

REACTIONS ON THE ROADMAP FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

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We would like to commend the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) in collaboration with the House of Representatives- Committee on Rural Development, for spearheading the preparation of the Roadmap for the Voluntary Sector. We believe that this Roadmap is an important undertaking to further strengthen and expand the voluntary sector in the country. This document would be a very relevant and useful input for the preparation of the Philippine National Development Strategic Plan for 2010-2020 and for the next MTPDP for 2010-2015.

At this time when the country is beset with an array of concerns like climate change and its repercussions, as well as the remaining challenges of the global financial crisis particularly in terms of employment and its effort on the poverty situation, this roadmap for the voluntary sector gives us a “word of hope” on the supply side to deal more squarely with the socio-economic demands of society.

Moreover concerted efforts from the voluntary sector would help the country in pushing forward the attainment of the MDG targets, particularly for those areas with low probabilities of achievement namely the education and maternal mortality targets. I support the suggestions of sister from VIDES for anchoring our volunteers efforts along the MDG. We would like therefore to put forward the following recommendations to improve the draft Roadmap:

- Taking from the experience that the country had with typhoons Ondoy and Peping where a lot volunteered (students, professionals and employees) to help, it would be beneficial if the roadmap, will ensure the sustainability of these efforts by having a program that would create a pool of volunteers that could be tapped specifically in times of crisis (i.e. typhoon, flooding, and earthquake). This program could be the roadmaps contribution to the country’s disaster preparedness and responsiveness program by giving the proper training (first aid and rescue operations) for identified volunteers as well as nurturing them. This can be done through the LGUs volunteer groups or bayanihan desks as proposed.
- PNVSCA’s visibility is crucial for the successful implementation and monitoring /evaluation of programs, projects and activities outlined in the Roadmap. Therefore, the Agency should include support strategies on how they can be more recognized by different organizations and institutions specially those who are involved in volunteering. Hence, innovative schemes for partnership building and networking as well as mainstreaming volunteerism in various local/sectoral development plans can also be pursued..
- Recruitment of volunteers has to go beyond advocacy and information dissemination. PNVSCA in collaboration with the various sectors has to ensure quick follow-up activities for individuals and/or organizations who express their interest to volunteer. For instance, after enlistment, volunteers have to be informed on where they can be assigned what trainings they could be provided

for or even the timeline on when they can be deployed. In this way, the interest of volunteers would be sustained and more people would be encouraged to volunteer. A thorough mapping of the needs of all sectors for volunteers, may have to be prepared and provided to match the supply of the interested volunteers.

- Incentives for volunteers may be augmented if needed, but these have to be reconciled with the real meaning of volunteerism
- On partnership building and networking, PNVSCA can also tap more actively school organizations who are often involved in different social undertakings. Hence, the creation of a volunteer office in every school is a good move, but these offices must be made functional, not just created.
- PNVSCA may need to identify the following to ensure the successful implementation of the Roadmap:
 - Sectors which need the help of the Voluntary Sector; for the mapping (demand and supply side)
 - Mechanisms that would be put in place to monitor implementation; and
 - Detailed timeframe of the Action Plan, and supported by measurable indicators to the extent possible as basis for measuring success.
- Include more strategic activities for resource mobilization; hence, this roadmap could be complemented by an investment program in the future, and;
- To include in the roadmap the operational framework showing how all these PAPs could contribute to the outcomes, goals and objectives.
- Also consider the effort towards measuring/accounting for the contribution of volunteerism in our national/local development efforts -- in as much as we're having a lot of national accounting systems (income accounting, unpaid work contribution, gender) --- (sort of volunteers accounting).
- Finally, I also support Cong. Oca Francisco's suggestion to consider community based volunteers' role in various national government projects (i.e. Kalahi-CIDSS) and in terms of doing countryside Community Based Management System (CBMS).