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**EMPOWERING THE POOR:
KEY TO EFFECTIVE PRO-POOR SERVICES**

Naga City Government

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EMPOWERING THE POOR: KEY TO EFFECTIVE PRO-POOR SERVICES

I. Development Challenge

The Setting

Originally called "Ciudad de Nueva Caceres," Naga is one of the oldest cities in the country being one of five urban settlements created by royal Spanish decree in the late 16th century. Since the Spanish times, it has been the center of trade and commerce, education, religion and culture of the Bicol region (one of the Philippines' 15 administrative regions made up of six provinces and seven cities) earning it the moniker the "Heart of Bicol."

Naga City is located some 400 kms. south of Manila. By Philippine standard, Naga's 8,448 hectares and 138,000 population place it in the bottom rung of medium sized cities.

Naga is not a port city, it is landlocked. It does not have access to the sea and is therefore in an obvious disadvantage compared to other port cities. Naga is not centrally located and is quite far from the country's primary urban centers, Manila and Cebu. Naga is therefore your typical rural third world city—supposedly one of the faceless government units dotting the Philippine countryside.

Despite its diminutive size, it rose to prominence when it came up with innovative programs that shattered the myth of mediocrity in local governance. Taking advantage of the expanded powers and prerogatives under the 1991 Local Government Code, Naga City took it upon itself to, among others:

- Maximize the participation of civil society and of individual citizens in local governance;
- Harness the synergy from participation to sustain its programs;

Its initiatives did not go unnoticed. Naga City's urban poor program was named one of the Top 40 Best Practices during the Habitat II Conference in Turkey which was duplicated soon after by the city's participatory governance mechanism. Locally, the Ford Foundation, Asian Institute of Management, and the Local Government Academy, among others, have recognized the city for its trailblazing innovations.

So that is Naga City—small in size but impressive in its track record.

The Challenge

In the late 1980's, the city had to contend with the twin problems of economic and social stagnation that negatively affected city competitiveness and the poor's quality of life. Economically, Naga then was in bad shape. Its distinction as Bicol's premier city had been eroded. A former first-class city, Naga was relegated to third-class status by the Department of Finance. Its coffers were empty, strained by overspending that left almost a P1-million deficit (\$17,953). The local economy was sluggish and employment scarce. The three-storey public market—considered in 1969 as Southeast Asia's biggest—was in shambles and soon hit

by a fire that ate up one-third of available space. The 30-hectare Central Business District (CBD), its size unchanged for more than four decades, was already overcrowded by transport terminals shying potential investors away. Business confidence was low and entrepreneurial opportunities were scarce such that the business tax base plateaued at 2,000 establishments. As a result, revenue collection was low and government lacked the wherewithal to initiate any major development initiative on its own.

The government's tight financial position spawned a vicious cycle that impacted negatively on service delivery, especially for the poor. Services and facilities, particularly for shelter, health and education, deteriorated. The extent of the socio-economic problems that the city faced was evident in the worsening living conditions of the homeless urban poor. Like any other urbanizing area, rural migrants searching for better opportunities flocked to the city. However, with very few job opportunities available, these migrants did not have the means to acquire or rent a decent home, they only bloated the social burden faced by Naga City. The limited and unpredictable budgetary support from the central government at that time made the problem even worse. According to the National Statistics Office (NSO), around 5,000 of Naga's 19,500 households in 1990 could be classified as squatters and slum dwellers, almost double the figure in 1980. These urban poor families did not own their homelots lived in dilapidated shelters in 27 blighted communities; and grappled with living conditions characterized by congestion, squalor, and lack of facilities and services.

These socio-economic problems led to the people's loss of faith and confidence in their local government.

II. SERVICE DELIVERY CONTEXT

The Development Perspective

Naga started addressing its problems when a new city administration, with the Hon. Jesse M. Robredo as mayor, was elected to office in 1988. Facing resource constraints, the local government tapped the private sector to spearhead the opening of new growth areas and decongest the Central Business District. These gave rise to the following growth strategies:

1. **Local Initiatives for Economic Activities and Partnerships (LEAPS)** – that encouraged the private sector to develop other areas of the city through the relocation of all transport terminals from the CBD to its peripheries; and by pushing for the operation of satellite markets in strategic areas as an alternative to the 1,500-stall Naga City Public Market found at the heart of the CBD.
2. **Idle Land Upgrading and Beautification Project** - through which a kilometer-long idle property leased by the city from the Philippine National Railways (PNR) was transformed into a commercial area through a Build-Operate-Lease arrangement with PNR and private firms.
3. **Promotion of New Growth Areas** – such as the Central Business District-II and the Naga Southwest Development, private-sector projects that turn relatively large tracts of land into new commercial areas.

A clear vision and a knack for showing results by the new city mayor convinced the business community to sink their money in support of the city's growth programs. The transport terminals were relocated to the periphery of the central business district, two satellite markets opened, development of a new central business district was started, and businessmen converted the PNR idle land into a spanking strip of business establishments and offices. All these investments became magnets for entrepreneurs from other areas further multiplying the job and livelihood opportunities open to urban poor residents.

Having revved up economic activities, the local government then initiated equity-building or pro-poor service delivery programs. While previous administrations looked at the plight of the poor with indifference, the new government took a more direct hand in uplifting their plight. The city figured that it could not wait for the benefits of economic growth to trickle down to the poor.

Growth and equity-building were made to feed off each other. Naga used economic growth programs to provide the resources for, and sustain, the implementation of social development programs leading to a better quality of life, a better city, that ultimately led to enhanced, not to mention empowering, services for the poor.

Partnership Laboratory

The period immediately after the 1986 EDSA Revolution was especially auspicious as NGOs flourished under a new-found legitimacy as development agents. It gave rise to a myriad of NGOs that helped create or strengthen civil society. One of these groups is the

Community Organization of the Philippines Enterprises (COPE) Foundation. COPE started operating in Naga in 1986. It mobilized and organized the urban poor community in the city. COPE educated urban poor communities on their rights. It delivered capability-building programs that enabled communities to identify and propose solutions to their own problems, appreciate how government works, and influence the over-all political process. It thus became a catalyst for group formation, social mobilization and policy advocacy.

The initial result of COPE's work was the formation of nine urban poor associations in the same number of slum areas. With their collective voice, these organizations clamored for the improvement of facilities and services in their communities. These issues were presented to then President Corazon Aquino during her visit to the city in 1987. The associations also formalized their concerns in a manifesto submitted to all candidates during the 1988 local elections.

The clamor of the urban poor—submitted to the President at that—revealed the absence of any local mechanism wherein the poor can interface with their local government and have their voices heard and acted upon. It highlighted the lack of desire by the then city government to open up and share the task of governance to their constituency, or at the very least, consult the poor and hear out their problems.

With very little resources to address its myriad concerns, the city government took on a policy of engagement or partnership with the private sector, including non-government and people's organizations. This was borne out of the belief that aside from resources, these organizations, being "nearer to the ground," had the expertise that government could never have. They, therefore, could complement city efforts.

Thus, instead of looking at COPE and the urban poor as "adversaries," the new city government took them on as partners optimizing COPE's expertise in community organizing and education to mobilize and capacitate the urban poor. Together, they evolved—making mistakes and picking lessons along the way—the *Kaantabay sa Kauswagan* (Partners in Development) Program, the city's flagship program for addressing the needs of the urban poor. The program seeks not only to resolve land tenurial problems but more importantly mainstream the poor in governance and development.

Today, a total of 41 on-site (the land where the poor lived on were acquired, developed and subdivided into individual lots) and off-site (resettlement areas) projects were completed benefiting 6,940 urban poor households which represent 27% of the entire Naga City population. Of these beneficiaries, 6,940 are on their way to getting their property titles having amortized more than half of the cost of their homelots.

Consultative Mechanisms

Naga's successful experience with the urban poor encouraged it to evolve strategies to concretize the abstract concept of "people power," the rallying cry of the EDSA Revolution that toppled a dictatorial regime. It came up with a consultative mechanism dubbed as Naga SPEED (which stands for Socialized Program for Empowerment and Economic Development). This laid down multiple channels through which specific sectors, groups, or the entire constituency can participate in identifying developmental priorities, or stamp their mandate—or disapproval—on major policy issues. This was done through regular dialogues and consultations with various sectors both at the city and village levels, essentially mainstreaming them

in local governance. These consultations doubled as reporting and feedback mechanism enabling both sides to identify problems and possible solutions early on, assess progress and identify areas for collaboration and complementation. The city, under SPEED, pioneered the holding of a locally-initiated referendum in the Philippines in August 6, 1993. In the process, it demonstrated that direct participation even at this scale works, especially in deciding development issues with long-term impact on the city. At issue were the establishment of a central bus terminal, the flotation of bonds to finance its development, and color-coding of trimobiles (a popular mode of intra-city transport).

These consultative channels recognize the poor's right to participate in finding solution to their problems rather than being mere recipients of traditional bureaucratic solutions. Picking on the lessons from the urban poor program, it also reinforces the principle that the poor are not simply beneficiaries but "partners in development" (thus, the program name "*Kaantabay sa Kauswagan*"). This was in direct contrast to previous thrusts where the urban poor only had a voice in government during elections and afterwards became passive recipients of government programs hatched from above.

The poor's involvement in program conceptualization and implementation led to program improvements and the broadening of interventions to respond to their actual needs. For instance, from only addressing the infrastructure and facilities requirements of the nine urban poor associations originally organized by COPE, *Kaantabay* became a mechanism for permanently settling tenurial problems, giving the urban poor legitimacy, providing them with economic opportunities, and turning "slums" and other urban poor areas into **livable** communities. The program likewise put a stop to arbitrary ejection and even minimized court sanctioned eviction.

III. Institutionalizing the Impowerment of the Poor

While the mechanisms previously cited paved the way for resolving the pressing problems of the poor and prepare them for more active engagement in governance, they cannot ensure that their needs and priorities are reflected and sustained at all levels of the development effort nor are the results of the consultations legally binding on government. But given the positive impact participation had on the urban poor problem, and egged on by NGOs and POs which had grown to a critical mass thru the progressive engagement by the city, the sangguniang panglunsod (the city legislative council) felt it imperative to institutionalize civic engagement into a binding law. Thus, the Empowerment Ordinance was enacted in 1995.

A. The Empowerment Ordinance

The *Empowerment Ordinance* (see Annex A) expressly declared that the city government is open to a partnership with duly accredited NGOs and POs; laid out a clear process of accreditation; provided for their organization into an autonomous council, now named the Naga City People's Council (NCPC); and gave such organization the right to be represented in the different bodies within the city government including those which may be created in the future.

Among others, the NCPC:

- Votes and participates in the deliberation, conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of programs, projects and activities of the city government;
- Proposes legislation, and participates and votes at the committee level of the Sangguniang Panglunsod; and
- Acts as the people's representative in the exercise of their constitutional right to information on matters of public concern and of access to official records and documents.

NCPC representatives now sit in the City Development Council (CDC) and in all special bodies mandated by national law and those created locally. The CDC evaluates and approves the local development plan, the comprehensive land use plan and the annual investment plan, as well as the budget for local development. The special bodies (see Annex B) are charged with formulating programs and policies relating to health, education, peace and order, among others. In addition, the NCPC representatives monitor and evaluate how the city implements these programs and policies.

The NCPC further sits in 29 standing committees of the city legislature placing it in a position to influence local laws and policy. As we all know, the nitty gritty of legislative work happens at the committee level, This is where laws are hammered out to their near-final version before being passed upon by the legislature in plenary session. One of these standing committees, the Appropriation Committee, approves the annual budget giving the NCPC front seat participation in the allocation of governmental resources.

Membership by the NCPC in the special bodies and in the standing committees of the city legislature places it right where they could see the details and ensure support for pro-poor projects and services. Indeed, membership in these bodies has been a potent tool of the NCPC for influencing local governance and imprint it with a pro-poor bias.

The NCPC is presently composed of 105 accredited NGOs and POs from thirteen different sectors with the representative from each sector comprising the Board of Directors. These sectors are: the urban poor, agricultural cooperative, non-agricultural cooperative, business, labor, academe, senior citizens, women, youth and children, NGO, veterans, peasants and transport.

i-Governance

While the Empowerment Ordinance institutionalized the participation of community organizations in government decision-making, i-Governance focuses on bringing the engagement down to the level of the individual by providing more venues for information openness and building up the citizen's capacity to access this information. It thus, enhances transparency and accountability and, ultimately, improves government responsiveness to the needs of the poor.

The program is composed of the following:

Naga City Citizens Charter

This is a guidebook on key services of the city government. It details the step-by-step procedure for availing each of the city's more than 150 frontline services, service requirements, the response time for delivery, and the city hall officers and staff responsible for the service.

The Charter also contains maps sketching the location of the office handling a specific service. A detachable customer feedback form is included to generate readers' feedback on the quality of service being delivered by the city.

The guidebook is a result of benchmarking techniques. It took off from a four (4) month workshop/training program— organized by the Productivity Improvement Committee (PIC) and the Human Resource Management Office— that involved all city departments and offices. This threshed out systems and procedures to ensure the predictability and improve the delivery of services.

The Citizens Charter has been distributed to key organizations. A second edition, both in English and the local dialect, is being printed for circulation to Naga's 27,000 households. The Sangguniang Panglunsod, last year, passed the i-Governance Ordinance. This mandates that the Charter be updated and re-distributed at least once every three years.

Naga City Website (www.naga.gov.ph)

The 1998 Asian Development Bank Cities Report shows that the number of Internet connections in Naga grows by at least 91% annually. With a population of only 137,000, there are eight Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and at least 28 cybercafes; there are five colleges

and universities and at least five more training institutions offering information technology (IT) degrees and programs. Practically all privately-run schools give their students exposure to computers and the Internet starting at the secondary/high school level, at the very least. Due to this robust growth, the city government decided to use the internet as a people empowerment tool.

Naga was among the first LGUs to extensively computerize operations in the 1980s and adopt to the use of the Internet. The setback, however, was that the city's Internet project was just seen, in 1997, as sole domain of web savvy employees of the Electronic Data Processing (EDP) unit. Aside from establishing net presence and presenting a profile of the city, therefore, it did not much else. i-Governance re-engineered the website, making it a city-wide concern focusing on using IT as a governance tool.

Like many local government websites, naga.gov.ph contains information on the city's profile, and investment and tourism potentials (called the Sell Naga web component). The site also has a Star Naga page that provides information on awards accorded the city government and publicizes local governance innovations to reinforce civic pride. But what makes the site different from other sites in the Philippines is its conscious effort to provide details of practically all aspects of city operations; and present a means of understanding and monitoring them.

Naga.gov.ph has a Serve Naga/NetServe portion which is the web equivalent of the Citizens Charter. Aside from the features of the guidebook, it offers downloadable forms commonly used in transacting with various agencies of the city government. The catalog of services is divided into 18 categories¹:

The *Share Naga* component provides information on:

- The city's annual budget, along with the allocations for specific offices
- The status of city finances, updated on a quarterly basis
- Invitations to bid and their outcomes
- City Ordinances and Executive Orders

Naga makes it a point to solicit, through the web, comments about the proposed local government budget at the same time that it is undergoing deliberation at the Appropriations Committee of the city legislature providing additional inputs for its members. As a matter of policy, no requests for supplies, equipment or infrastructure programs involving amounts of at least P 100,000.00 are processed unless they are posted in the city website.

The web components, put together, have resulted in hits of 700 to 1,300 every day, relatively high for any government agency in the Philippines.

¹ These are: (1) business and investment; (2) livelihood and employment; (3) tourism services; (4) infrastructure services; (5) agricultural services; (6) transport and traffic management services; (7) executive services/requests to the city mayor; (8) social welfare; (9) integrated health; (10) education; (11) urban poor; (12) environmental services; (13) civil registry services; (14) personnel services; (15) legal services; (16) information services; (17) other taxes, fines and administrative fees; (18) complaints

Bridging the Digital Divide

Since a large part of i-Governance is IT-related, the program also tries to address the need for bridging the digital divide and providing the poor with access to information and communications technology. The current efforts are the *cyberbarangay* and *cyberschool* projects.

To date, ten out of the city's 27 barangays (villages) have *cyberbarangays* while all public secondary schools, and soon, all public elementary schools have internet access and are deemed *cyberschools*.

Cyberbarangay provides Internet access to barangay or village residents through their barangay halls. Cyberschool provides infrastructure, equipment, training and Internet access for all public elementary and high schools. This puts these schools on an equal footing with their private counterparts.

TxtNaga (Short Messaging Service)

Due to the widespread use of text messaging in the Philippines, TxtNaga was introduced in April 2003. This improves access by citizens to the local government. It allows citizens to send complaints, queries and feedback to the city government through a "hotline" provided by a telecommunications company (2960). Messages, approximately ten per day, are relayed to the city government's mail server. Follow-up actions are directed to the relevant city department. Replies are sent by e-mail and received through the same cellphone.

Participatory mechanisms have sustained the city's pro-poor programs. Through the Empowerment Ordinance, urban poor organizations, as members of the NCPC, have been given seats in special bodies (such as the Urban Development and Housing Board) and the city's legislative committees. This participation led to improved efficiency by making use of local knowledge in the formulation of programs and identification of projects ensuring that these are located where they are most likely to be of greatest use. It also ensures that local services are tailored to local preferences.

The urban poor has been given a voice in resource allocation thru their membership in the CDC and thru the NCPC representative at the Appropriations Committee of the city council. The Empowerment Ordinance has given organized groups a mechanism through which they can cooperate with government on a regular basis. It has given the poor a chance to interact with local officials so that they can access more effectively the public services that they need.

The i-Governance program went beyond engagement with organizations and brought as many citizens as possible into the political process. The resulting transparency enhanced, and even reduced the cost of, service delivery. The program introduced various means to provide vital information to individuals. Access is not only limited to web-savvy constituents. Projects such as the cyberschools and cyberbarangays provide access and build up the capability of citizens—especially the marginalized—to make use of information technology-related tools in engaging government. Moreover, the Citizens Charter address the needs of those who are still "resistant" to using computers as a means of getting information.

IV. Successes Achieved

Direct Service Delivery Successes

The successes of the city's empowerment initiatives in terms of improving pro-poor services can be gleaned from the following figures for *Kaantabay*, the flagship program:

- A program coverage of 50 on-site and off-site development projects with a total of 8,717 urban poor households, which represents 34 percent of the entire population of the city (October 2003).
- Renewal of 27 blighted urban poor communities (October 2003).
- A household income level that is 115% higher than the national average (1998).

Through various improvements brought about by involvement in decision-making, the program made possible the transfer of ownership of private property to current occupants. As a result, social and economic dislocation of poor families has been avoided, affording them more time for work and to refocus their energies to more productive activities. Instead of attending to recurring problems like the threats of eviction and demolition, the program enabled people in the community to improve their houses, even on a self-help basis, as the proprietary right is vested in them.

Thus, the program contributed to a more secure future for the urban poor in Naga City. By helping them regain their dignity, it provided them a stake in, and motivated them to become more responsible members of society. By helping the urban poor build capital, *Kaantabay* empowered them to become more productive agents of the local economy.

Successes Resulting from Participatory Mechanisms

A major component of Naga's pro-poor programs is capability-building for the marginalized. In fact, as previously mentioned, *Kaantabay* only deals with organized groups, not individuals. This has led to an increase in the number of urban poor associations from only 9 in 1989, to 41 presently. They belong to a citywide federation. This provides them an avenue for greater participation in governance and improves the tripartite approach to settlement of land tenure problems.

Membership of these organizations in the NCPC, local special bodies and city council committees has led to "preferential" treatment for the poor and their involvement in issues affecting the sector. A case in point is Liberty Commercial Complex (LCC), a developer and operator of shopping malls. It bought in 1995 a 7.4 hectare area that is now part of Naga's South Riverfront Growth Area; and constructed in 1997 the biggest shopping mall in Naga City. About 221 informal settler families resided on the land. Instead of simply demolishing structures and evicting the urban poor, tripartite consultations led to an arrangement where the city government and urban poor organizations facilitated commercial development while LCC provided for the relocation to, and upgrading of, a nearby area for the homes of affected families (60 to 80 sq. m. per family). While addressing growth concerns therefore, Naga through participation of the urban poor sector was also able to address land tenure and economic dislocation issues.

Participation by the poor in city legislative committees has led to program sustainability. The city legislature, for example, enacted Ordinance 98-033— entitled “An Ordinance Providing for a Comprehensive and Continuing Development Program for the Urban Poor Sector and Appropriating Funds for the Purpose.” This regularizes funding for pro-poor programs and services. Under this ordinance, the city government is mandated to allocate to the various components of the Kaantabay program at least 10% of its annual budget, net of personal services.

Interaction at the level of government policy-making has further led to more innovative approaches in addressing problems. One case is the enactment of the *Bayadnihan* (Pay for Work) Ordinance. Urban poor families are required to pay amortization to cover the cost of acquisition and development of urban poor housing projects so that these funds can be plowed back into the program. But due to the economic crisis, urban poor families experienced difficulty in paying their monthly amortizations. They proposed Bayadnihan, a work-for-pay program that enables urban poor families to **render work for the city government in exchange for amortization payment**. The benefit flows both ways: the city government is assured of full payment of the homelot realized from its labor savings while the beneficiary is spared from shelling out money for the amortization.

Successes Resulting from Transparent Mechanisms

Aside from more equitable service delivery, transparent mechanisms promoted by the People Empowerment and i-Governance programs have resulted to:

More Responsive, Effective and Efficient Service Delivery

They have instilled customer-orientation and consciousness of performance standards; and allowed the city to “do more with less”.

Transparency has led to streamlining of processes. Frontline services have become more efficient. Among others, the improvements can be seen in:

- Processing of Urban Poor Livelihood Loans – one week as against one month or more before
- Complaints on Streetlight Maintenance – action taken within 24 hours as against three days
- Garbage Collection – 86% collection efficiency and 24-hour response time on other requests for garbage collection as against 65% garbage collection efficiency and erratic response

Because of these, the Department of Interior and Local Governments (DILG) also chose the city as the Bicol region's model for its Anti-Red Tape Program.

Transparency has become an important tool for making the government procurement system work and reducing procurement costs. A sampling of the items purchased and civil works projects bidded in 2002 and 2003 shows the following:

Against a government standard of PhP 6M to PhP 7M, a kilometer of road in Naga costs only PhP 4.06M to construct (up to a PhP 2.94M or a 42% difference)

- Medicine procured by the city is 19% to 70% lower than the usual price quoted for other local government units. City generic medicine is, on the average, 62% lower than branded products imported by the national government for sale to local government units
- Supplies bought by the General Services Division can be up to 33% lower than the local government standard

By opening for public scrutiny not only notices, but results of bids as well, the following were encouraged:

- Greater participation of service providers in the bidding process (14 firms bidded for the supply of the city government's latest requirement for medicine and medical supplies; the national government requirement is the presence of only 3 bidders)
- Inputs and comments from concerned organizations and individuals as to where the city government can source other suppliers offering the same product or service at lower cost
- Even lower bid prices than the previous since the program provides information on quotations of previous winning bidders that prospective suppliers can scrutinize.

The City Accountant's Office estimates that through a transparent procurement system, the city government generates significant savings of at least PhP 10M a year. The World Bank considers Naga a model in LGU procurement.

By streamlining processes and avoiding the wastes brought about by non-transparent systems that breed graft and corruption, Naga is able to meet rising demands for "equity-building" programs that commit the delivery of basic services, especially for the poor. Despite only a 3% budget increase in 2003, Naga has been able to meet increasing service requirements such as a 10% rise in the number of patients served by the city hospital; and a 7.7% annual growth in enrolment in the city's public schools. The percentage of pre-school malnourished children has been reduced to less than 1% from its previous level of 5.3%. The number of urban poor households without secure tenure has gone down to only 2.09% of household population.

More Meaningful Community Participation

More importantly, transparency mechanisms have cycled back to allowing the city to shape a more inclusive society by engaging individuals in governance processes. The extent of engagement can be seen in the average of twenty (20) e-mails and text messages that the city government gets per day through naga-dot-gov and TxtNaga. These range anywhere from views about development programs and policies to complaints about drainage systems and collection of fees. The number of visitors to the city website has increased from less than

20 per day before the program, to 100 in 2001, then to 700 to 1,320 during the last quarter of 2003.

Information openness has engendered critical engagement; and built-up the Nagueños trust and confidence in their government. A remark from a user is the best testament to this. Writing in the website's guestbook after looking at the city's budget and finances, he said that "by putting up the numbers for everyone to see, the city is requiring from us more than greetings. They are asking us, for the sake of the city, to look at the numbers, study them, question them."

V. Learning Points

At the macro level, the following learning points stand out:

- A. **Participation makes the task of governance easier.** By sharing responsibility and accountability with civil society and the community, participatory governance lightens the burden of government. Responsibility for decisions, performance, and outcomes are no longer lumped on the shoulders of government officials but is shared with the community. This facilitates support for, and sustainability of, programs as no one wants something to fail if, to put it bluntly, he would be party to the blame. Governance is likewise made easier as the resource constraints of government, (funds and expertise, among others) can be complemented by those from the private sector.
- B. **The poor are mendicants if not empowered, are their own change agents if sufficiently empowered.** The traditional approach is to regard the poor as perpetual recipients of government dole outs, that they are incapable of helping themselves. That would be true if the poor are confined to being "beneficiaries" rather than being partners in resolving their problems. The experience of Naga City showed that the poor will rise from their mendicancy if sufficiently empowered by government.
- C. **Government is not a complicated affair as to be beyond the comprehension of the poor.** Government functionaries tend to exclude their constituents from the process of governance on the belief that the people are ill-equipped to participate in it. The truth of the matter however is that what is expected from participation, particularly for those who have less in life, is the simple act of ventilating one's interest and having it survive the crucible of democratic debate. This can be done by anyone who has a firm grasp of his sectoral agenda.
- D. **Sharing governance does not dilute the power of government, on the contrary, it is strengthened by the synergy of specializations of the various sectors of the community.** Participatory governance allows other sectors to contribute their respective specializations in addressing problems of the poor. These are the expertise which government may lack, or even if it has them, are best done or provided by the private sector. Take community organizing. There are government personnel who can do job but if the organization is to engage government as an independent entity representing its interest, this task is best left to an NGO.
- E. **It is good politics.** Empowering the people thru participatory governance results in good governance. And good governance is the standard by which public officials are measured during elections. Those who succeed in it are invariably returned to office. This happened in Naga City where, over the past 14 years, the same set of officials have been re-elected their tenure cut only by term limitations.

At the operational level, the following lessons can be gleaned:

Need for Enabling Environment

Much of the innovations introduced by Naga City were made possible by a new Local Government Code that expanded and institutionalized the autonomy of local authorities from central government control. It also came at a time when people's organizations and non-government organizations have gained legitimacy and respect as development catalysts. The legal mandate thus exist and the main actors have gained experience and matured enough to engage the city government.

Opening up government to participatory processes is the way to go

The most important lesson that can be learned from Naga's experience is that a holistic approach— **built on participatory and inclusive governance**— is needed in dealing with the urban poor problems. Probably, the lack of progress against poverty is due to a misunderstanding of the role of governance. Governance has to include actors beyond government. Mechanisms to muster societal dynamics for the benefit of poverty reduction must be designed and operationalized. This is where the value of participation comes in.

The best way for local governments to tackle social problems is by sharing the task with civil society. This means opening up the process of priority-setting, decision-making and resource allocation to representatives of civil society, making them as much responsible as the officials of the local government. Government need not give everything to the poor. The poor are more than ready to help themselves if only they are involved in the decision-making process early on.

Perhaps, the value of good governance practices is that they improve citizens' awareness of their role in government and the possibilities for further innovations. This creates a "virtuous" cycle of innovative practices "feeding off each other".

Need for Capability-Building for the Urban Poor

The presence of participatory mechanisms is not enough to guarantee the inclusiveness of the poor in governance. The poor frequently lack the means to participate in these mechanisms. There is a need for improved capacity.

Naga, therefore, puts a value on community-organizing. In fact, to encourage this, the city government does not deal with individual beneficiaries. Organized communities are able to identify and propose solutions to their own problems (including problems among their fellow urban poor beneficiares, e.g. boundary disputes). As organizations, they become members of the NCPC and are, thus, better equipped them to more effectively participate in governance.

i-Governance addresses this need for capability-building through the cyberschool and cyberbarangay projects; and by introducing other more popular means for accessing government information.

Value of Partnerships

Local government cannot be all things to all people. It has its own specialization. To effectively respond to the myriad demand for services, it has to strike a synergy with national government agencies, other local governments, non-government and people's organizations, and with the beneficiaries themselves. In the case of Kaantabay, for example, roles such as community-organizing have been left to NGOs. The local government simply provides funding support.

Partnerships with the private sector, community organizations and other agencies allow government to overcome resource constraints. The cyberschool and cyberbarangay projects under i-Governance would not have been possible without assistance from the Ayala Foundation, Digitel (a telecommunications company), the Department of Education and the Association of Barangay Councils, among others.

Since partnerships also build stakeholdership, they contribute to program sustainability. Landowners and urban poor settlers now depend on Kaantabay's tripartite approach to settling land disputes. The Naga City People's Council continuously provides the impetus for Kaantabay, People Empowerment and i-Governance improvements. In fact, it is accessing funds to enable the city government to expand coverage of the i-Governance program.

Information is Empowering

City experiences with the *Empowerment Ordinance* and i-Governance shows that providing information on government operations leads to more equitable service delivery and encourages citizens to more actively participate in governance. It thus, empowers the citizenry. The i-Governance motto is, in fact, "*Putting Power in the Hands of the Nagueno.*" Citizen involvement, in turn, pushes government to live up to standards and continuously innovate.

However, information must be presented in such a way that it becomes easily understandable by ordinary citizens and allows them to monitor government performance. People must also be provided with the means to access them. This is the reason why PEP puts a value in having NCPC representatives as members of Sanggunian committees; and why i-Governance uses various media to reach out to constituents. Especially at the initial stage, an intensive marketing effort is, likewise required to enhance awareness about new programs.

Need for Committed Leadership

Innovative practices need "champions." Government personnel have the capabilities to "make things happen." However, leadership is required to provide focus and direction, and ensure that a program is sustained.

There was initial resistance to Kaantabay and the Empowerment Ordinance. These were seen as promoting "mendicancy" and "interference in government affairs." However, the administration pushed through with these programs as part of its core philosophy of "growth with equity" fuelled by partnerships and participation.

In the case of i-Governance, a website was already operational in 1997. However, it was merely seen as a "technological tool" handled by the Electronic Data Processing (EDP) Unit. As such, it did not much else aside from showing the city's profile. There were less than 20 visitors per day. And EDP had problems getting data from various offices. Worse, there were a lot of uncoordinated efforts with individual offices trying to come up with their own websites. In short, nothing much happened until the incumbent city mayor put together a program team composed of EDP (for technical support), personnel conversant with city government systems and content providers coming from individual offices; weaved the uncoordinated efforts into the i-Governance package; and impressed on the program team that the initiative is a "city-wide" and a "people empowerment" concern.

Cascading Transparency and Civic Engagement Mechanisms Down the Government Structure

Improving transparency, accountability and civic engagement mechanisms has to be a government-wide concern. This view is a key factor to sustaining the inclusive governance programs of the city. The whole government structure must be involved in the initiatives.

All city departments and offices continually interact with the NCPC. In fact, the city has made it a point to involve civic society in "flagship" programs of the local government to instill consciousness within the whole work force that participatory mechanisms sustain and contribute to the responsiveness of city efforts. The Urban Poor Affairs Office gets its policy directions from the Urban Housing and Development Board; the livelihood program, from an Integrated Livelihood Management Council; and the City Environment and Natural Resources Office, from the Solid Waste Management Board. The NCPC chairs committees that decide on "big ticket" offers for bids (e.g. the awarding of a contract for the operation of Naga's Central Bus Terminal).

While a program team was put in place so that the i-Governance program could take off, efforts are now in place to build-up the capabilities of various offices so that they can provide, maintain and update the contents of various i-Governance information components. In fact, the contents of the Citizens Charter and NetServe came from a four-month workshop participated in by all city offices to look into ways of improving government processes. The objective is to create an "i-Governance culture" within the city hall structure; and bring down the "content provider" responsibility to individual offices. The program team will just serve as an editorial board and technical support provider.

VI. Future Directions

The city will focus in two areas: improving the quality of participation and broadening access to participation.

Quality of participation is sought to be further improved:

1. Systems and procedures which hinder the openness of the government or hamper civic engagement will be identified jointly with the NCPC and if not prohibited by law, such systems and procedures will be modified accordingly.
2. The Local Government Code mandates the establishment of sectoral committees within the City Development Council. This has not been done in Naga City due to the presence of special bodies whose mandates overlap those of the sectoral committees. The CDC nevertheless needs these sectoral committees to effectively pass upon matters brought before its attention. The city government thus intends to activate these committees each of which will have members from civil society, the city government, and national government agencies.

Broadening access to participation:

1. The NCPC has over 100 member-organizations but they do not necessarily represent all the key sectors of urban society. For instance, professionals and the "civic groups" (e.g. Jaycees and Rotary) are not members and neither are some groups of the informal sector represented. The thrust is to encourage them to join NCPC by making it relevant to their existence.
2. Cost and lack of proficiency in the use of computers have distanced the poor from the internet, and thus prevented their access to the Naga City website. The city has started setting up cyberbarangays or village kiosks where ordinary citizens can walk in and surf the internet free or at a subsidized fee. This facility will be set up in more areas accessible to the urban poor. Similarly, the city has given trainings on basic computer and internet operations. This will likewise be sustained and expanded targeting marginalized groups as the main beneficiaries.
3. Participation in the budgeting process will be strengthened by tapping the CDC sectoral committees (to be activated) as forums for formulating the annual program and budget of a city government department or office. For instance, the CDC sectoral committee on housing and the urban poor (which will have as members the head of the Urban Poor Affairs Office (UPAO) and representatives from the urban poor sector and relevant national agencies on housing) will craft the program and budget of the UPAO.

VII. Replicability

Allowing civil society representatives to sit in the committees of the local legislature and in other governmental bodies.

This is at the core of the participatory mechanism of Naga City as it allows civil society to take part in the policy and decision making process ensuring the support for the major programs of government. Such a move can meet resistance from government functionaries who are accustomed to making decisions without consultation. Resistance can be minimized by trying participatory approaches in a new project highlighting how easier it is to have outside critics work as empowered partners. The passage of a local ordinance mandating civil society participation is a must to preclude any challenge to its legitimacy. Participation can then be gradually introduced in the bureaucracy. This process can be made much easier through strong advocacy work by civil society organizations.

Opening the budgeting process to civil society participation.

Resource allocation is the traditional preserve of government. But for participation to be meaningful, it must extend to the allocation of resources to translate decisions into concrete outputs. Opening the budgeting process must come after civil society participation has taken root in the other governmental bodies.

Making use of modern technology to promote transparency and encourage civic engagement.

The internet and short messaging services are becoming more accessible to the ordinary citizen making it an effective tool for transparency and civic engagement. What is important is to ensure that the website contain information deemed important and useful by the constituents and is not merely a marketing tool of the local government and its officials. Necessarily, this should include the plans, programs and budget of the local government posted in a timely manner. SMS or text messages should likewise be answered promptly even if the requested action or complaint has not yet been acted upon. Prompt feedback highlights the importance the city gives to the comments or ideas of the sender.

Sharing the task of benchmarking with the constituency.

Once the initial benchmarks for service delivery have been set, the task of monitoring performance and pushing for improvements can be shared with civil society. The tool here is an inventory of services with corresponding performance standards and clearly identified accountable employees. This is called the "Citizens Charter" in Naga City which is made available to every voting age constituent. The task of preparing the initial performance standards can be set by the local government itself. Any slack will be uncovered as civil society avails of the services and compares actual performance with the standards set in the guidebook.

ANNEX A

ORDINANCE NO. 95-092 **An Ordinance Initiating a System for a Partnership** **in Local Governance between the City Government** **and the People of Naga**

SECTION 1. Alternative Title. – This ordinance shall likewise be known as THE EMPOWERMENT ORDINANCE OF NAGA CITY.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Principles. – The City Government of Naga, as a creation of the Sovereign People, shall at all times adhere to the following principles of governance:

- a) The will of the people shall always reign supreme. It shall be the prime responsibility of any government to ensure that such will is at all times manifested and enforced.
- b) The will of the people can best be determined if they organize themselves to address their sectoral or common concerns.
- c) Governance is best effected if its responsibilities are shared by the people. A system of partnership between the governor and the governed shall guarantee that sovereignty effectively resides in the people.

GO-NGO-PO PARTNERSHIP

SECTION 3. Declaration of Intent to Enter into Partnership with NGOs and Pos. – The City Government of Naga hereby declares itself open to a partnership with duly accredited Naga-based people's organizations and non-government organizations in the conception, implementation and evaluation of all government activities and functions.

As used in this Ordinance, the following terms shall mean:

- a) Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) – any aggrupation of individuals, not subsidized by government funds or organized for religious purposes or partisan politics, and whose primary ends are advocacy of issues or the realizations of specific developmental objectives for the community or a sector thereof.
- b) People's Organizations (Pos) – any cooperative, labor union, business group, or any aggrupation of at least twenty-five (25) individuals belonging to the same sector or sharing a common interest, not subsidized by government funds or organized for religious purposes or partisan politics, and whose primary concern is the advocacy of sectoral issues, and/or the realization of specific developmental objectives for their sector or the promotion of their common interest; provided, that organizations of government employees shall not qualify as people's organizations under this Ordinance.

The record, more than what is stated in the articles of incorporation, constitution or by-laws of the NGO and PO, shall determine whether the aggrupation is primarily organized for religious purposes or partisan politics.

SECTION 4. Accreditation of NGOs and Pos. – Any Naga-based non-government organization or people's organization in active operation for at least one (1) year may be registered and accredited by the Sangguniang Panlungsod upon submission of and/or compliance with the following requirements:

- a) Proof of existence and operation in Naga City for at least one (1) year prior to the application for accreditation;
- b) Proof of activities held in pursuit of developmental objectives or of organizational activities conducted;
- c) Program of activities planned for the year following the date of application for accreditation;
- d) Copies of its constitution, by-laws and/or articles of incorporation;
- e) Lists of its officers and members of good standing;
- f) Financial statement and declaration of assets and liabilities; and
- g) Board resolution manifesting a decision to seek accreditation and participation under this ordinance.

Coalitions, alliances and federations of NGOs and Pos shall not be entitled to a separate accreditation if at least 50 percent of its members area already accredited as individual NGOs and Pos.

An NGO or PO whose application for accreditation has been approved shall be issued a certificate of accreditation containing, among others, the terms and conditions for the maintenance of its accredited status.

The Sangguniang Panlungsod, however, may from time to time, and in consultation with the People's Council, impose such other requirements and condition for accreditation as it may deem appropriate to best adhere to the principles behind this ordinance.

Any NGO or PO already accredited by the City government prior to the effectivity hereof need not apply again for accreditation for purposes of this Ordinance, unless its accreditation has in the meantime been withdrawn.

SECTION 5. – Withdrawal of Accreditation. – The Sangguniang Panlungsod may, in consultation with the People's Council and after hearing, withdraw any accreditation granted to any non-government organization or people's organization for violation of any provision of this ordinance or for failure to comply with any of the conditions for accreditation.

SECTION 6. Special Committee on Accreditation. – The Sangguniang Panlungsod shall create a special committee from among its members for purposes of processing applications for accreditation, monitoring compliance with the conditions for accreditation, recommending withdrawals thereof, and initiating necessary and desirable legislative measures for the effective performance of its tasks.

The People's Council, once formally organized, shall be entitled to a two-seat represent station in the Committee.

SECTION 7. Rights and Privileges of Accredited NGOs and Pos. – Accredited NGOs and Pos may enter into joint ventures and other cooperative undertakings with the city government to engage in the delivery of certain basic services, capability-building and livelihood projects, and to develop local enterprises designed to improve productivity and income, diversify agriculture, spur rural industrialization, promote ecological balance, and enhance the economic and social well-being of the people within the framework of equitable and sustainable development.

The City Government may provide assistance, financial or otherwise, to accredited NGOs and Pos for economic, socially-oriented, environmental, or cultural projects to be implemented within the territorial jurisdiction of the city.

PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

SECTION 8. Creation. – All accredited NGOs and Pos may organize themselves into a People's Council which shall, upon petition made to the Sangguniang Panlungsod, be recognized as their representative, and through which their rights, privileges and responsibilities under this ordinance may be exercised.

For this purpose, the Sanggunian Special Committee on Accreditation shall, not later than ninety (90) days from the effectivity hereof, call for a convention of all accredited NGOs and Pos to facilitate the formal organization of the People's Council.

SECTION 9. Structures and Internal Rules. – The People's Council shall determine its own organizational structures and internal rules, but shall at all times provide for adequate consultation mechanisms for purposes of obtaining the views and suggestions of all political parties or movements, government employees organizations, other non-accredited but legitimate NGOs and Pos, and accredited NGOs and Pos which are not members of the Council; Provided, that no such political party, government employees organization or non-accredited NGO and PO may be nominated by the council for membership in the city's special bodies nor may they be granted the rights and privileges of accredited NGOs and Pos under this ordinance; and, Provided further, that no provision herein shall be interpreted to prohibit the Council from changing its name or from being organized other than for purposes of this ordinance.

SECTION 10. Recognition. – There shall only be one (1) People's Council which shall be recognized by the Sangguniang Panlungsod within thirty (30) days from the filing of the petition for recognition. If only one petition is filed and the Sanggunian fails to deny the same within the said period, the petition shall be deemed automatically granted.

Should more than one petition be filed, the Sanggunian shall, within the same period of thirty (30) days, exert its best efforts to allow the petitioner to form a single council, failing in which the Sanggunian shall, within fifteen (15) days, resolve the petitions based on all of the following:

- a) The petitioner with the most number of member organizations;
- b) The petitioner with the most number of individual members;
- c) The petitioner which is representative of the most number of sectors, interests or concerns;
- d) The petitioner with the most credible track record of inter-organization activities and cooperative undertakings between and among its members; and
- e) The petitioner which is most capable of exercising the powers and responsibilities of the People's Council.

Recognition once granted, shall not be withdrawn except upon an action of a petitioner and upon showing that the People's Council no longer possesses most of the foregoing qualifications or has allowed itself or any of its members to engage primarily in, or to be used primarily for, religious purposes and/or partisan political activities.

The Sanggunian Panlungsod shall not entertain and exercise jurisdiction over internal and/or inter-organizational conflicts within the People's Council.

SECTION 11. Powers and Responsibilities. – Upon recognition, the People's Council may, in accordance only with its politics and internal rules, elect or appoint from among its member organizations only its representatives to all city government bodies, boards, councils, committees, task forces special government bodies and other similar work groups which the city government or the national laws may hereinafter create.

Member organizations elected or appointed to represent the People's Council shall have the sole prerogative to choose from among their bona fide members the persons that shall seat in the boards, councils, committees, task forces and/or special bodies concerned.

Unless otherwise provided herein, such representatives shall not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of the membership of the board, council, committee, task force or special body. Participation of the People's Council or any of its member organization in the conception, implementation and evaluation of government activities and functions shall be without any compensation or remuneration. The City Government, however, shall provide for the necessary office spaces, facilities and/or equipment for said participation of the Council. Representatives of the People's Council may observe, vote and participate in the deliberation, conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of projects, activities and programs of the City Government, propose legislations and participate and vote at the committee level of the Sangguniang Panlungsod, and/or act as the people's representatives in the exercise of their constitutional rights to information on matters of public concern and of access to official records and documents.

SECTION 12. Non-Partisan Nature of the People's Council. – The People's Council shall not engage in, or allow itself or its member organizations to be used for purposes of, partisan politics and shall adopt such measures to ensure that it is adequately shielded from any political partisanship or influence.

For purposes of this Ordinance, partisan politics shall refer to any activity statement or manifestation which solely or primarily serves to campaign for or against any particular political party or any candidate for any elective public office.

SECTION 13. Amendment of Composition of City Government Bodies. – The existing compositions of the City Government's committees, boards, councils, task forces, special bodies are hereby amended and modified to accommodate the membership and participation therein of the People's Council or its representatives as herein mandated.

SECTION 14. – Transitory Provisions. – The power and responsibilities of the people's Council as provided under Section 11 hereof shall not be exercised unless and until the People's Council has been recognized and has manifested by resolution to the Sangguniang Panlungsod that it is ready to exercise and to perform such powers and responsibilities. Pending such resolution by the People's Council, it may, after recognition, send representatives only to such boards, councils, committees, task forces or special bodies as it may deem appropriate. However, such representatives may not vote nor their attendance counted for purposes of determining a quorum, unless their appointment to represent the Council is made known to the Sangguniang Panlungsod within thirty (30) days after the Council's recognition.

SECTORAL REPRESENTATION

SECTION 15. Sectoral Representatives in the Sangguniang Panlungsod. – There shall be one (1) representative in the Sangguniang Panlungsod from each of the non-agricultural labor, women, and urban poor sectors of the city who shall be elected from among the members of the accredited NGOs and Pos in each sector.

The term of office of the elected sectoral representatives shall be coterminous with the term of office of the regular members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod. They shall not be entitled to any salary or emolument, except such reasonable allowances as may be granted by the Sangguniang Panlungsod to defray necessary expenses for attending and/or participating in official functions, the session of the sangguniang Panlungsod, its committee hearings, and other activities in aid of legislation.

Except as herein provided, the sectoral representatives shall enjoy the same rights and privileges, and exercise the same powers and responsibilities, as the regular members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod.

SECTION 16. Election of Sectoral Representatives. – The guidelines for, and the conduct of, the election for sectoral representatives shall be issued and supervised by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) and the Department of Interior and Local Government in coordination with the City Government which shall advance the necessary expenses therefore. No government official or employee shall directly or indirectly intervene or influence the conduct or result of the election.

Unless otherwise disqualified, no person belonging to a particular sector shall be denied his right to vote by reason of his not being a member of any accredited NGO or PO. For

purposes of the election, a person shall be entitled to be registered as a voter or allowed to be voted upon in only one (1) sector.

Existing election laws shall apply in a supplementary manner to the sectoral election herein mandated.

SECTION 17. Effectivity. – The foregoing provisions on election for sectoral representatives shall take effect only, and the representatives elected therein shall only hold office, until the relevant provisions on sectoral representation of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, are actually implemented on a national scale.

RIGHT TO SELF-ORGANIZATION

SECTION 18. Right to Self-Organization. – It shall be the joint responsibility of the City Government and the People's Council to organize the Nagueños into cooperatives, labor unions, interest groups, non-government organizations, sectoral organizations and/or people's organizations, or to encourage and support their own efforts towards self-organization to address their common concerns, to promote their common welfare, and/or to serve the city or their communities and interests.

SECTION 19. Funding. – An annual appropriation of THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P300,000.00) shall be appropriated for the next three (3) years for purposes of community organizing, establishment of cooperatives, people's and non-government organizations, interest groups, labor unions and other activities which promote and advance the people's right to self-organization.

No part of the public funds, however, shall be used to support any activity which is intended for religious purposes or as a form of partisan politics. In no case shall funds be used other than for organizing purposes as defined by the People's Council and approved by the Sangguniang Panlungsod.

The People's Council and the City Government shall form a joint committee to prepare a three-year program for the budget herein appropriated and the guidelines for the disbursement of funds for approval by the Sangguniang Panlungsod and subject to existing accounting rules and regulations. Once approved, such program and guidelines shall not be modified except upon the concurrence of the People's Council.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 20. Public Hearings and Consultations, Referenda and Plebiscites. – It shall be the principal obligation of the City Government to conduct regular public, barangay and sectoral hearings and consultations on all matters affecting the general welfare, and/or submit all controversial issues and legislations to the people in a referendum or plebiscite specially called for the purpose, upon two-thirds vote of the Sangguniang Panlungsod and subject to the provisions of existing laws.

SECTION 21. Information Boards and Suggestion Boxes. – Information boards and suggestion boxes shall be provided, maintained and controlled by the City Government in each barangay, at the public plazas, city hall compound, public markets, schools, government offices, and at such public places accessible to the people, which boards and boxes shall be other than those maintained by the barangays and the national government, and shall be controlled solely by the City Government.

Copies of the contents of the suggestion boxes shall be timely furnished the Office of the City Mayor, the members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod and the People's Council.

SECTION 22. Educational Programs on Empowerment and Sustainable Development. – The City Government shall maintain a daily radio and/or regular television information program on city policies, programs, projects and activities in at least one credible and popular radio station and one television channel to adequately inform the people on issues and matter affecting their rights and welfare.

The City Library shall develop and implement a public information, cultural and general education program for the people through films, video and other visual aids.

The City Government and the People's Council shall jointly create and provide for the composition of a City Council for Bikol History, Culture and Arts. Such Council shall be institutionalized by an ordinance and an annual appropriation, and shall be separate and independent of any other body for the promotion of the national culture and arts.

SECTION 23. Sectoral desks. – The City Government shall maintain sectoral desks or offices for labor, women, urban poor, students, peasants and agricultural workers, senior citizens, differently-abled persons, and disadvantaged minors to serve as centers for cooperation, coordination and joint actions with the People's Council on matters affecting the interests of said sectors.

SECTION 24. Repealing Clause. – All resolutions, ordinances and executive issuances, or provisions thereof, which are inconsistent with any of the provisions hereof are hereby accordingly repealed, amended and/or modified.

SECTION 25. Separability Clause. - Should any provision of this ordinance be subsequently declared unconstitutional or ultra vires, the rest of the provisions not so declared shall remain to be in full force and affect.

SECTION 26. Effectivity Clause. - This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon approval and publication in at least one (1) newspaper of general circulation in Naga City.
Enacted: 1995-12-20

ANNEX B

Briefer: How the Naga City People's Council Participates in Governance**Channels of Participation**

The NCPC participates in governance by being a member of governmental bodies. These bodies span the full hierarchy of decision and policy making authority in the city government starting from the city development council (CDC), to the city legislative council and across various specialized bodies affording the poor various channels of participation.

City Development Council

What Naga City will be in the coming years is, to a significant extent, influenced by what its people plan it to be. This is captured in a document called the Naga City Development Plan and further reflected in the Naga City Comprehensive Land Use Plan. An Annual Investment Program, an updated extraction from these plans, is also prepared which specifies the major public and private investments that must be made in order to move the city along its development path.

Preparing the plans is an extensive process in itself that involves consultations with people and institutions within and outside the city government. But the final documents are always subject to the evaluation and endorsement by the CDC. The CDC can always introduce changes, reorder priorities, or even demand a complete redo of the documents before finally giving its stamp of approval. Without its nod, the plans cannot be elevated to the *sangguniang panglunsod* for official approval.

Membership in the CDC thus gives the poor the power to define what the city will be. More significantly, whether Naga City will pursue a development path that is pro-poor or not.

Sangguniang Panglunsod

The *sangguniang panglunsod* is the local legislative body of the city government. It formulates regulatory ordinances and resolutions consistent with the plans formulated by the CDC. It also evaluates and approves the annual budget which reflects what the city intends to do for the year. It thus exercises a significant influence on whether the plans crafted by the City Development Council will be realized or not. The *Sangguniang panglunsod* is broken down into 29 standing committees to which are referred for evaluation measures submitted to it. These standing committees has the power to either recommend for approval or disapproval any intended measure. Decisions of the standing committees are usually sustained by the *Sanggunian*.

These are the committees on:

1. Appropriation
2. Agriculture
3. Barangay Affairs and Boundary disputes
4. Blue Ribbon and Administrative Cases
5. Children
6. City Properties
7. Culture, Heritage
8. Education
9. Environment and Ecology
10. Family
11. Games and Amusement
12. Health, Nutrition and Population
13. Infrastructure
14. Land Use
15. Laws, Ordinances and Reorganization
16. Market Affairs
17. Manpower, Cooperative and Livelihood
18. People Empowerment and Participation
19. Public Affairs and Information
20. Public Safety and Human Rights
21. Public Utilities
22. Rules and Privileges
23. Social Development and Senior Citizens
24. Trade, Industry and consumer Protection
25. Tourism, Foreign Relations and External Affairs
26. Urban Poor
27. Ways and Means
28. Women
29. Youth

Participation by the NCPC is through membership in these standing committees. NCPC representatives are clothed with full deliberative and voting rights as any of the popularly elected members. They can engage in debate, recommend modifications, or block any proposed legislation brought before the committee.

A committee usually has three regular members and one to two representatives from the Naga City People's Council. The NCPC representatives may not be in the majority but their voice carries the punch of the numerical superiority of the sectors they represent. NCPC participation was pivotal in crafting local pro-poor legislation. An example is an ordinance requiring subdivision developers to locate their socialized housing component within Naga City instead of anywhere within the region as allowed under the Urban Development and Housing Act (a national law). The city government can impose this requirement despite the broad intent of the national law as subdivision developers require the approval of the city before it could start its project. Beneficiaries of this ordinance are Naga's urban poor residents who can avail of the socialized housing units.

Special Bodies

These special bodies (also called task forces, boards, committees or councils) span the full range of concerns a local government unit is mandated to do. Among them are housing and the urban poor, livelihood and employment, cooperatives, women and health, productivity improvement and procurement. A total of 13 special bodies are in existence in Naga City each of which have representatives coming from the NCPC. In some of these bodies, the NCPC representatives comprise half of the total membership and some even sit as chairman or vice chairman. A listing of these special bodies would indicate their importance as well as the influence in governance by civil society.

Special Body

1. Naga City Investment Board
2. Naga City Urban Development and Housing Board
3. Solid Waste Management Board
4. Traffic Management Task Force
5. Task Force Tubig
6. Naga City Cooperative Development Council
7. Naga City Disaster Mitigation Council
8. City Agriculture and Fisheries Council
9. Bids and Awards Committee (government procurement)
10. People's Law Enforcement Board

11. Local School Board
12. Local Health Board
13. Peace and Order Council
14. Naga City Tourism Council

Membership Composition

- 10-member body, 5 come from NCPC, one sits as vice chair of the Board
- 20-member body, 10 come from NCPC
- 10-member body, 2 from NCPC
- 10-member body, 2 from NCPC
- 5-member body, 1 from NCPC
- 12-member body, 1 from NCPC
- 7-member body, 1 from NCPC
- 12-member body, 1 from NCPC
- 7-member body, 1 observer from the NCPC, 2 observers from engineering and accountancy professions
- 5-member body, 1 from NCPC
- 5-member body, 1 from NCPC
- 15-member body, 1 from NCPC
- 27-member body, 1 from NCPC

Does NCPC represent the poor?

A valid question is how representative the NCPC is of the interests of the poor. It may be true that the NCPC wields a large influence over the shape of things to come but will this future be pro-poor? The answer lies in looking at the membership and power structure of the NCPC. Out of the 105-member civil society organizations, 76 are people's organizations from the marginalized sectors, 14 are Barangay People's Councils (a village-version of the NCPC), 3 are business organizations which would naturally advance their private interests, and 18 are non-government organizations which are developmental in nature. Its officers and board are elected at large, the representatives they send to the various bodies of the city government are chosen by the sector they represent and affirmed by the board. The stance of an NCPC representative therefore will necessarily reflect the interests of the majority of the NCPC, that is, pro-poor.

The Nature of NCPC participation

Empowerment goes beyond mere membership in governmental bodies, it demands meaningful participation that should translate that membership into concrete programs and projects which would reach, engage and benefit the poor.

In this regard, the nature of participation by the NCPC encompasses several levels. At the apex would be the formulation of long term development plans (done at the CDC level) and the crafting of local legislation and policy (done at the standing committees of city legislature) that would advance those plans. At the lower levels would be the formulation of specific programs to guide everyone how to translate those plans into concrete results (done at the special bodies), and the allocation of resources to bring everything to fruition (done at the Appropriations Committee and the CDC levels)