

TEACHING NOTE
FOR WORKSHOP
FACILITATORSFROM ROADBLOCK TO CHAMPION:
PHE ADVOCACY AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVES

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Key Issue	Case-Study Discussion Questions
Coastal resource management, family planning, and food security	1, 2, 10
The role of local government executives	4
Advocacy strategies	5–7, 11
Partnerships	6, 9

Case-Study Synopsis

In many places around the world, local government executives (mayors, chiefs, and governors) have decisionmaking authority that could significantly affect the content and direction of development projects. This case study relates the story of how a development NGO—PATH Foundation Philippines, Inc. (PFPI)—won the support of a mayor who almost derailed an innovative project in her municipality that was working to incorporate reproductive health interventions into coastal resource management plans.

Teaching Tip

When allocating time for discussion of the action of this case study, be sure to allow plenty of time for the questions following Part II; the questions lead readers through an analysis of the action in the case, but then also ask them to apply these ideas to their own experience. If you are short on time, you may find it more efficient to skip the discussion questions following Part I, which address linkages among population, coastal resource management, and food security.

Selected Learning Points

This case study offers readers rich material to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various advocacy strategies targeting key decisionmakers such as local government executives. The case-study author offers the following lessons learned from his experience, which may be useful additions to the workshop discussion:

- ▶ **Self-reflection.** The learning visit took government executives away from possible distractions and allowed them to focus their full attention on a particular program and its benefits. The experience of direct exposure to a successful program also can help politicians examine their perceptions and correct their misconceptions on their own. This lesson is particularly useful when one recognizes that some government executives may not be open to accepting criticism of their perceptions from others; instead, creating an opportunity for self-realization can be a more effective approach.
- ▶ **Openness to persuasion.** Another sociocultural aspect of politics that plays an important role in this approach is the fact that some politicians are open to persuasion from their colleagues, especially in groups. An exposure trip for a group of local executives provides opportunities for them to share perceptions and ideas that can become significant factors in each other's decisionmaking. Thus, the positive reception of an idea by a majority of colleagues can influence the perceptions of others in the group.
- ▶ **Ideas from abroad.** While the benefits of a study tour can occur in the context of exposure visits to

a neighboring municipality, the PFPI staff believed that government officials sometimes perceive that the best ideas originate outside of one's own country. Learning visits to other countries may provide more impact and acceptance among politicians in cases when local exposure might not. In addition, the sense of competition with neighboring municipalities that remains among some Filipinos can hinder the appreciation of a successful intervention in another locality and instead result in negative reactions and criticisms.

- ▶ **Formal agreements.** Apart from the need to change the perceptions of individual local government executives, PFPI also learned that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an essential mechanism for the development and implementation of community-based family planning systems and services in the Philippines. The devolution of health services in 1992 gave primary responsibility for delivery of these services to local government units. An MOU between an NGO and a local government unit provides the legitimate basis for NGOs to train and support community volunteers to distribute contraceptives in areas where there are no health facilities, drugstores, or medical personnel to serve the people. But it should be emphasized that the contents of the MOU must be clear and well understood by both parties. In this case, we learned the hard way: Even though the MOU was in place, it was not initially understood or supported by the mayor, which almost derailed the entire project.
- ▶ **Alliances.** Moreover, we learned that the importance of alliances cannot be understated. It is unlikely that PFPI and the local NGO partners could have overcome this constraint without the timely assistance that was provided by an important ally: the Population and Community Development Association and its chairman, Mechai Viravaidya. The sharing of Thailand's 25 years of successful implementation of community-based family planning—both as stand-alone programs and part of integrated population-development projects—proved to be effective in this case. Alliances can be valuable as well in conducting advocacy with local executives.

Related Readings and Tools

The following documents are available on the IPOPCORM portion of PFPI's website at www.pfpi.org/ipopcorm.php:

- ▶ Joan L. Castro, Leona D'Agnes, and Carmina A. Aquino, *Mainstreaming Reproductive Health and Integrated Coastal Management in Local Governance: The Philippine Experience* (paper prepared for the Coastal Zone Asia-Pacific (CZAP) Conference in Cebu, Philippines, March 2004).
- ▶ Joan Castro and Leona D'Agnes, *Integrated Population and Coastal Resource Management Initiative: A Cross-Sectoral Model for Food Security* (Makati City, Philippines: PFPI, n.d.).
- ▶ C. Hermann, *The Rewards of Innovation: A Review of the Successful Piloting of the Integrated Population and Coastal Resource Management Project* (IPOPCORM) (Makati City, Philippines: PFPI, 2004).
- ▶ Enrique Hernandez et al., *Policy Reforms in Local Governance: The Integrated Population and Coastal Resource Management Initiative (IPOPCORM) Experience* (Makati City, Philippines: PFPI, n.d.).
- ▶ PFPI, *BMS Consolidated Report 2003–2004: Integrated Population and Coastal Resource Management (IPOPCORM) Behavioral Monitoring Surveys* (Makati City, Philippines: PFPI, 2004).

For additional background information on coastal resource management and food security linkages:

- ▶ Department of Environment Resources-Coastal Resources Management Project et al., *Coastal Resource Management for Food Security* (Makati City, Philippines: Bookmark, 1999).

Additional background information on the Population and Community Development Association, Thailand is available at www.pda.or.th/eng.