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DATE: December 31, 2011

RE: Grant End Report
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. 492-A-00-09-00033-00
"Enhanced Governance through Anti-Corruption Efforts in the Philippines"

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

USAID/Philippines awarded the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) funding to implement a 24-month program (October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2011) designed to support anti-corruption reforms in the Philippines. The program had two primary objectives: to provide legislative support to the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB), and to strengthen the capacity of journalists to investigate and report local corruption in an informed and responsible manner, often drawing on local groups of interested citizen activists. With approval from USAID, technical assistance to the OMB was shifted halfway through the program period to the Presidential Commission for Good Government (PCGG). This was chiefly due to the impeachment of the Ombudsman, which distracted our government partners and rendered the technical assistance program extremely problematic. This final report addresses the activities under each of these objectives, as described in the workplan approved by USAID in December 2009, in addition to supplemental activities ABA ROLI was able to realize through cost savings and collaboration with USAID and different Philippine government entities. This report does not include narratives contained in past reports; instead, ABA ROLI reviewed earlier and recent program highlights and accomplishments with the benefit of hindsight. This report also includes all data and subject fields required under the provisions of the Cooperative Agreement.

A. Legislative Support to the Office of the Ombudsman

ABA ROLI worked with the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB) to introduce amendments to its legislative charter, Republic Act (RA) No. 6770 (the Ombudsman Act of 1989) and RA No. 1379 (the civil forfeiture law), to strengthen its investigative powers and to enhance its ability to build stronger cases against suspected corrupt government officials. The technical assistance was divided into two major components: first, legislative drafting assistance, including a gap analysis to identify legislative and procedural encumbrances on OMB investigators, and second,

a legislative advocacy capacity-building effort for the OMB. The advocacy strengthening was designed to help the OMB create and sustain a small legislative outreach unit, similar to other executive agencies, to maintain open communication with the legislative bodies.

In December 2009, the OMB issued an order creating a technical working group (TWG) responsible for spearheading this legislative support project. The TWG was co-chaired by (then) Assistant Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni and Assistant Ombudsman Evelyn Baliton and composed of members of diverse Ombudsman bureaus involved in investigating and prosecuting allegations of corruption among government officials. Legal Research Consultants (LRCs) engaged by ABA ROLI, Attys. Gilbert Sembrano and Raquel Dimalanta helped the TWG draft propose bills to strengthen OMB's ability to prosecute. Both attorneys conducted legal research and led focus group discussions with the TWG. Atty. Dimalanta also provided a comprehensive gap analysis to survey current OMB investigative powers and to identify where the "gaps" in existing laws and procedures exist. Upon review of the gap analysis, the members of the TWG quickly realized that they desperately needed new laws, with a particular emphasis on legislatively reversing the Supreme Court decision in *People v. Eugenio*. This holding requires that an active case be filed in a trial court before investigators are allowed access to banking information. The holding prohibits common practice of law enforcement agencies worldwide—applying for *ex parte* applications before a court upon a showing of probable cause that someone is money laundering or illegally transferring funds, without having to inform suspects that they are being investigated. Fortunately, this practice is incorporated into related, pending legislation this current legislative cycle (See Table 1, below).

To assist the OMB with creating a legislative liaison unit within the OMB and to build its capacity to advocate for its legislative agenda, including the amendatory bills produced under this Cooperative Agreement, ABA ROLI engaged Publicus Asia, Inc. ("Publicus") to act as the Legislative Advocacy Consultant (LAC). In July 2010, the OMB, with technical assistance from ABA ROLI and its LRCs, finalized its amendatory bills were promptly submitted to Congress by officials of the OMB. Sen. Golez and Rep. Zubiri both agreed that these were beneficial changes to existing laws and introduced the bills to their respective House. Proposed amendments to the existing OMB Charter and Civil Forfeiture Laws include:

- Providing OMB investigators the authority to issue Bank Inquiry Orders *ex parte*, (without notifying the subject of the investigation).
- Allowing freeze orders on bank accounts to be promulgated *ex parte* and *motu proprio* (without need for the complainant to move for the freeze order in court), or upon motion by the complainant, for up to 6 months. This provision is controversial due to the enormous power it gives to OMB investigators. ABA ROLI strongly recommended to the TWG that the proposed bills allow for *ex parte* applications by OMB lawyers to freeze assets only after requesting an order from a judge. Publicus predicted that this controversial measure would be amended by the lawmakers as it progressed through the legislature.
- Allowing the OMB to hold uncooperative witnesses in contempt for failing to appear or to cooperate during preliminary investigations conducted by the OMB.

- Exempting the OMB from paying bonds and taxes on asset forfeiture cases.
- Allowing the OMB to retain a fifty percent share of forfeited assets to be used for salary supplements of OMB employees and for the purchase of equipment for subsequent investigations. ABA ROLI did not agree with the TWG on this provision and stated unequivocally that it was possibly unconstitutional and certainly problematic to give such extraordinary powers to the OMB.

Unfortunately, these bills were derailed soon after they were introduced in Congress due to the impeachment of Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez. The OMB TWG expressed its serious reservations about setting up the planned legislative liaison unit to help push for its legislative agenda and improve communications with Congress, since it could be seen as an “anti-impeachment office” that would be improper for the OMB to create. In late 2010, Deputy Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni stated that the OMB and ABA ROLI had taken this project as far as it could go at that point, given the political climate. Thus, although the OMB was able to find legislators to file its Amendatory Bills in Congress, support for the bills within the OMB and within Congress ended with the impeachment proceedings.

That said, the contents of the bills – with the exception of the more controversial provisions ABA ROLI advocated against – remained popular with key Judiciary Committee members of Congress. As a result, ABA ROLI monitored the movement of the Amendatory Bills and other bills that contained similar provisions. Table 1 shows the status of the pending bills that are most relevant to the Ombudsman’s anti-corruption efforts. Copies of the bills submitted to Congress by the OMB are attached as Annex A.

Table 1. Current Status of Legislation Similar to OMB Bills Submitted with Technical Assistance from ABA ROLI and USAID

Pending Measures in Congress and Senate	Status
<p>SBN 107</p> <p>Requiring public officials and employees to submit written permission or waiver in favor of the OMB to examine and verify bank accounts and investments in government bonds during investigation and prosecution.</p>	<p>Authored by Sen. Francis Escudero of the Justice Committee and co-authored by Sen. Serge Osmeña</p> <p>5 July 2010 - with Committee Report 2, pending sponsorship, Second Reading</p> <p>22 February 2011 – Sen. Ramon Revilla was made co-author</p> <p>13 September 2011 – Sen. Antonio Trillanes III was made co-author</p> <p>The bill was reported out of the committee hearings and gained sponsorship in plenary during the year-end session of the Senate.</p>
<p>SBN 2373</p> <p>An Act Amending RA1379 to provide a fixed percentage of the value forfeited properties in corruption cases as additional funding for the Office of the Ombudsman and for other purposes.</p>	<p>Authored by Sen. Escudero</p> <p>21 Sep 2010 thru 24 May 2011 – conducted joint committee hearings/meetings</p>
<p>SBN 2484</p> <p>Further strengthen the anti-money laundering law, amend Republic Act No. 9160 or Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001 to allow AMLC to conduct bank inquiry ex-parte by the courts.</p>	<p>Authored by Sen. Osmeña</p> <p>27 September 2010 thru 1 September 2011 - conducted joint committee hearings/meetings</p> <p>Senate Bill No. 2484 was drafted in response to the Supreme Court’s opinion on the Anti-Money Laundering Act, which effectively prohibited the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) from inquiring into bank accounts suspected of holding laundered money without the consent of the depositors under investigation. The bill aimed to enable AMLC to inquire into suspected bank accounts without the consent of the account holder, thereby facilitating investigations and tracing crime proceeds.</p> <p>Although the bill is still pending before the Senate’s Committee on Justice, it is expected to obtain strong support from the committee with the authorship of Sen. Osmeña, the chair of the principal Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies.</p>
<p>HB 2159</p> <p>An Act to Strengthen the Fiscal Autonomy of the Office of the Ombudsman, Amending for the Purpose Section 38 of RA 6770 (The Ombudsman Act of 1989).</p>	<p>Authored by Rep. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles</p> <p>4 August 2010 – The bill was referred from the Committee on Justice to Appropriations and then to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM)</p> <p>20 September 2010 - Referred to stakeholders</p>

Pending Measures in Congress and Senate	Status
	House Bill No. 2159 referred to OMB's inability to attract "top notch" employees and its lack of fiscal autonomy. This results in meager salaries given to OMB officials, making them more susceptible to corruption. This bill sought to grant the OMB enhanced fiscal autonomy to enable it to fulfill its duty as a "pillar of good governance."
HB 3916 An Act Amending Section 24 and 27 of RA 6770 (the Ombudsman Act of 1989) to define the preventive suspension authority of the Ombudsman and his Deputy over elective and appointive officials, and the effective date of the decisions of the Ombudsman.	Authored by Rep. Niel Tupas, Jr. 17 Jan 2010 – with Committee Report 433, pending unfinished business (period of interpellation)

Challenges Encountered

ABA ROLI experienced two primary challenges to successfully implementing the legislative support project to the OMB. First was TWG and the Ombudsman's resistance to our advice that changes to the law enforcement provisions of their legislative agenda be prioritized above personal salary and pension concerns, which were eventually included in the final draft of the bills submitted to Congress. The salary and pension language casted the bills in a tainted light, making them seem self-serving and not devoted entirely to the principle law enforcement mission of the OMB.

The second and most prominent challenge, discussed above, was the impeachment of Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez. Once this happened, the momentum for changing the Charter of the OMB to increase its law enforcement powers was lost. Also, once Deputy Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni resigned due to his corollary impeachment, ABA ROLI lost its chief contact person and reform champion within the OMB.

B. Technical Assistance to the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG)
 With its technical assistance to the OMB rendered impracticable by the Ombudsman impeachment proceedings, ABA ROLI discussed with USAID how to realize a similar program accomplishment with a different anti-corruption law enforcement agency of the Philippine government. Fortunately, President Aquino appointed well-meaning, intelligent and hardworking commissioners to the PCGG who welcomed technical assistance from ABA ROLI and USAID. After several meetings with the commissioners, the outline of a new program was created to assist PCGG with a) assessing its institutional strengths and weaknesses through an enhanced "business process mapping" and legal gap analysis, b) conducting an inventory of the status of all cases investigated by PCGG and referred to other law enforcement agencies for prosecution,

and c) providing recommendations on how to improve PCGG's oversight of ongoing cases based on the findings of the analyses and inventories. The main activities of ABA ROLI to accomplish these new program objectives included the following:

1. **Assessing PCGG legal and structural frameworks and systems** with the assistance of an outside consultant and legal technical expert.
2. **Holding meetings** facilitated by ABA ROLI and its consultant **between the PCGG and the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) and the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) to help reconcile and update the status and records of all PCGG-related cases.** ABA ROLI developed data extraction forms to help prosecutors provide the data necessary to conduct a thorough yet concise inventory of pending litigation initiated by PCGG investigations. These forms also allow PCGG commissioners to get snapshots of all cases they referred to other agencies. Several of the meetings between PCGG and other agencies were co-sponsored by another USAID-funded anti-corruption project.
3. **Drafting an Assessment Study with recommendations to address or remedy deficiencies in the current legal and structural framework and systems of PCGG,** based on findings of the process mapping and inventories, and conducted in close consultation with PCGG commissioners and ABA ROLI.

Summary Findings of the Assessment Study on the PCGG

Strengthening the government's capacity to recover national assets and reduce corruption requires an innate understanding of the regulatory structure in which PCGG operates. The Assessment Study therefore aimed to provide a graphic representation of PCGG cases, including their litigation status and what motions were filed, which matters remain pending, the strengths and weaknesses of each case, the amounts in controversy, and which government law enforcement agencies are responsible for prosecuting the cases initiated by a PCGG investigation. Due to time and resource limitations, as well as a dearth of data in the PCGG and other government files, *only cases where the assets were located within the Philippines were included in the study.* The objective of the study was to gain insight on challenges PCGG commonly encounters, and to provide recommendations for improving the enforcement of domestic asset recovery and forfeiture laws and ensuring that criminal cases are timely adjudicated.

ABA ROLI contracted with Atty. Racquel Dimalanta to conduct the Assessment Study. Through coordination with PCGG and other agencies, data was collected and business processes were mapped to show how cases proceed after the initial reporting of corruption or unexplained wealth. A "Data Extraction Form" (DEF) was developed for PCGG to assemble and maintain a database of concluded and pending PCGG matters. Contents include case information, milestones and aging of civil cases related to RA 1379, behest loans, assets and criminal cases from their inception to their current status pending at the Ombudsman and the Sandiganbayan, or if maintained properly, at the OSP and the OSG. Unfortunately, due to poor record-keeping by the OSG and OSP, much of the information sought by the DEFs was simply unavailable.

Discussions with PCGG Commissioners revealed that there was no consolidated list of all outstanding PCGG cases referred to other agencies, but they estimated that the number was close to 100. ABA ROLI and the prosecuting agencies were able to fill out 84 DEFs, representing most of the outstanding cases. Unfortunately, much of the data in the DEFs was unavailable, or the prosecuting agencies refused to fill them out. Still, PCGG and the ABA ROLI consultant believed that the information eventually obtained through the DEFs yielded enough data to draw relevant and empirical conclusions.

Based on the DEFs that were processed and analyzed, ABA ROLI consultant Racquel Dimalanta 18% of the cases were asset recovery and criminal cases pending with the OMB, and 82% were pending with the Sandiganbayan (SB). The range of pending OMB cases is shown in Table 2, while pending SB cases are shown in Table 3. Civil cases in both arenas are based on RA 1379 and Civil Code articles relating to Recovery, Reconveyance, Reversion, Accounting, and Damages. Criminal cases are based on RA3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act), RA 7080 (Plunder Law), RA 6713(Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees), and the Revised Penal Code.

According to the findings, case delays are chiefly caused by interlocutory appeals, which take place at every stage of the case. Each party involved in each case may go to the Supreme Court to question incidental issues raised in the OMB and Sandiganbayan, where resolution takes an average of 6 years and 9 years, respectively. Meanwhile, other legal remedies such as non-convictionbased forfeiture are underutilized, comprising only 7% of OMB’s pending cases. PCGG Commissioners repeatedly expressed their belief that the information gathered by the DEFs and the report synthesizing and collating the data was very useful in their efforts to modernize civil forfeiture efforts by the Philippine Government.

Table 2. Types of Cases Initiated by PCGG and now Pending Further Action by the Office of the Ombudsman

Types of Cases Pending in OMB	Count	Percentage
RA 1379 ¹ cases	1	7%
RA 3019 ² cases	12	80%
Criminal cases, legal basis not indicated in DEF	2	13%
TOTAL	15	100%

Similar data was found from a sampling of pending SB cases, where R.A. No 1379 cases only represent 6% of the total, as shown in Table 3. *Table 3. Breakdown of Types of Cases Initiated by PCGG and Now Pending in the Sandiganbayan*

¹The Forfeiture Law, Or An Act Declaring Forfeiture In Favor Of The State Any Property Found To Have Been Unlawfully Acquired By Any Public Officer Or Employee And Providing For The Proceedings Therefore.

² The Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act

Breakdown of SB Cases	Count	Percentage
RA 3019 cases (criminal)	7	10%
RA 1379 cases	4	6%
Recovery, restitution, accounting, and damages (civil)	23	33%
Declaration of nullity/rescission of contract (civil)	3	4%
Other civil cases	8	12%
Civil cases, legal basis not identified in the DEFs	23	33%
Unclassified (as civil or criminal)	1	1%
TOTAL	15	100%

The study likewise showed that asset recovery takes time. The average OMB case is nine years old, while the average Sandiganbayan case is twenty. Twenty-five years after PCGG was created, 78% of the studied cases are still pending in Sandiganbayan.

Table 4. Status of Cases Initiated by PCGG and now Pending or Resolved in the Sandiganbayan

Status of Cases in SB	Percentage
Cases dismissed by SB, subject of MR by PCGG (civil)	1.5%
Civil cases dismissed by SB, elevated to SC	9%
Criminal cases dismissed by SB, elevated to SC	1.5%
Archived cases	10%
Proceedings ongoing	78%
TOTAL	100%

Notably, out PhP 260.07 billion in assets claimed by the Republic, PhP 251.47 billion, or 97 percent, have been secured by PCGG (See Table 5, below.) Most of the recovered assets consist of financial instruments recovered through sequestration orders of the PCGG, other court writs placing the properties in custody, or voluntary surrender of such properties to PCGG.

A serious impediment to PCGG law enforcement powers stems from the 1987 Constitution,³ which specifically deleted PCGG's power to issue sequestration orders. As a consequence, petitions have not been filed with the OMB to freeze assets since 1987. Under the present regime, the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) has the power to secure stolen property through an application for Bank Inquiry and Freeze Orders during investigation.

³Article XVIII, *Transitory Provisions of the 1987 Constitution* provides: "Sec. 26. The authority to issue sequestration or freeze orders under Proclamation No. 3 dated March 25, 1986 in relation to the recovery of ill-gotten wealth shall remain operative for not more than eighteen months after the ratification of this Constitution."

Another legal remedy that the report discovered being underutilized is the application for a writ of preliminary attachment for properties the moment a case is filed in court.

Table 5. Asset Claims vs. Secured Assets

	Count of all Assets	Total Asset Value Outstanding(in PhP)	Count of Property Secured to PCGG	Total Value of Property Secured to PCGG
Real Property	916 units	11,469,681,100	881units	10,789,878,100
Cash ⁴	136 accounts	34,146,522	5	-
Financial Instruments	450	248,553,495,766	289	240,684,866,394
Personal Property	42	15,756,875	9	1,100,000
Other	15	28,000	11	28,000
TOTAL	1,559	260,073,108,263	1,195	251,475,872,494

The Assessment Study put forward the following key findings and recommendations:

1. PCGG, OMB, and other concerned agencies must prevent the dissipation of assets while the cases are pending. Since neither PCGG nor the Ombudsman has the power to issue freeze orders, they must better coordinate with the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) for field investigation and applications for Bank Inquiry Orders and Freeze Orders to secure properties subject to forfeiture proceedings.
2. Financial instruments, mostly stockholdings, comprise almost all of the assets being claimed (96%) by the Republic. These assets are easily endorsed and legally transferred as a bearer's note (and registration with the Corporate Secretary). Hence, there must be a complementary legal structure for staking claims to stock shares while graft cases are in the preparatory or investigation stage, similar to registering adverse claims on real properties with the Register of Deeds.
3. A government agency must be tasked with managing recovered assets and safeguarding the value of the properties, similar to the manner in which the U.S. Marshall's Office manages government seized properties.
4. Judicial processes should be improved to avoid protracted litigation and minimize case aging, frivolous interlocutory appeals, poor case management and other judicial inefficiencies.

The Assessment Study is attached as Annex B.

⁴ PCGG and other law enforcement agency records have maintained particularly poor track of cash accounts subjected to seize orders, and court rulings have made such seizures problematic. This helps to explain the anomalous figures reported in this table.

Additional Technical Assistance

Development of Data Extraction Forms (DEFs)

As discussed above, DEFs reflect case status and other significant information on areas of intervention for the improved framework of the PCGG in pursuing cases. DEFs have the following benefits and features:

- An electronic database for easy encoding of case information using standard fields and drop down menus;
- Simplified processing of case information for analysis;
- Easy transmission of reports; and
- The creation of a comprehensive database for policy makers and directors to identify systemic problems encountered, areas that work well and can be used as best practice examples, immediate ability to provide meaningful data upon request, and empirical information for future modernization efforts.

DEFs can be further developed by the PCGG to serve as a baseline data tool as well as a basis for a case management information system that may be developed in the future. PCGG may also use DEFs to develop a centralized database system in coordination with the Office of the Solicitor General and the Office of the Special Prosecutor. The PCGG Commissioners quickly realized the value of DEFs for current and future case management and inventory efforts. The DEFs allow a bifurcation between data entry personnel and the actual high level attorneys who can quickly fill out the DEFs for later inclusion in an automated database. A blank DEF is attached as Annex C.

Inter-agency protocols and procedures

ABA ROLI facilitated a series of meetings that resulted in a “Coordination Protocol” between the PCGG, the OSP and the OSG legal offices (See Annex D.)The protocol focused on critical areas of coordination, such as availability and sharing of documents, designation of point persons for PCGG and OSP and providing assistance to PCGG in prosecution. The Coordination Protocol aims to improve performance in prosecuting PCGG cases by serving as a manual for all concerned officers to follow.

Additional USAID/ABA ROLI Activities with PCGG

Building Anti-Corruption Coalitions

On May 4, 2011, ABA ROLI and USAID co-sponsored with PCGG and other USAID partners an Inaugural Lecture of the Haydee Yorac Commemorative Series. International Anti-Corruption Expert Tony Kwok, former Deputy Commissioner and Head of Operations of the Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), delivered a lecture entitled, “Fighting Corruption in the Philippines – What Went Wrong and What Can Be Done Now” emphasizing the importance of political will and sustainability through continued budget allocation for any successful anti-corruption effort. The event was attended by over 120 high level officials from various government agencies, including the Supreme Court, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Office of the Solicitor General, the Office of the Ombudsman, as well as representatives from civil society organizations and the international diplomatic community.



Figure 1. *Tony Kwok, former Commissioner of the Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), emphasizes the importance of strong enforcement and sufficient budget to fight corruption.*

On September 19-23, 2011 an exhibit was launched in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental by the PCGG Chairman and Commissioners highlighting the office’s work, challenges, and its continuing quest for asset recovery and good government. ABA ROLI and USAID co-sponsored the launch, which included a public forum and press conference to discuss the PCGG’s purpose, function and likely legacy. Almost 200 participants, including students and members of civil society organizations, visited the exhibit and participated in the open forum.



Figure 2. *ABA ROLI Consultant Racquel Ruiz-Dimalanta presents the findings of the PCGG Assessment Study to more than 200 representatives from the judiciary, Congress, civil society, business groups, and the diplomatic corps.*

On September 30, 2011, a forum on Good Governance and Asset Forfeiture in the Philippines was held as part of the Haydee Yorac Commemorative Series. The event was attended by more than 200 representatives from the judiciary, Congress, anti-corruption agencies, business groups, civil society, and the diplomatic corps.

The event, which was made possible by technical assistance and the successful adoption of an inter-agency coordination protocol between PCGG and OSP, featured the results of the ABA ROLI USAID Assessment Study on PCGG’s asset recovery efforts. The event also served as a venue for officials from different branches of government to share their anti-corruption agenda. Department of Budget and Management Secretary

Florencio Abad discussed the Philippine Government’s National Action Plan on Anti-Corruption and Good Governance, highlighting transparency and accountability as integral parts of improved public finance management. Senator Teofisto Guingona III, Chairman of the

Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations Committee and the Congressional Oversight Committee on the Anti-Money Laundering Act, expressed his deep concern on the adverse impact of weaknesses in the current legal framework and his commitment to legislative reforms strengthening the Philippine anti-corruption and asset forfeiture regime.

Through these USAID/ABA ROLI-sponsored efforts, PCGG has enabled various stakeholders to come together and start debates on strengthening anti-corruption enforcement mechanisms in the country. Table 6 shows the participation of different agencies and organizations in anti-corruption efforts. Over 500 participants have come from different sectors to take part in forums on fighting corruption and good governance.

Table 6. ABA ROLI/USAID Co-Sponsored PCGG Forums and Events

Sector	Fighting Corruption in the Philippines- What Went Wrong and What Can be Done Now?	PCGG: A Public Forum on Good Governance	Good Governance and Asset Forfeiture in the Philippines	Total
	4-May-11	21-Sep-11	30-Sep-11	
Civil Society Organizations/ students	12	187	6	205
Government Agencies	63	7	190	260
Private	9		11	20
Academic	5		5	10
International Organizations	15		21	36
Media	10		9	19
Others	6		4	10
Total	120	194	246	560

SOURCE: Data is based on event registration sheets.

Challenges Encountered

ABA ROLI assisted the PCGG in assessing the agency's performance since its inception 25 years ago. "Data Extraction Forms" (DEFs) developed to inventory pending PCGG matters were carefully designed to be both comprehensive and easy to fill out, using simple drop down menus and auto-fill features. Unfortunately, there was significant delay and resistance in the completion of the DEFs by PCGG attorneys due to internal PCGG difficulties, such as lack of full-time lawyers and a high turnover rate. Notwithstanding this initial roadblock, ABA ROLI was able to get DEFs for all cases falling within the coverage of the study, even though some of the DEFs were not totally filled in. ABA ROLI likewise provided technical assistance to PCGG to streamline its coordination and collaboration efforts with its legal counsel, the OSG and the OSP. However, only the coordination meetings with OSP pushed through, and persistent efforts to set

up the meetings with OSG did not work out. Nevertheless, PCGG and OSP were able to identify specific matters of concern and finalize a Coordination Protocol adopted by both offices.

II. Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project (PPTRP)

The second primary development objective of this Cooperative Agreement was to strengthen the capacity of journalists working at the local level to report responsibly and knowledgeably on corruption issues related to government procurement and other areas vulnerable to self-dealing by government officials. ABA ROLI worked primarily through a sub-grantee, the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), to develop an interactive website to allow local journalists and community groups to participate in anti-corruption activities, and to increase public access to information not normally covered by mainstream press. ABA ROLI provided technical assistance to train journalists on the legal meanings of common terms involved in reporting on corruption, such as “money laundering,” “nepotism,” and general government procurement language. Many supplemental activities were launched as the website became increasingly popular and local citizen groups formed in response to the information they were able to gather from the website. This grant-end report highlights accomplishments, successes and challenges that occurred under this program objective; however, it does not include detailed information covered in earlier reports concerning the monthly activities of the various local transparency and media groups. ABA ROLI can provide earlier quarterly or annual reports upon request.

“PeraNatin ‘To!’ (It’s Our Money!)” Website Successfully Launched

After entering into a sub-grant agreement with ABA ROLI on November 9, 2009, IWPR, through its local NGO, the Philippines Public Transparency Reporting Project (PPTRP), began preparing for program activities. Initial activities included the design, development, and registration of PPTRP's website. The site was designed to provide an interactive and user-friendly forum for citizens and professional journalists to productively discuss issues surrounding the investigation and reporting of corruption, including media safety and security.

In December 2009, IWPR re-established partnerships it had made under a previous human rights reporting program with local organizations to set project goals, objectives, specific project components, roles and responsibilities, and to assess the current political and economic situation for Mindanao journalists. These organizations included the Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD), the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines (NUJP), and Mindanao News (MindaNews). The organizations had legitimate concerns about security issues, since several of the journalists who worked with IWPR in the past were killed in the November 2009 Maguindanao massacre. Due to the involvement of the IWPR project staff and partners in the campaign to achieve justice for victims of the massacre and the consequent difficulty to coordinate with potential stakeholders in Mindanao, IWPR postponed project implementation for a few months.

During this delay, the IWPR and its partners finalized the plans for two surveys on civic expectation and the role of the media in reporting corruption and issues of transparency. IWPR also initiated the first batch of commissioned reports by journalists, former bureaucrats, and civil society organizations on public budgets, procurement, the role of media, checks and balances, and models for transparency.

On March 23, 2010 PPTRP was formally launched along with its website, *PeraNatin To!* ("It's Our Money!") which can be viewed at www.transparencyreporting.net.⁵The launch event was attended by over 70 representatives of 37 public and private sector organizations, including the diplomatic corps, local and international media, civil society, and government offices such as the Commission on Audit and OMB.



Figure 3. Solita Collas-Monsod, an economist and broadcaster, says "*PeraNatin To!*" will help widen public participation in the fight against corruption.

A roundtable discussion entitled "Building and Not Waiting for Public Transparency and Accountability: The Benefits of Working Together and Forcing Change" complemented the launch. Panelists included executives from CCJD, the Commission on Audit, the Transparency and Accountability Network, and representatives from "*Ehem!*", an anti-corruption project. During the discussion, CCJD Executive Director Victor Redmond Batario previewed results of the Media and Public Accountability baseline survey PPTRP undertook to measure citizen views of the media's

role in combating corruption.

Since the launch, stories about the project and the website have appeared in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Business World, GMA news, Korea Herald, Asia News network, and Philippine and Australian radio programs and blogs. As project implementation progressed, more features were added to the website to 1) encourage the reporting of anomalies in government spending, budgeting, procurement, etc. ("Report It Here!"); 2) allow government employees to share their stories on corruption ("Tell Us Your Story"); 3) create a public forum for topics posted by PPTRP (Talakayan); 4) link and re-post to social media sites like Twitter and Facebook; and 5) draw attention to government initiatives against corruption ("Highlight a Change"). The results of these feedback mechanism features can be found in Annex E.

Survey on Public Perception of Transparency Reporting

PPTRP conducted a baseline survey to assess the following:

1. The knowledge level of reporters and members of good government NGOs on the basics of anticorruption measures, transparency and sunshine laws.
2. The awareness of groups already combating corruption in the Philippines.
3. The knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices around the media's corruption reporting, as told to PPTRP by different groups in Mindanao and the Visayas.
4. The perceived efficacy of the media's efforts to collaborate with civil society on corruption reporting.

⁵The website continues to operate at this address, although PPTRP moved the website host from the Philippines to the U.S. to increase security and reliability.

There were 60 study respondents, drawn from the media itself, civil society, government (local government units, state agencies, etc.), and from the general public. The study utilized focus group discussions and a questionnaire sent out to respondents in advance. PPTRP, through the CCJD, met with groups in Catbalogan, Samar and North Cotabato and conducted follow-up sessions.

In June 2010, the complete results of the baseline study were released and published online.⁶ The results suggest that civil society and local governments are willing to organize to enhance local anti-corruption efforts and coordinate goals and strategies, but they need technical assistance to focus their efforts on activities that are the most effective in combating corruption. Besides highlighting opportunities for collaboration and engagement, the results also showed the need for building corruption reporting skills of the media and civil society and addressing security and safety issues.

At the end of the project, another survey was conducted with some of the original respondents from Samar and Kidapawan. This survey assessed changes in the media's reportorial skills and perspectives on transparency and corruption issues, as well as the role of media-citizen partnerships and their impact on critical issues of transparency and anti-corruption. The survey utilized focus group discussions and a questionnaire. Out of the 40 original respondents drawn from the local media, civil society organizations and local government units, 29 participated in the post-survey. The summary report from the two surveys is attached as Annex F.

Information Education Communication (IEC) campaign

Other "PeraNatin 'To! website features were developed and populated with technical information, data and statistics to increase public involvement and to facilitate the investigation and reporting of corruption. The website was designed to engage a range of audiences, using lively colors, boxes, imagery, and Filipino/Tagalog alongside English language sections. PPTRP and its partner organizations regularly posted project news. The website also contained in-depth reports on transparency issues and a list of frequently asked questions by the public regarding corruption.

PPTRP launched two online campaigns. The first campaign aimed at publishing of all the Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth and for the de-personalization of public works by public officials. The other campaign involved posting resource materials for laymen to easily learn and monitor public finance, Philippine governmental structure, libel, media guide to safety, and tips for whistleblowers. The number of visitors to the website increased as the site received more attention from other media, the public, NGOs, and other anti-corruption stakeholders, due to the website's dynamic features and socially relevant topics and reports. Major networks and print media picked up the campaigns launched by PPTRP and reproduced the reports posted in the "PeraNatin To!" website. PPTRP representatives were invited to TV and radio interviews,

⁶http://www.transparencyreporting.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=85:media-and-public-transparency-and-accountability-survey&catid=54

and involved in anti-corruption networking projects, planning and events. Reports on the IEC success can be found in Annex G.

Local Media Practitioners Trained on Investigative Journalism

PPTRP selected ten training areas and four pilot sites, targeting areas in Mindanao and the Visayas with clear issues and concerns on public corruption and transparency as well as active



Figure 4. *Journalists, church-based and civil society groups organize to identify corruption issues in their locality and propose plans to investigate and report on how their local government manages, spends and account for public funds.*

and reliable civil society and media communities: Catbalogan, Kidapawan, Cagayan de Oro, Dipolog, Bohol, Legazpi, Cotabato, Pampanga, Surigao and Davao. PPTRP aimed to build the capacity of local media, civil society groups and government units in their anti-corruption efforts by providing basic and advanced training seminars on how to investigate and report corruption, review fiscal reports, etc. The training modules and handouts for the participants are voluminous and were previously provided to USAID by ABA ROLI; they can be provided by ABA ROLI upon request.

Through these trainings, the NUJP, a PPTRP local partner, encouraged nearly 200 local journalists and civil society leaders to report corruption cases and promote good governance in a responsible manner. Emphasis was placed on sourcing guidelines for journalists to increase credibility and minimize the chances of reporting false information or parroting a local politician's words of vitriol against another. Participants consisted of 136 representatives from the media and 61 from civil society organizations, religious groups, academia and concerned citizens groups. A staff attorney from ABA ROLI participated in many of the roundtables and focus group discussions to provide a legal perspective on the laws of libel, slander and to educate reporters and CSOs on the meaning of relevant legal terms.



Figure 5. *ABA ROLI program manager Tina Manalang shares her experience in anti-corruption theory, laws, and existing law enforcement mechanisms in the Philippines.*

A copy of the glossary of legal terms provided by ABA ROLI for inclusion in the Reporter's Guidebook is attached as Annex H.

In the first round of seminars, participants were trained on basic methods for effectively investigating and reporting corruption, anti-corruption laws, and other factors that affect corruption and its impact on society. PPTRP and NUJP resource speakers explained how the public can use the SALNs of public officials to uncover possible corrupt activities of government agents.

In the second round of more advanced seminars, participants learned about the development and review of public budgets.

The advanced training also focused on building media and CSO’s ability to understand, investigate and report on public finance. The trainings familiarized the participants from media and CSOs on the workings of the budget process while also building their capacity to pursue stories on government spending and accountability. PPTRP also took the opportunity to encourage formal collaboration among media, CSOs and ordinary citizens to better monitor and report on government budget issues. The participants from media and NGOs discussed how to establish working relationships, share information, and join efforts to legally acquire public

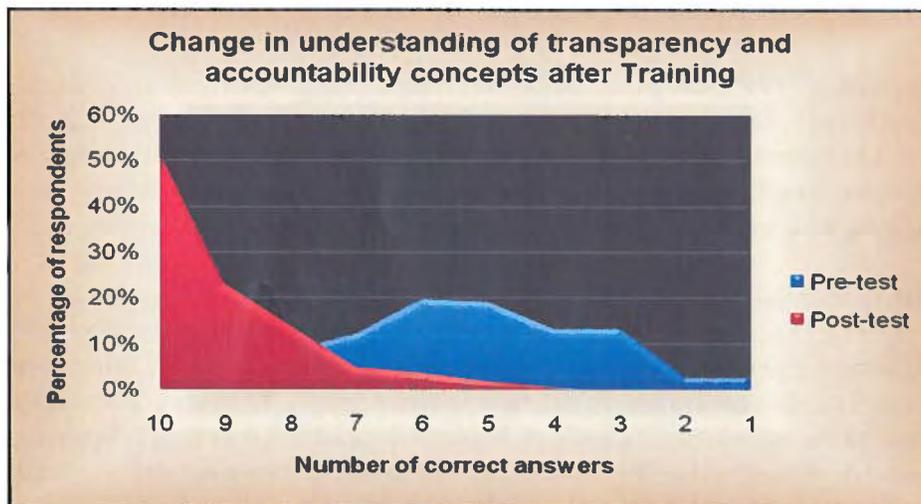
QUOTES

Christine Casurao, a public information officer with the Samar provincial government and a member of the Alliance of Concerned Employees of Samar, said that the training provided relevant information. “I will apply [the knowledge] in watching for government transactions and [in] checking if they are violating these anti-corruption laws,” she said.

Gina Ragudo, a Samarnews.com and Samar Media Productions reporter, said that the training was helpful and interesting. She specifically enjoyed learning about “investigating corruption cases and [about] the provisions of the *Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act*.”

documents. A workshop at the end of the seminar allowed participants to develop story proposals for community advocacy and investigative journalism.

In every seminar, participants were given a diagnostic quiz to determine their level of understanding of transparency and accountability concepts such as “lifestyle check”, “plunder”, and “conflict of interest.” Pre-test results show that out of the 172 participant respondents composed of media practitioners, CSO workers and other sectors, only 49 or 28% scored the passing rate of 70%. However, post-training results show that out of 165 participant respondents, 94% passed the percent rate with 52% scoring a perfect 10-point score and 23% got a 9-point score. Results of the pre- and post-training tests show a marked increase in participants’ understanding of corruption concepts from a weighted score of 5.4 to 9.0, or 90%, as the chart below demonstrates.



Joint Efforts of Media and Public Working Groups to Monitor and Report on Local Fiscal Accountability and Transparency

PPTRP successfully launched four pilot local transparency groups, the Watchful Advocates for Transparent, Clean and Honest Governance in Kidapawan (WATCH Kidapawan); the Multi-sectoral Alliance for Transparency and Accountability (MATA-Samar); Misamis Occidental Public Transparency Collective (MisOcc PTC); and Bohol TNT. All aim for closer collaboration between media and the civil society. The groups were composed of print and radio journalists, members of civil society organizations, academics, religious leaders, everyday citizens and public servants. They worked across dividing lines, engaging members of competing media groups, rival political parties, and diverse political and ethnic affiliations in monitoring the local government's performance and increasing civic participation in transparency issues. The World Bank commended PPTRP for effectively mobilizing independent anti-corruption groups and the public to initiate their own governance projects for the first time. Many of these groups continued operating after the closure of the project.

A list highlighting the accomplishments of the local WATCH groups is attached as Annex I. Additional details of their successes and their inspiration to other groups have been provided to USAID in earlier reports, notably the FY 2011 Annual Report.

Roundtable Discussions with High-level Government Officials and Media Members to Highlight and Publicize Corruption Issues

PPTRP engaged in various networking activities and events either as a participating organization or as an organizer. In January 2010, PPTRP participated in a forum of the International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Government entitled "Powers of the Presidency: Preventing Misuse and Abuse" and another forum organized by the Civil Society Resources Institute, Inc, where it conducted outreach to good governance stakeholders and major NGO actors. Members of the organizations were enthusiastic about the project and committed to future collaboration.

Throughout 2010, PPTRP established links with journalists, government officials, and civil society organizations. Several meetings were held with the Commission on Audit, Transparency International, Ombudsman, Department of Budget and Management, and Business World to share information, discuss possible collaboration in the area of information, education, communications, and training to establish an anti-corruption network.

In May 2010, to increase collaboration and information sharing, PPTRP convened over 50 corruption-fighting organizations. These included the Transparency and Accountability Network, Code NGO, Makati Business Club, the Ateneo School of Government, the International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Government, Philippine Human Development Network, and the Association of Schools of Public Administration in the Philippines. PPTRP created a network of more than 500 journalists from different provinces and in Manila. Networking accomplishments for the year include:

- The development of a 15-point anti-corruption covenant with milestones to measure the government's record in delivering positive change and commitment to transparency and public participation, using a survey to measure public expectations and demands
- The creation of a Budget Advocacy Group in conjunction with the Department of Budget and Management to identify concrete steps to increasing people's participation in the budget process from preparation to accountability
- BIR Commissioner Joel Tan Torres's announcement that BIR would share with PPTRP information about taxpayers' records and tax reforms, in appropriate circumstances.

After the 2010 national elections, PPTRP approached the Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN) and Code NGO, two of the country's leading anti-corruption networks, to discuss a joint project to ensure that the new administration prioritized transparency and accountability issues. An important component of this project was to organize meetings with CSOs and other groups promoting transparency to develop a set of independent benchmarks as well as a system for monitoring government efforts to improve transparency and accountability. The meetings also addressed activities to directly engage with the new administration. PPTRP participated in two conveners' meetings to develop a collective action plan and strategy.

On October 13, 2010, a forum entitled "Transparency Reporting by Media and the Citizenry" was organized in coordination with its local partner MindaNews in Davao City. About 50 representatives from academia, media, NGOs, the religious sector and the Technical Working Committee of the Multi-Sectoral Anti-Corruption Council of the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Mindanao, and Father Albert Alejo, SJ, a social anthropologist and leading figure in the anti-corruption project called "*Ehem!*", attended the forum.

On October 21, 2010, PPTRP and Social Watch Philippines co-organized the Media Seminar on the Philippine Budget. The seminar was attended by 12 journalists from various media outlets in Manila, Kidapawan and Catbalogan City, as well as representatives from PPTRP partner organizations and established anti-corruption groups such as the Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN) and the Rice Watch Network.⁷ The seminar provided the media with key knowledge on the role of media in covering and reporting budget issues; the stages of the budget process; budget reforms; and stages where media and CSOs could work together for increased and improved reporting on budget issues.⁸

PPTRP also participated in the 14th International Anti-Corruption Conference in Bangkok held November 10 to 13, 2010 and used it as an occasion to share experiences and know-how on issues relating to building public literacy and understanding public sector finances. PPTRP was recognized as one of the first to attempt such initiatives.⁹ Charles Caruso, the Regional Anti-

⁸http://www.transparencyreporting.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=146:pptrp-and-social-watch-hold-budget-seminar-for-media-october-21&catid=54&Itemid=97

⁹http://www.transparencyreporting.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=148:helping-the-people-know-how-public-finance-works-key-in-anti-corruption&catid=56&Itemid=98

Corruption Adviser for ABA ROLI, participated in this event as a resource speaker on regional corruption issues involving border security and other issues.

Upon invitation of the Open Budget Partnership secretariat, PPTRP agreed to become one of the members of a working group to plan action following the November 20, 2010 signing of the Declaration of Constructive Engagement for Open Budget Partnership.

On December 15, 2010, PPTRP held a meeting with Social Watch, INCITEGov, and the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability or ANSA. PPTRP shared information on the local transparency reporting groups in Kidapawan and Samar which it helped to establish this year. It also discussed basic anti-corruption and transparency reporting trainings for media and CSOs, plans for an advanced course, the need to engage the media in all the CSO work, and efforts to encourage public vigilance.

Throughout the course of the project, PPTRP continued to play an important role in conceptualizing and planning forums and other public events designed to increase budget transparency. PPTRP Program Manager Rorie Fajardo was invited to be a resource speaker on issues such as the open budget initiative and participatory budgeting for the Senate hearing on Senate Bill 2186, which proposes people's participation in budget deliberation. PPTRP staff also provided background materials to the OBP to address issues such as the need to replicate the open budget initiative in local communities, where people continue to face difficulties in understanding and accessing data on government transactions. By the time the project ended, OBP members agreed in principle to have the PPTRP website as the common information hub for OBP-related activities and studies, and chose the project to come up with a short-term communications plan.

PPTRP maintained its key role in the expansion and clarification of objectives of the CSO Working Group on Good Governance and Anti-Corruption (CSOWGAC) as well as the offshoot small groups such as the Budget Advocacy Group in which PPTRP actively took part. On December 13, 2010, PPTRP participated in another round of mapping and synergy sessions of CSOs currently involved or interested in public sector monitoring engagements.

On January 25, 2011 a roundtable discussion entitled, "Maguindanao after 11.23: Building Accountability and Transparency", was held in Davao City. Panelists of the event included Maguindanao Governor Esmael "Toto" Mangudadatu, Major General Anthony Alcantara, chief of the 6th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army, and Fr. Alberto Alejo, S.J., lead convenor of the Ehem-Aha Anti-Corruption Project. A total of 68 people representing the government, civil society organizations, media, military, academia, faith-based groups and ordinary citizens concerned with government transparency in Mindanao participated in the roundtable.

The final and closedown event on August 23, 2011 generated significant media coverage. PPTRP was featured in dzBB's public affairs program Bangonna Bayan with anchor Joel Reyes Zobel a week before the event. Apart from live radio interviews during the event itself and days

after, the closedown event was reported on several online and print news such as Philippine Star, Remate, Business World, GMA News Online, and Yahoo News 10.

PPTRP as Media and Journalist Resource on Corruption Reporting

PPTRP continued to be a regular source for mainstream media outlets for leads, information and analyses on key public sector transparency and accountability issues, including: (a) urgent tasks the administration should take to immediately address excesses in GOCCs; (b) reforms needed in COA and Ombudsman; and (c) the need to involve citizens in promoting transparency and more so reducing corruption. RMN Davao's news programs tackling government corruption regularly featured PPTRP, and the project was contacted by news and public affairs programs of the leading GMA Network for more information on earlier in-depth reports published (e.g. alleged anomalies within PAGCOR, PCSO and other GOCCs; and alleged procurement irregularities at the Department of Education division in Taguig City).

Towards the end of FY 2011, PPTRP developed a handbook for journalists compiling resource materials for transparency investigation and reporting, including the previously mentioned Glossary of Legal Terms. The handbooks were distributed at the project closing event on August 23, 2011. USAID was furnished copies of the Reporter's Handbook earlier in the program. ABA ROLI can provide additional copies to USAID upon request.

Online Campaigns

PPTRP launched a campaign against politicians who put their names and photos on public-funded projects to promote themselves, garnering over 100 signatures for a petition against this practice. On August 5, Senator Francis Escudero sponsored Senate Bill 2187 to ban this practice. In a letter to PPTRP, Sen. Escudero's office explained the goal of improving the accountability of local government officials. The bill is now pending in Congress.

Transparency and Anti-Corruption Reporting Trainings

The training activities of PPTRP, ABA ROLI and IWPR were described in the quarterly and annual reports provided by ABA ROLI to USAID throughout the project. The descriptions below summarize the substance of the trainings conducted throughout the program. A list of the quantitative outputs of all trainings is provided in Annex J.

On October 3, 2010 PPTRP held its 10th and final *introductory* training on basic anti-corruption and transparency reporting, this time in Ozamiz City. The Ozamiz training brought the total number of trainees to 197, of whom 136 were from the media and 61 from CSOs and other non-media sectors. An extra training in Cebu on anti-corruption was also conducted in partnership with the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP). Results from the pre-tests administered at the beginning of the training show that only 28% of the participants who identified as media practitioners and CSO workers scored the 70% passing rate. However, post-training test results show that out of the 165 participant respondents, 155 or 94% passed the test;

¹⁰<http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?publicationSubCategoryId=64&articleId=719987;>
<http://ph.news.yahoo.com/poll--filipinos-still-divided-on-gov-t-campaign-vs--corruption.html>; and
<http://www.gmanews.tv/story/230308/nation/fight-corruption-by-telling-the-truth-government-urged>

52% scored a perfect score; and 23% who got a 90% score. Further, results of the pre- and post-training tests show a marked increase in the participants' understanding of corruption concepts. The final score averaged 90%, a considerable advance over the original score of 54%.

From February to July 2011, PPTRP conducted its advanced trainings on reporting transparency and accountability for journalists, CSO workers and ordinary citizens, entitled "Numeracy for Journalists, Civil Society Organizations and Citizens." Participants included 203 representatives from the media and 97 from civil society organizations, religious groups, academe and concerned citizens groups. The trainings familiarized media and CSO participants with the workings of the budget process while also building their capacity to pursue stories on government spending and accountability. The advanced trainings also explored the possibility of establishing formal collaboration among media, CSOs and ordinary citizens to better monitor and report on government budget issues. A total of 519 participants (255 representatives from media and 164 CSOs) were trained on corruption reporting. Some participants included in the first series of basic training were also part of the second series of advanced trainings.

Use of Local Officials in Advanced Journalism Trainings on Corruption Reporting

In the trainings held in Masbate, Tawi-Tawi and Legazpi City, resource speakers from local city councils, Committees on Appropriations and city budget officers discussed the processes involved in budget deliberation, execution and accountability as well as key budget issues, including the alleged lack of accountability in special budget items such as the intelligence funds, sources of funds, and objects of expenditure. In the workshop, the trainees identified challenges to reporting corruption, such as family relations with the subjects of their reports; non-cooperation from sources; lack of access to documents on alleged corruption; lack of funds and other logistical means to pursue investigations; risks of political vendetta and harassment, especially from influential politicians; and the need to find continued support for reporting efforts.

In Dipolog city, contentious issues included the use of intelligence and calamity funds, compliance with the Government Procurement Reform Act, state of infrastructure projects, and ghost projects. Barriers to reporting corruption were identified, including the alleged culture of apathy in the community, close family ties, lack of resources, knowledge gaps in reporting, "utangaloob" or debt of gratitude, discrimination and harassment, red tape, fear of being fired from work, very poor justice system, lack of public and peer support, lack of confidence, and bribery of witnesses to silence them. The participants laid down some solutions: developing multiple sources of interviews and documents; reporting and interpreting budget stories so that ordinary citizens could relate to them; and proper coordination with editorial offices and media protection groups when pursuing sensitive stories on local budget spending and accountability.

Coverage of PPTRP Activities in Mainstream Media Outlets

The closedown event on August 23, 2011 generated significant media coverage. PPTRP was featured in dzBB's public affairs program *Bangonna Bayan* with anchor Joel Reyes Zobel a week before the event. Apart from live radio interviews during the event itself and for days after,

the closedown event was reported on several online and print news such as Philippine Star, Remate, Business World, GMA News Online, and Yahoo News¹¹.

Additional Activities of PPTRP

- On February 17, 2011 PPTRP participated and networked with selected groups and experts at the Public Expenditure Review forum by the World Bank. Organizers of the forum commended *PeraNatin 'To!* and said that its contents, links and other information were very useful resources for future similar forums.
- PPTRP helped the Budget Advocacy Group (BAG) draft the Public Declaration of Commitment of CSOs in continuing the legacy of the late Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin.
- PPTRP received invitations from various international organizations to discuss the project. Organizations included regional economic counselor of Canada Michael MacDuff and the World Bank Governance Practice group.
- PPTRP took part in the February 8, 2011 DBM-CSO forum on the proposed agreement on CSO participation in the budget process. PPTRP discussed the need to engage local groups emerging in the provinces to create an impact in monitoring and reporting the degree of transparency in local budgets.
- PPTRP granted a live radio interview on February 21 with Radyo Mindanao Network in Davao City regarding the reported plans of legislators to further increase their pork barrel spending.
- Several CSOs directly contacted PPTRP for their reporting and popularization needs. Groups included the rural development group PhilDHRRA, which sought assistance in to publishing agrarian reform studies, as well other members of the OBP.

PPTRP continued to be a regular source for mainstream media outlets for leads, information and analyses on key public sector transparency and accountability issues, including: (a) urgent things for the administration to do to immediately address excesses in GOCCs; (b) reforms needed in COA and Ombudsman; and (c) the need to involve citizens in promoting transparency and more so reducing corruption. RMN Davao's news programs tackling government corruption regularly featured PPTRP, and the project was contacted by news and public affairs programs of the leading GMA Network for more information on earlier in-depth reports published, *e.g.* alleged anomalies within PAGCOR, PCSO and other GOCCs; and alleged procurement irregularities at the Department of Education division in Taguig City.

¹¹<http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?publicationSubCategoryId=64&articleId=719987>;
<http://ph.news.yahoo.com/poll-filipinos-still-divided-on-gov-t-campaign-vs--corruption.html> ; and
<http://www.gmanews.tv/story/230308/nation/fight-corruption-by-telling-the-truth-government-urged>

Concluding Remarks on PPTRP

PPTRP and its website “Pera Natin ‘To! enjoyed a unique combination of public citizen support and recognition by high level government officials publicly proclaiming a reform agenda. The thousands of followers of the website, including through modern, popular social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook and others, actively participated in campaigns to expose government officials who appeared to be living well beyond their means. Visitors to the site submitted snapshots taken with cell phones of fancy cars in the garages of large houses owned by mayors and municipal leaders who have salaries that could not possibly support such purchases. The advocacy of the PPTRP website against the ubiquitous personalization of public works projects across the Philippines seems to have influenced the introduction of legislation to outlaw such practices, and it clearly resonated with the public as more and more stories appeared in the mainstream press echoing the issue raised by PPTRP.

The dozens of events and training sessions with local reporters and citizens’ groups clearly had a positive effect on their ability to report responsibly on corruption and transparency issues. Many of the participants had believed that their local leaders were involved in corrupt or self-dealing practices when in truth, with a little investigative effort, it was discovered that the officials were abiding by the law. Reducing the number of inaccurate and misleading reports by informal and formal press outlets is critical to the linked goals of increasing public trust in the media and lessening violent reactions to reporters from local officials who feel as if they have been libeled.

Given the amount of followers of the website located in different countries, and the public statements of support from World Bank and other regional supporters of anticorruption efforts, PPTRP clearly had an impact beyond the borders of the Philippines. The massacre of journalists at the very beginning of the project obviously had a chilling effect on the work of the local journalists who were reporting on figures like the Ampatuan clan who were using their offices to enrich themselves. PPTRP staff was nimble enough to add a major security component to the training of journalists and to add sections on the website for reporters to discuss ways to protect themselves from violent incidents targeting their work. ABA ROLI’s supporting role throughout was appreciated by the staff of PPTRP and it proved to be a valuable collaborative effort; Filipino journalists learned not only better reporting methods and the basic standards for investigative journalism, including double sourcing and proper fact checking methods, but they now have a glossary of terminology of legal terms so that there is now a level of geographical consistency in reports on procurement problems and other corruption issues. ABA ROLI and its lawyers in turn learned many of the serious and frightening issues that journalists face regularly in the Philippines and witnessed how citizens in rural areas are fighting corruption with tremendous zeal and extremely few resources.

A summary of all the quantitative outputs of the grant is included in Annex J. If additional information is requested, ABA ROLI is pleased to provide any additional data needed by USAID.

Digital Photos are available in the Picasa web album link below:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/113826291235601625946/USAID50thAnniversaryACPhotos>