



AMPLIFYING THE PEOPLE'S VOICES: The Philippine Community Radio Experience and Challenges

Book project manager:	Jola Diones-Mamangun
Overall editor:	Evelyn Roxas
Writers:	Bedette Libres Raymund B. Villanueva
Book cover artwork:	Federico Dominguez
Book design and layout:	Pom C. Villanueva
Researchers:	Marvie Matura Frenchiema Cumpio

Published by

The International Association of Women in Radio and Television-Philippine Chapter
with the support of



The International Association of Women in Radio and Television-International and
Fokus-Norway

c/o Kodao Productions
Third Floor, Erythrina Building
1 Maaralin corner Matatag Streets, Barangay Central
Quezon City, 1100 Philippines
Email: iawrtphilippines@gmail.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Iawrtphil/>
Telephone: (+632) 4262201

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2018



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Table of Contents

Foreword

I.	Introduction: The Philippine Media Overview	3
II.	History: Community Radio Broadcasting in the Philippines	9
III.	The Kodao Experience: Amplifying the voice of the people	13
a.	Community Radio: The Kodao experience	15
b.	Kodao’s other radio projects: Partnerships and stronger voices	23
c.	Kodao’s radio programs: Brave, award-winning, progressive	29
IV.	From Tacloban to Cebu to Panay: The IAWRT Community Radio Project	38
V.	Conclusion and Challenges	50

Foreword

This book, like the entire IAWRT Community Radio Station project in areas throughout Central Philippines hard-hit by Super typhoon Yolanda (International name ‘Haiyan’) in 2013, was an idea borne out of discussions by the IAWRT International Board. The current leadership of our global family wanted a publication that presents conditions of a country that sorely needs an amplified voice of its suffering people.

Prior to this, IAWRT made the groundbreaking decision to support a community radio station project that is based on a pressing need. Moreover, it wanted a narration of how the project is being undertaken—its successes and failures—and how it faces formidable challenges in its drive towards full fruition.

IAWRT said it wants a full documentation of the entire project in the hope that valuable lessons are learned. Specifically, IAWRT wanted to know how community women, whose voices need amplification the most, are encouraged and engaged to be the most important assets of this arduous undertaking.

IAWRT chose its Philippine Chapter to undertake this work. The International Board encouraged the local chapter to continue its work after suffering organizational setbacks earlier this decade. It responded by resolutely reinvigorating itself, starting in the latter part of 2013. Since then, it has gone from strength to strength that

resulted in its successful hosting of the 37th Biennial Conference in Quezon City, Philippines in November 2018.

It is notable that this book substantially discusses Kodao Productions' community radio experience. It is a conscious decision on the part of this publication's editors and writers to be as comprehensive based on several compelling reasons. First, Kodao Productions is arguably the Philippines' most active community radio broadcasting advocate. It took on the challenge left behind by its community radio predecessors Tambuli and Masipag and it continues to challenge the hegemony of corporate-based radio broadcasting on the grassroots level in the Philippines.

Second, Kodao Productions' community radio broadcasting model is premised on the principle that women, as well as other marginalized sectors in Philippine society, are not mere recipients but co-owners of the airwaves. As shown by its example of choosing women as top organizational managers, women eventually become managers of community radio stations Kodao Productions helped establish: Radyo Cagayano, Radio Sagada, and Radyo Lumad. No other community radio broadcasting advocate is as determined as Kodao Productions in this regard. Lastly, it is hoped that on the foundation of Kodao Productions' campaign for community radio broadcasting that the challenge to establish more democratic airwaves in the Philippines become a reality. What Kodao Productions could not accomplish, it is hoped that others, such as IAWRT-Philippines and IAWRT International, may be able to carry on until full realization.

It is hoped as well that this book would serve as a valuable resource to similar projects in the future in other parts of the world.

INTRODUCTION: The Philippine Media Overview

Philippine mass media enjoys the reputation as among the most free in Asia—rowdy, vibrant, diverse and hugely profitable. The country, however, suffers as among the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists.

Radio and Television

There are nearly 1,000 radio stations (around 600 of which are actively broadcasting) across an archipelago of 7,107 islands, broadcasting on FM and Medium Wave (AM), according to Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) - the Association of Broadcasters of the Philippines. As of last count, the KBP also lists more than 200 television stations nationwide. These radio and television stations are either stand-alone or are owned by the 121 KBP-listed media organizations and corporations nationwide. Radio and TV stations collectively command the biggest audiences nationwide. There is no listing yet of cable television stations that are currently gaining popularity in the provinces.

Radio remains to be the most reliable medium for distributing news, information and entertainment in the Philippines' rural interior, where mountains often get in the way of TV signals. However, TV is popular in the main towns and cities and satellite dishes are increasingly bringing television to remote rural areas. TV signals beamed down from space are less affected by the mountainous terrain.

According to the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, radio reaches 85 percent of households in the country, whereas television reaches just under 60 percent.

Privately-owned radio and television outfits

The first radio station in the Philippines started broadcasting in 1922. Television first came to the Philippines in 1953, but TV only took off in a big way following the overthrow of President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986.

Many broadcast outfits are owned by one of the big national radio and TV networks. Broadcasting is dominated by six powerful radio and TV networks which command massive audiences nationwide: ABS-CBN, GMA, TV5, Manila Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Mindanao Network, and Bombo Radyo.

TV has begun to displace radio in many rural areas as people increasingly turn to satellite dishes to overcome reception problems. Radio, on the other hand, has gained a new lease of life in the towns and cities with the spread of mobile phones. According to the Philippines' National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), an increasing number of people in both urban and rural areas listen to radio on their mobile phones rather than a conventional radio set. They broadcast a wide variety of music, news, talk-shows, dramas and religious programming.

According to the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, there are 57 million TV viewers in the Philippines.

Many channels, such as the ANC, GMA News TV and CNN-Philippines, broadcast only news and current affairs programs.

There are also several Christian TV channels, including the powerful Catholic Media Network's flagship TV station TV Maria. Other popular Catholic TV channels are EWTN and Familyland.

Public broadcast stations

Although commercial (private) broadcasting has flourished in the Philippines, state radio and television command relatively

low audiences, due in large part to problems mentioned above. In addition, public sector broadcasters suffer from low levels of government investment and are banned from carrying advertising. This prevents them from topping up their budget allocations with commercial revenue.

State media is very weak, partly because it is banned from supplementing its budget with advertising. It also currently suffers from bad reputation stemming from the Rodrigo Duterte government's shift to online media as primary platforms, numerous gaffes, massive lay-offs and other problems.

The state-owned Philippine Broadcasting Service (PBS) runs a nationwide network of 32 Medium Wave stations and a handful of FM stations. It also broadcasts on Short Wave.

The state-owned People's Television Inc (PNTI) previously operates three television channels, but in recent years has been forced to sell off its RPN-9 channel, which is now CNN-Philippines, and suspend operations of its IBC-13, which is now moribund. PTV-4 is the only remaining public television channel.

Newspapers

In the print medium, there are about 28 regular daily newspapers, both broadsheets and tabloids, published in Metro Manila, the regional capital of the Philippines. Dozens more daily and weekly newspapers are published in provincial cities. Many of the country's biggest newspapers are also owned by big businesses that own radio and TV networks. In general, private media ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few large privately owned groups and families.

Most of the "quality" newspapers in the Philippines, such as the Philippine Daily Inquirer the Philippine Star and the Manila Bulletin, are published in English.

However, they are outsold by popular tabloids such as Abante and Pilipino Star Ngayon. These specialize in sensationalist stories, celebrity and show business news and crime stories. Most of the top-selling tabloids are published in Filipino.

In early 2012, there were 28 daily newspapers which claimed to be national in circulation. However, newspaper circulation is declining under pressure from television and new media.

There are no authoritative and regularly published newspaper circulation figures. However, the most popular national dailies, such as Abante and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, claim to sell more than 250,000 copies each. The Inquirer, however, is reported to currently suffering massive losses both in copy sales and advertising, stemming from sustained verbal attacks and threats by President Rodrigo Duterte, especially in his home island of Mindanao. Its owners are continuously on the hunt for buyers for the entire conglomerate (which consists of the main broadsheet, tabloids and a radio station) even at a loss.

Many newspapers were founded by journalists with a political and nationalist agenda. However, most have been taken over by powerful families linked to strong commercial interests. Each of the main English language broadsheets has a sister tabloid in Filipino to cater for downmarket readers.

The standard of journalism is generally high. Nevertheless, journalists are dangerously exposed to the corruption, intimidation and violence that constitute the dark under-belly of Filipino politics.

Online media outfits

Internet usage is growing rapidly from a low base, especially amongst young people.

According to www.Internetworldstats.com, of the current

population of 106.5 million Filipinos, 67 million are internet users that translate to 62.9 percent penetration. Fifty-eight percent of Filipinos are Facebook users.

According to the internet traffic analysis website www.alexa.com the most popular news websites in the Philippines were those of the Philippine Daily Inquirer (www.inquirer.net) and broadcasting giant ABS-CBN. Rappler is also a major online news outfit.

Alternative media

In 2014, a network of independent and progressive media outfits, institutions and individuals was formed and was named the Altermidya (People's Alternative Media Network). Member alternative media outfits and individuals are from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, and include print, broadcast and online media. These outfits seek to redefine Philippine journalism by reporting stories from the margins, amplifying the voices of the oppressed and bravely filling the gaps that the dominant media outfit often overlook.

Among its founding organizations include Bulatlat.com, Kodao Productions, Pinoy Weekly, Northern Dispatch, Davao Today, Southern Tagalog Exposure, and others.

Threats to press freedom

According to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, there have been 174 journalists killed in the Philippines since 1986 when the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos was ousted and democracy was supposedly restored. Under the Duterte regime, 12 journalists have already been killed. Politically motivated murders, undertaken by hired killers, private militias and the state security forces, are usually linked to investigations into local and national politics, corruption, and business. Few perpetrators of such crimes are ever brought to trial.

International press freedom organisations Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) (www.rsf.org) and the Committee for the Protection of Journalists have consistently listed the Philippines as one of the 10 most dangerous countries in the world for journalists. In November 2009, the bloodiest incident against journalists happened in Mindanao island that killed 32 journalists in a single incident. It is known as the Ampatuan Massacre.

The advent of “fake news sites” that are seemingly deployed to undermine press freedom in the country and support the Duterte regime in its so-called war on drugs has become a struggle among media outfits and journalists.

HISTORY: Community Radio Broadcasting in the Philippines

Community radio broadcasting, specifically the conscious drive to establish networks of community radio stations in the Philippines, started with two major developments. The first was the establishment of the Tambuli Network in 1992 and the creation of Radyo Natin Network in 1995. Both played important roles in the development and served as foundation, both positively and negatively, of community radio broadcasting in the Philippines.

Tambuli

The creation of a network of community radio stations started comparatively early in the Philippines than the rest of Asia. It all started with Mr. Louie Tabing who enjoyed a reputation as a pioneer of community radio broadcasting in the entire region. He established the Tambuli network of community radio stations throughout the country, the first such network that built on various “stand alone” community-based radio stations that are also often owned by politicians and local businesspersons.

Tambuli, which is the Filipino word for a buffalo horn blown by village criers to call attention to announcements and alerts, was “acronym-ized” to mean Tinig ng Aming Munting Bayan upang Umunlad ang mga Maliliit (Voice of Our Small Villages for the Development of the Poor).

The Tambuli Network was developed with the support of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) “to empower Filipinos through information so that they would be motivated to take better advantage of existing development opportunities, as well as identifying and pursuing

their own development opportunities through media-supported discussion and debate.”The project was approved for funding by the UNESCO in 1992.

By mid-1996, the Tambuli network organized eight centers of media operations—community radio stations and some produced community newspapers. Preliminary activities prior to their establishment centered on training and workshops in technical aspects of broadcasting and reporting. Their programming focused on local livelihood, microfinance, and cooperativism for local development.

The Tambuli Network project earned high praises from UNESCO in the first years of its implementation. According to a mid-term assessment and report, the project and its community partners are highly motivated, professionally skilled, and from the pilot phase acquired the experience and know-how to continue to the project phase and the establishment of eight more community media centres.

Eventually, the Tambuli Network expanded to 21 radio stations that were managed by multisectoral community media council (CMC) composed of farmers, fishermen, women, youth, market vendors, church and a balance of political leaders, and staffed by volunteers from the community. The radio stations are located in poor, economically depressed, and geographically isolated communities and where such mass media outfits can bring about the great impact on the lives of people.

Eventually, the radio stations also provided important information such as schedule of Sunday masses, appointment with the rural doctor, prices of goods in the market, weddings, funerals and other services on top of usual broadcast fare such as news, commentary, education and entertainment. They provided communities their channel for expression, participation and involvement in community affairs in addition to the development of broadcast skills and enhancement of their right to public expression.

According to The Democracy and Governance Network (<http://communit.com/democracy-governance/content/tambuli-community-radio-project-philippines>) the radio stations in most sites also functioned in the place of telephone systems (i.e. messages can be broadcast advising that a relative in another village is ill, or to call someone to a meeting or celebration.)

In 1995, Tambuli Radio won the UNESCO-IPDC Rural Communication Prize. In 2002, probably as part of the terminal phase of the Tambuli project, UNESCO and Tabing published a book entitled “How to Do Community Radio?” (https://www.unicef.org/magic/resources/how_to_do_community_radio.pdf). The number of existing and operation Tambuli radio station and their impact to their host communities are not readily known as of this writing. Tabing died early 2018.

Tabing’s community radio station project served as model and inspiration to movements that were eventually launched elsewhere in Asia through the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (<http://www.amarc.org/>). AMARC heavily referenced Tambuli in its own UNESCO-funded 2001 Community Radio Handbook (http://www.amarc.org/documents/manuals/UNESCO_Community_Radio_Handbook.pdf). Tambuli also presented lessons in eventual efforts by others to establish more community radio stations throughout the country.

Radyo Natin

It is most probably on the success of the Tambuli Network project’s success that the country’s biggest radio broadcasting corporation launched its Radyo Natin Network. On December 16, 1997, the Manila Broadcasting Company—owner of the country’s oldest and most powerful radio station, (DZRH) and the Philippines’ biggest radio conglomerate—launched its Radyo Natin Network. Radyo Natin is composed of 100 FM stations strategically across the nation by using state of the art satellite technology. It is able to reach audiences that have never been reached before by another

radio station.

According to MBC (<http://mbcradio.net/mbc2.5/>), all Radyo Natin stations operate in the FM band. Each of them airs a “hometown radio” format that is synonymous with many of the characteristics of community radio stations. Their programming consist of simulcasts from DZRH on early weekday mornings (4:30-6:00 am) and timeslot clearances given to affiliate stations for local programming on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons until 7:00 pm are also cleared in the same format. Network-level musical programming is fed to all stations every Monday-Saturday at 1:00 pm before going to a two-hour local programming window for stations at 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Primetime network shows conclude with “Boys After Dark” until the network feed signs off at 10:00 in the evening. By local discretion, stations may air local late-night fare after the network feed by omitting the closing prayer intended for stations closing down at 10:00 pm or sign-off altogether by seamlessly playing the local station’s sign-off sequence after the feed.

The entry of Radyo Natin Network in the community/hometown radio scene, however, has its disadvantages to the community radio station movement in the Philippines. In the first place, low-power broadcasting should have been reserved for non-profit organizations and communities as is the case in other countries. But the Radyo Natin Network model has permitted private capital to own even more of the limited frequencies allowed by the national government. Radyo Natin could also make it more difficult for small media companies and communities to establish community radio stations as its permission must be sought in public hearings before new radio stations could be built where their signal footprint is already present.

The Kodao Experience: Amplifying the voice of the people

Kodao Productions was born in January 2001 amid the Filipino people's call to oust Joseph Ejercito Estrada, the former Philippine president whose rule was widely perceived as corrupt and inept. Kodao Productions' first undertaking was to document on video the final days of Estrada as president—from the EDSA monument where millions gathered for three days towards the final march to the historic Mendiola Bridge near the Presidential Palace to push Estrada out of office.

In February, the owner of a Manila-based radio station Ramon Jacinto of DZRJ-AM, who was involved in the ouster movement, offered a time slot for a radio program to a key personality in the ouster movement, Teddy Casino of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN). Casiño sought out Kodao Productions' start-up team to handle the radio program's production and airing. Thus born the *Ngayon na, Bayan!* (NNB) program on radio, starting out as a one-hour radio program. Five months later, it became a two-hour program due to the warm reception from its listeners. The program lasted for five years.

Ngayon na, Bayan! became Kodao Productions' core program while it expanded to video and audio production. It also provided training and support services to regional and sectoral endeavors to set-up similar production outfits in the early 2000s.

In cooperation with the Bayan Muna Party, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), and regional people's organizations, Kodao explored the setting-up of community radio stations.

Through the years, Kodao Productions has become an award-winning multi-media production outfit. It produces video documentaries on burning social issues in the Philippines such as

environmental destruction, human rights, and other civil liberties. Both its video and radio productions have been awarded and cited by private and government institutions, among them the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP, the Broadcasters' Association of the Philippines), the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), Pandayang Lino Brocka, Gawad Agong and Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA). Its video productions have been exhibited in local and international film festivals as well as in urban and rural poor communities in the country and abroad. In 2014, Kodao has branched out to online publishing of daily news and features and has since gathered followers in and out of the country. It has maintained Kodao its other services such as production of audio materials for existing radio networks and community radio stations throughout the country.

“Kodao” got its name from “kudaw”, a term used by the Higaonon tribe in Mindanao for the knotted rattan string that served as a calendar. It is used to chronicle important events within the tribe or for inter-tribal engagements. Each knot represents an important community event or agreements with other tribes.

Through its various programs and services, Kodao Productions is dedicated to documenting events that affect the Filipinos' search for a national identity and quest for genuine democracy, sovereignty, and economic development.

Community Radio: The Kodao experience

Less than a year of the NBB broadcast, a visiting friend from AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters), Bianca Migriolletto, conducted a three-day training-workshop on broadcasting among the Kodao staff, volunteers, and hosts. The members of Southern Tagalog Exposure, also a newly-formed multi-media group, attended as well.

As a community broadcaster in Switzerland and an officer of AMARC, Miglioretto encouraged Kodao to venture into community radio as there were already efforts started in the Philippines, particularly that of the Tambuli Foundation headed by the late Louie Tabing. The Kodao staff and Board members were readily convinced of the need to branch out to community radio even as it continued to improve on its core radio program, the NNB.

Community radio was seen as an additional medium where the voice of the marginalized sectors would be amplified given the numerous issues and concerns they face. More importantly, it was a means to further empower the people in the target communities, which were all organized communities and with a vibrant mass movement. Additionally, community radio is seen as an effective means of communication to expand the reach of the organizations. This, in effect, would further strengthen the people's organizations in the different villages.

Brainstorming and planning for establishing a community radio thus became one of the off-shoots of the said training workshop. Immediately, the Kodao staff laid the ground for the establishment of the radio program. Foremost among the first efforts was to consult with Louie Tabing on the many aspects of building

community radio stations based on their experience. The staff and Board also started to identify pilot areas and fund sources.

A conference on radio work of people's organizations was organized in the second half of 2002. This involved the regions and provinces and sectors, which, at the time, had radio programs in different parts of the country. The participants also included those who were targeted as pilot areas for setting up of the community radio, namely: Batangas, Cagayan, Iloilo City, and Sagada. The conference sized up the combined reach of the various radio programs, all block-time, all-over the country. At the time, these radio programs were aired in Sorsogon, Tacloban, Quezon, Negros Occidental (two programs), Cebu (two programs), Bohol, and Bukidnon.

Most of these programs catered to the peasant sector and funded by support non-governmental institutions supporting peasant communities.

In the same gathering, the possibility of maximizing the existing Radyo Natin stations was also looked into as additional channel for the people's organizations. At the time, it was relatively cheaper than going into a once a week block-time in existing radio stations. Also, the harassment of radio anchor hosts, red-tagging of the radio programs was specifically noted. As in the case of the NNB radio program, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and/or its citizen arm, the National Alliance for Democracy (NAD), held parallel programs in the same radio stations to rebut the issues discussed by the programs of people's organizations.

Bayan-Muna funded community radio stations

Funding opportunity for the pilot community radio stations came from the Bayan Muna Party, which, at the time, has three representatives in the Philippine House of Representatives. Being a grassroot-based political party and with strong links

with people's movements, the representatives from the Bayan Muna Party immediately saw the importance and significance of setting up radio stations in organized communities. Like Kodao Productions, Bayan Muna believed that such an endeavour would further empower the people in the communities and harness their organizing and education work among the community members.

The communities were selected based on the strength of the people's organization in the locality and their willingness to assign members to undertake the task was among the criteria set. As a matter of government requirement, funds from the Legislature were coursed through the local government unit (LGU), which practically would become Kodao's partner in the implementation of the project, aside from the local people's organization.

While fulfilling the numerous requirements in the bureaucracy to access the funds allocated by Bayan Muna, technical preparations were undertaken: consultations with experts on establishing radio, meetings with host organizations, site identification, and trainings of possible broadcasters and staff on broadcasting, writing, managing radio programs and radio station. There were also meetings with other community stakeholders like the local Churches and the education sector in the community who would also become partners in the undertaking. The Kodao staff also started to look for suppliers of antennae and transmitters and other broadcast equipment.

Challenges

The setting up of community radio stations was beset with challenges.

Midway in the implementation of the project, the project team had to negotiate with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) for the use of its broadcast franchise. The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) stopped the operations of low-frequency radio, specifically, those that were

operated by the Manila Broadcasting Corporations Radyo Natin. The NTC cited, among many other reasons, the complaints of other broadcasting companies when Radyo Natin proliferated nationwide, clogging the bandwidth and airwaves. The NTC thus allowed only the operations of 500kw stations that required licenses and franchise to broadcast. This became one of the major obstacles in putting up the community radio.

The rigorous requirements of the LGUs for Kodao and the people's organizations to access the funds were another obstacle. The LGU requirements, meant for big time and seasoned contractors and builders, was not applicable to production houses like Kodao, much more for community-based organizations.

But the biggest obstacle was the AFP's manoeuvres to prevent the realization of the project. Right from the start, when the AFP got information that such project was underway, it took steps such as talking to the concerned LGU officials, which was actually a warning. It resorted to red-tagging the project to intimidate the LGUs and eventually back out of the project.

Some of the LGU partners were direct in informing Kodao that the military had been talking to them. Others used the bureaucratic requirements to delay the project to no end.

Finally, none of these BM-allocated funds were used for the building of the community radio stations. But this did not dampen the desire of the people's organizations to pursue the project. With the initial four pilot areas, only two stations were actually set-up and started operations. At present, only one community radio station is still in operation.

Radyo Cagayano: The voice of the peasants

When the peasant organization, KAGUIMUNGAN, in Baggao, Cagayan Valley took the challenge to establish a community radio station in 2003, it immediately sent four volunteers to Kodao for

training.

The trainees stayed with Kodao for four months where they were trained to write radio news reports, audio plugs and radio scripts. They also covered events and reported on-air. They took part in the site preparation, conceptualization of the programs for Radyo Cagayano and the physical design of the station.

The KAGUIMUNGAN, while processing the funds from BM, also started its own fund-raising and resource mobilization campaign for the community radio.

Some 500 members and allies of the organization, during the groundbreaking of the radio station, brought with them wood, cement, hollow blocks, nails, paint, and food. Others helped in cleaning the ground and in the construction. When the construction was done and the broadcast started, radio listeners brought in furniture, even plates and pots. The radio station was built in the compound of the Philippine Independent Church. (<https://tingog.blogspot.com/2006/07/radio-station-farmers-built.html>)

It was also during the groundbreaking ceremonies, in May 2003, that Joey Javier, KAGUIMUNGAN president, was hacked on his left arm by soldiers, who pretended to be drunken bystanders. He was on his way home. That was the first in the series of military actions against the community radio, its staff, and the officers and members of peasant organization.

Because the fund from BM was never released by the local government, it took three years before KAGUIMUNGAN was able to raise the minimum funds to build the community and aired its first broadcast. But three weeks after its first test broadcast on April 28, 2006, lightning struck the radio antenna. Broadcast resumed the following month, in May, when the peasants were able to recycle the antenna and attached it to a tree near the station. During its short broadcasting life, Radyo Cagayano instantly

became popular among Baggao's people. It became its main source of local news as well as main public service platform. Farmers used it as a public address system to announce which crop trader was buying at higher farm gate prices, directly playing an important role in their livelihood. Several Churches asked Radyo Cagayano to broadcast their services. Schoolchildren regularly visited it for both school-related concerns and song requests.

But, on July 2, 2006, after a month on-air, the Radyo Cagayano station was burned. Before setting the station on fire, the eight assailants attacked the radio staff and ransacked the station. They took away the victims' money and seven cellular phones. Two of the staff had burns on their bodies.

The incident drew condemnation from local and international media organizations such as the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (Amarc), Reporters Sans Frontieres, as well as allied peasant organizations. (<http://pcij.org/blog/2006/07/03/arsonists-attack-cagayan-valley-radio-station>)

Four months later, on November 11, 2006, Joey Javier was killed. In less than two weeks, on November 27, 2006, Anthony Licayao, who took over as Kaguimungan's head after Javier was killed, was also slain.

It took a year after the burning before Radyo Cagayano went back "on-air" via public address system that goes around the community. Its first broadcast was in July 1, 2007 in a public market in Brgy. San Jose, Baggao. The peasant broadcasters were able to gather support from Germany to purchase equipment for a narrowcast signalling the rebirth of the community radio.

Radyo Cagayano, however, has yet to be rebuilt and go back on air to this day. Baggao remains heavily militarized and further loss of life is deemed imminent if it is rebuilt while the situation remains. In September 15, 2018, Typhoon Mangkhut (Local name:

Ompong), packing sustained winds of 205 kph with gusts of up to 285 kph made landfall in Baggao, Cagayan. Several lives were lost and rice and corn crops, a couple of weeks short of being harvested were lost. Many said that had Radyo Cagayano been allowed to continue broadcasting, it may have substantially contributed to mitigating, if not totally eliminating, the loss of lives and property. (<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/667890/ompong-s-landfall-site-baggao-cagayan-incurred-most-damage-dnd/story/>)

Radio Sagada: First indigenous people community radio station

Sagada, in Mountain Province, was among the selected pilot areas for Kodao's community radio in 2002. Preparations were made in 2003, undergoing the same steps as the other stations: meeting with the local government, bidding to access the fund, site preparation, meeting with stakeholders in the community, training of staff and program anchors, program identification, etc. Radio Sagada also went through the same difficulties, such as accessing Bayan Muna Party funds from the LGU, changes in personnel, broadcast license.

In the end, Radio Sagada, through its program holder, the Northern Media Information Network (or NorMIN, publisher of the Northern Dispatch Weekly) opted to seek funding from international NGOs with the help of AMARC, and was able to push through with the establishment of the community radio station. The radio station was substantially assisted by AMARC's Bianca Miglioretto, who was instrumental in seeking other funding support from international organizations and agencies such as Philippine Misereor Partners Inc (PMPI), MIVA (Ministerio Internacional Vida Abundante), and Isis International-Manila. She was also instrumental in organizing and holding trainings of volunteer broadcasters and staff prior to Radio Sagada's launch. (<http://bulatlat.com/main/2011/11/17/first-cordillera-community-radio-station-launched-in-sagada/>)

All in all, Radio Sagada 104.7 FM took eight long years before it finally went on air in 2011.

Radio Sagada, due to the strategic location of its 150 watt transmitter reaches Mountain Province, Kalinga, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Ifugao, Abra, Ilocos Sur and Benguet. It now enjoys a broad support of its listeners.

Kodao's other radio projects: Partnerships and stronger voices

Kodao Productions and its personnel were instrumental in efforts of marginalized sectors and people's organizations to establish community radio stations across the Philippines. In recent years, it was involved in at least four other community radio station projects on top of its own discussed above.

These were with the following:

- a. Masipag Farmers' Network for two of its community radio stations in Surigao del Sur province and Bukidnon province,
- b. Radyo Maralita with Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap, an organization of urban poor residents, in Metro Manila,
- c. Radyo Lumad with the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines-Northern Mindanao Region, and
- d. Establishment of radio stations under the Radyo Natin Network.

Masipag Radio

In 2008, former Kodao Productions staff member Ronald Magbuhos Papag was contracted by a farmers' group as consultant for the establishment of two community radio stations in Mindanao Island by virtue of his expertise acquired from his experience as Kodao co-founder. The farmers' group Masipag Farmers was supported by the European Catholic group Misereor to establish community radio stations primarily for its organic farming campaign among its beneficiary communities.

In its first year, Masipag established a low-power community radio station in Tandag City in Surigao del Sur province where

Papag was involved in the conceptualization stage as well as in the workshops and training. He was not involved in the actual establishment and operationalization of the radio stations, however.

On the second year of the project, Papag was involved in the crafting of a project proposal that eventually allowed the farmers' organization to acquire an existing radio station in Bukidnon Province in North-Central Mindanao. He also facilitated workshops and trainings for the radio station's programming not just on organic farming but on other radio shows. He also helped train scientists, agriculturists, farmers, community women, youth and students and other poor sectors become radio broadcasters. He helped develop other radio shows, particularly public service shows, particularly on announcements on farm gate and retail prices of farm produce.

To date, both stations are still broadcasting and under the control of Masipag Farmers.

Radyo Maralita

In 2015, the urban poor group Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) approached Kodao Productions to be its technical partner for its World Association of Christian Communicators-funded community radio broadcasting project. Years prior to this project, various urban poor communities around Metro Manila have been suffering from violent demolitions that mostly resulted in their houses destroyed and its residents relocated in just in far-flung but also more dangerous areas. So-called development campaigns by the government have either been selling off lands to private developers or implementing road-widening projects that victimize urban poor communities.

Philippine laws dictate that there should be no demolition of urban poor houses without permanent, decent and accessible housing complete with social services and amenities. This law as well as these rights have been regularly violated by both government and

private developers, however.

Kadamay's Radyo Maralita project was aimed at informing and educating these communities to consolidate them to assert their rights to decent and permanent housing.

Kodao Productions was instrumental in the crafting of the proposal to WACC, which included equipment procurement, training and implementation. The proposal was approved for funding within the year and its implementation starting in 2016.

Kodao Productions held two workshop-trainings among volunteers from various urban poor communities around Metro Manila. These activities included broadcasting competency-transfer in writing, broadcasting and reporting.

To date, Radyo Maralita remains a “narrowcast”-type operation using public address systems installed in select communities. These pieces of equipment are often loaded to a vehicle and used in other communities that do not have them, as was the case when thousands of Kadamay members occupied about four thousand unoccupied government housing projects in Pandi town, Bulacan Province in 2017.

Currently awaiting approval for additional funding for the establishment of an actual community radio station, Radyo Maralita continues to serve the urban poor sector in defense of their communities and rights to housing.

Radyo Lumad

In 2015, the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, specifically its Northern Mindanao Sub-Region formation, sought the help of Kodao Productions to be its technical partner in the establishment of a community radio station. The RMP is national organization, inter-diocesan and inter-congregational in character, of men and women religious, priests and lay people who live and work with the

peasants. Founded by the Association of Major Women Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMWRSP) in 1969, RMP members commit themselves to support the Filipino peasant's quest for justice, freedom, access to commons and genuine agrarian reform. The community radio station component called Radyo Lumad was part of a European Union-funded initiative called Healing the Hurt Project, which was a comprehensive initiative that included research, publication, humanitarian aid and others that seek to bring social justice for indigenous peoples' groups in Mindanao collectively called Lumad.

The Radyo Lumad Project initially sought to establish a community radio station in Cagayan de Oro City in Misamis Oriental province, operated and staffed by Lumad volunteers. Its actual implementation, however, hit several problems brought about by the militarization of their communities that compelled them to suffer forced evacuation in both Misamis Oriental, Bukidnon, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Lanao del Norte provinces.

Eventually, in 2016, workshops and trainings were held by Kodao Productions with volunteers from various communities throughout the region. A total of four trainings were held both in Cagayan de Oro and Malaybalay cities.

In early 2017, the project received a shot in the arm when a Mindanao-based radio network offered to sell its radio station in Manolo Fortich town Bukidnon because it was then building a stronger and bigger station in Cagayan de Oro. In September 18, 2017, Radyo Lumad 1575 AM was formally launched in a national event in Quezon City. (<https://kodao.org/2017/09/19/lumad-community-radio-station-launches-at-sitio-sandugo/>) RMP-NMR said that Radyo Lumad 1575 AM is the expression of the struggles of the Lumad who have been marginalized, discriminated, and oppressed. The radio is the voice of the Lumad in Mindanao that seeks to be heard, through which the Lumad can impart their culture and foster understanding and dialogue.

The station is dedicated to Lumad stories, news reports, alternative music and advocacy songs for the Lumads produced by Mindanao musicians, and the traditional music of the Lumad communities. Aiding the work against the discrimination of the Lumad, live reports of cases of rights violations direct from communities and interviews with victims are also included in its programming. A specific segment will be allotted for interactive discourse on Lumad issues where questions from listeners via text messages or phone calls are entertained.

Radyo Natin Network

While commercial in nature, the Radyo Natin network provided a viable option for people's organizations and support institutions because it operates like a community radio, albeit highly commercialized being a mainstream media project. Radyo Natin has also allowed community-based and people's organizations to buy into its franchise to broadcast their own programming. The initial cost of Php 60,000 for a franchise, with a ready 100 watts transmitter and antennae, was seen as reasonable and less complicated to operate.

At the time, a Radyo Natin in Bulacan province was operating with the support of an educational institution. It then became a model for other people's organizations and institutions. By 2003, a number of groups had availed of the Radyo Natin franchise and stated its operations.

In Nueva Ecija, there was a 500 watt and a 100 watt Radyo Natin operating in Guimba and Sta. Rosa, respectively.

In Mati, Davao Oriental, another 100watt Radyo Natin went on air in 2004, the staff of which underwent training from Kodao. Among the most successful in doing so is Radyo Natin in Guimba in Nueva Ecija Province that broadcasts farmer-related programs when DZRH simulcasts have ended. It has made the establishment of community radio easier for such communities and the model

also lends protection, technical expertise, and wherewithal inherent in a powerful private company.

All the 100 watt Radyo Natin however, stopped operation when the NTC imposed its new guidelines in 2005.

Today, only Radyo Natin Guimba is on-air. Aside from the regular broadcast, it is now streamed online. (<https://www.facebook.com/radyonatinguimba105.3/>)

Kodao's radio programs: Brave, award-winning, progressive

In the course of 18-year existence, Kodao Productions has produced four radio programs that challenged not the prevailing standards of news, commentary and public service radio programs in the Philippines. Each of these programs has offered something new not just to its broad listeners but has made them their owners and not simple consumers of what they were hearing on the airwaves.

1. Ngayon na, Bayan! (NNB) radio program

Aired five times a week, Mondays through Fridays, *Ngayon na, Bayan!* was a public affairs program that aimed to promote good governance and people's participation. Each broadcast day was devoted to specific themes such as current news and analysis, women's issues, health and education, religion and culture, and a variety of people's issues.

Every episode tackled specific issues based on the day's theme, spiced up with audio plugs that featured the life of ordinary people's martyrs and heroes, progressive songs, bits of history, jokes, and the day's breaking news. The hosts entertained phone-in/text messages and commentaries even from those with contrary opinions. This was one of the reasons why the program enjoyed a high volume of callers and texters (short messaging system/SMS-users)

The program had a main anchor and a rotating co-host each day. The co-hosts were known leaders of sectoral and multi-sectoral organizations. Aside from their expertise, it was also a way to gain listenership among the sectors/organizations they represented.

A resource person was usually invited to provide expert opinion on the topic. Usually, they were farmers, workers, women, and professionals who were directly involved in the struggles of the masses.

On several occasions, (e.g., during elections or nationwide coordinated people's actions) the program embarked on nationwide special coverage. Anchors of several block-time radio programs nationwide, that had become part of NNB's network, were tapped as correspondents and reporters. On-air cultural events and drama series also became part of NNB Specials.

The drama specials were specially made to cater to the majority of Filipinos who were hooked on radio drama. But, instead of the usual soap opera, the NNB drama specials dwelt on the phenomenon of enforced disappearances (the characters were a family of fireflies in search of their father); the Balangiga Bells of Samar, and the St. Louis Exposition where indigenous Filipinos were exhibited like animals in the US in the 1900s. The drama specials were recorded in Kodao office, using a video camera as recorder and old cushions and curtains for sound-proofing.

On its sixth month, the NNB was cited as Best Public Affairs program by the KBP Golden Dove Awards, one of the most coveted awards in the broadcast industry in the Philippines. The radio program's production crew was the same people who served as Kodao's core staff (three people, initially), who shuttled between the needs of the daily radio program and that of video production. Later, as Kodao was slowly expanding, a researcher/guest coordinator was assigned for NNB.

Planning was done monthly (to line up the topics for the month) and weekly to adjust the topics and accommodate breaking issues. A weekly issue discussion, assessment, and tasking were also in place.

The NNB program was eventually closed down in 2006, when then

Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo cracked down on the opposition and declared a state of emergency as a response to the widespread protests that called for her ouster. The radio station owner, which aired NNB was a close relative of then Pres. Arroyo. (<http://www.bulatlat.com/news/6-6/6-6-radio.htm>)

NNB Goes to Barangay, an off-studio broadcast

On NNB's 8th month, the "NNB Goes to Barangay (villages)" was initially conceptualized to popularize the program and broaden its listenership. The idea was to find a host village/community organization where the program could be recorded as live and later aired as a special broadcast of NNB.

The NNB Goes to Barangay would be contributory to the efforts to organize the NNB listeners.

During the pilot broadcast, the group only had one microphone attached to a mini-DV camera for recording and an old cassette tape recorder to play back the program's jingle and other pre-recorded audio materials of the program's segments. With an outdated and improvised equipment, the first few out-of-studio recorded programs sounded hollow and not of broadcast quality. This improved as Kodao acquired newer equipment in the years to come.

The first "NNB Goes to Barangay" was held in the garage of the Workers Alliance Center office in Cavite with workers from the nearby export processing zone as the main audience. Succeeding off-studio episodes were held in the following areas:

1. Hacienda Looc, Batangas, among the peasants and fisherfolk who were threatened with displacement because of the establishment of a resort. The broadcast was held along the shores of Looc.
2. Lakeshore, in Mexico, Pampanga, among the peasants who

were threatened with displacement because of land conversion from rice fields to high-end housing project.

3. Hacienda Luisita, Tarlac. The program held two separate broadcasts with the farm workers and union members prior to planned workers' strike and after the bloody massacre.
4. Taytay, Rizal where the urban poor dwellers living under the bridge attended.
5. Little Samar, a fish port in Navotas City, where fish vendors and residents along the port attended.
6. Calaca, Batangas among the residents affected by the establishment of a coal plant.
7. Barangay Proj. 2 where the guests and participants were pre-school children enrolled in the Parents Alternative, Inc. day care center.

The Ngayon na, Bayan! off-studio broadcasts were complemented by Kodao's Sinehang Bayan where progressive films were shown after the broadcast. Each of these broadcasts was well attended by the members of the host community.

In between NNB goes to Barangay was a Palengke (market) tour where Kodao staff and hosts go to different marketplaces to discuss issues and promote the program using either the market's public address system or a megaphone. Leaflets about the radio program were also distributed to invite listeners.

The NNB Goes to Barangay would become the prototype of Kodao's narrowcasts in the succeeding years, especially after the NNB went off-air.

It should also be noted that as these projects moved, more and more listeners were joining and assisting the radio staff as it went from one barangay to the next.

Organizing of listeners

In another bid to promote the program and gain a wider audience, the listeners were gathered through a Christmas party, 10 months after NNB started airing. It was a meet-and-greet activity between the listeners and hosts and among the listeners themselves. Almost a hundred listeners attended and brought with them food and gifts for sharing.

On February 2002, the listeners and program hosts were again gathered to celebrate the first anniversary of NNB. More than a hundred were present; many of them came from the communities where NNB Goes to Barangay were held. The program ended with a “pledge” among the listeners to actively participate in the pursuit of good governance. It was during this gathering that some listeners thought of banding together. A month later, in March 2002, the NNB Crusaders for Good Government was born as an organization composed of NNB listeners.

The Crusaders held meetings and planned their own activities. They held discussion sessions and participated in activities related to or outside of the radio program. They were involved in the petition signing to lower prices of electricity and other similar national issues. They also supported the activities of NNB such as the palengke (market) tour and the broadcasts in villages. They printed t-shirts for the NNB, distributed leaflets to promote the program, and solicited items that the radio could giveaway through a raffle.

Later, a member of the Crusaders would become staff of Kodao productions and another one, Board member.

NNB Challenges

In the five years that NNB was on-air, marketing the program and getting sponsors were among the challenges. An advocacy program like NNB was definitely not commercially viable. Aside from this,

it was also airing on a low-frequency AM station, which was also not getting enough advertisers on its own.

During that period, NNB occasionally got non-government institutions to sponsor information plugs such as disaster preparedness and similar info materials that, by some means, helped sustain the program and the station's requirements. But, what was a more significant at the time was the harassment by State forces, initially through callers and texters who bullied the program hosts. On its sixth month, the National Alliance for Democracy (NAD) a civilian arm of the military and self-professed anti-communist organization put up its own program on the same radio station. The NAD program, which aired after NNB, did not have any structure. Through its hosts, who were provocateurs, only discredited NNB's previous episode through red-tagging. This harassment would be consistently experienced in the succeeding years along with the effort to establish radio programs and community radio stations.

2. *Kaya Natin 'To Kids!*

Kodao Productions served as technical partner in the production of a special radio program produced by children on children's rights in 2008 called Kaya Natin 'To Kids! (We can do this, Children!). It was a weekly radio show aired every Saturday afternoon over mainstream radio station DWIZ-AM in Pasig City.

The show was a joint project between children's rights organization Salinlahi (Offspring) Alliance for Children's Concerns, the Children's Rehabilitation Center, and the Association of the Rights of Children in Southeast Asia, with funding support from Save the Children-Sweden.

The radio show was ambitious. It wanted a team of children, including victims of domestic violence and state terrorism, to be the program anchors, reporters, radio drama actors, information plug voice talents and audio editors. Each episode's topic focused

on one of the basic rights of children while its radio show focused on one case of child abuse one of the broadcasters suffered. It wanted the entire process to be part of the victims' psycho-social rehabilitation from the violence they suffered. And through a radio program, it wanted to educate children and their parents, as well as society in general, about children's rights in a country that grievously suffers too many and too frequent violations of them. Kodao was in charge of training all of them in these aspects of broadcasting, with the supervision of their Salinlahi, CRC and ARCSEA. What followed were several sessions of trainings that ultimately gave birth to 21 episodes of groundbreaking broadcasting. It featured a newscast titled *Balitang Bata* (Children's News), an issue discussion portion titled *Usapang Bata* (Children's Discussion), an information plug on a featured child titled *Huwarang Bata* (A Child Worth Emulating) and a 12-minute radio drama written, directed and acted on by the children themselves.

Starting September 2012, the only women's political party in power in the world, Gabriela Women's Party, sponsored another season of *Kaya Natin 'To Kids* that aired in DZXL-AM on Sunday mornings at 10 to 11 o'clock. (<http://bulatlat.com/main/2012/09/03/kaya-natin-%E2%80%98to-kids-promoting-children%E2%80%99s-rights-on-air/>)

3. *Sali Na, Bayan!*

Four years after its award-winning radio show *Ngayon Na, Bayan!* (Now is the time!) was forcibly closed after the declaration of a State of National Emergency by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Kodao has been given another free timeslot to produce another daily program starting September 2010.

This time, the host radio station was DZUP-AM, the radio station on the main campus of the University of the Philippines. Taking off from foundations laid by *Ngayon Na, Bayan!* And DZUP's own slogan "*Kasali Ka!*" (You are included!), the show was entitled *Sali*

Na, Bayan! (Join us now!).

(<http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/03/campus-radio-turns-grassroots-voice/>)

Sali Na, Bayan! stuck to Ngayon Na, Bayan!'s tested format that included a newscast, issue discussion, information plugs, and radio dramas in its hour-long programming. Sectors and organizations were also given specific days of the week as focus, including labor, health, education, church, and economy. Each day also featured a different co-host to main program anchor Raymund B. Villanueva. (<http://bulatlat.com/main/2010/09/11/sali-na-bayan-amplifying-the-people%E2%80%99s-voice/>)

In 2011, the radio program became a finalist to both the Catholic Mass Media Awards and the Gawad Agong for Excellence in Journalism.

Sali Na, Bayan ended its run with DZUP in 2012.

4. *Tala-Akayan*

In January 2013, the Promotion of Church People's Response started co-producing with the Kapatirang Simbahan Para Sa Bayan and Kodao Productions a weekly radio show aired every Tuesday at six o'clock entitled Tala-Akayan. It was a news commentary program based on the social teachings of Churches over Veritas 846-AM, the main radio station of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines.

Anchored by Kodao and co-anchored by a rotation of Roman Catholic priests over its three-year run, Tala-Akayan was unique in that it commented on social issues of the day using the social teachings of the churches as lenses. Tala-Akayan was a radio program aimed at the propagation of the word, church teachings and the people's responses to the daily challenges of Christian living in a society replete with social injustices.

In its three-year run, Tala-Akayan won first prize in the Gawad Agong for Excellence in Journalism and also became a finalist in the Catholic Mass Media Awards in 2014. (<https://kodao.org/2015/10/30/kodao-wins-three-awards-at-3rd-gawad-agong/>)

While Kodao Productions's primary radio show was in a modern broadcast studio, it took its radio programming to grassroots communities and organized its listeners into a group called "NNB Crusaders."

It also helped establish two community radio stations, Radyo Cagayano and Radyo Sagada. Sadly, Radyo Cagayano was attacked by suspected members of the military in 2006.



Kodao's radio staff and volunteers record a radio program in a makeshift studio in its office in Quezon City in its early days.



Jola Diones-Mamangun assisting volunteer broadcasters during one of Radyo Sagada's trainings.



Ngayon Na, Bayan! host Sonia M. Capio holds a narrowcast under a bridge where an urban poor community was located. The discussion was about the lack of employment and housing service for the poor.



NNB Goes to the Barangay visits Little Samar in Valenzuela City to hold one of its programs. Such programs were recorded and were later broadcast over DZRJ-AM.



During Christmas season and radio show anniversaries, NNB Crusaders for Good Governance gathered to celebrate and discuss projects to help poor communities in line with the radio show's main public service and good governance themes.



TOP: Radyo Cagayano staff after the attack. Note that some of them were injured when the radio station was burnt.

BOTTOM: What remained of Radyo Cagayano's radio station and studio after the attack.

With IAWRT's help, IAWRT-Philippines embarked on an ambitious women-led disaster risk preparedness community radio station project in areas hit by supertyphoon Yolanda (Haiyan). It started with Radyo Tacloban and on to Radyo Sugbuanon.

Radyo Sugbuanon is now on its test broadcast phase while Radyo Tacloban is closely following behind.

In the near future, the project would proceed to Panay Island.



Some trainees of the Radyo Tacloban project on several of their first narrowcast events in the target communities. They are a mix of young and old volunteers from various backgrounds.



Photos of the radio volunteers trained and formed by IAWRT-Philippines for the Radyo Tacloban project. Note that most of them are youth and students.





The Radyo Tacloban project travelled on a monthly basis to farmers' and fisher folk's communities in Madridejos, Pinabacdao, and Kauswagan in Samar Province to hold narrowcast events organized by its radio volunteers. Here are some photos of the communities' participation.





As in the Radyo Tacloban project, the Radyo Sugbuanon project in Cebu province attracted more young volunteers. They underwent trainings to prepare them for the eventual establishment of their radio station.

After undergoing training, the radio volunteers also held narrowcast events in Barrio Ukoy in Bantayan Island in Cebu Province.





It was a momentous event when the Radyo Sugbuanon community radio station put up its makeshift tower and conducted its first-ever test broadcast.



In November 2017, Members of the AIWRT International Board, as well as delegates to the IAWRT Biennial Conference visited Bantay Island to participate in two narrowcasts and conduct trainings for the beneficiary community. Here is a remembrance of the event.



From Tacloban to Cebu to Panay: The IAWRT-funded community radio station project after Typhoon Haiyan

November 8, 2013 changed the Philippines in many ways. On the day the strongest typhoon to have ever hit land in Philippine history, killed thousands and caused hundreds of billions of pesos in damages to property and livelihood in a rampage that cut across the entire breadth of central Philippines. With sustained wind speeds at more than 150 miles per hour, Haiyan was classified as a supertyphoon. It laid waste to the Visayas group of islands and home to 17 million people. What was unimaginable even to a people used to strong typhoons became a real nightmare that lasted hours, leaving the entire world stunned at what nature could do to a people already vulnerable to effects of climate change.

The typhoon made landfall in the fishing town of Guian, Eastern Samar province as a Category 5 storm and barrelled its way to the regional center of Eastern Visayas, the beautiful little city of Tacloban in nearby Leyte province. Because of the presence of local, national and international journalists, the havoc caused by Typhoon Haiyan (local name Yolanda) became the most documented supertyphoon in all recorded history. And the horror was shared throughout the world.

The typhoon's fury affected more than 14 million people across 44 provinces, displacing 4.1 million people, killing an estimated 6,000 victims and leaving 1,800 missing. In addition, 1.1 million houses were either partially or totally damaged, 33 million coconut trees (a major source of livelihoods) were destroyed, and the livelihood of 5.9 million workers were disrupted. (<https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/typhoon-haiyan-facts>) But these initial lists of destruction and death were just the

beginnings of a protracted horror. The slow, inefficient and inadequate response of the Philippine government in the aftermath of Supertyphoon Haiyan is felt even to this day, nearly five years after it happened. Thousands more, especially children, subsequently died due to many factors brought about by the destruction. Were it not for the outpouring of support from foreign government and international organizations, many more, especially the children and the elderly would not have survived the scarcity of water, food, medicine and shelter.

Hundreds of thousands of families have yet to fully recover and go back to living in real houses. Many have been driven away from the seaside communities, preventing them from rebuilding their houses and take up their traditional forms of livelihood such as fishing and trading. Farmers, including coconut and rice farmers, have yet to recover, plunging them deeper into poverty and prolonging their recovery.

The need for a disaster radio station

The need for a radio station dedicated for disaster preparedness, response, relief, and rehabilitation was underscored in no uncertain terms by Supertyphoon Haiyan. While radio stations all over the country, not just along the path of the storm, took pains to alert the people about the possible destruction of Haiyan, it was painfully clear that majority, if not all, were not equipped on disaster preparedness broadcasting. In fact, several broadcasters in Tacloban City have gone missing to this day and are presumed dead, obviously unaware they themselves were in grave danger when they kept on broadcasting even when the storm was on its way.

Supertyphoon Haiyan has destroyed all radio stations directly in its path. Not one radio station was left to serve the victims on Samar, Leyte, Cebu, Panay and Palawan islands, except powerful ones based in major cities that were somehow spared because they were relative from the past of the storm. There was “dead air” over the death and destruction of Haiyan.

The first radio station to put up an emergency broadcasting facility was California-based church-based group Far East Broadcasting Company that went to Tacloban mere days after the storm and hastily put up a low-power radio station. Its station temporarily broadcasted on the 98.7 FM frequency. (<https://www.febc.org/philippines-update-first-response-in-tacloban-after-typhoon-haiyan>) The first local radio station to put up its relay station back in Tacloban City was DZRH, and it only happened after more than a week after the storm.

But it was only in Tacloban that radio stations were put back up relatively within a short period of time after the disaster and made an impact in the response and relief of victims. Elsewhere, it took months for this to happen, if at all. The nearly-impossible task of recovery has become even more difficult in the absence of a mass medium to inform, educate and assist the victims.

In its coverage of the storm's destruction in Tacloban and elsewhere, Kodao Productions saw the need for stand-alone disaster preparedness, response and rehabilitation-focused community-based radio stations in a country that is frequented by ever-intensifying weather disturbances and other kinds of disasters.

Initial efforts

Days after Typhoon Haiyan struck the central part of the Philippines causing massive losses in lives and property, two emergency broadcasting advocacy groups contacted IAWRT-Philippines and Kodao Productions on how to bring in equipment and set up an emergency radio station in Tacloban City. First to communicate was IAWRT USA chapter head and IAWRT International Board member Sheila Katzman who contacted fellow chapter head Jola Diones Mamangun of IAWRT Philippines. From their communications was launched an appeal to help in the establishment of an emergency radio station at a Yolanda-devastated area. (<https://www.iawrt.org/looking->

assistance-building-emergency-radio-station). Subsequently, United Kingdom-based RadioActive communicated with IAWRT Philippines, again through IAWRT channels, until its representatives arrived in the Philippines with its equipment. They were met in Makati City where they sought opinion on where to set up their emergency radio station. IAWRT-Philippines tried to convince RadioActive to set up in other disaster-stricken areas but the international group was already set on Eastern Visayas as their base of operations. The RadioActive emergency radio station eventually ended up setting up in Guian, Easter Samar.

Next to communicate with Kodao was AMARC (www.amarc.org), whose Asia Pacific officers wanted Kodao Productions to submit a proposal for an emergency radio station in a Haiyan-devastated location in the Philippines. It was with AMARC-AP that Kodao developed the concept of a mobile emergency radio station. Kodao duly submitted proposals but AMARC-AP failed to raise funds for such an assistance to materialize.

On its own, Kodao Productions travelled to Estancia in Iloilo Province a month after the storm to look into the possibility of reviving a moribund Radyo Natin station as a disaster relief and rehabilitation radio station. Estancia, at the center of the country's richest fishing ground and proud location of its most productive fishing port, suffered the most in terms of properties and livelihood lost, next to Tacloban City. Unfortunately, the owner of the previous Radyo Natin radio station in Estancia no longer knew where his equipment were after the storm and that he already lost his license to operate. Kodao had to apply as a new operator with the Radyo Natin network of the Manila Broadcasting Company if it wanted to broadcast using the license. It took Kodao a few weeks to decide to give it a try. Alas, a local businessman beat Kodao Productions to it and put up his own Radyo Natin radio station.

Amidst all these, the IAWRT Philippine Chapter was revived. It held its general assembly on November 30, 2013, a mere three weeks after Supertyphoon Haiyan. Kodao Productions' Jola

Diones-Mamangun was elected chapter president. The timing could never be more fortuitous.

The IAWRT Community Radio Station Project in the Philippines From an emergency mobile radio station concept submitted to AMARC-AP, the IAWRT Philippine Chapter modified the project to be a women-led disaster response community radio station after IAWRT expressed openness to supporting the establishment of a community radio station in Tacloban City. In June 2014, during deliberations on Focus-supported projects at IAWRT International's Regional Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, Philippine Chapter president Jola Diones-Mamangun was asked to narrate about the situation in Typhoon Haiyan-hit areas. It was during her narration that shared that Kodao Productions had an existing proposal with AMARC about the establishment of a mobile disaster risk reduction and preparedness radio station in Tacloban City. At the end of the discussion, IAWRT-Philippines was asked to submit its proposal to IAWRT International. In its proposal, IAWRT-Philippines said that the project's general objectives were the following:

1. Create and operationalize an emergency mobile disaster response and rehabilitation radio station (EMDRRS) for deployment to other Yolanda-devastated areas, such as Eastern Leyte to help in retrieval, relief and rehabilitation efforts;
2. Utilize the EMDRRS in the identification of specific challenges to women and children in disaster areas and help in the resolution involving women and children in the said areas;
3. Utilize the EMDRRS in disaster response, retrieval, medical, relief and rehabilitation efforts by various sectors, both public and private; and
4. Create and operationalize an EMDRRS for deployment whenever and wherever in the future.

The proposal added that for the purpose of addressing the current and immediate needs of Typhoon Yolanda survivors, particularly women and children, an EMDRRS shall be assembled and

deployed immediately after the approval of the proposal and fund availability has been established. It will then be deployed without delay to Eastern Leyte, ready for broadcast.

The EMDRRS' programming shall include news and commentary; disaster relief, medical, retrieval and rehabilitation programs; and entertainment programs. It will focus and allocate substantial airtime to the most affected sectors of the identified broadcast area: women and children, peasants, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, youth, and others. Airtime shall also be allocated for disaster response agencies and local government units, as well as citizen and church-initiated disaster and relief efforts. A wealth of disaster-preparedness, mitigation, response, medical and rehabilitation resources shall be transformed to audio format and in local languages for constant broadcast.

On April 2015, then AMARC International Vice President Gerd Linger interviewed Diones-Mamangun if it was her, IAWRT-Philippines or Kodao that would be standing as project proponent for the radio station project. Diones-Mamangun replied that it would be IAWRT-Philippines with Kodao Productions as technical partner.

IAWRT-International treasurer Ananya Chakraborti called Diones-Mamangun in August 2015 to inform her that IAWRT-Philippines' proposal for a woman-led disaster risk reduction preparedness radio station was approved. Diones-Mamangun was also informed that she was tasked to be the project manager. The approved project was amended to a permanent radio station based in Tacloban City.

A Memorandum of Agreement was duly signed later in the year between IAWRT-Philippines and IAWRT International. In October 2015, ten thousand US dollars was remitted to IAWRT-Philippines representing the first tranche of funding of the project. The amount was for the equipment and training of volunteer broadcasters of the project then already dubbed "Radyo Tacloban."

The project's first-ever training was immediately held in Tacloban City.

Trainings and Narrowcasts

In October 2 to 6, 2015, the first training activity was held in Tacloban City with 15 participants from the Leyte and Samar provinces. The participants were mostly peasant youth volunteers while the rest were composed of urban poor and fisherfolk from the city itself. The trainers were IAWART-Philippine members Diones-Mamangun and Marvie Matura and May Macapobre, along with Kodao's Raymund Villanueva. Technical support and coordination was provided by Tacloban City-based alternative media outfit Eastern Vista.

Barely two weeks after, in October 22-24, a Psychological-Social and Community Broadcast Training was held at the University of the Philippines-Tacloban Campus. This second training was attended by 18 volunteers from the Samar and Leyte provinces. The psycho-social component of the community radio station project was deemed important as the participants and potential volunteer broadcasters were themselves victims of the typhoon. On the occasion of the second anniversary of Typhoon Yolanda on November 2015, the training participants were assigned to cover the first-ever podcast of the various activities in Tacloban City commemorating the disaster. Five teams composed of three volunteers each were organized and deployed to five different areas and activities. Their coverage, in a manner of speaking, was their baptism of fire.

Upon receipt of the second tranche of funding support from IAWRT International, the first-ever narrowcast was organized in the remote community of Mambog, Pinabacdao, Samar Province on July 23, 2016. The trainees and volunteer broadcasters held a narrowcast with around 200 members of the community, in cooperation with community based organizations Gabriela

(women) and Kauswagan Parag-Uma (farmers).

On August 22, 2016, another narrowcast was held in Tacloban City with the Center for Environmental Concerns and Eastern Vista. It was participated in by 12 volunteers from hardest-hit communities, five volunteer broadcasters and 10 households.

In September 11, 2016, IAWRT International officers Bibiana Pierre, Marie Melgard and Ananya Chakraborti witnessed the third narrowcast in Mambog, Pinabacdao, Samar. It was organized by 15 volunteer broadcasters and attended by 150 residents of the community.

Finally, on the occasion of the third anniversary of Typhoon Yolanda, a podcast was held in Tacloban City by 10 volunteer broadcasters as well as Kodao's Raymund Villanueva and Eastern Vista's Kelvin Tonzon. This was the culmination of another training activity from November 6 to 8, 2016.

While all these were happening, efforts to establish the radio station in Tacloban City were continuously undertaken. Following a series of meetings, the then Bishop of the East Jurisdictional Area of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines agreed to host the prospective radio station at his regional headquarters in Tacloban City that offered security as it was within a church-owned hospital compound in downtown Tacloban City.

Architectural and engineering designs of the radio station were also discussed. Eventually, then Bishop Jaime Moriles asked for some deferment as a new bishopric was being constructed where he wanted the radio station to be eventually located.

Meanwhile, Michael Advincula, a benefactor of the series of trainings under the Radyo Tacloban project was asked to undergo an internship program with Kodao Productions in Manila, with the long-term goal of asking him to take on greater responsibilities as a management level staff once Radyo Tacloban is fully on air. He

stayed with Kodao from December 2016 to February 2016.

Transfer to Cebu's Bantayan Island

In accordance with its original concept as a mobile disaster risk reduction and preparedness radio station and in response to queries by IAWRT-Philippines members based in the Central Visayas island province of Cebu, discussions were held on the possibility of organizing trainings for volunteer radio broadcasters in Cebu with the end view that another similar radio station would also be established in the remote island of Bantayan, also hard-hit by Typhoon Yolanda. A partnership between IAWRT-Philippines and the Farmers' Development Center (FARDEC) was then established in the first quarter of 2017.

In March 2017, IAWRT-Philippines's mobile disaster radio project moved to Central Visayas while keeping its group of trained volunteer broadcasters in Samar and Leyte intact. At the end of his Kodao internship, however, Advincula had been asked to work with the project in Cebu, particularly in Bantayan Island on the northernmost tip of Cebu province.

In March 20, and in March 23 to 24, scriptwriting and on-board presence training activities were held in Cebu City. It was participated in by six community women and given by both IAWRT-Philippine members and FARDEC staff. The next day, the entire team travelled to Bantayan Island and held their first narrowcast event that consisted of two episodes. Up to 80 residents of Barrio Patao as well as residents from islet communities nearby also attended the event. It was in the said event that the desire of the community to have their own community radio station was established.

Another narrowcast was held in May 21, 2017, this time in Barrio Madrideojos in Bantayan Island by the volunteers and FARDEC. Yet another was held on June 30, 2017 in Cebu City, this time with the Center for Development Education and Training attended

by an audience of 170 people from 10 communities. A two-day narrowcast with Cebu City workers was held in July 20 and 21, 2017. In August 23 and 24, 2017, the project, now called Radyo Sugbuanon, held a two-day narrowcast and podcast event in Cebu City with indigenous peoples who were victims of forced evacuation from Mindanao.

In November 6 and 7, 2017, Radyo Sugbuanon held narrowcast and podcast events in Barario Patao as part of the 37th Biennial Conference of IAWRT International. It was attended by around 60 residents of the community, as well as IAWRT International Board officers and IAWRT Philippines members and volunteers. During the activity, IAWRT International officers conducted community safety, basic video and information technology, and gender mainstreaming project trainings. The series of activities were punctuated by a community welcome and send-off to the international visitors. Five radio volunteers from Radyo Tacloban also attended.

In January 29 and 30, 2018, seven volunteers from both the Radyo Tacloban and Radyo Sugbuanon projects travelled to Bacolod City in Negros Occidental Province to attend a hands-on training on setting up of a radio transmitter. They visited several low-power community radio stations to learn how to construct a tower as well as set up an antenna and transmitter prior to Radyo Sugbuanon's test broadcast.

Meanwhile, the Radyo Tacloban project visited Metro Manila in February 27, 2018 where they held a narrowcast in front of the national office of the Department of Agriculture. It was participated in by 25 farmers from Samar and Leyte provinces who wanted to air their grievances on the effects of pests on their crops and the government's lack of response to their plight.

In February, another narrowcast was held in Barrio Madrideo in Bantayan Island, as part of the regular training and familiarization process of the Radyo Sugbuanon project. It was attended by 11

persons, including a facilitator from IAWRT Philippines.

In March 4, 2018, a radio production management training was held in Barrio Patao in Bantayan Island, participated in by 11 radio volunteers and a facilitator from IAWRT Philippines. This was the last training prior to the first-ever Radyo Sugbuanon test broadcast, which happened on March 5, 2018. It was directly participated in by 15 community members, three children and three IAWRT members while the surrounding communities listened to their radio sets. Many residents had tears in their eyes while the test broadcast was airing as their dream of having a community radio station of their own was finally happening.

Harassments

Everything was not as smooth sailing as this narration of events may make it out to be, however.

Following Radyo Sugbuanon's test broadcast in March, however, members of the local police and the local government units have made several visits to Barrio Patao to inquire about the project. Despite efforts by the community to explain that it was only a test broadcast and that project implementers are in the process of securing all the necessary permits with the National Telecommunications Commission, they were sternly warned not to broadcast again until national and local government permits have been secured.

Members of the community said they felt harassed by the visits. Nonetheless, they remain hopeful that their now beloved Radyo Sugbuanon would continue and eventually punch the airwaves as a legal entity.

In the meantime, they reverted to holding narrowcasts, as they did in Barrio Bunakan in March 17, 2018, in Barrio Masilang in April 26, 2018, and in Barrio Ukoy in May 29, 2018, all in Bantayan Island. All three subsequent narrowcasts were attended by around

40 participants.

As a result of the harassments from the local government and the local police, IAWRT-Philippines and the project management have decided to “borrow” Radyo Sugbuanon’s 30-watt transmitter to bring it to Radyo Tacloban to give it the chance to broadcast while the situation in Bantayan Island is being resolved.

On to Panay Island

As previously described, Supertyphoon Yolanda rampaged through the Visayan region when it hit Central Philippines that fateful day of November 8, 2013. One of the heavily-damaged regions was the major island of Panay which is home to Iloilo, Antique, Capiz and Aklan Provinces.

Very recently—while this book was being written, in fact—IAWRT Philippines president and project manager Jola Diones-Mamangun travelled to Iloilo City to pave the way for the Panay Island component of the project. This is in line with the mobile character of the community radio project.

Diones-Mamangun reported that the Panay Disaster Response Center has agreed to be the local partner, as well as its partner communities. And, while details still need to be threshed-out, the PDRC has already agreed to organize a community radio broadcasting training sometime in October 2018. In time for the fifth anniversary of Typhoon Yolanda on November 8, 2018, the Panay Island component of the project shall hold its first-ever narrowcast at a local community. The event will show the host and partner communities how the project will be implemented, as it did with Radyo Tacloban and Radyo Sugbuanon.

Conclusion and Challenges

The power of a radio broadcast is fully appreciated by the people's movement to complement its multi-faceted work of disseminating information and in mobilizing and organizing the poor majority of the people, especially in rural areas. In many instances, too, the radio broadcasts serve as a venue to educate and improve the literacy of the community members.

The effort to establish community radio stations, owned and operated by the community, rested on the strength of their organizations. It is a product of the advance of the people's movement, thus its broadcasts reflect the course the people's movement take. The community radio is deeply-rooted in the people's movement and logically serves the needs of the different sectors in the community.

The mobilization of community members in building Radyo Cagayano was exemplary. It manifested the people's will and desire to push for positive changes in their community, expressed through the radio. Every nail, hollow block, and drop of paint the village members contributed to set-up and build Radyo Cagayano came from their hard-earned peso.

That narrowcasts in communities where equipment and infrastructure for studio broadcast is absent is another proof of the people's appreciation of the power of radio and its program format. It also serves as their hands-on training, so to speak, as well as inspiration to forge ahead and establish an honest-to-goodness community radio station.

The Radyo Tacloban and Radyo Sugbuanon projects show the communities' determination to establish their own community radio stations. Despite fears that they do not have the education and training to become radio broadcasters, the lack of resources and government support, and difficulty in securing permits and licenses, they are resolved to do their best until their dreams come

to fruition.

That community radio stations empower the people in the community is beyond doubt. The participation of peasants, indigenous peoples, or mothers or the youth as broadcasters without prior formal education literally and figuratively broke the “culture of silence” among them. Hearing their own voices, speaking about their own lives, and being listened to by their own community gave them confidence. The basic trainings that were provided them—news writing, reporting, hosting—propel them to do their best.

Women’s participation in the setting-up of community radio stations is most significant. In many instances, they are the driving force in pushing for the realization of the project. They take part in all aspects of the project—conceptualization, operations, and sustaining. For them, there are no small or big tasks; only the will to push for what they believe would be beneficial for their families and to the community.

The combined strength of a strong people’s movement and the power of radio can be overwhelming and threatening to those who are in power. A well-informed citizenry is empowered; and it makes them realize their capacity to change the oppressive and exploitative situation they are in. This has become a collective experience among those who attempted and/or actually operating community radio stations—whether broadcasts or narrowcasts. Right from its inception, the community radio stations that were set up alarmed the government thus, prevented its realization through the use of its State forces.

With such a reaction from the government, parrying the red-tagging and harassment by State forces became intrinsic in the establishment and operations of the community radio stations. Worse, some of the stations that were envisioned did not materialize.

It should be emphasized that community radio stations in the

Philippines have no support from the government. In fact, only the giant commercial broadcasting corporations could meet and afford the stringent requirements in setting up community radio stations. Among these requirements is the acquisition of a congressional franchise before an entity could get into broadcasting.

What could have been a viable option for people's organizations, the 100 watt low-powered FM stations was stopped in favour of the 500 watts that now requires congressional franchise. The establishment of pseudo-community radio stations that operate commercially had pushed the community radio away from the hands of the ordinary folk.

With the prevailing commercial nature of operating radio stations, funding and sustainability become a heavy task, especially among those who desire to set up community radios the most—the peasants and indigenous peoples in the rural areas and the poor and workers in urban centers, whose voices are drowned by the dominantly profit-driven broadcast industry.

Locally, there is a need for a strong community radio movement that should push for government recognition of non-profit, community-owned radio stations as a form of promoting people's right to information—democratizing access to communication, giving voice to the voiceless.

It is in this context that the role of community radio advocates and international organizations such as IAWRT in supporting the establishment of community radio stations—in the Philippines and in other poor and underdeveloped countries—should be underscored. It is also in this context that future partnerships are strengthened.

