

FACTCHECK 2016 #4

Pro-poor Participatory Budgeting: Sustaining and Expanding the Bottom-Up-Budgeting (BuB)

Despite the Philippines' notable development in recent years, inclusive development remains an elusive goal. Citizens at the grassroots level are neither empowered nor involved in determining programs and services that are relevant to them. As a result, government programs and services may not suit the people's needs nor work toward inclusive development.

The Grassroots Participatory Budgeting, more commonly known as Bottom-up Budgeting (BuB), is a policy that engages local government units (LGUs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and citizens in the planning and budgeting of government projects. It aims to empower citizens by actively involving them in determining projects responsive to their needs, foster and strengthen partnerships between LGUs and CSOs in program planning and budgeting, and align the plans and priorities of local and national governments.

BuB was launched in 2012, first targeting LGUs with high poverty incidence or magnitude. BuB received a budget of PhP8 billion in 2013 covering 609 cities and municipalities, PhP20 billion in 2014 covering 1,233 cities and municipalities, PhP20.9 billion in 2015 covering all cities and municipalities, and PhP24.7 billion in 2016 covering all cities and municipalities except ARMM. Through the program, felt-need projects have been identified by the citizens themselves and civil society-LGU engagement has been facilitated, potentially democratizing government-citizen relationship.

BuB has generated political and administrative issues such as skepticism and lack of political will from local government officials, limited participation of CSOs, allegations of leakages, and vote-buying accusations. According to a 2015 study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies

(PIDS), the implementation of BuB projects in 2013 has been slow. Out of the 12 sites evaluated by the study, only 1 BuB sub-project was completed as of March 2014. This is due to bureaucratic red tape and poor coordination between LGUs and CSOs, according to the said study. In addition, CSOs have limited involvement in the implementation and monitoring of approved BuB projects. CSOs are mostly involved in the identification of the project and are not informed of the status of its implementation. This is one gap identified by the study. Finally, one criticism of BuB is that it might foster patronage. However, the study has dispelled this by showing that BuB is rules-based rather than discretionary (unlike PDAF), making it less vulnerable to patronage politics.

Presidential Candidates and BuB

Among the presidential candidates, only Grace Poe and Mar Roxas have expressed support for BuB. Poe said that she will engage CSOs, while Roxas said that he will continue, strengthen and expand the program. Poe, however, was criticized for giving a wrong information about BuB implementation during the Presidential Debate on March 20, 2016. She criticized the administration for starting the BuB only when the election period was about to start, while in fact the government has been implementing BuB since 2012. This makes her support for BuB partly unclear.

Both Poe and Roxas mention continuation of BuB in their platforms. Poe proposes to institutionalize CSO participation in budget decision-making. She wants to increase the participation capacity of citizens, CSOs, and LGUs; create a system determining readiness of CSOs; pursue inclusive approaches where citizens become directly involved in the process; improve BuB monitoring; and incentivize citizens to participate in the planning and budget process. Roxas, on the other hand, will increase BuB funding by at least PhP100 billion, prioritizing Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) and basic facilities and services. He is

proposing a process that will hold each level of local government accountable for programs developed. A toolkit will be provided at the barangay level to address basic services and needs, while proposals will be drafted by cities and municipalities to be vetted at the provincial level.

Binay, Duterte and Santiago have not taken a clear opposition stand on the agenda of BuB continuation, but have made critical statements on it. Binay criticized BuB as a form of "legalized vote buying." Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte's camp said that, through the BUB, Roxas is "buying" local executives for their votes. Santiago criticized BuB budget allocation and the elections.

Only Roxas has a clear BuB track record as Interior and Local Government Secretary. The Department of the Interior and (DILG) is the lead agency implementing the program. Rodrigo Duterte has implemented a few BuB projects as mayor of Davao City.

Vice Presidential Candidates and BuB

Francisco Escudero, Leni Robredo, and Bongbong Marcos have stands and platforms on BuB. Escudero and Robredo will continue BuB, with Robredo expressing her plans of accelerating the program. Marcos said that government involves people at the grassroots in deliberating public budget.

Escudero, together with Poe, will continue BuB and ensure that LGU funding for development programs and basic services are included in the budget proposals of national government agencies. Robredo is championing BuB under her anti-poverty platform and pushes for its institutionalization.

Only Robredo has a clear track record on BuB. She co-authored a bill in Congress that would allow CSOs to participate in the planning and budgeting of local programs. Escudero is the Senate Committee on Finance Chair where he has been involved in budget deliberations of BuB.

What is FactCheck 2016?

FactCheck is a continuing project of the Ateneo School of Government (ASoG), through its Political Democracy Reforms (PODER) and Government Watch (G-Watch) programs, that provides verified information on candidate's position, platform and track record as a voter's basis in making their decisions on who to vote and what issues and agenda to further advance. Now on its third cycle, the 2016 FactCheck, as in the previous 2010 and 2013 elections, probes candidate's position, platform and track record on key issues and agenda identified through consultations with organizations at the local and national levels. It highlights and mainstreams critical issues in the election agenda to contribute in making elections issue- and platform-oriented.

FactCheck 2016 focuses on 10 issues:

- Agriculture, fisheries development and agrarian reform
- Participatory and pro-poor budgeting (BuB)
- The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)
- Political and Electoral Reforms
- Meaningful youth participation
- Education and Health Services to Vulnerable Sectors
- Social Justice for the Bangsamoro and the Indigenous Peoples (IPs)
- Urban Development
- Environmental-ecological Protection and disaster risk and reduction management (DRRM)
- Anti-corruption

The following process was undertaken in coming up with the FactChecks:

- Formal letters were sent out to all the candidates requesting for their position, platform and track record on the agenda we identified.
- Based on the input from the candidates, we did the 'fact-checking' by checking on official reports and documents and

reports from credible newspapers/ online media. For the candidates who did not send their inputs, our take off point was their official website.

- We then processed the data using a processing table and following our measures and indicators.

***Factcheck 2016
Measures and Indicators***

Position refers to the candidates' pronouncements about the agenda that can be found in printed materials like news, statements or online. We determine whether the candidate is for, against or neutral.

Platform refers to the candidates' plans in tackling the agenda as stated in their official platform. We determine whether the agenda is mentioned, not mentioned in the platform.

Track record refers to the direct action taken by the candidates in advancing/ realizing the agenda. We determine whether the candidates' track record is concrete, not concrete, no record or opposition based on whether the candidates has taken direct action in terms of bills filed, laws passed, decisions made, programs/ projects personally/ directly championed as stated in official or reliable/ verifiable records. We mark the candidates' track record 'opposition' if s/he has taken an opposition position on the agenda.

credible source that would correct any wrong data on our FactCheck. Upon receiving such feedback, we checked the source, verified it and corrected the FactCheck (if needed) indicating the correction we made.

Note: The data and figures can still be updated and we are open to additional sources from anyone. Please contact us through our FB page.

PODER/ G-Watch deems FactCheck 2016 mainly as a platform to mainstream critical issues and agenda identified through studies and consultations of PODER/ G-Watch and to facilitate the exchange of citizens and politicians on these issues and agenda.

Sources

- <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/764693/binay-camp-aquino-admins-bub-legalized-vote-buying>
- <http://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/122539-binay-charges-4ps-vote-buying>
- <http://interaksyon.com/article/125421/bub--better-budgeting-or-bribe-ur-barangay>
- https://www.senate.gov.ph/press_release/2014/0924_escudero1.asp
- <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/763156/speech-of-vice-president-jejomar-c-binay-for-the-feb-9-proclamation-rally>
- Copies of platform from offices of Marcos, Poe, Roxas and Duterte.

- After a researcher prepared the data processing table, at least two other researchers peer reviewed the data and the briefer. We then prepared the infographics and finalized the briefer for posting on FactCheck 2016 Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/factcheck2016/>).
- The final checking was crowdsourced. We allow anyone using the online platform (Facebook) to point to us any