

## Editor's Notes

Nongovernment organizations (NGOs) are part of the larger civil society and nonprofit sector. They are non-stock, nonprofit organizations engaged in a wide range of activities, which lend their knowledge and expertise to help the lot of the poorer, least able sectors of society. Their significant role in nation building is recognized and enshrined in the 1987 Constitution. The Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act 7160) further ensures that they are consciously drawn as partners in local governance and development.

This issue focuses on the capability-building needs of selected NGOs. The assessment of needs is directed towards enhancing NGO capacity for performance, advocacy, and partnership.

Ma. Concepcion P. Alfiler's piece entitled "Strengthening NGO Capability for Advocacy: An Assessment" integrates the results of a collaborative project undertaken by the Center for Leadership, Citizenship and Democracy of the U.P. National College of Public Administration and Governance with Christian Aid and its partner NGOs. Two main activities were carried out for the first phase of the project—(a) consultative meetings, and (b) field research on four selected NGOs for more focused and in-depth case studies on their organizational experiences, capacities, and needs. The four partner NGOs selected for the field research were Balay Mindanaw Foundation, Inc. (BMFI), Philippine Network for Rural Development Institutes in Cebu and Leyte (Philnet-RDI), Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. (FORGE), and Community Action for Rural Development (CARD). The individual case studies are included in this issue. The second part of the research looked into the assessment by participants of their organizational needs to enhance their capability for policy advocacy. The last part summarizes the findings on organizational needs as gleaned from the case studies.

"FORGE, Inc.: Examining the Organization and Its Capability-Building Needs for Policy Advocacy" written by Rizalino B. Cruz inquires into how FORGE can enhance poverty alleviation efforts as reflected in its training needs survey. He identifies several areas for improvement that would definitely enable the organization to tackle the many facets of inequity and help it formulate alternative development models.

Ivy P. Perucho's case study "Balay Mindanaw Foundation, Inc. (BMFI): An Assessment of Advocacy Capabilities" points out that in order to further enhance poverty mitigating efforts of BMFI, the following inadequacies must first be addressed: (a) technical assistance on revenue generation programs and economic promotion for local governments; (b) training for micro-enterprise development; (c) continuing paralegal education; and (d) training on program monitoring. In her article, she notes that BMFI's espousal takes as its backdrop a political environment that is more open and conducive to shared governance.

Edna Estifania A. Co's article "Philnet-Rural Development Institute-Cebu and Leyte: Understanding the Organization and Gearing for Capability-Building for Advocacy" traces Philnet's history, structure, capacities, skills, resources and advocacy efforts on behalf of sugar farm workers and its pursuit of agrarian reform and development. She focuses on two member institutes of Philnet (i.e., Rural Development Institute in Cebu and in Leyte). She notes that new demands for capacity building refer to an alternative perspective in dealing with NGO leadership and performance. Such skills may not only be useful for advocacy but may also be an enabling tool for effective management.

Eleanor E. Nicolas' piece "Case Study of Community Action for Rural Development" intends to bolster CARD's social development agenda among the tribal communities of Kapalong, Davao del Norte. Her article deftly illustrates how CARD executes its advocacy work, what issues have been advocated, what factors facilitated or hindered its advocacy work, what are its capability needs, and how its advocacy work could be augmented. Although her study is directed primarily at the advocacy initiatives of CARD, a noteworthy organizational reflection elicits a holistic picture of how the institution has performed its mandate.

Included in this issue of the *Journal* is the "United Nations (UN) Millennium Declaration" adopted by the General Assembly during its fifty-fifth session on 8 September 2000. The promulgation was made at the dawn of a new millennium in order to reaffirm the collective responsibility of the UN to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality, and equity at the global level. World leaders recognize their duty to mankind, especially to the most vulnerable, and, in particular, to the children of the world—to whom the future belongs.