

Participation of Non- Government Organizations in Local Special Bodies of Northern Samar

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Abstract: *This study aimed at determining the profile, problems and needs of the non government organization in participating in the local governance of Northern Samar. Specifically, it attempted to document the profile of the NGOs in terms of the name of NGO, date of incorporation, date of accreditation, sector served, type, number of staff, scope, source of fund and, major thrust. It tried to determine the problems encountered by the NGOs in Northern Samar in their involvement in local governance, and draw recommendations from the respondents for meaningful involvement in local governance. There were ten accredited NGOs existing whose main offices are situated in Northern Samar. The respondents of the study were the heads or directors of the ten purposively selected NGOs in Northern Samar, partner agencies, organized POs, and beneficiaries. Majority are in the service for 10 to 15 years, served farmers, developmental type of NGO, three to five staff, covered the entire province of Northern Samar, has international funding, and their thrust is on rural development. A total of eight constraints in achieving harmonious participation of NGOs in the province of Northern Samar emerged after associating the responses of the key informants, determining similarities, grouping and modifying categories. The topmost constraint is political intervention.*

Key Words: *Non–Government Organizations, People`s Organizations, Civic Organizations.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Background

In the Philippines, the role of non-government organizations (NGOs) in refining the lives of rural poor was first felt in the early 50s with the establishment of the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) in Nueva Ecija. Over the years, NGOs have increased in number and their contribution to the socio-economic upliftment of the rural people, more specifically, the marginalized, has not remained ignored.

To ensure their continued involvement in community development and local governance, the congress included a provision in the Local Government Code of 1991 mandating local government units (LGUs) to establish partnership with NGOs. This scheme is one way of institutionalizing the decentralization of the different LGUs namely: provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays. One of the operative principles of decentralization is that “there shall be established in every local government unit an accountable, efficient and dynamic organizational structure and operating mechanism that will meet the priority need and service requirement of its communities” (Local Government Code of 1991).

The corporation of NGOs and LGUs is enhanced through several joint activities and cooperative arrangements which include delivery of basic services, promoting livelihood projects, developing local enterprises and enhancing economic and social well-being of the people. Moreover, participation of NGOs in local governance also includes: (1) membership in local special bodies; (2) implementation of DRRM act; (3) environmental protection; (4) delivery of basic services; (5) promotion of peace and order and; (6) poverty alleviation. Apart from this, NGOs can provide efficient and effective measures to problems and tremendous crisis caused by the deterioration of peace and order and degradation of environment.

Moreover, decentralizations, specifically debureacratization, is “a form of decentralization that involves the transfer of powers and functions from the government to NGOs and people’s organizations (POs), including the private sector, all of which are sometimes referred to collectively as the “civil society.

The role of NGOs in local development should be seen as complementary and supplementary to and supportive of the efforts of local governments. This is the essence of partnership between the government and the private sector.

In addition, there are laws that exhilarated NGOs for active participation towards local governance as stipulated in Section 23, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution where the state shall encourage non-governmental, community-based, or sectoral organizations that will promote the welfare of the nation. Section 15, Article XIII provided that the state shall respect the role of independent people’s organization, within the democratic framework, their legitimate and collective interest and aspirations through the peaceful and lawful means. Likewise, Section 35, Chapter 4 of the 1991 Local Government Code provided that the local government units shall promote the establishment and operation of people’s and non-government organizations to become active

partners in the pursuit of local autonomy. LGUs may likewise enter into joint ventures and such other cooperative arrangements with people's and non-governmental organizations to engage in the delivery of certain basic services, capability-building and livelihood projects, and to develop local enterprises designed to improve productivity and income, diversify agriculture, spur rural industrialization, promote ecological balance, and enhance the economic and social well-being of the people (Local Government Code of 1991).

Furthermore, this study would deepen and enhance the knowledge and understanding of the students on the important role of civil societies in making democracy alive and vibrant. Moreover, it would help them fully grasp Alexis de Tocqueville's premise that the absence of organizations in the state would lead to the emergence of mass society where the individuals become utterly defenseless against a very powerful central government since there is no institution which serves as a buffer between the people and a highly powerful centralized government.

However, in a preliminary interview of the researchers with the NGOs it was found out that: (1) there are some NGOs that do not want to be accredited with local governance in Northern Samar; (2) there is limited participation of NGOs in local governance of Northern Samar; (3) there is unsustainable implementation of programs and activities among local NGOs.

Thus, the researchers are very keen in pursuing this study to thoroughly explore the profile, problems, needs and participation of NGOs in the local governance of Northern Samar.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

According to Emmanuel Buendia (2005), NGOs are groups which are non-profit, private entity established to work for the people's development through various means such as training, organizing, advocacy, research and project development. It is a social development organization in empowerment of the people.

According to George and John Steiner (2006), NGOs are voluntary organizations formed for collective action to meet shared needs and goals; sometimes called civil society groups. They are flexible and democratic with the ability to serve the people without profit for themselves.

Moreover, according to De Leon as cited by Tonog, these groups are privately founded, non-profit development organizations engaged primarily in promoting, empowering and providing their members with legal means to improve their socio-economic and political status.

On the other hand, Brillantes defined it as an organization composed of private individuals who believe in certain basic social principles and who structure their activities to bring about development to communities that they serve. Hence, it is not affiliated to political parties, generally engaged in working for aid, and welfare of the community. Likewise, they are committed to the root causes of the problems trying to better the quality of life especially for the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized in urban and rural areas. (gdrc.org/ngo/wb-define.htm, 2017)

Villarin (2002) viewed NGOs as non-stock, non-profit, non-membership voluntary organization having a core professional staff delivering a mandate for acting as intermediaries for grassroots organizations, promoting self-help projects or doing community organizing work.

As cited by Padilla (1991), the term NGOs first appeared in official literature in the United Nations ECOSOS Resolution No.288 of February 1950 which stated that "any international organization which is not established by international organization shall be considered an international nongovernmental organization. Thus, NGOs are privately funded, non-profit development organizations engaged primarily in promotion, empowering, and providing their member with legal means to improve their socio-economic and political status.

In keeping with the spirit of the constitution, the code provides for the participation of NGOs and POs in local governance through their membership in LSBs.

The code ensures the participation of the NGOs and POs in local governance through their membership in local special bodies – the local development council (LDC), the local pre-qualification bids and awards committee (LPBAC), the local school board (LSB), the local health board (LHB), the local peace and order council, and other local bodies. This is in line with the policy of enabling local inhabitants to define and manage the direction of the development of their community.

Local Special Bodies Created by the Local Government Code Of 1991

Local Development Council

A local development council is created in every province, city, municipality, and barangay to formulate the socio-economic development plans and public investment programs of its locality. At the least one-fourth of the members of the LDC shall come from the NGO's operating in the LGU. NGP's credited by the sanggunian shall choose from among themselves their representatives to the council (Local Government Code, 1991).

Each LDC is mandated to create an executive committee to represent it and act in its behalf when it is not in session. NGOs are again represented in the executive committees.

The representation of the NGOs in the LDCs will ensure that the programs and projects that address the needs and aspirations of the people are accorded high priority by the LGUs.

Local Pre-qualification of Bids and Awards Committee

The local PBAC is created in every province, city and municipality to conduct prequalification of contractors, bidding, evaluation of bids, and the recommendation of awards concerning local infrastructure projects. It includes among the six members of the committee, two representatives of the accredited NGOs to be chosen by the organizations themselves, and practicing certified

public accountant from the private sector, to be designated by the local chapter of the Philippines Institute of Certified Public Accountants, if any (Local Government Code, 1991).

Local School Board

The local school board is created in every province, city, and municipality primarily to determine the annual supplementary budgetary requirements for the operation and maintenance of public schools in the locality the eight members of the local school board are from the private sector. One representative each from following organizations sit in the local school board: local federation of parent teacher associations, the local teachers association, the local teachers' organizations, and the non-academic personnel of public schools in the locality.

Members in the local school board who are not government officials or employees shall be entitled to necessary travelling expenses and allowances chargeable against the fund of the board concerned, to existing accounting and auditing rules and regulations (Ibid).

Local Health Board

The local health board is tasked to assist the sanggunian on health matters concerning the LGU. A representative from the private sector or NGOs involved in health services in the locality sits in a five man committee.

Members of the local health board who are not government officials or employees shall be entitled to necessary traveling expenses and allowances chargeable against the funds of the local health board concerned, subject to existing accounting and auditing rules and regulation (Ibid).

Local Peace and Order Council

The local peace and other council is created in every province, city, and municipality to formulate plans and recommend measures which will improve the peace and order situation in the LGU concerned. Aside from government officials, the local POC shall include as members three representatives of the private sector consisting of the academic, civil, religious, youth, labor, legal, business and media organizations. These representatives are to be appointed by the chairman upon consultation with the members of the Peace and Order Council concerned (Ibid).

Other Local Bodies

The code also provides for the membership of representatives from the NGOs and the private sector in other local special bodies like the local council on culture and arts and the local for the elderly. The establishment of these councils, however, is subject to the availability of funds (Ibid).

3. METHODOLOGY:

This study was conducted in the province of Northern Samar.

This study used qualitative approach specifically descriptive survey. The NGOs under study was represented by their directors/ heads since they are knowledgeable of the operations and functions of their respective NGOs.

Further, the researchers also included the stakeholders of the NGOs to confirm or disconfirm and to validate the information given by the NGOs as regards their participation in local governance.

The respondents of this study were the heads or directors of purposively selected NGOs in Northern Samar. The researchers also included two (2) beneficiaries and POs organized by the NGOs to confirm or disconfirm the participation of NGOs. Also, the linkages of the NGOs were included as respondents specifically the head of offices to validate the information given by the heads or directors of NGOs.

There were four sets of instruments in this study. One is a semi-structured interview for the heads or directors of selected NGOs, another was a semi-structured interview among purposively chosen beneficiaries and residents.

Further, to ensure that all responses of the respondents were captured in details, an electronic recorder was used by the researchers. The transcripts served as the bases of the data analysis. It also acquired firmly-rooted answers from the respondents of the study.

4. ANALYSIS – DISCUSSION:

Profile of the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

Names of the NGOs

The names of the accredited NGOs in Northern Samar are follows: Agricultural Workers and Entrepreneurs Multipurpose Cooperative (AWEMPC); Eastern Visayas Partnership for Rural Development Inc. (EVPRD); Center for Empowerment and Resource Development (CERD); Northern Samar Children's Ministries Network Inc. (NSCMN); Plan Philippines (PlanPhil); Sacred Heart Institute for Transformative Education Foundation (SHIFT); Samar Center for Rural Education and Development (SACRED); Seed Producers Association of Northern Samar (SPANS); Sentro ha Pagpapauswag ha Pangabuhin Inc. (SPPI); and Trustland Socialized Credit Cooperative (TSCC).

All of these have their offices in Northern Samar. Eight of them, namely; AWEMPC, CERD, EVPRD, PlanPhil, SACRED, SPANS, SPPI and TSCC, are located in Catarman, Northern Samar. NSCMN is in Lavezare, Northern Samar and SHIFT has its

office in Doña Lucia, Mondragon, Northern Samar. The data imply that majority of the NGOs offices were situated in Catarman because it is the capital town of Northern Samar and the center of trades and banking industry where NGOs can easily access their needs specifically on money transactions.

Date of Incorporation

Of the ten NGOs, SACRED was the oldest. Formed in 1990, it already existed for 28 years. The most recent was TSCC established in 2015. It has been in service for four years only as compared to the rest which have been in service for about two decades and over. PlanPhil which is an NGO under Plan International, one of the oldest NGOs in the world and founded in Spain, reached Northern Samar in 2004.

The data imply that many of them have already contributed to the improvement of the lives of the marginalized and the environment through their package of development tools which include material and technical assistance, skills training and other empowerment-related interventions.

Date of Accreditation

Of the ten NGOs, seven were accredited last October 2016, two were accredited December 2016 while on the same year one was accredited but on the month of January.

From the data, it can be observed that these NGOs are compliant of DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2001-89. The law provides certain requirements before NGOs and POs can engage in local governance. It requires all NGOs and POs pursuing partnership with government, under the Local Government Code of 1991, should go through a process of accreditation.

Moreover, as to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration of the NGOs, all of them claimed that they are registered on the same year of their date of accreditation. The primary purpose of SEC registration of NGOs according to some informant is to implement a microenterprise development strategy and providing microfinance programs, products, and services, such as microcredit and microsavings, for the poor and low-income clients. Also, through SEC registration they were able to accept donations or grants or contributions in accordance with existing laws and regulations; maintain a transparent and comprehensive management information system; and publish and disclose audited accounts at the end of every financial year

Sectors Served

There were six (6) out of ten (10) NGOs or majority of the NGOs served the farmers. It is because the province has vast agricultural land and most of the residents' source of living is farming.

Furthermore, there were five (5) out of ten (10) or half of the NGOs served youth sector because they do believe in the saying of Dr. Jose P. Rizal that *"the youth is the hope of our fatherland"*.

SHIFT, SACRED and SPPI served women sector because they believe that women constitute the most vulnerable sector in the community.

NSCMN, PlanPhil, SHIFT and Sacred served the children because they are one of the defenseless sectors in the community.

SACRED, SHIFT and SPPI served the community because they do believed that if a certain community is shelled with their aid, community can manage their common affairs and solve their own problems.

CERD, SACRED and SPPI served fisherfolks because they are suffering from poverty. CERD serves fisherfolks because it is the major thrust of their NGO.

AWEMPC and SPPI serve the laborers where they provide livelihood to them so that they will be more resilient in the community.

Lastly, SHIFT and SACRED served persons with disabilities (PWDs) because they are considered as vulnerable who do not receive much attention from the society.

Furthermore, the sectors served of the abovementioned NGOs are considered as depressed, deprived, and underprivileged (DDU), in other words, they are the ones who really need the aid of both the government and these NGOs.

SACRED topped among the ten NGOs when it comes to the number of sectors served, with seven, followed by SHIFT with six and SPPI with five, EVPRD, on the other hand, EVPRD, SPANS and TSCC, serves only one sector the farmers while CERD also serve only one sector the fisher folks.

The data further imply that SACRED has the large number of sectors served because the NGO was established since 1990 or the oldest NGO where they were able to come-up with many programs/projects for various clientele.

Types of NGO

The retrieved data indicate that the ten NGO respondents are classified as development, environmental, agricultural, humanitarian and microfinance NGOs.

The data imply that since the NGOs are of different types, they serve and provide services in accordance to their major thrust as well as the sector that they serve. AWEMPC and TSCC are microfinance, agricultural and developmental because they are cooperatives where their primary beneficiaries are farmers. They train them to be more self-reliant individuals. EVPRD is developmental, environmental and agricultural NGO concerned with the social development of depressed rural communities and the development of our natural resources and environment. CERD is developmental NGO which address the needs of fisherfolks to effectively manage marine and coastal resources on which they depend on for livelihood. NSCMN, PlanPhil and SHIFT are

developmental and humanitarian NGOs because they promote human welfare and social reforms specifically to children. SPANS is developmental, agricultural and microfinance NGOs because they offer a small lending for farmers. SPPI is developmental because it aims for the development of their beneficiaries where they provide livelihood, trainings, and seminar-workshops for the upliftment of their socio-economic status.

The data further revealed that ten or all of the NGOs are developmental because they contribute to the development of the community through their own development approach and focus.

Number of Staff

SPANS had the smallest staff with only three, AWEMPC and EVPRD with four, SACRED and TSCC with five. CERD with eight, NSCMN with seven, PlanPhil with 21, SHIFT with 25 staff, and SPPI with nine.

This data seem to negate the notion of Padilla that NGOs which are weak in membership capacity or small membership are unable to respond to the demands and responsibilities it has assumed, resulting in internal organization dysfunctions. In this study, SPANS had the smallest number of staff, yet, it covered the entire province of Northern Samar but served one sector only. In the case of EVPRD, although it served only one sector, it covers three municipalities in Northern Samar.

Scope

AWEMPC is located in Barangay Dalakit, Catarman, Northern Samar. It covers the entire province of Northern Samar or the twenty-four (24) municipalities.

EVPRD office is situated in the University of Eastern Philippines, Zone III, Catarman, Northern Samar but it covers, aside from Catarman, areas far from its office such as Mondragon, Lope De Vega, Catubig, and Calbayog. This is because EVPRD was able to establish linkages with other LGUs within and outside Northern Samar.

CERD is located in Barangay Talisay, Catarman, Northern Samar yet it covered the municipalities of San Roque, Pambujan, Mondragon, and Biri.

NSCMN is located in Barangay Ocad, Lavezares, Northern Samar. It covered the 24 municipalities.

PlanPhil is located in Catarman Northern Samar and it covers Catarman, Catubig, Lope de Vega, San Roque, and Las Navas.

SACRED is situated in Barangay, Dalakit, Catarman Northern Samar and it covered the whole province except the municipalities of Mapanas, Gamay, Lapinig, San Vicente, Capul and Silvino Lobos. According to the key informant, these six municipalities are far flung municipalities where they cannot establish a project because of their location and distance. It is hard for them to conduct the implementation and monitoring.

SPANS has no permanent office as stipulated by the key informant; however, its former location is in Barangay Calachuchi, Catarman, Northern Samar. The NGO covered the 24 municipalities but served the farmer sector only.

SPPI is found in Cawayan, Catarman Northern Samar. It covers San Antonio, Capul, Lavezares, Mapanas, Gamay, Lapinig, Laoang and Pambujan.

TSCC is located in JP Rizal Street, Catarman Northern Samar. It covered the municipalities of Catarman and Bobon.

It appears that four (4) out of ten NGOs covered the 24 municipalities in the province of Northern Samar. However, the other NGOs covered almost all the municipalities in the province.

Again the data negate the notion of Padilla because despite the manpower limitation, they can still cover large geographical area.

Source of Fund

Among the ten (10) NGOs, six (6) sources of fund came from both international and government counterparts; four (4) were from local donations and share capital of the members which include membership fees and registration of every member; two (2) from sponsors and income generated projects (IGPs)- the SPANS is selling sacks of rice as source of their fund while SHIFT is selling organic vegetables from their backyard farm, they also have hall rental and Early Childhood Care Development (ECCD) enrollment.

Major Thrust

Major Thrust

AWEMPC major thrust is lending because it is a multipurpose cooperative that provides the needed services for the empowerment of its members, making them more capable in promoting agricultural development in the countryside by increasing their self-worth, capabilities profitability and efficiency.

EVPRD thrust is agriculture where the NGO intends to encourage private/public partnerships for rural communities and economic development, increase collaboration among local government units, agencies, service providers and communities in the island through agriculture and engage local government units and national government agencies in developing programs and innovative service delivery to communities.

CERD is a non-stock, non-profit development organization with major thrust on fisherfolks empowerment. The NGO is established to address the needs of fisherfolks to effectively manage marine and coastal resources on which they depend on for livelihood.

NSCMN major thrust is children's welfare where the NGO has their four (4) core programs which include: (1) family development session; (2) youth safety; (3) break the silence: sexual abused prevention and; (4) alternative poster family care. So, these programs are intended for children's welfare.

PlanPhil major thrust is children welfare where their programs/projects are anchored on the said thrust which includes establishments of Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) buildings in the three municipalities of the province, education, trainings and other related activities on children empowerment.

SHIFT major thrust is Justice, Peace, Integrity and Creation (JPIC). As to the midterm report outlines some of the accomplishments along JPIC made in the year 2017/18. To mention a few highlights of the accomplishment, the foundation was able to train students, organic farming practitioners, agricultural extension workers, women, youth and farmers in various agricultural programs in its Sophie's Farm project. It was able to educate 39 children in 2017 and 45 children in 2018 from poor families using a mix of traditional and Montessori system of education. As stipulated also in their report, SHIFT provided livelihood to a group of mothers from the nearby coastal village and support families by rebuilding their homes. It was able to provide local and international volunteers from France and Australia. In addition, the NGO has heavily invested in its infrastructure projects to develop Sophie's Farm as training center for sustainable agriculture as well as provide board and lodging to people of like-minded organizations that aim to empower people in Northern Samar.

The major thrust of SACRED is rural education and development where their vision is to establish building network of healthy, dignified, and self-generating rural communities with active participation of women and their family to sustain economic development and sound environment. Also, the NGO participates in promoting for effective and efficient health and literacy programs to rural communities; participate in the promotion of appropriate agricultural technologies and restoration of endemic varieties; and participate in the conservation and preservation of environment and natural resources.

The major thrust of SPANS is agriculture where they provide loans to the farmers for the promotion of sustainable-farming. The major thrust of SPPI is livelihood where they provide trainings, seminar-workshops to their beneficiaries so that they are able to come-up and manage their sources of revenue.

The major thrust of TSCC is lending where the NGO grants loans to their members and farmers to finance and augment their needs.

Extent of Participation of the NGOs in Membership in Local Special Bodies

The Local Government Code of 1991, mandates that one fourth of the total membership of LSBs be reserved to accredited NGOs. The inclusion of NGOs in the LSBs is the very essence of participatory governance. As shown, all the ten (10) NGOs are members or have representations in LDCs which suggests that they have the voice in the formulation of the development plan of the barangays, municipalities, and the provinces as LDC members. Hence, the representation of the NGOs in the LDCs will ensure that the programs and projects that address the needs and aspirations of the people are accorded high priority by the LGUS.

The NSCMN and PlanPhil are also members of the Local Health Board and Local Peace and Order Council. CERD is a member of the Provincial Disaster Council (PDC) and the Municipal Disaster Council (MDC) of Mondragon. The SHIFT is a former member of peace and order council while SACRED is a former member of Local Pre-qualification of Bids and Awards Committee task to conduct prequalification of contractors, bidding, evaluation of bids, and the recommendation of awards concerning local infrastructure projects. Moreover, according to the informant:

Ang rason kung bakit kami hindi nanatilisang ibang special body kasi matagal na kami dyan.

(The reason why we are not staying in a certain special body because where are there already for a long period of time.)

Which means that there are some NGOs that do not stay as member of a certain special body because they have a time-frame that should be followed. They need to focus into other priority programs or projects.

As to the invitation of the NGOs to the provincial meetings on local special bodies, majority of the NGOs were invited regularly and can voice out their opinion. However, one of the informants said:

Minsan na invite pero minsan naman hindi.

(Sometimes we are invited, sometimes not.)

The said informant is the president of the NGO that has no permanent office in the province which affects the dissemination of information on meetings and other matters because the LSB cannot easily contact the said NGO.

Problems Encountered by the NGOs

NGOs play a vital role towards the development of the province because its collaborations with the local government of Northern Samar. However, achieving a harmonious participation of NGOs in local governance is not easy. There are some factors that can become constraints in achieving it.

A total of eight (8) constraints in achieving harmonious participation of NGOs in the province of Northern Samar emerged after associating the responses of the key informants, determining similarities, grouping and modifying categories. These constraints are: (1) political intervention; (2) lack of coordination between LGU and NGO; (3) lack of LGU support; (4) lack of budget/fund; (5) lack of community participation; (6) lack of technical skills; (7) office location and; (8) delay in the release of fund.

Of the eight issues and concerns, the number one constraint is "political intervention". Most of the informants said that political partisan primarily hinders their participation in local governance. One of the informants said,

In Northern Samar, political partisan is rampant which should be avoided whatever the political affiliation of your NGO, because there are some NGO who support certain politicians and if you are not supporting them they will tag you as a foe and will not support your NGO.

The statement implies that there are NGOs who are politically affiliated while some politicians do/will not support some NGOs because they have some loyal NGOs supporting their political career. Another informant said,

Our politics is very dirty and expensive which results to local government units seeking for funds and getting a big amount from it.

One of the informants who raised this problem was a candidate for a Sangguniang Bayan Member post in Catarman. His answer confirmed that political partisan really affects the performance of NGOs.

Hence, the result negates the notion of the father of classical public administration Woodrow Wilson on the dichotomy of politics and administration where he stipulated that politics and administration are closely related but distinct from each other. In other words, public administration “lies outside the proper sphere of politics.”

Ranked two on the problem encountered is “lack of coordination between LGUs and NGOs”. The informants stipulated that although they are accredited, they are not given opportunity to voice-out their issues and concerns as NGO in the province. One of the informants said,

We also encountered that we were there during the planning and budgeting but they neglected us during the implementation of the program.

The statement clearly shows that there is lack of coordination between the LGU and the NGO. Based on the theory of Salisbury, there should be mutuality of interest in a group in order to be a viable entity. This problem is affirmed by the theory of citizen participation which provides private individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process.

Ranked three of the problem is “lack of LGU support”. An informant said,

There is a weak partnership, LGU only tap NGO when they need our support or help not for a long term partnership.

The statement implies that there is insufficiency on the support of LGUs to NGOs specifically on their long term plans. The informant said that they are just tapped by the LGU when they need their support but not on the regular implementation of a certain program/project.

Ranking fourth among the problems is “lack of budget/fund”. The informants added that,

There is no agency that do not have problem in fund”

Although these NGOs are funded by both local and international donors, still, there is deficiency of fund that hinder and affect the implementation of their programs/projects. Budget crises are a special consideration in problem recognition, as they often trump other problems. Budgets play effective role in achieving organizational strategic goals. In this sense, budgets are ways through which one can reach the goals set. In budget development process, one tries to foresee whether strategic goals can successfully be reached or not. Budgets set standards to achieve goals and can help in evaluating the fluctuations occurring during the year and try to ascertain the reasons from deviating in achieving the defined goals. So, these NGOs implement their projects/programs based on their available resources.

Another problem encountered is “lack of community participation”. The informants cited some instances where their beneficiaries are not actively participating in their programs/projects. This problem is affirmed by Vroom expectancy motivation theory which assumes that behavior results from conscious choices among alternatives whose purpose is to maximize pleasure and to minimize pain.

Sixth among the problems is “lack of technical skills”. It is observed that these accredited NGOs have small number of employees that run the operation, hence, there is insufficiency in the manpower. The problem is pinned to Vroom when he realized that an employee's performance is based on individual factors such as personality, skills, knowledge, experience and abilities.

Another problem is “office location” where two of the ten NGOs have no permanent office. The former office of SPANS was situated at Barangay Calachuchi-Catarman, Northern Samar, however, as mentioned by the NGO's president, they do not have office right now, while the NSCMN office is situated in the residential house of their president.

The least problem encountered by the NGO is the “delay of fund”. According to them, sometimes, the delay of the counterpart of the LGUs and other partner agencies causes delays in their program/projects too.

5. FINDINGS:

The data revealed that more than half of the NGOs are serving more than a decade because they are supported by both local and foreign donors to sustain their projects/programs and operation.

The data further revealed that all of the NGOs are accredited last 2016 because it is the year where the chief executives assumed into office. As stipulated in the steps in accrediting NGOs as a pre-requisite to membership in local special bodies, the representative chosen by the accredited organization shall be co-terminus with that of the chief executive, in case of vacancy the alternative shall take over the un-expired term.

It can be gathered from the data that the farmers are the most served by the NGOs because they are considered as a vulnerable sector in the community and should be given attention. It is followed by the youth sector because they are the primary target market considering that at their young age they can do many good things for the country than other sectors. It is followed by women, children, community, PWDs, laborer and fisherfolks because they are perceived by the NGOs to be the most vulnerable among the sectors.

Nine or almost all of the NGOs are considered as local NGOs because their scope is within the vicinity of their offices, the nine (9) NGOs originated in the province of Northern Samar. However, only the PlanPhil is considered as international NGO because of its local and international linkages. The main office of the said NGO is in United Kingdom, Europe.

The NGOs can still manage their office with small number of staff only, it can be stated that these NGOs have “hand over the stick” to the POs which is actually the essence of participatory governance. The people are given wider responsibilities by the GO management hence, even with a small staff they are able to serve different sectors and cover wide area.

Aside from the fact that they know how to delegate responsibilities to the communities, NGOs are manned by committed personnel who are trained to deliver effective and efficient service.

Their major thrusts were determined through interviews and based on their vision, mission and goals.

From the data, it can be observed that 60 percent of the NGOs funds came from both international and government linkages. It can be concluded that NGOs have different sources of funds that make them sustainable and functional in achieving their goals and objectives.

As to the extent of participation of the NGOs in membership in local special bodies, it can be deduced from the data that the NGOs have less involvement in three local special bodies namely: the local health board, the local school board and the local peace and order council.

A total of eight (8) constraints in achieving harmonious participation of NGOs in the province of Northern Samar emerged after associating the responses of the key informants, determining similarities, grouping and modifying categories. These constraints are: (1) political intervention; (2) lack of coordination between LGU and NGO; (3) lack of LGU support; (4) lack of budget/fund; (5) lack of community participation; (6) lack of technical skills; (7) office location and; (8) delay in the release of fund.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- There were only ten (10) accredited NGOs in the province of Northern Samar. The LGUs of Northern Samar (LGUs) in collaboration with the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) should encourage NGOs to submit themselves for accreditation so that they can have representations not only in the local development council but also in other local special bodies in which there is lack or no representation from the NGOs. In this way, participatory governance can be fully realized.
- One of the issues raised by an informant is weak partnership of NGOs and LGUs. Hence, NGO-LGU connections must be institutionalized. This linkage must be anchored on the principle of transparency and accountability so that they can establish strong support and partnership.
- NGOs must provide their own office where they can be located. This recommendation is based on the difficulty experienced by the researcher in locating some NGOs because they do not have proper offices. Some have their offices in the residence of their respective focal person.
- The issues, concerns and recommendations raised by the key informants should be given attention by the DILG and the local government of Northern Samar to address the hindrances in achieving harmonious relationship between the NGOs and LGUs.
- Another study may be conducted to include the non-accredited NGOs in the province of Northern Samar.

7. CONCLUSION:

Non-governmental organizations have more benefits of working in rural areas as compared to governmental organizations because NGOs are more flexible. NGOs are specific to a particular locality, and moreover, these are committed towards serving the public and community as a whole. As the task of development is massive, many NGOs are playing vital role in the rural development of Northern Samar in collaboration with the government.

Thus, in this way, the NGOs can bring the awareness among the poor rural people. It is now the need of the society as well as the nation to make these rural area and people competent to be aware about their fundamental rights. NGOs are the only organizations that could make the rural area developed.

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