



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY JOURNALISM AND DEVELOPMENT

Engaged Journalism for Better Communities

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY JOURNALISM AND DEVELOPMENT (CCJD)  
WITH THE MEDIA CONSORTIUM ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

**Sustaining Public Journalism Initiatives Mainstreaming RBA and Localizing the MDGs**

**Summary**

While there have been a number of significant gains in local, home-grown efforts to promote the rights-based approach to development in the context of the Millennium Development Goals, high-impact strategies to increase popular awareness and wide public understanding of their implications for the day-to-day lives of citizens need to be further developed and strengthened.

Innovative strategies like media-citizen engagements for good governance through public journalism have to be recognized and further enhanced for these to significantly contribute to local counter-corruption efforts, for example. Interesting and exciting experiences from these engagements could provide valuable lessons for citizens, communities, development agencies, government and the media for developing replicable models and influencing policy.

Over the last three years, the Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD) modestly contributed to addressing this issue by developing journalistic approaches on how communities and the media can begin to invigorate public life through engagement especially in developing the news agenda.

It may not have had all the answers but it did point out the direction where the answer may lie. Often this was in the arena of multi-sector action where different groups of varying persuasions were able to articulate community concerns by focusing on shared values upon which many of their decisions were based. This became possible through a shift towards a kind of journalism that encourages citizens and communities to identify and solve local problems, to increase participation in public life and in governance: it is called public journalism.

Public journalism is a philosophy, a framework that encourages and provides a forum for public debate over issues that are most important to citizens and how they can address these. It also requires that when these public debates do occur, all voices of the community be heard. It likewise requires journalists to focus not only on what's wrong but also on what's working, not only on problems but also on stories of success and hope.

Several media groups, newspapers, radio stations, and individual practitioners in several areas around the Philippines have initiated public journalism projects that somehow demonstrated that the community media can help refocus and add sinew to popularizing good governance initiatives at the local level without necessarily losing their cherished traditions of autonomy and independence.

These include:

- Working with multi-sector groups and local governments in adopting governance monitoring and feedback strategies using RBA in an MDG context (news weekly and press club in Iloilo)
- Developing a regional radio network (Bicol) to consistently tackle governance reform issues in relation to mainstreaming RBA in governance
- Getting people to exercise their citizenship roles by actively engaging the local government in environmental protection, electoral exercises, development projects using a rights-based monitoring-feedback approach (Palawan community newspaper and citizen-media council)
- Sustaining interactive radio dialogue between citizens, multi-sector groups and local government on transparency and accountability issues (radio program in Kidapawan)
- Media and citizen groups working together to strengthen multi-sector, community-based counter corruption strategy (public journalism group in Samar and San Pablo City, Laguna)
- Mobilizing citizen action to support good governance practices (using Mindanews documentation of good governance practices as take-off strategy)
- Muslim volunteers for peace developing communication strategies with community media (to be developed with the Kapamagogopa, Inc. covering the cities of Marawi and Iligan, and the provinces of Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte)

## **Objectives**

The project aims to:

1. Strengthen links and engagements between media groups, journalists and multi-sector organizations in developing a good governance news agenda at the local level through public journalism approaches
2. Localize and popularize RBA and MDG responsive governance practices through published/aired stories and multi-sector dialogues
3. Sustain media and multi-sector public journalism initiatives or projects in popularizing and replicating good governance practices in eight (8) identified areas