

Final Evaluation of the Common Program of Viva Salud, KIYO and Solidagro in the Philippines

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The coming together of a vast array of CSOs with their respective networks, partner beneficiary communities, partner groups, allies from government and non-government organizations, and the staff manifests another level of partnership in the global and local development efforts for social change. About five years after its implementation, the Common Program has seen achievements in terms of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency. Its Impact and Sustainability have been accomplished up to a certain degree that is possible, given the current politically repressive government that targets social change agents, human rights defenders and development workers coming from organizations engaged in the Common Program.

With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, partners have made the necessary adjustments both in program activities and budget. Such a situation all the more highlights the integration and complimentary character of the partners' respective advocacies: the right to health, food and children's rights. Climate justice and gender rights are likewise issues that cut across all partners.

Prior to the pandemic, the wide economic disparity between the rich and poor as manifested in patterns of land ownership, food security and access to health care has already provided a niche for a rights-based approach to empower people. As the pandemic reinforced this thesis, more creative and innovative methods came into fruition reflecting greater challenges as well as opportunities for future development initiatives. Changes for duty bearers to guarantee people's rights may not be possible immediately given the political climate but changes for rights holders have been significant.

The Common Program has created a group of CSOs that is recognized nationally and internationally in varying degrees for their work in claiming people's right to health and food, and it has strengthened as well, a pool of child's rights actors advocating a more comprehensive awareness on children's rights - their rights to life, survival and development.

KARAPATAN remains to be the foremost human rights organization in the country with CHD emerging as a national and sensible voice on health concerns. Gabriela has retained its position as an authority on women's rights championing grassroots women's issues and concerns. Despite the closure of some its schools and the continuing political harassment, ALCADEV and eventually, FLCCI and MISFI along with CDPC have put indigenous rights into the national and local consciousness. CCNCI, PNFSP and MASIPAG joining other partners in the network Agroecology X

created greater opportunities for the realization of the National People's Food Systems Summit (NPFSS).

KIYO partners have developed and nurtured children and youth capable of implementing activities advocating children's rights along with adults who are aware of children's rights and issues. Awareness of children's rights in communities, government and non-government organizations has also contributed to organized action. Children and youth leaders from schools and communities emerged as active child rights advocates; youth groups are functional with some of them managing their organizations and specific programs and activities. Peer facilitators, speakers, radio anchors, public speakers, writers, educators, peer trainers and youth representatives have emerged from these youth organizations.

The rights-based approach has proven to be a comprehensive and effective tool to empower people to claim their rights and demand accountability from duty bearers. Through the Common Program, rights holders/target groups have been empowered to assert their individual and collective rights. From being victims of political persecution and human rights violations, they have become champions of RBA through the Common Program which was an effective venue for awareness raising, mobilization/action and organization. Through the strategy of collective empowerment (by organizing the rights holders), the program has affected the lives of those in the margins, the rights holders, who are now consistently asserting their rights within the context of movements for social change.

The rise of social media as a key public awareness venue noticeably during the pandemic, saw the partners double their efforts in this field. Online forums, webinars and even rallies were launched. Creative communication strategies including the use of digital art were utilized for greater attention. Media liaison work was doubled resulting in partners being the frequent and knowledgeable sources of news and information.

Solidagro and Viva partners as well as CYC, facilitated organizing in communities and sectoral groups and throughout the project period, there was expansion of members & chapters. Partner community organizations and youth organizations joined protest rallies & camp-outs, organized advocacy/campaign activities, and initiated and managed projects in their schools and communities. Networks and alliances were formed to generate more support for policy change proposals and join in advocacy and lobbying activities.

Duty bearers and other actors have now been challenged by best practices. This is illustrated for instance by the lobbying of KARAPATAN and other organizations of the Human Rights Defenders Bill which was passed by the House of Representatives and the institutionalized support from local governments to the Juvenile Justice Network as designed and initiated by CLB. Gabriela activities in its local chapters prompted local governments to take action and provide support to GABRIELA's clean-up drive campaign against increasing dengue cases.

Recommendations

The research component on policy advocacy for good governance and best practices can be strengthened among the partners, in particular, building their research capacity to effectively gather data/information that will aid in analysis and presentation of alternatives and policy proposals.

Solidagro and Viva Salud Partners can improve coordination within CSOs, particularly those outside the partners' current network, in the regions and at the national and international levels for more effective lobbying and policy advocacy. Another aspect that can be improved is on national and local alliance work with individuals within government as well as networking at the international level.

KIYO Partners can invest more in organizing, primarily children and youth groups in the communities (including TVET learners) for more youth/children-led advocacy activities. Partners can also develop strategies towards the social engagement of TVET learners (as well as TVET partners from the private sector).

The pathway for empowerment, with focus on organizing and mobilization can always benefit from continuous and sustained funding support and resource generation. Partners can explore ways to generate steady funds for organizing, social protection and health protection/services.