

## Editor's Preface

**Virginia A. Miralao**

This special issue of the *PSR* on Philippine NGOs is meant to provide readers with a review of the work and activities of NGOs, which beginning the 1970s and through the 1980s, took on a lead role in social and national transformation. The articles in this issue variously deal with the conditions that gave rise to NGO formations and activities; the interplay between state policies and programs and the popular causes and movements led by NGOs; and the gains and achievements as well as limitations of the advocacy and other social transformational initiatives of NGOs.

The first four articles in this issue were initially prepared in connection with an ongoing assessment of NGO roles and opportunities by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) which pioneered in establishing direct funding mechanisms for NGOs within its official development assistance program in the Philippines. In the first article, J. Eliseo Rocamora discusses some of the major political and economic changes that have occurred nationally and internationally and their impact on NGO activity. The paper also calls attention to the future implications of these changes on the NGO community in general, and on progressive or "development NGOs" in particular.

The second article on "The Growth and Changing Roles of NGOs and the Voluntary Sector" by Virginia A. Miralao and Ma. Cynthia B. Bautista complements the first by tracing the growth of NGOs since the 1980s and the differentiation that has occurred in the organizations, functions and activities of NGOs. The paper too, touches on the nature of the working relationships that have evolved between NGOs and government, and NGOs and external funding agencies.

The third paper, "NGO-GO Relationships: Experience and Prospects" by Victor E. Tan and Rose R. Nierras looks more closely into the nature of NGO-GO collaboration at the level of national agencies and local governments. It highlights some of the issues surrounding the working relationship between government and NGOs, and identifies opportunities for advancing their collaborative work.

The fourth paper on "Standard Evaluation Methodologies and NGO Projects", written also by Virginia A. Miralao and Ma. Cynthia B. Bautista, tackles the issues and problems arising from the application of conventional program/project evaluation methodologies employed by donor agencies to NGO work and projects.

The next four articles deal with specific sectoral causes and struggles that were sustained with NGO mobilization and support. Two of these were contributed by associates of the Institute of Church and Social Issues (ICSI) which has gained recognition for its research and analysis on contemporary social movements and other forms of popular participation evoked by government policies and societal tensions and conflicts. Ana Marie A. Karaos' paper on "Manila's Squatter Movement: A Struggle for Place and Identity" looks at how the urban poor movement was influenced by changing state policies, government administrations and political conditions since the 1970s. She argues that the squatter movement was a reactionary movement, the development of which was conditioned by state initiatives and policies. She also examines the role of ideology in popular movements and the likely impact of ongoing democratization processes on these.

Focusing on the peasant sector, Maria Cielito C. Goño likewise discusses the interaction between the Congress for People's Agrarian Reform, the largest coalition ever forged by farmers' groups in the Philippines, with the Aquino and Ramos governments in the area of legislative, public policy and electoral action. She further examines how differences in the membership, leadership forms and ideologies of farmer organizations have affected their dynamics and cohesion and their ability to relate with government. Despite organizational weaknesses, Ms. Goño credits the peasant coalition for increasing public awareness and knowledge of peasant struggles and interests.

The paper written by Michael L. Tan, who heads the Health Action Information Network (HAIN), on "The Development of Health NGOs in the Philippines: A Sociohistorical Review" documents the development of health NGOs in the Philippines. His article goes beyond a narrative chronology of events and calls attention to the importance of social context in understanding developments in the health sector and the alternative health movement and community-based health care systems founded by NGOs.

The last article contributed by Nanette Garcia-Dungo of the UP Department of Sociology reviews the work and experiences of NGOs in Negros Occidental, with the view of assessing the effectivity of NGOs in bringing about desired social changes. She concludes that while the patronage culture long institutionalized in Negros' sugar haciendas is difficult to change, NGO activity in the province has nonetheless ushered in new experiments for alleviating the impoverished conditions of sugar workers. Among these are the emergence of Basic Christian Communities and various forms of land transfer and sharing schemes forged with the assistance of NGOs.

This issue also carries a review prepared by Fernando N. Zialcita of the Ateneo Department of Sociology and Anthropology on two books written by Niels Mulder on self and social identities in Thai and Javanese societies. Finally, an obituary of the late Fr. Renato A. Ocampo, S.J., who served as President of the Philippine Sociological Society from 1988 to 1991 and who worked closely with NGOs, is also included in this issue.