Sustaining Accountability in Education: The Government Watch Experience

Government Watch
ATENEO SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
The Graduate School of Leadership and Public Service
Philippines
Quick Facts About G-Watch

It is a governance engagement program of the Ateneo School of Government

Specialization: citizen/community-based/joint CSO-government monitoring of programs, service delivery and procurement

It was established in 2000

It has developed, pilot-tested and had government (local governments, national agencies) adopted participatory monitoring tools on specific service delivery in education, health, agriculture, water, infrastructure, environment, disaster management, human rights

Is a partner of over 10 national government agencies, 10 LGUs, 8 key donor institutions, at least 30 CSOs

PARTNERS: DepEd, DPWH, OMB, DBM, DSWD, CHR, Comelec, DoH, CSC | S. Leyte, Naga, Dumaguete, Samal Island, Puerto Princesa, San Miguel, Bohol, Calbayog, Pampanga, Cotabato | UNDP, PTF, World Bank, ADB, TAF, USAID, GDN, AUSAid
G-Watch in Education

In 2001, G-Watch started citizen monitoring of DepEd service deliveries

In 2010, localized education monitoring in Naga City tapping the Local School Board through a project, “Edukasyon sa Naga, Salmingan Ta” and have conducted action research since 2010
GOVERNMENT WATCH (G-Watch) of the Ateneo School of Government, established in 2000, is a program that promotes and strengthens transparency and accountability towards effective governance through constructive engagement between citizen organizations and government in performance monitoring.
**KEY RESULTS & GAINS**

- **Contributes in efficiency...**
  - paved the way for the decrease of average textbook price **P120 to P30-40**
  - decrease in procurement time from 24 mos to ave. of 12 months
  - savings in monitoring cost

- **Influencing budget preparation and law-making**
  - Monitoring results presented to DepEd execs and Congress on the deliberation of the budget and to come up with amendments in related policy

- **MOBILIZED / CAPACITATED**
  - 47 Civil Society Organizations
  - 300 community monitors nationwide
  - Protect Procurement Project: 101 Procurement Observers (Nat'l & Local)
  - Local Hubs: 702 members of SBMTs

- **IMPROVED PUBLIC TRUST**

---

CSOs Engaged: Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP), Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP), Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance (CCAGG), North Luzon Coalition on Good Governance (NLGGG), PTA (Parent-Teacher Association), Western Visayas Network of NGOs, Inc. (WEVNET), Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK), Civil Society Network for Education Reforms/ Education Network (E-net), Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS), Young Moro Network (YMN), G-Watch RO8, Procurement Watch, Inc. (PWI), Social Action Center (SAC), Rural Development Institute (RDI), Western Samar Development Foundation, Inc. (WESADEF), Bugto Foundation, Eastern Visayas Network of NGOs, Inc. (EVNET), MNSED, MINCILL, PUSAKA Mindanao, Inc., Associates in Community Extension Services (ACES), Maranoa People Development Center, Inc. (MARADECA), Reform ARMN Now (RAN), SURABASE, Young Moro Professionals Network (YMPN), People Power Volunteers for Reform (PPVR), PNEUMA, Inc., Movement for Principled Politics in Pampanga (MP3), Institute for Democratic Participation in Governance (IDPG), Change Politics Movement (CPM), Group Aid, Ranao Council, Inc., SSC – CCSPC, SEA-SD, AKIL-SLS, Christian Leaders of San Fernando Pampanga, Inc. (CLASP), Caucus of Development NGO Network Inc. (CODE NGO), Naga City Peoples’ Council (NCP), Palawan State University (PSU), C4CC, Philippine Business for Education (PBEd), Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN), TEACHERS, Inc., Brotherhood of Destiny, Inc. (BROOD), Movement for the Advancement of Student Power (MASP), Ten Outstanding Boy Scouts of the Philippines (TOBSP), Alliance of Volunteer Educators (AVE), National Citizen’s Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), Community Organizing of the Philippine Enterprise (BICOL Chapter), QUEEN Parent’s Association, Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), Association of Ministers and Ministries of Nueva Ecija, Barug Pilipino, Christian Convergence for Good Governance, Victory Campus Ministry, Student Catholic Action, Social Watch Visayas, CCP – Sugpuingan Korupsyon!, Volunteers for a Libertarian Society, Negros Center for People Empowerment and Rural Development, UP Bannuar, UP Harong, UP Camayo, YES Tejeros, Youth Empowering Youth Forum, Don Bosco Technical Institute of Makati, Fellowship of Christians in Government, Kapatawan Kaunlaran Foundation, Rahma Qur’anic Center and Mosque Foundation. (Note: These are all the orgs that became part of G-Watch monitoring in education since 2000. Total of 70 CSOs. Some might already be inactive.)
Peculiar characteristics of education governance

- Centralized, largest bureaucracy
- Spending is on inputs: textbooks, classrooms, furniture
- Resources are never enough due to ever-increasing population
- Corruption is mainly in expenditure (procurement to delivery)
- Plagued by the challenge of “weak state”
  - Bureaucracy is weak vis-à-vis political elites
  - Implementation of laws is a challenge
  - Public power serving private interests of a few (captured)
  - High public distrust
- Relatively many CSOs engaging but the few engaging accountability face problems of sustainability and capacity gaps
G-Watch’s engagement in education evolves and responds...

While it is sector specific, the needed response must address systemic issues

- From project-level engagement to governance engagement
  - From project-based mobilization to institutionalization of representation and capacity development of CSOs and citizens
  - From focus on efficiency to improvement in systems and policies
- Has been working with multiple donors, a whole array of CSOs (national, local, community-based), career bureaucrats (not just senior government officials) in education department and even LGUs
- Has taken multiple forms of action: monitoring to capacity-building to action research and advocacy
- Engaged different avenues: project, state-led processes at DepEd and other related policy-making venues (DBM, OMB, GGACC)
- Multi-layered engagement: national, intermediate/ meso level, community
How G-Watch engagement is aiming to change the governance context: weakness of State institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEAK INSTITUTIONS</th>
<th>DEMOCRATIZING OF INSTITUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Operationalizing and enabling the implementation of laws | Pilot projects to adopted program  
• tested mechanisms to operationalize and realize transparency, accountability and participation policies |
| Bureaucracy is weak vis-à-vis monopolized political power | Constructive engagement between civil society and government as a new tool for honest bureaucrats to neutralize abuse of discretion of their “political bosses” |
| Cultural dimension of corruption | Broadening and deepening of government spaces accessible to ordinary people (address limits of “long-route to accountability, i.e., elections) – builds ownership  
Change attitude of people towards government officials (at least understanding its complexity) and enhance appreciation of government towards role of civil society |
4 Sustainability Elements

Policy support
- access to information
- monitoring as a priority of the agency

Knowledge products and capacity
- easy-to-use manual
- monitoring tool
- regular briefing-orientations
- development of new monitoring project

Self-sustaining mechanism for flow of information
- meeting of stakeholders to prepare and process result
- quick response (hotline)
- technology-based reporting

Self-sustaining mechanism for analysis and advocacy
- existing participatory mechanisms: LDCs, sectoral-based councils
- existing decision-making venues: Sanggunian, management meeting

KEY CHALLENGE: How to sustain and expand the gains?
Lessons on sustainability

• As irregularities diminish over time (a targeted result of monitoring), so does the volunteers’ drive to monitor government processes.

• Monitors sustain monitoring when mobilized, capacitated, coordinated and followed up. The spirit of volunteerism is there, but the need for support must be addressed.

• As we sustain CSO engagement, we cannot bureaucratize CSO participation.

• Government accountability efforts should not be constrained by CSO participation.
State-based accountability mechanisms must be strengthened in such a way that: (a) it can ensure transparency and accountability of the delivery of services, while (b) being permeable to citizen checks, but not dependent on it.

- The government still has the primary mandate to ensure accountability.
- CSOs’ accountability efforts must be viewed as corrective and supplemental to government accountability mandates.

Build and sustain the capacity of intermediary CSOs – not to parallel the government processes, but to have the capacity to support school-based monitoring and exact accountability at an intermediary and national levels whenever it is needed.
End of Presentation. Thank you!