Aiming High

Ningas

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Nurturing
Research Culture

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Ningas

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AIMING HIGH

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Ningas is a Philippine term for flame. Like the Torch that symbolizes Education, it keeps aflame to burn the midnight oil and allow one to think, write and continue acquiring knowledge in light of research.

INTRODUCTION

Research must be done not only for the purpose of meeting the requirement of the CHED or the accrediting organizations but also and more importantly to make plausible the production of knowledge and innovations. As a school catering to programs that rely on knowledge for advancement, research is given importance along other areas, namely, instruction and community extension. The school of Education, Arts, and Sciences aims to kindle among its students and teachers, the love for research. This monograph, *Ningas*, concretizes this goal. The publication of this monograph manifests intent to develop a research culture characterized by commitment towards the development of knowledge beneficial to the academe and to the professional world.

Ningas, a Filipino translation for flame, symbolizes the element of fire. Fire epitomizes motivation, passion, will, and determination. For the school of Education, Arts, and Sciences, *Ningas* is a symbolism of an ardent desire to nurture research culture.

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Civil Society Organizations' Participation in Development Efforts in the Local Government of Legazpi City

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Abstract

The study focused on the significance of the civil society organizations in the development efforts of the local government of Legazpi City. Specifically, it tried to know the forms of participation of the civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPAs) of the said local government. The researchers utilized a pure qualitative descriptive research design. The respondents of this study were 11 accredited CSOs and the City Mayor of Legazpi City. The researchers used the interview method to gain data and consequently used the three levels of analysis to treat the data. The research specifically determined: the participation of the CSOs in planning, implementation, and evaluation of the PPAs; the enhancing and hindering factors to their participation; and the recommendations of the Civil Society Organizations to enhance the participation in the programs, projects, and activities in Legazpi City. As it turned out, participation of the CSOs varied in different aspects. Only nine out of 11 CSO respondents claimed participation in the development efforts of the local government. In line with this, activeness in the different aspects of participation varied in such a way that it connoted a negative result outcome. Other than that, the enhancing and hindering factors to the participation were specifically identified. Furthermore, the mayor of Legazpi City recommended a mechanism to enhance CSO participation.

Keywords: *civil society, governance, public engagement, development efforts*

There is an increasing recognition around the world of the potential contribution of civil society organizations to the overall development of a country, as well as their role in the Local Government Units. The Philippine Constitution mandates that all sectors of society shall participate in governing. This principle is reiterated in the Local Government Code of 1991 or RA 7160 that opens many windows of opportunities for civic participation in governance. Other national laws provide for specific mandates on people's participation.

Governance is not the sole arena of the government. One cannot speak of governance when neither government nor the governed is absent in the equation. The interaction and cooperation of civic organizations with government in crafting policies and in implementing programs, projects and activities define what governance is. The right and responsibility to govern are shared by those who govern and who are governed. Both the representatives of the state and civil society share the initiative to better governance. The government and the governed take collective responsibility for the welfare of society.

In a democratic society, the government is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. The sovereign are the people. Elected officials in the government are but stewards of power. The people elect their representatives to whom they shall delegate the power and the responsibility that goes with it in managing the affairs of governance.

Democracy in its simplest form is defined as the rule of the people. In concept, it has two basic principles: 1) popular control over public decision and decision makers; and 2) equality in the exercise of that control. In essence, a system of public decision-making may only be recognized as

democratic to the degree that these principles are realized in practice. Within the context of a system of representative government, these broad principles have been translated into a more specific set of mediating values that include representativeness, participation, accountability, and responsiveness. It is these values, among others, that provide a democratic character to the institutions of a representative government.

Active participation in ruling and being ruled is an attribute of an active citizen. On the other hand, openness of government officials to civic participation is a requisite for a participative form of government.

Participation and governance are mutually inclusive and can reinforce each other. Participation is broader as it includes not only the traditional forms of political and social participation but that of having excluded groups either by citizenship rights or in conflict situations.

In the context of governance, public participation is vital. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2017), governance has eight major characteristics. One of those major characteristics is public participation. They also added that "participation needs to be organized." This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand, and an organized civil society on the other hand. To say it plainly, "public participation in governance involves the direct involvement – or indirect involvement through representatives – of concerned stakeholders in decision-making about policies, plans or programs in which they have interest" (Quick & Bryson, 2016).

Public participation denotes that people have the right and duty to actively participate in state affairs. It includes standing for elections, voting in elections, becoming

informed, holding and attending community meetings, joining civil or political organizations, paying taxes, protesting and petitioning. Moreover, it means that citizens should be able to interact with the government on decisions that affect them. Public participation should not be limited to elections. Instead, it must be taken into account that the citizens must have a say in terms of how the government is doing its duty. If citizens do not actively participate, the government may make decisions that are not in accordance with the opinion of the citizens; thus, causing confusion and disunity, and which will eventually end up in compromising the general welfare of the state. With that, it is safe to conclude that public participation, in essence, is truly vital in a democratic state and one of the avenues for active public participation is through civil society.

Civil society "is the set of associations which is neither government nor family but plays a positive and active role in social economic and cultural activities" (Easha, 2018). When civil society is organized, CSOs come into existence. According to the UNDP, "CSOs are voluntary organizations with governance and direction coming from citizens or constituency members, without significant government-controlled participation or representation." It includes all non-market and non-state organizations outside the family "in which people organize themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain" (UNDP, n.d.). Examples of which are village associations, environmental groups, women's rights groups, farmers' association, faith-based organizations, labor unions, co-operatives, professional associations, chamber of commerce, independent research institutes, and the non-profit media. Its significance lies in its "vital role in enabling people to claim rights, in promoting rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships, and in overseeing their implementation" (BGPFDC, n.d.). With this, it can be seen that CSOs are not only vital to the people, but also to carrying out good governance.

In the Philippine context, CSOs play an important role in carrying out good governance. And it is being first honed and practiced in the local level. In fact, CSOs are given special emphasis in terms of local governance. Book 1, Article 3, Chapter 4, Section 34 of Republic Act No. 7160 or the Local Government Code of the Philippines states, "Local government units shall promote the establishment and operations of people's and non-governmental organizations to become active partners in the pursuit of local autonomy." People and non-governmental organizations are considered, in the context of this research, the CSOs. It is clearly seen that CSOs have a legal framework on its role and contribution to the objective of good governance.

The initiative to localize governance powers must come with the sincere effort to democratize local governance by broadening the provisions for mechanisms of participation. Community empowerment may not be realized when civic participation in governance is glaringly absent.

Orbista's (2012) master's thesis tackled the relationship between the Local Government Unit (LGU) and the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in carrying out local governance. In the context of his research, the term NGO is used in lieu of CSO (although the two terms are inherently the same). The main objective of the study is "to examine the most effective relationship between the LGU and the NGOs as well as where collaboration is most necessary" (Orbista,2012). This was carried out by evaluating the validity of four hypotheses on LGU-NGOs relations: 1) effective LGU-NGOs relationships are hardly felt or visibly seen despite the existing mechanisms, 2) opportunities for NGOs to participate are great; however, participation has not been realized, 3) examines whether larger LGUs are more effective in addressing the needs of their constituents, taking into consideration the presence of NGOs as conduits between the

LGUs and the ordinary citizens, and 4) examines whether larger LGUs are more effective in cooperating with NGOs because of the substantial resources and staff that they can utilize to reach out to them. The research had a dominant qualitative and a pinch of quantitative approach. It utilized various instruments and methods such as interview, documentary analysis, comparative study, and focused group discussions. And through those methods, the researcher came to the conclusion that there was a failure to involve the NGOs in planning and basic policy-making processes and there was weak involvement in the implementation of programs, projects and activities which defeated the mandate imposed on LGUs. "It appears that local governments do not yet get the point why NGOs should be involved" (Orbista, 2012). Thus, according to Orbista, it seems that the NGOs do not understand why the local government units involved them. "Although NGOs possess local knowledge and understand local needs, these were not utilized to full advantage by the local governments" (Orbista, 2012).

Butkevičien, Vaidelyte, and Šnapštiene (2010) discussed the role of civil society in local governance and attempted to determine the one responsible for initiating the partnership between civil society organizations and local government, the possible partnership models, the effect of public administrators to the civil society and vice versa, and the determinants of active civic participation in local governance" (Butkevičiene et al., 2010). It had a two-fold approach: general approach to the civil society and government partnership in local democracy, and particular approach examining how discussed partnership models work in Lithuania" (Butkevičiene et al., 2010). Upon analysis of empirical data, both local administration and CSOs acknowledge the importance of civil society participation in governance. However, despite this acknowledgement of mutual benefit in the theoretical level, the researchers had concluded that "neither local government nor CSOs have clear

vision about partnership models" (Butkevičiene et al., 2010). Meaning, "collaboration of CSOs with local government is rather fragmented, usually comes as a separate project but there is no obvious strategy for partnership development yet" (Butkevičiene et al., 2010). Lastly, it can be inferred that the role of CSOs in governance and in partnership with the local government is clearly at the theoretical level.

Gouzou (2012) studied the role of civil society in governance processes in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The study concluded that CSOs are inefficient in carrying out governance processes in the DRC. According to Gouzou, the study showed that the CSOs are performing poorly and are hardly fulfilling their role in improving governance in the DRC. Only 5% of the CSOs are highly effective when it comes to strategic planning and adaptability, while 48% are potentially effective, and 47% have poor effectiveness. This casts doubt on the relevance and quality of the work by CSOs. Gouzou concluded by saying that only very few CSOs are models of good governance: "As things stand, the analysis globally shows that the CSOs are not very effective in the governance work that CARE foresees in its Governance Programming Framework" (Gouzou, 2012).

In the background paper written by Mundy (2008), CSOs are viewed in the context of "education for all": its involvement and effectiveness. The study shows that more attention needs to be given to the role of civil society in the achievement of Education for All — particularly in poor countries where universal access to basic education has not been achieved. According to Mundy, "most official donor discourse on civil society continues to support civil society participation for reasons of instrumental efficiency: as a way of enhancing educational service delivery or ensuring accountability for funding at the local level. Recently donors have also welcomed civil society participation in national level policy dialogue, but this invitation is quite limited and de-

linked from the mechanisms for local level civil society participation being supported by donors." It can be seen that CSOs in that context are not highly efficient.

The related literatures and studies showed that CSOs can be or cannot be effective in terms of governance. This polarity in the findings ignited the researchers' interest to dig deeper into the role of CSOs in governance. Thus, this study aimed to examine the role of the CSOs in the development efforts of the local government of Legazpi City.

The system of participation of civil societies in the PPA's of Legazpi City is assessed by looking at its three fundamental functions in local democracy, such as planning, which refers to the process of consultation, feed-backing, discussing and sharing of ideas and opinion to clarify issues, resolve problems or settle disputes; implementation, which refers to the process of persuading local legislators and executives to adopt certain polities on specific issues using legislative and executive mechanisms; and evaluation, which refers to the process of scrutinizing the governmental actions, such as policy formulation and service delivery, as bases for commendation or sanction by the public.

Considering its strategic location, Legazpi City has become the center of commerce, government and education, and is in the path towards growth and urbanization. It is also one of the many popular eco-tourism destinations. It provides opportunity for the development of commercial and agro-industrial economy. Agro-industrial development, eco-tourism and fisheries and aquatic resources development highlight the City's development strategy. There is opportunity to address the high level of rural poverty given these socio-economic features of the city.

"Good governance is synonymous to sound development management" (WorldBank, 2012). A

development effort is defined in this study as one of the components towards attaining good governance. Hence, it refers to the programs, projects, and activities of the local government of Legazpi City.

As of the present, the local government of Legazpi City has a total of 24 accredited CSOs, namely: Visually Impaired Voices of Albay (VIVA), Legazpi Puericulture Center, Bicol University Development Foundation, Inc., Social Action Center (SAC) Diocese of Legazpi, Tiwala Kids and Communities, Inc., Albay Kuntaw Blackbelters Federation Inc., Legazpi City Slumdwellers Federation Inc., Gayon Albay Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Organization, Inc. (GAYON, Inc), Dawitan-Agna Community Association Inc. (DACAI), Albay Provincial NGO-PO Network for Development (ALPRODEV), Southern Luzon Technological College (SLTCF) Inc., Simbag sa Pag-asenso Inc. (SEDP INC.), Bicol Advocacy for Environment Concerns People's Organization (BAFECPO), Sorsogon Coco Coir Producers Cooperative, Bicol Communicators and Environmental Rescue Group (BCERG) Inc., Magayon Chess Club Inc., Bondservants Organization (BSORG), United Architects of the Philippines-Legazpi City Chapter, Bicol Center for Community Development (BCCD) Incorporated, Legazpi Senior Citizens Credit Cooperative (LSCCC), Fundacion Educacion Y Cooperacion, Philippine Society of Mining Engineers-Bicol Chapter, Sunwest Care Foundation, and SIKLAB Pilipinas, Inc.

In the context of this research, given the clarity on the concept of civil society and the function of CSOs, the researchers wanted to check on the operability of the CSOs in relation to the programs, projects, and activities (PPA) of the local government of Legazpi City; since good governance is a product of the government and the people, and these programs, projects, and activities are the contributions of the government in carrying out their part in good governance. Hence, this study endeavored to find out the different forms of participation of

CSOs in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a PPA; to identify the enhancing and hindering factors to their participation in the PPAs; and to provide recommendations for the enhancement of the operability of the CSOs.

This research would primarily be of great significance to the local government of Legazpi City for it would inform them of the participation of CSOs in their jurisdiction, and, consequently, would provide them recommendations for the enhancement of the participation of CSOs. It would contribute to the field of the academe by updating scholars and students of politics on the role of CSOs in relation to attaining good governance. Lastly, to the general public, in order for them to appreciate and be aware of their key role for the flourishment of CSOs in consonance with good governance.

The Statement of the Problem consists of three questions: 1. What is the participation of the CSOs in planning, implementing, and evaluating of the PPAs?; 2. What are the enhancing and hindering factors to their participation?; and 3. What are the recommendations of the local government to enhance the participation in the programs, projects, and activities in Legazpi City?

Conceptual Framework

The challenge of this study, therefore, was to determine how the democratic system of local governance in the City of Legazpi actually worked. This was done by examining how the Civil Society was demonstrated in the institutions of representative government at the local level such as in the areas of planning, implementing and evaluating.
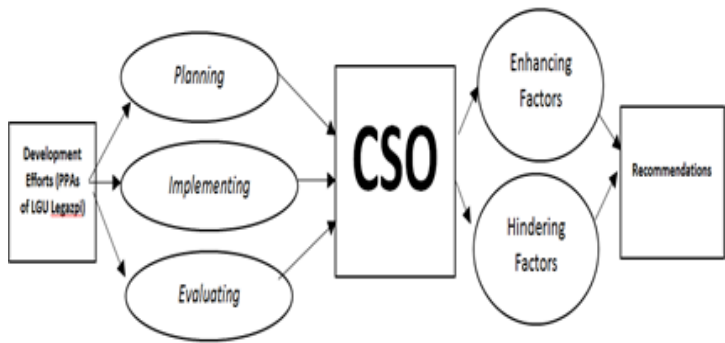
Figure 1. CSO Participation in the Context of the PPAs of Legazpi City

The study first identified the participation of the CSO respondents in the Development Efforts (PPAs) of Legazpi City in terms of planning, implementing, and evaluating. Development effort is defined as one of the components towards attaining good governance. It refers to the PPAs of the local government of Legazpi City. Corollary to this, the enhancing and hindering factors were illuminated upon checking their participation in the aforementioned aspects. On the one hand, enhancing factors refer to the motivators to the participation of the CSOs. On the other hand, hindering factors refer to the impediments to their participation. Furthermore, all the gathered results served as the foundation in building up the recommendations.

Method

Research Design

The study, which is qualitative in nature, utilized a descriptive approach. The researchers used interview guide questions for the chosen CSO and government official respondents. Consequently, the gathered data from the interview were utilized as primary data and subsequently used other related documents for supplementary data.

Respondents

The study targeted the 24 accredited CSOs. Unfortunately, only 12 agreed to be respondents. One of the 12 was the city mayor of Legazpi City.

The Social Action Center (SAC) has made a significant stride in emergency relief assistance especially during calamities and other social concerns. It showcases a successful community resource mobilization effort, combining the resources of the city government, other government agencies, the church, and other private sector institutions. They are under the Social Development Sector.

Through the SEDP-Simbag sa Pag-Asenso (SEDP), it helped the poor and the less privileged sectors of society acquire (lend) capital over time. The livelihood program allows them to develop capability and build capital. This program seeks to augment the incomes of target clients. Among the program components are micro-lending, training and marketing assistance. The success of the program hinges on partnerships with the people's organizations, and the city government of Legazpi. They are under the Economic Development Sector

Legazpi City's urban poor program is a successful program built around the concept of tripartism where the LGU, private sector (UAP-LC) and urban poor associations work together in finding mutually acceptable solutions to tenurial issues which have generated a number of innovative approaches to the perennial problem of squatting and urban blight. The United Architects of the Philippines –Legazpi City is working on model houses. They are under the Infrastructure Development Sector.

The Albay Kuntaw Balckbelters Federation Inc. (AKBFI) made a significant effort in helping the youth to be on the right track through sports advocacy and development. They

are under the Social Development Sector.

The Dawitan-Agna Community Association Inc. (DACAI) helped in enhancing the environmental sector in the City. They are under the Environment Development Sector

The Philippines Society of Mining Engineers-Bicol Chapter (PSME-BC) is always willing to help in the disaster risk reduction and management. In times of calamities they continuously deliver advisories. They are under the Infrastructure Development Sector

The Sunwest Care Foundation (SCF) contributes to the economic and social development of the local government. They are under the Social Development and Economic Development Sector

The Magayon Chess Club Inc. (MCCI) also helps in guiding the youth by spreading active sports participation through chess. With that, they are able to produce top chess players within the City that are currently recognized nationwide. They are under the Social Development Sector.

The Sorsogon Coco Coir Producers Cooperative (SCCPC) is able to help in the economy by providing quality coco products. Consequently, it is able to provide livelihood and job opportunities to the unemployed. It is under the Economic Development and Environment Development Sector.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was the interview guide. Corollary to this, the researchers used high-end audio-visual technology to record every interview session.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers first prepared a letter for the different civil society organizations and to the City Mayor. Upon receiving confirmation from the respondents who were willing to participate in the study, they were immediately interviewed. Unfortunately, not all targeted respondents were willing to participate. As a result, the researchers crossed them out of the list. With the obtained data from the interview, in the form of transcripts, a critical analysis and interpretation was done.

Data Analysis/Treatment

Using pure qualitative analysis, the data were coded, categorized, and thematized. The data were analysed on 3 levels: first, second, and third degree. The first degree of analysis refers to the results from the interview; the direct analysis of data. The second degree of analysis refers to the cross analysis of data and themes. The third degree of analysis refers to the related literature and documents in relation to the study.

Results

Participation of the CSOs in Planning , Implementation, and Evaluation

As prescribed in the context of this research, participation is divided into three aspects, namely: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Participation in each of these aspects was further scrutinized through this research. Of the 24 targeted CSOs, only 11 cooperated to become respondents. The CSO respondents were as follows: SAC, SEDP, AKBFI, DACAI, PSME-BC, SCFI, MCCI, SCCPC, UAP-LC, BUDFI, and SIKLAB. And of the 11 CSO respondents, only nine claimed participation and two claimed no participation. The researchers had identified different forms of participation in

the three abovementioned aspects based on the statements of the respondents.

Participation in the Planning. All of the nine CSO respondents that claimed participation in the PPAs of the local government of Legazpi City were active in the planning process, namely: SAC, SEDP, AKBFI, DACAI, PSME-BC, SCFI, MCCI, SCCPC, and UAP-LC. Corollary to this, the researchers were able to identify the kind of participation that the CSOs did in the planning process.

The first form of participation is "attending meetings". There were seven responses under this category. According to the AKBFI: *"Naiinvite kami sa mga meetings at nag aattend kami"* (We are being invited to the meetings, and we attend those meetings); to the DACAI: *"Nag aattend kaming meetings"* (We attend meetings); to the PSME-BC: *"Nag aattend kaming meetings"* (We attend meetings); to the SCFI: *"Being the LCPDC member, we are being invited"*; and to the MCCI: *"Nag kunyan man lang kami kan su sa pag pa-seminar tapos meetings"* (We attend seminars and meetings); to the SCCPC: *"Nag aattend kami lagi ng meetings"* (We always attend meetings); and to the SEDP, upon asking whether they attend meetings: *"Yes, as a member of the Local Development Council"*.

The second form of participation is "sharing of insights and suggestions during discussions in meetings". There were five responses under this category. According to the SAC: *"well, the planning of the PPA, of a certain PPA, more like sa City Development Council its more consultations sa ining ngayang plans kang ano, iyo man lang ito"* (Well, in the planning of the PPA, of a certain PPA, in the City Development Council is more on consultations on certain plans); to the SCFI: *"Sa discussions naman, naiinvolve kami"* (We are involved in the discussions); to the SCCPC: *"Nag iinput lang kami ng ideas kung ano ang magandang*

gawin kung may mga ganitong pinagiisipang bagay" (We input ideas on what is the best thing to do on a certain matter); and to the UAP-LC: *"Actually, during planning, nagpapa hearing sila or may meeting sila usually every month starting April. Then yun, we make some suggestions, dun sa ano, sa iprepresent nilang plans"* (Actually, during planning, they conduct hearings or meetings, usually every month starting April. There, we make some suggestions regarding their proposed plans).

With the given responses, the researchers were able to formulate a theme. As to the planning aspect: The participation of the CSOs in the planning process was by attending meetings where they actively participated in the discussions.

Participation in the Implementation. Only three out of nine CSOs that claimed participation in the PPAs of the local government of Legazpi City were active in the implementation process of the PPAs, namely: SAC, DACAI, and UAP-LC. Corollary to this, the researchers were able to identify the kind of participation the CSOs had in the implementation process.

The first form of participation is "organization of projects". Only the response of the SAC was under this category. According to them: *Nag organize, continue to accompany… every step of the way sa implementation"* (We organize and continue to accompany every step of the way).

The second form of participation was "help in implementing City programs". Only the response of the DACAI was under this category. According to the members: *"Hands-on po kami sa pag tabang sa City sa mga programa ninda"* (We are hands-on in helping the City with their programs).

The third form of participation was "processing of land reclassification". Only the response of the UAP-LC was under

this category. According to the members, *"Sa implementation process kasi dun na namin tinitingnan kung, halimbawa, yung lupa di alam nung owner na converted na pala to. I-aadvise na namin sakanya na i-convert nya na para di na sya mag undergo ng re-classification kasi yun na yung iiimplement"* (In the implementation process, this is where we look at, for example, a certain land owner does not know that his land is not yet converted. We tell him that he should convert the land so as not to re-classify it, because that is the standard procedure).

With the given categories of responses, a theme was formulated. As to the implementation aspect: The participation of the CSOs in the implementation process was by doing the actual work.

Participation in the Evaluation. A total of five out of nine CSOs that claimed participation in the PPAs of the local government of Legazpi City were active in the implementation process of the PPAs, namely: AKBFI, DACAI, SCFI, MCCI, and UAP-LC. Corollary to this, the researchers were able to identify the kind of participation done by the CSOs in the planning process.

The first indicator was "checking of implemented PPAs". Three responses were under this category. According to the AKBFI: *"Kasama naman kami doon, tapos tinitingan. Halimbawa, may naimplement na project, tinitingnan naming kung tapos na ba sya, na-implement na ba sya, na-implement ba sya according sa allotted time. Tapos dun naming na irereport na ito ay tapos na ganun"* (We are involved, and we check. For example, if there is an implemented project, we check if it has been implemented properly and in accordance to the given time-frame. And from there we give our own report on it); to the MCCI: *"Nag checheck kan su mga ginagawa nilang building, sumama kami"* (We check on the

ongoing building constructions); and to the SCFI: *"Monitoring, because that's the given opportunity for us to join"*.

The second indicator was "assessment of PPAs". Two responses were under this cateogry. According to the DACAI: *"Bale pag ano,naga assess man po kami kan mga programa ninda"* (It's like this, we give assessments regarding their programs); and according to the UAP-LC: *"we give recommendations kasi pag nagpapatawag sila, nagtatanong din sila samin tapos humihingi din sila ng suggestions dun sa agenda na binibigay nila samin"* (We give recommendations because when we are being asked of our evaluation and then they ask for suggestions).

With the given responses, a theme was formulated. As to the evaluation aspect: The participation of the CSOs in the evaluation process was by project monitoring.

Enhancing and Hindering Factors to the Participation of the CSOs

Apart from the given forms of participation that the CSO respondents did in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the PPAs of the local government of Legazpi City, several factors that affected CSO participation were identified. These were the enhancing and hindering factors.

Enhancing Factors

Of the 11 CSO respondents, only nine gave answers in this matter. And those nine CSOs were the ones that claimed participation at the outset. The responses of the CSOs to the enhancing factors to their participation were arranged according to categories.

The first factor was "willingness to help". A total of six responses fell under this category. According to the SAC: "*We want to help*"; to the AKBFI: *"Gusto kasi naming makatulong"* (We want to help); to the DACAI: *"Tapos muya mi man makatabang"* (And we want to help); to the PSME-BC: *"Enhancing, yung willingness naming tumulong at magbigay serbisyo"* (The enhancing factor is our willingness to help and be of service); to the SCFI: *"Enhancing, muya mi makatabang"* (The enhancing factor is we want to help); and to the UAP-LC: *"Well, sa enhancement, we just want to help"* (Well, in the enhancement, we just want to help).

The second factor was "establishing network". Two responses were under this category. According to the SEDP: "*we believe na pag nag participate kami sa local government, it provides us opportunities to be connected to the local government. Aside from what we provide them, our microfinance services, because we are part of the LDC, there are services of the LGU that we are able to tie them up with the health services of the City, mga trainings, we are able to connect… we are able to establish network"* (we believe that if we participated in the affairs of the local government, it would provide us opportunities to be connected to the local government… we are able to establish network); and to the SCCPC: *"getting more linkage"*.

The third factor was "obligation as a CSO". Only the AKBFI's response was under this category: "*At syempre obligasyon din bilang isang CSO"* (And of course, it's our obligation as a CSO).

The fourth factor was "endorsement of the organization's advocacies". The responses of AKBFI and MCCI were under this category. According to the AKBFI: *"At syempre para na rin ma-endorse ang kuntaw sa mga kabataan"* (And of course we want to endorse kuntaw to the youth); and to the MCCI: "*dahil muya ming mamidbidan kami"* (we want to be known).

The fifth factor was "administration of the local government". Two responses were under this category. According to the DACAI: *"eto po siguro na pag inform samuya pirmi, na transparent sinda"* (I think it is because we are always well informed and they are transparent); and to the UAP-LC: "*And dahil na rin sa smooth and good relationship naming with the City"* (And due to our smooth and good relationship with the City).

The sixth factor was "gaining insights". According to the SCCPC: *"The enhancing factor is sharing of ideas"*.

Based on the responses, two themes were formulated. The willingness of the CSOs to help and benefit that would be gained due to their active participation.

Hindering Factors

Of the 11 CSO respondents, only four gave answers on this matter. The CSO respondents who claimed such factors were the MCCI, SCCPC, BUDFI, and SIKLAB. The responses of the CSOs to the hindering factors to their participation were arranged according to its category.

The first factor was "lack of interest if not in accordance with the nature of the organization". Only the response of the MCCI was under this category. According to them: *"basta pag bako chess, dae man kaming labot"* (If it's not about chess, then we don't care).

The second factor was "distance and lack of accessibility". Only the response of the SCCPC was under this category. According to them: *"Hindering factors are distance from our place, availability of time, and expenses"*.

The third factor was "lack of transparency by the local government". Only the response of the BUDFI was under this category. According to them: *"No transparency and lack of awareness in the PPAs of the local government"*.

The fourth factor was "rigid process of handling projects". Only the response of the SIKLAB was under this category. According to them: *"the very tiring bureaucratic process for handling project proposals"*.

Based on the responses, a theme was formulated: The Hindering factors were the unfavorable circumstances of the CSOs and the administration of the local government.

Recommendations for the Enhancement of CSO Participation

In this part, the response of the City Mayor of Legazpi City was used as data to satisfy this question. It was for the reason that the City Mayor had a better bird's eye view on the participation of the CSOs.

According to Mayor Rosal, the CSOs needed to step up a notch when it comes to their participation: "*Siguro, if they can be part of the committee, in the Legislative*" (I think they can be part of the committee, in the Legislative). He also cited Naga City as an example for comparison to the improvement of CSO participation: *Like what they are doing in Naga… they can be part of the legislative body"*.

From the response of the City Mayor, a theme was formulated, which was: The recommendation to enhance CSO participation is to include them in the local legislative body.

Discussions

In this chapter, the obtained data were critically analyzed and discussed. The researchers cross analyzed all the data. Consequently, they were able to expose various links among the results and inferred implications from the data.

As observed, participation among the respondents varied. An organization can say that it participates in one aspect, and not participates in the other two. It can claim that it participated in two aspects only. It can say that it participated in all three aspects. With this, it was difficult not only for the researchers, but also for the readers to measure their participation. The further and substantial participation must be measured.

Hence, for the sake of this study, participation was measured as: low, average and high. Low, if the participation of a CSO is only present in one aspect. Average, if done in two aspects. And high, if it checks in all of the three aspects.

As it turned out, three were under "Low Participation" namely: SEDP, PSME-BC, and SCCPC. There were four under "Average Participation" namely: SAC, AKBFI, SCFI, and MCCI. And only two under "High Participation" namely: DACAI and UAP-LC.

With all these, it can be seen that the participation of the CSOs varied in the different aspects. Only two CSOs were highly active in the participation aspect, while the rest were either low or average. Corollary to this, participation of the CSOs in the development efforts of the local government concentrated more in the planning aspect only. When it came to the implementation and evaluation, only selected CSOs were active. This demonstrated inconsistency in participation.

Focusing on the forms of participation that the CSOs had done, it can be seen that their participation was limited. Nine out of nine CSOs claimed participation in the planning by "attending meetings" and "sharing insights and suggestions during discussions in meetings"; three out of nine in the implementation through "organization of projects", "help in implementing programs", and "processing of land reclassification"; and five out of nine in the evaluation by "checking of implemented PPAs" and assessment of PPAs".

The participation of the CSOs in the planning process was by attending meetings through actively participating in the discussions. According to Article 63 of the 1991 Local Government of Code the Philippines: "The duly designated representatives of accredited people's organizations, NGOs, and the private sector operating in the provinces, cities, municipalities, or barangays shall sit as members in the provincial, city, municipal, or barangay development councils, as the case may be". As part of the Local Development Council, they are invited by the local government to attend meetings. And this was manifested through the responses of the CSO respondents. In line with this, they do not just attend meetings; they also actively participate in the discussions by giving opinions and suggestions on the proposed PPAs of the local government.

The participation of the CSOs in the implementation process is by doing the actual work. The three CSOs that claimed participation in this area had responses leading to this theme. This refers to project organizing, field work, and land reclassification. In the implementation process of the PPAs of the local government, the City Heads who are the chief implementer and the CSOs are the handmaids. The latter helped the former implement PPAs by doing the actual work that they were assigned to do.

The participation of the CSOs in the evaluation process was by project monitoring. This refers to the checking of the implemented projects if they were done according to what was planned. Corrollary to this, the CSOs provide assessments and recommendations after monitoring the implemented PPAs.

The willingness of the CSOs to help and the gains that they would benefit from actively participating served as the enhancing factor. On the one hand, consensus of responses indicated that the willingness of the CSOs to help, served as the main motivation for them to participate. On the other hand, the consolidation of the factors "establishing network", endorsement of the organization's advocacies", and "gaining insights" all lead to one common theme: the benefits that the CSO would gain if they would participate. This served as another motivation for them to participate.

There was no common answer among the respondents. Each of the four respondents had different answers but one can be certain that all of these hindrances were somehow because of unfavorable circumstances. The MCCI would only be willing to help if the PPA would be in their field of interest. The SCCPC stated that they were more than willing to offer support to the local government of Legazpi with their projects and products but the problem was that the local government of Legazpi did not extend a helping hand. The products were all free but they came from Sorsogon. Mr. Jesus Gabionza Jr., the chairman of the organization, said that they were willing to extend help to the local government of Legazpi. All the local government of Legazpi needs to do was to ask. Thus, the main hindering factors for the participation of the CSOs were not of their individual choices but the unfavorable circumstances.

The City Mayor only pointed out one recommendation to enhance CSO participation, and that was to integrate them with/in the local legislative body. He compared the case of

Naga City, where the local government integrated the CSOs with the legislative body. Consequently, he used various mechanisms for the enhancement of their participation.

The integration in the legislative body means there were certain privileges. Integration to the legislative body means having the privilege to be included in the legislative process or law-making. In the case of the CSOs, their major role would be pressure groups in such a way they would be able to represent the side of the general public. Being accredited and having a say on the administrations decisions, the CSOs would be able to formally address the needs of the people, hence, enhancing laws and administration in the local government.

In the case of Legazpi City, this kind of participation has not yet been implemented. According to the Local Government Code of the Philippines 1991, the CSOs must be accredited and integrated in the sanggunian of the local governments. However, it can be seen that this type of integration seems to be stuck in the theoretical level; theory once again did not spell reality.

The reason for the inconsistent participation of the CSOs in the planning, implementation, and evaluation was due to the factors that either enhanced and hindered their participation. The active participation of the CSOs in the planning process was a product of the enhancing factors. It is associated with the factor "obligation as a CSO". According to Article 3, Section 34 of the 1991 Local Government Code of the Philippines: "Local government units shall promote the establishment and operations of people's and non-governmental organizations to become active partners in the pursuit of local autonomy." It shows that it is not just the local government that has an obligation to the CSOs. But inversely, the CSOs have an obligation towards the local government by being members of the Local Development Council. Hence,

providing an avenue for them to participate.

The active participation in the planning process was also due to the enhancing factors like "establishing network", "endorsement of the organization's advocacies", and "gaining insights". If further analyzed, these factors lead to one common ground. They all imply gaining personal benefits. And in the context of this study, these are the benefits that the organizations might gain from participating in the development efforts of the local government. This serves as a substantial motivator for the CSOs to participate. By participating in the planning process, the CSOs were able to establish a connection with the local government. And having connections imply certain benefits. An example of this is that CSOs were able to promote their own organizational interests and advocacies. Corollary to this, during the discussions in meetings, they were able to gain ideas and insights from other members of the council for their own programs, projects, and activities.

Also they were able to gain weights from other members of the other council members for their own programs, projects and activities.

The not so active participation of the CSOs in the implementation and evaluation process is associated with the hindering factors. The "lack of interest if not in accordance with the nature of the organization" factor is a primary cause for lack of participation. Lack of interest denotes lack of enthusiasm and motivation to do something. This results to negligence and imprudence. Putting it in the context of CSO participation, the lack of interest of the CSOs resulted in failure to accomplish things and unsound collaboration in carrying out good local governance. Hence, it means that if a certain PPA is not in accordance with an organization's interest, it will result to minimal involvement and participation of the CSOs.

Another factor that would explain their not so active participation in the implementation and evaluation process is due to the administration of the local government; the "lack of transparency of the local government". Although there were some CSOs that viewed the administration as contributory to the enhancement of their participation, there were also some CSOs that viewed this negatively, hence, becoming a hindering factor. These CSOs saw the lacking transparency of the administration consequently, reducing CSO participation.

Lastly, the willingness of the CSOs to help, served as the primary enhancing factor for several CSOs to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation. It reached a consensus of responses from several CSOs. This would explain why there was a minimal participation, in the implementation and evaluation process.

To further establish the interpretation that the researchers pointed out, the data were validated by the studies and literatures that were reviewed.

In the Master's thesis of Orbista (2012) titled "NGOs Participation in Local Governance in the Philippines", he examined the relationship between the LGU and the NGOs in the context of Philippines local governance and the extent of NGO participation. It tried to test and verify four hypotheses. He did this by comparing two different municipalities in which he elicited data, through focused group discussions and interviews. According to Orbista (2012), he concluded that "NGOs rarely participated, if at all in the planning process, although a number of NGOs somehow got to be involved in the implementation of PPAs". This conclusion was grounded on the findings that "in both larger and smaller municipalities it was found that the mechanisms were in place yet they were not utilized appropriately". He further argued that opportunities for NGOs to participate are great; however, it

has not been realized. He also found out inconsistencies in the statements from the NGO respondents and the government official respondents. On the one hand, the consensus of the NGO respondents showed that they did not have much participation. However, on the other hand, the government official respondents claimed that the NGOs within their jurisdiction were active and participative. Similar to the study of Orbista, the researchers' study illumined less than average participation of the CSOs. As seen in the results, only two CSOs were active in all the three aspects of participation (in the context of this research). It seems that CSOs were not utilized by the local government of Legazpi to the fullest of their operability, or it can be the other way around. And similar to Orbista's findings on the extent of participation by the CSOs (NGOs), this study also found out that all of the nine CSO respondents that claimed participation, all of them were active in the planning process. However, when it came to the implementation and evaluation process of the PPAs, participation varied, in such a way that only few were active. It shows that the participation of the CSOs were only utilized in the planning process only.

Similar CSO participation result was manifested in the study of Gouzou (2012), in collaboration with CARE International, titled "Study on the Role of Civil Society in Governance Processes in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)". This study viewed CSOs as being inefficient in carrying out governance processes in the DRC: "the analysis shows that the CSOs are not very effective in the governance work" (Gouzou, 2012). Results showed that only 5% of the CSOs are highly effective when it comes to strategic planning and adaptability. While 48% are potentially effective. Forty seven percent have poor effectiveness. Ultimately, "CSOs scored poorly on each of the five roles/functions assigned to them: to plan strategically and adapt to changing contexts; to put a Rights-Based Approach into practice; to develop capacities; to advocate for democratic governance; and to be

examples of good internal governance" (Gouzou,2012). In the context of the CSOs in Legazpi City, although it did not reach this kind of extreme misconduct in participation, the CSOs failed to utilize their full potential in carrying out governance. This was seen in their participation that the CSOs were active. All of the nine CSOs that claimed participation in the PPAs of Legazpi City were fully active in the planning process. However, when it came to the implementation and evaluation, minimal active participation was seen. Hence, we can see that active participation is inconsistent among the CSO respondents of this study.

The Master's thesis of Maria Cecilia Del Puerto (2017) titled "Civil Society Organizations in Participatory Governance through the Bottom Up Budgeting (BUB) Process: The Case of Camarines Norte Province" focused on the assessment of CSOs in the Province of Camarines Norte in governance through the Bottom-Up Budgeting (BUB) Process. The second statement of the problem solicits the extent of the participation of CSOs in the BUB Process. The findings on the side of the CSOs reflected high participation with a total of 79%. However, CSOs failed to fully participate due to "the failure to attend meetings and related activities". On the side of the government, the overall assessment was low. The MLGOOs claimed that not all CSOs were actively participating. Connecting it to the study at hand, CSO participation in the local government of Legazpi City varied in terms of planning, implementation, and evaluation. This means that CSOs are not fully active in the development efforts of the local government.

The third problem in Del Puerto's work solicited the factors that affect CSO participation in the BUB Process. The topmost factor that affected CSO participation in her study were the "conflict in schedule", "short notice of invitation", "lack of transportation money and loss of income". Another dominating factor to their participation is the political

interference in the prioritization of projects. "Those factors cause discouragement from the part of the CSOs" (Del Puerto, 2017). Relating it to the study at hand, the researchers discovered that there were numerous enhancing and hindering factors to the participation of the CSOs. The hindering factors from Del Puerto's study posited some of the hindering factors this study. In the study at hand, various factors were considered as the enhancing and hindering factors to CSO participation. Hence, this shows that CSO participation is affected by numerous factors.

Similar results were found in the study of Butkevičiene, et al., (2010) titled "Role of Civil Society Organizations in Local Governance: Theoretical Approaches and Empirical Challenges in Lithuania". The results of their study suggests that both local administration and CSOs acknowledge the importance of civil society participation in governance. However, according to them, "neither local government nor CSOs have clear vision about partnership models". "Collaboration of CSOs with local government is rather fragmented, usually comes as separate projects but there is no obvious strategy for partnership development yet". On the one hand, the local government does not provide space for partnership. And on the other hand, CSOs claim that the city never knocks at the door asking for help. Hence, participation is hindered due to lack of initiation and interest. Butkevičiene, et al., (2010) concluded "that the role of CSOs in local governance is rather relevant in theory as well as in Lithuanian practice." Relating it to this study, CSO participation in Legazpi City is intrinsically less active, in comparison to the theoretical expectation. It seems that participation is still in the theoretical level, rather than in reality. Some of the respondents of this study claimed several hindering factors to their participation. Among those hindering factors were: "lack of interest if not in accordance with the nature of the organization" and "rigid process for handling project proposals." If put in the context of the study

of Butkevičiene et al. (2010), CSOs are not interested in partnership and the local government does not provide space for partnership. Hence, going back to the study at hand, these factors are the impediments to the collaborative partnership and participation between the local government of Legazpi City and CSOs. Another point that must be taken into consideration is the implementation process. According to the Mayor of Legazpi City, the participation of the CSOs in the implementation process of the PPAs of the city is relative. This means that participation depends on the nature of the PPA and the partnership that it bears. If a PPA is initiated by the local government, specifically by the Department Heads, it oftentimes happens that the CSOs are being put out of the picture when it comes to the implementation process.

Nheu, N & McDonald, H's (2010) book "By the people, for the people? Community participation in law reform" tackled the participation of the CSOs specifically in the legislative aspect. In Chapter 7.1 Role of CSOs in Law Reform, Nheu & McDonald posited the significance of the CSOs in the legislative aspect: "Our data suggests that government often ascribes CSOs a 'representative' role in law reform." It means that if the government wants the views of the public or stakeholders on particular issues, CSOs may be identified and harnessed for their standing and expertise, or for their reach into particular groups of members of the public, and are, thereby, a means to access particular communities. Law-making institutions often identify CSOs as experts, key stakeholders, or informants in particular law reform issues because of their perceived expertise or knowledge in the particular issues and the certain needs of people. Such knowledge about clients and constituents enables CSOs to bring unique and practical perspective to law reform issues. Meaning, the CSOs are being identified as having more political clout because they are the representatives of the people. Hence, CSOs may be of great impact in the enhancement of the laws.

Relating it to the answer of the third Statement of The Problem, integration of the CSOs in the Sangunian will not only improve laws but will also send a message to all CSOs in such a way that would increase participation. It would encourage them to fully actualize their concerns and consequently be more efficient in representing the people. Ergo, it will increase participation among CSOs.

The cited literature was similar to the book of Kamal Mashriqi (2018), in collaboration with West Asia-North Africa Institution, titled "The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Legislative Reform." For him, CSOs are considered the "fourth power" within a state. It indicates that there is a strong belief in the power of the CSOs to effect legislative reform. Civil Society Organizations access local community needs and communicate them to decision-makers so that they are taken into account when defining and designing policies and laws. However, according to Mashriqi, CSOs must be properly informed and trained in the legislative process before their integration. It will be fundamentally wrong to hastily integrate them without them having proper knowledge on legislation. Hence, CSOs must be properly trained before integration; and it is the duty of the local government to provide them with such mechanisms

The study implies that the present process in reality in terms of local governance did not reconcile with the mandates of the law. The Philippine Constitution mandates that all sectors of society shall participate in governing. This principle is reiterated in the Local Government Code of 1991 or RA 7160, providing avenues and opportunities for CSOs to participate in local government affairs. Other national laws provide for specific mandates on people's participation. The minimal participation of the CSOs meant that they do not fully understand and do their role as CSOs. It is because they were not well oriented and equipped in their role as CSOs. As

CSOs, they should be partners of the local government in carrying out good local governance. With this, their participation in the development efforts of the local government of Legazpi City is of great importance. It is not just because they represent the interests of their organization, but they are also the representatives of the general public.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers were able to come up with the appropriate conclusions to answer the researcher problems. They are:

What is the participation of the CSOs in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the PPAs?

On Planning

The participation of the CSOs in the planning process was by attending meetings and active participation in the discussions thereof. Participation in this aspect was very active. A total of nine out of nine CSO respondents were active in this aspect. With that, the local government of Legazpi City must continue to maintain and enhance CSO participation in the planning process.

On Implementation

The participation of the CSOs in the implementation process was by doing actual work. Participation in this aspect was not active. Only a total of three out of nine CSO respondents were active. This implies a low participation. Consequently, the local government must provide suitable mechanisms and policies that would serve as an avenue for the CSOs to participate actively. The operability of the CSOs was not fully utilized.

On Evaluation

The participation of the CSOs in the evaluation process was by monitoring and assessing implemented projects. Participation in this aspect was average. A total of five out of nine CSO respondents were active in this aspect. This implies that the local government of Legazpi City must enhance CSO participation in the evaluation aspect. With that, the local government must form an official committee on evaluating implemented projects in where CSOs would have a voice and would be involved.

What are the enhancing and hindering factors to the participation of the CSOs?

On Enhancing Factors

The main enhancing factor to the participation of the CSO was the willingness of the CSOs to help. From the conclusion itself, the researchers deemed it appropriate for the CSOs to continue that motivation and for the local government to maintain and develop strategies to add up enhancing factors for the participation of the CSOs.

On Hindering Factors

The main hindering factor to the participation of the CSO was the underlying unfavorable circumstances that the CSOs experience while trying to work harmoniously with the local government of Legazpi City. Only four out of 11 claimed that they experience hindering factors but it was inevitable for all the others not to. With that, the researchers recommend that the CSOs must be have a more positive outlook towards the local government, and for the latter to develop measures and device strategies to enhance CSO participation.

What are the recommendations to enhance CSO participation?

The CSOs must be integrated within the Sanguniang Panlungsod, so as to be part of the local legislative body of the

City. This would serve as a major enhancing factor for the CSOs to participate actively, for they would be able to formally be heard as the official representative of the people. The local government of Legazpi must emulate the mechanisms that the local government of Naga City employed in integrating their CSOs in the local legislative body.

Recommendations

On the part of the local government of Legazpi City, participatory governance must be implemented. This must be done is such a way that the CSOs would be the watchdogs of good governance through checks and balances. An example of this is through transparency and accountability of the local government to the CSOs in the implementation and evaluation process of the PPAs. The local government of Legazpi City must impose laws, policies, or mechanisms that would serve as avenues to increase CSO participation. With that, one of the efficient avenues that would increase CSO participation is to bring back the Bottoms Up Budgeting (BUB) Process. Another is to emulate the mechanisms that are used in the local government of Naga City in enhancing CSO participation.

On the part of the CSOs, they must enhance their involvement in local government affairs. Their participation is vital in carrying out good local governance. With that, they must hone their knowledge and skills on their role in local governance.

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