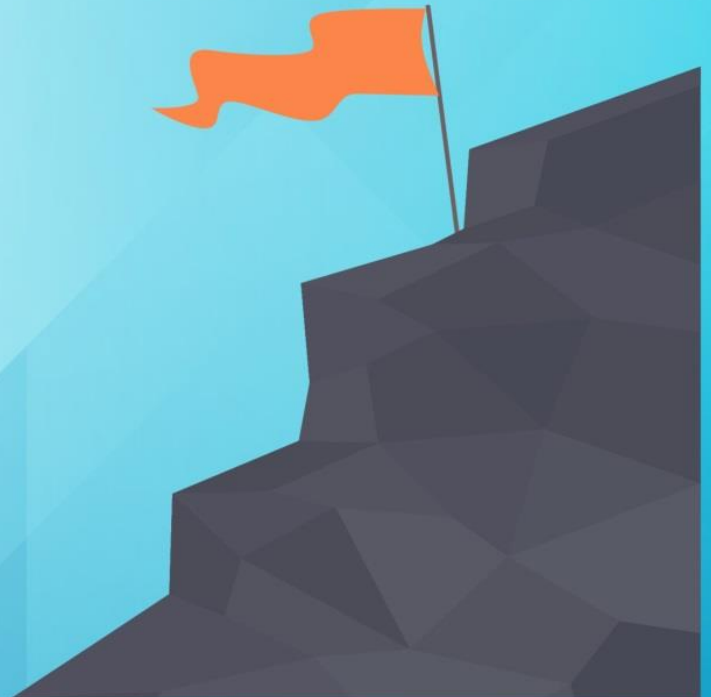


From Zero to Hero:

Small victories in an uphill battle to inclusiveness (San Lorenzo Ruiz, Camarines Norte)

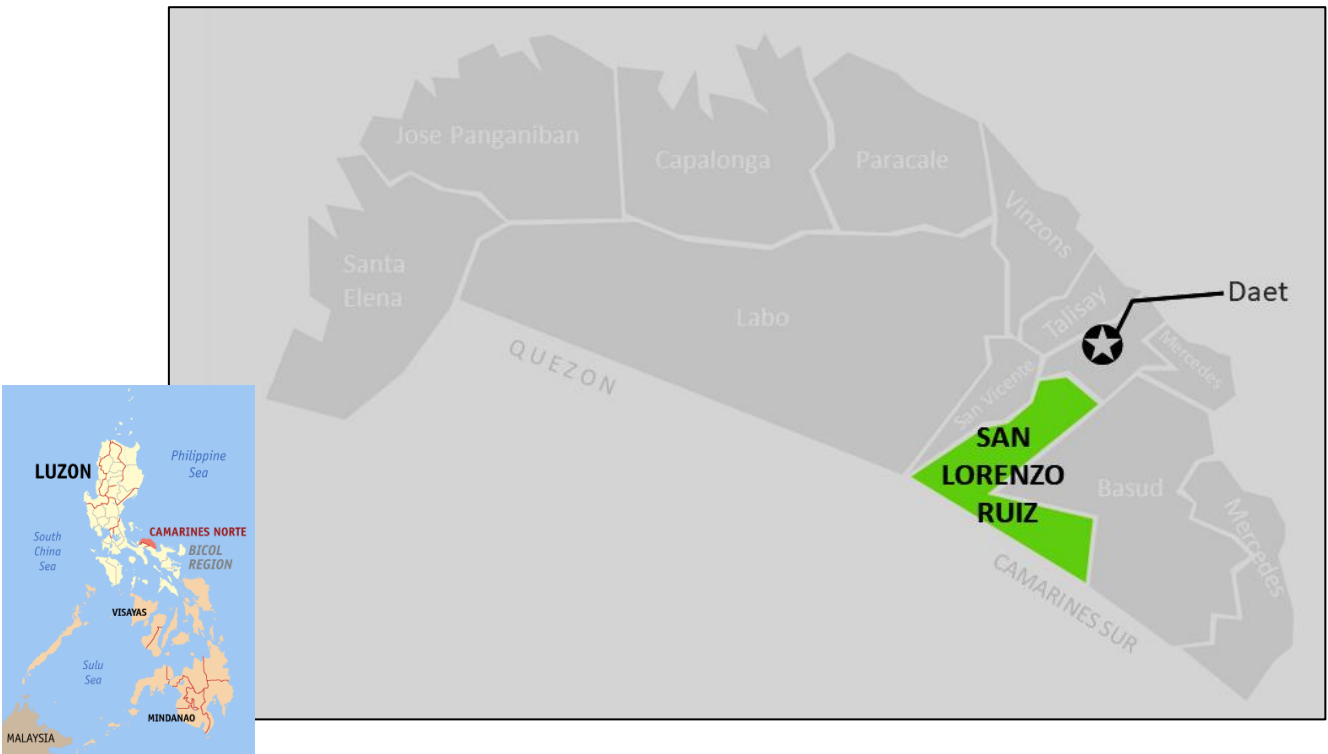
Raphael Montes, Jr. & Prejean Prieto



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The municipality of San Lorenzo Ruiz is a municipality of Camarines Norte. It has a total land area of 119.37 square kilometers. It has an L-shaped territory straddling the southwestern part of the province on the slopes of the mountainous border between Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur. It is located 12 kilometers from the provincial capital of Daet with which it shares a boundary. The topography is generally sloping especially at the area of the poblacion and the civic center.

Figure 1. Map of the Municipality of San Lorenzo, Camarines Norte



It has 14,063 residents and 12 barangays (PSA 2015). Sixty-three percent (63%) of the population can be found in the three barangays bordering Daet and at the poblacion (Barangay Matacong). The municipality is largely rural with agriculture as the dominant economic activity. The municipality also has some seasonal tourism activities brought about by its natural springs and several waterfalls. Residential and economic development mainly runs along a linear pattern along the San Lorenzo Ruiz road that connects the town to Daet.

i. Disability Profile of the Municipality

The 2017 provincial profile of types of disabilities indicate 285 persons with disabilities. This is 2% of the total population of the municipality. Orthopedic disabilities make up 27% of the PWD population—the largest. Visual disabilities comprise 23% of the total PWD population. These two disability profiles make up half of the total PWD population. Primarily, both have immediate mobility requirements framed by the unique hilly topographical situation of SLR.

SAN LORENZO RUIZ, CAMARINES NORTE

From zero to hero: Small victories in an uphill battle to inclusiveness

PROJECT: Assessment of Local Mechanisms for Programs and Services for PWDs - Focus on Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office

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Table 1. Profile of PWDs in San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN

<i>Disability</i>	<i>No. of PWDs</i>	<i>% of PWD Population</i>
Hearing	22	8%
Learning	6	3%
Mental	36	13%
Multiple	17	6%
Orthopedic	70	27%
Psychosocial	30	11%
Speech	24	9%
Visual	62	23%
TOTAL	267	100

Source: CN-PDAO

According to the Municipal Disabilities Affairs Focal Person, five percent (5%) of the PWDs in SLR are employed. Around 20% of PWDs are self-employed, while the rest are dependent on their families.

The LGU had already issued 100 PWD identification cards and booklets. Unfortunately, in 2017, the old municipal hall where the Municipal Social Welfare Office is located—together with the records and supplies of the PDAO—was burned down in an electrical fire that leveled the building. They are currently reconstituting their records and reordered the printing of IDs and purchase booklets. They have restarted the re-registration of PWDs who have previously submitted the application forms and documents for registration.

Eleven out of the 12 barangays have constituted their PWD associations with the exception of Barangay Langga, which only has two (2) registered members. The MPDAO is thinking whether to merge the memberships of those of Langga and Mampurog.

ii. The Story of PDAO’s creation

The Municipal Disabilities Affairs Office of San Lorenzo Ruiz was created in 2012, through Municipal Ordinance No. 2-2012. However, there were no executive or legislative action to implement the said ordinance between its approval in 2012 and 2016. No specific reasons were cited for the inaction. Municipal officials said that a fourth class municipality has to manage competing priorities over very limited resources.

Municipal Ordinance 1-2016, would later amend the M.O. 2-2012 reiterating the provision of funds for the Municipal PDAO to be drawn from half of 1% of the total municipal appropriations—the other half of which is allocated for Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA). Prior to 2016, only the OSCA was utilizing that budget item. Subsequently, ordinances mandating the uniform design for the municipal PWD ID card (M.O. 03-2016) and purchase booklets (M.O. 04-2016) and implementing rules and regulations were approved, also in 2016.

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The sanggunian also passed the appropriations ordinance for 2017 carrying the first-ever budgetary allocation for the MPDAO which amounted to PHP 313,000. This is the first time that an item in the annual appropriations specifically for Disabilities Affairs has been allotted. The budget is still lodged within the departmental budget of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO).

The passage of the legal framework for the MPDAO was championed by Sanggunian Bayan (SB) Bayan Member Restituta Nagera. She is serving her second term as municipal councilor after a hiatus of one electoral term. Nagera's first term was from 2010 to 2013. She was the only non-incumbent who was elected to the sanggunian in 2016. By serendipity, she was given the Chairmanship of the Committee for Handicapped Persons. According to Nagera, the ordinances for the PDAO underwent a speedy process of approval, despite the background political dynamics between some members of the sanggunian (including her) and the municipal mayor. Nagera adds that the Camarines Norte PDAO had a meeting with the mayor in order to secure support for the approval of the PDAO-related ordinances.

iii. Profile of PDAO Office/ Focal Person and PDAO Team

Mr. Joselito Salen is Agricultural Technologist at SLR's Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO). He has been working for the municipal government for 25 years. He began working for the MAO in 1993; although he was only appointed permanently to his current position at the MAO in 2012. His designation as Municipal Disabilities Affairs Focal Person is concurrent and does not entail any additional compensation or an increase in his current salary at the MAO. He receives a monthly honorarium of PHP 600. For the first time, he was able to receive that honorarium (PHP 7,200) at the end of the 2017. Key informants at the municipal government cite "insufficiency of funds" as reason for not appointing a permanent head of office for the MPDAO.

Mr. Salen's workstation remains at the MAO which is located some 700 meters down the hill from the Municipal Hall complex. Staff work for programs and projects is done by the MSWDO including the registration of PWDs and the issuance of IDs and purchase booklets. The MSWDO is located in the municipal hall complex.

According to Executive Order 25, Series of 2016, Mayor Nelson delos Santos designated Mr. Salen as PDAFP, the Municipal PDAO Focal Person "shall serve under the Office of the Local Chief Executive" (Section 2). In addition, Section 4 of the E.O. also states that "the Municipal PDAO shall at least have two staff, one for program and another for administration purposes." However, only the PDAO head has been filled, albeit through designation of concurrent capacity. Mr. Salen is expecting one job order (J.O.) staffer to be designated to the MPDAO in 2018.

Municipal Administrator Amiel Guinto clarified that PWD Affairs remains under MSWDO supervision. All programs and projects about PWD affairs still needs the approval of the Mayor. The MSWDO which still performs the staff work for the MPDAO, is currently composed of five (5) staffers. The position of the head of office is currently vacant due to the untimely death of the newly appointed MSWDO last January 2018. In-charge of office, Social Welfare Assistant Ms. Arlene Guañezo said that the local government has begun its recruitment for a new MSWD Officer. Guañezo confirmed that

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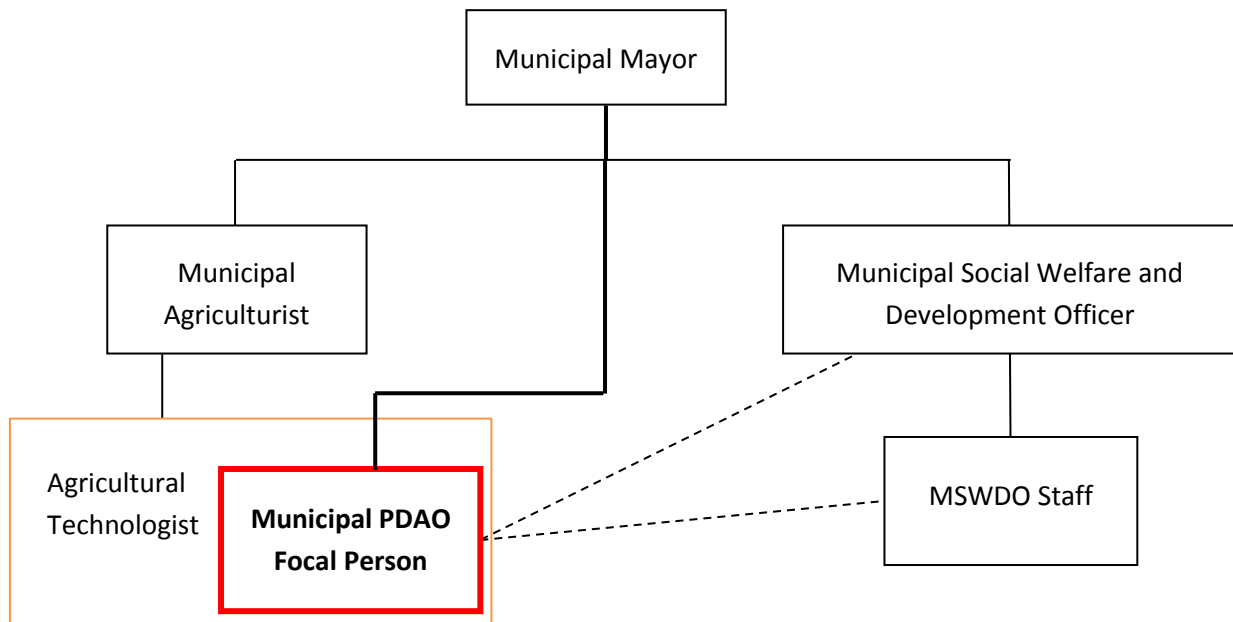
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they keep the records and supplies for the PDAO. Since the fire that destroyed their office, Mr. Salen and MSWDO staff have been trying to reconstitute the PDAO records. Because of the small size of the MSWDO, there is no specific staff assigned for PWD affairs tasked to assist the operations of the MPDAO.

While the MPDAO has a working relationship with the MSWDO, Mr. Salen does not have supervisory powers over the staff performing PDAO-related work. This relationship is mainly coordinative in nature. Mr. Salen’s main responsibility continues to be with the MAO. He adds “I only allot 20% of my working hours for my functions as PDAO Focal Person but whenever I go to the field to visit the farmers in the barangays, I do some of my PDAO duties there as well.”

The chart below illustrates the relationship of the MPDAO to the three superior officials with whom the MDPAO Focal Person interfaces. The thicker solid line indicates the intended structure of E.O. 25, S-2016 which locates the MPDAO within the Office of the Mayor. The thinner solid line indicates the subordinate relationship of the MPDAO Focal Person with his immediate superior in the Municipal Agriculture Office. The dotted line indicates the functional relationship of the MPDAO Focal Person with the municipal employees who are performing PDAO-related responsibilities. By operation and implication, financial accountability is still be supervised by the MSWDO since the PDAO funds are still lodged within its departmental budget. Municipal Administrator Amiel Guinto said that “structurally, the PDAO is under the MSWDO.

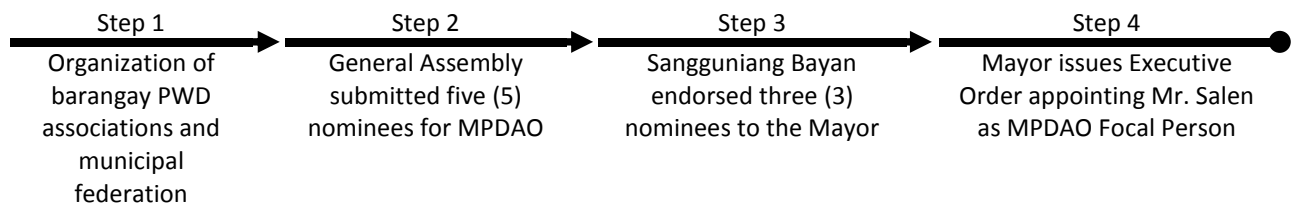
Chart 1. Existing Functional Relationships of the MPDAO



iv. Selection Process

The MPDAO selection process underwent a two-stage nomination process. In 2016, the PWDs from the biggest barangays adjacent to the poblacion were organized. They chose their barangay association officers. The association presidents became the barangay focal persons. Mr. Salen was elected as municipal PWD federation president. Following the call for nominations for MPDAO head, a General Assembly was convened to solicit nominees for MPDAO head. A list of five (5) nominees was submitted to the Sangguniang Bayan of SLR. On 26 September 2016, the Sangguniang Bayan passed Resolution 71, S. 2016 (authored by SB Member Nagera), endorsing three (3) of the five nominees of the General Assembly for action by the Mayor. As stated above, E.O. 25, S. 2016, promulgated the appointment of Mr. Salen as MPDAO Focal Person.

Chart 2. Timeline of MPDAO Selection Process



As a consequence of his election, Mr. Salen voluntarily resigned from the position of PWD president of the municipal PWD federation. In 2017, they elected a new president who happened to be a senior citizen, as well. Due to mobility and age-related problems, they are contemplating another election in 2018 in order to have a more accessible and active leadership in the federation.

E.O. 25 did not explain why Mr. Salen was the choice. SB Member Nagera said “He (Mr. Salen) was the only nominee who was already a municipal employee and with a permanent appointment. In a small municipality like ours, it would be very hard to establish a fully operational office with permanent staff.” In the LGU’s desire to economize and avoid breaching the Personal Services cap, the mayor deemed it fit to appoint the MPDAO on a concurrent capacity. LGU-SLR has a total of 215 employees—33 are permanent and 182 are employed through job order/contract of services (Municipality of San Lorenzo Ruiz-CN, 2017). The 2015 to 2018 Annual Appropriations of LGU-SLR indicates that 45% of the budget had been allotted for Personnel Services.

v. PDAO at Work

As with every nationally-mandated policy, local governments encounter nuances in localizing and implementing national standards and directives. These are mostly defined by resources that are readily available, the local social context and governance strategies. San Lorenzo Ruiz-CN faced an uphill battle in mainstreaming PWD-inclusiveness—possibly the most challenging situation in the entire province.

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Un-Zeroing the Budget. The policy process was fairly fast, taking place within the 2nd Semester of 2016 after the elections. In fact, it was one of the first ordinances enacted by the sangguniang bayan. However, in the process of kick-starting the initial activities of the MPDAO, it was discovered that the MSWDO or any department in the LGU, did not have a specific budget item for PWD affairs. In 2015, PWD affairs was lumped together with ‘Gender and Development’ and ‘Violence Against Women.’ No specific amount of the PHP221,676 budget was allotted for any of the three program areas. For 2016, PWD affairs disappeared altogether. No one in the LGU was able to explain why this was missed out or overlooked.

Councilor Nagera’s championing of PWD affairs legislations in 2016 was able to bring attention to the sector particularly the inclusion of a budget item in the 2017 appropriations ordinance. The stark difference in the budget allocation for the MPDAO jumps out of the monitoring report of PDAO Camarines Norte. While the 11 municipalities of Camarines Norte each had annual budgets for PWD affairs, SLR’s 2017 budget has increased by 313% simply because it was not funded in 2016.

Table 2. Comparative Annual Budgets for PWD Affairs per CN municipalities, 2016 to 2018

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
Basud	51,000	122,830	203,000
Capalonga	60,000	70,000	425,000
Daet	330,000	435,000	435,000
Jose Panganiban	262,122	120,616	494,950
Labo	411,000	580,000	262,000
Mercedes	50,000	400,000	350,000
Paracale	254,200	250,000	430,000
San Lorenzo Ruiz	0	331,000	358,000
San Vicente	108,000	380,000	411,348
Santa Elena	136,585	82,800	155,000
Talisay	100,000	100,000	180,000
Vinzons	508,950	561,040	685,443

With passage of the 2017 budget, PHP331,000 was allocated for PWD affairs. This was taken out of the 1% of the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) formerly allotted for the Office of Senior Citizens’ Affairs. In 2018, PHP353,000 was appropriated for PWD affairs.

While Councilor Nagera admits that passing legislation can be quite swift in their “small town,” un-zeroing the budget did not happen without any challenges. Because the funds for the MPDAO were taken from an item previously enjoyed by the OSCA, the senior citizens of SLR raised their objection when their annual budget was halved. “Nagtatampo po ang mga Senior. Kasi nga naman po biglang nabawasan yung pondo nila. Pero sinasabi naman nila na naiintindihan nila.”

The Sanggunian pushed through with the budget and explained that the MPDAO budget is a statutory obligation of every LGU in the Philippines. Even for 2018, OSCA and PWD Affairs still shared

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the 1% of IRA allocation in the MSWDO budget. There was no specific budgetary augmentation for either programs in other departments.

The Sanggunian passed the 2017 budget of the MPDAO while waiting for the appointment of the PDAO Focal Person. The PWD Affairs budget was passed as an unprogrammed fund. After the appointment of Mr. Salen, the Sanggunian had to authorize disbursements for the 2017 programs during the course of the fiscal year. However, the 2018 PWD Affairs budget has been properly programed.

Making do with meager resources. Despite the positive developments of available funding, SLR still suffers from the financial constraints of a 5th income class municipality. Its budget for 2018 is PHP70,675,000. Forty-six percent (46%) percent of that goes to personal services. The Municipal Development Fund amounts to PHP13,866,000. The MSWDO’s budget is only 5% of the total 2018 budget. PWD Affairs is only 10% of that. On a per capita basis, SLR would spend PHP1,322 per registered PWD.

The municipal administrator admits that the MPDAO has limited funds and personnel but has ostensibly very specific needs that needs resources that is not available in the LGU. On the other hand, the accessibility requirements under the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG), has been taken off the shoulder of the MPDAO and had been absorbed into the budget of the Municipal Engineer. Following Dr. Rex Bernardo’s visit and audit of public facilities in SLR in 2016, the Engineering Office was able to renovate the ramps in the municipal complex to be compliant to standard measurements. The ramps at the municipal hall were adjusted to be 1.2 meters wide with a gradient of 1:12. According to Mr. Salen, the old ramps were short and steep. With the retrofiting, the compliant ramps became longer and flatter. The new tourist information center, adjacent to the municipal hall, was completed on February 2018 with compliant ramps and toilet facilities. The PWD-responsive features of the Municipal Health Office will be adjusted in 2018. Municipal Engineer Rodel Chavez asserted “Even if the LGU did not establish the PDAO, we will still be retrofiting in order to comply with the requirements of Batas Pambansa 344 (BP 344) and the requirements of the SGLG.” He said that the Engineering Office communicates directly with the Office of the Mayor regarding PWD concerns.

Box 1. Mobility is Empowerment

Councilor Restituta Nagera accompanied a group of PWDs to Daet to a medical mission facilitated by the CN-PDAO. There the PWDs had fittings for customized wheelchairs and leg prostheses.

One of the men who went there had an improvised wheelchair made up of an old bike and a wooden chair. After he received his customized wheelchair, Councilor Nagera often sees the same man down the hill from his residence interacting with other people and visiting his friends.

The customized wheelchair had given him more opportunities for mobility. Being able to move around more than the way he used to have changed his quality of life for the better.

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The MPDAO was able to take its first crack at its own programs in 2017. It was able to implement several programs along the lines of community organizing, capacity building, livelihood, education and assistive devices. From February to May 2017, the MPDAO conducted profiling and organization of PWDs in the most populous barangays of Matacong, Mampurog, Daculang Bolo, Laniton and Dagotdotan. The municipal PWD federation was reorganized and the Municipal Council for Disability Affairs convened. These operations in the field were piggy-backed on the MSWDO's existing "mobile" operations in the barangays, which brought the different welfare projects of the LGU to citizens. There is at least one "mobile" operation per barangay per year.

In October, a training program on organic swine and native chicken production was conducted for 56 PWD families. Consequently, 40 heads of native pig and 96 heads of native chicken were procured for distribution to the PWD families who attended the training. Thirty-four (34) PWD students or children of PWDs (from day care to college) were granted educational assistance. Each received PHP882 for the year.

Regarding assistive devices, seven (7) were referred to the CN-PDAO for wheelchairs and four (4) were assisted in availing artificial legs. Mr. Salen said that wheelchairs and artificial legs are too expensive for the municipal government to provide as a direct service.

For 2018, the livelihood program for PWD families has the largest share in the MPDAO budget at PHP130,375. Unlike the 2016 livelihood program, this package will depend on the proposed activity that the beneficiary will undertake. This leaves opportunity for non-agricultural PWD families to avail of the livelihood assistance. There is a medical assistance fund which amounts to PHP25,000. Mr. Salen admits that they have yet to promulgate the guidelines. He prefers that the amount of cash assistance should be based on the type of illness and not be a uniform amount, as what is currently practiced. However, the said amount is still too small that it runs the risk of being depleted in a short period of time. The office has a 36,000-peso allotment for equipment to be used for trainings.

Box 2. Looking Out for Each Other

Mr. Eric Flores is a partially blind employee of LGU-SLR. He serves as Supply Officer for the municipal government but also as president of the Barangay Matacong PWD association.

He said that he was also one of those who availed of the training on raising organic pigs and native chicken. He is therefore entitled to receive the allotted animals for every beneficiary.

However, there is a family that cares for a developmentally challenged boy in Barangay Matacong. In this light, he waived his right to the said aid and suggested instead that the PWD's family receive his share.

"Citizens take precedence over government workers even if one is also entitled to PWD benefits" he said.

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Table 3. Budget for PWD Affairs, MSWDO, San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN, 2018
Highest to lowest allocation

<i>Budget item</i>	<i>Amount (PHP)</i>
Livelihood program	135,375
Equipment	36,400
Educational Assistance	30,000
Medical Assistance	25,000
Honorarium	24,000
Capability Building	23,000
Assistive Devices	20,000
Burial Assistance	20,000
PWD Month Celebration	15,968
Travelling expenses	10,000
Mobile Monthly Meeting	10,000
Other expenses	8,632
TOTAL	358,375

Source: Municipal Budget Office, SLR-CN

Councilor Nagera notes that since the MPDAO has chosen to concentrate on livelihood projects, serious monitoring must be the rule. They may have to consider a partnership with the local state college—Camarines Norte State College (CNSC). She said that she had spoken to the college’s PWD focal person and they are exploring the possibility of conducting a training program on business development for the PWDs.

vi. Insights

The (Re)X-Factor: Crucial role of Provincial PDAO. The statutory obligation of setting up the PDAO would persuade a local government to take initial steps, as what may have happened with the 2012 creation of SLR’s MPDAO. However, it did drag its feet with regard to funding the office, appointing a focal person and including PWD-specific programs/projects. The incentives tied to the performance measurements of the SGLG started the ball rolling again.

In situations like this, the Provincial PDAO has a crucial role to play in persuading and encouraging the low-income municipalities to comply with the law. Hand-holding cash-strapped LGUs through the process of establishing the PDAO and jumpstarting the programming of PWD programs is necessary instead of simply waiting for compliance. The PPDAO should be able to advocate to the key decisionmakers in the local executive and legislative departments. In SLR, CN-PDAO was able to nurture a relationship with a policy champion in the person of Councilor Resty Nagera. The councilor was willing to continue learning about the policy area on persons with disabilities and has been proactive in continuing the engagement with CN-PDAO. While she would like to confine herself to the policymaking aspect of PWD concerns, she regularly attends CN-PDAO activities including trainings and PCDA meetings.

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Success also depends on the PDAO's diligence in presenting the establishment of the office and subsequent related actions as part of an overall provincial policy and development strategy. Mr. Rex Bernardo's visit to brief the Mayor and local legislators as well as inspect public facilities showed the provincial government's seriousness in pushing for the PDAO project. Making lifelines available (i.e. assistive devices, medical missions) assured the municipal government that the provincial government is willing to help fill some the inadequacy of resources.

Although mainly through coincidence, the limited circumstances of the CN-PDAO—having only a three-person complement—is also an example to reluctant municipalities that things can be done even with limited resources.

The Reluctant Champion. As SB Member Nagera has recounted, the portfolio of PWD Affairs was foisted on her since that committee was the only one that no one wanted. However, she said that during the campaign, she had contemplated on including PWD concerns since one campaign team member had a special child of whom she was fond. “Yung PWD na anak nung supporter ko ang nagparealize sa akin na: Bakit kaya hindi ko na lang gawing programa itong mga PWD?” Nagera recounted.

Post-elections, her enthusiasm for PWD concerns was tempered by political differences with the Mayor. As it turned out, the Mayor—a medical doctor and former municipal health officer—was receptive to the idea. According to Municipal Planning Officer, Rico Brizo, the Mayor is very receptive to PWD-inclusive policies. During his first term (2010-2013), the LGU began retrofitting the buildings for accessibility. Having lost a re-election bid, the accessibility projects were halted during the ensuing term. That was the same re-election bid that Nagera also lost. Having won fresh mandates in 2016, Nagera's championing of the PDAO policy has found a receptive local chief executive who chose to look beyond political color to support a worthy cause.

The process of championing a policy in legislation, no matter how noble and relevant, will need a receptive local chief executive. That is simply how the system works. If the key policy actors are not able to reach out beyond political lines, any initiative would grind to a screeching halt.

Double-edged sword of synergies. “Hitting two birds with one stone” speaks of a can-do organizational philosophy that can help institutions run efficient programs and projects. On the other hand, creating too many overlaps can have negative effects to organizational effectiveness in the long term.

Mr. Salen's designation as MPDAO Focal Person may seem like a practical way of addressing limited resources in light of statutory obligations. Nonetheless, through his own admission, as well as the assessment of his co-workers in the LGU, he is unable to devote 100% of his time to duties at the MPDAO. Being an agricultural technologist does help him frame MPDAO interventions beyond the welfare and health approach to most PWD concerns. He can craft programs that are relevant to the specific needs of PWD families in this largely agricultural municipality.

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However, his designation of MPDAO Focal Person without the full stature as a head of office may somewhat hamper efforts in mainstreaming PWD-inclusive programs in the municipality. The PDAO's role is primarily coordinative which requires it to look into portfolios of infrastructure, welfare, health, education, and regulation. Mr. Salen does not sit in venues where he can exercise coordination across sectors. He does not sit in Management Committee meetings nor has he been invited to local special bodies and the local development council. The municipal administrator still expects the MSWDO to articulate PWD concerns.

At the very least, PDAO Focal Person should have the same stature as the GAD Coordinator. The GAD Coordinator has some authority to vet project ideas whether these are responsive to the sector that he/she represents. Local governments seeking to achieve synergies, would find it wise to use the process of "budget tagging" used in gender and development in trying to coordinate the PWD-related projects of the LGUs similarly.

Redundancies can be good too. According to CN-PDAO, the database on PWDs are kept at the municipal level. While registration is done through a DOH-online platform, the municipal governments are the repository of census data as well as related data like IDs and purchase booklets. The provincial PDAO receives statistics from individual municipal PDAOs which they integrate to form a profile of PWDs in the province.

When, SLR's old municipal hall housing the MSWDO offices burned down, the roster of PWDs as well as the updated list of PWDs who were issued IDs and purchase booklets were also lost in the fire. The written and electronic files of the PDAO were burned. Since the record-keeping protocols do not offer redundancies within the LGU or in CN-PDAO, SLR-PDAO and the MSWDO are presently reconstituting their records as they try to restore full office operations at the same time.

In light of this, redundant records must exist either at the provincial PDAO, a back-up drive in the LGU or a cloud drive, any of which can be retrieved in case of an incident that has permanently damaged the records of the PDAO. As LGU databases become interrelated in relation to disaster risk reduction and families would have specialized needs in terms of evacuation, relief or even mitigation.

vii. Conclusion

While the goals of establishing a PWD Affairs Office in every local government is a noble undertaking, it is an unfunded mandate. Even in the context of devolution, national government mandates structures and functional assignments to local governments often over competencies that have not been defined when the decentralization law was enacted. The reasons are most of the time valid and necessary such as in the creation of a local disaster risk reduction and management office in every local government. However, the principle of fiscal equivalence demands that financial resources should match the assignment of functions. If this does not happen, it is considered an unfunded mandate.

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As such, the uptake in local policy, structural adjustments, and planning and programming will largely depend on an LGU's capacities in accommodating one additional office specifically in terms of personnel, operations, and budget. Lower income municipalities usually are slower at localizing these mandates. These municipalities would normally have to contend with competing priorities amidst very limited funding sources. These municipalities will resort to ad-hoc options to comply. Ad-hoc arrangements often lead to other problems later such as competition or turfing among participating departments. In ad-hoc arrangements, it is important to clarify the accountabilities of the temporary official/s as well as the line of supervision and the level of authority the ad-hoc official possesses.

Fourth to sixth class municipalities would need the leadership of the provincial government in mainstreaming the PDAO and PWD-inclusive policies. The provincial government should lead by example and should assist these municipalities from policy formulation to programming to ensure the most basic compliance to national policy.

PWD concerns are particularly financially demanding given the diversity of disabilities and their respective needs. PWD inclusive public infrastructure may be challenging in mountainous or sloping areas where many fourth to sixth class municipalities like San Lorenzo Ruiz are located. They would have to follow standards as well as consider the slope of the natural terrain in ensuring accessibility and safety for PWDs. Add to that the general context of limited funds for infrastructure and other development projects.

However, PWD-inclusiveness goes beyond compliance to national law and performance measurements. Fourth to sixth class municipalities already find it difficult to comply in a speed that national policy desires. To bear the costs of the mandates on the PDAO lead to uncomfortable choices and the dynamics between winners and losers in LGU programs.

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List of Interviewees

- Bernardo, Rex. Camarines Norte Persons With Disabilities Affairs Officer.
- Brizo, Rico Z. Municipal Planning and Development Officer.
- Chavez, Rodel. Municipal Engineer.
- Flores, Eric. Supply Officer, Office of the Municipal Engineer/Barangay Focal Person, Brgy. Matacong.
- Guañezo, Arlene. In-charge of Office/Social Welfare Assistant. Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office.
- Guinto, Amiel. Municipal Administrator.
- Nagera, Restituta. Member, Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council)
- Salen, Joselito C. Municipal Persons With Disabilities Affairs Focal Person/Agricultural Technologist

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