



Building disaster-resilient communities

A new generation of strategies for government accountability is needed, one that fully considers entrenched, institutional obstacles to change. Vertical integration of coordinated civil society policy monitoring and advocacy is one such strategy. Engaging each stage and level of public sector actions in an integrated way can locate the causes of accountability failures, show their interconnected nature, and leverage the local, national and transnational power shifts necessary to produce sustainable institutional change (Fox 2001). This case study summary is one of seven that reflect on civil society monitoring and advocacy initiatives in the Philippines – all of which aim to improve government accountability in different sectors – through the lens of vertical integration.



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This case study summary looks into the advocacy campaign of the Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNetPhils), which was directed at the passage, implementation and review of the 2010 Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) Act. It examines the interaction of various initiatives and actions at different levels of policy-making, from the local to the national, introducing experiences and lessons from the campaign. It shows how using the vertical integration approach could be useful in framing and analysing similar monitoring and advocacy campaigns.

Prior to the passage of the DRRM Act, the primary law covering disaster management in the country was an outdated Presidential Decree (PD 1566), enacted by the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1978. The DRRM Act represented a paradigm shift in DRR and response, moving from an approach limited to the reactive management of disasters to a recognition of the need for a holistic approach to reducing risks and responding during emergencies (Scriven 2013). It included provision for a Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Fund, which also covers climate change adaptation initiatives, and civil society participation in DRRM councils at the national, regional, local and grassroots / village levels.

The passage of the DRRM Act took more than a decade of patient and persistent engagement with the legislative process. While there had been earlier campaigns by various groups, DRRNetPhils is widely credited as being a crucial advocate for the passage of the DRRM Act (Scriven 2013). It provided a strong, broad, persistent and consolidated network that influenced policy.

Building a national coalition

As a national formation, DRRNetPhils brought together more than 300 civil society organisations, communities, practitioners and advocates adhering to the Hyogo Framework for Action on DRRM and implementing a community-based DRM approach. It included members from academic institutions and government agencies, local government units (LGUs) and various LGU leagues. The focus on a common aim helped the network's membership to build agreement and consensus and, in turn, collectively advocate for change. The concrete nature of the target was seen as crucial to creating cohesion within the network: without this, it would have been a disparate group of heterogeneous actors (Scriven 2013).

The coalition was helped by champions inside government, in both the executive and legislative branches, who proved critical in the passage of the legislation (Dela Cruz 2015). International agreements, such as the Hyogo Framework, also strongly influenced the new law.

Some observers argue that it was Mother Nature herself that provided the 'game changer' for the passage of the act. The devastation wrought on the Philippines by Typhoon Ketsana / Tropical Storm Ondoy in 2010 provided a shock effect and showed the urgent need for changes in the law (Dela Cruz 2015). However, it was DRRNetPhils that undertook coalition-building after this shock, both within the shared constituencies of its members and in other cross-sectoral formations. It then used coalition-building as a key strategy in creating a constituency for the passage of the DRRM Act.

DRRNetPhils served various purposes, providing a unified public education

strategy, a venue for shared learning and exchanges between both local and national organisations, and a forum for information dissemination, consultation and consolidation on issues and positions.

Crucially, it was present at both local and national levels. At the community level, DRRNetPhils undertook awareness-raising and capacity-building on DRR and policy-making. Local communities were also involved in the preparation of local and national development plans, and provided inputs to the draft the DRRM bill. DRRNetPhils consciously sought to bring practical experience from grassroots organisations into legislative discussions. Furthermore, it engaged the scientific community in providing evidence to committee hearings. It also pushed for local ordinances, and modelled community-based DRM through the efforts and actions of its member organisations.

The interface between the DRRNetPhils campaign and the state was pronounced at both local and national levels. At the national level, the concerted efforts of DRRNetPhils members were critical for the passage of the act. Once it was passed, DRRNetPhils members became part of national and local DRRM councils, focused on the implementation and monitoring of the act.

Lessons for vertically integrated campaigning

- One of the challenges of building the coalition and cultivating champions in government was the lack of coordination among government agencies. Before the act was passed, although the campaign was vertically integrated, government approaches to DRRM were not. A vertically-integrated civil society

campaign can provide poorly integrated government agencies with a model for well-integrated ways of working.

- DRRNetPhils was a mechanism for both horizontal and vertical integration: internally, it organised itself to build muscle for legislative advocacy, while externally it mirrored the coordination of local and national initiatives.

References

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Background to this summary

This summary is based on a case study by Marlon Lara Cornelio. Further reflections on this material will be published later in 2016 as part of a report on the theory and practice of vertically integrated civil society activism, edited by Joy Acheron, and including a contribution by Jonathan Fox. Please visit the Making All Voices Count website (www.makingallvoicescount.org) for the latest information about the publication of this report, and to find the other six case study summaries in this series.

About Making All Voices Count

Making All Voices Count is a programme working towards a world in which open, effective and participatory governance is the norm and not the exception. It focuses global attention on creative and cutting-edge solutions to transform the relationship between citizens and their governments. The programme is inspired by and supports the goals of the Open Government Partnership.

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Research, Evidence and Learning component

The programme's research, evidence and learning component, managed by IDS, contributes to improving performance and practice, and builds an evidence base in the field of citizen voice, government responsiveness, transparency and accountability (T&A) and technology for T&A (Tech4T&A).

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