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BY DESIGN OR MERE HAPPENSTANCE?

Role of women in Open Government in the Philippines

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CONTENTS

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The Web Foundation was established in 2009 by Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web. Our mission is to establish the open web as a public good and a basic right.

BACKGROUND

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

OGP's vision is that more governments become more transparent, more accountable, and more responsive to their own citizens, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of governance, as well as the quality of services that citizens receive. Since its inception in 2011, OGP today brings together 79 countries and 20 subnational governments with over 2,500 commitments to make their governments more open and accountable.

The Philippines is one of the pioneering members of the OGP. As part of its commitments contained in its first national action plan, the Philippine government launched initiatives to promote transparency, strengthen participation of citizens in governance processes, and exact accountability from government officials.

In this research, we would like to assess how women are participating in OGP processes and how their issues and concerns are represented in OGP National Action Plans that are co-created by government and civil society representatives in the country.

01

COUNTRY CONTEXT

1.1 Women's activism in historical perspective

The dynamic women's movement in the Philippines is the product of a long history of struggle and participation. The 20th century witnessed the establishment of the first feminist organisation the Asociacion Feminista Filipina (Feminist Association of the Philippines/AFF) in 1905, followed by The Asociacion Feminista Ilonga. Both focused largely on social issues such as prison, education and labor reforms, drives against prostitution, gambling, drinking and other vices, establishment of recreational facilities, sanitation, health, infant and maternal care, and the campaign for the appointment of women to municipal and provincial boards of education and electoral precincts. But these organisations were founded and headed by elite women and consisted mainly of women from the upper and middle classes. However, its birth signaled the awakening of the women's feminist consciousness and later paved the way for the establishment of militant and political women's groups. During the colonial period of the Philippines, women actively participated in the armed resistance against oppressors and guerilla movements.

In the late 1960s, whilst the Philippines was under dictatorial regime, the women's movement gained new momentum as it started to develop along socialist feminist lines. In 1969, The Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (Freedom Movement of Progressive Women) or MAKIBAKA was established with the attempt "to situate women's liberation within the context of the struggle against foreign domination and class oppression".[1] In 1975, addressing national, class, and gender issues under its goals of equality, development, peace, and freedom, the Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina (KABAPA) was founded by women who had been active in peasant-based movements.[2]

In the 1980s, the first women's organisations focusing on women's issues on personal and societal levels, were founded: the Kilusang Kababaihang Pilipina (Philippines Women's Movement/PILIPINA) in 1981, and the Katipunan ng Kalayaan para sa Kababaihan (Organisation of Women for Freedom/KALAYAAN) in 1983.[3] PILIPINA envisioned a "Philippine society where women possess dignity, autonomy, and

1   Valte, C. (1992). *"The Philippine Women's Movement: In Search of a Feminist Identity"*. http://library.fes.de/fulltext/iez/00060006.htm
2   Estrada-Claudio, S. (2005). *"The Women's Movement(s) and Social Movements: Conjunctures and Divergences"*. https://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article530
3   Sobritchea, C. (2004a). *"The Second Wave of the Women's Movement in the Philippines and the Evolution of Feminist Politics"*. In Gender, Culture and Society: Selected Readings in Women's Studies in the Philippines, 1st ed. Seoul, Korea: Ewha Women's University Press

equality". [4] Founded in 1984 by women's groups of various political persuasions and class composition, the General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action (GABRIELA) was the first attempt at unifying women's organisations around a feminist agenda.

With the toppling of the dictator Marcos in 1986 and the subsequent restoration of democracy under the Corazon Aquino administration, CSOs, non-traditional political parties and women's organisations in urban, poor, rural and grassroots communities blossomed, taking on specific women's issues (e.g. sexual violence/rape, reproductive rights, sexuality, legislative reforms for women) as their focus and addressing these with concrete programmatic actions. At the same time, development NGO networks and multi-stakeholder networks are also growing, such as The Women's Action Network for Development (WAND), Collective Initiative of Women for the Transformation of the Laws and Society (SIBOL), and the Reproductive Health Advocacy Network (RHAN).

1.2 Legal Frameworks promoting women's empowerment

The Philippines' constitutional and legal framework acknowledges the need for gender mainstreaming. This is manifested in a few policies and initiatives which are directed at women's empowerment. In terms of supporting the improvement of women's participation and representation in politics and governance, the Philippine Women's Suffrage Plebiscite in 1937 paved the way for the inclusion of the right of suffrage to women in the 1935 Constitution.

In 1975, through Presidential Decree No. 633, the government established the country's primary policy-making and coordinating body on women and gender equality concerns, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) .

Meanwhile, R.A. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women's Rights mandates the government to institute affirmative action measures so that women can participate meaningfully in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies, plans, and programs for national, regional, and local development. It mandates the adoption of temporary special measures for the incremental increase of women in third-level positions (senior executives) in the civil service until a 50:50 gender balance is achieved, sets a 40% quota for women in local development councils and planning

bodies, and provides for the creation of an incentive system for encouraging political parties to integrate women in their leadership hierarchy and electoral nominating processes, among others.

The following are legislations and government policies which seek to foster women's leadership and political participation:

1. R.A. 7160 Local Government Code (1991) mandates that one third of sector representatives in every municipal, provincial and city legislative council should be a woman.

2. R.A. 7941 Party List Law (1995) mandates that there shall be party-list representatives and the women sector is to be allocated a seat therein. The law is the fruit of the efforts of activists to push for electoral reforms, which has since enabled women's organisations to represent their constituencies in Congress. This led to the passage of several legislative measures such as the 2000 Solo Parent Act, the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Law, the Reproductive Health Bill, and the Gender Balance Bill.

3. R.A. 7192 Women in Development and Nation Building Act (1992) provides guidance and measures to enhance participation of women in the development process in ways equal to that of men. The law provides that a substantial portion of government resources be utilised to support programs and activities for women and encourages the removal of gender bias in all government regulations and procedures.

4. R.A. 7688 An Act Giving Representation to Women in the Social Security Commission (1994) guarantees women's representation in the Social Security Commission.

5. Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (1995-2025) or the National Plan for Women consolidates the development goals and action commitments to mainstream gender perspectives in public programs and policies.

6. Gender and Development (GAD) aims at "institutionalising gender concerns in the mainstream development process and agenda" and prescribes for the allocation of 5% of the government agency's/local government unit's budget on gender-responsive activities and projects.

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4   Santos-Maranan, A., Perrena, N. and Fabros, A. (2007). *"Women's Political Participation in the Philippines. Conversations, reflections and Recommendations."* https://www.eldis.org/document/A57724#.WK8PnRhh1E4

7. Framework Plan for Women (FPW) lists actions to be undertaken by government agencies, local government units (LGUs), and civil society, including mainstreaming GAD in the bureaucracy and enhancing women's leadership roles and participation in decision-making. The plan identifies the concrete gender issues that will be addressed, pinpoints targets and indicators, names programmes, formulates the implementation plan, and sets up tools for monitoring and evaluation.

1.3 Women's political participation

The Philippines has consistently maintained its position as one of the strongest performers in terms of gender equality in the East Asia and Pacific region [5]. Women holding leadership positions is also not unusual in the Philippines. Since the end of the Marcos dictatorship, for instance, Filipinos have already installed two female presidents(Corazon Aquino from 1986-1992 and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from 2001-2010), two female vice presidents (Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in 1998-2001 and Leni Robredo in 2016-present), and had its first woman Supreme Court justice (Cecilia Muñoz Palma in 1973), reflecting a long history of efforts by women to involve themselves equally in governance as well as in society.

In the Philippine Senate, the number of female senators has been from three to six out of the 24 since 2001. Since the 12th Congress in 2001, only one female has ever served in a leadership position within the Senate whilst no female has ever assumed the rank of Senate President or House Speaker. In the 2013 senatorial election, women secured four out of 12 available seats (33.3%), an increase from only two in 2010. In the 2013 Congress, women accounted for 25.6% of all members of the House of Representatives compared to 22.5% in the 2010 Congress.

Women's representation in politics and governance has been increasing. In 2017, among 24 members of the Senate, six are women (25%). The House of Representatives has 86 female politicians of 292 representatives (29.5%) whilst there are 59 party-list House members, 19 of which are women, representing various marginalised sectors including women and the youth.

Table 1 — Percentage of Women Elected Officials - Philippines

ELECTION YEAR	WOMEN	MEN
1998	**16.15%**	83.85%
2004	**16.63%**	83.37%
2010	**18.56%**	81.44%
2013	**19.92%**	79.75%
2016	**21.45%**	78.55%

Women have also been dominating the bureaucracy, especially the technical or second-level position. As of August 2017, women make up most of the bureaucracy, accounting for 62% of the total 1.56 million government personnel[6]. Meanwhile 42% of third-level positions in the government are occupied by women[7].

In contrast, the picture is particularly alarming in the local elective offices, such as in the positions of governor, mayor, and lower elected positions. In 2013, only 11% of elected local officials were women - 12 Provincial Governors, 10 Vice Governors, 10 mayors, 9 vice mayors - a sharp decline from 20% in 2010, 18% in 2007, and 17% in 2004. At the barangay level, specifically, women only occupied 19% and 27% of all barangay captain and councilperson posts, respectively[8].

In the executive branch, top positions in cabinet offices have likewise remained largely male dominated since 1986. Currently, eight out of 32 ministerial positions (32%) are held by women[9]. Women have been more represented in the traditionally female-associated fields of health (28.6%), tourism (33.3%), and social welfare (100%) while less represented in areas of economics (8.3%), budget and management (15.4%), finance (6.7%), and foreign affairs (6.2%). The Department of Social Welfare and Development has had only female secretaries since 1986.

5   See for example: World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report and UNDP's Gender Inequality Index
6   Civil Service Commission. (2017). *Inventory of Government Human Resource.* http://www.csc.gov.ph/2014-02-21-08-28-23/pdf-files/category/1214-2017. html?download=4056:inventory-of-government-human-resource-as-of-august-31,-2017
7   Firmalo-Fabic, T. (2016). *"Women in Politics and Governance."* In: Manang at Ading: A National Dialogue on the Past, Present and Future of the Women's Movement in the Philippines
8   Commission on Elections. (2017).
9   Inter-Parliamentarian Union. (2017). *"Women in Politics: 2017".* https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2017-03/women-in-politics-2017

02

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Questions

In this research, we explored the role of women in open government processes and how country governments and OGP processes have ensured women's representation and the inclusion of women's issues and concerns in open government in these two countries. This stems from the hypothesis that the inclusion of women in OGP processes are incidental, if not accidental, and that the inclusion of women's issues and concerns are impacted by the lack of intentionality in making the OGP process inclusive of women.

More particularly, the research would like to answer the following questions:

1. **How are women and women's groups participating in open government processes more particularly?** How are women's issues and concerns presented/represented NAP processes and how are their needs considered in drafting the NAP? What mechanisms and processes have governments instituted to ensure that women are represented in OGP processes and their issues and concerns included?

2. **What key gender data sets do women want their governments to proactively publish?** What datasets were provided by government to them proactively, and used by them to pursue gender-inclusive development?

3. **What challenges and opportunities exist in terms of incorporating gender-sensitive OGP commitments in these countries?**

2.2   Methodology

Data collection, done over a period of three months, involved a combination of a review of secondary documents (e.g. budget statements, spending reports, laws and policies, OGP action plans), key informant interviews, and focus group discussions with government, civil society advocates, and local community representatives. Prior and informed consent were obtained from respondents in key informant interview and focus groups. Respondents' right to privacy was also respected. A total of 34 individuals participated in the research, from government (6), national civil society organizations (6), academia (4), private sector (4) women's groups (14); 70% of whom are women.

The researchers find Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework as an appropriate lens to assess the "OGP Project" in both countries. The framework focuses on levels of empowerment – welfare, access, conscientization, participation, and control – and the attendant conditions that bring about differences in both men and women's condition along these levels.

The researchers are mindful of the inherent limitations of the framework and used these limitations as points of consideration in unpacking the analysis narratives. The researchers redefined the notions of access to suit the OGP as a political project – welfare (women's current political condition, relative to men), access (women's access to political processes within the OGP), conscientization (conscious understanding of sex and gender, cultural norms, and its implications to political participation), participation (women's participation in political processes), and control (women's control over decision making processes).

03

RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 Framework for Inclusion

This section will begin with discussing how the Philippine government underwent the formulation of their National Action Plans.

The legal and foundational basis of OGP in the Philippines is the 1987 Constitution promulgated after a democratic revolution ended a long-standing dictatorship. The Constitution enshrined not only the participation of the Filipino people in every aspect of governance, but also institutionalized the landmark provisions on transparency and accountability. The Local Government Code, the blueprint legislation for the country's decentralization project also mandates citizen participation in governance processes, mandating public participation in planning, budgeting, procurement, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of government transactions.

The Open Government Process (OGP) in the Philippines is led by a Steering Committee (SC) comprising representatives from government, civil society, and the business community, serving as the consultation and coordination forum on the status and implementation of the national action plans (NAPs). Housed in the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the OG Secretariat has coordinated implementation and served as the communication centre for the Steering Committee.

The current action plan is currently anchored on the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 that defines the Duterte's administration's priorities - more inclusive growth, a high-trust and resilient society, and a globally competitive knowledge economy. The plan identifies three pillars - *Malasakit* or enhancing the social fabric, *Pagbabago* or reducing inequality, and *Kaunlaran* or increasing potential rapid economic growth.

For the current action plan (2017-2019), the SC defined the action plan development process and timeline that it published through the government cluster website and the PH OGP's Facebook page. The crafting process started with the issuance of the call for OGP commitments to various national government agencies. As a response, a total of 26 proposed commitments were submitted by various national government agencies.

After consolidating all submissions, the draft list of commitments was presented back to the SC in a meeting where these were evaluated based on agreed criteria; ambitious targets, anchored on one or more OGP Grand Challenge and OGP Values, secured government support or buy-in (priority initiative of concerned agency/ies), and with an existing funding under the agency's budget. After the presentation,

a Technical Working Group further fleshed out the proposed initiatives based on the criteria and narrowed down the number of commitments.

Regional and thematic consultations were then conducted. The regional consultations were important because they brought the OGP discussions to the major island groups in the archipelagic country. National and local government officials, and representatives from civil society, business groups, academe, public sector unions, international development partners, and media were convened in these consultations to provide comments and recommendations to the plan.

The first draft was then produced by the SC based on the results of the consultations and the review of the previous action plan and the recommendations of the IRM report. The draft was subjected to another round of consultation, this time through online means, before the report was finalized and submitted.

It must be noted that during this action plan preparation process, the Philippines, for the first time, incorporated subnational commitments. So, a separate subnational drafting and consultation was also conducted with interested subnational governments. Three provinces submitted commitments that were incorporated into the action plan.
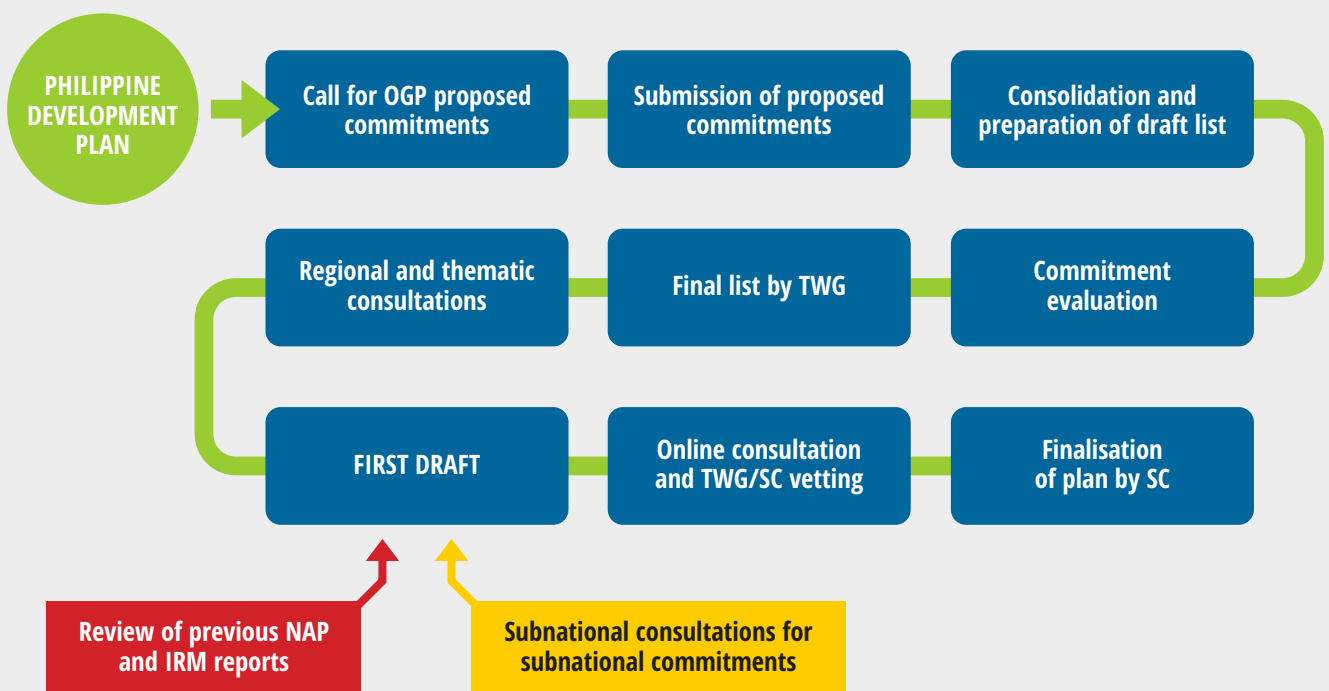
3.2 Women's Participation in the OGP Process

In these processes, how were women participating?

Women's organizations are not represented in the SC in the Philippines. Though there are women who are members of the steering committee, they represent different sectoral concerns. In the Philippines, two government representatives out of the seven are women, while six out of the eight CSO representatives are women, coming from different sectors as academia, NGO coalitions, labor, and business.

A more inclusive process in terms or participation is employed in the Philippines, where consultations at the regional levels where conducted, in the archipelagic countries three major island groups. In these consultations, though women are represented, only very few are coming from women sectoral groups. While the country has initiated mechanisms to strengthen participation of any sector throughout, from the preparation of national action plans (NAPs), the implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation, it has has not yet instituted any process which could ensure equal representation of different citizen groups in its processes and evaluate the inclusive quality of its processes and outcomes. This, despite legal provisions on mandatory representation earlier discussed.

Interestingly, only very few (less than 20%) of women's organizations we consulted with in the country were aware of the OGP process and how they can use it to advance women-specific issues and concerns.

3.3 Inclusion of Women's Issues and Concerns in OGP Action Plans

National Action Plans in the Philippines show that while civic participation and citizen engagement are at the core of several commitments, none of these specifically relate to women, and women's issues and concerns even though women organizations, down to the grassroots level, are participating significantly in governance processes. In the Philippines, two major issues affecting women are (1) gender-gap in labour participation and (2) violence against women. None of these made it to the two countries' national action plans.

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the presidential commission mandated as the primary policy-making and coordinating body on women and gender equality concerns in the country, is not part of the Philippines' OGP Steering Committee though it was identified as one of the implementers of one of the commitments but only in determining benchmarks for the performance of local governments. The commission is not sufficiently engaged in the OGP process since the time the country became a member to the OGP.

3.4 Data publication and use

The Philippines publishes government data proactively in a national portal (data.gov.ph). Currently, there are 284 datasets in the portal and has less coverage when compared to the period before it was redesigned. Except for some data where details are sex-aggregated, there are no datasets available in the portal that specifically addresses women's issues and concerns. Currently, the Philippine government does not give priority to proactive data disclosure; it currently strengthens its implementation of the FOI portal, a reactive disclosure mechanism. Local government websites are also available where local government units post data related to local public finance, including compliance to the Gender and Development Budgeting guidelines.

Women's organizations use data from government to monitor government's budgeting and spending performance as well as evaluate government's delivery of public services. As the portal currently does not contain these datasets, the groups resort to asking for the physical data from relevant government agencies or securing them from contacts and partners from within government. There is a strong budget monitoring network among CSOs that regularly meets to scrutinize the government's spending processes. Women leaders also are at the helm of the Right to Know Right Now Coalition, a group of more than 150 individuals and organizations demanding for the passage of the right to information law in the country.

04

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 Challenges

We classify the challenges in advancing women's inclusion in the OGP process into three institutional, cultural, and process challenges. We discuss these below.

4.1.1 Institutional challenges

Respondents from CSOs and government stakeholders agree that the OGP Steering Committee in the Philippines is still focusing on strengthening its institutional capacity and enhancing awareness about the Open Government agenda, activities, and achievements.

The OGP secretariat is lodged in a powerful agency, the Department of Budget and Management, and has sufficient command of other agencies in terms of their cooperation and compliance to the OGP process. However, the secretariat is also ill-resourced and the OGP mechanism is considered as a program, and additional task to those coordinating the OGP process, who also at the same time perform other functions besides OGP coordination.

There is no strong orientation towards gender and feminism in the lead agencies coordinating the OGP processes. As a result, inclusion of women in OGP processes is not purposive but accidental, and the inclusion of women's issues and concerns in the NAP is inconsequential.

4.1.2   Cultural challenges

Despite appearing to be ahead of other countries in women's representation in politics and governance, Philippines' political landscape is still male-dominated. Besides, the election of women generally conformed to constraints posed by dynastic and patronage politics that characterise the Philippine system. Almost all women who occupied the highest positions in government, including the women presidents and prominent women legislators, either came from political families or were associated with prominent politicians by marriage.

Critics have also been pointing out that the perceptible increase in the number of women elected into government and regulatory posts does not necessarily translate into more gender responsive policy, economic or electoral outcomes, and promote women's agenda. Although the women's movement made certain gains and spaces were opened for the progressive participation of women at different levels of society during the women-led presidencies, both presidents have been staying the conservative path vis-a-vis reproductive rights.

The aggregates also fail to reveal that women in the Philippines remain sorely underrepresented in the highest positions in elective and appointive positions across the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, where most important decisions are made, and directions are set.

There are numerous obstacles for women to partake a bigger role and impact in the Philippines' politics. Leadership is still conceptualised in terms of male strength with women bearing the double-burden challenge to breaking the glass ceiling in politics whilst still having to take care of the next generations of the political family. The nature of political relations and transactions also puts the role of women in the margins by reducing the access to resources and decision-making thus diminishing their political power.

In the current political climate where there is low regard, and at the extreme, a grave disrespect of women, encouraged by the president himself, voices of key women leaders in the Philippine government seemed to be muted, even that of the PCW. Influential women who are critical of the current administration are argued to be targeted – jailed as in the case of one senator, or politically harassed as in the case of one publisher of an online news site.

These cultural realities have significant impact on OGP processes, albeit in a covert way. For example, in the Philippines, textual analysis of priorities set in regional consultations reveal that there are several commitments identified, some indirectly related to women and other marginalized groups as indigenous peoples, but these were not included when prioritization was done at the national steering committee level. How these commitments were excluded was not communicated to proponents, and thus, devaluing the importance and relevance of consultations to the inclusiveness of the process.

4.1.3   Process issues

The absence of requirements from the OGP mandating accountable equal participation throughout the OGP cycle as well as the mechanism to evaluate NAPs in terms of its contribution to increasing women's rights, access to services, and welfare, significantly affected how OGP processes in the Philippines have unknowingly excluded women's groups in its processes, and the inclusion of women's issues and concerns in the country's NAP. This is so because the nature of the OGP principles do not necessarily point to inclusion. While transparency, accountability, and citizen participation are the pillars to which government performance is measured against, inclusion of women, and other marginalized groups is assumed under the catch-all banner of participation. Though recent literature produced by the OGP Steering Committee mentions women participation, this can not be seen in the language of guidance notes issued by OGP on the core values of access to information, civic participation, public accountability, and technology and innovation.

This lack of guidance, or the pointers towards it, which OGP is now starting to amend with making inclusion as a fundamental consideration in the participation pillar, affected the OGP processes in the Philippines. Inclusion of women was only incidental to the fact that some leaders of agencies and civil society organizations are women, though they do not necessarily represent women's advocacies. Consequently, no specific commitment has been included in the NAP that addresses women's issues and concerns.

4.2   Opportunities

But these challenges also present opportunities as indicated below:

4.2.1   The OGP momentum for the inclusion of women

The emergence and effort to institutionalise the discourse of feminist governance in the OGP starting off with this research for example, has increased the awareness of both government and civil society organizations participating in the OGP regarding the importance and necessity of making the OGP processes in the country more gender-responsive. Hopefully, this awareness would help inform new ways of doing to make the planning, implementation, and monitoring of OGP commitments more gender-responsive.

4.2.2   Greater awareness and willingness of women organizations to participate in OGP processes

Most women's organizations we have engaged with in this research were not aware of what the OGP is and how relevant it is for their goals of gender equality. However, after getting a more in-depth explanation about OGP, the implementation of open government, and the current achievements so far, women's organisations perceive the initiative enthusiastically as they look at it as yet another platform to engage with and influence government.

4.2.3   Gender lens to discern gender dimensions in NAP

With no participation from women's organisations in the OGP processes, it would be difficult for the inclusion of standalone gender-sensitive commitments in the NAPs. However, there are several commitments included in the current NAP in which could be used as a starting place for engagement with women's issues and concerns.

For example, the PH-OGP NAP 2015-2017 mandated the Philippine Commission on Women, National Council on Disability Affairs, Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas, and National Council on Indigenous People, as some of the agencies in charge of implementing the commitment to 'enhance performance benchmarks for local governance' as one of the efforts to achieve commitment #8 (Seal of Good Local Governance). The current criteria for exemplary performance in local governance could have been improved by not just looking at gender and development compliance in documentation requirements, but also performance in addressing gender issues and concerns.

There are other areas where the action plans can be improved had a gender lens been used in drafting the commitments. For example, commitment 9 in the current action plan mandated that the annual Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) report incorporate information on processes in the extractive industries which involve indigenous peoples as a way to inform the public about the multi-stakeholder dialogues which happen throughout the EITI processes. This could have been made more gender-responsive by looking at how women in indigenous communities and communities within mining sites are impacted by mining activities.

The same can also be said for action plan commitments related to the urban poor on shelter planning. Relevant questions such as "(1) How are women participating in shelter planning? (2) How are women's needs incorporated into urban shelter plans?" are critical. As a matter of fact, all the 11 commitments in the current action plan could have been expressed more intentionally to address the issues of women and other disadvantaged groups.

4.2.4   NAP processes can be made more inclusive by design.

The current OGP process in the Philippines could have provided opportunities for strengthened involvement of women and the inclusion of women's concerns and promote wider inclusion of other marginalized sectors, had there been a more intentional process of doing so. For example, regional consultations could have been designed to include under-represented groups, including women, so that their issues and concerns are addressed in the articulation of the commitments.

The framing of political, economic, and social issues underpinning the national action plans could have been improved by problem analysis processes that ask the basic question of how do specific problems or challenges impact women and men differently. Also, it can be made more inclusive if the commitments are implemented and monitored cognizant that the word "citizens" can mean different sets of people with different needs – men, women, differently-abled, children, youth, among others. Finally, public data sets that will inform both the design and progress of commitments need to be gender-disaggregated to allow a more nuanced analysis of the progress of OGP NAP implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the research have shown that participation of women in the OGP process was just coincidental thus affecting how the OGP action plans were prepared and how women's issues and concerns were included in the process.

The OGP process, we argue, can be made inclusive by design, and this means that more opportunities could have been designed for more women interest groups to participate and advocate for women-specific commitments.

But is designing an inclusive OGP enough?

This paper argues the argument of inclusive design needs to be problematised, after all, consulting people need not necessarily mean that their needs are answered. In this case, Longwe's women empowerment framework is critical because it allows a further articulation of how those included are valued in the process of incorporation. Are they just given access to the means of participation in the OGP process (welfare) or they are given the voice to control the decision-making process (control)? In the same way, as a consequence of their inclusion, will they be better than before, when they were excluded (positive recognition) or nothing is expected to be changed at all (neutral recognition)?

To improve gender-responsiveness of the OGP process in the Philippines, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Open Government Partnership should consider including an operation manual, code of conduct, or mandatory requirement for equal participation throughout the OGP cycle as well as mechanisms to evaluate NAPs in terms of its contribution to increasing women's political representation, access to information, public services, economic resources and social protection. Guidance could be developed to support women's participation, including use of gender indicators to evaluate the quality of open government implementation.

2. The Open Government Secretariat should invest additional efforts to increase awareness of women's organizations as to the value of participation in the OGP and benefits for engaging. More than merely inviting women's groups to participate in the OGP processes, ensuring that there is a greater political opportunity for their activism to gain success through the OGP platform is critical.

3. The Philippine government should strengthen the role of the Philippine Commission on Women in the OGP processes and involve more women's organizations in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of national action plans (NAP).

4. The Open Government Secretariat should Include gender indicators in OGP country progress reports. The inclusion of gender dimensions in OGP NAPs and the involvement of women in community monitoring of its implementation could be used as a method to assess OGP impact on men and women and to identify corrective measures needed to ensure future positive outcomes.

5. Women organizations and civil society groups advocating for women's issues and concerns should leverage commitments included in the current NAP as a starting place for engagement with women's issues and concerns, such as access to education, health services, social protection, ownership rights and access to productive resources, among others. The incorporation of more specific issues to the NAPs which address the need for diverse marginalized groups would add depth to the general OGP themes and increase the OGP profile as a platform to improve governance.

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