

Foreword

This issue of the Philippine Journal of Social Development contains articles on the general topic of 'peace and governance', the fourth research and advocacy cluster of the University of the Philippines College of Social Work and Community Development. The past three issues focused on the other three clusters, namely migration, disaster risk reduction and management, and social protection.

Governance and good governance have been buzzwords used by government, non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) in the recent past as a strategy towards development. For UNDP (1994), governance is the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels, including mechanisms, processes and institutions whereby citizens and groups air their needs, exercise their rights, and perform their obligations. At the same time, good governance is transparent, accountable, effective, equitable and participatory, specifically that the poor and marginalized are included in decision – making. Moreover, good governance is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights, and with due regard for the rule of law (UNOHCHR, n.d.).

While governance was previously the domain of politicians, the 1987 Philippine Constitution and 1991 Local Government Code opened venues for participation of POs and NGOs in this arena. These laws highlight the importance of participation and partnership of POs and NGOs in the affairs of government, enabling them to be involved in major governance areas, e.g. planning, policy-making, budgeting, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Several articles in the 1987 Constitution strengthened and emphasized the importance of the roles of NGOs and POs in Philippine society and governance. Among these are the following:

Art 2, Sec.23: The State shall encourage non-governmental, community-based, or sectoral organizations that promote the welfare of the nation;

Art 13, Sec. 15: The State shall respect the role of independent people's organizations to enable the people to pursue and protect, within the democratic framework, their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means. People's organizations are bona fide associations of citizens with demonstrated capacity to promote the public interest and with identifiable leadership, membership, and structure.

Art 13, Sec. 16: The right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making shall not be abridged. The State shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms.

The 1987 Constitution also introduced the Partylist System, wherein a certain number of seats in the House of Representatives were allocated for political parties representing marginalized sectors of society, such as the farmers and urban poor. This new system in the Philippine political arena provided another venue for progressive people's organizations to be elected as members of the House of Representatives.

RA 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991 paved the way for local autonomy through decentralization and devolution of power of the national government. This law enabled the participation of the people as individuals or as members of their POs and NGOs in various affairs of local government as stated in Sec 34: Role of People's and Non-governmental Organization – Local government units shall promote the establishment and operation of people's and non-governmental organizations to become active partners in the pursuit of local autonomy.

POs and NGOs used these venues to be part of community governance, defined as having the following elements: community leadership; community empowerment; community ownership; and, community and people's participation (Ferrer, 2006).

Three articles in this journal showcase achievements of POs and NGOs in their engagements with different government units. Prof. Rebecca Samson-Gaddi

traces the history of farmer organizations in Nueva Ecija and fisherfolk organizations in Bataan since they started implementing sustainable agriculture programs in their localities. Her article has a special focus on the roles that women played in the organizations and in the communities. The various skills that both male and female leaders learned in the process were put to good use when they decided to run in the local elections and won seats in the local government units. In their positions as village heads or council members, they continued to advocate for sustainable development programs as well as highlight the active roles of women in development.

The second article written by six authors (Bawagan, Cayabyab, Lagos, Obedicen, Vallejos & Vallejos) summarizes six case studies which reviewed the outcomes of participation of farmer leaders in local and national governance. These leaders were elected either as village heads, village council members, municipal councilor or member of the House of Representatives through the partylist system. Their experiences show very positive contributions and outcomes to their communities, such as installation of basic social and infrastructure services, and to the people's organizations, such as increase in membership. The cases showed that farmer leaders did not waver to push for their agenda of genuine agrarian reform and people-centered development in the local councils or in Congress.

Prof. Editha V. Maslang presented cases of programs of non-government organizations and their contributions to social development, specifically improvements in the areas of children's education and health as well as the family's livelihood. Two factors that facilitated the accomplishment of the program goals were the effective relationship between the local government units and the NGOs, as well as the active participation by the people's organization in the programs.

Good governance also refers to "the processes and interactions by which the organization engages and consults with its stakeholders and accounts for its achievements. Governance characterizes how things are decided and then realized within an organization, be it a government or a company" (UNIDO, 2010, p. 9). Hence, effective organizational management, specially for organizations involved

in social development programs, is another aspect of good governance. The article of Prof. Justin Francis Leon V. Nicolas shows how governance or management of social development organizations strengthens or hinders creativity among the staff, specifically social workers. The article shares what social workers define as creative, as follows: the person; the product; the process; and, the press or environment. As to the latter, creativity is further enhanced in an organization whose management is highly supportive of the staff, provides for training or mentoring opportunities and allows staff to participate in brainstorming activities.

Prof. Fermin P. Manalo Jr. has the lone article on the topic of peace and peace building from below. He presents the case of GiNaPaLaDTaKa Space for Peace in Mindanao as peace building from below and relates this to the various strategies of community based development, specifically development education, community organizing, community based resource management, and advocacy.

The last article by Prof. Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo proposes a policy paper for the achievement of the people's right to food, considering the intersections of food security with issues of poverty, climate change, human rights, international and local trade regulations and gender disparity. The article cites programs on urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) in Brazil and the Philippines as responses of urban poor communities to their food situation.

Prof. Ofreneo links this issue to the next issue of PJSD which will present papers discussing the theory and practice of social solidarity economy (SSE). The papers were presented in the International Conference on SSE held October 2013 at UP CSWCD, with UPA as an example of SSE aiming for women's empowerment and sustainable development.

Thank you for your continued support to PJSD.

Aleli B. Bawagan
Issue Editor

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