

Civil Society Engagement Under Local Decentralization: An Assessment of CSO Participation in Tangub City Governance

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Abstract

Abstract: This study analyzes the participation, purposes, and challenges of civil society organizations (CSOs) in local decision-making in Tangub City. Using a mixed-method approach, five representatives were purposively selected from fourteen accredited CSOs based on active involvement and organizational performance. Purposeful sampling enables the selection of information-rich cases and aligns with evidence that data saturation is often achieved with a limited number of interviews. The findings show that CSOs consistently engage in program implementation and consultations, frequently participate in development planning, and occasionally contribute to monitoring and evaluation. Their main objectives are to promote public participation and provide essential community services. However, CSOs face constraints including limited financial capacity, weak legislative support, low institutional awareness, and the absence of a coordinating focal person. Strengthening capacity-building programs, improving documentation practices, and enhancing collaboration with stakeholders are recommended to improve the effectiveness of CSO participation in local governance.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menganalisis partisipasi, tujuan, dan tantangan organisasi masyarakat sipil (KKP) dalam pengambilan keputusan lokal di Kota Tangub. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, lima perwakilan dipilih secara sengaja dari empat belas KKP terakreditasi berdasarkan keterlibatan aktif dan kinerja organisasi. Pengambilan sampel bertujuan memungkinkan pemilihan kasus yang kaya informasi dan selaras dengan bukti bahwa saturasi data sering dicapai dengan jumlah wawancara yang terbatas. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa KKP secara konsisten terlibat dalam implementasi program dan konsultasi, sering berpartisipasi dalam perencanaan pembangunan, dan kadang-kadang berkontribusi pada pemantauan dan evaluasi. Tujuan utama mereka adalah untuk mendorong partisipasi publik dan menyediakan layanan masyarakat yang penting. Namun, KKP menghadapi kendala termasuk kapasitas keuangan yang terbatas, dukungan legislatif yang lemah, kesadaran kelembagaan yang rendah, dan tidak adanya koordinator utama. Penguatan program peningkatan kapasitas, peningkatan praktik dokumentasi, dan peningkatan kolaborasi dengan pemangku kepentingan direkomendasikan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas partisipasi KKP dalam tata kelola lokal.

Introduction

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are non-governmental and non-profit organizations that are organized at the local, national, and international levels to promote social, economic, and political change. These organizations are often focused on advocacy, service delivery, and community mobilization to promote human rights, democracy, and sustainable development (Asian Development Bank, 2009; Van Wessel et al., 2020). CSOs serves as vital pillars of societal progress, fostering transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in governance while advocating for human rights, social justice, and environmental sustainability (Levine et al., 2023) and its participation became essential for assessing the democratic qualities of the country as it means to be that through its participation, it connects the people needs leading to strong governance in general (Kalm & Uhlin, 2015)

In a global perspective, civil society organizations act as crucial intermediaries between the individual citizen and the often-overwhelming forces of globalization (Cromm & Volk, 2024). It serves to be the mediator between the people and the government. Initially, civil society organizations identified the challenges in the regulatory environment such as, recognition of registration of CSOs are problematic, national rules go beyond the restrictions of the freedom of peaceful assembly for CSOs, and the lack of funding for CSO. Another study from Cromm & Volk (2024) highlights that CSO has its problem for effective participation such as limited access to information about policy or legal initiatives, lack of knowledge on legal matters and process, and cutting of funds for CSO's activities. The essential need for CSOs participation highlights good governance and strong presence of democracy. However, the growing number of restrictive laws and rules, as part of a larger legal crackdown on Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), is making it much harder for them to access funding in many countries, questioning the essence of CSOs participation (Rusfiana & Kurniasih, 2024).

The United Nations established the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to foster the importance of sustainable programs. Part of this, is the Sustainable Development Goal number 16 which highlights the peace, justice, and strong institutions promoting inclusive and open societies ensuring all voices are heard. With regard to this, CSO representatives made it clear that civil society's involvement is needed both to implement the goals and ensure that dedicated resources are not misused (Holloway, 2001). Meaningful civil society participation is crucial for inclusive SDG implementation and accountability, ensuring governments respond to diverse societal needs. Civil society acts as a vital link between governments and stakeholders, playing a key role in monitoring and review at national and local levels.

In the Philippines, decentralization, as mandated by the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991, is aimed at improving the contribution of local governments to national development and improving governance in the country by bringing government closer to the people (Asian Development Bank, 2007). The LGC enables civil society through Local Development Council (LDCs), which coordinate local development with government and CSO representatives (Brillantes, 2003). Although the 1991 LGC emphasizes CSO participation in local governance as both a means and an end to decentralization, CSOs face several challenges in implementing their programs and projects. These include limited funding and human resources, lack of government support, and political patronage.

Philippine CSOS primarily secure funding through membership dues, donations, subsidies, and revenue from income-generating activities (Asian Development Bank, 2013). Al-Zuabi (2012) found that many CSOs, despite being active, struggle due to unclear vision, limited awareness, experience, skills, and negative public perception. This underscores the need to analyze their role in monitoring and development planning (Yasay, 2018). Additionally, CSOs must understand their rights and responsibilities in policymaking. Due to lack of lobbying and policy expertise, they miss government opportunities, highlighting the need for training in participatory audits, financial reports, and project proposals (Asian Development Bank, 2007; Gaus-Pasha, 2005).

Although CSOs' play a crucial role in democratic societies, their specific impact in Philippines remains understudied. Most research has focused on political institutions, elections, and party dynamics, often neglecting non-state actors (Hastono & Ratnasari, 2020). While some studies examine prominent CSOs, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis of their strategies, state interactions and influence on social and political change. Despite the fact that CSO collaborations are essential for promoting community involvement and policy advocacy, there are still few studies examining these ties in rural contexts, according to (Hanoum & Kusumaningrum, 2020). This established the need to conduct this study in the rural setting particularly in the province of Misamis Occidental.

In Tangub City, there are a number of accredited civil society organizations that have been created to promote its needs and priorities, specifically those of women and agricultural groups. Specifically, as of fiscal year 2022, there are fourteen (14) registered CSO in the city that are newly established. These CSO has a fundamental role in shaping the active citizen engagement and they serve as an agency to carry out people's initiative. Thus, this study will assess the CSO and state (Local Government) relationship. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to assess the level of participation of the CSO in the LGU and community, to identify the purpose of the CSO for its creation, evaluate the programs of the Local Government Unit in Tangub City that promotes CSO participation and identify its challenges. To address this and understand the dynamics of the civil society organizations in Tangub City, this study was conceived.

This study examines the challenges and purpose of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Tangub City. It highlights the fundamental role of CSOs in citizen participation in local governance and explores their purpose as well as the challenges they face since their establishment. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether CSOs participate in the policymaking processes of the Local Government of Tangub City, to assess the level of their participation in key areas such as monitoring and evaluation, program implementation, development planning, and consultation and legislation, and to identify the challenges encountered by CSOs in Tangub City

Research Method

This study uses a sequential exploratory research method. According to Creswell (2009) this method is a better way of comprehending ideas, opinions, experiences that includes gathering and evaluating a non-numerical data. In this study, sequential explanatory used to verify the results from the research question one through identifying the challenges of the

CSO in an interview form. Further, this study was conducted in the Tangub City in the province of Misamis Occidental. Tangub City is located at the southern part of the province of Misamis Occidental, forming a D-shape. It is bounded by Mt. Malindang in the north, Ozamis City in the east, Panguil bay in the south and the municipality of Bonifacio in the west. It sheltered by the mighty Mt. Malindang range and embraced by the placid Panguil bay, it has fifty-five (55) barangays over 16,572 land hectares. The research respondents of this study were the representatives of the accredited Civil Society Organization in Tangub City that was chosen from a convenience sampling. The researchers considered five (5) participants out from fourteen (14) accredited CSO. Furthermore, the researcher considered to interview key informants that would answer the programs and policies that was implemented for the CSO. The researcher conducted the study with a modified questionnaire and a researcher-made interview guide for the key informants. The questionnaire was divided into (3) parts. In the first part of the questionnaire answers the level of the participation of the CSO in Tangub City that was adopted from the study of (Abdula, 2018) The second part of the questionnaire is an interview guide that would answer the SOP two (2) which is the challenges of the civil society organization. This determined the answers of the participants in relation to their purpose, challenges and will identify the possible recommendations and interventions for the study. Further, in the first part of the survey questionnaire, the following scaling and interpretation are used, as adopted from Sullivan & Artino (2013) a mean score ranging from 4.00 to 3.00 is interpreted as Always, 2.99 to 2.00 as Frequently, 1.99 to 1.00 as Occasional, and 1.00 to 0.99 as never.

Furthermore, in the data gathering, the researchers first asked the participants for their written and signed consent and explained the purpose of the study. The researcher briefly elaborated that the participants have the rights to refuse to participate and assured that the participants data collected remain confidential. While conducting the study, the researchers followed the mandatory health protocol of the local IATF. The researcher wore face mask in having an interview and followed the minimum health standards of physical distancing. Also, the researcher is vaccinated for safety purposes. With this, the data was analyzed through average mean. The sample mean was used to get the average of the indicators of the level of participation of the 5 participants. In addition, the thematic analysis was used for qualitative data gathered from the interviews in the purpose and challenges of the civil society organization in Tangub City. The thematic analysis is suitable in this since it is a versatile data analysis approach used by qualitative researchers to derive themes from interview data (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

This study will identify the level of participation purpose, challenges and extent of participation of the CSO of Tangub City towards local government. Furthermore, it will provide some understanding what are the factors that affect the CSO in participating in the legislation. In this study, it will first identify the level of participation of the civil society organization, purpose of the civil society organization and its main reason. Second, it will assess the challenges of the identify some variables that the affects the participation of the organization. Thus, at the end of this study, it will provide some recommendations and underlying solutions for the challenges of the CSO in Tangub City.

In identifying its main objectives, researchers highlight concepts used and the elements necessary to answer the objectives earlier presented. Accordingly, participation in local governance is the main aspect for assessing the democratic society. The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines clearly recognizes participation and empowerment, including the important role of CSOs. This may be seen in several provisions of the Constitution, most prominently in the following: Article II, Section 23: "The State shall encourage non-governmental, community-based, or sector organizations that promote the welfare of the nation." Article XIII, Section 15: "The State shall respect the role of independent people's organizations to enable the people to pursue and protect, within the democratic framework, their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means." Article XIII, Section 16: "The right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political and economic decision-making shall not be abridged. The State shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms." Many laws covered the importance of recognizing the participation of the CSO in the local government setting.

In this study, the participation of civil society leads to democratic principle and good governance. Therefore, the Karl (2002) influential work, "Bowling Alone," holds significant relevance in this field, emphasizing the importance of social capital comprising networks, norms, and trust among individuals in enhancing the effectiveness of civil society. This analysis highlights how strong social capital fosters civic involvement and democratic engagement, which are essential for sustaining a dynamic civil society. In addition to Karl framework, other theoretical perspectives offer deeper insights into the dynamics of civil society (Nemtoi, 2015). Court (2006) views civil society as a site of ideological struggle, where civil society organizations (CSOs) can challenge dominant power structures and promote alternative societal visions. Likewise, Habermas's concept of the public sphere emphasizes civil society's role in facilitating rational-critical discussions that influence political discourse and decision-making (Susen, 2020). In relation to this, it is not only using imperative applying social capital theory in this study.

The concept of "participatory democracy" is a relatively recent term used to describe a specific democratic theory, which seems to have originated from Arnold S. Kaufman's advocacy for "participatory politics" (Bhargava, 2015). By the early 1970s, participatory democracy had been sufficiently developed to be recognized as a distinct democratic theory. Carole Pateman's *Participation and Democratic Theory* provides the first comprehensive political science analysis of this concept. Drawing from J.J. Rousseau, J.S. Mill, and G.D.H. Cole, Pateman contrasts participatory democracy with elite and pluralist models, ultimately arguing that active civic engagement has positive psychological effects and contributes to individual development. Furthermore, she asserts that a truly participatory society necessitates expanding the definition of "political" beyond national governance to include other spheres of social life.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Monitoring and Evaluation

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Submit accomplishment of the project.	2.2	Frequently
CSO's invite other institution to monitor Project	1	Never
There are established rules and Monitoring and evaluation.	3.2	Always
Involved LGUs in monitoring project	1.8	Occasional
Frequently monitor their project.	1.8	Occasional
Involve community in evaluating project.	1	Never
Involve/hire private people to evaluate project.	1	Never
Report anomalies during project implementation.	1.8	Occasional
Ensure accountability in project monitoring and evaluation	1.8	Occasional
Grand Mean	1.73	Occasional

Table 1 presents the extent of CSO participation in project monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The results show that CSOs have never been involved in directly monitoring projects or engaging the community in evaluating project outcomes, with a mean of 1. Statements 4, 5, 8, and 9, which relate to involving the LGU in project monitoring, reporting anomalies during implementation, and ensuring accountability, received a mean interpreted as *occasionally*. Overall, the grand mean of 1.73 indicates that CSO participation in M&E activities is generally limited or occasional. This suggests that CSOs are primarily active during the implementation phase of projects but tend to withdraw from the follow-up and evaluation stages, leaving sustainability largely in the hands of the community members.

This pattern is consistent with findings in the development literature that highlight a common challenge for civil society organizations: while CSOs are often effective in mobilizing communities and implementing programs, their involvement in systematic monitoring and long-term evaluation is frequently constrained by resources, capacity, or institutional focus (Banks et al., 2015; Boris & Mosher-Williams, 1998; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2004; Kövér, 2021). Abudla (2018) notes that effective accountability and learning mechanisms require not only participation in implementation but also active engagement in tracking progress, assessing outcomes, and feeding insights back into program design. Similarly, Maestrecampo (2016) emphasize that evaluation is most effective when stakeholders, including community members and partner organizations, are continuously involved in monitoring processes rather than solely during project completion. The occasional involvement of CSOs in M&E, as indicated in this study, points to the need for structured and

sustainable mechanisms that integrate CSOs in follow-up activities to ensure project accountability, adaptability, and long-term impact.

Table 2. Program Implementation

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
CSO's involve community people in Project implementation.	4	Always
There are sufficient budget for their Programs/projects.	4	Always
Consult community before implementing Projects.	3	Always
Community residents are prioritized in employment	2.6	Frequently
Empowers community for project sustainability	4	Always
Conduct community consultation in project implementation.	1.6	Occasional
CSO's has administrative capability to implement project.	2.2	Frequently
Ask the LGU's equipment necessary to project implementation	4	Always
Policy implementation is in accordance with the Socioeconomic need of the local people.	2	Frequently
Grand Mean	3.04	Always

Table 2 reveals that the CSO is always involved in the participation of program implementation with a grand mean of 3.04. Statement number 1,2,3,5 and 8 obtained means ranging in between 3-4 that results to the interpretation of "always" in its participation. However, in terms of conducting a community consultation in project implementation, it was shown that CSO occasionally participated with a mean of 1.6.

The policy implementation must be at all times in accordance to the interest and needs of the people ([Asian Development Bank, 2007](#)). However, in this study, CSOs participation in policy implementation in accordance with the need of the local people is just frequently done with a mean of 2. Statement 7 which is CSOs has administrative capability to implement

project also has a mean of 2 with frequently as its interpretation. It is found out also that they need the LGU to fully implement the program that they support.

Table 3. Development Planning

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Finalization of plans is based on consensus?	3	Always
Plans are validated by LGUs?	3.2	Always
Involve barangay officials in planning?	2	Frequently
Plans are based on community needs?	2	Occasional
Involve other stakeholders in planning?	1.8	Occasional
There are established monitoring criteria?	1.6	Occasional
CSO's participate in bidding?	1	Never
Programs/Projects are relevant to the needs of the people in the target areas?	2	Frequently
Grand Mean	2.07	Frequently

Table 3 refers to the CSOs participation in development planning. It reveals that the CSO has always participated in terms of finalization of plans that is based on consensus and plans are validated by LGU. It is said that CSO must coordinate with LGU for assistance before implementing programs and activities ([Asian Development Bank, 2012](#)). Although, Section 67 of Republic Act No. 10964 (General Appropriations Act of 2018) allows national government agencies to partner with civil society organization (CSOs) in implementing certain programs and projects and encourages LGUs to provide assistance, financial to the organization ([Yasay, 2018](#)). it is revealed in this study that CSOs never participate in any bidding agreement between the LGU. Statement 7 with a mean of 1 has an interpretation of never as the measurement for participation.

According to Gaus-Pasha ([2005](#)), one of the purposes of the CSO is to promote inclusivity and highlights the people's interest. In addition, public engagement and programs in accordance with the community needs is important as it is the basis of democracy. However, Generally, the grand mean of 2.07 reveal that CSOs frequently participated in the development planning that includes communities needs and plans must be based and consensus with the public

Table 4. Consultation

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Participate in community decision making.	2	Frequently

Asserts rights in community decision making	2.4	Frequently
Initiate consultation dialogue with the LGUs.	3	Always
Represents peoples interest in different sectors	4	Always
Encourage transparency of LGU programs.	4	Always
Grand Mean	3.08	Always

Table 4 presents the extent of consultation practices of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in relation to local governance processes. The indicators yielded a grand mean of 3.08, interpreted as Always, suggesting that consultation is generally practiced by CSOs in their engagement with Local Government Units (LGUs). Consultation, as defined in the Guidebook for Civil Society Organizations in Local Special Bodies and Local Budget Process (2018) refers to processes that promote openness, inclusivity, and participatory leadership through improved understanding of programs and activities. In this study, consultation is examined through CSO participation in community decision-making, assertion of rights, initiation of dialogue with LGUs, representation of sectoral interests, and promotion of transparency in LGU programs.

The findings indicate that initiating consultation dialogue with LGUs, representing people's interests across sectors, and encouraging transparency of LGU programs obtained the highest mean scores ($\bar{x} = 4$), all interpreted as Always. This suggests that CSOs are consistently engaged in formal and institutionalized spaces of participation. This pattern is supported by Gaventa and Barrett (2012), who argue that civil society engagement is often strongest in invited spaces of governance, where organizations gain access to decision-makers but may have limited influence over final outcomes.

In contrast, participation in community decision-making ($\bar{x} = 2$) and asserting rights in community decision-making ($\bar{x} = 2.4$) were interpreted as Frequently. This indicates that CSO involvement is less consistent at the grassroots level, suggesting that participation may be more consultative than deliberative. Such variation implies that while CSOs are recognized partners of LGUs, broader community empowerment and sustained rights-based participation remain constrained. Although the grand mean reflects consultation as "always" practiced, the variation among indicators suggests that consultation is not uniformly experienced across all levels. As participatory governance literature emphasizes, consultation alone does not ensure meaningful influence when decision-making power remains centralized (Parel et al., 2015). Overall, the findings indicate that CSO consultation is stronger in formal institutional settings than in community-based processes, highlighting the need for deeper and more inclusive participatory mechanisms.

This section presents the findings of the interviews conducted to examine the purposes of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the challenges they encounter, and the response of the Local Government Unit (LGU) in Tangub City to these challenges. The analysis is based on three guiding questions concerning CSO formation, organizational constraints, and LGU programs that promote CSO participation.

Interview results indicate that the primary purpose of most CSOs is to promote public engagement and participation in local governance. Participants consistently described their organizations as platforms for representing community interests and facilitating citizen involvement in public decision-making processes. CSOs were viewed as mechanisms through which community concerns could be conveyed to the local council and integrated into public deliberations. This reflects the broader role of CSOs as democratic intermediaries that encourage participation, accountability, and dialogue between citizens and government institutions. Consistent with the literature, participants framed public engagement not only as a goal but also as the foundation of CSO advocacy and representation within local governance structures.

In addition to participatory roles, several CSOs identified service provision as a central organizational purpose. Participants reported that their organizations deliver livelihood assistance, sector-specific services, and regulatory support to their members and communities. These services were often described as responses to unmet needs or gaps in government provision, particularly at the grassroots level. This finding highlights the dual function of CSOs in Tangub City: while some prioritize advocacy and participation, others operate primarily as service-oriented organizations. Such functional diversity aligns with existing scholarship emphasizing that CSO roles vary according to organizational focus, resources, and community demands.

Despite these contributions, participants emphasized that service delivery and organizational effectiveness are highly constrained by limited financial capacity. Most CSOs rely on irregular funding sources, including project-based LGU allocations, donations, and membership fees. Participants noted that the absence of stable funding restricts their ability to implement programs consistently and sustain long-term initiatives. Financial constraints were described as directly affecting organizational activities, limiting engagement with government processes, and reducing program visibility. This finding reinforces previous studies that link weak resource bases and limited financial management capacity to reduced CSO effectiveness and institutional influence.

Beyond financial limitations, lack of legislative support emerged as a major challenge for many CSOs. Several participants expressed disappointment that CSO accreditation did not guarantee prioritization of their programs within the local council. Participants reported difficulties in securing budget allocations, gaining recognition, and accessing institutional support for proposed activities. These experiences suggest that CSO participation in legislative and budgetary processes remains uneven and highly dependent on local political priorities. Although national legal frameworks encourage LGU CSO partnerships, the findings

indicate that only programs aligned with established local development priorities are likely to receive support, leaving other CSOs marginalized within decision-making spaces.

Nevertheless, contrasting experiences were also evident. Accredited CSOs reported receiving stronger institutional support, including representation in local councils and assistance in sustaining their programs. Participants from these organizations emphasized that LGU recognition and organizational capacity enabled them to participate more effectively in planning and implementation processes. This variation underscores that LGU support for CSOs in Tangub City is not uniform but contingent upon accreditation status, institutional capacity, and alignment with government priorities.

The study further reveals disparities in organizational capacity, particularly in program development and documentation. Some participants acknowledged limited educational backgrounds and technical skills among members, which hindered their ability to prepare proposals, draft formal documents, and engage effectively with legislative processes. In contrast, other CSOs demonstrated strong capacity, supported by members' professional experience in government and community development, as well as collaboration with other organizations. These findings suggest that while individual experience and informal learning can enhance CSO capacity, the absence of systematic and continuous capacity-building mechanisms may limit long-term sustainability and effective participation.

Overall, the findings illustrate that CSOs in Tangub City play significant roles in participation, service delivery, and community representation, yet their effectiveness is shaped by financial constraints, uneven legislative support, and varying levels of organizational capacity. These dynamics highlight the need for more inclusive institutional arrangements and sustained capacity-building efforts to strengthen CSO engagement in local governance.

Discussion

This study examines the extent and form of Civil Society Organization (CSO) participation in local governance in Tangub City, focusing on monitoring and evaluation, program implementation, development planning, consultation, and the challenges faced by CSOs. Overall, the findings indicate that CSO participation is uneven across governance stages: while CSOs demonstrate strong involvement in consultation and program implementation, their involvement remains limited in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and development planning, particularly in more technical and institutional processes such as bidding, evaluation, and policy prioritization.

The results indicate that CSOs in Tangub City tend to be more active in implementation-oriented and consultative roles than in monitoring, evaluation, and planning functions. The low level of participation in monitoring and evaluation (overall mean = 1.73, interpreted as occasional) indicates that CSOs are frequently involved during project implementation but withdraw during the follow-up, accountability, and sustainability phases. This pattern

indicates a participation gap, where CSOs play more of an implementer or partner role than a monitor or learning agent in local governance.

In contrast, the participation of indigenous peoples' organizations (PJKs) in program implementation (overall mean = 3.04, always) and consultations (overall mean = 3.08, always) highlights their recognized role as intermediaries between communities and local governments (PJKs). PJKs consistently represented sectoral interests, initiated dialogue with PJKs, and promoted transparency. However, findings also revealed that grassroots participation such as in community decision-making and rights assertion was less consistent, suggesting that participation was often consultative rather than empowering or deliberative.

Participation in development planning yielded an overall mean of 2.07 (often), indicating moderate engagement. While PJKs actively participated in the finalization and validation of plans with PJKs, they were less involved in needs-based planning, stakeholder inclusion, and the establishment of monitoring criteria. The absence of PJK participation in the bidding process further reflects the structural and institutional barriers that limit their involvement in formal decision-making spaces.

These findings are largely consistent with existing literature on civil society participation in development and governance. Previous studies have emphasized that civil society organizations (CSOs) are often effective in mobilization, service delivery, and advocacy, but face barriers to systematic monitoring, evaluation, and policy influence due to limited resources, technical capacity, and institutional access (Banks et al., 2015; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2004; Kövér, 2021). The limited involvement of CSOs in monitoring and evaluation observed in this study supports Abudla's (2018) argument that accountability and learning mechanisms remain weak when CSOs are excluded from follow-up and evaluation processes.

Similarly, the CSO's strong presence in consultations aligns with Jussi (2014) notion of "invited spaces," where civil society participation is encouraged but often constrained by state-imposed rules. Although the KKK in Tangub City were consistently invited to dialogue and consultation, their limited influence on policy priorities and budgeting mirrors the findings of Parel et al. (2015), who argued that consultation alone does not guarantee meaningful participation if decision-making power remains centralized.

The interview findings further corroborate previous research highlighting financial constraints as a persistent challenge faced by KKK (Soliman, 2014; Khan et al., 2003). Reliance on donations, project-based funding, and membership fees limits the KKK's ability to sustain programs and invest in long-term capacity building. Furthermore, the lack of legislative support experienced by unaccredited or less visible CSOs mirrors the structural inequalities noted in studies on CSO-state relations, where recognition and accreditation significantly influence access to resources and decision-making space. This study also

revealed variation among CSOs. Accredited organizations with adequate capacity reported stronger local government support and greater access to governance areas, suggesting that.

Conclusion

This study is in relation to the level of participation, purpose and challenges of the CSO in Tangub City. A total of five (5) accredited CSO interviewed on this study. Results shows in this study the different participation level of the CSO. Same results that there is always a participation in program implementation and consultation, frequent participation in development planning and occasional participatin in monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, results revealed some of the underlying themes that the purpose of the CSO is for public engagement and a service provider to the public. In addition, the challenges of the CSO revealed in this study are lack of financial capacity of the CSO, lack of support in the legislation, and lack of awareness of the CSO to capacitate programs. There are also certain challenges underlying in the theme arises such as the budget of fund is through donation and membership fee since it is voluntary, and it is not sufficient to support the CSO. To add also, some of the CSO members has a low educational attainment that affects their participation in the CSO. However, there are also certain results whether the CSO participates in the policy-making process of the legislation, they are given seat in the local development council in a local government unit, however, as to the manner of their program support of fund is a matter of the LGU priorities. It was also showed in this study that given the fact that they have a space in the legislation process, however, if there programs are not the priorities of the local government there will be no allocation of fund in that aspect.

To add, the participants also revealed some underlying needs of their CSO such as capacity building, seminar and workshop on documents making, and benchmarking of other stakeholders to partner with the accredited CSO. Civil society organization in Tangub city don't have an overall organization or a focal person to be the head of all the accredited CSO in the City. Therefore, the participants recommended that a federation of officers in the local accredited CSO in Tangub City is really needed to establish. In general, the CSO in Tangub City is still new as it requires accreditation or renewal in every new set of leaders. The main purpose of the civil society organization that was founded in Tangub City is for public engagement, participation, and service providers in the community. Thus, it is the main tool to strengthen the relationship of the people towards the government. Furthermore, their main challenges affect their participation in the public setting and in the local governance. They have challenges in their financial capacity, lack of support in the legislation, and lack of awareness of the CSO to capacitate programs. The CSO is a guide to further strengthen the good governance set up in the local level. Therefore, there must be a need of creating programs and solutions in strengthening them to be capacitated.

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