

Self Assessment Report on Project Implementation

Philippines:

Trial advocacy skills development program

Pillar 1 – Developing effective and transparent systems for public service

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Project budget: Php 1,216,613.00

Starting date: 1st Batch: May 12, 2003
2nd Batch: June 16, 2003
3rd Batch: August 10, 2003

Closing date: 1st Batch: May 16, 2003
2nd Batch: June 20, 2003
3rd Batch: August 15, 2003

Project description:

The Trial Advocacy Skills Development Program for Ombudsman Prosecutors is a response to the needs and challenges inherent in a significantly rapid and developing society, particularly in the field of investigation and prosecution, which greatly affect the speedy prosecution of cases. The intended beneficiaries of this program are the Special Prosecution Officers and Graft Investigation Officers of the Office of the Ombudsman who, by their profession as trial advocates under the most adverse and trying circumstances and given the Office of the Ombudsman's limited human and material resources, investigate and prosecute criminal and administrative cases against corrupt government officials and employees.

Project objectives and scope

- Familiarize and enhance the participants' knowledge and capabilities in trial work;
- Provide participants other methods and approaches aimed at simplifying their advocacy tasks and lighten their trial loads;
- Assist the participants in identifying the particular features and format of the criminal investigation and trial process which they could take advantage of as effective court advocacy management tools; and
- Provide participants with the academic venue to revisit and review pertinent anti-graft laws and jurisprudence, particularly in the field of criminal law, criminal procedure and evidence.

Project inputs

- Hiring of consultants
 - Assessment of training needs
 - a. one-day orientation course on Trial Advocacy conducted on January 31, 2003 [anti-graft laws, plunder, Revised Penal Code, defenses available to, or raised by, the accused, minimum evidentiary requirements in anti-graft and
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related cases, pertinent decisions of the Supreme Court, Rules of Procedures of the Sandiganbayan (anti-graft court), and applicable provisions of the Rules of Court.]

b. conference of resource speakers

- Approval of training design and budget
- Conduct of training

Project outputs

Capability-building in criminal investigation and prosecution.

Project benefits and risks

- Team-building at the Office of the Special Prosecutor
- Enhanced trial advocacy skills

Output evaluation

- The mock trial was well-organized and the participants learned new trial techniques. The case materials were relevant and appropriate. The evaluator/judge has provided very useful feedback. He has clearly explained and succeeded in integrating the issues raised.
- The Trial Advocacy Skills Development Program was accredited by the Supreme Court for purposes of the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE).

Project design changes (if any)

The original training modules were designed for the Special Prosecution Officers of the Office of the Special Prosecutor. Minor revisions were introduced for the third batch of participants who came from the area and sectoral offices of the Office of the Ombudsman. The revised modules put more emphasis on the mock trial and discussion on trial techniques.

Project overall assessment/major lessons learned

The attainment of the objectives of the Trial Advocacy Skills Development Program is heavily dependent on the positive attitude and the extent of the individual commitment of its key officials, training staff and participants. The experiences gained by Ombudsman Prosecutors will hopefully enhance their criminal investigation capabilities and trial advocacy skills.

Undoubtedly, the conduct of Trial Advocacy Skills Development Program (1st Batch and 2nd Batch) was a success. This finding is confirmed through participants' feedback and post-course evaluation.

Follow-up action and recommendation

There is a need for a follow-through training on advocacy skills in examination of witnesses (direct and cross-examination) and presentation of real and documentary evidence.

The program should be done every year in order to constantly enhance the skills of the prosecutors and update them on recent developments in the areas which are of particular concern to them such as criminal law and remedial law.
