

GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY WATCH 2012

THE INTERNET AND CORRUPTION
Transparency and accountability online



Global Information Society Watch

2012



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Financial support provided by

Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (Hivos)
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)



Global Information Society Watch

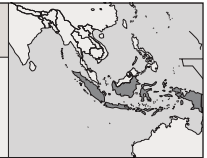
Published by APC and Hivos
2012

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ISSN: 2225-4625
ISBN: 978-92-95096-85-1
APC-201301-CIPP-R-EN-DIGITAL-176

INDONESIA

NO ROOM FOR BROKEN PROMISES IN AN ONLINE INDONESIA



EngageMedia

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Introduction

This report focuses on one way citizens are beginning to use online video to demand transparency and accountability in the Indonesian democratic process. It tells the story of the short video “Bupati (Tak Pernah) Ingkar Janji”, or “Regents (Never) Lie”, by Bowo Leksono, published on engagemedia.org on 20 March 2012. This video was produced by the Cinema Lovers Community (CLC) of Purbalingga, Central Java.

The video focuses on the real situation for citizens under the governance of the current regent of Purbalingga, Heru Sudjatmoko. It has been used in a local campaign to compare the policy actions and election promises of the elected representatives. The video has won a number of awards and created an immense amount of political discourse in a country where corruption has been the norm for decades. The campaign has been integrated with other online tools and spread nationwide. Similar methods look to be an integral part of the 2014 national elections in Indonesia.

Corruption, collusion and nepotism

It has been 14 years since the end of Suharto’s dictatorship and the beginning of “Reformasi” (Reformation) in Indonesia. One of the boldest demands of Reformation was to end the widespread practices associated with corruption, collusion and nepotism, recognised by Indonesians under the acronym of KKN (Korupsi, Kolusi, Nepotisme), and most clearly associated with the Suharto family’s political practices.

With Reformation came a period of transition with evidence of a more open and liberal political and social environment. Since the first election of a post-Suharto government in 1999, people inside and outside Indonesia have been watching carefully to see if the ingrained culture of KKN could be eliminated from the democratic process. Anti-corruption laws, namely Law No. 31 (1999) and Law No. 20 (2001) on the Eradication of Corruption, as well as Law No. 28 (1999) on Corruption-Free State

Governance were passed. Indonesia also ratified the UN Convention against Corruption in 2006.

Reformation also significantly transformed the 1945 Constitution. One of the fundamental changes is related to the election of regional leaders: governors, regents and mayors. During Suharto’s rule, regional leaders were chosen by local parliaments. The enactment of Law No. 32 (2004) on regional government meant that the election of regional leaders was changed to direct election, which gives each resident the right to vote for their local leader. Now, almost eight years after its implementation, the effectiveness of this law is being questioned. Despite direct election, local leaders are not keeping their promises.¹ Many Indonesians claim that the way campaigns are run, based on corrupt business dealings, is still not democratic, and produces leaders similar to those during the “New Order” of the Suharto regime.²

Many cases of electoral fraud in direct elections have been uncovered; physical violence and intimidation still occur around local elections; riots often occur in certain regions when there are particularly contentious campaigns; and vote buying often takes place in almost all regions.³ The national government this year proposed a bill to change the process of local elections, taking it back to indirect election through local parliament.⁴ This issue has attracted much debate, not only among politicians but also among citizens who still feel they do not have a say in their leadership.

The Cinema Lovers Community demands accountability

One way young people are using technology to participate in this complex issue is through online video. One group, the CLC of Purbalingga, is demanding transparency and accountability by

1 www.engagemedia.org/Members/clc_purbalingga/videos/Bupati-tak-pernah-ingkar-janji.mp4/view

2 Pradhanawati, A. (2011) Kekerasan Politik Dan Kerusuhan Sosial Dalam PemiluKada, *Forum*, 39(2). ejournal.undip.ac.id/index.php/forum/article/view/3151

3 Somba, N. D. (2012) Four dead, Tolikara in chaos as rivals riot in regency election, *The Jakarta Post*, 21 February. www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/02/21/four-dead-tolikara-chaos-rivals-riot-regency-election.html

4 Faiz, P. M. (2011) Defending the Direct Governatorial Election in Indonesia, *Law Journal*, 9 May. faizlawjournal.blogspot.com.au/2011/05/defending-direct-gubernatorial-election.html

combining video evidence of campaign promises with the stories of people affected by those promises. The CLC Purbalingga was formed in 2006 and holds an annual film festival that is not only about screening new local work, but also includes workshops on documentary filmmaking, researching and creating video databases. It has a broad network of young artists, activists and students in Purbalingga city and includes around 15 independent film/video production houses.

The CLC also runs a programme called “A Gift for Our Beloved City” which is about celebrating their city’s anniversary. In 2010, with the rising debate around local elections, they invited proposals for films that engaged with the topic of local government policies.

In 2010, the CLC began the production of “Regents (Never) Lie”. The filmmaker obtained documentation from a number of cameramen covering the 2010 election campaign. This footage showed the then-candidate for regent voicing a range of promises.

The video is structured around these promises, beginning with “Promises for Workers”, and concluding with “Promises for the Environment”. The soundtrack brings together local folk, punk and hip-hop musicians whose lyrics also point out the discrepancy between political promises and reality. The CLC conducted research for one year after the election, which revealed that none of these promises had been kept. They found evidence of a lack of change for everyday people, despite dramatic political rhetoric. The touching stories of a number of workers of Purbalingga, whose voices are rarely heard during election time, show that these election promises have little to do with real change in people’s lives.

Purbalingga is home to a large number of foreign-owned factories that make it the biggest manufacturer and exporter of wigs and mannequins in Indonesia. Of the 30,000 workers in these factories, 90% are female, according to 2009 data from the Purbalingga Department of Labour. Many of these workers leave school to work in the factories, and up to 30% of them do not receive the standard minimum monthly wage for Purbalingga, which is IDR 818,500 (USD 90). While the regent promised increased wages if elected, many workers in Purbalingga still survive earning well below this minimum. Those who appear in the video say they earn only IDR 100,000 (USD 10) every two weeks. These are amongst the lowest paid workers in Indonesia.

In a concurrent project, the CLC helped groups of Sukasari high school students in the subdistrict of Kutasari to conduct research on working

conditions, and these students found that most of the mannequin factories in nearby areas were using underage workers. This research became the foundation of another CLC video called “Mata Buruh/Workers’ Eyes”.⁵

To give these videos the necessary platform to criticise local government openly, the CLC hosts public screening events, showcasing local culture and opening political discussions. “Regents (Never) Lie” was screened widely in local cafés, at schools, and in makeshift open-air cinemas. The CLC organised discussions, sent thousands of text messages, posted on social media, and blogged furiously.⁶ Soon after, pro-democracy activists across the nation became interested in this as a model for encouraging citizens to demand transparency from their politicians.

Purbalingga’s stories circulate

The CLC’s audience is made up of followers not only in Purbalingga, but also nearby cities like Cilacap and Purwokerto. The collective has been steadily building this following since they first created a mailing list in 2006. The list quickly became popular in Jakarta, where many people from Purbalingga and other places in Central Java have moved to work. The mailing list, which circulates a lot of information in the local Central Java dialect as well as Indonesian and focuses on local political issues, enables the CLC to organise at a national level. CLC videos are regularly screened in Tangerang, a workers’ area of Jakarta, for instance. In addition, the CLC now runs a Facebook group that has over 700 members.

By December 2011, after the video had been in circulation just a few months, the regent was forced to respond to its popularity. He sent a text message to the filmmaker, Bowo Leksono:

Thank you for this exposure which is tendentious. If you are acting in good faith, I think you can leave those who feel they have not had “promises” fulfilled to communicate to me directly. But if you have any other intention, of course that is another story. And if that is so, please just come forward. Thank you.

When the CLC launched the video, they expected some degree of negative reaction from the local government, but not constant surveillance. CLC members say that members have been closely monitored by the police. By the end of December

5 clc-purbalingga.blogspot.com/2011/12/dokumenter-buruh-dibawah-usia.html

6 clc-purbalingga.blogspot.com.au

2012, although the film was not officially banned, the police had begun intervening in its distribution. A community screening in Purbalingga was shut down by local police officers, who said that the CLC had not gained permission for a public event (official permission for such a screening is rare, yet its requirement is often used by authorities to control particular gatherings in Indonesia).⁷

With the video, the CLC has gained access to a wider advocacy network. Now anti-corruption NGOs like Indonesian Corruption Watch help the CLC to screen their videos. Since early May 2012, in response to the video, the Forum for Purbalingga Citizens against Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism (FWPB KKN) has gathered together several civil society organisations to create an organised anti-corruption movement in Purbalingga. The political situation in Purbalingga is now becoming more heated, and mainstream media, such as newspapers and online news media, are digging into the allegations of corruption against the regent.

These efforts connect with other anti-corruption initiatives leading up to the 2014 election in Indonesia. For instance, a recently launched website, korupedia.org – a conflation of “korupsi” (corruption) and Wikipedia – is acting as an online reference tool on the history of corruption, most controversially, by naming corruptors convicted under one of Indonesia’s many anti-corruption or anti-bribery laws put in place since the end of the New Order. The website was created by a coalition of prominent anti-corruption figures and NGOs as well as the technology advocacy group AirPutih.⁸ It gathers background information about individuals convicted of corruption across Indonesia. Activists say that this website will help educate people by providing more data and knowledge about corruption. There is not enough awareness of corruption cases in Indonesia, and cases are quickly forgotten after those found guilty serve light sentences. Many of these corrupt politicians are planning to run in the 2014 national elections. Every corruption case is shown as a red dot on korupedia’s map, not surprisingly with a high concentration in central Java. Politicians in Purbalingga and elsewhere are keen to keep their names off this site.

The government has been forced to respond, and, recently, the regent signed an “integrity pact” for the eradication of corruption, collusion and nepotism.⁹ The pact states that all government officials will only accept earnings from honest activity. While this pact is more like a moral code than a binding legal agreement, the media has publicised it widely, and it is unlikely to be forgotten in the campaigns of the 2014 election.

Conclusion

Corruption is still widespread in Indonesian politics. Data presented by the Commission of Corruption Eradication (KPK) shows that there are ten governors and 158 mayors or regents, currently in office, who have been convicted for corruption.¹⁰

“Regents (Never) Lie” was screened in July at the 2012 South-to-South Film Festival in Jakarta to an enthusiastic audience. Festival directors stated that it was one of the strongest demonstrations of how technology can contribute to activism.¹¹ Hopefully, it is just the beginning.

Action steps

- Watch the video with English subtitles at EngageMedia and share: www.engagemedia.org/Members/clc_purbalingga/videos/Bupati-tak-pernah-ingkar-janji.mp4/view
- Support community filmmakers.
- Contribute to the subtitling of Southeast Asian social justice videos. Join the EngageMedia subtitling team at www.universalsubtitles.org/en/teams/engagemedia
- Share this video with anti-corruption NGOs. ■

7 Priyatni (2011) Film Dokumenter 'Terpanas' Tahun 2011 'Bupati (Tak Pernah) Ingkar Janji', *KOMPAS Forum*, 28 March. forum.kompas.com/nasional/72968-film-dokumenter-terpanas-tahun-2011-bupati-tak-pernah-ingkar-janji.html

8 airputih.or.id

9 Finesso, G. M. (2012) Bupati Tanda Tangan Pakta Integritas Anti-Korupsi, *KOMPAS*, 15 March. regional.kompas.com/read/2012/03/15/1640566/Bupati.Tanda.Tangani.Pakta.Integritas.Anti-Korupsi

10 Ibid.

11 Indrasafitri, D. (2012) SToS 2012: Movies, meetings and more, *The Jakarta Post*, 25 February. www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/02/25/stos-2012-movies-meetings-and-more.html