



The Watchful Advocates for Transparent, Clean and Honest Governance in Kidapawan (WATCH Kidapawan) led several campaigns between August and September to demand for more transparency and accountability in government projects, including the delivery of heavy infrastructure equipment worth PhP 45 million (USD 1 million) and the unimplemented PhP 5.9 million (USD 134,090) waste water treatment facility.

WATCH Kidapawan is the first media-CSO joint group which PPTRP helped develop and establish to monitor and report on transparency and accountability issues in the city. Below is the full text of its accomplishment report to PPTRP:

1. Delivery of the PhP 45-million worth of heavy equipments

“The group’s expose’ of the PhP 45-million undelivered heavy equipment yielded positive result. The said equipment should have been delivered a year ago. It was only last July 2010 that WATCH Kidapawan exposed the issue through its media members namely Charm Radio, DXND, Radyo Ukay and Southern Voice Journal.

“After two weeks of simultaneous on-air drumbeating of issue, three of the five equipments arrived. The group continued to stir the “hornet’s nest” by bringing the issue before the *Sangguniang Panlungsod* (provincial council) and in community discussions. The four media entities contacted concerned government officials and suppliers to get explanations on the delayed delivery of equipment. The Sangguniang Panlungsod invited in its Question Hour session the city’s General Services Officer to explain the cause of delay. The concerned city officials promised that the said equipment be delivered on a certain date but it was not realized. Charm Radio did a daily countdown to remind the officials of their promises. On the 14th day of the countdown, the remaining two equipments were finally delivered. The issue was put to rest.

2. The unimplemented Ph 5.9 million waste water treatment facility

“The Kidapawan City Government blamed unqualified bidders as the cause of the non-implementation of the proposed PhP 5.9 million waste water treatment facility. The City Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) under the leadership of City Administrator Rodolfo Cabiles said they cannot implement the project because no bidder passed the required qualifications. WATCH Kidapawan requested the Sangguniang Panglungsod to invite Cabiles in their Question Hour but the said official turned down the invitation several times.

“It took five weeks and five consecutive invitation letters before Cabiles finally appeared before the SP session – although he still failed to provide clear answers on when the project would be implemented. Meanwhile, the public continues to pay for the principal amount and the interest rate before the Land Bank of the Philippines. WATCH Kidapawan plans to file a criminal complaint against city officials before the Office of the Ombudsman Mindanao because the project should have been implemented two years ago. The issue continued to be a priority in Kidapawan media’s coverage.

3. Case verification at Regional Ombudsman

“The group went to Ombudsman on September 2 to get updates on different graft-related cases filed against local officials before the Office of the Ombudsman in Davao City. The group was disappointed with the policy of the government’s anti-graft body that only the complainant can inquire about the status of the cases. The group also wanted to apply for accreditation but was told that the Ombudsman stopped the said program two years ago. Not wanting to go home empty-handed, the group tried to ask for other programs and services of the Ombudsman, including the process of securing copies of Statement of Assets Liabilities and Net worth (SALN) of public officials. PPTRP published a [story](#) on WATCH Kidapawan’s engagement of the Ombudsman in *Pera Natin ‘To!*

4. Follow-up on the missing PhP 11.7 million (USD 265,909) city treasury fund

“Charm Radio exposed the issue on the missing PhP 11.7 million public fund two years ago, where eight tax collectors and employees of the city treasury were involved. Seven of them admitted they pocketed the amount, returned it and apologized while one vehemently denied the accusations. The city mayor ordered the creation of the Administrative Complaint Committee that meted the seven accused with merely six months’ suspension. They had served the “simple punishment” and are now back on their job. The last remaining accused is facing the charge before the committee and the Ombudsman. WATCH Kidapawan asked update of the case but Ombudsman refused to give information citing certain policy that only the complainant could ask for the status of the case.

“To date, the administrative case against the remaining accused is almost forgotten. No hearing took place for the past 10 months. Through its own initiative, WATCH Kidapawan inquired and learned the case is still pending. A week after the inquiry, the committee decided to resume the hearing. The last hearing was done on September 24 and will continue up to November 13, after which the committee will submit recommendation to the mayor who as the disciplining authority will hand down his judgment. WATCH Kidapawan meanwhile is still studying the case of the seven employees who received minor punishment.

5. WATCH Kidapawan support to whistleblower

“WATCH Kidapawan supported Lally Aninon, the lady whistleblower who after exposing the illegal collection activities was charged with two counts of libel cases. Aside from financial support through a fundraising drive that collected PhP 27, 000 (USD 613) for her bail bond, WATCH Kidapawan consistently attended the court hearings. One of the whistleblower’s accuser city employee Emiliana Beltran admitted she found the group’s presence in the hearing to be “intimidating.” On August 24, Beltran contacted WATCH Kidapawan of her intention to

withdraw her case against Aninon. On the same day, she went to the City Prosecutors Office together with WATCH Chairperson Abner Francisco and thereat she signed her affidavit of desistance. She informed the group she wanted to have peace of mind and that there was no precondition of her withdrawal. The illegal exaction case which Aninon filed against Beltran is still pending before the Ombudsman Mindanao. She also awaits for the City Prosecutors Office to submit Motion to Dismiss before the Regional Trial Court Branch 17.

6. Verification of tips from reliable sources

“WATCH Kidapawan received a copy of the Deed of Donation entered into by the Philippine National Oil Company-Energy Development Corporation and the Second Legislative of North Cotabato involving a slightly used car (Toyota Revo).

When the said issue was tackled on air, another source gave WATCH Kidapawan copy of the Certificate of Registration and Official Receipt from the Land Transportation Office (LTO) showing the questionable transfer of ownership of the said vehicle. The vehicle was donated by PNOC-EDC to the public office but the documents show it was not registered under the Second Legislative District of Cotabato. The OR and CR clearly showed that the vehicle became a personal property of former congressman Bernardo Pinol. The former congressman claimed the vehicle was donated to him as a private person by the PNOC-EDC. Pinol challenged Charm Radio to get the opinion of PNOC to set the record straight. He said he “brought home” the vehicle because it was his but the claim was contradicted by the donor agency. Mr. Alejandro Catacutan PNOC EDC Resident Manager put end to all the speculations when he said “the vehicle was donated to the public office therefore it is a public property”.

WATCH Kidapawan campaigns for more transparency in government projects

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North Cotabato Representative Nancy Catamco vowed to seek all legal actions to recover the vehicle from the possession of her predecessor. As of September 16, 2010, the subject vehicle was returned by the staff of former Congressman Pinol at the PNOC garage.”