Assessing the Public Value of a Volunteer Program: In Search of a Collaborative Community-Based Model for Volunteerism[1]

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Abstract

The Volunteers for Information and Development Assistance (VIDA) Program, managed by the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA), the focal government agency for volunteerism, provides opportunities for unemployed Filipinos to serve in the communities where they live by sharing their time and technical skills with local host institutions. This study revisits an assessment of the VIDA Program done by the authors in 2015, which reviewed VIDA's possible public value as a locally-based volunteer program that collaborates with local host institutions, volunteers, and community residents. The public value framework employed in both studies is an adaptation of the integrated framework Bai (2013) used to evaluate the organizational performance of e-government in China. Further, this study explores collaborative approaches of a community-based government initiated volunteer program, including the implications of a public value framework.

Keywords: public value, collaborative approaches, local governance, volunteerism, volunteering for development

I. BACKGROUND OF THE LOCAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Volunteers for Information and Development Assistance (VIDA) Program is intended as a model for community-based volunteering in the Philippines. It was launched by the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) in 1979 in partnership with the then Ministry of Human Settlements (MHS) to provide opportunities for young people living in the social housing projects to help in facilitating and accelerating development activities in their communities. Since then, the VIDA Program has evolved. Presently, the volunteers serve as community organizers, trainers, and service providers in diverse projects such as sustainable agriculture, livelihood, education, health, social welfare services, environmental protection, peace building, etc. while still retaining the original framework of volunteers assisting in communities where they live.

The VIDA volunteers are assigned to a local partner institution (LPI) in the area, which may be a national government agency, local government unit, non-government organization (NGO) or an academic institution implementing a community development program. Based on the standards set by PNVSCA, the LPI identifies the project in need of volunteer assistance and at

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the same time, the volunteer candidate that it believes can respond to the project's requirements. Meritorious projects and qualified volunteers are approved for an initial term of one year and a maximum of three years.

PNVSCA supports the volunteers with a monthly living allowance (MLA) and provides them with health and life insurance coverage. As a counterpart, the LPIs are encouraged to provide an additional MLA, transportation for activity-related travels, meal allowance, and other incentives, which may be feasible.

From 1979 to December 2014, 942 VIDA volunteers were deployed nationwide, especially in provinces with high poverty incidence and conflict areas in the Mindanao region. After more than three decades, which saw the rise of local volunteering platforms like *Gawad Kalinga* and the Local Government Agency (LGA) – Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Volunteer and Citizenship Program (VCP) as well as school-based volunteer programs (e.g. Jesuits Volunteer Program and UP *Ugnayan ng Pahinungod*) among many others, PNVSCA wanted to assess VIDA program's relevance as a complementary manpower to respond to the government's thrusts to alleviate poverty and mobilize socially-committed Filipinos in building communities through volunteering.

A rapid assessment on the VIDA program was conducted in 2015[4] to analyze the significance of the VIDA Program using the public value framework. This framework is now gaining recognition as a lens for evaluating the performance of public agencies, which has an implicit requirement of a collaborative endeavor towards a common good.

This paper puts a premium on extracting collaborative dimensions in implementing the VIDA program, assumed to have produced public value. The paper aims to understand deeper such implications of a community-based approach in implementing local volunteer programs. Thus, by reviewing the results of the previous study which adopted a public value approach, this study now asks what reflections can be made as regards the public value of VIDA and the adoption of collaborative approaches? How can the public lens framework be further enhanced to devise a collaborative approach in assessing governance of volunteering for local development?

Some of the aspects of volunteerism in the VIDA program that imply collaborative approaches are to be further reflected on as to their public value. The following questions were explored more:

1. How has the VIDA program enabled volunteers to link with actors in local development in the areas where the volunteers seemingly use a collaborative approach?

2. What have been the short-term and long-term effects on the volunteers, the local host or partner institutions, the local community, and the larger society, which can serve as a common interest/development agenda?

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[4] Dr. Maria Faina Diola, Asst. Professor at the National College of Public Administration (NCPAG), University of the Philippines (UP), was the lead researcher who conducted this initial assessment of the VIDA program.

3. What are VIDA's significant contributions in the promotion of volunteerism and citizen's participation in development relative to other local/community-based volunteering platforms implemented by other sectors (e.g. government agencies and local units, academe and Corporate sectors) that may imply a linking or collaborative function?

4. Has VIDA produced trust among the volunteers, the host institutions, and the local community? If it had, did this encourage the volunteers, the local partner institutions and the communities to engage or get involved in local development activities? How?

5. How can a government-initiated volunteer program such as VIDA be better and sustainably carried out in partnership or in collaboration with the different sectors towards a more relevant and stronger governance of national and/or local development?

II. Objectives of the Paper

This paper revisits the 2015 rapid assessment of the VIDA program during its implementation period in 2000 – 2014, wherein the study adopted the public value framework. The original study attempted to assess the overall performance of the VIDA Program and evaluated its influence on beneficiaries: LPIs, the communities served, and the volunteers themselves (looking at both volunteers' personal and professional development).

This paper thus aims to:

1. Highlight the collaborative implications of the public value lens used in evaluating the VIDA program. This is to draw up a model for a collaborative approach in implementing this community-based local volunteer program of the government, which implies more partnerships in local development, and

2. Draw out recommendations and policy guidelines for government-initiated volunteer programs such as VIDA towards a more relevant and strong national and/or local volunteering program, adopting whatever collaborative approaches are implied in producing the public value of VIDA.

The assessment serves as guide in exploring the feasibility of drawing up a collaborative community-based volunteering model using a public value lens, by extracting features and dimensions of the VIDA program that approximate the given, plus emerging, indicators for public value. Theoretically, the results of the study also aim to contribute to the discourse on public value as a framework for overall performance assessment of public services and to expand Denhardt and Denhardt's (2007) New Public Service's espousal of engaging citizens and the community. Finally, the study hopes to segue into the co-production discourse in the future, initially investigating collaborative elements of a development program.

III. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The following analytical framework for assessing VIDA was adopted in 2015:
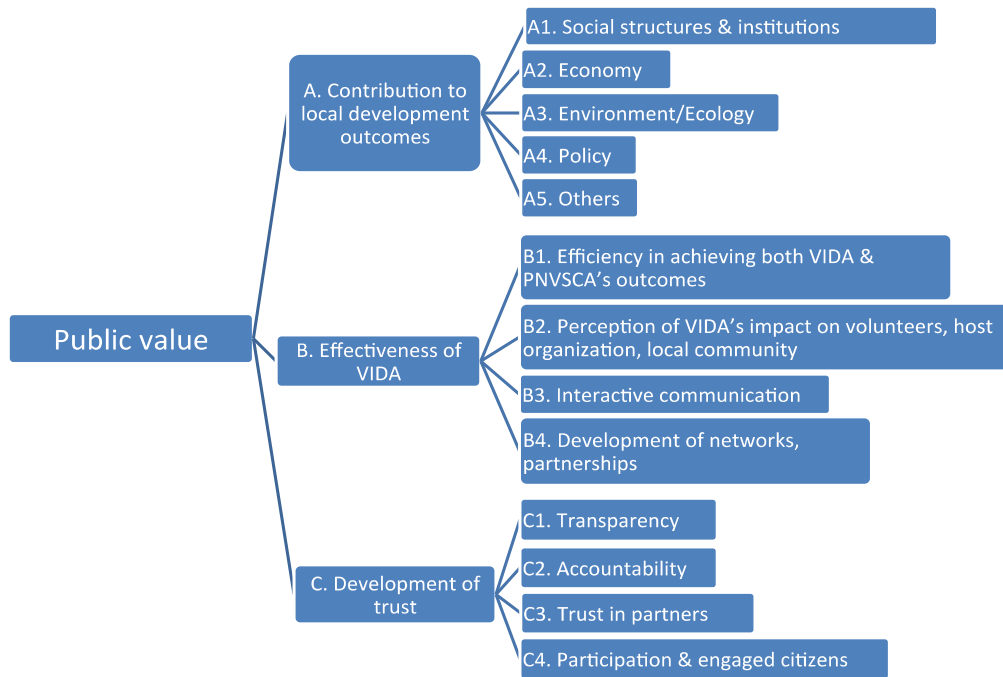
Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework for Assessing the Collaborative Implications

of the VIDA Program

Source: Diola and Liamzon (2015), adapted from Bai (2013)

The original framework used in 2015 to assess the public value created by VIDA was an adaptation of the integrated framework by Bai (2013) which evaluated the organizational performance of e-government in China. Bai's framework was also based on five previous works on public value, i.e., by Keams (2004), E-GEP (2006), Goluben (2007), Heeks (2008), and Deng (2011). In the proposed analytical framework above, the contribution of VIDA to local development outcomes was deemed one major public value that was used to assess the study, which differs from the study of Bai, but which follows the trajectory of the "volunteering for development" thrust advocated in the World State of Volunteerism Report (2011), the Philippine State of Volunteerism Report (2011) and newly crafted Philippine Coalition of Volunteerism (PhilCV) Roadmap on Volunteering (2015). Different facets of local development – socio-cultural, economic, environment, and contributions to the policy process – were assessed with regard to VIDA's contributions.

The effectiveness of VIDA as a program and the PNVSCA as a whole was assessed in terms of their internal structure and operation; partnerships and linkages; and the overall milieu in which each volunteer is engaged. VIDA's overall implementation was compared with similar community-based volunteer programs. The development of trust is another major indicator adopted in public value assessment studies, closely linked with the good governance model in public administration.

This paper however now uses a lens adapted from the same original public value framework Bai (2013) used, but basically highlights possible collaborative aspects implied in the VIDA program. This research used the following analytical guide in exploring the collaborative aspects of VIDA's public value, based on the Diola and Liamzon 2015 assessment of the VIDA program. Fig.2 below shows the conceptual framework for this study. Items highlighted in red are those examined that imply collaborative approaches in creating public value.
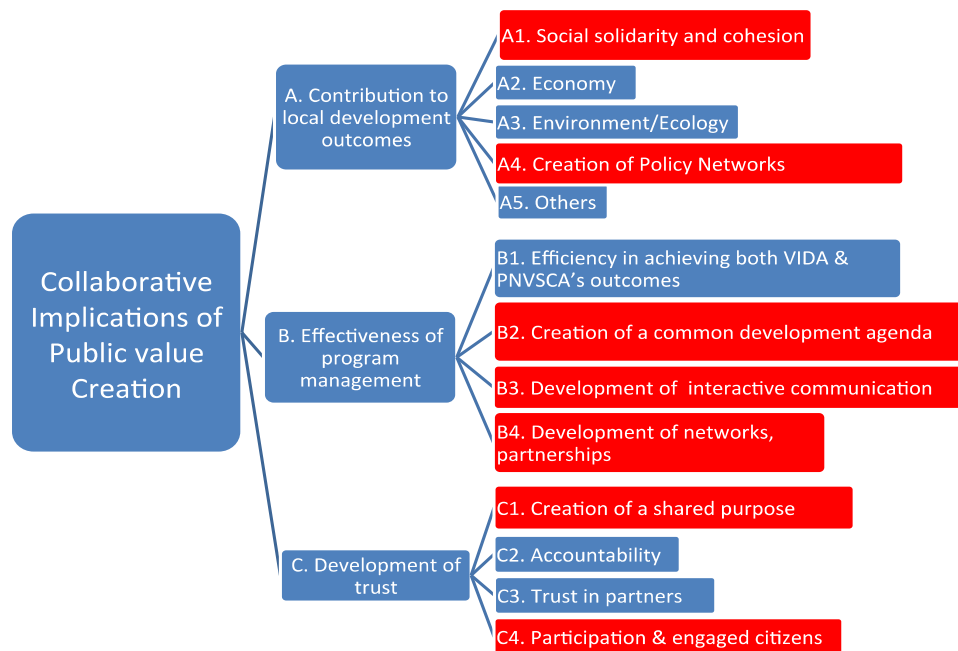
Source: Diola and Liamzon, adapted from Diola and Liamzon, 2015.

Fig. 2. Analytical framework for extracting the collaborative aspects of public value production in volunteering *(red highlights mark the collaborative aspects of the program implementation that were explored in the study).*

III. DEFINITIONS AND RELATED LITERATURE

Public Value and public sphere

The term **public sphere** is related to public value. In an article by Diola and Sonsri (2015), a take-off point adopted was that of Habermas's (1984) theory of *communicative action*, which necessitates shared meanings as fundamental to action. Their study dwelt on *public sphere,* which the authors conceive as having a discernible structure that could possibly take shape during a process of dialogue among the participants in a communication activity. The research looked into meanings the Philippine and Thai respondents attached to the concepts or constructs the study associated with public sphere. P*ublic sphere* is considered as nexus for democracy, public services delivery, and active citizenship (see theoretical framework in Fig. 1 of Diola and Sonsri 2015).

In the exploratory collaborative research[5] towards finding possible commonalities and differences between selected Thai and Philippine rural residents' perceptions on the "public sphere", the researchers assume that before joint action and meaningful active citizenship can take place, the different stakeholders enter into a joint "public sphere", either conceptually or physically within an arena where public dialogues may take place. In practical terms, the study invokes the concept of *active citizenship*, which meant getting involved in a community to make things happen by taking action in tackling issues and subject matter that need to be reformed or improved within one's reach. *Public services* are services offered by government to the people within its jurisdiction while public goods are goods offered by government to the people within its jurisdiction. In the public value discourse, the public goods may be considered part of the public value produced by the collaboration or joint action among the participants.

The concept of a public sphere is used extensively in communication and media studies, and is deemed implicit in the discourse argued by Denhardt and Denhardt in their 2007 book on the New Public Service. Exploring the possible application of public sphere in public service, Diola and Sonsri offer this tentative definition: "it is a conceptual or physical dimension, where public administrators engage citizens and where both parties express their citizenship, consciously or unconsciously, in trying to solve common problems." In their study, the common problems are related to public services. The public sphere assumes that there is access to public goods and services in the space where both public administrators and citizens engage themselves in a dialogue, debate, or in a simple discussion of issues. Not necessarily a physical territory, the public sphere can mean a psychological space where citizens have opportunities to engage in an enlightened debate or dialogue with the government, NGOs, and the private sector. In Diola and Sonsri's study therefore, public service is seen to pave the way for citizenship. Applying such thinking in this study, ideally, VIDA, a government service volunteer program, is assumed to lead to citizenship.

The link between public service and citizenship is for the most part discussed by Denhardt and Denhardt's (2007) New Public Service model. The model looks at the ethical dimension of

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[5] A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Mahasarakham University and the University of the Philippines in September 2011 for the College of Politics and Governance (COPAG) of the Mahasarakham University and the National College of Public Administration and Governnace (NCPAG) to conduct joint undertakings. This collaborative research is part of that MoU.

citizenship and defines it as "concerned with the nature of one's membership in a political community, including such issues as the rights and responsibilities of citizens." The authors cite Aristotle's *Politics* as "that which gives a classical account, an expression of an "ideal" view of citizenship[6] (Pocock, 1995, p.42 cited by Denhardt and Denhardt, p. 46). As explained by the two authors mentioned above, following this view, citizens engage in the work of the *polis* because that is the means by which they can attain their fullest humanity, at the same time, ideally leading to an expression of their responsibility towards the polis.

While individuals can act on their own expressing their citizenship*, mutual responsibility* has been recognized by Pranger as a laudable direction for citizen action. Pranger (1968, p. 53)[7] , cited by Denhardt and Denhardt (2007, p. 51) explains that the more virtuous conduct of citizens is when they veer away from the culture of power, rather, they act responsibly as an agent "for common participation based on independent points of view, eventually fostering that *mutual responsibility*, which alone enriches the commonwealth's life" (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007, p. 51). The mutuality aspect of citizenship is also explored in this study, which is considered a key variable that may unlock gray areas in action-oriented and participatory types of public service programs, such as volunteer programs or activities.

The role of the public administrator in doing public service is in fact argued by Cooper (1991) as a citizenship role. Cooper's (1991, p. 139)[8] *An Ethic of Citizenship for Public Administration*, describes the ethical identity of public administrators as it cites Walzer: "citizens in lieu of the rest of us; the common good is, so to speak, their specialty." Cooper implies the idea of a larger community where he says the public administrator is employed as one of the citizens and who works for the citizens. Here the idea of interconnectiveness is implied in expressing citizenship within the context of working in a community.

On the other hand, this study looks at public value as a product of active citizenship and volunteerism. It is assumed that this public value is generated in a public sphere through expressions of public service.

Collaborative approaches in development work: *Views on partnership and collaboration*

Building partnerships has been the mark of successful development projects in most literature. In the public administration and governance realm, Peters and Pierre (2003) document literature on state and administrative reform where the fragmentation and differentiation of the state are focused, portraying the state as a series of interconnected agencies, organizations, flexible rules and negotiations, where an increasing number of actors and interests play a part in public policy. Public organizations are pulled not only to work with other public organizations, but with private or business groups and with citizens as well. Concerns on governance of networks of different

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[6] Denhardt and Denhardt cite Pocock for this view: Pocock, J.G.A. 1995 (p. 42). "The ideal of citizenship since classical times". In *Theorizing Citizenship*, ed. Ronald Beiner, 29-52. Albany: State University of New York.

[7] Original source: Pranger, Robert J. (1968). *The eclipse of citizenship*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

[8] Original source: Cooper, Terry L. (1991). An Ethic of Citizenship for Public Administration. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

interests are growing in prominence, and this field is likely to persist in the future as the focus of public administration.

In tandem with networks governance, a similar strand of governance has emerged during the past two decades dubbed "collaborative governance". Whereas networks governance produce shared information as a basic output, collaborative governance implies more structured arrangements among collaborators or partners in terms of decision-making and planning. The latter implies the coming together of various stakeholders in common venues with public agencies "to engage in consensus-oriented decision-making" (Ansell and Gash 2008, p.543). According to the authors, collaborative governance is

> A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets (Ansell and Gash, 2008, p. 544).
> The definition by the authors requires participation by non-state stakeholders, although public agencies for them are the typical initiators or instigators of collaborative governance. Thus, the type of governance implies that governance is not merely consultative.

Similarly, Thomson, Perry, and Miller (2008, pp.97-120) have extensively discussed the link between collaboration processes and outcomes using meta analysis of empirical data from related studies, employing grounded theory approach. As explained by these authors, basically, their multidimensional model of collaboration is derived from the basic theoretical framework by Wood and Gray (1991), who argued that the study of collaboration should examine three areas: **antecedents** to collaboration, the process of **collaboration** itself, and the **outcomes** of that process. Thomson et al's study using grounded theory (2008), had the following definition for collaborative governance:

> Collaboration is a process in which autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions.
> With regard to collaborative **processes**, as can be discerned above, Thomson et al. (2008) offer five dimensions to be used in analysis of effective collaboration, corresponding to: governance. administration, organizational autonomy, mutuality; and trust (and norms).

In public management, the definition by Bingham and O'Leary may be adopted to define "collaborative public management":
> Collaborative public management is a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved by single organizations. Collaborative means to co-labor, to achieve common goals, often working across boundaries and in multisector and multiactor relationships. Collaboration is based on the value of reciprocity (Bingham, O'Leary, and Carlson, 2008, p. 3)

In practice and theory, current local, national and global realities have propelled a central focus on concepts of cooperation and collaboration. Bringing together organizations to work together and work toward a common purpose has become imperative; at the same time, building and strengthening inter-organizational relationships and capacities have been an on-going concern

and pre-occupation, especially when there are competing priorities. Varying degrees of inter-organizational relationships have often been referred to generally as "partnerships".

Ansell and Gash's (2008) definition of collaborative governance implies an explicit and public strategy of organizing group influence. They cite Walter and Petr (2000, p. 495) who mention that collaborative governance has a formal feature to it, entailing joint activities, joint structures and shared resources. For Padilla and Daigle (1998, p. 74), there needs to be a development of a "structured arrangement" in collaborative governance. Ansell and Gash stress the same argument as their definition implies organization and structure. Further, their meta-analytical study points out the cyclical rather than linear process of collaboration. This iterative process is confirmed by Huxham (2003) and Imperial (2005) who implied that collaboration appeared to depend on achieving a virtuous cycle between communication, trust, commitment, understanding and outcomes. For Ansell and Gash, these elements are important across all stages of collaboration.

The concept of "collaboration" and its significance to and implication on management functions in development projects has been studied quite extensively in the recent past. Several cases in the Philippines underscore the role of coordination, collaboration and convergence in successful local projects. Results of these projects have shown how resources were pooled and maximized, how gains were achieved, how plans were developed and implemented effectively through various degrees of coordination and cooperation among various sectors of the local community and among different agencies and organizations outside the community. These phenomena are closely linked to the development of social capital studies described in this present study.

Through various experiences and cases of partnerships in the Philippines, the Local Development Assistance Program (LDAP), a USAID Project on local governance, categorized partnerships according to tasks and activities shared: consultative, coordinative, complementary, collaborative and critical. Based on the experience of LDAP, coordinative and collaborative partnerships exist for a much longer time and have more deliberate systems and plans for sustainability. The purpose for coming together is another distinguishing factor in partnerships: networks are more focused on purely information exchange, while collaboration aims to attain certain fundamental changes embodied in the partners' shared vision of a desired state.

Evaluating outcomes of volunteering

In evaluating volunteer programs, it is important to consider that volunteering does not operate in a vacuum; instead the socio-economic and political milieu needs to be taken into account, including the inputs provided to the volunteer program. The study by Lowe, B. and Matthew, L. (2014) on International Volunteering and Governance looks at both formal and informal institutional contributions to public sector governance. Of interest are such principles and products of rule of law, voice, participation, activism, capacity building; and social capital, trust, "inspiration and optimism", inclusiveness and equity. The study focuses on international volunteers, and the methodology is limited to a literature review and some interviews. This paper aims to strengthen evidence on the contributions of international development volunteerism to good governance. The study highlights case examples from a variety of International Volunteer Cooperation Organizations (IVCOs) to demonstrate various ways that volunteers and IVCOs have strengthened public and private governance structures through formal and informal interventions. The conceptual framework investigates contributions of volunteerism at multiple levels of governance—from macro-level government structures and policy frameworks to

microlevel personal values and normative constraints. While the intentional activities of international volunteers are described, pathways to good governance are also traced to volunteers' relationships and socio-cultural influences. As a people-centered development approach, international volunteering has helped change informal norms and attitudes that determine how people perceive and act on governing institutions, as well as inspire direct participation in political processes that determine formal rules and laws.

A more extensive study on volunteering in various development contexts and in different countries has been done by Burns, D., et al (2015) on "The Role of Volunteering in Sustainable Development." This report summarizes findings from the global action research project 'Valuing Volunteering'. The research explores how and why volunteering contributes to poverty reduction and sustainable positive change, and the factors which prevent it from doing so. It looks at both the intended and unintended impacts of volunteering interventions. The research was conducted over two years in 2012–14 in four countries: Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal and the Philippines. Led by volunteer researchers and drawing on participatory action research methodologies the study aims to inform learning and practice across the development sector. The case studies explore the contribution of volunteering to sustainable development.

The guiding question for the above research project is: "How and why does volunteering affect poverty?" Published in 2015 by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), it offers fresh insights on the "unique contribution" of volunteering to sustainable development, and considers power and politics. Since its literature review finds that there is "very little" research on the actual impact of volunteering on communities on the ground, the project endeavored to look for actual impact.

An in-depth study on the Philippines anchored on the above research project was done by IDS and VSO (2014), which has guided the evaluation on the VIDA Program as the former study provides a good contextualization of volunteerism in the Philippines. The study identifies and suggests new ways of thinking about, doing, and monitoring/evaluating volunteering. These two IDS/VSO publications shift attention away from the volunteers themselves (which many have already extensively covered) and to the communities. The study argues that in recent years, global and national initiatives have begun to integrate the idea that volunteerism creates tangible change for communities in poverty into development policy and discourse. For a society with socially embedded values of *bayanihan* (embodying mutual assistance and self-help in times of need and togetherness in a common effort) and pakikipagkapwa (self in relation to others), the introduction of legal frameworks, policies and initiatives to endorse volunteerism as a strategy for development has been relatively easy. Yet, despite this progress and following an evidence-based approach, there has been limited research and documentation, which have made it challenging for the volunteer-involving sector, and associated government actors like the PNVSCA, to make a compelling case that can elevate the role of volunteers and active citizens as key actors shaping social, environmental and economic outcomes.

Interesting to consider in evaluation research of volunteering programs would be the "economic value" of volunteers (not just "social value" in contributing to public values. Using this proposed research's humble purposive sample, we hope to suggest the estimated salaries and make a strong case for not only social value but economic value as well – "it makes visible the amount of money that would have to be paid if services were not provided by volunteers". The 2011 study on the Value of Volunteers by the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) describes the

economic and social value of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers. It is based on a rigorous methodology s aligned with the ILO and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies volunteer measurement project. It provides a baseline for subsequent studies to track the evolution of volunteer recruitment and retention is based on surveys sent to National Societies and includes case studies of volunteer activities. The value of the IFRC volunteer network is that it offers an opportunity to invest more in tackling the root causes of suffering and furthering development through the mobilization of resources by the community. Understanding development contexts and identification of actual needs of communities is key in planning mobilization and collaborative pursuits in volunteering.

The use of volunteering standards by which to gauge volunteering programs is certainly worth adopting. An earlier Progress Report (1999-2007) by IFRC (2007) on *Taking Volunteers Seriously* draws attention to the high international standards for establishing and pursuing a "volunteer-friendly society", offering rich insights into training, caring for volunteers, networking and peer support, health and safety, etc. International Federation's volunteering development. The study likewise sheds light on the importance of giving volunteers the tools and resources they need to meet the high demands and expectations that IFRC and supporters place on them. It reviews volunteer management practices.

In terms of input and resources, the study by Bussell, H., & Forbes, D. (2002) dealing on the understanding of the volunteer market: *The what, where, who and why of volunteering* further argues that the key to an organization's success in recruiting and retaining its volunteers is to have an understanding of its target groups. The research reviews the prior research on volunteering and outlines the current situation in the voluntary sector with regard to the donation of time. The review shows that those who volunteer are an extremely diverse group, active in a wide variety of contexts. Worth noting is the finding that individuals and organizations may volunteer for reasons other than purely altruistic motives.

Still, studies on volunteer impact have looked at the individual as well as the organizational dimensions of volunteering. The work of Sherraden, Margaret, et al. (2008), entitled "Effects of International Volunteering and Service: Individual and Institutional Predictors" came up with a model suggesting that "outcomes for host communities, volunteers, and sending communities vary depending on individual and institutional attributes and capacity. How institutions structure and leverage individual capacity influences who participates and how they serve, and shapes the impact of volunteer action." Similarly, the University of the Philippines' series of studies on volunteering cases in the Philippines led by Carino, L. and Gaffud (2007) recognized both the individual as well as the institution in looking at contributions of volunteering. The cases on nonprofits and volunteering is highly useful for its deep grounding in Philippine "social realities, needs, and theoretical concerns", like the psychology of volunteerism and the "bent" towards collective governance.

As regards the newer lens of public value adopted in the evaluation of the performance of public organizations, the works of Bai (2013), W. and Hills, D. & Sullivan, F. (2006) are useful references. Bai's work however only provides a conceptual framework that seeks to be comprehensive for evaluating government services. It was not tested nor piloted. It looks at the following attributes: delivery of public services (information, importance, choice, citizens' satisfaction, fairness, take-up); development of trust (transparency, participation, trust in e-services); effectiveness (efficiency, interactive communication, citizens' perceptions) towards the creation of public value.

This study proposes an adaptation of Bai's framework, which is also grounded on five other papers using the same foundational factors of trust, delivery of public services, and effectiveness.

Hills and Sullivan's study is useful as criteria for evaluating measures for public value. As the title implies, this publication tackles ways of measuring "public value", as well as considerations. "Clusters" used in considering public service delivery are: efficiency, effectiveness and cost effectiveness and broader values like democracy, transparency, equity authorization: negotiation between different stakeholders trust; and clusters of values beyond the delivery of service outcomes to include notions of enhancing: quality of life, wellbeing and happiness social capital, social cohesion and social inclusion safety and security, equality, tackling deprivation and social exclusion, and promoting democracy and civic engagement. These "other" clusters of values can be used in our own evaluation. Finally, the article offers some useful guidelines – framework- for reviewing measures of public value (are they appropriate, holistic, democratic, trustworthy, generating public values). The study also lists a number of approaches for gathering public opinion (e.g. citizens' juries, FGDs, satisfaction surveys), visioning exercises, etc. adopted to measure public value.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection

This paper revisits primary and secondary data gathered during the conduct of the 2015 rapid assessment. Primary data comprise key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and perception surveys of volunteers. Given limited contact data of former volunteers, and resource constraints, the sampling method for the assessment was purposive, in particular using snowball sampling.

FGDs and KIIs were organized for different sets of respondents: host organizations or LPIs; the local community or beneficiaries of volunteer interventions; volunteers ; PNVSCA staff; and volunteer-involving organizations. Ten FGDs and 14 interviews took place between September and November 2015. Documentation from interviews and FGDs were subjected to coding and content analysis for emerging themes.

In addition, a survey was made available online and was open to all previous and present VIDA volunteers whose contact data were available. The indicators of public value were extracted through the research instruments that were devised for the research.

A review of related literature on public value (guiding the conceptual framework) was made (See Section III above with summary in Annex I). The evaluation team reviewed PNVSCA and VIDA documents, as well as on studies and reports on: volunteerism and its impacts (including their measurement), other volunteer programs, and volunteering standards

Since the rapid assessment made use of purposive sampling with only three case studies, the generalizations may be applicable only to the respondents and samples surveyed. It used a rapid appraisal approach which was an exhaustive examination on the operations of each case especially the effect of non-beneficiaries of the particular VIDA activity. However, the fact that key questions were probed based on an agreed public value lens and key respondents carefully

chosen with PNVSCA, the extent to which the findings allowed the latter to have meaningful insights in their work should be able to justify the internal validity of the results.

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Finding the public value of VIDA as a community-based collaborative volunteer program and its implications in local governance is one of the main purposes of the study. Below are the general findings based on the research questions formulated for this study:

1. VIDA's Contribution to local development

In general, VIDA has contributed to local development where volunteers have been assigned. Findings of the rapid assessment have validated what is already known and documented about the contribution of the volunteers to socio-economic development of the communities. Based on the LPIs visited, it was clear that the volunteers contributed to development of the local community or on a particular sector, as in the case of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) at the Bethsaida Community-Based Services for the Disabled. The volunteers at the Philippine Heart Center, although not precisely catering to a specific geographical community, had also done their part in contributing to the health sector by assisting in medical functions. For the most part, the volunteers did coordination and facilitation work for the LPI and/or the communities they served in various fields, including agriculture, land security, education, livelihood, and PWDs.

Many volunteers surveyed listed successes in their beneficiaries' livelihood enterprises among their accomplishments. Some included increased participation of beneficiaries, be they women, families, church members, or youth groups, in their projects. In one case, the VIDA volunteer in fact helped the communities served to engage in local decision making by having their issues heard at the local council meetings. At an FGD with PWDs, the role of the volunteer was seen as an engagement in the political process and empowerment of the beneficiaries. In a way, it may not be far to see how the PWDs in the area can coalesce and continue engaging local governments as policy networks to further protect their rights. One of the community members expressed, "Noong una, akala namin hindi kami kasali sa lipunan… ang VIDA volunteer ang nagmulat sa amin na may mga karapatan pala ang mga katulad namin na may kapansanan..nasa batas na pala yan. Ito ang nagbigay lakas sa amin upang makibahagi sa gawaing panlipunan…(*At first, we thought we were not part of society…the VIDA volunteer made us aware that people with disabilities like us also have rights, and that this was already in our laws. This was what gave us courage to share in the work of the community…)".* The volunteers helped promote social cohesion and solidarity among the PWDs, in fact the respondents admitted they felt empowered by realizing their rights through the volunteers' teachings.

This said, however, there was no local development agenda for volunteering in the area, from which to guage the success of volunteering and its contribution to development in the locality.

2. Development of networks and partnerships

VIDA volunteers recognize the value in organizing people into associations, whether formal or informal, as a way to strengthen local capacity and galvanize the community into achieving their desired outcomes. They have therefore been instrumental in **forming new local associations** involving community members.

Six of 16 survey respondents, purposively selected from among former VIDA volunteers, cited organizing such local associations as their accomplishment, while one mentioned capacity-building of a newly organized association. These new organizations serve as the volunteers' legacy in the community, living on after their terms. Moreover, respondents wrote that in creating these associations, they: "created a venue for the people to [have a] united harmonious relationship; united beneficiaries in their livelihood endeavor; enabled members to link to institutional buyers in Manila and Bacolod city for their market." One VIDA shared that he has organized four people's organizations of farmers and women.

To highlight the case of Bethsaida Community-Based Services for the Disabled, its volunteers have led in the establishment of two associations: one for the parents of children with disabilities – Samahan ng mga Magulang ng may Kapansanan (SMAK); and another for PWDs – Samahan ng mga Nagtataguyod ng Karapatan ng mga Kapansanan (SNAKK). SMAK is registered with the government's commission tasked with regulating associations. There are also more community-based organizations born as the fruit of awareness-raising of PWDs, like the association of PWDs in Gumaca, Quezon, which aims to include all PWDs in the municipality as its members. Some of these associations are registered with the government agency on social welfare and the local government unit, and have given greater voice to the concerns of PWDs. Clearly then community-based activities were facilitated through the VIDA volunteers in the case of the PWDs in Quezon Province.

3. Adhering to a theory of change: planned development approaches?

On the whole it appears there is no systematic planned approach adopted by PNVSCA to attract volunteers with matched or relevant/appropriate interests, knowledge, skills or attributes, guided by an organizational broader plan for volunteer involvement. As such, there are no targeted methods of advertising or communicating volunteer opportunities for development, the more recent thrust of volunteering for PNVSCA. A central development theory can serve as the fulcrum on which stronger partnerships may rest. At a more philosophical level, a theory of change needs to be explicitly formulated as guide for VIDA; or perhaps an outcome-based results framework needs to devised as policy in future volunteer deployment, in coordination with the country's economic and development planning agency, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA). As guide to development paths, national development plans and goals are stipulated in the country's Philippine Development Plan (PDP) prepared by NEDA, while local development strategic directions and priorities are contained in the local governments' Comprehensive Development Plans (CDPs). These plans are an important consideration, especially the latter, since

VIDA's local partner institutions are located in that sphere.[9] Consideration of development goals in both tiers is an important task to make sure that national as well as local development goals are more or less aligned.

The formulation of a common development agenda can be a radius that may develop into strong partnerships between the local government, the PNVSCA staff at the national level, and the citizenry in general who are involved in the volunteer program, which allows the actors to have an agenda to negotiate, confirm or deliberate upon. Having no clear development agenda may result in a one-sided, say a volunteer-oriented or a local partner institution-led deployment of volunteers in a local area, which may or may not necessarily lead to an aligned or matched national-local development goal for the volunteer program. Having aligned development goals can save on resources and lead to better and perhaps more responsive programming of development programs.

4. Support for local partner institutions

The VIDA Program has helped and even "saved" countless LPIs and volunteers. Some LPIs recounted that were it not for VIDA, certain programs would have been scrapped or would have been neglected. All LPIs are grateful for the assistance provided them by PNVSCA, which is not only the allowance, but the training provided. In addition, volunteers appreciate the "prestige" of being in the program.

The monthly allowance, albeit modest at P2,000, nonetheless has provided LPIs a regular, dependable source of support. "*Malaking tulong talaga*" ("It is really a big help"), especially for many community-based organizations. Knowing they can keep a volunteer for at least a year has helped LPIs plan activities better. This suggests that PNVSCA can consider having longer-term partnerships with several local organizations that have demonstrated their capacity to manage volunteers, sealed with a memorandum of understanding, to help local organizations increase their impact.

5. VIDA's contributions in the promotion of volunteerism and citizen's participation in development relative to other local/community-based volunteering platforms implemented by other sectors (e.g. national government agencies, local governments, academe and Corporate sectors)

Most volunteers readily agree that the VIDA Program has promoted volunteerism. In a broad sense, the orientation/seminar sets the context for volunteering, enabling volunteers to better understand their role and their contribution to national development. To illustrate, Ms. Ela

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[9] VSO International is an excellent place to start learning about Theory of Change. "VSO's Global Theory of Change" is a document describing the philosophy that guides VSO's programs and policies. It can be found at: https://www.vsointernational.org/sites/vso_international/files/vso-theory-of-change-may2014.pdf

Sarmago, PNVSCA chief Volunteer Service Officer, shared that indigenous peoples (IPs) usually do not consider themselves part of the Philippines. When an IP volunteer, who had long been a volunteer, attended the VIDA orientation seminar, he began to realize his connection to the broader picture of Philippine national development.

Asked an open-ended question about how the VIDA Program helped them grow as a person, one-third of the 16 survey respondents remarked that the program instilled in them the value of volunteerism. Being volunteers taught them how to become better volunteers, because of the experiences they gain, the character and confidence they develop, and the values they form. See Box 1 on how they described volunteerism.

Box 1. What volunteering means to VIDA volunteers – survey responses
"Kusang loob" or doing things "freely" and volitionally was how majority of VIDA volunteers surveyed described volunteering in their own words. Volunteering also meant the expectation of nothing in return for the services rendered. Two respondents also added "sacrifice" and enduring difficulties as part of volunteering.
- "Kusang loob (of one's own will)… with no pecuniary consideration."
- "Helping people help themselves, with no strings attached."
- *"Ang volunteering po ay ang boluntaryong serbisyo o boluntaryong pagtulong na walang hinihinging kapalit o kabayaran… tulong na ayon sa kalooban, kagustohan ng isang volunteer."* (Volunteering is service that is freely given, or service that does not seek for repayment – this help is extended because the volunteer wants.)
- "Volunteering is not simply having no monetary compensation, but a commitment to do a mission for the betterment of the deprived majority to be heard and given attention to achieve their basic need to live."
- "You give without remembering. Voluntary work without expecting monetary fund. Giving your best to each project without asking something in return."
- *"Kusang loob na pagsasakripisyo, para makamit ang pagbabago sa buhay ng mga Filipino"*(Freely done to self-sacrifice, so that changes can be achieved in the lives of the Filipinos."
- "To contribute and help people or organizations for the betterment of the society … without expecting something in return.

Exposure and networking with fellow volunteers also builds volunteerism. For example, at one seminar, a VIDA realized that the foreigners were more optimistic than him. This encouraged him in his work.

Even among LPIs, seeing the volunteers has been an inspiration. "[VIDA] inspired me to look at volunteerism among students (referring to the National Service Training Program). What … would allow us to learn with PNV[SCA], what can we partner in innovation to make it more relevant and timely for the millennium… so I focused on the youth," said Ms. Pilar Habito of Life Learning Organization of Peace (LLOoP). Ms. Jean Wong of the Philippine Heart Center expressed interest in signing up with PNVSCA, wishing to volunteer somewhere.

Despite the traces of good values and benefits VIDA has brought to the communities and the LPIs, the rapid assessment team however did not have a clear sense whether the Program provided for planning activities in order to involve volunteers more proactively so that they can contribute directly to the host organization. The team had an impression that there is no programmatic or systematic planning for the VIDA-funded volunteer activities in a geographic area and during a given period. Due to limited resources, deployment of VIDA volunteers appeared to be demand-driven, that is, the types of projects engaged in by volunteers may at times be limited or defined by the request of LPIs. Compared with the VSO Bahaginan, a federation member of VSO based in the Philippines, PNVSCA does not have an explicit theory of change embedded in its program, although PNVSCA also adheres to the concept of volunteering for development. Still, compared with other volunteer organizations -- Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation (JVPI), VSO, and *Kapamagogopa*, a volunteer organization managed mostly by Muslim Filipinos, -- which all have volunteering manuals in place as well as more developed monitoring and evaluation systems, VIDA's volunteer placement program is not as advanced.

Perhaps as with volunteer programs initiated by other sectors, volunteer activities by PNVSCA tend to be short-term and volunteer-focused in the sense that empowerment of communities can be short-lived, sometimes not sustainable or persistent. It might help for PNVSCA to look into the adoption of a value chain approach to planning change it wants to see in areas that require volunteers for development.[10] This approach to formulating a theory of change has been adopted by VSO International, and may open doors for varied types of interests in volunteer work.

6. Formation of trust among the volunteers, the host institutions, and the local community

VIDA volunteers as mediators and bridges are helping build trust. Volunteers play a *mediating* or *bridging* role between the LPI and the community. An LPI director described them as their hands and feet in the community (*"Sila ang aming mga kamay at paa sa community").* They are also perceived as a neutral force in the community. ECOWEB volunteers have served as *peacemakers* in conflict-ridden areas: "*VIDA ay mga volunteers na walang kinikilingan. Lahat ng mga victims walang tinitignan Muslim man o Maranao kailangan nasa pagitan kami ng dalawang tribo."* (The VIDA volunteers are volunteers that do not have personal leanings. We do not take sides as to being Muslims or Maranaos; we usually stay in the middle of two tribes.) A VIDA noted "social cohesion" in relation to peacebuilding and multi-stakeholder collaboration – involving community, barangay officials, Armed Forces of the Philippines, municipal and provincial governments, and even non-state actors such as the MILF in the area. Another VIDA reported receiving concrete feedback from their radio listeners that they have learned new things about

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[10] The value chain approach is a market system approach to development and looks at the market broadly, from input suppliers to markets. A simple introduction is available on:
https://www.microlinks.org/good-practice-center/value-chain-wiki/overview-value-chain-approach.

the Bangsamoro Peace Process, as a sign that they have succeeded in bridging the information gap and allaying community fears.

"Mas magaang kapag may VIDA na nagvo-volunteer sa community." (It is better if there is a VIDA who volunteers in the community.*)* Indeed, VIDA is positively perceived in the community as a direct intervention of the government – as a sign that the government cares about the community enough to invest resources in a volunteer. "… *Masarap kasing pakinggan na mahalaga itong community para sa government kasi may VIDA volunteer dito - yun ang naaapreciate ko*." (It feels good to know that a particular community is important for the government – because there is a VIDA volunteer placed there – this is what I appreciate.)

In general, transparency in terms of procedures has been adopted in VIDA implementation, although the respondents not received feedback about the reports they submit to PNVSCA. Although this does not appear to be an issue, the research team felt that the LPIs need to receive feedback about the reports they submit to PNVSCA.

7. Standards for assessing performance of internal systems

With regard to an assessment of PNVSCA's overall effectiveness or the alignment with its mandated function vis-à-vis the Philippine Volunteer Act, the research team examined whether PNVSCA has helped achieve volunteering goals as provided for by law (Republic Act 9418) through the VIDA program.

Ideally, the goals for volunteering of the government, with PNVSCA at the helm, should be:

a) To provide a policy framework on volunteerism that shall underscore the fundamental principles necessary to harness and harmonize the broad and diverse efforts of the voluntary sector in the country into an integrative and effective partnership for local and national development as well as international cooperation and understanding;

b) To provide a conducive and enabling environment for volunteers and volunteer service organizations by setting mechanisms to protect volunteers' rights; and privileges, and give due recognition to highlight their roles and contributions to society;

c) To provide an effective institutional mechanism to strengthen the capacity of PNVSCA to fulfill its mandate and to oversee the implementation of this Act.

First of all, there are no volunteering standards upon which to gauge the implementation of VIDA and other volunteer programs in the country. There are no agreed-upon principles that can harmonize and integrate the different volunteering activities by VIDA volunteers at various levels, to wit: local volunteering and a national volunteering program. Hence, in the final analysis, assessment of the impact of VIDA as well as of PNVSCA to volunteering may be incomplete or baseless without a set of Volunteering Standards. At the same time, priorities and operational definitions of local as well as national development need to be in place.

Second, since the VIDA program and even PNVSCA are not popularly known among volunteer organizations nor among ordinary people as revealed during the rapid assessment, the Philippine Volunteer Act of 2007[11] needs to be promoted. Government agencies and local officials, the private sector, as well as civil society organizations need to be aware of the Philippine law on volunteerism and PNVSCA's pivotal role for volunteerism in the country.

Part of PNVSCA's mandate is also developing an online registration scheme, but the assessment team found the management of the database of VIDA volunteers in PNVSCA lacking. At the moment, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)-Local Government Academy (LGA), as part of operationalizing its Volunteer and Citizenship Program for local governments, also has plans of developing a national volunteer and information database. Other volunteer organizations may have similar plans for systematizing their volunteer databases. This is one area where PNVSCA and DILG-LGA, and other volunteer organizations need to forge an agreement to share resources collaboratively. This online registration could also allow for electronic interaction among the past and current volunteers that might help sustain enthusiasm on the volunteer program and boost up the spirit of volunteerism itself. This study suggests that PNVSCA retain a coordinative and supervisory function in ensuring the maintenance and usability of the online registration data for the country, while other volunteer service organizations and DILG-LGA maintain the physical space, software and hardware, based on their mandate to keep an online registry of volunteers in the country.

V. Recommendations for Improving Governance of the VIDA Program in partnership or in collaboration with the different sectors towards a more relevant and a stronger national and/or local development

On the whole, VIDA needs to be sustained for the public value it has produced; however, PNVSCA may need to reconfigure some of its management approaches in order to strengthen PNVSCA's VIDA program. The recommendations offered by the rapid assessment team below are based on the findings of the study and the current status of each item relative to PNVSCA's mandates/ functions.

Engaging LPIs

One of the goals of PNVSCA to strengthen VIDA as a program would be to engage LPIs more proactively. This is to ensure that the volunteers respond to local development priorities that require volunteers. To do this, PNVSCA may have to work with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in its Volunteer and Citizenship Program (VCP) and the prioritization of development plans as basis for accepting volunteers. In the forthcoming dispatch of VIDA volunteers, LPIs should be able to first present a list of its priority programs as bases for PNVSCA to deploy VIDA volunteers in a certain area. Therefore, PNVSCA may have to engage in a

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[11] Officially known as Republic Act 9418, this national law institutionalized volunteerism as a strategy for national development and international cooperation (PNVSCA).

Memorandum of Agreement with DILG-LGA to share their database of volunteer organizations and individuals in the area, the list of priority local needs, and potential local partner institutions. In the meantime, PNVSCA may be trained and develop its value chain for planned change through volunteerism as well as monitoring and evaluation systems in partnership with the local volunteer and citizenship desk team.

Focusing on geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs)

A resurfacing recommendation is to bring volunteers into the communities in greatest need. The VIDA program has generally done well in focusing on poor provinces and municipalities and neglected sectors: 68% of volunteers in the last 10 years have come from Mindanao. The accomplishments of VIDA ECOWEB volunteers in community organizing, peace-building in different parts of Lanao del Norte are heartening, for example. Supporting volunteers of a farmer's cooperative in Bukidnon contributes to community empowerment and local development. The Mindanao Tri-people Women Resource Center, Inc. recommended encouraging/deploying more volunteers from Moro and indigenous communities, as they promote cultural knowledge and sensitivity. It is in these far-flung rural areas where the VIDA program can yield the highest impact, and where the P2,000 monthly allowance can go a long way. This is what VIDA has been doing and should continue.

Fig. 3 below shows in diagram form the assessment team's general recommendations for **strengthening VIDA as PNVSCA's program on volunteering for local development** based on its general mandate under RA 9418 and based on the findings of the rapid assessment.

* The VMS will be jointly managed by PNVSCA and DILG
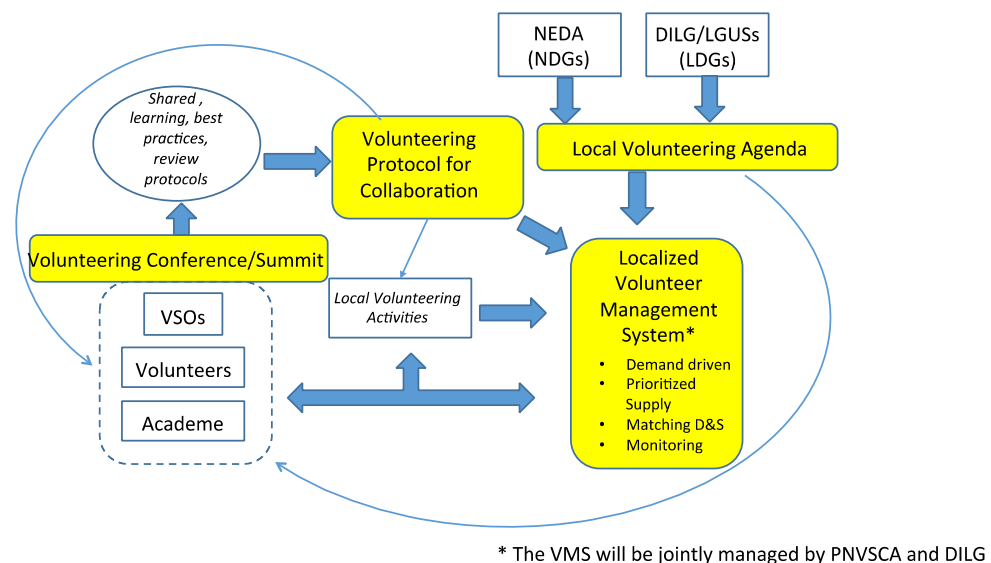
Fig. 3.   Proposed Collaborative Model for Sustaining Local Governance of a Community-Based Volunteer Program

Proposed Major Program Management Areas

1. **Volunteering Protocol for Collaboration**: Making sense of volunteer management practices currently being adopted by PNVSCA as well as other volunteer service organizations should be one priority to sustain the implementation and management of VIDA. A regularly updated document containing principles, policies and general/common operational procedures to be adopted by volunteer organizations, which will be the standard reference for administering and conducting volunteer work in the country needs to be formulated. Updating may be done at least once in every three years. Updates may be suggested through a yearly "Volunteering Conference" or "Volunteering Summit" organized by PNVSCA (see no. 4 below on this).

2. Local **Volunteering Agenda**: Having no volunteering agenda at the moment, at the local level, PNVSCA through its VIDA could install a parallel process consistent with local development processes .VIDA can initiate this process with DILG'S VCP program pushing for the prioritization of volunteering needs (according to a locally endorsed prioritization – such as by the local development council). In this manner, PNVSCA should aim to partner with DILG-LGA in sitting in the local development council to make sure that prioritization of volunteer needs and the protection / recognition of volunteers in the area are ensured). In this connection, it might help to work with the local councils / DILG in the prioritization / rationalization of priority development plans for volunteering, which initially could be aligned with the local development plans and with the new sustainable development goals.

PNVSCA should assess the impact / contribution of the VIDA activities viz-a-vis the local development priorities, as well as the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, it should provide good documentation for each volunteering activity by hiring case study writers / researchers. Alternatively, PNVSCA may have a regular (yearly) impact assessment/reflection session by volunteers to talk about their experience, organizationally and personally in order to develop the models, perhaps in the form of a writeshop. This major activity may be done in existing yearly conferences organized by PNVSCA. In this line, PNVSCA may connect with other volunteer involving organizations to share experiences and for modeling. Towards this end, PNVSCA may need to be oriented on a **value chain approach in planning for its national volunteering for development program** and to develop its own theory of change and volunteering development agenda so as to augment VIDA as a national volunteer program.

3. Localized **Volunteer Management Systems**: This will be a major component of the National Volunteer Infrastructure and Forum. This includes the current volunteer registration system to create a database of volunteers (Supply) and a database of volunteering opportunities (Demand) ranked or certified as to alignment with National or local goals. A localized volunteer placement management system has to be in place especially based on local and national demands/development priorities. In this regard, PNVSCA may consider engaging in partnership with local volunteer organizations, such as the newly created Philippine Coalition on Volunteerism

(PhilCV) and other volunteer organizations such as JVPFI, VSO Bahaginan, IAVE, and Kapamagogopa to assist with volunteer placement and the dispatch of VIDA volunteers. In fact, PNVSCA may subcontract or engage the services of a local volunteer organization in cooperation with the mandated local government unit's volunteer and citizenship desk or office to manage the implementation of VIDA, including funds disbursement. This may help decentralize and localize planning, monitoring and implementation of volunteer activities that would be more responsive to communities' and the volunteers' needs.

4. **Volunteering Conference or Summit**: Every new VIDA volunteer in a local partner institution should be treated as a case study that is a learning experience and its knowledge to be extracted. The expected output of the proponent should be more than the ordinary reporting, and should adopt a format highlighting the lessons learned based on models of volunteering to be formulated by PNVSCA. The case studies and models of volunteering for development shall be presented in a Volunteering Summit. Also, the volunteering summit may be a venue for PNVSCA to be able to spot potential credible volunteer organizations and volunteer involving organizations such as NGOs who may be doing significant volunteer work but are less well known. The assessment team stresses the importance of working with existing networks, emphasizing the need to link up with communities of practice (COP). PNVSCA may therefore benefit from forging a continuing program for its local volunteers and partners together with volunteer involving organizations (VIOs) that regularly offer volunteer programs/short courses and trainings, including schools and or even volunteer programs of VIOs. That said, there is a need to promote VIDA not just as a PNVSCA program but one that works with a consortium, such as the Philippine Consortium for Volunteerism (PhilCV).

VI. Implications of a Public Value Framework

Adopting a public value lens while highligting the collaborative aspects of the VIDA program illustrates the following relevance of the framework:

1. Monitoring actual contributions to development and collaborative governance

This study has shown that using a public value lens pins down concrete contributions of volunteer work, in this study, a collaborative volunteer program. In keeping with the "volunteering for development" thrust, a public value framework would help ensure that volunteer programs are actually geared towards concrete development outcomes. Program implementers can keep track of their contributions to local development and to a particular sector; by adopting the framework, they would not only look at impacts of volunteering on economy, ecology, and environment, but also lend focus to social structures and policy networks, critical ingredients that in turn contribute to good governance.

When specifically assessed for collaborative action, the public value framework can help assess the scope and probably spell out norms or guidelines for collaborative action, for the latter to gain acceptability and serve as a guide in evaluating added value and decipher future action among the partners. Moreover, the framework can aid in identifying contributions to the policy process.

2. Performance standards of effectiveness

The framework lays emphasis on program effectiveness, and the need for performance standards and indicators. Any assessment of public value has to be based on such standards of effectiveness. Using the framework helps implementers become aware of whether such measures of performance exist within the organization or not. In the case of complex development goals, using public value as a framework may also help check the alignment of different tiers of development goals and other agreed-upon goals and strategic directions.

3. Forging networks and partnerships

An important manifestation of public value for volunteering may perhaps be expressed as continued partnerships and the presence of dense networks where people engage in volunteering and civic action in public arenas. Volunteer programs adopting the public value framework highlight the importance of organizing people into associations as public spheres where dialogue and multiple voices can be heard. The stronger and more dense the bonds, the deeper may the public value of volunteering be felt by the partners. As mentioned above, these associations lead to strengthened local capacity while galvanizing community members to attain their objectives. Collaborative governance itself relies on the coming together of different stakeholders in a formal setting that promotes trust, communication, and commitment. A public value framework keeps networks and partnerships aware of the possibilities of further engendering institutions / new local institutions, as a result of interlocking interests.

4. Sealing trust promotion

According to the public value framework, the development of trust includes transparency, accountability, creation of a shared purpose, trust in partners, and participation and engaged citizens. In the context of volunteerism, volunteers may help promote trust among partners via their role as mediators or bridges. Volunteers may be perceived by various stakeholders as a neutral party who can act as mediators in times of conflict. In the VIDA rapid appraisal, it was found that VIDAs are perceived by the community and host organizations as a valued intervention of the government.

Volunteer programs would do well to integrate these indicators of trust in their assessments. Trust is a most important public value formed that needs to be assessed for sustainability and further collective action.

5. Identifying common development agendas

A public value framework demolishes silo approaches to development, and helps identify common agendas to pursue. By identifying public spheres for formulating and treading common development paths in volunteering programs, a public value paradigm can help implementers of volunteer programs ensure that local development processes are upheld and strengthened. For example, an assessment of the contribution of volunteer activities would also consider how development outcomes are strategically aligned with local development goals as well as the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Pushing towards a common agenda entails collaboration in determining priorities and crafting plans.

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