



Analytical Report on the Stakeholders' Meeting/ Validation Workshop of the Case Study on the Philippine Anti-corruption Movement

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(The preliminary findings of the case study on the anti-corruption movement in the Philippines was presented during a workshop on May 24, 2006 at the Balay Kalinaw, University of the Philippines [UP]-Diliman, Quezon City. It was attended by members of the Transparency and Accountability Network [TAN], as well as representatives from government. Reviews on the paper were also presented by Dr. Ledivina Cariño of the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance, and TAN executive director Vincent Lazatin.)

The workshop started with the presentation highlighting the following:

The general objective of the study is to examine the Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN) to illustrate the case of a civil-society organization involved in anti-corruption campaigns in the Philippines. TAN was selected for the study because it is the biggest coalition of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) involved in anti-corruption advocacy in the Philippines. It also has among its members those who are most

active and have done pioneering works against corruption. Having TAN as the subject of the study, the research examines the organization around the three following themes: its emergence; networks, resources and strategies; and the outcomes of its initiatives.

The first part of the paper discusses the emergence of TAN. The next parts examine the network's resources and strategies, as well as the outcomes of its initiatives using

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the frameworks of resource mobilization, political opportunity structure, and the interactive approach.

Using the framework of resource mobilization, the research discusses how TAN makes use of resources within the network to realize success in its initiatives. Worth mentioning is its capacity to utilize the expertise of its member-organizations in the conduct of campaigns and projects, as well as tap the support of government officials.

With regard to the political opportunity structure (POS) framework, the paper also discusses how TAN was able to take advantage of the openings provided by the political environment to advance its programs. Such opening is exemplified in the willingness of government officials to undertake collaborative projects with the network. TAN has also utilized the openings provided by the legal environment for civil-society participation in government processes. Opportunities were also provided by the international context through international funding agencies whose increased emphasis on anti-corruption efforts as imperative for good governance. This provided opportunities for funding for TAN as well as other anti-corruption NGOs in the country.

Despite its accomplishments, TAN still has to do a lot to considerably tilt the extent of corruption in the country. One of these is the need to get more anti-corruption advocates in government, as well as make popular among the general public

the anti-corruption discourse. Following the interactive approach that takes off from the cooking of *bibingka* (native rice cake) that needs heat from the top and bottom, TAN is fully aware of the need to generate enough heat from above and below to be able to considerably reduce, if not eliminate, corruption. With regard to government officials on top, even though TAN has been collaborating with some, their number still does not constitute a critical mass that could institute the needed reforms in the bureaucracy and enforce anti-corruption laws and practices. TAN is therefore aware of the need to step up its campaign to get more advocates from government.

Regarding the populace below, the presence of structural problems (such as poverty and low educational attainment) and elements in popular culture conducive to corruption are stumbling blocks that need to be hurdled by the anti-corruption campaign. TAN should, therefore, be able to launch or sustain existing efforts aimed at realizing a more corruption-averse general populace.

GLOBAL CONTEXT

The 1990s saw the increasing adoption of the anti-corruption discourse by government as well as nongovernment actors. This development is attributed to the following processes: 1) the spread of the principle of democracy and liberalism, as well as the end of the Cold War; 2) the information revolution that resulted in the widespread diffusion of information about the causes and costs of corruption; and 3) the growth of NGOs and free investigative press within nation states

(McCoy and Heckel 2001). Corollary to this, international organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations, and Asia Foundation begun channeling more resources for anti-corruption initiatives. With the infusion of funding, civil society groups involved in anti-corruption campaigns proliferated in the country.

Although this was mentioned in the paper, there is still a need to further discuss the character of the international anti-corruption movement and relate this to local anti-corruption mobilizations. In the case of TAN, it was mentioned in the paper that most of its funding come from Asia Foundation. This element of funding from an international organization can be pursued for the international context discussion. During the discussion, TAN executive director Vincent Lazatin also mentioned that the organization is currently networking with the international coalition Access to Information. This information can also be used to further explicate the international linkage of TAN to other anti-corruption initiatives. Lazatin, nonetheless, admitted that TAN still needs to link with more international organizations to enable it to share experiences and lessons with other countries to improve its anti-corruption campaign strategies.

A discussion on current international anti-corruption organizations and efforts can be offered by the paper and situate TAN amidst these initiatives. How are the efforts of TAN related to these initiatives? If the relationship is scanty, why is this so?

There is also a need to include in the paper the debate about the largely neo-liberal character of proposals from international organizations, particularly the World Bank, on how to lessen corruption in the country. To simplify, these proposals largely harp the idea that since government is corrupt, then it would be prudent to let it stay out of the market. In addition, private sector should be allowed to take over utilities and services currently controlled by government (through privatization) because they are less prone to corruption. Through lesser state control, then corruption can be

restrained and the country will be on its way to economic prosperity. According to some critics, however, this line of thinking deters us from critically examining the root cause of poverty in the country, as well as our need for a stronger state. Instead of putting too much blame on corruption for our woes, Bello et al (2004) contend that "the more convincing explanation for the country's poverty and underdevelopment lies more with the ruling elite factions' control over people, production, markets, and resources and successful subordination of the state to their interests. The country has failed to develop and so many of its people are mired in poverty because the state, strangled as it is by competing factions' demand, has been rendered powerless to even chart the country's direction, much less subordinate ruling elites under its control."

THE GOVERNMENT FACTOR

A review of the initiatives of TAN including that of other organizations involved in anti-corruption activities in the Philippines show that corruption is widely framed as a governance issue, with heavy emphasis on instituting reforms in government to make the system less conducive to, if not free of, corruption. Hence, most civil-society groups take a nonconfrontational stance toward and often collaborate with state officials to penetrate and eventually reform government processes.

Collaborating with government brings out the contentious issue of how civil-society groups are able to maintain their being critical while working with elements of the state. As TAN has partnered with government on several projects, this is one issue that the network needs to contend with.

Consistent with the frame of reforming government, the participants in the validation meeting put much emphasis on the issue of the need to get more officials who will take the cudgels against corruption. They said that getting more reform champions in government is a big

challenge because there are only a few who can be tapped. Although there are reform-minded civil-society people who joined the government after the People Power 2 uprising (which led to the ouster of former president Joseph Estrada because of corruption), a number have since left their posts.

The importance of relating the issue of corruption to election was also discussed by the workshop participants. They agreed that more effort should be put into developing strategies on how to get more anti-corruption champions get elected to government positions.

MOBILIZING RESOURCES AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES

Inasmuch as the paper pointed out that TAN mobilizes the expertise of its member-organizations in the implementation of projects, Lazatin nonetheless emphasized that the network also utilizes the expertise of organizations outside its network. It has formed partnerships with organizations that are not members of the network. It was also pointed out that TAN is not the only one utilizing its members; even member organizations themselves tap the expertise of their fellow members in the conduct of their projects.

Although TAN has taken advantage of the openings for collaboration presented by certain government offices, it is still unable to take advantage of other opportunities. The legislature is an arena not yet fully explored by TAN, although there are party-list representatives with anti-corruption platforms that it could forge collaborative undertakings with. Moreover, despite the perception that corruption in the judiciary is pervasive, TAN has not been able to explore the possibility of undertaking collaborative projects aiming to reduce malpractice among its members with the Supreme Court .

ASSESSMENT OF TAN

There is need for the paper to gather the opinions of TAN members as well as partners to further assess its effectiveness. The paper has mainly gathered the opinions of the TAN secretariat, which do not provide enough basis for assessing the performance of the network.

To come up with a critical analysis of TAN, it is also recommended that initiatives of other anti-corruption civil society organizations be assessed and juxtaposed against the efforts of the network. Through the examination of other initiatives, areas where TAN's efforts are deficient might be pinpointed. More important, through the discussion on the initiatives of other civil-society groups, the paper can provide a more comprehensive picture of anti-corruption efforts in the country.

Among the three areas of prosecution, promotion, and prevention upon which TAN frames its anti-corruption initiatives, it is weakest in prosecution. This is because there is are no members in the network solely focusing on this aspect. There is, therefore, a need for TAN to find partners specializing in this area.

Moreover, the TAN secretariat said it encounters difficulty in getting the support of the general populace for its endeavors. TAN does not work on sensational cases. It mostly focuses on "quiet" work like institutional reforms. The public is definitely more interested in the conviction of prominent officials than in what TAN is working on. Several issues were also raised in order to further illumine how TAN operates as a network. In this regard, the paper needs to assess how TAN is different or similar with other networks. There is also need to further examine the dynamics among the members. How does TAN deal with conflicts within the network? Do the members make monetary contributions to the network?

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the meeting with the stakeholders, the gaps in the paper as well as how these can be addressed were discussed. Among the gaps that were identified was the inadequate discussion on the international anti-corruption movement and how to locate the efforts of TAN in this context. Concerns were also raised as to the need to put forward more critical analysis of TAN's performance by getting the opinions of network members and other organizations that TAN has partnered with. The analysis can also be deepened by examining the efforts of other anti-corruption groups and juxtaposing these against the efforts of TAN to elucidate areas where its efforts are deficient. This will also serve the purpose of providing a more comprehensive picture of civil society-initiated anti-corruption efforts in the country.

The validation meeting also provided a venue where anti-corruption activists were able to reflect on their efforts. They contend that one major obstacle in their campaign is the lack of reform champions in government. There is therefore a need for them to devote more effort in strategizing on how to put more anti-corruption champions in government. One way of doing this is to popularize the anti-corruption discourse among the general public and make corruption a prominent election issue.

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PHOTO DOCUMENTATION



Ma. Glenda S. Lopez Wui, member of the UNRISD-Philippine Research Team, presents her initial findings during the stakeholders' meeting/validation workshop on the anti-corruption movement in the Philippines.



Mahar Mangahas (left), president, Social Weather Stations and Ledivina Cariño (right), professor, National College of Public Administration and Governance shared valuable insights during the meeting.



A representative of the Office of the Ombudsman (left) and Teresita Baltazar (right), chair, Presidential Anti-Graft Commission represented the government sector in the meeting.



Vincent T. Lazatin (left), executive director, TAN and Sixto Donato C. Macasaet (right), executive director of CODE-NGO (right) gave the civil society's feedback on the study.