unless that change is deeply rooted in the ground and in its people.

So we believed- and still believe – that real sustainable change in governance comes only from active and continual participation of citizens. It needs action and engagement at both the national and local level. It needs groups, sectors and communities finding new ways of coming and working together to develop new ideas and build new constituencies and avenues for change. It needs to involve and energise all those hundreds of thousands of honest and professional civil servants across the country who for way too long have quietly despaired going to work each day given the failure of leadership in their own departments and agencies.

All this required and still requires a combined response that uses new thinking and approaches. It required first and foremost the start of a public literacy campaign around public finances since citizens cannot ever hope to adequately monitor or engage in things that they don’t understand. So it was that we built our project equally around information, education, training, capacity-





building, networking, advocacy and campaigns. So it was that we worked with people's organizations, civil society groups, media and ordinary members of the public at one and the same time. We figured that everybody had a role to play in building and securing transparency and accountability – and so everybody should get involved.

We started work on a website full of the basics – ([www.transparencyreporting.net](http://www.transparencyreporting.net)) accessible and easy to understand information about all aspects of public finance. We assumed little – partly because we knew little ourselves and were learning on the job as we went. We wrote, commissioned and edited material designed to give readers a sense of understanding about how public finances, systems and cycles worked and what kind of issues and problems there were. We tried to identify how and where money was raised and how it was allocated and spent and why and by whom. Invariably it comes down to money. If you can follow the money, you can find the problems and perhaps even help suggest some solutions.

We developed training modules too – modules aimed equally at journalists and activists and ordinary members of the public. And we toured around the Philippines going north and as far south as Tawi-Tawi where we were told few groups ever venture. We encouraged people to report allegations of corruption – but equally we sought out instances of where government was working well and deserved highlighting. It is easy to be negative – but far better to be critically constructive. We received many more allegations than we could investigate – in large part because sources were scared even to follow up and meet with us in confidence. Protection for whistle-blowers remains very much a pressing issue today that needs sorting.



We also tried to highlight and campaign on issues close to our heart like pork barrel, Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net-worth and access to information: We were probably the first to spot and highlight serious problems in government-owned and -controlled corporations back in March 2010 – but only because we read about them in a Commission on Audit report. As is often the case, sometimes the information is already there and we just need to look for it more closely.

Looking back there are many things we could have done differently and things we could have done better. As a very small group we felt ourselves continually being pulled in all directions. There was so much to do and so few hours in the day.

At our public launch on March 23, 2010, we heavily criticised the practise of politicians using publicly-funded projects to promote themselves: Allowing their names and faces to be plastered over billboards, schools, ambulances, bridges and the likes of barangay halls was symptomatic of the corruption that runs deep through the country's institutions and political system.

While all projects must by necessity always remain above the political fray, we were naturally delighted that as things turned out, the new incoming administration made improving transparency and accountability a primary goal. When an initiative finds itself working in support of government policy, it is always easier. So we were delighted to see the issue of political abuse of public projects taken up as were the appointment of some leading proponents of open government to key positions in the administration. We were very fortunate also for the chance to work closely with officials in several key departments and on various initiatives linked to the national budget.



There are still a great many more things we would like to see change and happen – and we still have plenty of ideas –but simply and sadly, we have just run out of time. It is heartening though to end with the results of the electronic surveys we set up showing that both project participants and those with no association with PPTRP have helped validate our thinking and approach. The substantial feedback received so far shows we were not so totally wrong.

The vast majority of respondents to our surveys still don't think government and constitutional institutions and agencies are all working as they should and that citizens must play a more organized and active role and that change just won't happen without it.

Perhaps one key achievement we might be remembered for, alongside the website which will remain as hopefully a useful resource for those wanting to learn more about public sector finances -- is having set up four local citizen watchdog groups that demonstrate how easy and important it is for ordinary people to get involved and play their part. We hope more groups can follow their lead. People power needs to be much more than a slogan and become a way of life.

We at PPTRP have only scratched the surface of what can and should be done in terms of citizen engagement.

Now it is over to you—and the very best of luck.







one

## Media-Citizen Engagement: Setting a Transformative Agenda

By Red Batario

*“Everybody can and should be involved. Too many anti-corruption initiatives have focused on just one group, interest or sector and failed to realize that real power and change stems from different and disparate communities and people coming together to organize, share knowledge, forge links, build pressure and collectively force change...”*  
from the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project briefing.

**T**hat journalists and citizens should not be merely spectators in public life but active participants committed to making their communities work is an assertion that has over time been translated into actual initiatives and experiments in a number of places around the Philippines.

While this may appear to fly in the face of the journalist’s indulgent self-image of an independent, unaffected, and neutral bystander while events and public life unfold, democratic accountability, in the words of communications lecturer Dr. Katrin Voltmer in *The Role of the News Media in the Governance Reform Agenda*, covers a whole

spectrum of society and not just “political power holders but also the citizens and the media that link government and citizens.”

This means that responsibility lies on the shoulders of both the news media and citizens to help make public life work and to see to it that civic engagement is alive and well by allowing for informed, deliberative discussion to take place especially in the face of complex processes of change.

It is also one way by which citizens and journalists can begin to re-imagine democracy by working together to build new approaches in addressing things that are wrong and underlining those that are working.

In an ideal world, one the most powerful ways to address public malfeasance, the most insidious of which is corruption, is to ensure that citizens have access to the same information as their government. Here the role of the press comes into even sharper focus as it is expected to give voice to what has been described as the “unorganized majority.”

The UNDP, in its report “Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives: Accelerating Human Development in Asia and the Pacific,” said that the news media is a principal watch group monitoring and exposing corruption through newspapers, television, radio, and increasingly, the Internet.

“Tackling corruption is not a job for governments alone. Civil society must play its part – by monitoring and reporting on standards of government and also by refusing to pay bribes or collude with corrupt officials. Individuals, civil society and the media all need to stay alert, demanding the highest ethical standards and resolving to reject corruption wherever it appears,” the report said.



It went on to say that “They (the news media) can serve many important functions beyond just exposing corruption. The media can sustain an open and transparent flow of information, fostering a climate of opinion that is increasingly intolerant of corruption.”

To do this, the news media not only must engage citizens but must ensure that their community connectedness is firmly in place in setting an agenda for change. This in a way enables the press to facilitate democratic citizenship, a necessary ingredient in the fight against corruption and wrongdoing.



Media interviews WATCH Kidapawan members during their launch in June 2010.

“Civil society and the media are crucial to maintaining an atmosphere in public life that discourages fraud and corruption. Indeed, they are arguably the two most important factors in eliminating systemic corruption in public institutions,” said Rick Stapenhurst in his World Bank Institute paper, “The Media’s Role in Curbing Corruption.”

It is exactly this assertion that enhances the framework of media-citizen engagement that is one of the guiding principles of the public journalism philosophy that in turn situates journalists as community stakeholders and active participants in civic life. Public journalism principles by themselves are rights-based as they engage, involve and ensure that citizens' voices are heard in issues that impact on their daily lives. Public journalism is sometimes also referred to as community-connected journalism or civic journalism and shares one common characteristic: there is no exclusive ownership...it is owned and shared by all who believe in its possibilities and who are willing to take it to new directions.

By adopting the framework and the same principles, the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project (PPTRP) helped propel its media-citizen engagement approaches to build local transparency reporting mechanisms that are in turn propelled by the need to enhance and strengthen the capacity of rights holders in local participation.

By providing some sort of a roadmap for citizens and journalists as to what they can do, and how, in addressing transparency issues the PPTRP began examining problems and also how these can be solved.

Experiments like these have had strong bases in past initiatives such as those undertaken by the Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD) recently cited by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) in effectively addressing the issue of continuing lack of transparency and accountability, protection of social and economic rights and other basic human rights.

The UNOHCHR, through its publication *Good Governance Practices to Protect Human Rights*, pointed out how the project sought to bring





the Philippine media and civil society organizations together by allowing them to examine the extent of their collaborative tolerance and common points of agreement in order for them to strengthen the ability of local communities to participate in governance.



Journalists and CSO workers study budget transparency issues in a joint seminar by PPTRP and Social Watch Philippines.

The project “was designed to raise awareness within communities about their right to participate in local government and to empower them to demand good governance practices. The media contributed by sparking debate on local issues as well as by facilitating advocacy networks between communities, local governments and civil society organizations, particularly on issues important to the poor, the marginalized and the disadvantaged. The motivation behind this endeavor was the understanding that the media are not simply communicators of facts, but that they also influence public policy agendas and can act as catalysts for community efforts to demand good governance.”

The UNOHCHR also cited two cases of media-citizen engagement initiatives that looked into how media and civil society examined the effectiveness of local policies and governance on education, health and food security in Palawan, and how the media in Iloilo City responded to the initiatives of communities themselves by working with a local NGO to create a space for the community members to express their opinions on such issues as environmental degradation, below par public works, and delivery of basic services.

While these can be considered as useful templates for media-citizen engagement initiatives, current realities and emerging challenges may also help shape future undertakings of a similar nature. Other tools and technologies, such as social media and the worldwide web can have a huge impact on how these engagements will move forward. What is important to remember is that the same framework and principles can serve as a beacon when wading in uncharted waters. This is not simply about journalism but about journalism that is inclusive and is unafraid to re-imagine itself by creating a deliberative public.

Jay Rosen, author of the book “What Are Journalists For?” had this to say about it: “Publics are formed when we turn from our private and separate affairs to face common problems, and to face each other in dialogue and discussion.”

In the quest for transparent and accountable governance, a press that is unafraid, free and responsible and a public that is vigilant and concerned will emerge as a potent weapon given the immensity of the challenge and the insidiousness of this multi-headed monster called corruption. Everything must be brought to bear with vigor and resoluteness or else suffer the dire consequences as this trenchant editorial from a newspaper in Guatemala wanted to say.



“When in a society the shameless triumph; when the abuser is admired; when principles end and only opportunism prevails; when the insolent rule and the people tolerate it; when everything becomes corrupt but the majority is silent... When so many ‘whens’ unite, perhaps it is time to hide oneself; time to suspend the battle; time to stop being a Quixote; it is time to review our activities, re-evaluate those around us, and return to ourselves” – quoted from Guatemala’s *La Prensa* by Robert Klitgaard in the book “Corrupt Cities: A Practical Guide to Cure and Prevention.”

The PPTRP initiative has shown that there are many ways by which corruption in the Philippines can be addressed and media-citizen engagement is one mechanism or system by which to effectively do it. What remains is for others to take on the challenge by replicating similar efforts around the country in a demonstration of intolerance for corruption.





two

## Developing Local Media-Citizen Transparency Groups

2

When the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project was conceived, one of its major objectives was to develop mechanisms through which the media and citizens can work together to address corruption issues in local areas. Four pilot areas were selected based on several factors such as the willingness and ability of the media and civil society to work together to tackle transparency issues, capacity to move forward the initiative, probability of replication by other areas, and to some extent, indicators for success like previous efforts at media-citizen engagement.

These bold experiments were undertaken in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato; Catbalogan, Samar; Tagbilaran, Bohol; and, Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental. All have varied levels of success given different sets of circumstances and situations, challenges, media environment and sectoral interaction.

## The Transparency Reporting Groups

- WATCH Kidapawan (Watchful Advocates for Transparent, Clean and Honest Governance in Kidapawan)
- MATA-Samar (Multi-Sectoral Alliance for Transparency and Accountability in Samar)
- Bohol TNT (Bohol Transparency Network for Transformation)
- Misamis Occidental PTC (Misamis Occidental Public Transparency Collective)

The transparency groups were formed by media and civil society groups through consultations, dialogues and training workshops on reporting transparency and accountability through an understanding, for example, of budget and procurement processes.

By presenting their experiences in these pages, it is hoped that others may be inspired to build their own media-citizen transparency groups and perchance help reduce malfeasance in governance.

Here is how two of the reporting groups did it.



## WATCH Kidapawan

### When People Own the News

By Abner P. Francisco

*Many people in North Cotabato initially thought that the idea to unify different civil society and media organizations to form an advocacy group to fight corruption was next to impossible.*



Alan Davis

Media and CSO workers in Kidapawan City discuss transparency and corruption issues in their city and possibilities of forming their own local monitoring group.

*It was understandable as many of them still suffer from the trauma of having been harassed and jailed for demanding better governance. Six years ago, several people in Kidapawan City were arrested and jailed for calling for reforms and an end to corruption in government. One of those put behind bars was lawyer Concepcion "Connie" Brizuela, legal counsel of the Diocese of Kidapawan and one of the founders of the local anti-corruption group Kutabatenyos Alang sa Maayng Panggobyerno or KALAMPAG (People of Cotabato for Good Governance). Brizuela would later be killed in the infamous Maguindanao Massacre in 2009.*

A local official belonging to the biggest political clan in the province charged Brizuela and three others with libel after they wrote about his alleged abuses and malpractices.

They were locked up in a cell for three nights and three days but people of the province launched their own version of people power to have them released. Led by then Kidapawan Bishop Romulo Valles DD, thousands marched to the Kidapawan City police station to stage a prayer rally, concert for a cause, and a fund raising drive dubbed "Piso-Piso Para sa Piniriso," (A Peso for Jailed Friends). Brizuela and her colleagues later posted bail but the case dragged on for years. It was dismissed by the Court in 2009 but by then the case had taken its toll on the people behind KALAMPAG who had to concentrate on their defense.

The group later disbanded, saddening many of those who saw KALAMPAG as a potent mechanism for governance reform.

Bebiano Gabo of the human rights group KARAPATAN said they found it hard to address complaints brought to their attention. "When KALAMPAG became inactive we were left receiving all the complaints from people. It was hard as we were also undermanned. We are very glad that WATCH Kidapawan (as a multi-sector transparency reporting group) was organized as we now have the whole media and civil society to receive (and act on) these complaints."

## Unifying the Media

When the idea of forming a local media-citizen transparency reporting group was first broached, people in Kidapawan were ecstatic, seeing a revival of sorts of the old KALAMPAG. But there was a hitch.

The media in North Cotabato were fragmented by competing beliefs and the rush for ratings. This was exacerbated by numerous media associations





and formations with their own agendas whose leaders also came from rival news outfits. Many journalists chose not to join any of these organizations.



WATCH Kidapawan launches campaign against illegal collection of fees from small vendors.

Radio announcers, on the other hand, were daily trying to “out-scoop” one another for the right to claim airwave supremacy. For example, radio station DXND claimed it was the “news capital of South Central Mindanao” while its competitor, DXCA Charm Radio, tagged itself as the “Public Opinion Maker.” DXND broadcasts simultaneously with DXMS in Cotabato City and other member stations saying that it delivers the most comprehensive and latest news. Charm Radio, simulcast with Wow Radio in Midsayap and other member stations, said it airs the most hard-hitting commentary and widely-participated in interactive programs. DXND partnered with the **Mindanao Cross** newspaper based in Cotabato City while Charm Radio worked in tandem with the **Southern Voice Journal** in Kidapawan City.

There were even media practitioners who launched attacks on air against colleagues, accusing each other of having political patrons and of being paid hacks. Had it not been for the timely intervention of Fr. Peter Geremiah of the Tribal Filipino Program of the Diocese of Kidapawan, the so-called "network wars" could have exploded into a bitter war of attrition.

Fr. Geremiah called the media representatives to a series of meetings where it was suggested that it will be to the public's benefit if the media will join hands and eschew competition in bringing all their resources and talent to bear on critical issues facing the province. To their credit, the media agreed to the suggestion thereby ending what could have been a debilitating and mutually destructive "network war."

There is no doubt that the creation of WATCH Kidapawan brought media closer together. Gone are the days when the competing stations put so much weight on the exclusivity of stories. Now they share stories for wider dissemination and stronger impact.

Ruby Padilla Sison, chair of Gabriela North Cotabato, said the unification of the local media redounds to the benefit of the people. "When we heard Abner Francisco (of DXCA Charm Radio) being interviewed by Malu Manar at DXND and Malu being interviewed by Abner at Charm Radio, we were very happy for we know that they have transcended competition and it was the people who have become their utmost priority. It was not an issue of which station corners the wider audience, it's setting the people's agenda above and over the corporate interest of their stations. Indeed it's journalism for the public and it's the people's victory. After all it is the people who own the issue."



## Forming WATCH Kidapawan

Shortly after the successful “media unification talks,” the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project (PPTRP) through its partners Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD) and National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), conducted survey focused group discussions and training on transparency reporting.



WATCH Kidapawan members follow up status of corruption cases filed against public officials in Kidapawan City.

Different civil society organization representatives and all media outfits in the province participated in the training after which they agreed to form an anti-corruption group in the province of Cotabato to be based in Kidapawan City.

In May 2010, PPTRP Director Alan Davis met with selected media practitioners and CSO leaders to discuss data showing how rampant corruption is in the country and the possibility of creating a local anti-corruption group to address the issue.

After a week, the informal group met again and decided to form the Watchful Advocates for Transparent Clean and Honest Governance in Kidapawan (WATCH Kidapawan).

WATCH Kidapawan is committed to work together to monitor, evaluate, report and push for improved fiscal accountability of public funds within the area of jurisdiction of Kidapawan City. The member organizations vowed to help each other in accessing documents on local government finances; assess local government's performance and accountability regarding public funds vis-à-vis the actual results and impact on the people and to generate feedback from the community regarding local government officials' compliance with anti-corruption laws; production of Budget Watch news program or section composed of data, news and commentary on local procurement issues; and media and public events to engage local government officials and generate public feedback.

This writer, representing DXCA Charm Radio was elected chairperson. Other officers elected were Prof. Vilma Gonzales of Go-Gender, secretary general of E-Gender; Sister Lalyn Macahilo, OND, of Pagbabago Peoples Movement for Change, finance officer; Pastor Ernesto Ramos of United Methodist Church, auditor; Jocelyn Aquitan of Gabriela volunteer facilitator.

WATCH Kidapawan was formally launched on June 5, 2010 simultaneously in three competing radio stations, DXCA Charm Radio, DXND, and DXCM Radyo Ukay.

WATCH Kidapawan member-organizations are DXCA Charm Radio, DXND, DXCM Radyo Ukay, **Southern Voice Journal**, Pagbabago People's Movement for Change, **Mindanao Express**, ICON PTS, Gabriela, Kalampag Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP-Cotbatao), Education Network Philippines (E-NET), Go-Gender, Network of Women, Tribal Filipino Program Diocese of Kidapawan, Bayan Muna, Kabataan Partylist, Apo Sandawa Lumadnong Panaghiusa, and other peoples organizations.

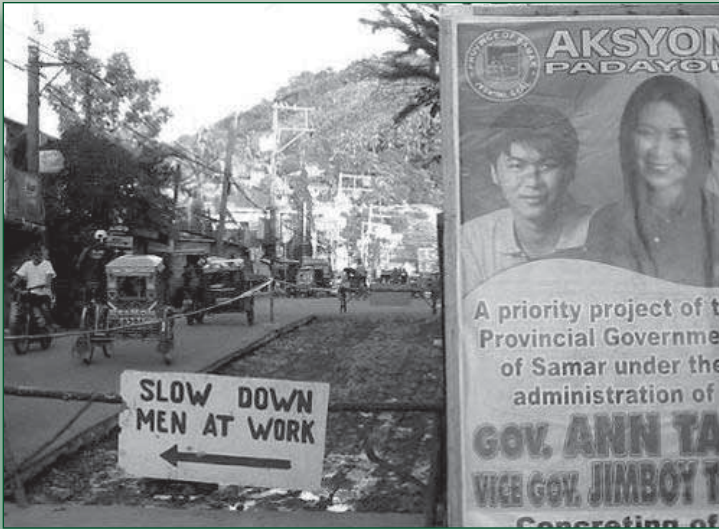


## MATA-Samar

# Local Mechanism for Governance Reform

By Imelda Bonifacio

*The formation and launch of an anti-corruption initiative in Samar was driven by the systemic and continuing failure of the local government to address basic development issues, especially poverty, facing the province.*



Emy Bonifacio

Samar's governor, vice governor and Congress representative all come from the same political family.

*For a very long time, Samar has been languishing in the backwaters of development, having been consistently on the list of seven poorest provinces in the country with three of its municipalities, Matuguinao, Daram and Zumarraga, rated as the poorest in the region.*

*Its forests have been ravaged, its seas over-fished and whatever arable lands remain have lain fallow. There are few economic activities*

and productivity has consistently declined while unemployment and underemployment rates remain high.

These are the more obvious results of bad governance that has been the bane of the province. Many Samarans believe that its resources are not properly managed and its development agenda is not well defined. This is exacerbated by the lack of adequate control, audit or oversight of public spending, meaning public money is not being spent to promote the welfare of the people of Samar.

Given this kind of situation, concerned citizens of Samar decided to help bring it back on track by bringing the different sectors together: government, media, business, church and civil society that eventually gave birth to what is now known as the Multisectoral Alliance for Transparency and Accountability in Samar (MATA-Samar).



Media, CSOs and government workers concerned with the alleged corruption in Samar formed MATA-Samar as a collective initiative to increase public sector transparency.



*Anti-corruption efforts are not new to Samarans. A number of people's and non-government organizations in the past have stood up to protest wrongdoing in government by filing court cases against erring public officials. But protracted litigation and perceived inaction by the Ombudsman eventually dampened their spirits even leading some to believe that fighting corruption was just a waste of time. Other members of the community also were indifferent to the anti-corruption efforts by various groups that were also hounded by financial difficulties. There was also no formal organization to speak of.*

*But in a sense, Samar was lucky. It was selected as one of the four pilot areas of the PPTRP that will be supported in developing joint initiatives of the media, civil society and citizens to monitor and report transparency issues relating to budget, procurement, project development including access to information regarding government transactions.*

*Also for the first time in Samar's continuing fight against corruption, the media committed to make a definite stand, putting into sharper focus their role in shaping people's opinions on governance issues and providing opportunities for expanding citizens' voices.*

*The presence of the media in the advocacy campaign facilitated information gathering and dissemination and encouraged people to freely express their views. The media are generally considered credible by the community.*

## Forming an Anti-Corruption Alliance

*MATA-Samar's main objective is to promote greater awareness on anti-corruption, transparency, and public accountability. It also aims to address the misuse of public funds in the province through timely and factual reporting of public spending.*



Members agreed that the group would work for participatory democracy, responsive governance and an empowered citizenry to help achieve a progressive and peaceful Samar. It envisions Samar to be a livable community that is corruption free and whose quality basic services would be accessible to everyone.

The multi-sector feature of MATA-Samar makes it easier for the group to undertake various monitoring activities. Members complement each other. Information dissemination campaigns are being done by media partners such as samarnews.com. A website was also created to maximize information sharing while social media such as FaceBook, Tweeter, and blogs are also being harnessed.

Road monitoring and the gathering of documents for evidence are being handled by the Alliance of Concerned Employees in Samar (ACES) that has direct access to concerned government agencies while the Social Action Center (SAC) focuses on member recruitment and information dissemination at the grassroots level. Legal issues and action are referred to the Corruption Prevention Unit (CPI) Ombudsman Samar Chapter and the Isog han Samar, a coalition of non-government organizations.

The efforts of MATA-Samar are also being supported through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Samar Island Partnership, an NGO to which most MATA-Samar members belong. DILG Secretary Jesse Robredo and the three bishops of Samar (Emmanuel Trance of Catarman, Northern Samar; Isabelo Abarquez of Calbayog, Western Samar, and Crispin Varquez of Borongan, Eastern Samar) signed the MOA on September 22, 2010 to encourage civil society participation in all government transactions to ensure transparency and accountability.

MATA-Samar members agreed to focus on monitoring on-going infrastructure projects and tracking government budget, procurement





and delivery of social services. To accomplish this, MATA-Samar made representations with the regional directors of the DILG, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Commission on Audit (COA), and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to seek their assistance in addressing transparency issues.

The group would later establish and strengthen links with other agencies and networks in government, media and civil society organizations through training workshops and seminars on governance.



MATA-Samar officers thanks the Department of Budget and Management in a workshop in understanding the budget better.

MATA-Samar has also been officially recognized as a member of the Millennium Challenge Account, a local monitoring project that will play a major role in the implementation of the 222 km road network from Barangay Buray, Paranas, Samar to Guian, Eastern Samar and the KALAHI-CIDSS project of the social welfare department.

It was also recognized by the Corruption Prevention Unit-Ombudsman (CPU-Visayas) as a partner, making it easier for the group to act on complaints.



Through the EVNET, a coalition of NGOs in Eastern Visayas, MATA-Samar has been tapped to help in the **Bantay Lansangan** (Road Watch) monitoring project and it now sits in the bids and awards committee of the DPWH as an NGO partner.

It likewise attends weekly sessions and committee hearings of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan and disseminates session reports to the news media. The group also attends court hearings and provides moral support to complainants who filed cases against provincial government officials.

Currently MATA-Samar acts as secretariat to the island-wide SIPPAD (Samar Island Partnership for Peace and Development) assemblies and other development councils and has helped draft the six-year Development Agenda for Samar which was presented to President Aquino.

Recently the group made it to the national papers for challenging the Full Disclosure Act and the Prohibition of Billboards with Names and Pictures of Politicians on Government Programs and Projects as expressed in DILG Memorandum Circulars. It filed a test case at the Ombudsman against officials and employees of the provincial government who have willfully violated that particular law.

But huge challenges still remain. The group is at the receiving end of threats and harassment. Politicians who have been the target of MATA exposés often resorted to attacking the credibility of the members. Sometimes the attacks come from unexpected quarters like some media colleagues who questioned the partnership between the press and citizens groups.

By publicizing its work and opening its operations to public scrutiny, MATA-Samar has further enhanced its credibility. It also continues to open dialogues with media and other sectors on how to engage more meaningfully in working for better governance in the province.



## Some Important Points to Remember When Forming Transparency Groups



Scan the environment by peeling the layers of the community and then identify local good governance champions. They can come from the ranks of civil society, government, media, academe or business.



If the news media triggers the initiative, ask tough questions as to what the community can and is willing to do to make government more transparent and accountable.



Open continuing dialogues with all sectors. Agree on a framework and develop a set of strategies.



Meetings need not be expensive. Bring your own “baon” (brown bagging) sessions can result in substantive discussions and action steps.



For media, build alliances with the competition and look at the outcome of journalism.



For civil society and other sectors, look at media not merely as information avenues but as community facilitators and partners.







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## **Building Local Capacities: Transparency and Anti-Corruption Reporting Training**

By Rorie Fajardo

**I**nformative. Timely. Significant to their campaigns or news coverage.

These were some of the feedback from participants – both media and non-media members including students and workers from civil society – in the training workshops on transparency and anti-corruption reporting organized by the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project (PPTRP).

Since its launch in March 2010, the PPTRP has conducted through one of its four partner organizations, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), a total of 22 training activities in 12 areas across the country. These areas were selected by the PPTRP partner organizations using a set of criteria that includes strong presence of media and CSO community concerned with monitoring and reporting government corruption and transparency issues.

The training series covered the following:

**Luzon** -- Pampanga, Legazpi City and Masbate City

**Visayas** – Samar and Bohol

**Mindanao** – Kidapawan City, Dipolog City, Davao City, Surigao City, Cagayan de Oro City, Ozamiz City and Tawi-Tawi



Julie Alipala

Journalists in Tawi-Tawi take part in PPTRP training on transparency and anti-corruption reporting.

Masbate City and Tawi-Tawi were added during the second year of the training due to requests from several members of media and CSO community in those areas for capacity building assistance to help them organize their own campaigns or reporting on transparency issues related to their local governments.

Participants from Tawi-Tawi in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said that the PPTRP training in February 2011 was the first time a national training was held in their area. They said that in the past very few journalists were invited to take part in trainings



usually held in Mindanao urban centers like Zamboanga City and Davao City.

In a span of 13 months since the first basic PPTRP training was conducted (June 2010 to July 2011), PPTRP was able to train and engage a total of 633 persons, 395 of whom were from the media and 238 were from other sectors like CSOs, schools, church groups and even associations of local government employees. Of the total, 252 were female and 381 male.

The training activities also became venues for the media and civil society groups to come together to discuss and share knowledge on basic concepts and laws on corruption and transparency, national and local budget processes, procurement process, audit and accountability, and safety and security protocols when investigating sensitive corruption cases or advocating for a corruption-free public sector. The trainings also featured workshops wherein participants from both sectors were guided in identifying corruption issues, challenges or obstacles in monitoring and reporting these plus possible solutions and formulating story plans or anti-corruption campaign plans.

The PPTRP also designed the training as a two-level approach with the basic training on anti-corruption and transparency reporting held during the first year of project implementation and the advanced training organized the following year. This was done to allow the same set of participants from media and civil society to further enhance their transparency reporting skills while developing partnership initiatives.

But it soon became apparent that training the same set of participants twice over a period of two years would be challenging



given realities on the ground. Some of the Year 1 trainees were no longer available for the Year 2 activity as they either transferred to another province or were working in other jobs. As a result, the Year 2 advanced trainings were opened to those who did not attend the basic training by adjusting the design to include fundamental concepts on corruption and transparency.

The other challenge faced by the project was the low participation of civil society organizations in several of the target areas. It was only in Kidapawan City in North Cotabato and Catabalogan, Samar that an equal mix of participants from the media and civil society demonstrated a higher level of civic engagement. This could be attributed mainly to their previous experience of working together in addressing transparency issues in their respective localities.



Journalists in Dipolog City take part in PPTRP training on transparency and anti-corruption reporting.





In Masbate and Tawi-Tawi, on the other hand, a very thin line exists between the news media and advocates or activists with a number considering themselves as members of both sectors.

Overall, the participants rated the PPTRP trainings at both levels as relevant and useful to their line of work. Majority of them said that the trainings helped them understand better and improve the kind of reporting or campaigns they normally do. Several journalists said they are now more or less equipped with knowledge about laws and policies on corruption and transparency, and are thus able to ask more critical questions of their sources, in turn enabling them to provide their public with key information that would allow the same public to understand how their money is being spent by government.

In the next few pages, we have reprinted some stories originally published in the PPTRP website to illustrate how training on transparency and anti-corruption can help enhance reporting. The three articles we've chosen reflect the diversity and depth of wide-ranging issues on public spending, local governance operations and management, fiscal integrity and their impact on the people's daily lives.

We hope that by presenting these stories in this guide, journalists, civil society members, advocates, government workers, citizens will find cause and encouragement to report not only what's wrong, but also what's working in their own communities.



## Learning Transparency and Accountability Processes

The Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project (PPTRP) has always put premium on the need for the public to fully understand basic laws and processes in relation to transparency and accountability. Access to information about these issues can only become meaningful and effective if people are able to scrutinize such information, ask critical questions, and identify problems as well as solutions.

Thus did the project through one of its partners, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), design a two-tiered training activity – basic and advanced – on transparency and anti-corruption to address the challenge of people’s lack of access to information and ensuring meaningful citizen participation in governance.

The basic training focused on essential knowledge areas for beginners in transparency and accountability work. Main topics included: (1) Definition of concepts on corruption and transparency; (2) Discussion on the basic laws tackling corruption, among them Republic Act 6713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees; (3) Discussion on the existing mechanisms to address corruption such as the Ombudsman and the *Sandiganbayan* (anti-graft court); (4) Discussion on important areas where investigation, monitoring and reporting are important, for instance reading the statements of assets and liabilities and net worth of officials and procurement process as well as the so-called red flags or stages where corruption is usually committed.



Short workshops within the training then engaged participants in identifying constraints in monitoring and reporting public sector corruption and some possible solutions. Many of the recurring issues identified during these workshops were: lack of access to, and understanding of, information on public sector transparency and corruption; safety and security risks when reporting corruption or campaigning against it; and, refusal of potential sources to provide information.

Feedback from the basic training participants showed that lack of knowledge in engaging local officials and other public servants continues to hamper their efforts to closely examine governance processes.

“I will use my new knowledge when interviewing government officials on alleged corruption in the province,” said one journalist. On the other hand, majority of the civil society participants believe that such knowledge can help them with their reform campaigns.

The advanced training, administered during the project’s second year, focused more on accessing information and understanding the local and national budgets. “The budget as a story has strategic values,” said Rowena Paraan, NUJP secretary general and lead trainer for the PPTRP training component. The budget, as emphasized in the training, is both a governance and development tool designed to address such issues as poverty and inequity. In reality, however, the budget is oftentimes used as a political tool and avenue for corruption.

The participants in the advanced training were also taught critical aspects linked to the budget process such as powers and limitations of the local government in fiscal administration, the national and



local budget cycle, the procurement process, and specific laws and regulations pertaining to the budgetary powers of government officials.

The advanced training was also designed to engage the participants from both media and civil society in identifying constraints in monitoring and reporting budget-related issues as well as possible solutions. Among these constraints were understanding relevant laws; lack of transparency; difficulty in accessing documents and sources willing to talk on record; the need to understand the sheer volume of documents; and the fact that understanding the budget involves math that is also a challenge to many of the participants. In general, they agreed that continually improving their knowledge and skills in scrutinizing the budget could provide the key in addressing many of these constraints.

## Pre- and post-training diagnostics

The PPTRP trainings also used simple diagnostics before and after the training to measure skills and knowledge levels and the effect of the training in enhancing these.

Two sets of diagnostic tests were prepared: a 10-question test for the basic training and a seven-question test for the advanced training (see boxed sidebars)

The pre-training test results indicated that participants have limited knowledge on specific laws on transparency and corruption in the Philippines, agencies concerned in ensuring accountability, as well as the powers and limitations of government officials and employees in key areas like budget authorization and execution.



Test scores after the training proper in both levels showed a general improvement in the participants' knowledge on the issues discussed – with some of them posting perfect scores after the one-day training.

## Diagnostic Test Questions

### Year 1 Training: Basic Transparency and Anti-Corruption Reporting

1. What law defines the conduct of public officials?
2. What do you call the document that contains the income of a public official, amounts of his and his family's expenses, and the taxes he paid for the preceding year?
3. What law requires public officials to submit sworn statements on their total assets every year?
4. What government body is tasked to investigate and prosecute corruption cases?
5. If you want to get the tax record of Mayor Rodrigo Duterte of Davao City, where can you get it?
6. What do you call the form of investigation that looks at an official's declared income and compares it with his actual net worth, sources of wealth and way of living?
7. What term refers to situations wherein a public official's performance of his duty is affected by his personal interest?
8. What do you call the crime wherein a public official, in a series of criminal acts, amasses more than P50 million in illegally acquired wealth?



9. In a local government unit, which body has the power to allocate funds?
10. Fill in the blank: A public office is a public \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answers:** (1) Republic Act 6713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees; (2) Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth; (3) Republic Act 3019, Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act; (4) Office of the Ombudsman; (5) Bureau of Internal Revenue/Tax Assessor's Office; (6) Lifestyle check; (7) Conflict of interest; (8) Plunder; (9) Sangguniang Panlalawigan or Sangguniang Panglunsod; (10) Trust

## Diagnostic Test Questions

Year 2 Training: Advanced Transparency  
and Anti-Corruption Reporting  
Numeracy for Journalists, CSO Workers  
and Citizens

1. What law paved the way for greater local autonomy?
2. Which of the following can a mayor not do?
  - a. Propose an annual budget
  - b. Hire and fire city employees
  - c. Secure financial grants on his own
3. How many members does your provincial board have?
4. Fill in the blanks: Every year, the proposed budget for next year must be submitted by what date? (Give the exact date.)



5. In an LGU, what government body approves the budget? \_\_\_\_\_. What body proposes? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which committee conducts hearings on the proposed budget? Who is the head of this committee in this city/ municipality?
7. What do you call the share of local government units in the national internal revenue taxes?

**Answers:** (1) *Local Government Code of 1991*; (2) *C. Secure financial grants on his own*; (3) *13* ; (4) *October 16 of every year*; (5) *legislative body and executive body*; (6) *Committee on Appropriations*; (7) *Internal Revenue Allotment*

Prepared by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines as one of four PPTRP partners



*A fairly good understanding and appreciation of governance processes such as the annual budget make for a well-crafted report or story that removes technical jargon, unravels complex steps, explains hidden nuances, and generally tells how and why things happen as they do.*

*Here is a good example of how the budget process is explained that will help journalists and citizens in undertaking transparency reporting initiatives.*

## Anatomy of the Annual Budget

By Claire Delfin



Jes Aznar

The Philippine Congress is said to hold the power of the purse.

The annual national budget is said to be the most powerful public articulation of the government's policy. It lays out the





government's course of actions for the country for that year. And as pundits would say it, the budget is the development policy expressed in peso terms.

The budget, after all, is the engine, the prime mover. Without it, any development plan cannot set into motion. Thus, given the magnitude of its importance, no less than the Constitution specifically provides that the budget proposed by the Executive must go through an exhaustive check in Congress before it is approved.

In theory, the Congress, being composed of the people's representatives, goes through the process of holding public hearings and discussions on various aspects of the budget each year. Every item is scrutinized and heads of various departments and agencies are meticulously questioned to ensure that the proposed budgets are justified.

But in practice, studies and fiscal experts claim, Congress has practically abdicated the power of the purse to the executive branch.

A United Nations-financed study shows that Congress has failed to scrutinize the annual national budget thoroughly and in the process, has in fact, facilitated corruption.

“Congress is given four months to debate the budget. But, more often than not, debates—particularly in the House of Representatives—deal not with policy but rather parochial concerns,” said the 2008/2009 Philippine Human Development Report.



Social Watch Philippines (SWP) sees the same observation. SWP is a nongovernmental group pushing for national budget reforms in Congress. It leads the Alternative Budget Initiative (ABI), a campaign involving 60 NGOs which has been trying to monitor the budget process in the legislature since 1996.

It says the country's annual budget process is so lacking in transparency and oversight it effectively helps to ensure huge amounts of public money is lost through corruption and mismanagement.

## Budget process

The budget cycle is a long process that for the most part is hidden from public view: Given the space and time it subsequently devotes to covering alleged financial scandals, the media has shown surprisingly little interest in scrutinizing it in any serious way.

Budget preparation runs from January to July when the administration engages in vigorous planning and debate with the different government agencies.

“The President determines the allocation and those who are close to the president get a better deal,” says SWP co-convenor Leonor Magtolis-Briones, former national treasurer.

While agencies are free to propose their own budgets, it is the chief executive who calls the shots. Usually, this depends on the President's priority programs for the year, the expected revenue targets, and amount of debt the government can source out to fund the budget.



The authorization stage of the budgetary process for the following year runs from August to December when it is presented to and piloted through Congress. This stage is also called the budget legislation.

Under the Constitution, Congress is given the “power of the purse.” In reality however, only a few legislators scrutinize the entire budget. It has been widely observed that the Arroyo administration has a very compliant Congress with the majority of members allied to the President.

To all extent and purposes therefore, from a practical point of view, by the time it reaches Congress, the real work has been done and only amendments are made.

“As long as they get their pork barrel, they’re okay. They don’t look at the total picture. The result is a blank check for Malacañang,” claims Magtolis-Briones.

“Only the chairs of the Senate committee on finance and of the House appropriations committee meet regularly to discuss the budget,” she says. “There are no minutes of these meetings.” As a result, serious mistakes are sometimes made – like that of the controversial C-5 Road project, which was reportedly twice awarded PhP 200 million (USD 4.5 million) within the 2008 budget.

According to the late budget secretary Emilia Boncodin, such serious mistakes are due to a weak oversight process of the legislative branch.



In her presentation on the vulnerabilities of public financial management system of the Philippines in May last year at the University of the Philippines, she said oversight process by legislative committees only come to life when there are reactive investigations in aid of legislation. Other than this, it's practically dead.

There is also no dedicated oversight over intelligence and confidential funds. And regular reports submitted to Congress by different agencies are generally ignored as there is no unit that analyzes these reports, Boncodin had claimed.

January to December is the budget execution stage when the budget for that year should have already been approved, released and used as appropriated by Congress.

The accountability stage is supposed to run concurrently – and yet it is often disregarded because by then the agencies are busy preparing for the new budget: So the budget cycle starts all over again.

The budget calendar often gets disrupted by delays in the passage of the current year budget. From 2001 to 2010, the enactment of the General Appropriations Act (GAA) was delayed seven times. The non-implementation or delay in implementation of projects results in service disruption. And when this happens, the budget laws give the sitting president a wide discretion in terms of realignment of budget savings.



## Budget pie

As said earlier, the budget primarily depends on the President's priority programs for the year. In 2008, the budget was about sustaining economic momentum, according to Malacañang. This came as the Philippines posted a gross domestic product growth rate of 7.3 percent a year earlier, making the country one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia.

The budget was consequently strong in investments for infrastructure, education, health, housing, as well as for science and technology.

In 2009, the budget was meant to cover an economic resiliency program in the midst of a global economic crisis that was raging through the most developed economies of the world. So a special purpose fund for 'economic stimulus' worth PhP 10.07 billion (USD 227 million) was included in the budget. This is on top of the increased allocations granted to the departments of public works and highways, agriculture, and the social welfare and development.

And in 2010, the budget, according to Malacañang, is aimed to leave a "legacy of hope and promise of a better future" by an outgoing president. So, the Department of Education is given the highest allocation among other agencies.

But the annual national budgets (*Please see attached list of annual budgets 2008-2010*) show that the highest allocation



actually goes to debt service-interest payment. It's more than 70 percent higher than the budget for education for 2010.

Put together, the budgets for the different executive departments and offices comprise the major share of the budget pie. These include the budgets for the offices of the President and the Vice President.



Jes Aznar

For the Office of the President, year 2010 gets an additional PhP 1 million (USD 22,727) confidential and intelligence funds provided for the National Telecommunications Commission. This makes a total of PhP 651 million (USD 15 million) intelligence and confidential funds that should be released only upon the President's approval. PhP 500 million (USD 11 million) goes to the Philippine Anti-



Organized Crime Commission and PhP 150 million (USD 3 million) is for the President's general administration and support services.

Allocation for Congress, including the House of Representatives, doubled since 2009. This is on top of the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) that goes straight to each senator or representative. The PDAF has consistently grown higher as the national budget goes bigger.

Except for the Commission on Elections' budget, which has doubled this year due to the conduct of the first automated national elections in May, the allocation for the judiciary and all other independent offices in government has practically remained unchanged for the last two or three years.

The annual budgets are also a showcase of lump sum appropriations for special purposes, known as Special Purpose Funds (SPF). The SPF, for fiscal analysts, is the much more consequential instrument in the national budget. These are lump-sum appropriations governed by special provisions and their release is subject to presidential discretion.

Next to debt-servicing, 'Unprogrammed Fund' gets the highest allocation in the SPFs. For 2010, it has a budget four times higher than the health department. PDAF, calamity and contingent funds are also part of these SPFs.



There are also special budgets that are earmarked funds specifically provided by law like the Modernization Fund of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

## It's the beef

In theory, these SPFs are an effective tool to cover contingencies and provide flexibility in operations. But in practice, these special budgets suffer from general lack of transparency and abuse of discretion.

“The beef has always been that SPFs, being ‘lump-sum’ rather than ‘line budgeted’ items, are less transparent and are one of the main faults why a national budget can become less effective, less ethical and less equitable,” according to Zoilo Dejaresco III, financial adviser of the Philippine Center for National Budget Legislation.

From 2002 to 2008, the trend in the administration was to increase the amount that came under the category SPFs.

According to Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III, last year, the World Bank stepped in to criticize the practice, so the percentage of funds allocated under SPFs decreased.

“The World Bank intervened and told the Philippines to reform. The government listened for it is beholden to the World Bank. It's where we get our loans,” says Guingona.

But it isn't for long. This year, it's back to its old habits.





## Unprogrammed funds

The most glaring are the Unprogrammed Funds, which hit a record high PhP 119 billion (USD 2.7 billion) this year, representing a hefty hike from only PhP 76 billion (USD 1.7 billion) in 2009 when the World Bank supposedly intervened. In 2008, its budget was PhP 115 billion (USD 2.6 billion).



Jes Aznar

Pork barrel funds are often used for political patronage, resulting in ghost projects and unfinished roads like this one in Sultan Kudarat.

Unprogrammed Funds are standby appropriations which authorize additional agency expenditures for priority programs and projects in excess of the original budget. And like everything inside SPF, these funds require presidential approval.

For Dejaresco, these funds sit within the questionable SPF allocations. What makes it more controversial

is the Contingency Funds, which are separate from Unprogrammed Funds. PhP 800 million (USD 18 million) is available in this Fund for 2010.

## Pork barrel

With SPF being the beef, the PDAF is just it – the pork.

More commonly known as “pork barrel,” – PDAF is widely seen as an old style fiscal instrument still employed in the budget that helps to foster continuing graft and corruption.

Every year, members of the House of Representatives receive a PDAF worth PhP 70 million (USD 1.6 million) each. A senator meantime receives PhP 200 million (USD 4.5 million). The money is for wholly discretionary spending.

As the name suggests, the PDAF is intended for priority development projects such as clean water, education and health care, and poverty alleviation. However, many legislators end up spending their allocations on trivial projects like waiting sheds or basketball courts.

Trivial or worthy, the use of pork barrel funds allows ample opportunities to defraud the state by irregular contracting procedures; by inflating prices – or by agreeing and securing kick-backs – where the winning contractor will illegally return a percentage of the funds paid out.

Yet according to Guingona, the country’s pork barrel is merely the tip of one enormous problem as it represents around one percent of the entire national budget.



## Re-enacted budget

Even if a noncompliant Congress rejects the budget, the President is allowed a veto. And in the event no budget is approved, the administration can, under the Constitution, reenact – re-spend- the preceding national budget.



Keith Bacongco

A road project in Davao supported by the former president's funds.

At the end of the day, it remains the President's budget. And a reenacted budget favors the chief executive even more than one that is approved.

“A reenacted budget is like getting away with murder,” says Guingona.

Apart from the fact that a reenacted budget no longer conforms to the cost of goods and services of the current year, it also leaves new projects unfunded.

In cases of those projects that have already been funded the previous year, it means the allocated funds appear automatically as savings. Yet these savings are not necessarily channeled back to the national treasury. The sitting president is instead allowed to use these 'savings' to fund things which may not be identified in the national budget. This can be done without first securing Congressional approval.

Since President Arroyo stepped into office in 2001, there has not been a single year that her administration did not operate on a reenacted budget for at least part of the time. For seven years -including 2010- the government operated on a reenacted budget for up to four months of each year. The three other years -- 2001, 2004 and 2006 -- the government used a reenacted budget for the entire fiscal year.

For Rep. Guingona, a reenacted budget is a “badge of shame” for lawmakers. Given the many working hours, it’s a shame that they are not able to pass a very important legislation, the General Appropriations Act, he says.

“But this is purposely done. It’s with a sinister purpose, and not out of laziness,” claims Guingona.

2001 was when then-president Joseph Estrada was ousted from power and Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo took over. 2004 was an election year. It was the same year when Arroyo ran for the presidency and was declared winner, but not without subsequently facing impeachment claims and charges that she was responsible for engineering



a massive electoral fraud. 2006 started the campaign season for the 2007 elections.

“You can only guess where the savings of the reenacted budget went,” claims Guingona.



Jes Aznar

The term of then president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was marked by repeated re-enactment of the national budget and alleged lack of transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

## Impounded budget

Alongside the re-enactment of budget, impoundment is another common practice that can be used as a mechanism to funnel funds into savings, all for presidential use.

Impoundment is the refusal of the chief executive to release and spend funds that have already been appropriated.



Typically, when the phrase ‘savings,’ are mentioned, it is not so much about funds that have been managed so effectively that there remains money left over – but that the money has not actually been released to pay for what was intended.

In 2008, according to SWP, the Arroyo administration registered an all-time high over-all savings of PhP 140 billion (USD 3.18 billion) from impounded funds. It dislodges from the spot the year 2007 when pooled savings amounted to PhP 106.11 billion) (USD 2.41 billion).



Angel Carballo

Special purpose funds and savings should have been wisely used to increase calamity funds.

“President Arroyo transferred PhP 178 billion (USD 4 billion) from different agencies to overall savings. On the other hand, a total of PhP 38 billion (USD 864 million) was transferred from Overall Savings to different agencies. This resulted to a net transfer of PhP 140 billion (USD 3.18

billion), which are recorded as Unreleased Appropriations. Presumably, this amount is carried over to 2009,” Magtolis-Briones says in a press statement.

She adds, instead of a supplemental budget that would only increase the country’s deficit, Malacañang should have used the remaining balances in the SPFs and accumulated savings which are handled by the Office of the President through the Department of Budget and Management to increase the calamity fund in 2009 amidst disasters hitting the country.

Per ABI’s data, the impounded funds from the 2008 budget include those for health and agriculture programs. These are the PhP 1.8 billion (USD 41 million) for family health program, PhP 400 million (USD 9 million) for the tuberculosis program, PhP 100 million (USD 2.3 million) for purchase of autoclaves (machinery for sterilization in public hospitals), PhP 100 million (USD 2.3 million) for the promotion of organic agriculture, and PhP 2 million (USD 45,454) for the small farmers’ training on system of rice intensification.

From the 2009 budget, environmental programs are among the casualty. These include the PhP 95 million (USD 2.16 million) for protected areas and wildlife management and PhP 1 billion (USD 22.7 million) for reforestation.

“Once impounded as ‘forced savings,’ congressional initiative allocations may never see the light of day or the impounded amounts constitute an off-budget new lump sum, which can be used by the Executive to fund



projects which may not even find anchorage in the General Appropriations Act,” says Rep. Edcel Lagman, vice chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, in his sponsorship speech during the plenary debates on the 2010 national budget.

## Monitoring

SWP calls on congressmen and senators to fully exercise their power of the purse over the 2010 national budget by supporting monitoring of public funds by impartial civil society groups.

“It is within times of economic crises and national elections. This means more work for Senators and Congressmen to ensure that the budget is actually released to the most vulnerable sectors of society,” Magtolis-Briones says.

“This is a crucial fiscal year as diversion of public funds is rampant during election period,” she adds.

But it’s not just a problem of a lack or an absence of monitoring. Much of the problem is also about accounting and audit.

In terms of accounting, there is no agency performing controllership function that will oversee the implementation of budgeting, internal control, accounting and auditing rules, including the preparation of financial statements and actual results of operations by the government.





Government accounting system is not fully computerized and integrated; manual accounting still exist, creating difficulties and delays in expenditure tracking.

The financial reporting system is also weak. The annual report from the Commission on Audit is either delayed or incomplete. And it is not available during the Budget Preparation period. Thus, its audit opinions are generally ignored or have no impact on agency operations.

### Faulty budget process



Cesar Usapdin

The supreme audit institution has a major role in promoting transparency.

The faulty budget process originated from budgetary laws passed during the years of martial law which have not yet been repealed. It is based on a decree by the dictatorial regime of President Ferdinand Marcos.



The constitution mandates the President to veto specific items in the budget bill created by the Senate and House of Representatives. On the implementation of the approved budget, the President can transfer items as deemed necessary.

And so this budget process has benefited not just President Arroyo, but all the presidents starting with Marcos.

It is this kind of system -- no check and balance -- that experts say, breeds corruption, monopoly and tax evasion and hampers the government's efforts to attain pro-poor targets.

Budget reform bills have been filed in Congress, but none have yet been passed. The bills include those aiming to prohibit unprogrammed funds, bills providing guidelines for reenacted budgets and for national budget savings. There are also bills seeking transparency in bicameral meetings – as well as a bill that pushes for people's participation in budget deliberations.

“Ownership of the budget must be returned to the people by enabling them to take part in the budget process,” says Magtolis-Briones.

But since these bills are expected to clip the powers of the President, and as majority in Congress are allies of the incumbent chief executive, advocates of reform do not hold out much hope of seeing any change before President Arroyo's term expires.



But from the sounds of it, those vying to replace her do not appear to be impatient to challenge a process that encourages massive waste and corruption.

One reason of course may be the huge power of patronage it provides the lucky incumbent. And so all the more that the civil society, the legislators, and even the media should work together so that when the next administration comes, third party monitoring will finally be institutionalized. After all, poverty alleviation rests upon how the national budget is crafted and implemented.

*Stories need not always be about big-ticket items and grand corruption. This one about poor delivery of basic services and its impact on people's daily lives will always connect with readers. At times, it can also trigger demand for better governance.*

## Off the Performance Track

By Rick Flores

**MARAWI CITY** -- It is 7 a.m. and a dozen heavily armed members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) man a checkpoint that marks the boundary between Balindong and Ganassi municipalities.

“We are always on red alert here especially after the ambush and killing of a mayor,” says the young Maranao police officer assigned at the police headquarters in Langcap, Marawi. “We need to elect new leaders, we need to have change,” he adds.



Here in Ganassi, change appears badly needed.

Roads are worn down while health centers provide shelter to domestic animals. School buildings are mostly old except for a few new two-classroom types which have been built by international donor agencies.



Rick Flores

Instead of improving roads which would help ensure economic activities and safety of its people, the Sultan Kudarat local government prioritizes building “multi-purpose buildings.”

Ganassi’s internal revenue allotment (IRA) for 2009 was pegged at PhP 50,158,451 (USD 1.16 million) - higher than most of Lanao del Sur’s 39 municipalities. Lumbaca-Unayan meantime received the smallest – just PhP 25,393,471 (USD 590,545).

Even so, while the local government of Ganassi provides basic services of sorts to the population of 19,000, the municipality has still to provide potable water on tap to all residents.



“Last year, our municipality was allocated PhP 20 million (USD 465,116) by former President Gloria Arroyo for the construction of a water system,” Nosrodin Saripoden says pointing to a site for the proposed project. “The construction has started and we still have to see if it will be completed,” says the 47-year old resident of Macabao, one of the 32 barangays in Ganassi.

### Absence of performance monitoring systems

It was mid-day amid the glittering sun where 60 young pre-school children marched towards a simple stage of Sultan Aguam Central Elementary School to formally receive their certificates from an assistant division school superintendent of the Department of Education (DepEd) for completing the mandatory eight-week early childhood education (ECE).

Before proceeding to the stage, five-year old Ashema Abdulmalic asks her mother: “Inakulay, inu madakul a taw emanto?” (Mother, why are there so many people?) Her mother replies: “Because today is a special day. Today is your graduation. ”

Clad in white and yellow togas, the children belong to the fifth batch of the ECE program implemented by local NGO Lyecap with funding support from a donor agency.

Abdulgaphor Panimbang, Lyecap executive director, laments the lack of support for the education sector in this town. “The mere fact that we had to accept 60 young learners over and above our capacity is proof of the seeming disregard for the education sector,” he told the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project.



“The local government unit should have invested more for basic education but it is cash-strapped and can barely sustain the salaries for ECE teachers,” Panimbang complains.

## No data

Surprisingly, given the refocusing and strengthening of local government unit performance measurement attempts in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) where the poorest of the poor live, no formal accountability measures are in place. Last October, ARMM officials received Local Governance Performance Management System (LGPMS) training from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).



Rick Flores

The people need to be consulted to come up with responsive local development plans.

LGPMS is an on-line system set up by DILG to fast-track monitoring of the progress of LGUs to encourage transparency.

It aims to provide transparency and accountability measures of LGUS vis-à-vis in achieving their targeted local development plans and fiscal management.

Yet a look into in to the LGPMS website shows no data from Lanao del Sur.

Dr. Nordina Sarip, assistant schools division superintendent of Lanao del Sur II-B in Ganassi says nevertheless, the municipality is observing transparent processes especially in the building of the two-classroom learning centers.

“It has been proven we can provide facilities for young learners without wastage caused by kickbacks and red tape in procurement,” says Sarip.

But for one Muslina Osop, a young pre-school teacher, more money should be spent on basic education.

“The literacy rate in our municipality is very low and our children barely finish their elementary education,” he said. “The ECE is special for our children here because they need not go far, their parents need not spend much, and the community need not worry much because slowly many of us are learning to read and write.”

Panimbang added that local government “still lacked support from government agencies to help it improve its fiscal management and economic performance.”



## Investing in human resources cliché

Things are different though in Lumbatan, Lanao del Sur, a fifth class municipality nestled above the famous Lake Lanao.

Home to more than 18,000 people, this place speaks of contrasts: a modern two-storey building for high school students and the recently inaugurated learning center which provides free pre-school education for young learners and alternative learning procedures for parents and the rest of the community.

As in Ganassi, there are no paved roads leading to this interior municipality and one high school in Macadar that serves students coming from its 20 barangays: Yet the mayor here is bent on improving this sleepy town by pouring more budget in education.

“Inshallah, we can become a model where our children and adults, as well as parents, shall learn to read, to write, and look for income generating opportunities that shall become our basis for development,” Mayor Mamintal Razuman says.

Education, according to him, is his top priority.

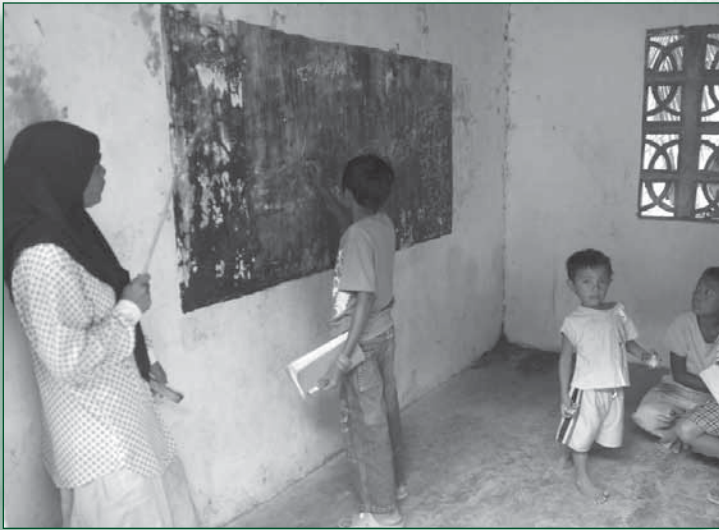
“As mayor, I accept full responsibility in sustaining this initiative because I firmly believe that it is only through basic education that we can uplift the intellectual being of our children. We shall mutually manage these facilities together with DepEd and the local government officials and the community.”

Yet ironically, except for the new high school building and a learning center, there are no indication of infrastructure





improvement in the school complex: Some 2,000 children share a common toilet. In 2009, Lumbatan received a total of PhP 40,141,478 (USD 933,522) for its IRA. Where this money went though remains a question since Lumbatan, like Ganassi and the rest of the Lanao del Sur municipalities have published no data on budget management, disbursement, procurement processes or performance indicators.



Keith Baongco

Local governments are urged to spend more money on basic education and be transparent about it.

Under DepEd's Allocation of School Infrastructure in 2009 which amounted to more than PhP 1 billion (USD 23 million), ARMM received its share of PhP 44,769,991 (USD 1 million) for the purchase of school chairs and tables. Of these, Lanao del Sur was allocated PhP 7,959,072 (USD 185,094) —more than enough to provide decent and comfortable learning facilities for students. Yet, only a handful of modern chairs were visible at the Macadar Central Elementary School.



## Banking on access roads

Because of bad road conditions, the local government is also focusing on paving more and better interior roads – as shown by the presence of a 24-hour work team near the *poblacion*. The adjacent municipality is Lumbayanague whose young mayor, Jamal Asum, is an epitome of a new breed of politician in an areas which has long been known for its clan feuds or *ridos*.

Mayor Asum has only been five months in office and local residents say they have yet to see if the young mayor can deliver.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a teacher claimed that previous leaders did not live in the area but in Iligan City. “Our government has been run and managed by ‘messengers’ of our mayor who come here and then to visit and then report to them,” confided the teacher.

Going back to Marawi City from Lumbatan, Panimbang stressed the need for local government units to improve their performance. “We know that in Lanao del Sur, people are basically poor and have no access to government services, we are still hoping that our leaders will make good of their promises,” says Panimbang.



While it is necessary to report what is wrong it is also important to write about what is working to give people a sense that not everything is hopeless and that they can do something about the problems that beset them. This story examines how a city encouraged citizen participation in making the local government more transparent and accountable and showed how it can also build political capital in the long run.

## Putting People Power to Work in Naga City

By Alec Santos



Jose Collera

Naga City government selects and trains young leaders every summer on how to “run” City government affairs in an honest, transparent and effective way.

Located in the central part of the country’s Bicol region, Naga City in Camarines Sur lacks viable industries and abundant natural resources. But these deficiencies are compensated by a

participatory and accountable system of local government that makes people here count their blessings.

While the city has been in existence even before the arrival of the Spaniards in the 16th century, it has largely remained a base for religious and colonial expeditions. Its strategic location, while favorable as a trading hub, did not give Naga a chance to become a major magnet for investments.

After the downfall of the Marcos administration in 1986, however, Naga seemingly awoke from being a sleepy and backward city into a boomtown. In 1988, a political newcomer, 29-year-old business executive Jesse Robredo became the city mayor by a narrow margin.

Riding on the principles of change, hope and People Power, Robredo sought to change the image of Naga from a lowly city into one of the region's best. He lacked natural resources – but what he did have were people.

## **Naga City People's Council**

One of the mayor's early accomplishments was the creation of the Naga City People's Council (NCPC), which was made easier by the enactment of the Local Government Code of 1991.

Drawing inspiration from the return of democracy to the Philippines during the 1986 People Power Revolution, the city government enacted legislative and executive measures to institutionalize sweeping changes allowed by the law.



The NCPC is a federation of non-government organizations and people's organizations in the city. Its members are represented up to the committee level of the city council. Until 1996, the NCPC acted as the civil sector's representation to the local government. Yet without formal acknowledgment from the city government, its recommendations were not given much weight.



Jose Collera

The Naga City government works closely with persons with disabilities to make sure their rights are recognized and protected.

All that changed when then city councilor Jaime Jacob authored the Empowerment Ordinance in 1996, giving the NCPC the power to directly influence the policies of the local government. The same legislative measure also institutionalized the active participation of NGOs and people's organizations in the city, making them independent of the city government.

The Empowerment Ordinance also established the creation of sectoral representation positions in the city council.



Representatives from the non-agricultural, women, and urban poor sectors were also elected to function as city councilors, exercise the same powers and responsibilities, and enjoy the same rights and privileges as ordinary city council members.

One of many consequences is that NCPC representatives take part in hearings and consultations where the city government opens the budget for programs for the following year.

At present, more than a hundred groups comprise the NCPC. Member-groups from the urban poor, agriculture, transport, youth, women, and the elderly sectors are given the freedom and the opportunity to express their concerns as well as participate in the creation and monitoring of key legislations, programs, and services aimed to help their particular sectors.

The representation of previously unrepresented sectors has made it possible for various groups to air grievances or request assistance in the development of their sectors.

The resulting union of civil society and city government policies has led to key measures favorable to different sectors. One such instance in which the will of the civil society was heeded over the local officials' judgment was the proposed construction of a golf course in upland Naga in 1997. City officials believed that the presence of a golf course would help spur economic growth in some of Naga's far-flung barangays on the slopes of Mt. Isarog. However strong concern over water shortages and the misuse of arable land led NGOs and POs to oppose and block the plans.



NGOs and POs can also request financial and logistical assistance from the city government to implement their own projects and programs. To avail of the city's assistance, member-groups of civil society have to be accredited by the city government. Upon accreditation, they can then request the executive branch for funding assistance, provided that the legislative department approves of the request.

The city government, as a policy, however, refrains from shouldering the total costs incurred by civil society organizations. Partnerships and close cooperation between the government and NGOs is espoused but financial assistance is given on a case-to-case basis, with the local government usually shouldering only a portion of project costs, depending on the benefits such projects can give to the city and its constituents.

“When the need arises, representatives from the NCPC are also convened so they can actively participate in decision-making,” said city budget officer Francisco Mendoza.

In the process, the daily grind in the city hall is opened up to the public. “The result is what we call transparency in governance. The people get to know how we do it, how we can do it, and how much we have,” said outgoing mayor Jesse Robredo.

Robredo, however, said that transparency is just a by-product of the participation of the NCPC in city affairs.

“It's not transparency for the sake of transparency. What becomes more important is how the process engages the people to participate in governing the city, which results to better outcomes,” he said.



Mendoza admitted that the participation of the NCPC in city hall affairs at times results in extended implementation of city government programs. “But it’s a welcome extension. After all, better results always follow when everyone participates.”

The participation of the NCPC in city hall affairs had not been free from criticisms however.



Jose Collera

Naga City’s blood donation program.

Father Wilmer Joseph Tria, priest from the archdiocese of Caceres, said the NCPC, really, had not been a watchdog of government and had not been independent from the government. He said it had neither operated on its own nor freed itself from the grip and influence of politicians.





## i-Governance

One would think that allowing members of the civil sector to meddle in city affairs would have disastrous consequences. But the opposite is true in Naga. In fact, many of the city's award-winning programs and projects came about because of direct consultation with the NCPC and other NGOs and POs.

For instance, the creation of the NCPC and the rapid onset of technology, particularly the internet, gave birth to the idea of i-Governance.

Six years after the Empowerment Ordinance came into place, another landmark legislation paved the way for the i-Governance program. According to the author of the ordinance, councilor Mila Raquid-Arroyo, i-Governance would serve as a mechanism for people participation that would ensure transparency in government.

The program is anchored on several pillars that guide its implementation. The first principle, inclusive governance, basically calls for the inclusion of all citizens and sectors in running the city government without excluding stakeholders.

Information openness, better known as transparency, is required of government officials and transactions. This would give citizens the opportunity to see the inner workings of their government and encourage them to be vigilant.

Interactive management aims to include people not only in the implementation of government projects but also in the



conceptualization, monitoring and even evaluation of said projects.

Finally, innovative management seeks to make use of new ways to improve management of government resources to promote people participation and transparency.

The brainchild of technocrats whom Robredo brought in to the city government during his three terms, the i-Governance was initially planned to make use of all means to achieve transparency in governance.

While the i-Governance program may appear to be the ideal style of local governance, it is far from being perfect. At the conceptual and theoretical level, the program covers all bases ranging from service delivery to assessment but on the operational level, it leaves a lot to be desired.

On the operational level, the i-Governance relies on the city government's website for its transparency promotion. However, the local government has also resorted to a more traditional way of encouraging citizens to participate in government affairs through the publication of the Naga City Citizens Charter.

## Naga City website

A decade after Robredo stepped into office, the city once again broke barriers by introducing an innovation: developing and maintaining its own official website. This made Naga as one of the first Philippine cities to promote transparency in local government work through a website.



The Naga City website provides the public access to government documents and services that would normally take days to find. Budget plans, legislative documents, and even statistics were automatically uploaded in the website and organized for faster access.

The city government website immediately became a hit and for several months and even years after its launching, thousands of citizens and even Filipino expatriates flocked to the new portal. A community forum also gave people the chance to exchange views and opinions regarding city issues.



Alec Santos

Naga City's education program.

Bids and status of projects can also be viewed online through the website, making it much easier for citizens to see where city resources are spent. The website is a snapshot of the city government, all its branches and its offices doing their part.



However, the website also has its flaws, too. While the city government banks on the website's features to promote transparency, data and information available on the portal is totally dependent on whatever government personnel upload. This means that the city government can choose to exclude any data uploaded to the website.

This oversight, while, not intentional, leaves a gap that prevents the public from accessing all documents and data available to the city government. Without any way of verifying information uploaded to the website, people are left to trust whatever figures or data the local government supplies. This can cast doubt over the supposed transparent practices of the city.

Despite its shortcomings, the city website continually provides constituents the chance to air their complaints directly to the chief executive. Citizens afraid of approaching the city mayor can directly send their messages and complaints via email. During the early years of the i-Governance program, the city also relied on TXTNaga to encourage citizens to voice out their sentiments regarding government action. In recent years however, the number of people making use of this service has declined sharply. At present, TXTNaga is undergoing an overhaul.

## Citizens Charter

Three years after the launching of the city government website and five years after the enactment of the Empowerment Ordinance, Naga institutionalized its Citizens Charter.



The Charter is basically a handbook of government services and a catalogue of key offices and personnel. The first of its kind in the Philippines, the Charter makes use of corporate management styles introduced by Robredo during his first three terms as city mayor.



Alec Santos

The Naga City local government engages ordinary citizens to take part in its programs.

However, the Citizens Charter is only the product of constant evolution of government policies. Even before its introduction and printing, city hall employees and department heads were required to sign performance pledges detailing their specific duties and corresponding length of time needed or allowed to respond to requests from the public. This meant that even before citizens entered offices, they would know the services offered as well as the response times.

The office and department heads of the city government renew their performance pledges every three years as a sign



of their commitment to the city's adherence to transparency and accountability. City employees assigned to attend to the specific needs and requests of constituents also affix their signatures on these pledges to ensure that they comply with the city government's commitment.

By institutionalizing the concept of a well-organized and structured system to serve the needs of the constituency, the city government has, in effect paved the way for the reduction, if not the total elimination of excessive bureaucracy and red tape.

As with the website, however, the Citizens Charter and performance pledges are not fool-proof. Closer inspection of these innovations shows that during the start of these programs, enthusiasm is high resulting in good implementation. As years pass by, however, complacency often sets in.

While the city government has printed three editions of the Citizens Charter and has distributed at least one copy per household, much work needs to be done to ensure perfect delivery of government services. Many constituents agree that most government offices in the city hall comply with the performance pledges. However, there has been no initiative to check whether employees are indeed complying.

The lack of a quantitative mechanism to assess the services delivered by city employees can create an impression that some innovations of Naga may very well just be on paper.



Even so, dozens of local government units have sent delegations to the city as part of efforts to develop their own citizen's charters as prescribed by R.A. 9485 or the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007.

## Replicating Naga's success

The institutionalization of Naga's innovative services and programs has resulted in the steady growth and development of the civil society and a culture of active people participation in governance. Local government units from across the country can easily replicate Naga's success by studying their individual situations, analyzing their strengths and weakness, and adopting measures to ensure the efficient delivery of government services.

Local government units can start by engaging the different sectors in dialogues and regaining their trust. By building partnerships with the citizenry and encouraging constituents to share their feedback and recommendations, city or municipal officials can come up with a better picture of their current situation. From this, planners and local leaders can forge concrete ways of promoting people participation in local government affairs. Adopting a policy of government transparency and accountability coupled with productivity incentives will also encourage government employees to perform their duties and responsibilities as mandated by law.

Adopting new technology to better inform constituents of ongoing government programs and projects will also foster a culture of cooperation between government organizations and the civil sector. LGUs can also provide better opportunities for NGOs and POs to air their concerns directly to local executives and legislators. LGUs can also establish umbrella organizations



like the NCPC to help members of civil society organize themselves and be an effective force in local governance.

A potential disadvantage would arise if citizens and customers of public services do not become vigilant in asserting their rights. Without accompanying mechanisms to hear and recognize complaints over poor public service, the purpose of a Citizens Charter is defeated and it becomes a mere cosmetic in public offices.

The advantage of having a Citizens Charter like Naga's lies in its empowerment of ordinary citizens in service delivery. Before, customers are at the mercy of government workers because there are no transparent performance metrics on which service quality can be measured. A service charter addresses this gap.







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## Using Surveys to Gauge Participation Effectiveness

By G Sevilla Alvarez and  
Ma. Constanse A. Perfecto

**A**s one of its major and critical components, the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project (PPTRP) developed the Media and Public Transparency and Accountability Surveys which aimed to produce a baseline study to guide project thrusts and activities and an end-of-project survey/report to examine changes in perceptions, behavior and impact on media coverage of corruption as a consequence of the project and the establishment of transparency mechanisms for media-citizen engagement.

The survey reports were produced in early 2010 and mid-2011 by the Center for Community Journalism and Development, one of the four partner organizations in PPTRP.

The baseline study looked at present levels of effectiveness of knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices around corruption reporting by media as reported to PPTRP by different groups in Mindanao and the Visayas. It also looked at how effectively media is perceived to be collaborating with civil society when working on such issues. Study respondents were drawn from the media itself, civil society, government (local government units, state agencies, etc.), and from the general public.

Two FGDs were conducted for the baseline survey: one in Catbalogan City, Samar and another in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato. A total of 60 respondents, 30 from each province, participated in the FGDs and completed the survey questionnaires. Representation by gender from the media sector was about equal with a little over 50 percent composed of female respondents.

The respondents were asked to answer a 21-item questionnaire prior to the conduct of the half-day FGD for each of the sectors. The FGD covered eight to nine questions to gather deeper insights and to clarify some points raised and responses in the questionnaire.

The survey results are based on perceptions thus a qualitative pattern or trending of their answers were described in the report. The report compares perception-responses of the media sector with those of the two other sectors: the local government/government agency and civil society organizations/citizens in the survey areas. Comparison was made primarily on the role of media in addressing corruption issues in the past up to the present. The results provided substantial baseline information for project implementation and evaluation.

The baseline results showed that there was a common definition of corruption in the Philippines and its prevalence (with examples in their area/province), as cited by majority of the respondents from the two areas and from across the three sectors:

- Corruption is perceived by the three sectors in both provinces to be basically **stealing of public funds**.
- It is described on paper (questionnaire) and during the FGD as **misuse (squandering/wastage)**, **abuse** and **stealing** of not just **funds** programmed for projects of the local government for personal gain but also of other



**logistics/resources of government, e.g. time, office supplies, fertilizers, medicines.**

- Corruption may take many forms such as “SOP” (standard rates given to an official or an employee, high-ranking or otherwise), rigged bidding, overpricing, non-delivery of goods (ghost projects), asking the poor or employees to sign blank vouchers, payroll padding, etc.
- **Misuse and abuse also refer to power, authority and influence.**
- Corruption is very rampant in all levels of government. Primarily committed by government officials, employees of government also commit corruption.
- Corruption is also prevalent in the private sector, even at home.
- Some respondents said that even in media there is corruption manifested by what is popularly referred to as “envelopmental” journalism, ATM journalism, AC-DC (attack and collect, defend and collect), being part of a “payroll” of one official, or “favors” in exchange for positions in government for the media person himself or herself or even his/her relatives.
- Corruption has affected delivery of basic needs of Filipinos.
- It is described as “social cancer” which has spread in society.

The end-of-project survey, on the other hand, identified changes, if any, in behavior and perspectives of the target respondents and assessed the immediate impact of the project. Target survey respondents were the community media, civil society groups, public sector (LGUs, government agencies, etc), and citizens at large covering Samar and North Cotabato but also including Tagbilaran City in Bohol through a focus group discussion. For the complete survey results, please click on [www.transparencyreporting.net](http://www.transparencyreporting.net)



The survey assessed areas of:

- How helpful or useful were the PPTRP activities or interventions for the target, anti-corruption constituencies composed of media, civil society and the general public;
- The emerging role of media in addressing corruption issues, if any; and,
- Media-citizenship partnership during the past year

In general, the both media and civil society respondents said that their understanding of corruption and accountability has improved to a great extent due to various PPTRP activities such as training workshops, roundtable discussions, website, commissioning of stories and the like.

The survey results also noted that formerly competing media organizations have now developed partnerships in addressing corruption issues as exemplified by two rival radio stations in Kidapawan, North Cotabato.

Those in Samar, on the other hand, are exploring new ways of expanding their efforts in working with civil society organizations for greater transparency in governance.

Media-citizen partnerships to address corruption were also formed through formal and informal mechanisms such as the Multi-Sector Alliance for Transparency and Accountability (MATA-Samar) and the Watchful Advocates for Transparent, Clean and Honest Governance (WATCH-Kidapawan), North Cotabato.



In Bohol, where a focus group discussion was held in June 2011, the formation of the Transparency Network for Transformation (Bohol TNT), enabled the media and anti-corruption groups in the province to band together under a common banner.

Some key lessons:

### *Kidapawan City, North Cotabato*

- Civil society participation strengthened partnership among news organizations
- Pooling resources and stories made for stronger impact in the fight against corruption
- Clarity of goals, purpose, vision can unite different sectors
- Skills enhancement important element in strengthening anti-corruption initiatives
- Monitoring and evaluation of multi-sector efforts e.g. strengths, weaknesses can help improve partnership
- Working together (media and CSO) has encouraged citizens to speak out and report on wrongdoing

### *Catbalogan, Samar*

- Media should be involved every step of the way when undertaking a partnership initiative especially in addressing transparency issues
- Efforts should focus on issues, not personalities
- Everyone should be clear about the objectives of the partnership and what is expected of the members
- Transparency and accountability must also be institutionalized within the partnership
- Addressing the sustainability of the partnership must be given priority also



## *Tagbilaran City, Bohol*

- Working together has increased people's awareness about graft and corruption
- There is a need to establish feedback mechanisms so that members of the alliance will also know if they are going in the right direction
- Revived the interest of the media in doing in-depth reporting on corruption
- That working together (media and citizens) brings a sense of hope that the fight against corruption can move forward

## The End-of-Project Online Surveys

An Internet-based online survey was also used for the end-of-project assessment to support the focus group discussions so that a wider sampling of respondents can be covered and also to gauge public awareness of what people can contribute in addressing corruption through the [www.transparencyreporting.net](http://www.transparencyreporting.net) website and other PPTRP participation avenues.

While they are a critical way of checking on the validity of projects, few civil society organizations (CSO) relish end-of-project surveys given that it signals the moment when they essentially lose control. It may be the time staff find out that all their ideas and assumptions were wrong and that their activities and outputs achieved very little -- if anything at all.

Some may try and structure and frame their surveys in ways that block out the unwelcome and further their cause. But essentially, the more open-ended, widely distributed and



public the surveys are; the more you are likely to get honest and helpful feedback.

This is why we are publishing the unedited and unadulterated versions of our surveys online for all to see. Our project was a learning curve and is now ending and we simply hope something can come out of it and others pick up some of the pieces and hopefully move things forward.

We produced and published two surveys – one was aimed at and sent out privately to direct project participants -- all those who participated in our trainings and events since March of last year and to those who wrote for us, or wrote to us with suggestions, allegations or complaints. A second survey went out to all of those who might not have heard of our project and was aimed at trying to measure wider citizen perception of where things current stand as regards transparency and accountability in the Philippines.

Nobody in their right mind likes responding to surveys sent out by email – and yet we have had a good response so far and are well on course for 200 plus respondents by the time this book appears. The split between project and non-project participants is pretty evenly matched – but obviously we are very interested to hear from those who were not in any way involved in our project. That hopefully tells us something of our real impact – if any.

Impact is a very difficult word to pin down. ‘Change’ even harder. We will leave it to others to say what impact and change – if any – we delivered over the space of the past year



and a half. Certainly though, it seems what we were thinking and what many people believe appear to match up – that real sustainable change in terms of corruption and transparency and accountability will only come through a sustained effort by citizens.

Reliance on a top-down approach is not enough and respondents so far are not at all sure the government has a real strategy to engage the People.

We encourage everybody to look through the results of the surveys and think about what might and should come next and how to take things to the next level and really tap into the People Power we all so readily cite, but seldom actually employ.

You can find the complete end of project survey results on our website which will remain open beyond August 30 when our project closes.

We wish you all the best of luck. It has been a wonderful learning experience for us all.

**Alan Davis**

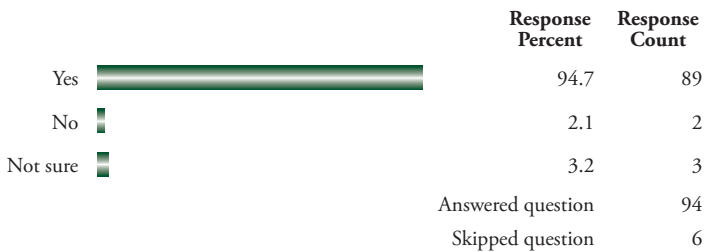
Project Director, PPTRP



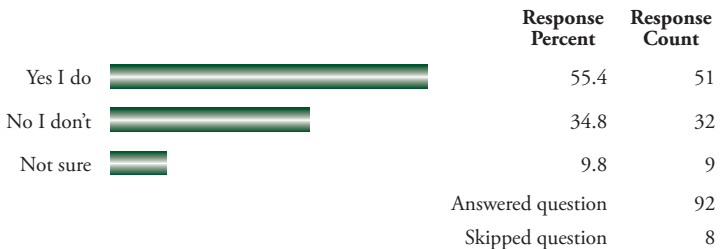


A selection of questions and responses from our non-participant survey: Visit our website to see the complete results from both surveys (project participants and non-project participants).

1. Do you agree that building greater public sector transparency and accountability in the Philippines will directly help to reduce public sector corruption?









2. Do you sense or do you see real progress over the past 12 months in government attempts to improve transparency and accountability and battle corruption?



3. Do you think the current administration already has the ideal strategy in place to build greater transparency and accountability and combat corruption?




		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes		22.3	21
No		60.6	57
Don't know		17	16
		Answered question	94
		Skipped question	6

4. What do you think is the reason for the lack of an ideal government strategy? (you may choose more than one answer)





		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Our culture makes it impossible to combat corruption		25.7	19
Lack of vision and/or practical ideas		56.8	42
Lack of political support		39.2	29
Lack of political will		66.2	49
Lack of funds to implement the necessary change		18.9	14
Concern that any real change will fail because of the power of vested interests		63.5	47
		Others (please specify)	17
		Answered question	74
		Skipped question	26



5. Do you think this administration is able to improve transparency and accountability and reduce corruption all by itself?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		14.9	14
No		73.4	69
Not sure		11.7	11
		Answered question	94
		Skipped question	6

6. To what extent does the Government need to work in partnership with other groups and sectors to seriously improve transparency and accountability and so reduce corruption?

		Response Percent	Response Count
To a great extent		91.2	83
To some extent		5.5	5
No need for it		1.1	1
Don't know		2.2	2
		Answered question	91
		Skipped question	9

4



7. To what extent is the Government ALREADY working in partnership with other groups and sectors to seriously improve transparency and accountability and so reduce corruption?

	Response Percent	Response Count
To a great extent	4.4	4
To some extent	54.4	49
No need for it	28.9	25
Don't know	12.2	11
Answered question		90
Skipped question		10

8. Which of the following is important in improving transparency and accountability and tackling corruption? (you make tick more than one box if you wish)

	Response Percent	Response Count
The Executive (President and his Administration)	88.9	80
The Legislature	76.7	69
The Judiciary	76.7	69
Constitutional Bodies such as COA and the Ombudsman	87.8	79
The Sandiganbayan	63.3	57
Religious Groups	48.9	44
The Media	76.7	69
Civil Society	73.3	66
Citizens' Groups	74.4	67
Don't know	0	0
Answered question		90
Skipped question		10



9. Which of the following is doing a GOOD job in improving transparency and accountability and tackling corruption? (you make tick more than one box if you wish)

	Response Percent	Response Count
The Executive (President and his Administration)	41	34
The Legislature	8.4	7
The Judiciary	7.2	6
Constitutional Bodies such as COA and the Ombudsman	21.7	18
The Sandiganbayan	3.6	3
Religious Groups	13.3	11
The Media	56.6	47
Civil Society	57.8	48
Citizens' Groups	47	39
Don't know	9.6	8
Answered question		83
Skipped question		17

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10. Which of the following is doing a POOR job in improving transparency and accountability and tackling corruption? (you make tick more than one box if you wish)

	Response Percent	Response Count
The Executive (President and his Administration)	43.8	39
The Legislature	74.2	66
The Judiciary	68.5	61
Constitutional Bodies such as COA and the Ombudsman	69.7	62
The Sandiganbayan	53.9	48
Religious Groups	29.2	26
The Media	22.5	20
Civil Society	14.6	13
Citizens' Groups	13.5	12
Don't know	2.2	2
Answered question		89
Skipped question		11



## 11. How important do you see the following groups in helping to build transparency and accountability and so combat corruption?

	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Don't Know	Rating Average	Response Count
Constitutional Bodies	89.7% (78)	8.0% (7)	2.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.13	87
Judiciary	87.2% (75)	9.3% (8)	3.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.16	85
Media	70.5% (62)	22.7% (20)	6.8% (6)	0.0% (0)	1.36	88
Civil Society	71.3% (62)	25.3% (22)	3.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.32	87
Religious Groups	42.7% (35)	39.0% (32)	18.3% (15)	0.0% (0)	1.76	82
Local Citizen-driven Accountability Watchdog Groups	78.4% (69)	19.3% (17)	2.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.24	88
				Answered question		89
				Skipped question		11

## 12. What do you think is the best approach to building transparency and accountability and combating corruption?



	Response Percent	Response Count
Top (government-led) down	18.2	16
Bottom (citizen-driven) up	4.5	4
Top down and bottom up at the same time	77.3	68
Don't know	0	0
	Answered question	88
	Skipped question	12



13. To what extent do you agree that the more transparency and accountability can be built from the bottom up, the more sustainable and effective they will prove to be?

					<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Very much agree	89.8% (44)	10.2% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.1	49
Agree	57.7% (15)	30.8% (8)	0.0% (0)	11.5% (3)	1.65	25
Disagree	71.4% (5)	14.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (1)	1.57	7
Disagree strongly	75.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25.0% (1)	1.75	4
Not sure	66.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (1)	2	3
					Answered question	85
					Skipped question	15




14. Do you agree with the statement that you don't have to be any kind of expert to help build transparency and accountability and so reduce corruption?

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes		90.8	79
No		9.2	8
Not sure		0	0
		Answered question	87
		Skipped question	13








15. Do you believe the internet and social media and/or citizens' networks can play an important part in building transparency, accountability and combating corruption?




		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		96.4	81
No		1.2	1
Not sure		2.4	2
		Answered question	84
		Skipped question	16

16. Do you think it would be useful if there could be more local citizens' accountability groups set up in other Local Government Units around the country - and that these groups begin networking, sharing information and expertise?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		96.5	82
No		1.2	1
Not sure		2.4	2
		Answered question	85
		Skipped question	15



17. Do you think it would improve transparency, accountability and the fight against corruption if media, civil society and local citizen watchdog groups around the country were to find ways of coming together and working in a structured way?




		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		92.9	78
No		2.4	2
Not sure		4.5	4
		Answered question	84
		Skipped question	16

18. Our project has spent some time setting up local citizen watchdog and accountability groups in 4 pilot areas to monitor, report on and engage with Local Government Units on improving transparency and accountability issues. Do you think this is a good idea?




		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		92.9	79
No		0	0
Not sure		7.1	6
		Answered question	85
		Skipped question	15



19. Do you think greater public understanding of how public finances work - how and where money is raised and spent - and who decides these things - is important in helping build transparency and accountability and so combat corruption?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		97.7	84
No		1.2	1
Not sure		1.2	1
		Answered question	86
		Skipped question	14

20. Is it more important to build transparency and accountability and combat corruption at the national or the local level?

		Response Percent	Response Count
National		4.7	4
Local		5.8	5
Both are equally important		89.5	77
Don't know		0	0
		Answered question	86
		Skipped question	14

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21. How useful or effective has the project been in the following areas? (If you are not familiar with our work in any area, please tick don't know)

	Very useful and effective	Quite useful and effective	Not very useful or effective	Don't know, can't comment	Rating Average	Response Count
Simplifying public finance issues to help improve citizen monitoring and participation in governance	43.6% (17)	25.6% (10)	5.1% (2)	25.6% (10)	2.13	39
Building basic citizen literacy on public spending and accountability issues	46.2% (18)	25.6% (10)	2.6% (1)	25.6% (10)	2.08	39
Reporting important issue of transparency and corruption	53.8% (21)	20.5% (8)	2.6% (1)	23.1% (9)	1.95	39
Campaigning on issues (i.e. like political abuse of public projects like signages)	44.7% (17)	18.4% (7)	10.5% (4)	26.3% (10)	2.18	38
Setting up pilot citizens' accountability groups around the country	57.9% (22)	15.8% (6)	2.6% (1)	23.7% (9)	1.92	38
Working on the Open Budget initiative to build participation in national budget preparations	43.6% (17)	15.4% (6)	7.7% (3)	33.3% (13)	2.31	39
Training media, CSOs and local citizens on transparency and corruption issues	57.5% (23)	15.0% (6)	5.0% (2)	22.5% (9)	1.93	40
				Other (please specify)		1
				Answered question		40
				Skipped question		60



## End-of-Project Electronic Feedback from Non-Project Participants

1. What you're doing is not easy but the results are indeed commendable. I do hope we can have more of this. Keep up the good work. May the force be with you.
2. Hope what has been started by this project will be continued and spread to wider areas. The local citizens' groups hopefully will multiply and positively help in curbing corruption at both local and national levels.
3. Good luck on your project! May it help reduce corruption and promote good governance in the Philippine government!
4. Hope this survey will aid you in coming up with concrete measures to at least combat corruption. I think the lifestyle check is very good tool on this matter.
5. Great job. I wish this group can help set up a local corruption watchdog in the province of Ilocos Norte.
6. You are doing the right dissemination of information that helps those people who have slim knowledge of corrupt activity in government.
7. Localization and training program have been very effective! Good job!
8. Realization that we can do more for this country if we are aware of what's happening and act, do something together for a better and transparent governance.

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9. Salute to all your efforts to educate as many people and groups as possible on public finance and budgeting system and in putting in place local citizens' groups as watchdogs on transparency and accountability issues in key pilot sites
10. It is significant that you have covered corruption at the local level, which is not touched by the mainstream media.
11. There should have been more announcements about the project so that most Filipinos would know that there is an ongoing project like this. Advertise more....
12. Raising public awareness about fighting corruption and upgrading capabilities of CSOs to further promote transparency and accountability
13. Information dissemination is highly effective to educate a broader audience and sustaining it will likely result in a shift in the mental atmosphere that will prove to be useful for the success of this project.
14. I think it needs more public exposure on how to reach out to common people, to make them understand that we can still do something about this country that has been in poverty.
15. The Philippines is at a socio-political juncture wherein the opportunity for massively reducing, if not totally eliminating corruption is enormous. And your project is unquestionably contributing much. I am particularly wishing that you continue assisting people in organizing community-driven accountability network/organization at the local level, and push for a more vibrant national network/movement against corruption.



16. Courage. Only few people have courage like you and willing to sacrifice in the name of truth.
17. The website is a powerful medium -as a repository of stories, links, related information. Sometimes, I can't finish reading up on the many information that one can read or download!
18. Thanks very much for your project!
19. Willing to link up with your group
20. Good luck on your advocacy.
21. Very enlightening to ah. Tuloy niyo lang. Bangon Pinas :)
22. Stop piloting ... expand...extend...replicate if we wish see a big difference and sustained effort
23. There's a lot more to be done especially in creating a culture of transparency and accountability among our people, regardless of their age, gender, social status in life.
24. Well done PPTRP! Thank you and congratulations!
25. I think this a great time to unite and be part of building transparency in the government and fight graft and corruption.
26. I hope this Project and survey can help in building up the momentum for improved governance in the Philippines.
27. Good luck!



28. I wish to be more updated of what is happening around my home country Philippines since I am working very hard for my family's future abroad.
29. Sana pwedeng maka-upload ng video sa website nyo in order to improve the shame campaign against corrupt and irresponsible government officials.
30. More power!

## End-of-Project Electronic Feedback from Project Participants

1. The project opened an avenue on matters relative to transparency and accountability of public officials where even an ordinary individual may be involved.
2. It re-awakens the interest of the ordinary citizens and made them understand better their stake and responsibilities in the community, in particular, and the country in general.
3. It encouraged the public to be vigilant against corruption or about spending of people's money.
4. The more people/constituents get involved in this advocacy/campaign the more are aware of what must be done for the development and welfare of the Filipino people. Pera natin 'to so we must get involved.
5. It made young and aspiring media practitioners become more aware and critical of corruption issues and how to handle such a case if assigned.





6. Vanish corruption, restore transparency.
7. It encouraged me to get involved in writing issues related to corruption practices wherein I can express my own idea as an individual. This is one way of helping our government. Being a watchdog to our government officials.
8. I hope we can explore/expose the assets from the government that are not being used in Lanao del Sur and other ARMM regions, like misusing their IRA, Municipal Halls and other projects.
9. Made more people aware of the issues.
10. It would somehow make more Filipinos aware that something is being done to minimize or downgrade the culture of corruption in the country.
11. Clearly, it helped give a better insight on how government should work and how citizens can help raise red flags in case they observe some questionable actions.... we have raised the right queries and the local officials are surprised how better informed we have become. They seem to act more cautiously nowadays.
12. It raised the awareness of the media and civil society circles on reporting graft and corruption in the government, as the well the skills on how to report it.
13. It widens our sense of responsibility to get involved in promoting a vigilant, responsible and objective media in Surigao City.



14. In Bohol, more people are becoming vigilant. Moreover, the creation of the transparency group Bohol Transparency Network for Transformation (Bohol TNT) brought about by the PPTRP project has unified transparency undertakings in the province.
15. Public transparency and accountability must introduce also in the barangay level through massive campaign.
16. The strong public participation is a manifestation that they were convinced of the PPTRP's objectives
17. The information about transparency and corruption was "concretized." The details of incidents were made known to the public. It didn't only prove that corruption was real, it showed how it was happening.
18. It alarmed the corrupt officials in our locality and somewhat inform people that there is a venue for their grievances related to corruption.
19. Awareness among the media practitioners and the civil society and business sector.
20. Generated and stock-piled a wealth of information and analysis on Philippine budgeting system which could be easily accessed in the website.
21. Further drumming up the need for public transparency and demanding accountability from public officials.
22. It increased awareness.



23. Somehow, the training had helped me become more watchful/conscious about the government and the people in our government behave. Learning specific laws on corruption and other things, I became more assertive of my rights as a citizen and as someone contributing to the government's treasure.
24. The project has encouraged other concerned citizens to report "corruption issues" to recognized anti-corruption unit (i.e. MATA).
25. Created awareness to Journalists and to ordinary citizens as to how certain activities/projects of the government are done, its governing laws and principles and the possible areas for violation (corruption) that ideally every citizen must take an eye on.
26. The project served as an eye to public servants and became venue in discussing and providing information to the public.
27. Government Officials became more conscious they are watched and monitored and acting scrupulously in making decisions. Revenue collection increased by using a better and more transparent policy on tax collection...It has deterred some officials in doing violations and made them cautious of what they are doing. It has encouraged support of some Local legislators.
28. It helped in a number of cases and instances since the project helped organise anti-corruption efforts at various levels and has resulted in government filing some cases versus corrupt officials who were never touched in all these years.
29. The Project made available to common people the information which main stream media would not dare publish. The Project protects no other interest but the people's.



30. People become more aware of the issues on corruption, how it is done, and how people can help in its prevention. They also become aware of the need to be informed of what the people in the government are doing, and the need for cooperation and involvement with other sectors to curb corruption and encourage transparency in government dealings.
31. The formation of a local accountability group is already a bold step towards citizen's participation in building better governance in the country.
32. The project through its efforts, I think, had successfully made the public aware of what it can also do for its part to help end corruption in the country and not just complain about it.
33. It mobilized both CSOs and Media to become partners in transparency and accountability.
34. People get to be aware that there is indeed a group who serve as watchdogs, thus corruption activities are being limited or stopped. Increased awareness on corruption issues was better achieved.
35. I think the project was able to achieve its goal in forming an anti-corruption group in the local level, but it needs more force, advocacy and better actions to be able to be effective.
36. Developing and supporting local transparency reporting groups and looking deeper into corruption and transparency issues which are not usually reported in the mainstream media.
37. Conduct further trainings on the same mission at the barangay level, if possible.



38. If individual's participation be appreciated in the involvement of government's affairs there is a certainty that corruption be vanished.
39. Exposed more corruptions!!
40. Give citizens a safer way to report corruption.
41. Schools are the most ideal venue to educate our young and instill values for a better Philippines.
42. I'm not really sure how to go about it but I believe that if organizations such as yours touch base with the younger generations, we can have a better informed citizenry.
43. Project needs to be continued and expanded.
44. Perhaps an extension of the project.
45. We need more informative trainings for our media group (NUJP Surigao City).
46. I think the project is too short, it might be better or best if their will be a continuity of the same project in the province of Bohol or in other areas.
47. More on transparency and accountability advocacy will introduce in the whole constituency.
48. PPTRP project should be sustained and expanded.
49. The project is so useful in advocating anti corruption but it would be much better if the project could give full legal protec-



tion and financial support if necessary to the people who are widely open in exposing anomalies of the corrupt local officials from the lower to the higher court.

50. More trainings!
51. It's an honor to write for PPTRP. I hope I'd be given a chance to write for this website again.
52. It would be great if this project be extended and inform more people regarding the website.
53. Bohol Transparency Network for Transformation, of which i am a member must be sustained. It helps the media on reporting public transparency and accountability not only on public finance but all other dimension/concerns and values of local governance.
54. I hope this project is extended.
55. The challenge to educate the people continues.
56. It would be brilliant to conduct more related trainings involving larger number of participants to widen constituency advocating for a less corrupt country.
57. This project had been effective and efficient in the pursuit of transparency, accountability and some LGU officials find it a good instrument in encouraging them become more sincere in doing their functions and duties as public servants. One year was not enough. It was a good start that needs to become sustainable and vigilant people will become more inspired to



help check graft and corruption because they feel somebody up there (PPTRP) supports their effort...We strongly suggest for the next round of similar or the same project to continue after August.

58. More leeway, wider scope and a longer for the project so that there will be continuity and more results can be achieved.
59. Hope it continues with its advocacy!
60. There still exist a need to capacitate more sectors of our society, particularly the youth in promoting transparency and curbing corruption.
61. The PPTRP is a very good initiative. However, the term is too short.
62. Replicate the local transparency reporting efforts in other areas and strengthen information and education work.
63. Congrats, more power!

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## Managing Risks

**R**eporting corruption is not easy. In fact, in some cases, it is even downright dangerous. Of the Filipino journalists who have been killed in the line of duty, a number died while trying to expose wrongdoing. This situation has earned for the Philippines the dubious distinction of being the most dangerous country for journalists, second only to Iraq for several years running. It has also ranked low on press freedom and human rights ratings.

But the news media have a critical role in anti-corruption efforts by being the principal watch group monitoring and exposing corruption through news stories. They also have other important functions that include sustaining transparent information flow and fostering public opinion intolerant of corruption.

Several media organizations and support groups such as the International News Safety Institute, Peace and Conflict Journalism Network, Center for Community Journalism and Development, International Committee of the Red Cross, National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, to cite a few, have developed safety programs, training modules, and alerts systems that could prove useful in making the corruption reporting environment a little bit more safe for journalists and media staff.

Some of these are compiled in this guide for easy reference by journalists and citizens who seriously want to combat corruption.

## Personal Safety and Security

### *Detecting and Dealing with Surveillance*

- Always be alert
- Familiarize yourself with your own neighborhood
- Take note of suspicious looking persons or vehicles
- Surreptitiously take pictures of the above
- Report presence of suspicious persons or vehicles to colleagues, friends and family
- File a complaint with the police
- Surveillance can also be detected in chokepoints like traffic lights, busy intersections, bridges, narrow streets
- When driving be on the lookout for vehicles, especially motorcycles, following you
- Keep car windows up and doors locked
- Keep your vehicle in good running condition
- When driving on wide avenues, try to stay close to the center island
- Avoid walking in deserted or dark streets or alleys
- If you think you are being followed, head for the nearest police precinct
- In a taxi, constantly check for vehicles that may be closely tailing you. Ask the driver to honk the horns and head for the nearest police station

## Dealing with Death Threats

- Write down the exact wording of the threat including details about how the threat or threats were received. Doing this



- enables you to provide the police with a thorough report
- Threats should not be taken lightly. Immediately inform superiors, colleagues, and family about the incident
  - Create a lot of noise about the threat. Seek support from press associations and other media groups. Ask news organizations to publicize it
  - Send alerts to press groups such as the NUJP which has an alerts system in place
  - Save threats sent through SMS in your phone memory so that you can have a support document when reporting to proper authorities
  - If the threats are imminent, consider temporarily moving to another place
  - Ask for police protection only when absolutely necessary and if the police in your area can be trusted

## Securing the Newsroom

- Inform your editors or immediate superiors of your whereabouts of itinerary for the day; let them know who you will be meeting and at what time and where
- While on dangerous assignments work out a system with the news desk so that you can be in constant communication with the office or that you could reach them immediately
- Sensitive files, documents, compact discs, hard disk drives, thumb drives, video and audio recordings should be secured. Ideally these should be stored in a secure place outside the newsroom
- As much as possible limit phone interviews to non-sensitive information
- Have a buddy system in place (to keep track of each other's whereabouts)



- Newsrooms should conduct regular safety training for the staff

## Keeping Your Family Safe

- Instruct family members and household help not to give out information through the phone or to strangers
- Conduct regular drills with the family members on taking cover from gunfire, etc.
- Tell family members to take note of the presence of suspicious vehicles or persons
- Keep doors securely locked; make sure these have deadbolts
- Designate a safe room within the house where family members can seek cover in case of an attack. The room should have a sturdy door, a telephone line, water and food, flashlight, first aid kit, and a possible escape route
- Entrust house keys to a trusted neighbor; do not leave under doormats or in flowerpots
- If possible, get a watchdog
- Enlist the help of neighbors in detecting surveillance

## What to Do When Targeted

### *Lessening the Chances of Being Abducted*

- Make an assessment of the risk before going on assignment by asking yourself the following questions:
  - Does the area where I am going have a history of hostage-taking and violence?
  - Is there a history of journalists being abducted or held hostage?



- Who are the key players? Military, bandits, rebels, militia forces, political clans or local warlords? Or a combination of the above?
- What are the relationships between the warring groups? Between clans?
- Are the sources of information highly reliable?
- Before grabbing that exclusive interview, ask:
  - Has this person granted interviews before?
  - Has he/she kept his/her word?
  - To whom does that person usually give interviews?
  - If rarely, why now? Why you?

## Surviving Abduction

- To survive an abduction, you must retain mental alertness and a positive attitude
- Do not antagonize your abductors; do as you are told
- Mentally converse with someone (your partner, colleague, spouse, children) to help you keep the situation in perspective
- Use whatever methods you have for relaxing like mentally picturing what you will do when you return home
- Try to seek some improvements in your condition especially if you are being held for more than a day
- Make it difficult for your captors to treat you inhumanely by talking about your family
- If you are being brutally treated, try to mentally converse with your loved ones or talk to your God
- Do not believe in promises that you will soon be released





This is a listing of organizations and initiatives on transparency and anti-corruption that may be able to help those interested in pursuing similar efforts in their areas.

### Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG)

The Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government is a civic organization that works in the remote, rural province of Abra in the northern Philippines. Established in 1987, CCAGG specializes in monitoring the implementation of infrastructure projects in the province. Their community-based approach relies on the voluntary efforts of area residents who verify whether bridges, roads, and other infrastructure projects are executed according to contract regulations. These citizen audits are then verified by civil engineers working with CCAGG and turned into evidence-based reports that aim to disclose potential corruption in the implementation of public infrastructure projects.

In 2000 CCAGG was awarded one of Transparency International's first Integrity Awards for its fight against graft and corruption

at the local level. CCAGG's main activities include monitoring, evaluation, and auditing; training and networking with other civil society groups in the province; and designing and implementing development projects that will directly benefit the local community.

## Civil Service Commission

The Civil Service Commission was conferred the status of a department by Republic Act No. 2260 as amended and elevated to a constitutional body by the 1973 Constitution. It was reorganized under PD No. 181 dated September 24, 1972, and again reorganized under Executive Order no. 181 dated November 21, 1986. With the new Administrative Code of 1987 (EO 292), the Commission is constitutionally mandated to promote morale, efficiency, integrity, responsiveness, progressiveness, and courtesy in the Civil Service.

For more information, visit [www.csc.gov.ph](http://www.csc.gov.ph)

## Ehem!

Ehemplo is a call of people dedicated to live a life of honor, integrity and good examples. Ehemplo is based on espousing Ehem! – the urgent call for cultural reform against corruption in the Philippines.

Ehem aims to bring people to a renewed sensitivity to the evil of corruption and its prevalence in ordinary life. It seeks ultimately to make them more intensely aware of their own vulnerability to corruption, their own uncritical, often unwitting practice of corruption in daily life

Contact Fr. Bert Alejo for more information at [paringbert@yahoo.com](mailto:paringbert@yahoo.com)





## Government Watch (G-Watch)

Government Watch or G-Watch, is a social accountability action-research program of the Ateneo School of Governance (ASoG), that was launched in 2000 as a reaction to numerous reports of corruption and inefficiencies in the administration of then President Joseph Ejercito Estrada. To complement perception surveys, G-Watch deployed fresh college graduates as G-Watch monitors to visit government project sites and collect documents to be used to assess actual government performance in service delivery.

G-Watch provides tools and methods for ordinary citizens' participation in the monitoring of government service delivery programs. The tools and methods answer the question that any ordinary citizen wants to ask: Is government delivering what it has promised? Basically, these tools and methods compare input against output, plan against accomplishment, and expectation against actual result.

Pacifico Ortiz Hall, Social Development Complex  
Ateneo de Manila University  
Tel. +63 2 920-2920

## International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance

Founded on July 8, 2005, InCITEGov is a non-profit organization whose objectives are to provide the basic foundations of government reforms needed to improve the quality of governance and livelihood in the Philippines, creating an environment for a peaceful transition of government towards genuine social reforms. Its methods include

providing the necessary materials and resources for case-studies that would help prosper ideas towards developing the country's needs as well as a stable platform for maintaining the momentum towards social change from within our country. Their site [www.incitegov.org](http://www.incitegov.org) provides additional information.

## Multi-Sectoral Alliance for Transparency and Accountability in Samar (MATA-Samar)

MATA-Samar's main objective is to promote greater awareness on anti-corruption, transparency, and public accountability. It also aims to address the misuse of public funds in the province through timely and factual reporting of public spending.

Members agreed that the group would work for participatory democracy, responsive governance and an empowered citizenry to help achieve a progressive and peaceful Samar. It envisions Samar to be a livable community that is corruption free and whose quality basic services would be accessible to everyone.

The multi-sector feature of MATA-Samar makes it easier for the group to undertake various monitoring activities. Members complement each other. Information dissemination campaigns are being done by media partners such as samarnews.com. A website was also created to maximize information sharing while social media such as FaceBook, Tweeter, and blogs are also being harnessed.

For more information, click on <http://www.mata-samar.org>



## Office of the Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman is a bureau under the Department of Justice whose obligation is to provide the necessary legislative powers to protect the Filipino people against corruption from within the government. Visit [www.ombudsman.gov.ph](http://www.ombudsman.gov.ph) for more information.

## People's Action against Corruption (PAAC)

The Mindanao-based anti-corruption coalition was founded in early 2011 “to address the obvious and proven practice of corruption in the Philippine revenue system.”

Email: [support@againstcorruption.info](mailto:support@againstcorruption.info)

Website: <http://www.againstcorruption.info>

## Pera Ng Bayan

The Makati Business Club, the Coalition against Corruption, and other good governance advocates have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Finance, forging a partnership for good governance. At a ceremony held at the Land Bank of the Philippines along Ayala Avenue in Makati City, the signatories pledged to encourage citizen's participation in reporting anomalies and other forms of graft and corruption through the DOF's Pera ng Bayan website.

To promote transparency, accountability, and private-sector participation, the Perang Bayan website makes it possible for citizens to send information to the DOF and its agencies, the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs, regarding cases of tax evasion and smuggling, as well as provide feedback on the performance of these agencies' officials.

For more information click on <http://perangbayan.com>

## Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project

PPTRP is the second collaborative effort among four media development organizations whose goal is to raise public awareness through various media public sector transparency and accountability. It aims to increase the capacity of journalists, civil society and the public in selected areas in the Philippines to expose corrupt behavior in the public sector and to promote anti-corruption best practices through:

- Conduct of anti-corruption Information, Education, Communications (IEC) campaign, such as the website portal, reporting and confidential hotline to report corruption allegations
- Training of local media practitioners and civil society workers on reporting corruption and accountability
- Creation of anti-corruption network and constituency among media and civil society groups and others

For more information visit [www.transparencyreporting.net/index.php](http://www.transparencyreporting.net/index.php)



## Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN)

The Transparency and Accountability Network is a growing coalition of multi-sectoral organizations, which seeks to contribute significantly to the reduction of corruption in the Philippines.

It is a non-stock, non-profit organization formed primarily for the purpose of exchanging information on developments and initiatives in transparency and accountability issues.

TAN is also a venue for organizations to come together and embark on initiatives of common interest, whether involving the entire network or a group of like-minded organizations within the network.

Check out their site at [www.tan.org.ph](http://www.tan.org.ph)

## Transparency International

Transparency International is a global network of organizations whose goal is to fight corruption through the use of the media. Established in 1993 and with more than 90 affiliates worldwide, TI is committed to utilizing various resources to organize, deliver, project and maintain its capacity through the help of its partner-affiliates and empower people and the local community in the fight against corruption.

Visit [www.transparency.org/about\\_us](http://www.transparency.org/about_us) for details.





## Glossary of Some Legal Terms

Compiled by the American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative (ABA-ROLI)

<b>ABANDONMENT OF OFFICE OR POSITION</b>	The crime committed by a public officer who, before the acceptance of his/her resignation, abandons his/her office to the detriment of the public service. (Article 238, Revised Penal Code).
<b>APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)</b>	As used in the Government Procurement Reform Act, it refers to the budget for the contract duly approved by the Head of the Procuring Entity (government agency), as provided for in the proper appropriations law of the procuring entity. (Section 5 (a), R.A. No. 9184).  The ABC shall reflect the most advantageous prevailing price for the government. (Section 36, R.A. No. 9184).
<b>BAC</b>	Bids and Awards Committee composed of five (5) to seven (7) members established within the procuring entity (government agency). (Section 11, R.A. No. 9184).
<b>BIDDING DOCUMENTS</b>	Documents issued by the procuring entity (government agency), which contain all information necessary for a prospective bidder to prepare a bid. (Section 5 (c), R.A. No. 9184).
<b>BRIBERY</b>	The giving of a benefit (can be in any form, whether cash, kind, or service) in order to unduly influence an action or decision.
<b>BRIBERY (DIRECT)</b>	The crime committed by a public officer who, in exchange for any offer, promise, gift, or present, (i) agrees to perform an act in connection with the performance of his/her official duties, whether or not such act constitutes a crime, or (ii) agrees to refrain from doing something which it was his official duty to do. (Article 210, Revised Penal Code).
<b>BRIBERY (INDIRECT)</b>	The crime committed by a public officer who accepts gifts offered to him/her by reason of his/her office. (Article 211, Revised Penal Code).



<p><b>CITIZEN'S CHARTER</b></p>	<p>This refers to the service standards of all government agencies in the form of information billboards, which are required to be posted at the main entrance of offices or at the most conspicuous place, and in the form of published materials written either in English, Filipino, or in the local dialect, that detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The procedure to obtain a particular service;</li> <li>(b) The person/s responsible for each step;</li> <li>(c) The maximum time to conclude the process;</li> <li>(d) The document/s to be presented by the customer, if necessary;</li> <li>(e) The amount of fees, if necessary; and</li> <li>(f) The procedure for filing complaints. (Section 6, R.A. No. 9485).</li> </ul> <p>The Citizen's Charter is a requirement under R.A. No. 9485, otherwise known as the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007.</p>
<p><b>COMPETITIVE BIDDING</b></p>	<p>A method of procurement which is open to participation by any interested party and which consist of the following processes: advertisement, pre-bid conference, eligibility screening of bids, evaluations of bids, post - qualification, and award of contract. (Section 5 (e), R.A. No. 9184).</p> <p>All procurement shall be done through this method, except when resort to alternative methods of procurement is justified and approved by the Head of the Procuring Entity. (Section 10, R.A. No. 9184).</p>
<p><b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST</b></p>	<p>The situation where a public officer's personal interests become incompatible with the objective exercise of his/her official functions. (Corruption Glossary).</p> <p>A situation where a public official or employee is a board member, an officer, or a substantial stockholder of a private corporation, or where such public official has a substantial interest/ownership in a business, and the interest of such corporation or business, or the public official's rights or duties therein, may be opposed to or affected by the faithful performance of official duty. (Section 3 (i), R.A. No. 6713).</p>
<p><b>CORRUPTION</b></p>	<p>"There is no single, comprehensive, universally accepted definition of corruption." The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) deemed it fit not to provide a single definition, but rather, provide a list of specific types or acts of corruption. (UN Anti-Corruption Toolkit)</p>





<b>CORRUPTION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS</b>	This is the crime committed by any person who made the offers or promises or gave the gifts or presents to public officers in the crimes of direct or indirect bribery. (Article 212, Revised Penal Code).
<b>COVERED INSTITUTION</b>	<p>This term, as used in the Anti-Money Laundering Act, refers to the following financial institutions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) banks, non-banks, quasi-banks, trust entities, and all other institutions and their subsidiaries and affiliates supervised or regulated by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP);</li> <li>(2) Insurance companies and all other institutions supervised or regulated by the Insurance Commission; and</li> <li>(3) (i) securities dealers, brokers, salesmen, investment houses and other similar entities managing securities or rendering services as investment agent, advisor, or consultant, (ii) mutual funds, close and investment companies, common trust funds, pre-need companies and other similar entities, (iii) foreign exchange corporations, money changers, money payment, remittance, and transfer companies and other similar entities, and (iv) other entities administering or otherwise dealing in currency, commodities or financial derivatives based thereon, valuable objects, cash substitutes and other similar monetary instruments or property supervised or regulated by Securities and Exchange Commission. (Section 3(a), R.A. No. 9160).</li> </ol>
<b>COVERED TRANSACTION</b>	<p>This term, as used in the Anti-Money Laundering Act, refers to a single, series, or combination of transactions involving a total amount in excess of four million Philippine pesos (Php4,000,000.00, or an equivalent amount in foreign currency based on the prevailing exchange rate) effected within five (5) consecutive banking days. These, however, do not include those transactions between a covered institution and a person who, at the time of the transaction, was a properly identified client and the amount is commensurate with the business or financial capacity of the client; or those with an underlying legal or trade obligation, purpose, origin or economic justification.</p> <p>It likewise refers to a single, series or combination or pattern of unusually large and complex transactions in excess of four million Philippine pesos (Php4,000,000.00), especially cash deposits and investments having no credible purpose or origin, underlying trade obligation or contract. (Section 3(b), R.A. No. 9160).</p>



<p><b>DIRECT CONTRACTING, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS SINGLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT</b></p>	<p>An alternative method of procurement that does not require elaborate bidding documents because the supplier is simply asked to submit a price quotation or a pro-forma voice together with the conditions of sale, which offer may be accepted immediately or after some negotiations. (Section 48 (b), R.A. No. 9184).</p> <p>Direct contracting may only be resorted to under the conditions specified in Section 50 of the Government Procurement Reform Act.</p>
<p><b>DIVESTMENT</b></p>	<p>The transfer of title or disposal of interest in property by voluntarily, completely and actually depriving or dispossessing one's self of his/ her right or title to it in favor of a person or persons other than his/her spouse and relatives. (Section 3 (j), R.A. No. 6713).</p> <p>The resignation by a public official from his position in any private business enterprise (including a partnership) within thirty (30) days from his assumption of office and/or ridding himself of his shareholdings or interest within sixty (60) days from such assumption.</p> <p>Divestment is not required of those who serve the Government in an honorary capacity, laborers and casual or temporary workers.(Section 9, R.A. No. 6713).</p>
<p><b>FIXER</b></p>	<p>Any individual, whether or not officially involved in the operation of a government office or agency,who has access to people working therein, and whether or not in collusion with them, facilitates speedy completion of transactions for pecuniary gain or any other advantage or consideration. (Section 4 (g), R.A. No. 9485).</p>
<p><b>FRONTLINE SERVICE</b></p>	<p>The process or transaction between the public 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 and/or requests which are acted upon in the ordinary course of business of the agency or office concerned.(Section 4 (c), R.A. No. 9485).</p>
<p><b>GOVERNMENT ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM (G-EPS)</b></p>	<p>The single portal that shall serve as the primary source of information on all government procurement, which shall be utilized by all procuring entities for the procurement of common supplies. (Section 8, R.A. No. 9184)</p>



<b>GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR CONTROLLED CORPORATION (GOCC)</b>	<p>Any agency organized as a stock or non-stock corporation, vested with functions relating to public needs whether governmental or proprietary in nature, and owned by the government directly or through its instrumentalities either wholly, or, where applicable as in the case of stock corporations, to the extent of at least fifty-one per cent (51%) of its capital stock.</p> <p>GOCCs may be further categorized by the Department of Budget and Management, the Civil Service Commission, and the Commission on Audit for purposes of the exercise and discharge of such government agencies' respective powers, functions and responsibilities with respect to such corporations. (Section 2 (13), E.O. No. 292).</p>
<b>GRAFT</b>	<p>"Political corruption with an element of greediness". It may also refer to the rewards of corruption (e.g., payoffs). (Corruption Glossary)</p>
<b>GRAND CORRUPTION</b>	<p>Corruption "that pervades the highest levels of a national Government, leading to a broad erosion of confidence in good governance, the rule of law and economic stability." (UN Anti-Corruption Toolkit)</p>
<b>HEAD OF THE PROCURING ENTITY</b>	<p>As used in the Government Procurement Reform Act, it refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the head of the agency or his duly authorized official, for national government agencies;</li> <li>(ii) the governing board or its duly authorized official, for government-owned and/or government-controlled corporations; or</li> <li>(iii) the local chief executive, for local government units.</li> </ul> <p>In a department, office or agency where the procurement is decentralized, the Head of each decentralized unit shall be considered as the Head of the Procuring Entity subject to the limitations and authority delegated by the head of the department, office or agency. (Section 5 (j), R.A. No. 9184).</p>



<p><b>ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH</b></p>	<p>Any asset, property, business enterprise or material possession of any person acquired by a public officer, directly or indirectly through dummies, nominees, agents, subordinates and/or business associates, by any combination or series of the following means or similar schemes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Through misappropriation, conversion, misuse, or malversation of public funds or raids on the public treasury;</li> <li>2) By receiving, directly or indirectly, any commission, gift, share, percentage, kickbacks or any other form of pecuniary benefit from any person and/or entity in connection with any government contract or project or by reason of the office or position of the public officer concerned;</li> <li>3) By the illegal or fraudulent conveyance or disposition of assets belonging to the government or any of its subdivisions, agencies or instrumentalities or government-owned or government-controlled corporations and their subsidiaries;</li> <li>4) By obtaining, receiving or accepting directly or indirectly any shares of stock, equity or any other form of interest or participation, including promise of future employment in any business enterprise or undertaking;</li> <li>5) By establishing agricultural, industrial or commercial monopolies or other combinations and/or implementation of decrees and orders intended to benefit particular persons or special interests; or</li> <li>6) By taking undue advantage of official position, authority, relationship, connection or influence to unjustly enrich himself or themselves at the expense and to the damage and prejudice of the Filipino people and the Republic of the Philippines. (Section 1 (d), R.A. No. 7080).</li> </ol>
<p><b>ILLEGAL USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS OR PROPERTY (TECHNICAL MALVERSATION)</b></p>	<p>The crime committed by a public officer who applies any public fund or property under his administration to any public use other than for which such fund or property was appropriated by law or ordinance. (Article 220, Revised Penal Code).</p>
<p><b>LIMITED SOURCE BIDDING, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS SELECTIVE BIDDING</b></p>	<p>An alternative method of procurement that involves direct invitation to bid by the procuring entity from a set of pre-selected suppliers or consultants with known experience and proven capability relative to the requirements of a particular contract. (Section 48 (a), R.A. No. 9184).</p> <p>Limited Source Bidding may only be resorted to under the conditions specified in Section 49 of the Government Procurement Reform Act.</p>



<b>MALVERSATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS OR PROPERTY</b>	The crime committed by a public officer who, by reason of the duties of his office, is accountable for public funds or property, but misappropriates the same or permits any other person to take such public funds, or property through abandonment or negligence. (Article 217, Revised Penal Code).
<b>MONEY LAUNDERING</b>	A crime whereby the proceeds of an “unlawful activity” (as defined in the Anti-Money Laundering Act) are “transacted or attempted to be transacted” to make them appear to have originated from legitimate sources. (Section 4, R.A. No. 9160).
<b>NEGOTIATED PROCUREMENT</b>	An alternative method of procurement whereby the procuring entity directly negotiates a contract with a technically, legally and financially capable supplier, contractor or consultant. (Section 48 (e), R.A. No. 9184).  Negotiated procurement may only be resorted to under the conditions specified in Section 53 of the Government Procurement Reform Act
<b>NEPOTISM</b>	The prohibited appointment in the national, provincial, city and municipal governments or in any branch or instrumentality thereof, including government-owned or controlled corporations, made in favor of a relative within the third degree either of consanguinity or affinity of the appointing or recommending authority, or of the chief of the bureau or office, or of the persons exercising immediate supervision over him.  The following, however, are exempted from the operation of the rules on nepotism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) persons employed in a confidential capacity</li> <li>(b) teachers</li> <li>(c) physicians</li> <li>(d) members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. However, full report of such appointment shall be made in each particular instance to the Civil Service Commission. (Section 59, E.O. No. 292).</li> </ul> In local governments, the prohibition covers relatives by consanguinity or affinity of the appointing or recommending authority within the fourth civil degree. (Section 79, Local Government Code).
<b>PETTY CORRUPTION</b>	Corruption that involves exchange of small amounts of money and granting of minor favors. (UN Anti-Corruption Toolkit)
<b>PLUNDER</b>	The crime committed by a public officer who, by himself or in connivance with others, amasses, accumulates or acquires ill-gotten wealth through a combination or series of overt or criminal acts particularly described in Section 1(d) of the Plunder Law, in the aggregate amount or total value of at least fifty million pesos (P50,000,000.00). (Section 2, R.A. No. 7080).



<b>POSSESSION OF PROHIBITED INTEREST BY A PUBLIC OFFICER</b>	The crime committed by a public officer who, directly or indirectly, becomes interested in any contract or business in which it is his official duty to intervene. (Article 216, Revised Penal Code).
<b>PREVENTIVE SUSPENSION</b>	<p>An <i>interim</i> remedial measure to address the situation of an official who has been charged administratively or criminally, where the evidence preliminarily indicates the likelihood of, or potential for eventual guilt or liability.</p> <p>Preventive suspension is imposed under the Local Government Code “when the evidence of guilt is strong and given the gravity of the offense, there is a possibility that the continuance in office of the respondent could influence the witnesses or pose a threat to the safety and integrity of the records and other evidence.”</p> <p>Under the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (R.A. No. 3019), it is imposed after a valid information (which requires a finding of probable cause) has been filed in court.</p> <p>Under the Ombudsman Act (R.A. No. 6770), it is imposed when, in the judgment of the Ombudsman, the evidence of guilt is strong; and (a) the charge involves dishonesty, oppression or grave misconduct or neglect in the performance of duty; or (b) the charges would warrant removal from the service; or (c) the respondent’s continued stay in office may prejudice the case filed against him. (Aldovino, Jr., et al. vs. COMELEC, et al., G.R. No. 184836, December 23, 2009).</p>
<b>PROCUREMENT</b>	<p>The acquisition of Goods, Consulting Services, and the contracting for Infrastructure Projects by the Procuring Entity, as defined under the Government Procurement Reform Act.</p> <p>Procurement also includes the lease of goods and real estate. (Section 5 (n), R.A. No. 9184).</p> <p>Note: Procurement of real property shall be governed by the provisions of Republic Act No.8974, entitled “An Act to Facilitate the Acquisition of Right-of -Way Site or Location of National Government Infrastructure Projects and for Other Purposes” and other applicable laws, rules and regulations.</p>
<b>PROCURING ENTITY</b>	Any branch, department, office, agency, or instrumentality of the government, including state universities and colleges, government-owned and/or government-controlled corporations, government financial institutions, and local government units procuring Goods, Consulting Services and Infrastructure Projects. (Section 5 (o), R.A. No. 9184).



<b>PROLONGING PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES AND POWERS</b>	The crime committed by a public officer who continues to exercise the duties and powers of his office, employment or commission, beyond the period provided by law, regulation or special provisions applicable to the case. (Article 237, Revised Penal Code).
<b>PUBLIC DOCUMENT</b>	<p>Any instrument authorized by a notary public or a competent public official, with the solemnities required by law. (Cacnio vs. Baens, 5 Phil. 742).</p> <p>A public document must be made accessible to, and readily available for inspection by, the public within reasonable working hours. (Section 5 (e), R.A. No. 6713).</p>
<b>PUBLIC OFFICER/ OFFICIAL</b>	<p>Any person who, by direct provision of the law, popular election or appointment by competent authority, shall take part in the performance of public functions or duties in government either as an employee, agent or subordinate official, of any rank or class. (Article 203, Revised Penal Code).</p> <p>This includes elective and appointive officials and employees, permanent or temporary, whether in the career or non-career service, including military and police personnel, whether or not they receive compensation, regardless of amount. (Section 3 (b), R.A. No. 6713).</p>
<b>RECEIVING ANY GIFT</b>	The act by a public officer of accepting directly or indirectly a gift from a person other than a member of his/her immediate family, on behalf of him/herself or of any member of his family or relative within the fourth civil degree (either by consanguinity or affinity). This includes gifts received even on occasions of a family celebration or national festivity like Christmas, if the value of the gift is, under the circumstances, manifestly excessive. (Section 2 (c), R.A. No. 3019).
<b>REPEAT ORDER</b>	<p>An alternative method of procurement that involves direct procurement of goods from the previous winning bidder, whenever there is a need to replenish goods procured under a contract previously awarded through Competitive Bidding. (Section 48 (c), R.A. No. 9184).</p> <p>Repeat Order may only be resorted to under the conditions specified in Section 51 of the Government Procurement Reform Act.</p>
<b>REPORT CARD SURVEY</b>	A survey to be initiated by the Civil Service Commission, in coordination with the Development Academy of the Philippines, which shall be used to obtain feedback on how provisions in the Citizen's Charter are being followed by all offices and agencies providing frontline services. (Section 10, R.A. No. 9485).



<p><b>SALN (Statement of Assets, Liability, and Net Worth)</b></p>	<p>A public document required to be filed under oath by all public officials and employees, except those who serve in an honorary capacity, laborers and casual or temporary workers, which should contain information on the assets, liabilities, net worth, and a disclosure of their business interests and financial connections and those of their spouses and unmarried children under eighteen (18) years of age living in their households. (Section 8, R.A. No. 6713. See also Section 7, R.A. No. 3019).</p> <p>SALNs must be filed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) within thirty (30) days after assumption of office;</li> <li>(b) on or before April 30, of every year thereafter; and</li> <li>(c) within thirty (30) days after separation from the service.(Section 8, R.A. No. 6713).</li> </ul>
<p><b>SHOPPING</b></p>	<p>An alternative method of procurement whereby the procuring entity simply requests for the submission of price quotations for readily available off-the-shelf goods or ordinary/regular equipment to be procured directly from suppliers of known qualification. (Section 48 (d), R.A. No. 9184).</p> <p>Shopping may only be resorted to under the conditions specified in Section 52 of the Government Procurement Reform Act.</p>
<p><b>UNEXPLAINED WEALTH</b></p>	<p>An amount of property and/or money manifestly out of proportion to a public officer's salary and to his other lawful income, whether in his name or in the name of other persons, which is a ground for the dismissal or removal of such public officer, absent a reasonable explanation for the disproportionate amount of property and/or money. (Section 8, R.A. No. 3019; See also R.A. No. 1379).</p>





<b>UNLAWFUL ACTIVITY</b>	<p>As used in the Anti-Money Laundering Act, is the crime or offense which generates dirty money. It is commonly called the predicate crime. It refers to any act or omission or series or combination thereof involving or having direct relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kidnapping for ransom</li> <li>• Drug trafficking and related offenses</li> <li>• Graft and corrupt practices</li> <li>• Plunder</li> <li>• Robbery and Extortion</li> <li>• <i>Tueteng</i> and <i>Masiao</i></li> <li>• Piracy</li> <li>• Qualified theft</li> <li>• Swindling</li> <li>• Smuggling</li> <li>• Violations under the Electronic Commerce Act of 2000</li> <li>• Hijacking; destructive arson; and murder, including those perpetrated by terrorists against non-combatant persons and similar targets</li> <li>• Fraudulent practices and other violations under the Securities Regulation Code of 2000</li> <li>• Felonies or offenses of a similar nature that are punishable under the penal laws of other countries. (Section 3(i), R.A. No. 9160).</li> </ul>
<b>UNLAWFUL APPOINTMENTS</b>	<p>The crime committed by a public officer who knowingly nominates or appoints to any public office any person lacking the legal qualifications therefor. (Article 244, Revised Penal Code).</p>



## References:

Act No. 3815, *The Revised Penal Code*

Corruption Glossary, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre.  
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PHILIPPINE PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY  
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# Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project (Pera Natin 'to!)

[www.transparencyreporting.net](http://www.transparencyreporting.net)

Over 100 unique reports, investigations, commentaries and back-grounders produced on transparency and accountability issues, plus 29 blogs and 46 project news reports;

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More than 390 journalists, activists and citizens trained on budget and financial issues. 22 training workshops held across the country and 9 public roundtables;

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Four local pilot citizens' watchdog and accountability groups set up and formally linking with the Department of Interior and Local Government at the latter's request. More potential groups coming forward for help;

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Dedicated educational and interactive website set up to build understanding and engagement in transparency and accountability issues. More than 140,000 visits to the site since March 23, 2010;

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Front page coverage and editorial citations in the leading Philippine daily newspaper;

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Project handbook commissioned and published; Baseline study and two end-of-project electronic surveys produced generating more than 170 individual responses so far;

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More than 1,000 Facebook fans.

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This publication was made possible through the funding support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with technical support from the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI).

