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EVALUATION REPORT



**UDF-PHI-11-458: Expanding and Fortifying Local Democracy through the People's
Council in the Philippines**

Date: 13 January 2016

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All photographs used in the report were provided by NCPC.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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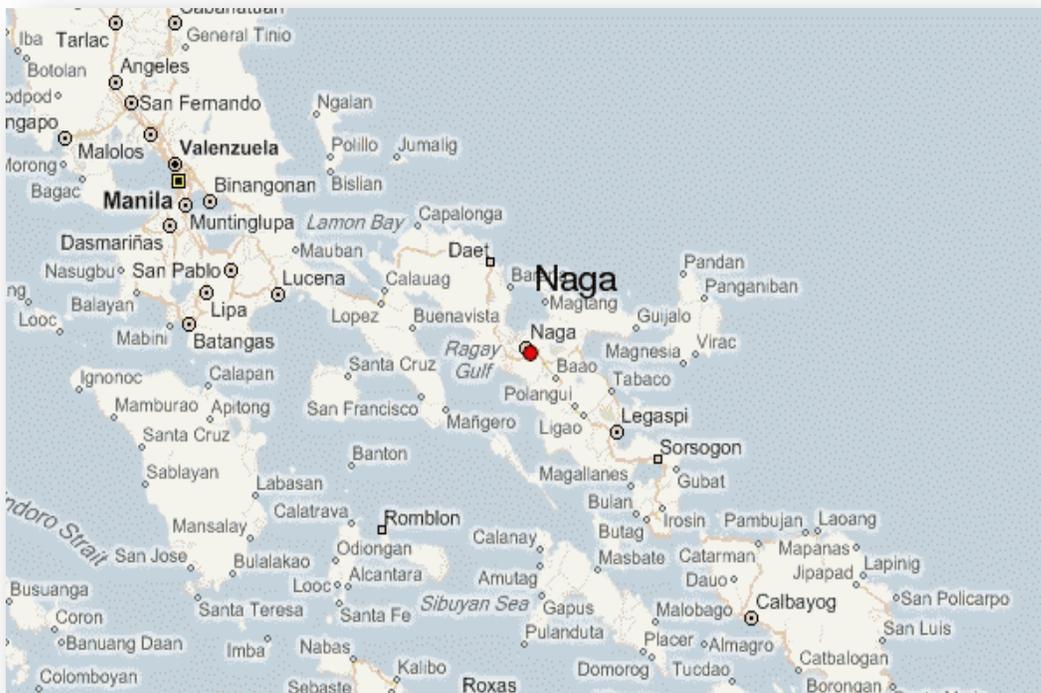


Figure 1: Position of Naga City and Manila on Luzon in the Philippines

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) **Project data**

The project *Expanding and Fortifying Local Democracy through the People's Council in the Philippines* was implemented by the Naga City People's Council (NCPC) between 1 February 2013 and 30 April 2015: a period which included a nine-month, no-cost extension. The project had a budget of \$200,000. Operations were undertaken in 6 municipalities in Metro Naga, as well as 21 of the 27 *barangays* (the lowest level of the local governance system) within Naga City. The principal beneficiaries were the social-sector CSOs, along with the peoples councils established, in these 27 local government units (LGUs).

Through the project, the grantee hoped to contribute to **a broader development goal:** (to facilitate) *the recognition and replication of the Peoples Council in the country as a democratization mechanism in local governance.* The more immediate **Project Objective** was: *to establish, expand and institutionalize the Peoples Council in 21 barangays in the city and six municipalities in the Metro Naga area.*

(ii) **Evaluation findings**

Relevance: In Naga City, the People's Council (PC) has proved itself as an effective mechanism to public participation, particularly of the representatives of the poor and other vulnerable groups, in local governance. The initiative to replicate the success of the Naga City People's council (NCPC) through the project stood out as a relevant contribution to the broader aim of enhancing local democracy in the Philippines.

Project strategy was appropriate as a plan to build for stated results. With a capacity development focus, it presented a sound balance of sequenced training workshops with ongoing on-site technical support to the newly-formed PCs by the NCPC project team. However, to a degree, the scope of the project exceeded the capacity of the project team to provide the necessary level of support, despite heroic efforts to do so.

Risks were well-understood and prepared for. However, the grantee underestimated the level of resistance of the entrenched local government councils (municipal and *barangay*) to accepting the PC as an official partner in local governance.

Effectiveness: Overall, the project implemented its program more-or-less as planned. However, the project did experience difficulties in its scheduling of training workshops to accommodate timing conflicts with particular PCs. In two of the six municipalities included in the project, it was obliged to abandon plans to hold an important two-part training workshop on municipal planning and budgeting.

The project's training program was implemented, for the most part, by experienced external consultants. While the sequence of workshops provided for addressing a comprehensive list of topics, there were some deficiencies: in the use of only English-language training materials for a population, particularly at *barangay* level, which had a limited knowledge of English, particularly of the written word; problems caused by unexpected high turnover of PC leaders who had

completed training, as a result of including only small numbers of leaders from each PC in the workshops; and, efforts to cover complex topics in very brief training sessions, limiting prospects for building the practical knowledge of trainees.

In discussions with the evaluation team, trainees were unable to recall details of what they had learned in training. Further, and more tellingly, in the course of the project, when PCs had deal with a range of issues, they referred to NCPC to solve problems and advise them on completing necessary tasks, rather than relying on their training, or referring to the manuals with which they had been provided. In fact, the quality and relevance to immediate needs of ongoing technical support provided to the partners was a major strength of the project. In this regard, the project team was quite exceptional.

The project had mixed success in achieving its targets and encountered some major disappointments in reaching the goal of institutionalizing the PC in the 27 target LGUs. However, the PCs were officially recognized in the case of four of the six municipal people's councils (MPCs) supported, but only in five of the 21 barangay people's councils (BPCs). Despite this, NCPC cannot be faulted on its effort to achieve the project goals, and, given the scope of what the project sought to achieve, a great deal was accomplished.

There were many factors beyond its control, and the level of resistance by the LGU executive and legislative arms was far stronger than anticipated. A great deal depends on local leadership and commitment on the side of the LGU, but more particularly from the PC and its core CSOs. These qualities will not necessarily emerge overnight. As yet, in many of the 27 LGUs where the project supported PCs, the level of local ownership remains low. Yet, In Pili and Bula MPCs, and to a lesser degree in Bombon, it is clear that the local leadership is in place, and progress has been made. Elsewhere, and especially at *barangay* level, it is likely to take some time to establish the PC as a strong and widely-accepted institution. Hence, it may be necessary to adjust expectations in recognition of more limited capacities at that level, as well as the strength of elite resistance.

Efficiency: The project ran its operations efficiently and smoothly, for the most part. The grantee took complete responsibility for management and finance. MOUs were signed with all partners and these seem to have provided a solid basis for partnership. All partners and beneficiaries with whom the evaluation team met were positive about the grantee, not only on the technical support provided, but also on the management of logistics and resources. Generally, the project's human and financial resources were used appropriately and with care in support of intended results.

NCPC succeeded in completing a long list of activities, some concentrated in Naga City, and others dispersed across the territory of the 27 partners, and all completed with a very modest budget. Although the project was labour-intensive the proportion of its budget devoted to staff salaries was low and the financial allocation to cover training costs was reasonable.

The only area where questions might be asked was in regard to the only discretionary item in the budget: the \$40,500 (22.5 per cent of the program budget of \$180,000) devoted to "Fellowships and Other Grants". This budget line provided (very) small grants to each of the 27 partners to support local projects and joint planning with the local municipality or *barangay*. A listing of grants and the purposes of the activities supported was included in the Final Report. However,

no information was given on the status of the small projects. This was remedied in a late communication from NCPC to the evaluators, after the field mission.

It is apparent that in most, though not all, cases, the funds have been used productively. However, the objective of the small grants was to contribute to building local ownership for the PCs and strengthening the organizations. The desired result has been accomplished in only a very few cases. Insufficient attention was given to preparing and enforcing guidelines on the grants and how they were to be used and reported on.

A communications breakdown, caused, in part, by a cumbersome procedure for Board approval of decisions at NCPC and also by staffing changes and breaks in continuity at UNDEF, resulted in a failure on the part of the grantee to request approval to reprogram unspent funds prior to the deadline for obtaining such approvals. Consequently, \$5,850 was returned to UNDEF.

The main challenge for the NCPC team in managing the project was the ongoing struggle to cope with the fact that the both the scope of the programme and the number of partners were too large. This resulted in a project that was overextended and staff who were overstretched. Not surprisingly, the gap between project needs and human resource capabilities did result in a few deficiencies in performance, including a lack of attention to documentation of activities and a weakness in some aspects of training planning and delivery. However, this should not detract from the bigger picture wherein there was a very strong effort by project leadership and staff to respond to the needs of the partners. It may be concluded that the project was understaffed on both the administrative and the technical side.

Impact: The project has made a difference in strengthening the organization of civil society through the People's Councils in the Metro Naga area. If it has not succeeded in institutionalizing the PC with each of its 27 partners, it has built the foundations for the establishment of a set of institutions to provide a mechanism for ensuring that the interests of the poor and other vulnerable groups are recognized and addressed in local government priority-setting and budgeting. A strong foundation has been established and, over time, it may be expected that project objectives will be achieved. Effective working partnerships have been built, and there is universal good will for NCPC among the PCs. For its part, NCPC is committed to continue the work.

The impact on beneficiaries, in many, though not all, cases was considerable. This was particularly true for members of such social sector groups as Women, People with Disabilities (PWDs), Senior Citizens and Solo (Single) Parents. A number of members of these groups testified to the evaluators on the difference the project had made to them in terms of their enhanced self-confidence to take an informed and active part in the proceedings of the Poverty Reduction Action Groups and/or Local Development Councils.

In addition to the project's immediate impact on its partners, it was also successful in achieving greater visibility for the People's Council idea beyond Naga City, not only in neighbouring municipalities, but also in other provinces and at the national level.

Sustainability: It is too early to determine whether the PC as an institution has taken root in the partner municipalities and *barangays*. There are promising signs in several of the municipalities, but far more work will be required over an extended period to buttress the organizational base of

the PCs, while also strengthening and broadening local ownership for them, particularly at *barangay* level. NCPC recognized this and is committed to continue the work.

(iii) Conclusions

- The focus of the project on ***seeking to replicate and adapt the people's council (PC) model was highly relevant to enhancing local democracy*** in the Philippines. In particular, it facilitated the participation of the urban poor and other vulnerable groups in local decision-making.

- ***The project invested significant resources in training, as well as in the "accompaniment"*** by the project team of its partners in 27 local government units (LGUs), as they sought to take the steps to establish people's councils. The role of the ongoing on-site, technical support by the project team proved critical.

- ***The scope of the project was rather extensive. As a result, the management and technical capabilities of the project team, while very good, were overstretched.*** Similarly, over-commitment led to deficiencies in a few areas of project management.

- ***One problem experienced by the project derived from the lengthy delays in decision-making by NCPC as a result of the need to refer all major issues to the Board*** of Directors to make a decision. This led to problems in communications with UNDEF and resulted in a missing of the deadline to request a reprogramming of unspent funds. The discontinuity of staffing at UNDEF at the level of interns and trainees contributed to the gaps in communications.

- ***Despite some limitations in project planning and implementation, the quality of the technical contribution of the project's core team was outstanding*** and stood out as a positive factor in overall effectiveness and in the results achieved.

- ***The training program delivered to the partners and beneficiaries was comprehensive.*** However, although the overall program was solid, there were some gaps and deficiencies.

- ***NCPC underestimated the degree of resistance to change*** it and its partners would encounter from municipal and barangay leaders and council members.

- ***Results achieved were positive in the building of awareness of the concept of the people's council***, and in ensuring that all PCs were formally registered with the central government. This latter is an arduous but necessary procedure for the PCs to have an official role in local governance.

- ***Modest success was achieved in institutionalizing the PC, requiring the passage by the council of the host LGU of an "empowerment ordinance."*** PCs (MPCs) were fully established in three of six municipalities supported, with a fourth formalized under an interim measure. BPCs were also formally recognized in five of 21 barangays. Disappointing results in this sphere arose from factors beyond the control of the project.

- **While NCPC developed a sound results framework for the project, it found it more difficult to collect the data to enable it to report against some of the indicators.** In consequence of staffing limitations, the project had only limited success in capturing progress made by each partner, and in documenting the project's activities, challenges and achievements.

- **NCPC established strong partnerships through the project** and this will serve as a solid foundation to facilitate further cooperation in the future.

- **An assessment of the project's capacity development strategy yields a mixed picture.** All beneficiaries interviewed during the field mission were positive about the value of the training provided. Yet, at the same time, the evaluation team found that there were obvious limitations to the knowledge acquired by the trainees through the project, and to their capacity to participate effectively in local governance NCPC plans to strengthen its capacity development capabilities by developing a training-of-trainers (ToT) program to produce a cadre of well-prepared local trainers.

- Overall, **it may be concluded that a valuable foundation for the process of replicating the people's council, following the Naga City model, has been established.** Yet, it is apparent that it will take some years, and substantial additional resources, to ensure that the PCs are sustainable.

(iv) Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- **In future projects, NCPC undertakes a design process which begins with desired results, rather than activities,** and which takes full account of the human and financial resources required to manage the project and support its partners and beneficiaries. Such an approach may lead to a reduction in the scope of future projects to a more manageable level.

- **The NCPC Board gives serious consideration to devising a mechanism for more rapid decision-making** to provide timely support to its projects

- **NCPC ensures that, in future projects –and in its ongoing work more generally - it makes it a priority to document thoroughly its activities** and to ensure that it allocates sufficient resources to support this process.

- **NCPC includes plans for post-training evaluation in its future training programs,** and that it seeks expert advice in designing such evaluations and ensuring that they are both manageable and effective.

- NCPC gives careful consideration in training plans to **enrolling sufficient numbers from each locality to allow for continuity** in the event of a turnover in the local leadership.

- **NCPC proceeds with its plans to develop a training-of-trainers program to produce a cadre of local trainers**, while also assessing possibilities, perhaps in consultation with other stakeholders, including the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and university centres, for developing training materials in Tagalog, the national language.

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

(i) The project and evaluation objectives

The project *Expanding and Fortifying Local Democracy through the People's Council in the Philippines* was implemented by the Naga City People's Council (NCPC) between 1 February 2013 and 30 April 2015: a period which included a nine-month, no-cost extension. The project had a budget of \$200,000, including \$20,000 for UNDEF monitoring and Evaluation. Operations were undertaken in 6 municipalities in Metro Naga, as well as 21 of the 27 *barangays* (the lowest level of the local government system) within Naga City. The principal beneficiaries were the CSOs, along with the peoples councils established, in these 27 local government units (LGUs).

The site for the project, Naga City has a population of around 140,000. It is situated about 500 kms south of Manila, in southern Luzon, in the Bicol region of the Central Philippines. It is a city with a strong civil society sector, and one that has been recognized both nationally and internationally as a centre for innovation in local governance. NCPC has previously managed small projects funded by other donors, including USAID, AUSAID, the Ford Foundation and the World Bank. However, the UNDEF project was substantially larger in scope and longer in duration.

While the Naga City Peoples Council has come to be viewed widely - by the Philippine government and civil society, as well as by international donors and international NGOs – as a model to be emulated in facilitating the institutionalization of civil society engagement with local government, there have been few systematic efforts to build on the Naga experience, even with lower-level local government units within the Metro Naga area. Hence, the UNDEF project had the objective of establishing Peoples Councils in 21 of the 27 *barangays* in the City of Naga, as well as in six municipalities (one level higher up than *barangays* in the local government hierarchy) in Metro Naga. The six of the 27 *barangays* excluded had been part of a previous, small-scale World bank project (see below)The project also aimed to build the capacity of the newly-established Peoples Councils, thus enabling them to play a full part in local governance.

The UNDEF project built on the NCPC's experience in completing a small World Bank funded project, beginning in 2011, entitled *Implementing a System of Partnership between the Communities and Barangays of the City of Naga*. The project was judged effective in building the working relationship between NCPC and the six *barangays* which took part in the project.¹ However, it did not focus on strengthening the capacity of local CSOs, nor did it build up the PCs. This led to the more ambitious focus adopted for the UNDEF project.

Through the project, the grantee hoped to contribute to a broader development goal: (to facilitate) the recognition and replication of the Peoples Council in the country as a democratization mechanism in local governance. The more immediate Project Objective was: to establish, expand and institutionalize the Peoples Council in 21 *barangays* in the city and six municipalities in the Metro Naga area.

¹ These six *barangays* were excluded from the UNDEF project.

The project sought to meet this objective through achieving four Outcomes, arranged in what would appear to be a logical sequence:

Outcome 1: Awareness-raising concerning the Peoples Council concept, mechanism, role, function and importance in the local governance system;

Outcome 2: Capacity Building of CSOs and LGU leaders towards participatory development;

Outcome 3: Institution-Building (Peoples Council) in the target LGUs;

Outcome 4: Participation of Peoples Councils in the governance system in their respective LGUs.

The **direct beneficiaries** associated with the project included the 27 LGUs involved, as well as 442 CSOs active in the 21 *barangays*, along with a further 262 in the six municipalities, as well as 231 *barangay* officials, and a further 72 from the municipalities.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The initial plan for the mission was developed by the international consultant, based on a preliminary review of project documents, as well as selected background materials, and through consultations with his national counterpart. The plan was then refined, and details of the mission elaborated, through email exchanges between the two consultants, and through detailed exchanges between the national consultant and the grantee. Final plans and logistical details were confirmed by the consultants in discussions with NCPC on arrival in Naga on Sunday, October 4.

As a result of limited flight connections to Hong Kong, as well as poor connections to and from Manila to Naga (two daily flights in each direction, both in the morning), and because of the need for the international consultant to reach Shenzhen in SE China in time to begin a second mission the following Monday, it was necessary for the mission to be completed by the Thursday evening, October 8, with departure on Friday, October 9. In order to make optimum use of the time available, the mission proper began on the late morning of Sunday, October 4, with an overview discussion with the NCPC Executive Director, followed by a visit to a *barangay*.

With the assistance of NCPC, the scope of ground covered by the mission exceeded the initial expectations of the evaluators. In the course of the mission, meetings were held during visits to three of the *barangays* and three of the municipalities participating in the project. Arrangements were made to rent a van for the period of the field mission, and this enabled the team to cover a lot of ground over five days. Fortunately, the whole project took place within the bounds of Naga City and the surrounding metropolitan area, limiting the distances to be covered.

Key stakeholders and beneficiaries interviewed included the following:

- The Executive Director and Program Officers of NCPC (those who were involved in the project);
- Members of the NCPC Board;
- Presidents of the People's Councils (PCs) and other representatives of the participating CSOs from the target *barangays* and municipalities, who have been trained by the project, taken part in the PCs, and played an active role in local activities, included some involved in the joint local initiatives;

- Local officials, elected and appointed, from both the target *barangays* and municipalities (including *barangay* captains and mayors of municipalities), some of whom took part in training through the project, and who have been active in cooperation (or in blocking cooperation, in some cases) with the PCs;
- Representatives of the newly-formed People with Disabilities (PWD) Federations, as well as Women’s Federations, involved in the PCs and supported by the project;
- One trainer who designed and delivered courses through the project and one academic who had followed developments with NCPD and national and local governance over a long period.

The project’s core documentation was complete and well-prepared. In addition to the core documents obtained in advance of the mission, some additional materials were made available to the evaluation team while they were in Naga City. This documentation was reviewed by both consultants and drawn on in the preparation of this report.

The *Field Visit Report*, prepared by the national consultant, Ms. Advincula-Lopez, was of great assistance as an aid to the drafting of this document, and much of the content of the report has been blended into the text.

(iii) Development context

The UNDEF project took place in the context of ongoing local and national efforts to strengthen public participation in local-level decision-making in the Philippines. While the important position of civil society in public life is widely recognized, and while it has played an important role politically in facilitating, and, at times, leading, peaceful movements for social change and the ending of corrupt regimes, it has also lacked an institutional mechanism through which to influence government.

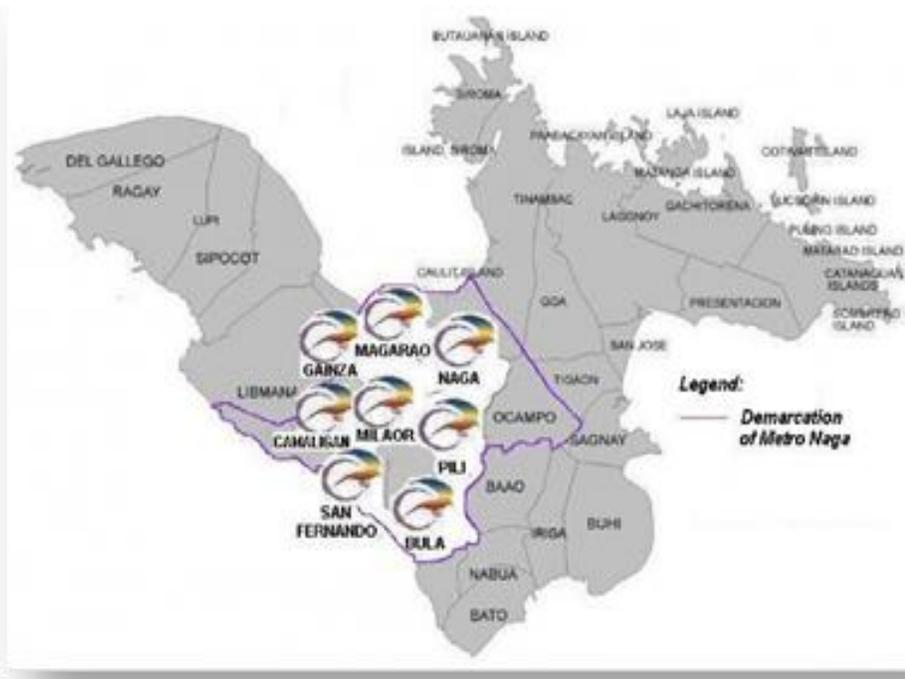


Figure 1: Map of Metro Naga, Bicol Region, Philippines, Showing Target Municipalities

The foundation for entrenching the democratic character of local government in the Philippines was established through the adoption of the Local Government Code (LGC) in 1991. The LGC provided for delegation of greater authority for decision-making and enhanced fiscal autonomy

for local government units. It also provided the basis for the participation of citizens in local decision-making, and, hence, for greater public accountability.

However, progress in implementing and building on the new foundation put in place with the adoption of the LGC was uneven and disappointing overall. The problem lay in unwillingness on the part of central and local authorities to take practical steps to engage with citizens' organizations, as well as the lack of the necessary practical knowledge and capacities on the part of civil society to take advantage of the new opportunities offered. Despite this, unlike many other local government units, Naga City took a pro-active approach in seeking to realize the potential of the new legislation.

The Empowerment Ordinance of the City of Naga, adopted by the city's legislature in 1995, was the first of its kind in the country. It institutionalized a partnership between city government, on the one hand, and peoples' organizations and CSOs, on the other. The NCPC was founded the following year, as a network of civil society organizations and a mechanism for engaging in local governance processes. Through the partnership, People's Council representatives now sit on all Standing Committees of the city legislature, as well as "special bodies", including the Boards of Health and Schools, and the Bids and Awards Committee (public procurement). Hence, through NCPC, citizens' representatives are now able to bring their influence to bear on the making of local government policy and legislation.²

Under the current administration of President Benigno Aquino, who came to power with strong support from civil society organizations, a number of additional steps have been taken to strengthen accountability and transparency in government, including a program aimed to enhance the partnership between the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and civil society. Further initiatives, which are linked to some of the activities undertaken during the UNDEF Project, have aimed to increase public participation in the budget preparation process and public procurement.³

² Sources: Asian Development Bank, *Civil Society Briefs: the Philippines*. Manila, February 2013; Jaime D. Jacob, "Empowering Local Government: the Naga City Experience", *Asia Review of Public Administration*, 12, 1, January-June, 2000; and, NCPC, "Peoples Participation in the Governance of the City of Naga", PowerPoint (PPT), undated.

³ See: ADB 2013, *Op Cit.*; see also Project Document, "Problem Analysis", p.2. On "Bottom-Up Budgeting", see World Bank Group, Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Group: *Philippines Bottom-Up Budgeting Program: Country Summary Brief*, June 2015.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

i. Project strategy and approach

The project aimed to replicate and adapt the NCPC model to fit with the needs and circumstances of municipalities and barangays. The approach was to:

- i) Strengthen the capacities of the key sector-based CSOs from the targeted municipalities and *barangays*, and,
- ii) Facilitate the establishment of People's Councils (PCs);
- iii) Support the institutionalization of the PCs through the adoption and passage by the municipal or *barangay* council of an Empowerment Ordinance, based on a model ordinance provided by NCPC. The ordinance would recognize the legal position of the PC as the institution representing local CSOs, empower its representatives to participate in the council and its committees, as well as local Special Bodies, and provide for a financial contribution to support the organizational needs of the PC;
- iv) In addition: to support the strengthening of sector-based CSOs at municipal level, including those representing the needs of such groups as women, senior citizens, and people with disabilities.⁴ The project gave particular attention to women and PWDs, as well as Farmers.
- v) The project invested substantially in training as the main component of its capacity development program. At the same time, it also provided ongoing "accompaniment" and technical support to its partners through regular advisory and review visits by project staff. Where necessary, NCPC also participated in meetings with mayors, *barangay* captains, members of council and local officials, to prepare the way for the establishment of the councils (leaders and members of council and local government staff were also included as participants in some of the training programs). The grantee also assisted the partners with the necessary paperwork required to enable the PCs and their CSO members to operate officially.
- vi) This process included facilitation of the accreditation of PCs and member CSOs with the relevant Council, and registration of the PCs with the central government.

For the most part, training was delivered by expert trainers recruited and contracted by NCPC. The training curricula were mainly "off-the-shelf" modules, tested previously, with some adjustments. As is customary in the Philippines, training materials are in the English language, with some of the presentations during the workshop in *Tagalog*, and discussion, in some cases, taking place in *Bicalano*, the local dialect. To ensure continuity and a common frame of reference, the project team attended all elements of the training program. Training for beneficiaries from municipalities and *barangays* was delivered in separate sessions.

⁴ In the Philippines, government planning and budgeting at all levels is built, in part, around priorities for established social "Sectors", including Women, Senior Citizens, People with Disabilities (PWDs), Farmers, Children (those in conflict with the law) and "Solo Parents". The position of these groups and their entitlement to receive a share of the national budget through allocations to local government units for projects to respond to their needs is set out in law.

There is some overlap in the Project Document and Final Report between Outputs and Activities. For present purposes, a listing of key outputs and a few additional activities will provide a suitable **overview of the major activities to be undertaken by the project:**

Outcome 1:

- Public Presentation of the project to officials and CSO leaders from target LGUs;
- Dissemination of Key Documents on social accountability mechanisms and organization of Peoples Councils; and,
- Two Forums on Social Accountability (one later cancelled), each for 100 or more participants, drawn from both LGU officials and CSO leaders.

Outcome 2:

- Training on Social Accountability and Governance in Local Democracy, drawing on a methodology entitled *SA GOLD*. It was intended that the training would be delivered in seven sessions to 350 *barangay* officials and CSO leaders, and in two sessions to 100 elected officials and CSO leaders from the target municipalities;
- Citizens' Advocacy and Legislative Lobbying for 120 *barangay* CSO leaders (in four sessions), and 40 CSO leaders (one session) from municipalities;
- Training on Organizational Management (participants as for Citizens' Advocacy);
- Training of Observers of Bidding Processes for Public Procurement at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) at both Municipality and *Barangay* Levels. The training was to be delivered to 80 CSO leaders from the *barangays* (in two sessions) and 40 CSO leaders from the municipalities in one session;
- Training on Community-Based Project Monitoring for 80 *Barangay* CSO Leaders (two sessions) and 40 from the Municipalities in one session. (N.B. One of the mandates of the government in support of the Bottom-Up Budgeting Program is the organization of a Project Monitoring Committee in each LGU, but very few LGUs have established such a body. Further, CSOs lack the necessary skills and understanding to adequately monitor public infrastructure and other projects);
- Training on the Composition, and functions of Local Development Councils (LDCs), along with the Planning Process to produce the Local Development Plan. It was intended that the training would be delivered in seven sessions to 350 *barangay* officials and CSO leaders, and in two sessions to 100 elected officials and CSO leaders from the target municipalities; and,
- Equipment Purchase to support the Capacity-Building Activities (printers, a photocopying machine, an LCD projector for training presentations and a digital camera for documentation.

Outcome 3

- Training Needs Assessment for both *barangays* and municipalities to identify capacity gaps beyond those covered by the components of the training plan, requiring attention. Modest funds through small grants would be allocated to each LGU for additional technical support;
- Participating CSOs in the *barangays* would assess the current status of initiatives undertaken in their area by the NCPC, while also taking steps to organize Peoples Councils, or, where they already exist (9 cases), to strengthen the organization. For

those CSOs in *barangays* where there is no PC, the first step would be to identify and map out CSOs within the territory of the LGU;

- NCPC would also strengthen its working relationship with the *barangay* councils, with presentations of the project to individual *barangays*, as well as to the Association of *Barangay* Councils to prepare them for the engagement with their BPCs (see Outcome 2, above);
- Setting the Legal Framework to Institutionalize the Peoples Council (PC) in all target LGUs;
- Formulation of Standard Operating Procedures (financial, human resources and other operational procedures) by each PC, with continuing mentoring and support from project staff;
- Obtaining Accreditation for each PC with the *Sanggunian* (council, legislative branch) of the relevant LGU, enabling it to participate in the Local Development Council (LDC) and Local Special Bodies (LSBs). Each CSO member of the PC would also need to obtain accreditation. Similarly, the project team would assist each PC to register with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), a central government requirement, to enable the PC to be established as a recognized legal entity; and,
- Purchase of 4 motorcycles to enable project staff to visit all LGUs participating in the project on a regular basis.

Outcome 4

- Facilitation of the Active Engagement of PCs in Local Development Councils and Local Special Bodies, through Provision of Small Grants and Technical Assistance;
- Establishing 4 People with Disabilities (PWD) Organizations in the Participating Municipalities (in the 4 Municipalities where no such body existed previously). The project would support the organization of the new bodies and facilitate their engagement as active members of the PCs, and with the planning process for the PWD sector;
- Provision of Support to Agenda Preparation for joint planning activities of CSOs and LGUs for the Women, PWD and Farmers' Sectors;
- Undertaking Participatory Assessment and Planning for all Participating LGUs. NCPC would lobby with the LGUs to undertake these processes as the central mechanism for LDC planning, with the work to be initiated by each PC; and,
- Support to Development and Implementation of Joint PC and LGU Programs or Projects, with project concepts to be developed through a planning process conducted by each PC. The intention was to document each of the projects as case-studies to be used in the guide on how to organize a PC. A format would be provided for preparing the case-studies.

During the extension period of the project, two additional workshops were added: the first on Gender and Development and a second on Organizational Development, both intended to follow up on the workshops on the planning process. Neither was integrated in the project's results framework.

The grantee included a short section on ***Risk and Risk Mitigation Strategy*** in the Project Document, which demonstrated, as might be expected, given its reputation and experience, a strong grasp of probable challenges and the means to address them. In addition, detailed baseline data was provided based on a rapid assessment and profiling of all target LGUs. This

enabled NCPC to develop a set of measurable indicators for each outcome. A number of provisions were made for support to women and vulnerable groups and their active involvement in the project.

A Note on Management:

The project was managed and administered by NCPC, the grantee, with no delegation of responsibility to the implementing partners. Memoranda of Understanding were signed with each partner (the 27 peoples councils), which set out the roles and responsibilities of both NCPC and the partner.⁵ The project was headed by the NCPC's Executive Director, with the project budget covering 56 per cent of his salary, as well 53 per cent of the salary of the organization's Finance Officer. Four Project Officers were engaged full-time on project work, with the UNDEF budget covering all salary costs for two. The budget also paid for 53 per cent of the salaries of the remaining two Project Officers, with NCPC providing the funds for the remainder of the cost.



Evaluation Team with Penafancia Barangay Council in uniform, with BPC President, (Standing at left), Barangay Captain (White Shirt), and NCPC Executive Director (Blue Shirt)

⁵ In this project, the partners were also the principal beneficiaries.

ii. Logical framework

The chart is based on detailed information included in the project's results framework, as set out in the project Document, as well as the final report.

Project activities	Intended outputs/outcomes	Medium-term impacts	Long-term development objective
<p><i>Courtesy visits to the target LGUs;</i> <i>Comprehensive profiling of CSOs in the target area;</i> <i>Invitations and follow-up with the selected participants; Conducting the presentation.</i></p> <p><i>Design and preparation of essential documents;</i> <i>Distribution of Citizens' Charter, Barangay Governance Manual and Guidebook;</i> <i>Barangay Governance Manual adapted to fit with the operations of each barangay council and published (20 copies per barangay)</i></p> <p><i>Organize and conduct Forums on Social Accountability, aimed at both LGU officials & CSO representatives</i></p> <p><i>Review & Enhancement of the training package SA GOLD;</i></p> <p><i>Select, contract & prepare resource persons; organization of training venues & catering;</i> <i>Preparation & printing of training materials & manuals</i></p> <p><i>Delivery of 7 training workshops for barangays & 2 for municipalities; post-training evaluation planned</i></p> <p><i>Review & Enhancement of the training package CALL;</i></p> <p><i>Select, contract & prepare resource persons; organization of training venues & catering;</i> <i>Preparation & printing of training</i></p>	<p>Delivery of Public presentation of the project to 100 officials and CSO leaders of target LGUs, 50% each from LGUs and CSOs; <i>(In practice: 144 participants, 44 (39%) from government and 70 (61%) from CSOs.</i></p> <p>Dissemination of Key Documents. <u>NOT PURSUED</u>; popularization of citizen's charter and explanation of key services deferred to be a project of the PCs. <u>A barangay manual</u> has been developed by the Naga City Council, and this is viewed as making this project deliverable unnecessary. A <u>Guidebook</u> has been developed, but was not available during the project.</p> <p>First Forum on Social Accountability & Governance in Local Democracy held (for 100 key officials & CSO leaders of target LGUs): <u>NOT CONDUCTED</u></p> <p>2nd Forum on Social Accountability held with 120 participants (50% each LGU officials and CSO leaders: <i>ACTUAL: 114 participants, 39% LGU; & 61% CSO.</i></p> <p>Training on <u>Social Accountability & Governance</u> in Local Democracy completed; <i>ACTUAL: The model prepared was adapted, incorporating elements of the NCPC training curriculum to meet the needs of the project; the training was delivered as planned. Attendance: 319 for barangays (91% of target); 100 barangay officials took part, meeting the target. Municipalities: 92 participants (91% of target); LGU officials made up 50% of trainees.</i></p> <p>Training on <u>Citizens' Advocacy & Legislative Lobbying</u>, using the CALL training package, completed. <i>ACTUAL: The model prepared was adapted, incorporating elements of the NCPC training curriculum to meet the needs of the project; 3 workshops were</i></p>	<p><i>1. Raising Awareness concerning the People's Council (PC) Concept, Mechanism, Role, Function and Importance in the Local Governance System.</i></p> <p><i>2. Building the Capacity of CSOs and LGU Leaders towards Enhancing Participatory Development.</i></p>	<p>To Establish, expand and institutionalize the People's Council in 21 <i>Barangays</i> in the City and Six Municipalities in the Metro Naga Area.</p>

<p><i>materials & manuals</i></p> <p><i>Delivery of 4 training workshops for barangays & 1 for municipalities; post-training evaluation planned</i></p> <p><i>Review of the training module prepared by consultants with NCPC; Select, contract & prepare resource persons; organization of training venues & catering; Preparation & printing of training materials & manuals</i> <i>Delivery of 2 training workshops for barangays & 1 for municipalities; post-training evaluation planned</i></p> <p><i>Formulation of training curriculum by experts in consultation with NCPC ; Select, contract & prepare resource persons; organization of training venues & catering; Preparation & printing of training materials & manuals</i> <i>Delivery of 2 training workshops for barangays & 1 for municipalities; post-training evaluation planned</i></p> <p><i>Formulation of training curriculum by experts in consultation with NCPC; Select, contract & prepare resource persons; organization of training venues & catering; Preparation & printing of training materials & manuals</i> <i>Delivery of 2 training workshops for barangays & 1 for municipalities; post-training evaluation planned</i></p> <p><i>Training curriculum developed; Select, contract & prepare resource persons; organization of training venues & catering; Preparation & printing of training materials; Delivery of 7 training workshops for barangays & 2 for municipalities; post-training evaluation planned</i></p>	<p><i>conducted for barangays, & 1 for municipalities</i> <i>Attendance: 118 for barangays (98% of target); Municipalities: 41 participants (target met)</i></p> <p><i>Training on Organizational Development Completed. ACTUAL: 3 workshops were conducted for barangays, & 1 for municipalities</i> <i>Attendance: 109 for barangays (91% of target); Municipalities: 44 participants (exceeded target by 10%)</i></p> <p><i>Bids & Awards Committee (BAC) Observer's Training Completed. ACTUAL: 2 workshops were conducted for barangays, & 1 for municipalities</i> <i>Attendance: 80 for barangays (exceeded target by 26%); Municipalities: 40 participants: target met.</i></p> <p><i>Community-Based Project Monitoring Training Completed. ACTUAL: 2 workshops were conducted for barangays, & 1 for municipalities</i> <i>Attendance: 83 for barangays (exceeded target by 4%); Municipalities: 28 participants: 70 % of target.</i></p> <p><i>Training on Local Development Council (LDC) Completed. ACTUAL: The training was combined with joint planning activities. Separate Training was held for each of 4 municipalities. In 2 others, it proved impossible to make arrangements. For barangays: 2 sets of training workshops were held. Numbers of trainees involved and targets are incomplete, although it appears that 296 participants from the 21 barangays took part in the budget planning activities and 64 in the LDC workshops. At municipal level, the number varied from 35 to 50 per session.</i></p>		
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<p><i>Profiling of existing CSOs in the territories of the target barangays and municipalities</i></p> <p><i>Planning and Conducting courtesy visits to key CSOs in the target areas</i></p> <p><i>Initial meetings planned for all CSOs; All areas organize their PCs and elect ad hoc officers All PCs initiate a schedule of regular meetings NCPC to provide ongoing mentoring, technical & secretariat assistance</i></p> <p><i>All PCs conduct planning activities and seek to identify priority activities</i></p> <p><i>All PCs adopt as policy the commitment to meet on a quarterly basis. PCs begin to implement a formal schedule of meetings</i></p> <p><i>With the Support of NCPC, PCs prepare draft Empowerment Ordinances, drawing on the Naga City model, and consult with the LGUs on its adoption and possible adjustments</i></p> <p><i>LGUs place the empowerment ordinance or equivalent on the legislative agenda</i></p> <p><i>Lobbying & Advocacy by CSO leaders</i></p> <p><i>Municipal & Barangay Councils adopt an Empowerment Ordinance.</i></p> <p><i>The Councils allocate an annual budget to the PCs</i></p>	<p><u>CSO Mapping and NCPC Strategy for activities in each LGU area formulated.</u> ACTUAL: Documentation of 349 CSOs with profiles in the Barangay People's Councils (BPCs) & 170 in the Municipal People's Councils (MPCs).</p> <p><u>Courtesy Visits to Key CSOs in target areas Completed.</u> ACTUAL: Activity completed, as planned. The key CSOs become the initial partners in the organizing of the BPCs & MPCs, and become leaders of the PCs. THEN: Initial meetings held with CSOs in all areas covered by the project. PCS then organized in all areas. All PCs hold regular meetings. NCPC provided continuing support, advice and mentoring.</p> <p><u>Strategic Planning Conducted, with All PCs articulating their vision, mission, strategy & Priority Projects.</u> ACTUAL: All MPCs complete planning activities, with outputs forming a basis for their programs and project engagement with the LGUs. In all but 4 cases, BPCs also complete the process effectively.</p> <p><u>PCs Conduct Meetings on at least a Quarterly Basis.</u> ACTUAL: All PCs adopted a policy to meet monthly, and most have maintained this schedule. Four BPCs became inactive, but all except one have been revived.</p> <p><u>PCs Prepare & Submit a Draft Proposed Legislative Measure to Facilitate Expanded People's Participation in their Respective LGUs.</u> ACTUAL: All PCs prepare Empowerment Ordinances and hold initial discussions with possible sponsors on the LGU.</p> <p><u>Legal Framework for the Operation of the PCs and their Participation in Local Governance is Put in Place.</u> ACTUAL: Only 4 barangays adopted an Empowerment Ordinance. The BPC Federation has submitted a proposal to the Naga City Council for adoption of a city-wide Empowerment Ordinance for BPCs. For MPCs, 3 municipal Councils adopted Empowerment Ordinances. In one other case, the MPC was authorized through an Executive Order. In 3 cases, a solid annual budget was allocated; in one other, a token budget was assigned.</p>	<p>3. Building the Institution of the People's Council (and institutionalizing the PC) in the Target LGUs</p>	
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<p><i>PCs draft operational policies & guidelines, drawing on NCPC's model draft working document</i></p> <p><i>Forms & Technical Assistance provided to the PCs & their CSO Members for accreditation</i></p> <p><i>Lobbying & Advocacy in support of accreditation</i> <i>PCs active& gain membership in Local Development Councils (LDCs) & Local Special Bodies (LSBs)</i></p> <p><i>Preparation by PCs of Annual Plans and Budgets, with priorities for inclusion in MPC & BPC Planning: Agendas forwarded to LGUs</i></p> <p><i>Lists of PWDs are produced for each municipality</i> <i>Agenda-Building exercise designed by NCPC, & reviewed with PCs; Meeting of PWDs organized in each municipality; officers elected; orientation of PWDs on their rights by PC, supported by NCPC; PWD organizations formulate plans & priorities</i></p> <p><i>Holding of 15 Agenda-Building exercises; situational analysis undertaken of each sector in each municipality; Visioning exercise for each sector group; Identification of programs, projects &activities for next 10 years; identification of priorities for FY 2014; evaluations of exercise by participants.</i></p>	<p><u>PCs Adopt & Implement Standard Operating Procedures</u>, ACTUAL: 17 of 21 BPCs adopt their operational mechanisms; 4 of the 6 MPCs were able to adopt their policies.</p> <p><u>PCs & Member CSOs are Accredited by the LGU Council & Registered at National Level</u>. ACTUAL: All BPCs & MPCs are registered with national government (SEC). All MPCs have achieved active engagement with the LDCs, &, in some cases, with other LSBs. For BPCs, further advances depend on a Circular from the Department of the Interior & Local Government (DILG) to facilitate accreditation.</p> <p><u>The PCs' Agenda (of Planning Priorities) is Prepared & Submitted and Included in LGU Annual Plans & Budgets</u>. ACTUAL: MPC agendas were incorporated in the plan of the LGU during Joint Planning & Bottom-Up Budgeting (BUB) activities. BPC agendas incorporated in Joint Planning, but monitoring will be required to ensure that they are included in the final plans.</p> <p><u>Organizations of People with Disabilities (PWDs) are Set Up in 4 of the 6 Target Municipalities</u>. ACTUAL: PWD Federations set up in 5 municipalities; the 6th already had an active PWD Federation.</p> <p><u>Sectoral Agenda Building Completed in the Six Target Municipalities</u>, with 6 Women's & 6 PWD organizations, plus 3 Farmers groups. ACTUAL: 15 Agenda-Building exercises (1/2 day workshops) completed, as planned. Participants completed evaluations. <u>Attendance</u>: 188 PWDs; 137 women & 164 farmers.</p>	<p>4. Bringing about the Participation of People's Councils in the Governance System in their Respective LGUs.</p>	
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IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation is based on a framework reflecting a core set of evaluation questions formulated to meet the evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The questions and sub-questions are listed in Annex 1 of this document.

(i) **Relevance**

The project's emphasis on building institutional mechanisms for people's participation in local governance was highly relevant to the need to enhance democratic structures and processes in the Philippines, particularly at local level. NCPC's effort to take the People's Council (PC) concept, as developed in Naga City, and replicate it, by adapting it to the needs of other municipalities in Metro Naga and of *barangays* within Naga City was an entirely appropriate focus for the project. As such, it represented a valuable approach to closing a gap between civil society organizations and local government structures. It is somewhat surprising that the People's Council concept has not been adapted and applied elsewhere in the Philippines. The UNDEF project raised the profile of the PC as an institution with other municipalities, as well as the national government.

As USAID has concluded in the analysis underlying its current Country Development Strategy for the Philippines, weak governance and pervasive corruption stand out as fundamental barriers to development and economic growth. A focus on improving governance, broadening the base of political participation and reducing state capture by traditional elites is viewed as central to addressing the situation.⁶ The strengthening of local governance is also identified as a priority for action.⁷

In a modest way, the institution of the People's Council, once fully operating, as is the case with the government of Naga City, makes a contribution to acting on the core democracy-and-governance problems of the country. Its engagement in local governance brings greater transparency to local decision-making, while asserting the interests and priorities of the poor and other vulnerable groups and ensuring that they are included in local government plans and budgets.

Further, the People's Council contains and represents a range of sector interests which can only be accommodated through compromise. This, in itself, enhances the relevance of local decision-making through the development of consensus decision-making. This, in turn, influences the determination of priorities by the local legislative arm of government. Members of the Board of NCPC were able to describe to the evaluators a number of cases of successful bargaining and compromise between business groups and social groups, bringing mutual benefit in such areas as provision for social housing in new property development plans.

In terms of **project strategy**, the balance between training programs, on the one hand, and hands-on technical support and advice to partners by the project team was well-judged. As a

⁶ See: USAID Philippines, *Country Development Strategy, 2012-2016*, p.4.

⁷ See: *Ibid*, p.25.

review of the Logical Framework makes clear, NCPC included a very long list of activities to support the PCs in the project plan. It was the ongoing engagement of project staff with the partners which held everything together. The training alone would not have worked as a mechanism for capacity development. For all this, as will be discussed in more detail below, there were limitations to the *training strategy* as a response to the needs of CSO and sector leaders, who became core members of the PCs.

By comparison with many other UNDEF projects, the NCPC initiative took place in a relatively concentrated geographic area. Yet, paradoxically, the scope of the project was huge, since it aimed to provide support to establishing PCs in 6



Induction of People's Council, Bombon Municipality

municipalities and 21 *barangays*. Each project partner required focused support at key stages of the project, and this presented a major challenge to project staff. It is probably the case that, in designing the project strategy, the grantee underestimated the extent of the demand on the project staff.

Risks were identified reasonably well. However, it may be that the extent of resistance and hesitation on the part of elected councils and senior staff to “letting in the enemy” – allowing civil society to observe and participate in local decision-making – was underestimated. This was also the case in the early history of the establishment of the NCPC itself, and, over time (but beyond the timeframe of the project), this form of opposition is likely to weaken.

Accompanying this form of resistance to formalizing the PC, in several cases, was the strength of local political rivalries and of enmity among local competitors, which led *barangay* captains to resist adoption of an Empowerment Ordinance so long as a perceived political rival held the position of President of the PC. Despite efforts at diplomacy, this kind of impasse will only be resolved by one or other of the position-holders resigning, or being replaced through elections.⁸

A further challenge to achieving results was the unexpected turnover among those holding leadership positions in the CSOs which formed the PCs. In a number of cases, very capable, well-qualified leaders were not re-elected by the membership. This revealed a risk taken by the project in training relatively small numbers of members of each PC. There was no budget, nor time, for a second round of training. In any case, in many cases, those elected in the new round of organizational elections lacked both the commitment and the capabilities of their predecessors. In several cases, this turn of events stymied hopes for strengthening the PC of the relevant local government unit.

⁸ In the case of *barangays*, the Federation of *Barangay* Councils, a member of the NCPC, has moved a resolution, and submitted it to the City Council, requesting that the Council adopt a city-wide Empowerment Ordinance, which would apply to all *barangays* within Naga City. The Ordinance has been moved and adopted (16 June 2015), but not yet implemented.

(ii) Effectiveness

The project set itself the task of completing a demanding set of activities (see Logical Framework, above). Overall, with a few exceptions, as reported to UNDEF, its program was implemented more-or-less as planned. In a few cases, two activities were merged and one training exercise (the First Social Accountability Forum) was not implemented, mainly because of the late delivery of the Guidebook on People's Councils, which was integral to the training plan.

In addition, plans for a number of training workshops planned for particular municipalities or *barangays* were abandoned because of the difficulty experienced in arranging a time when all key participants could attend. From their field visits, the evaluators came to understand the problems faced by the project team in developing a schedule for events. Nevertheless, for whatever reason, the project's inability to deliver the two-pronged training workshop on participatory assessment and planning for the PCs and joint planning with the municipal councils in two of the six target municipalities represented a setback in the grantee's quest to achieve some of its objectives with two of its principal partners.

Taking a broad view of the project, as suggested above in the discussion of project risk, it may be concluded that NCPC (the Board, as well as the project team) underestimated the degree of difficulty it would encounter in delivering its ambitious program and achieving results. For all this, in the view of the evaluation team, the grantee performed strongly and with great determination and insight in completing its program and engaging effectively with its partners.

In the view of the NCPC board, which determined the scope of the project, the UNDEF project presented an opportunity to extend the place of the people's council to lower levels of government in Naga City itself, as well as to other municipalities in the Metro Naga area. Such a development was seen as overdue, and, hence, it was important to grasp the opportunity. Even if the scope of a project with 27 partners was over-ambitious, it was essential to move ahead. If the project did not complete the job, the commitment was made by the Board and the project team to find ways to complete it beyond the project.

Capacity Development and Results: The Project's capacity development strategy depended on, first, delivery of a lengthy set of training activities, and, second, ongoing technical support and advice provided by the project team. In addition, the Project Director and/or other members of the team accompanied the local PC leadership in key meetings with the mayor/*barangay* captain and council members. As PC members and sectoral group representatives interviewed for the evaluation testified, the technical support and regular presence of NCPC team members was absolutely critical to the ability of the PCs to achieve their immediate objectives and negotiate key steps in their development.

As to training, the topics addressed in the series of workshops were selected carefully and delivered in a deliberate sequence in order to provide the leaders of the PCs – and, in some cases, members of the municipal and *barangay* councils – with the information, skills and knowledge required to facilitate ongoing and effective engagement of civil society as an actor in local governance.

Most of the training was delivered by experienced external consultants known to NCPC. This reliance on external expertise was unavoidable, given the heavy demands on the project team and the absence of a capacity development specialist as a member of the team. The utilization of external consultants was cost-effective, judging by an examination of the record of financial expenditures and in view of the sheer volume of training completed. Yet, while the training program was the key component of the effort to build the capacity of CSOs and establish the PCs, there were limitations to its effectiveness.



NCPC Executive Director Consulting with Members of Pili MPC

First, there is the question of the duration of training workshops. For the most part, they were held over one day, or one half-day. Given the complexity of the material covered and the varying educational and experience backgrounds and experience of the trainees, this seems to have been somewhat problematic in terms of the ability of the learners to absorb the material and be able to apply what was learned in practice. Yet, since, at least at *barangay* level, most participants were drawn from the ranks of the urban poor, there were very real constraints to the time allocated to training, given the need of the trainees to devote most of their time to earning a living. Members of the project team reported that it was often a struggle to get people to come to the training.

Efforts were made to optimize the engagement of trainees in the workshops and to make information more accessible to them through the utilization of Structured Learning Activities. This offered the opportunity for participatory learning and a sharing of experience. Role-playing was also employed in some workshops, for example, those focusing on budgeting and procurement (training on the Bids and Awards Committee). While training was normally conducted in Filipino (*Tagalog*), and/or the local dialect, *Bicolano*, a major difficulty to be confronted was the fact that the training materials used in the workshops, as well as the manuals provided to the trainees, were written in English. While this is normal procedure in the Philippines, and while the use of standard training courses saved the project the cost of producing new curricula, it was a source of difficulty. It is clear that, because of the language in which they were written, many trainees did not use the training manuals provided as reference materials to support their work.

A further problem arose from the decision to train only small numbers from each PC. An unexpected development was the high rate of turnover of leaders who had been trained, and who, despite their leadership qualities, were not re-elected by their members. There was neither money, nor time, to train their replacements.

While NCPC ensured that training participants completed short evaluation forms before departing at the end of each workshop, it has been unable to assess how much trainees had learned. In this respect, in meetings with the evaluation team, representatives from the Barangay

People's Councils (BPC) of Bombon, Concepcion Pequeña, Igualdad and Peñafrancia, as well as those from the Municipal People's Council of Bula, Pili and Bombon, recalled their attendance at a number of training seminars conducted by NCPC. For example: those from the MPC of Bula were able to recall participation in accountability training; a Barangay Council member from Peñafrancia was able to recall training on the Annual Investment Plan, Budgeting and Planning. A Women's Sectoral Representative from Gainza recalled attending a training session on the inclusion of sectoral interests in the Municipal Annual Development Plan.

While most participants could still recall the general topics discussed, they were hard pressed to recall specific details of what they had learned from these training courses. In dealing with specific problems they encountered in preparing plans and budgets, as well as the paperwork to meet the requirements for registration with SEC, rather than being able to draw on the knowledge and information they obtained through training, they were obliged to call on the NCPC project team, which provided them with regular technical assistance. It also reminded them that the answers to some of their questions were actually discussed in the training courses that they had attended.

On the basis of the experience of the project, NCPC now recognizes the urgency of adapting and "localizing" its future training programs, while also ensuring that they more directly respond to participants' learning needs. For example, as observed by the UNDEF Project Officer in discussions with the project team in the course of a site visit, the Organization and Management course was too generic in its treatment of the topic. It did not provide the focus on how the LGU works, and on its decision-making and procedures, to equip the members of the PC with the knowledge they required to ensure that it could fulfil its mandate as an actor in local governance. However, beyond this, some training was simply inadequate to allow the trainers and participants to achieve projected learning objectives. For example, training on the substance of local planning was restricted to a few hours. The course was delivered by the Planning and Development Offices of the local municipalities, not professional trainers, and no curriculum was prepared.

The challenge to be confronted is that more training is needed, on both the basics of organization and management and the more specific requirements of how to work effectively with local government, including the special bodies. As was noted, there are practical limits to time available for training, as well as to the willingness of CSO members, who are volunteers, to take part in additional workshops. It is apparent that the PCs and their members will need a great deal of face-to-face time on-site with visiting experts and/or field officers, who can relate to them (a real strength of the project) for "hand-holding", mentoring and problem-solving in small groups. Formal training is a beginning, not an end, to this process.

This was recognized by the project team which made a remarkable effort to provide direct support to the PC members through regular visits. Yet, the restricted timeframe of the project and the limited human resources available to the grantee, along with the long list of partners to support, meant that such efforts were never enough. There is evidence that, among partners, ownership for the newly-established PCs is very limited. It was intended that the grants to partners during the extension phase would help address this by supplying discretionary resources to assist member organizations with organizational development and developing new initiatives. However, according to NCPC, the resources were not shared adequately among PC members, thus weakening the prospect for enhancing engagement and a sense of ownership.

For the future, Translation of training materials will help, as well as a plan to write the manuals and guidebooks with the learning level and needs of users in mind. It may also be essential to differentiate to a greater extent between the training design for MPCs, on the one hand, and BPCs, on the other, given the rather different learner profiles of the two groups. Building ownership may be essential to increasing motivation to participate in further training programs and engage fully with the learning process. NCPC is planning to strengthen its capacity development capabilities by developing a training-of-trainers (ToT) program to produce a cadre of well-prepared local trainers. This will contribute to supporting further strengthening of the PCs.

A Note on the Gender Dimension: The project has not been able to provide complete data on the disaggregation of men and women among trainees (or on the participation of LGU officials in training activities). Available information will be found in summary form in Column 2 of the Logical Framework, above. For those workshops and activities where data has been provided, the rate of participation of women normally exceeds 50 per cent. One of the final activities of the project, towards the close of the extension phase, was a second workshop on Organizational Management, held on April 28, 2015. It was attended by 53 participants, drawn from both MPCs and BPCs. Of those who attended, 74 per cent were women.

A 2-day Gender and Development (GAD) training course was also held in the final month of the project. The course was designed to facilitate the preparation of sound proposals for inclusion of GAD-related programming in the annual LGU plans. Not surprisingly, 79 per cent of the 59 trainees were women.⁹ Women's organizations are a strong force in Naga City and the surrounding municipalities and they play a prominent role in the PCs. No data is available on their overall representation at leadership levels in the PCs supported by the project.¹⁰

Results and Achievements: *Outcome 1: Building Awareness in Target LGUs among both elected officials and CSOs for the role of the People's Council in Local Governance.* NCPC was not able to verify its precise target of 95 per cent of elected officials understanding the concept and practical role of the PC, since it had no means of measuring progress against the indicator selected. Despite this, the evaluators concluded that, for the most part, the project succeed in achieving its objective. The barriers to progress were not based on a lack of basic information on the part of those who took part in the project.

Outcome 2: Capacity Development of CSOs and LGU Leaders Regarding Participatory Development. For this outcome, as with Outcome 1, it proved difficult to verify results against the indicators selected. The first target was for 80 per cent of CSO participants from known CSOs (440 for the 21 barangays and 362 for the six municipalities) in training to acquire the necessary technical skills to participate effectively in local governance. It is reported that 730 leaders from 349 CSOs were trained (*barangay* level), along with 245 leaders from 170 CSOs for the municipalities.

It is not entirely clear what these raw numbers tell us. The project did not maintain records of the numbers of participants who completed all relevant courses, nor did it prove possible to assess either the "before and after" level of knowledge of trainees, or their capacity to apply what was learned. Anecdotal evidence derived from the evaluation field mission would suggest a mixed picture. Few participants completed all courses, and many individual members and PCs as

⁹ Information on the two April 2015 courses was provided by the NCPC Director in an email communication, 10 November, 2015.

¹⁰ It might also be noted that, in accordance with national legislation, Gender and Development is included as a budget line in annual plans for all LGUs, with an allocation equivalent to 5 per cent of the annual budget.

collectives still lacked capacity in important areas.¹¹ In other cases, in at least some areas of PC activity, it was clear that participants now had the confidence to apply what had been learned. A more helpful indicator would have been a record of how many members from each PC had completed the relevant courses, along with a qualitative assessment of the end-of-project capacity of the PC members (what they were now able to do) and an identification of a list of capacity gaps to be addressed. However, as NCPC has observed, it lacked the support of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer, who might have organized such an assessment and ensured that complete records were maintained.

A second target was for 100 per cent of trained CSOs to participate in the PCs. The grantee was able to report on this issue, although the data are not precise, with an estimated 85-90 per cent of trained CSO leaders actively participating in the PC's activities. Given the limited progress within the project timeframe on adoption by the relevant LGUs of the empowerment ordinance, it was not possible for the project to achieve its third target of 70 per cent of officials who had been trained by the project supporting the passage of an ordinance in their LGUs.

Outcome 3: Institution Building of the LGUs: There has been disappointment in the numbers of PCs which have been formally established. Only four of 21 *barangays* have adopted an Empowerment Ordinance. The BPC Federation has submitted a proposal to the Naga City Council for adoption of a city-wide Empowerment Ordinance for BPCs. For MPCs, three of six municipal Councils adopted Empowerment Ordinances. In one other case, the MPC was authorized through an Executive Order. In three cases, a solid annual budget was allocated; in one other, a token budget was assigned by the LGU. Despite the best efforts of NCPC, the target of 100 per cent adoption of an empowerment ordinance has not been met.

The Project and its partners fared much better in meeting a second target of 100 per cent of PCs equipping themselves with clear internal and external operational procedures. Four of six MPCs completed the process, along with 17 of the 21 BPCs. However, in some cases, reaching this target did not reveal the full picture. The BPCs and the MPCs were found to be at different levels in terms of finalizing their policies and guidelines on administrative, human resource and financial systems. For example, the MPCs of both Pili and Bula have formed committees to handle the various activities of the organization (e.g. Bids and Awards, Procurement, Management, etc.). According to NCPC, these two MPCs have already institutionalized parliamentary procedures in the conduct of their meetings and these are worth replicating in other MPCs and BPCs covered by the project. In the Barangays visited by the evaluation team, it was not clear whether procedures were strictly followed in the conduct of BPC activities including meetings and deliberations.

A third target, for 100 per cent of PCs to be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the national body charged with responsibility for registration of NGOs), was met. All the MPCs and BPCs visited in the course of the field mission emphasized the crucial role played by NCPC in facilitating this complicated and lengthy process.

Outcome 4: Participation of People's Councils in the Governance Systems of their Respective LGUs. Obviously, the results specified under the fourth outcome depended on targets being met under the preceding outcome. The first target was for 100 per cent of the PCs engaging local

¹¹ It might be observed that some PCs (Bombon MPC, for example), adopted a division of labour strategy on determining *who* should attend *which* course. Where the PC operates in such a collegial manner, where information is shared within the group, and where basic capacities are in place, through prior experience, this may be a reasonable approach.

government through active participation in the local special bodies, local development councils, Bids and Awards committee (local procurement), the Project Monitoring Committee and other boards and committees. Thus far, solid progress has been made in the case of the four MPCs which have been formally recognized. This is particularly the case in Bombon, where PC members are represented in significant numbers on a number of major bodies, though not yet in council committees. In the other five municipalities, CSOs are well-represented on the local development council and the local Poverty Reduction Action Teams (LPRATs) and, in some cases, on other bodies.

For the *barangays*, five BPCs attend council meetings on an unrestricted basis, and for two others, participation is by invitation only. Overall, progress in the 21 barangays where the BPC was supported by the project has been slow, even where the empowerment ordinance has been passed. Clearly, much depends on local leadership and buy-in to the idea of the PC and its value in local governance. Beyond this, the nature and strength of the partnership between the BPC and the *barangay* council varies in accordance with the quality of personal relations among the community leaders in the barangay, especially between the Barangay Captain and the head of the BPC. This is precisely the challenge currently being faced by Barangays *Concepcion Pequeña* and *Igualdad*, whereby the *Barangay* Captains do not trust the heads of the BPC, who are viewed as rivals and competitors. This has resulted in the non-recognition of the BPC in barangay affairs.

To a certain extent, this is also the case in the Municipality of Bombon where the Vice-Mayor who heads the Municipal Council (*Sanggunian Bayan*) does not support the Mayor, including the latter's initiative to come up with an empowerment ordinance. This is the reason why Bombon does not have a Municipal Empowerment Ordinance. Instead, the Mayor penned an Executive Order in 2014 to provide a subsidy to Bombon People's Council amounting to ₱50, 000.¹²

At a more modest level, the project succeeded in achieving its target of 100 per cent of target PCs formulating their planning agenda, incorporating plans for PWDs, Women, and the Farmers' Sector. However, whether these plans were actually included in the final municipal plan is another matter.

Looking behind the numbers, at the municipal level, there is a more conscious effort to come up with plans that will be beneficial to the different sectors involved. For example in the case of Pili People's Council (PPC), the sectoral representatives who sit as members of the Local Poverty Reduction Action Team (LPRAT) meet as a group to discuss which project or projects to prioritize and submit for funding via the Bottom-up Budgeting¹³ (BUB) process. They make sure that the sectoral interests of PWD, women, informal settlers and farmers, among others, are all sufficiently recognized in the projects that they have proposed to the LPRAT. For example, they came to a realization that submitting a livelihood project would be beneficial for several sectors represented in the PPC. According to the sectoral representatives, the MPC and the BPC help organize and prioritize projects for them. Before the People's Council, there was no systematic

¹² According to the Final Report, the amount allocated for this year was lower at P20, 000. This was confirmed in an informal meeting with representatives of Bombon People's Council during the field mission.

¹³ An approach in the preparation of an agency's budget proposal preparation that takes into consideration the development needs of cities and municipalities as identified in their local poverty reduction action plans prepared with strong participation of basic sector organizations and other civil society organizations. This was codified in various national government policies and policy statements: for example: 1) Philippine Development Plan, 2011-2016; 2) DBM-DILG-DSWD-NAPC Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2, Series of 2012, December 12, 2012; 3) DBM-DILG-DSWD-NAPC Joint Memorandum Circular No. 6, 27 February 2015. Projects which are accepted in the municipal plan are funded directly by the central government.

way to propose projects and activities for the marginalized sectors in their communities. This was confirmed by NCPC. Training on building a consolidated agenda preparation for the different sectors (i.e. women, PWDs and farmers) was included in the workshop on planning conducted by NCPC.

Summing-Up the Project's Overall Achievements: As has been discussed above, the project had mixed success in achieving its targets and encountered some major disappointments in reaching the goal of institutionalizing the PC in the 27 target LGUs. NCPC cannot be faulted on its effort to achieve the project goals, and, particularly given the scope of the project, a great deal was accomplished. There were many factors beyond its control, and the level of resistance by the LGU executive and legislative arms was far stronger than anticipated. However, a review of the history of the NCPC itself reveals that its establishment was a story of struggle which unfolded over many years. It is by no means surprising that it proved difficult to insert 27 people's councils into local governance in a two-year period.

BPC Small Grants(Selected)		
People's Council	Major Programs and Projects	Current Status
Abella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> they purchase 3 grass cutters for the their clean and green program and their barangay commits that all the maintenance of the grass cutters will be shouldered by the barangays. 	The grass cutters are currently being use in the various clean and green of the barangay
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mass inductions of the Barangay People's Council and the officers of the their member organizations 	Will again be conducted by next year
Sta. Cruz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in partnership with the barangays councils, they were able to conduct waste management orientations in their barangays 	On-going assistance in the solid waste management program of their barangay and will be tied up to the incoming
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of BPC Office as in the space provided by their respective LGU 	Office and the organization are still functional
Triangulo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They provided garbage transporter to help in the solid waste management program of their barangay. This effort was recognized by the Barangay Council in the Assembly of their Barangay 	Continuing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnered with the LGU in the clean-up drive 	Regular engagement
Lerma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in partnership with their barangay, they were able to restore their mini-park and conducted a localized training on Citizen's Advocacy and Legislative Lobbying attended by BPC leaders and members of the barangay council 	Mini-park needs to be maintained annually but they still need for fund source
Tabuco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> even with their inactiveness in the middle of implementation period, they were able to activate their council and was able to complete their garbage collector transporter project that helps in the solid waste management project of their barangay 	Program officer already raised the attention of Executive Director that the collector becomes stationery due to non-compliance to the agreement of the Barangay Government. ED will recommend to the board the transfer it to other BPCs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> they were also able to acquire chairs which they intend to use for their sustainability program 	Though no income generated yet, it was being utilized by member organization and of the barangays
Igualdad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PC was not functional 	NCPC will be re-organizing them in partnership with the barangay

Much depends on local leadership. At a more modest level, the project succeeded in achieving its target of 100 per cent of target PCs formulating their planning agenda, incorporating plans for PWDs, Women, and the Farmers' Sector. However, whether these plans were actually included in the final municipal plan is another matter.



Election of Officers, Bula MPC, Bula KALAHi (Training Centre) Project

Looking behind the numbers, at the municipal level, there is a more conscious effort to come up with plans that will be beneficial to the different sectors involved. For example in the case of Pili People's Council (PPC), the sectoral representatives who sit as members of the Local Poverty Reduction Action Team (LPRAT) meet as a group to discuss which project or projects to prioritize and submit for funding via the Bottom-up Budgeting¹⁴ (BUB) process. They make sure that the sectoral interests of PWD, women, informal settlers and farmers, among others, are all sufficiently recognized in the projects that they have proposed to the LPRAT. For example, they came to a realization that submitting a livelihood project would be beneficial for several sectors represented in the PPC. According to the sectoral representatives, the MPC and the BPC help organize and prioritize projects for them. Before the People's Council, there was no systematic way to propose projects and activities for the marginalized sectors in their communities. This was confirmed by NCPCC. Training on building a consolidated agenda preparation for the different sectors (i.e. women, PWDs and farmers) was included in the workshop on planning conducted by NCPCC.

(iii) Efficiency

The project was planned and most activities and tasks were managed well throughout by a competent and professional organization. Institutional arrangements were simple, with the grantee taking complete responsibility for management and finance. There were no complaints about the budget by partners, who were also very positive on both the quality of inputs provided and on the management of logistics and expenditures. Although, as is noted below, there was an issue of gaps in communication because of the need for all decisions on the project to be made by, or referred to, the NCPCC Board, the degree of engagement of the Board with the UNDEF project demonstrated a strong degree of ownership for the initiative. This was confirmed in the discussion between Board members and the evaluation team.

NCPCC managed financial resources with care, and completed an exhaustive set of activities with a surprisingly modest budget. The project was labour-intensive and made continuing, heavy

¹⁴An approach in the preparation of an agency's budget proposal preparation that takes into consideration the development needs of cities and municipalities as identified in their local poverty reduction action plans prepared with strong participation of basic sector organizations and other civil society organizations. This was codified in various national government policies and policy statements: for example: 1) Philippine Development Plan, 2011-2016; 2) DBM-DILG-DSWD-NAPC Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2, Series of 2012, December 12, 2012; 3)DBM-DILG-DSWD-NAPC Joint Memorandum Circular No. 6, 27 February 2015. Projects which are accepted in the municipal plan are funded directly by the central government.

demands on the project team members. Salaries amounted to \$33,000, or 18.36 per cent of a program budget of \$180,000. It is quite apparent that NCPC contributed more to the project than the percentages of staff salaries set out in the budget accompanying the Project Document might suggest.

As might be expected, meeting and training expenses accounted for a major portion of overall financial expenditures, but the costs, including fees and expenses for trainers, totalled only \$64,406, or 36 per cent of the budget. Given the long list of workshops and meetings completed, the cost is entirely reasonable.

The only item in the budget which raises questions is the \$40,466 allocated to “Fellowships and Awards”. These funds were allocated to provide (very) small grants to the 27 people’s councils to facilitate organizational development and joint planning between PCs and LGUs and to assist in the detailed conceptualization and design of projects. This also fitted with the emphasis in the extension phase, as approved by UNDEF, to assist partners in accessing funds under the government’s BUB program. This is the only discretionary component in the project, and, in principle, is worthwhile. A listing of all the initiatives undertaken by the project’s partners is provided in the results report included in the Final Report (p.23). However, no reporting on utilization of the funds was included in the final report. At the evaluators’ request, a summary table was provided on the current status of the activities financed by the fund **for examples of small grants to BPCs, see text box above.**¹⁵

It is apparent that insufficient attention was given to providing detailed guidelines to ensure that the funds would be used to strengthen the PCs to which the grants were provided. While, in most cases, funds were used productively, many did little to strengthen the position of the PC. According to NCPC, there was insufficient involvement of the designated beneficiaries (the member CSOs and the sector groups which they represented). It was the intention of the grantee that the funds would be used to build local engagement and, hence, strengthen a sense of ownership in local civil society for the PCs. Overall, this did not happen.¹⁶

There were repeated difficulties in communication between UNDEF and NCPC.¹⁷ In part, this resulted from the rather cumbersome process in Naga, where all decisions concerning the project had to be ratified by the Board. This led to lengthy delays in response time. In addition, there were staffing changes involving interns and trainees at UNDEF, which interrupted communication flows. Difficulties of this kind led to an unfortunate delay in NCPC’s requesting approval for reprogramming unspent funds remaining late in the extension period. As a result, it was obliged to return \$5,857.36 to the funding agency.

These problems apart, for the most part, and with a few exceptions, project resources were deployed effectively to support efforts to achieve results. It is apparent that in many areas, for example: advocacy and accountability; organizational development and management; and the legislative process for the LGUs and development of policy proposals, the organization of additional activities would have helped. While further investment in these areas would have been beneficial, the already-strained project budget would not have permitted this. In view of the labour-intensive nature of the project, an additional program officer, or a capacity development

¹⁵ Information provided by the NCPC Executive Director through email on November 10, 2015. The size of grants provided, in most cases, was P5, 600 (S119.00) for MPCs and P2, 700 (\$57.50) for BPCs. Some grants were larger.

¹⁶ Email communications between evaluators and NCPC: 8 November, 2015.

¹⁷ See: PO Additional Note.

specialist, would also have been an asset. As noted above, the project also lacked the services of an M&E Officer (see: comments of NCPC in Final Report, Section 8, page 28).

One area in particular where limited investment was problematic was in the training for MPCs on the local planning and budgeting process, in support of *Outcome 4*. In this case, training was provided by the officers of the Municipal Planning and Development Office in each municipality. No curriculum was prepared and no experienced trainers or facilitators were involved. The substantive training for an area of central importance to the PCs and the sectors was of only a few hours duration. This is one example of an area where more resources should have been allocated, and where more care should have been taken in planning.

Simply put, the project tried to do too much with too little. More attention to the workload implications of the project design, and a focus on desired results before determining activities, might well have led to a narrowing of the scope of the project. On that basis, greater attention might have been given to a smaller set of partners. In addition, the project team might have been strengthened to a degree, and attention might have been given to “localizing” the training curricula employed. This is, perhaps, best seen as a list of lessons learned, rather than a criticism of the project.

The project suffered from weak information–gathering and documentation was uneven. This showed up in gaps in the final report and, particularly, in reporting against results. The project did an effective job in defining indicators, but, in a number of cases, was unable to collect the data to enable it to use them in reporting. The Project Director badly needed greater administrative support.

It should be borne in mind that this was NCPC’s first experience of managing a project of this scope. Despite some issues about the design and management, the project team and the Board which supported it are to be commended on a strong effort overall to make the best use of limited resources to achieve their objectives.

(iv) Impact

The project has made a difference in strengthening the organization of civil society in the Metro Naga area. It has also put in place the foundations for an effective set of institutions in the form of the people’s council, which, over time, will facilitate the engagement of civil society in local governance, thus enhancing local democracy and ensuring that the voices of the poor and marginalized have their place in dialogues over priority-setting and budget allocations. Yet this is only a beginning and much remains to be done.

Even where PCs have been formalized, members are hesitant to assert themselves and have a great deal to learn about optimizing their opportunity to advocate the interests of the social groups represented on the PCs, and to seek to influence the decisions of the municipal and *barangay* councils. In the case of the most successful PCs at municipal level, there has been an emphasis on putting forward project proposals, rather than on seeking to influence the priorities and directions of the councils.

Beyond the immediate impact on the project’s partners, it has also brought greater visibility to the idea of the people’s council and given indications that it is a model for formalizing and entrenching civil society engagement with local governance, which may be adapted to meet the

needs of municipalities beyond Naga City. NCPC and its Board report expressions of interest from other municipalities in neighbouring provinces in developing their own PCs, and requesting technical advice from Naga City.

All beneficiaries reported that the project has had a positive impact on their work. Particularly striking was the feedback from the representatives of the Women's and PWD Sectors, who told the evaluators of their new-found confidence and ability to play an effective role in the Poverty Reduction Action Teams and/or Local Development Councils. Several sector representatives reported that they are now listened to with respect and taken seriously by the LGU because of the establishment of the PC.

(v)Sustainability

It is too early to tell whether the people's council as an institution has taken root in the four municipalities where the PC has been formally recognized as a partner in local governance. However, it does seem likely that the model will be fully institutionalized in the short term in these cases, as well as in at least a small cluster of *barangays*. NCPC has indicated its determination to continue its work, and, partly as a result of the UNDEF project, has been able to obtain additional funding through a USAID-funded program implemented through the Ayala Foundation's Philippine-American Fund, with a budget of \$US 174,000. Through the new project, NCPC will be able to continue its work of strengthening the CSOs and PCs, extending its reach to a further seven municipalities in Metro Naga. At a national policy level, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has also taken a keen interest in the replication of the NCPC model.

It is to be hoped that NCPC will also be able to secure the resources to enable it to reinforce the efforts made under the UNDEF project with its 27 initial PC partners. Further organizational strengthening will be particularly important in the case of the BPCs, which remain fragile as organizations (as NCPC itself has acknowledged), and where the "critical mass" of CSO leaders is much more limited in both numbers and experience than with the MPCs.

As noted earlier, and not surprisingly, the conditions for success would seem to be more readily identified in the six target municipalities than in any of the *barangays* supported. While not generalizable to all the municipalities and *barangays* covered by the NCPC project, interviews with the members of Bula and Pili Municipal People's Councils as well as Barangay Peñafrancia People's Council (the most successful of the 21 BPCs in the project) indicated that participation at the municipal level is more vibrant than at the *barangay* level. At the Municipal level, representatives of Pili and Bula People's Councils were represented in the special bodies, including LPRAT. They were active in the deliberation of priority development projects for the municipality and their opinions were regularly sought in various committees of the Municipal Councils, especially those concerning the various sectors such as the PWD, informal settlers, and senior citizens. They were also consulted in the realignment of budgets for projects and programs. In addition, both MPCs have current projects funded through the BUB.

Meanwhile in Barangay Peñafrancia, while there is a general acknowledgment of the close working relations between the Barangay Council and the BPC, there was not as much involvement in the deliberation process and representation, except by the sectoral groups, at the meetings and activities of the Barangay Council. Except for partnerships in activities like a "fun run", beauty contest and the "clean and green drive", there were no specific mentions of the

involvement of the BPC in the development planning and deliberations of the Barangay Council, although the Barangay Secretary mentioned that Barangay deliberations are public and that anyone can sit in and ask questions. To date, the BPC is not implementing any BUB projects. The character of the activities organized by the BPC suggested short-term engagement, rather than an effort to plan longer-term initiatives.

This was not the case, however, with the MPCs of either Pili or Bula, both of which are implementing longer-term development projects, such as the tools and equipment for PWDs in Pili and the building and equipping of the training center in Bula, both funded through the BUB process. The MPC of Bombon also had established a social protection program for informal settlers. They also have targeted livelihood projects for women, including soap making, dress making, pig dispersal and cosmetology. If managed well, these initiatives can support longer-term sustainability for both the MPCs. While some BPCs have also implemented livelihood projects (as listed in the project's Final Report), the timeline is shorter and coverage narrower than for those currently being implemented by the MPCs.

It is not clear yet whether there is broad local ownership for the PCs. It will be critical for NCPC and its partners to identify mechanisms through which to ensure engagement of the sector CSOs and others in the work of the PCs. In some cases, the support for projects approved by the municipal or *barangay* council, and funded under the national BUB program, will contribute to facilitating this process. The benefits to the PC in utilizing new projects to enhance solidarity and local engagement was apparent to the evaluators in their field visit to Bula through their discussions with members of the MPC on the sharing of work among them to manage the construction and establishment of the new training centre.

One of the limitations of the project, noted above, and well-understood by NCPC, concerns the reliance on external experts and standard training packages. NCPC is planning to develop a training-of-trainers program to prepare a cadre of local trainers to support its programs. This will be a positive development, and will enhance efforts to ensure that the PCs are sustainable.

(vi) UNDEF Added Value

The agreement of UNDEF with the proposal from the [NCPC](#) Board to extend the life of the project into an extension phase enabled it to begin work on equipping its partners with the skills and knowledge necessary to enable them to prepare and submit proposals for funding of local projects under the national Bottom-Up Budgeting (BUB) Program. It was this initiative which enabled NCPC, in turn, to obtain the additional funding from the Ayala Foundation (see above) to continue its work and extend its reach to a further group of municipalities. The experience of developing the proposal for UNDEF and in managing and implementing the project also assisted it in developing a proposal to meet the criteria of the new funding agency.

NCPC is particularly appreciative of the extra effort made by UNDEF to advise it in finalizing its initial proposal. At the time, the organization lacked experience with some aspects of a typical UNDEF project, including the design of indicators. The patience and understanding of the UNDEF Program Officer is greatly appreciated (the Project Document went through three drafts before an acceptable version was completed).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

(i) The focus of the project on seeking to replicate and adapt the people's council (PC) model was highly relevant to broader efforts to strengthen local democracy in the Philippines and enhance the participation of the urban poor and other vulnerable groups in local decision-making.

(ii) The project invested significant resources in training, as well as in the “accompaniment” of its partners in 27 local government units (LGUs), as they sought to take the steps necessary to set-up, and/or strengthen people’s councils. The role of the ongoing on-site, technical support, advice and trouble-shooting by the project team proved essential.

(iii) The scope of the project was rather extensive, with the need for the grantee to extend support to 27 different local partners, each located in the territory of a different LGU. As a result, the management and technical capabilities of the project team, while very good, were overstretched. Similarly, while the overall management of the project was sound, the over-commitment led to deficiencies in a few areas.

(iv) One problem experienced by the project derived from the lengthy delays in decision-making by NCPD as a result of the need to refer all major issues to the Board of Directors to make a decision. This led to problems in communications with UNDEF and resulted in a missing of the deadline to request a reprogramming of unspent funds. A lack of continuity of staffing at UNDEF at the level of interns and trainees contributed to the gaps in communications.

(v) Despite some limitations of the project, the quality of the technical contribution of the project’s core team was outstanding and stood out as a positive factor in overall effectiveness and in the results achieved.

(vi) The training program delivered to the partners and beneficiaries was comprehensive. However, although the overall program was solid, there were some gaps and limitations.

(vii) NCPD underestimated the degree of resistance it and its partners would encounter from municipal and *barangay* leaders and council members, many of whom were concerned to protect their own privileged position in local decision-making and wary of opening-up council proceedings and those of associated boards and “special bodies” to active engagement by representatives of local civil society.

(viii) Results achieved were positive in the building of awareness of the theory and practice of the people’s council, and in ensuring that all PCs were formally registered with

the central government. This latter is an arduous procedure, but a necessary one if the PCs are to have an official role in local governance.

(ix) More mixed success was achieved in institutionalizing the PC, requiring the passage by the council of the host LGU of an “empowerment ordinance.” PCs (MPCs) were fully established in three of six municipalities supported, with a fourth formalized under an interim measure. BPCs were also formally recognized in five of 21 *barangays*. Limitations in this regard were as a result of factors beyond the control of the project (see **vii** above).

(x) With the support of UNDEF, NCPC did a good job in developing a results framework for the project, identifying indicators against which to measure success. However, it proved difficult for the grantee to collect the data to enable it to report against some of the indicators. The project also required additional support in capturing progress with each partner, and in documenting its activities, challenges and achievements.

(xi) NCPC established strong partnerships through the project and this serves as a firm foundation to facilitate further cooperation in the future.

(xii) The project’s capacity development strategy was successful up to a point. All beneficiaries interviewed during the field mission were extremely positive about the value of the training provided. Yet, despite this, the evaluation team found that there were obvious limitations to the knowledge acquired by the trainees through the project, and to their capacity to participate effectively in local governance. The PCs which are fully established are still hesitant to take full advantage of the opportunities open to them and to advocate for further advances.

(xiii) NCPC is planning to strengthen its capacity development capabilities by developing a training-of-trainers (ToT) program to produce a cadre of well-prepared local trainers.

(xiv) Overall, it may be concluded that a valuable foundation has been established. Yet, it is apparent that far more time –a matter of years rather than months – and substantial additional resources will be required to ensure that the PCs are sustainable.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

(i) In future projects, NCPC undertakes a design process which begins with desired results, rather than activities, and which takes full account of the human and financial resources required to manage the project and support its partners and beneficiaries. Such an approach may lead to a reduction in the scope of future projects to a more manageable level. *Based on Conclusion iii.*

(ii) NCPC ensures that, in future projects –and in its ongoing work more generally - it makes it a priority to document thoroughly its activities and to ensure that it allocates sufficient resources to support this process. *Based on Conclusion x.*

(iii) The NCPC Board gives serious consideration to devising a mechanism for more rapid decision-making to provide timely support to its projects. *Based on Conclusion iv.*

(iv) NCPC includes plans for post-training evaluation in its future training programs, and that it seeks expert advice in designing such evaluations and ensuring that they are both manageable and effective. *Based on Conclusion x.*

(v) NCPC gives careful consideration in training plans to enrolling sufficient numbers from each locality to allow for continuity in the event of a turnover in the local leadership. *Based on Conclusion vi.*

(vi) NCPC proceeds with its plans to develop a training-of-trainers program to produce a cadre of local trainers, while also assessing possibilities, perhaps in consultation with other stakeholders, including DILG and university centres, for developing training materials in Tagalog. *Based on Conclusions xiii and vi.*

(vii) NCPC maintains its commitment to provide ongoing support to the Six MPCs and 21 BPCs supported during the UNDEF project to assist in the effort to build the organizations and ensure sustainability. *Based on Conclusion ix.*

(viii) UNDEF provides more detailed, practical and realistic guidelines to grantees on developing results frameworks and in devising indicators against which results may be readily assessed. Most UNDEF projects lack the resources to undertake thorough data collection exercises, based on survey data and detailed statistical analysis. *Based on Conclusion x.*

VI. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value-added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc.). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Project documents:

Project Document, UDF-PHI-11-458
Mid-term Progress Report
Final Financial Utilization Report 04 2015
Final Report
Milestone Verification Mission Reports, 24 July, 2013 and 12 March, 2015
UNDEF Project Extension Request Form (approval 16 December, 2014)
UNDEF Project Specific Evaluation Notes
Naga City Council, Ordinance No.2015-032, 16 June 2015

Other Documents and Reference Materials:

Asian Development Bank, *Civil Society Briefs: the Philippines*. Manila, February 2013;

Nelson S. Legacion, *Barangay Legislation and Good Governance*. City of Naga, July 2014

CODE NGO and CIVICUS, *Civil Society Index: Philippines*, March 2011.

Jaime D. Jacob, "Empowering Local Government: the Naga City Experience", *Asia Review of Public Administration*, 12, 1, January-June, 2000;

NCPC, *Organizing and Operationalization of a People's Council: A Guidebook*, Draft Version, October 2015

NCPC, "Peoples Participation in the Governance of the City of Naga", PowerPoint (PPT), undated

USAID Philippines, *Country Development Strategy, 2012-2016*

World Bank Group, Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Group: *Philippines Bottom-Up Budgeting Program: Country Summary Brief*, June 2015.

ANNEX 3: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

4 October 2015, Sunday		
Introductory meeting Manila Airport; 8.45 AM: Travel by air to Naga City; and joint planning, International and National Consultant, Naga City; Initial Planning and Briefing Meeting with Johann De la Rosa, Executive Director, NCPC, Naga City		
5 October 2015, Monday		
Name	Organization	Position
9.00 AM: <u>Meeting: Barangay People's Council – Penafrancia, Naga City</u>		
Remedios Q. dela Vega	Queen	---
Eliezer P. Perez	San Martin Neighborhood Association	Chairman
Arnel V. Suarez	Saint Joseph Catholic Faith Society	---
Aproniano T. Morada	Barangay Association of Senior Citizen Affairs	---
Angelina B. Virata	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program	---
Nancy O. de Lima	Solo Parent	President
Joel Brabante	Naga City People's Council	Program Officer
Marisca Nocesa	---	---
Elcodora D. Purca	Sanggawadan	---
Alvin V. Villacruz	SRSO	---
Jeffrey C. Moralde	Barangay Council	Punong Barangay
Johann Dela Rosa	NCPC	Executive Director
10.00 AM: <u>Interview with Punong Barangay/Barangay Council, Penafrancia</u>		
Name	Organization	Position
Jeffrey C. Moralde	Barangay Council	Punong Barangay
Wenifreda Villacruz	Barangay Council	Barangay Kagawad
Esteban A. Beltran	Barangay Council	Barangay Secretary
1.15 PM: <u>Interview with BPC Concepcion Pequeña/Barangay Council, Barangay Concepcion Pequeña, Naga City</u>		
Name	Organization	Position
Rolly Pagao	Barangay People's Council	President
Christopher H. Balane	NCPC	Program Officer
Carlos D. Seechung	Barangay Council	Barangay Secretary
3.30 PM: <u>Meeting with Naga City People's Council, Project Team at NCPC Secretariat Offices</u>		
Name	Organization	Position
Johann Dela Rosa	NCPC	Executive Director
Edilberto "Joy" A. San Carlos	NCPC	Program Officer
Jocar S. Padrigon	NCPC	Program Officer
Florella Naldoza	NCPC	---
Christopher H. Balane	NCPC	Program Officer
Joel Brabante	NCPC	Program Officer
6 October 2015, Tuesday		
10.30 AM: <u>Meeting with Pili Municipal Council, Municipality of Pili, Metro Naga</u>		
Augusto Racis	PPCDI	Vice president –Execom
Melany M. Vargas	PPCDI	President - Execom
Ma. Jean Toroc	PPC	Member
Maria Luisa Arnante	PPC	Administrative officer
Ramon N. Gaudiel	PPC	Auditor
Maximo J. Belmacia Jr.	PPCDI	Secretary
Joy San Carlos	NCPC	Program Officer
Antonio P. Altamarino Jr.	PPCDI	Vice-chairman
Santi Cervantez	PPCDI	Chairman

11.45 AM: <i>Interview with Mayor of Municipality of Pili</i>		
Augusto Racis Municipal council & Executive Mayor		
1.30 PM: <i>Meeting with Municipal Council of Bula Municipality</i>		
Name	Organization	Position
Hon. Moises P. Soreta	Municipal Council	OIC – Mayor
Glenn Genio	Sangguniang Bayan	Member
Mary Ruth Amparo	Municipal Planning and Development Office	Planning Development Officer
2.30 PM: <i>Meeting with Bula People's Council</i>		
Name	Organization	Position
Emma O. Bigay	Kababaihan	Federation president
Santiago E. Vargas	MBPC	Auditor
Jaime B. Abonita	MBPC	Board
Peter A. Avila	MBPC	President
5.00 PM <i>Interview with Woman Council member, Barangay Penafrancia (National Consultant</i>		
Name	Organization	Position
Wenifreda Villacruz	Barangay Council	Member
5.30 PM: <i>Meeting with Political Scientist and Activist (International Consultant)</i>		
Name	Organization	Position
Renne Gamba	Naga City Governance Institute	Senior Researcher
7 October 2015, Wednesday		
9.30 AM <i>Interview with Barangay Council of Iqualdad</i>		
Name	Organization	Position
Antonio F. Gelido	Barangay Council	Barangay Kagawad (councilor)
Erna Martirez	Barangay Council	Secretary
10.30 AM <i>Discussion with NCPC Executive Director on Situation in Barangays, in Coffee Shop</i>		
Name	Organization	Position
Johann De la Rosa	NCPC	Executive Director
1.30 PM: <i>Meeting with Representatives of PWD and Women's Sectors at NCPC</i>		
Name	Organization	Position
Cyril N. Tamon	Magarao People's Council (Women sector)	Secretary
Jun J. Dalmacia	Pili People's Council (PWD sector)	Secretary
Manuel Vichocho	Canaman Federation of Differently Abled Person, Inc.	President
Charita B. Florendo	Bombon Association of Person with Disability	---
Zenaida B. Diaras	Gainza People's Council (Women and OFWs)	---
Roy B. Recario	Gainza People's Council (PWD sector)	President

Marites C. Glon	Gainza People's Council (Cooperative sector)	Treasurer
Edilberto "Joy" A. San Carlos	NCPC	Program Officer
3.00 PM <i>Interview with NCPC Program Officer</i>		
Name	Organization	Position
Edilberto « Joy » San Carlos	NCPC	Program Officer
8 October, 2015 Thursday		
9.30 AM: <u>Meeting with NCPC Board at NCPC</u>		
Name	Organization	Position
David Abogado	SALIGAN – Bicol / NCPC board	Branch coordinator
August Nieves	Naga City Retired Government Employees NCPC board	---
Danilo B. Ludovice	National Council for Urban Poor [ES] / NCPC Board	President/treasurer
Arturo Tuy	BPC – Concepcion Grande BPC Federation	President
Medith C. Bolosa-Rivera	Naga City Council for Women	President
4.00 PM <u>Meeting with Bombon Municipal People's Council at Villa Caceres Hotel, Naga City</u>		
Name	Organization	Position
1Eden Jana	Bombon People's Council Council	President
Rosalina Fatagan	Bombon PC & Solo Parents' Federation	Chair
515 PM <u>Interview with Trainer on Public Procurement at Viall Caceres Hotel</u>		
Name	Organization	Position
Carol Del Rosario	Procurement Watch International	Consultant
9 October Friday		
AM: International and National Consultant depart for Manila		

ANNEX 4: LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BAC	Bids and Awards Committee
BPC	Barangay People's Council
BUB	Bottom-Up Budgeting
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
GAD	Gender and Development
LDC	Local Development Council
LGC	Local Government Code
LGU	Local Government Unit
LPRAT	Local Poverty Reduction Team
LSB	Local Special Bodies
MC	Municipal Council
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPC	Municipal People's Council
NCPC	Naga City People's Council
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PWD	People with Disabilities
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund