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Some experiences from the Philippines in urban community development planning

by EDNA CO, JAN VELASCO-FABONAN and JEREMY PHILIPPE NISHIMORI

Introduction

The legal background and structures

Local autonomy is enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. The Local Government Code of 1991 (LGC) provides the legislative basis for people's participation in governance. Under the LGC, the local government units (LGUs) assume broader responsibility and greater accountability to their constituents. Each local government unit (LGU) must have a multi-sectoral development plan to be developed by its corresponding Local Development Council (LDC). The Local Development Council is the mechanism through which the local council, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), people's organisations (POs), and the private sector participate in local development planning, including budget planning and local resource allocation. At least 25% of the seats of the local development council should come from non-governmental groups, people's organisations, or the private sector. Table 1 shows the composition of the Local Development Councils at different levels.

The case study: participatory situational analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (SAPIME) in three urban *barangays*

ECPG (Empowering Civic Participation in Governance) is an

NGO working on village-level local governance. Participation of NGOs and POs in participatory development planning has been more common in rural areas than in urban areas, and so it was a challenge for ECPG to venture into participatory local development planning in urban areas, and it is now working in three *barangays* (villages) in Quezon City, the capital of the Philippines (Culiat, Sauyo, and Santa Monica, with populations of 27–50,000 people). The city holds the largest number of informal urban dwellers in metropolitan Manila and probably in the Philippines. One of the basic qualities shared by the three *barangays* is the presence of strong people's organisations, with whom ECPG works.

The SAPIME methodology

ECPG is committed to the improvement of urban participatory local development planning as opposed to narrow technical planning. ECPG's strategy is called *Barangay Development Planning Through Participatory Situational Analysis, Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation* (BDP-Participatory SAPIME). In this participatory methodology community members themselves identify and analyse their problems, the situation within which these problems are embedded, and the possible solutions. Table 2 summarises the approach.

Table 1: Structures and roles of local government

Local Government unit	Approx. population	Role of the Local Development Council	Composition of the Local Development Council
Province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not less than 250,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the formulation of annual, medium-term, and long-term socio-economic development plans and public investment programmes • the evaluation and prioritisation of socio-economic programmes and projects • the formulation of local investment incentives that will promote the inflow of private investment • the coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of development programmes and projects being implemented in its jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • governor • mayors of the component cities and municipalities • the chairperson of the Committee on Appropriations of the Provincial Government (budget committee) • the congressman or his representative • NGO/PO representatives operating in the province, who should constitute no less than one-fourth of the members of the fully organised council
City/municipality	150,000+ 25,000 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The formulation of annual, medium-term, and long-term socio-economic development plans and public investment programmes • The evaluation and prioritisation of socio-economic programs and projects • The formulation of local investment incentives that will promote the inflow of private investment • The coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of development programmes and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mayor • All of the <i>punong barangays</i> (village heads) in the city/municipality • The chairperson of the Committee on Appropriations of the City/Municipal Government • The congressman or his representative • NGO/PO representatives operating in the city/municipality, who should constitute no less than one-fourth of the members of the fully organised council
Barangay (barangay Development Council)	2,000+ for municipality 5,000+ for city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mobilisation of people's participation in local development efforts • preparation of local development plans based on local requirements • implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national and local programmes and projects in their locality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>punong barangay</i> (village head) • members of the <i>barangay</i> council • The congressman or his representative • NGO/PO representatives operating in the <i>barangay</i>, who should constitute no less than one-fourth of the members of the fully organised council

Key elements

Social preparation and capability-building interventions

Upon establishing the partnership between the *barangay* and ECPG, the *barangay* officers went through a three-day capability-building workshop called an Empowering Local Governance Seminar (ELGS) on management and planning issues, as well as the role of civil society, and emphasising the engagement of the *barangay* officials with people's organisations. A Technologies of Participation (TOP) participatory methodology was used to engage participants in the discussion and planning. Smaller workshop sessions enabled all participants to speak out, others were empowered to show their leadership by serving as small group facilitators, and others reported on the outcomes of the group discussions. By doing this, the leadership skills of the individuals were honed, the ability to articulate and communicate with others on issues that matter to them is strengthened, and self-confidence built among these potential leaders. More-

over, unity and group cohesion emerged as another inspiring outcome of this technique.

To help start the participatory planning process, ECPG ran a social preparation programme, specifically for the POs and other community associations in the *barangays* to reintroduce the *barangay* as a venue for people's participation, specifically through the formulation of a comprehensive development plan.

Later on, the ECPG organised a seminar called Citizens' Legal Capability-Building Seminar (CLCBS), which introduced POs to the laws, policies, and citizens' rights that are relevant to their interests.

Multi-sector assemblies

Multi-sector assemblies comprising of different interest groups such as transport groups, the urban poor, the elderly, youth, the various homeowners associations, and other interest groups were initiated by ECPG's community facilitators as a venue for sharing experiences and concerns, to

Table 2: Elements of the community-based planning process

Elements	CBP in Quezon City, Philippines
Planning unit	<i>Barangay</i> (village)
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three- to four-week process mostly at weekends including <i>barangay</i> • profiling (situation analysis) by sector and area, development plan • multi-sector assemblies developed as forums • acts as guide for a Local (<i>Barangay</i>) Development Investment Plan (LDIP)
Facilitation of <i>barangay</i> plans	By community facilitators.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three-day training for <i>barangay</i> officers by NGO on empowering local governance • social preparation programme for POs, highlighting role of development plan, as well as legal capacity-building • two-day training for participatory planning facilitators from the community • capacity-building on implementation, M&E, and legal rights for <i>barangay</i> structures
Financing of planning process	The budget allocation includes support for workshops and similar activities that would engage community participation through POs' participation in the <i>Barangay</i> Development Plan.
Funding the plans	Stakeholders forum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Government agencies • NGOs – provide organising, training/seminars, and medical missions • Local Government officials Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) for footpaths, sanitation, livelihood training /seminars, medical missions, improvement of PO participation in <i>barangay</i> affairs • City Government for financing of infrastructure and human development projects such as rip-rapping, <i>barangay</i> roads, micro-renting, parks and recreation, improvement of rivers/creeks • the Community Development Fund of district representatives for <i>barangay</i> roads, park, and recreation centres. • People's organisations – can work on the implementation and financing aspects of the plan
Linkage to city and provincial plans	The Local Development Investment Plan is adopted as a component of the <i>barangay</i> plan, which in turn is forwarded to the higher level of local government, for budget consideration and support by the higher local government level.
Implementation of the <i>barangay</i> plans	Through the leadership of the <i>barangay</i> as the LGU concerned, the projects in the development plan are cooperatively implemented with the concerned National Government agencies, LGUs, and other possible stakeholders.
Monitoring and evaluation of implementation at <i>barangay</i> level	For monitoring and evaluation needs, the participatory planners who participated in the participatory planning process are transformed into participatory monitoring and evaluation teams.

bring out the common agenda in local development among community associations. The multi-sectoral assembly also provides a forum for community members to validate the development programme initially drafted through the seminar-workshops.

Preparation for and mobilisation of BDP-participatory SAPIME

The community is prepared for the development planning process through a combination of the initial groundwork by ECPG's community facilitators and a two-day training for participatory planning facilitators (PPFs) and *barangay* participatory planners (BPPs).

The planning methodology

The overall process of participatory situational analysis, planning, and budgeting takes three to four weeks, with most of the work done during the weekends. The planning methodology used is shown in Table 3.

Once familiarised with the tools, the planners and the facilitators work with sector-based and geographic groupings to produce a corresponding situational analysis for each, which is later consolidated into a comprehensive multi-sectoral development plan. Subsequently a two-week process of validation, enrichment, and refinement is

Stage	Tool
The Technologies of Participation (TOP) tools for the PPFs and the BPPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the discussion method: objective, reflective, interpretative, and decisional (ORID) mode of discourse, for situations where participants have a common experience • the workshop method: a mode of discourse for situations where there might be differences of experiences, but with a common ground
Situation analysis (SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resource and social mapping: including 'community walks' where PPFs and BPPs walk through geographic sub-areas of the community to take note of its social and resource characteristics • historical transect map: including political, social, and economic transitions • Venn diagram: measuring the degrees of influence and persuasion that community leaders, organisations, government agencies, and personnel have in different arenas and issues • service map of all the services that can be found within the community, which are given a rating • organisational ratings matrix assessing all organisations and institutions within the community, including the <i>barangay</i> council
SWOT Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOT for each SA tool and a Grand SWOT which takes into consideration the SWOT results of each SA tool
Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of situation analysis by sector and area
Participatory Planning (P) tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problem tree: participants identify the main problems, the root causes, the extensions and their interrelations, as experienced by the <i>barangay</i> • objective tree: participants transform the problems outlined in the problem tree into ideal situations and the actions necessary to achieve that situation • alternatives analysis: participants analyse and prioritise the different possible projects based on necessity, acceptability, and the availability of funds • participation analysis: through this process, the participants evaluate the motives, interests, and possible contributions of all the stakeholders for specific projects. As such, a strategy for each stakeholder can be constructed • development of sectoral/area plans • validation, enrichment, refinement over two weeks • development of consolidated multi-sectoral plan with short-, medium-, and long-term sectoral goals
Planning implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of a Local (<i>Barangay</i>) Development Investment Plan (LDIP), • Preparation of the <i>barangay's</i> annual budget

undertaken through sector and area assemblies.

Some responses to the process

Reactions from the community

Some of the initial reactions from the community regarding the process were:

Situational analysis

- Most community members were surprised that they were being invited to participate in the process of planning for the development plan, and thus, were eager to participate.
- Some participants found the planning tools initially difficult to use but eventually found the visual and participatory nature of the tools attractive and encouraging.
- *Barangay* officials were generally supportive of the participatory process being implemented. A few others with

traditional leadership backgrounds were hesitant to move into a terrain of planning that involved people's participation and power-sharing structures.

- Some members of the community were not interested.

Participatory planning

- Some community members found the process difficult and hard to sustain, specifically in some sectors and certain areas.
- Community members from homeowners' associations and organisations that manage the affairs of private subdivisions were often outnumbered by the informal settlers in the community. In the past, issues such as peace and order and waste management, have been the focus of development planning; the current process being introduced has balanced the focus on other urban poor issues e.g. housing and basic services.

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- Some *barangay* officials felt that participatory planning encroached on what is essentially the terrain of *barangay* officials.

Implementation

- The three *barangays* are in the process of setting the plan into an ordinance.
- The various POs in the three communities are currently lobbying for the passage of the ordinance.

Reactions by local government

The commitment and support of the Local Government units concerned towards the participatory planning process is also important. On many occasions during the planning, the *barangay* officials opposed some of the proposals raised e.g. citing budgetary restrictions that already limit the provision of basic services. Previously, local development planning overemphasised infrastructure projects. While LGUs can provide support for the participatory planning process, it is equally important that they redirect their priorities towards more responsive and people-centred programmes and projects. The involvement of *barangay* officials in the planning helped to ensure a better balance between physical and socio-economic projects.

At present, the use of participatory planning in the three *barangays* has been given legal status through ordinances, incorporating participatory development planning into the *barangay's* budget system. A pledging session is also underway with the higher Local Government units, National Government agencies, and funding agencies, to supplement the limited financial capacities of the *barangays*.

Currently, the on-going BDP has to be integrated with the Community Development Plan of Quezon City to tap budget allocations to support the projects at the *barangay* level that would eventually lead to direct improvement of the Quezon City dwellers as a whole. These include budgets for education, the Social Development Fund, and other related resources.

Issues and challenges

There were tendencies among some people's organisations to use the newly gained planning skills as a tool to challenge *barangay* officials on issues pertaining to transparency and management. Some *barangay* officials felt threatened by the empowerment of POs and saw PO leaders as potential competitors in the next elections. To avoid this jeopardising their willingness to support the plans, participants have to be reminded to focus on the planning goals and not personal attacks.

The majority of inhabitants in the three *barangays* are poor and marginalized, and in the process the development plan must be continuously challenged to check how it responds to the needs of this majority. For example the issues of basic services and housing rights are given priority by the BPPs over other demands such as peace and order. However, the other needs cannot be ignored and should also be addressed.

Besides social preparation (information dissemination, coordination, collaboration, and consultation), funding is the biggest hurdle for the participatory development plan as the available funds are likely to be less than the requirements of the projects planned for. Prioritisation is therefore an essential process, as well as ensuring that funds already allocated for Local Governments by the National Government are actually disbursed to them on time. The late disbursement of these funds causes the Local Governments to use their funds for these devolved functions, thus further reducing the budget available for LGU projects.

Another issue is the lack of coordination among the *barangay* and their parent cities or provinces in their planning processes. For example, the City Government drafts their own plans and LDIP to comply with the prerequisite for receiving their annual funding but without considering the individual BDP's from their localities. More often than not, these city plans would advocate the political agendas of the city's leaders. This has resulted in poorly synchronised programmes, and the formulation of community development and land use plans that do not reflect the felt needs of the *barangays*.

Replication and scale-up

The experience of these three *barangays* illustrates that the system is workable and practical and can be replicated in other *barangays*. However, the three pilots are essentially poor urban communities. Another set of pilots may have to be conducted in dissimilar communities so that a more comprehensive set of guidelines and performance indicators can be developed.

Barangay officials are sensitive to the threat of being unseated by members of the participating organisations or being subjected to severe criticism. Therefore, unless the process is made a mandatory annual exercise for all *barangays*, e.g. for the release of the *barangay's* budget, it will not be easy to ensure widespread adoption of this process.

The city or provincial level should also benefit from the participatory process. Should the provincial plan not be the amalgamation of the plans of the subordinate Government units? This cannot simply be the case, because the social and economic requirements of a province or a large city are more than the sum of the requirements of its subordinate units. Nevertheless, the concept of participatory planning is very relevant using representatives from the planning units of the

Edna Co**Jan Velasco-Fabonan****Jeremy Philippe 'Nishi' Nishimori**

barangays in the city or provincial planning process, and avoiding the arbitrary selection of planning members and the non-representation of some sectors in the planning process.

Local governments as enablers should provide a level playing field, role definitions, advice on workable courses of action and priorities, and they should set up monitoring and evaluation units to promote transparency in the budget allocation for community activities.

CONTACT DETAILS

Edna Co, Associate Professor, University of the Philippines National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Email: ednaco@up.edu.ph

Johanna 'Jan' L. Velasco-Fabonan, Programme Officer, Urban Local Governance Team, ECPG, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Email: janvelasco-fabonan@consultant.com

Jeremy Philippe 'Nishi' Nishimori, Programme Officer, Policy Research and Publications Team, ECPG, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Email: ampaonarchist16@yahoo.com

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GLOSSARY

BDP	<i>Barangay</i> development plan
BPP	<i>Barangay</i> participatory planners
ECPG	Empowering Civic Participation in Governance (the lead NGO)
LDC	Local Development Council
LGC	Local Government Code of 1991
LDIP	Local (<i>Barangay</i>) Development Investment Plan
LGU	Local Government units
PO	People's Organisations
PPF	Participatory planning facilitators
SAPIME	Participatory Situational Analysis, Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation
TOP	Technologies of Participation methodology