

# **CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGIES ASSESSMENT IN THE ANE REGION**

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**The Philippines**

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## **ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION**

This report has two basic purposes. The first is to provide an assessment of strategies pursued by USAID and other donors to support civil society as a critical component of democratization in the Philippines in the period since the democratic restoration of 1986. As such, this case study will feed into the Center’s general civil society strategy assessment currently under way. Its second purpose is to explore the development of civil society in the Philippines as representing the “high end” of achievement experienced anywhere among USAID-assisted countries. The question here is: What has donor-assisted civil society been able to accomplish against the long track record of oligarchic cronyism at the center and bossism at the local level that have been so much a part of Philippine history?

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- 👉 **Rule of Law**
- 👉 **Elections and Political Processes**
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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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Harry is the author of the present report and served as team leader for the field study it incorporates, as well as managing the overall civil society strategy assessment at the Office of Democracy and Governance. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from Duke University and served as professor of political science at Bucknell University from 1970 to 2000, with visiting appointments at Colgate, Columbia, Cornell, Rutgers, and Yale Universities. Currently he is a senior research scholar and lecturer in political science at Yale University. Harry's earlier research and publications focused largely on politics, rural development, and natural resource management in the Indian subcontinent; more recently he has been concentrating on the democratization process across a range of countries. At USAID, Harry has worked for the former Science and Technology Bureau in the early 1980s, and during the 1990s in both the Center for Development Information and Evaluation and in the Center for Democracy and Governance (the precursor to the Office of Democracy and Governance).

As with most USAID reports, this one was a team effort in its field phase, and many thanks are due to Gwendolyn Bevis, Monette Parado, and Cris Pineda for their excellent work in producing the raw material for the report. Much appreciation also goes to Mike Calavan, Program Office at USAID/Manila, who earlier served as the mission's DG officer. In addition, thanks to the members of the mission's former DG team, who are now working with other parts of USAID/Philippines, spreading their democratization experience—Nards Dayao, Nap de Sagun, Boy Dulce, Christine Idquival, and Gerry Porta. And finally, much additional gratitude is due to Gwen Bevis, Boy Dulce, Paul Lundberg, Cris Pineda, Gerry Porta, and David Timberman for their helpful criticism on earlier versions of this report, as well as to Cris Pineda for her help in tracking information long after the DG team had finished its field work.

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## **Executive Summary**

This report focuses on USAID support for civil society in the Philippines as part of a larger exercise intended to assess civil society strategy across USAID, distilling lessons to be learned from the experience and considering their implications for future support of the civil society sector. Achievements in civil society programming in the Philippines may be taken as the high end of what USAID has been able to accomplish in the developing world over the last decades, and accordingly the country presents an especially interesting case to analyze. The end product of the multi-country assessment will be a synthesis analysis.

The present report also has a second purpose in posing what is anticipated to be one of the synthesis' central questions: What constitutes success in civil society programming? Again the Philippines should have some answers, both as to what donor-supported civil society might be able to do and what limitations might exist on that ability.

Because this report gathers lessons from the Philippines as part of a wider assessment of civil society strategy, it is not intended as in any sense an evaluation—either formal or informal—of civil society support efforts in the Philippines. Here the purpose is to analyze aspects and illustrations of Philippine experience to inform the Office's global civil society strategy assessment.

The Philippine assessment was carried out by a team working in-country for some three weeks in April-May 2000. The team concentrated on two USAID-sponsored civil society assistance activities, both begun in 1994: local programs undertaken as part of the Governance and Local Democracy (GOLD) project, and national efforts mostly comprising aspects of the mission's civil society program.

### **A. Background and Program Context**

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Philippines' core DG problem has been a political system dominated by elites, concentrating political and economic power into relatively few hands at both national and local levels, a basic structure that has carried over into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well. The 1986 People's Power revolution dislodged the extreme form that this elite domination had attained during the Marcos period, and, since that time, the overall democratic environment as measured by such indices as the Freedom House rankings has improved significantly. Civil society activity has flourished, assisted by USAID and other donors.

Yet if we look beyond specific donor-sponsored program activities, it appears that the overall process of democratization has stalled or at least slowed down. Oligarchs and cronies resurfaced soon after the 1986 transition and still dominate the commanding heights of the political and economic systems. Local bosses continue to exercise inordinate power in too many places. The political parties remain personality-centered and ephemeral. Corruption continues to be rife at all levels, both public (especially in the judiciary) and private. Things have improved since the Marcos era, but not nearly as much as was confidently hoped in the euphoria of 1986. Early indications are that the January 2001 regime transition launched with the People's Power II movement and the accession of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to the presidency will not materially change this trajectory.

Against this backdrop of promised change at best only partially realized, the central question posed by the present report is this: What has the USAID civil society program been able to accomplish in furthering the democratic process in the Philippines? In answering this question, we hope to better

understand what might be the outer range of success in donor-assisted civil society programming in effecting system change as well as some of the limitations.

This report looks at both local and national levels. The government's bold 1991 Local Government Code (LGC), which devolved adequately funded service delivery activities to lower governmental levels, provided the context within which USAID's GOLD pilot project functioned to build both demand and supply capacity. On the demand side, GOLD has worked to enhance non-governmental organization (NGO) participation in local governance activities as well as to foster networks at the national level to support decentralized governance. On the supply side, it has strengthened local planning, management, and finance capacity to respond to local needs and wants.

At the national level, the mission's civil society program emerged out of a series of earlier NGO support projects intended to build service delivery capacity. The Agency's re-engineering efforts in the 1990s along with a shift in focus to poor and marginal constituencies led to an emphasis on civil society inputs into the policy process that culminated in the civil society program that began in 1995. By 1998, this program had funded some 17 activities covering a wide range from fisherfolk to urban housing to the justice system. A major program component built coalitions and networks among civil society organizations (CSOs), an effort seen as necessary in a country with many thousands of independent NGOs.

Both programs have operated against a background of declining donor assistance generally and of U.S. assistance in particular, which dropped from over \$250 million annually in the early 1990s to around \$30 million by the decade's end. As a part of this downsizing, the mission decided to phase out the DG program as a stand-alone effort and has merged it into other ongoing activities.

### **B. Programming in Action: Examples from the High End**

A number of examples illustrate results from USAID support to civil society at its best, locally and nationally. In Naga city, a vigorous mayor in the earlier 1990s had made the city something of a model in urban development, including a Naga City People's Council (NCPC) consisting of more than 40 NGOs. The NCPC became involved in a number of issues, among them an urban landfill, a proposed golfing community, and a new central business district. All three issues occasioned much local civil society interest, as various groups apprehensive about project impact sought to weigh in on the municipal decision-making process with at least partial success. In a very different example of high-end local development, the Gerry Roxas Foundation (GRF) has served as the GOLD project grantee in Capiz province and has achieved impressive results, particularly in improving the health delivery system, and in sponsoring a women's program.

At the national level, one of USAID/Philippines's civil society program initiatives was Building Unity for Continuing Coconut Industry Reform (BUCO), which supported two coalitions of small coconut farmers in their effort to claim the legacy of a special coconut tax from the Marcos era that had wound up under the control of one of the dictator's major cronies. The prize was sizable—brewery stock worth well over \$1 billion—and the struggle an intense one with several powerful claimants bringing conflicting pressures on then-President Joseph Estrada to decide the case in their favor. A presidential order in November 2000 appeared to award at least some of the stock to the BUCO network, but the outcome remained unclear—both at the time and later on in the post-Estrada era.

In a second example, a USAID-supported fisherfolk coalition sought congressional enactment of a fisheries reform code that would protect small-scale offshore fishing against the large-scale commercial

overfishing that had become common. The coalition proved difficult to sustain and in fact broke up, but a vastly weakened act did get enacted in 1997 and became law. As a final example, the municipal association supported by the GOLD project led a massive demonstration and public relations offensive in 1999 to obtain restoration of government funds that had been allotted to LGUs but later in part withheld. In April 2000, Estrada declared he would restore the funds; the decision was later reinforced by a Supreme Court decision.

### **C. What is Success in Civil Society Advocacy?**

In implementing the Agency's managing for results system, USAID/Philippines has set up indicators to gauge progress toward realizing strategic objectives (SOs) and intermediate indicators. Net self-generated revenue in GOLD-supported municipalities, for instance, grew during 1995-99 from P592 million to P1.15 billion. Some data go further to give an indication of progress in affecting governmental decision-making. As an example, GOLD-supported local government units (LGUs) implementing environment plans developed with effective citizen participation grew from 38 to 148 over the 1995-2000 period.

Even so, we still have no real idea of just *how* participation affects public decisions. For that, we must necessarily rely on more impressionistic data such as that presented in our six mini-case studies. In one case (the Naga landfill), the coalition appears to have achieved its basic aim unequivocally. Two groups (the coconut coalition and the municipal network) are likely to realize a good portion if not all of their goals. One (the fisherfolk) won a pyrrhic victory with a law gutted through a loophole exemption. Another lost initially (the Naga golfing community) but was rescued temporarily by a presidential decree. In the final case, the USAID-supported advocacy group seems to have lost outright (the Naga business district).

But must civil society success be defined as absolute victory in influencing public decision-making? Or does it make more sense to say that success occurs when CSOs are able to make the discourse sufficiently robust and the media coverage sufficiently vigorous so that decision-making was reasonably transparent, and when major stakeholders feel they have been taken seriously and (most important) will stay in the game? By this latter standard, our six cases appear to qualify as successes.

The GRF also presents a success, but of a rather different kind. The achievements of this elite-sponsored philanthropic enterprise constitute more nearly evidence of well-managed, effective, top-down governance—a patron-client model upgraded—than of civil society with its contending advocacies. The public interest may well be realized, but pluralism is largely absent.

These successes by themselves are not going to remove local bosses or crack the system of oligarchs and cronies at higher levels. But civil society initiatives have put some dents, perhaps even a few middle-sized holes, in the armor protecting this structure and have perhaps inserted some critical clots in the blood supply that keeps the organism going. The hope is that the USAID effort has helped to launch a trajectory that could lead to system change.

### **D. Other Civil Society Initiatives**

Civil society has been the focus of several initiatives aside from those sponsored by USAID. The first is a remarkably bold party-list system set up for the 1998 congressional elections. "Marginalized and under-represented" sectors were invited to run candidates for the House independently of the major political parties, for a new allotment of up to 20 percent of all House seats. This radically new

mechanism clearly suffered troubles in its first outing, but made a reasonable start. The second initiative, sponsored by the Ford Foundation, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and others, is a *barangay*-level enterprise including local officeholders, civil society elements, and a new political party—all under the interesting name of BATMAN, which stands for *Barangay Training Manual*.

Two additional USAID efforts involve the process side of how the civil society community manages its business, as opposed to the substance side of what CSOs do in the political arena. In the first activity, as part of its civil society program, USAID has placed a central emphasis on coalition building, as with the fisherfolk groups discussed earlier in this summary. A second thrust has worked to enhance professionalization in the NGO community to set performance and certification standards, to increase indigenous resource mobilization capacity among NGOs, and to nurture centers of local governance expertise that can sustain themselves after USAID programs wind up in FY 2001.

## **E. Lessons and Issues for Civil Society Assistance**

### **1. USAID Concepts and Practices**

The first set of lessons and issues regard USAID concepts and practices:

1. *Defining success in civil society programming.* The report argues that success lies more in a CSO getting its demands considered seriously and in bolstering decision-making transparency than in fully realizing its program agenda.
2. *Defining civil society itself.* The Philippine experience encourages widening USAID's definition of civil society to include umbrella organizations dedicated to sector professionalization/advocacy, and also service delivery NGOs that can grow into CSOs.
3. *Supporting civil society within and beyond the DG sector.* The report finds much evidence of productive reinforcement between civil society and other sub-sectors within DG (e.g., rule of law), as well as other sectors outside DG, especially in the economic development area.
4. *Recognizing civil society as means and end.* During and immediately after the Marcos era, USAID supported civil society largely as a means to promote fundamental system reform, but by the later 1990s, much of that had changed to supporting it as an end in itself—fostering a pluralist polity. This trajectory has interesting implications for civil society strategies elsewhere.
5. *Supporting civil society without a DG strategic objective.* When the mission had to close out its stand-alone DG SO because of financial stringency and the former DG SO team was dispersed to other teams, the occasion provided a unique opportunity to integrate civil society approaches into these other activities. This process should be followed up in a couple of years to harvest lessons for other missions and regions.

### **2. The Policy and Political Environment**

A second set of lessons and issues concerns democratization more generally:

1. *Civil society, regime transition, and democratic consolidation.* The extra-constitutional aspects of the January 2001 regime transition strongly indicates that democracy has not yet fully consolidated in the Philippines. Even so, civil society's critical role in the process shows that it has become a universally accepted part of the democratic process.

2. *A test for empowerment.* Forcing accountability in public decision-making can indicate attainment of significant empowerment for marginal groups—a stage it has often proved difficult to reach in supporting democratization elsewhere.
3. *A continuing will to reform.* The Philippine case illustrates that serious reform can continue well into the democratization process, as evidenced in the party-list system enacted in 1995.
4. *The importance of political structure.* Even though it did not work all that well the first time around, the new party-list system indicates that formal political structure can potentially be of great importance in providing an institutionalized voice to civil society.
5. *Civil society as a substitute for political parties?* The comparative strength of civil society and weakness of the parties tempt one to think of the former as possible substitute for the latter. But CSOs advocate, while parties try to govern; these are very different tasks.
6. *Patterns at national and local levels.* In earlier country studies, distinct differences appeared between these two levels, with the local arena much less advanced in terms of civil society players at work in the arena. In the Philippines, the local level has in many ways begun to catch up with the national.
7. *Beyond gender advocacy.* The wide presence of women in leadership positions in civil society has made their gender literally unremarkable. The country is scarcely free of gender-related problems, but female prominence does indicate a relative maturity in democratization.
8. *The media—old and new.* Despite their not-infrequent excesses, the media—especially the broadcast press—have proven a critical factor the democratization process. Cell phone text messaging during EDSA2 has introduced a new dimension to media’s democratic role of informing and mobilizing citizens.
9. *Foreign funding, sustainability, and donor coordination.* Steadily decreasing donor support has worked to force sustainability strategies on the civil society community. But neither host-country government nor donors have shown much interest in coordinating to make their declining investments go further.



# 1 Introduction

This report assesses USAID support for civil society in the Philippines. It comprises one phase of an exercise currently under way at the Office of Democracy and Governance that is intended to assess civil society strategy across USAID. The central idea behind this broader assessment is that, after a decade of USAID's supporting civil society, it is time to distill what lessons can be learned from the experience and to consider the implications of such lessons for future support of the civil society as a key element in the democracy and governance (DG) sector. Standing as it does at the high end of civil society programming accomplishment within USAID, the Philippines presents an especially interesting case to analyze.

Thus far, we have finished civil society strategy assessments on two LAC countries, Bolivia and El Salvador (USAID 2001) and three AFR countries (Woods 2000a, 2000b, 2000c). In addition, our inquiry has gained significant enrichment from two independent exercises conducted by other offices at USAID/W. First, E&E/DGSR undertook a multi-country assessment of its experience in supporting NGOs in its region, an effort that has recently been published as a report (USAID 1999a). Similarly, LAC/RSD engaged in an analysis of its Partners of the Americas network supporting civil society throughout that region (USAID 2000a). Our design is to complete a synthesis report for the exercise as a whole.

The present report also has a second purpose—building toward the synthesis by posing what is anticipated to be one of its central animating questions: What constitutes “success” in civil society programming? The Philippines, arguably at the high end of achievement in promoting civil society through USAID programming, should have some answers here, both as to what donor-supported civil society might be able to do and what limitations might exist on that ability.

## A. What the Report is and is Not

It is important to underline this report's central purpose as part of a wider assessment of civil society strategy, gathering lessons from the Philippine experience. Accordingly, the report is not intended as in any sense an evaluation—either formal or informal—of civil society support efforts in the Philippines. Instead, aspects and illustrations are taken from the Philippines to inform the Office's global civil society strategy assessment. It is certainly to be hoped that the two USAID-supported programs featured in this report (the GOLD project and USAID/Philippines's civil society program) will receive a formal final evaluation now that they are coming to an end, for both these path-breaking initiatives have valuable lessons to offer future efforts elsewhere. But the present report does not constitute such an evaluation.

## B. Methodology

The Philippine assessment was carried out by a four-person team working in-country for about three weeks in April-May 2000. The principal methodology consisted of key informant interviews, document review, in-country fieldtrips, direct observation, and focus group sessions. After the team's fieldwork, subsequent developments in the country—in particular EDSA2 and events leading to President Joseph Estrada's January 2001 ouster—have been used to interpret civil society progress.<sup>1</sup>

In the Philippines, two kinds of USAID-sponsored civil society assistance were in progress at the time of our assessment. They were

- **Local programs**, at a variety of levels from province to *barangay* (neighborhood). These initiatives were all part of the GOLD project begun in 1995.

TABLE 1: CSOs, NGOs, AND POS: CLASSIFICATION AND EXAMPLES		
USAID Taxonomy	Philippine Taxonomy	
	PO	NGO
CSO as well as NGO (tries to influence public policy)	Street traders association	Makati Business Club
NGO only (no interest in influencing public policy)	Local mothers' club with no political agenda	Helen Keller organization

- **National-level DG efforts**, which included mainly coalition building and capacity development as aspects of the mission’s civil society program started in 1995 but also included some GOLD components as well

### C. The Report’s Organization

Section 2 opens with a brief statement of the central DG problems in the Philippines. It then lays out the DG context facing the USAID Mission, the major program activities undertaken by the mission at local and national levels, and an interpretation of those efforts in terms of the civil society strategic logic framework used at the Office of Democracy and Governance.

Section 3 analyzes several USAID-supported activities as mini-case studies, while the following section employs these examples in addressing the question of how to assess success in civil society programming. Sections 5 and 6 examine civil society efforts in other arenas at national and local levels. Finally, Section 7 draws out findings and lessons learned from the Philippine experience.

### D. Definitions and Acronyms

The terms employed in this report should be familiar to both practitioners and students of democracy-support efforts—with one significant exception. The term “people’s organizations” (POs) is commonly used in the Philippines to distinguish such bodies from NGOs. Popularized by David Korten and others, the PO/NGO distinction has come into widespread use in the Philippines, although it is rarely encountered elsewhere. While all the finer differences are hard to pin down, those working in the Philippine civil society environment regularly employ the two terms in everyday practice—so regularly that an attempt must be made to reconcile the terminology with USAID usage. Table 1 compares the USAID concept of CSOs and NGOs with the Philippine idea of the PO, illustrating the somewhat confusing overlap between the two perspectives. What is a CSO to USAID could become a PO or NGO in the Philippines, while what is a Philippine PO could be in USAID parlance either a CSO aiming to influence public policy or an NGO uninterested in such efforts. Table 2 represents an attempt to outline the more salient points in the Philippine taxonomy, with the main differences being that NGOs are generally formally constituted, professional organizations that support POs, while the latter tend to be more informal, grassroots-based bodies.<sup>2</sup>

**TABLE 2: NGOs AND POs IN THE PHILIPPINES**

	Characteristic	NGOs	POs
1	Market orientation	Non-profit	Non-profit
2	Intended beneficiaries	Disadvantaged people	Disadvantaged people
3	Membership	Organizations or individuals	Individuals
4	Central focus	Supporting POs by providing management, fundraising, etc.	Grassroots constituency: sectoral (e.g., women, farmers) or specific local area
5	Staff	Largely professional, likely not from beneficiary population	Mostly voluntary, drawn from beneficiary population
6	Organizational structure	Well-developed, formally constituted	Rudimentary, often less formally constituted
7	Type of organization	Coalition or individual body	Individual body
8	Level of operation	National or local	Local
9	Size	Large or small	Generally small
10	Social function	Middle & upper class do-gooderism	Lower class issue-based advocacy
11	Motivation to join	Voluntarism, public service, career opportunity	Mutual benefit
12	Internal structure	Not necessarily democratic	More likely to be democratic

Source: Initially drawn up by Gwen Bevis, May 2000 (items 1-8). Other items added from sources below, as well as from suggestions offered during fieldwork in April-May 2000.

Useful references on this topic:

- Gerard Clarke, *Politics of NGOs in South-east Asia* (Routledge 1998) 3.  
 Thos Carroll, *Intermediary NGOs* (Kumarian 1992), 9-11.  
 David Korten, *Getting to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Kumarian 1992), 2 & ch. 9.  
 Marie Constantino-David, essay in civil society set, vol 3, pp 24 &ff.

A second difficulty for outsiders looking in at the Philippine civil society universe is presented by the proliferation of acronyms. Admittedly a problem in the development community to begin with, the situation is compounded in the Philippines by a widespread tendency to form new groups rather than expand old ones, and then to seek economies of organizational scale through coalitions with their own acronyms, thus creating two reinforcing sources of abbreviations. The result is an often thoroughly confusing jumble of acronyms. As an example of the issue, one recent analysis of Philippine NGOs listed almost 300 acronyms used by the author.<sup>3</sup> The present report promises to employ far fewer than 300 acronyms, but the list provided as Annex A is still longer than one would wish.

## 2 The Core DG Problem

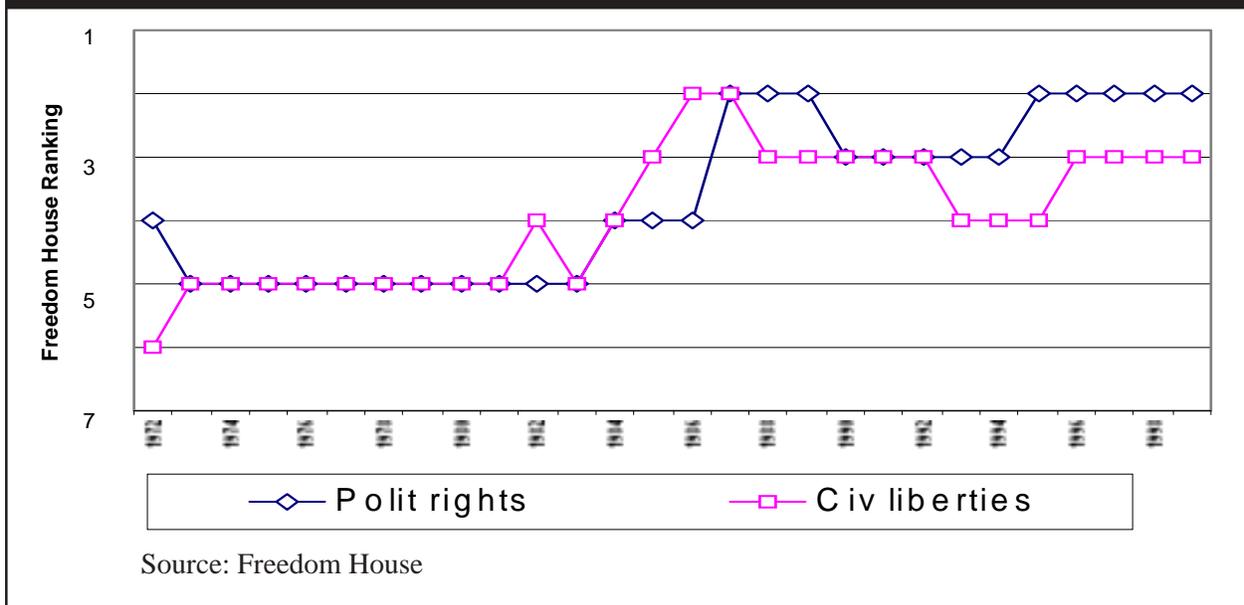
Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Philippines' political system has been dominated by elites, and this basic structure has carried over into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Democracy at both national and local levels has ebbed and flowed over this time, but always against a backdrop of elite suzerainty. In its present form, this pattern can be traced back to the early phases of U.S. colonial control and even further back into the Spanish period, when most of life in the archipelago was dominated by local elites. During the course of U.S. rule and the early decades of independence, as democratic politics became increasingly institutionalized, this same elite ascendancy continued, largely operating along patrimonial lines through oligarchic families and working through the ballot box as well as through economic dominance. Thus political and economic power was concentrated into relatively few hands at both levels.<sup>4</sup>

The Marcos dictatorship (1972-1986) solidified this pattern at the national level, substituting new cronies for old oligarchs and concentrating control over the economy by narrowing the circle of insiders as well as centralizing political power and repressing civil liberties. In dislodging the Marcos family as well as the cronies, the 1986 People's Power revolution restored formal democracy and brought a new constitution as well as other political reforms during the presidency of Corazon Aquino (1986-1992), in particular the 1991 Local Government Code (LGC). Oligarchs and cronies soon reemerged, however, including those favored and disfavored during the Marcos years. They quickly established themselves in the new order, once again becoming the central fact of Philippine economic and political life—"cacique democracy" in the words of one observer (Anderson 1998). The succeeding president, Fidel Ramos (1992-1998), instituted a number of market-oriented reforms on the economic front (e.g., privatization and deregulation), and, while he supported the decentralization initiative launched with the LGC, he was less active on the political side. Under Estrada (1998-2001), the old system appeared to regain much of what it had not already recouped in the Aquino and Ramos eras, with the most prominent of the Marcos cronies back in full form, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.<sup>5</sup> It seems unlikely that any major structural transformation will occur under Estrada's successor, Macapagal-Arroyo. In sum, this system has proven itself both durable and flexible over time, because the oligarchs, *caciques* (local political bosses), and cronies have faced a relatively weak or non-autonomous state, which has for the most part been unable to act independently of such barons.

To be sure, civil society has had some role to play, even in the Marcos years, in particular the Roman Catholic Church and the business community. In addition to its own agenda (e.g., advocating the retention of anti-abortion and anti-divorce laws), the church has pressed vigorously for anti-poverty initiatives and was a major player in the anti-Marcos rising of 1986 (as well as in the anti-Estrada movement of 2001). While represented in many ways by cronies demanding protected markets, the business community has also had many members pushing to open the economy to outside investment and trade. A major moment of influence came in 1986, when a large portion of the business community joined with the church in supporting the movement against Marcos. Again, as the anti-Estrada movement gathered steam in the fall of 2000, the business community added powerful weight by declaring against him. Another significant element in recent history was the left opposition during the Marcos years, much of which engaged in civil society efforts against the regime (and a good number of whose leaders assumed government posts after 1986). Thus there has been a certain leavening to the overall pattern of patrimonial domination that has characterized the Philippine polity.<sup>6</sup>

Certainly in the post-Marcos years, the overall democratic environment has improved measurably. Freedom House rankings, which held steady at 5 (on a 1-7 scale where 7 is the worst) for both political rights and civil liberties in the 1970s and early 1980s, have been at 2 and 3 respectively in the later 1990s

**Figure 1: Political Rights and Civil Liberties in the Philippines, 1972-1999**



(Figure 1). At the national level, the 1987 Constitution specifically enshrined the rights of NGOs and POs,<sup>7</sup> and civil society has become more prominent as NGO coalitions have made themselves felt in public life. As a further step, for the 1998 legislative elections, a party-list system was instituted for including civil society representatives in the national Congress. The LGC has put authority, personnel, and funding into the hands of elected local governments and, in the process, has provided for a statutorily included civil society presence on local authorities.

It should also be emphasized that political will in the sense of support for civil society from the highest level has not been a problem in the Philippines since the 1986 EDSA revolution. A significant civil society presence has become so much a part of Philippine political culture that it would be extremely difficult for a president to exercise any repression toward it; civil society is now part of the democratic furniture. Nor is it conceivable that the government could contain the media, which has functioned as an unhampered thorn in the executive branch’s side.<sup>8</sup> Worth noting here is the fact that at no time during the People’s Power II movement leading to Estrada’s departure in January 2001 was there any serious threat to civil society or the media.

The political will issue certainly relates to the country’s position in its democratization trajectory. The fact that it appears so firmly in place offers evidence that the Philippines has begun to cross the somewhat murky line between a democratic transition phase to a consolidation one, although the extra-constitutional aspects of Macapagal-Arroyo’s accession to power have raised questions as to whether the polity has in fact firmly crossed that boundary.<sup>9</sup> Even so, the basic legitimacy of civil society has not been at issue. As Larry Diamond might put it (see Diamond 1999: 20), when political will is no longer in doubt, it means that both elites and the mass public have accepted a democratic dispensation to the extent that it has become self-sustainable. And as part of that dispensation, civil society is firmly in place as an integral component.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of civil society accomplishment, the Philippines clearly stands at what we might call the “high end” among USAID-assisted countries worldwide, in that there is arguable no USAID-presence country

where civil society has made more progress than in the Philippines.<sup>11</sup> Working in a large experimental area, the GOLD project has significantly enhanced NGO capacity to participate in local governance activities while at the same time improving local government bodies' ability to respond to new demands. GOLD has now begun to roll out the lessons of this experience on a wider scale. At the national level, civil society coalitions have made some real headway in increasing the policy voice of under-represented and marginal constituencies and in professionalizing the civil society community more generally. Programs sponsored by other donors have also done well at both national and local levels.

Yet if we look beyond specific donor-sponsored program activities, it appears that the overall process of democratization has stalled or at least slowed down. Oligarchs and cronies still dominate the commanding heights of the political and economic systems. Local bosses do not control the political scene in every Philippine province or municipality by any means,<sup>12</sup> but they continue to exercise inordinate power in too many places. The political parties remain personality-centered and ephemeral. In spite of frequent revelations in the media, corruption continues to be rife at all levels, both public (especially in the judiciary) and private. Things have undoubtedly improved over what they were during the Marcos era, but not nearly as much as was confidently hoped in the euphoria of 1986.

Against this backdrop of promised change at best only very partially realized, the central question posed by the present report is this: What has the USAID civil society program been able to accomplish in furthering the democratic process in the Philippines? In answering this question, we hope to better understand what might be the outer range of success in donor-assisted civil society programming in effecting system change as well as some of the limitations.

### **A. Program Context**

At the local level, aside from the 1987 Constitution, the major political reform implemented during the Aquinos years was the 1991 LGC.<sup>13</sup> The LGC launched a decentralization initiative arguably more bold than any other in the developing world during the 1990s, with the possible exception of Bolivia's 1994 Popular Participation Law. The LGC's major provisions dealt with both the supply and demand sides of local governance in the Philippines. On the supply side, it devolved service delivery in several important sectors—health, agriculture, and environment among them—and provided for an automatic 20 percent allotment of the internal revenue collected, along with authority to levy local taxes and float loans. In the process some 70,000 central government personnel were transferred to lower levels, mostly in the health sector.

As for demand, the LGC mandated NGO participation in all “local special bodies” (primarily local development councils charged with planning and monitoring public investments, but also local health boards, school boards, law enforcement boards, and the like). In addition, it provided for local initiatives, referenda, and recall mechanisms similar to the framework established by the progressive movement in the United States in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The LGC, in short, made available a framework for civil society participation in local governance and an institutional structure that could respond to that participation. Citizens were guaranteed a channel beyond periodic elections for making their desires known to local governments, and the latter were given the means to respond to such desires.

Because of its long involvement with local governance, USAID was well prepared to react positively to this opportunity. The mission's Local Development and Assistance program (LDAP) and Decentralized Shelter and Urban Development project (DSUD) had contributed extensively to enhancing policy planning and institutional capacity at local level and had focused on the LGC as an opportunity as it was coming on line in the early 1990s. The GOLD project launched in 1995 was in many ways a logical

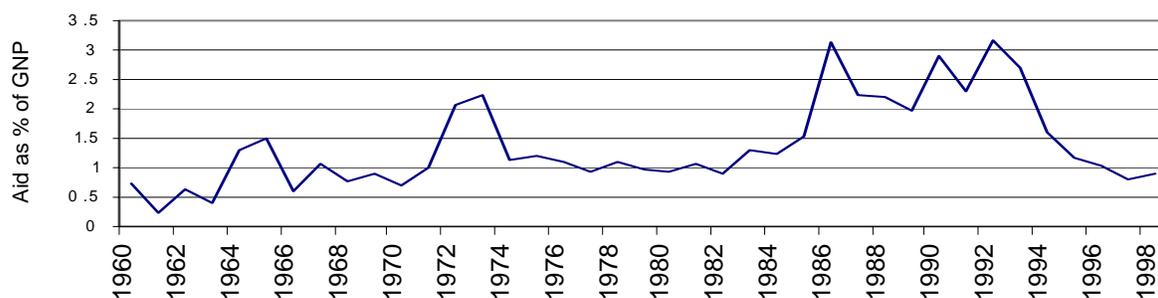
extension of previous efforts, expanding them more fully into the democratic demand side of the local governance equation while continuing previous work to improve the supply side. At the same time, GOLD changed the operational focus from a national level directly to the field, where it assisted LGUs in 11 partner sites scattered through the country.<sup>14</sup>

GOLD has operated in a variety of modes, working through Associates in Rural Development (ARD) as a primary contractor, as well as with two NGO grantees—Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) and the Evelio Javier Foundation, and two sub-grantees of PBSP—the Caucus of Development NGO Networks and the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in the Rural Areas.<sup>15</sup> The project has organized its efforts into four principal areas:

- Participation of NGOs in LGU activities
- LGU planning, management, and financing
- Networks of LGUs and NGOs (principally the LGU leagues)
- Feedback through polling and self-reporting

USAID's national-level programming grew out of its long experience with its PVO (private voluntary organization) co-financing efforts, which by the mid-1990s were in the fourth generation.<sup>16</sup> The first PVO co-finance project began in 1980, emphasizing NGOs as alternatives to the government for service delivery among disadvantaged communities, with the recipient NGOs required to provide a 25 percent contribution in cash or kind (whence the term "co-financing"). PVO Co-finance II started in 1984, expanding the coverage to the poor more generally and emphasizing capacity building among the recipient NGOs. PVO Co-finance II also added a new aspect—the intermediate institution, which was intended to provide technical support and management oversight to the sub-grantees as well as funding, but not to become involved in actual program implementation. PVO Co-finance III began in 1989, continuing the same focus on the poor and disadvantaged while specifically including ethnic minorities as well. A greater emphasis was placed on the intermediate institutions, which channeled funding and training to many hundreds of sub-grantee NGOs.

When PVO Co-finance IV commenced in 1993, a dozen NGOs were chosen for the intermediate institution role, and a major emphasis was placed on building sustainability for what was anticipated to be a future of declining development assistance. Shortly afterward, a significant programming shift occurred with the introduction of USAID's re-engineering efforts, a process that required each mission activity to become linked to one of the Agency's strategic program areas. PVO Co-finance IV fit best into the DG sector, where the strategic objective was delineated as "broadened participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies in selected areas."<sup>17</sup> With GOLD coming on line to deal with the local aspects of this agenda, PVO Co-finance IV was re-shaped to become an enterprise to support national-level civil society initiatives, with the major emphasis on building coalitions among disadvantaged and marginal groups to participate more effectively in democratic processes. In 1996 programs were approved to support coalitions among the urban poor, indigenous peoples, and fisherfolk. By 1998 (the last year for applications), some 17 programs had been funded, as listed in Annex B to this report. They ranged over a wide area, focusing variously on specific occupational groups (e.g., street traders), marginal geographical areas (e.g., Western Mindanao), labor, urban housing, children, economic growth, and justice system concerns. In addition, two programs work with NGO capacity in fundraising and professionalization.

**FIGURE 2: OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO PHILIPPINES AS PERCENTAGE OF GNP, 1960-**

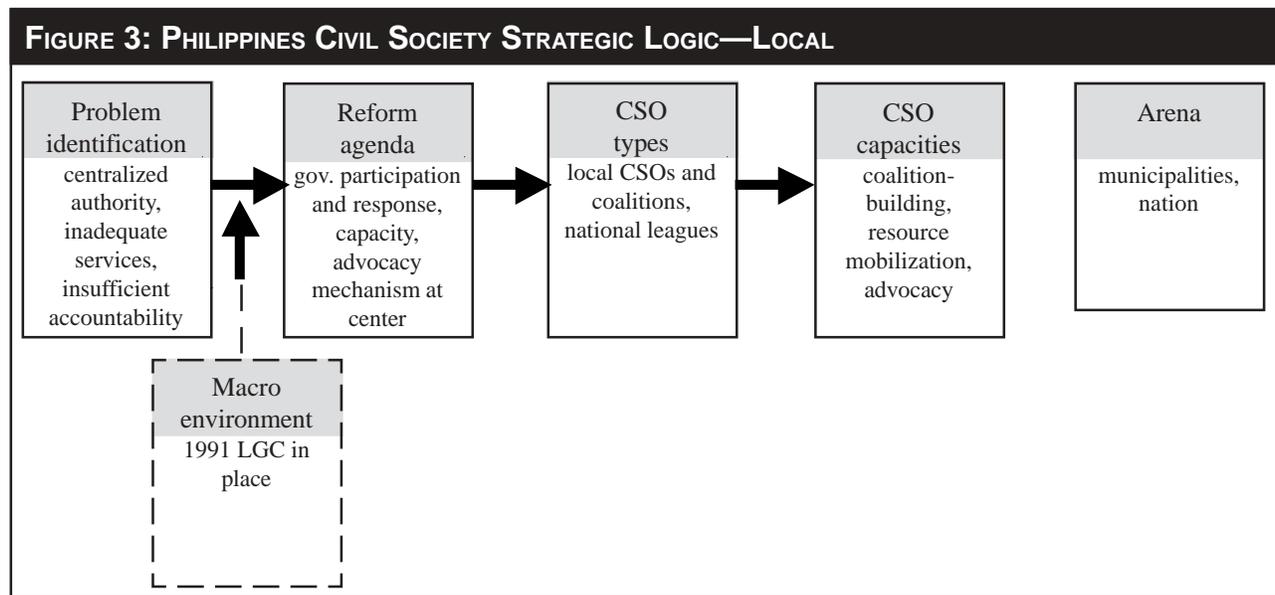
Source: USAID, CDIE, Economic and Social Data Service

Another element of the program context is the overall reality of declining donor assistance. As shown in Figure 2, the pattern of official development aid took a sharp jump after the 1986 EDSA revolution restored democracy. After several high years, the total then took an equally sharp decline in the mid-1990s, falling from 2½-3 percent of GNP to less than 1 percent toward the end of the decade. U.S. assistance underwent an even more precipitate drop, from over \$250 million annually in the early 1990s to around \$30 million a year in the decade's later years. Sustainability thus became more than a slogan as the decade passed. Indeed, it became an increasingly harsh necessity, made greater for USAID grantees by the fact that other donors would not be on hand to pick up any slack left by declining U.S. assistance levels but were instead reducing their own assistance along with USAID. Accordingly, democracy NGOs and POs, which constituted the heart of the USAID enterprise, were increasingly facing the need to fend for themselves in an unsupportive financial resource environment.

Finally as an additional note on USAID programming in the DG sector, it should be mentioned that, when faced with a serious shortfall in anticipated funding in 1999, the mission decided to drop its DG SO altogether during FY 2001 (i.e., the next fiscal year to be programmed). Accordingly, it phased out both the GOLD and civil society initiatives by the end of that fiscal year. Part of the mission's concept is to merge DG approaches and experience into its other sectoral SOs (e.g., in EGAD and PHN), and in FY 2000 it transferred its DG personnel to these other efforts.<sup>18</sup> The question thus emerges with rather stark clarity: Had the activities launched through the GOLD and civil society programs attained enough momentum to become self-sustaining after the USAID side of the equation shut down? Hopefully some final USAID evaluations of these two programs will help answer that question more definitively, but in the meantime we will offer some ideas in Section 6 of this report.

## B. Civil Society Strategic Logic

Figures 3 and 4 endeavor to lay out USAID's civil society approach at local and national levels respectively in terms of the Office of Democracy and Governance's strategic logic framework (as articulated in Hansen, 1996). The problems at the local level (Figure 3), which had initially been perceived to be inadequate service delivery, had been addressed with the LGU capacity-building efforts of the LDAP and DSUD projects in the early post-Marcos years. Then in the mid-1990s the perception enlarged to include insufficient accountability in an overcentralized system. The response was the GOLD project, with its emphasis on enhancing both LGU capacity to deliver and local citizens' capacity to make their wants known to LGUs and hold them accountable for what is delivered. A critical factor in this whole process, of course, was the enactment of the LGC, which provided the policy environment at



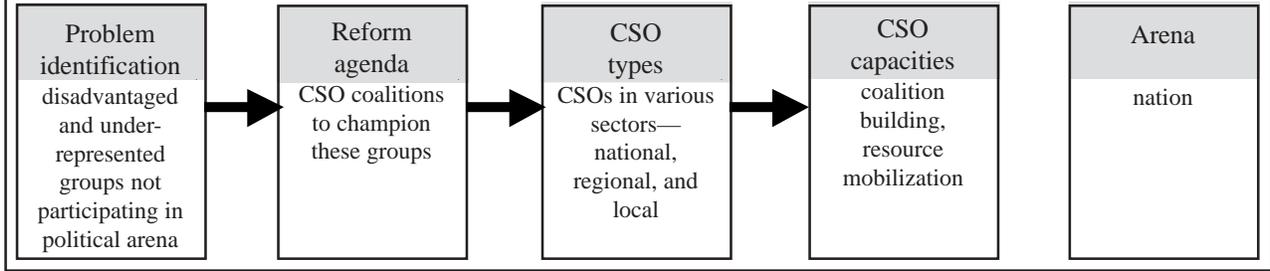
a macro-level within which a serious effort to build local accountability could be launched. Without that key development, the whole USAID enterprise would have made little sense. With it, GOLD was eminently feasible. The CSO types supported were local NGOs and POs as well as the several leagues of LGUs (for municipalities, *barangays*, etc.) to advocate the policy case for the local governmental constituency at the national level.

At the national level (Figure 4), the agenda was somewhat more specific. The problem identified, in large part as an outgrowth of the PVO Co-finance III and early IV projects, was the lack of voice accorded to disadvantaged, under-represented, and basically marginal elements in the national political arena. With that problem identification, it made sense to respond by supporting the groups so deprived, and this is precisely what the redirected PVO Co-finance IV program did. The principal activity, consequently, was to use the intermediate institution approach pioneered earlier by building coalitions that would mobilize resources, coordinate and train their constituent POs, and advocate for them at the national level, as is shown in the several program activities listed in Annex B. Altogether some 17 program activities were supported through the civil society programs, with several features in common:

- They dealt with under-represented or marginalized groups—mostly directly, but in some cases indirectly, as with the two coalitions for economic growth and the two for capacity building (Annex B).
- They devoted significant energy to building coalitions among NGOs and POs involved with these groups.
- They emphasized activism at the national level.

**Generational changes?** A decade and more ago, Korten proposed a generational scheme for analyzing the life cycle of NGO communities. In countries like the Philippines (the model for much of his thinking), NGOs largely began as relief and welfare organizations, mainly in the 1950s and 1960s. Then in the 1970s they moved (often under some donor pressure) toward more developmental efforts, first on a local scale (the second generation) and later at a system level (the third generation), typified by water

**FIGURE 4: PHILIPPINES CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGIC LOGIC—NATIONAL**



management and social forestry initiatives. Korten saw a fourth generation as people’s movements—self-managing networks of NGOs often working on an international scale and concerned with wider issues like environmental sustainability or HIV/AIDS. The USAID-supported civil society efforts looked at here fit to some extent into Korten’s fourth generation, but they might better be thought of as a kind of “third-and-a-half generation”—organizations working to promote systemic changes that would remedy the historical exclusion of non-elites from the political arena.<sup>19</sup> However one chooses to label the stages, there does appear to have been a generational growth from service delivery organizations through the USAID co-finance projects to a different kind of NGO focusing on policy advocacy and change in the Philippines. In the following section, we will explore some examples of this newest generation of NGOs.



### 3 Civil Society Programming in Action: Examples from the High End

Given that a substantial part of our rationale in choosing the Philippines for this assessment was the country's standing at the upper tier of civil society programming within USAID globally, it would make sense to look at several high-end examples within the country—to see “the best of the best.” Doing so should give a good picture of what civil society support can do at its best and, at the same time, show what are the possible limits in promoting this DG sub-sector. In this section, we will first briefly examine USAID-supported efforts at the local level in Naga city and then in Capiz province. At the national level we will look at advocacy initiatives in the coconut and fishing industries, as well as the effort to preserve the central government's contribution to the LGUs. A major objective of our inquiry here will be to ask how to define success in these efforts and to what extent it has been realized in these top-end examples; this will be the concern of the following section of the present report.

#### A. Civil Society at the Local Level

##### 1. Naga City

Located toward the southeastern end of Luzon about 175 miles from Manila, Naga has long enjoyed a high reputation as a progressive city. When the Ford Foundation-sponsored Galing Pook award for local governance innovation and excellence was introduced in 1994, Naga was one of the first winners, an achievement it repeated for the next two years running. Much of this achievement was due to the city's dynamic mayor, Jesse Robredo, who had by the early 1990s attained national standing as a dynamic municipal leader.<sup>20</sup> With this kind of track record, it is scarcely surprising that Naga's application was selected by USAID as a project site in 1996. In June 1996, as the outcome of a workshop conducted by the GOLD project staff along the lines developed for Technology of Participation (ToP), an action agenda was set for the activities chosen as highest priority.<sup>21</sup> These were a watershed improvement plan for the Naga river, solid waste management, health services upgrading, and expansion of popular participation in local councils.

With advice and counsel from GOLD, initiatives based on the 1996 workshop agenda were launched in each of these sectors, and within three years significant progress had been made on all of them, in considerable part because of the work of the NCPC, on which some 44 NGOs and POs are represented.<sup>22</sup> Sulpicio “Cho” Roco became the new mayor after the 1998 election; he had worked with USAID in Manila for 16 years until 1996 and was intimately familiar with the GOLD project. It would be hard to imagine a situation better suited to civil society involvement. In what follows, three of these activities will be explored further.

**The landfill issue.** The centerpiece of the solid waste management enterprise involved closing down the city's main dump by the river and relocating it to a new site in another *barangay*. Because the dump had become a major source of river pollution, such a move would also contribute to the watershed management agenda. But snags quickly developed as residents near the new site objected in a demonstration of the NIMBY (not in my back yard) pattern so familiar to Americans. Another site was then chosen, but again objections emerged, this time not only along NIMBY lines but also from a farmers' NGO which produced evidence that the intended area had earlier been reserved for agricultural use and could not be converted without extended due process. In addition to these interested parties, there was also a much wider concern about the river, which has traditionally been the locale for the primary event of the town's major celebration, the festival of Naga's patron saint, Our Lady of Peñafrancia. The festival's highlight has been a barge procession, an event badly sullied by increasing

pollution levels in the river. Finally, the proposed dump resiting implied significant squatter relocation, a factor pushing the Bicol Urban Poor Coalition into action. With all these interested parties involved, the NCPC was able to play an intermediary role between citizen groups and government. At the time of the DG team's visit, the debate had stalled, but indications were that the city government was contemplating a recycling plant to replace the dump and produce paper, fertilizer, and blocks of construction material. Hopes of getting a World Bank loan were in the air. After the team had left, the city, with the backing of the NCPC, acquired some property adjacent to the present landfill as a stopgap pending the construction of a recycling center.

**The golfing community.** A group of Manila-based developers joined with local landowners to propose a planned residential community in which the central attraction would be a golf course. The project found considerable favor from the city government, which has been trying to promote outside investment, but had not been successful in promoting tourism in a city with few attractions for visitors. Ecotourism had some earlier appeal, but the council had become wary after other localities reported unhappy experiences at the hands of ecotourism hucksters who had launched large-scale promotions, only to pull out after collecting investment money from local governments and backers. Golf seemed a safer bet, but the plan quickly ran into opposition from tenant farmers who would be displaced, as well as environmentalists worried about how much water the golf course would consume.

After much study and deliberation, the NCPC opposed the plan and issued a position paper arguing against it in the spring of 2000. At the time of the DG team's visit in May, the NCPC was demanding a revised city land use plan that would take its considerations into effect. There were other players involved also, as the national Departments of Agriculture (DAR), Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) all had to clear the plan. There was, in other words, good scope for lobbying at higher levels. Thus far, the DA and DENR had apparently signed off on it, but the DAR representative declared some opposition. While all this controversy was going on, the mayor assumed a neutral stance, but it was clear he would have to make a decision. Indications were that he was going to favor the developers, and, not too long after the DG team had departed, the city council endorsed the project with considerable backing from many in Naga, indicating that, while the NCPC did represent the interests of parts of civil society, there were other civil society elements leaning in the opposite direction. A subsequent directive from Estrada putting a national moratorium on golf course construction, however, made the whole issue moot at least temporarily.

**The central business district.** As part of its urban improvement undertaking, Naga city borrowed from a World Bank/Asian Development Bank infrastructure loan fund to build the public-owned but privately managed Central Business District 2 (CBD2), intending to spur development. In the construction process, what was a low-lying area that drained the surrounding terrain became a higher, built-up piece of land that was now paved over. Instead of receiving surface drainage, the CBD2 area now produced it, causing extensive flooding in the surrounding neighborhoods and displacing many families. The NCPC has taken up the cause of these families, but the CBD2 managers claim it is not their problem, while the city council pleads a lack of funds to provide relief. The present picture, then, is one of external diseconomies (for the flooded neighbors) created by a municipal project that has turned a drainage collector into a drainage producer, with the city refusing to accept responsibility for the consequences.

## **2. Capiz and the Gerry Roxas Foundation**

The DG team encountered a very different example of high-end local development in Capiz province, located on the island of Panay in the Central Visayas region. Here the Gerry Roxas Foundation (GRF) has been the GOLD grantee and has been an impressively energetic practitioner of the project's ToP

approach to local governance. GRF is named for a senator of the Roxas family, which has long been the pre-eminent clan on Panay, contributing the country's first president after independence in 1946, as well as the name of the provincial capital, Roxas city. In connection with its GOLD work, the GRF has launched a series of programs in such diverse areas as health delivery, justice, women's empowerment, and alliances with local CSOs. All these activities are well organized and smoothly functioning with highly motivated professionals involved.

The Capiz Integrated Health Services Council, an expanded version of the provincial health council mandated by the LGC, includes civil society representatives from service and professional organizations and has assumed a constructive policy role in coordinating and upgrading the health delivery system at all levels, including surgical and dental service provision to the poor. There is significant evidence of achievement in these activities. They were recognized by the mission's Local Government Performance program (part of USAID/Philippines's health sector activity) as one of the best local health efforts in the country. A CDIE report on cross-sector linkages between DG and other sectors in the Philippines found the program an impressive example of intersectoral synergy.<sup>23</sup> In other undertakings, the GRF's Barangay Justice Sector program had set up some 421 *barangay* justice advocates to deal with local justice issues (primarily domestic violence),<sup>24</sup> and its Partners Alliance for GOLD Expansion and Replication (PAGER) is coordinating the GOLD project's Center for Local Governance efforts to roll out the GOLD framework to other areas.<sup>25</sup>

All these initiatives have involved high levels of energy, enthusiasm, and competence from GRF, and there is no question that the supply side objectives of the GOLD project have been achieved. Local government responsiveness has greatly improved; service delivery has become better, and ToP has increased the ability of LGUs to respond to public needs. The demand side has been given considerable attention as well, in the form of NGO membership on local special bodies and the like. And a CSO like Capiz Women, Inc., which has some 12,000 members in the province, has become quite effective in promoting environmental programs like tree planting and small loan enterprises for women. It has also pushed an effort to prevent a mining operation in the province and pressed successfully for an ordinance requiring solid waste segregation.

Naga and Capiz provide two very different experiences in local governance. In Naga, the critical factor was Robredo, who set up the NCPC and thereby launched a mechanism for ensuring civil society inputs into governmental decision-making. Nurtured by GOLD-sponsored training and guidance, CSOs have used the NCPC and similar sectoral bodies to inject considerable bottom-up demands into the system, often to the discomfort of local elites. POs do not always get their way, and in fact seem to lose as often as they win, but their involvement has made local governance a good deal more transparent and accountable. By contrast, in Capiz the GRF has organized things in a well-coordinated, top-down fashion, with little obvious evidence of spontaneous input from below. *Noblesse oblige* has been the dominant theme—what might be called the benevolent side of the patrimonial heritage of local governance in the Philippines. Good things get done, services improve, and public interest is advanced, but the key dynamic in the equation has been the GRF, not civil society.<sup>26</sup>

## **B. Civil Society at the National Level**

### **1. The Coconut Levy**

The story of the coconut levy is a tangled one, but it offers an excellent example of the convoluted reality that surrounds any serious effort in civil society, where there are always many perspectives and contestants involved in any important issue. The fact that it has been so extensively analyzed helps in

understanding it,<sup>27</sup> but much of the analysis makes one suspect that there remains a great deal to be explained. The saga began in the early years of the Marcos dictatorship, when he established successive levies on the sale of coconuts to the millers who produced coconut oil. Ostensibly intended to support funds for price stabilization sector improvement, the levies collected soon went into the hands of Marcos cronies charged with managing them. The levies were onerous enough that, despite the dictatorship, there was much farmer opposition, and finally they were ended in 1982. By this time the larger of the two levies had collected almost P10 billion, and much of it had been invested through various mechanisms controlled by cronies into a number of industries, including the San Miguel Corporation, by far the country's largest brewery. The top Marcos crony involved in the coconut fund at the time was Cojuangco, who fled the country with the Marcos family after the 1986 EDSA revolution. Cojuangco resurfaced in 1991 and resumed his role in the San Miguel Corporation, claiming control over some 47 percent of the corporation's stock. By the late 1990s, the prize was huge; the San Miguel Corporation was ranked number three among all Philippine corporate enterprises in the year 2000 by *Asiaweek*, and one of only seven operations in the country that ranked among the top 1,000 in Asia overall.<sup>28</sup>

USAID's civil society program entered the picture with a grant in 1996 to Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA, which in 1997 combined with the Agricultural Cooperative Development International to become ACDI/VOCA). This grantee supported an effort called Building Unity for Continuing Coconut Industry Reform (BUCO), which then assisted two coalitions representing small coconut farmers—the Coconut Industry Reform Movement (COIR) and Pambansang Koalisyon ng Magsasaka at Manggagawa sa Niyugan (PKSMMN). Each of these organizations is in turn composed of a number of smaller NGOs and POs.

BUCO's main initiative has been to advocate through the government, the political arena, and the media to obtain a release of the San Miguel Corporation shares to a trust fund that would benefit the small farmers who had involuntarily created the stockholding through the levies. BUCO's argument is that, of Cojuangco's 47 percent holding in the San Miguel Corporation, at least 27 percent (and possibly the other 20 percent as well) rightfully belongs to these farmers. The 27 percent stake by itself amounts to a very large holding, worth perhaps P50 million or well over \$1 billion at the time of the DG team's visit. The alliance pulled together a multi-sectoral task force including businessmen, religious leaders, academics, legislators, former cabinet secretaries and, it is claimed, even a few people with access to Estrada himself. Their main objective was to induce the president to issue an executive order setting up a trust fund for these shares.

In its campaign, the task force generated huge publicity, with video documentaries and heavy press coverage, aided greatly by the convenient target presented by Cojuangco with his past as a leading Marcos crony and widespread current allegations that he held a similar role in Estrada's inner circle. Press stories frequently have appeared in Manila's leading dailies, often on the front page.<sup>29</sup> Cojuangco himself has insisted that all the shares are rightfully his personal property, never purchased with coconut levy money.

The campaign has in many ways been eminently successful. BUCO has also pushed a legal case in the Sandiganbayan (the special anti-corruption court). But BUCO was not the only group attempting to pressure the president. BUCO has been facing a rival claim from another coconut group, the Coconut Producers Federation of the Philippines (COCOFED), which claims that it, representing larger farmers and mill owners who actually paid the levy collections to the government, is entitled to the contested shares (BUCO responds that the mill owners simply deducted the levies from what they paid the growers and thus acted merely as conduits in the process, not as the actual payers).<sup>30</sup>

At the time of the DG team's visit, BUCO and COCOFED had both submitted draft executive orders for the president's signature. For his part, however, apparently torn by conflicting claims from the two coconut alliances plus those of his ally Cojuangco, Estrada was evading making any decision in the case. At various times he promised to decide, but then postponed doing so. Various rumors of compromise floated, but nothing actual had materialized, and in the meantime, the Sandiganbayan has allowed Cojuangco to vote all the 47 percent holding, pending the eventual outcome of the matter.

Then on November 8, 2000, as the impeachment movement against Estrada was gathering steam, he signed an executive order that would award Cojuangco his claimed 20 percent of San Miguel Corporation shares, while putting the 27 percent to auction, from which the proceeds would be placed in a fund to benefit the coconut farmers. The executive order named BUCO's two organizations (COIR and PKSMMN) as beneficiaries, but it also named COCOFED, as well as leaving some doubt about auditing provisions and whether the fund would be private or public. Some in the peasant farmer organizations seemed ready to accept the new dispensation, but others—especially PKSMMN—were opposed, promising to take the matter back to the Sandiganbayan. Needless to say, much speculation emerged on presidential motives for signing the order as the demands for his removal mounted.<sup>31</sup> Then with the presidential succession of January 2001, things appeared to change quite radically once again, with Cojuangco's position and the disposition of the 27 percent shares both becoming uncertain. The BUCO coalition should have many more opportunities to try affecting the political process.

## **2. The Fisherfolk Coalition**

In the early 1990s the National Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reform (NACFAR) formed as an alliance of eight national and regional fisherfolk federations for the purposes of increasing the public policy voice of fisherfolk and the small-scale fishing industry they belong to. Its principal policy objective was to press for a comprehensive fisheries reform code to be enacted by Congress that would set regulations for offshore fishing—a livelihood increasingly threatened by large-scale extraction, mangrove eradication, and overfishing.<sup>32</sup> Despite differences and even defections among the member organizations, NACFAR held together, and in 1995 became one of the first coalitions to gain support from USAID's civil society program. This was the Fisherfolk Advocacy for Sustainable Aquatic Reform (FASAR) program, in which ACDI/VOCA was the principal grantee and NACFAR the sub-grantee.

Dissension continued among NACFAR members, culminating in a September 1996 split as a result of an advertisement run in a Manila daily newspaper opposing the fisheries bill then before the Congress. A number of coalition members withdrew, and a legal tussle over FASAR assets ensued. The split evolved as partly ideological and partly personal. Those remaining in NACFAR persisted, and eventually a bill did pass in August 1997, which was signed by Ramos. The new code granted a municipal fishery zone out to 12 miles and provided for fishery resource management councils to manage the zones; it garnered considerable media coverage. Whereas NACFAR had hoped for a three-ton limit on allowable catches, the code as passed allowed for up to 50 tons. Instead of helping to guarantee livelihood and working space for small operators (as well as helping preserve the coastal environment), the code in effect opened the door to much bigger fishing enterprises. Still, the provision for local management councils marked something of an advance and fisherfolk organizations gained valuable political experience.

## **3. The Internal Revenue Allotment Reduction**

When it was enacted in 1991, the LGC identified the internal revenue allotment (IRA) as the principal funding source for the new LGUs. Specifically, the code stated that 30 percent of the internal revenue taxes collected would be allotted to the LGUs in 1992, rising to 40 percent for 1994 and thereafter. The

LGUs were given various powers to raise money on their own, but the IRA has been the main source of income for them. Thus it came as an unpleasant surprise when Ramos withheld one-tenth of the IRA (i.e., one-quarter of the 40 percent) from the LGUs in 1997. Estrada maintained the cut when he took office in 1998, although he reduced it by half to five percent, or one-eighth of the 40 percent. By the time the 2000 budget came to the Congress, several proposals had emerged. Some held that the IRA should be reduced as a matter of principle, for the LGUs had become too dependent on it and should be forced to raise more of their own funds. A second school held that the LGUs were entitled to the full 40 percent but that a part of it should remain unprogrammed so that it would be turned over only if all anticipated internal revenue taxes were in fact collected. Finally, some argued that not only should the 40 percent be honored in full, but it should be raised to 50 percent.

The second school appeared to hold sway when the budget was passed in early 2000, but then Estrada gave signals to the contrary, assuring protestors in March that all funds would be restored without the unprogrammed feature. Things dragged on without resolution, however, until July when the Supreme Court declared the cuts unconstitutional, but avoided specifying whether the LGUs were entitled to restitution of IRA funds already cut.<sup>33</sup>

This constantly changing and somewhat confusing debate with several sides would appear made to order for CSOs to enter the fray, and so it is not surprising that many (perhaps most) of the various local governmental leagues supported by the GOLD project have been weighing in on the IRA issue. The lead body recently has been the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), which was formed in September 1998 from the previous League of Leagues, the apex coalition of subnational governmental bodies and officeholders in the country. Assisted by USAID grantee PBSP as part of the GOLD project, ULAP and its member organizations have pressed their cause with all three branches of government as well as with the media and occasionally on the streets. In 1999 ULAP staged street demonstrations in Manila to protest the IRA cut, while supporting the legal case that culminated with the Supreme Court decision in July 2000. ULAP's constituent organizations have also become political actors on the national stage, some of them quite adept. The League of Municipalities, for example, elected as its head Estrada's son, Jinggoy, who was mayor of San Juan, one of metropolitan Manila's constituent units. One suspects some opportunism here in trying to gain access to the executive branch. Certainly it has not impeded access to the media.<sup>34</sup> ULAP and its member organizations, in short, have become heavyweight political actors at the national level.<sup>35</sup>

## **4** Assessing “Success”

### **A. What is Success in Civil Society Advocacy?**

In the R4 reviews generated at USAID/Philippines during the later 1990s, indicators were set for strategic objectives and intermediate results that might give some idea of program success. The number of NGO representatives actively participating in local special bodies as specified in the LGC, for example, grew from 293 in 1995 (the baseline year) to 693 in 1997, and to 1,153 in 1999. Similarly, net self-generated revenue grew from P592 million collected in 1995 to P1.15 billion by 1999.<sup>36</sup>

At least some of these indicators show real progress for civil society, but our concerns run deeper. Specifically, we want to know how have civil society efforts affected decision-making at local and national level? There are some data available through the GOLD project along these lines.<sup>37</sup> Year-to-year figures are provided in Table 3, and overall progress is shown below:

- LGUs implementing environmental plans that had been developed with effective citizen participation grew from 38 in 1995 to 148 in 2000, over two-thirds of the 211 LGUs covered by the GOLD project.
- Similarly, LGUs implementing investment plans developed with effective citizen participation increased from 41 to 132 over the same period.
- The percentage of survey respondents feeling that their priority concerns were being addressed rose from 36 percent in 1995 to 47 percent in 2000.<sup>38</sup>

As valuable as these indicators are, they still do not fully answer the impact question. That citizens participated effectively in developing an environmental plan comes close (about as close as it is possible to get, as we will see shortly), but it does not show that participation positively affected public decision-making. The same goes for the investment plans indicator. Unfortunately, results indicators of this sort were never constructed for the mission’s civil society initiative at the national level, leaving only the more impressionistic data presented in the brief sketches given in the previous section.

Among the six issue-oriented mini-case studies, three local and three national,<sup>39</sup> all exhibited a high degree of civil society input—USAID grantees had strengthened institutional capacity, the CSOs involved were able to launch efforts to affect public decision-making, and the three national-level cases were able to garner a good deal of media publicity as well. As for direct realization of immediate objectives, outcomes were a bit more mixed. In only one case has a coalition achieved its basic aim, assuming that the Naga landfill will be turned into a recycling center. Two cases saw (or will probably see) a significant if partial victory. The coconut levy coalition appears likely to gain a good portion if not all of its 27 percent of San Miguel Corporation shares when the dust finally settles. And local governance groups did win the presidential order and Supreme Court decision on full rights to the IRA, although no provision was made to restore cuts already in place for the last several years.

In one instance a coalition won the day with a policy change, but the triumph was essentially pyrrhic. This occurred when the fisherfolk coalition saw its code enacted but with such a substantial exemption for catches that its provisions were largely gutted, and, in the process of campaigning for the code, the national-level coalition had basically disintegrated. In one case a temporary victory emerged from the jaws of defeat, as the Naga city council’s decision to approve the golf community was quashed by

presidential decree, but how long that will hold remains unclear. Finally it looks as if the neighborhoods flooded by the new central business district will get no relief or redress. So if success is to be defined by policy-oriented outcomes of advocacy initiative—victory for a CSO in influencing state agencies—these high-end Philippine examples qualify marginally at best.

But is this how civil society success should be defined? It certainly can be argued that success has to be more than capacity building and advocacy as activities *per se*. All the components of civil society activity like crafting a plan, mobilizing resources, activating a constituency, and advocating for policy change, are not really the same as having some actual effect on governmental decision-making. Such activities may well teach democratic values and behavior, inculcate a sense of citizen efficacy, and even increase public support for democracy, but if they do not change policy or at least have a significant impact on it, can they be said to succeed?

This question brings us to ask what constitutes civil society success in any political system. If success is defined as winning the day on a public policy issue, then how is one to judge civil society in the United States? Was the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) a civil society success because its backers won? Or a civil society failure because its opponents lost? Or does it make more sense to say that in civil society terms the NAFTA issue represented a success because of the following:

- A number of mutually contentious approaches had to be taken seriously in the process of decision-making.
- The discourse and debate between contending sides were sufficiently robust and the media coverage sufficiently vigorous that the process was reasonably transparent and the decision-makers (in the case the Congress) had to account (by explaining their votes to their constituents) for why they decided as they did.
- Major stakeholders felt that their interests were considered in the decision-making process.
- These stakeholders were willing to stay actively involved in the political game.

If the test is to be contending views taken seriously and transparency/accountability exercised, then all six of the Philippine examples presented above should be termed civil society successes. In each case there were well-articulated proposals put forward by civil society groups with sufficient strength that decision-makers had to take them seriously and account for the policy outcomes, which were subjected to public scrutiny. Of course these outcomes could have been a good deal better in several instances. For instance, the flooded CBD2 neighbors will probably get no relief. Nor do poor fisherfolk stand to realize much actual benefit from the 50-ton limit on coastal catches.

Certainly transparency could be greater. What exactly impelled the Naga city council to reject the flooded residents' complaints in the end? What were the considerations that led to Congress increasing the catch limit from 3 to 50 tons? Just what pressures and inducements were being put into play by those trying to influence the San Miguel Corporation decision? These are all good questions, but they could equally be asked of the processes that actually go on in important decisions taken in the western democracies. There is in fact a long tradition of just such inquiry, tracing back to the work of Robert Dahl (1961) and G. William Domhoff (1967) and continuing since then, often through acrimonious arguments. When all is said and done, surely the important question is whether civil society was sufficiently strong and pluralistic to force the decision-makers to account for their actions.

**TABLE 3: SELECTED GOLD PROJECT INDICATOR DATA, 1995-2000**

<b>Local government units implementing environmental plans developed with effective citizen participation</b>						
	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>
Target	[baseline]	70	90	130	170	200
Actual	38	68	88	104	132	148
<b>Local government units implementing investment plans developed with effective citizen participation</b>						
	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>
Target	[baseline]	40	65	100	160	185
Actual	41	47	88	103	121	132
<b>Percent of citizens who feel their priority concerns are being addressed</b>						
	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>
Target	[baseline]	35%	40%	45%	50%	50%
Actual	36%	43%	45%	43%	36%	47%

Source: GOLD project; data for 1995-1997 were also published in ARD (1998) along with notes on methodology, and in USAID/Philippines R4 reports.

By this standard, our six cases appear to qualify; the objectives that were part of the civil society strategic logic at both local and national levels (cf. Figures 3 and 4) have been realized to a significant extent. The GOLD indicator data on LGU plans (Table 3) show that it is also possible to ask such questions on a larger and more practical scale. The best approach would be a wide series of case studies such as the six presented here, although the logistics of data gathering could prove daunting (GOLD's data collection effort was formidable enough and might be the best that would realistically be possible).

**Philanthropy and civil society.** The GRF experience in Capiz presents somewhat different lessons. LGU capacity has been greatly enhanced, and service delivery has improved markedly in decentralized sectors like health. Moreover, an initiative like the Barangay Justice System program increased citizen ability to demand that local government deliver needed services. And the Center for Local Governance

initiated by GRF as part of the GOLD rollout exercise will allow these aspects of good governance to spread elsewhere in the Visayas. All of this, however, constitutes more nearly evidence of well-managed, effective, top-down governance—a patron-client model upgraded—than of civil society.<sup>40</sup> People’s needs are being met, but they are being met through the GRF initiative rather than an active civil society. With the GRF’s demonstrated and impressive ability to galvanize and manage public efforts, one could argue that the GRF approach to local governance does even better than a system in which civil society played the major role in connecting citizen and state. In a real sense, other localities would be lucky to have a GRF on which to rely, and many might think it worthwhile to trade off the self-management required by a pluralistic democracy in favor of the well-meaning (and generally well-directed) enthusiastic civic role played by the GRF.<sup>41</sup> However, and perhaps unfortunately, the number of elite provincial families that have taken such a local philanthropic route in putting *noblesse oblige* into action remains very small.

In sum, the case being made here is that a polity based on civil society requires a healthy degree of pluralism—different CSOs with different agendas advocating differing and even at times opposed preferences. A philanthropic entity that dominates the political arena essentially offers only one agenda, multi-faceted though it may be. It is not civil society. This is an arguable case, and several development professionals both in the Philippines and at USAID/W have urged that the GRF should be considered a CSO.

## **B. Civil Society Programming and Transforming the State**

We are now brought back to what was posed earlier as the report’s central question: What has the USAID civil society program been able to accomplish in furthering the democratic process in the Philippines? The achievements noted in the six case-study examples are significant, but they themselves are not sufficient to remove local bosses or crack the system of oligarchs and cronies at higher levels. If the GOLD rollout encourages large numbers of LGUs to adopt its processes at the local level and if other marginal groups prove able to replicate the work of the coconut farmers at the national level, the bosses, oligarchs, and cronies will still not disappear. The structures examined by Anderson (1998), Hutchcroft (1991, 1999), Lacaba (1995), and Sidel (1996, 1999) can be expected to remain largely in place. One knowledgeable estimate on local development councils (which in the LGC formulation are the key theatre of activity for NGO participation in local affairs), for instance, is that countrywide around 25-40 percent of them are in fact functioning.<sup>42</sup>

These elites will remain, and, working as they do through the various patron-client structures that have long been in place, they will continue the rent-seeking, corrupt practices that make the Philippine economy and polity so much less efficient than they could be. But civil society initiatives have put some dents, perhaps even a few small holes, in the armor protecting this structure and have perhaps inserted critical clots in its blood supply. When a powerful insider magnate like Cojuangco stands to lose a considerable part of his fortune to a civil society initiative and when land developers in Naga come under serious public scrutiny for their actions, then things have changed. Perhaps not yet in a fundamental way, but in an incremental fashion that can be expected to have a cumulative impact. In short, the possibility of serious system change toward democratic pluralism is conceivable today, whereas a decade ago it was at best difficult to discern, and, during the Marcos era, it was impossible to see at all.

Is this kind of incrementalism enough to justify a civil society program? Probably not if the goal is to fundamentally transform the political system, but this was not the objective of the USAID program in the Philippines and it could not reasonably be expected to serve as the goal of a program effort that at both national and local levels cost about 10¢ annually per citizen over a five-year period<sup>43</sup> against a backdrop of a century and more of history devoted to putting the present system into place. Perhaps at a time of

system transition (e.g., the period just after the first EDSA revolution) such a transformation could have taken place. But the *ancien régime* was largely restored under Aquino, at least insofar as its political economy was concerned, and by the 1990s the system's intensified momentum had become like that of a large ocean liner, impossible to turn except by small, incremental degrees.<sup>44</sup> Fundamental system change would seem to be out of the question, but if the goal is to launch a trajectory that could lead to such system change, then the USAID effort can be counted a good investment.

One could ask about redirecting the economy at this point. If it has been possible in the post-Marcos era to turn the economy in a more market-oriented direction through privatizing, deregulating, and the like, why should it be so difficult to re-direct the polity?<sup>45</sup> There are in fact several reasons why transforming the polity has proven harder:

- Donors have exercised far less funding leverage in pushing for changes in the polity. A great deal of the development assistance during the late 1980s and early 1990s that is portrayed in Figure 2 went for structural readjustment efforts; DG assistance has always been far smaller.<sup>46</sup>
- Economic reform has generally centered on dismantling regulations and privatizing state enterprises—essentially *undoing* things—while political reform has been about *building* new mechanisms and institutions, a considerably harder task.<sup>47</sup>
- The changes to be undertaken in economic reform are essentially top-down and can be directed from the ministries in Manila, whereas demands for change that would come from a truly pluralistic political system would be mainly bottom-up, probably unpredictable, and largely unmanageable from the government side.
- Political elites know that they can deal with and accommodate to whatever economic elites emerge from a restructured economy, just as they have done with economic elites all along. Indeed, many of the post-reform moguls are the very same people who commanded the economic heights before. New national leaders that would be thrown up through civil society efforts, on the other hand, are all too likely to be quite unknown, and the populist demands they might well make could become tougher to handle.

For all these reasons, national elites find it easier to contemplate and undertake economic reforms than to entertain restructuring the basic political framework. Change can happen in the political realm, but it will have to be slow.



## 5 Advancing Civil Society Apart from USAID-supported Efforts

While USAID has made significant contributions to civil society in the Philippines, it has scarcely been the only source of innovation or support. In a country with such a rich base of human capital and developmental enthusiasm, it would be surprising if there were not many other efforts, both indigenous and foreign-supported. Some of these efforts deserve consideration as civil society initiatives that could inform USAID programming efforts in other countries.

In this section, we examine two such activities. The first, in calling for civil society participation at the national level in the legislature, constitutes a remarkably bold and at the same time logical follow-on to the LGC with its requirement for NGO participation on local official bodies. And like the LGC, the 1995 Party-list System Act was indigenously crafted, not the product of foreign guidance. The second initiative, with the somewhat improbable (to American ears) name of BATMAN, has received a good deal of outside support. Similar in some ways to GOLD, it focuses on the local level, but so far only on *barangays*—although it has ambitions of eventual impact at higher levels as well.

### A. Institutionalizing Civil Society in the Legislature: The Party-list System

The party-list system instituted in 1998 shows the lengths to which the Philippine political system has been willing to go in experimenting with new ways to increase popular participation in governance. It has not been the object of any significant foreign assistance, but the magnitude of its daring deserves attention in a report of this sort.

In the 1987 Constitution, a provision called for the establishment of a party-list system, whereby 20 percent of the House of Representatives should consist of members representing the “labor, peasant, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, women, youth, and such other sectors as may be provided by law, except the religious sector.”<sup>48</sup> It took some time for Congress to compose an act to implement this provision, but in 1995 the Party-list System Act was passed, and over the next two years implementing regulations were drawn up, so that the new structure was first implemented in the May 1998 elections.

The party-list system constitutes something of a misnomer, in that one of its principal features specifically excludes the five largest political parties by name from competing for the 51 seats it adds to the House of Representatives. It is worth quoting the act regarding those whom it seeks to include. Its purpose is to

...enable Filipino citizens belonging to marginalized and under-represented sectors, organizations, and parties, and who lack well-defined political constituencies but who could contribute to the formulation and enactment of appropriate legislation that will benefit the nation as a whole, to become members of the House of Representatives.  
(quoted from Agra 1997: 4)

Like the LGC, the act was a bold step, especially in a political situation of kaleidoscopically regrouping and realigning major parties in which civil society representatives to the House could conceivably hold the balance of power. At the very least, the new system proved to be a confusing one, not least to those attempting to gain election under its provisions. The act’s main aspects were as follows:

- Parties (other than the five excluded ones), organizations, and coalitions may register with the Commission on Elections to represent one of the following sectors: labor, peasants, fisherfolk,

urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, elderly, handicapped, women, youth, veterans, overseas workers, and professionals.

- Voters get two ballots for the House—one for a territorial representative (the traditional system) and the second for a party list.
- Party-list groups win seats according to a formula giving one representative for the first two percent of all votes cast nationally under the system, a second seat for four percent, and a maximum of three seats for six percent. Only those parties crossing the two percent barrier will win any seats at all.
- The parties assign seats won to specific persons, which means that voters cast their ballots for a party, not for an individual candidate.
- In contrast to the regular representatives with their geographical districts, the party-list representatives have national constituencies.
- The five major parties will be able to participate in the party-list system beginning with the 2001 elections; the ban on their involvement only holds for the 1998-2001 term.

As the election commission implemented the act, some 15 categories of lists were established, with organizations/coalitions, cooperatives, and (small) political parties entitled to enter the 1998 election.<sup>49</sup> In the event, some 123 bodies put themselves into the contest.<sup>50</sup> The sectoral groupings ranged from two party-list groups in the elderly and handicapped sectors up to 30 in the organizations/coalitions sector. Voters evidently had some trouble dealing with the new setup, and only about one-third of those voting for ordinary congressional candidates also cast a ballot for a party-list entry. While turnout for the regular candidates was a bit over 27 million, only 9.16 million voted in the party-list arrangement, meaning that the two percent entry level became 183,000 votes. As indicated in Table 4, just 13 groups passed this threshold to win a seat, and only one of them managed to win more than four percent of the votes to gain two seats in the Congress.

Clearly there were serious troubles with the new system. First, no more than a third of those voting for a regular House candidate had enough motivation and understanding to vote for a party-list group. Second, fragmentation, competition, poor mobilization, and misplaced confidence among the party-list groups themselves meant many wasted votes. In the women's sector, for example, six groups entered the contest and collectively they garnered six percent of the vote, sufficient to elect three representatives, but only one group cleared the two-percent threshold (Abanse!Pinay [Women, Advance!] received 2.6 percent of the total party-list vote). In the labor sector, the outcome was even worse as 13 parties (several connected to the ACILS-supported Trade Union Congress of the Philippines<sup>51</sup>) competed with each other, taking seven percent of the party-list vote overall, but none of the individual groups getting more than 1.1 percent. A few groups did well organizing and motivating their constituencies—two urban poor groups each won a seat, four peasant bodies took a seat each, and a cooperative managed to win two seats. But these were exceptions. Fully 112 of the 123 contesting groups, 8 of the 15 sectors, and 72 percent of the voters elected no one at all. Presumably for the 2001 election, groups will merge and will coordinate and energize their campaigns, so that more citizens vote for party-list entries and a greater proportion of the 51 seats get filled.<sup>52</sup>

Those who did win in 1998 have had more chance to affect the legislative process than one might think, in that the Congress has no single majority party and must work through a majority-coalition structure. Party-list representatives have been able to participate in that structure. For example, Patricia Sarenas of

**TABLE 4: PARTY-LIST SYSTEM ELECTION RESULTS FOR HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1998**

Sector	Groups contesting	Percent of total party-list votes received by sector	Seats won
Elderly	2	2%	0
Fisherfolk	3	1%	0
Handicapped	2	2%	0
Indigenous cultural communities	6	2%	0
Labor	13	7%	0
Overseas workers	6	4%	0
Peasants	9	13%	4
Professionals	4	2%	0
Urban poor	8	10%	2
Veterans	3	5%	1
Women	6	6%	1
Youth	7	4%	0
Organizations/coalitions	30	17%	1
Cooperatives	10	10%	3*
Small political parties	17	15%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>

\* One group won two seats in this sector.

Source: Derived from Rodriguez and Velasco (1998: passim).

Abanse!Pinay became the women’s sector representative and also chair of the Committee on Women, while Cresente Paez, who won a seat with the National Coalition of Cooperatives, an agricultural group, and has been able to change the budgeting practices of the government’s Cooperative Development Authority that funds and supervises national coops.

There are, in short, a number of bright spots in the rather perplexing picture emerging from the first party-list elections. Given the basic complexities of the structure for both politicians and voters, it should be judged as having made a reasonable start.

## **B. Developing Civil Society at the Base: BATMAN and GOLD**

Over the latter half of the 1990s, a more intense and focused alternative to GOLD has emerged in the form of a *barangay*-level initiative built around a publication titled the *Barangay Training Manual*; the project quickly acquired the acronym BATMAN. A number of donors have supported it, including principally the Ford Foundation and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, but also Christian Aid and the Australian PACAP program. It anticipates receiving funding as well from the European Union and two Dutch agencies, NOVIB and CORDAID.

BATMAN has two conceptual foundations.<sup>53</sup> The first came in the early 1990s when several left-of-center NGOs joined to support a slate of national candidates in the 1992 election. All of them lost. The group then decided to engage in local work, both as a political party and as a *barangay*-level effort in participatory planning, resource mobilization and monitoring. The party became Akbayan, which won a number of seats in the 1997 *barangay* elections and then ran a slate for the national party-list election in 1998, winning one seat in the House of Representatives. Akbayan is only loosely (how loosely appears to be a matter of debate) related to BATMAN, which is the governance side of the enterprise. BATMAN itself began with a predecessor project called COMET (Campaign Management and Electoral Training), formed in 1996 when some seven NGOs came together to form it and draw up the *Barangay Training Manual* that gave the organization its new acronym-based title. The seven NGOs grew into 36 the following year, forming the BATMAN consortium.

The BATMAN approach is somewhat similar to GOLD's, in that it begins with a participatory planning workshop, but whereas the GOLD version is a two-day affair launching the initiative in each province or city, followed by guidance and advice, BATMAN operates its program at the *barangay* level with many workshops, training sessions, and the like over a much longer period. Great effort is put into establishing local priorities and crafting plans to mobilize the resources needed to deal with them. NGO and PO representatives are included all the way through the program, along with *barangay* officials.

The main features distinguishing BATMAN from GOLD are

- A focus on the *barangay* level as opposed to GOLD's work with the entire LGU structure from province (or city) down to *barangay*
- A longer timeframe for anticipated outcomes to materialize. How much longer wasn't clear, perhaps even to BATMAN's activists and supporters, but there is a definite feeling among both groups that they are looking over a longer term than is GOLD.
- An informal rather than a formal replication system. Whereas GOLD has instituted a rollout of its approach with the idea of recruiting other LGUs to take it up, the BATMAN strategy is for *barangay* captains assisted by local POs and NGOs to evangelize their neighbors and energize them into taking up the BATMAN initiative.
- An explicit political effort to support the Akbayan political party at both local and (through the party-list) national levels, with the hope of launching a bottom-up political reform movement. In a sense GOLD's support for the LGU leagues represents a bottom-up effort to affect national politics on behalf of a local agenda, but it is a much more restricted and focused approach, which is confined to securing and enlarging the claim of LGUs and government bodies generally, while Akbayan is conceived as a broader enterprise pulling together overall civil society interests and pushing them from below.

So far BATMAN has trained people in several hundred *barangays* during its first full year of operation in 1999, and it has targeted several hundred more for 2000. It has also broadened its donor base impressively. The Freidrich Ebert Stiftung is now decreasing its assistance, but others like the Dutch agencies appear to be moving in, while some like the Ford Foundation are continuing their support. Akbayan plans to run candidates in the next round of *barangay* elections in 2000 and the party-list component of the congressional mid-term elections in 2001.

Since BATMAN is somewhat parallel to GOLD in its coverage, especially in its ToP approach including both *barangay* officials and citizens, the question of overlap and even competition might arise. But there are more than 42,000 *barangays* in the Philippines, and so far neither initiative has involved more than several hundred. With its bottom-up orientation, it will be some time before BATMAN takes on the higher levels of LGUs, which GOLD has incorporated into the heart of its program from the outset. Finally, GOLD is in its final phases now as a USAID-supported enterprise after five years of work, while BATMAN is relatively at its beginning. There seems more than enough room for both these efforts to make a significant and complementary contribution to civil society's development at the local level. Certainly, both approaches—GOLD's legacy and BATMAN's development—deserve close watching by democracy assistance professionals for what they will reveal about democratization assistance.

### **C. Other Donor Initiatives**

In addition to the Ford, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and other BATMAN supporters noted above, still further donors were involved in assisting civil society efforts. Among those visited by the DG team, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was the most active, with a local government support program that works at the local level on both supply (capacity building) and demand (participation) sides, somewhat parallel to the GOLD project. In addition, the Canadian embassy has been supporting the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives that assists local NGOs with one-time grants. Finally there is a CIDA-supported Philippine Development Assistance program focusing on locally sustainable integrated area development.

Other donors with civil society activities are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Australian Agency for International Development, and the German assistance program, Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit. The World Bank has taken a different tack; rather than support CSOs, it has undertaken systematically to include civil society groups in designing and implementing its many project activities in the Philippines.<sup>54</sup> About half of its projects incorporate NGOs in a contractual role as well. Thus far, however, the bank has not worked directly with LGUs or with civil society advocacy efforts similar to those supported by USAID and other bi-lateral donors.

Despite the number of donors supporting various aspects of civil society, there appears to be relatively little coordination among them or between them as a donor group and the national government. As with most aid-receiving countries, there is a consultative group that meets periodically, but it does not seem to have a section or committee dealing with DG issues. Given diminishing donor funding, there should be some incentive on the part of both donors and government to coordinate activity, but so far such an initiative has not emerged.

### **D. Role of the Media**

As the peppering of this report with references to Manila newspapers should indicate, the Philippine media are active and vociferous as agents of democracy. The broadsheet English press in particular constantly airs stories of scandal, and government officials are continually called upon to account for

what are portrayed to the public as misdeeds. If anything, the press is perhaps too vigorous in hounding out wrongdoing (not all of its stories are well founded), but its active presence assures a kind of basic constraint on government excesses. The broadsheet press circulates principally to an elite audience, but this serves a similar function to that played by the quality print media in the western democracies—forming the elite opinion that confers on (or denies to) a regime its legitimacy.

The vernacular press and the broadcast media cover much wider audiences and provide popular versions of what is carried in the elite press. Most towns of any size have local newspapers, and small radio stations, especially low-power outfits on the AM band, are ubiquitous, with numerous talkshow programs. Television boasts a number of channels from Manila, but covering most of the country.<sup>55</sup>

Although donor support for the Philippine media has been modest, it can probably claim credit for a substantial impact. Much of the impetus toward investigative reporting is the work of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), which was supported by The Asia Foundation (TAF) in the early 1990s. In addition to doing its own example-setting work, the PCIJ has provided useful training and guidance to print journalists and more recently has worked to produce investigative TV documentaries.

## **6 Civil Society and Democratization: Coalition Building and Professionalization**

Most of this report thus far has concentrated on the substance of civil society activity—what CSOs do in the political arena and how they do it. A second vital dimension lies in the internal or process side of how the civil society community manages its business. Two aspects in particular are worth analyzing for their lessons. Both would seem to have some relationship to the Philippines' position on the democratization trajectory. The first processing aspect is coalition building, while the second concerns the increasing efforts toward professionalization in the civil society community.

### **A. Coordinating Organizational Chaos: Coalition Building**

Given the proliferation of NGOs and POs in the Philippines (more than 14,000 were reported in the mid-1990s<sup>56</sup>), with large numbers working on any given subject, some kind of coordinating mechanism is essential. Thus it makes sense that a great many coalitions have come into being, bringing their own torrent of confusing acronyms. But so many coalitions have arisen (including coalitions of coalitions, which might better be termed something like “meta-coalitions”) that they cannot all have arisen only in response to the need or convenience of coordination. There must be further reasons for the remarkable Philippine enthusiasm for coalitions. Here are some likely ones:

- NGOs and especially POs tend to focus narrowly on a single issue; part of their self-perceived strength is an unwillingness to compromise, which makes it difficult to effect mergers. The coalitional framework, however, allows them to grant temporary concessions in order to achieve short-term goals.
- As in many countries, NGOs and POs are more often than not the creations of strong and even charismatic individuals for whom much of the reward is to have an organization of one's own—a big compensation for what amounts to a low-paying job. Such leaders are generally not given to subordinating their own egos by merging into larger groups, but they can compromise on joining a coalition, which will help them deliver something of substance to their constituencies.
- Coalitions and meta-coalitions help constrain the rivalries that naturally occur within civil society sectors (between CSOs working the same turf) as well as between them (e.g., competition over what groups get to fill a limited number of seats on an LGU sectoral council).
- Donors have encouraged coalition building not just as guidance tips but also as central program components. USAID's civil society program was built in part around the idea that NGO and POs would form coalitions and—perhaps more importantly—meta-coalitions to enhance their voice and effectiveness. Most of the activities listed in Annex B involve meta-coalitions bringing together already extant coalitions.

Coalitions require considerable maintenance and nurturing. To take the examples discussed in Section 3, the BUCO alliance for the coconut levy campaign brought together two coalitions (COIR and PKSMN) in a rather uneasy relationship that has necessitated a good deal of management effort from USAID grantee ACDI/VOCA to keep going. The fisherfolk coalition posed a more difficult challenge right from its start and indeed split up in fairly short order. The remnant coalition stayed together through passage of the fisheries code but then itself disintegrated.

In a sense coalitions and particularly meta-coalitions emulate some aspects of political parties, for they combine and aggregate the disparate demands of their member units into politically marketable packages in which each member has to accept some compromise in the interest of gaining a portion of its wants. This process constitutes the classic role of the political party, and, in a system like the Philippines with its weak and ever-changing parties, civil society coalitions might perhaps substitute for parties in some ways. To a small degree the party-list system facilitates such a substitution, although “supplement” would be a better term, given the limit of three seats any organization can win in the House of Representatives. If the 14 party-list representatives were to join together as a quasi-party in the House, they could take on some of the interest-aggregating and mediating role of a political party. Given the very different single-issue constituencies they represent (see Table 4), this seems unlikely as the compromises needed would be too great.

### **B. Coming of Age: Professionalizing Civil Society**

As CSOs have proliferated and their voice has grown, so has the need to establish common standards and a publicly acceptable profile. These needs stem in part from the very success civil society has achieved in becoming a vital element in the body politic. Although there are not—at least not yet—NGOs of the size and political weight attained by such entities as BRAC or PROSHIKA in Bangladesh, organizations like Abanse!Pinay (women), NATCCO (a cooperative federation), and PKSMMN (small coconut farmers) have become serious players in the political arena. Their inchoate and ad hoc nature proved effective in the EDSA revolution where such groups provided part of the critical evidence that the citizenry had turned against the Marcos regime. To become and remain effective in the more settled routines of the post-Marcos era, they needed to build and project an image of organizational competence.

A second factor providing incentive to set and maintain standards in the NGO/PO community has been the national government, which in the mid-1990s made moves to eliminate the tax deduction benefits for corporate grants to the community. This effort was accompanied by much rhetoric about fraudulent NGOs, one-person NGO scams, tax-dodge operations, and the like. Although in some cases the charges had a ring of truth, such a change would be harmful in the short run to the large number of above-board and legitimate NGOs and POs. It would likely be devastating to many in the longer run as foreign donors scaled back their assistance, a trend that in any event had already begun by mid-decade (cf. Figure 2).

The principal group coming to the defense of the civil society community was the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO), a coalition of seven national NGO networks and five regional ones that dates back to the Aquino administration. Altogether CODE-NGO represents about 3,000 organizations. After much advocacy and resistance from the NGO community, with CODE-NGO in the forefront of the debate, a deal was struck with the Ministry of Finance whereby corporations could continue giving tax-deductible grants to NGOs if the recipients obtained a certification from CODE-NGO. Standards would be set and those entities not qualifying would be ineligible to receive such grants. To implement the accord, CODE-NGO along with five other coalitions<sup>57</sup> set up a separate entity, the Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNC). This new body, which received support from USAID’s civil society program through the Ayala Foundation,<sup>58</sup> started operation in 1998 and forged a memorandum of agreement with the national Department of Finance. The memorandum specified that existing NGOs and POs would get an exemption, but this grandfathering was to be limited: All organizations would need certification by January 2001 in order to receive corporate donations.

PCNC set up an evaluation process based on a wide variety of factors, including NGO goal coherence, internal governance procedures, monitoring capability, and financial management. By the time of the DG team’s visit, some 500 evaluators had been trained in the procedures, but only 150 organizations had

applied for certification and less than 30 certifications had so far been granted. With a January 2001 deadline looming and a very large number of NGOs and POs needing certification, some considerable crush was likely to develop.<sup>59</sup> One benefit to USAID/Philippines also deserves mention: PCNC certification will mean that the mission should be able to avoid the pre-award audits that it had been required to conduct for new NGOs after USAID/Washington ended earlier rules requiring in-country NGOs to obtain registration in Washington itself before they could receive funds.<sup>60</sup>

Certification is not the only need the NGO community faces in the Philippines. If it is to survive amid the declining donor support illustrated in Figure 2, it is clearly going to have to craft new resource mobilization strategies. Certification will help, certainly, but it comprises just one requirement for one type of support; corporations are not going to provide grants to NGOs merely because they are certified, and the corporate community is but one potential source of funding. In short, a multi-faceted approach is called for if financial sustainability is to be achieved. One USAID civil society grant intended to develop such many-sided strategies emerged in its assistance to TAF, which in turn is supporting three NGOs to promote financial sustainability within the NGO/PO community.

One of these sub-grantees, the Venture for Fund Raising (VFR), has begun several activities. A research effort has been documenting best practices among NGOs and has also embarked on a national 6,000-respondent survey designed to probe the appeal of various fundraising strategies.<sup>61</sup> In addition, it has built a training and consulting arm that charges course tuition and service fees (VFR claims to derive 70 percent of its budget from such activities). Finally, it has embarked on an advocacy campaign to raise awareness about the joys of giving and promote more avenues for giving. One particular target here is the tax code for individuals, which presently allows only the equivalent of about \$50 for charitable giving per year. VFR hopes to raise this level significantly.

A somewhat analogous professionalization initiative has also been launched as part of the GOLD project in the form of CLGs. Six of these CLGs have been set up around the country, all but one connected with universities,<sup>62</sup> to provide technical assistance and training services to LGUs and local NGOs and POs on a cost-recovery basis. They will be the principal vehicles to perpetuate the knowledge and experience built up during GOLD's lifetime and initially disseminated during the rollout phase launched in 1999. The DG team visited the CLG in Naga city, located at the Ateneo de Naga University, where it was providing technical assistance to the four LGUs that had thus far responded to the rollout. The Ateneo CLG staff were contemplating institutionalizing the training program they had developed into their standard master of public administration program. If they do, it would in effect indigenize a good part of the GOLD experience into the general landscape of public administration.



## **7 Lessons and Issues for Civil Society Assistance**

As a high-end country in terms of civil society programming and impact, the Philippine experience offers many lessons and raises many issues for future donor assistance in this DG sub-sector. These lessons and issues fall into two basic categories. The first regards USAID concepts and practices, while the second concerns the external policy and political environments within which civil society operates. Both types have significant relevance for civil society programming beyond the Philippines itself.

### **A. USAID Concepts and Practices**

#### **1. Defining Success in Civil Society Programming**

The era of managing for results has given much difficulty to the DG sector with its demand for “hard,” measurable indicators. The vast majority of indicators that have been crafted to meet USAID/W’s demands in this regard, such as numbers of petitions presented to local councils or agenda items researched by CSOs, do not really give an accurate picture of what is being accomplished. This inadequacy of quantitative measures has surfaced repeatedly as R4 reports are drawn up in the field and annual performance reports are compiled at USAID/Washington. In response to these problems, an interest in crafting qualitative measures has been gaining ground recently within USAID/Washington. This report’s analysis of “assessing success” should provide useful material for that effort.

Section 4 of this report argues that the real test of civil society’s worth is whether its component groups can place enough pressure on state decision-makers that

- Their demands will be taken seriously
- The decision-makers will have to account publicly and transparently for the public policy they ultimately decide upon

The concept is testable in that passing the second part (accountability) constitutes proof that the first part has occurred.

Another way to put this approach is that success lies not so much in individual CSOs completely realizing their aims as in effecting greater pluralism within the polity as a whole. Even partial successes of the sort recounted in this report can wield a cumulative impact by making the political system more open to pluralist influence.

The approach will need some more thought but could quite conceivably serve as a qualitative and at the same time systematic measure of the progress of civil society programming. To employ it would take more effort than the kind of counting exercises that go on with present R4 indicators, but the sort of case study examples offered in Section 3 might not prove that hard to put together and assess, at least on an illustrative basis. Alternatively the more broadly quantitative measures developed by GOLD to gauge citizen input at local level could be employed. These ideas certainly warrant consideration as a solution to the quantitative results problem that the DG sector has been facing in its reporting tasks.

#### **2. Defining Civil Society Itself**

Deciding just what should and should not be considered civil society for programming purposes has been a thorny problem ever since USAID began engaging in DG support in the 1980s. It has proven equally

challenging to develop useful taxonomies within what has been determined to lie within the civil society sub-sector. Experience in the Philippines adds significantly to this effort to establish definitions:

- **Non-government organizations and people’s organizations** form a distinction that Filipinos treat as being conceptually clear. Table 2 endeavors to summarize the more important points dividing the two. In practice, however, there seems a great deal of overlap in how the terms are used. In speaking and writing, “NGOs and POs” is very often used as a catch-all term for the civil society community or “NGOs” is used to imply both NGOs and POs—so much so, in reality, that the supposed distinction tends to get lost. Certainly it has created confusion for this report’s author. Probably there is some importance in the fact that it has not been picked up elsewhere, despite the efforts of Korten and others to popularize it. With its confusion in practice, there is unlikely to be any advantage in employing it in USAID’s own efforts to promote civil society.
- **“Coalitions”** is another confusing term, largely because it tends to have a somewhat different meaning in a Philippine context than elsewhere. What are coalitions of rather small NGOs/POs in the Philippines—COIR and PKSMMN in the coconut levy initiative are examples—would most likely be NGOs with local or regional branches in other countries. For reasons brought out earlier in Section 6 this report, here they are coalitions; many “coalitions of coalitions” like NACFAR would generally be considered to be just plain coalitions elsewhere. To put it differently, the vocabulary appears to move downward a step in the Philippines from the terminology employed in the rest of the world. The lesson, in effect, is that there is no lesson in the proliferation of coalitions; it’s basically the Philippine approach to scaling up to a strategically practical mass at regional and national levels.
- **Networking coalitions or umbrellas** like CODE-NGO or the League of Corporate Foundations, in contrast with the coalitions discussed above, are quite parallel to similar bodies elsewhere in providing training, logistical support, guidance, and perhaps above all professionalization and standard-setting to the NGO community. CODE-NGO carries the process a step further, though, in having become an advocate for the NGO community, for instance negotiating the corporate tax deduction issue with the Ramos administration in the mid-1990s. The professionalization role parallels experiences in the Europe and Eurasia (E&E) region, where intermediary support organizations provide similar services to the NGO community. The advocacy role finds some resonance in Bangladesh, where the Associated Development Agencies of Bangladesh has served a major role in furthering the general interests of this community. CODE-NGO’s dual umbrella function in the Philippines would seem to have applicability elsewhere as well.
- **Quasi-official CSOs** like the leagues make for some taxonomic muddling, in that state entities like municipal governments become members of an NGO (the League of Municipalities) to engage in civil society advocacy (lobbying the central government). Whatever the definitional difficulties presented by these organizations, they have become very much a part of the civil society landscape in the Philippines as they have in other countries.
- **Service delivery NGOs** have generally not been considered part of the DG definition of civil society, but in a number of countries they have served as an entrée to civil society activism, in that DG donor practitioners nurtured them and successfully encouraged them to gradually take on civil society functions. This has especially been the case in the E&E region (see USAID 1999a). That USAID/Philippines’s civil society program experienced a similar trajectory metamorphosing from the PVO co-finance projects indicates that this kind of approach has applicability outside the E&E area.<sup>63</sup>

### **3. Civil Society Within and Beyond the DG Sector**

As with earlier field visits in connection with this DG assessment, the Philippine experience also shows the artificiality in separating civil society as a DG sub-sector from others, most notably decentralization. Much of the present report, in fact, could have been taken up as an assessment exercise in decentralization. Some could have been done under a labor or rule of law rubric (cf. the labor and justice activities in Annex B). This is not surprising, for democracy after all is a holistic entity with complementarily overlapping components. But it does argue for continued efforts to promote coordination and cooperation within the DG sector.

Beyond the confines of the DG sector *per se*, the CDIE report on cross-sectoral linkages in the Philippines (Lippman and Blue 2000; see also Lippman 2000) revealed a large number of USAID/Philippines activities working cross-sectorally between DG and other sectors. A glance at the civil society initiatives listed in Annex B shows efforts linking DG to environment (fisherfolk), urban programs (urban housing), economic growth (street traders, microfinance, high growth areas), agriculture (coconut farmers), and human capital development (Mindanao education), among others. In short, such linkages seem to have been a vital part of DG activity at the mission and deserve emulation elsewhere.<sup>64</sup>

### **4. Civil Society as Both Means and End**

In USAID terms, civil society in the Marcos era and in the early years beyond it functioned mainly as a means to promote fundamental reform of the political system, by securing human rights, creating an improved legal environment, advocating reforms in domestic abuse, and the like. Much of the work undertaken by GOLD and the mission's civil society program continues this objective. But by the later 1990s, civil society had become an end in itself, insofar as part of the reason to assist civil society at both national and local level is that it is good for people to manage their affairs through political pluralism. And more of such management builds up momentum in civil society that would prove very hard indeed to stop. Civil society, in short, has great value in itself, in addition to its utility for realizing other goals.

### **5. Supporting Civil Society without a DG Strategic Objective**

Because of financial stringency, USAID/Philippines found itself in the spring of 1999 having to reduce the number of SOs it could pursue as stand-alone activities. It decided to close out the DG SO and merge the DG team members in with its other teams, terminating the GOLD and civil society programs by the end of FY 2001. Assessing the effects of this change was not part of the DG team's charge; indeed, this would have been impossible in any event, given that the redirection had taken place only a short while before the team's visit.

A few comments might nonetheless be in order. It was clear that the redistribution of the erstwhile DG team members to the remaining SO teams provided a unique opportunity to evangelize for adopting aspects of the DG approach within these other SO efforts. For example, former DG staff now working on the natural resource management or clean fuel initiatives (the mission's SOs 4 and 5) would be well situated to harness their DG experience toward program design and implementation in these areas. Indeed, the mission's leadership has vigorously encouraged integrating DG skills into its other SOs. In view of the Agency's interest in cross-sectoral linkages between DG and other sectors (cf. Lippman 2000), the mission's reorganization should be seen as an experiment that could offer valuable lessons on a more general basis. It would be well worth tracking after a couple of years to see what has happened in terms of spreading DG practice to other sectors.

## **B. The Policy and Political Environment**

Aside from USAID programming considerations, the Philippines offers a number of lessons in democratization more generally. Many of them give evidence of movement from a transitional democracy to one more characteristic of consolidation, even if the country has not yet fully entered the latter stage in its democratic trajectory.

### **1. Civil Society, Regime Transition, and Democratic Consolidation**

In their influential 1996 volume *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, Linz and Stepan argue that the test of a consolidated democracy is when “democracy has become ‘the only game in town’” (1996: 5). This occurs, they assert across three dimensions. Behaviorally, no significant elements will seriously turn to non-democratic means; attitudinally, public opinion overwhelmingly demands democratic institutions and processes; and constitutionally, governmental and non-governmental elements throughout the system resolve conflicts through democratically determined rules of the game.<sup>65</sup> The events of January 2001 surrounding Macapagal-Arroyo’s succession to the presidency provide an excellent opportunity to test this hypothesis. Attitudinally, the Philippines may well have measured up, with a great majority of the population wedded to democratic procedures. Behaviorally, however, the military leadership’s decision to switch its backing from the unimpeached Estrada to Macapagal-Arroyo must be seen as extra-constitutional, as was the Supreme Court’s decision that Estrada should be stripped of his office and Arroyo sworn in. Constitutionally, then, the political system did not measure up to the standards of a consolidated democracy, at least insofar as the Linz-Stepan framework is concerned.<sup>66</sup> The Philippines remains a democracy, but a transitional rather than a consolidated one. Intimations of consolidation, such as those included in earlier drafts of this report rendered before the January regime change, proved in the event to have been premature.

Whatever the democratic character of Philippine democracy, though, civil society played a major role in the regime change. The Roman Catholic Church and the leading business associations declared against Estrada as the impeachment movement was building up in the fall and early winter of 2000, and the huge masses thronging what became the EDSA amphitheatre provided a national chorus before which the final moments of the drama were enacted, as past presidents and present generals appeared before the multitude. Much of the crowd was mobilized through the new cell phone medium of text messaging, in which “phone trees” alerted ever more people to join in.

As evidenced by these events and perhaps in part as a result of them, civil society’s place at the center of the Philippine polity seems assured. In the early post-Marcos years, with constant threats of coups d’état and instability, a strong political will was essential to keep democratization on course. Without vigorous presidential support, civil society might well have had a difficult time maintaining a place in the system (despite its enshrinement in the 1987 Constitution). But by the time Estrada took office in 1998, the democratic polity had achieved enough momentum of its own that it no longer needed this kind of backing, and indeed when the balance of civil society tilted against him, there was little he could do to counter it. Should Arroyo or a successor prove indifferent or even mildly hostile to civil society, it would nonetheless endure (a strong hostility might of course be a different story, as became all too clear in the Marcos takeover of 1972). It is worth remarking that, during the impeachment drama that gripped the country toward the end of 2000, little if any suggestion has emerged of insufficient political will to keep in place the democratic reforms of the post-Marcos era. This was simply assumed on all sides.

A comparison with Bolivia would be instructive here. In 1998 a new president took office who was at best indifferent toward the democratic reforms implemented by his predecessor, including those affecting

civil society. The future of these initiatives seemed sufficiently precarious that the donor community felt it necessary to put some pressure on the new administration to ensure that the democratization momentum did not sag (in the event, things turned out well). In the Philippines, where Estrada manifested roughly the same low level of enthusiasm toward the LGC and civil society as his Bolivian counterpart, no one felt the need for any action to firm up the democratic enterprise. The Philippines would seem to be measurably further along the democratization path than Bolivia.

## **2. A Test for Empowerment**

One serious problem in inducing political participation on the part of marginal elements has been that, while it appears relatively easy to bring about participation and representation in the political process, it has proven much more difficult to move to actual empowerment—a stage where those previously excluded obtain some real voice in political decision-making.<sup>67</sup> The kind of accountability that has emerged in our Philippine examples at both national and local levels goes some distance in establishing evidence of such empowerment. When the coconut farmers can cause consternation and embarrassment in presidential decision-making and the golf community protestors in Naga city can keep up enough pressure to stall land developers over a prolonged period, we surely have some strong indication of empowerment. Not as much as if the coconut farmers do gain control over the San Miguel Corporation shares and the Naga protestors quash the gold development permanently, true enough, but the real test of democratic pluralism is forcing accountability rather than necessarily getting one's way.

## **3. A Continuing Will to Reform**

The recent Philippine experience with the party-list system strongly indicates that the reformist impulse can continue well beyond the passage from authoritarianism into democratization. These reforms, enacted in 1995 and implemented in 1998, evince a continuing concern for getting the fundamentals right in democratic representation—that political parties alone are not enough to do the job, and that serious extra effort is needed to ensure full representation of civil society at the highest levels. As enacted and initially implemented, the party-list system has not done very well at realizing this goal, and all those involved see the need for further changes. But hopefully such modifications would mean only relatively minor tweaking.

Looking to the future, if the Philippine polity is ever to move beyond the elite bias manifested in persistent crony and boss influence, even more fundamental reforms will be needed. Whether they can be engineered of course remains to be seen. But the fact that the system showed itself up to the challenge of the party-list reforms gives a hopeful sign that the reformist urge can endure a long time.

## **4. The Importance of Formal Political Structure**

The introduction of the party-list system in the 1998 election meant that for the first time CSOs could actually elect representatives directly to Congress. Among developing countries, only Thailand has anything resembling such an innovation. That the civil society community failed to capitalize on the potential of the new system, electing only 13 representatives to fill their potential 51 seats is scarcely surprising, given the novelty of the new structure. In the 2001 election, the five major parties, excluded from the system in the first round, will become eligible to contest the party-list seats, which could smother civil society groups in the race. But the turmoil of party desertions surrounding the ouster of Estrada has meant that the regular parties are once again in great instability and flux. There may well be a chance for better organized CSOs to win a good number of seats this next time around and thereby gain the chance to have a more substantial impact on national policy-making. Absent the structure created by the party-list reforms, though, such influence would not be a possibility.

## **5. Civil Society as a Substitute for Political Parties?**

The oft-remarked flabbiness and ephemerality of Philippine parties tempts the observer to urge civil society and CSOs as a potential substitute. If the parties cannot connect citizenry to state, then perhaps civil society could go the job. Civil society has filled in for an absent state in making local governance work by delivering critical services in many areas, (especially sub-Saharan Africa). Could it also step in for a non-performing party system?

Even modest attention to the basic purposes of the two kinds of association should dispel any such notion. The basic function of the CSO is to advocate the particular interest of a constituency in influencing the state, while that of a political party is to gather or aggregate many interests in winning state power and managing the state. Perhaps a coalition of coalitions over a very wide range of interests could do the job of a party, but then it would really be a party rather than a CSO. No, in the end, these are two separate functions, and neither can really substitute for the other in a democratic setup.

## **6. Civil Society Challenge at Local and National Levels**

In both Bolivia and El Salvador, significant differences were noted between national and local levels in terms of the principal challenges facing civil society. At the local level, the task is largely to move new players into the political arena—too many groups lack any representation at all, to say nothing of empowerment in local decision-making. At the national level, however, a multiplicity of societal groups is already represented in various ways (although more could certainly be added); here the agenda is to enhance pluralism by increasing capacity for advocacy, coalition building, sustainability and the like. In the Philippines, the two levels seem much more alike—civil society already has a good number of players on the field (although more such groups need to be energized), so the democratic challenge lies in enhancing pluralism. To look at the matter another way, consolidation appears to have penetrated beyond the national level here in ways that have yet to occur in the two LAC countries.

## **7. Women's Participation Beyond Gender Advocacy**

Most if not all democratizing countries now possess an energetic women's sector with advocacy organizations working across the broad range of activities traditionally associated with women—health, education, social welfare, youth, etc., in addition to women's rights *per se*. The Philippines is no exception here. But what is also impressive is the role women play in a large spread of initiatives having little or nothing to do with these more usual spheres.

Perhaps the best way to capture this would be to make two observations. First, the chief managing officers (usually the executive director) of a large number of the CSOs the DG team met were women. At the national level such institutions as the PCIJ, the Institute for Philippine Culture, and the VFR were all women; at the local level, the Camarines Sur NGO-PO Development Network, the Ateneo Social Science Research Center in Naga city, and the GRF in Capiz province were all led by women. Moreover, in these and virtually all the other CSOs we visited, women were well represented in management positions throughout the organizations. Second and more significantly, there were so many women in leadership positions all through the civil society sector that their presence was in no way to be remarked on—one just assumed that any organizational leader was as likely to be a woman as a man.<sup>68</sup>

This female prominence scarcely means that Philippine society is free of gender problems. Two of USAID/Philippines's civil society programs in fact deal directly with women's issues. These are the initiatives on Delivery of Justice to Disadvantaged Women and Barangay Justice Service System, which

focus particularly on domestic violence and sexual harassment. But it does signify that women's presence has become quite well indigenized in a whole range of sectors that elsewhere remain a male preserve. Female participation in professional life, in other words, has moved well beyond the ambit of women's issues. This development could be regarded as another sign of the relative maturity that democratization has achieved in the Philippines.

### **8. The Media—Old and New**

Absent the vigorous media that have been so much a part of the Philippine political scene in the post-Marcos era, it is highly doubtful that democracy would have done as well as it has. It could certainly be argued that the polity's passage along the democratization path would have been much slower if the media were not keeping the state's feet to the investigative fire. In any event, without a media establishment of the quality (despite its excesses and lapses, especially in scandal mongering) now extant, civil society would surely have a much harder time.

The People's Power II movement instrumental in toppling Estrada introduced a new kind of media into the civil society arena, perhaps for the first time anywhere. This was the cell phone-based text messaging technology that proved critical to mobilizing the huge crowds in the EDSA area serving as the political amphitheater for the dramatic events of January 2001.<sup>69</sup> Using "phone trees," activists were able to rapidly contact exponential numbers of people in a way that would have been impossible earlier with stationary telephone systems.<sup>70</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic *Democracy in America* observed that the press had two basic functions in a democratic setting: to disseminate information and to enable citizens to unite for political purposes.<sup>71</sup> Cell phone technology carries these functions to new levels. It cannot replace the more traditional print and broadcast media, if only because the amount of information spreadable through texting necessarily terse messages has to be so scanty. But it does offer a powerful instrument for civil society activism.<sup>72</sup>

### **9. Foreign Funding, Sustainability, and Donor Coordination**

One would think that, as a function of steadily decreasing foreign support for democratization generally and civil society particularly, two developments would be occurring. First, NGOs and POs would be increasingly concerned with their own future viability and thus busily constructing sustainability strategies. Second, both donor community and the national government would be moving to coordinate remaining external resources to maximize their utility.

In fact, while Samuel Johnson's maxim that "the prospect of a hanging works marvelously to concentrate a man's mind" has held true for the first development, it has not for the second. CSOs have been busily developing survival strategies in recent years. In this process, USAID/Philippines's support to such entities as CODE-NGO and PCNC has aided materially in helping CSOs to become self-sustaining in terms of programming and assuring professional standards. The VFR has assisted them in important ways with expanding their funding bases.

But neither the Philippine government nor the general donor community (multi-laterals as well as bi-laterals) has shown great interest in stretching the latter's shrinking resources by coordinating DG assistance efforts along the lines pursued in some other countries (cf. USAID 2001 on Bolivia and El Salvador). What may seem like a good idea to outsiders like visiting DG teams is not necessarily so to those in the host-country government or the wider donor community.



## Annex A: Acronyms

ACDI	Agricultural Cooperative Development International
AFR	Bureau for Africa, USAID/W
ARD	Associates in Rural Development, Inc.
BATMAN	<i>Barangay Training Manual</i> Project
BUCO	Building Unity for Coconut Industry Reform
CDIE	Center for Development Information and Evaluation [in USAID/Washington]
COCOFED	Coconut Producers Federation of the Philippines
CODE-NGO	Caucus of Development NGO Networks
COIR	Coconut Industry Reform Movement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	[Philippine] Department of Agriculture
DAR	[Philippine] Department of Agrarian Reform
DENR	[Philippine] Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DG	Democracy and Governance [sector in USAID]
DSUD	Decentralized Shelter and Urban Development Project
E&E	Europe and Eurasia
EGAD	Economic Growth and Agricultural Development [sector in USAID]
FASAR	Fisherfolk Advocacy for Sustainable Aquatic Reform
GOLD	Governance and Local Development Project
GRF	Gerry Roxas Foundation
IRA	Internal Revenue Allotment
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean [Bureau, USAID]
LDAP	Local Development and Assistance Project
LGC	Local Government Code of 1991
LGU	Local government unit
NACFAR	National Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reform
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NCPC	Naga City People's Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PBSP	Philippine Business for Social Progress
PCNC	Philippine Council for NGO Certification
PHN	Population, Health and Nutrition [sector in USAID]
PKSMMN	Pambansang Koalisyon ng Magsasaka at Manggagawa sa Niyugan (a coalition of NGOs and POs representing small coconut farmers)
PO	People's organization
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
SO	Strategic Objective [for USAID mission programming]
TAF	The Asia Foundation
ToP	Technology of Participation
ULAP	Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines
VFR	Venture for Fund Raising
VOCA	Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance



## Annex B: USAID/Philippines Civil Society Program Activities, 1996-2000

Occupational	Coalition program Fisherfolk Advocacy for Sustainable Aquatic Reform	Statement of purpose To assist the Nationwide Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reform and coalition partners more effectively represent the legitimate rights and interests of its fisherfolk constituents in advocating sustainable aquatic reforms at the national, regional and local policy levels	Main grantee Agricultural Cooperative Development, Inc. Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance	Implementing coalition partners Nationwide Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reform
	Building Unity for Continuing Coconut Industry Reform	To increase the influence and meaningful participation of small coconut farmers and farm workers in public policy processes at the national, regional and local levels	Volunteers In Overseas Cooperative Assistance	Pambansang Samahan ng Magsasaka at Manggagawa sa Niyugan Coconut Industry Reform
	Coalition for the Recognition and Empowerment of Street Traders	To advocate for a supportive environment for street traders/vendors at national and local levels. Advocacy focuses on law ensuring security and protection of street traders and vendors at their workplace	CARE Philippines	Kalipunan ng Maraming Tinig ng mga Manggagawant Impormal, National Council on Social Devt, Samahan ng mga Manininda sa Intramuros, Cebu People's Multi Purpose Cooperative, Oro Integrated Cooperative, National market Vendors Confederation of Cooperatives
Marginal Areas	Advancing Participation of Upland Indigenous Peoples in Philippine Democratic Processes	To strengthen existing and/or develop alternative structures and systems for the Indigenous People's participation in program formulation. policy and decision-making processes: to extend the necessary skills needed to shape national and local policies	Philippine Business for Social Progress	Upland NGO Assistance Committee Later continued through Katutubong Samahan ng Pilipinas
	Strategic Program for Enhancing Education and Development in Mindanao (SPEED)	To catalyze developmental reforms in policies, systems and programs in the education and training sector in Central and Western Mindanao	Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities	The SPEED coalition is an ad hoc group formed for this purpose
	Empowering Women and Children in the Informal Sector Project	To advocate the implementation of existing laws protecting child workers and home-based women; to build coalitions among other informal sector groups; to address issues related to social protection, improved work conditions, and raising productivity	American Center for International Labor Solidarity	Trade Union Congress of the Philippines Batikatan sa Kaunlaran, PATAMABA, KAKASAHIA
Labor	Solidarity for Justice Project	To bring together a coalition of trade unions, organizations within the informal sector, and women's and migrant labor advocacy groups. The project aims at enjoining these sectors to participate in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of legislation, public policies, and private initiatives	American Center for International Labor Solidarity	TUUCP, Federacion Internacionale de Abogadas

<b>Poverty</b>	<p>Enhancing People's Initiative and Capabilities for Housing and Urban Development (EPIC)</p>	<p>To consolidate and empower urban poor organizations for the effective participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies that would improve access to land, shelter and basic services</p>	<p>Mondragon International, Phils.- Inc.</p>	<p>Urban Land Reform Task Force</p>
<b>Children</b>	<p>Synchronizing &amp; Harmonizing Local Efforts for Sustainable Shelter Reform</p>	<p>Successor program to EPIC</p>	<p>Mondragon International Phils.,Inc.</p>	<p>Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies, Urban Poor Colloquim</p>
<b>Economic Growth</b>	<p>Expanding Children's Participation in Social Reform Project</p>	<p>To enhance children's participation in governance activities on behalf of children through organizing, advocacy and coalition building</p>	<p>World Vision Relief &amp; Development</p>	<p>Christian Children's Fund Plan International/Philippines Educational Research &amp; Development Foundation</p>
<b>Economic Growth</b>	<p>Developing Standards for Micro-finance</p>	<p>To develop and promote standards for micro-finance operations that seek to provide the poor with greater access to financial services on a viable and sustainable basis</p>	<p>Tulay sa Paganlad, Inc. Development Corporation</p>	<p>The micro-finance coalition is an ad hoc group formed for this purpose</p>
<b>Economic Growth</b>	<p>People's Development Agenda in High Growth Area</p>	<p>To ease the strains of rapid industrialization in high growth areas by developing the work force in 6 areas</p>	<p>Philippine Business for Social Progress</p>	<p>Multisectoral task forces like the Laguna Manpower and Employment Development Council</p>
<b>Justice</b>	<p>Reforming Administration of Justice through Coalition Advocacy</p>	<p>To enhance the demand for improved justice from civil society, especially from alternative law and public interest law groups (Advocacy covers reforms within the court system, outside the court, and sustainable ALG interventions in administering justice reforms.)</p>	<p>The Asia Foundation</p>	<p>Sentro ng Alternatibong Panlegal, as well as various other alternative law groups</p>
<b>Justice</b>	<p>Delivery of Justice to Disadvantaged Women</p>	<p>To advocate for effective policy formulation and implementation, promoting access to justice of disadvantaged women. Among relevant policy issues being addressed are sexual harassment, discrimination, violence against and abuse of women at home and at work, both domestic and overseas</p>	<p>American Center for International Labor Solidarity</p>	<p>ACILS with Trade Union Congress of the Philippines Balikatan sa Kaunlaran Lihok Pilipina Women's Legal Bureau Women LEAD</p>

<p><b>Justice</b></p>	<p>People's Access to Justice: Barangay Justice Service System</p>	<p>To improve the <i>barangay</i> justice system on Panay island. Specifically improve access to integrated <i>barangay</i> justice services for high-risk families and distinct/under-served sectors, particularly women and children, and indigenous Panayanons</p> <p>Advocacy reforms against domestic violence, child abuse, food security, and other high priority issues affecting disadvantaged sectors</p>	<p>Gerry Roxas Foundation</p> <p>GRF with Merciphil, USWAG, RICE Guimaras, Capiz Women, Inc., Antique Foundation</p>
<p><b>Capacity-building</b></p>	<p>NGO Financial Sustainability: Mobilizing Resources for Philippine Development</p>	<p>To build and strengthen the capacity of NGOs to diversify their resources and achieve greater financial sustainability</p>	<p>The Asia Foundation</p> <p>Association of Foundations</p> <p>Venture for Fund Raising</p> <p>UP-College of Public Administration &amp; Governance</p>
<p><b>Capacity-building</b></p>	<p>Public Awareness Campaign and Training of Evaluators</p>	<p>To help establish the Philippine Council for NGO certification, a membership-based institution whose main function is to certify non-profit organizations that meet the established minimum criteria for financial management and accountability in the service to underprivileged Filipinos</p>	<p>Ayala Foundation, Inc</p> <p>Sub-grantee: Philippine Council for NGO Certification</p>



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The EDSA revolution of 1986—also called the People’s Power revolution—was named after the site of its major mass demonstrations, the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue circumferential highway around Manila. The main public events of the Estrada ouster in 2001 occurred in the same place, whence the designations “EDSA2” and “People’s Power II”.

<sup>2</sup> POs vs. NGOs is only one of many taxonomies that can be made in trying to chart the terrain of Philippine organizations. For an exhaustive assault on the matter, see Constantino-David (1998).

<sup>3</sup> See Clarke (1998: xiv-xxiii). For their volume on civil society published the same year, Silliman and Noble offer a list of more than 250 acronyms (1998: xi-xx).

<sup>4</sup> The analysis in this and the following paragraph is taken largely from Hutchcroft (1991, 1999) and Anderson (1998).

<sup>5</sup> The Corruption Perception Index released by Transparency International in June 2001 placed the Philippines as tied with Guatemala, Senegal, and Zimbabwe far down the rankings, in 65<sup>th</sup> place (out of 91), with a score of 2.9 (out of 10). On resurgent cronies, see Tordesillas (1999).

<sup>6</sup> A significant addition to civil society accompanying the recent transition has been what might be called the “instant civil society” occasioned by the ability of cell phones and text messaging to mobilize huge numbers of people for EDSA demonstrations in Estrada’s final days. See, e.g., Jimenez-David (2001).

<sup>7</sup> In Article II, section 23; also Article XII, sections 15-16.

<sup>8</sup> Like his counterparts in the western democracies, Estrada constantly complained of his treatment at the hands of the media. See for instance Labog-Javellana (2000).

<sup>9</sup> The extra-constitutional roles of the army and the Supreme Court in particular provoke questions as to how indigenized basic rules of the DG game has become. See Mydans (2001), also Chandrasekaran (2001). For an assertion of the constitutionality of the succession, see Doronila (2001).

<sup>10</sup> The constitution guarantees civil society rights (cf. note 7 above), which is surely unusual (such rights are more often implied rather than stated in national constitutions), but the political will test is a better one for whether such rights are actually operational.

<sup>11</sup> No accepted comparative measures (such as Freedom House scores) exist to support such an assertion, so the evidence is essentially impressionistic, but here is much anecdotal evidence for it. One could argue that some “northern tier” East European countries like Poland may have done better with respect to civil society, but then these were very advanced systems to begin with, basically needing a kick-start to launch democracy after a prolonged Soviet repression. Certainly one is hard-pressed to name a USAID-assisted country that is genuinely less developed (e.g., one ranking below \$1,500 in per capita GNP) where civil society enjoys better health.

<sup>12</sup> The 1998 local elections saw many new faces voted into office; something more than half of the mayors elected that year were new. But this changeover was in significant measure owing to the three-term limit on holding any given elected office and should not be taken to mean that half the country’s municipalities

are now free of control by local bosses. By 1998, large numbers of local officials had completed their three terms and were ineligible to contest again.

<sup>13</sup> For an assessment of the LGC and USAID's programming in connection with it, see Jutkowitz *et al* (1997). Some of this experience is incorporated into a broader USAID analysis of democratic decentralization (Blair 1998).

<sup>14</sup> GOLD operated in nine provinces and two independent cities; in the former it worked with some 60 municipalities and more than 200 *barangays*; thus, the project worked at all sub-national levels except the region.

<sup>15</sup> For a mid-term appraisal of GOLD focusing on its impact, see Van Sant *et al* (1998).

<sup>16</sup> A brief comprehensive analysis of the PVO co-finance programs will be found in Cripe and Perrier (1997).

<sup>17</sup> See USAID/Philippines (1994) on the transition, which is also covered in Cripe and Perrier (1997).

<sup>18</sup> Details of the DG phaseout are available in USAID/M (1999 and 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Korten presented his ideas on the several generations of NGO programming in Korten (1987 and 1990). For an earlier attempt to pose a "three-and-a-half" generational type, see Blair (1993). Clarke (1998: *passim*) makes considerable use of Korten's typology in his own analysis.

<sup>20</sup> Robredo reached the end of his three-term limit in 1998 and so had to step down in the elections held that year. In 1999 Naga was chosen by *Asiaweek* magazine as Asia's most-improved city (Espinosa-Robles 1999), and in the summer of 2000, Robredo was selected as a winner of the coveted Ramon Magsaysay award, often referred to as "Asia's version of the Nobel prize" (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 26, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> The GOLD workshop was written up in much detail in ARD (n.d.). The GOLD project required LGUs to apply to its program, and thus the USAID Mission was able to screen them *ex ante*, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes. Given that one of GOLD's purposes was to develop good models that could be rolled out for replication, this was a sound approach.

<sup>22</sup> Some details of the work in Naga city can be found in Balgos and Batario (1999a and 1999b). The NCPC was created in 1995, largely at the behest of Robredo, through a special "empowerment ordinance" that went beyond what the LGC required by giving this NGO body a seat (although not a vote) on the city council—further evidence of Naga's democratic progressiveness.

<sup>23</sup> As reported in Lippman and Blue (1999: 14, 16); see also Capiz province (n.d.).

<sup>24</sup> The Barangay Justice Sector program is not part of GOLD but rather is an element in USAID/Philippines's civil society program (see Annex B).

<sup>25</sup> The GRF was selected by GOLD as one of six centers for local governance in connection with the rollout, the only one of the six not an academic institution.

<sup>26</sup> As the 1998 impact assessment of GOLD put it, activity of the GOLD sub-grantee charged with promoting PO/NGO involvement with local special bodies "was not evident in Capiz, where the Gerry

Roxas Foundation has in effect been dealing with both the LGU and NGO project components.” (Van Sant *et al* 1998: page 3). The GRF itself could be seen as part of civil society, inasmuch as it acts as an organized group between family and state, seeking to influence the latter’s decision-making (some of those in the GRF likely see their role in this way). But we are looking at it as a USAID partner/grantee rather than as a CSO and as a body taking up the political space that in other settings would more probably be occupied by a multiplicity of CSOs. The question of whether GRF should be seen as a CSO is a complex one and will be dealt with at more length in Section 4 of this report.

<sup>27</sup> See, for instance, Parreño and Gaborni (1999), also Gregorio-Medel (1998).

<sup>28</sup> See the website at [[http://www.cnn.com/ASIANOW/asiaweek/features/asiaweek1000.2000/c\\_philippines.html](http://www.cnn.com/ASIANOW/asiaweek/features/asiaweek1000.2000/c_philippines.html)].

<sup>29</sup> BUCO (1998) assembled a collection of 64 clippings appearing in the national press between January and July 1998. Between May and August 2000, more than a dozen stories appeared in just two Manila dailies (the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and *Philippine Star*).

<sup>30</sup> The fact that COCOFED elected a representative to Congress under the party-list system in 1998 (about which more later in this report) gave it added clout in pressing its claims.

<sup>31</sup> The executive order and subsequent events generated even more publicity and media coverage than the campaign to claim the San Miguel Corporation holdings. Manila papers have carried quite a number of stories relaying both events and speculation regarding the story, e.g., Villanueva and Clapano (2000) and Villanueva (2000), Pascual (2000); also Castillo (2000).

<sup>32</sup> On the industry’s problems, see Tacio (1999); for an account of the NACFAR coalition and USAID’s FASAR program, see Gregorio-Medel (1998b).

<sup>33</sup> See Festin and Manuel (2000) for an extensive legal analysis of the IRA issue. On the confusing swirl of events relating to the IRA during 2000, see Cervantes (2000), Contreras (2000), Danao (2000), Porcalla (2000).

<sup>34</sup> See for instance Malig and Basa (2000), a story in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* that begins “Presidential son Jinggoy Estrada, the mayor of San Juan who heads the League of Municipalities in the Philippines, has asked Luzon town mayors to support his proposed amendments....”

<sup>35</sup> Another example of policy impact on the part of the leagues was the near-successful effort of decentralized health employees (who had been devolved to the LGUs as part of the LGC) to restore their status as central government workers. A bill to do so passed both House and Senate in the mid-1990s, but after heavy lobbying from the leagues and others, Ramos vetoed it.

<sup>36</sup> The figures on NGO representation are based on the total number of LGUs included in the GOLD project (211 at all levels); the revenue data include the entire country.

<sup>37</sup> USAID/Philippines included these figures for 1996 and 1997 as results indicators for its R4 reports (i.e., the reports for FY 1999 and FY 2000), but dropped them in later years, although ARD (the GOLD contractor) continued to collect them.

<sup>38</sup> These results for the first two years were also published in ARD (1998), which discusses the methodology involved in the data collection. Subsequent data were supplied by ARD to the author of this

report. Gathering the information needed to produce such data was an elaborate exercise, requiring many field visits, interviews, and cross-checking, as well as a survey of over 1,600 respondents for the third item. “Effective citizen participation” in the first two items was defined with some rigor and is worth quoting here. “By ‘effective citizen participation’ is meant some process that allows ordinary citizens to express views early enough in the planning process to make a difference, and the government expresses its judgment about whether it will take these views into account. This participation cannot be just a comment on something that already has so much momentum that views of citizens cannot be taken into account. On the other hand, ‘effective citizen participation’ does not imply that government and NGOs/POs cannot disagree. Government officials still retain the right to overrule citizen input—knowing that electoral judgment will be faced at the end of the current term of office.” (ARD 1998: 11).

One intriguing finding emerged from the survey query on whether respondents felt their local city or provincial (cities are independent of provinces) government was “definitely doing something” about their perceived topmost problems. For Naga city in 1996, only 28 percent responded positively, while in 1997 the level fell to 21 percent—in both years the lowest of any LGU (weighted average for the entire sample of 1650 was 43 percent and 45 percent for the two surveys). See ARD (1998: Annex A). Was this because the Naga city government was in fact doing less? Or because its relative openness to citizen input had encouraged citizens to think it should be doing more and thus left them thinking it was not living up to the higher standard they had come to expect? One suspects the latter. Similar reasoning likely explains the small increases in the third item in Table 3 after 1996: as they observed local governments doing more, citizens became more demanding, with the result that their demands continually outpaced performance.

<sup>39</sup> It may be recalled that Capiz province and the Gerry Roxas Foundation were included in our earlier analysis of local level USAID initiatives. Whether the GRF can be considered as a civil society enterprise is, however, highly questionable (see the discussion later in Section 4), so it is not included here.

<sup>40</sup> The GRF’s CWI offered an excellent example of the hold of patron-client ties during a meeting with the visiting DG team. The session included over 50 members. When asked what CWI had done, why it is successful, how it could be replicated, etc., a large proportion of the answers involved testimonials to the critical role played by Judy Roxas, the clan head and chairperson of the GRF board of trustees.

<sup>41</sup> It will be interesting to see how the GRF model does on the GOLD rollout. It is likely to prove quite effective in enhancing the ability of LGUs to deliver services; how well it can do in building an autonomous civil society capacity to generate inputs to the decision-making process remains to be seen.

<sup>42</sup> From interview with Steven Rood of TAF on April 25, 2000.

<sup>43</sup> Total obligations have been \$36 million (\$19 million for GOLD and \$17 million for the civil society effort) over five years in a country of 75 million people.

<sup>44</sup> The question of opportunity for structural transformation can also be raised in connection with the second EDSA-connected regime change in January 2001. This second change appears to have been a much less profound break with the past than the 1986 transition, however, so the opportunity would have to be judged as correspondingly more modest.

<sup>45</sup> The economic restructuring has encountered many problems, e.g., with privatizing the Philippine National Bank and the National [electric] Power Corporation, both of which had stalled by mid-2000 (see EIU 2000). Even so, the overall changes in the economic fundamentals would have to be judged as significantly more profound in the post-Marcos era than those in the polity.

<sup>46</sup> Of course it was not just donors pressing for economic reform. Many domestic business elements in the Philippines were also advocating such an agenda.

<sup>47</sup> This difference can be taken too far. A robust economy needs a strong state with strong institutions to keep it on an even keel (e.g., central banking system and securities trading regulation), and such structures in most developing countries need considerable building effort.

<sup>48</sup> The quotation is from Section 5, Article VI of the constitution. For a thorough legal analysis of the party-list system, see Agra (1997). Corral provides an account of some of the lobbying effort that went into crafting the legislation establishing the system (Corral 1996).

<sup>49</sup> The presence of professionals as a “marginalized and under-represented” constituency is somewhat puzzling, but in any event no seats were won from this category in 1998.

<sup>50</sup> Data on the party-list election are taken from Rodriguez and Velasco (1998: passim).

<sup>51</sup> Various people interviewed by the DG team estimated the number of TUCP candidates at between four and seven. Whatever the actual number, many thought the multiple TUCP candidates symptomatic of problems with the party-list system.

<sup>52</sup> An additional factor for 2001 is that the five major political parties will be able to put up party-list candidates, but how that will play out is unpredictable at this point.

<sup>53</sup> BATMAN’s background and early history are summarized in Bulatao (1999). Its manual has been published in English as Institute for Policy Governance (1999).

<sup>54</sup> In its 1999-2000 strategy report, the bank allotted 17 pages to queries from civil society groups (World Bank n.d.: 111-127). See also World Bank (2000), which shows in some detail NGO participation in its current projects.

<sup>55</sup> The UNDP’s *Human Development Report 2000* reported 147 radios per 1,000 population and 126 television sets.

<sup>56</sup> Ferrer (1997: 1). This is the number reported by the Department of Interior and Local Government and presumably counts those registered officially. The total number is much larger, reckoned by some at upwards of 100,000 and even up to 150,000, depending on how rigorously NGOs and POs are defined.

<sup>57</sup> The others were the Association of Foundations, the Bishops’ and Businessmen’s Conference for Human Development, the League of Corporate Foundations, the National Council of Social Development, and Philippine Business for Social Progress.

<sup>58</sup> PCNC has also received assistance from the Ford Foundation and the World Bank—useful support as USAID downsized its own grant from three to two years.

<sup>59</sup> Of the 6,000 NGOs and POs included in CODE-NGO’s networks, only some receive corporate funding, so all will not have to be certified, but many will.

<sup>60</sup> Per Agency Policy Notice Number 68, “Discontinuation of Registration of Local Private Voluntary Organizations (LVPOs),” issued 28 January 2000.

<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, approaches like direct mailing, which for some time have experienced declining effectiveness in the United States, continue to be productive in the Philippines. Further development of this resource seems quite feasible.

<sup>62</sup> The one exception is the CLG set up at the GRF, as mentioned previously.

<sup>63</sup> Of course a great many Philippine NGOs have played a civil society role from their founding. The point here is that a good number of NGOs starting as service delivery organizations later took on civil society functions, encouraged by the USAID program.

<sup>64</sup> That these cross-sectoral linkages were so successful was likely a factor that weighed significantly in the decision to phase out DG as a stand-alone sector in merging it in with the other sectors in the fall of 1999.

<sup>65</sup> The account offered here is a précis of their fuller analysis (Linz and Stepan 1996: 5-6).

<sup>66</sup> The constitutionality of the transfer will surely be argued for a long time to come. For several early assessments, see Chandrasekharan (2001), Doronila (2001), Mydans (2001).

<sup>67</sup> See Blair (2000) for an exploration of this theme in the context of decentralization initiatives.

<sup>68</sup> This pattern must in some way reflect in increasing ratio of women to men in the country's higher educational system. In 1960 the female-to-male ratio for completing four years or more of college with a degree was .81, but by 1980 it had grown to 1.19 and by 1990 to 1.36 (data from UNDP, supplied by ARD/Manila).

<sup>69</sup> The mass mobilization of opposition to President Slobodan Milosevic in Yugoslavia only a few months before EDSA2 was also quite likely greatly facilitated by cell phone technology.

<sup>70</sup> There will surely be much analysis of texting's role in People's Power II, but for an early assessment, see Jimenez-David (2001); Chandrasekharan (2000) provides valuable background on text messaging in the anti-Estrada context.

<sup>71</sup> Tocqueville (2000: 172-180; 493-495). His two chapters on the press are well worth consulting. For readers who may use other editions of *Democracy in America*, the references are to Volume I, Part II, Chapter 3 and Volume II, Part II, Chapter 6. His comments on press irresponsibility are also impressive in the Philippine context. Press licentiousness, he thought, was troublesome, but more than compensated for by its benefits for democracy.

<sup>72</sup> One can ask if cell phone activism constitutes an elite technology in that their possession is largely restricted to the middle and upper classes. This has surely been the case, but the explosive growth in cell phones has presumably extended their use further through more and more of the class structure. Accounts vary, but there appear to have been somewhere between three and four million cell phones in the country at the beginning of 2001, which represented roughly a doubling from 12 months previously.

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