Monitoring Governance:
Civil Society Experience in Cebu City

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This article examines two local governance monitoring initiatives in Cebu City in terms of objectives, methodology, findings and outcomes. On the basis of the nine core principles of good governance espoused by the UNDP's The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI), the sectoral stakeholders rated the city "Good" in both the general report card and the gender report card. The ratings also showed that the city can do much more in terms of equity. In another monitoring exercise in The People's Efficiency and Transparency Campaign (PEAT), community-based groups and the follow-up customer feedback survey showed improvement in service delivery among the city's eight departments. The report card system has generated public awareness on the need to monitor public agencies to improve performance and provided a sense of empowerment to civil society. However, to be effective, this monitoring must be done regularly. Improving the methodology of the process, particularly of the sampling design, will definitely enhance the credibility of citizen monitoring.

Introduction

In the governance paradigm, the state, civil society and the private sector interact to pursue societal development. Governance is the result of the interaction of the three

regimes in the political, economic, administrative and social realms that have bearing on the living standards and quality of life of the citizens (UNDP 2000). Managing urbanization and improving the environment requires concerted efforts among policy-making institutions, regional and local authorities and the community at large (UNCHR 1996). Good governance is thus regarded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as central to sustainable human development.[1] Participation, transparency, accountability and efficient and effective management are the core principles of good governance as defined by different organizations[2]. A global effort to develop indicators to measure good governance has been spearheaded by the UNDP in recent years. In the Philippines, institutions have developed indicators and standards of performance for local government. Among these are the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Associates in Rural Development of the Governance and Local Democracy Project (GOLD), and the Development Academy of the Philippines. However, using the tools developed by these institutions to monitor local governance by civil society is still very limited.

Cebu's civil society is a pioneer in the actual monitoring of performance of a local government unit directly by local groups in their locality. This is not surprising considering that active civil society participation in city governance has already gained recognition in the 1990s. Cebu City was cited as a best practice in GO-NGO partnership in service delivery by the Urban Management Programme, UNDP in 1995 (Etemadi 1995). Following their paradigm shift from "expose-oppose" to "expose-oppose-propose", the non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) changed their stance from confrontation to critical collaboration vis-à-vis the city government in the early 1990s. Since then they have been intensifying their political engagement beyond advocacy and service delivery by participating in policy legislation or reformulation, city planning, program planning, implementation and

monitoring as well as conflict management and resolution (Etemadi 2001).

This article examines civil society participation in two NGO-led local governance monitoring projects in Cebu City[3] – The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI) of the UNDP and the People's Efficiency and Transparency Campaign of the Solidarity for Justice Project (SJP). It discusses the objectives of the monitoring, the methodology used, and the major findings and analyzes the outcomes. Lessons learned from the NGO experience provide insights towards improving citizen surveys to strengthen civil society participation in monitoring local governance. Gaps in the research methodology are identified based on the standards of scientific rigor in research.

The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI)

TUGI is a UNDP project intended to help local governments make cities particularly those in the Asia Pacific (UNDP 2000) more livable. The project has identified nine core characteristics of good governance: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision.

- Participation

✓ All men and women should have a voice in decision-making either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interest

✓ Participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively

- Rule of Law

✓ Fair legal frameworks which are enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights

- Transparency

✓ Free flow of information

✓ Access to processes, institutions and information

✓ Enough information is available

- Responsiveness

✓ Institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders

- Consensus Orientation

✓ Differing interests are mediated to reach a broad consensus on what is the best interest of the group; and on policies and procedures

- Equity

✓ All men and women have opportunities to improve and maintain their well-being

- Effectiveness and Efficiency

✓ Processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources

- Accountability

✓ Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public as well as to institutional stakeholders

- Strategic Vision

✓ Leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on human development

✓   A sense of what is needed for development

✓   Perspective grounded on an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities

It has developed A Municipal Report Card or the General Report Card on the nine characteristics with corresponding indicators. The purpose of the report card is to encourage and assist the urban local governments and their civil society and corporate sector partners in understanding and appreciating the need for regular assessment of performance to determine and address the strengths and weaknesses of the city's political and administrative mechanisms subsequently.

Aside from the General Report Card for Good Governance, TUGI has also proposed the Issue Report Card on eight critical urban concerns: employment/job creation, solid waste collection and disposal, urban poverty, shelter and housing, water and sanitation, public transport and traffic, health services, and civil society participation.

The Lihok Pilipina[4] was tasked by the UNDP to field test the General Report Card and the Issue-based Gender and Development (GAD) Report Card as Cebu City was chosen as one of the lead cities in 2000. A Technical Working Group was formed with one sectoral representative each from the NGO, academe, women, and lawyer's group. The members modified the two TUGI sample protocols to suit the local context and provided translation in Cebuano, the local dialect. They also identified the major interest groups and shortlisted key informants concerned with city governance. The project mobilized the support of civil society by creating the Local Steering Committee at the start of project implementation. Representatives from the media, business, academe and the mayors' office were briefed about the project and were consulted regarding its implementation. With their inputs, the bilingual questionnaire and the list of

participants were finalized. The participants were invited to a one-day multi-sectoral consultation at the Sacred Heart Center on November 22, 2000. After a briefing on the project, the respondents proceeded to answer the General Report Card, the results of which were tabulated and presented to the body by mid-day. In the afternoon, the respondents tackled the GAD Report Card. The consultation concluded with a report on the results by sector followed by an open forum.

A total of 68 respondents from 14 sectors rated the General Report Card. The government sector was represented by city and barangay officials (4), two pillars of the justice system[5] (2), and the City Health Office (3). The 59 civil society participants came from different sectors: business (1), cooperatives (3), vendors (2), labor (2), farmers (3), urban poor (4), NGOs (4), religious (1), academe (3), students (24), children (3), elderly (7), and media (2). The GAD report card was rated by all the above sectors except the students. Two focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted separately among the women's groups (20) and the researchers from the academe (10) on November 29, 2000. The 30 FGD participants also assessed the strengths and weaknesses of city governance on gender and development by filling up the issue-based report card.

The overall result of the General Report Card indicated that the City performance was Good. The GO sector rated Cebu City's performance as Good with an average of 67.83 while the civil society representatives including the students gave a lower rating at an average of 54.91 or Fair (Table 1). Of the nine characteristics, transparency[6] and participation[7] received the highest rating by the GO and civil society respectively. After all, Cebu City showcases a track record of GO-NGO partnership. However, all sectors gave the lowest score to equity. Based on the indicators used, the rating implies that the city government has to increase its efforts to reduce poverty incidence, improve low-

income habitats, attend to the needs of the disadvantaged sectors such as workers and the informal sectors, and increase women's participation in senior positions.

Table 1. General Report Card by Sector: Cebu City November 2000			
Core Characteristics of Good Governance	Sector		
	Government (9)	Civil Society (35)	Students (24)
	Percentage (%)		
Participation	67.42	58.75	61.00
Rule of Law	67.30	55.41	52.26
Transparency	71.70	55.56	50.91
Responsiveness	68.33	57.85	51.26
Consensus Orientation	67.64	52.97	57.25
Equity	65.67	50.78	45.07
Effectiveness and Efficiency	68.77	54.33	53.02
Accountability	65.19	53.58	55.50
Strategic Vision	69.81	55.13	58.48
Total	**67.83**	**55.24**	**54.58**

Ratings:
85-100%   Very Good (Keep it up)
65-84%   Good (But needs more improvement)
50-64%   Fair (Can do much better)
35-49%   Poor (Needs more commitment and effort)
Below 35%   Very Poor
Data based on Lihok Pilipina, Gender and Good Urban Governance, 2002.

The GO rating on city performance on the GAD report card was again higher (70.28 or *Good*) compared to that of civil society (56.52 or *Fair*) (Table 2). With the creation of the women's desk in police stations, the women and family affairs commission, and the Cebu City Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children by the city government, the GO perceived the city to be strong in *participation*[8]. In contrast, the civil society rated *accountability*[9] as the highest of the nine characteristics. Among the civil society groups, participants from the women's groups gave the highest score to *accountability* and a higher rating overall. They reasoned that since most of them were members of organized women's groups, they were more aware of the programs initiated for the development of their sector and their implementation.

As in the General Report Card, *equity* had the lowest rating in the GAD Report Card from both the GO and civil society.

Table 2 Gender and Development Report Card by Sector: Cebu City November 2000

Core Characteristics of Good Governance	Sector			
	Government (9)	Civil Society (37)	Women (20)	Academe/ Researchers (10)
	Percentage (%)			
Participation	73.50	58.04	61.23	53.25
Rule of Law	72.44	55.05	59.65	53.88
Transparency	72.94	54.07	60.67	58.22
Responsiveness	69.17	49.26	58.82	56.40
Consensus Orientation	70.22	53.60	62.18	57.17
Equity	62.48	47.49	55.88	48.59
Effectiveness and Efficiency	70.94	58.99	59.46	50.44
Accountability	71.11	60.36	67.64	62.77
Strategic Vision	68.25	52.14	62.42	52.33
Total	**70.28**	**54.24**	**60.72**	**54.61**

Ratings:
85-100% Very Good (Keep it up)
65-84%   Good (But needs more improvement)
50-64%   Fair (Can do much better)
35-49%   Poor (Needs more commitment and effort)
Below 35%   Very Poor
Data based on Lihok Pilipina, Gender and Good Urban Governance, 2002.

The participants raised the following issues and concerns:

• Need to improve basic service provision to the city's poor and their quality of life;

• Participation and representation of women at all levels (particularly at the barangay level) from needs assessment to policy making and project planning, implementation and monitoring;

• Release of the P8 million GAD budget allocated in 2000;

• Clear-cut guidelines on how to access and use the GAD budget;

• Increase in the current GAD budget of the city government which is below the five percent mandated by law;

• Women's participation in the drafting of the Women's Code initiated by the city;

• Passage of laws prohibiting violence against women;

• Legal protection of women who are victims of violence;

• Equal representation of all sectors in the consultation (this was considered by the organizer but some of those invited did not attend the consultation); and

• Disseminating the results of the report cards to the different sectors of society.

The People's Efficiency and Transparency Campaign (PEAT)

The PEAT is a component of the Solidarity for Peace Project which seeks to "bring about improvements in the administration of justice for disadvantaged workers in the formal and informal sectors" (Solidarity for Justice Coalition 2001). One of the main objectives of the Project is to catalyze collective action from various civil society groups to promote efficiency, integrity and transparency in public governance. The Campaign aims to promote effective application of RA 6713 (The Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees). Subsequently, coalition watch groups were organized in the pilot areas in the National Capital Region, Calabarzon and Central Visayas[10]. These groups consist of trade unions, women's, child-

oriented and migrant workers' advocacy groups, community-based organizations, government workers and their organizations. In Cebu City, the coalition watch group was led by Lihok Pilipina in partnership with the *Bantay Banay*[11] Federation and the Cebu Law Inc., another NGO.

The campaign was implemented in two phases in Cebu City from August to October 2001. In Phase I, the coalition watch group observed and conducted key informant interviews to monitor the compliance of eight (8) city departments/offices with the provisions of RA 6713 pertinent to the responsibilities of the government agency and the duties of government workers. Two months later, a customer feedback survey was conducted in Phase II to find out if there was any improvement in service delivery. The findings of Phase I and II were presented to the stakeholders for validation on August 28, 2001 and October 26, 2001 respectively with media coverage.

The indicators used in Phase I include the following:

✓   Presence of building directory
✓   Availability service guide
✓   Posting of work flowchart
✓   Designation of information desk/booth
✓   Familiarity of information officer with the workflow
✓   Specification of complain procedure
✓   Availability of service inquiry via telephone
✓   Familiarity of phone call receiver with the workflow
✓   Availability of seats in the waiting area
✓   Attitude of service provider
✓   Availability of notice of payment or charges
✓   Posting of payment rate
✓   Issuance of official receipt
✓   Presence of "fixers" [12]

The Customer Feedback Survey in Phase II used the following indicators:

- ✓ Presence of building directory or signage
- ✓ Availability of service guide
- ✓ Posting of work flowchart
- ✓ Designation of information desk/booth
- ✓ Specification of complain procedure
- ✓ Length of waiting time
- ✓ Attitude of service provider
- ✓ Posting of payment or charges
- ✓ Issuance of official receipt
- ✓ Payment of grease money
- ✓ Presence of "fixers"
- ✓ Filing of complaint

The *Bantay Banay* members were tapped to conduct the monitoring for Phase I after undergoing an orientation. Two monitors were assigned to each of the eight (8) city departments namely, the City Health Office (CHO), City Traffic and Operations Management (CITOM), Department of Engineering and Public Works (DEPW), Department for Social Welfare Services (DSWS), Department for the Welfare of Urban Poor (DWUP), Office of Building Official (OBO), City Accounting Office, and the City Assessor's Office. Data were gathered primarily through observation guided by a checklist. The monitors then asked the employees of some concerned offices to confirm their observation.

For the customer feedback survey, the same monitors interviewed ten respondents in each department. The survey was conducted among two types of "on the street" respondents – those who were waiting for their turn but had previous transaction with the same office and those who were about to leave the office after transacting their business at the counter.

Monitoring the compliance of city offices with RA 6713 shows the following findings:

- No building directory in the City Hall;

- No service guide posted in the eight offices being monitored;

- Only the DWUP and the City Accounting Office have displayed a flow chart which is visible but does not specify service timeframe;

- All offices except the City Health and the OBO have an information booth and an information officer; the information officer is familiar with office procedures and could provide information to clients regarding processing of requests;

- Except for the City Accounting, no other office has posted the complain procedure though the City Engineering has a grievance committee;

- Complaint forms and procedures are available in the Accounting Office and the DWUP;

- All offices accept telephone inquiry except the City Assessor's Office which entertains only personal inquiry. The telephone at the CHO was out of service because the line was cut due to unpaid bills;

- Clients waited in long queues at the Accounting Office and the OBO particularly at the CITOM and the Assessor's Office; the long line at City Health actually led to the Local Civil Registrar which is located in the same building;

- There are seats for the waiting public but the City Engineering, the OBO and the Accounting Office are too crowded;

- The personnel in all the offices are respectful except those in the OBO;

- Processing of service takes time in the CITOM, OBO, Accounting, and Assessor's Office; texting on the cellphone among CITOM personnel was observed;

- The CITOM imposes fines for traffic violations and the OBO charges for documentary stamps;

- Official receipts are issued for payments received at the CITOM, DWUP, OBO, and the Assessor's Office reflecting the amount received; and

- There are "fixers" in the City Engineering and the OBO.

The Customer Feedback Survey reveals the following:

- Five of the eight offices – the CHO, CITOM, OBO, City Accounting and City Assessor have already posted a service guide in their respective offices;

- The OBO has set up an information desk with an information officer;

- Clients queue up in the CHO, CITOM, OBO, City Accounting and the Assessor's Office; some (31) waited for less than thirty minutes while others (23) waited for less than an hour or so;

- For many (63), it was their first transaction at the office concerned; a few (13) have reportedly gone back to the same office for the second time. Two (2) are said to be on their fourth visit for the same business at the Accounting and the Assessor's respectively;

- About half of the respondents (41) did not complete their business on the same day because:

⇨ Service is by schedule at the CHO, DEPW, and DWUP;

⇨ Requests at the DEPW were pending because a sketch had to be made or the mayor's approval had yet to be secured;

⇨ At the CITOM, delays are attributed to unavailability of the arresting officer, lack of endorsement and other factors related to the functions of the Land Transportation Office and the Philippine National Police;

- Most of the respondents were attended to right away upon their turn; two respondents reported that the attending officer at the CITOM was texting on the cellphone;

- The attending officials were perceived to be respectful except those in the CHO and the OBO;

- A third of the respondents paid charges for certificates, certification or traffic violations most of whom paid less than P100.00; nobody claimed to have paid *suborno* (grease money) to "fixers";

- Ten respondents noted the presence of "fixers" at the CITOM; and

- Only 17 openly complained about the processing time. Most of them suggested that the office increase its workforce but a few (6) expressed their willingness to pay *suborno*.

Issues and Concerns

The participants in the validation forum raised matters concerning the conduct of interview, factors affecting service performance and the need for feedbacking.

Reluctance of clients. Members of the coalition watch group reported that the respondents were hesitant to answer their questions at the outset because they had never been asked by strangers to provide feedback on government service delivery. After a process of persuasion, they were finally convinced. Some were wary about how the information gathered would be used.

Proper orientation of the monitors. Some of the community monitors were not familiar with the roles and functions of the offices. Two offices reacted during the validation of findings. Apparently, no distinction was made among the clients of CHO, the Local Civil Registrar and the Treasurer's Office that are all located in the City Health Building. The CITOM representative also clarified that the CITOM, the Land Transportation office and the Philippine National Police have their respective responsibilities when road accidents happen.

Broader picture. The call for efficiency should be contextualized within the broader picture of city administration. Budgetary constraints and the lack of space, manpower and equipment are some of the factors that affect public service delivery.

Training of rank and file. At present, only the top level management in the city government undergo further training in the SPRING[13] program. Training should also be conducted among the rank and file to improve their performance.

Awards and incentives. Awards and incentives would encourage better performance among public servants. Government offices and their employees are likely to do their best if they think they are competing with other departments.

Reshuffling of personnel. The reassignment of personnel particularly the head of an office due to political reasons does not help to improve performance. The regular staff of

an office are reportedly demoralized by the new head who has to seek guidance from them instead of leading them.

Promotion not based on merit. Many government employees are said to be demoralized by promotions which are based on personal connection and not on qualification or performance. It is a question of whom you know and not what you know. As stated by one employee *"kapit minus merit equals sirit; merit minus kapit equals pilit."*

Feedbacking. The NGOs should inform the department heads about the results of their evaluation so that they can make the necessary changes or improvements. Constructive criticism rather than fingerpointing is one way of encouraging service improvement.

Validation before public dissemination. Results of the Citizen Feedback Survey should have been presented to the offices concerned before inviting the media so that they would have the opportunity to react to the findings. Media have the tendency to sensationalize news as in the case of the headline of a local daily which read "Alvin flunks in good governance report card" a day after the TUGI multi-sectoral consultation.

Outcome

The assessment on the effect of the two projects is based on the feedback provided by the respondents in the TUGI report cards and selected personnel from the city offices who were interviewed between August 2002 and October 2002. Monitoring local governance by civil society in Cebu City has produced many positive outcomes:

- It has awakened public awareness on the need to monitor city governance among organized groups:

Monitoring is very important to assess the quality of public service.

A very good way of reminding government employees that they are public servants and must put the interest of the public first before other concerns.

Monitoring is good because it is one way of practicing check and balance.

It is very useful to assess the efficiency of government offices.

• Both the GO and civil society have come to recognize the need to pressure the government to improve performance:

Need to remind and pressure public servants to be excellent.

A tool to determine whether an employee is doing his or her job.

It is good because it will enable the LGUs to assess what more needs to be done and the proper action to be taken.

An eye-opener to government employees. *Mapukaw ang empleyado nga daghan pa diay sila og kakulangan* (awaken the employees to realize their shortcomings). If they become aware of their deficiencies, then they might work harder to become more efficient.

The exercise serves as a reminder *kung unsa pa ang kulang ug dapat i-implement sa balaod* (to find out what the shortcomings are and what legal provisions have yet to be implemented).

• The initiatives have empowered or provided a sense of empowerment to civil society:

Opinion leaders and representatives of organized groups who participated in the multi-sectoral consultation were very enthusiastic and serious about rating the General Report Card and the GAD Report Card. As pointed out by two city department heads: "The consultation is empowering for it provided a venue for stakeholders to express their perceptions and opinion on governance...the consultation is a good indication that governance is working and that civil society is taking an active role to promote the well-being of the community".

The multi-sectoral consultation did not directly elicit concrete and timely response from the city government on women's concerns. Improvement in the women's sector is rather the result of sustained advocacy by active women's groups led by the Lihok. But the consultation occasioned the women's groups to assess the status of their demands vis-a-vis the city government response. Recognizing the gaps has heightened their advocacy efforts in order to attain their agenda.

The women sector has made some gains through the advocacy efforts spearheaded by Lihok together with the Bantay Banay and the Cebu Women's Coalition[14].

Of the 80 Cebu City barangays, about 17 barangays that have submitted their gender plan have received their GAD allocation from the P8 million budget proposed by the city barangays in 2000 based on the five percent policy. The Lihok Pilipina is enabling more women's groups and the women barangay councilors in the 62 barangays

that have allocated the GAD budget to prepare their gender plan so that they can access their funds.

The city government has announced a P5 million budget to fund the priority activities in the proposal submitted early this year by the Cebu Women's Coalition with Lihok as the secretariat. Through gender sensitizing activities, the Coalition is hopeful that the city departments would learn to make their budget gender sensitive. The Coalition expects a yearly increase until they can sensitize the City Hall to make their budget fully gender sensitive.

There is now a GAD budget policy from the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women and a pro forma from the Department of Budget and Management for processing financial request.

The Gender and Development Code of the City of Cebu or the Women's Code was enacted by the city on March 14, 2001 and was approved by then Mayor Alvin Garcia on April 15 of the same year. Cebu City is the first LGU in the country to pass an Anti Domestic Violence Ordinance and a Council resolution creating the City Committee on Decorum and Investigation to hear cases of sexual harassment. These are part of the mechanisms to operationalize the Code.

• Monitoring has promoted among government officials an openness to monitoring by civil society:

Kinsa man diay ang mopukpok kun'di ang public (who should take the cudgel but the public).

A great way of keeping the employees on their toes *nga naa man diay nagtan-aw sa ilang agi* (since someone is watching their move).

The government needs more external evaluation done by credible organizations like Lihok, so that it can improve delivery of basic services including customer satisfaction.

Monitoring should be done by the NGOs and civil society. Sometimes the government is very absorbed in its functions that it fails to see its shortcomings. It often takes somebody from the outside to point out the weaknesses. Besides, if monitoring is done by another government agency, there might be bias. Sometimes *personalan pa ang dating* (it is taken personally). The NGOs are impartial monitors and they will really tell you the truth.

Even if the NGOs do not have the clout to implement changes, they could refer the matter to the necessary government agencies like the Office of the Ombudsman for proper action.

Wala pay gasto ang gobyerno (the government does not have to spend money). Monitoring by the NGOs saves government resources because they are responsible for deploying monitors and for data processing.

Monitoring done by the NGOs is okay because *mas daghan ang motan-aw, mas ma-improve ang serbisyo* (services will improve when many are watching).

Monitoring is okay as long as there is a feedback mechanism. The person or organization doing the monitoring should make an effort to give their feedback to the office or person being evaluated. *Unsaon pag-action kung dili pahibaw-on* (how can a person improve if he or she is not informed about the evaluation result?);

• It has opened the eyes of public service providers that user-satisfaction is an important dimension of their performance:

The initiative of the NGOs like Lihok is appreciated since the trend today is towards customer satisfaction.

The survey reminds the government offices that they are there to serve the public.

Maninguha nga ma-improve ang serbisyo aron malipay ang gi-served, apan dili maka-expect ang public nga 100% (will try to improve the service to satisfy the client, but the public cannot expect one hundred percent).

• Some of the departments have implemented concrete changes to improve customer satisfaction:

⇨   Installation of signage and direction in the CHO, DWUP and OBO;
⇨   Specification of service timeframe in the OBO ;
⇨   Assignment of an information officer in the CHO and OBO;
⇨   Proper orientation among DWUP staff regarding each other's roles and responsibilities;
⇨   Installation of a complaint box in the OBO;
⇨   Prohibition of entry of "fixers" in the OBO;
⇨   To prevent the interference of "fixers", the OBO requires the clients to submit a notarized authorization letter if they ask another person to do the processing for them. An official revealed: *"Mosulod ang fixers sa opisina mura sila og empleyado, karon wala na sila"* (The fixers used to come to the office as if they were employees, now they are no longer there); and
⇨   Job evaluation and streamlining of procedures at the DEPW.

However, some City Hall officials are apprehensive that unless monitoring is done regularly any change or improvement would be transitory and that the employees would backslide to their old habits.

Lessons Learned

The report card system operationalizes the principles of good governance by gathering citizen feedback on the performance of public services and the attitudes of providers towards their customers. The TUGI report card provides an overview of how the Cebu City government fared in terms of the nine core characteristics of good governance. More specific and practical though is the PEAT customer survey since it assesses particular dimensions of service delivery and serves as a baseline to benchmark service improvements. The macro and micro perspectives may complement one another and provide a better picture of the state of urban governance. The PEAT indicators such as availability of service guide, timeliness of service, comfort and accommodation, providers' attitude and affordability concretize the principles of responsiveness, accountability, transparency and efficiency. However, implementing both is expensive. Choosing an approach depends on the issues or problems that the community finds most troublesome or on the key values it seeks to promote in public service. Aside from the objectives of the study, resources, time and cost are factors to be considered. In other words, conducting report card surveys requires thorough planning.

The credibility of the report card rests on the soundness of the methodology particularly the sampling design, survey instrument and skills of the staff and field workers. Purposive sampling used by both TUGI and PEAT is less rigorous than probability sampling. The sampling process in these projects did not comply with two basic requirements, that is, the sample must be representative and adequate. Still, it was functional for field testing and launching the community into action. But future monitoring must exert all-out effort to

obtain a representative sample from the target population to increase the level of generalization.

Having a questionnaire with local dialect translation begets cooperation and facilitates better understanding among the respondents. On the other hand, the nine-page TUGI questionnaire containing 50 items could be tightened. It can narrow down on priority issues with carefully selected key indicators. Since TUGI was the first-ever citizen feedback survey, the respondents who are the opinion leaders of their respective sectors welcomed the opportunity enthusiastically. Other citizens may not be as patient or may not have the luxury of time as evidenced by extremely low turn out of business leaders.

The credibility of the NGO conducting the monitoring is very crucial because it enhances the integrity of the survey. Positive approach by the NGO is reciprocated by constructive response from the government as reflected in TUGI and PEAT. However, the respondents' misperception regarding the functions of some city offices in the PEAT survey could have been avoided had the community monitors undergone proper training. Their initial apprehension about the survey could have been allayed had the interviewers clearly explained the purpose of the study right at the start. Technical working group members are constrained by their busy schedules to come together for regular briefings and debriefings. Forming a multi-sectoral body is one thing but real teamwork is another.

Citizen feedback has broadened the scope of citizen participation in governance. The participation of sectoral representatives in the planning and implementation of monitoring fosters a sense of ownership among community members as shown by the *Bantay Banay*. The participation of the business sector in TUGI could be strengthened by exploring alternative approaches in reaching out to them in consultation with the chambers of commerce. Networking with the media at the early stage of the project makes them

realize the importance of their role in monitoring governance. Survey results must be brought to the attention of local executives so that they can implement the necessary changes. Dissemination of research findings to the general public would generate more public awareness and increase pressure on the local government to take concrete actions to improve performance. The technical working group or its spokesperson could prepare press releases to gain wider public attention. A one-page handout containing the highlights of the study serves as basis for accurate news reportage.

The civil society in Cebu City has taken a significant stride to promote good governance. Systematic reforms in government service and positive impact on service delivery would certainly take time. But the rippling effects of the two monitoring initiatives indicate that the process is progressing. Some departments have already used the findings to improve their performance. The City government is intensifying the internal capability training of the senior and middle managers. The City Council has ruled against the use of the GAD budget for ballroom dancing and bonuses of barangay officials. The city government is now open to the TUGI and PEAT monitoring on a regular basis. Daily press conference with the past and present leadership at the City Hall thresh out controversial issues and make city officials more accountable for their actions or inaction.

But monitoring is not a one-shot deal. It should be done regularly to become effective. Trending increases the chances of getting the attention of the government. NGO dynamism in garnering logistical support from civil society groups would increase the prospect of continuous monitoring beyond foreign-funded projects. Sustaining the momentum to improve government performance depends on follow-up actions undertaken by civil society. Only when citizen watchtowers remain vigilant can good governance be translated from an idealistic construct to a resounding reality. ❖

Notes

[1] The UNDP 1994 Human Development Report defines human development as "a process of enlarging people's choices." Sustainable human development "places people at the centre of the development process and makes the central purpose of development as creating an enabling environment in which all people can enjoy a long, healthy and creative life."

[2] Inherent in the notion of governance is good governance, a normative concept reflecting western liberal-democratic values. Four elements are common to the definitions of good governance formulated by different organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the Development Academy of the Philippines, the Philippine Coalition of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO), and the Philippine League of Cities. These core principles are participation, transparency, accountability and efficient and effective management. The institutions have respectively defined the parameters and/or indicators of these broad principles.

[3] Monitoring local governance by the NGOs is an emerging trend in Cebu City. From 1999 to 2002, three NGOs with their PO partners and/or their networks and a NGO coalition have participated in monitoring initiatives. The Lihok Pilipina Foundation partnered with the women's groups, the lawyers' group, the academe and the media in the TUGI of the UNDP in 2000. In the following year, the Lihok Pilipina and the *Bantay Banay* Federation implemented the Solidarity for Justice Project. The Urban Poor Associates (URA) and the Urban Poor Colloquium (URC) conducted separate assessment on the implementation of the Urban Housing Development Act (UDHA) in 1999 and 2002 respectively. The Kaabag Sa Sugbu, the Cebu City-based NGO coalition is involved in the Asian Development Bank project on Enhancing Municipal Services Delivery Capability II. The Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. coordinates the PROYECTOCITIES which aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the city in terms of physical and social infrastructure and the strategic options for the future.

[4] Lihok Pilipina is a foundation established in Cebu City in 1987 to address women's concerns. Started as a women's savings and credit program, Lihok has pioneered the Women's Crisis Intervention Program in Cebu. It has conceptualized and organized the *Bantay Banay* (family/community watch against domestic and gender violence). The program is replicated in 60 cities and municipalities all over the country. It is the convenor of the Urban Poor Colloquium in the Visayas where urban poor groups gather to discuss issues affecting them.

5 The Five Pillars of the Philippine Justice System refer to law enforcement, prosecution, correction, courts and the community. The institutions in charge of the respective pillar are: the police, the prosecutors, the jails, the judges and the community.

[6] The General Report Card used the following indicators for transparency: transparency of budget formulation, revenue collection and expenditure; transparency in municipal staff selection and promotion; and effectiveness of Information Education Communication for public education.

[7] The indicators of participation include: availability of municipal mechanisms to ascertain citizen participation; degree of municipal devolution and decentralization; quality of participation of Council Members in municipal debates; women's representation in the City Council; voter turn-up in the last municipal election (May 1·998); municipal incentives for private sector participation in city economy, environment care and in municipal staff development (HRD) activities; participation of the city's poor in planning and implementing programs related to their well-being; civil society participation in implementing municipal programs; and participation of academic institutions in municipal strategy search, research and evaluation.

[8] The parameters of participation in the GAD report card are: policies and programs of the local government encourage the participation of all citizens irrespective of their age, sex, language, economic condition and religion; extent of participation of men and women in the process of development of the city; extent of women's representation in the city council; extent of women's representation in the city administration; women voter turn-up in the last election (May 1998); women participation at public hearings for new ordinances introduced or in amending existing laws affecting women, children and family; extent of the commitment and implementation of the GAD budget; and local government's sensitivity and provision of mechanisms for participation by all sectors particularly Women.

[9] Accountability is measured in terms of gender advocacy/support groups in the city; organization of training workshops and seminars on the issue of Gender, Development and Accountability; media mobilization for advocacy on gender and development; and extent to which grievances and complaints are entertained by city administration without gender bias.

[10] Central Visayas or Region 7 is one of the 14 regions in the Philippines. It comprises the provinces of Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental and Siquijor.

[11] Of the 80 barangays in Cebu City, 50 are part of the *Bantay·Banay* Federation. The *Bantay Banay* vary in their degree of involvement. Some are active in advocacy while others make referrals to Lihok.

¹² Fixers" are private individuals who position themselves in the vicinity of government offices and offer their services to those transacting business in these offices. They facilitate paper processing for a fee. It is speculated that fixers have connection with officials who condone their operation.

¹³ The Services and Procedure Rationalization and Improvement in Government (SPRING) was implemented by the city government from 1990 to 1994. SPRING aimed at improving the performance and delivery of internal and external services among its offices. Benchmarking is now included in the SPRING which was revived in July 2001 as a component of the ADB project Enhancing Municipal Services Delivery Capability II.

¹⁴ The Cebu Women's Coalition is an umbrella of over 30 women organizations from the different sectors in the Cebu community that are active in the advocacy and empowerment of women.

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