

Barangay Initiatives on Good Governance of Selected Barangays in Lamitan City, Basilan Province

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Abstract—This study examines the governance initiatives implemented by selected barangays in Lamitan City, Basilan Province, focusing on their contributions to sustainable local development and community empowerment. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research analyzes governance practices across eight barangays in Lamitan City, investigating transparency measures, participatory mechanisms, service delivery improvements, and accountability frameworks. The study reveals significant variations in governance effectiveness, with urban barangays demonstrating higher levels of institutional capacity (78% effectiveness rating) compared to rural counterparts (52% effectiveness rating). Key findings indicate that successful governance initiatives are characterized by strong community participation (65% average engagement rate), transparent budget allocation processes, effective use of technology for service delivery, and robust accountability mechanisms. Results demonstrate that barangays implementing comprehensive governance reforms show 43% improvement in service delivery satisfaction and 38% increase in community trust levels.

Keywords— Barangay governance, local government, transparency, accountability, participatory governance, Basilan Province, conflict-affected areas, community development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Good governance at the barangay level represents the foundation of democratic participation and effective service delivery in the Philippines. As the smallest political unit, barangays serve as the primary interface between citizens and government, making their governance practices crucial for overall democratic development [1]. The Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act 7160) devolved significant powers and responsibilities to local government units, including barangays, emphasizing the importance of effective governance at the grassroots level [2].

Lamitan City, located in Basilan Province within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), presents a unique context for studying barangay governance. The city has experienced significant transformation following the peace process and the establishment of the BARMM, creating opportunities for innovative governance approaches while addressing the challenges inherent in post-conflict environments [3]. With 45 barangays comprising diverse ethnic and cultural communities, Lamitan City serves as a microcosm for understanding governance dynamics in conflict-affected areas. The concept of good governance encompasses several key dimensions: transparency, accountability, participation, effectiveness, and rule of law [4]. In the Philippine context,

these principles are operationalized through various mechanisms including Sangguniang Barangay sessions, barangay assemblies, citizen participation in budget processes, and transparency measures such as public disclosure of budgets and projects [5]. However, the implementation of these governance principles varies significantly across different barangays, influenced by factors such as leadership capacity, community engagement levels, resources availability, and historical context.

Recent studies on local governance in the Philippines have highlighted the critical role of barangay officials in promoting development outcomes and building community trust [6]. The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has implemented various programs to strengthen local governance, including the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) program, which recognizes local government units demonstrating excellence in governance practices [7]. For instance, Indal and Arriola [21] shows that head of different agencies in Basilan Province possess some leadership competencies and they also show in [22] that the province have some initiative in other aspect particularly like climate change. However, limited research has focused specifically on governance initiatives in conflict-affected areas like Basilan Province, where unique challenges require adapted approaches to traditional governance frameworks.

This study addresses the research gap by examining specific governance initiatives implemented by selected barangays in Lamitan City, analyzing their effectiveness in promoting transparency, accountability, and community participation. The research aims to identify best practices that can be replicated in similar contexts and develop a framework for effective barangay governance in post-conflict environments.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Barangay Governance in the Philippines

The barangay system in the Philippines has evolved significantly since the pre-colonial era, serving as the basic unit of local government with roots in traditional community organization [8]. The 1987 Constitution and the Local Government Code of 1991 established the legal framework for barangay governance, defining their powers, functions, and responsibilities in areas such as peace and order, health and social services, infrastructure development, and environmental protection [9].

Research on barangay governance has identified several critical factors that influence effectiveness. Capuno (2005) found that barangay officials' educational background and leadership experience significantly impact governance outcomes, with higher education levels correlating with better service delivery and community satisfaction [10]. Similarly, Hutchcroft and Rocamora (2003) emphasized the importance of social capital and community networks in facilitating effective governance at the barangay level [11].

Governance in Conflict-Affected Areas

Governance in post-conflict environments faces unique challenges that distinguish it from traditional development contexts. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) identifies several key factors that influence governance effectiveness in conflict-affected areas: legitimacy of governing institutions, capacity for service delivery, security and rule of law, and social cohesion [12]. These factors are particularly relevant in the context of Basilan Province, which has experienced decades of armed conflict affecting institutional development and community trust.

Studies on post-conflict governance emphasize the importance of inclusive participation and reconciliation processes in building sustainable institutions. Brinkerhoff (2005) argues that governance initiatives in fragile states must balance the need for rapid service delivery with long-term institution building, requiring adaptive approaches that respond to changing circumstances [13]. This perspective is particularly relevant for barangays in Lamitan City, which must address immediate community needs while building sustainable governance systems.

Technology and Governance Innovation

The integration of technology in local governance has emerged as a significant trend in recent years, with digital platforms enabling greater transparency, citizen engagement, and service delivery efficiency [14]. The Philippine government's Digital Governance framework promotes the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to improve government services and enhance citizen participation [15].

Research by Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) demonstrates that digital governance initiatives can significantly improve citizen satisfaction and trust in government, particularly when combined with traditional participation mechanisms [16]. However, the effectiveness of technology-enabled governance depends on factors such as digital literacy, infrastructure availability, and cultural acceptance, which vary significantly across different communities.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design to comprehensively examine barangay governance initiatives in Lamitan City, combining quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis to provide a holistic understanding of governance practices and their effectiveness. The research was conducted across eight purposively selected barangays chosen to represent different geographic locations, population sizes, and

socio-economic characteristics, including four urban barangays (Colonia, Maganda, Bolong, and Campo Uno) and four rural barangays (Bohebaca, Bulingan, Look Basahan, and Parangbasakan). A total of 520 participants were involved in the study, comprising 64 barangay officials (8 barangay captains and 56 kagawads and SK officials), 400 community members from the selected barangays, 32 civil society representatives from community organizations, and 24 municipal officials representing the city government.

The quantitative component utilized three primary instruments: the Governance Effectiveness Survey (GES), a 40-item instrument measuring transparency, accountability, participation, and service delivery; the Community Satisfaction Index (CSI), a 25-item scale assessing resident satisfaction with barangay services; and the Participation Assessment Tool (PAT), a 15-item measure of citizen engagement levels. The qualitative component included semi-structured interviews with barangay officials, focus group discussions with community members, key informant interviews with civil society leaders, and participant observation of barangay assemblies and council sessions. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression to identify predictors of governance effectiveness, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Current State of Barangay Governance

The assessment of governance practices across the eight selected barangays revealed significant variations in implementation and effectiveness. Table 1 presents the overall governance effectiveness scores across different dimensions.

TABLE 1: Governance Effectiveness Scores by Barangay Type

Governance Dimension	Urban Barangays (%)	Rural Barangays (%)	Overall Average (%)
Transparency	82	58	70
Accountability	78	51	65
Participation	75	55	65
Service Delivery	80	49	65
Rule of Law	76	48	62
Overall Effectiveness	78	52	65

The data reveals a substantial governance gap between urban and rural barangays, with urban areas consistently outperforming rural counterparts across all dimensions. This disparity reflects differences in resources, capacity, and access to support systems.

Transparency Initiatives

Analysis of transparency measures implemented across the barangays identified several innovative practices: Digital Transparency Platforms: Four barangays (Colonia, Maganda, Bolong, Campo Uno) have implemented digital platforms for budget disclosure and project monitoring. These systems allow residents to access real-time information about barangay finances and development projects through social media platforms and community bulletin boards.

Community Scorecards: Six barangays have adopted community scorecard systems where residents regularly evaluate barangay performance across key service areas. This initiative has led to a 45% increase in citizen awareness of barangay activities and a 38% improvement in service responsiveness.

Public Financial Management: All urban barangays and three rural barangays have implemented enhanced public financial management systems, including quarterly financial reports, public budget hearings, and transparent procurement processes.

Participatory Governance Mechanisms

The study identified various mechanisms for citizen participation, with effectiveness varying significantly across barangays:

TABLE 2: Citizen Participation Mechanisms and Effectiveness

Participation Mechanism	Implementation Rate (%)	Effectiveness Rating (1-5)	Community Satisfaction (%)
Regular Barangay Assemblies	100	3.8	72
Participatory Budgeting	62	4.2	81
Community Consultations	87	3.9	75
Youth Participation Programs	75	4.0	78
Women's Leadership Initiatives	50	4.3	83
Indigenous Peoples' Council	37	4.1	79

Participatory budgeting emerged as the most effective mechanism for citizen engagement, with communities reporting high levels of satisfaction and meaningful participation in decision-making processes. However, implementation remains limited, with only five barangays having established formal participatory budgeting systems.

Service Delivery Innovations

Several barangays have implemented innovative approaches to improve service delivery:

Mobile Service Units: Three barangays (Bohebaca, Bulingan, Look Basahan) have established mobile service units that bring essential services to remote areas, including health services, document processing, and social services registration.

Digital Service Windows: Urban barangays have established digital service windows that streamline document processing and reduce transaction times by an average of 60%. These systems have significantly improved citizen satisfaction with barangay services.

Community-Based Service Delivery: All barangays have implemented some form of community-based service delivery, with trained community volunteers providing basic services

and information to residents.

Accountability Mechanisms

The research identified various accountability mechanisms implemented across the barangays:

TABLE 3: Accountability Mechanisms Implementation and Effectiveness

Accountability Mechanism	Implementation (%)
Public Performance Reviews	87%
Citizen Complaint Systems	75%
Regular Financial Audits	100%
Community Monitoring	62%
Anti-Corruption Measures	37%
Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	50%

Regular financial audits show 100% implementation across all barangays, mandated by national regulations. However, community monitoring and anti-corruption measures show lower implementation rates, indicating areas for improvement.

Challenges and Barriers

The study identified several key challenges facing barangay governance in Lamitan City:

Capacity Constraints: Limited technical and administrative capacity among barangay officials, with only 42% having received formal governance training in the past two years.

Resource Limitations: Inadequate financial resources for implementing governance initiatives, with rural barangays particularly affected by budget constraints.

Technology Gaps: Limited access to technology and digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where only 34% of households have reliable internet connectivity.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Challenges in ensuring inclusive participation across diverse ethnic and linguistic communities, with language barriers affecting 28% of residents' participation in governance processes.

Security Concerns: Ongoing security issues that occasionally disrupt governance activities and limit access to some remote areas.

Best Practices and Success Stories

Several barangays have demonstrated exemplary governance practices that serve as models for replication:

Barangay Colonia's Digital Governance Initiative: Implementation of a comprehensive digital platform that integrates budget transparency, service delivery, and citizen feedback mechanisms. This initiative has resulted in 89% citizen satisfaction rates and 65% increase in youth participation.

Participatory Development Planning in Barangay Maganda: A comprehensive participatory planning process involving all community sectors in developing the barangay development plan. This approach has led to 78% community ownership of development projects and 45% increase in volunteer participation.

Conflict-Sensitive Governance in Barangay Bohebaca: Implementation of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms alongside formal governance processes, resulting in 67%

reduction in community disputes and improved social cohesion.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that effective barangay governance in Lamitan City is characterized by several key factors that distinguish high-performing from low-performing barangays. The significant performance gap between urban and rural barangays highlights the importance of addressing structural inequalities in resources, capacity, and access to support systems.

Factors Contributing to Governance Effectiveness

Leadership Quality and Capacity: Barangays with highly effective governance consistently demonstrated strong leadership characterized by educational qualifications, previous governance experience, and commitment to transparency. Statistical analysis revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.01$) between barangay captain educational attainment and overall governance effectiveness scores.

Community Engagement and Social Capital: High-performing barangays showed significantly higher levels of community participation and social capital. The presence of active civil society organizations, functional community groups, and regular citizen engagement mechanisms correlated strongly with better governance outcomes ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$).

Technology Integration: Barangays that successfully integrated technology into their governance processes showed marked improvements in transparency, service delivery efficiency, and citizen satisfaction. However, the effectiveness of technology integration depended heavily on digital literacy levels and infrastructure availability.

Institutional Partnerships: Successful barangays maintained strong partnerships with municipal government, civil society organizations, and development partners. These partnerships provided access to technical assistance, funding opportunities, and knowledge sharing that enhanced governance capacity.

Challenges in Post-Conflict Contexts

The study revealed unique challenges faced by barangays in post-conflict environments that require specialized approaches to governance development:

Trust Building: Historical conflicts have created trust deficits that affect citizen-government relations. Barangays that successfully addressed these challenges implemented specific trust-building measures, including transparency initiatives, inclusive participation mechanisms, and conflict-sensitive service delivery approaches.

Diversity Management: The ethnic and cultural diversity in Lamitan City presents both opportunities and challenges for governance. Successful barangays developed inclusive governance mechanisms that respect cultural differences while promoting unity and common purpose.

Security and Access: Ongoing security concerns continue to affect governance processes, particularly in remote areas. Barangays that effectively managed these challenges developed flexible governance mechanisms that could adapt to varying security conditions.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study provides comprehensive insights into barangay governance practices in Lamitan City, Basilan Province, revealing both significant challenges and promising opportunities for improvement. The research demonstrates that effective governance in conflict-affected areas requires adapted approaches that address unique contextual factors while building on universal governance principles. The significant performance gap between urban and rural barangays highlights the importance of targeted interventions that address structural inequalities in resources, capacity, and access to support systems. The success stories identified in this study demonstrate that effective governance is achievable in challenging contexts when appropriate support systems, leadership commitment, and community engagement converge.

The research contributes to the broader understanding of local governance in post-conflict environments and provides practical guidance for policymakers, practitioners, and development partners working to strengthen democratic governance at the grassroots level. The findings demonstrate that with appropriate support and commitment, barangays in conflict-affected areas can achieve high levels of governance effectiveness and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development and peace-building efforts. Key elements for success include institutional strengthening, participatory governance mechanisms, transparency and accountability measures, service delivery excellence, and sustainable development approaches that recognize the unique challenges faced by communities recovering from conflict while building on existing strengths and opportunities.

The study's emphasis on participatory approaches, transparency mechanisms, and community empowerment aligns with global good governance principles while recognizing the importance of cultural sensitivity and conflict awareness. As the Philippines continues to strengthen its democratic institutions and build lasting peace in formerly conflict-affected areas, the lessons learned from this research can inform efforts to build effective, responsive, and sustainable governance systems at all levels of government. Future success in barangay governance will depend on continued commitment from all stakeholders – barangay officials, municipal and national governments, civil society organizations, and community members – to work collaboratively toward the shared vision of effective, transparent, and participatory governance that serves the needs and aspirations of all citizens.

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