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**Evaluation of the LDAP
NGO Grants Components**

**Local Development Assistance Program
(LDAP)
End-of-Project Impact Evaluation**

by

**Conchita M. Ragraio
NGO Specialist**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE NGO/PO MOVEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

To better appreciate the role the NGOs/POs played in the first years of decentralization, it may be useful to look four decades back and view the socio-political environment prevailing during the period when these social movements emerged and developed. The four decades cover the period from the mid-1950s to the early 1990s immediately prior to enactment of the Local Government Code.

During these last four decades, the country pursued a model of development that perpetuated the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the elite. This has resulted in, among others, the erosion of public accountability and the stifling of local initiative. The dominant fallacy then was that development was the sole responsibility of government. But while government continually asserted its principal role in national development, it lacked the human and financial resources to achieve its mission.

It was partly because of government's failure to deliver its development programs that the NGO sector emerged. The first generation of NGOs started as "relief and welfare"-oriented organizations, whose well-defined roles were providing emergency goods and care in calamity-prone and calamity-stricken areas. The second generation of NGOs emerged with the advent of rural development planning in the 1960s and 1970s. These NGOs were engaged in the delivery of basic services in remote rural areas unserved by government agencies. A third generation of NGOs is exemplified by consortia or coalitions engaged in policy reform advocacy and in interventions that contribute to the creation of alternative development structures and processes.

In all these years, the common practice was that of working outside "the establishment," or undertaking activities in parallel with government agencies. The common sentiment then was one of mistrust and animosity, with the government perceived largely as an adversary, especially during the Marcos era. From the NGO/PO perspective, government represented mainstream, anti-people development, while they were the pro-people alternative. The government, on the other hand, viewed NGOs/POs as subversive elements seeking to undermine its authority. This kind of atmosphere posed difficulties for the LDAP at the outset and hindered the operations of some LDAP projects.

1.2 BEGINNINGS OF "NGO PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL AUTONOMY"

The year 1986 saw the widening of the so-called "democratic space", with increasing recognition of the right of the citizens and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political and economic decision-making. In the same year, government began to re-examine its structures and institutions in the light of the need to respond to current changes.

A group of consultants conducting policy review studies for the Presidential Commission on Government Reorganization concluded that one of the major constraints to the optimization of the country's development potential was the lack of local autonomy. With local communities lacking the authority and resources to promote their welfare, they find themselves perennially in the backwaters of development.

Seeing the need for a sustained pursuit of the issues impinging on local autonomy, they initiated the establishment of the Center for the Advancement of Local Autonomy, having as major incorporators both political figures and leaders from the NGO sector. Plans for the Center's establishment, however, failed to materialize, as the group did not progress beyond discussion meetings on the incorporation of the Center.

The same group worked together on various initiatives as consultants of the Philippine Development Alternatives Foundation. One initiative was the preparation of discussion papers for the National Congress on Local Autonomy convened by the Leagues in October 1989. Another initiative was inspired by the PCGR discussions on alternatives for improving the performance of local governments and concerned the formulation of a local autonomy model to be pilot tested in selected communities. PDAF saw its role, through the exercise, as institutional advisor to the then Department of Local Government.

A major component of the experimental project was the participation of NGOs and POs who were seen not only as catalytic and empowering agents as far as grassroots communities were concerned, but also as possible conduits of services and resources that genuine local autonomy can make available to local communities.

The local autonomy model that PDAF envisioned was basically premised on a triad of principles: **DECENTRALIZATION, DEMOCRATIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT**. Features of the model included: the delivery of basic services; secondment of line agencies' employees to the local chief executives; monitoring of

public officials' performance; and initiative, recall and referendum.

While preliminary meetings with NGOs were held, surveys conducted and a modeling exercise started in Lucban, Quezon, the projects were plagued by PDAF's internal organizational problems and were subsequently shelved.

In January 1991, the Caucus of Development NGO Networks held a conference on the role of NGOs in building democracy, with the aim of gathering the perspectives, ideas and views of different NGOs on the social, political and economic situation of the country. The conference was held only months after the national peace conference was convened to define an NGO agenda of peace and development based on justice. At the time the CODE-NGO conference was held, the Gulf war had just begun, and the government was in the process of formulating evacuation plans for Filipino contract workers in the Gulf region and contingency plans in case the war would escalate. The conference framework presented three specific areas in which NGOs could play a role: building democratic institutions; participating in the 1992 electoral process; and mobilizing in cases of emergency and crises such as the one being experienced by the country then.

It is interesting to note that while resolutions and action plans formulated during the conference defined the specific roles of NGOs in a democracy, such as "fiscalizers, model builders, organizers, advocates of the cause of the people... and should be in the forefront in the delivery of basic services" -- roles NGOs afterwards assumed in partnership with LGUs during the initial period of decentralization -- no specific mention was made in these resolutions, action plans and lists of post-conference activities about the impending enactment of the Local Government Code and what roles NGOs would play in its implementation.

2.0 OBJECTIVES AND FRAMEWORK OF THE EVALUATION

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The End-of-Project Impact Evaluation aims to determine the contribution of the Local Development Assistance Program (LDAP) to the decentralization efforts of the Government of the Philippines.

The impact evaluation of the NGO Grants Component seeks to assess the contribution of the program in enhancing the collaborative efforts of the local

government units and the NGOs/POs in initiating decentralization support activities.

2.2 SCOPE OF WORK AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation involved the participation of LDAP project proponents and PO partners, representatives of regional and national NGO networks and other key informants in the following areas: Metro Manila (NCR), Baguio City and the Cordilleras, Bohol province, Davao City and the Davao provinces. The rationale for site selection was the clustering of the LDAP-assisted projects in these areas; Metro Manila is where the national NGO networks and 10 project proponents are, Bohol hosted 8 projects, while Davao had 7. Baguio/Cordillera region was also included, although LDAP assisted only 2 projects there, to be able to assess the extent of NGO/PO participation in the decentralization efforts in the region, with minimal LDAP assistance.

Documents such as program publications, progress reports, terminal reports, project manuals and relevant project materials were reviewed and their contents analyzed. Focused group discussions and key informant interviews were employed in the gathering of information. The interviews and FGDs focused on:

- Grassroots' contributions to decentralization efforts
- NGO/PO activities undertaken with LGUs and the nature and extent of NGO-LGU cooperation
- Lessons from pilot projects
- Program influence on universities and training institutions
- LGU performance review procedures
- Adversarial relationships between LGUs and NGOs/POs:
nature, roots and mitigation
- Program mode: effectiveness, weaknesses, recommendations

Following is the list of the questions used to guide the focused group discussions and the individual interviews:

1. Did the program enhance NGO-LGU cooperation? In what ways? Did it promote grassroots associations' contributions to decentralization efforts? Did it encourage local citizens to participate in grassroots associations?

2. What sort of activities do the NGOs undertake with local governments? Do they address governance and accountability issues in these activities? How has the program helped in addressing these concerns?

3. What are the lessons from the pilot projects? Where lies the expertise/effectivity of NGOs given the wide range of possible modes of participation? What local governance issues are the NGOs most interested in? What are their stands/positions in these issues?

4. How did the program influence universities/training institutions to address participation?

5. Are there performance review procedures in place enabling citizens to be informed, to evaluate and influence the effectiveness of local government management? Did the program contribute to these review processes?

6. Have there been adversarial relationships between NGOs and LGUs? What were the roots/nature of these relationships? Did the program contribute to mitigating these adversarial relationships?

7. Was the program an effective mode of providing assistance to NGOs to participate in local governance? If yes, why? If no, what could have been a more effective mode?

2.3 PROGRAM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The evaluation will address these basic evaluation issues:

- Program Rationale (Did the program make sense?)
- Achievement of Objectives (Has the program achieved what was

expected?)

- Impacts and Effects (What has happened as a result of the program?)
- Alternatives (Are there better ways of achieving the results?)

In assessing the program's impacts and effects, the evaluation will be guided by the program's framework on NGO/PO participation on decentralization and local governance which set as possible areas for participation the following:

- strengthening the local bureaucracy;
- debureaucratizing local governance; and
- institutionalizing people's participation in governance.

3.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

THE LDAP NGO GRANTS COMPONENT: "Breaking ground..."

The NGO Grants Component of the LDAP was started on May 10, 1991 and was to have run for two years, although effectively the program lasted only 18 months, with several extensions granted to allow for the completion of projects. The program officially ended on November 30, 1994.

The purpose of the LDAP NGO Grants Component was "to promote NGO participation in the government's decentralization program." This was premised on the belief that the participation of NGOs in local governance would lead to a more effective and efficient decentralization program. Its general objectives were (Terminal Report: LDAP NGO Support Grants Component, 1994):

- To generate a strong multisectoral support and collective action to sustain and strengthen initiatives and breakthroughs in decentralization, in general, and the Local Government Code, in particular, from key sectors in all levels; and
- To develop and promote replicable decentralization models,

policies, partnership mechanisms, structures and systems evolving from the pilot and training projects being implemented by PBSP/LDAP partners.

The program's areas of assistance were in: education and training; institution-building; community organizing; technical assistance and consultancy; workshops, conferences and study tours; and publications and promotions. It assisted a total of 33 province/municipality/city wide projects, 5 projects which were nationwide in scope and 13 centers for Local Governance. Additional 15 projects were funded from the Program Management Funds. A total of 14 provinces were covered by the Program -- 6 in Luzon, 4 in Visayas and 4 in Mindanao.

The expected outputs of the program were:

1. A strong multisectoral core of local and national advocates organized on decentralization;
2. Replicable models of decentralization developed from the experiences of implementing partner organizations;
3. Regional CLGs institutionalized as key players in developing capacities of both LGUs and NGOs/POs;
4. Policies, plans, structures and systems developed to support decentralization and integrated into the local and national agenda; and
5. Stronger partnerships operationalized and popularized among NGOs, POs, LGUs and NGAs as they participate in the decentralization process.

In this evaluation, due appreciation is given to the limitations of the program. First of all, the time frame was too short to be able to create as wide an impact as would be desired, and to be able to allow the expected changes to take place. Secondly, the portion initially allotted for the NGO Grants Component represented only 5% of the total LDAP funds and hence, limited the number of projects that could be assisted, the duration of these projects and the magnitude of the grants. Thirdly, the program operated under a political environment in which misgivings abounded regarding the bringing together of traditional adversaries. These apprehensions were heightened after May 1992 when NGOs/POs, on one hand, and the LGUs, on the other, found the prospect of working together unpleasant, having been for the most part on opposite camps in the recent elections. The fourth point is that the program's potential for laying the foundations for local

transformation and influencing local development was not widely realized. For many, the program merely provided funds to be accessed for projects.

4.0 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

4.1 NGO/PO CONTRIBUTIONS TO DECENTRALIZATION NGO-LGU COOPERATION

Did the program enhance NGO-LGU cooperation? In what ways? Did it promote grassroots associations' contributions to decentralization efforts? Did it encourage local citizens to participate in grassroots associations?

There were mixed responses to these questions, but more respondents cited positive influences.

At the outset of the implementation of the Local Government Code, there were misgivings and apprehensions as both sectors viewed one another with mistrust. The resistance from the LGU side arose from the perception that the NGOs were encroaching on what they considered to be the LGUs' turf. On the part of the NGOs/POs, participation in local governance was something they were not used to doing, operating, as they have been, quite independently of government. The Local Government Code was also new to them; thus, they did not know the possibilities and limits of the Code for them.

Part of the difficulty also stemmed from differences in views, agendas, work styles, processes and approaches. NGOs tended to have a more participatory culture, while LGUs tended to be bureaucratic. NGOs/POs emphasize social development, while LGUs focus on physical infrastructure development. The former's constituency is a particular sector or issue-based sectors, while the LGUs' constituency is the whole community (Soriano, 1993).

The Program, however, was instrumental in having both NGOs/POs and LGUs take the basic step of coming together. Among the NGOs/POs, it induced greater interest in the Local Government Code and opened avenues for working with LGUs. It also provided venues for clarifying their organizational mandates and objectives. In the case of Social Action Centers, as for instance, in the case of the Diocesan SAC of Bohol, the Program enabled the SAC to explain the spirit with which it was assisting government, thus "improving" its image and influence

in the eyes of local government. While community organizing was previously considered a subversive activity, it had now become acceptable and devoid of its negative connotations.

Among LGUs, there was greater appreciation of the role of NGOs/POs in local governance and development and, consequently, greater openness to NGOs/POs in terms of ideas, management, style and expertise.

The program, thus, contributed to each sector's understanding particular cultures and approaches of the other, and to the process of confidence-building to a point when both sectors were able to trust each other enough to agree to work together.

Among the Davao NGOs/POs, clarification as to the nature of "partnership" or "cooperation" was an important first step to working together. Partnership was clarified as denoting equality; commonality of purpose despite the differences in methods; complementation; based on transparency, mutual trust and respect; and without attempts at co-optation.

Furthermore, the program, through the regional NGO/PO consultations, has been able to solicit as wide a participation as possible within timetable limitations in the NGO/PO accreditation and selection processes. In some cases, as in the Bohol Alliance of NGOs, the Mindanao NGO Congress, the Nagkakaisang NGO ng Zambales at Olongapo (NNZO), the Bulacan NGO Coalition for Cooperatives Development, the NGOs/POs were able to expand the consensus-building process among various sectors toward formulating common development agendas. In the case of some regional organizations (e.g., the Central Luzon NGO/PO Coalition for Local Governance, while no common agenda was formulated, a basis of unity was agreed upon).

Another contribution of the Program was the formation of mechanisms of cooperation. Among these mechanisms are the National Coordinating Council for Local Governance (NCC-LG), the 65 Provincial Coordinating Councils (PCCs) and the Sta. Catalina Forum. The NCC-LG, at its initial formation, was composed of 18 national NGO networks, and then expanded to 23 at the height of the accreditation/selection processes for the local special bodies. The PCCs were established as a result of the nationwide consultation processes. The SCF is a multi-sectoral forum on local governance and development issues composed of representatives of NGO and PO networks, the Leagues of local governments and national government agencies.

Efforts were also exerted to promote the understanding of the Local

Government Code in peasant organizations through the Congress for People's Agrarian Reform, the grassroots women's organizations through the PILIPINA and urban poor associations and NGOs/POs in Mindanao through the Mindanao Congress and the Mindanao Urban Poor Congress. Although the reach to the grassroots was not as wide as the Program would have desired, inroads have been accomplished within the limited time and resources.

4.2 NGO ACTIVITIES

What sort of activities do the NGOs undertake with local governments? Do they address governance/accountability issues in these activities? How has the program helped in addressing these concerns?

The Local Government Code has opened opportunities for NGO/PO - LGU partnerships in local development, governance and empowerment. It provides for six primary venues for people's participation (Saligan, 1992):

- 1) representation in local special bodies;
- 2) sectoral representation in local legislative councils;
- 3) mandatory consultations;
- 4) role of NGOs/POs (active partnership in development, joint ventures with LGUs, assistance from LGUs, privatization of public economic enterprises);
- 5) recall; and
- 6) initiative and referendum.

Through LDAP-assisted projects, NGOs/POs have been able to utilize a few of these venues; namely, representation in local special bodies and participation in terms of active partnerships and joint undertakings with LGUs, and privatization.

Membership in Local Special Bodies:

Largely, through the nationwide regional consultations that were held between April to June 1992, NGOs and POs all over the country were exhorted to apply for accreditation to the local special bodies. These regional consultations achieved the following (AF, 1993):

- 1) Realization of the importance of NGO participation in the local special bodies;
- 2) Agreement on the mechanism for networking and consultation among NGOs and POs at all levels from provincial down to barangay;
- 3) Agreement on a system for selecting NGOs/POs for membership in the local special bodies;
- 4) Validation of the system for monitoring and evaluating NGO/PO participation in the local special bodies and LGU compliance with codal provisions regarding such;
- 5) Nationwide listing of NGOs/POs; and
- 6) Provincial action plans regarding NGO/PO membership in the local special bodies.

Data, as of January 1993, indicate that efforts to solicit the widest participation of NGOs and POs in the local special bodies have met with success, however, limited. The participation rate of the NGOs and POs in the application process averaged 43.6%. Of those that applied, practically all were accredited in the local special bodies concerned. However, among those accredited, actual membership in the local councils and special bodies averaged only 56.8% and as far as the actual active participation of the NGOs/POs goes, many NGOs/POs report that despite their being fully constituted, the special bodies have yet to be convened (ISDS, 1993).

Of the 60,000 NGOs/POs all over the country, only 15.6% were reached by the NCC-LG and only 1.2% were selected members (PBSP, 1993).

Sectoral Representation in the Sanggunian:

Only 52% of cities and municipalities nationwide have submitted their reports on the status of the selection of sectoral representation (ISDS, 1993). Some of the LGUs are merely awaiting COMELEC guidelines on the conduct of elections for the sectoral representatives and the enabling legislation from Congress. Many others, however, are apparently hesitant to implement this particular provision of the Code.

It is in their membership in these local bodies, particularly the PBAC, and in their representation in the local Sanggunian that NGOs/POs will have a direct hand in addressing accountability concerns. However, until elections are held, in the case of the Sanggunian, and these local special bodies are convened, the NGO/PO members will have to "wait in the wings".

LGU - NGO/PO Partnership:

Where NGOs/POs met with more success are the pilot models of LGU-NGO/PO partnerships. These were mainly in cooperatives development, basic services delivery, environmental protection and management, and in enhancing local systems and structures -- areas where NGOs and POs felt more comfortable because in these projects they utilized their expertise and drew upon their experiences and strengths.

The projects of the Davao-based NGO/PO participants in the LDAP covered a wide range of concerns: basic health care, public market management, local agricultural and enterprise development, community-based environmental management and protection (focusing on reforestation). On the other hand, the Bohol NGOs had one project on coastal resource management and a common project with majority of the NGOs involved in training members of the Barangay Development Councils and the Municipal Development Councils on the preparation and implementation of sustainable economic development programs. The emphases in these projects were: 1) the community residents as active project participants; and 2) multi-sectoral advisory bodies serving as liaison between the LGU and the project participants.

Perhaps an indicator of how successful some of these partnerships have been

is the continuing support the government extends to the program that was pushed by both partners in the pilot project. For instance, the Malitz municipal government has committed ten million pesos for its reforestation program and has allocated a million pesos to support the current efforts of the Malita Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc.

4.3 LESSONS FROM PILOT PROJECTS

Where lies the expertise/effectivity of the NGOs given the wide range of possible modes of participation? What local governance issues are the NGOs most interested in? What are their stands/positions in these issues? What are the lessons that can be drawn from the pilot projects?

As the LDAP experience has shown, the NGOs and POs work best where they put to work their resources, strengths and expertise. The modes of participation that hold much promise thus far, as has been previously mentioned, are in joint undertakings in basic service delivery, community-based natural resource protection and management, and in extending assistance to improve local government systems, such as in revenue mobilization. Asked about what they feel are their strengths, respondents mentioned the following:

- 1) community organizing;
- 2) cooperatives organizing;
- 3) lobbying/advocacy;
- 4) legal reforms;
- 5) community communications (newsletters, radio programs);
- 6) social credit;
- 7) advocacy of gender concerns;
- 8) indigenous knowledge and technology;

9) experience in alternative health care; and

10) environmentalism.

NGOs/POs are most concerned about the incorporation of their pro-people development agenda into the local planning processes. Because of this, they feel that to be able to sustain partnerships with LGUs, a leveling of understanding of the most basic issues needs to be achieved – what constitutes equitable and environmentally sustainable development; what are the root causes of poverty and underdevelopment; and the need for the community's participation in planning and in making decisions about directions and interventions that affect their livelihood and sustenance.

The lessons that can be drawn from the pilot projects are many, but they can be summarized thus:

1) Planning activities should start from the grassroots level, building up to higher levels. This is, after all, what participatory democracy is all about. The communication loop then should be closed, ensuring proper feedback to the grassroots regarding plans formulated and decisions made.

2) Trust and confidence in one another is a basic ingredient in an effective partnership. Trust comes, too, with the credibility that one sector perceives the other possesses. Building trust and confidence, however, entails a process of sitting together, airing out each other's concerns in an atmosphere of mutual respect and openness. To achieve this, individuals need to relate to one another on a personal level as well.

3) Projects can start small, utilizing local and indigenous resources (financial, material and human). Outside resources should be considered supplementary.

4) Patience is a virtue that would keep all players in good stead, realizing that they are all involved in the process of building genuine democracy, "stone by stone", "block by block", cementing each piece with their commitment and perseverance.

5) The most viable expression of NGO involvement in local governance was shown to be the Provincial Coordinating Council. PCCs were organized in almost every province and credit should be given the NGOs and POs who took part in the organizing efforts. The exercise helped set the stage for the meaningful citizen participation in local governance at the provincial level. There was, however, no provision to sustain these efforts beyond the NGO/PO accreditation and selection

process. "It was like gearing up the people for something, raising their expectations, then leaving them with nothing to carry on."

4.4 PARTICIPATION OF UNIVERSITIES AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

How did the program influence universities/training institutions to address participation?

To fully carry out the mandates of the Local Government Code, the key players need to gear up to be in a position to perform their specific roles in making local autonomy a reality. An assessment of the capability needs of LGUs conducted even prior to the enactment of the law showed critical gaps in LGUs' capacities.

The Center for Local Governance Program was conceptualized in response to these needs. The CLG was intended to perform the role of a partner institution to carry out capability building programs enhancing local officials' skills, values and knowledge as well as fostering NGOs' and POs' understanding of local governance processes, thus improving the quality of their participation in the decentralization process. More than a training institution, the CLG was to serve as a resource center for LGUs, NGOs, POs and the private sector.

Through the CLG program, seven universities, one college and one NGO in nine regions of the country participated in bringing together participants from LGUs and NGOs/POs within a period of six months of trainings. Positive outcomes of the CLG were:

1) It provided a venue for direct interaction between NGOs/POs and LGUs in a neutral ground and with an open, learning atmosphere. For NGOs/POs, it was an educational experience to witness, for instance, how local governments plan. LGUs, on the other hand, appreciated the NGOs as a rich source of ideas, creative approaches and innovations.

2) While at the start, the attendance of NGOs was disappointing, during subsequent trainings, through the previous training participants' promotion efforts, there became an "outpouring of enthusiasm". There were, in fact, requests for other training courses such as strategic planning, land use planning and joint-

venture project proposal preparation. Other follow-up activities after the end of the LDAP assistance were undertaken at the initiative and expense of the host institutions (e.g., Kaduami, Benguet State University and the Ateneo de Davao University).

3) By-products of the CLG Program for the host institutions were staff development, module development for other areas of training, a pool of resource persons on local governance and overall strengthening of the institution. Many of the CLGs have been institutionalized by their host universities and are continuing the programs they have begun with LDAP. The Ateneo Resource Center for Local Governance has gone as far as coordinating, starting this schoolyear, the Ateneo de Davao University's Master in Government Administration Program.

While most of the CLGs succeeded in their capability building activities, improvements have been suggested, some of which specific CLGs have already incorporated in their on-going programs. More innovative types of training would be more interesting to target participants, such as outside-the-classroom, experiential modes of learning; experience-sharing; symposia with other sectors; and technology transfer processes with recognized technical experts. A common sentiment aired by respondents was that courses be offered at the provincial level, to allow for greater participation, especially from the NGOs/POs, for whom attendance in 4- to 7-day trainings always posed a problem. "Many of the NGOs/POs invited to send participants to the trainings failed to do so because of the lack of funds ... to defray transportation expenses and allowances of their intended participants. (Other) NGO members ... refused...to attend...not because of lack of interest but because they could not afford to leave either their work in the organization or their means of livelihood for the duration of the trainings, which was from 4 to 7 days" (ARCLG, 1994). Another suggestion is to target barangay officials as participants, because they are the ones with lesser opportunities for training, but who have greater need for knowledge and skills required for local governance.

A mismatch such as the situation that existed between Bohol and Cebu can also be avoided in the future. The CLG for the region was based in Cebu, with only one LDAP-assisted project, while the pilot projects in the region were mostly in the province of Bohol. The partnerships developed in Bohol might have been more greatly enhanced if the CLG had been based in Tagbilaran, Bohol.

Greater coordination between the CLGs and the NCC-LG members at the inception of the CLG programs could also have enhanced the processes of training design and curriculum development, and could also have improved the response of the NGOs targeted to send participants to the training and to provide resource

persons for the training programs.

4.5 PERFORMANCE REVIEW MECHANISMS

Are there performance review procedures in place enabling citizens to be informed, to evaluate and influence the effectiveness of local government management? Did the program contribute to these review processes?

Accountability checking and performance monitoring, quite understandably, would not be among the first activities that an uninformed citizenry would undertake. First of all, citizens would need to first be knowledgeable about what is going on in their locality and to understand their specific roles and functions. Secondly, performance review implies criticism and confrontation, a position even well-organized communities would avoid assuming at such an early stage of decentralization.

An offshoot of the Bulacan LGU/GO - PO/NGO Conference on Partnership for Local Development in October 1993 was the LGU-NGO/PO Partnership Committee, tasked with monitoring and assessing LGU-NGO/PO cooperation. Regional Committees were likewise organized, and lately, a Provincial LGU-NGO/PO Partnership Committee has been formed, spearheaded by the MINCODE, a Mindanao NGO network, and composed of the DILG Regional Director, a Mayor (Mati) and a Vice-Mayor (Panabo). One of the Partnership Committee's functions is to undertake monitoring of LGUs' performance, but this has yet to be operationalized.

Among the Bohol NGOs, performance review is not yet in the agenda of their coalition, the BANGON, but respondents were keen on including it as an area of focus for BANGON. They expressed the need to set performance standards and the bases for performance review together with the LGUs concerned. As an initial set of criteria, they suggested: 1) the real property tax collection rate; 2) the implementation of the 20% development fund; and 3) the quality of the LGU's development plan and the status of its implementation.

4.6 ADVERSARIAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LGUS AND NGOS/POS

Have there been adversarial relationships between NGOs and LGUs? What were the roots/nature of these relationships? Did the program contribute to mitigating these adversarial relationships?

To understand the perceptions and attitudes that shape the relationships between LGUs and NGOs/POs, one has to appreciate the historical context of these relationships. Prior to 1986, these NGOs/POs and particular individuals (who then formed their own NGOs after 1986) struggled against the government, then perceived to be the instrument of the Marcos dictatorship. These social development organizations, professional associations and cause-oriented groups and individuals were involved in specific sets of concerns running parallel to that of government, but were operating outside the mainstream of government "development" activities. Thus, opportunities for interacting with government as provided by the implementation of the Local Government Code were approached with misgivings and apprehension. For most of the NGOs interviewed, interfacing with government was a new experience.

During the implementation of the LDAP projects during the first three years of decentralization efforts, there were various types of LGU-NGO/PO relationships ranging from mutual distrust and animosity at one extreme, to full cooperation and active partnership on the other (Gregorio, 1993). The study conducted by the Institute for Popular Democracy focused on the various types of relationships and interfaces of LGUs and NGOs/POs and identified the key factors that facilitated and those that hindered LGU-NGO/PO interaction.

From the IPD study and from the FGDs and interviews conducted, it can be concluded that adversarial relationships between specific LGUs and particular NGOs were not uncommon during the implementation of the LDAP projects. The causes of these difficulties have been mentioned previously -- differences in "cultures" and approaches, lack of openness and trust, traditional politics, bureaucratic red-tape and inefficiencies within government. Also, NGOs/POs were not prepared for "partnership" modes of interacting with government, honed as they have been in "conflict/confrontational tactics" in their previous struggles with government. "Organizing for governance is a new competence that has to be developed" (Soriano, 1993).

Other sources of conflict were the lapses in the implementation of the Code.

In some LGUs (e.g., in Makati, Metro Manila), a significant number of NGOs have not yet been accredited. In many LGUs, the local development councils and special bodies have not been convened even after the selection of NGO representatives has been completed. Such was the case in Davao City, at the time of the IPD study and even as late as February this year. In quite a few cases, such as in Panglao Island in Bohol, the local chief executives simply refused to extend any support to the LDAP Project.

In response, or perhaps in anticipation of some of these problems, a project on conflict resolution was undertaken by PINOI (A Mechanism for Conflict Resolution Towards Effective Devolution in Selected Local Government Units). The project opened avenues for identifying sources of conflict, clarifying issues, consultation and discussion. It also formulated a framework for forming workable conflict resolution mechanisms. In this respect, the Program was able to contribute to mitigating adversarial relationships. In a few cases, however, the Program's intervention served to further widen the gap between GO and NGO. In Davao, outright "divide-and-rule" tactics of government were manifested in the withdrawal of LDAP support to a project of MINCODE which it was jointly undertaking with the Office of the Presidential Assistant in Mindanao. The project was to convene a Mindanao Congress to discuss a common island-wide development agenda. The OPAMIN, labeling the MINCODE as leftist prevailed upon PBSP to withdraw its support midstream, and suggested that a new NGO/PO congress be formed for Mindanao.

4.7 PROGRAM MODE FOR NGO/PO PARTICIPATION

Was the program an effective mode of providing assistance to NGOs to participate in local governance? If yes, why? If no, what could have been a more effective mode?

In general, respondents agreed that the LDAP NGO Grants component, although not as efficient as it could have been, was an effective mode of extending assistance to NGOs. More than just providing support for projects, it helped in the establishment of provincial and national formations focused on local governance, in network-building and the institutionalization of models of partnership and of capability building programs. The Program had a good staff who related well with program partners and did more than what was required of them by the Program.

Although they did not initially appreciate the Program objectives and were even accused of "technical dictation" by some Program participants, they later internalized these objectives through the process of developing concepts and schemes for projects in collaboration with the prospective partners. Some of these concepts were developed into proactive endeavors, such as the Centers for Local Governance.

The shortcomings of the program lay mainly in the bureaucratic processes that to some extent the Program management had to follow. As there were time limitations, management needed to fast-track the grants, an urgency that allowed the Program staff little time to immerse themselves in the localities to better appreciate the conditions and needs for NGO/PO - LGU collaboration. The Program management, to a certain degree, was characterized by centralization, quite the opposite of what it professed to advocate. Respondents pointed to the need to decentralize certain parts of the program operations, to improve communication processes and to consider the nature and culture of NGOs in requiring management systems for NGOs/POs to follow.

5.0 FINDINGS

5.1 PROGRAM RATIONALE

The program could not have come at a more opportune time. The Local Government Code that had just been enacted provided for various modes of NGO/PO participation. Such an important piece of legislation which may otherwise not have caught the NGOs'/POs' immediate attention instead caused nationwide interest. The program objectives and its assumptions continue to be relevant, as new sets of LGU officials after the May 1995 elections will require new starting points and new relationships.

5.2 ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The way the objectives of the program have been modified or clarified from earlier documents such as the LDAP Approval Document and the Cooperative

Agreement to the Program's Terminal Report indicates that what were finally expected to result from the program inputs were a product of a consensus-building effort among the agencies involved (USAID, DILG and PBSP) and were a response to needs expressed by the NGO/PO communities themselves during the course of program implementation.

The program has been able to lay the foundations for NGO/PO-LGU cooperation and to strengthen the initiatives and actions that were already existing or were offshoots of project interventions. The program extended steadfast support to the Sta. Catalina Forum, a multi-sectoral forum composed of the Leagues of local governments, national line agencies and NGO/PO national networks; the National Coordinating Council for Local Governance, a coalition of 22 national NGO and PO networks; the Research Forum on Decentralization; and the Leagues.

5.3 IMPACTS AND EFFECTS

5.3.1 INSTITUTIONALIZING PEOPLE'S GOVERNANCE

Essential to ensuring effective participation in decentralization efforts is information and communication regarding people's participation in the implementation of the Local Government Code. The LDAP provided the means with which the NGOs/POs could increase their level of awareness of the Code. Many project partners seized the opportunity provided by their projects to deepen their understanding of the Code and to orient their project participants to it. Efforts were made by the Program management to promote understanding of the Code in grassroots associations (108 rural federations and other peasant organizations in 36 provinces) through the Congress for People's Agrarian Reform; grassroots women's associations in 6 provinces through the PILIPINA; and urban poor associations and NGOs/POs in Mindanao through the Mindanao Congress and the Mindanao Urban Poor Congress. Although the reach to the grassroots was not as wide as the Program would have desired, inroads were made and further efforts will be accelerated because of the start that has been accomplished.

The LDAP supported the nationwide effort of NGO coalitions to induce the interest and solicit the NGOs' POs participation in the accreditation/selection process for local special bodies. While misgivings were expressed at the outset, a little less than 10,000 NGOs/POs participated in these consultation meetings. As a

result of these consultations, 65 provincial formations were initiated or strengthened. A total of 4,522 applied for accreditation of which from 56.8% (PBSP Terminal Report, 1994) to 70.8% (Nationwide Mechanism for NGO/PO Selection and Representation in Local Bodies, 1993) were accredited. Of this number, however, only 729 were represented in the local special bodies.

Various fora for decentralization issues were established. Such networking mechanisms as the National Coordinating Council for Local Governance and the Sta. Catalina Forum were formed and made the venue for discussing and advocating issues pertaining to decentralization. The Sta. Catalina Forum mode was replicated in 4 LDAP provinces and several Provincial Coordinating Councils were established as well. The program sponsored several nationwide conferences and provincial cluster consultations and a Donors' Forum. However, because there was no provision for continuing support for these mechanisms, some have ceased to exist. There are some which still continue to exist largely due to the host organizations' efforts to source other funding support or to incorporate them within the host organizations' own programs.

Another mode of people's participation in local governance is performance/accountability monitoring. Because this conjures an attitude of criticism and confrontation, this would not be among the first activities that local communities would undertake. Also, it requires a fairly informed, vigilant and prepared citizenry and a level of maturity that most NGO/PO communities are still in the process of achieving. Examples of initial steps taken towards this end are the formation of the NGO-LGU Partnership Committees to monitor the status and progress of partnerships. In some areas, federations of accredited NGOs have also been formed to address the need for a legal entity to formally relate to LGUs, national agencies and other institutions. Among these newly formed bodies, performance/ accountability monitoring is yet to be included as part of their agendas and workplans.

5.3.2 DEBUREAUCRATIZING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

With regard to the program's contribution to the enhancement of NGO/PO-LGU relationships, the program had mixed results, although on the whole, the program effected breakthroughs in cooperation. It provided the occasion to come

and sit at the same table and the opportunity for building trust and confidence; for getting acquainted with one another's "terrain", culture, systems and operations; and for leveling off of one another's expectations, capacities and strengths as well as limitations.

At the local level, inroads in partnership-building were made. The projects became the catalysts or the driving force for LGUs and NGOs to start working together, out of a realization that they shared common concerns and interests. The concept of partnership was broadened from the previous narrow view of NGOs/POs as mere implementors of government projects to one that denoted "equality, commonality of purpose, complementation and not co-optation, and mutual trust and respect, transparency and accountability" (Davao FGD).

Where the LGUs expressed a need, and where NGOs exhibited their strength and expertise, models of partnership in the delivery of services and local administration (such as health, environmental protection and management, community organizing, cooperatives organization, resource generation and social credit) were tested and set in place. Various advisory bodies were also created (on public markets, environment, health, agriculture, investments, land use, resource generation) through which NGOs/POs would be able to influence local public policy and to assist LGUs to use their devolved resources and authority to effect reforms.

5.3.3 STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL BUREAUCRACY

The program has been able to also lay the groundwork for assisting LGUs to move from being mere administrators to area managers. The program interventions included projects developing local administrative systems, institutional development and the shaping of the Centers of Local Governance (CLGs). Nine of the 13 centers still operate and have been institutionalized as resource and training centers of the host institutions. In at least one university, the CLG has been instrumental in designing a modular program for a Master in Government Administration.

Prior to the LDAP, only a few Manila-based institutions focused on local governance. Because of the CLG sub-program (and also the Local Government Academy's Institute for Local Government Administration), capacity-building for local governments received its much needed attention.

6.0 INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 ALTERNATIVES

While PBSP has been lauded for its efforts as program manager, in some cases, doing more than what was required, several points were raised regarding more efficient and effective modes of program delivery.

1. A program that preaches decentralization must practice decentralization in its decision-making and operations. The program mode needs to incorporate more responsive, more participatory and less bureaucratic features.

2. Less stringent and simpler financial requirements for project implementation would allow and encourage greater participation in the program of grassroots organizations.

3. Established, competent, locally-based NGO/PO networks could serve as program conduits or local program committees which participate in program decision-making. Lessons may be drawn from the experience of other funding mechanisms in the country.

4. NGOs, in general, survive on project funds and have very little corporate funds to tide them over during lean times. POs are even more financially disadvantaged. Thus, because delays in project fund releases adversely affect the operations of these NGOs/POs, efforts must be exerted to avoid such delays.

6.2 PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUING PARTNERSHIP

"From breaking ground to building avenues and bridges..."

1. NGOs/POs and LGUs need to start with a common and clear understanding of the concept of partnership. Building credibility, trust and commitment is a long process but it can move forward, based on the gains that have been achieved.

2. To maximize efforts, the Program's attention can focus on areas where local chief executives are more progressive, systems-oriented and inclined to institutionalize systems and processes which can remain in place long after the chief executives leave their office. The Program's attention ought to also focus on project concepts which are innovative but have a great chance of being replicated in other similar areas or of producing "multiplier effects."

3. Greater effort must be exerted in matching an LGU with the appropriate NGO or PO, considering its interests, strengths and expertise.

4. There is a need to consolidate the various Program experiences, to document and popularize them in order that future NGO proponents/partners can draw lessons and benefit from the wealth of these experiences.

5. A program mode with decentralized, debureaucratized and democratized features will speak well of itself and the principles it upholds. The program management can be so designed as to allow a transition to this mode towards the latter half of the program or when the program management sees the readiness of the program participants to share the program responsibilities.

In summary, the LDAP NGO Grants Component was only a start, but a very good start. It opened doors for partnerships, not only between NGOs/POs and LGUs but also among NGOs/POs, among LGUs and between LGUs and NGAs as well. It made the NGOs/POs appreciate their rightful role in local governance and aided them in their first steps towards assuming these roles. For sure, there have been roadblocks, hazards and unexpected twists and turns along the way, but the ground has been broken and is slowly being paved. Building bridges between government and civil society and building avenues of cooperation will take some time. What LDAP has accomplished is to demonstrate that it is within the realm of the possible, with the support, participation and commitment of all sectors of society.

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APPENDIX A:
LDAP END-OF-PROJECT IMPACT EVALUATION
GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS AND FGDS
(Based on Attachment 2, PI0/T 492-0436-3-00408)

1. Did the program enhance NGO-LGU cooperation? In what ways? Did it promote grassroots associations' contributions to decentralization efforts? Did it encourage local citizens to participate in grassroots associations?
2. What sort of activities do the NGOs undertake with local governments? Do they address governance/accountability issues in these activities? How has the program helped in addressing these concerns?
3. What are the lessons from the pilot projects? Where lies the expertise/effectivity of NGOs given the wide range of possible modes of participation? What local governance issues are the NGOs most interested in? What are their stands/positions in these issues?
4. How did the program influence universities/training institutions to address participation?
5. Are there performance review procedures in place enabling citizens to be informed, to evaluate and influence the effectiveness of local government management? Did the program contribute to these review processes?
6. Have there been adversarial relationships between NGOs and LGUs? What were the roots/nature of these relationships? Did the program contribute to mitigating these adversarial relationships?
7. Was the program an effective mode of providing assistance to NGOs to participate in local governance? If yes, why? If no, what could have been a more effective mode?

APPENDIX B.
**LIST OF FGD PARTICIPANTS AND
RESOURCE PERSONS INTERVIEWED**

DAVAO, BOHOL AND BAGUIO

1. Araceli D. Gamias. Davao Medical School Foundation - Institute of Primary Health Care
2. Jennifer P. Jakabelo. Digos Market Vendors Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc.
3. Jocelyn S. Somera. Digos Market Vendors Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc.
4. Flordeliza Ma. Togonon. Malita Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc.
5. Dolly S. Corro. MINCODE
6. Corazon Baylon. Ateneo Resource Center for Local Governance
7. Lourdes Mamaed. Ateneo Resource Center for Local Governance
8. Wenifredo Gorrez. Konsumo Dabaw/Lunhaw Mindanaw
9. Carlos S. Echauz. Bol-anon Foundation, Inc.
10. Delia B. Solis. PROCESS Foundation
11. Socorro A. Plaza. PROCESS Foundation
12. Buenaventura Delusa. Southern Philippines Fishermen's Association
13. Tomas V. Molina. Kapunungan sa mga Mananagat sa Loay
14. Fr. Romeo A. Dompur. Bohol Integrated Development Foundation, Inc.
15. Charlito Ayco. FCRB Livelihood Foundation, Inc.
16. Wilfredo B. Porpor, Jr. Bohol Health Foundation, Inc.

17. Christopher A. Fortich. Bohol Cooperative Center Inc.
18. Noel Uy. Diocesan Social Action Center
19. Dr. Julie Solimen. Benguet State University
20. Danilo Alterado. Katinnulong Daguiti Umili ti Amianan (KADUAMI)
21. Elena Regpala. Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND NATIONAL NETWORKS

1. Aurora Tolentino, Executive Director, Philippine Business for Social Progress
2. Emmanuel Buendia, Former LDAP Program Director, PBSP
3. Joel Pagsanjan. Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PHILDHRA)
4. Horace de Ocera. National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)
5. Gessen Rocas. NGO Coalition for Cooperatives Development (NGO-CCD), Current Chairman of National Coordinating Council on Local Governance
6. Ariel Betan. Green Forum - Philippines
7. Victor Jose Penaranda. Council for People's Development (CPD)
8. Rommel Martinez. Evelio B. Javier Foundation
9. Amie Coronel. Convergence for Community-Centered Area Development (CONVERGENCE)
10. Dolores Castillo, Former Program Director of Philippine Institute of Non-Government Organizations (PINOG)
11. Ramon Oliveros, Former OIC of Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO)

APPENDIX C.
**FACTORS THAT FACILITATE AND FACTORS
THAT HINDER LGU-NGO/PO INTERACTIONS**

Key Factors to Successful LGU-NGO/PO Interfaces

- 1) Sympathetic chief executive officer and appointive officials.
- 2) A well-entrenched NGO/PO community that is capable of articulating and pursuing its agenda on its own, drawing from both human and logistical resources mobilized independent of government.
- 3) A common appreciation of the issues that need to be confronted first; and the sympathies of power blocs and development players both in and out of government.
- 4) A combination of formal leaders and informal middle-level leaders in government and in the NGO/PO community willing to work out solutions to problems regarding interactions and relationships.
- 5) Accumulation of positive experiences around concrete projects that have immediate impact.
- 6) Informal and formal venues for interfacing other than the local development council and special bodies. The case studies suggest the following:
 - a) Formal offices created within the LGU;
 - b) Multi-sectoral task forces;
 - c) Partnerships in specific impact projects;
 - d) Joint campaigns;
 - e) Development planning workshops;
 - f) Cultural events and activities.
- 7) Speedy and favorable resolution of problems put forward by POs to local government.
- 8) Attitude of transparency, respect and openness.

Key Factors that Hinder LGU-NGO/PO Interfaces

1) Loopholes or lapses in the implementation of the Local Government Code. Examples are the case of Makati, where many NGOs that have applied have not yet been accredited, and those municipalities and cities where the LDCs have been constituted but have not yet been convened.

2) Differences in the culture, perceptions and attitudes of government and of NGOs/POs.

3) Tendency of interfaces to be reactive, focusing on immediate issues rather than strategic, looking at long-term trajectories.

4) Lack of resources for interface programs.

5) Lack of openness and trust.

6) Traditional politics, fear of being used for partisan political ends.

7) Red-tape and inefficiency in government.

8) Inadequate organizing strategies.

Source:

J. Clark Soriano, Selected Studies: NGO-PO-GO Interfaces in Local Governance. Institute for Popular Democracy, November 1993.