



**National Volunteering in Secure Livelihoods:
Case Studies from the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Uganda**



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Researcher-Writer: Abby Mercado

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Cover photo: Filipino Muslim/ KI volunteer with seaweed farmer
Photo by Mark Boot

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Volunteering (NV) is an approach that many VSO country programmes are incorporating into their work as an effective means of contributing to development and an opportunity to enhance participation and ownership at a local level. This piece of work was carried out in response to a request from VSO programme managers in Secure Livelihoods and in National Volunteering who expressed the need for practical examples of how tapping a country's most valuable resource, its people, can contribute to VSO's corporate programme objectives for the Secure Livelihoods goal:

- Improved food and income security for poor and marginalised women, men and young people through sustainable natural resource management
- Increased access to and participation in market chains for poor and marginalised women, men and young people

Experiences from other organisations are deemed useful in allowing programme offices to gain further learning from their ongoing local volunteering initiatives that build on the potentials of the disadvantaged, enabling them to improve their chances of generating income in a sustainable way.

A research on what other countries or organisations are doing regarding National Volunteering has been designed to gather information on how NV initiatives in SL have been developed, and are being implemented. In phase 1 of the NV Research in Secure Livelihoods, a number of NV models in Secure Livelihoods were identified, from both within and outside VSO. The preliminary output featured eight selected NV models showcasing a range of roles that local volunteers can perform to support VSO's work in Secure Livelihoods, along with the corresponding approaches and frameworks used by each initiative to promote NV. The consultation on this initial report with Secure Livelihoods and National Volunteering programme managers, in countries with SL Programme Area Plans, has identified four NV models to be of particular interest to VSO programmes. The case studies in this report detail how the NV programmes have been set up, expanded or adopted; who the key players and partners are; how the NV initiatives are being implemented, sustained, and the challenges that come with it; how VSO is playing a key role in supporting some of these NV programmes; and most importantly, how NV is addressing development issues through Secure Livelihoods support.

Kapamagogopa Inc.

Kapamagogopa Inc. (KI) is the first and only institutionalised Muslim volunteer-sending organisation in the Philippines. Every year, at least 10 KI volunteers are deployed for one full year, through local NGOs and government agencies, to work in disadvantaged communities in Mindanao on development issues, including: peace; sustainable agriculture; micro-enterprise; livelihood; health and literacy; emotional recovery; capacity building; environment; and gender. Kapamagogopa Inc. is countering the "war-monger" image of Muslims, while alleviating poverty in the poorest and remotest communities in Mindanao, by sending young Muslim professionals to volunteer as peace advocates and development workers in both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. In addition to working on secure livelihoods issues, the volunteers themselves gain skills through volunteering.

National Agricultural and Advisory Services

The National Agricultural and Advisory Services (NAADS) is a core component of Uganda's Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries' Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture, which aims to

transform smallholder agriculture from subsistence farming to commercially oriented production. Under the NAADS approach, a cost-effective and sustainable delivery of adequate advisory services to the economically-active poor farmers is being achieved through community-based facilitators. The NAADS community-based facilitators are essentially volunteers, who assist other farmers by sharing their agricultural knowledge and skills. The NAADS programme developed the concept of community-based facilitators to enhance the effectiveness of its advisory services and to scale up the programme coverage, making it possible to reach and benefit more farmers throughout Uganda.

Peace and Development Corps

The National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) has been contributing to the decentralisation process in Sierra Leone through its Peace and Development Corps (PADCO) volunteering programme. The Peace and Development Corps programme was launched in 2004 with the initial deployment of 19 PADCO volunteers in local councils across the country, for two years. This government-led national volunteering initiative continues to assign PADCO volunteers to provide them with practical work experience as they share their skills with local institutions and NGOs, by supporting the implementation of their development programmes. With the promotion of decentralisation comes the realisation of the necessary interventions to enable local and district councils to perform their new tasks. Through national volunteering, PADCO aims to accelerate the pace of poverty reduction in the country, by increasing the capacity of local development institutions, while creating work and learning opportunities for the qualified, unemployed, young Sierra Leoneans.

Business Advisory Program

The Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), a private, nonprofit foundation, is dedicated to promoting the business sector's commitment to social development. Through its Business Advisory Programme (BAP), PBSP provides an organised way of facilitating the volunteer mentoring of Filipino business advisers to contribute to the development of micro and small enterprises in the Philippines. The PBSP Business Advisory Program demonstrates how international volunteering can be localised by taking lessons from an international partner agency, adopting the model in the Philippine setting, and tapping Filipino business experts as volunteers.

The experiences of the featured organisations² illustrate how volunteering in one's own country or community, as community-based facilitators for farmers groups, peace advocates and development workers in local organisations and communities, and business advisers to micro and small enterprises,

² Information on the KI and BAP case studies were gathered through field interviews, allowing this researcher to probe into the specifics of the programmes that are not always available in public documents. Access to data for the PADCO and NAADS case studies is due to NV Support Advisers, and VSO Sierra Leone and Uganda Programme Managers, who facilitated the conduct of interviews through email and telephone. Information on these NV initiatives were sought to offer practical procedures on incorporating NV in Secure Livelihoods using the organisations' experiences in National Volunteering, rather than to provide an assessment of the featured organisations.

can effectively contribute to VSO's efforts in Secure Livelihoods. Through the case studies from the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Uganda, this NV Research in Secure Livelihoods hopes to inspire similar volunteering initiatives, by serving as a useful reference for VSO programmes in developing their own SL National Volunteering strategies or scaling up VSO's existing work in the SL Goal through National Volunteering. The presented case studies show how national volunteers can add value to, and ensure sustainability of, VSO Secure Livelihoods programmes. VSO Programme Offices can derive lessons and workable structures for developing and implementing National Volunteering strategies within Secure Livelihoods work. However, it is important to bear in mind that an analysis of one's own country context is vital in implementing any NV approach to ensure adaptation to local circumstances.

CASE STUDIES

Kapamagogopa, Inc.

“Promoting Muslim Volunteering for Peace and Development in Mindanao”

The Programme

Context

The conflict in Mindanao has had a devastating effect on its population, from those killed, displaced and dispossessed, to those whose property and livelihoods have been destroyed. Armed conflict has meant no inward investment, despite the natural abundance of resources of the region, leading to limited employment opportunities. Another consequence has been the stigmatising of the Muslim population, as being to blame for the conflict.

Approach

Kapamagogopa Inc. (KI) decided to counter this “war-monger” image of Muslims by sending young Muslim professionals to volunteer as peace advocates and development workers in both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, for one year. Kapamagogopa Inc. is the first and only institutionalised Muslim volunteer-sending organisation in the Philippines since 2004. Every year, at least 10 KI volunteers are deployed, through local NGOs and government agencies, to work in communities in the following KI focus areas: peace; sustainable agriculture; micro-enterprise; livelihood; health and literacy; emotional recovery; capacity building; environment; and gender.

Partnership with VSO

Amenodin Cali, Executive Director of Kalimudan Foundation, Inc. and Vice-Chairperson of KI Board of Trustees, shared that the idea of deploying Muslim volunteers started when VSO TOSCADAR (Technical and Organisational Skills for Civil Society Actors for the Displaced and at Risk in Mindanao) was looking for local partner organisations to work with to address the after effects of war. Due to threats of security, VSO international volunteers were not allowed in areas where armed conflict between the government military and the Muslim extremists group had taken place. This limitation encouraged Kalimudan and VSO TOSCADAR to train and deploy Filipino Muslim volunteers to reach these affected communities. During this time, VSO Bahaginan was starting to explore ways of supporting national volunteering in the Philippines.

“A consultative meeting with representatives from the academe, NGOs, and local government units (LGUs), was held to promote Muslim volunteering, and was positively received by the stakeholders,” Mariam Barandia, KI Executive Director, recalled the initial activities to set up KI in 2004. In the second consultative meeting, an agreement was reached to establish a Muslim volunteering programme, and to aptly call it *Kapamagogopa*, which means “sharing or helping others” in a Filipino Muslim language called Maranao.

VSO Bahaginan, in conjunction with VSO TOSCADAR, which later evolved to become VSO PEACE (Peace Enabling Actions for Community Empowerment in North Central Mindanao), and VSO volunteers, provided the seed funding and led the organisational development activities to establish Kapamagogopa Inc. Mariam was initially hired as KI coordinator to set up a small office and start working on KI’s organisational structure, and its volunteer management systems and policies. KI staff have since participated in several VSO Bahaginan trainings covering Volunteer Programme Development and Management. Through VSO Philippines and VSO PEACE Mindanao, two long-term VSO volunteers with expertise in resource mobilisation have been placed with KI in successive placements since 2006.

“While it’s true that the VSO funding has been vital to making KI happen, we found VSO’s expertise in working with volunteers very crucial in establishing KI. I don’t think any other international or local NGO could have provided the kind of support we needed when it comes to developing our very own Muslim volunteering

programme." Mariam said that together with VSO support, having an active and deeply-committed Board of Trustees, who bring with them a wealth of expertise from the academe and the NGO sectors, has been crucial in establishing the KI programme.

Working with Local Volunteers

The Volunteers

A KI volunteer must be between 20-35 years old, single, Muslim male or female professional/university graduate, and able to speak, write and understand Filipino, one common ethnic dialect in the communities, and English. An applicant must also have minimum knowledge on the fundamentals of Islam. While work experience is not necessary, a KI volunteer must be willing to learn and work in the poor communities of both Muslim and non-Muslim people, for one year. KI volunteers working in Secure Livelihoods advise organisations in savings, finance, bookkeeping, livelihood and micro enterprise; promote sustainable agricultural practices; assist in reforestation projects; and help set up community infrastructure for internally displaced people due to conflict in Mindanao, among other relevant roles.

KI volunteer Jamilah Mayo Lomondot, a graduate in Community Development, has been serving as a Livelihood Support Staff for Balay Integrated Rehabilitation Center for Total Human Development (BIRTH-DEV) Inc., for the past five months. BIRTH-DEV Inc. is a nonprofit, human rights, volunteer-involving organisation that provides psychosocial rehabilitation to victims of armed conflict and other disasters. To ensure the effectiveness of the emotional recovery programme, support services are provided to the internally-displaced people, including assistance in generating new sources of income after being evacuated from their own communities. Together with a community volunteer, Jamilah oversees the small enterprise development and management of BIRTH-DEV's micro-lending beneficiaries. "Since my volunteer buddy lives in the area and is a Christian like the others, it has been easy for me to be introduced and to reach out to the women farmers so I can facilitate their applications for micro-credit enterprise." Meanwhile, the community volunteer shared that she is learning a lot from Jamilah since she does not possess formal university training on community development as Jamilah does.

As a former KI volunteer at Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation, Inc., Omohanie Camarodin helped organise people's organisations to enable them to apply for livelihood assistance. She also provided them with training on business planning and financial management. Unlad Kabayan is an entrepreneurial NGO that promotes saving and investment among overseas Filipinos workers (OFW) to help them plan their return in the Philippines. Unlad Kabayan encourages the OFWs to invest their savings, which are then used as a revolving fund for poor farmers and aspiring entrepreneurs through a micro-credit scheme. To ensure the success of the enterprises and proper use of loans, Unlad Kabayan builds the capacity of the people's groups or cooperatives through mentoring on business management and product development.

Volunteer Management

The recruitment of KI volunteers is mainly done by distributing posters and flyers in the universities within Mindanao. "We also have our website and we tap the local media. But, the most effective promo activity of all is through our KI alumni, and even their parents." Apart from promoting the programme, Haslaida Abubacar, KI Project Officer, is also responsible for monitoring the activities of the KI volunteers.

KI volunteers undergo a rigorous selection process, including an Assessment Day, which is a modified version of the VSO Assessment Day. Applicants are assessed based on their professional and interpersonal skills, considering the needs of requesting host organisations. Selected KI volunteers go through a month-long training focussing on community organising, project management, networking and peace advocacy, communication enhancement and values formation. They also have a five-day immersion in remote communities, before their actual deployment. KI volunteers receive a small monthly allowance, basic

accommodation and an accident insurance. KI conducts a formal ceremony to send-off their volunteers, and they do a similar event when the volunteers have completed their placements. KI volunteers are given a plaque of recognition, a certificate of service, work reference, information about job opportunities, and a network of prospective employers at the end of their service. Former KI volunteers are further tapped as resource persons and trainers for activities for future batches of KI volunteers. KI alumni also act as a support body to serving KI volunteers.

Through series of meetings and organisational needs assessment workshops, KI identifies local NGOs and government agencies to host KI volunteers. Host organisations have to be: duly registered under Philippine law; operating for at least one year, with regular staff and office; support KI's thrust and goals; have clear and specific job objectives for the KI volunteer; have established systems, policies and procedures; and are willing to share the counterpart cost of at least 60% of the KI volunteer allowance and accommodation.

Benefits of Volunteering

Most KI volunteers are convinced that Muslim volunteering will help break down the stereotyped image of Muslims being the cause of conflict in the region. Many KI volunteers are motivated to serve their fellow Filipinos in Mindanao. Others do it because they believe that their KI volunteering experience will increase their chances of getting a paid job afterwards. Two KI volunteers shared how the volunteering experience has led them to their current paid jobs and a KI host organisation described how they are also starting to reap the rewards of having Muslim volunteers, and staff, in the team.

Omahanie, who graduated with a degree in Public Administration, decided to volunteer with Kapamagogopa Inc. because she wanted to help women, men and the youth in organising themselves and setting up their own small enterprises. Omahanie thought that being a Muslim volunteer is the best way to counteract the negative image of Muslims among many. "At first, they would not listen to me. No one would attend when I call for community meetings. All because I am a Muslim." Omahanie shared that she found support from the KI staff and her fellow KI volunteers. "Eventually, the people I work with would ask questions about my religion and they begin to understand why I dress the way I do, or do things in a different way. At the same time, I get exposed to non-Muslim practices. By the time I had to leave, they did not want me to go anymore. I also gained more confidence in myself after realising what I have accomplished as a volunteer." Apart from her newly-found confidence, Omahanie found herself continuing her work with the cooperative she helped organise even after her KI assignment. Unlad Kabayan hired her right after she had successfully completed her one-year of KI volunteering.

Shaminoden Sambitory, Acting Manager of Unlad Kabayan, said that before KI volunteers were placed in their organisation, the coverage area of their work was limited to non-Muslim communities. He said that before KI volunteering happened in Mindanao, the idea of people's groups from Muslim communities approaching their organisation for support was unthinkable. "But because Muslims began to see KI volunteers serving in their communities, they now feel more comfortable to work with us." Shaminoden said that KI volunteers serve as conduit between Muslim communities and non-Muslim organisations.

Shaminoden was also a KI volunteer at Unlad Kabayan. Just like Omahanie, Unlad Kabayan hired him right after his KI assignment with the organisation. He now manages Omahanie, along with other 11 staff, and oversees the implementation of Unlad Kabayan in one city and three municipalities. The rewards of KI volunteering have not only transformed Shaminoden, but also his definition of volunteering. "I used to say volunteering is rendering services in the communities without expecting any return, but now I tell people that volunteering is sharing your skills with others, while gaining personal benefits, too."

The staff of Unlad Kabayan were all non-Muslims until they hired Omahanie and Shaminoden. Today, the Unlad Kabayan team is composed of both Muslims and non-Muslims staff working together.

Impact

Through the efforts of KI volunteers, many families in Mindanao have been able to set up their own small enterprises, generating income for the needs of their families even in the event of a conflict. Some KI beneficiaries pride themselves in having a stronger voice as an organised group.

With supervision from KI volunteer Jamilah on enterprise development and management, the women farmers of Roboccon Farmers Association proudly showcased how they came up with their small enterprises, including growing vegetables in community gardens, making local delicacies, and reselling ready-to-wear garments. "We have to leave our coconut farms whenever there is war, so we have to think of another way to earn money for our families. Now, even when return to our farms, we continue selling vegetables, sweets and clothes, while waiting for harvest season, so we have additional income."

Cherlita Amore, a seaweed farmer shared the common problem in the main source of livelihood of 380 households in her community. "Last December, the cost of our seaweed per kilo is more than P100, and now some traders want to buy it for only P24 a kilo." Cherlita is a Board of Director for the Lanao Seaweed Growers Multi-Purpose Cooperative, which Omahanie helped organised and get registered. "Before we were organised as a group, it was difficult to negotiate with traders, but now, we can say 'NO' as a cooperative."

Lessons and Challenges

KI Executive Director Mariam shared that one of the most crucial of challenges they had to face in promoting Muslim volunteering had been the five-century old conflict that the KI programme specifically aims to address. "Some of our many detractors in the beginning were our fellow Muslims. They asked why we serve in non-Muslim areas as well, instead of just assigning our volunteers exclusively in the Muslim communities."

Apart from these discouraging remarks in its early days, there was also confusion between the roles of various parts of VSO as regards the overall guidance over KI. As VSO programme offices started developing their own NV programmes, the supervision over KI was transferred from VSO Bahaginan to VSO Philippines and VSO PEACE Mindanao. Mariam said that this transition in the VSO management proved to be a critical point in the early stages of KI, which caused the delay in the initial deployment of the volunteers. With better-defined roles among the VSO offices, KI finally deployed its first batch of 10 volunteers in local NGOs and government agencies in Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte in 2005. Mariam admitted that if it were not for the support from VSO PEACE Mindanao partners, they would not have been able to easily find placements for their first group of volunteers. She said that one of their first lessons at KI was that developing the placements for the KI volunteers should have been their priority as well, while recruiting the volunteers. Today, the recruitment for KI volunteers is done simultaneously with identifying partners to serve as host organisations for the volunteers.

KI's greatest challenge at this time is funding. The comprehensive training for the KI volunteers costs a lot. However, Mariam said that it is precisely the kind of support that they provide KI volunteers that make their volunteering programme successful, and its KI volunteers sought-after by host partner organisations. She said that they are hopeful that their fundraising strategies, which include tapping local donors to complement their international grants, would generate more funding for KI.

The Way Forward

Romulo dela Rosa, VSO PEACE Mindanao Programme Area Manager, is hopeful about the future of Kapamagogopa Inc. "KI has the potential to transform itself from being a Muslim volunteer sending organisation, to a Volunteer Centre, offering its expertise in developing and setting up local volunteering

initiatives.” He said that two long-term VSO volunteers have been placed with KI to enable KI to sustain its remarkable work long after VSO has closed in the Philippines.

A very pleased Mark Boot, current VSO volunteer from the UK serving as Resource Mobilisation Adviser at KI, recently announced that their funding proposal submitted to the Canadian International Development Agency (CDIA) has been granted. Prior to CIDA funding, KI has been receiving small grants from the British, Australian and other embassies. The secured CIDA funding would enable KI to continue its volunteer deployment for the coming years, but more efforts are needed to achieve the results of KI’s Resource Mobilisation Strategic Plan.

Apart from sending more KI volunteers to serve remote communities, and reaching more provinces in Mindanao, in partnership with two other NGOs, Kapamagugupod Inc. is setting up a pilot programme that will encourage Muslims to volunteer in their own communities. The programme will also provide an avenue for community members who do not have a university degree to serve within their communities. Based on lessons in sourcing funds, KI is heavily involving local government units in the programme for them to take ownership of this new community-based Muslim volunteering initiative.

The Government of Uganda’s National Agricultural and Advisory Services “Decentralising Agricultural Extension Services Using Farmer-to-Farmer Approach”

The Programme

Context

The Ugandan Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries’ Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) provides a framework for coordinated implementation of agricultural sector reforms in the country. This framework is aimed at transforming smallholder agriculture from subsistence farming to commercially oriented production. The National Agricultural and Advisory Services (NAADS) is a PMA core programme, which is designed to be a decentralised, farmer-owned and private sector service extension system.

Under the Advisory Services component of the NAADS programme, farmers groups, through the NAADS Coordinator¹, contract service providers, who are awarded short-term contracts to promote specific enterprises and provide advisory services. The contract duration ranges from six to 12 months, depending on the enterprise and number of participating farmers groups. It was soon realised that once the contracts have expired, a gap existed until another contractor is hired by the programme. Farmers did not know where to seek advice once the consultants had left. The demand for continuous and readily-available advisory services eventually led to the tapping of skilled farmers in the communities as part of the NAADS programme. This concept was also developed to scale up the coverage of NAADS advisory services, making it possible to reach and benefit more farmers throughout Uganda.

Approach

The National Agricultural and Advisory Services programme is implemented through the NAADS Coordinator in the sub-county level, a contracted service provider, and the community-based facilitators (CBFs). The Advisory Services programme component of NAADS mobilises farmers into groups through the community-based facilitators. As a group, farmers are involved in the participatory planning, monitoring processes and

¹ A NAADS Coordinator is a full-time staff identified in the district level, to work with the sub-county and the local community to identify farmers’ priorities, manage the allocation of contracts, and monitor and evaluate the performance and accountability of the service providers, farmers groups, and community-based facilitators.

contracting of farming advisory services at the sub-county level. Farmers groups are also able to avail of Farmers Grants and take part in the NAADS' Savings and Credit scheme, which enable them to apply the advisory services into their own farm lands.

The NAADS programme adopted the "community extension worker (CEW) approach"² for a cost-effective and sustainable delivery of adequate advisory services to the economically-active poor -- those with limited physical and financial assets, skills and knowledge, rather than the destitute or large-scale -- farmers. The key elements of the CEW model include: 1) the community; 2) the community extension workers; and 3) the service providers. Different terms are used to refer to community extension workers, but in the case of NAADS, these are the community-based facilitators, who are essentially community volunteers. The concept of community-based facilitators was developed to scale up the approach of using group promoters to support farmer institutional development. Each community-based facilitator is assigned with a maximum of 10 farmers groups (composed of up to 25 member-farmers) for effective coverage. The use of community-based facilitators makes it possible to have a thorough coverage of all the farmer groups in a sub-county. The NAADS programme is being rolled out on a large scale with over 2000 community-based facilitators. From its pilot areas of six districts, NAADS is now implemented in all the 79 districts of Uganda.

Working with Local Volunteers

The Volunteers

The main role of NAADS community-based facilitators is to assist other farmers by sharing their farming knowledge and skills. They must have relevant skills to diagnose a farming problem to be able to give the right advice. NAADS community-based facilitators are men and women farmers of influence within their communities, who command respect and are approachable. Community-based facilitators are selected by the farmers in the parish level. Apart from being a practicing farmer and living within the farmers group vicinity, a community-based facilitator must also be able to read and write (finished at least Grade 7) in order to communicate effectively within the group.

Apart from organising farmers groups and advising them on new technologies for increased agricultural production, many community-based facilitators also host demonstration sites. These demonstration sites are used in training farmers. For a farm land to be used as a demonstration site, the farmer must be willing to serve as a host and must be approachable by farmers and other visitors. There must also be adequate labor force within the farm's homestead, and the land must be strategically situated or close to the main roads.

Another form of community-based facilitators is a farmer who, because of their proven interest, practical skills and knowledge in specific fields or enterprises, has volunteered to train and guide other farmers. They are also referred to as community-based farmer trainer, and their main role is to complement the efforts of NAADS staff, specifically by: a) communicating the training needs and requirements of farmers with common interests to the NAADS sub-county and district coordinators; b) facilitating actual trainings on practical skills; and c) assisting contracted specialists and NAADS staff during the training courses organised at the sub-county and parish levels. These farmer volunteers are also often selected to host the NAADS demonstration sites.

² A Study of Lessons and Experiences of Ugandan Organisations using the CEW approach was conducted by the NAADS Secretariat in 2003, to enhance the adaptation of the CEW model to the NAADS structure and strategies in the Ugandan context. The community extension worker concept is a reference to services that have client involvement in the development and delivery of messages. There is quantitative evidence that community-based service delivery is popular, cost effective and efficient.

Volunteer Management

A national workshop was held to discuss and agree on the roles, qualifications and selection criteria of community-based facilitators, along with the responsible stakeholders for managing the volunteers. The Community Development Officer and the NAADS Coordinator at the sub-county level take the lead role in recruiting community-based facilitators in the parish level, through nomination by community members. A Farmers Forum Executive Committee is responsible for verifying and approving the selected NAADS community-based facilitators, while the Office of the Sub-County Chief gives out the appointment letters to the identified community-based facilitators. Apart from the participating farmers, the monitoring of community-based facilitators' performance is also done by the NAADS Coordinator, Community Development Officer, parish committees, and the contracted service provider.

Sam Mativo, a NAADS Coordinator for five years, shared that in order to sustain his community-based facilitators, he devised a reporting system wherein the community-based facilitator's allowance is based on the number of reports submitted. "A well-organised volunteer coordinator should be able to find ways to keep his community-based facilitators motivated." Each community-based facilitator advises a certain number of farmers and is supposed to do a report on each farmer. During their monthly meetings, Sam discusses each community-based facilitator's work plan. The volunteers get to decide on how much time they can spend advising other farmers per week. Sam said the community-based facilitators' volunteering time may vary, but what is important is they fulfill their agreed work plan. Service contractors provide the community-based facilitators with tailored training on enterprises to enable them to supplement and sustain their efforts in the communities upon completion of their contracts. Community-based facilitators work closely with the consultants, while on contract, to gain field experience. "The community-based facilitators receive specialised and hands-on trainings from the contracted service providers, so they could diagnose simple farming diseases and prescribe remedies under the direct supervision of the consultant."

An incentive mechanism for motivating the CBFs within NAADS has been considered and given a specific budget line within the NAADS programme. However, sub-counties are flexible in utilising this budget. Some give allowances to the community-based facilitators. Others provide bicycles and farming products.

Benefits of Volunteering

According to Sam, the NAADS community-based facilitators are volunteers because they sacrifice a lot of their time visiting farmers without expecting monetary gain. "A volunteer is somebody who contributes time, talent and effort to further a mission, without going on the payroll." However, Sam admitted that community-based facilitators could use more affirmation from the government and the communities for their valuable contribution, just like the volunteers in HIV & AIDS do. "The recognition of the community volunteers' work within NAADS is not really pronounced, although at times, sub-counties give out certificates to outstanding community-based facilitators. Of late, it has been suggested that all community-based facilitators should be given [farming] inputs to set their own demonstration sites for farmers [rather than limiting this incentive to only some of them]." Sam added that the bicycle provided to some community-based facilitators is a symbol of status in the community, which they are also able use to run family errands.

Sam also shared some of the anticipated incentives that may have initially motivated farmers to serve as NAADS community-based facilitator. "Most community-based facilitators get to use their own farm lands as demonstration site. An incentive for doing this is that once the project has been completed then the farmer gets to keep the [agricultural] inputs used for the land, along with the produce." Generally, Sam said that most community-based facilitators are highly encouraged to volunteer because of the hands-on training they get from the contracted service providers, which builds their capacities.

Impact

A key principle of NAADS is the empowerment of farmers to demand and manage advisory services. NAADS has been able to achieve this by increasing farmers' participation and ownership of the programme through establishing farmers' institutions, such as farmers groups, parish committees, and community-based facilitators. It has also strengthened the human resource skills and institutional capacity of farmers.

"I had never even thought that I would ever be a leader outside my home," shared Joina Auma Wabwire, Chairperson of a farmers group founded for purposes of communal digging for members. "But with the empowerment I have got from NAADS, I can now go out and chair meetings as well as share development ideas with my colleagues." Since NAADS' involvement, the farmers group has developed a saving scheme, and has embarked on a boer goat breeding project to improve the local breeds. They also learned to diversify farm enterprises with ground nut production and locally-improved cattle breeds. "Now we've realised that the training has been beneficial on changing our attitudes to look out for those enterprises that are profitable," she added.

The International Food Policy Research Institute evaluated the impact of NAADS in the Uganda rural livelihoods, in October 2007. Based on this assessment, NAADS is having substantial positive impacts on the availability and quality of advisory services provided to farmers, promoting adoption of new crop and livestock enterprises, as well as improving adoption and use of modern agricultural production technologies and practices. It also appeared that NAADS has promoted greater use of post-harvest technologies and commercial marketing of commodities, consistent with its mission to promote more commercially-oriented agriculture.²

Lessons and Challenges

Many farmers wanted to serve as a NAADS community-based facilitator in the beginning due to anticipated monetary incentives. This led to the use of secret balloting for nominating a community-based facilitator. There was also problem in the early stages of farmers taking the opportunity to become demonstration sites without really thinking through the work that this would demand and its other implications. This was addressed by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the farm owners before the agricultural inputs were brought in. However, some of the continuing challenges concerning the NAADS community-based facilitators include: a) absence of regular allowance or lack of incentives; b) long distances; c) large number of farmers groups d) the limited capacity of community-based facilitators to address farming problems, outside their trainings; d) some NAADS field extension staff consider the community-based facilitators as a threat to their staff position; and e) the lack of recognition of the farmer volunteers' contribution to the community. Motions to address these issues include lobbying for an increase in the budget for community-based facilitators, and minimising the assigned areas of community-based facilitators by recruiting more volunteers.

Reported poor procurement practices, lack of accountability, inadequate local government capacities, and lack of political support at the local government level prompted a six-month suspension of the NAADS operations in

² Despite the encouraging effects of NAADS, there were no significant differences found in the yield growth between the NAADS and non-NAADS sub-counties for most crops, which is a reflection of the still-low levels of adoption of these technologies even in NAADS sub-counties. Shortage of capital and credit facilities was often cited by farmers as a critical constraint, as well as other factors affecting productivity. This showed that the quality of advisory services is not the only important factor influencing technology adoption and productivity, and that development of the rural financial system must complement the advisory component of NAADS.

October 2007. Following a Cabinet review of the programme, NAADS resumed in April 2008 under a restructured programme framework and with additional mandates.

Funding for the NAADS programme has come from the Ugandan government, together with match funding from local governments and farmers, and donations from international development partners. The ratio of funding from different sources has varied throughout the period of the programme. The reported failures which led to the review of the programme also affected funding from international donors. Funding is currently issued in quotas from the Ministry of Finance, however NAADS is trying to arrange for quotas to be released with the seasons, to make planting easier.

NAADS Executive Director Silim Nahdy also admitted that the programme has been slowed down by scarcity of agricultural inputs, lack of adequate farmland, unfavorable weather patterns, problems of pests and diseases, and even by corruption. "Community procurement is [now] used for the programme and involves use of chiefs, coordinators and security officers. These checks and balances are intended to reduce corruption."

The Way Forward

The National Agricultural and Advisory Services of Uganda has undergone modifications since its launch in 2001 as part of the government's 25-year programme to increase farmer access to information, knowledge and technology for profitable agricultural production. Yet, throughout its eight years of operation, and even after the NAADS' brief suspension for more effective delivery of advisory services, the volunteering role of the Ugandan farmers to facilitate the implementation of NAADS in the community-level remained vital. Under the newly-restructured NAADS, farmers will have a greater role in recommending agricultural inputs for the programme, based on their successful demonstration sites. In the new NAADS, the programme will utilise different categories of government extension workers and research institutions for the provision of quality agricultural advisory services to farmers. Sam said this would mean decreasing the budget used to contract private service providers, and reallocating the money for more agricultural inputs for the farmers, and hopefully, for a better support mechanism for the NAADS community-based facilitators.

National Commission for Social Action's Peace and Development Corps "Addressing Two Goals through a Single Action"

The Programme

Context

The end of a decade-long civil conflict in Sierra Leone had led to post-war challenges threatening the newly-installed peace in the country. Among these are youth unemployment and the lack of local institutional capacities to implement the government's decentralisation policy. The rate of unemployment increased with the restoration of the educational system. More than half of the capable young graduates remain unemployed long after they have secured their university degrees. Meanwhile, many Sierra Leoneans believe that the over-centralised government was one of the main causes of the war. Yet with the promotion of decentralisation in Sierra Leone comes the realisation of the necessary interventions to enable local councils to perform their new tasks.

Sierra Leone's National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), a quasi-government commission, has been contributing to decentralisation through its development programmes for local councils, including the Peace and Development Corps (PADCO) volunteering programme. PADCO is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development (also the Decentralisation Secretariat, which links NaCSA with the district and local councils), the African Development Bank (donor), district and local councils

and NGOs (hosts), and VSO (organisational and volunteer management capacity). The collaboration came about through an inter-agency forum where representatives from both government and NGO sectors anticipated the need to provide immediate support to local councils that were to be revitalised.

Approach

The Peace and Development Corps volunteering programme was launched in 2004 with the deployment of 19 PADCO volunteers in local councils across the country. This government-led national volunteering initiative has recognised the need to provide practical experience for the young Sierra Leonean graduates in order to deter the recurrence of a conflict that was also a consequence of a disillusioned, unemployed youth. PADCO seeks to provide the unemployed, tertiary-level educated youth with a two-year opportunity to gain experience and build skills so they can find meaningful employment afterwards. In doing so, the PADCO volunteering initiative aims to strengthen institutional structures through the provision of educated and trained Sierra Leonean volunteers. PADCO also endeavors to assign volunteers from different tribes to work in other tribal areas to create a sense of nationalism, versus the ongoing tribalism.

Partnership with VSO

VSO Sierra Leone, through partnership with the National Commission for Social Action, is contributing to this remarkable national volunteering undertaking.

“The [NaCSA] partnership with VSO came in [later] at a very critical stage of the programme. With little hope for any funds to continue PADCO, VSO invited volunteer-involving organisations to an information sharing session on national volunteering...VSO’s knowledge on national volunteering is notable.” David Lahai, PADCO Project Coordinator, shared that the collaborative sessions on best practices on volunteer management culminated in an initial support from VSO to deploy PADCO volunteers in 2007.

Kate Press, VSO volunteer from Canada, was a Programme Advisor at the National Commission for Social Action, contributing to significant programme management changes concerning the PADCO volunteering programme. For one year, Kate worked on areas regarding PADCO’s overall strategic mission, volunteer management systems and procedures, and programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Another VSO volunteer from the UK, Victoria Hoe, assisted PADCO through organisational development, training, planning, finance, and communications activities, during her three-month placement. As a result, there have been substantial improvements with the programme’s planning and documentation of activities, as well as with the communications within the organisation, and with external partners. The organisational assessment provided the opportunity to assess PADCO as a programme, highlighting both the achievements and challenges that PADCO faces. “Links have been made with several external organisations to help with the training. This has also raised PADCO’s profile, which in time will help with funding, events and working towards a National Volunteering policy.” Victoria said that the changes within PADCO are a result of cumulative efforts of the several VSO volunteers placed with NaCSA, to help build the capacity of the PADCO Secretariat.

Apart from VSO volunteers, VSO Sierra Leone also provides funding for PADCO volunteers’ activities, and for the strengthening of the established forum of volunteer-involving organisations, chaired by NaCSA. VSO also supported the training of PADCO staff by sending the PADCO Coordinator to the one-month Volunteer Programme Development and Management course in the Philippines, and to a study tour in Ghana to learn more about national volunteering in another country. The VSO Sierra Leone partnership with NaCSA is within its Participation and Governance Programme Area Plan. Through this collaborative effort between VSO Sierra Leone and NaCSA, the employment of young people through volunteering, primarily aimed at supporting the decentralisation process, is also significantly addressing Secure Livelihoods issues.

Working with Local Volunteers

The Volunteers

The first batch of PADCO volunteers were mainly assigned in district and local councils as Development Resource Facilitators, which entailed the volunteers to assist the council staff in coordinating donor funding and relations, writing reports, and designing as well as implementing development projects. PADCO volunteers conduct participatory assessments of the development needs of communities, and other relevant researches, for use in the development plans of the councils. Volunteers also organise workshops, act as secretaries during council meetings, and perform various technical and administrative tasks, to support their host organisations. Today, PADCO volunteers are performing more roles, including those for the livelihood sector, as micro-credit and project officers for community livelihood projects. Apart from being posted in government institutions, PADCO volunteers are now also assigned in civil society organisations.

PADCO volunteer Brima Soria Kanu is posted at the Civil Society Alternative Process of Sierra Leone, which is a coalition of trade unions, women's and youth groups, and other community-based and non-government organisations in the country. With a degree in Education and Linguistic Option, and a diploma in Human Resource Management, and Business Management and Administration, 28-year old Brima is responsible for all the programmes of the coalition. As a programme manager, Brima represents his host organisation in its advocacy and lobbying activities, coordinates meetings for the coalition, writes reports and links the coalition's secretariat with the top management.

Volunteer Management

The PADCO Secretariat, housed within NaCSA, recruits, trains and places young Sierra Leonean graduates in local councils and civil society organisations. PADCO volunteers must be: graduates within the last three years of application date; unemployed or under-employed; willing to be placed in any part of the country; and a patriotic citizen of Sierra Leone. Fifty percent of the volunteer placements are reserved for female candidates. PADCO volunteers must pass the application screening, written test and panel interview, and undergo up to six weeks of full-time training in project management, and in technical areas directly related to each volunteer's assignment. PADCO volunteers receive a modest monthly stipend to cover basic board and lodging. They also receive a resettlement package equivalent to a month's allowance, once they have completed their two-year placements.

The volunteer monitoring and supervision is jointly undertaken by the PADCO Secretariat and the host organisation. PADCO volunteers submit a monthly report on their assignments, which are countersigned by their host supervisors. Monthly calls and quarterly placement visits are also conducted by the PADCO Secretariat.

PADCO invites NGOs/CBOs, local governments or relevant line ministries, and other development partners to apply in order to obtain one or more PADCO volunteers to work on specific projects or tasks within their organisations, for two years. Host organisations are selected through their expressions of interest. Participating local councils and organisations are able to host PADCO volunteers over consecutive years, pending on the assessed needs and capacity of the volunteer hosts.

Benefits of Volunteering

PADCO volunteers believe that volunteering is an opportunity for the patriotic young Sierra Leoneans to help mitigate the risk of renewed conflict and contribute to national development.

"I want to help rebuild my country after the war through volunteerism." Apart from his motivation for volunteering, Brima also shared his greatest experience as a PADCO volunteer. "Volunteering has helped me interact with people from all walks of life... I learned how to manage limited resources and overcome different

challenges in life.” Brima said that his PADCO experience has also built his capacity through the programme’s training support package.

Many volunteers also developed a greater sense of national identity, which is important for the development and integration of the country. Having worked alongside development stakeholders, the volunteers have acquired a broader understanding of development issues and many are keen to have a career in development. Through direct work involvement, PADCO volunteers gained new skills and experience in project management, budgeting, and report writing, among many others.

Host organisations reported that PADCO volunteers are productive, flexible and dedicated in many aspects of their work. They benefitted from the volunteers’ ideas in preparing and implementing development plans and from their coordinating role in donor funding relations. Councils realised that PADCO volunteers had been strongly prepared for their volunteering assignments, and hence came with very good skills. The PADCO volunteers’ knowledge of participatory tools has been very useful for the councils in planning its development projects. PADCO volunteers helped ensure that the local community participated in, and felt engaged in, programmes run by local councils, as well as NGOs. The Sierra Leonean volunteers extended their host organisations’ areas of competence by engaging in work, where they did not have skills. This led to the increased number of beneficiaries of councils and NGOs’ development programmes.

Impact

The majority of the PADCO volunteers have found employment in either government or the NGO sector after completing their two-year volunteer placements. Many of the volunteers were hired to continue working with their host councils. In a country with an extremely high unemployment rate among young people, PADCO is fulfilling its objective to build the capacities of the unemployed youth through gaining practical experience in the field, and enhancing their opportunities for permanent employment. The skills gained through volunteering have qualified the PADCO volunteers for paid employment, and hence to earn a good income.

NaCSA Commissioner Kanja Sesay expressed satisfaction with the PADCO programme, particularly in terms of building the capacities of both the local councils and the young graduates, who in turn become more marketable because of their volunteering experience. “This is already manifested by the recruitment of some of the volunteers in the local councils they served.”

According to the PADCO Project Coordinator, the PADCO volunteers, who are also victims of the war, are now making a living for themselves and the society they serve. “Local volunteering has contributed immensely to the main goal of the National Commission for Social Action, which is to mitigate the risk of renewed conflict by rebuilding shattered lives after the war.”

Lessons and Challenges

PADCO has faced several financial shortfalls over its five years of operations. Funding has been intermittent and limited. PADCO’s volunteer management systems and policies also needed improvement. Some of the problems of PADCO include the development of volunteer training modules that would prepare the volunteers in fulfilling their job descriptions. There were also problems concerning a few host organisations, which involved the under-utilisation and the ever-changing roles of the PADCO volunteers in their postings.

VSO’s support is addressing these issues by building the capacity of the PADCO staff through mentoring from VSO volunteers. VSO volunteers’ close collaboration with the PADCO Coordinator, the Coordinator’s attendance on the volunteer management systems course, and a study tour on national volunteering, resulted in better defined volunteer roles, clearer responsibilities among PADCO stakeholders, and updated volunteer recruitment, selection, training, and M&E tools. These outcomes proved to have considerably enhanced the experience of the succeeding batches of PADCO volunteers and increased the Secretariat’s capacity in

implementing the PADCO volunteering programme. A VSO volunteer was also successful in assisting the programme in generating funding.

The Way Forward

PADCO has been embarking on fundraising efforts to continue its deployment of national volunteers. Through a VSO volunteer, a two-year funding support from the African Development Bank has been secured. PADCO is currently reviewing its strategic plan, which details the volunteering programme's direction and sustainability, through support from government and other potential donors.

The PADCO Project Coordinator is confident that the desire of the youth to volunteer, the administrative strength of NaCSA, and the strong cooperation among PADCO supporters, will sustain Sierra Leone's national volunteering programme to fulfill its goal of accelerating the pace of poverty reduction in the country, by increasing the capacity of local development institutions, and creating work opportunities for unemployed graduates.

Philippine Business for Social Progress' Business Advisory Program "Helping Micro and Small Enterprises Grow through Volunteer Business Advising"

The Programme

Context

The Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), a private, nonprofit foundation of 246 member business companies, is dedicated to promoting the business sector's commitment to social development since 1970. In 2003, PBSP launched the Corporate Volunteers for Enterprise Development to sustain the volunteering efforts of the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO) in the country. CESO had begun deploying Canadian professionals as volunteer business advisers in the Philippines in 1999. Through a five-year funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), PBSP localised the Canadian volunteering, allowing Filipino volunteer advisers to support micro and small enterprises in selected areas of the Philippines. In 2007, this Filipino business volunteering initiative was re-launched as PBSP's core programme, and renamed as Business Advisory Program or BAP.

Approach

PBSP's Business Advisory Programme provides an organised way of facilitating the volunteer mentoring of Filipino business advisers to contribute to the development of micro and small enterprises in the Philippines. The business volunteering engagement happens through consultations between the BAP volunteer and the client, through a highly-structured volunteer management systems and procedures developed for PBSP's Business Advisory Program.

Working with Local Volunteers

The Volunteers

BAP has more than 500 volunteer advisers in the roster, with expertise in the areas of marketing, finance, tourism, organisation development, and production and operations management. These volunteers are active professionals and retirees from the private and public sectors, as well as the academe. BAP prioritises support for areas in agribusiness (off-farm production and trading), food processing, small manufacturing, and tourism.

Alice de Guzman, 43 years old, has been in the food service industry since passing the Board in Nutrition and Dietetics. She managed the operations of various food services and set up her own eatery and bakeshop,

before joining The Center for Culinary Arts to teach courses relating to food service, including operations and management, among others. Alice is currently advising two BAP clients in the food business in the different aspects of operations system, costing, as well as menu engineering to guide them in coming up with more popular dishes. "At first, my clients were apprehensive in giving me the information I needed, to assist them in identifying business strategies that would enable them to compete with other rising restaurants in the area and to expand their food business. Although we signed a contract of agreement to protect the confidentiality of the business information, clients tend to feel more comfortable to share the required information once I have managed to establish my credibility as a business adviser."

Lito Tayag, then a partner of Isla Lipana & Co., the Philippine member firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and an active member of the BAP Advisory Committee, volunteered to assist the National Federation of Cooperatives of Persons with Disability (NFCPWD), on how to make the item pricing and project costing of their business proposal competitive, yet realistic. The Federation serves as the marketing arm of cooperatives, run by more than 1,500 individual members with disabilities, which produce school desks and chairs for livelihood. NFCPWD has been bidding for the Department of Education contracts since 1994. In 2006, NFCPWD sought the assistance of a BAP volunteer adviser to review their product costing and pricing to meet new requirements in relation to their bid for the Department of Education contract. Their contracts with this government agency have been the Federation's biggest source of income for the past years. Losing the bid would have heavily impacted on the member cooperatives.

Volunteer Management

The original idea was to harvest volunteers from among the employees of the member companies of PBSP. However, the employee volunteer programmes of the PBSP member corporations were either not yet in place or were mostly one-off activities. The BAP volunteering engagement lasts for at least three months through series of consultations. PBSP ended up recruiting more volunteers by organising events and promoting BAP to a wider public. Beng Bernabe, PBSP's BAP Programme Manager said it is essential to have appropriate structures in place to achieve an efficient volunteering programme. The travel, meal and lodging expenses of the BAP volunteer, during the consultations, is shouldered by the client, while PBSP covers the rest of the logistical costs of the programme, including travel insurance for volunteers.

The implementation of the Business Advisory Program consists of four main components: a) Volunteer Roster Development and Management; b) Client Generation; c) Advisory Services Delivery; and, d) Assignment Monitoring and Evaluation.

Volunteer Roster Development and Management involves promotion to potential volunteer advisers, screening and orientation, maintaining and updating volunteer roster database, and capacity building of volunteers. To build the roster of volunteer advisers, Filipino professionals with expertise in the BAP focus sectors are tapped to sign in as volunteers through BAP promo events and activities. The volunteer applicants are interviewed and screened based on their CV and volunteer information sheet to determine the relevance of their expertise for BAP assignments. A database of volunteers with their respective skills and availabilities has been developed to facilitate the matching of volunteers with clients' needs or assignments. BAP provides trainings and learning opportunities for its roster of volunteers as part of its volunteer support.

Client Generation includes BAP promotion activities to potential clients, prospective client visits, applications for BAP services and client diagnostics. Requesting clients must fall within the micro and small enterprise asset categories to be eligible to apply for BAP assistance. Apart from their submitted application for assistance forms, clients are screened through an evaluation visit and an interview to assess the qualification of the clients. Selected clients then go through diagnostic procedures, conducted by BAP staff, to determine the

appropriate assistance. Results of the business diagnostics are used to endorse the application. Business needs are prioritised based on the social development impact of the whole enterprise operation.

Advisory Services Delivery involves: approval of application, skilling and matching; volunteer and client briefing; deployment; post assignment debriefing; and information brokering. The programme manager approves client applications based on the BAP staff's endorsement. Skilling and matching is done by assessing the skills of the volunteers in the database in relation to the needs of the clients' diagnostics reports. Potential volunteer advisers are given information about the clients' application and business diagnostics report to determine the availability of the volunteers for the assignment. Clients are also provided a list of the potential volunteer advisers, along with their credentials, to guide them in their choice of BAP volunteer. Volunteers and clients receive briefings prior to the BAP engagement. Through information brokering, sources of funds and equipment, training assistance, and market information are provided to the clients as a supplement to the volunteering advisory service. Finally, BAP staff reports to the PBSP management and BAP donors on the programme's progress and results through *Assignment Monitoring and Evaluation*. The volunteering engagement is regularly monitored by BAP staff during and after its completion.

Benefits of Volunteering

BAP advisers volunteer out of their own interest, using their personal time, to share their expertise with local entrepreneurs. There are a few cases, however, where the volunteers' BAP assignment is accredited by their employers.

"My course on Community Nutrition back in the university provided me my first glimpse of community work, and I found myself taking part in various community activities since then. My joining the BAP as a business adviser for the past three years is not very unusual for me." Alice said she feels fortunate and hence, just wants to share her blessings with others. Nonetheless, Alice said that the BAP volunteering has actually furthered her professional development as well, through PBSP's regular trainings and networking opportunities. On the challenges of being a volunteer, Alice disclosed that one of her frustrations with a client involved conflict among family members managing the business, which is delaying the implementation of their business plan. "I found myself being a family counselor on top of my business advising role." Even with her wider role as a volunteer, Alice is determined to continue her BAP assignment until she sees the results of her mentoring with the management-level staff, cascading down to the last personnel of the restaurant.

Now 62 years old and having retired from his PwC job, BAP volunteer Lito finds himself doing various volunteering work, particularly given his current involvement with NGOs. Lito, however, said that it was his BAP volunteering assignment with the National Federation of Cooperatives of Persons with Disability, which took him three months to complete, that maximised his business expertise, as well as his business network, the most. A very humble Lito shared that it was the Federation's openness to his business advice that made his BAP engagement a huge success.

"If we want to empower people with disability (PWD) to participate in the whole aspects of life, then we must recognise their abilities, not their disabilities." Johnny Lantion is the Manager of the National Federation of Cooperatives of Persons with Disability, composed of 16 primary cooperatives of PWDs nationwide. Lito's coaching sessions helped build the skills of the Federation's management team in contract development and negotiation. With an enhanced business proposal and improved negotiation skills, the National Federation of Cooperatives of Persons with Disability won the bid for its biggest contract ever in 2006.

Impact

"Our involvement with PBSP through BAP has broadened our business network, which helps in furthering the cause of the Federation." Johnny said that the BAP experience has given the NFCPWD the much-needed

credibility to secure more and bigger business contracts. The Department of Education also awarded a multi-million peso contract to the Federation in 2007, ensuring its more than 1,500 individual PWD members a steady livelihood for the years that followed.

To date, more than 500 BAP volunteer advisers are available to support micro and small enterprises nationwide. Of more than 200 BAP-assisted MSEs, 90 had demonstrated advancement in business performance measured through increased sales, improved productivity and operations system, new products developed, additional and new markets identified, and new investments. BAP has also helped generate more than 500 jobs in the micro and small enterprise sector.

Lessons and Challenges

BAP Programme Manager Beng shared that one of the most exciting challenges in implementing BAP was learning the Canadian volunteering framework and adopting it in the Philippine setting. "In developing our own framework, we selected the best practices of CESO and localised it, giving it our own imprint." Beng added that working closely with CESO and CIDA has been an excellent opportunity to learn new technology and skills in programme management that one can gain through working with international agencies. "Our continuing challenge in each of the focus areas is getting a volunteer within the locality of the client that could provide advice to highly-specialised business needs. The travel, meal and lodging expenses of a volunteer is shouldered by the client, hence we really try to source the needed volunteers within the clients' vicinity. Yet oftentimes, you can only find such volunteers in the big cities."

The Canadian Executive Service Organization designed an effective way of addressing the issue of cost which the PBSP's Business Advisory Program has adopted. The *clustering* method entails grouping of enterprises with common needs, and identifying one volunteer to support the cluster. The incurred costs of one BAP volunteer serving the cluster is shared by the involved enterprises, thus reducing the burden of costs and establishing a network among the member enterprises of the cluster.

Partnership with various organisations involved in enterprise development helped in the implementation of the Business Advisory Program. Such is the case with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the government agency which is mandated to assist enterprises through business mentoring. On the one hand, PBSP's volunteer business advisers have been contributing to DTI's fulfilling its mandate. On the other hand, the DTI is assisting PBSP in identifying clients in various regions. Before its partnership with DTI, PBSP experienced difficulties in introducing business advising to entrepreneurs. The potential clients tend to associate business advisory with access to loans, and hence lose their interest as soon as they realise that BAP is a non-credit scheme. The DTI-identified clients are more familiar and open to the concept of coaching, which makes the BAP engagement more effective. PBSP has since established partnerships with other national and local government institutions, as well as business groups, NGOs and the academe to implement its business volunteering initiative.

Towards the end of the CIDA support, PBSP positioned the Business Advisory Program among its clients as a fee-based service, at subsidised rates. This new financial requirement received initial resistance from the BAP clients. However, this was addressed when clients were reminded that the fee is merely to facilitate the BAP engagement and is comparatively cheaper than hiring a consultant with the expertise of the volunteer business advisers. The clients also realised that the pay-off at end of the assistance, *i.e.*, higher revenue, is more than the value or return of the "assignment fee".

The Way Forward

The Business Advisory Program was piloted in four major provinces in the three major islands of the Philippines. After five years of operation, BAP expanded to include seven more provinces and the Autonomous

Region of Muslim Mindanao. In all of its areas, the Department of Trade and Industry, through its local units, has been PBSP's main link in identifying local entrepreneurs deserving of BAP volunteers. BAP Programme Manager said they have slowed down on their volunteer recruitment because they now have a sufficient pool of volunteers, which includes some of their former BAP clients and their DTI partners' staff.

"Since the CIDA funding ended in 2008 and PBSP now has full ownership of BAP, we have identified strategies to mobilise resources for the continuation of the program, like sourcing funds from other donors. Having a highly-documented programme, using a results-based reporting method, greatly facilitates our fundraising efforts." Beng shared that apart from its efficient fundraising schemes, PBSP is also currently conducting a study to find new ways of ensuring the sustainability and future of the PBSP Business Advisory Program, the Filipino way.