

Topic 2: Governance Summary



Overview of Session

- Debate format was good for discussing governance which has a lot of dichotomy (“AND”) – Local and national, formal and informal, customary and statutory, majority and minority
- Debate forced panel to advocate absolute positions whereas the audience was making compromises so we were able to capture the range of experiences, issues and ideas.
- Generated a number of questions: For governance often times the answers are the questions.
 - We flagged a lot of issues that need to be considered rather than the solutions.
- People didn’t leave the room during the 3 hours!

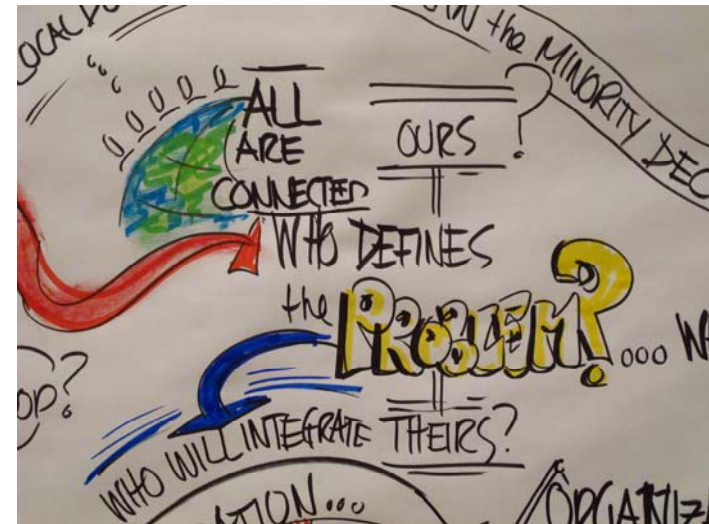
Message 1: There are “many Mekongs”

- Bio-physical – from Tibetan Plateau to Vietnam Delta
- The socio-cultural and the historical Mekong crossing many kingdoms, tribes and ethnic groups
- Political – different countries, different political systems
- MRC and regional organizations
- This demonstrates the diversity of institutions at all different scales (formal, informal, traditional, imposed, etc)



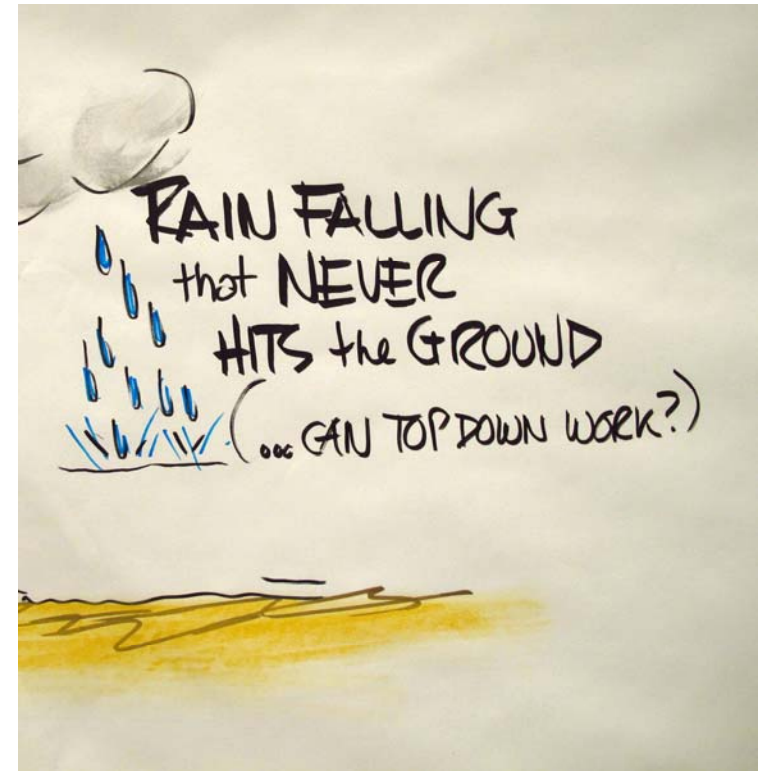
Message 2: “Nothing is entirely local anymore, everything is connected”

- Us vs. them – those who manage and those who are managed. Good governance is about enlarging the “we”
- Integration: Who defines the problems, who decides
- The need for flexibility for both government and local informal institutions; government can learn from community experiences
- Competition between different organizations for resources is a problem for coordination/integration
- Who does the integration: done by the person who is technically recognized:
 - 1) at local level a local expert (not just headman)
 - 2) at national level could be an independently elected/appointed person



Message 3: Good governance is about “the rain drops reaching the ground”

- Governance is the way in which society shares power, benefits and risks
- Responsibility without resources and authority is difficult
- Tyranny of the majority vs tyranny of minority – who decides.
- Dialogue needs to occur with all and it is not all local. On the other hand, if we consult too much the resulting consensus tends to be a ‘grey mess’



Message 4: Local institutions are necessary but not enough

- Without strong local institutions implementation will not occur. It is the relationship between different organizations rather than a matter of scaling up or scaling down
- In less developed countries the local governance mechanisms are more important
- Local institutions are 'weakening' in certain areas where young generation is moving away. Need to encourage the young generation to participate and innovate