

**Making a Difference**  
**Citizen's and their organisations and networks contributing to change**  
**OWA PPA 2008-9: Case study 29**

<b>Title of Case Study:</b>	<b>Transforming Urban Poor Communities - The Story of Barangay Luz Centre for Participatory Governance (CPAG) Cebu, Philippines</b>
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<b>1. PPA partner name</b>	<b>One World Action</b>
<b>2. Countries highlighted in case study</b>	<b>The Philippines</b>

**Transforming Urban Poor Communities - The Story of Barangay Luz  
Centre for Participatory Governance (CPAG) Cebu, Philippines**

The City of Cebu is the oldest city in the Philippines and has a population of around 720,000. Cebu is split into 80 administrative areas or Barangays. One of these is Barangay Luz, an urban poor area in the centre of Cebu with a population of around 15,000.



In 2003 the local officials of Barangay Luz attended a training programme organised by The Centre for Participatory Governance (CPAG). As a result they decided to involve their community and citizens in developing the five year vision, plan, priorities and budgets for the Barangay.

Michael Guerra is a Barangay Councillor who has been involved in the process since the beginning:  
*Since opening up this process to its citizens, Barangay Luz has gone from strength to strength. We started our relationship with CPAG in 2002 when a new set of Barangay officials were elected - we have since won so many awards from the national and city government bodies. People were first cautious and had reservations but we had an orientation on how the participatory formulation of the plan would happen. We publicised the process in person to each household. It was important to build up a relationship of*

*trust to share the objectives of what the participatory planning process aimed to achieve. It was open to everyone no matter what their political position.*

*People conducted their own planning to assess the priorities of their communities and to gather data on the situation and employment status of all residents. The main priorities identified were - unemployment, livelihoods, health (affordable medicines) and canals. Representatives from people's organisations, the Barangay Development Council and the Homeowners Associations drafted the plan. There was resistance at first from residents because so many times before officials had said they would listen to residents concerns but then they were ignored and trust had been broken. However we put our promises into action and the evidence now speaks for itself. This process has built ownership, civic responsibilities, inclusiveness, accountability and built the contract between state and citizens.*

*Now the success of Barangay projects and programmes is not solely accredited to Barangay Officials. If people are not involved then projects and programmes won't be sustainable. Many heads are better than one - with people's participation we now get a true picture of the Barangay so we know the issues, people's concerns and how they want to prioritise their issues.*

The citizens of Barangay Luz have seen many changes in the last 7 years and this process has spearheaded numerous community initiatives and programmes. Successes include:

- Improvement in the **quality of life** - poverty and unemployment has decreased. Due to livelihood and education programmes the prevalence of sex work and drug taking by young people has also decreased.
- **Free education**, vocational schools and adult literacy programmes have been established by the Barangay.
- Cheaper medicine and **health care** are now available from a Barangay run clinic and pharmacy.
- **Decreased corruption** due to monitoring and surveillance by people's organisations and NGOs who have been trained in transparency, accountability and procurement.
- **Waste management and recycling schemes** have been implemented. Residents have been trained in recycling and waste management and many women now make products (e.g. clothes and bags) from recycled materials. Residents earn money through selling their products and the scheme promotes waste segregation at source. The scheme has trained communities in composting and now people are selling compost to farmers. As one citizen told One World Action - *Before people used to come to ask the Barangay for a free bowl of rice and now they are Co-operative members. 90% of households in the Barangay are now members of the co-operative.*

- Specific schemes have been implemented to **support and protect women and children** focussing particularly on issues of crime and violence. The Barangay now fully utilises the 10% of its budget that is intended for youth empowerment and the 5% for gender mainstreaming. This is specified in the Local Government Code but is very rarely implemented.

*Despite the challenges of unemployment, poverty and poor housing the citizens of Barangay Luz are incredibly involved and active in their communities. There are 28 people's organisations which include groups representing older people, youth, fathers and women. There are 200 gay men in one organisation that organised the first Cebu Gay Pride. The Barangay also organised a youth parliament of 400 as 60% of voters here are young people.*

Michael Guerra

*In 1991, the Local Government Code opened up a world of opportunities for partnership in local governance between LGUs and the NGO-PO community. While much remains to be realised in the actualisation of the Code's provision, several examples of successful partnership initiatives at the community level give reason for optimism. The challenge is for NGOs and POs to consolidate their ranks and maximise the openings for people's participation in local governance. We work to strengthen citizenship and democracies governance and work on community-organising. We provide technical knowledge, skills, training and accompaniment and work hand in hand with officials and people's organisations.*

Kathy Ruiz, Centre for Participatory Governance

### **Background facts**

- CPAG is one of the 7 local partners of the groundbreaking and ambitious Bayanihan Sa Kalunsuran (BAKAL) programme. This programme aims to strengthen participatory governance in urban poor areas across the Philippines. It is supported by One World Action through its Programme Partnership Agreement with DFID and is co-ordinated by the national organisation the Institute of Politics and Governance (IPG). This programme is anchored in the work of the Barangay-Bayan Governance Consortium, a network of around 100 local government officials, people's organisations and NGOs interested in participatory governance and in fully implementing the Local Government Code.
- The current President of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been in power since 2001 and the next national elections will be held in 2010. Her presidency has been marred by allegations of corruption, abuse of presidential power and manipulation of the electoral system.
- One World Action has been working in the Philippines since 1989 - it also works with the Institute for Popular Democracy.
- For more information about the project and IPG see [www.ipg.org.ph](http://www.ipg.org.ph)