

**Coastal Resource Management Component
Natural Resources Management Program**

LESSONS LEARNED

ON THE PROCESS AND APPROACHES

- **CRM is a governance function.** There is no question that active community participation remains an essential ingredient for sustaining local CRM initiatives and that the community – people- must be at the center of the CRM process, but the idea that the community can make CRM happen without assistance from government is a romantic notion. The community cannot achieve sustainable CRM outside of current policy conditions and political, social and economic structures. It is the state that creates the conditions and enabling environment that makes it possible for stakeholders to equitably benefit from the CRM process, which in the final analysis is the primary motivation for their participation. The most effective CRM approaches therefore incorporate concepts of good governance into their design and implementation. Although the involvement and participation of NGOs and academe remain essential in catalyzing, funding and to some degree sustaining coastal governance norm that acknowledges the delivery of coastal (and environmental management) as a basic service (Courtney et al 2000)

- **CRM begins with LGU acceptance of their leadership role.** CRM is a new concept to Philippine LGUs, or a function that they still regard as a national government mandate. Unless and until they accept CRM as a responsibility, they will hold back crucial support, which can derail community resource management efforts. Effort must therefore be taken to encourage LGUs to take on the leadership role in CRM, and to constantly affirm and underscore such role. To increase the LGUs' appreciation of their role in CRM, the governance aspect of the LGC, Fisheries Code and AFMA must be cited. LGUs as a rule want to be perceived as responsive to their constituents' needs, and thus respond more positively when CRM is presented as a basic government service that they are mandated and expected to deliver to coastal communities.

- **Intervention must be responsive to the LGU's "priorities".** Often, LGUs are anxious to immediately implement specific CRM interventions, such as marine sanctuaries or closed seasons, because they want to see results that will establish the connection between resource management and certain benefits, for example, increased fisheries yield. Many LGUs reasonably regard CRM planning as a protracted process that offers few immediate

benefits, and often generates negative impacts on people's livelihoods in the short term – therefore, a politically risky proposition. While technical assistance must work toward the eventual LGU adoption of the CRM planning process, it must also be perceived as timely and relevant to LGU needs. The opportunity of using specific “best practices” and management interventions to demonstrate the benefits of CRM must therefore not be ignored. Many allies can be won over with just a few small successes. Indeed, the LGUs who are most strategy are maintained on the fuel of its credibility, and this can only be ensured if success can be seen. It encourages one or two “quick victories” that have an impact on direct beneficiaries”. Education can provide the initial understanding of why a program is needed, but, where there is pressure from the public for the LGU to produce results, only observable results can sustain a program (Courtney et al 2000).

- **CRM must directly address poverty issues.** The arguments that CRM will in the long term provide greater economic benefits to resources users than current unsustainable practices sounds lame when made against the backdrop of the hand-to-mouth existence that our poorest coastal communities live. In particular, marginal fishers who are asked to stop destructive fishing must be assured of livelihood assistance that will allow them to “survive” low yields and income for as long as it takes fishery stocks and habitats to recover their natural abundance and productivity. This is what makes enterprise development particularly appealing to LGUs as an entry point for CRM.
- **The process is essential.** No matter what the entry point may be, however, the process must promote capacity development for CRM and proceed progressively toward the integration of the CRM planning process into the local governance system. Whether the LGU opts to begin CRM implementation with the establishment of a marine sanctuary or enterprise development or some other specific intervention, capacity development for CRM planning is possible if the five CRM phases – issue identification and baseline assessment, plan preparation and adoption, action plan and project implementation, M&E, and IEC – is integrated in the design of every training program. In the same vein, every phase of the CRM planning process is an opportunity for building capacity. The process therefore is as important as the output, indeed, is in itself an output.
- **The message is the medium.** Many LGUs perceive CRM as a project focused on fisheries designed to meet certain specific, sectoral and primarily conservation objectives. Where there are

existing programs aimed at increasing fisheries productivity and efficiency for food production (which is nearly always the case), the LGU may regard CRM as low priority, redundant, or worse, an unnecessary workload and therefore inimical to its interest. The key to such LGUs acceptance of CRM often lies on how CRM is packaged and "sold" to the decision-makers and project implementers within the LGU. In general, the LGU officials become more accepting of CRM and its objectives when they are able to relate it to their development functions and goals, their "bread butter". Without exception, poverty eradication is the ultimate goal, and economic growth through sustainable development is the means to that goal. No LGU will deny the problem of declining fisheries, or its impact on the local economy. In many areas around the country, uncontrolled shoreline development is becoming a major concern, contributing to pollution, shoreline erosion, and the loss of water quality. No LGU therefore will refuse an offer to develop its capacity to solve these problems. In this sense, CRM becomes a much more attractive proposition as an integrating management "framework" for coastal development efforts than it would be as a fisheries-focused conservation "project".

- **Sell the law.** IEC efforts must focus on "selling the law" and must add the elements of environmental ethics in their message. There is a need to strongly advocate for a protective, holistic and precautionary mindset and perspective in addition to technical information and training in CRM.
- **People need to understand the 'why' of CRM.** Providing some biological information and explanation of natural and ecological laws contribute greatly to the understanding of why CRM is needed. When resource users understand the workings of certain natural laws, there is a better appreciation of the impacts of human activities on the environment and the importance of good resource management.
- **Integration is essential.** CRM will remain a marginal program if it is not integrated into the development framework of the LGU. The integration of resource management and economic development, in particular, is an essential ingredient to sustaining CRM initiatives in the government bureaucracy. The CRM plan and framework will have far greater impact if it is integrated in the LGU's overall development plan, for instance, the municipal CLUP. There must be involvement of both the executive and legislative branches, in addition to community-level participation by resource-users and village officials. And there must be a conscious effort to cut across

the horizontal and vertical lines of government to ensure that all concerned sectors are integrated into the process.

- **Information is better appreciated when it is “localized”.** The value of localizing information regarding the state of coastal habitats and corresponding issues and problems is best illustrated with the conduct of PCRA at the community level. PCRA serves not only as a research tool for information decision-making, but also as a high-impact educational vehicle for resource users and decision-makers alike. Efforts to generate LGU and community support for CRM are generally more successful when backed up by information about local conditions. Through the presentation of locally derived research results and other relevant information, LGUs and community users are able to appreciate better the issues and problems and the need for a unified rather than a fragmented solution.
- **Ownership must be shared and spread as widely as possible.** Ownership of the program must be spread across the community and across as many sectors as possible. To foster such ownership, the process must be made as transparent as possible, giving all partners a complete say in what happens in the project. Counterpart funding of LGUs in the conduct of CRM activities must be negotiated so as to generate a level of LGU ownership over these activities. Formation of capable and respected community groups is critical, and groups working together on projects with real outputs are essential. In previous section, we cited the importance of cultivating local heroes and champions who feel a strong sense of ownership over the CRM process. These champions, however, must be taught to “distribute” power and accountability and manage relationships in a manner that will foster everyone’s sense of ownership over the process. It is essential that everyone work together at the same pace – assisting agencies, fisherfolk, and government officials – and those adequate second liners are developed and ready to take over at any time. Having just one or two people own the whole project and do all the activities means that ownership accrues only to a couple of people, and may not be sustainable in the long run. Similarly, while strong political commitment is a must for success, de-linking CRM from the political process and the political personalities makes management less vulnerable to changes in political leadership and therefore enhances sustainability.

A low-profile approach favors collaboration. In any endeavor, credit for the achievements that are realized must always go to one’s partners – the LGU, fisherfolk, village heads, NGOs and NGAs. By working behind the scene,

equipping partners with training and information while ensuring that they are the ones who are leading the way, and taking into account the traditional structures of authority in the community, donor projects are better able to coordinate the actions and outputs of all the players in CRM.

Planning is not implementation. Priority must be given to implementation, not to planning. This does not mean that planning is not important, but to be useful, it must consider pragmatic concerns – time, money, and the need to adjust strategies, targets and speed as required, depending on how implementation proceeds and how the institutional, political and human relationships that affect it develop.

Clear, measurable targets keep everyone on track. Goals and priorities must be clearly identified and communicated, and consensus built around them. The use of measurable indicators improves program efficiency, as shown by CRMP's experience in the application of its Revised Results Framework. It provides focus to project implementation, and guides all players in the same direction. It also helps to optimize the use of resources, and improves the efficiency of implementation processes and systems. To be useful, indicators must reflect changes in the outcomes as well as the process, and must be monitored and evaluated regularly against program baselines and targets. Moreover, M&E should be conducted in a manner that allows those responsible for program implementation to assess their own progress and adapt their actions accordingly, and should in itself contribute to capacity development.

Resource constraints are real, but counterpart funding must be encouraged. Capacity building efforts must adjust to the financial, technological and human resource realities at the local level. Capacity development in M&E database tools, while useful in most cases, have no immediate practical application in municipalities that do not have a reliable supply of electricity. Resource assessment and management methods must not require expensive, sophisticated gear that LGUs can barely afford. And, reporting and documentation requirements must not be so complicated as to stretch the LGU's manpower resources beyond their limit. Nevertheless, LGU investment in CRM must be encouraged, not only to allow assisting projects and organizations to leverage resources in order to cover more areas, but also to increase the LGUs' sense of ownership in a specific activity, and the intensity of their commitment in follow-up activities.

CRM requires a broad-based support system. CRM involves a complex network of issues involving a wide range of sectors, some outside the realm of the LGU. Capacity development efforts for CRM therefore cannot be confined to the LGU, but must encompass all institutional and state structures that play a role in development and other activities in the coastal zone. The degree of coordination of local initiatives and resources with external policies, resources and actions is within the LGU's control only to a limited extent. To avoid

duplication and conflicts, and in order that resources are more effectively used and have greater impact, higher-level interventions are needed to coordinate the actions and resources of all levels of government for CRM. External driving forces – in particular, state structures and institutions – are important factors that must be included in the CRM equation.

ON SUPPORT STRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS FOR CRM

Mainstreaming need not be expensive. Large-group interventions targeted at increasing general public awareness are normally expensive, but we were able to reduce costs considerably through leveraging and strategic selection of events and venues to serve multiple IEC purposes. Partnerships with national and local mass media groups, for example, yielded about half a million dollars in media values contributed by government and private media groups, both print and broadcast. TV plugs and short documentaries produced jointly by CRMP with ABS-CBN Foundation and the PIA continue to get airtime, especially in May, the Month of the Ocean. To mainstream CRM in the national government agenda, we looked for appropriate opportunities to frame proposed messages against the government's current priorities, such as food security.

CRM is a collaborative undertaking. Clearly, no matter how dedicated and determined, no LGU acting alone can be effective in addressing the multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral issues that characterize CRM. And given the complex network of activities affecting coastal resource use and management, no LGU can be self-contained in CRM. It must be supported from the inside as well as from the outside by all sectors whose activities affect the coastal environment. Even heroes need an enabling environment. Capacity development must not focus only on developing local champions and equipping them with the technical skills for CRM. It is also important to build the capacity of institutions within and outside the LGU to support these champions so that they can more effectively undertake and push for the right course of action toward sustainable CRM.

Collaborations begins with and is strengthened by a policy of inclusion. To encourage collaboration, one must not preclude anyone from participating in CRM, whether in advocacy or actual management activities. The policy of inclusion must apply to all stakeholders at all levels of implementation. This does not only ensures that issues are addressed across a wide range of sectors – it also fosters a broad mechanism of support that extends throughout the entire CRM system and helps promote sustainability by providing “back-up support” should the community's internal support mechanism fail.

Collaboration entails coordination. Collaboration can only work with effective coordination. It is not enough that the various sectors come together and agree to work together, they must define their individual roles and responsibilities and

functional relationships, and devise mechanisms by which their actions and interactions can be properly coordinated to serve the purpose of CRM.

To promote CRM, one must speak the language of the bureaucracy. To increase buy-ins for CRM at various levels of government, one must frame one's message in a way that appeals to the prevailing bureaucratic mindset. Aside from policy, the bureaucracy is concerned primarily with development functions, which permeate their day-to-day decision-making and work practices. One must be able to frame CRM not only as a program or project, but also and more importantly, as an overarching strategy or framework that will support and enhance the development process. The goal is to influence the entire bureaucracy so that everyone is thinking resource management, and CRM principles and capacity development are considered in the formulation and implementation of development and land use plans and programs, in policies, and in legislation. This promotes horizontal and vertical integration of CRM into the governance system.

Absorptive capacity is a key determinant of success in capacity development at any level. Existing skills, knowledge and experience levels, as well as the attitude, ethics and values of individual within the organization affect the pace at which capacity initiatives are accepted and understood, and the desired capacities developed and utilized. All of our Learning Area provinces, at one time or another, had been the project site of earlier CRM or other resources management projects, and so had institutional memory and previous experience I resource management. In Masbate, the high-caliber technical and decision-making competencies and professionalism of provincial staff members allowed for fast uptake and acceptance of the principles and technologies of CRM. Although they had no prior exposure to CRM, the individuals involved in the capacity initiative had extensive previous experience in development planning and change management, which made for a higher level of openness to acquiring new skills and taking on new responsibilities, and a minimal resistance to change and multi-tasking.

M&E is a habit that LGUs still have to acquire. Benchmarking keeps everyone on track, but it is not a practice that many LGUs are inclined to practice on a regular basis. Currently, the LGU is tasked to collect and collate data for various purposes, but these data are often not recognized for easy retrieval, and data collection is not done in a systematized manner. Computer-based tools such as the MCD that partially automates M&E can make data management less "tedious" and therefore improve compliance with M&E requirements. Utilization of such tools, however, remains low, even among LGUs with computer facilities. LGUs complain about having to maintain several databases, which require repeated encoding the MCD, into a single integrated information management system. Compliance can also be improved with incentives. As a non-monetary incentive, certification provides the "prestige" factor, which can encourage LGUs to regularly benchmark, monitor and evaluate their progress in CRM. Combined

with financial incentives, it can be a powerful mechanism for cultivating LGU commitment to CRM, and thus promoting the sustainability of local CRM initiatives.

Capacity development must be comprehensive. Because CRM involves many interlinked issues that cuts across sectors, it is important to address capacity gaps across the sectors and at all levels of government. One cannot effectively build capacities at the LGU level without addressing the impacts of NGA support (or lack of support), cross-sectoral interactions and relationships, and the policy environment. Nevertheless, capacity development can only progress incrementally, one step at a time. CRMP took a two-track approach that directly addressed capacity gaps at the local level, while addressing national factors that hindered local capacity initiatives. The next step would be to strengthen the capacities that have been built, and then link national and local initiatives so that the capacities are coordinated and ultimately integrated into one seamless system that assures CRM services are delivered where they are needed in the most efficient and timely manner.

Good coordination is key to success in CRM. Like all cross-sectoral programs, CRM cannot work effectively without proper coordination. Coordinating mechanisms must be institute at all levels of implementation. While progress has been achieved in this regard at the local level, the mechanisms that have already been installed still need to be strengthened. At the national level, the newly created CMMO will be the primary coordinating body of CRM, but this office has yet to be staffed and organized. To a limited extent, in the past few years, CRMP played the role of national coordinator for CRM. There must be a proper transition period to prepare CMMO for its role as CRM “broker” and at the same time ensure that progress achieved in instituting CRM as a basic LGU service does not lose its momentum.

Sustainability is a function of demand, which is built on success. Now more than ever, servicing LGU needs for assistance is crucial to ensure that CRM initiatives are pursued long enough to generate economic, social and political benefits. Current demand for CRM best practices will peter out if LGUs are unable to sustain their initiatives, and thus can demonstrate no positive results to justify their CRM efforts. Results that are tangible and convincingly spell success will generate a self-sustaining demand for CRM that will ensure its continuity. One way that national government can help sustain local initiatives is by using the CRM Certification System as basis for prioritizing LGUs, especially for financial assistance. Such stepladder benchmarking system encourages progressive implementation of prescribed CRM best practices.

National government reorientation is necessary. The devolution of mandates to LGUs implies a change in the complexion of NGA-LGU relationships. No longer are NGAs expected to control, command and deliver many basic services directly to communities, as these have become the primary responsibility of

LGUs. In resource management, particularly in CRM, where capacities have only recently begun to develop (Courtney et al 2002), national government has been slow in adapting to its new supporting role. At the policy level, there is recognition that the LGU now plays the lead role, but operational directions and performance targets, as well as authority and accountability structures, have not been sufficiently adjusted to allow the machinery of government to respond adequately to the needs of LGUs as the new CRM service units of government. The National CRM Policy, once adopted, can serve as a guide to reorient government's central management targets and coordination functions to more closely fit NGAs' assigned role in the new decentralized governance system. But, again, policy is only as good as its implementation. Every effort must be taken to ensure that the National CRM Policy is translated into concrete actions. NGAs must begin to perceive the LGU as their customer, and define their function as, generally, meeting the LGU's needs and demands. They must learn to trust that the current decentralized governance system works, to support and inspire LGUs, and to focus on building LGU capacity and confidence to shape their own development.

Resistance must be anticipated and addressed. Policy and institutional reforms and other efforts that bring about radical changes are often met with resistance from those who benefit from the *status quo*, or those who fear they would be worse off if reforms were instituted, or those who simply do not see the need for change. There are many proven ways to manage resistance. These include education and awareness campaigns, implementing "bridge" activities to achieve early and visible wins that generate benefits for affected stakeholders, encouraging those who oppose change to participate in capacity development and related activities, providing support to those who need it, negotiations, co-opting, finding champions and innovators, and even taking disciplinary actions. (UNDP 1998) The important thing is that the resistance is anticipated, recognized, and addressed appropriately in a timely manner. For example, a paradigm shift from "open access" to "limited access" is now taking place – the necessary legal and policy instruments are in place to limit access to municipal waters to small-scale (municipal) fishers. The commercial fishing sector has blocked efforts at implementing these instruments. Such resistance must be addressed – primarily through coordinated, consistent enforcement of fishery laws, public awareness campaigns, and where practicable, disincentives for investments in highly efficient industrial fishing gear and incentives for investments in environment-friendly enterprise.

The province can play a strategic role as coordinator of CRM. Provinces that appreciate the importance of CRM are the best "retailers" of CRM service to municipal and city LGUs. Many provinces have a good number of years of experience and adequate capacities in development planning and coordination that only need to be enhanced by the introduction of CRM technologies and skills. In particular, much headway can be achieved by working with the province to integrate a CRM framework into the PFP. The PFP provides the general directions of provincial development planning and programming and serves as

the basis for all municipal CLUPs. It can provide a well-entrenched mechanism to establish CRM planning as a mainstream function of the LGU. Many provinces are now preparing to revise their PFPs for the next 10-year plan period (2003-2013). This is an opportunity to begin the integration and mainstreaming of CRM in the provincial agenda that must not be missed.

Capacity development never ends. Capacity building is an ever-ongoing process. It is important to be always responsive to requests for information, guidance, assurance and support from LGUs and communities as they undertake CRM. The emphasis must not be on creating new institutions, but rather on building and strengthening capacities by linking and connecting the mechanisms already in place in government institutions to support CRM. There must, of course, be a center for coordination, and in this regard, the creation of the CMMO is a step in the right direction. Effort must now be taken to ensure that the CMMO is properly organized to give it the ability to adequately perform its coordinating function and thus respond in a timely manner to request for technical assistance from LGUs. Organizational development must focus on developing within the CMMO a personnel complement that is technically competent in CRM, a leadership that is task-oriented inspirational and motivational, and a work culture geared toward efficient “client” service. In addition to building and strengthening technical capacities, therefore, the organization of the CMMO must also result in instilling good social values and work ethics among individual staff members. Important individual social values and capacities that must be developed include inter-personal, coordinating and communication skills; conflict, negotiating and change management proficiencies; initiative; and professionalism.

Capacity development must aim for flexible, learning organizations. Technical assistance must be combined with organizational development aimed at restructuring key organizations at all levels of government to equip them with flexibility and quick response mechanisms required in addressing the many cross-cutting issues related to CRM. Systems must be in place to create an enabling environment for CRM champions within each organization to be effective in their job in promoting CRM. The most important “technology” that we can give organizations – whether local (municipal and barangay), provincial, regional or national – is the ability to learn from successes and mistakes, which gives them the capacity to implement CRM well into the future.

ON COASTAL MANAGEMENT CAPACITY INITIATIVES

The first step is always the most daunting. Starting up a capacity development project as widely compassing as CRMP is often the most difficult part of project implementation. Getting the project support components – including administrative systems – up and running proved critical for CRMP, as it gave everyone, including field staff, the sense that a systematic management

process was in place, and that they had a “home base” from which to operate, that they could rely on.

Set clear, measurable, doable targets. Unoriginal but not irrelevant, this advice was one we had to struggle to follow. As noted in chapter 1, the initial CRMP result indicators contained in our SOW (USAID 1995) had to undergo an intensive and lengthy review and revision process that took up more than two years of our life-of-project. Without an approved results framework and indicators at the beginning of the Project, we could not establish some pre-project baseline conditions against which we could measure the successes or failures of particular interventions. (CRMP 2000) To our Learning Area Coordinators, the 1998 CRMP Revised Results Framework provided clear directions on what specific pressure points to focus on and which activities and issues to prioritize, thus helping them avoid the trap of taking on too much work without any clear idea of what needed to be accomplished.

Provided strategic management directions, not tactical details. A common results framework is useful, but a cookie-cutter approach to managing field-level project activities does not work effectively in the unpredictable environment in which capacities for CRM should be built. In this environment, timeliness is of the essence, and to achieve timeliness and provide rapid response when requested, one must be flexible and adapt to the realities of one’s working environment. The success of CRMP was as much a factor of our well-defined result framework as well as flexible operational policies. Flexibility allowed us to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to opportunities and challenges that surfaced unexpectedly, without warning, during implementation. Project leadership focused more on the bigger picture, allowing Learning Area staff members, who were more closely in touch with the unique realities of the environment in which they were working, to do the micromanaging. This resulted in innovation and creative thinking, which in turn resulted in many new permutations of old approaches, and novel strategies for capacity development that built CRMP’s reputation as the primary source of state-of-the-art CRM technologies in the Philippines.

The process is as important as the result. The objective of CRM is sustainable use and better management of coastal resources, as indicated by an increase in fish abundance and improved coastal habitat conditions. Achieving this objective is, of course, essential, but in the context of capacity development, it is not the whole point – the process of getting there is equally, if not more, important. That our Results Framework provided for monitoring of both progress and outcomes proved to be particularly useful. Compared to the time horizon required to effect the many institutional and social changes needed to bring about sustainable coastal development, our life-of-project was but a fleeting moment, not long enough for us to say with certainty, for instance, that we had eliminated the deep root of our fishery problems, or that we had reached a point of sustainability. It was important for us to know that we were moving in the right direction,

progressively reducing obstacles to CRM, and achieving success that built on previous successes.

Provide for “check-in” time. Managing a project like CRMP with many broad and complex concerns necessarily entails regular progress monitoring, to ensure that field activities remain aligned with overall project directions and objectives, and that everyone is kept up-to-date and moving in step with the rest of the team toward the same goal. CRMP Learning Area activities were guided by quarterly planning and progress meetings. Held primarily in preparation for the compilation of quarterly reports to USAID and counterpart agencies, these meetings served as a forum to discuss program progress, identify major constraints, summarize lessons learned, do reality checks and recommend adjustments. Despite limited time spent on deliberate exchange and sharing of experiences between Learning Areas, the documentary outputs that resulted from these meetings provided useful reference points and information that staff members could use to plan their next steps in a systematic manner.

Information management is key. Complex projects generate copious amounts of information essential to decision-making and planning. A good information storage and retrieval system is therefore essential to ensure efficiency of project operations. Recognizing this, CRMP invested in the development of an information management system to handle both externally sourced and internally produced publications, papers and other literature on CRM, and provide timely information to both the Project and the external public. Considerable time and effort was also spent in the development of the MCD in order to automate the organization, analysis and reporting of data on CRM activities at the municipal level. Although primarily intended for use by its clients (both NGAs and LGUs), the MCD also served as an internal project management and assessment tool, allowing the Project to monitor compliance with CRM in its Learning and Expansion Areas and compare this with the level of CRM activity on other areas.

Invest in processes that generate their own momentum. Project implementation in the complex setting such as the one in which CRMP operated would never prosper if one were to micro-manage each and every detail, every step of the way. There were individual activities of CRMP that needed constant and close monitoring, so where it was possible, we invested in activities and processes that, once started, built their own momentum. For example, at the outset, CRMP intended to extend its reach to as wide an audience as possible through information dissemination. By investing in the development and maintenance of its own web site, www.oneocean.org, CRMP gained – with virtually no investment in advertising and promotion – a worldwide audience (almost 60 countries and territories) for the Philippines and could find application elsewhere. Driven by the inherent efficiency of the Internet as a communication medium, this audience continues to grow – at the end of 2001, the web site was generating up to 12,000 visits (120,000 hits) a month, and visitor traffic

appeared headed for sustained growth. With other mediums, this kind of reach would have been difficult (and very costly) to achieve.

Don't be afraid to take risks. Innovation necessarily entails risks, and CRMP took not a few calculated risks in innovating new approaches to mainstreaming CRM in the local and national agenda, for example, or taking the expansion route through the province. Although donor projects must strive at all times to be politically correct, some tough diplomacy is sometimes required to push certain agenda that are perceived as not entirely politically palatable, and this also entails some risks that CRMP did not hesitate to take when the issue was crucial enough to warrant it.

Social capital is a priceless commodity. One of the most precious assets on which CRMP built its success was the social capital that individual staff members brought in when they joined the Project. The Philippines has a highly personalized environment, where "who you know" can literally open doors. Many of our key institutional and sectoral partnerships evolved out of the personal contacts and connections of CRMP to the country's top leaders in the government, media, business, NGOs, the academe, the church and even the entertainment sector. Such introductions resulted in enduring relationships that time and again the Project was able to tap to help its agenda.

Everything boils down to good communication! Keeping the lines of communication between CRMP leadership and the various Project components open at all times was essential to ensure that all the different pieces in Project implementation fit together as parts of a single, whole process. Where they were available, modern telecommunications technologies, including E-mail and SMS, as well as field visits by home office Project management staff to the Learning and Expansion Areas, greatly facilitated communication. But more important was the manner by which the Project's general directions and vision were articulated and communicated to everyone who was involved in CRMP, so that everyone had the sense of being a part of the bigger picture and contributing to a process that was national in scope and had great inter-generational implications.