



**15th INTERNATIONAL  
ANTI-CORRUPTION  
CONFERENCE**

**MOBILISING PEOPLE:  
CONNECTING AGENTS OF CHANGE**

**BRASÍLIA BRAZIL  
7-10 NOVEMBER 2012**

### **Long Session Report: Game Changers**

**Session Title:** Downtown Community: The Camera is Mightier Than...

**Date & Time:** 9 November 2012, 17:30 – 19:30

**Report prepared by:** Olga Kravtsova, Director, Journalism  
Advancement and Support Center

**Experts:**

**Jon Alpert**

Co-founder, co-director, Downtown Community Television Center

**Olga Kravtsova**

Director, Journalism Advancement and Support Center

**Moderated by: Jon Alpert**

**Session coordinated by: Jon Alpert**

#### **Main issues raised in kick off remarks. What's the focus of the session?**

Media is crucial in fighting corruption – it helps provide transparency and mobilize people.

New York-based Downtown Community Television Center (DCTV) was founded by Jon Alpert and Keiko Tsuno in 1972. Now DCTV is the largest most honored community media center in the US. They train hundreds of high school students and thousands of independent filmmakers on how to use media to improve their lives and their community.

Jon Alpert has won 15 National Emmy Awards and basically every major journalism award in the US for his reports about war, corruption, and human rights. His team has worked all over the world helping journalists and citizens use media to fight corruption. They have supported whistle-blowers in government agencies in the United States, Mexico, and Philippines.

In the course of the session, Jon Alpert showed specific examples from the last four decades of how his team has used media – almost always successfully – to fight against corruption. The presenter described the specific corruption case, showed clips of the media that was used to fight it, and discussed the results with the audience.

During the session, we also talked about the dangers involved, and how to battle the forces that will try to shut reporters down.

Besides that, the session examined the available technologies that citizens and journalists can use. Strength of media was showcased, as well as its ability to promote justice and transparency.

**What initiatives have been showcased? Describe the Game Changing Strategies. Please be as detailed as possible, include web urls, name of the initiatives and indicate if local, regional or national.**

During the session there were case studies from fighting corruption in local New York city school boards, American health care system, moral corruption in famine-struck Cambodia, covering life of homeless people in New York and Philadelphia, corruption in the Philippines that lead to the overthrow of Marcos' dictatorship, corruption in American, Canadian and Mexican factories that allowed unsafe working conditions, corruption during the build-up to Olympics (especially relevant to Brazil which will be hosting the World Cup and the Olympics), corruption and dishonesty during the First Gulf War, government-based corruption that enables people smuggling from China into the United States.

There were also clips from a cross-country tour that tried to stimulate and promote community discussions that would encourage transparency and community action.

Finally, there were reports from Iraq that disclosed many things that the Bush administration was trying to keep secret, a clip from China that revealed the corruption that lead to the deaths of innocent school children during the earthquake ("China's Unnatural Disaster: the Tears of Sichuan Province", 2008).

And last there were clips from an unfinished investigation in Brazil that revealed one was thought to be suicides of Guarani Indians were actually murders in an attempt to steal the Indians' lands.

The main Game Changing Strategy here is to get people encouraged and excited by these real life examples. Nowadays everybody can access this technology. DCTV's examples inspire a lot of people. The participants can see how journalists and ordinary people can use media not only to change their local communities, but also to change the world history, and it's empowering.

DCTV's work has united like-minded people all over the world to bring about change. Media's function is to connect people, and it's a powerful multiplier, that's why it works.

Besides talking about successes, the discussion also dealt with failures and negative consequences.

The conference session helped widen the network of people from different parts of the world who can share and inspire each other with their media work.

The participants were encouraged to stay in touch with DCTV through its website, [www.dctvny.org](http://www.dctvny.org) and e-mail.

**Highlights: What are the main outcomes of this session? What's next?**

Encouraged by DCTV's experience, the session participants joined an online community of media makers from around the world to facilitate people to collaborate after our Brazilian meeting and beyond.

**What are the recommendations, follow-up Actions (200 words narrative form)**

Many of the participants from different parts of the world expressed their appreciation of the inspiring session and made contacts to develop joint projects in the future.

**What kind of questions came from the audience? (Please include interesting quotes)**

"This is absolutely fantastic stuff, and you're doing it in a right way – and you just have to keep on going! Thanks God that you're here!"  
(applause)

"I want to congratulate you for your efforts, your dedication, your courage, because few people have such courage..."

"These videos are really powerful!.."

"I just want to say thanks – it was amazing to see this. I'm also a filmmaker... How much do you keep the dialog with the people – specifically in Philippines and China, did you hear about any whistle-blowers, if anything happened to them (after they were filmed)?"

"I'm shocked. I'm very grateful to Jon Alpert for the documentaries. I wonder if we can build an international coalition..."

A number of the participants spoke highly about the session and commented it happened to be one of the most interesting at the conference.

**What could be done to promote cross-sector and cross-regional work related to the focus of this game changer session? (if applicable)**

**What should be done to create opportunities for scaling up the proven solutions discussed in the session? What and by whom?**

The session showed and proved that enthusiastic people who have time to make a report, passion about a particular subject and access to sources – can make a good story. In this sense Downtown Community Television Center's (which just celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year) experience is very inspiring for reporters and activists from all over the world.

**Key Insights Recommended to be included in the IACC Declaration**

We need to encourage media makers from all over the world to participate in the fight against corruption. We need to help them with the information, sustenance, support and protection. The media makers are important members of anti-corruption community. We have to help them find outlets for their work and provide training.

**Rapporteur's name and date submitted**

**Olga Kravtsova, 14 November 2012**

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