**Combating Corruption through School-Based Monitoring of
Education Services in the Philippines:
Establishing G-Watch Local Hubs**

Project Completion Report

Submitted to:

Partnership for Transparency Fund

Government Watch
Ateneo School of Government
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Executive Summary

1. The Ateneo School of Government – Government Watch started the implementation of the project "Combating Corruption through School-Based Monitoring of Education Services in the Philippines: Establishing G-Watch Local Hubs," shortly known as "DepEd – CSO Local Hubs," in June 2011 in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) with support from its long time partner, the Partnership for Transparency Fund.

2. Series of meetings were conducted between the G-Watch team and DepEd through the Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS), Physical Facilities and Schools Engineering Division (PFSED) and the Procurement Service (PS) to conceptualize and plan out the effective implementation of project activities.

3. Mobilization and enlistment of more civil society organizations (CSOs) were carried out through the conduct of the National Roll Out of Bayanihang Eskwela (BayEsk) and the Re-launch of Textbook Count. The identification of regional and division coordinators for BayEsk and Textbook Count with additional groundworking of the project team helped in determining CSOs that could be tapped for the project.

4. Briefing Orientations were conducted in the regions of the pilot divisions. For Region VIII divisions, the briefing orientation was held on March 5, 2012 at the Regional Education Learning Center in Palo, Leyte. As for ARMM divisions, it was conducted on March 18 – 19, 2012 at the Office of the Regional Governor in Cotabato City. Lastly, divisions in Region IV – A were oriented on March 20 – 21, 2012 at Tri-Place Hotel in Quezon City. A total of 75 Local Hubs members (20 in Region IV – A, 23 in Region VIII and 32 in ARMM) were further capacitated on the G-Watch Social Accountability technology with highlight on constructive engagement, their roles as members of the Local Hubs and the activities to be undertaken to enable school-based monitoring.

5. The Local Hubs members were tasked to facilitate school-based monitoring in their respective divisions. The facilitation activities included (1) conduct of briefing orientation for the school-based monitoring teams (SBMTs) (2) deployment of the SBMTs to the projects to be monitored (3) consolidation of the monitoring tools (4) processing of monitoring results and (5) sending report to the National Coordinating Group. Through the facilitation of the Local Hubs, a total of Php 391M out of the Php 894M worth of projects were monitored with corresponding reports.

6. Sharing Sessions were conducted to (1) gather the experiences of the Local Hubs members in the facilitation of the school-based monitoring and (2) discuss issues and challenges encountered in the course of facilitation process. The Sharing Sessions were conducted on September 11, 2013 at the RELC for pilot divisions in Region VIII, on September 30, 2013 at the Ateneo School of Government for Region IV – A pilot divisions and on October 1, 2013 at the AlNor Hotel for ARMM divisions.

7. A Problem Solving Session was conducted on October 11, 2013 at Oakwood Premier Joy-Nostalg Center. Attendees of the Problem Solving Session include representatives from DepEd, specifically from the IMCS, PS and Offices of the Assistant Secretaries on Planning and Chief of Staff and from a national CSO, the Boy Scout of the Philippines National Council. The objectives of the Problem Solving Session are the following: (1) present issues and challenges as generated from the implementation of project activities in the pilot divisions (2) present recommendations to address the issues and challenges discussed (3) solicit responses and commitment from the national stakeholders.

8. The pilot-test of Local Hubs proved the viability of such intermediary mechanism as an enabler of school-based monitoring provided that (1) its application will take into account condition of the local context and (2) support will be provided for its operations. The paper entitled *Lessons and Recommendations in Sustaining School-Based Monitoring of Education Services* presents the lessons learned from the various sustainability efforts of G-Watch including the pilot run of Local Hubs and recommends ways how to enable and sustain school-based monitoring.

Background and Rationale

Budget for basic education is at an all time high of P207.27 billion for 2011, growing by 18.46% (P32 billion) from the 2010 budget of P175 billion. The Department of Education (DepEd) once again received the highest budget appropriation among all government agencies (excluding debt servicing). In order to ensure that the allocated budget goes to the needed education services, G-Watch shall sustain and expand its engagement with DepEd through school-based monitoring backed up by Local Hubs in order to eliminate opportunities for corruption.

Despite the significant increase in the budget for education, it still falls short from the ideal P461 billion recommended by UNESCO (6% of total GDP) or the P329B recommended by World Bank (20% of the national budget). This budget is still not sufficient to address our deficit of 75,751 teachers, 120,952 classrooms, and 3.8 million chairs and desks. The need to guard it against leaks and corruption and ensure transparent procurement and budget execution of the DepEd has never been more crucial.

The timing is also of the essence as DepEd has received and executed the use of budget increases for school facilities and textbooks. The Basic Education Facilities Fund (BEFF) is worth more than P10 billion for fiscal year 2012 and the universal procurement and delivery of textbooks is worth P1.2 billion.

At present, there have already been existing efforts by civil society to ensure transparent and accountable delivery of education services. However, the impact of these efforts remains limited as there remain problems of sustaining the CSO efforts in monitoring services of the department, hence the constant threat of backsliding. These efforts also cover limited national processes due to the limited number of national actors.

In trying to address the abovementioned challenges, G-Watch has successfully institutionalized transparency and accountability mechanisms in DepEd's education service delivery. The mechanisms introduced have the following main features:

(1) a policy from the national that supports decentralized and community-based engagement of citizens and government in performance monitoring (i.e. Department of Educations' passage of Department Orders adopting G-Watch's Textbook Count and Bayanihang Eskwela);
(2) operational mechanisms at the national and local levels of the government as stipulated in the national policy; and,
(3) tools and technology for building capacities of citizens, communities and government officials on the ground.

The abovementioned mechanisms can be observed in the institutionalization process of Textbook Count and recent adoption of Bayanihang Eskwela. Thus, in the last two rounds of Textbook Count, G-Watch tested a hands-off approach to assess if such models of institutionalization would work. G-Watch generated important lessons in sustaining citizen participation in monitoring the government which it hoped to put into action through the

implementation of the project: *Combating Corruption through School-Based Monitoring of Education Services in the Philippines: Establishing G-Watch Local Hubs.*
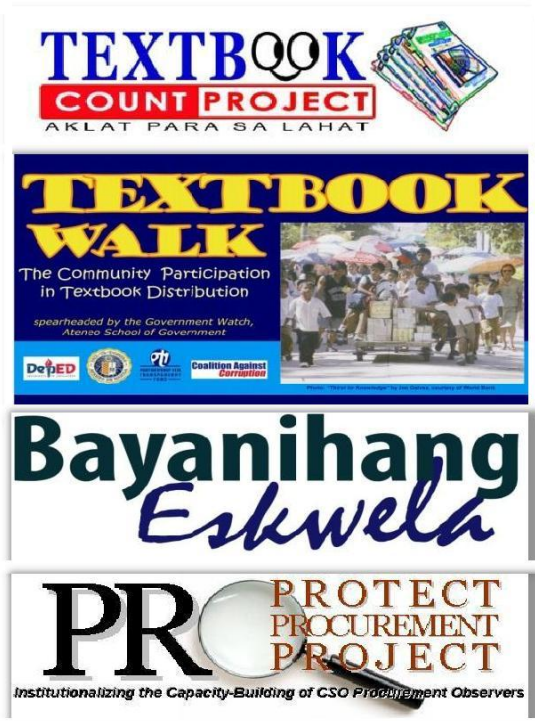
The institutionalization mechanisms such as the Department Orders adopting Bayanihang Eskwela and Textbook Count as DepEd's own projects have proven to be important in putting the ideal systems where school communities can participate in education monitoring into concrete policies. These policies however are proven to still be insufficient in ensuring sustainability of social accountability efforts as they still need to go beyond their reliance on a centralized coordination which is being done by the Department of Education.

Indeed, past experiences show that centralized coordination of local monitoring initiatives still requires substantial resources for it to be sustained. During the implementation of Textbook Count, while quite advanced in institutionalization, G-Watch still experienced the difficulty of ensuring active participation of CSOs around the Philippines as G-Watch cannot coordinate all CSOs in more than 190 divisions in the country.

With such centralized set up, it is thus evident that it would be difficult to sustain the following processes and activities without ample resources:

- Mobilization of monitors
- Capacity-building of monitors
- Transmission of information and tools
- Processing of monitoring results

Addressing this would be most critical as G-Watch believes that social accountability mechanisms should be closer to the beneficiaries where corruption is most likely to occur. Indeed, corruption happens when contractors and frontline service providers feel that they can short-change beneficiaries who do not know what they should receive. This was the case in the past that led to the use of sub-standard materials for school-building projects, to persistence of ghost projects and ghost textbook deliveries, and to contracts not being followed in terms of quantity and quality, among others.

Social accountability mechanisms that are nearer to the implementation process also ensure faster transmission of information and reporting system. In monitoring services,

ensuring quick response from agencies would be most important to ensure that deviations are corrected immediately with minimal cost from the government.

G-Watch thus believes that decentralization serves the most promising set up as it would (1) ensure that minimum resources are needed, and that (2) ensure quicker feedback and more responsive governance as coordination and information transfer happens closer to the ground.

School- based monitoring further ensures that there will be accountability mechanisms present at the implementation stage of education service deliveries where corruption is most evident and easier to identify. Moreover, monitoring at the implementation/ delivery stage ensures that the right quantity and quality of services are provided to and claimed by the beneficiaries themselves.

A nationwide school-based monitoring of education services however has some pre-requisites for it to be implemented. There should be (1) available capacity-building mechanisms, (2) available tools and monitoring materials and (3) transmission belts of information and monitoring results as well as feedbacks requiring quick response.

This project provided these pre-requisites that would serve as a backbone for a school-based monitoring of education services. These took the form of **Local Hubs** (based in provinces and divisions) which served as intermediary groups that provided capacity-building, tools for monitoring, and served as transmission belts for monitoring reports and feedbacks.

G-Watch contents that enabling a school-based monitoring connected to intermediary mechanisms (local hubs) at the division/provincial levels – that receive and transmit information from national to schools, and subsequently from schools to the national – will ensure that information on the quantity and quality of services is provided to the beneficiaries. This will also serve as supervisors and technical experts, as well as communication points where beneficiaries can report their monitoring findings and thus will serve to ensure that such accountability activities on the ground by monitors are supported and sustained.

Areas of Coverage

While G-Watch coordinated with DepEd to oversee and provide capacity-building support to the national implementation of *Bayanihang Eskwela*, G-Watch's intensive intervention in setting-up Local Hubs focused on three regions selected according to the following criteria:
- Presence/ non-presence of G-Watch partners (areas with no G-Watch partners are also selected to see the how this constraint will be overcome in the implementation of the project);
- Areas with high allocation of SBPs and/or textbooks;
- Areas facing challenges in misallocation and education outcomes; and
- Areas not covered by the networks of G-Watch to avoid duplication.

The following were the regions covered by the project:

Region IV-A. Region IV-A has the highest enrollment population translating to high textbook allocation. It also has the second highest allocation of SBPs for 2011. As per a study conducted by G-Watch, divisions with highest misallocation in SBPs and furniture in year 2009 are in this region. G-Watch already mobilized monitors in some schools in the region for BayEsk's second round. However, G-Watch has no existing partner organization in the region. This will be the case that can demonstrate how G-Watch will overcome this constraint.

ARMM. G-Watch has already conducted around three trainings in ARMM for BayEsk and PRO, thus the presence of prospective partners and monitors. It has the third highest allocation of SBPs. Transparency and accountability in ARMM remains a problem, as documented in the Bayanihang Eskwela 2 and 3, due to the region's autonomy in governance processes which remains unstable and unclear at the moment. Possible partners of G-Watch in ARMM are: Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS) and Young Moro Network in Social Accountability.

Region VIII. Region VIII has a relatively high allocation of SBPs, bagging the seventh rank in allocation. In a study conducted by G-Watch, it was noted that this region has a relatively high misallocation in SBPs in 2009. It also has a relatively high enrollment, ranking seventh among the 17 regions of the country. Through Protect Procurement Project 2 (PRO 2), a G-Watch chapter in Tacloban has been formed. They are the main partners for this implementation in the region. Another partner for this region is the Eastern Visayas Network of NGOs and POs (EVNET).

The Parent - Teachers Associations (PTAs), Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSPs), and Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSPs) of the areas were the first ones tapped for the project.

Activities Conducted

From August 2011 to October 2013, the following activities were conducted in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the project:

Phase 1: Mobilize and enlist more civil society organizations to adopt the G-Watch technology in monitoring education services.

1. Convening of the Bayanihang Eskwela National Coordinating Group and Launching of the Bayanihang Eskwela Nationwide Roll Out

   On August 10, 2011, the Ateneo School of Government convened representatives from organizations that committed to be part of the Bayanihang Eskwela National Coordination Group.

These included Boy Scouts of the Philippines, Civil Society Network for Education Reforms (E-Net), Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, DepEd, DPWH, Girl Scouts of the Philippines, National PTA Confederation, Northern Luzon Consortium for Good Governance, Procurement Watch, Inc., Public Services Labor Independent Confederation, Young Moro Network for Social Accountability, Western Visayas Network of Development NGOs and. These organizations were asked to invite their local counterparts who can serve as local coordinators for the nationwide implementation of Bayanihang Eskwela.

Different DepEd and CSO representatives pledge their commitment to the Bayanihang Eskwela Initiative during its nationwide roll-out launch.

To formally mark the start of DepEd's adoption of Bayanihang Eskwela, DepEd hosted the official launching of the BayEsk Nationwide roll-out on August 18, 2011. This was specifically conducted to solicit pledges of commitment from members of the National Coordinating Group in coordinating Bayanihang Eskwela through their local counterparts.

2. Convening of the Textbook Count National Coordinating Group and Re-launching of the Textbook Count and Textbook Walk

On September 5, 2011, organizations which have been part of the Consortium of CSOs for Textbook Count were once again convened by the Ateneo School of Government. This coming off together of the CSOs for Textbook Count was done to provide support in sustaining and coordinating implementation of the Textbook Count and Textbook Walk. The next steps were also discussed and area assignments were agreed upon by the participating organizations.

Representatives coming from different partner organizations stand for the official re-launching of Textbook Count

DepEd, in coordination with the Ateneo School of Government, conducted the re-launching of the Textbook Count and Textbook Walk project last September 14, 2011 to strengthen and ensure the sustainability of the programs. The launch was also done to renew the commitments of the members of the Consortium of CSOs for Textbook Count in checking the delivery of quality and quantity textbooks to the right beneficiaries.

Organizations which renewed their commitments included the Alliance of Volunteer Educators, Brotherhood of Destiny Inc., BSP, Checkmyschool.org, CODE NGO, Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance, Education Network , GroupAid, GSP, Movement of the Advancements of Student Power, National PTA Federation, Philippine Business for Education, PS LINK, TEACHERS Inc., Transparency and Accountability Network, and YMN. Just like with Bayanihang Eskwela, members of the Consortium of CSOs for Textbook Count were asked to identify areas in which they could serve as coordinator for Textbook Count. The identification of area assignments were used for the monitoring of the upcoming universal delivery of textbooks to all the regions of the country.

3. Communicating and coordinating with DepEd Offices regarding the plans for the implementations of next activities, particularly the orientation of the to-be-Local Hubs members:

- Brainstorming with the units responsible with the service deliveries to be monitored

  On October 6, 2011, the G-Watch convened units of the DepEd Central Office responsible for the delivery of the services that the project targeted to monitor at the school level. These were the Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS) for textbooks represented by Director Socorro Pilor, Physical Facilities and Schools Engineering Division (PFSED) for school building projects and furniture represented by Engr. Erwin Igarta, and the Procurement Service (PS) represented by Director Aida Carpentero. Herein, the different stakeholders brainstormed on the idea of a comprehensive school-based monitoring and threshed out the details of the "DepEd-CSO Local Hubs".

- Meeting with DepEd Undersecretary to solicit support on the project

  The G-Watch team also had a meeting with Hon. Rizalino Rivera, DepEd Undersecretary for Regional Operations last October 27, 2011 to solicit his support in the implementation of the activities for the pilot-testing of the Local Hubs. More particularly, a DepEd Memorandum was drafted, approved and disseminated by the Office of the Undersecretary supporting the initiative and inviting targeted local stakeholders to attend the Briefing Orientations aimed to train members of the Local Hubs.

- Synchronization Workshop with the responsible units of the Department of Education

  Last January 19, 2012, a synchronization workshop was conducted with representatives from the IMCS, PFSED and the PS. Herein, the schedule of DepEd's School Building Program, School Furniture Program, Textbook Delivery Program and other procurement items were laid down. After this, the activities

in the establishment of the Local Hubs were scheduled parallel the different procurement items and implementation dates of the department.

4. Preparation of the Memorandum of Agreement with the ARMM Government

Given the unique set up of Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), a MOA was drafted to formalize the partnership with the ARMM Government and the Department of Education Central Office on education monitoring in the. Apart from the ARMM Government, other groups and agencies were invited to sign the MOA. Three civil society networks in ARMM were brought on board as project partners and signatories in the MOA: the Consortium on Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS), the Young Moro Network for Social Accountability, PUSAKA Mindanao, Inc. (Education Network). This MOA has been approved and is ready for signing. The aforementioned MOA was already checked and approved by the different offices of the DepEd National and is ready for signing. (Refer to Annex A for the Signed MoA)

Phase 2: Establish and capacitate Local Hubs at the provincial/division levels which shall be equipped with the G-Watch technology in monitoring education services

1. Regional Briefing Orientations for Division Coordinating Groups

Through the support of the Department of Education, the second phase of this project was expanded to capacitate division-level representatives from the DepEd and local CSOs *nationwide* on G-Watch technologies, instead of the initially targeted three regions, ten divisions for each region. The orientations conducted had particular focus on Bayanihang Eskwela. Herein, a series of region-wide briefing-orientations were conducted covering all divisions of the country from August to September 2011. The Briefing Orientations also served as a venue to disseminate DepEd Order no. 21 series of 2011, which mandates the school community, headed by the school principal, to form school-based monitoring teams (SBMTs), a multi-sectoral group composed of stakeholders at the school level.

2. Selection of division to be covered as pilot areas for the Local Hubs:

From the pre-determined three regions, two to three divisions were chosen to be the focus areas for the pilot-implementation of the Local Hubs. The divisions were chosen based on: (1) representation of different LGU type (city divisions and provincial divisions), (2) highest allocation per LGU classification, (3) varying levels of CSO participation as indicated through initial research and groundworking.

The divisions chosen are the following:

Regions	Divisions
IV – A	Antipolo City
	Cavite Province

VIII	Calbayog City
	Leyte Province
ARMM	Maguindanao I
	Maguindanao II
	Marawi City

3. Preparation and finalization of the comprehensive monitoring tool kit.

Local Hubs were envisioned to cover the monitoring of the basic services of DepEd namely school buildings, school furniture and textbooks. The G-Watch Social Accountability technology has a feature of using easy-to-use-tools to produce data and evidence-based results. The existing programs adopted and institutionalized by DepEd like Bayanihang Eskwela, Textbook Count and Textbook Walk already have these easy-to-use tools. The G-Watch team, through consultations with the PFSED and checking on the standards, formulated an additional tool for the monitoring of school furniture program. The four tools, together with the readily available PRO Diagnostic Report form designed for monitoring procurement services (Local Hubs members are to attend procurement stages for monitoring in the Division Level) were packaged to serve as the comprehensive monitoring tool kit for education services later on called as the **Education Monitoring Tool Kit**. (Refer to Annex B for the Education Monitoring Tool Kit)

4. Briefing Orientation for pilot Local Hubs

After the divisions were chosen, invitations were sent to local civil society partners who committed to be part of the Textbook Count, Textbook Walk, Bayanihang Eskwela Nationwide Roll-out and Protect Procurement Project. Some potential CSOs not previously engaged with G-Watch projects were also given invitations. Through the invitations, they were asked to join the Local Hubs and attend the scheduled briefing orientations. Relevant DepEd officials were also invited through a memorandum order issued by DepEd Central Office through the facilitation of the Office of Usec. Rizalino Rivera.

The briefing orientations were conducted in the three chosen regions with attendance from the DepEd division office and local CSOs from the pilot divisions. The schedule of each orientation and the venues are as follows:

Regions	Invited Pilot Divisions	Date and Time	Venue
Region VIII	Calbayog City Leyte	March 5, 2012 08:00am – 05:00pm	DepEd – RELC Palo, Leyte
ARMM	Maguindanao I Maguindanao II Marawi City	March 18, 2012 12:00nn – 05:00pm March 19, 2012 08:00am – 05:00pm	Office of the Regional Governor Cotabato City
Region IV –	Antipolo City	March 20, 2012	Tri-Place Hotel

A	Cavite	08:00am – 05:00pm March 21, 2013 08:00am – 12:00nn	Quezon City

Specifically, the members of the Local Hubs are the following: (1) division supply officer, (2) division physical facilities coordinator, (3) local CSOs, such as the Parent-Teacher Association Federation President, Boy Scouts of the Philippines and Girl Scouts of the Philippines representatives. The Schools Division Superintendent, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent and a member of the Local School Board from the local government unit/ Local School Board Secretariat were also encouraged to attend the briefing orientations and be part of the DepEd – CSO Local Hubs.

Below is the list of civil society organizations mobilized for the implementation of the Local Hubs project for each covered divisions. (Refer to Annex C for the List of organizations that will implement the Local Hubs)

Region IV – A:	ARMM:	Region VIII:
Cavite Province: • Boy Scouts of the Philippines • Girl Scouts of the Philippines • Social Action Center/ CARITAS Cavite	Maguindanao I: • Parent – Teacher Association • Minsed Foundation, Inc. • MINCILL • E-NET • Young Moro Network	Leyte Province: • Girl Scouts of the Philippines • Rural Development Institute • Parent-Teacher Association
Antipolo City: • Boy Scouts of the Philippines • Girl Scouts of the Philippines • Parent-Teacher Association • Public Services Labor Independent Confederation, Inc.	Maguindanao II: Girl scouts of the Philippines • Parent-Teacher Association • YPAMS • PUSAKA • ACES	Calbayog City: • Boy Scouts of the Philippines • Social Action Center • Bugto Association • Western Development Foundation, Inc. • Parent-Teacher Association • Eastern Visayas Network • Samar Island Consortium of CSOs
	Marawi City • MADADECA • SUPRABASE • KFI • ARMM Watch • CBCS	

The briefing orientations were conducted to capacitate the members of the Local Hubs in the pilot divisions on the rationale and objectives of Local Hubs, the functions and responsibilities of Local Hubs members, with particular focus on the reports and outputs that expected from them, the services to be monitored and programs to be coordinated by the Local Hubs, and the knowledge products available and how these will be used. A discussion on the coordination (inter-level and inter-agency) and the reporting mechanism of the Local Hubs as guide for their operations was made. The briefing orientations also provided a venue for the Local Hubs to plan their activities and operations for the year.

Below is the template of the program used for each of the briefing orientations. You may also refer to Annex D for the Training Module.

Time	Topic/Activity
30 minutes	Registration
30 minutes	Opening Program • National Anthem • Prayer • Welcoming Remarks • Getting to Know You
30 minutes	Rationale and objectives of DepEd-CSO Local Hubs
1 hour and 30 Minutes	Functions, responsibilities and expected outputs from Local Hubs
15 minutes	Open Forum
1 hour	2012 Government Education Services to be Monitored by Local Hubs • School Building and School Furniture Program • Textbooks • Procurement Service
15 minutes	Open Forum
1 hour	Lunch
1 hour	Existing knowledge products (monitoring tools, reports); *Review on how to use them and brief guide on how the school-based monitoring teams will be taught to use them* • PRO Diagnostics Tool • Inspection and Acceptance Report (Textbooks) • Textbook Walk Report Form • Bayanihang Eskwela Tool • School Furniture Monitoring Tool
30 minutes	Open Forum
1 hour	Suggested coordinating mechanism, reporting process and plan of Activities
1 hour	Planning Workshop and Presentation

30 minutes	Closing Program
	• Pledge of Commitment
	• Closing Remarks

Clockwise:

Mr. Diomangay, Physical Facilities Coordinator of Calbayog City presents the output of their group workshop.

Cavite Local Hub during the formulation of their division action plan.

Local Hubs of Maguindanao I, Maguindanao II and Marawi City as they receive Certificates of Appreciation given out by DepEd – ARMM Assistant Secretary Mr. Noor, Mr. Sahid Ali of PUSAKA, Inc. and Ms. Ruth Romano of DepEd – PS.

Below are the highlights of the discussions during the open forums across the pilot divisions: (Refer to Annex E for the Documentation of the Briefing Orientations)

Financial resources of stakeholders for monitoring

Resources in the form of goods/services/monetary have always been an issue/concern in implementations of projects which involve monitoring. This project is of no difference because it requires different resources for it to work. The usual response to questions regarding resources is that the ASoG/G-Watch team could reimburse the operational expenses (i.e. transportation of Local Hubs members for attending a meeting, meals for convening of Local Hubs members and communication expenses) of the Local Hubs, but everyone is reminded that the support to be provided by the G-Watch team is minimal

and could not cover all the activities that the group would undertake. The local hub members were then encouraged to tap other resources, such as resources from the LGU and other related funds in the division.

Incentive for monitors/volunteers

The next most commonly raised issue/concern is the incentive for the monitors/volunteers. There are participants that would say, "What's in it for the monitors?"

It is clarified that the project could not provide monetary support, especially for the honorarium of the monitors. In instances like this, participants with previous engagements with volunteer works were asked to share their experiences. Ongoing discussions at the national level on state financing for civil society were also shared. The dangers of state financing for civil society in compromising the autonomy and independence of civil society were also discussed with the group.

Security/ Safety / Confidentiality of the monitors

Apart from the financial concerns and benefits for the monitors that are usually brought up during open forums, another frequently-raised issue was security/ safety/ confidentiality of the monitors tapped to be part of the SBMTs.

This usually applies for the monitoring of school building projects wherein reports of non-compliance of contractors (as to the standards) could affect the disbursement of their payments or worst could cause the blacklisting of contractors. Monitors would fear that the contractors would try to get even with them.

This issue was answered by underscoring multi-stakeholdership, collective action and constructive engagement. It was explained during the open forum that in this project, the implementing agencies are also involved so that all issues including security concerns could easily be addressed. The importance of having equal representation/ representatives from various groups was also reiterated because it could provide protection for the individuals in the group.

Another principle that was reiterated was preventive and pre-emptive approach. The monitoring was meant to pre-empt non-compliance to avoid it, so that resources will not be wasted.

Apprehension whether the Local Hubs design is a fault-finding mechanism

The concept of constructive engagement is somewhat new for some of the members of the newly-formed Local Hubs, thus it is quite understandable that some members from the government (DepEd) still have an antagonistic view on the civil society representatives, while civil society representatives still have the bad perception on government officials as being corrupt.

The principle of constructive engagement would be reiterated every time this issue would be raised.

Contingency plans if ever the Local Hubs members couldn't fix the issues amongst themselves

What happens if DepEd officials and civil society representatives couldn't agree on certain issues? The participants then were reminded of constructive engagement and were assured that the ASoG team will be there every step of the way to walk the pilot Local Hubs through the whole process and provide support whenever an issue arises that the local hub members couldn't fix amongst themselves. The G-Watch Team pointed out that this is in accordance with the Communication and Coordination Mechanism of the Local Hubs.

The mandated head of the SBMTs and Strengthening the School Governing Council

The SBMT, being a multi-stakeholder group, needs a chairperson who should be responsible for convening the other members for planning and implementation activities. The mandated head of the SBMT as per DepEd Order 21, s. 2011 is the principal/school head.

The schools now, most especially the autonomous ones, have a School Governing Council (SGC), which basically has the same composition of the SBMTs. It was brought up that the existing SGC could be expanded/ could be added with additional school-based CSOs so that it could perform the roles of the SBMTs.

School building constructions implemented by other agencies other than DepEd

Government resources are never enough to provide for the needed school buildings of all schools in the country. There would be donations from the private sector to augment resources, but there were questions on the quality of the school buildings implemented. Either such school buildings would be sub-standard or would not comply with the DepEd standards. Though the project was more focused on DepEd-implemented SBPs, it still envisioned a school with quality facilities, thus participants were encouraged to expand the coverage of their monitoring if this is possible.

Other Concerns:

- Procurement in ARMM always delayed (re-scheduled three times)
- Textbooks delivered not at the right place (house of the district supervisor)
- Suppliers delivering textbooks anytime that is convenient for them – difficult for the monitoring teams
- Complaints from bidder on the result of the bidding process
- Reports of teacher not receiving their salaries

- Going after contractors who abandoned the implementation of the SBP construction.
- The status of supposed-school furniture program that comes with newly constructed school buildings
- The division office is the last to know re: the goods that are to be delivered/to be received by their areas.
- The presence of different monitoring teams that could arrive to different findings due to looking at various standards.

5. Signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Regional Government of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Department of Education (DepEd) and Region-wide Civil Society Organizations

To better facilitate the school-based monitoring project in the pilot divisions in ARMM, the project team opted to have a Memorandum of Agreement among the major stakeholders in the region. On August 24, 2012, the Office of the Regional Governor of ARMM with the leadership of Gov. Mujiv Hataman, the DepEd – Central Office through Assistant Secretary Antonio Umali and three CSO networks with region-wide presence in

Signatories of the MoA: Mr. Alim from CBCS, Dean La Vina of ASoG, Gov. Hataman ORG, and Asec. Umali DepEd Central Office and witnesses in the persona of Ms. Aceron of G-Watch, Atty. Kulayan of DepEd – ARMM and Mr. Maulana of ARMM Watch.

ARMM namely the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, Young Moro Network – Social Accountability and the Education Network through its counterpart in the region, PUSAKA Mindanao signed the MoA. The MoA signing was conducted with witnesses from national civil society organizations, the media and local stakeholders.

During the MoA Signing, signatories of the MoA expressed their commitments to support the project. Specifically, the ARMM government, being under a new administration, has opened up the system for CSO partners in monitoring. And for the side of the CSOs, the organizations have committed to constructively engage their government and in this case, DepEd – ARMM in order to improve the service delivery.

Phase 3: Facilitate school-based monitoring through the coordination of Local Hubs in at least three localities as demonstration case.

1. Constant follow-up on the Local Hubs Action Plan

   The project team has been constantly keeping in touch with the assigned Local Hubs coordinators to keep track on the progress of each division. Such follow ups were done through phone calls, text messages and exchange of e-mails with the Local Hubs members.

   To further reinforce the follow ups, DepEd Memorandums were issued to the pilot divisions through the Office of DepEd Secretary Br. Armin Luistro and Usec. Rizalino Rivera. The memos laid down the activities that the Local Hubs members were supposed to undertake, as well as the expected outputs from the conduct of activities. Also included in the memos was the timeline of the project.

2. Implementation of the Local Hubs Action Plan

   The orientations of SBMTs were conducted by the established Local Hubs in five divisions: Antipolo City, Calbayog City, Cavite City, Leyte and Marawi City. Herein, the Local Hubs invited school principals and other school community members for an orientation on how to organize their SBMTs and how to monitor education services using G-Watch tools and technology.

   The Local Hubs members were given the leeway to choose which schools to include in this round of monitoring. Some, like Cavite province, Marawi City, Calbayog City and Leyte province have conducted the orientation in all the schools under their jurisdiction, whereas the others have chosen several schools with new school building projects.

   Immediately after the briefing orientations of SBMTs, the Local Hubs members facilitated the deployment of the SBMTs to the projects to be monitored. Once deployed, the actual monitoring of the project took place. In the course of the monitoring, quick feed-backing were done between the Local Hubs members and the SBMTs.

   Through the use of the Local Hubs Report Form provided by the project team, the members of the Local Hubs consolidated and processed the monitoring results. No major deviations were noted, but few issues still emerged in the implementation of the service delivery, such as delay in the construction of school building programs due to late release of SAROs, some textbook and furniture were delivered in the division office instead of going directly to recipient schools, etc.

3. Meetings with the Department of Education Representatives

- Updating meeting with DepEd Undersecretary on the progress of the project

  On July 17, 2012, the G-Watch team had a meeting with Usec. Rizalino Rivera to provide him updates on the project activities conducted. The issues raised by the Local Hubs members during the briefing orientations were discussed in this meeting. Recommendations on how to possibly address the discussed issues were also tackled. Usec. Rivera brought up that as much as possible, DepEd Central wants the school heads and division superintendents to be more autonomous and empowered; thus, DepEd Central is moving towards enabling their local counterparts in addressing issues at their level.

- Updating meeting with IMCS, PFSED and PS

  A meeting with representatives of IMCS, PFSED and PS was convened on September 26, 2012. The agenda of the meeting is to provide them updates on the implemented project activities and the upcoming activities. The representatives were also asked to give updates on the status of the implementation of the monitored service delivery. This meeting also served as a venue to solicit inputs from the partners within DepEd on how to implement future plans for the project. Action points for each of the units and G-Watch were also discussed in this meeting.

4. Sharing Sessions

Sharing sessions were conducted in order to (a) gather experiences of the Local Hubs in implementing activities (b) issues and challenges encountered in the course of the project (c) check on the functionality of the Local Hubs as per their envisioned roles. (Refer to Annex F for the Documentation of the Sharing Sessions)

Though not 100% present, members of the Local Hubs attended the Sharing Sessions together with regional representatives from the service implementers monitored in the project namely the Physical Facilities and Schools Engineering Division and the Instructional Materials and Council Secretariat.

The conduct of the Sharing Sessions started with the review of the framework of the Local Hubs. This presentation discussed the rationale behind pilot-testing the Local Hubs and the roles that members of the Local Hubs should be able to portray.

A presentation on the status of the project implementation of the monitored projects (construction of school buildings and delivery of school furniture under the Basic Educational Facilities Fund F.Y. 2012 and delivery of textbooks under the Textbook Count and Walk 2011 budget) were done by the service implementers.

In order to gather the experiences of the Local Hubs, each Hub was requested to prepare a presentation on the activities they conducted. More experiences were generated in a structured discussion facilitated by G-Watch which focused on the facilitating and hindering factors for the functionality of Local Hubs. Inputs of the Local Hubs members on whether Local Hubs should be replicated into other areas were also gathered.

Calbayog ASDS Raul Agban, presenting the results of the activities conducted by their Local Hub in the Sharing Session in Region VIII.

Ms. Joy Aceron while reviewing the Local Hubs framework to the attendees of the Sharing Session for Region IV – A.

Members of the Local Hubs in ARMM during the mapping workshop of the monitoring activities usually conducted for SBPs, textbooks and school furniture.

Below are the schedules and venues of the Sharing Sessions conducted:

Divisions	Date	Venue
Calbayog City Leyte	11 September 2013 01:00pm – 04:30pm	Conference Hall DepEd - RELC Palo, Leyte
Antipolo City Cavite	30 September 2013 01:00pm – 04:30pm	Conference Hall Ateneo School of Government Quezon City
Maguindanao I Maguindanao II Marawi City	01 October 2013 01:00pm – 04:30pm	Conference Hall AlNor Hotel and Convention Center Cotabato City

Issues and Challenges

On the participation on civil society representatives of the Local Hubs

One of the major issues raised, specifically from the side of the DepEd, is the inability of the civil society organizations to attend meetings, planning sessions and activities scheduled for the Local Hubs. This was mainly due to busy schedules and implementation of activities of their respective organizations. DepEd representatives then were left to implement the activities by themselves or with little participation from the CSOs.

This issue is not only faced by the Local Hubs. It is a common issue encountered in implementation of projects involving participatory mechanisms. This issue started occurring when the government started opening up for performance monitoring of its critical service delivery like the local budgeting process of local government units, provision of health care and the like. It was then realized that the CSOs could not parallel the government especially in terms of performance monitoring since CSOs do not have enough time and resources.

On the Education Monitoring Tool Kit

It was feedbacked by the Local Hubs members that they have encountered difficulty in accomplishing the Tool Kit provided for the SBMTs. This is because of the tool's comprehensive coverage and extensive details, especially the tool of Bayanihang Eskwela. The absence of a uniform tool in monitoring the physical facilities of the schools was also raised by the stakeholders.

In response to this, Physical Facilities Coordinators in the pilot divisions of Region VIII were requested to review the Tool Kit and provide inputs on which parts are critical and which parts could be already scraped. In addition, a technical working group meeting in Region VIII facilitated by their Regional Facilities Coordinator was convened in order to formulate a unified tool that could be used in the whole region. This unified monitoring tool is expected facilitate easier and uniform points on the appreciation of the monitoring results.

On the lead convener of the Local Hubs

The confusion on who should lead in convening the Local Hubs also surfaced. This has lead to delays in the implementation of project activities because both DepEd and CSOs were unsure of who should initiate. This was the case of the pilot divisions in ARMM. As for the other Local Hubs, the local DepEd were the ones who led the activities. This facilitated the easier completion of the activities.

There were accounts that DepEd was already performing the role of the Local Hubs even before the introduction of the project in the pilot sites. What is newly introduced in the project was the inclusion of the CSOs in the process and formalizing the coordination and roles of each of the units in DepEd.

It was then clarified that DepEd, through the Schools Division Superintendent, can be the lead convener of the Local Hubs. It was further discussed that DepEd should still carry out the roles of Local Hubs to facilitate school-based monitoring even without a representative from CSO, so long as CSOs are constantly invited and updated and be allowed to participate if CSOs deemed it necessary.

On the generation of reports

Problem on the generation of reports from the SBMTs was also raised. During the conduct of briefing orientations for the SBMTs, the Education Monitoring Tool Kit was distributed to each participant. Though monitoring was conducted in the school-level, consolidation of the tools has been a challenge for the Local Hubs. This is highly evident when only one division was able to comply with the memo issued by DepEd through Usec. Rivera's office requesting for an initial report of the status of Local Hubs.

When G-Watch further followed up the report, the Local Hubs led by DepEd representatives were able to report on the results of the monitoring though no reports from CSOs were generated that could possibly validate the reports provided.

5. Problem – Solving with National Stakeholders

After the Sharing Sessions in the pilot divisions, a National Problem Solving Session was conducted on October 11, 2013 at the Oakwood Premier Joy Nostalg Center. Participants were representatives from the different units of the DepEd National Office

and a CSO with nationwide-coverage namely IMCS, PS and Offices of Assistant Secretaries Jesus Mateo and Reynaldo Laguda and Boy Scouts of the Philippines. Also invited but failed to come were representatives from Girl Scouts of the Philippines and PFSED.

The first part of the Problem Solving Session was the presentation of G-Watch which showcased its experience in sustaining monitoring initiatives and its recommendations on enabling school-based monitoring. Issues and challenges raised included the limited coverage of CSOs in terms of projects monitored vis-à-vis the total budget, the decline in turn out of monitors through the years and the difficulty in generating reports from the CSOs who monitored.

Ms. Joy Aceron of G-Watch as she presents to the attendees of the Problem Session
the ways on how to enable school-based monitoring.

Lessons learned from the continuous sustainability efforts of G-Watch were shared. These lessons were as follows: (a) CSOs engage their government when they see the need to take part in the process, but steps back when the latter opens the systems for participation; (b) due to limited resources, CSOs cannot attain the same regularity and extensiveness like the government in conducting its social accountability efforts; (c) volunteerism, as proven by the project, is still present but the issues on the need operational support is valid, especially for coordinating with stakeholders, mobilizing and capacitating CSOs and preparation of reports.

Clarificatory questions and comments from the participants were raised in between the presentation.

Another presentation by G-Watch followed which dealt on the recommendations to address the presented issues and challenges in the first report. There were two major recommendations put forward by the G-Team: (a) Strengthening of state-based accountability mechanisms in such a way that it can ensure transparency and accountability of the delivery of services not purely dependent on citizen participation,

but supportive and permeable to it; and (b) Building of the capacity of CSOs not to parallel government processes, but to have the capacity to exact accountability whenever it is needed.

To facilitate better appreciation on the major recommendations, they were operationalized and broken down into specifics. In the end, the formula of local hubs is recommended in order to enable an effective and efficient school-based monitoring.

DepEd Asec. Rey Laguda as he gives his inputs on the recommendations on how to sustain monitoring of education service deliveries after the presentation done by the G-Watch team.

The presentation of the recommendations has been effective in generating inputs from the stakeholders. The substantive part of the discussion focused on enriching and improving the recommendations that were put forward by the project team.

After the discussion on the recommendations, DepEd Assistant Secretary on Planning Reynaldo Laguda presented a brewing project by DepEd, which has a lot of potential in providing a platform on some of the recommendations provided by G-Watch. The project involves improving and maximizing the Information Communications Technology available. The ICT project features a comprehensive and uniform data basing on the information on schools, not limited to school profile but covering information down to pupil-level that can be accessed by the public. Not only that the project could improve their targeting for allocation of DepEd resources, it also promotes participation from the ordinary citizens in validating the information uploaded.

G-Watch has seen the value of the database that DepEd seeks to put together. To make the most out of the project, G-Watch proposed the inclusion of the service delivery (textbooks, school building and school furniture) that each school is programmed to receive to facilitate monitoring on the ground, as well as to improve information dissemination within the Department. The results of the monitoring and mapping of the CSOs in school-level can also be integrated through this data base. In that manner, CSOs can outright identify which processes of the service delivery to engage and what

schools/divisions are in need of CSO participation. (Refer to Annex G for the Documentation of the Problem – Solving Session.)

Phase 4: Develop an Operational Guide for Decentralized Education Monitoring that can be Replicated in Other Provinces

Instead of the initially planned writing of an operational guide for decentralized education monitoring, G-Watch opted to produce a paper entitled *Lessons and Recommendations in Sustaining School-Based Monitoring.* This is mainly due to the reason that what have been observed and learned from the pilot run of the Local Hubs project are too premature to be translated to an operational guide.

G-Watch gathered lessons learned and experiences from (a) past efforts in monitoring of education services (b) the implementation of the latest education monitoring sustaining effort: pilot-testing of Local Hubs, and (c) recommendations and inputs from relevant stakeholders in order to come up with a piece that recommends a strategy and actions in sustaining a decentralized/school-based monitoring. Putting these together provided the project team the needed data in identifying strategic steps on how to sustain a comprehensive school-based monitoring.

Grounded on the established notion that DepEd cannot improve the education system alone and that civil society are needed for check and balance mechanisms (if deemed necessary), the said paper features not only steps in setting up the Local Hubs, but it also includes possible strategies on strengthening and improving the capacity of both the government and civil society organizations in conducting monitoring of education services. With this, the paper advances the constructive and substantive engagement between the Department and the CSOs.

Refer to Annex H for the Paper on Lessons and Recommendations in Sustaining School-Based Monitoring of Education Services.