



Celebrating Participatory Governance in Nueva Vizcaya

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Cover:

Achieved through participatory governance, Nueva Vizcaya's success in watershed management is depicted by its landscape coming into focus as if emerging from a series of mountain ranges and peaks.

As practiced in Nueva Vizcaya, participatory governance truly emerges, like the reality it is, from the landscape of the Novo Vizcayanos' collective vision, communal dreams and creative aspirations.

Celebrating Participatory Governance in Nueva Vizcaya

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De La Salle University
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For the People of Nueva Vizcaya
who have put to the test
the Principle of Participatory Governance
and proved their mettle as good and courageous citizens.
May their kind increase.

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The Philippines is currently undergoing economic, social, political, and cultural transformation, which can be attributed to globalization, decentralization, and rapid urbanization. Decentralization, in particular, has brought about changes as well as challenges that local government units (LGUs) must address.

Since the enactment of the Local Government Code 12 years ago, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has consistently promoted autonomy and excellence in local governance through capacity-development interventions to LGUs. The leagues of local governments, the private sector, including civil-society organizations, local and international development agencies, local resource institutions, and other stakeholders of local governance have actively supported the Department's programs. Several LGUs in the country have demonstrated good local governance practices. However, many best practices and tools for good governance have not been replicated in other areas because they have not been widely disseminated.

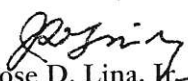
Celebrating Participatory Governance in Nueva Vizcaya is a useful resource to facilitate the scaling up of good governance practices. The book clearly illustrates the strategies and mechanisms utilized by the multi-awarded outstanding provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya in developing local capacity and in creating good governance practices. Vital issues confronting Nueva Vizcaya province in its effort to involve its constituency in different phases of program development and governance are likewise presented.

I urge all LGUs and other sectors interested in people's participation in governance to read this book and to draw lessons from Nueva Vizcaya's rich experiences to enable them to attain the goals of the Local Government Code.

On its 25th anniversary, I congratulate De La Salle University's Social Development Research Center [DLSU-SDRC], particularly its administrators and authors for producing a reader-friendly book on participatory governance.

I look forward to a continued strong partnership between DILG and DLSU-SDRC.

Mabuhay!


Jose D. Lina, Jr.
Secretary

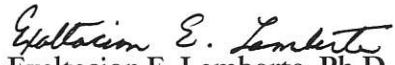
The implementation of the Local Government Code in the Philippines has brought challenges to the local government units and elected officials in the country. At the same time, it has provided the opportunity for the local communities and officials to be creative and bring out the best in them. Local governance is now the focus of concern and has caught the attention not only of researchers but also of development planners and advocates of varying social and political standpoints.

How well is our local governance doing? Is participatory local governance an empirical reality or is it mere rhetoric? What data are available showing that indeed participatory local governance and effective and successful local governance in communities are closely related? What factors contribute to the success of participatory local governance practice? What are the outcomes? Do people benefit from the approach? In what ways do the benefits trickle down to those who need these most?

As part of its 25th Anniversary, the Social Development Research Center of the College of Liberal Arts embarked on documenting and publishing research that provides evidence of community and organizational approaches that stress the importance of people and social relations in development efforts. Among the Center's ventures has been the identification of success factors and issues confronting the use of participatory local governance among our local communities, be they urban or rural, lowland or upland, mainstream communities or indigenous groups.

This scientific documentation of the experience of Nueva Vizcaya Province is among the projects that contribute to the Center's research efforts in the area of participatory local governance. It evidently discusses the initiatives, mechanisms and processes that exemplify the principles and ideas of participatory local governance. The issues surrounding the exercise and application of the participatory local governance framework are also analyzed towards the latter part of the documentation.

I wish to congratulate Dr. Pilar Ramos-Jimenez, the principal investigator of this research endeavor, and her team consisting of Saniata P. Masulit and Ysadora F. Mendoza for carrying out this valuable research. This book is the result of their efforts. The Social Development Research Center is proud to have contributed to its publication and to have believed that there are success stories in governance that can be used as proof that Filipino communities at the local level are effective catalysts of people-centered development.


Exaltacion E. Lamberte, Ph.D.

Director

Social Development Research Center

College of Liberal Arts

De La Salle University-Manila

March 2004

After the passage of the Local Government Code (LGC) in 1991, I organized a series of seminars under the auspices of De La Salle University's Social Development Research Center (SDRC) to determine the views of provincial and city government officials, as well as members of non-government and people's organizations, about the anticipated effects of the law on local governance. Most government officials of the local government units (LGUs) and members of the civil society that participated in the seminars had favorable views about the LGC and expressed optimism about its prospects in improving the delivery of basic services in their respective locales. There was great expectation that the involvement of the civil society in various aspects of local governance would result in long-lasting changes in the social system.

In the past decade, positive changes and difficulties have been reportedly experienced in the implementation of the LGC. However, during the first convention on local governance in October 2001, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Jose Lina Jr. assessed that people's participation, the LGC's core strategy, had yet to be "fully optimized." People's involvement in local governance is a long and tedious undertaking and it requires good management skills, a great deal of patience, and flexibility among various stakeholders. Because of its complexity and rather slow process in effecting change, LGUs and other institutions tend to use this strategy in selected development programs related to environmental protection and conservation, education, health and nutrition, governance, finance, agriculture, and social welfare.

Finding Nueva Vizcaya is akin to striking a lode of gold and a major reason for celebration because this province's local government unit, in

collaboration with its civil society, has effectively adopted democratic participation as its key strategy in governance and in the development of several new interventions as well as innovations in existing province-wide programs.

My keen interest in Nueva Vizcaya began in 1998, when I served as one of four United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) consultants that assessed the state of Philippine population, including reproductive health (RH). In multi-sectoral consultation meetings, Nueva Vizcaya was presented as the model province for its successful integration of the various RH elements at different levels of its health system. I pledged that I would one day take my students from the Master's program in Health Social Science to Nueva Vizcaya to learn how this small province in northern Luzon managed to integrate RH in its health facilities.

It was not until August 2002 that I was finally able to take the students of the seminar course on gender, sexuality and reproductive health for a one-week field immersion in Nueva Vizcaya. The graduate students and I learned a great deal from that intensive weeklong experience, not only about RH but also other aspects of local governance. We were impressed by the numerous awards and plaques of recognition that were proudly displayed at the provincial capitol, and the infectious enthusiasm exuded by Governor Rodolfo Agbayani, the administrators and faculty of St. Mary's University (the academic institution that has an adolescent RH program), as well as the health personnel of a barangay health station, a rural health unit, a district and a provincial hospital. My students and I were pleasantly surprised that the governor was knowledgeable about gender and that this

cross-cutting issue is mainstreamed at different levels of the province's political and health systems.

Other development efforts that were shared with us included the Barobbob Watershed and Lower Magat Projects, innovations in the provincial jail, the empowerment and livelihood projects of people with disability, the TREE for Legacy (a program which enables a Novo Vizcayano to own one or more trees on public land), the early childhood development program, and the improvement of the real property tax system. These interventions further enlightened us about the benefits of decentralization and participatory governance in improving the people's quality of life. I recall suggesting to the governor and other provincial personnel that a book about Nueva Vizcaya's participatory governance should be written so that other LGUs and groups could learn from their experience.

That brief visit to Nueva Vizcaya provided the impetus to pursue the idea of writing a reader-friendly book so that other LGUs, national agencies, and the civil society can readily understand the processes that Nueva Vizcaya went through in installing the LGC's core strategy. I am grateful to DLSU-SDRC Director Dr. Exaltacion E. Lamberte for encouraging me to form a small research team to carry out my book-writing plan.

I am forever indebted to the two outstanding graduates of my university's Master's Program in Health Social Science who eagerly joined me in this endeavor: Saniata P. Masulit, former publications editor of the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development Department of Science and Technology, and communications specialist of the Population Council Philippines Office, and Ysadora F. Mendoza, a former clinical instructor of

physical therapy from Cebu Doctors' College. These dynamic women braved bad weather and long-distance travel to gather data, and they labored long hours in the preparation of the various chapters of this book.

The field immersion in mid-2003 enabled our team to unravel not only the complexities in participatory governance in Nueva Vizcaya but also the difficulties in installing this approach in the province's development efforts. Some elective officials and key players of Nueva Vizcaya's development have openly expressed major issues about the participatory approach in local governance which I believe must be seriously addressed by the DILG and other national agencies, the LGUs and by the civil society.

Our team is grateful to the Novo Vizcayanos for the hospitality and assistance they have extended in helping us complete the difficult task of writing this book. We particularly appreciate Governor Rodolfo Agbayani and Provincial Administrator Virgilio Tiongson for allowing us to interview them and their staff as well as the leaders and beneficiaries of their various programs, examine their reports and records, and observe various areas where major development activities are taking place.

Our gratitude is also extended to the following: Dr. Edwin Galapon, the UNFPA's Provincial Coordinator for RH; Officer-in-Charge Mike Jubay Jr. and all the middle-level managers of the Provincial Planning and Development Office; Provincial Warden Benzon Cadiente and his staff; the leaders of the organization of people with disability; the trainers/educators of the Early Childhood Development Program; Environment and Natural Resources Officer Francisco Tolentino, his staff as well as the beneficiaries of the Barobbob Watershed and Lower Magat Projects; the officers and staff of the Provincial Assessor's Office, the Quality Service Improvement

Program, and the Finance and Management Information System; some barangay captains and mayors, students, business women and men. I really appreciate their cooperation and openness in sharing their opinions and experiences in their province's intervention programs.

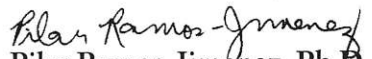
We are grateful to Vice-Governor Luisa L. Cuaresma, the Presiding Officer of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP), the province's legislative body, for allowing us to interview her and other SP members during their session breaks. Their candid and frank assessment of participatory governance and other related matters has raised a number of critical issues that should be addressed by the government and the private sector.

From the inception to the completion of this book, we have received continued encouragement from the DILG, particularly from Secretary Jose D. Lina Jr. and his staff: Assistant Secretary for Administration and Human Resource Development Austere A. Panaderos, and Gerald E. Potutan, consultant to the Local Government Academy and a graduate of DLSU's Master of Health Social Science Program. Our research team hopes that this publication would be a useful resource not only in their capacity-development program for LGUs and other partner agencies but also in the improvement of decentralization policies and interventions.

We want to express our gratitude to De La Salle University's administrators, particularly Interim President and Executive Vice-President Dr. Carmelita I. Quebengco, Vice-President for Academics and Research Dr. Allan Benedict L. Bernardo, the College of Liberal Arts Dean Dr. Jesusa M. Marco, and Behavioral Sciences Department Chair Dr. Romeo B. Lee for providing a supportive environment in the preparation of this book. We thank the SDRC Administrator for Finance Aurora S. Esquejo and

our project secretary, Ma. Rosario L. Eugenio, for the excellent support services extended to us throughout the project. We are happy that Dr. Marjorie Evasco, Director of DLSU's Bienvenido N. Santos Creative Writing Center, and the Center's staff, worked with us to ensure that this book would be interesting to the reading public.

Finally, we want to pay tribute to Nueva Vizcaya for its legacy of demonstrating that people's participation as a core LGC strategy is indeed possible and can bring long-term systemic changes that are beneficial to the majority. It is our hope that this initial attempt at documenting the rich experience of a single province can be replicated in other LGUs so that new models and more lessons can be drawn for effective local governance.


Pilar Ramos-Jimenez, Ph.D.

Research Fellow, DLSU-SDRC

INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, several developing countries in various world regions shifted from unitary to decentralized systems of governance to facilitate social and economic development and to bring their governments closer to the people. Although initial and continuing difficulties are encountered in implementing decentralization in its many forms, numerous gains are also noted. The active partnership between the private and public sectors, strengthened civil-society participation and democracy, improved delivery of basic services, and more efficient as well as transparent local government organization and management, are some of the significant changes experienced by many decentralized governments. Despite limited evidence directly associating democratic decentralization with rural poverty reduction, success stories illustrating “balance between autonomy and accountability, constructive support from external actors, and commitment to democratic deepening” have been reported (Johnson, 2001).

In Asia, the Philippines stands out for its serious efforts in implementing a decentralized system. In October 2001, a decade after the passage of the Local Government Code, the country convened its First Local Government Congress to review the progress, issues, and prospects for good governance. Jose D. Lina Jr., secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), proudly reported the state of local governance based on data obtained from 715 local government units (LGUs) that evaluated themselves through the use of the Local Productivity and Performance Measurement System (LPPMS), an instrument with programmatic indicators and standards which LGUs used to assess themselves in the “efficiency, effectiveness, adequacy and equity” of the services they deliver to their constituencies.



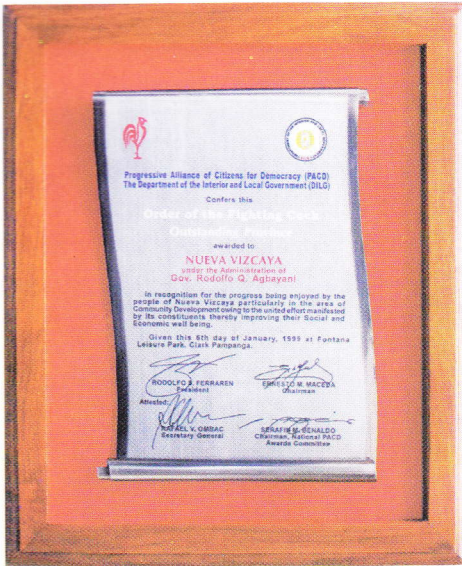
The well-landscaped grounds of the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Capitol manifest the provincial leadership's belief that cleanliness starts at home.

Secretary Lina noted that a large majority of the LGUs claimed that they had improved their capacities in organizational management, particularly in planning and budgeting as well as in the development of annual and investment plans. They had also developed internal rules of procedure and local revenue codes. They had formulated acceptable service delivery standards and organized *lupong tagapamayapa*, or security councils. However, only one-half of the LGUs had data-bank systems, and few had computer-based financial management systems, environment and investment codes, locally initiated health services and economic enterprises. The DILG secretary noted that only one-fifth of the LGUs had initiated economic programs because the “cumbersome processes in the local bureaucracies” made it difficult to attain “vibrant local economies.” Thus, he pledged to address the problem of red tape in local government during his term as secretary.

Although people's participation is a core strategy of the Local Government Code, the DILG secretary admitted that this had yet to be “fully optimized.”



Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo awards the Gawad Galing Pook to Nueva Vizcaya Governor Rodolfo Aghayani.



The Order of the Fighting Cock Outstanding Province is one of the many awards Nueva Vizcaya has received under the administration of Governor Aguiryani.

He noted the active involvement of the members of civil society in the first national congress as an indication of their commitment to “deepen their participation.” To further support people participation, DILG Memorandum Circular 2001-89 was issued to hasten the identification and accreditation of civil-society groups in local special bodies and development councils.

The overall relations between the central and local governments have reportedly improved since decentralization was implemented. The national government has assumed not only

regulating but also facilitating and enabling roles, and has encouraged “customized, demand-driven” rather than generic policies and programs. The private sector, on the other hand, “has shifted from being passive observers to active stakeholders.” Instead of being adversaries, the civil society has developed a more “critical collaboration and engagement” with the LGUs.

Secretary Lina summed up the significant changes observed among the LGUs in their manner of managing their local activities as follows: (1) from dependency to self-reliance; (2) from traditional routine to embracing innovations; (3) from process and structure to performance and result; and (4) from individualism to alliance building.

In their intention to be more responsive and efficient, the LGUs and local communities have reportedly experimented on a number of innovations. Over 400 cases and models of effective local governance have been documented by the Local Government Academy and the Gawad Galing Pook Awards, a non-government foundation that was funded by the Ford Foundation, in the following thematic areas: fighting poverty, promoting excellence in urban

governance, transforming the local economy, managing the environment, institutionalizing child-friendly governance, and striving for local governance. It was, however, observed that a majority of the LGU innovations are reported as anecdotal accounts, with processes seldom described in the reports. A large proportion of LGU innovations are reportedly not sustained after funding and interest have ceased, or when the local leadership changes. Furthermore, the innovative efforts of a single province that has introduced several interventions have not been fully documented.

In its 25th year, De La Salle University's Social Development Research Center chose to highlight the experience of Nueva Vizcaya, a northern Luzon province which has been installed in the Gawad Galing Pook Hall of Fame. The province has developed a vision to improve the *Novo Vizcayano's* quality of life and pursued it relentlessly over the past 10 years, transforming its bureaucracy and programs through the active involvement of its civil society. Describing the process of participatory governance as experienced by this model province may provide lessons to other local governments with the political will to engage their constituencies in similar development endeavors.

In the preparation of this book, several research methods were utilized, particularly review of



A decade's harvest of awards is showcased at the People's Museum.

documents and reports, field observation, in-depth interviews with key informants, informal interviews, group discussions, and focus groups. About 100 informants were interviewed from April to October 2003. Elected government officials from the different levels of the executive and legislative departments of the province, representatives of people's and non-government organizations, government administrative and middle-level management staff, health and other service providers, and program beneficiaries were among the sources of information for this study.

There are four chapters in this book. The first chapter traces the process Nueva Vizcaya went through in putting participatory governance (PG) in place. It describes in detail the confluence of factors that contributed to participatory governance, and the synergy that resulted in the institutionalization of participatory mechanisms in the province. These factors include (1) a democratic leadership committed to sharing power and governance with constituents, (2) the Local Government Code as an enabling instrument and a creditable framework for participatory governance, (3) external assistance, particularly the USAID-funded Governance and Local Democracy (GOLD) project, (4) management innovations, specifically the participatory planning-budgeting mechanism and organizational development, (5) a communication and feedback system, (6) capability development, and (7) partnership and linkages.

The second chapter describes the people's participation in improving systems and processes in the different development sectors, and their outcomes. It describes the (1) co-management scheme employed in managing the Barobbob watershed and other natural resources, (2) empowerment of persons with disability, (3) service improvement for customer satisfaction in hospitals, (4) transformation of the real property tax system from a cost center to a revenue-generating center, (5) promotion of transparency and accountability through a fund management information system, (6) development of a humane and healthy jail management program, and (7) training of early-childhood and development workers. Each account is treated as a case study in PG and highlights how the stakeholders were engaged to participate, the form of participation, the innovations applied in installing a new system/scheme/process, and the outcomes of the participatory process. The case-study approach to describing the outcomes makes it easy for readers to

identify the elements that went into the making of systems/schemes/processes with PG as a pivotal strategy.

The third chapter highlights the issues, including the growing pains, in installing participatory governance. Among other things, it describes the tensions between the executive and legislative branches of government that result from differing frameworks and views of governance. It also suggests ways to resolve certain difficulties encountered in participatory governance by the public officials of the province.

The final chapter does not close with a conclusion. Rather, it poses the question of sustainability of the gains ushered in by participatory governance, given that key stakeholders may have opposing views of governance. It presents the prospects for sustainability as viewed through the lens of the *Novo Vizcayanos* themselves.



Grade six students of the Quezon Central School in Quezon, Nueva Vizcaya eagerly visit previously planted trees to sustain watershed management efforts.

Process and elements of participatory governance

In the past decade, Nueva Vizcaya has attracted national and international attention for its numerous innovative development projects and activities. Founded in 1839, this small province is located in the heart of northern Luzon, the largest island of the Philippines. Its land area of 437,880 hectares accounts for 16.30 percent of the land in the five provinces of Region II. Surrounded by seven provinces, it is bounded on the north by Ifugao; on the northeast by Isabela; on the east by Quirino; on the southeast by Aurora; on the south by Nueva Ecija; on the southwest by Pangasinan; and on the west by Benguet.

Nueva Vizcaya has 275 barangays,

or villages, in 15 municipalities. Its provincial capital, Bayombong, is 268 kilometers north of Manila. Its total population of 366,962 (as of year 2000) is a mosaic of seven indigenous cultural communities co-existing peacefully with mainstream cultures made up predominantly of Ilokanos and Tagalogs.

Before the passage of the Local Government Code in 1991, Nueva Vizcaya was known as a fifth-class province. In 1992 over half of its families was living below the poverty line. Five years later, the number of people living below the poverty threshold had declined dramatically to 10.7 percent (NSO, 1997). Today

Nueva Vizcaya is waiting for confirmation as a first-class province from the national government because it is reportedly operating on a budget of a province with this classification.

The province has garnered several regional and national awards in the fields of agriculture, environment, economics, health, peace and order, as well as in social and community development. The impressive plaques of recognition proudly displayed in the lobby and on the hallway of the provincial government office attest to the province's outstanding accomplishments. The

major awards received by the province are listed in Appendix A.

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, a German foundation, and the Local Government Development Foundation jointly recognized Nueva Vizcaya as a model province in 1999 by honoring it with a medal of excellence, an award given only once every three years. Several institutions have placed Nueva Vizcaya in their halls of fame in recognition of the awards the province has consistently received for a number of years. For example, the Gawad Galing Pook, a non-government foundation which collaborates with the Local Government Academy, has installed the province in its Hall of Fame, recognizing its annual awards from 1998 to 2002 for innovations in the management of the environment including the forest, the improvement of quality service in hospitals, the empowerment of people with disability, and reforming the real property tax system.

Nueva Vizcaya has also earned a place in the Hall of Fame of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the National Police Commission: it was chosen as the most peaceful province



Nueva Vizcaya earns the most peaceful province distinction for six consecutive years from 1995 to 2000.



Foreign funding agencies show interest in the province's various participatory projects.

by the Provincial Peace and Order Council for six consecutive years, from 1995 to 2000. It is in Region II's Hall of Fame for winning the regional contest of the Provincial Grains Standardization Program for four consecutive years. And for three consecutive years, the provincial jail has been assessed as the region's "healthiest prison."

The trust and confidence of foreign funding agencies in the capability of Nueva Vizcaya to

harness its resources, particularly the involvement of the citizenry, are reflected in the technical and financial support extended to the province's special projects. These include capability building, reproductive health, basic education, rural water supply and sanitation, self-reliance in agriculture, forestry, and solid waste and watershed management. A list of projects and foreign funding agencies is found in Appendix B.

Because of the innovations made in

the foregoing areas, Nueva Vizcaya is a frequent host to many local and foreign visitors of varying age groups who eagerly learn how this small province came to develop and implement innovative interventions in its social system.

What accounts for the dramatic social and economic transformation in Nueva Vizcaya in the past decade? Informants from various public and private sectors attribute the positive changes in the province mainly to participatory governance, or the active involvement of the *Novo Vizcayanos* in government decision-making and the development process itself.

Participatory governance in the province, however, did not occur by chance. Nor did it happen overnight, this process through which various stakeholders—particularly the general public, civil society, the private sector, and government— influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions, and resources that affect them. Rather, it was deliberate and carefully planned, and purposefully implemented over a span of 10 years. It is the outcome of a confluence of elements that include (1) a democratic leadership at the helm of government,

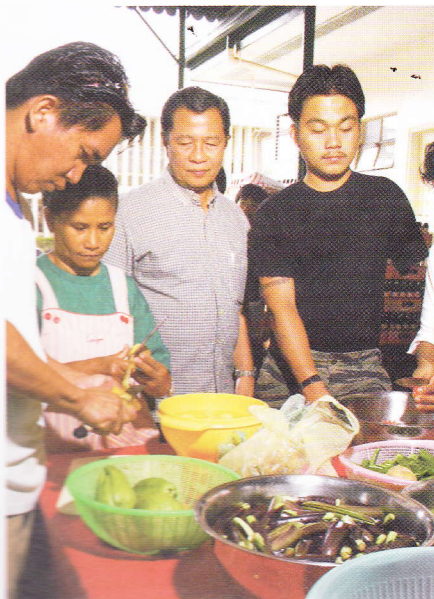
(2) the implementation of the Local Government Code, (3) external assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), (4) the institutionalization of the participatory local governance program, (5) organizational development, (6) the strengthening of human resource capability, (7) communication and feedback, and (8) partnership as well as linkages among the stakeholders.

Democratic leadership

Perhaps one could say that fate played a hand in putting participatory governance in place in Nueva Vizcaya. With the unexpected demise of the incumbent governor in 1992, Vice-Governor Rodolfo Q. Agbayani, a lawyer and former judge of the regional trial court in Cauayan, Isabela province, became governor by succession.

The new chief executive possessed a number of qualities that worked in favor of participatory governance. For one, he was untutored in traditional politics. Currying political favor to win popular support was unacceptable to him. For another, he was wise in the ways of the democratic process: his administration

“favored the many instead of the few,” and the laws he adhered to sought “to afford equal justice to all in their private differences.” He was also imbued with a deep sense of right and wrong. Armed with a strong political will, he was resolute in sharing power and governance with his constituents. This composite of personal characteristics allowed the governor to create among the Novo Vizcayanos a craving for reforms and a yearning for meaningful governance, where the community – together with civil society, the private



Governor Aghayani visits PWDs preparing the day's meals for their canteen livelihood project.

sector, and the local government – carves its own future and destiny.

The Local Government Code

In the same year that a new democratic leader took over the helm of the Nueva Vizcaya provincial government, the Local Government Code (LGC) was implemented, providing the enabling instrument and a clear framework for participatory governance.

The Local Government Code of 1991 was a turning point in the history of governance in the country. It redefined the role of government in social integration, the economy, and the protection of the environment. It sought to promote greater local autonomy by devolving authority, responsibility, and allocation of power and resources from the central to the local government. More importantly, it recognized the critical role of citizens' participation in local governance.

The stage for participatory governance was thus set, and the time was ripe for reforms and an exciting political journey.

The new chief executive of Nueva Vizcaya lost no time in engaging

people's participation in governance. Following the LGC's provision on promoting the establishment of people's and non-government organizations (POs/NGOs) to become active partners in local autonomy, the governor pursued the accreditation of POs/NGOs in the province by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (provincial council). The accreditation enabled POs/NGOs to participate in local special bodies to present their concerns and ventilate their views on development and governance policies.

Aside from the local special entities, the governor issued directives that created functional committees allowing POs/NGOs partnership in programs such as environmental protection and conservation, social welfare, tourism, rural development, computer education, cooperatives organizing, disaster preparedness, human-rights protection, charity work, and others.

To encourage more participation in planning and budgeting among the POs/NGOs, the provincial leadership set a bold precedent by expand-



The Nueva Vizcaya landscape provides many breathtaking views like this scenic spot in the municipality of Ambaguio.

ing their membership in the Provincial Development Council (PDC) beyond the prescribed minimum. Thus POs/NGOs came to occupy 13 seats in the PDC, up from five, and held two seats in the PDC Executive Committee instead of just one. The PDC, the highest planning body in the provincial government, is headed by the governor.

These moves broadened the base of civil-society involvement in governance. They extended the reach of POs/NGOs not only in program planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation but also in the delivery of basic services, joint ventures and cooperative programs, local enterprises, livelihood projects, and capability building.



A good harvest of local produce finds its way to the marketplace in Solano municipality.

The GOLD project

Pivotal in strengthening participatory governance in Nueva Vizcaya was the Governance and Local Democracy (GOLD) project that was funded by USAID. Established in 1995 and implemented through the Associates in Rural Development, Inc. (ARD), the project sought to (1) enhance participatory decision-making processes and community involvement in local governance; (2) improve the government's performance in management, operations, and service delivery; (3) strengthen supportive organizational linkages at the local and national levels; and (4) address policy roadblocks that constrain local governance and development.

The 1995 GOLD planning workshop, attended by 80 individuals including the governor, local chief executives, Sangguniang Panlalawigan members, department heads, and POs/NGOs, identified and prioritized six projects deemed in need of GOLD assistance. These were (1) participatory governance, (2) organizational development, (3) the real property tax system, (4) forest management and economic enterprise, (5) investment promotion, and (6) the fund management and information system.

Participatory local governance program

As one of the GOLD-assisted initiatives, the participatory local governance program of Nueva Vizcaya was given greater focus and a collective push. The program sought to capitalize on the existing democratic climate by strengthening participatory mechanisms in the local development councils (LDCs). The main venue for people's participation in governance, LDCs are mandated to craft the development plan of the local government units (LGUs) as provided for in the Local Government Code.

Operationally, strengthening participatory mechanisms was defined in terms of installing

- 1) an effective participatory local governance mechanism in at least 68 of the 275 barangays in the province through fast, simple, and sustainable approaches that may be replicated in other barangays;
- 2) a participatory development planning mechanism in at least 10 of the 15 municipalities in the province, which considers the lower-level plans and yields an appropriate plan that can be

executed through the budget; and

- 3) a sustainable budget decision-making mechanism, guided by the principles of transparency and accountability, in the barangays and municipalities concerned.

The following year, 1996, was exciting as the different key players picked rich, lush threads of ideas on participatory planning-budgeting mechanisms and wove them until they blended perfectly into a tapestry that made sense. It was not, however, easy at the outset. Not everyone had the wherewithal to contribute to the grand enterprise of developing participatory mechanisms. Hence, planning and budget officers from five pilot municipalities were chosen and trained in the technology of participation (TOP). This capability-building exercise was designed to equip the participants with skills and tools for initiating and sustaining the change process. It sought to enable the trainees to experience and practice the complete strategic planning process of visioning, strategic-direction setting, and implementation. The goal was to build a cadre of facilitators who would transfer the knowledge and practice of

participatory planning-budgeting to their barangays. At that time, nobody thought that “broadening the democratic base” would take root through these tools and training programs.

Finally, with the help of ARD and applying the TOP techniques, the selected members of the GOLD task force completed and unveiled their magnum opus: the barangay participatory planning-budgeting mechanism. This mechanism, though rich in substance, was scrupulously severe in style. It was simple, participatory in nature, and reflective of the realities and conditions in the barangays. It

enabled an LGU to complete a strategic plan and an annual budget in just three days. It also allowed the barangay to install a people’s monitoring and evaluation system through quarterly meetings of the Local Development Council.

The planning-budgeting workshop design (see Figure 1) starts off with a current-reality dialogue where the development situation of the community is assessed. This step in the process looks into major trends that influence the community’s current condition, recent accomplishments, challenges and obstacles

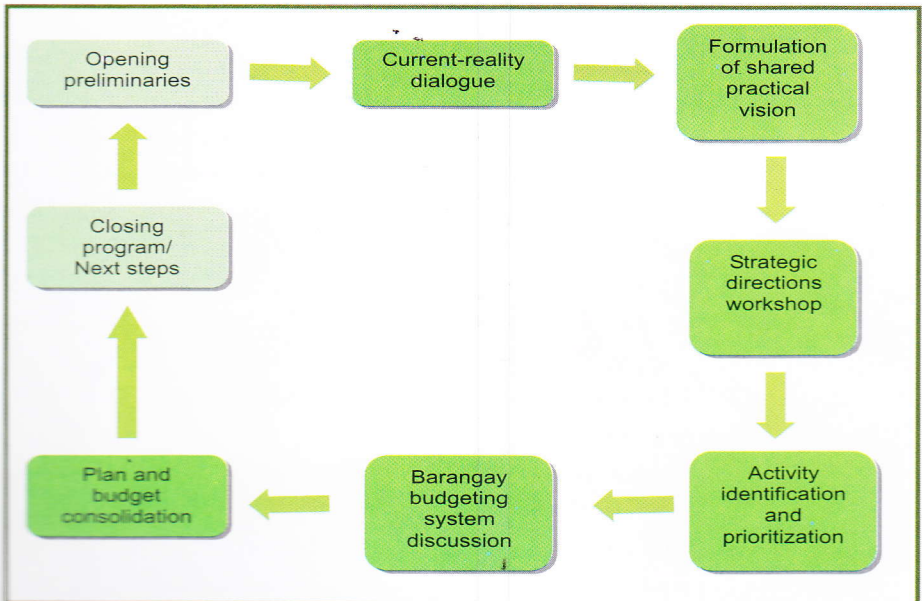


Figure 1. The participatory planning - budgeting workshop design

to development as well as strengths and advantages on which to build the plan.

Based on the validated current situation, the participants formulate a practical vision – the shared hopes and aspirations that unify the community and lead it towards a common direction. The vision is designed to be congruent with that of the province and the municipality. With the vision as the guidepost, strategies are formulated and the corresponding programs, projects,

and activities to be pursued over a span of three years are identified. These are then prioritized through a simple voting process.

The discussion of the barangay budgeting system gives the participants a sense of the plan-budget linkage, the budget calendar, and the provisions in the circulars issued by the Departments of Budget and Management (DBM) and Interior and Local Government (DILG). The plan and budget are then consolidated.



Local leaders and civic-spirited citizens discuss and refine the Barangay Management Information System.

The participatory planning-budgeting design was pre-tested, refined, and piloted in 29 barangays. Its viability led to its adoption at the municipal and provincial levels and eventually in the Provincial Development Council.

Extensive social marketing was used to promote participatory planning-budgeting and create a demand for it. Social marketing is defined by some key informants as “the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas or practices; it involves consideration of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research.” It combines traditional approaches to social change with commercial marketing and advertising techniques.

To steer the stakeholders' thinking and behavior towards adopting participatory planning and budgeting, dialogues were conducted with cultural community councils, municipal governments, the Municipal Federation of Liga ng mga Barangay (league of villages), and the DILG provincial office. A comedy radio program about a barangay head called *Kapitan Enteng* who did not

know how to manage his LGU was used to popularize the Local Government Code's provisions on people's participation in governance. It also educated the listeners in participatory planning and budgeting. Social marketing tools and techniques were thus subjected to an acid test.

One of the provincial government staff members noted that the participatory characteristics of barangay planning exercises taught farmers, fisherfolk, religious groups, schools, POs/NGOs, and other institutions that they are important to the community.

The social marketing of the program was assessed as effective because 164 of the 275 barangays adopted the participatory planning-budgeting process. They requested and availed themselves of technical assistance in implementing the participatory planning and budgeting mechanism. Thus, the concept of “demand-driven” projects became a concrete LGU experience.

Progress made in the implementation of the LGU's development plan, or the lack of it, is monitored and evaluated through a participatory process that begins with the barangay captain rendering a report (see

Figure 2). Commitments are reviewed and accomplishments assessed against targets set in the plan. Stakeholders similarly undergo a current-reality dialogue much like that in the planning-budgeting process. The vision as well as priorities are revisited to provide some basis for the activity planning and prioritization that follow. Budget inputs and allocation are also monitored.

The road to good governance is at best rocky. A provincial government

middle-level manager noted the difficulties of the province during the early years of instituting participatory governance:

Resistance to change emanated from within the provincial government system. The elements of teamwork and shared responsibility were not acceptable to the personnel.

The new governor knew the situation full well. He also recognized that if he was to achieve his goal, he needed a strong bureaucracy

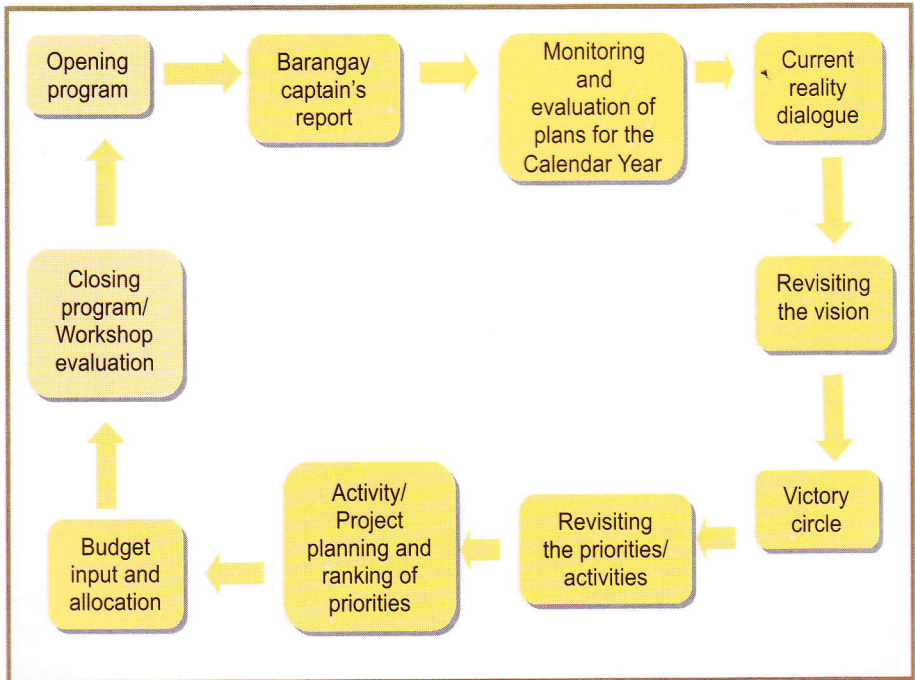


Figure 2. The participatory monitoring and evaluation workshop design.

to buttress his platform of participatory, transparent, and accountable governance. The challenge would have daunted the fainthearted; the bureaucracy was a baffling picture of sharp contrasts. While it was bloated with a large number of personnel, it was assessed as essentially unproductive. Yet there was a long-standing clamor from the personnel for upward mobility in the organizational ladder. Some offices had a preponderance of unnecessary positions while others were understaffed. Although they occupied the top positions in their department, a number of officers had a low level of confidence and competence, and sought the governor's guidance in even the most trivial tasks endorsed to them.

Sensitive to these ironies and compelled by the need to transform the bureaucracy into an effective and efficient service delivery system, the governor established the Organizational Development Program for Enhanced Service Delivery (ODES), with assistance from the GOLD project. ODES aimed to provide a systematic process for identifying, designing, implementing, and managing change in



Enhanced services transform this municipal health station into a patient-friendly facility.

the provincial government so that it can serve its internal and external clients efficiently and effectively.

Applying the integrated organizational change model, the provincial government embarked on an organizational diagnosis that assessed the different components of the bureaucracy: the vision, leadership, strategy, group process, human resources, culture, systems and technology, and structure. Governor Agbayani encouraged the middle-level managers to be open and candid in their assessment of the provincial government organization with the following advice: "Go ahead. You can break the pieces. But let's not leave the pieces; let's pick them up and forge ahead."

The diagnostic process was reportedly honest; most of the results that surfaced were negative. These were

presented nonetheless to the different departments to pave the way for the recognition and acceptance of the need for improvement.

The same results informed the development of a change plan that would direct the complementation of the different organizational components. The findings helped identify the interventions that would address the organizational weaknesses highlighted in the diagnosis. These interventions included the development of a common vision, systems redesign, formulation of the performance evaluation system, training needs analysis, and capability building.

A revealing finding from the organizational diagnosis was the nebulous perception of a vision. While some claimed that the province had a vision to guide it, others asserted that the province lacked direction and focus in its development efforts. This led to the crafting of the vision of the Nueva Vizcaya local government. Conducted in a highly participatory manner, the vision formulation drew on the inputs of the rank-and-file, the managers at different levels of the various departments, and the elective officials.

With the LGU vision as the framework, the shift from “a culture of indifference and ineptitude to a culture of responsiveness and excellence” was made much easier, though no less tortuous or painful. Everything else flowed from the vision – it spelled out the mission, goals, and strategic focus. The alignment of the different organizational components – particularly the leadership, systems, processes, and culture – with this vision facilitated the management of resistance during the change process.

With a more robust bureaucracy and a policy of resolving issues at the department level, the governor introduced a new management norm: greater delegation of responsibility to decentralize decision-making.

Capability development

By itself, organizational change could not fuel and sustain the change process that the provincial leadership aimed to put in place. The capacity of the personnel managing the organization was also considered. People operating the ramparts of the bureaucracy needed practical skills and tools to help them focus their creativity toward effective action,

productivity, and work satisfaction. Thus began the intensive process of capability development in the province.

To help those concerned thrive in the chaos of change expected not only in the government but in the entire province as well, the chief executive, the LGU staff, and other stakeholders underwent a series of capability-building seminars and workshops. The series included an orientation on organizational devel-

opment and seminars on managing and leading change. Facilitation workshops were conducted to provide the skills needed to handle subsequent group discussions, meetings, and fora in the local government units. Personal growth seminars, on the other hand, allowed participants to get to know each other, clarify personal values, and explore individual as well as team contributions.

The training in counseling unveiled ways to manage resistance to



One of the major thrusts in participatory governance is recognizing one's active and vital role in development.

social change and cushion the blow brought about by changes in the organization. The workflow analysis training, meanwhile, taught the staff how to analyze and redesign processes.

The trainers' training in team building equipped selected staff with skills to conduct in-house training activities in the LGUs. The provincial leadership was known to champion governance that recognizes the people as active subjects, rather than mere objects, of their own development. The community, therefore, also needed to be trained to work as a team and to find new and exciting opportunities in the journey toward change.

The training in social marketing and development communication guided the LGU in positioning and promoting such social products as participation in local governance, compliance with real property tax payment, and forest protection and management.

The training in the technology of participation was applied intensively in numerous community consultations and organizational activities. Quality service improvement and customer satisfaction skills training helped build a customer orientation in

the health-service delivery system, particularly in hospitals.

To implement the provincial strategic Organizational Development Framework Plan effectively, the provincial government reorganized its operating structures. A Position Classification and Pay Plan providing equal pay for comparatively equal work was put in place. Employees' performance was evaluated using a performance-rather than position-based system. This system adopts as reference the success indicators and responsibility charting per office as well as performance targets consistent with the Organizational Development Framework Plan. The performance evaluation system allows an objective basis for personnel action such as promotion, demotion, transfer, reassignment, and separation.

Capability development as well as support systems like the performance evaluation system have worked synergistically with substantial payoffs, as evidenced in the increased level of responsiveness of the government bureaucracy. Outfitted with the necessary skills and a new mind set, the LGU staff have been transformed into self-propelled service providers.



Efficiency and quality are at the forefront of standards set in the delivery of health care services.

Efficiency, timeliness, quality, innovativeness, and accountability now mark the local government's delivery of services.

Communication and feedback system

Mere transmission of information from those who have it to those who do not is not enough to stimulate critical thinking and encourage participation in development. Realizing this, the information office of the provincial government

adopted the concept and practice of development communication to create and stimulate understanding of participatory governance.

Development communication is by nature people-centered. It recognizes the centrality of indigenous knowledge and aspirations in development. Its use of communication channels and techniques should lead to people's participation in the change process. Thus, the information unit of the provincial government chose to use participatory media that would serve as instruments not only of

information transmission but also of communication, that is, for exchanging views and involving the community. These media included the *Capitol Newsletter* and a radio program called *Daytoy ti Nueva Vizcaya* (This is Nueva Vizcaya).

The *Capitol Newsletter* was a monthly community paper which was first published in September 1993. It was later renamed *Vizcaya Update*. The newsletter aimed at raising Novo Vizcayano awareness of developments in the provincial government. The eight-page broadsheet



A local folk keeps abreast with what is happening in his province through the Vizcaya Update.

featured the programs, projects, and activities of the provincial government; innovations in local governance; improvements in service delivery systems and procedures; and action taken to respond to pressing problems. It also disseminated information on community as well as national issues.

The newsletter aimed to give the people the opportunity to identify common aspirations as well as problems and solutions, reflect on community issues, and develop a critical attitude towards the reality of self, the community, the LGU, and society. Going through this process would hopefully give the people a sense of involvement in their community life, instill in them a sense of ownership of their common problems, and spur them to plan and act with government in the search for solutions to their concerns.

A critical section of the community paper is the *Letters to the Editor*, a venue for people to express their thoughts and concerns, and comment on various aspects of development in the province.

Daytoy ti Nueva Vizcaya, on the other hand, is a one-hour radio program aired over radio station DWRV in Bayombong, the capital



The Daytoy ti Nueva Vizcaya radio program brings the latest developments to both town and farm dwellers.

town of the province. The use of the broadcast medium effectively addresses the geographic difficulty of reaching the people in the mountainous areas of Nueva Vizcaya.

The radio program features news on developments in Nueva Vizcaya as well as agricultural technologies relevant to farmers in the province. Resource persons interviewed live provide expert advice on community issues and concerns. Producers use the “infotainment” format, combining information and entertainment to make the program interesting and appealing to a broad spectrum of listeners. Acting on audience survey findings on the most appropriate broadcast time, the program was moved to the 6:30-7:30 a.m.

Wednesday slot to reach the widest possible audience.

To pursue development communication effectively, the information office applied strategies such as social marketing, public opinion polling, and process documentation.

Social marketing consists of putting into practice standard techniques in commercial marketing to promote pro-social behavior. From marketing and advertising, it imports theories of consumer behavior into development



Women's participation is an essential component in community empowerment.

communication. Introduced by the GOLD project, the information unit used social marketing extensively to influence people to adopt participatory local governance, forest management as an economic enterprise, revenue mobilization, organizational development, and investment promotion. To a large extent, the real property tax system in Nueva Vizcaya owes its successful implementation to social marketing. Through direct

dialogues with taxpayers during field collection forays, radio broadcasts, and lecture-discussions during the barangay planning and budgeting sessions, people responded positively to the campaign for real property tax payment.

Public opinion polling found its use in getting people's perceptions of the provincial government's program of governance. Process documentation, meanwhile, captured the processes involved in program and project implementation. This tool allowed the provincial government to encapsulate the rich cache of experiences of 164 barangays in using the participatory planning-budgeting mechanism. Drawing on this information, the province developed the unified barangay planning manual that is currently in use.



The Lower Magat forest reserve foliage offers proof that local participatory governance works best in watershed co-management.

Partnerships, linkages, and participatory democracy

The main pillar of the governor's administration is civil-society and private-sector (PS) involvement in local governance. This blends seamlessly with the provisions of the Local Government Code on local government relations with POs, NGOs, and PS.

To further institutionalize participatory governance, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan implemented an accreditation system for POs, NGOs, and PS. Accreditation paved the way for the participation of these organizations in local special bodies and other areas of governance. Local special bodies include the local development council, peace and order council, health board, school board, pre-qualification, bids, and awards committee, and the people's law-enforcement board.

POs, NGOs, and PS which are unable to get a seat in local special bodies may seek partnership with the provincial government in projects that are legitimately negotiated and executed through a memorandum of agreement. With the participatory planning and budgeting system on the use of the 20-percent development fund, a private-sector organization may propose a project to the provincial government and obtain some funding. In the project implementation scheme, the provincial government may provide counterpart or full financial support. The private organization, on the other hand, is expected to monitor and evaluate the project. The institutionalization of

private-sector participation in local special bodies guarantees popular support for the attainment of the vision of the province.

Apart from the local special bodies, functional committees organized through executive orders issued by the governor allow PO-NGO-PS-LGU partnerships in various fields such as environmental protection and conservation, social welfare, tourism, rural development, computer education, organization of cooperatives, charity work, disaster preparedness, and human-rights protection.

The provincial government has successfully transferred to the private sector a number of its projects. For instance, the maintenance of the Colocol irrigation system is now managed by the Irrigators' Association, a cooperative with a membership of 1,700 farmers/families and total assets of PhP6.2 million. The previously LGU-subsidized boats in the small lagoon located in the capitol compound are now profitably operated by the Provincial Federation of Persons with Disabilities. Fifty NGOs and POs currently obtain additional income through harvesting rights given them in exchange for



The Provincial Federation of Persons with Disabilities operates the boats in the lagoon at the Nueva Vizcaya Capitol compound.

their reforesting and managing one-hectare parcels of a formerly barren 50-hectare hill. This was made possible through LGU negotiations with the local college that owned the hill.

The vision of “steering partnership with all sectors...” remains vibrant in Nueva Vizcaya. Partnership has become the hallmark of democracy in the province. That democracy is a Western political ideology inapplicable in Philippine society has been

invalidated by the Nueva Vizcaya experience. Although still largely formative, the province's foray into participatory governance is instructive in how classical democracy — “a government of, by, and for the people” — works.

Gains

An inclusive democratic culture in Nueva Vizcaya that promotes popular participation in governance has

reportedly resulted in more responsive, accountable, transparent, and sustainable programs, projects, and activities (PPAs).

Consultative mechanisms, public hearings, and community dialogues have removed barriers to people's participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring PPAs. Starting at the barangay level, the participatory development planning and budgeting system allows citizens to verbalize their needs in the form of PPA proposals, sift through and prioritize these ideas for funding, and weld them together into a composite whole coherent with the local government's vision for the people. The system further shares with the citizenry the responsibility for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programs, projects, and activities.

Working with a coalition of health groups, for example, the Provincial Health Board has forged various partnerships between local government units and POs/NGOs/PS in planning, funding, and implementing health care services in Nueva Vizcaya.

The Provincial Peace and Order Council which was established in 1992 has brought together local

institutions concerned with the pursuit of peace in the province. Today the Council has expanded to 64 members, including the municipal mayors and representatives of the religious and academic sectors, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, the Press Corps, and Task Force Detainees. The other members consist, among others, of representatives of the local and national Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Philippine National Police, the jail management and penology as well as fire prevention bureaus, the National Police Commission, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Public Attorney's Office, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The strong collaborative and institutional relationships the Provincial Peace and Order Council has established with public and private entities have led to effective and responsive peace efforts in Nueva Vizcaya. Its accomplishments have placed the Council in the Hall of Fame for being the best in its ranks for six consecutive years (1995-2000).

Apart from these strides in democratic governance, the current governor, who is on his third and last term,



Conservation of the environment is a major concern of participatory governance in Nueva Vizcaya.

has authored a legacy of innovations made distinct by the participatory approaches employed. These include (1) watershed management models applied in Nueva Vizcaya, (2) transforming the real property tax system from a cost center to a revenue-generating center, (3) hospital service improvement for customer satisfaction, (4) empowering persons with disability, (5) promoting transpar-

ency and accountability through a funds management and information system, (6) developing a humane and healthy jail management program, and (7) the early childhood development program.

Described in the following chapter, these innovations are a treasure trove of lessons and insights from which other LGUs may draw inspiration.

Cases of participatory governance in selected development areas

Seven of Nueva Vizcaya's many development programs stand out not only for their innovative approaches and long-term effects but also for their clear demonstration of the stakeholders' participation from inception to implementation, an element which turned the interventions into success stories. In this chapter, the situations prior to program development, goals, strategies, gains, and lessons learned are presented in each of the following areas: (1) watershed management; (2) persons with disability; (3) quality service improvement for the health sector; (4) the real property tax system; (5) the funds management information

system (FMIS); (6) the provincial jail; and (7) the early childhood development program.

Reviving the Vizcaya watershed: Four models of creative watershed management

Nueva Vizcaya is the watershed haven of the Cagayan Valley region. Forest lands comprise three-fourths (349,880 hectares) of the province's total land area. From these forests spring the waters that provide irrigation to the whole region. The Nueva Vizcaya watersheds are strategically important to the floodplains of the province and the

region as well as some parts of central and northern Luzon. They support the Magat hydroelectric facility which irrigates 150,000 hectares of riceland in nearby Isabela province, and the Casecnan multi-purpose irrigation and 150-megawatt power project located at the southern tip of Nueva Vizcaya.

A decade ago, 75 percent (262,410 hectares) of Nueva Vizcaya's forest zone was without trees. Using destructive methods, squatters in the logged-over areas mined the remaining forests for their wealth.



Proper watershed management ensures that future generations get a chance to benefit from waterfalls.

Indiscriminate logging, timber poaching and smuggling, kaingin (slash-and-burn) farming, and charcoal-making eventually denuded the forests. Frequent brush and forest fires compounded the problem. All this led to the marginalization of the forest lands, causing erosion, flooding in the lowlands, and a declining water supply. Ultimately, these effects wrought untold damage to agriculture, residential and commercial properties, and infrastructure projects. Clearly, the provincial leadership had to respond urgently to the wanton destruction of the watershed.

Addressing the problem, however, was quite forbidding. Confronted not only with the biophysical component of forest management but also its political, social, economic, and policy dimensions, the provincial government applied approaches to suit the requirements of the situation. The models are described below and summarized in Table 2.

MODEL 1: Co-management of a devolved small watershed

The Barobbob watershed is one of the tributaries that comprise the Magat regional watershed. Occupying a small area of 439



The Barobbob watershed area is vital to the province's biodiversity.

hectares, the watershed supplies irrigation water to nearly 400 hectares of prime lowland farms in the adjoining municipalities of Bayombong and Solano. It also provides potable water to the Provincial Water Utilities System, benefiting nearly 2,000 households.

Although the watershed is considered a protected area, this did not prevent squatters from intruding. A total of 135 families made Barobbob their home, eking out a living from the land and forest resources, often using means that degraded the watershed and, consequently, the water system. When management of the watershed was devolved to the LGU in 1992, the provincial government attempted to

relocate the illegal occupants in order to protect the area. The relocation efforts, however, were met with strong resistance and defiance from the squatters. Challenged, the provincial government shifted gears and adopted a different strategy. Instead of imposing its conditions on them, the LGU engaged the stakeholders in a participatory current-reality analysis and in generating solutions acceptable to both parties.

A fundamental issue the occupants raised which the LGU officials failed to recognize earlier was tenurial security. Armed with the information generated from the participatory analysis, the local government held dialogues with the Department of

Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on the sensitive and contentious issue of tenurial security. Both the DENR and LGU accepted the fact that for many years the illegal occupants had been the watershed's de facto managers. They realized belatedly that the watershed squatters should actually be treated as co-managers. Hence, the goal shifted from ejecting illegal settlers from the watershed to providing them with legal tenurial and economic incentives that would motivate them to under-

take sound, long-term forest management practices.

The 1969 Presidential Proclamation which declared Magat watershed a "forest reserve" and prohibited settlement in the area would have stymied efforts to grant tenurial security to the squatters. But the provincial government found a way to circumvent this policy limitation: it invoked its "area manager" role and responsibility of sharing with DENR the maintenance and management of ecological balance as provided



Local environment representatives regularly check and monitor conditions in the rehabilitated portions of the watershed to ensure continuing success.

for in the Local Government Code. It thus advocated a co-management arrangement with DENR through a memorandum of agreement (MOA). Unprecedented in similarly situated provinces, the MOA effectively grants responsible use rights to legitimate watershed occupants in terms that approximate the rights and privileges given through formal DENR stewardship instruments. The MOA is good for 25 years and renewable for another 25 years.

The highly participatory strategy the provincial government adopted paid off. Dialogues, consultations, development of feedback mechanisms, social marketing, and participatory planning contributed to developing a strong sense of community ownership of the watershed management program. An Environment and Natural Resources Officer (ENRO) described the outcome of the numerous meetings with the Barobbob watershed occupants as follows.

The series of consultations and dialogues we held with the watershed occupants, our effort to go down to their level by "laymanizing" technical jargon—all these made them realize that

the government was committed to help them. As a result, they cooperated with us.

Thus the maintenance and protection of 11 hectares of reforestation lands and 176 hectares of residual forests and vegetative cover around the spring area greatly improved. There was a steep decline in the incidence of grassland and bush fire. And the most vital positive effects were the restoration of the yield and quality of Barobbob water. Furthermore, the participatory processes led to the establishment of the Barobbob Watershed Occupants' Association, Inc. (BWOA), which assumed the role of chief steward of the watershed. With the livelihood and enterprise development training provided by the provincial government, the BWOA was able to organize and manage a trading center as well as cottage-type agro-forestry nurseries which provide the occupants with additional sources of income.

The Barobbob experience showed that socializing resource access and control is an attainable objective that can be enjoyed by all, especially the marginalized and disadvantaged occupants of the watershed. A watershed occupant commented on

the benefits he and others like him derived from the tenurial and economic incentives of the project.

Umaangat na ang aming kabuhayan ngayon. Dati nakatira kami sa kubo; ngayon meron na kaming bubong na yero. At nakakapag-college na ang mga anak namin. (Our life is now improving. We used to live in thatched huts; now our roofs are made of galvanized iron. Our children are now able to go to college).

MODEL 2: DENR - LGU - Stakeholders' co-management of the Lower Magat forest reserve

The Lower Magat Forest Reserve consists of 24,251 hectares of forest land and 6,547 hectares of alienable and disposable (A & D) land. It covers the entire municipality of Diadi and two barangays in the municipality of Bagabag. The Lower Magat Forest Reserve was a protected area, as specified in the 1969 Presidential Proclamation.

Within the forest reserve are seven major sub-watersheds. Most of them are lamentably devoid of forest cover. On the whole, 77 percent of the forest land in the reserve consists of grass



Sunlight streams through the lush forest of the Lower Magat watershed revealing the decline in the incidence of grassland and bush fires.

and brush lands which are periodically razed by fire. Only 23 percent (5,674 hectares) contains residual forest. Twenty-three percent (5,663 hectares) of the total forest land is classified as steep slope which is severely eroded, threatening the viability of the Magat hydropower and irrigation system in Isabela Province.

Close to 78 percent (18,892 hectares) of the forest reserve is considered open-access area while the



The Lower Magat watershed consists of 24,251 hectares of forest land.

rest (5,359 hectares) is tenured land. Open-access areas are supposed to be managed by DENR. Because the national agency could not provide adequate forest protection due to a lack of funds and personnel, the reserve was opened to migrant settlers who occupied and cultivated the land. These occupants earned their living through activities inimical to forest preservation, e.g., **kaingin** (slash and burn) farming, charcoal-making, **timber poaching**.

Faced with this untenable situation, the provincial government negotiated boldly with DENR for a radical solution. In an MOA signed in June 1997, 24,000 hectares of forest land that had been managed by DENR since 1938, under a regular reforestation project, was placed under a co-management arrangement between DENR and the provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya.

The watershed co-management scheme in Nueva Vizcaya is the first of

its kind in the country. It is believed to have influenced DENR's national policy on co-management. The arrangement awards formal land tenure instruments (sub-agreements) to communities, people's organizations, and individuals who for many years have served as de facto managers of open-access areas. It also provides for assistance to owners of A & D lands in adopting farming technologies that will enhance the service functions of the watershed. In the case of tenured areas, the arrangement recognizes existing leases. And, when necessary, tenants are given extension and support services to improve traditional cultivation practices to ensure that these conform with sound watershed management principles.

Under the co-management arrangement, a steering committee chaired by the governor and the DENR regional executive director is authorized to sub-allocate reserve areas to individuals, associations, cooperatives, and corporations for a term of 25 years. The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) and the local chief executives of the municipalities where the project is situated are MOA signatories. The DENR may issue formal tenure instruments when appropriate.

This partnership is unprecedented in Philippine devolution. A year after the program was launched, DENR-DILG Memorandum Circular 9801 was issued to formalize and nationalize co-management as a natural resource management strategy. On May 13, 2003, DENR Secretary Elisea Gozun issued DENR-DILG Memorandum Circular 2003 to strengthen and institutionalize the partnership.

So far, 28 sub-agreements covering about 2,140 hectares have been awarded to community-based organizations and individual stakeholders. With land security as an incentive, communities have assumed the role of "social fence" to protect the watershed. Conditions in the watershed have stabilized noticeably, especially with the communities' aggressive planting of fruit and forest trees. The incidence of forest fires, timber poaching, and charcoal-making has declined dramatically. This stabilization process has created a ripple effect: communities which are not yet tenured are now abandoning the traditional practice of indiscriminate clearing and burning of forests and adapting to a growing sense of responsible forest management.

Co-management has resulted in a remarkable change in attitude as well as level of participation and cooperation in both the LGUs and DENR. This may be attributed to the more open channels of consultation and dialogue between them as well as the sense of mutual commitment to sustain the gains of their partnership. Meanwhile, the communities feel empowered in their newly developed ability to articulate their position on issues they were unable to express in the past.

MODEL 3: TREE for legacy

Reforestation of timberless forest land with minimal government investment and sustaining the effort while yielding maximum impact on the environment and on the tree planters are a major challenge to the provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya. The



Hands-on tree planting by school children and their parents enhance their awareness and appreciation of the environment.

province has undertaken these daunting tasks successfully through its TREE for Legacy program.

TREE for Legacy – TREE stands for “tree resources for education and enterprise” – is the LGU’s ingenious approach to motivating the people to participate in the government’s tree planting program. The core element of this model grants ownership or use rights to tree planters and the opportunity to utilize their trees as income sources. All sectors committed to protecting the forest have found the scheme beneficial. The forest cover has been restored and is continually preserved, while Novo Vizcayano planters earn cash income from the trees and their products. The provincial government, on the other hand, has accomplished its reforestation task at a cost much lower than if it had resorted to contract reforestation.

TREE for Legacy is a three-pronged endeavor. It targets schools and schoolchildren (Tree for Education), individuals and associations who want to venture into tree farming as a source of income (Tree for Enterprise), as well as environmentalists and advocates (Tree for Legacy). The incentives and the areas designated for tree planting vary depending

Table 1. TREE for Legacy program components and incentives

Program Component	Participants	Where Applicable	Incentive
Tree for Education	Schools Schoolchildren	Production forests Private lands	Tree ownership with harvesting rights
Tree for Enterprise	Individuals Associations	Production forests Private lands	Tree ownership with harvesting rights
Tree for Legacy	Environmentalists Advocates	Protected forests Production forests Private lands	Usufructuary rights to enjoy products without cutting the trees

on the program component (see Table 1). Implementation is multi-sectoral and multi-agency, involving the DENR, LGU-ENRO, the Provincial Assessor's Office, the Department of Education, and the barangays.

Participation in TREE for Legacy is formalized through an MOA between the DENR, the LGU, and the participating organization or individual. The accord is signed and a certificate of ownership is issued for surviving year-old trees. Ownership is granted over the trees, not the land. To maintain the forest cover, only 60 percent of the trees are allowed to be harvested at one time. Moreover, tree owners are required to replace the cut trees with new seedlings.

Since its inception in 1993, TREE for Legacy has reforested more than

2,000 hectares of land, with 734,875 seedlings distributed by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office. This was accomplished through the combined efforts of 78 schools, 84 organizations, and 5,615 individuals. With the participants serving as forest guards and managers, forest fires, squatting, and timber poaching have been reduced throughout the province. The forests have regenerated naturally in many places, consequently improving the supply of potable and irrigation water. Hands-on tree planting has also enhanced the youth's awareness and appreciation of the environment. Harvesting rights have provided tree owners with a source of income while local and private investments in reforestation have generated employ-

ment opportunities. These economic developments have helped reduce the incidence of poverty in the province.

On September 12, 2003, Secretary Elisea Gozun issued DENR Memorandum Order No. 2003-09 recognizing the TREE for Legacy program in Nueva Vizcaya. The same memorandum order authorized the DENR regional field office concerned to issue appropriate permits for the harvesting, cutting, and transport of products under the program.

In celebration of this milestone in devolution, national, regional, and

provincial officials led by Governor Agbayani formally launched the TREE for Legacy program in the provincial capitol of Nueva Vizcaya on September 26, 2003. The event was attended by national and local stakeholders as well as representatives of international funding agencies.

MODEL 4: LGU-NGA-NGO partnership for Bangan Hill reforestation

Redeeming idle grasslands need not be an expensive and frustrating enterprise. Not with the right



The TREE for Legacy program has reforested more than 2,000 hectares of land.

Table 2. The four models of watershed management applied in Nueva Vizcaya

ELEMENTS	MODEL 1 Barobbob Watershed	MODEL 2 Lower Magat Forest Reserve	MODEL 3 TREE for Legacy	MODEL 4 Bangan Hill Reforestation
Strategy	LGU-Community co-management	DENR-LGU-Community co-management	DENR-LGU-Tree planters partnership	LGU-NGA-NGO/PO partnership
Salient features	DENR devolves watershed management to LGU LGU and the community co-manage the watershed Watershed squatters are empowered to become managers	Watershed previously managed unsuccessfully by DENR is co managed by DENR, LGU, and occupants Watershed occupants are empowered to become managers	LGU engages schools, individuals, NGOs/POs, GOs, and barangays in reforestation Key players achieve economic self-reliance through assisted participation in reforestation activities	LGU partners with an academic institution and co-opts NGOs/POs to reforest Bangan Hill Peripheral communities are involved in reforestation and become a "social fence" protecting the forest
Legal instrument formalizing the arrangement (Term of agreement)	Memorandum of Agreement (25 years, renewable for another 25 years)	Memorandum of Agreement (25 years, renewable for another 25 years)	Memorandum of Agreement (25 years, renewable for another 25 years)	Memorandum of Agreement (25 years, renewable for another 25 years)
Incentive given to participants	Tenurial security	Tenurial security	Tree ownership with harvesting rights Usufructuary rights	Harvesting rights
Implementing process	Participatory reality analysis and consensus-building Watershed resource appraisal using mapping techniques Community organizing, social preparation, conflict resolution Participatory planning Crafting and issuance of land/resource management agreements Organizational and livelihood training	Primary and secondary data gathering and analysis, barangay consultations, and thematic map preparation to determine appropriate management strategies for each type of forest land Planning workshop to agree on doable strategies for the development, protection, and management of the reserve Mobilization and organization of the Lower Magat Forest Management Office Implementation of the co-management scheme Monitoring and evaluation	Consultations with key players and stakeholders Information and education campaign through orientations, seminars, and workshops Participatory planning to formulate policies and resource management strategies Provision of technical support in terms of seedling dispersal, forest land survey and validation, and processing Monitoring and evaluation	Negotiation with NVSIT and NGOs/POs Involving peripheral communities in the project

linkages and incentive for the participating groups. The Bangan Hill reforestation project proved this. It provided a “laboratory” for testing processes and enabling instruments for engaging people to participate in environmental management.

In 1993, the provincial government negotiated with the Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of Technology (NVSIT) for the turnover of 50 hectares of a barren hill to LGU management. The intention was to convert this otherwise unproductive tract of land into a forested area. As the new guardian of the land for 25 years and, possibly, for another 25, the LGU parceled the area into one-hectare lots which it awarded to 50 non-government and people's organizations (NGOs/POs) on a first come-first served basis. In exchange for planting mango trees and managing the area, the NGOs/POs were given harvesting rights over the trees. This arrangement, embodied in an MOA between the plantation “managers” and the LGU, was the precursor of the more ambitious TREE for Legacy program described earlier.

In the early years of the project, fires of questionable origin destroyed

the fruit trees. Undaunted, the NGOs/POs planted new seedlings and tightened security by constructing watchtowers and mobilizing regular patrols. These measures, however, failed to prevent the occurrence of fires. Thus came a turning point for the LGU. The local government realized the need to involve the communities living at the foot of the hill. Although belated participants in the plantation project, the community members constituted themselves as a “social fence” that guards and protects the mango trees from fires. Since then, there have been no forest fires.

Bangan Hill stands as living proof of the forest land's ability to regenerate itself when properly managed. What used to be a desolate piece of land has metamorphosed into a lush, verdant hill that is now a source of income for its “guards” and a testament to LGU-non-government agency-NGO/PO partnership for reforestation.

Putting the wind beneath their broken wings: Empowering persons with disability

About a decade ago, persons with disability (PWDs) in Nueva Vizcaya lived on the fringes of society.

Impaired physically and/or mentally, PWDs found that the door to gainful employment, and hence to a dignified life, was closed to them. Consequently, quite a number resorted to begging. PWDs were unrecognized as a sector and had no social or political power. They had practically no access to social welfare and medical services. With very low family incomes, many PWDs could not afford to go to school. The lack of economic and

educational opportunities as well as socio-political leverage pushed them to a life of vagrancy and mendicancy. This was until the provincial government intervened.

GOAL. The provincial government set out to improve the situation of PWDs by empowering them so that they may live as productive and self-reliant members of society

STRATEGIES. The following strategies were used to attain this goal.



Kainan sa Park provides employment to hardworking PWDs.

▪ Organizing the PWDs

In 1996, the LGU, through the Provincial Social Welfare Development Office (PSWDO), identified potential leaders from among the PWDs in Nueva Vizcaya. Organized into a core group, these leaders were given the responsibility of reaching out to their peers and introducing the governor's program for PWDs. With financial assistance from the provincial government and the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP), the core group conducted a survey among PWDs to determine their number as well as socio-economic status. The survey findings revealed a province-wide total of 2,808 PWDs, with disabilities ranging from blindness and deformity to hearing, orthopedic, and mental impairment.

PWDs in 13 of the 15 municipalities in the province subsequently organized themselves into municipal associations (MAs). Through the initiative of the provincial government, these MAs formed an alliance in 1997 called the Provincial Federation of Persons with Disability (PFPWD).

▪ Political empowerment

Accredited by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan in 1996, the PFPWD



The success of Kainan sa Park empowers PWDs to venture into the catering business.

now sits as a voting member of the Social Development Committee of the Provincial Development Council, thus earning the right to participate in local governance and decision-making. Membership in the committee entitles the federation to regular project fund allocation.

Accredited by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in 1999, the PFPWD became a partner in the department's Tulay 2000 Self-employment Assistance Program.

▪ Capability development

To empower PWDs to become self-reliant members of the community, the PSWDO provided them with training in project proposal preparation, management skills development, canteen management, simplified

bookkeeping, cooperative management, as well as communication skills development and networking. These training activities were carried out in collaboration with DOLE, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Provincial Cooperative Affairs Office. The training helped 120 PWDs to embark on income-generating activities. Meanwhile, the project proposal the federation submitted to DOLE enabled PWDs to get funding support to establish a restaurant and sari-sari (convenience) store in the provincial capitol grounds.

The federation officers have assumed the responsibility of providing the 36 PWDs employed in the restaurant and sari-sari store with training and support to facilitate their integration into the livelihood program. The training covers entrepreneurial skills as well as attitudinal and behavioral development.

To produce a multiplier effect, the federation also trains PWDs in the different municipalities of the province. The training focuses on the establishment of livelihood projects which can be implemented in the PWDs' homes.

▪ **Educational assistance**

With the help of TESDA, DOLE, the Area Vocational Rehabilitation Center (AVRC) in Dagupan City, and academe, 21 PWDs completed a vocational training program. Three PWDs finished college, while eight scholars are pursuing their chosen vocational training courses.

▪ **Alliance building**

With the Provincial Social Welfare Officer providing guidance to the federation, PWDs initiated linkages with national and funding agencies from which they subsequently received assistance and financial support. For instance, the National Orthopedic Hospital provided prostheses for PWDs who needed them. Networking with the Land Transportation Office made possible the provision of a 20-percent fare discount to PWDs as well as preferential seats in buses. The San Miguel Foundation has generously provided wheelchairs and toys to children with disability. Financial and technical assistance from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the School for the Blind, the Rotarians of Nueva Vizcaya, the NCWDP, and AVRC were likewise extended to the families of PWDs. Continued support from

DOLE and TESDA serves as a security blanket to the federation's flagship programs. This has encouraged the federation leaders to expand their operations to provide employment to more PWDs.

GAINS. The following are the major positive outcomes of the interventions initiated by the provincial government.

- Most PWDs are now employed in livelihood projects that provide them with steady sources of income. They have to a large extent transcended their life of mendicancy to become self-reliant individuals.
- The Provincial Federation of Persons with Disability is reportedly a fully functional and politically empowered organization with a revolving capital of more than half a million pesos. Now able to stand on its own feet financially, the federation has been weaned from the PSWDO's care.
- In 1998, the federation won the Apolinario Mabini Award as "The Disabled Group of the Year" given by the Philippine Foundation for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Inc.

- Through the training and varied forms of support extended to them, the PWDs developed more confidence and higher self-esteem. "We have come out of our shell," said a PWD. "We realized we had talents and leadership skills." They in fact continued to hone their talents and leadership skills. They learned to articulate their concerns and problems. With technical and financial assistance, they discovered that they could participate productively in community life. They have learned to assume responsibility in exchange for the free use of the Provincial Capitol's facilities and utilities, by maintaining the cleanliness of the grounds and the people's park.

LESSONS LEARNED. In empowering PWDs to become self-reliant, the community learned the following lessons.

- Resistance to change in systems, policies, and programs may be overcome through a participatory approach.
- A strong and mature leader with an active political will and people's participation are two of the most important ingredients for a



Citizen participation is at the heart of every capacity-building workshop.

successful implementation of policies and programs; and

- Consultation and the involvement of people in sharing conscientiously to improve their lot will likely yield positive results.

An ailing health sector gets a shot in the arm: the quality service improvement program (QSIP)

The budgetary constraints that accompanied the 1991 devolution of health services to the local government precluded the provision of free hospitalization, led to insufficiency of supplies and medicines, curtailed employee benefits, limited staff training, and resulted in an overall decline in employee morale. The health workers' arrogant and incon-

siderate behavior toward patients aggravated the already dismal situation in the hospitals in Nueva Vizcaya. With the many ensuing complaints from the public, the governor's office became a regular stopover of irate patients and watchers who poured out their frustrations and disenchantment with hospital services.

GOAL. Restoring customer satisfaction through behavioral and systems improvements in hospital service delivery was the goal of the provincial government in developing the Quality Service Improvement Program (QSIP).

STRATEGIES. The following strategies were implemented by the provincial government to improve the quality of services extended by the health personnel in Nueva Vizcaya's health facilities.

▪ **Critical appraisal of complaints**

A rapid field appraisal of complaints received by the governor revealed that the brusque, inconsiderate behavior of health workers irked the public much more than the absence of free hospitalization services and the inadequacy of supplies and medicines. This led the provincial chief executive to enroll the four public hospitals and the Provincial Health Office (PHO) in the

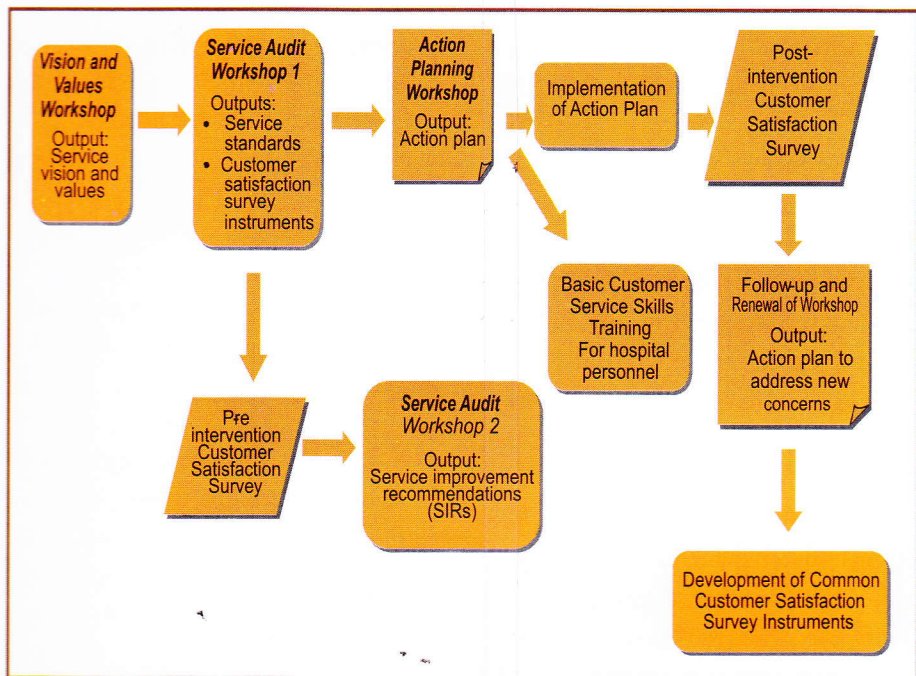


Figure 3. The quality service improvement process in the health sector

Quality Service Improvement Program (QSIP) in May 1998. The program was envisioned to effect a mind shift among health workers, one that would help them recognize the public as stakeholders and partners in attaining health goals on whose patronage the survival of the hospital/office depends. Ultimately, the program would develop a customer-oriented culture in the health bureaucracy. "It does not take too much money to satisfy our customers," Governor Agbayani noted.

▪ **Systems analysis, design, and implementation**

The chiefs and supervisors of the various units of the PHO and the four hospitals participated in a series of workshops and implemented various activities (see Figure 3) designed to put in place the necessary behavioral and organizational changes in the health system. The workshop began with the participants articulating how they would want to serve their customers (Vision and Values Workshop). This

led them to draft and adopt a single service vision and values for the health sector. The participants also selected the personnel who would comprise the QSIP teams.

In Service Audit Workshop 1, the participants analyzed how their agency was currently serving the public, including services offered; the processes, procedures, and time involved in service delivery; and the problems they had encountered. The information obtained from the discussions enabled them to identify and adopt common service standards. They also drafted two customer-satisfaction survey instruments which they administered to their internal (the personnel) and external clients (the public) to establish baseline information (pre-intervention) on customer satisfaction.

The survey results were presented to the public in Service Audit Workshop 2. In the same workshop, the QSIP teams evaluated the findings, determined the root causes of the problems identified, and formulated service improvement recommendations (SIRs) to address the problems.

In the Action Planning Workshop, the survey results and SIRs were

presented to the office chiefs for approval. An action plan which operationalized the recommendations was formulated, discussed, and finalized. This was eventually implemented as the intervention program.

During the implementation of the intervention, the health workers also underwent training to obtain skills in basic customer service.

A second survey was conducted to measure changes in customer satisfaction during the intervention. The outcomes of the pre- and post-intervention surveys were compared, analyzed, and reported to top management during the follow-up and renewal workshop. Challenged by the results of QSIP, office chiefs voluntarily renewed their commitment to implement the program. Agency action plans were crafted to respond to new customer concerns.

Finally, the QSIP team developed two sets of survey instruments—one for all hospitals and another for field health workers—so the program would include a comparative analysis of agency ratings.

▪ **Service improvements**

Aside from the behavioral component of health service delivery, the

QSIP also tried to improve selected components of service delivery. Hospital referral was made easier through the two-way referral system of case management, which reports outcomes automatically to the referring unit through the referral form's return slip.

A special procurement system was designed and applied to facilitate the procurement of supplies and medicines in the health sector. The system ensured the availability of supplies and medicines whenever needed. The

inclusion of the Provincial Awards Committee chairman and the Provincial General Services Office in the Health Board made for greater responsiveness to procurement problems of the health system.

A customer feedback mechanism allowed the public and the hospital staff to voice their complaints and bring to the attention of hospital management some issues and health-related concerns. The use of a drop box for the feedback form assured external customers of anonymity.

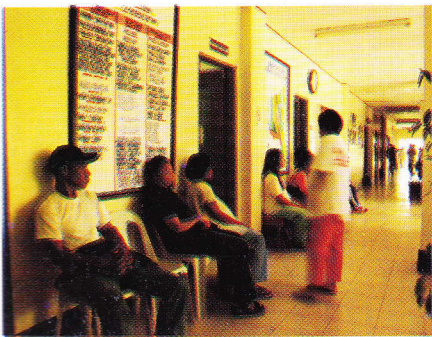


Trained health care service providers are aware that proper attitude plays a critical role in patient care.

They felt free to articulate their views on the services provided to them by the health personnel. Regular consultation with customers was another strategy to obtain feedback on the way they were treated by health personnel.

▪ **Capability development**

The QSIP teams underwent intensive capability development exercises to enable them to manage and implement the program. They trained to obtain skills in facilitation, quality service improvement, public opinion polling, survey sampling and analysis, and the application of the logical framework, among other things. Health workers, on the other hand, were trained to handle difficult customer interactions with sensitivity and tact.



Patients waiting for their turn to be served is a typical day at the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Hospital.

▪ **Partnership with the community**

The four hospitals renewed their participation in the local health board of their host municipality. This linkage created a channel to communicate client feedback to the proper authorities and also provided a venue where issues and concerns could be discussed and resolved.

▪ **Capitalizing on the gains from other innovations**

The QSIP built on the gains from previous innovations initiated by the provincial government. The membership of the Provincial Health Board (PHB) was expanded from five to 43 members representing all groups related to health service delivery. This has resulted in a more dynamic and participatory PHB that addresses health issues and concerns in a manner acceptable to both private and public representatives.

- Recognizing that the usual screening process for hiring and promotion of personnel is not responsive to the needs of the health sector, the PHB recommended that health workers conduct the selection process. Screening of candidates was done

at three different levels to ensure that only competent individuals are employed in the health bureaucracy.

- The PHB also recommended that the procurement of hospital supplies and medicines be centralized. This reform provided for bulk procurement, thus enabling the provincial government to get bigger discounts and more value for every peso spent.

GAINS. What are the major gains from the QSIP?

- The number of customer complaints declined significantly. The average customer satisfaction survey rating of the four participating hospitals and the Provincial Health Office rose by .14 points from the rating of 3.55 obtained pre-intervention. A provincial government middle-level manager gave the following observation:

It pays to listen to the employees. Health workers have mastered the intricacies of the health sector. Giving them the opportunity to make policy recommendations sparks their creativity in finding solutions to problems in the health sector.

- Revenues generated by the four hospitals increased at a mean rate of 131 percent per annum from 1997 to 1999. This points to an increase in patronage of public hospitals and, by inference, customer satisfaction.
- Networking and coordination among health agencies improved, resulting in, among other things, the local government hospitals' development and adoption of common performance evaluation benchmarks, programs, projects, and activities. A higher level of inter-agency support evolved, particularly in covering deficiencies in supplies, medicines, and equipment to ensure that vital services in the hospitals remained uninterrupted.
- Employee morale improved as health workers found themselves empowered to implement reforms at their level and take part in policy formulation. Improved morale unleashed the health workers' creativity in finding solutions to problems in the health sector. It also sparked among the staff a deeper commitment to quality service improvement.

- The inclusion of customer satisfaction in the performance indicators of health agency heads empowered the public to rate the performance of these officials through an assessment of the services provided by their respective health agencies.
- The Quality Service Improvement Program won the Galing Pook Award (1999-2000) as one of the top 10 outstanding programs in local governance.

LESSONS LEARNED. The following lessons were drawn from the QSIP.

- A critical factor in the successful implementation of the program was a mature political leadership that allowed the implementers the space and freedom to innovate in order to attain the program objectives.
- A change initiative is more likely to succeed if it is managed by the agencies involved. The QSIP in Nueva Vizcaya was managed and implemented by the health workers themselves.
- A change process is more likely to be sustainable if the implementers are empowered to carry out innovations at their level.
- Nobody knows the intricacies of health service delivery better than the health workers. Consulting them and drawing from their knowledge and wisdom contributed immensely in the development and implementation of the QSIP.

From cost center to revenue-generating center: the revitalized real property tax system

The real property tax (RPT) is considered a major source of local revenue. In Nueva Vizcaya, however, RPT contributed, on the average, only a measly three percent to the provincial budget, an amount that was not sufficient to pay for the salaries and operating expenses of the Provincial Assessor's Office (PAO). Riddled with systemic problems (low collection targets, lack of cooperation between Treasury and Assessor operations, highly centralized transactions at PAO, etc.) as well as a high tax delinquency rate, the provincial government ran (from 1991-96) a deficit of 49 centavos for every peso of revenue collected. Thus the cost of administering real property taxation

exceeded the revenue generated, with the provincial government spending PhP1.49 for every PhP1.00 collected.

GOAL. The intention of the provincial government was to transform the real property tax system (RPTS) from an expense center into a cost-effective, revenue-generating center.

STRATEGIES. The following strategies were employed to effect the transformation.

▪ **Situation analysis for information-based design of the new RPTS**

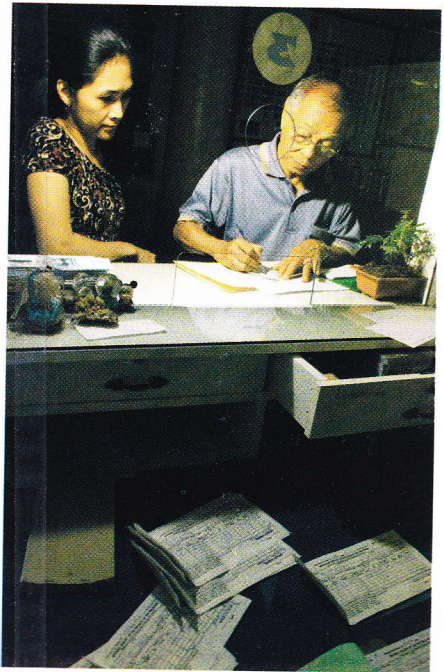
To ensure an appropriate and sound design for the new real property tax system, a situation analysis (SA) was conducted at the outset. The SA-generated data covered the key players, processes, systems, procedures, and organizational structure in real property tax administration (RPTA), the causes of low tax collection and high cost of RPTA, as well as the policy gaps. From these building blocks of data, the revitalized real property tax system was designed.

▪ **Improvement of real property tax administration**

The real property tax administration was improved by (1) increasing

the tax collection targets, and (2) increasing the tax base through regular assessment audits, tax mapping, and updating the schedule of fair market value of real property.

The Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF) formula for setting tax collection targets yielded targets much lower than the actual collectibles. With the formula applied in the new RPTS, targets increased two-fold, from 45 to 90 percent.



A hassle-free, taxpayer-friendly collection strategy is the result of a painstaking process of procedure and systems change.

The assessment audits determined whether all real properties were properly declared and listed in the assessment roll. The conduct of such audits, especially among delinquent taxpayers, helped increase collection. Tax mapping, a vital exercise, was undertaken to provide a record of every property location. It has proved to be a useful reference tool in assessment transactions.

Surveys as well as extensive consultations with realtors, bank appraisers, business groups, other government agencies, and taxpayers have contributed to the correct calculation of the fair market value of real properties. Reflecting the true current market value of these properties redounds to more accurate tax assessment.

▪ Streamlining the RPT system and functions

The provincial government adopted several approaches to create a more efficient and effectively integrated RPTS. It redefined the roles and responsibilities of the provincial offices of the Assessor (PAO) and Treasurer (PTO), and synchronized their targets at the provincial and municipal levels to promote



Tax collection campaign starts right at the client's doorstep where property identification, assessment, and computation can be done.

complementation and synergy. The PAO delegated the appraisal and assessment functions to the municipalities and institutionalized the move through a memorandum of agreement. Delegation rationalized the workload at the provincial and municipal levels and speeded up the delivery of services. Clients today need not wait for days or weeks for the documents they need.

The restructuring of the Provincial Assessor's Office and downsizing of personnel from 29 to 18 have resulted in a leaner but more efficient unit. With certain functions delegated to the municipalities, the PAO was able to attend to more relevant activities such as valuation and appraisal, assessment audits, tax mapping, and

aggressive tax information dissemination. The new performance evaluation system (PES) ensured that personnel performed at top level since they had defined work targets and their accomplishments were monitored and recognized.

Capability development through leadership training and technical skills upgrading was pursued for both PAO and PTO personnel. Team building, coaching, total quality management, and quality service improvement were some of the change management tools that transformed the Assessor's and Treasury offices into high-performing units. Municipal assessors and other personnel were given continuing skills development exercises and assistance to enable them to carry out their new roles and responsibilities.

Working together, the assessor and the collection agent applied a taxpayer-friendly collection strategy. This consisted of completing the RPTA cycle – from property identification, appraisal and assessment to tax computation and collection – right at the client's doorstep. This saved the taxpayer the trouble, time, and transportation fare going to the collector's office. Trimming down the number of forms used in RPTA – from

seven to four – has reduced the burden of filling out the forms as well as the expense for supplies and materials needed to reproduce them, thus resulting in substantial savings.

▪ **Social marketing**

To instill awareness of real property taxation in the public and encourage voluntary tax compliance, the RPT was marketed as a social product. Market research conducted through workshops showed that taxpayers were most interested in the mechanics of appraisal and assessment, computation of taxes, premium for prompt payment, and implications of late or non-payment of taxes. This information was provided through dialogues with taxpayers and lectures during the barangay planning-budgeting workshops. It was also disseminated through radio broadcasts, posters, brochures, and slogans. The active social marketing of the RPT stands in stark contrast with the total lack of information, education, and communication efforts prior to the establishment of the revitalized RPTS.1

▪ **Participation of, and partnership with, key stakeholders**

Using the barangay participatory planning-budgeting workshops as venue for RPT lectures, barangay

officials, people's and non-government organizations (POs/NGOs), and community members were made aware of real property taxation. A clear understanding of the RPT has made these stakeholders realize the need to include it in their revenue generation plan. The barangay officials also helped improve the tax base by identifying property owners and campaigning for tax payment.

With the Provincial Treasurer deputizing barangay treasurers to collect the real property tax, access to hard-to-reach areas in the province became increasingly feasible, thus improving collection. An incentive scheme based on the amount collected made RPT collection rewarding for the deputy treasurers.

Partnership with public school teachers at the elementary and

secondary levels has led to the crafting and integration of 10 one-unit RPT modules in the school curriculum in Nueva Vizcaya. Not only does this provide knowledge on real property taxation among the students; it also promotes tax consciousness among taxpayers through the young *Novo Vizcayanos* who influence their parents to pay their taxes.

Dialogues between PAO and barangay officials as well as leaders of the integrated social forestry and community-based forest management areas have led to the forging of partnerships. Issues and concerns in real property tax administration were addressed collaboratively through these partnerships.

GAINS. The following are the concrete gains of the RPTS.

- The real property taxation cost-to-collection ratio improved to PhP 0.87:1.00 in 2001 from PhP 1.49:1.00 (the 1991-96 average) despite a hike in salaries, wages, and maintenance and other operating expenditures.
- Real property tax collection increased by 46 percent, from PhP4 million in 1995 when the new RPTS was not yet in place, to PhP7.6 million in 2001.



An efficient tax collection emerges from a streamlined real property tax system.

- The tax base expanded at an average rate of 12 percent per annum from 1996 to 2001.
 - The assessed valuation of properties more than doubled, from PhP7 million in 1996 to PhP15 million in 2002.
 - The tax delinquency rate dropped from 32 percent to 12 percent.
 - A new breed of responsive and efficient PAO and PTO personnel was created through the application of organizational development mechanisms such as the new performance evaluation system and logical framework.
 - Nueva Vizcaya topped the provinces in Region II for having the largest increase in revenue collection for 2000-2001. The province copped the first place in local assessment in the region in 2001.
 - The revitalized real property tax system of Nueva Vizcaya was recognized as one of the trail-blazing programs in local governance for 2001-2002 by the Gawad Galing Pook Awards foundation.
- LESSONS LEARNED.** The following lessons are drawn from Nueva Vizcaya's new approach to real property tax collection
- To be viable and to deliver results, a change process such as the development of the new RPTS requires a project champion. The tested project champion is a democratic leader who instills confidence and encourages creativity and innovation among the project implementers.
 - An overarching vision is a vital element in the change process. It sets the road map that guides and energizes the organization in achieving its goals.
 - Change management calls for leaders and implementers equipped with knowledge and skills in planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. Capability development, therefore, holds a high premium in the change process.
 - Encouraging stakeholders' participation in the change process is a must. Participation generates among stakeholders a sense of ownership that compels them to protect the project and ensure that it succeeds.
 - Real property taxation is a social product that calls for social marketing to instill among taxpayers a positive attitude

toward it and to effect the desired behavior change, that is, compliance. To achieve these ends, empirical data on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the market are necessary. Moreover, the PAO and PTO personnel need to assume the role of salespersons and treat taxpayers as customers deserving respect.

- Assessment and collection are two sides of the same coin. Effective real property tax administration cannot be accomplished without the assessor and the treasurer working together to achieve a common goal.
- A thorough, critical study of the system can help program implementers find ways to accomplish tasks without necessarily adding resources such as personnel.
- Effective and efficient tax collection precludes the necessity of increasing taxes often.

The funds management and information system: promoting efficiency, transparency, and accountability

Funds are a vital element in the delivery of basic services. Without

money, projects cannot be implemented and services cannot be provided as planned; consequently, the public is deprived of its entitlement. Funds, however, are only as good as they are efficiently managed and properly used.

Prior to the Governance and Local Development (GOLD) project in 1995, the funds management system in the Nueva Vizcaya provincial government suffered a crisis of confidence. The split of the Treasurer's Office into several distinct units (the accounting, assessor, budget, and supply offices) without the necessary guidelines on how they should interface with each other impaired their operations considerably. Because of turfing, information that was supposed to be shared was withheld from other departments. Financial information was not available for decision-making. The system was so inordinately loose that anomalous transactions (e.g., cash being loaned out to employees, contrary to the rules) were executed with impunity.

Non-compliance with accounting and auditing rules and regulations; behavioral and attitudinal problems among personnel; turfing; poor working relationship among the

accounting, assessor, budget, and treasury offices; middle-management resistance and operational problems – all these resulted in inefficient and ineffective fiscal management and, consequently, poor service delivery.

With all these problems, a system to ensure that monies of the local government unit are handled and disbursed with care, transparency, and accountability needed to be installed immediately.

GOALS. The object was to develop and put in place an operative funds management and information system (FMIS) that promotes efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability.

STRATEGIES. The following approaches were used in establishing the FMIS.

▪ **Systems analysis and redesign**

An assessment of existing systems of funds management in the provincial government yielded specific issues and concerns that needed to be addressed, particularly in (1) budget preparation, authorization, and execution; (2) cash receipts and disbursements; and (3) accounting operations.

A special order was executed to allow the formation of an audit team for the conduct of cash counts and

audit of funds. The team discovered anomalous transactions, and charges were filed against those responsible. The team was then tasked to report to the governor, the accounting department, and the Commission on Audit (COA) regularly.

Systems and procedures of financial transactions in the different offices concerned – the accounting, assessor's, budget, and treasury offices – were harmonized. A change in the flow of documents was instituted by rearranging the physical placement of the different offices. This saved the messengers time and energy, thus contributing to greater efficiency.

Forms were reviewed and redesigned to make them more concise and to maximize the use of paper. For greater efficiency in the processing of documents, the number of forms, signatories, and steps in the procedures was reduced. Each document was meticulously scrutinized at every stage (a “walking-through” process) to account for what happens to it as it passes through the different departments. Deadlines were also given to each office for an expeditious processing of papers. An internal control system was established.

Using the standard process and

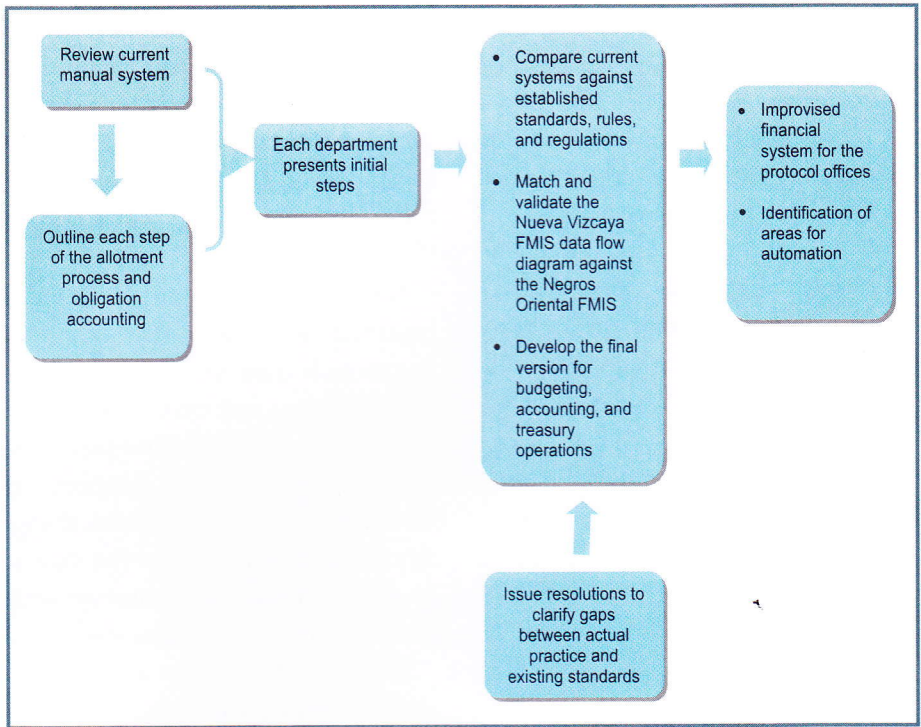


Figure 4. Standard process and workflow analysis (Phase 1)

workflow analysis tool, the manual for the system of funds management was reviewed and compared with established standards, rules, and regulations (see Figure 4). With the help of consultants from COA and the Department of Finance, systems and procedures were redesigned. This resulted in an improved financial system among the protocol offices: accounting, budget, treasury, and planning and development. This effort

was formalized through an executive order which embodied the resolutions addressing the issues and concerns of the technical working group (TWG) in regard to the funds management process flow.

▪ **Computerization of financial operations**

Armed with the final version of the FMIS data flow diagram in accounting, budgeting, and treasury operations, areas for automation were

identified. The necessary hardware and software are now being developed. Test-runs are being conducted to ensure a flaws-free system. Figure 5 presents the process flow of the full automation of financial operations.

▪ **Capability development**

Both the TWG and the provincial management team (PMT) underwent training in local government financial administration. They were sent to Manila and Cebu to train in systems analysis and software development for full systems automation. Cross-visits to other LGUs were conducted to share the experience and lessons of

installing the new funds management system. Apart from the TWG and PMT, personnel in the offices concerned had their share of team-building exercises.

▪ **Getting the participation of key stakeholders**

Employees were included in assessing and planning the best way to accomplish their duties and responsibilities. In this way, they were made to feel they were an important part of the whole system, thereby adding prestige to their position. Behavioral change initiatives – especially in the case of middle management, where most of

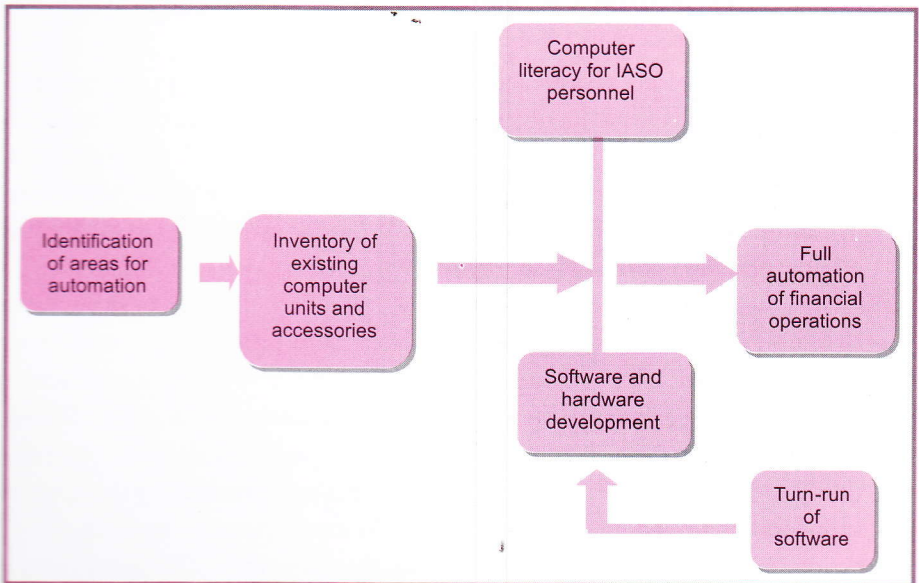


Figure 5. Process flow of full automation of financial operations (Phase 2)

the resistance was felt – were carried out to draw support to the new system.

GAINS. The following benefits were obtained from the establishment of FMIS.

- The new system resulted in fewer discrepancies in record-keeping, fund balances, and other financial records/matters. With the FMIS, the different departments have assumed responsibility for the funds, records, and documents that go through their offices for scrutiny and action. “The era of full transparency and accountability has come,” according to a middle-level manager of the provincial government.
- By putting in place a system of checks and balances, a reduction in cash advances was observed. Certain restraints were established to avoid abuse, misuse, and misappropriation of funds. More savings were seen as a result.
- Processes ran smoothly, as evidenced in the reduced incidence of lost documents, faster processing of financial transactions, and fewer complaints from suppliers and customers transacting business with the LGU. Deadlines were met and reports

were updated after every transaction.

- Interdepartmental relationships improved considerably with the general change in behavior and attitudes of personnel.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Redesigning systems and processes in a particular manner in itself induces new and proper behavior patterns.
- Changes and improvements in systems and processes can be instituted if employees develop self-imposed service targets that are monitored and properly acknowledged by their supervisors.
- Internal control can be strengthened by minimizing personal options available to employees. Automation of financial operations is extremely useful in this regard.
- Involving the accounting and treasury offices in the analysis of systemic problems reduces resistance in both offices, especially if there is an objective third party facilitating the process in a participatory manner.
- Involving the staff in redesigning a system gives them a sense of

ownership that makes for a smoother implementation of the system.

- Resistance to changes in systems and processes may be overcome through the right training.

The metamorphosis of the provincial jail: an odyssey from chaos to symmetry

The lax management of the Nueva Vizcaya provincial jail over the years resulted in the breakdown of discipline and the proliferation of vice among the inmates, disorderly and unsanitary living quarters, dilapidated buildings and facilities, and undependable jail personnel.

At its best the provincial jail was an embarrassment. At its worst it was a decrepit pit where people, pet pigs, and filth found a kinship of sorts. Both the inmates and jail personnel needed a massive dose of discipline to maintain order in the jail and curb gambling, drinking, and other vices. For health reasons, the inmates needed to be educated in personal hygiene and good grooming. The facilities required refurbishing and maintenance to ensure the safety of the inmates and provide them with a

healthy environment. Clearly, major changes were needed if justice was to be served and dignity preserved for inmates waiting for the court's decision on their cases.

GOAL. The provincial government set out to transform the provincial jail into a model of custodianship, one that preserves the dignity and well-being of wards through humane and just systems and programs.

STRATEGIES. Given the diversity of the problems besetting the provincial jail, the Office of the Provincial Warden (OPW) adopted a holistic approach.

▪ Values orientation

Both inmates and jail personnel were given values orientation to instill in them courtesy, discipline, and respect for self and others. Additionally, jail wards were trained in security measures. A lady guard attended a gender-sensitivity and sexual-harassment course to learn the skills to manage gender-related issues.

▪ Health, nutrition, and environmental sanitation program

Inmates were given training in personal hygiene, good grooming, and the maintenance of sanitary conditions in the prison cells and immediate



A registered female nurse who is also a guard in the provincial jail monitors the blood pressure of inmates.

premises. A clinic was created for the wards. A registered female nurse who served as a guard monitored the inmates' blood pressure regularly. Drug dependents and mental patients were referred to rehabilitation centers. A daily diet planner was developed for the inmates. Prison cooks underwent health examinations and were issued health certificates when found physically fit. A garbage disposal system for biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes was established.

▪ Infrastructure and facilities maintenance

Efforts to provide the inmates with adequate, safe, and healthy facilities and surroundings were diligently pursued by the OPW. An additional septic tank and a new kitchen with an

electric water system were constructed. Concrete pathways and drainage canals were built. Run-down facilities such as double-deck beds, the septic tank, water system, and service vehicle were repaired. To ensure safety, the authorities installed iron grills on windows and barbed wire on top of the main jail building. A separate dormitory for females and youth was constructed. To keep the prison clean, garbage containers were provided in strategic locations.

▪ Income-generating program

To enable them to earn some income, inmates were encouraged to engage in income-generating activities using whatever skills they already had. Hence, wards accepted small jobs such as carpentry and furniture-making; repair of radios, cassette players, and electric fans; streamer and billboard painting; cross-stitching; and auto repair.

▪ Sports and recreation

Various sports activities and games – like basketball, chess, checkers, and scrabble – were organized and held in the provincial jail to foster unity and camaraderie and to inculcate self-discipline and sportsmanship among the inmates. TV viewing was



Making picture frames and other handicrafts keep the inmates occupied and sharpen their creative skills.

encouraged. Inmates have also organized a music band that can be called upon to perform during social affairs.

- **Support for educational and religious activities**

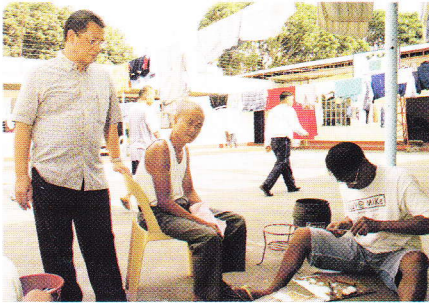
The OPW extended full support to educational and religious activities that different groups in the province organized for inmates to make their time in jail more bearable. These activities include guidance and counseling, bible study, prayer meetings, and Holy Mass.

- **Communication and feedback**

The Office of the Provincial Warden fostered open communication lines between management and inmates. Wards were encouraged to present issues and concerns needing attention. Every so often, meetings were organized for this purpose.

- **Getting the participation of inmates**

At the time that the provincial government and its offices were crafting the LGU's vision and mission, the Office of the Provincial Warden



Governor Agbayani observes inmates busy creating their works of art.

also developed its own. This was carried out in a participatory manner, involving not only the personnel but the inmates as well. The practice of encouraging inmates to participate in decision-making was continued. This is evident in the wards' election of their own set of officers; their taking on the responsibility for meal planning, budgeting, marketing, and preparation; and the conduct of social activities such as birthday and farewell parties for inmates.

▪ **Qualified jail personnel**

Considering the enormity of the task of managing the jail and the inmates, the Office of the Provincial Warden hired only qualified and dedicated individuals to serve as jail personnel. To ensure that the privacy and dignity of female inmates as well as visitors are protected, female guards were hired to check and provide security.

GAINS. These are the benefits obtained from the interventions made in the provincial jail.

- Inmates exhibited a new sense of discipline. There was less gambling, drinking, and smoking. The unhygienic practice of raising domesticated animals such as hogs inside prison cells was stopped.
- The provincial jail changed into a clean and healthy residence for inmates. The metamorphosis was such that it won the “Cleanest and Greenest Government Office” award at the provincial level for three consecutive years. It also won the “Healthiest Prison” Award in Region II for three consecutive years; it was thus accorded the Hall of Fame Award in 2002.
- Jail personnel were transformed into a committed, responsive, and dependable custodial force. They reported for duty well-groomed and wearing the proper uniform.
- Women and young inmates were afforded greater privacy and protection from sexual harassment through the construction of a building intended solely for them.
- With the participatory approach to managing the provincial jail,

inmates were empowered to share in decision-making in such areas as crafting the prison's vision and mission; selecting their officers; meal planning and budgeting; and even in determining how they wish to be referred to. They requested that they not be called "offenders" because they have not yet been convicted; their request was granted.

LESSONS LEARNED. The following are the major lessons derived from the transformation of the provincial prison.

- The long and difficult journey from an undesirable state to a desirable one starts with the political will of the leadership to embark on such a trip and see it to its end.
- Consulting people and involving them to share in the responsibility of improving their situation is



A sign in front of the provincial jail that makes every inmate proud.

more likely to yield positive results than if decisions are made unilaterally.

- A highly disciplined and knowledgeable manager – in this case the provincial warden – endowed with social skills, plus the inmates' participation, are necessary for symmetry to emerge out of chaos and a total lack of discipline.

Day-care workers graduate into early childhood education and development workers

Before the year 2001, day-care workers were tasked mostly to take care of the children placed in their charge. Sure, they taught the little ones a few rhymes and told them a fairy tale or two. But that's about all. There seemed to be no real learning that would prepare the children for stepping up the educational ladder.

This is probably why, later on, students, particularly in the upland communities in Nueva Vizcaya, performed poorly compared with their lowland counterparts. After all, a weak foundation in the pre-school years could arguably lead to serious learning difficulties in subsequent years.



Story-telling time at the day care center is a favorite event for both the teacher and the children.

Today, the scene in day-care centers is different, more colorful, zapped with greater energy. Well, at least in Nueva Vizcaya. The once unstructured learning activities have taken on a sharp, well-defined contour. And day-care workers have assumed a new name: early childhood education and development (ECED) workers.

But what's so thrilling in a new title, you might ask. A lot, if the experience in Nueva Vizcaya is anything to go by. Because with the new designation

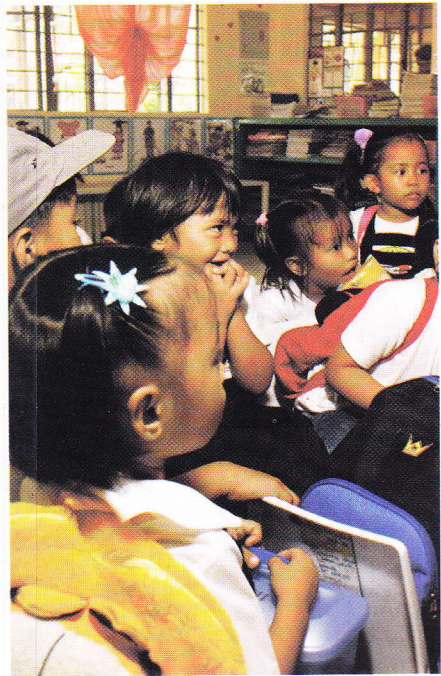
came a whole package of changes, and roles. For one thing, day-care centers in the province now follow a standardized curriculum that goes beyond developing the pupils' socialization skills. Numeracy, literacy, reading readiness, as well as fine and gross motor skills development are the staple contents of the new early childhood education and development program. Co-opted by the provincial government to help in this undertaking, St. Mary's University (SMU)

produced standardized instructional materials “to ensure uniformity of lessons.” These materials are now being used in day-care centers through out the province.

For another, some 421 day-care workers (90%) trained intensively in the four components of the ECED program to enable them to teach effectively and earn the title of “ECED worker.” Under the aegis of SMU, the training included such ECED skills as day-care center structuring, lesson planning, strategies for teaching young children, and classroom management. The participants, particularly those from the uplands, were monitored and evaluated rigorously to ensure they would be effective ECED workers when they returned to their classrooms. Their performance was assessed three ways: through (1) observation of performance in an actual classroom situation, (2) a standard index of evaluation, and (3) pupils' personal evaluation.

SMU conducted the six-week training in two waves: the first in the summer of 2001 and the second in 2002. Funding support came from The Ford Foundation.

The impact of the training was readily felt. One graduate said she



Students of the Bayombong Day Care Center listen intently to their teacher.

learned a lot: “...the training created changes, particularly in enriching the day-care program.” Another observed that “the number of enrollees [in my class] increased when the parents learned that I was a graduate of the summer training.”

Even more heartening is the fact that a number of the training graduates went back to school to complete their studies via the Extended Tertiary Education Equivalency Accreditation Program (ETEEAP). Some day-care



Governor Agbayani's administration believes that education of the young leads to an educated citizenry, making participatory governance a vibrant reality.

workers are college graduates but did not specialize in ECED; others are undergraduates. Through ETEEAP, they can earn a bachelor's degree in ECED by taking courses as well as getting credits for their experience, length of service, and seminars/training attended. Thirty-two of the training graduates enrolled in ETEEAP. Of these, 16 have obtained their degree; the rest are still completing the program.

At this time, financial constraints in the barangays they are posted in may not allow ECED workers to get a raise

in salary despite their increased competence. (Some receive a measly monthly salary of PhP1,500, while others get PhP50 a month per enrollee). These unsung heroines are aware they may have to continue doing their job at great personal sacrifice. They say, however, that they are recompensed by one thought: they are now in a better position to shape the minds and hearts of their pupils. And who knows, one day the children they helped mold may rise to become leaders of the province, or even the country.

Issues and implications

Democratic governance in Nueva Vizcaya has inexorably made its mark in the lives of the Novo Vizcayano. The journey has not been easy, though. It was an uphill climb for the most part, with diversity in perspectives and differences in political orientation providing the thorny path that made for an interesting trip. These differences have spawned issues some of which have been addressed; other issues may take a long time to resolve, if they are resolved at all.

For all its successes, not everyone in Nueva Vizcaya subscribes to the kind of participatory governance (PG) that was applied in the province. While

many revel in it and its positive outcomes, others revile it.

Participatory governance: definitions, perceptions, and priorities

In the beginning, there was considerable resistance to the pursuit of participatory governance. It was most evident in the provincial government system itself, where maintaining the status quo was the prevailing culture. Change had no place in the comfortable though unimaginative approach to providing services to the Novo Vizcayanos. One middle manager in the provincial government theorized that the

readiness to embrace participatory governance varied from individual to individual (“*Hindi sabay-sabay ang pagkabinog ng mga tao*”). As in any innovation adoption process, there were risk-takers – the trailblazers – who were more than willing to experiment with participatory processes; others, however, tended to be laggardly.

There was also the group of doubters, mostly newly elected officials, who were not properly tutored in the processes of PG. This group of doubting Thomases exists to this day. In the legislative branch of the provincial government, for example, the majority, who are reportedly oppositionists, contend that there is no full participation in governance. PG, as they see it, is at best “selective.” Their perception is that the provincial government “focuses on the participation of NGOs only, thus leaving out barangays and municipalities.” The oppositionists recognize the value of consultation in participatory governance. They are deeply concerned that the sentiments of people in far-flung areas as well as those who do not belong to any organization may not be heard by a governor who “does not regularly visit

the uplands” to consult the people.

Opposing concepts of participatory governance may account for this perception. The provincial chief executive, who espouses participatory governance, views PG in the context of democratizing government, of widening the democratic base. In light of this, he believes that “the power to decide must be shared with the public.” Drawing on the provisions of the Local Government Code, he translated this power sharing to giving civil society, the private (business) sector, and the LGUs a foothold in decision-making, using as venue legitimate and recognized mechanisms, specifically the planning and budgeting process. Given the complex social and economic concerns he has to attend to, the governor relies on the LGU’s customized participatory planning process, where problems and needs are translated into programs and projects, and addressed through specific activities. Throughout this process, the chief executive has adopted the role of facilitator and catalyst rather than ultimate decision-maker.

Oppositionists in the legislative branch, however, view things through an entirely different lens. They uphold

the traditional concept of governance where decision-making emanates from the seat of power of elective officials. While PG may provide "a source of data for decision-making, the responsibility for decisions should reside in the chief executive." The traditionalists say that "participants in PG should only recommend and should not hold the final decision" because some of them, specifically the NGOs and POs, were "not elected by the people" and are, therefore, not accountable to them.

The traditionalists claim that PG "involves all sectors." Yet they show a marked bias against NGOs and POs, probably owing to the fact that these groups outnumber and thus "overrule" the elective officials in the Provincial Development Council. Moreover, they seem to have overlooked the existence of the barangay planning and budgeting process as the mechanism through which the people, be they unorganized or residing in the hinterlands, may be consulted. Barangay plans, programs, and projects which passed through the standard planning and budgeting process are vertically integrated into the municipal development plans, which are then vertically linked to the

provincial comprehensive development plan. The process assures the total participation of all stakeholders (POs, NGOs, NGAs, the private sector) at all LGU levels.

If they do see the merit of the budgeting and planning process, the skeptics claim it is not user-friendly and that it requires skills that simple folks simply do not have (e.g., preparing and defending a proposal). To a certain extent, the budgeting and planning process does require certain skills. Governance, after all, must keep up with the demands of sustainable development, demands which call for new processes, systems, skills, and technologies. It becomes imperative, therefore, for members of the legislative body to acquaint themselves with these innovations so they may fully understand and appreciate the complexity of development and participatory governance, and effectively take part in it.

Drawing on their own concepts of participatory governance, the two camps chase different performance targets and indicators. Capability development is a primordial concern of the pro-PG group because enlightened decision-making requires that key players in the process possess

certain knowledge and skills. The progressive bloc also admits to the existence of a “feeble” bureaucracy and thus sees the need to improve systems and personnel capability. This group finds it “necessary to institutionalize a culture [of efficient and effective service] and leave a legacy of a strong civil service system.” Prioritizing social investment through capability development is, therefore, justified.

The traditionalists, on the other hand, dismiss the pro-PG group's efforts to develop systems and human capability and favor investments in infrastructure instead. They say that already, “millions of pesos have been funneled into seminars and human development.” Hence, capability development should be given low priority. They contend that farmers need irrigation facilities as well as farm-to-market roads to transport their produce. As one Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) member sharply remarked, “*Bulok na ang mga kalsada! Kawawang magbubukid!*” (Roads are in a state of disrepair! Poor farmers!) Another board member lamented, “*Paano mae-encourage ang mga farmers to produce kung putik-putik ang mga daan?*” (How can you encourage

farmers to improve their yield when farm-to-market roads are all muddy?) The traditionalists further say “there is a dearth of schools, particularly in upland barangays.” They feel the provincial government should dip into its coffers to build classrooms, particularly because “the national government cannot support everything.”

Infrastructure, however, is also one of the thrusts of the chief executive. The bulk of the annual 20-percent development fund is reportedly allocated for infrastructure, specifically provincial roads, bridges, and buildings. Although farm-to-market roads are beyond the mandate of the provincial government, these are nonetheless attended to on a cost-sharing agreement with the barangays, with the provincial government providing the necessary heavy equipment. On the other hand, the construction of school buildings is not a mandate of the provincial government. The repair of schools may be undertaken using the school board fund.

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan members seem to be under the impression that funds for training are all drawn from the provincial govern-

ment budget. The grants from foreign donors have actually enabled the LGU to implement a continuing capability development program. The GOLD project funded by USAID, as well as the projects supported by the United Nations Population Fund, The Ford Foundation, and the European Union through the Caraballo and Southern Cordillera Agricultural Development Program (CASCADE), have financed the bulk of skills and technology training. While there may be a regular appropriation for training, this is reportedly small. It is allocated for training and seminars conducted by the Civil Service Commission, the Department of Budget and Management, and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

Because of these differences in thrust and priorities, a palpable tension persists between the executive body and the majority in the Sangguniang Panlalawigan.

Transparency, or the alleged lack of it, in the use of funds has become a bone of contention in the past two years. The chief executive is an advocate of transparency as one of the basic elements of participatory governance. The majority in SP,

however, complained about the absence of transparency in the disposition of the prize money from the Gawad Sapat Ani (Award for Sufficient Harvest) which was awarded by the Department of Agriculture (DA), and the grant received from The Ford Foundation for the early childhood education and development program. In the case of the former, the classification of the prize money is a gray area that may account for the "questionable" disposition of the fund. The chief executive classifies the prize money as a trust fund. As such, it will not go to the general fund, the disposition of which needs SP approval. As a trust fund, the prize money can only be used for a specified purpose. With the DA reportedly giving the go-signal to use the money for the establishment of an agricultural trading facility, the chief executive did not see the need to go through the Sangguniang Panlalawigan process to determine how the money would be used.

The opposing camp, on the other hand, considers the prize money as a miscellaneous fund and maintains that its use must be approved by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan because "SP holds the power of the purse."

With the Ford Foundation assistance, a lack of openness about the terms of the grant agreement has given rise to questions on the correctness of fund disposition. The donor agency recommended that a private foundation be created through which the funding support could be channeled. This was what the chief executive did: he established the Novo Vizcayano Development Foundation. The oppositionists, however, appear to be unaware of this arrangement, and thus questioned the agenda of the chief executive as well as the appropriateness of the whole scheme. The apparent breakdown in communication between the executive and legislative branches has not helped the situation.

The divergence in definitions, perceptions, and priorities as well as the information gap in some instances have created a festering wound in the relationship of the executive and legislative branches of the provincial government. While such differences are to be expected, and are actually given space in a democracy, they can also weaken the muscle tone of good governance. Clearly, there is a need for a common framework and understanding of people's involve-

ment in governance. Otherwise, people-driven progress would require more time, effort, and material resources to pursue when that progress is actually needed now and at the least cost.

Budget impasse

A long-simmering controversy is the SP's withholding the authorization of the executive budget for fiscal years 2002 and 2003. Towards the last term of the governor, the provincial budget remains unauthorized and, therefore, inaccessible. This budget deadlock has effectively disabled the provincial government in implementing several development projects that would have benefited Nueva Vizcaya.

A number of factors may account for the impasse. First, there seems to be some confusion in the scope and limits of power of the executive and legislative branches of government. This is apparent in the case of the 2002 budget, where the Sangguniang Panlalawigan reportedly pruned down budget proposals for certain projects and allotted the trimmed-off portions to projects of their choice. This is clearly contrary to the Local Budgeting (LB) Manual provision which states that "the local

Sanggunian may not increase the proposed amount in the executive budget nor include new items except to provide for statutory and contractual obligations...”

Second, there is a great deal of disagreement on the planning and budgeting process, mainly because the executive and legislative branches have different interpretations of the process. At the moment there is no official guidebook that would clarify these interpretations.

Lastly, there is also confusion in the proper procedure for the formulation of the annual investment plan (AIP) that forms part of the executive budget. The annual investment plan is a tool by which the LGU manages and financially supports its medium-term sectoral plan and its local development investment program. A *Guidebook for Annual Investment Plan (AIP)* was prepared and issued in 1994 by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG); NEDA; the Leagues of Provinces, Municipalities, and Cities; and the *Liga ng mga Barangay*. Up to now, however, these agencies have not conducted any follow-up orientation or training that would elucidate the provisions of the manual, especially to newly elected

officials. In Nueva Vizcaya, for instance, even the format and content of the AIP have reportedly been the object of disagreement; this has somehow contributed to the delay in the SP's action on the annual budget.

While the local chief executive may be administratively and criminally liable if he fails to submit the executive budget on or before October 16 of the preceding fiscal year, there is no equivalent sanction on the Sangguniang Panlalawigan for failure to authorize the budget. For this reason, in a bold precedent in budget administration, the governor brought to court the case of the budget impasse. In its decision effective October 2, 2003, the Regional Trial Court Branch 27 ordered, among other things, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan “to hold *daily*, not weekly, sessions to tackle no other issue than the authorization of the annual budget.” This decision on the case, dubbed by the Court as “a case of first impression,” carries far-reaching implications on the legislative-executive working relationship not only in Nueva Vizcaya but in other LGUs similarly situated.

The precarious balance in the relationship of the executive and legislative branches of government has

affected not only the two protagonists. More alarmingly, it has reportedly hurt the Novo Vizcayanos, who, because of the stalemate, were unable to benefit from the fruits of development projects that should have been implemented with the approved budget.

What can be done to minimize the friction between the two camps?

First, an official clarification of the roles, responsibilities as well as limits of power and authority of the executive and legislative branches is called for. A manual consolidating the provisions of the Local Government Code, the Local Budgeting Manual, current legal opinion, and other source materials in this regard would be useful.

Secondly, LGU officials and personnel, particularly newly elected officials, need to train in planning and budgeting. The training should cover the different types of plans (e.g., physical framework, multi-sectoral development, local development investment, and annual investment) as

well as the logical framework as a tool in planning and budgeting. An official guidebook on planning and budgeting should be developed to provide a reference material. A DILG-initiated comprehensive orientation would help reduce confusion in the crafting of the annual investment plan.

Finally, to institutionalize participatory governance, the DILG should provide and implement specific administrative sanctions for LGUs that do not comply with the mandate to organize local special bodies, particularly the local development council (LDC). The LDC is the special body tasked, among other things, to formulate annual, medium- and long-term socioeconomic development plans and policies as well as public investment programs. It sets the direction of economic and social development, and coordinates development efforts within the LGU. The LDC's strategic role makes it vital that a functional local development council is established.

Sustainability: *quo vadis,* participatory governance?

Can the Novo Vizcayanos sustain the momentum of participatory governance and the gains it has afforded the province?

With the present administration now on its last term, and the political succession still quite uncertain at this time, this question assumes greater importance than ever. Some Novo Vizcayanos believe that the delicate tapestry of participatory governance stitched together by a democratic leader could come unraveled if an autocrat wins the next election. The reason: "The people are still at the awareness stage."

Although they are cognizant of participatory governance, a Novo Vizcayano observed that:

The people are still politically immature; they lack the collective willingness to take the risk and assert what is right. Moreover, the system does not allow the people to take that crucial step toward the assertion level. Individuals who are elected to a position hold so much power that civil society is left only with a tiny voice to express itself.

Another said it more succinctly:

No one especially in the local government] would be stupid enough to rally for participatory governance and in the process place his job on the chopping block.

Admittedly, a number of participatory innovations are now deeply entrenched in the organizational system. With the strong political will and support of the current leadership, the revitalized real property tax system as well as programs on cooperative development and agriculture, and for persons with disability, were put in place and have acquired a life of their own. The offices concerned have already adopted these programs as part of their systems and procedures. It would thus be tragically unwise and extremely costly for the incoming administration to simply disregard them and install new systems.

But what about the innovations that have yet to be fully integrated in the local government system? The programs on quality service improvement, forestry management, and strategic planning as well as the use of the logical framework still need to be institutionalized. Executive orders and local ordinances would at best serve as legal instruments that establish the programs' existence. They do not in any way guarantee that the new systems, models, and processes will continue to be adopted, particularly if the succeeding leadership's value system is incompatible

with that of its predecessor.

How then will Nueva Vizcaya's democratic and participatory form of governance be sustained?

The current dispensation has established some safety nets that will help prevent the return of autocracy. First, the middle managers in the provincial government bear the onus of *teaching* the incoming leadership the theory and practice of participatory governance. PG need not be an arcane religion of the present administration. The processes of participatory governance can be learned. Having been immersed in these processes for over 10 years, the middle managers are in the best position to tutor the new administration on the subject.

Second, a common vision for the LGU has been crafted by the different offices and the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. This vision cannot be summarily dismissed by the next chief executive. Those who sculpted it are expected to ensure that the vision is effectively pursued.

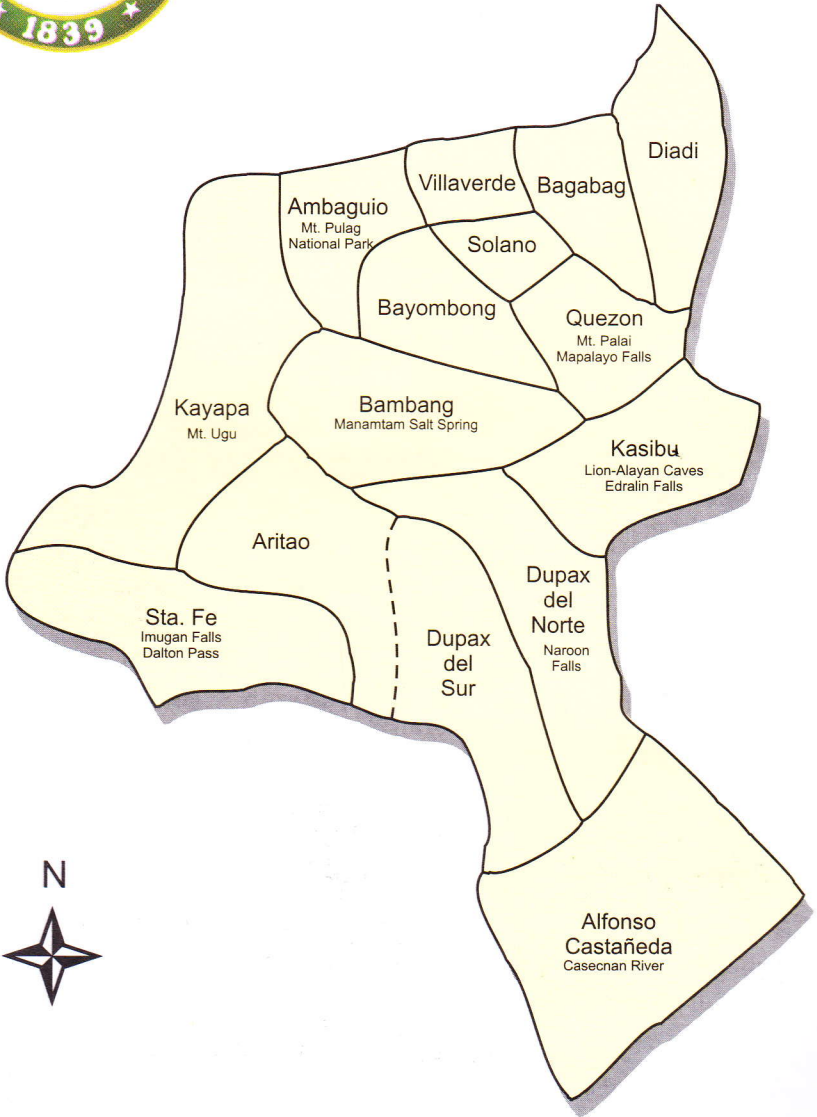
On a macro level, the provisions of the Local Government Code, if properly enforced and enhanced, should adequately guarantee that PG is established in all LGUs even if the local officials are averse to it. The

weak enforcement of the Code's provisions has resulted in some lower LGUs wanting in functional local development councils, special bodies, as well as planning and budgeting systems. National monitoring of the Code's implementation is practically nil. Implementation standards have yet to be prescribed. Sanctions for non-compliance with the Code's provisions are non-existent. Addressing these issues and enhancing the LGC provisions would fortify the

legal and administrative framework of democratic governance.

But in the final analysis, preventing autocracy from taking a grip of Nueva Vizcaya is in the hands of the Novo Vizcayanos themselves. By electing a democratic and competent political leadership, they would operatively sustain the gains of participatory governance. It's a decision the Novo Vizcayanos will have to make. And today would not be soon enough.





Map of Nueva Vizcaya

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- 1999 Regional/National Level
- 2001 Regional
- 2002 Regional (Hall of Fame)
- 5. Outstanding NGA Cooperator (PIA)
 - 1998 Regional Level
National Level Runner-up
 - 1999 Regional Level
National Level Runner-up
 - 2001 Regional/National Level
 - 2002 Regional (Hall of Fame)
- 6. Outstanding NGO CPRTR (DWRV)
 - 1998 Regional Level
 - 1999 Regional Level
 - 2001 Regional Level
 - 2002 Regional (Hall of Fame)
- 7. Outstanding Grains Farmers Cooperative
 - 1998 Regional Level (Bambang Fruits)
 - 1999 Regional Level
 - 2001 Regional Level (NV Alay Kapwa)
 - 2002 Regional Level (NV Alay Kapwa)
 - Regional Runner-up (Bambang Fruits)
- 8. Outstanding Rice Miller
 - 1998 Regional Runner-up
 - 1999 Regional Runner-up
 - 2001 Regional Runner-up
 - 2002 Regional Runner-up
 - Outstanding Province in Corn-based Integrated Farming, 1996
 - Most Outstanding Provincial Agriculture and Fishery Council for 1999 and 1996, an award given by the Department of Agriculture
 - Best Province in Local Food Processing for 1999, an award garnered by Kalahan Foundation in Imugan, Santa Fe
 - The Gawad Sapat Ani 2000 (2nd Runner-up), a Presidential Award for Outstanding Province on Food Security; earned for the province PhP25 million for agriculture

Environment

- Hall of Fame 2002 Gawad Galing Pook Awards:

- 1998-1999 Watershed Co-Management (Outstanding)
- 2001-2002 TREE for Legacy (Outstanding)
- 3rd Place, 1995 National Search for the Cleanest and Greenest Province
- 3rd Place, 1997 Search for the Cleanest and Greenest Province
- The 2000 Pag-asa Award Group for outstanding teams in the government for their performance in the Quality Service Improvement Program (QSIP)

Economic

- 3RD Runner up Best Local Government Unit in Budget Administration sponsored by PHILBO and DBM, awarded on April 11, 2000
- Hall of Fame 2002 Gawad Galing Pook Awards:
 - 2001-2002 Real Property Tax System (Trailblazer)
- Gawad Pitak sa Pinakatanging Kooperatiba 2003 (Non-agricultural based Category) awarded to Nueva Vizcaya Alay Kapwa Multi-Purpose Cooperative by the Land Bank of the Philippines

Peace and Order

- Hall of Fame in the yearly national search for Best Provincial Peace and Order Council (consistently winning the Best PPOC in 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 six consecutive years) sponsored by the DILG and National Police Commission
- Nueva Vizcaya Disaster Response Team the Gawad Kalasag for Excellence in Disaster Preparedness Response (Group Category)
- Most Prepared Disaster Coordinating Council for 1997, an award for the NDCC

Health

- Most Outstanding Provincial Health Board, National Level, 1994 and 1995
- The 1998 Healthiest Prison, awarded to the Provincial Jail in recognition of the prison management's efforts to provide a supportive environment for health through multi-sectoral partnership sponsored by the Department of Health
- The 2000 Pag-asa Award Group for outstanding teams in the government for their performance in the Quality Service Improvement Program (QSIP)
- 2001 Asin Law Award Universal Salt Iodization Award for exemplary achievements in the implementation of the Asin Law (RA 8172)
- Over-all Champion: 2001 Regional Population Congress
- Hall of Fame 2002, Gawad Galing Pook Awards:
 - 1998-1999 Watershed Co-Management (Outstanding)

Social and Community Development

- Outstanding Province, 1997 Progressive Alliance for Community Development by the DILG
- The 1998 Apolinario Mabini Award conferred to The Provincial Federation of Persons with Disability Association of Nueva Vizcaya (PFPWDA) as The Disabled Group of the Year
- The 1998 Order of the Fighting Cock and Most Outstanding Province, an award from the Progressive Alliance for Community Development and DILG
- Special National Award, BSP National Court of Honor conferred at Cebu City, May 27, 2001
- Hall of Fame 2002 Gawag Galing Pook Awards:
 - 2001-2002 Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Trailblazer)

REGIONAL AWARDS

Agriculture

- Hall of Fame for consistently winning in the PGSP Contest as Outstanding LGU for four consecutive times, thereby showing the value of excellence, hard work, cooperation and dedication to duty, which ultimately contributed to the sustainable implementation of Provincial Grains Standardization Program

Health

- Best Provincial Local Government Unit Support for the 1996 Knock Out Polio campaign in Region II
- Healthy Setting Sponsored by the Philippine Health Promotions Program (PHPP) of the Department of Health:
- Healthiest in
 - Workplace - (Hall of Fame) Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Capitol (1999-2000 and 2001)
 - Hospital - Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Hospital (First Place, 1999-2000; 3rd place, 2001)
 - Prison - (Hall of Fame) Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail (1998, 2000 and 2001)
 - Eating Place
 - Restaurant: (Hall of Fame) FTM Food Fiesta (1999-2000 and 2001)
 - Multinational: Jollibee Solano (2000 and 2001)
 - Turo-turo: Jasmin Restaurant, Santa Fe (1999, 2000 and 2001)
 - School - Solano East Central School (2000 and 2001)
 - Bonfal Central School (2nd in 1999)

- Sawmill Elementary School (Elementary Level) 2001 winner
- Street - Gen. A. Santos St., Solano (Exterior) (2000 and 2nd place, 2001) - Sta. Lucia, Bagabag (Interior) 2nd place, 2001
- Hotel - Governor's Garden Hotel (1999) 2nd place (2000)
- Home - Gumpeng Family, Kayapa (2000 and 2001)
- Resort - 2nd Villa Margarita (1999-2000 and 3rd place, 2001)
- Barangay - Poblacion Norte, Solano (1st to 2nd Class) 2001 winner
- 2nd Palabotan, Dupax del Sur (4th to 6th class) (1999 winner and 2nd place, 2001))
- Market - 4th Bagabag Public Market (1999)
- 3rd Solano Public Market (2001)
- The 2000 Rafael M. Salas Population and Development Award given to Saint Mary's University for its outstanding performance and a manifestation of the exemplary technical assistance extended by the Provincial Government through the Population Officer;
- The 2000-2001 Green Banner Award 1st Place winner & Most Outstanding Province in Region II awarded to the Provincial Nutrition Council Committee

Peace and order

- Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council adjudged Excellent in Disaster Preparedness and Response, LDCC Category
- DRT 933 was selected BEST Government Emergency Responder in the region

Environment

- Cleanest and Greenest Province (Gawad Pangulo sa Kapakaligiran) for years 1995, 1997, 2000
- Regional Award in Search for Model on Sustainable Development under Upland Category -
○ 1st Prize Banila Community-Based Reforestation with a cash prize of P100,000.00 for livelihood projects

Social and Community Development

- Nueva Vizcaya has been the consistent Grand-slam Champion in the annual Regional Youth Skills Olympics sponsored by TESDA for 7 years (1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000 and 2003)

Economic

- Best Local Government Unit in Budget Administration in Region II, sponsored by PHILBO and DBM, awarded April 11, 2000

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- The reduction of poverty incidence from 52% in 1992 to a low of 10.9% as of the 2000 Census, the highest reduction so far in Region II, which set a goal of reducing poverty incidence to 30% (NEDA Statistics) on the basis of P11,000.00 income of a family of six and thus catapulting Nueva Vizcaya as one of the 10 provinces in the entire country having the lowest poverty incidence as compared to the national level of 34%.
- The adoption of a 30-year Physical Framework or Land Use Plan with an appropriate Provincial Ordinance.
- The reorganization and reengineering of the bureaucracy which transformed the provincial government as a people-centered development institution.
- The reorientation of NGOs/POs/Private Sector Organizations from being lobby groups bargaining for concession into active partners in development and policy reforms.
- The adoption of a 5-year Comprehensive Development Plan (2000 to 2004); assisted all municipalities in crafting their own comprehensive development plan.
- The adoption of Strategic Agricultural Fisheries Development Zones (SAFDZ) at the provincial level; assisted all municipalities in crafting their own.

FOREIGN-ASSISTED SPECIAL PROJECTS

- USAID chose Nueva Vizcaya as one of the 10 recipient provinces of the Governance and Local Democracy (GOLD) Project, a technical assistance program for local governments from 1995 to 2000 on

-Barangay Planning, Budgeting and Accountability	-Investment Promotion
-Community Mapping	-Organizational Development
-Environment	-Fund Management
-Real Property Tax System	-Communication and Feedback
	-Geographical Information System
- UNFPA grantee of a US\$ 2 million population development fund for 5 years (1999-2004), covering Reproductive Health on

-Family Planning	-Violence Against Women
-Maternal Care	-Men's Reproductive Health
-Reproductive Tract Infections (RTIs), STDs, HIV/AIDS	-Prevention of Abortion and Management of its Complications
-Cancer of Reproductive Tract and Breast	-Infertility
-Adolescent Health	-Education and Counseling on Gender and Human Sexuality
- Ford Foundation on Basic Education PhP15 million for 2002 and extended another grant of PhP35 million up to 2006
- Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project Phase V-funded by Japanese Government (Japan Bank for International Cooperative JBIC)
- Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, P400,000.00 through PHILDRAA
- Caraballo and Southern Cordillera Agricultural Development Programme (CASCADE) A program for self-reliance is a special project of the Department of Agriculture and jointly funded by the Government of the Philippines and the European Union with ~13.5M grant for 7 years (1997-2004)
- Inter-Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and organization of tropical countries funded by Japan and USA
- Eco-Governance on solid waste and watershed management

A C R O N Y M S


A & D	<i>Alienable and Dispensable</i>
AIP	<i>Annual Investment Plan</i>
ARD	<i>Associates in Rural Development, Inc.</i>
AVRC	<i>Area Vocational Rehabilitation Center</i>
BLGF	<i>Bureau of Local Government Finance</i>
BWOA	<i>Barobob Watershed Occupants' Association, Inc.</i>
CASCADE	<i>Caraballo and Southern Cordillera Agricultural Development Program</i>
COA	<i>Commission on Audit</i>
DA	<i>Department of Agriculture</i>
DBM	<i>Department of Budget and Management</i>
DENR	<i>Department of Environment and Natural Resources</i>
DILG	<i>Department of Interior and Local Government</i>
DOLE	<i>Department of Labor and Employment</i>
ECED	<i>Early Childhood Education and Development</i>
ENRO	<i>Environment and Natural Resources Office</i>
ETEEAP	<i>Extended Tertiary Education Equivalency Accreditation Program</i>
FMIS	<i>Funds Management Information System</i>
GOLD	<i>Governance and Local Democracy Project</i>
LB	<i>Local Budgeting</i>
LDC	<i>Local Development Council</i>
LGC	<i>Local Government Code</i>
LGU	<i>Local Government Unit</i>
LPPMS	<i>Local Productivity and Performance Measurement System</i>
MA	<i>Municipal Association</i>
MOA	<i>Memorandum of Agreement</i>
NCWDP	<i>National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons</i>
NEDA	<i>National Economic and Development Authority</i>
NGA	<i>Non-Government Agency</i>
NGO	<i>Non-Government Organization</i>
NVSIT	<i>Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of Technology</i>
ODES	<i>Organizational Development Program for Enhanced Service Delivery</i>

OPW	<i>Office of the Provincial Warden</i>
PAO	<i>Provincial Assessor's Office</i>
PDC	<i>Provincial Development Council</i>
PENRO	<i>Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer</i>
PES	<i>Performance Evaluation System</i>
PFPWD	<i>Provincial Federation of Persons with Disability</i>
PG	<i>Participatory Governance</i>
PHB	<i>Provincial Health Board</i>
PHO	<i>Provincial Health Office</i>
PMT	<i>Provincial Management Team</i>
PO	<i>People's Organization</i>
PPA	<i>Programs, Projects and Activities</i>
PS	<i>Private Sector</i>
PSWDO	<i>Provincial Social Welfare Development Office</i>
PTO	<i>Provincial Treasurer's Office</i>
PWDs	<i>Persons with Disability</i>
QSIP	<i>Quality Service Improvement Program</i>
RPT	<i>Real Property Tax</i>
RPTA	<i>Real Property Tax Administration</i>
RPTS	<i>Real Property Tax System</i>
RTIs	<i>Reproductive Tract Infections</i>
SA	<i>Situation Analysis</i>
SIR	<i>Service Improvement Recommendation</i>
SMU	<i>St. Mary's University</i>
SP	<i>Sangguniang Panlalawigan</i>
TESDA	<i>Technical Education and Skills Development Authority</i>
TOP	<i>Technology of Participation</i>
TREE for Legacy	<i>Tree Resources for Education, Enterprise and Legacy</i>
TWG	<i>Technical Working Group</i>
UNFPA	<i>United Nations Population Fund</i>
USAID	<i>United States Agency for International Development</i>

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People's involvement in local governance is a long and tedious undertaking and it requires good management skills, a great deal of patience and flexibility among various stakeholders. Because of its complexity and rather slow process in effecting change, LGUs and other institutions tend to use this strategy in selected development programs related to environmental protection and conservation, education, health and nutrition, governance, finance, agriculture, and social welfare.

Finding Nueva Vizcaya is akin to striking a lode of gold and a major reason for celebration because this province's local government unit in collaboration with its civil society has effectively adopted democratic participation as its key strategy in governance and in the development of several new interventions as well as innovations in existing province-wide programs.

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