

Strengthening NGO Capability for Advocacy: An Assessment

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The Philippines recognized the emergence of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) during their involvement in the First People Power and acknowledged them as state's partner in the 1987 Constitution. At present, NGOs provide social services to marginalized and disadvantaged groups and help the disempowered members of the society to exercise their rights and participate in decisions benefitting them. The author elucidates that NGOs will always have a cause to fight for and this makes advocacy one of its key concerns. NGOs must have some preparation to grow as an organization that could bring changes and redistribution of power within society. They need professionals for this unique preparation.

Objectives

This article presents the results of a collaborative project undertaken by the Center for Leadership, Citizenship, and Democracy (CLCD) of the University of the Philippines-National College of Public Administration and Governance (U.P. NCPAG) with Christian Aid and Christian Aid's partner nongovernment organizations (NGOs) in the Philippines. This Christian Aid funded project has three objectives:

- To identify potential areas for collaboration between U.P. NCPAG, Christian Aid, and Christian Aid's partner NGOs in the Philippines, through which these organizations may undertake mutually beneficial research, training, and extension services in support of policy advocacy;
- To determine Christian Aid partner NGOs' organizational capabilities and needs for policy advocacy and other related functions; and
- On the basis of the findings produced by the second objective above, for the U.P. NCPAG to design a capability development and enhancement program to address the needs.

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Project Activities

Two main activities were carried out for the first phase of this 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.

Consultative Meetings

To bring together the principal actors in this project, Christian Aid and U.P. NCPAG organized three consultative meetings with Christian Aid partners in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. The consultative meeting for Mindanao-based partner NGOs of Christian Aid was held in Cagayan de Oro City on 27 November 1998. Seventeen (17) representatives of six NGOs attended this meeting. The consultative meeting for Visayas-based partners was held in Cebu City on 13 February 1999. Another group of 17 representatives from six NGOs operating in the Visayas area came for this meeting. The third and last consultative meeting was held at the U.P. NCPAG building in U.P. Diliman on 19 March 1999. This was attended by 27 representatives from 14 partner NGOs.

The format of these meetings was fairly similar. The morning session was devoted to the presentation of the results of a 1998 study on "Capability Building in Advocacy Work for Philippine Nongovernmental Organizations and People's Organizations." In the discussion that followed the presentation, participants commented on the findings of this study and shared their views and experiences in doing advocacy work. In the afternoon, the participants broke up into smaller workshop groups where they identified their organizational needs for policy advocacy and possible collaborative efforts with the U.P. NCPAG to address these needs.

Field Research for Case Studies

Four partner NGOs were purposively selected for the field research. These NGOs do advocacy work in behalf of four marginalized sectors. They are:

- (1) Balay Mindanaw Foundation, Inc. (BMFI), an NGO committed to the welfare of farmer-beneficiaries of the agrarian reform program in Mindanao;
- (2) Philippine Network for Rural Development Institutes in Cebu and Leyte (Philnet-RDI), which promotes the cause of sugar-workers who are also beneficiaries of agrarian reform;

- (3) Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. (FORGE), which organizes and assists the urban poor in Cebu City; and
- (4) Community Action for Rural Development (CARD), which organizes and provides basic services to indigenous peoples (IPs) such as the Ata-Manobos, Dibabawons, and Mandayas residing in remote barangays of Kapalong, Davao del Norte.

The case studies on these partner NGOs complement the results of the consultative meetings. Each case provides a fuller picture of the capabilities and needs of the NGO as these are assessed in the context of the organization's goals, programs, and projects as implemented in the disadvantaged communities they serve.

Four case study writers from the faculty and senior research staff of the U.P. NCPAG conducted fieldwork from late February to mid-March 1999. During this period, they collected data for the case studies through: desk review of relevant organization policies and documents; interviews of key officials and staff of the NGO; visits to project sites; and talks with partner communities and officials, and representatives of other organizations who assist the NGO in implementing their programs in their service areas.

This article presents the outcome of these activities and the proposed capability development and enhancement program. It has three parts. To provide the context for the discussion of the results of the consultative meetings and the case studies, the first part reviews studies that provide accounts of efforts of civil society organizations to influence policy. This review focuses on insights that these accounts offer on capability building for policy advocacy.

The second part looks into the assessment by participants of their organizational needs for capability building for policy advocacy. It also reports on views expressed in the consultative meetings on potential areas of collaboration between Christian Aid, its counterparts or partner NGOs in the Philippines, and the U.P. NCPAG as an academic institution actively involved in the training and research on the processes of governance. The third part summarizes the findings on organizational needs as gleaned from the case studies.

Capability Building for Policy Advocacy in the Philippines

The reconceptualization of governance has established that it is no longer the sole province of the state. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has defined "governance" as the "exercise of political,

economic, and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. It is the complex mechanism, processes, relationships, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences" (UNDP 1997: 9). With the redefinition of the process of governance comes the recognition of the equally vital roles of the state, the private sector, and civil society as the three domains of governance. These three domains have strengths and weaknesses that they can transcend through constructive interaction among them.

Civil society organizations are expected to facilitate political and social interaction and mobilize groups in society to be actively involved in economic, social, and political activities. Through these involvements, these groups channel people's participation in economic and social activities and organize them into more potent groups to influence public policies. Acting in concert, these organizations may mitigate potentially adverse effects of economic instability, create effective ways for allocating social benefits, and serve as the voice of poorer groups in political decisionmaking (UNDP 1997: 17-18).

The Philippines has witnessed the emergence and active involvement of civil society organizations, including NGOs and people's organizations (POs), in economic, social, and political activities. The collective action of these organizations was partly responsible for the people power phenomenon that brought about the fall of the Marcos dictatorship. Acknowledged as partners of the state in the 1987 Constitution, they now serve as alternative providers of social services to marginalized and disadvantaged groups and assist disempowered members of the society to exercise their right to be heard and to participate in decisions affecting them.

Efforts of civil society organizations to influence the state's policymaking processes at the national and local levels have been the subject of some studies. These studies are important jump off points for any effort at instituting a capability program for policy advocacy. Four of these studies have concrete proposals on how NGOs can improve on their performance as policy advocates.

The latest of these studies is the Advocacy Working Group's Report. Written by Edna Co, it is entitled *Beating the Drums: Advocacy for Policy Reform in the Philippines*. The study looked into the experiences of NGOs and POs in their attempts to influence public policy. It culled lessons from these experiences and came up with specific recommendations on capability building for policy advocacy. It recommends that NGOs interested in upgrading their capacity for policy advocacy must give more attention to: (a) reviewing or enhancing their framework for advocacy, (b) integrating research and information management into advocacy, (c) developing their research capability, (d) learning the skills for market research, (e) acquiring

negotiation skills, f) broadening linkages and networks, g) strengthening their organization and management for advocacy work, and h) developing the discipline for advocacy (Co 1999: 64-75).

Another study, published by the Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, also documents attempts of NGOs to influence policies on urban housing and land reform, rural land tenure and use, aquatic reforms, logging practices, and indigenous land and community rights (Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs 1997: 172-218).

An analysis of the experiences documented in this study disclosed that in terms of policy gains, the Nationwide Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reform (NACFAR) and the Urban Land Reform Task Force (ULRTF) had accomplished the most. Their success was attributed to the following factors: a) coalition structure and full-time secretaries with professional staff; b) speedy and quick decisionmaking processes; c) willingness and ability to negotiate with government; d) a more dynamic and less monolithic view of the state; e) alliances with power elites and other sectors; and f) a combination of modest but strategic short-term policy goals with comprehensive long-term goals (Miller and Razon-Abad 1997: 203).

Four important lessons gained from these experiences in policy advocacy are the following:

- (1) "Building allies among influential policymakers and powerbrokers and getting their support and sponsorship provides groups with strength for gaining policy influence and organizational legitimacy."
- (2) "A concrete effective strategy aimed at opposition players can counter their potential impact on a campaign."
- (3) "The willingness and capacity of groups to negotiate with government and to accept the validity of incremental reform affects their ability to obtain policy gains and political legitimacy."
- (4) "Effective grassroots education and organizing efforts help sustain and strengthen the institutional base necessary for holding governments accountable and for pushing long-term policy change" (Miller and Razon-Abad 1997: 197-199).

To strengthen the civil society organizations' influence on the executive for advocacy purposes, Brillantes proposed that they consider, among others, the following courses of action:

- NGOs must specialize and focus.
- They must take advantage of the formal mechanisms made available to civil society.
- To avoid wasteful competition and duplication of efforts, NGOs must coalesce with other like-minded members of civil society.
- They must conduct policy research.
- NGOs must build capability in areas that need strengthening, such as increased appreciation of government rules and procedures, and acquisition of negotiation skills.
- They must find ways to maintain continuous dialogue between government and civil society.
- They must also monitor their programs and constantly evaluate their experiences (Brillantes 1997: 29-30).

On civil society's relationship with the legislative body, Paez's article stressed that the NGOs' sources of strength include their: (a) organization, (b) grassroots membership, (c) resource advantage, (d) strength in unity, (e) credibility, and (f) flexibility and willingness to compromise (Paez 1997: 60-63). She also pointed out that:

- To achieve desired results, civil society actors must know the power grid in Congress and the workings of the legislative mill. They must also lobby the executive branch and win the support of the media and the legislators' constituents.
- Civil society must get their act together and speak with one voice. Divisiveness diverts congressional attention away from the issue they are campaigning for.

These studies indicate the growing literature on state-civil society relations. They also attest to the interest of scholars and researchers to document NGOs' varied experiences in policy advocacy and to distill lessons from these experiences.

Outcome of Consultative Meetings

Three consultative one-day meetings in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao brought together a total of 61 representatives from 26 partner NGOs of Christian Aid in the Philippines.

Reflection on Advocacy Study Results

What were accomplished in these consultative meetings? They provided NGOs operating in the same area their first opportunity to meet. More than

this, however, these meetings were valuable for a number of reasons. First, participants became aware of efforts of the Advocacy Working Group (AWG) to systematically examine the process, outcomes, and lessons learned from the advocacy experiences of selected NGOs. Second, Dr. Co's presentation of the findings of the study and the exchange that followed her presentation prompted participants to reflect on their own advocacy work. Some of them commented that while they have been doing advocacy work all this time, they have not really subjected what they did to this kind of systematic assessment. Moreover, they confirmed that in some instances, they were not too clear on their advocacy agenda nor on the roles and responsibilities of advocacy officers, when such positions were created. Third, partner NGOs expressed interest in possible ties with an academic institution, whose facilities may link them to other avenues and opportunities for continuing staff education and development. They were also hoping that through these linkages, they might acquire access to research and other materials that they may use for their advocacy work. Finally, they were looking forward to being part of a program that would enable them to upgrade their know-how on, and organizational capability for, policy advocacy.

Determining Capability Needs for Policy Advocacy

After the presentation and discussion of the AWG study, the participants were divided into smaller groups. These workshops focused on their capability building needs and explored possible collaborative efforts with Christian Aid and the U.P. NCPAG to address these needs in mutually beneficial ways. After about three hours of discussion, the workshop groups reconvened as one body. Each workshop group then conveyed the results of its discussions to all participants.

These workshop group reports were the main data sources for the five tables presented below. To facilitate simple frequency counts, four general categories of needs were established: a) advocacy, b) staff development, c) special skills, and d) understanding government. Table 1 consolidates the total frequency count for the number of times specific needs within each category were mentioned in all the workshop group presentations. Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 provide the breakdown for each of these four categories.

The "Advocacy" category includes requests for training or walking through the advocacy process; research for advocacy; documentation and database creation and maintenance; planning, management, and evaluation of advocacy work; access to information and policy results for advocacy work; use of media for advocacy; and local and international linkages among NGOs.

The "Staff Development" category refers to calls for scholarship grants, access to formal/non-formal education, customized training, training through

sharing of experiences, setting up of volunteer/internship/exchange programs, curriculum development for voluntary sector management, and funding for staff development.

The "Special Skills" category covers requests for training for specific skills for research and writing, social marketing, community organizing, negotiation, conflict management, lobbying, and paralegal work.

"Understanding Government" includes the need to understand mechanisms for maintaining linkages with government, involvement in local and national government initiatives, and knowing how the executive and legislative branches of government operate at the local and national levels.

Table 1 shows that the highest ranked need in all areas was preparation for different aspects of advocacy, which was mentioned 54 times. "Staff Development" was next (34 times), while "Special Skills" and "Understanding Government" were mentioned 14 times in the workshop reports.

Table 1. Summary of NGOs Capability Needs as Presented in Consultative Meetings

<i>Areas of Concern</i>	<i>Mindanao</i>	<i>Visayas</i>	<i>Luzon</i>	<i>Total</i>
Advocacy	13	19	22	54
Staff Development	10	12	12	34
Special Skills	1	9	4	14
Understanding Government	3	2	9	14
Total	27	42	47	116

Table 1.1 specifies the components of the "Advocacy" category. It reveals that the three highest needs are: a) documentation and data base creation and maintenance, b) access to information and policy results for advocacy work, and c) research for advocacy.

On "Staff Development," Table 1.2 discloses that interest in internship/volunteer/exchange programs was the most frequently mentioned. Two other components of this category, the need for formal/non-formal education and customized training, came in as close seconds. A closer examination of this table would reveal that components of this category are also modes of learning preferred by NGOs in that they are convenient and feasible given the demands that working with communities makes on NGO staff and field personnel. The table shows the preference for staff development programs that integrate formal and non-formal ways of learning, with contents that are

Table 1.1 Advocacy

<i>Specific Needs</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Total</i>
1) Training/walk-through advocacy process	2	0	0	2
2) Documentation and data base creation and maintenance	3	5	3	11
3) Planning, management, and evaluation of advocacy work	2	1	4	7
4) Access to information and policy results for advocacy work	2	4	5	11
5) Media advocacy	0	2	1	3
6) Solid local/international linkages, liaison among NGOs	1	5	3	9
7) Research for Advocacy	3	2	6	11
Total	13	19	22	54

tailored to their needs, utilize teaching methodologies that build on the sharing of experiences, and, where feasible, enable learners to participate in exchange programs. Inquiries on when the Voluntary Sector Management (VSM) degree program of the U.P. NCPAG may be available on distance mode reflect the desire of some employees to earn academic degrees while working even in remote areas at times.

Table 1.2 Staff Development

<i>Specific Needs</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Total</i>
1) Scholarship grants	0	2	2	4
2) Formal/nonformal education	2	1	3	6
3) Customized training	1	4	1	6
4) Experiential training	1	2	2	5
5) Internship/volunteer/exchange programs	3	1	3	7
6) VSM curricular development	1	2	1	4
7) Fund Support	2	0	0	2
Total	10	12	12	34

Among the specialized skills that NGO partners would want their staff to acquire, Table 1.3 shows that research and writing skills had the highest demand, with social marketing and community organizing coming in next. This was followed by negotiation skills, conflict management, and lobbying skills.

Table 1.3 Special Skills

<i>Specific Needs</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Total</i>
1) Research/writing	1	3	2	6
2) Social marketing, community organizing	0	4	0	4
3) Negotiation, conflict management, lobbying	0	1	2	3
4) Paralegal	0	1	0	1
Total	1	9	4	14

The category "Understanding Government" is shown in Table 1.4 below. Within this category, NGO partners were most interested in knowing how they could be involved in activities that national and local governments have initiated. Coming a close second to this was their desire to know more of executive and legislative processes at the national and local levels. They also wanted to know more about mechanisms through which they could establish linkages with government.

Table 1.4 Understanding Government

<i>Specific Needs</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Total</i>
1) Involvement in local and national government initiatives	1	2	3	6
2) Mechanism for government linkages	1	0	2	3
3) Knowledge of executive and legislative processes at the national and local levels	1	0	4	5
Total	3	2	9	14

Areas of Collaboration

The workshop group reports also indicated how Christian Aid, U.P. NCPAG, and partner NGOs could work together to address the capability building needs they established earlier. There were concrete proposals on what these collaborative activities may be and how they can be done. These

proposed areas of collaboration between and among these three actors include the following:

With Christian Aid Partner NGOs

- Share experiences in advocacy work
- Solidarity support among partners in dealing with specific issues
- Support Christian Aid in its advocacy and initiatives
- Involve constituencies in advocacy work
- Partner-NGOs with expertise in certain fields to provide training for other partners
- Staff exchange program among Christian Aid partner-NGOs

With U.P. NCPAG. As a resource and training center for the group, U.P. NCPAG could:

- Provide access to researches and other materials
- Design and develop modular training programs for NGO staff who cannot leave their work for long periods
- Assist NGOs in the writing of case studies that would document experiences in advocacy work
- Provide information on U.P.'s distance education program
- Develop its Voluntary Sector Management program in distance mode
- Identify scholarship grants for NGOs and POs
- Serve as venue for NGOs, POs, government offices, and academics to come together to discuss research results or specific policy issues.

With Christian Aid

- Share information/materials on latest developments in advocacy work
- Mobilize international support
- Provide support and opportunities for capability building activities.

Capability Building Needs of Four Christian Aid Partner-NGOs

To establish organizational needs in the context of ongoing activities of NGO partners, field research for four case studies was undertaken. The four partner NGOs purposively selected for these cases on the basis of the sectors that they serve are: 1) Balay Mindanaw Foundation, Inc. (BMFI), 2) Philippine Network of Rural Development Institutes, Inc. in Cebu and Leyte (Philnet-RDI), 3) Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. (FORGE), and 4) Community Action for Rural Development (CARD).

A brief background on these partner NGOs will be presented here. These accounts are drawn from the case studies on these organizations.

BMFI. Balay Mindanaw Foundation, Inc. is a Mindanao-based non-stock, non-profit foundation formally registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission in May 1996. Mr. Charlito Z. Manlupig, its principal founder, traced the notion of creating BMFI to his stint as Senior Fellow of the Kaisahan Tungo sa Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN) in 1994. Its head office is located in Cagayan de Oro City. It maintains staff houses in areas that it services: Balay Claveria in Claveria, Misamis Oriental, Balay Gingoog in Gingoog City, Balay Loreto in Dinagat Island, and Balay Davao in Davao del Sur.

BMFI's three-fold mission as an organization is to: (1) promote sustainable integrated area development, (2) develop mechanisms and technology for democratic participation of people and communities in their localities, and (3) facilitate the implementation of agrarian reform.

It deploys its community organizers, also known as SIADOs (Sustainable Integrated Area Development Officers) at the barangay level, where it is most active. Beyond organizing, it assists barangays through the conduct of management and leadership training for elected barangay officials. It also extends assistance for the formulation of the barangay development plans and provides training on project development and other capability-building needs of the barangay, including helping barangay councils identify sources for financial support from local and national government agencies. BMFI also works for the eventual integration of barangay development plans in municipal plans and budgets. It also encourages the barangays to establish ties with local municipal executives. Towards this end, it prompts the Sangguniang Pambarangay to monitor the status of their development plans.

To ensure greater access to justice at the barangay level, it conducts paralegal training to strengthen the barangay justice system. It has a separate unit for its legal support program called Legal Assistance for Agrarian Reform, Governance, and Empowerment (LARGE). Through this program, BMFI supports the formation of barangay based paralegal teams, conducts regular legal clinics, and provides litigation assistance in selected cases.

BMFI is well known in Mindanao civil society because it serves as technical secretariat of various development groups such as the Mindanao Coalition of Development NGO Networks (MINCODE), Mindanao Congress of Development NGOs (MINCON), Mindanao Peace Advocates Conference (MPAC), Kusog Mindanao (Mindanao Force), and other multisectoral movements for Mindanao development. In 1997, BMFI sat as the lone NGO permanent member of the Social Reform Agenda Regional Technical Working

Group (SRA-RTWG) for Northern Mindanao. The SRA-RTWG is the highest overall coordinating body for all government anti-poverty initiatives in the subregion.

By the end of 1998, BMFI's area-based teams had assisted in the distribution of land to about 2,000 barangays declared as agrarian reform communities (ARCs) and twelve other non ARCs. They were also instrumental in establishing the foundation of the agrarian reform paralegal systems in Misamis Oriental and in Bukidnon. In local governance, BMFI has developed a model of institutionalizing people's democratic participation in local development planning and is in the process of replicating this in 22 barangays in Claveria, ten barangays in Gingoog City, nine barangays in Loreto, and 44 barangays in Iligan.

BMFI considers its personnel as its greatest resource. It has a core of well-respected and experienced development workers and legal advocates. On the whole, its staff complement consists of young, well-educated, and committed employees who take pride in working with BMFI.

BMFI manages its operation from a fully equipped central office complete with five working stations with internet access, a photocopier, a fax machine, and telephone lines. It has a small library whose collection is fast expanding. BMFI also runs a training center called the Balay Mindanaw Formation House, which has lodging and conference facilities for small groups.

Given all these, what are BMFI's organizational needs for policy advocacy? With its projected activities, BMFI is keen on getting support for training for its staff on revenue generation programs and economic promotion for local governments, micro-enterprise development, continuing paralegal education, and program monitoring of the services it provides to its service areas.

CARD. The Community Action for Rural Development (CARD) was formally organized on 24 September 1988 and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 8 November 1988. Before this, it was known as the Lumad Development Program (LDP) of Kahayag Foundation, an NGO servicing Ata-Manobos in the Paquibato District of Davao City.

Committed to the welfare of Indigenous Peoples (IPs), CARD hopes to upgrade the quality of life in the remote villages through its programs in the area. It hopes to see the economic, political, and sociocultural empowerment of IPs and peasant settlers' communities, so they can defend their rights to self-determination and their claims to their ancestral domain. Its beneficiaries are purely indigenous communities and mixed communities with

tribal and peasant settlers. It now covers 16 beneficiary communities located in remote and inaccessible areas of the municipality of Kapalong, Davao del Norte.

To realize this vision, CARD carries out a two-fold project package that involves community organizing, service delivery, assistance for economic projects, and capability development and provision of support facilities. The range of services it offers includes community organizing and the formation of community-based cooperatives, agriculture extension work for agricultural production, livestock raising and work animal dispersal, the conduct of day-care classes in its pre-school centers, and maintaining a halfway house for IP children enrolled in public elementary schools. It also provides financial assistance for income generating projects and seed money for cooperatives. Its health program services provide training on primary and secondary health care, gender sensitivity, curative and preventive health care, first aid, and even an orientation on reproductive health rights for couples.

For its work over the last ten years, CARD has reason to be proud of its accomplishments in (a) the formation and strengthening of IP community organizations, (b) raising awareness of IP's rights through culture-based and gender-fair education, (c) delivering services in health, early childhood education, agriculture, cooperative development, (d) providing skills and knowledge in managing livelihood projects, and (e) supporting IPs claims on ancestral lands.

Over the years, keeping qualified personnel in the organization was a perennial CARD problem. Fortunately, this is not as much of a problem now. The current staff of CARD are not only better qualified. They are also better trained and most of them are indigenous to the communities and they speak the language of the IPs.

To upgrade its capability for advocacy work, CARD is seeking training on policy advocacy, on developing indicators for policy advocacy, and on culture-specific advocacy intervention. It is also interested in exposure to NGOs with actual advocacy experience. It needs to know where advocacy can be done in government's executive, legislative, and judicial branches and at national and local levels. Its staff needs skills training on report writing and in developing communication skills, particularly the use of Lumad language, and on cooperatives and ancestral domain issues.

FORGE. The Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. was organized in June 1987 with support from People's Force, an organizing NGO based in Manila that provided FORGE seed funds for its initial years. It was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission in January 1988. Three lady community organizers were behind the founding of FORGE.

FORGE's vision depicts gender-sensitive and ecologically balanced society where the marginalized sector is culturally, spiritually, economically, and politically empowered. To fulfill this vision, it sees itself as striving to be a stable and militant social development institution, which aims to organize, educate, and mobilize the marginalized sectors, especially the urban poor in Central Visayas, towards holistic and sustainable development. In cooperation with its partner organizations, FORGE is committed to advocate alternative development models.

FORGE has two major programs, the Urban Poor Development Program and the Integrated Program for Prostituted Women and Children. The first program seeks to develop integrated, sustainable, and child-friendly communities. It has four sets of activities: community organizing, education and training, advocacy and networking, and research and documentation. FORGE sees community organizing as an effective mechanism to prepare its communities to empower themselves so that they can engage or critically collaborate with government. Within this three-year program, FORGE hopes to organize a total of twelve communities, or four per year. For its education and training activities, it carries out a Participatory Leader-Organizers Training (PLOT), through which it identifies and train leaders to organize and facilitate other support activities in their respective communities.

The improvement of basic services for the poor in Cebu is among the major causes FORGE is advocating. In this regard, its policy advocacy arena is at the local government level. It is working for the full implementation of the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), although it has not limited its advocacy work to this law alone. It has also assisted the Cebu Port Area Trisikad Operators and Drivers Association (CPATODA) in their campaign against attempts of management of the Port Area to keep them away from the area.

FORGE admits that it lacks personnel for research and does not have experience and expertise in this area. The attention it gives to community organizing, its special projects, and policy advocacy, has kept its staff away from research concerns.

For its Integrated Program for Prostituted Women and Children, FORGE has an AIDS Surveillance and Education Program (ASEP). It also provides direct services through a Drop-In Center and a pre-rehabilitation center called Balay Pag-amoma.

What are the implications of all these on FORGE's capability building needs? The case study on FORGE noted that by the nature of the sector that it serves, FORGE tends to deal with diverse constituencies and has multiple roles in relation to many shareholders. This leads to its being unclear on its stance vis-à-vis government and its attention tends to be spread out thinly over multiple

concerns. All these affect its organizational capability to focus its efforts on causes that it can effectively do advocacy work for. Its greatest asset is its dedicated staff who are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their work.

To upgrade its capability to promote its causes, FORGE feels the need to train its staff on: a) policy advocacy, b) technical writing, c) policy research and analysis, d) program and project management, e) resource generation and utilization, and f) acquiring access to information and resources.

PHILNET. The Philippine Network of Rural Development Institutes, Inc. was established in 1996 and became fully operational by January 1997. It is duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. It is a network of Rural Development Institutes (RDIs) that used to compose the rural development projects under the Philippine Peasant Institute (PPI). The RDIs were then the socioeconomic and micro-enterprise development arms of the PPI. The decision to convert the institutes into autonomous entities was prompted by the need to give focused and specialized attention to project sites. Thus, RDIs concentrated on area development at the local level, as PPI attended to its original work of research and advocacy. The working relationship between these two organizations was clear. PPI would assume the responsibility for national level advocacy based on solid research. The RDIs would work on strengthening and expanding work at the level of the peasants and farm workers.

Philnet's vision is for rural communities to be self-determining and to attain development founded on equity, ecological sustainability, gender fairness, respect for people's rights and culture, as well as the economic, socio-cultural, and political empowerment of the marginalized rural sector. To fulfill this vision, Philnet pushes for rural democratization by assisting the marginalized sectors in the formulation of area development programs, in gaining access and control over productive resources, and in pushing for responsive and efficient governance.

Philnet has four core programs which provide assistance to its beneficiaries. One of these programs is the formation of cooperatives. Another is asset reform, which secures access to and control over productive resources such as land. Under its rural governance program, it engages government through claims-making on the policy on and implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law. Through its fourth program on area development planning and project development and management, Philnet helps local organizations prepare their plans through the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach.

There are 14 RDIs operating in 14 provinces of the country. While they form one network, each RDI is autonomous in its operation and in generating its own sources of funds. The RDIs in Cebu and Leyte are the subject of the

case study written for this project. The beneficiaries of the Cebu and Leyte RDIs are mostly sugar farm workers who have been working for years on huge estates of sugar lands. The RDIs support these workers in their effort to acquire their due share of land as beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

As with the other NGOs described earlier, Philnet's greatest resources is its staff who are committed and dedicated to their mission to alleviate the poverty that leads to the disempowerment of its beneficiaries. RDIs in Cebu and Leyte have very modest office facilities. They operate within limited means, i.e., two to four computer sets with access to the Internet, basic office equipment, a bulletin board, and just enough office space. They also have limited library materials. Aside from its staff, RDI relies on the tremendous support it gets from the network and the Philnet Central Office and secretariat.

RDI-Cebu and Leyte are both supported by Christian Aid. With its funds, RDI Leyte operates in at least five barangays. Its other source (Philippine Agrarian Reform Foundation for National Development, Inc. or PARFUND) allows it to extend its services to another five barangays. RDI Cebu, which is also funded by Christian Aid, works in two municipalities with vast sugar lands. It also receives additional funds from Save the Children-UK and from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), which provides assistance for skills training.

RDI Cebu and Leyte seemed fairly clear on what they need to enable them to push further the causes they advocate. They look forward to assistance in:

- Leadership training for their farmer leaders through which they would better understand the processes of barangay administration, particularly barangay development planning and implementation;
- Developing negotiation skills of local leaders and RDI staff to deal with local and national government officials;
- Getting access to scholarship programs for RDI and Philnet staff to enable them to grow in their career in this civil society organization; and
- Mentoring and consultancy work with academics who can help them in organizational analysis and in developing their strategies and appropriate course of action.

Using the same categories utilized in classifying the organizational needs identified in the consultative meetings, Table 2 presents the comparative capability building needs that emerged from the four case

studies. It will be noted that all four NGOs saw the need to understand government's operations and policy formulation processes as these are carried out at the national and local levels. Three of them explicitly mentioned the need for training on policy advocacy. Special skills needed, writing skills and program and project management know-how, came out at least twice.

Table 2. Capability Needs from Case Studies

<i>NGO</i>	<i>Policy Advocacy</i>	<i>Understanding Government</i>	<i>Special Skills</i>	<i>Staff Development</i>
BMFI		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical assistance in revenue generation programs and economic promotion for local government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training on micro-enterprise development ▪ Continuing paralegal education ▪ Program Monitoring 	
CARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training on policy advocacy ▪ Indicators for advocacy ▪ Culture-specific advocacy intervention ▪ Exposure in NGOs with actual advocacy experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge in institutional mechanisms where advocacy can be done in government, i.e., executive, legislative, judicial; national-local levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report writing and communication skills of staff using the Lumad language ▪ Training on cooperatives ▪ Training on ancestral domains 	
FORGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy research and analysis ▪ Policy advocacy training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on urban development planning, local and national operations, Local Government Code, budget planning process 		
PHILNET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills on campaign administration and media campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on local decision-making processes in barangay, municipal, and provincial levels in local development councils ▪ Negotiation skills involving NGOs and government agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training on governance, management of organizations ▪ Effective leadership in the NGO field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to scholarship grants

A comparison of the needs identified through the four case studies and those brought out during the consultative meetings reveals a consistent clamor for capability building intervention on policy advocacy and the need to understand government and the acquisition of specific skills. Since the case studies defined organizational needs in the context of the NGOs vision, mission, programs, and strategies, these needs are more rooted in the context of their institutional realities and goals.

Civil Society Organizations are here to stay. They must no longer be viewed as temporary, transformative institutions that would phase out once they have organized and empowered POs. If NGOs/POs are here to stay, then they will grow as organizations and they will eventually need professionals who are in the best position to serve their needs because of their unique preparation. As catalyst, NGOs will always have causes to fight for. This then puts advocacy as one of its key concerns. If this will be the main concern of NGOs, necessarily, they must have some preparation for this activity which will be at the heart of their efforts to try to bring about changes and hopefully the redistribution of power within society.

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