



**Climate and
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ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: LESSONS FROM THE PHILIPPINES

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Executive Summary

Global frameworks and support for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) have not translated into adequate reduction of risks to disasters. One reason for this is a lack of a legally binding international agreement and slow progress in national legislative change for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Significant progress has been made in mobilising communities for disaster risk reduction, with visible signs of improved preparedness, building an extensive knowledge base about what contributes to risk reduction in different settings. Too often, however, this is on a more piecemeal and short-term basis and the underlying vulnerabilities persist. A chasm between local initiatives and national policy prevails in many cases with weak or unclear institutional mandates, capacity and resources for DRM at the intermediary scales.

International and civil society organisations have identified a need for stronger attention to accountability for DRR to ensure governments act to fulfil their commitments. Accountability is established as a component of good governance in a number of frameworks that guide disaster resilience work (UNISDR 2005; Twigg 2007; Tanner *et al.* 2009). However, operationalising state accountability for improving DRR outcomes are under-researched, with the emphasis to date placed on developing outcome indicators (Twigg 2007; Liebmann and Pavanello 2007; Cardona *et al.* 2004; Mitchell 2003) rather than on examining accountability as a social process.

In the Philippines, the passing of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Law in 2010 and the Climate Change Law in 2009 reflect significant advancements in orienting DRM towards a risk reduction and resilience approach. This has been hard won by a multitude of stakeholders. Supported by a context of participatory governance and a culture of ‘accountability’, important lessons have been emerging from the Philippines from efforts to hold the government to account on its DRR responsibilities. The operationalisation of accountability by civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Philippines has guided DRR mainstreaming in local planning including participatory budgeting for DRR, the tackling of single issues at the appropriate scale (logging concessions, roads for markets, land tenure security), and the establishment of strong national advocacy and learning networks for national legislative change, and continued engagement and policy monitoring. The approaches taken balance collaboration, critical participation and contestation, and in general keep DRR integrated in broader work on sustainable development.

Underpinning these approaches is an ‘enabling environment’ for CSOs to hold government to account for DRR. This environment becomes continually stronger through attention to power, wealth inequality, interests, scales of governance and partnerships and process-oriented outcomes of interventions. The enabling environment comprises: opportunities or strategies for participation and citizen action; high numbers and capacity of citizens claiming their rights and holding their government to account and capacity for responsiveness amongst relevant authorities; and recognised legitimate standards as the measurement against which actors are held to account.

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Acronyms

APSEMO	Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSWCD	Centre for Social Work and Community Development
BDRC	Building Disaster Resilient Communities
BEC	Basic Ecclesiastical Community
DENR	Department of the Environment and Natural Resources
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRMA	Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act
DRRN	Disaster Risk Reduction Network
FMC	Forest Management Council
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IFMA	Integrated Forest Management Agreement
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
JMC	Joint Memorandum Circular
LGU	Local Government Unit
MACEC	Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns
MDC	Municipal Development Council
MDCC	Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council
MSRBMC	Magapa-Suagape River Basin Management Council
PAR	Philippines Area of Responsibility
PCARRD	Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development
PCVA	Participatory Capacities & Vulnerabilities Assessment
PDRN	Pampanga Disaster Research Network
PO	People's Organisations
PRDCI	Panay Rural Development Center
RA	Republic Act
RDC	Regional Development Council
SA	Sustainable Agriculture
SAC	Social Action Center
SD	Sustainable Development
SNAP	Strategic National Action Plan
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UP	University of the Philippines

1. Introduction

Disasters are increasingly recognised as a function of poverty, vulnerability and exposure to a host of different hazards. Vulnerability to disasters can be attributed to unequal economic systems, limited access to resources and to a voice in formal or informal institutions, and are therefore intimately related to power and powerlessness and the governance arrangements that underpin such conditions. Furthermore, climate change is presenting a context of greater climate variability and uncertainty, increasing exposure to more extreme events. An integrated approach to DRR, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development, with attention to tackling poverty and vulnerability to disasters, is needed now more than ever to enable societies to assess risks and build the networks and capacities to tackle them and adapt to changing circumstances.

Significant progress has been made in mobilising communities for DRR, with visible signs of improved preparedness, building an extensive knowledge base about what contributes to risk reduction in different settings. Too often, however, this is on a more piecemeal and short-term basis and the underlying vulnerabilities persist. A chasm between local initiatives and national policy prevails in many cases with weak or unclear institutional mandates, capacity and resources for DRM at the intermediary scales. Increased attention to partnerships and longevity of efforts are required. Resilience to shocks and stresses of different kinds relies on an empowered population that can demand a voice, and through this, access to services and conditions that support their wellbeing at all times – not just when ‘disasters’ strike.

Since 2005, 168¹ states around the world have endorsed the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) on Disaster Risk Reduction (2005–10) and the goals and actions at national and sub-national level that it embodies. Yet commitment at national state level has not always resulted in changed behaviour of state institutions at local or regional level. The initiation of the mid-term review of the HFA at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (hosted by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)) in June 2009 identified areas of limited progress particularly in mainstreaming DRR into development and tackling underlying drivers of poverty and vulnerability. The review called for investment in overarching areas such as high level policy, economic resilience and refocusing development towards poverty and risk drivers. A parallel review, produced by the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction: *Views from the Frontline*, also established that in terms of creating real transformation in the wellbeing and levels of safety of people on the ground the HFA was falling short (2009). The reasons for limited progress are manifold, but significantly the HFA is voluntary and non-binding and therefore lacks an enforcement mechanism. International organisations and CSOs have identified a need for stronger accountability processes and advocacy strategies in order to ensure governments act to fulfil their commitments (Tearfund 2005).

Accountability is established as a component of good governance in a number of guiding frameworks for disaster resilience (UNISDR 2005; Twigg 2007; Tanner *et al.* 2009). However, processes intending to operationalise state accountability for DRR are under-researched, with the emphasis to date placed on developing outcome indicators (Twigg 2007; Liebmann and Pavanello 2007; Cardona *et al.* 2004; Mitchell 2003) rather than on examining accountability as a social process. This research seeks to overcome this gap, by understanding accountability in development as a social and political process with a focus on the role of CSOs in empowering citizens to hold policymakers to account. This paper focuses on understanding accountability as a means of empowerment and voice for citizens, CSOs and marginalised groups, often those most at risk from disasters.

In this working paper the DRR work of three civil society organisations (CSOs) and one national civil society network in the Philippines are examined in order to identify how accountability in the DRR context is operationalised, and what conditions underpin successful engagement and therefore progress on

¹Provention Consortium <http://www.proventionconsortium.org/?pageid=36>

DRR. Section 2 presents the conceptual framework linking evolving interpretations of accountability in development to the limited progress on DRR globally. Section 3 presents the cases from the Philippines, exploring the range of DRR interventions that explicitly seek to build capacity, partnerships, participatory spaces and legislative change to build accountable governance arrangements for DRR. The concluding section seeks to draw out the key lessons from the Philippines cases for strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction through attention to public accountability.

2. Conceptualising Accountability for DRR

This section links evolving interpretations of accountability as a social process to challenges facing effective implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction. Through this, three key components of an enabling environment are identified, to support a complex set of activities and partnerships to ensure states are *transparent* in planning processes, and *compliant* with and *responsive* to their obligations to safeguard citizens from the impacts of disasters. These components are: *opportunities for participation; standards and legislation for DRR; and accountability, capacity of claimants to ensure accountability.*

a. Evolving interpretations of accountability

Accountability, rather than being a bureaucratic or legal term, is about improving democratic processes, challenging power and claiming citizenship. It is best claimed from below by citizens themselves, rather than only being provided by the state. Supporting citizen-led initiatives is important as they address accountability failures in very direct ways.

(Mahendra 2007)

Accountability is fundamentally a relationship of power. When accountability works, citizens are able to make demands on powerful institutions and ensure that those demands are met.

(Newell and Wheeler 2006a)

These assertions reflect a transformation of notions of accountability from pure state-centric and ‘accountancy’ interpretations. Accountability can instead be seen as a social process through which citizens keep the potential for abuse of unequal power relations in check and states fulfil their obligations to citizens. It relates therefore to the rules (formal and informal) that govern relations between different actors in society, to political will, and to opportunities, capacities and interests of citizens to ensure accountability is exercised. Accountability can be understood in terms of ‘answerability’ and ‘enforceability’ of actors in power (Newell and Bellour 2002). Commonly, accountability is associated with those in power being: ‘Compliant’ (accepting the need to account for one’s actions); Transparent (giving an account and making information available); and Responsive (actually taking account and having clear mechanisms for reviewing progress in place). These dimensions of accountability require clear systems and standards (rights and regulations) to be enforced and any number of actions and forms of engagement through which answers can be demanded (legal mechanisms, formal lobbying, and collaborative partnerships).

Accountability is often categorised as horizontal² and vertical³. The changing nature of global governance (multiple actors, more attention to accountability of multinational institutions, or accountability to donors, and global spheres of governance) has demanded efforts to bring accountability back to the process through which citizens ‘challenge power and claim citizenship’, through ensuring vertical is ‘downwards’ and recognising ‘hybrid’ forms of accountability, where citizens play as great a part in horizontal oversight as vertical. Organised, community-policy monitoring could be one such example. Goetz and Jenkins describe new accountability jurisdictions: including a *geographically expanded legal sphere*, across borders and making use of international norms and legal frameworks (e.g. corporate litigation), *local-level arrangements* such as village level committees and community monitoring processes, and *cyberspace* (Goetz and Jenkins 2002).

b. How does accountability relate to Disaster Risk Reduction?

DRR is about communication between government and citizens.
(Global Network for Disaster Reduction, Banner slogan)

Globally, those working in DRR are becoming aware of the limited progress to date on reducing risks to disasters. Accountability in emergency contexts has advanced, with a number of significant initiatives developing voluntary and legally binding standards mechanisms to improve transparency and accountability of humanitarian agencies and states operating at all levels. These have improved the tools available to civil society in times of disasters. Developing an approach to accountability to DRM as a whole has been a tougher challenge, with a lack of a legally binding international agreement and the high initial costs to governments of investing in risk reduction, but also those associated with tackling widespread underlying vulnerability to disasters. Vulnerability, as a function of unequal economic relations or marginalisation from decision-making structures, is intimately related to power relations. The lines of accountability for vulnerability and risk reduction can be far more blurred, hence the need for an approach which sees accountability as a social process which underpins progress on risk reduction. Similarly Twigg emphasises the complexities, and the centrality of effective relationships:

DRR thinking sees disasters as complex problems demanding a collective response from different disciplinary and institutional groups – in other words, partnerships.
(Twigg 2007)

Twigg explores the human rights associated with safety from disasters. Whilst clearly enshrined in Articles of the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, this relies upon a process of ‘progressive realisation’ which limits enforcement. In this context ‘codes of conduct, sets of quality standards and similar principles may seem to be more flexible, attainable alternatives’ (Twigg 2001) Box A presents examples of characteristics of accountable DRR governance arrangements. Overall, the notion that accountability as a social and political process leads to effective disaster risk reduction is underdeveloped.

The emergence of DRR implementation frameworks has presented new opportunities around which to frame and establish better accountability for reducing risk and vulnerability and increasing resilience.

² Horizontal Accountability refers to governmental institutions – including such ‘agencies of restraint’ as courts, independent electoral tribunals, anti-corruption bodies, central banks, auditing agencies, and ombudsmen – to check abuses by other public agencies and branches of government (Waldrauch 1998)

³ Vertical accountability may include citizens acting through the electoral process or indirectly via civic organisations (‘civil society’) or the news media. Vertical accountability implies accountability demanded by civil society or the individual citizen from institutions that have a bearing on their lives (Schacter 2000).

These have included community-level disaster resilience approaches and DRR mainstreaming tools (Twigg 2007), and through attempts to put those most at risk at the centre of DRR efforts, communities should be more able to influence policy formulation and demand transparency and compliance (Handmer and Dovers 2007: 68–71).

Box A: Accountable DRR Governance

A number of studies have identified the characteristics of accountable DRR governance arrangements:

At the community level this includes:

- Devolved structures that enable participation;
- Access to information;
- Capacities of communities to influence plans and actions;
- Inclusion of vulnerable groups in decision-making;
- Participatory M&E systems;
- High level of volunteerism for DRR.

(Twigg 2007)

At a national level this could include:

- Efforts by government agencies directed and coordinated towards DRR;
- Funds (e.g. from public sources) which are spent;
- Information gathered by officials made more widely available;
- Assets accruing to those institutions and other actors remaining under appropriate control; and
- Service to the community demonstrated.

(Newbourne 2008)

c. Analysing accountability for DRR

*On account of the contextually specific nature of citizen-state relations, the complex partnerships required for DRR and the non-linearity of processes through which ‘citizens grant power and demand accountability’ (Newell and Belour 2002), theorists often propose an ‘enabling environment’ for accountability. For Newell and Wheeler, a set of case studies suggested the following necessary components: a clear legislative environment (rights and regulations), enforcement mechanisms including vertical and horizontal mechanisms, awareness of these mechanisms, support for citizen-led accountability initiatives, engaged private and civil society organisations, and accountability of donors (2006a). For successful pro-poor policy reforms through citizen action, (i.e. demanding accountability to a set of normative values not yet reflected in policy and practice) Gaventa and McGee identify *democratic space*, *nationally owned strategies* (led by national citizen action networks as opposed to INGOs), *strategic framing of issues*, and *contentious politics in the case of contentious issues* and common factors in achieving the desired goals (2010). In terms of assessing and analysing the processes of citizen engagement, Gaventa highlights the importance of attention to intermediary processes of participation and building citizenship in the analysis of citizen engagement, in order to better understand how citizen action is building ‘a responsive state which delivers services, protects and extends rights, and fosters a culture of accountability’ (Gaventa and Barrett 2010).*

To achieve cultural and practice shifts from disaster response and relief to integrated DRR and resilience in a changing climate, considerable work needs to take place across scales, raising awareness of risks, rights, relevant policies and practical solutions, and of the accountability mechanisms available.

For greater transparency in development planning, and greater compliance and responsiveness amongst governments to obligations to ensure the safety and resilience of communities, three interrelated components of an enabling environment are important:

- **Opportunities or strategies for participation and citizen action:** Establishing genuine forms of **participation** as a fundamental pathway to accountability in which citizens are taking a proactive role in engaging and claiming spaces and developing meaningful forms of representation so that their views and needs as they relate to risk reduction are heard. This pertains to the democratic space and support for citizen-led initiatives and equitable partnerships. For example, formal accreditation and membership on local decision-making bodies improves transparency in local planning. Freedom of association allows collective action that increases the chances that participation can be citizen-led.
- **Recognised legitimate standards as the measurement against which actors are held to account:** The enactment of relevant legislation and implementation frameworks provides for institutional mechanisms, financing, and capacity development relating to DRR, ensuring a more responsive state for DRR delivery. Often referred to as the enabling legislative environment.
- **High numbers and capacity of citizens claiming their rights and holding their government to account:** Maximising (and expanding) opportunities for participation in DRR and making demands on government institutions occurs through high capacities of claimants based on access to information, awareness of rights and standards relating to risk reduction, notions of citizenship and responsibilities to selves and others, ability to mobilise others, knowledge of advocacy and policy influence through multiple, strategic pathways.

This paper draws lessons from CSOs working on DRR in the Philippines to deepen our understanding of how and why different strategies to demand accountability for DRR lead to a more responsive state that delivers on its obligations to citizens, through developing these three components of an enabling environment.

3. Mapping Pathways - The Case of the Philippines

This section presents how civil society organisations are operationalising accountability for DRR through particular approaches or specific interventions. The outcomes are not always clear, but indications of success have led to the inclusion of the approach or intervention. These cases show the process of driving governance and accountability issues to the heart of DRR in the Philippines.

Evidence from the Philippines illustrates the types of strategies CSOs are using to build better accountability for DRR amongst relevant actors, and reveals the opportunities and the challenges to effective engagement. CSOs working on DRR are operating within a setting of opportunities and constraints which shape their understanding of accountability and their prioritisation of issues and the pathways through which they pursue their DRR objectives.

Context: Opportunities and constraints for DRR practitioners in Philippines

a. Disaster Risks in the Philippines

As an archipelago located at the south-eastern part of Asia, the Philippines is exposed to both climatic and geological hazards. It is situated in the Pacific Ring of Fire where two major tectonic plates, the Pacific Plate and the Eurasian Plate meet. With several fault lines crossing the country, earthquakes could have very devastating effects, as happened in Luzon in 1990. There are 220 volcanoes, 22 of which are classified as active (NDCC 2008). The most devastating eruption was the Mt. Pinatubo eruption in 1991.

Disaster risks in the Philippines are amongst some of the highest in the world, spurring attention to DRR but facing challenges in shifting from a focus on emergency response and relief. Accountability is embedded in cultural attitudes towards the self and others. This provides both opportunities and challenges to holding government officials to account.

The Philippines is also located along the typhoon belt on the North Pacific Basin in the Pacific where 75 per cent of the typhoons originate. There are 20 to 30 typhoons passing through the country, 5–7 of which can be destructive (NDCC 2008). The area most vulnerable to typhoons are the eastern part of Luzon and the Visayas, particularly the Bicol Region, Southern Tagalog and Eastern Visayas. As a consequence of extreme rainfall events, flash floods, flooding and landslides have become more prevalent since 2000. The recent disasters

that caught the world's attention are the flash flood and landslide in the municipalities of Real, General Nakar and Infanta, province of Quezon (2004), the landslide in Guinsaugon, Southern Leyte (2006) that buried the whole village, the multi-hazards flash flood in Albay (2006) and the September 2009 flood in Metro Manila caused by Typhoon Ketsana.

The impacts of climate change in the Philippines are becoming better understood (Cruz *et al.* 2007). There has been an increase in mean annual, maximum and minimum temperatures by 0.14°C between 1971–2000, an increase in the annual mean rainfall since the 1980s and in the number of rainy days since the 1990s (Cruz *et al.*: 10.2.2). There has been an increase in occurrence of landslides and floods in 1990 and 2004 (Cruz *et al.*: 10.2.3). On average 20 cyclones cross the Philippines Area of Responsibility (PAR) with about 8–9 making landfall each year; with an increase of 4.2 in the frequency of cyclones entering PAR during the period 1990–2003 (Cruz *et al.*: 10.2.3).

The natural risks associated with these trends are aggravated by human activities, particularly in the exploitation of resources such as forests and minerals and development interventions that do not incorporate responsible risk assessments. Coupled with the exposure of a growing urban and even upland population increases the risks of disasters for communities, such are the experiences in the cases presented below.

b. Accountability: in Culture, Government and Governance

Accountability in language and culture

Accountability in the Filipino language reflects sociocultural values that underpin citizenship and state-citizen relations. DRR practitioners in the Philippines see notions of accountability as deeply embedded in Filipino culture, expressed most closely in the term '*Panangutanan*'. A popular traditional song of religious origins includes it as follows:

Walang sinuman ang mabubuhay (No one lives)
Para sa sarili lamang (For self alone)

Walang sinuman ang mamamatay (No one dies)
Para sa sarili lamang (For self alone)
*Tayong lahat ay may **pananagutan** sa isa't isa* (We are all accountable to each other)

For Filipinos, *Pananagutan* relates to the very concept of self. Filipinos have a concept of the 'other' or '*kapwa*' – as an extension of one's being. Therefore, caring for each other is an imperative because the actions of one, affects every person who is an extension of his/her being. Embedded in the culture are concepts of '*pakikiisa*' (solidarity) or the highest level of '*pakikipagkapwa*' (solidarity with others). This concept drives the practice of '*bayanihan*' – or volunteerism and community spirit that enriches the social capital of Filipino communities especially in times of need.

The root word of *pananagutan* is '*sagot*', meaning 'answer'. *Pananagutan*, in the song, means being accountable to each other, ensuring one's wellbeing, security and welfare, as no-one lives or dies for himself alone, but for others. Taking the family as a traditional example of the application of this value, the parents are accountable to the children in terms of nurturing, caring and protecting the children. Similarly, the children are accountable to their parents in respecting and honouring them, in fulfilling responsibilities at home and performing well in school. A person who is entrusted by a parent to look after the child and accepts such responsibility becomes accountable to the parents.

Translated to organisational accountability, government, mandated by the people, becomes an extension of the people's aspirations and wields the power of public will. This entrusted power carries with it enormous responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of the people. The government then is expected to answer (*sagot*) or respond to this trust with appropriate action. This sociocultural value and expectation of being accountable is formalised in the government through legislation and policies. This concept of accountability is enshrined in the Philippine Constitution and in a much more explicit form, the Local Government Code of 1991 and related laws.

Thus, when the government does not fulfil the obligations, then two expectations are violated: the informal sociocultural trust and the formal legislated obligation. The informal one is sanctioned through social mechanisms such as being ashamed of one's behaviour, loss of trust, anger from those who were violated and possible exclusion or retaliation. Violation of the formal obligation could mean social plus legal sanctions.

It is to be understood, however, that the underlying cultural force behind accountability in the Philippines may also have its downside. *Pakikipagkapwa* or establishing oneness with others demands a lot of compassion. It has been difficult for many Filipinos to penalise to its fullest an erring public official because of compassion. This storyline can be found in the way the Filipinos dealt with the known president and Dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr and one of his successors Joseph Estrada. While there is fervour to demand accountability, there are cultural impediments that prevent public officials from being truly accountable. Furthermore CSOs bringing communities together to analyse risks and vulnerabilities have lead community residents to appreciate and strengthen '*dagyaw*'⁴ since addressing risks could not be done by few individuals and households. This expression of responsibility to others helps lay foundations for accountability within communities. The greatest challenge is that this approach to solidarity can let government and other actors off the hook for risk reduction responsibilities.

Formal participatory and accountable governance arrangements

The Philippine Constitution provides basic principles guaranteeing that sovereignty resides in the people. The prime duty of the government is to serve and protect the people. Democracy and participation are

⁴ The spirit of teamwork or helping each other.

values that the Filipinos put high premium on and these have implications in asserting accountability from the state that continues to violate these values.

In the 2010 national election, Senator Benigno Aquino III, son of President Aquino won the presidency with the highest proportion of votes since 1969. His campaign slogan was ‘*Walang mahirap kung walang kurapsyon*’ (‘There will be no poor if there is no corruption.’). His strength is not only because he had the legacy of his parents who are considered by the Filipinos as heroes, but because he is seen as a person with integrity and competence who would not malign the name of his parents through corrupt practices. The spirit behind these provisions continues to be in the heart of Filipinos as shown in the participation of civil society organisations and communities in local governance and in influencing national issues.

With underlying cultural forces driving accountability in the Philippines and its history with strong leaderships, the preferred solution was to diffuse power by embarking on shared leadership through civil society participation in governance. There are legislated formal civil society representations in the Filipino government at different levels of government:

- 20 per cent of the members of the House of Representatives must come from the party list system.⁵
- Committee hearings in the House and in Senate must include the concerned NGO and People’s Organisations affected by any Bill.
- 20 per cent of the members of the local development councils must be representatives of the NGOs.
- Development projects affecting communities are required to have consultations with the affected groups and communities before they are given environmental clearance.
- NGOs can be represented in executive committees and other bodies at the national to local levels that decide on matters related to development.

c. Progress in and barriers to Disaster Risk Reduction

Until recently the Presidential Decree 1566, issued in 1978 at the time of martial law, served as the basis of the Philippine disaster management system. The decree was criticised as reactive and inappropriate to present conditions. Under its obligations as signatory to the HFA, the Philippines developed a Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP). This was developed with significant consultation and guidance from national and international NGOs, but the challenge has been implementation as no legal enforcement mechanism was attached to the SNAP. CSOs, through a national network, have been working for the passage of a new law that promotes DRR rather than reactive disaster management orientation. After several years of strategic advocacy work, the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (DRRMA) 2010 became law on May 27, 2010. It is now known as the Republic Act 10121. The new Climate Change Act (2009) also promotes integration and addresses disaster risks.

Even prior to the DRRM and Climate Change Acts, several Philippine laws mandate the assessment of risks (in its various forms, such as health and environment) although risk assessments of hazard, exposure and various dimensions of vulnerabilities are not explicitly required. The Philippines has a Local Government Code (Republic Act 7160) that explicitly empowers local government officials to secure public welfare (i.e. lives, livelihoods, assets) and safety. The Act, in itself, provides a strong legal basis for vulnerable communities to demand accountability for DRR. However, for local government officials who may not have a strong understanding of DRR, establishing RA 7160 as the legal basis for DRR actions may prove to be a challenge and may not be seen to warrant immediate action.

⁵ This number is rarely maximised.

The new laws take into account the natural hazards and climate-related exposure and vulnerabilities that the state needs to understand to secure public welfare and safety. The passage of the new DRRM law expresses a key shift in the government's perspective from focusing on disaster response to embracing a disaster risk reduction approach. The new law includes a liability provision that penalises Local Government Units (LGUs)⁶ that fail to enforce disaster risk reduction measures to avoid disasters. This is highly relevant to the enforceability of the government's obligations.

At a local level, LGUs have received little DRR orientation and are therefore still oriented towards disaster response coordination. Until recently, financial resourcing for disaster management at LGU level was limited to a 5 per cent calamity fund, which had to be returned if unused. This can now be used for DRR activities. In 2007, a Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 of 2007 was issued mandating the harmonisation and integrations of plans and budgets in the LGUs. This provided the opportunity for the integration and mainstreaming of DRR in sub-national development planning and budgeting processes, facilitating local level responsiveness for DRR which CSOs have capitalised upon. CSOs, such as Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns (MACEC) took the work forward by integrating DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in the Barangay development planning and budgeting. Moreover, this also provided an avenue for the institutionalisation of Community Based Disaster Risk Management.

The new DRR law also enables the creation of an executive body within LGUs (with the exception of Barangays) specifically to manage disaster risks. This move was replicated after the experience of Albay province in Southern Luzon, Philippines; A Case Study of the Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office (APSEMO) suggests an Institutional Disaster Risk Management Office should make a significant contribution to DRR accountability through 'building confidence and empowering the community, enhancing local bureaucracy, facilitating learning, enhancing multi-stakeholder cooperation and promoting excellence in public service amongst others (Oxfam 2008).

Significant to this study is the fact that the Philippines' governance system mandates civil society participation as mechanisms to demand public accountability. This opportunity is enshrined in the Philippine Constitution, the Local Government Code and both the old and new laws on disaster management.

CSOs working on DRR have been a major driver of this DRR policy environment and continue to capitalise on and shape this context which provides a strong cultural and legislative environment for participation, but does not always equate to genuine participation and therefore transparency and accountability. Other conditions that are slowing transitions towards DRR include:

- Inappropriate legislation;
- Length of LGU terms;
- Token participation and representation;
- Lack of dedicated or mainstreamed resources;
- Failure to secure basic human rights and therefore reduce vulnerability;
- Conflicting development paradigms and knowledge systems.

The next section introduces the DRR work of three CSOs and one national network before exploring their approaches to ensuring that the government is held to account for safeguarding citizens against the impact of disasters.

⁶ Local Government Units are local government structures with recognised responsibility and power over decentralised areas; they include autonomous regions, provinces and cities, municipalities, Barangays.

Operationalising accountability for DRR: Cases from Filipino Civil Society

The work of three CSOs and one national civil society network were investigated (four arenas of enquiry). This section looks at how DRR was being integrated in their broader work, what modes of practice they engaged in, in seeking to strengthen downwards and horizontal accountability to citizens (particularly those most vulnerable to disasters), and the lessons that can be drawn from their experiences. In particular relating to building opportunities and strategies for participation, a stronger legislative environment and higher capacity amongst citizens to demand that the government at different scales fulfils its obligations to build disaster resilience.

Four arenas of enquiry (Introduction to case study organisations):

Christian Aid's Building Disaster Resilient Communities (BDRC) programme established partnerships with CSOs interested in integrating DRR into their programmes of work. The core approaches taken by three partners and a national network are summarised below:

- **Mainstreaming DRR in development interventions**
by MACEC

In the absence of a local government DRR and CCA integration process, MACEC utilised the existing Local Government Code and the accompanying guidance for the harmonisation of the planning process (JMC No. 1 – 2007⁷) to secure that disaster risk reduction measures can be included in development interventions of local government units. The objective was ensured by mobilising its members to engage local government units in planning and budgeting training and the passage of Barangay development plans and budgets that included DRR and CCA measures. Challenging risk enhancing developments that are in contravention of existing policies and laws (for example, mining), ensuring sustainable natural resource management and providing alternative livelihoods to mining, through critical engagement with government institutions, are part of the core strategies of MACEC.

- **Mainstreaming DRR in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management**
by Panay Rural Development Center, Inc. (PRDCI)

Building on their expertise on watershed management and River Basin Development that led to a ten-year basin development plan and in sustainable agriculture approaches in river systems, PRDCI attempted to integrate DRR and CCA in farming technologies and systems particularly in areas challenged by disaster and climate-related risks. Their approach includes engaging local government units to utilise risk assessment (i.e. Participatory, Vulnerability and Capacities Assessments and other tools) and invest in DRR and CCA interventions, household organising through the use of gender-sensitive measures, and the application of DRR and CCA approaches to farming and engaging households to secure sustainable livelihoods.

⁷ <http://pdf.ph/downloads/decentralization/jmc%20final%20signed%20with%20date.pdf> (accessed 26 January 2011)

- **A multi-pronged approach to DRR – tackling illegal and risk enhancing logging concessions, agricultural rehabilitation and promoting the rights of displaced communities**
by SAC Infanta

SAC Infanta (Social Action Centre) built on its experience of illegal logging and a devastating debris flow that buried villages and took the lives of over a thousand people in Northern Quezon. Prior to the BDRRC, SAC Infanta has been engaged in addressing illegal logging activities through Task Force Sierra Madre to protect the forest in the face of massive deforestation and in sustainable agricultural practices. The Task Force succeeded in their call for the cancellation of the Agreement between the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and a logging company for a logging concession. SAC Infanta also successfully engaged government scientific institutions (i.e. UP Los Banos and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD)) in finding ways to address livelihood concerns in the aftermath of the disaster. They have also supported a homeowners' association in a resettlement area to access basic services from the government. To complement its initial efforts in the lowland areas, SAC Infanta engaged in finding alternative livelihoods for upland areas and in mobilising the communities and local government units to jointly install early warning systems in a major river system with the help of Manila Observatory and the UP National Institute of Geological Studies.

- **Influencing policy formulation for DRR through networked advocacy and lobbying by DRR Network Philippines (DRR NetPhils)**

National level advocacy work through civil society networks has focused on national policy development and strengthening government linkages across scales for better downwards accountability. The current DRR Network Philippines is supported by individual advocates, CSOs, International Humanitarian Agencies, and academic institutions who have engaged Congressmen and women, senators and local government executives to secure the passage of DRR and CC-relevant policies. Very effective lobbying has contributed to a strong DRRM Law and yielded support for the Climate Change Laws.

Approaches and pathways to accountability

The three CSOs in this study (MACEC, SAC Infanta, PRDCI) are well established in their regions. They are able to draw on past experience, social and political capital and partnerships to advance their agendas. They pursue a range of pathways that challenge inaction or unjust action head on to reduce risks, sometimes through supporting direct support to the communities at risk, sometimes as representatives of those at risk, and sometimes as technical advisors. They are all involved in developing DRR practice and policy and challenging unequal power as they go.

Approaches identified as particularly relevant to building accountability as part of DRR interventions include:

- Community organising;
- Building local capacities;
- Engaging in formal pathways;
- Building horizontal social and political capital: convening dialogues, expertise and alliances;
- Building downwards vertical accountability: operating across scales and linking local to national;
- Building the evidence base for effective practice in tackling poverty and underlying drivers.

This section explores these approaches and concludes with lessons from across the investigation including contributing factors and persistent challenges.

The approaches presented here are oriented around building partnerships either within communities or between citizens and government or private actors. Through building stronger partnerships between government, citizen's associations and technical agencies, CSOs create spaces for citizens to be heard and demand accountability. These approaches are not discrete, bounded or mutually exclusive. They are part of efforts to stimulate a social and political process to advance risk reduction. Many CSO interventions reflect several pathways at one time.

1. Community organising

The CSOs have been able to raise people's levels of awareness of the government's responsibilities for DRR. They became conscious of their needs and entitlements upon which to make claims. Organised communities were able to gain bargaining power and engage with the local government in order to meet their needs and support their demands for welfare and services. Organised groups also became a channel for the delivery of services by local government thus aiding responsiveness. The three CSOs innovated with organising techniques to yield community participation.

The Basic Ecclesiastical Community (BEC), a church model for organising neighbourhood cell groups was used by the SAC Infanta and MACEC. The capacity building on DRR and Climate Change was integrated in the study sessions of neighbourhood cell groups. In SAC Infanta, the resettlement village's Homeowners Association became the mechanism for negotiation and bargaining with the LGU to respond to the needs of the resettlement village. Farmers were also organised to engage the local government to support and promote organic farming which was seen as an innovative response to agricultural lands that have been devastated by the flood. Riverine communities were mobilised to engage the government in the installation of an early warning system. MACEC has very strong village level organisations that support the realisation of Church teaching into development interventions with the aim of protecting the fragile environment and communities of Marinduque. These organisations were the vehicle for laying foundations for DRR policy and practice at the local level.

PRDCI focused on a household level organising model for securing livelihoods. The Asset Reform and Enterprise Development component of PRDCI's programme was able to enhance the capacity and capabilities of people's organisations to implement and manage sustainable enterprises that support Sustainable Agriculture (SA). This was supported by a strengthening of land tenure to empower farmers and farm workers to adopt SA technologies. PRDCI's interventions resulted in the establishment of 16 active organisations at different levels of organisational and entrepreneurial development and one cooperative with members coming from several towns. These organisations are affiliated with the provincial coalition that aims to promote enterprise development and agrarian reform. Since its establishment in 2005, it has been very active in accessing services from various government agencies and NGOs such as infrastructure (i.e. farm to market roads), agricultural training and small scale equipment and health services. PRDCI used this same organising strategy as a vehicle to mobilise community action for preparedness and disaster risk reduction.

2. Building local capacities

An essential element of community organising is enhancing local capacities. It is a principal approach to DRR accountability aimed at building awareness, lobbying for policy change and the integration of DRR into development planning. PRDCI identified the following two scenarios: capable, interested and

engaged elected officials but with a weak implementing office with inadequately trained personnel, or capable staff but less committed and capable officials (i.e. low political will). CSOs have taken a multi-pronged or collaborative approach to delivering DRR training to local populations and worked directly with LGUs to develop integrated plans and budgets. This is building the capacity of citizens to engage in DRR and call authorities to account through claiming new spaces for engagement and participation in the planning process and building the capacity of LGUs to respond. Particularly in identifying available funds which should lead to increased transparency. The three year election cycle for village councils requires communities to be well-informed to buffer changes in government and be ready to hold the next councils to account.

Empowering the frontline officials and raising DRR as an election issue

For PRDCI, it became clear that for LGUs participating in the seminars and training, and in the processes of instituting mechanisms for DRR, it was empowering as it expanded their knowledge, enhanced their skills and built their confidence. For some, it made them reflect on their purpose and why they ran for public office and were elected by the people. By giving prominent roles to village officials in the implementation of DRR plans, they were pressured to do good and perform well. They then had to exercise transparency, inclusiveness and responsiveness. Their performance in reducing risks to life or property has become part and parcel of enabling peoples' trust in them.

3. 'Formal' pathways: Official representation

The government bodies, in which CSOs participated in, to demand accountability, vary. They include the Municipal Development Councils (MDC) (which comprise 20 per cent civil society), the Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council (MDCC) and the Regional Development Councils (RDC) among others. These forms of participation are supported by legal mandates. SAC Infanta is not an official member of the MDC due to the reporting requirements, but is still invited to attend and participate in meetings and activities presenting a space for influence and calling local government to account. It is an active member of the MDCC. MACEC worked for official registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission and acquired this legal accreditation in 1996. This gave MACEC the legitimacy needed to establish partnerships with LGUs and government agencies. MACEC has utilised this formal representation form of participation from the Barangay to the regional level, to drive the DRR agenda into overarching frameworks for sustainable development, to influence mainstreaming into planning, programme development and management, and decision-making processes. Specifically it assisted Barangay to develop DRR/CCA-enhanced Barangay Development and Investment Plans, Annual Investment Plans and Annual Budgets in accordance with Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 on harmonisation and integration of plans at the local level.

PRDCI is accredited in eight municipal development councils and sits on the Iloilo Provincial Development Council. It has been an uphill struggle to increase attention to and support for Sustainable Agriculture (SA) within the policies (and therefore budget allocations) of municipal and local councils when it was not a priority for LGUs. Engaging local government agencies to provide direct support to SA initiatives of local people's organisations received a more positive response. In the case of sand quarrying and solid waste disposal and management issues, a more direct form of policy monitoring was carried out.

Formal representation allows civil society organisations a more institutionalised form of representation; one that cannot be at the mercy of political whims of whoever is in office. Thus, it guarantees a legal mandate to bring calls for government accountability before major decision-makers and which the latter must act on. For organisations that do not have a constituency base as large as the Church, institutionalised participation is the best way to be heard by decision-making bodies particularly in local government.

4. Building horizontal social and political capital to demand accountability: convening stakeholder dialogues, expertise and strategic alliances

Strategic networks or alliances with key actors who can monitor, evaluate and inform decision-making processes are critical for demanding accountability to further reduce risks. Such is the case of the Sierra Madre Task Force (later transformed into the Metro Reina Multi-stakeholders' Forest Management Council (FMC) who heavily advocated against illegal logging and called on responsible forest management to avoid future disasters (See Box B). SAC Infanta brought expertise into the region devastated by landslides through a partnership with the State University and a Research institution (UP Los Banos and PCARRD) to investigate suitable crop varieties for post-disaster rehabilitation.

Box B

Sierra Madre Task Force results in cancellation of logging concession

Sierra Madre is the mountain range that partially includes the upland municipality of General Nakar and the lowland coastal municipality of Infanta in the northern province of Quezon. Due to extensive commercial deforestation undertaken by a firm since 2002, the Social Action Center (SAC), the social arm of the Roman Catholic Church led in establishing the 'Task Force Sierra Madre' to protect the forest. The Task Force was composed of NGOs and concerned individuals wanting to protect the Sierra Madre mountains from deforestation. One of the main advocacy agendas of the Task Force was the cancellation of the Memorandum of Agreement IFMA 2002–07 between the government Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and a private logging corporation.

Through the facilitation of the SAC, the Task Force, together with the mayors of three municipalities, was given an audience with the President of the Philippines. The Task Force delegates met with President Arroyo in June 2008, and with the Secretary of the DENR and other officials. They presented the appeal for the cancellation of the IFMA and showed the pictures of the massive logging taking place and the flash flood that killed more than 1,000 people in the 2004 disaster. The IFMA was signed just four months after the disaster.

On this journey the role of the media in tackling contentious local politics challenged the relationship between the Task Force and local officials, and the freedom of speech of the Task Force was also challenged. Despite this, the Agreement was cancelled. The impacts of the 2004 flood was a significant driver of this level of compliance and responsiveness, but by recognising it could not be resolved locally SAC Infanta took the case to the top. The campaign raised much needed public awareness of the relationship between logging and disasters. It also demonstrated an alternative to mass mobilisations in the form of strategic and formal accountability pathways by a mandated expert group alongside environmental management planning.

MACEC has established a membership of 2,960 individual members from 113 Barangay chapters. MACEC also called for a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder process for formulating the People's Development Agenda in Boac, Marinduque as the municipality's blueprint for sustainable development of the environment and human communities. In a similar light, MACEC convened a provincial/diocesan inter-agency disaster coordinating network to work in partnership with the government disaster coordinating councils. Furthermore, PRDCI engaged in the process of watershed management through the Magapa-Suagape River Basin Management Council (MSRBMC) which involves local governments from

the six relevant municipalities, government line agencies, academia, youth, peoples' organisations and NGOs. The national DRRN also successfully lobbied for the new DRR law through strategic alliances amongst local and international non-government and government organisations (See Box C).

These are examples of how CSOs and government have collaborated positively for improved accountability in light of unsustainable practices, and through developing integrated development plans for equitable, sustainable development and DRR. Complementarity is key to a successful alliance, in the case of DRR. A strategy is to enable all stakeholders to contribute to an initiative by giving space to each organisation's unique contribution, be it in the form of resources or expertise.

Box C

Legislative change through national networking and convening expertise

The DRRM Act passing through law was the outcome of several years of hard work by civil society and legislators, and built on advocacy work that led to the development of the Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP). Members of a disaster management forum did significant legwork in advocating for the Bill, and the collaboration between CSOs, INGOs, academia and the media was consolidated in 2008 in the DRR network Philippines (DRR NetPhils).

Most significant in influencing the law was the pooling of resources and expertise from community members, lawyers, activists, environmentalists, public administrators, social scientists, geologists and engineers. This meant capacity to present the evidence base for a sound DRR policy and to act as resource people to members of the Technical Committee of the House of Representatives of Congress. CSOs played a key role in reflecting the voices of local people on many key aspects now reflected in the law. Maintaining a strong and informed network, and building support from the local level up were also pursued (Agsaoay-Sano 2010).

The functioning of networks is not always straightforward. Relations with authorities can be threatened by a highly expert network with the media on their side and therefore needs sensitive and strategic approaches. Agsaoay-Sano noted the capacity for strategic action in recognising the true capacities of politicians and civil servants and to know 'when to step on the toes of politicians or bureaucrats, but perhaps more importantly, when not to' (*ibid.* p142). Establishing consensus between diverse memberships also requires skill.

Reflections on the DRRM law in relation to accountability

Opportunities for improved accountability:

1. Volunteers empowered by having a law to fall back on;
2. Transformation of calamity fund improves resourcing for DRR;
3. Provides a clear mandate for mainstreaming DRR in the planning and budgeting processes;
4. Calls for participation of CSOs;
5. Stringent enforcement mechanism.

Notes of caution:

1. The law can be prone to abuse so there is need for vigilance, and for continuous clarification of responsibility and accountability in the process of implementation.
2. LGUs must be knowledgeable of the law and DRR and it must be clear whose responsibility it is to disseminate the law.
3. Accreditation as called for in the law can also be a tool for disenfranchisement of CSOs.

5. *Building the evidence base for good practice in tackling poverty and underlying drivers*

Vulnerability reduction, risk assessment, and policy reform for DRR are not easily supported in government because of the costs they carry. Clear evidence that viable and efficient means for disaster risk reduction exists is crucial in convincing local government units to invest in risk reducing development interventions. Solid evidence from viable DRR interventions can be used to leverage local government resources.

SAC Infanta has convinced a state university and a research institution (UP Los Banos and PCARRD, respectively) to invest in risk reducing post disaster rehabilitation and establish a government counterpart to develop community-based early warning systems alongside Infanta. MACEC on the other hand provided the expertise and acted as a counterpart to work alongside local government units and support their work towards DRR and CCA-sensitive planning and budgeting processes. PRDCI has convinced the local government unit of a locality, once dependent on chemical farming, to invest in sustainable forms of farming practices in order to reduce their risks of climate-related disasters.

6. *Downwards vertical accountability: local to national linkages and operating across scales*

All the organisations included in the study operate across political spaces from Barangay, municipal, city/provincial, to regional and national levels (for example, see Table 1) either directly or through their network partners. Vertical political linkages became vital in exploring decision-making bodies for potential partnerships or critical engagement to ensure that services and goods for risk reduction are given to the most vulnerable communities.

Vertical engagement is often driven by the awakening that vulnerability reduction cannot often be addressed by local government officials where decisions (i.e. on natural resource use) are with the sub-national or national government. Beyond their reach of participation opportunities provided by local accreditation processes, CSOs look for avenues to access opportunities to bring their cause to major decision-makers either through another accreditation or selection process (i.e. MACEC's bid for a seat at the Regional Development Council), directly engaging decision-makers (i.e. SAC Infanta sought audiences with the president and vice president over the logging concession, with positive results) or working through broader networks (i.e. engagement of PRDCI through DRR NetPhils and Aksyon Klima).

Table 3.1 How SAC operates across scales to tackle accountability deficits

<i>Community Level</i>	<i>Municipal Level</i>	<i>National and International Level</i>
Consultation and assembly meetings with the Barangay level and municipal officials	Membership in the Municipal DCC Participation in the MDC Partnership in programme implementation with Ministry of Agriculture	Dialogue by the task force with the President of the Philippines and cabinet officials National media through newspaper article
Coordination meeting with the SAC, Barangay Council and Municipal councillor	Attendance in meetings with the LGU	International exposure (presentation/publication of case studies)
Confrontational mobilisation with the LGU	Newsletter production Informal and personal relationships Demonstration and rallies	

Multi-scalar modes of engagement also allow NGOs to negotiate around barriers at particular scales. Working with other stakeholders at various levels of engagement allows CSOs to find partners that will complement their limitations. For instance, clear scientific data from partner academic and research institutes alongside empirical data from communities were utilised by the DRR NetPhils in public hearings for the deliberations that led to the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act. This does not always run smoothly and CSOs are still developing effective mechanisms to ensure local inputs into national advocacy work and to maximise the potential of dynamic exchanges of information for influencing policy.

Cross-cutting dimensions: balancing collaboration, contestation and linkages with sustainable development and environmental justice

The CSOs in this study work as intermediaries to ensure that the government is delivering its commitments and responsibilities for disaster risk reduction. A range of advancements have been made in DRR in the Philippines as a result in part of the activities of these CSOs, a wider network of international, national and local organisations working on DRR and a set of enabling factors unique to the Philippines and to the contexts in which the organisations are operating. Outcomes can be identified as tangible and intangible change that will facilitate cumulative improvements in safeguarding Filipinos against the impacts of disasters.

Capacity development work has shown the types of institutions and governance arrangements that are required at different scales to maximise efficacy of DRR efforts and resources. This includes examples of mainstreaming, budgeting and participatory approaches to assessing and addressing specific risks for specific groups of people. A number of tangible outcomes addressing vulnerability to disasters such as securing land titles, provision of roads to market, health services and Early Warning Systems were also linked to these interventions, including securing LGU support for sustainable agriculture. Formal pathways or opportunities for official representation in local planning and disaster management committees have facilitated transparency, representation and influence and thereby greater responsiveness. MACEC contributed to significant progress in mainstreaming because of this formal engagement, because of its expertise in local planning processes as three of MACEC's staff were former municipal officers.

Mobilisation for advocacy around policy gaps (weak DRR law and implementation) or violations of existing legislation (logging and mining concessions) have also raised consciousness of the need for a risk reduction approach to disaster management (although this continues to be a challenge, and particularly in areas that have to date, not been highly disaster-prone) and delivered tangible policy outcomes and compliance with existing legislation. Strong national networks have been built, that continue to learn to link local contexts to national policy processes and to optimise partnerships, expertise and advocacy skills.

CSOs need some level of LGU recognition and support in order to operate. Conversely many LGUs rely on support and expertise from Civil Society. Mainstreaming DRR requires collaboration, being often oriented towards training and convening multiple stakeholders to carrying out planning and budgeting. Citizens benefit from collaborative operations which depend upon trust between LGUs and CSOs, but also on the terms of engagement, such that a critical stance can still be taken. These different pathways and outcomes have reinforced that DRR is negotiated and bargained for by citizens. Strategies are naturally tailored to the cultural context and prevailing governance arrangements, as well as continuously reshaping both. The CSOs in this study identified the challenge of balancing collaborative and critical partnerships (Box D).

Box D

Balancing collaborative and critical partnerships

Functional collaboration: Relationships are based upon some consensus in the perspectives and methods of the government, communities, and CSOs in addressing the DRR issues at hand. There are often capacity, resources and institutional gaps that can only be overcome by collaborative governance arrangements. Examples include: awareness-raising and capacity building amongst government officials on DRR and accountability; financial or material support; formal representation in decision-making bodies; alliances and networks between key DRR players.

Critical participation: Engagement is based upon a commitment towards mutual support but with recognition for differences in perspectives and approaches of governments, communities and CSOs, and some significant limitations to government accountability. Examples include research to build evidence base for effective DRR and promote sustainable practices or convening dialogues and consultations with an agenda for practice or policy change.

Confrontation and contestation: Action is based upon conflicting views and approaches between government actors and citizens or civil society actors. This often evolves after collaborative and critical approaches have failed to establish common or compromised positions. The following accountability pathways are likely to arise in the context: research to gather evidence, dialogues, direct advocacy through position papers, media, legal action and extra legal forms of engagement and mobilisation to challenge unequal power dynamics.

These typologies are not mutually exclusive, and accountability mechanisms such as community policy monitoring sit across these approaches depending on levels of openness, responsiveness and compliance by targeted authorities. This is similar to tackling social justice concerns related to any other policy issue. It serves more importantly as a reminder that negotiating for DRR to tackle underlying vulnerabilities to disasters, and holding governments to account on their failures to prioritise this fundamental component may require engaging in contentious politics.

Box E

CSO's own accountability conundrum: the case of John Paul II Resettlement Village

In 2004, flash floods and landslides destroyed the three towns of Real, General Nakar and Infanta, in the province of Quezon, flooding the towns by as much as ten feet and leaving them buried under up to two feet of mud. One of the rehabilitation programmes of the SAC Infanta was the establishment of a resettlement community with 200 duplex houses to house 400 families. The community, known as John Paul II Village is 5.4 hectares, and was bought by the Infanta Prelature from donations from European funding sources and churches. The title of the land will be transferred to the family beneficiaries after five years since they were given the unit, with no payments required from the families. An association of the resettled families, the John Paul Village Homeowners Association was established, as a channel for the residents to participate in the management of the community affairs. The association has a board of directors and several committees covering education, livelihood, health, infrastructure amongst others.

The village is considered by the Local Government Units (LGU) as private property, belonging to the church. As such, the community have had problems in accessing government resources, including electrification, road improvement and other infrastructure development. Multiple pathways to access services have been pursued through mobilisation and formal representation through the Homeowners Association, but there has been little progress on official recognition of the community. This underlying limitation to accessing to basic services must be tackled to help build resilience in the community to a range of stresses.

SAC Infanta has been under pressure to pay for the registration of the community. The communities struggle to understand why if SAC Infanta can provide some funds, that the LGU cannot find resources.

Striking a balance in collaborative approaches is also essential for building long-term responsiveness from authorities. The potential for the interventions of CSOs to displace government accountability was a concern, when DRR capacities are low and CSOs take a strong DRR delivery role. This is seen in the case of the John Paul II resettlement village (Box E) and promotes the attention to accountable relationships and partnerships.

The three CSOs and DRR NetPhils members were already established in the field of sustainable development and improving local government accountability for safeguarding against the negative impacts of development interventions. Approaches to mainstreaming DRR and developing DRR legislation can support an integrated approach to tackling persistent challenges associated with non-transparent resource extraction agreements that violate existing standards and legislation. In Marinduque, the series of lobbying and campaign strategies led to the delisting of the San Antonio Copper Project, one of the priority mining projects in the country. The known risks from mining are not new, but with a policy framework for DRR, there are more avenues for tackling potentially high risk projects. ‘Strategic framing’ of issues is a component of successful action for policy reform identified by Gaventa and McGee (2010).

PRDCI, as an organisation new to DRR, identified the different DRR and Resilience resources for informing their own strategy, developing an understanding of DRR at a local level, and practical tools for analysis (Annex 2).

Many of the resources guiding DRR and resilience work have now been tailored for a Filipino audience and political and hazard context (See Annex 2 for the list of resources drawn upon by PRDCI). International frameworks including the Rio Declaration, UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol and the Hyogo Framework for Action are all used for accountability to normative standards and domestic international norms into national legislation and practice. This reflects an ‘expanding geographical sphere’ and ‘diverse set of jurisdictions’ (Goetz and Jenkins 2002). MACEC in particular continues to draw heavily on the Sustainable Development frameworks, and the localisation of this global normative framework: Philippines Strategy for Sustainable Development and Agenda 21, and the Millennium Development Goals. (Box F).

Box F

Merging Sustainable Development and DRR Activism

Due to MACEC’s advocacy against large-scale mining following the 1996 Mine Spill disaster, the provincial government declared a 50-year moratorium on large-scale mining. Working with people’s organisations, MACEC pursued critical collaboration and engagement and denounced and opposed deliberate violations of existing laws and regulations by LGU leaders. For example, MACEC was successful in exposing the attempt to revive mining in the province. MACEC’s development practice, and therefore its work on DRR/CCA integration in development, is firmly grounded in the *Sustainable Development framework and Millennium Development Goals*. The SD framework was given a national perspective with the formulation of the *Philippine Strategy for Sustainable Development* and the contextualisation of *Agenda 21*.

Summary: Accountability at the heart of DRR efforts in the Philippines

The new DRRM Act and Climate Change Law improve accountability through:

- Citizens empowered by having legislation in place;
- A mandate for increased participation of CSOs in DRM;
- A stronger mandate for DRR mainstreaming;
- Transformation of the calamity fund to resourcing for DRR.

Implementation will require increased awareness of LGUs, which means overcoming a number of key challenges outlined in this study in terms of mobilising LGUs and the practicalities of integrating both DRR and climate change adaptation at each level of government.

The new DRRM law has created a new enabling space for enhancing risk reduction. The Act has a stringent enforcement mechanism. At the time of writing, the implementation strategy was under consultation. Even in its formulation and passage through parliament the Act has increased debate at the national level of the need to dramatically step up risk reduction efforts.

The cases in the study establish the breadth of positive, non-linear, societal outcomes resulting from citizen engagement in DRR. CSOs are in a strong position in the Philippines, and a legislated participatory governance framework enables different government and civil society actors to work together at different scales. The importance of local LGU and civil society engagement on DRR is related to the perceived lack of resources and capacity at the LGU level. Already collaboration and capacity building has mobilised greater resource allocation for DRR, greater awareness of the multiple dimensions of DRR and revealed the potential to find resources ‘within’ the form of local collective capacities amongst citizens, POs and the LGU to advance risk reduction. These resources come in the form of their capacity to collaborate, negotiate and problem solve. Similarly, at the national level, CSOs fill a critical gap between risk conditions faced at a local level and national policy processes that are influencing them. CSOs can take both single issues forward to higher levels of government (as in both the IFMA case and the resettlement village) and represent local voices in national policy processes. Without this participatory governance space for civil society to occupy they would be less able to leverage accountability for DRR.

CSOs continue to push boundaries and reshape governance arrangements and as a consequence governance is continually evolving and so too are the modes by which governments are held accountable. Notably, there has been a decline in the ‘parliaments of the streets’ over the past decades, as the people are now exploring other avenues to engage the government and demand accountability. This can be seen in the multi-scalar and formal and non-formal pathways the CSOs are taking in advancing DRR. Effective influence occurs in cases where CSOs gained the respect and trust of the LGUs or government agencies. The three CSOs established relationships of respect in their expertise and trust in their intentions. MACEC in particular demonstrated that their legacy in addressing environmental management challenges have provided a strong base from which to take a meaningful and grounded approach to DRR. Four aspects of the nature of MACEC stand out: affiliation with the Catholic Church which sits well within traditional governance arrangements in Marinduque; track record in anti-mining advocacy in the interests of the people; legal compliance through official accreditation; and leadership qualities and expertise in local planning processes.

Returning to our concept of an environment, the types of outcomes achieved through some of the interventions (both tangible – for example, policy change, land tenure and resourcing and non-tangible – for example, stronger networks, culture shift to recognising importance of DRR, inclusion of marginalised groups) contribute to a strengthening of the three components: **more participatory spaces and opportunities, stronger normative and legal standards** against which actors are held to account and recognition for them, and **increased capacity amongst citizens** to maximise the opportunities, hold governments to account and create new spaces for doing so.

Box G

Approaches to holding authorities to account on DRR



4. Conclusion: Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction through attention to public accountability

Accountability as a fundamental principle for equitable, effective, efficient and transparent delivery of services can be as easily applied to Disaster Risk Reduction as any other policy arena. As a principle for exposing and addressing power relations between a collection of actors and activities overtime it is relevant to DRR particularly when it provides mechanisms for, and conditions within which, to tackle the underlying vulnerabilities of socioeconomically, politically or geographically marginalised communities to disasters. Establishing social accountability is critical at every stage of the disaster management cycle, with awareness-raising being a fundamental platform for progress on DRR (Benson 2009).

The research demonstrated that addressing weak accountability (for example, low capacity to address disaster risks, or non-transparent local planning processes that result in greater risk or transference of risk to particular populations, lack of normative or legal standards that require investment in risk reduction) requires an assessment of barriers to effective DRR delivery and tackling them head on. The granting of mining permits, logging concessions, and so on with community-based forestry projects and small-scale mining, has been a development option for many administrations. However, in its attempt to make significant development interventions, the government falls short of looking at the probable risks to other communities and ecosystems. In demanding for government accountability, CSOs such as MACEC, PRDCI and SAC Infanta have called on the government to take notice of other dimensions of development, and by so doing, demand that the government look into the other vulnerabilities and exposure to hazards resulting from natural threats or its own development interventions. Similarly Sustainable Agriculture interventions for rehabilitation and livelihood security have had to push against state-led input-heavy large scale agriculture agendas through exposing the potential for increasing vulnerability, and demonstrating agriculture techniques for rehabilitation and livelihood security.

Accountability is negotiated, time consuming, political, but also collaborative. Without all these different approaches, little progress happens at a scale wider than piecemeal initiatives, and policies are formed but not implemented. Strategic engagement or ‘partnerships’ with supportive individuals, champions and technical experts in different types of institutions are established advocacy strategies that are influencing DRR policy processes and policy outcomes and practice in the Philippines. Linking across scales to establish citizen-led horizontal or vertical accountability is also yielding DRR outcomes.

DRR interventions by CSOs with a conscious orientation towards holding the government to account and building accountable governance arrangements are strengthening the enabling environment for government to be transparent, responsive and compliant with regards to their obligations to safeguard citizens’ welfare and safety at all times. In particular interventions are ensuring:

- **More participatory spaces and opportunities** through community organising around single issue cases or convening participatory assessments, planning and budgeting processes.
- **Stronger normative and legal standards** against which actors are held to account and through influencing national legislation on DRR, climate change and sustainable development, including the regulation of risk enhancing resource extraction, and on accountable governance.
- **Increased capacity amongst citizens** to maximise the opportunities for genuine participation and therefore holding governments to account, and creating new spaces for doing so through building

capacity on DRR (including training for relevant government officials, research and evidence building, and project implementation).

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Annex 1: DRR related policies in the Philippines

The Philippines has a number of policies that are by nature risk reduction policies. Among these are the following:

- National Building Code (PD 1096)
- Environmental Impact Assessment (PD 2146)
- Republic Act 855 – An Act Providing for the Development, Management, and Conservation of the fisheries and Aquatic Resources, 1998
- Republic Act 7586 – An Act Providing for the Establishment and Management of National Integrated Protected Areas System, 1992
- Philippine Agenda 21 on Sustainable Development
- Philippine Environment Code (PD 1152)
- Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000
- The Indigenous People’s Rights Act of 1997
- Atomic Energy Regulatory and Liability Act of 1968
- National Physical Framework Plan, 1993–2022
- The Fire Code of the Philippines (PD 1185)
- Code on Sanitation (PD 856)
- Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992
- People’s Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991(RA 7076)
- Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines (PD 389)
- The Mining Act (Commonwealth Act No. 137)

Annex 2: Frameworks, tools and resources for DRR

Tasks	Frameworks, Tools and Resources
Formulation of mainstreaming DRR strategies in core programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyogo Framework of Action • Christian Aid’s materials on Building Disaster Resilient Communities • John Twigg’s Guidance Notes on the Characteristics of Disaster Resilient Communities • <i>Training materials from the Intensive DRR Course managed by the Centre for Social Work and Community Development (CSWCD), University of the Philippines*</i> • Humanitarian Accountability Programme • Sphere project www.sphereproject.org/
Orientation and skills training of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Training materials from the Intensive DRR</i>

Tasks	Frameworks, Tools and Resources
village officials, and residents on DRR	<p><i>Course managed by CSWCD</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Training manuals from the Philippine National Red Cross</i> • <i>Training manuals from Oxfam GB</i> • <i>Provention and Tearfund Materials</i>
Conduct of PCVAs and Barangay level Disaster Management Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PCVA guidelines contextualised in the Philippine setting by Oxfam GB</i> • <i>Manuals and materials from the Pampanga Disaster Research Network (PDRN)</i> • <i>National Planning Framework</i>

**Italics* = resources tailored for Philippines audience.

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Through collaborative policy-oriented research, the Climate and Disaster Governance Programme seeks to identify national and sub-national governance arrangements which could help reduce climate and disaster risks to poor communities and keep development on track.

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