

The New Breed of Revolution: The Success and Challenges of Empowering Communities

Catherine T. Basinillo¹, Jeffrey M. Ordinal², Froilan L. Calixto³

¹Associate Professor, School of Arts and Sciences, National University Philippines

²Assistant Professor, School of Arts and Sciences, National University Philippines

³Assistant Professor, National University Philippines

Abstract

This qualitative case study examines the role of non-government organizations in empowering communities, specifically the Angat Buhay Foundation. The participants in the present research were selected team members from the aforementioned non-government organization in varied capacities. The data were gathered through in-depth interviews and the findings revealed that several factors impede the operations of the organization, including budgetary constraints, political factors such as volunteer support, collaboration among local government units, public perception, and media influence. The themes that emerge from the data analysis include internal and external issues faced by the Angat Buhay Foundation, solutions to internal and external challenges faced by the non-government organizations, and strengthening the role of non-government organizations in empowering communities. It is also crucial to recognize that Angat Buhay Foundation has faced public criticism since its inception. Public support, government support, and media influence were cited as critical factors in the effectiveness of non-government organizations' efforts during this period of societal recovery. Team members of the Angat Buhay Foundation also expressed confidence that their non-government organization's work would continue to prosper despite some negative criticism from the public and other government leaders. Recommendations were made to improve the working circumstances of non-government organizations in the country, allowing them to effectively serve the people in their own distinctive ways.

Keywords: non-government organization, volunteer support, political factor, local government units, media influence, public perception

1. Introduction

In the past few years, the landscape of global development has shifted significantly toward a more sophisticated and community-centered approach, with non-governmental organizations emerging as critical players advocating for social change through a variety of programs addressing a broad spectrum of social issues. Non-government organizations, also known as civil society groups, are formed at the community, national, and international levels to advance a social or political cause, such as humanitarian aid, environmental protection, women's rights, global health, political advocacy, labor unions, religious faith, elder care, and youth empowerment (Folger, 2024).

After the People Power Revolution in 1986, the Philippines' nonprofit sector, particularly non-governmental organizations, has evolved to be one of the largest and best organized in the developing world. However, even though non-government organizations provide products and services that were

previously supplied by the state and engage in advocacy that supports the public or general interest, non-government organizations in the Philippines continue to face several challenges that limit their ability to influence long-term change.

Non-governmental organizations in the Philippines confront two key obstacles, which include both internal and external elements. Internally, non-government organizations face obstacles such as poor financial management, leadership failures and inefficiency, damaged connections with the communities they seek to serve, ineffective planning, and plans that are out of step with modernity (Sta. Ana, 2003). External problems that non-government organizations confront include political reasons, financial instability caused by a lack of funding, economic conditions, sociological transformations, unexpected changes in non-government organizations policies, and so on. These external factors influence and contribute to the obstacles that non-government organizations have in achieving their aims and objectives (Asian NGO, n.d).

In 2022, the Angat Buhay Foundation, a non-government organization in the Philippines, was established to promote government involvement in addressing social issues. The non-government organization was founded by then-Presidential candidate Maria Leonor Gerona Robredo. The Angat Buhay Foundation aspires to empower Filipinos as involved citizens by mobilizing the largest volunteer network for bayanihan activities (Angat Pinas, n.d). Today many see Angat Buhay Foundation as a beacon of hope for underprivileged communities and promotes positive transformation. From poverty reduction to better healthcare in the country today. This non-government organization believes that understanding the country's complicated challenges requires a well-established institution in Filipino society to assess its current situation.

As such, Angat Buhay Foundation enables the mobilization of associates, volunteers, and sponsors to assist Filipino communities, particularly those that are underprivileged and in need. The organization faced difficulties while fulfilling its mission of "empowering Filipinos in becoming communities of active citizens as they collectively pursue a life of dignity and hope" and its vision of "responding to the needs of marginalized communities by mobilizing the largest volunteer network in implementing Bayanihan programs" due to a variety of internal and external challenges. Internal hurdles might be severe, including organizational structure, resource, and budgetary limits. Externally, the organization's efforts may be hampered by political considerations such as government rules, social issues, economic factors, and public perception.

As noted by Nery (2022), a non-government organization created by former vice president Leni Robredo, one of Angat Buhay's challenges is the continued demonization of opposition parties by supporters of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Vice President Sara Duterte. This has resulted in a new normal in which opposition efforts, regardless of motive or impact, are criticized and labeled negatively. According to Vera Files (2022), the disagreement began when a vlogger claimed that former Vice President Leni Robredo's charity which is the Angat Buhay Foundation, aimed to improve Filipinos' lives more than the government. In this case, Robredo's Angat Buhay organization disagreed with the notion and responded by encouraging unity, communication, and understanding among various sectors of society.

Furthermore, these issues adversely affected the communities that rely on Angat Buhay Foundation critical networks of help, while also making it more difficult for the organization to achieve its goals. According to Jones (2020), identifying and resolving the issues faced by non-government organizations is crucial, stressing their necessary role in advancing social change and sustainable development.

This research examines the Angat-Buhay Foundation's success and challenges, as well as their community-empowering initiatives. It emphasizes the importance of grassroots initiatives in fostering positive societal change. The researchers aim to shed light on the essential role that non-government organizations play in inspiring constructive societal change by conducting a detailed analysis of the organization's strategy, influence, and ultimate goals, as well as defining non-government dynamics.

2. Limitations of the Study

This research examines the Angat-Buhay Foundation's success and challenges and how they approach and cope with difficulties. It highlights the role of grassroots actions in promoting constructive societal change. The inclusion of the research also serves to increase the role of non-governmental organizations in empowering communities. These will also direct the research to proceed with a recommendation through the team members of the non-government organization's insight based on subject understanding.

Moreover, it is critical to acknowledge and assess the research's limitations. The scope of the research is limited to the Philippines; hence the results cannot be generalized to other countries. The analysis also relies on a specific non-government organization insight, which could be biased or erroneous. The research also fails to collect viewpoints and opinions from other non-government organizations operating in the country, who may have had different experiences. Furthermore, it should be highlighted that the scope of the research is limited, as it does not cover all conceivable factors that may influence the functioning of non-government organizations. Finally, it should be mentioned that the research was conducted in 2023 and is limited by the time frame in which data was obtained.

3. Methodology

This research used a qualitative-case study to investigate the topic presented. Identifying and recruiting participants with direct knowledge and experience in the Angat Buhay Foundation was the first step in conducting this research. To address the presented problem, participants are interviewed in-depth utilizing a semi-structured interview. The third phase entails analyzing documents and other secondary sources to offer context and background data on the role of non-government organizations in empowering communities. The data from interviews and document analysis are transcribed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The participants in the research are seven members of the Angat Buhay Foundation's organizational staff. The inclusion requirements for participants include being part of the foundation, serving in diverse positions, being partners for change, and adhering to organizational principles. Finally, must voluntarily participate in the researchers' interview.

Moreover, the researchers used purposive sampling technique to get the right number of participants for this research. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected based on specified characteristics such as their knowledge, skill, or competence in a particular subject (Palinkas et al., 2015). Seven members of the Angat Buhay Foundation's organization team were selected for this research. According to the researchers, this technique ensures that participants have the necessary expertise and experience to provide significant insights and opinions on the research topic.

The research started by reviewing of literature on the role of non-governmental organizations in the Philippines. This review will lay a solid basis and highlight topics for additional inquiry. Afterwards, interviews with non-government organization team members were done to discuss the topic provided.

The discussion covers a variety of topics, including the success and challenges of non-government organizations, how non-government organizations overcome challenges, and more.

In addition, the researchers protected participants' rights and anonymity by respecting their privacy. The participants signed informed consent outlining the research's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits before participating. Participants were also told about their legal rights and could withdraw from the research at any time. Their personal information and names were kept private, and the data they supplied was anonymized so that individual participants could not be recognized. Furthermore, the participants were not asked to provide personal information unrelated to the research.

Lastly, successfully completing this research requires analyzing the data acquired to evaluate assumptions and response to research questions. The inquiry collects many types of data, including participants' views and opinions on the subject. After collecting data from participants, researchers analyzed the findings by categorizing methods, themes, and codes to solve difficulties, evaluate interview responses to ensure sufficient data, then draw conclusions based on analytical results.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Internal and External Challenges Faced by Angat Buhay Foundation

Non-governmental organizations are groups that support a variety of issues. These causes varied depending on the non-government organizations' target areas. Non-government organizations are often focused on providing aid and support for future development, regardless of the subjects they put out. However, non-government organizations like Angat Buhay Foundation confront many challenges they are not always prepared for, including budgetary constraints, absence of collaboration, public support, and media influence.

The Angat Buhay Foundation team members' perspectives and experiences on the role of non-government organizations in empowering communities and the challenges it faced include a wide range of topics, as indicated in the themes. To begin, in terms of challenges, one of the cited challenges is budgetary constraints. Angat Buhay Foundation, like any other non-government organization, is experiencing financial difficulties to continue its mission. They have limited resource mobilization and are frequently searching for funding accessible locally or waiting for international supporters to contact them. After a project has been completed successfully, non-government organizations typically want to stay in touch with their beneficiaries to ensure that progress is being made. Aside from that, non-government organizations want to assist more individuals and communities according to their needs. To do so, non-government organizations constantly need funds.

Secondly, is absence of collaboration between the local government units, in terms of involvement and collaboration, team members emphasize the need of bringing varied stakeholders together to ensure the success of non-government organizations' projects and advocacy. This integration not only encourages collaboration but also adds to long-term relationships, a theme emphasized by team members in the context of any non-government organizations' long-term viability.

Another issue faced by the Angat Buhay Foundation is the lack of public support, from its inception, the organization has received numerous stern critiques for being formed by former Vice President Leni Robredo, who was also running for president at the time. Many individuals believe that the Angat Buhay Foundation was founded as part of the vice president's political plot to win the presidential race. Many supporters of the current administration claim that the Angat Buhay Foundation is working against the government and is only being used as a political instrument to boost the former vice president's image.

Finally, the media influence has a significant impact on the organization's advocacy efforts. It has become a vital instrument for non-government organizations in disseminating information and making a meaningful impact on society. However, in the case of the Angat Buhay Foundation, some media outlets are being influenced by the present government administration to taint their image, causing people to withdraw their support for the organization and creating a negative image.

Indeed, it is crucial to emphasize that, while the Angat Buhay Foundation faces difficulties and challenges in its operations as a non-government organization, team members remain optimistic that the organization will be able to achieve its mission of empowering communities. As former Vice President Leni Robredo stated in her interview, the Angat Buhay Foundation seeks to continue motivating young people to be catalysts for change. She also believed that social development is essential for making people feel linked and everyone feels like they are part of the solution (Harvard International Review, n.d).

4.2 Solutions to Internal and External Challenges Encountered

The participants in the discussion regarding resolving internal and external challenges faced by their non-government organization foresee a favorable trajectory for the Angat Buhay Foundation's activity. To begin, in terms of budgetary constraints, as stated during the interview with team members, the Angat Buhay Foundation is funded by private donations. Those wanting to donate can choose between three schemes such as patron-based donations, project-specific donations, and donations to the disaster preparedness fund. As stated, they have collaborated with several organizations to promote their nutrition, education, and mental health projects and programs.

Secondly, on absence of collaboration between the local government units, local governments units play an important role in achieving the Angat Buhay Foundation's objectives. They provide initial information on their top priorities, but gathering credible data ensures that community concerns are resolved more effectively. The Angat Buhay Foundation, for example, encourages community engagement among local government units because they believe it not only establishes the accuracy of information, but also allows for discussion of what the community can do to address its own concerns. Another move they took was to urge local governments units to form partnerships with public-private organizations. The Angat Buhay Foundation has evolved into a center of knowledge on private sector development projects to which local governments units can gain access. This prompted the organization to develop a capacity-building program for the adopted local government units, which would guide them in interacting with diverse stakeholders.

Third, is the lack of public support. Public support is a crucial component for a non-government organization for many reasons, including the ability to boost credibility in their mission to promote societal change. Not only does the organization or project believe their issue needs to be addressed, but so does the entire community. The more assistance the non-government organization receives, the more likely it will continue to get support to help it implement its aims and initiatives for the communities.

Finally, is the media influence. Nowadays, media is an essential tool for conveying information. Truthful information about the non-government organization's activities can have a significant impact on their ability to empower communities. In the instance of the Angat Buhay Foundation, they strive to persuade the media that they exist not for political reasons, but to be an active partner in societal recovery. As stated in its objectives, the Angat Buhay Foundation is a non-government organization that aims to instill optimism and the bayanihan spirit in people by leveraging the energy of partners, volunteers, and supporters to empower Filipino communities, particularly the marginalized.

4.3 Increasing the Role of Non-Government Organization in Empowering Communities

The participants in the discussion about enhancing the role of non-government organizations in empowering communities believe that in order to achieve sustainability and effectiveness, the Philippine government should be more supportive of non-government organizations' efforts. Some participants pointed out the necessity of government and non-governmental organizations working together to effectively resolve community issues. Other participants emphasized the importance of strengthening legislation and ensuring government standards for the activities of non-government groups, rather than viewing them as a danger to the government administration. The participants attributed the success of non-government organizations to fulfilling commitments, collaborating, and providing support, while minimizing political involvement. Encouragement of local government units to engage in public-private partnerships was also emphasized. The main purpose of the non-government organizations is to inspire everyone to be partner for change and take part of the solutions in resolving various challenges that society is facing in order to stimulate economic growth and peace in the Philippines.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the extensive discussions among team members of the Angat Buhay Foundation offer a nuanced and multifaceted exploration of the works of the non-government organizations in the country. The team members underscore the significance of the collaboration of integrating diverse stakeholders in the success of the non-government organizations. Throughout the discourse, the pivotal theme of collaboration and support emerges prominently, with team members of the organization emphasizing the importance of collaboration between the government and non-government organizations and public support. It is also concluded that strong collaboration, and synergy among stakeholders are indispensable for the success of the non-government organizations in empowering the communities.

Based on the extensive discussions among team members regarding the role of non-government organizations in empowering communities, it is evident that a thoughtful and comprehensive approach is crucial for the success of such endeavors. These are the recommendations based on the data gathered: 1) integration of diverse stakeholders in the works of the non-government organizations; 2) strong government collaboration in helping the non-government organizations realize their advocacy and projects; 3) increased budgetary measures in order to support the programs and projects of the non-government organizations; 4) encourage people to volunteer in the works of the non-government organizations; 5) improve public perception in the works of the non-government organizations in order to gain public support; and finally, increased media influence in order to create a positive image and support.

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