

Lessons Learned from

Participatory Budgeting in the Philippines

Mr. Richard L. Villacorte

Department of the Interior and Local Government

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The Bottom-up Budgeting Program in the Philippines

The BUB is a process in which the people are given the opportunity to participate in the process of setting portion of the national budget.

In general, it represents a very limited scope of participatory budgeting and governance but it served as a starting point to build an evidence based on key challenges and possible means to address the issues related to [strengthening local governance and service delivery](#) in the country.

What worked well?

1. LGUs generally became more open to CSO participation in various phases of the broader development planning process.
2. Both LGUs and CSOs developed a more nuanced and critical thinking in project prioritization over the course of participatory budgeting through BUB.
3. The BUB represented an unprecedented inter-agency effort to strengthen systems for local government accountability for local governance and service delivery.
4. Participatory budgeting through BUB moved away from discretionary allocation and installed transparent funding allocation.
5. BUB also helped strengthen demand-side accountability, measured by CSOs' trust in LGUs and CSO empowerment.

What did not work well?

1. The extent of CSO influence on the BUB decision-making process varied across LGUs.
2. Most of the CSOs would identify development solutions/priority projects based on “common felt needs” rather than any concrete data.
3. Participatory budgeting tends to result in small-scale investments catering to the interests of various groups.

What needs to be improved?

1. In the longer-term, the Government needs to consider a more sustainable mechanism than a program-based approach in the context of decentralization of authority and corresponding resources to the LGUs.
2. Sufficient facilitation and capacity building for both the CSOs and the LGUs need to be provided to improve the quality of participatory planning.