



Tapestry of Asian NGO Leadership

stories, patterns, trends Vol.2

Tapestry of Asian Leadership: Stories, Patterns, Trends
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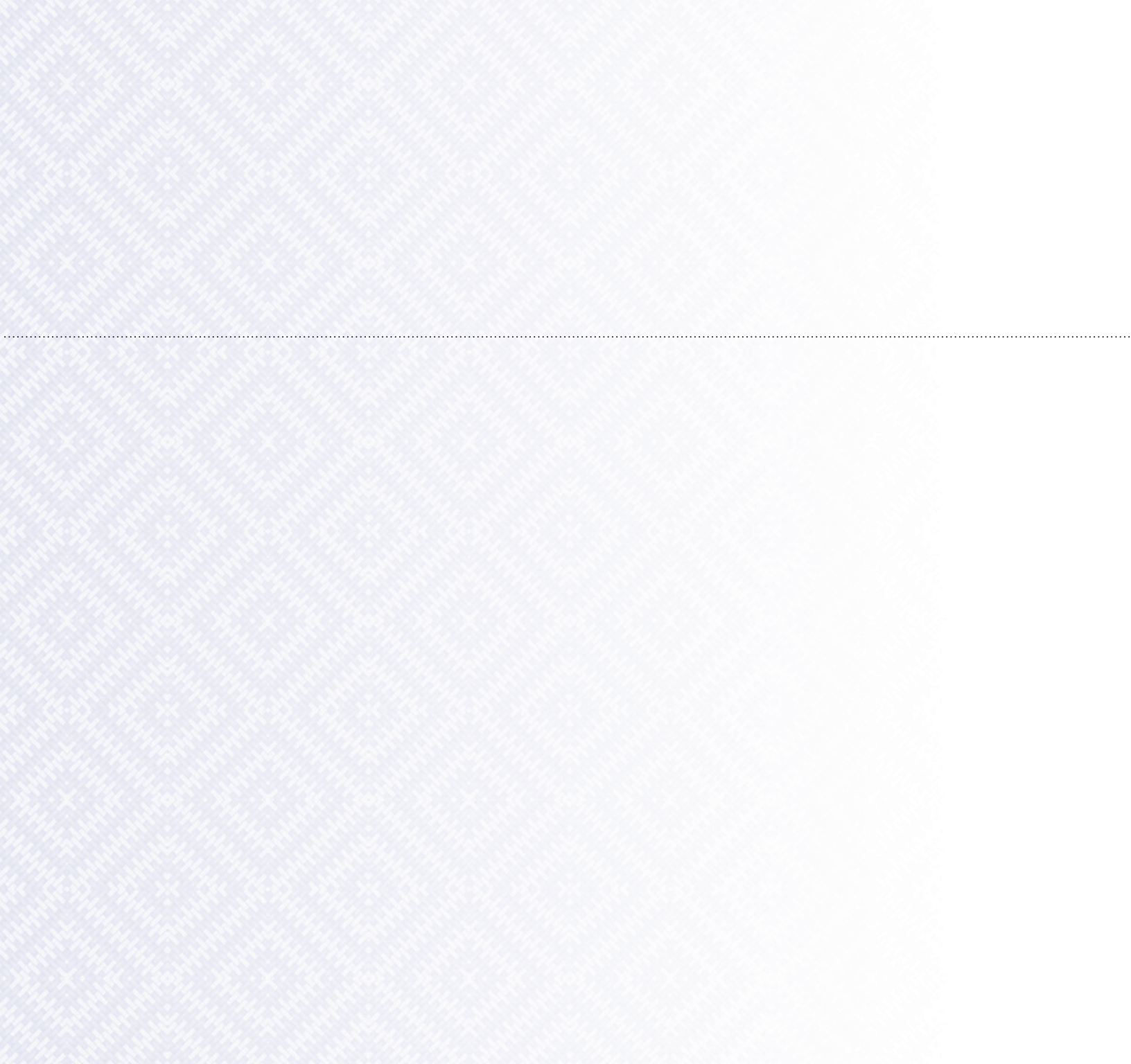
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**Tapestry of Asian NGO Leadership:
Stories, Patterns, Trends**



foreword

“Until you accept yourself, you block the way that leads to the growth you aspire to reach. This growth comes from your heart. Be kind to yourself.” Emmanuel

This second issue of the Asian NGO Leaders’ Dialogue book is a treasure to us – as individuals and as an organization for it contains well-kept stories of some of our leaders, colleagues and friends in the NGO community. Well kept, literally, because we are from a community that doesn’t talk much about ourselves, but more of others and of what we do as a group or community. Getting people to write about their leadership experiences was a challenging but, after some prodding and waiting, rewarding experience. Not only for us but, as many confessed, also for them who haven’t found time to reflect on what they have gone through or found it difficult to recognize their achievements as leaders in their own field.

While the stories are as diverse as the owners and are but best attempts of busy people to stop, reflect, write or narrate the highlights of their leadership experiences, they are amazing pieces that we hope will inspire and encourage us to discover what we have in ourselves, in our organizations and communities that could make us effective leaders in our quest for change in our society. We also documented two cases to help us in our discourse on leadership, based on the actual experiences of two NGO leaders and their institutions.

Reading the stories was a very humbling experience, yet encouraging, as we resonated with the patterns and saw common threads that many of us also found in our own weave. Their stories and ours will unfold, along with the changing contexts of our lives and communities. Many stories are yet to be told, written and documented. We hope that we will continue to find ways to share stories, to listen and to learn from one another. The dilemmas we face as leaders and the conflicts we overcome are but necessary ingredients in nurturing ourselves to be the best that we could be at this juncture in the development community.

The 2nd Asian NGO Leaders' Dialogue, the proceedings of which we share in this book also allowed us to progress in our effort to put together a collective reference point for an Asian NGO leadership development framework on which we hope to further put flesh and life as we pursue this track of transforming leadership in the NGO community.

We bask in the constant support of our Chairperson, Soetrisno Kusumohadi, who has been very dedicated in pursuing this project, especially in seeing new generation leaders grow and take action. Our thanks to Angelita Gregorio-Medel, our mentor, friend and facilitator who has accompanied us the past years in shaping our leadership program; to Rachel Polestico for her impressive case writing and for generously writing narrated stories of some leaders, struck by inspiration; and to Dulce Carandang-Simanivoung, constant AsiaDHRRA partner, who ably documented a case and also our dialogue. We thank the Open Society Institute-Southeast Asia Initiative for believing in this cooperation the second time around and Lany Rebagay, our colleague and secretariat A-team anchor for the leadership development program.

Most of all, our deep gratitude to all those who selflessly shared their beautiful stories.

Marlene D. Ramirez
Secretary General, AsiaDHRRA

chapter 1



Innovative NGO Leadership Experiences: The Philippines and Thailand Case

introduction

Case studies on Adaptive Leadership

The Asian NGO Leaders' Dialogue (ALD 1) held in 2003 at Cyberjaya, Malaysia focused on leadership in the context of globalization. In Cyberjaya, globalization in the beginning was a big unknown monster but after the session it was not any more. The desire to demystify globalization was accomplished and the participants felt more able to grasp the concept and its realities.

Their voices were fully captured in the book "Asian NGO Leadership Amidst Globalization" and in the Cyberjaya Declaration, which highlighted their critique of globalization, their personal commitments as development practitioners, and the challenges they see as a regional community.

For ALD 2, the focus was defining the concept of leadership in the midst of globalization. To aid the process, two leadership stories were highlighted. The innovative cases were chosen specifically because the leadership stories took place in the context of civil societies unsure and undefined relationship with the financial market and resource mobilization within local communities.



The Leadership Challenge

The 1970's in Philippine history was a time of great awakening. Many of the events that happened during this time bore fruits that lasted far beyond the later years. The dawning of social responsibility in every Filipino student's life took root if not blossomed during this time nurtured by the alternative pedagogy that sent students to experience the streets, the farms, and the slums. The "society as a classroom" exposed the students to the stark contrast between theory and practice, of the gnawing gap between the rich and the poor, and the ideals of democratic society against the horrors of the Marcos dictatorship. This was a time of hard choices for young students. Some eventually joined the underground, some

How to Raise a Billion Pesos and Not Profit From It: The Multi-faceted Leadership of Marissa Camacho-Reyes

By Rachel Polestico

worked for the government, some continued to inhabit the safety of academia or fled to other countries for better opportunities. Providing a common experience for the students to see the side of the poor was an investment that enabled them, in later years, to work together for a common cause despite varying professional allegiances.

Maria Socorro (Marissa) Camacho-Reyes was raised in such an environment. As a high school student in the 1970s at the College of the Holy Spirit in Manila, she joined rallies, organized unions, supported the work of farmers. She collaborated with students from other schools and other organizations when a united stand on issues was called for. As a member of an active student organization, KASAPI, she worked very closely with other student leaders who later became her colleagues in the NGO network, contacts in the government or advisers in business. Marissa was also part of an extensive network of socially conscious like-minded citizens from the associates of her activist and journalist mother, Leonarda, and war veteran and lawyer father, Teodoro Camacho, Jr.. These were also the type of people who made possible the ousting of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, the replacement of the Estrada government in 2001 and possibly in sustaining the effort to wage war against poverty till 2015.

The joint forces of civil society, the corporate-social-responsibility imbued sector of the business community, and the cooperation of some of the progressive members of the government brought political changes in Philippine society. As experienced in EDSA I and EDSA II,¹ governments can change and can raise hopes while the general situation of the people can remain unchanged or change very little if at all. These political revolutions must be accompanied by economic and social changes that must benefit the people. This was where the civil society can contribute substantially. However, one of the problems of NGOs was generating resources for its many development projects and programs. The dream of Marissa was for NGOs to have a significant pool of funds that is managed and owned by NGOs. Years of fund sourcing and negotiating with funding agencies to support development projects made her sensitive to

the conditionalities and stringent donor requirements imposed vis-à-vis the use of the funds. Perhaps if the funds is owned and managed by the NGOs, it could be spent and targeted to the priorities and initiatives coming from the communities.

After exploring the feasibility of raising significant amount of funds from the traditional sources, Marissa realized that there is a need to look elsewhere. In casual conversations, she started to ask businessmen friends how companies raise money if they wanted to expand their business but did not want to borrow money from the bank. The common answer she got was that the company issues bonds. This got her interested in the possibility of raising money from the capital market. Can NGOs raise money through development bonds? She continued making this inquiry by asking several people.

Raising money from the private sector for development projects is however not new in the Philippines. Since the 1970's, the different companies in the Philippines donate 1% of their net profit every year as expression of their corporate responsibility to the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) for social services and to support innovative programs that lead towards self-reliance and sustainable development. There are at least thirty (30) corporate foundations like the Sarmiento Foundation, the Bank of the Philippine Islands Foundation etc. that are funded by corporate entities as channel for their philanthropic activities². Businesses are also a common source of donation for many activities of communities in exchange for public relations or advertisement benefits. These fund raising has mostly been in the form of donations or tax shelter mechanisms.

Utilizing business to generate resources for social development or environmental purposes has also been tried in the Philippines. Several organizations have endowment funds that are invested in the market to generate perpetual income from interest earnings. The Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE) was formed to manage a PHP 500 million debt-for-

nature-swap arrangement with the United States and the Philippine Government to support the protection of biodiversity and promotion of sustainable development. The Foundation for Sustainable Society, Inc. (FSSI) is another PHP 500 million debt-for-nature swap between the Governments of the Philippines and Switzerland for the economic empowerment of organized marginal rural and urban communities.

The experience of microfinance in the Philippines also showed that the poor are bankable. There is a proliferation of microfinance institutions (MFIs) in the Philippines to capitalize on this large market. MFIs report an average of 98% repayment rate, much higher than the repayment rates realized by commercial banks. The largest MFI in the Philippines is the Center for Agricultural Rural Development (CARD) has 42,000 clients with an average borrowing of PHP 5,000 means an investment of PHP 210 million of just one conduit³. There are approximately about 300 MFI conduits in the Philippines. This is a massive market and the business establishments should be impressed by this high repayment record.

The Association of Foundation (AF) had a small discussion group that was looking into what NGOs can do together over and above what each one was already doing to respond to the anticipated worsening poverty situation. A concept called HANAP BUHAY⁴ Centers was developed by Marcia “Chucki” Miranda, then the AF vice president and a micro finance person. With Marissa’s exposure in the discussions about microfinance (her area is health and reproductive health), she thought that among the many NGO programs, micro finance had the best potential for a return on investment because repayment rate was very high and the funds can be loaned with an interest. They thought of establishing Hanap Buhay Centers in strategic areas to assist the women borrowers and MFIs to scale up their operations and capture a larger share in the market. One center would require about PHP 50 million to put up and if they thought of establishing ten of these centers, they would need PHP 500 million capitalization. That is plenty of capital needed that the already dwindling traditional donors of NGOs simply cannot provide.

After Marissa's informal research on bonds and after she thought she understood enough about its mechanics, she wrote a two page concept paper for raising money through the retailing of development bonds. She wanted to concept test this idea and so she organized an initial brainstorming session. She invited some colleagues from the NGO sector and investment bankers/finance people. The first person she called was her brother, an investment banker then with Deutsche Bank. However, he was leaving for a business trip and did not sound very enthusiastic about her idea. So she called Roberto Guevara, a family friend and an investment banker. She requested him to invite other investment bankers and finance people to the brainstorming session. The first brainstorming session happened in February 2001.

Her original concept was to retail development bonds and pay investors a 4% interest. Then invest the proceeds in a trust fund that will earn anywhere from 10 – 12 %. The difference, about 8% is what would go to poverty alleviation projects such as micro finance. The investment bankers present did not think the design was feasible. However when she asked them if it was possible for NGOs to raise money from the capital market for poverty alleviation, the investment bankers said that it was possible but they have not tried it before. She challenged them that since they are the experts, why don't they design something that would work for NGOs.

The idea of raising funds from the capital market to seed a poverty alleviation program appealed to this group of investment bankers. It was something they wanted to see done since the 1970's. This case study is an account of how from this meeting, the Peace and Equity Fund was raised and demonstrates the power of cross-sectoral cooperation as well as cross-sectoral thinking in achieving the goal of providing resources for the poor.

The Leadership Social Web

Marissa was very active as a high school student, involving herself with many campus and community activities while not forgetting to also excel in the academics. Community involvement was something that was encouraged by her mother and the collection of school medals was a family sport that was given so much value by her father. Growing up with a sister and four brothers must have provided Marissa the practice to coordinate and to work together in the spirit of consensus.

From elementary until first year college, she studied in exclusive Catholic schools. She wanted so much to drop out of school after high school graduation to go full time into organizing the urban poor. Her guilt feelings about disappointing her parents and setting a bad example to her younger siblings made her continue on to college. After first year at St Theresa's College, she decided to transfer to the University of the Philippines (UP). This decision was arrived at without consultation or permission of her parents that was why they decided not to support her studies at UP. Her father said that if she was old enough to make decisions without their permission, she should be old enough to support her decision. When she got to UP she was overwhelmed by UP, its vastness and the students. This was the reason why she withdrew from all her activist involvements. At UP, although she was not seen in rallies and demonstrations, she was an enthusiastic student of sociology and political science.

After college, she landed in a research job with the Philippine Center for Population and Development (PCPD). She started working there since 1976 as a research aide, rose from the ranks, stayed with the organization to this day and now serves as the President of the organization. During the twenty-eight years with PCPD, Marissa saw the transformation of the organization from an implementing agency with a hundred staff to a grant-making institution run by nine persons. She saw through the transition and made sure that employees

who were retrenched were able to make use of other employment opportunities outside of PCPD. Her work with PCPD took her to the bedrooms of the rural huts conducting research or implementing projects to the boardrooms of Congress to lobby for appropriate and effective population policies.

Working with PCPD's very competent and supportive staff, Marissa had time to pursue linkages and networking both for her organization and for the NGO sector. Representing PCPD, she was elected as a Member of the Board and consequently became the President of the Association of Foundation from 1999 to 2004. During her incumbency, Marissa was able to access projects for AF that enabled AF to reach out more to its members. AF was able to develop the data bank for NGOs and foundations in the Philippines and was able to put AF towards financial sustainability by helping set up an endowment fund of PHP 14 million.⁵

Marissa represented AF in CODE-NGO and as tribute to her reputation as a consensus builder, Marissa was elected as Chair of CODE-NGO in 2001, after Corazon "Dinky" Soliman was appointed Secretary of Department of Social Welfare. Marissa was the Chair of CODE-NGO when CODE launched several programs to assist in the strengthening and professionalization of the NGO community and to be more involved in local and national governance. CODE-NGO and other NGO networks joined the business sector in calling for a "tri-sectoral collaboration" for effective governance, conducted comprehensive civil society assessment of government's performance in the area of poverty alleviation, and in addressing some of the pressing issues confronting Philippine democracy.

The Estrada Presidency⁶, confident of its overwhelming popular mandate during the 1998 election, began to show signs of gross abuse of power in the subsequent years of its incumbency. Revelations of bribes channeled to secret accounts of the President from gambling, drugs, influence peddlers and various other charges of corruption triggered a move to impeach the

President. As the impeachment process was looming, there was a necessity to convene a citizen's movement to safeguard democracy. Thus the second Kongreso ng Mamayang Pilipino (KOMPIL II)⁷ was convened with the participation of a broad coalition of many NGOs, the church, business, and other sectors. CODE-NGO was the Secretariat of KOMPIL II and was in charge of coordinating the various activities and the various groups that were participating.

The impeachment process was covered fully by media and the Filipino public was glued to the judicial process that tried a President. It was already known that the Senate that was acting as the jury had a majority that was partial to the President because of political debts. The only hope was that the Presiding Judge in the person of the Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide was known to be objective. It was also accepted that there would be threats to the witnesses called to testify against the President but there was also the trust that the Filipino would shine at its finest hour. The Filipino public was tolerant of grandstanding senators and filibustering lawyers but it could not bear to see evidence withheld to protect a political figure. The envelope containing the bank evidence of the anomalous transactions of the President was decided by the majority of the Senate not to be opened. As the pro-Estrada senators danced and rejoiced of what they thought was their victory, KOMPIL II fingers clicked to send text messages all over the country to converge one and all once again at EDSA for a prayer rally to protect Philippine democracy. Thus in January 2001, more than a million people took to the streets especially in EDSA in Manila to protest against the handling of the impeachment process that eventually toppled President Estrada.

The credibility of President Estrada was so eroded by the revelations during the impeachment proceedings that several of the cabinet members resigned prompting the Supreme Court to decide that the Estrada government was no longer functional and therefore the Court had to install the then Vice-President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as the legally mandated President. Because perhaps it was viewed that civil society was instrumental in bringing about this

change, President Arroyo appointed several NGO leaders into her newly constituted cabinet. Corazon Soliman, former Chair of CODE-NGO, became the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD); Victoria Garchitorena, former President of the Ayala Foundation, was chosen as the new Presidential Management Staff (PMS), Teresita Deles, then Director of the Gaston Z. Ortigaz Peace Foundation (GZOP) was the new Chair of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), Karina David was named Chief of the Civil Service Commission, Danilo Songco landed as one of the Board Members of the Development Bank of the Philippines. These were NGO luminaries who at one time or another were associated with CODE-NGO. Marissa's brother, Jose Isidro Camacho, was first appointed as Secretary of Energy in March 2001 and was later appointed as the Secretary of the Finance Department in June.

EDSA I was supposed to be a miracle that like lightning could not strike again in the same place. It was a miracle that only divine intervention could make happen. Yet, EDSA II occurred at a time when all predictions pointed to a rigging of the impeachment process. It seems that a "network of conscience" has been formed over years of organizing and consciousness raising in the Philippines that can respond and act accordingly when there is a call to protect Philippine democracy. Raising PHP 1.4 Billion from the capital market to set up the Peace and Equity Fund to support poverty alleviation projects and programs of NGOs was also viewed as something that could not be done again. It was a singular event in NGO history when the conditions were right, when the connections were well established, and Marissa with the team was there to make use of the opportunities.

The Leadership Moments

Lightning may not strike twice in one place but it can strike nearby if the elements for lightning formation are present. The curiosity in the account of how the PEF funds was put together

stems from the possibility of recreating the process. If there was EDSA II because the “network of conscience” can be summoned anytime, there could be PEF II if the details of how to raise money from the capital market can be mastered. When Cesar Mayo⁸, one of the financial advisers who masterminded this scheme was asked whether the Peace Bonds deal was replicable, he said that it is difficult if not downright impossible if the opportunities and mood current during the year 2001 are not present, if the right chemistry of the team cannot be generated, and if the leadership and tenacity of Marissa are not there from the beginning.

The saga of the Peace Bonds was dubbed by many critics as a “financial coup” that generated P1.4 billion out of nothing. Marissa is the first one to object that on the contrary, the team invested almost a year’s work in the process on top of the three months of harrowing senate investigation and media exposure that left them so scared of doing anything like it ever again. It started with a noble if not naive motive of raising money for the poor, encouraged with the idea of tapping the capital market, carried out by playing the rules of the game, defending the process with life and limbs, and making sure that the gains finally go to the poor.

Raising funds is one of Marissa’s forte. In the Philippine Center for Population Development, she is challenged every year to raise P40 million pesos to support the different programs of the Center. In the Association of Foundation, she had to look for project funds and a mechanism to raise an endowment fund. When she became the Chair of CODE-NGO, she had to generate money for the NGOs and for the communities that they serve. Her dream was to look for funds big enough and totally controlled by the NGOs so that the funds could be spent without strings attached from the donors.

Marissa entertained the idea of raising money from the capital market because the possibility of raising additional significant amounts from traditional sources was not feasible given the Philippine economic and global conditions. She stumbled on the idea of development bonds

after asking businessmen about how companies raise funds if they do not want to borrow from a bank. When she invited her brother to the brainstorming session where she planned to present her concept for raising funds by retailing development bonds, he was not available and seemed not interested. After the first brainstorming meeting, there were less people who continued to join the team. This smaller group became the core group of the PEACE bonds. They were Dan Songco, Chuki Miranda and Marissa from the NGO sector, Roberto Guevara (*the first person who took the idea seriously enough to invite his colleagues to join the first brainstorming session*), Juan Victor Tanjuatco and Cesar Mayo who eventually designed the PEACe bonds. The Board of Code NGO approved the proposal and authorized Dan and Marissa to represent Code in the negotiations.

During the first meeting, Marissa and the team presented the most successful moneymaking experience of the NGOs in micro finance and sought advice as to how P500 million can be raised from the capital market if CODE-NGO would promise a 4% per annum return of investment. The money raised can go a long way in terms of giving livelihood to the poor and solving the grinding poverty in the rural and urban areas. There was also a presentation of the work of the NGOs in addressing the major issues of the country and to show how if resources are available, the NGOs can make a dent in the problem of poverty. The proposal of Marissa to retail development bonds at 4% interest was rejected as something unfeasible but the idea of raising money from the capital market for the poor was something that the financial advisers agreed to pursue upon the request of Marissa. It was something different from what they are used to doing – that is raising money for the rich. That idea merited subsequent meetings.

By the second meeting of the team, now composed of the CODE-NGO contingent and the financial advisers, Cesar Mayo announced that it would take as much work to raise P500 million pesos as to raise P 1 billion pesos in the capital market. So why not aim to raise P1 billion pesos for CODE-NGO and the financial advisers would see how this could be done for

a fee. Cesar Mayo was confident this was possible because he read in the newspaper that the Philippine Government, in order to develop the capital market, was considering issuing zero coupon bonds or zeroes⁹. CODE-NGO can buy these zeroes at the primary market and sell them at the secondary market at a higher price¹⁰. The sale differential minus the fees can go towards the poverty alleviation endowment of CODE-NGO. So this was the alternative plan to the retail of development bonds proposal.

The idea was simple but there were issues that need to be addressed. First, only Government Securities Eligible Dealer (GSED) are authorized to buy government securities and CODE-NGO did not have this status. Second, upfront capital in billions of pesos would be needed to buy these securities and CODE-NGO did not have these billions. Third, the bonds should have eligibilities such as secondary reserve, agri-agra compliant to make them attractive to the secondary market. Through the advice and connections of the financial advisers, CODE-NGO was able to contract the services of Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC is a GSED) to act as its agent in purchasing the zeroes. It was also able to obtain the underwriting contract with RCBC Capital to buy all the zeroes that it would get from the government through RCBC at a pre-agreed price.

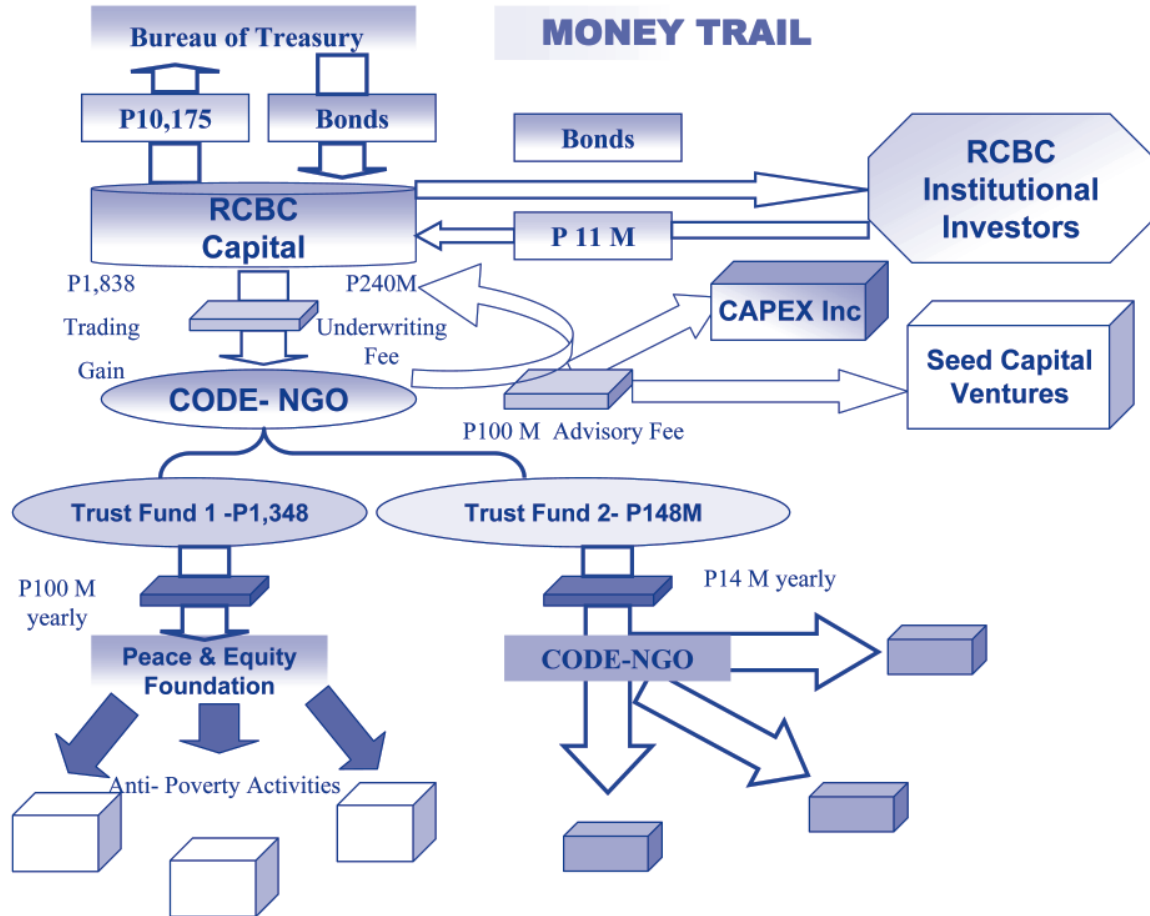
This full underwriting agreement meant that RCBC Capital would put up the initial billions to buy the zeroes from government. Most of the work of CODE-NGO was then focused on getting the necessary government authorizations to issue the ten-year zero bonds, then called the PEACe¹¹ Bonds, and for the certifications for the inherent tax-free status of the same. By necessity, the team including Marissa had to learn very quickly the ropes of the capital market both to understand what was going on and also to see how the process can be explained in civil society terms.

Although CODE-NGO initially tried to buy the zeroes through an exclusive sale basis, the Bureau of Treasury (BTr) decided to auction them off to other GSEDs on October 16, 2001.

In this auction, there were sixteen (16) GSEDs that participated. RCBC was able to obtain the P35 billion worth of zeroes in behalf of CODE-NGO. It was able to buy this from the government at 12.75% per annum compounded semi-annually paying the government P10.168 billions at its current value and the government would redeem the bonds at P35 billion in ten years. Following the underwriting agreement, RCBC sold the bonds to RCBC Capital at 11% per annum amounting to P11.9 billions from where the payment to the Bureau of Treasury of P10.168 was taken and the difference of P1.83 billion was made available for CODE-NGO. CODE-NGO paid the financial advisers and the underwriting services worth P340 million pesos and established a trust fund of P148 million for the sustainability of CODE-NGO and the bulk amount of P1.34 billion was used to seed the endowment for the Peace, Equity and Access for Community Empowerment Foundation or Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF)¹². The endowment for CODE-NGO would have a yield of P14 million a year and the P 1.34 billion for the Peace and Equity Foundation will have an interest earning of P100 million annually. This process is shown in the Money Trail diagram in the next page.¹³

The months starting from the conceptualization of the PEACe Bonds in January 2001 up to its purchase in October 2001 were very busy months for Marissa and the team. There were meetings to prepare for and organize with the team or with the persons or institutions involved in the project. There were discussions with top people in the Department of Finance, the Bureau of Treasury, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Monetary Board, Bureau of Internal Revenue Commission on Audit, with the RCBC and RCBC Capital management, and of course the constant update with CODE-NGO and the members. In the process, Marissa and the team learned if not perfected the “song and dance” that they had to do to convince others of the value of the project and/or to get the approval for the bond eligibilities. Setting up appointments and follow-up work took much of the time. Marissa remembered having to call as many as twenty five (25) times everyday for an appointment. Fortunately, she was lucky to have friends, or neighbors, or classmates or some kind of acquaintance in most of these offices. Her smiling

MONEY TRAIL



tenacity and gentle ways of persuading people to the team's argument won many a signature and support from the government agencies and business sector. Marissa's faith that this project was a worthwhile endeavor and trust that things would work out finally for the poor bouyed the team from the ups and downs of their journey in the capital market.

The most trying times of course was when Senators John Osmena and Tessie Aquino-Oreta questioned the acquisition of the PEACe Bonds as rent-seeking behaviour¹⁴ and threatened to file a plunder case against Marissa on the grounds that she is the sister of the then Secretary of Finance and that CODE-NGO that was instrumental intalling President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had many leaders who were already part of the Arroyo Cabinet. The appointment of Sec. Camacho was also up for confirmation in the Commission of Appointments and this added to the urgency of the investigation of his possible involvement in the PEACe Bonds. The media also picked up the issue and NGOs like the Freedom from Debt Coalition and the Development Watch of the Institute of Popular Democracy also hurled their accusations on Marissa and Company. So from November of 2001 to about March of 2002, the PEACe Bonds issue was in the front pages of newspapers and in primetime television and radio talks.

Marissa and Dan Songco representing CODE-NGO and with Jesuit Treasurer Fr. Noel Vasquez, S.J. and former Under Secretary of Agriculture Senen Bacani, two of the new members of the Board of Trustees of the Peace and Equity Foundation, sat through all the Senate investigations, appeared in many television talk shows, and wrote and countered arguments against the Peace Bonds or how it was acquired. No, there was no rent-seeking involved, Secretary Camacho was not involved in this process, it was already well underway long before he became Secretary of DOF and he inhibited himself from the discussions and decision regarding the Peace Bonds. No, this was not an illegal transaction, all the processes followed in the acquisition were above board and standard practice in the capital market. No, the government was not deprived of taxes from the transaction because the Comprehensive

Tax Reform Code exempts bonds with maturity of 5 years plus 1 from tax to encourage people to invest in long term securities. No, the P35billion that would be paid by the government in 2011 would not add to the indebtedness of the government because this was already part of the government's programmed/planned borrowings. No, the P1.83 billion raised would not be used for personal nor for political reasons, P340 million was used to pay the underwriting and financial advise fees, P148 million in a trust fund for the sustainability of CODE-NGO member networks, and P1.34 billion for the Peace and Equity Foundation. No, we did not get a centavo from this deal. Yes, we would resign from CODE-NGO just to show that we are not interested to control the Peace Bonds. Yes, all the money earned by PEF would go towards the alleviation of poverty and it would be managed prudently and professionally. They stuck to this story because this was the truth.

While there were detractors who called the Peace Bonds a scam, a financial coup, a rent-seeking product, there were also several supporters who helped Marissa and the team defend and explain the PEF story. The People's Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network (AR Now) recognized the legality, transparency, morality, and relevance of the transactions leading to the acquisition and sale of the PEACe Bonds and the setting up of the PEF. Synergos and the Philippine Business for Social Progress organized several conferences and workshops to explain how and for what purpose was the PEF. Prominent social scientists like Dr. Mahar Mangahas of the Social Weather Station made his own inquiry about the Peace Bonds and came out hailing the innovativeness of this process and praising the purpose of all the effort. Dr. Solita Monsod, former Director of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) called the PEACe Bonds a win-win-win multisectoral zero-sum game that benefited the government, business, and especially the NGOs and the people who would eventually be the beneficiaries of PEF¹⁵.

Will the investment of P1.4 billions that went to seed PEF and the P148m that supported CODE-NGO generate social benefits equivalent to P35 billion? The NGO community is confident

that if the PEF funds would be managed well, it can even surpass this value because PEF would be contributing to poverty alleviation perpetually. The project of NGOs and the programs that would be funded by the PEF funds impact on the increase of income, better farming and enterprise development, savings on medical expenses due to better health, reduction of crime and domestic violence and/or physical abuse, increase in the fertility and productivity of the soil because of environmental treatment. These tangible benefits can be calculated in terms of savings from the use of fertilizer and pesticide, and developing the capacity of people to sustain their development initiatives. If all these parameters are computed and taken into consideration, cost-benefit analysis¹⁶ of these social projects can generate a value 3 to 10 times the original investment. If these projects are managed well, the net worth valued from its contribution to increasing income, improving health, fostering peace and harmony, environmental services would be in the range of P .3 to 1 billion every year in perpetuity for as long as the seed fund is not eroded. The structure and policies of the Peace and Equity Foundation are such that it could guarantee that the fund is preserved and managed very carefully.

The Leadership Legacy

It is said that a leader is someone who embarks on new territories. If he succeeds, he is a leader and if he fails, he is stupid. When asked whether Marissa would still be considered a leader if the PEACe Bonds fell through, Norman Jiao, the Executive Director of the Association of Foundation said that Marissa would not in any way diminish her capacity and reputation as a leader because she is a leader in her own right. She has achieved so much already in the twenty-eight years that she has worked in the NGO sector. She is the President of the Philippine Center for Population and Development, a grant making organization in population policy research and advocacy. She is currently a senior fellow of the Synergos Institute and chairperson of the Association of Foundations' Community Foundations (CF) Committee. She has served on the boards of other non-profit organizations such as the Association of Foundations (2000–2004), a

31-year old national network of some 140 social development organizations, and the Philippine Council for NGO Certification (2000–2002), a regulatory body empowered by government to certify NGOs. Her 28 years of experience in development work is mainly in the areas of community-based health, population and development, development finance/innovative resource mobilization, project development and management, foundation management and network building. Even without CODE-NGO chairmanship and the PEACe Bonds she still has a full and impressive legacy to civil society.

Marissa’s institutional base is the Philippine Center for Population and Development where she started working for the last twenty-eight (28) years when it was newly established in 1973. From an institution that focused in demographic and family planning population issues implementing projects that addressed population and development concerns, she has been instrumental in redefining PCPD’s role as a grant giving institution partial to supporting broader social and human development initiatives in both rural and urban areas. PCPD provides grants for: policy research; research dissemination activities; action-research projects; advocacy activities such as small group discussions, workshops, and conferences; and population and development modeling at the local government level.

Some of the new researches funded by PCPD are the “The Population-Poverty Nexus: The Philippines in Comparative East Asian Context”, “The Ties that Bind: Population and Development in the Philippines” and a compendium of studies on the Philippine population that includes a new chapter, “Gender in Population and Development: Gender Makes a Difference” by Dr. Sylvia Guerrero. Marissa is able to mobilize business leaders, demographers and sociologists, as well as media personalities to compose the governance structure of PCPD in order to be effective in advocating for progressive population policies and programs that would arrest the alarming pace of population growth, diffuse the explosion of the population bomb and balance this with the capacity to provide for people’s needs and sustained economic growth.¹⁷

Work with PCPD gave Marissa a very good grounding with what NGOs need and gave her contact with the realities of poverty in both the rural and urban areas. She realized the importance of linking and networking with other organizations both to further the interest of her own organization as well as to support common agenda. The link of PCPD with the Association of Foundations and through AF to CODE-NGO provided a venue for her extraordinary talent to benefit other NGOs in the country. The projects that she personally looked funding for and oversaw their implementation were initiatives that facilitated or enabled NGOs to interact with one another such as the compilation and publication of the directory of NGOs, donors and foundations in the Philippines. The information system for Philippine NGOs has also been modernized and made available online by setting up the Philippine Foundation Center that manages the electronic database for NGOs, donors, accreditors, grant windows, and other resources needed by NGOs.¹⁸

The Philippines may not have a very reputable governance and economic system but it can pride itself of a very strong civil society as manifested by the existence of close to 30,000 NGOs operating around the country. The creation of CODE-NGO in 1991 was prompted by the need to set up standards among the NGOs to be able to police its own ranks and to provide a forum of action in important national issues. Over the ten years since its establishment, this “network of networks” was able to successfully formulate the Code of Ethics with the Implementing Rules and Regulations and have it approved by the members. It has also created a body called the Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNC) that is recognized by the government to accredit NGOs based on the Code of Ethics and qualifies it with a donee status for tax exemption purposes. Most of all the Network also continues to support the strengthening of the members and to safeguard our democratic structures and systems. For these functions, CODE-NGO needed its own resources. Marissa was able to mainstream CODE-NGO with other financial institutions like the World Bank but again for mutually beneficial concerns but it was a challenge to find funding that NGOs can use as they see fit.

With the P148 million endowment for the Network, it could continue with its work in capacity and institutional building, policy development and advocacy, entrepreneurship and leadership formation, NGO governance, and management of information system. From its endowment, it funds various advocacy initiatives of people's organizations and for network strengthening¹⁹. It has also acquired enough independence to be involved with activities that are not anymore dictated by practical consideration but more in keeping with its vision.

While the Network was instrumental in installing the Arroyo Administration in 2001 EDSA II event, CODE-NGO did not hesitate to spearhead or join activities that criticized the policies of her administration. It joined the other like-minded NGOs in denouncing the Philippine policy to support the US war in Iraq, opposed the move to ammend the constitution through the constituent assembly instead of a constitutional convention, mobilized the people to oppose the military opportunism and government corruption, and rallied civil society in stopping the move to impeach the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Hilario Davide.

One of the ways to allay fears that the proceeds of the PEACe Bonds would be controlled by CODE-NGO and therefore only benefit its member networks and NGOs, it was decided that the P1.34billion net proceeds be administered and managed by an independent body. The Peace and Equity Foundation (or PEF)²⁰ was formed as an independent non-profit foundation in October 2001 by the Caucus of Development NGOs (CODE-NGO) to support the work of civil society in eradicating poverty and marginalization. It was registered with the Security and Exchange Commission on November 27, 2001. As a funding institution, it will only use the earnings of the endowment and it will not go into direct implementation of projects nor undertake direct training and capacity building programs. It will support best practice as well as innovative development projects, placing special focus on initiatives that promote people's empowerment, enhance community-based resources and build multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The Board of Trustees is the policy-making body of the Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF). It is composed of nine representatives from Civil Society Organizations and other organizations involved in community development. NGO networks and other coalition organizations endorse board membership. The first members of the Board of Trustees headed by Fr. Noel Vasquez, S.J. as Chairman and Mr. Senen Bacani as Treasurer²¹ with other members of the Board were critical because they were the ones who defended PEF during the Senate investigations and also to respond to the media and public inquiry. The Board together with CODE-NGO and with the other representation of civil society developed the vision-mission-goals and strategies and set the targets of the Foundation.

Marissa commented that it was in a way a blessing in disguise that the birth of PEF was heralded by so much controversy because then the Foundation was so concerned that it would be governed and managed and account for the funds entrusted to it and create the impact it was envisioned to achieve. Note that Marissa Camacho-Reyes and Danilo Songco are no longer part of the Board of PEF nor do they occupy any position in the Foundation. Dan and Marissa were members of the original board but they resigned in early 2002 to protect PEF from further criticism targeted at Dan and Marissa.

For the years 2002-2005, PEF planned to utilize 80% of the P500million of the endowment income to responsive projects like enterprise creation, asset acquisition, human capital enhancement, education, health, shelter, and institution building and spend 20% for proactive projects that would explore new modes of financing, new technologies, and new strategies of addressing the alleviation of poverty. There would be a combination of loans for income generation projects and grants for basic services and institution building projects and hope to recover the loans to preserve the capital from inflationary losses. As of August 2004 (67% of the time since January 2002), PEF has already disbursed P334,726,092 pesos to 306 different projects in priority areas which happened to be also 67% of the P500million expenditures planned for

four years. Of these expenses, special projects and others that can qualify as proactive projects comprise 19.9% of the allocation and 81.1% went to livelihood and employment, basic services, and social capital kinds of projects. This means that PEF is managed very well fiscally.²²

In the spirit of accessibility and transparency, PEF maintains a website²³ that not only contains the information about the Foundation, its history, governance structure, financial reports, etc, it is also an interactive system for project application. One can download the guidelines and proposal format, can send proposals by e-mail and then track the progress of that proposal whether it has been received, evaluated, and acted upon. It also has a status tracker for every project approved by PEF. One other feature of the PEF website is that it contains the poverty map of the Philippines and the poverty indicators (health, employment, education, human development and poverty indices) for every province in the country. It is completely interactive via the internet and is a very quick and useful source of quantitative information regarding any province in the country. This poverty map and poverty indicator database are the great pride and joy of the late Enrico Garde, the former Executive Director of PEF. The map and the poverty data can serve as baseline and a monitoring tool for tracking how PEF and contribute towards the alleviation of poverty. Other agencies also find these information very useful for their own work.

These are just a few of the achievements that Marissa could be remembered for- the continuing growth and reach of the Philippine Center for Population Development, the enhanced capacities of the Association of Foundations, the easier and effective interactions of development stakeholders, a more independent network of NGOs, a well-managed and responsive funding mechanism for poverty programs, etc. Marissa is first to acknowledge that these are successes that are not solely attributable to her but that these are successes that are due to collective effort. Despite the controversy surrounding the PEACe Bonds or maybe because of it, there is worldwide interest in the work of Marissa. She has been invited to countries like Mexico and Mozambique

to explore similar schemes in their countries. Synergos, an international organization that aims to promote community foundations, has asked Marissa to participate in discussions and share how to explore non-traditional ways of mobilizing resources for development projects.

The Leadership Qualities

Joel Pagsanghan, the current Executive Director of CODE-NGO commented that the kind of leaders that are needed in the country today are those who can bring together all sectors to work collectively and at the same time be catalyst for partnership especially with civil society, the business sector, and the government. Marissa herself reflected that we need leaders who can transcend parochial thinking and give urgency to the collective good and to think positively because thinking negatively can only paralyze us to inaction. These required a new way of looking at the situation, harnessing the opportunities around, learning along the way, but always keeping the interest of the people in the fore. Interviews with the friends and co-workers of Marissa unraveled some of the qualities of the leadership of Marissa.

1. Taking on a challenge even when there is no solution on sight

The question of how to raise funds for NGOs that NGOs fully control was almost like an oxymoron because the common experience was to get the funds from donors to implement programs. She herself did not know how to solve this problem so she collaborated with people outside the NGO community - mainstream bankers – whose profession is to make money or raise funds. She kept asking the question to whoever she could talk to who could suggest some way out. Victoria Pagsanghan of the Philippine Foundation Center noted this particular trait of Marissa to be very clear of her vision even if the path to that vision is still unclear. She found that by bouncing her ideas around, some people would give some leads that she would later pursue.

2. Motivated to lead from the sense of values and the inclusion of the values of others

Marissa said that she draws strength from the self-sacrifice of farmers and the urban poor and she made it her job to mobilize resources to assist them in making their conditions better. She fell in love with this idea from a long way back and she wanted to infect other people with this feeling. Raising money for the poor from the capital market was something that did not sit very well with NGO core values but prospective positive impact in the communities was more important for her than ideological purity. Once an idea grabs Marissa, she would not let go with it like a dog holding on to a bone, was how Danilo Songo described Marissa's tenacity. This was the same observation of Veronica Villavicencio of PEF confirming that Marissa is the type who will not stop until she is able to make that idea a reality. Even people from business like Cesar Mayo was so taken by the dedication of Marissa in making sure the Peace Bonds work because of what it can do to communities.

3. Mobilizing the involvement of others by a clear assessment of reality and focusing on issues

Although Marissa was driven by her own motivation, she was always very systematic and very rational in her presentation of a concept. She is non-threatening that is why she is able to convince people to her side, observed Victoria Pagsanghan of the Philippine Foundation Center. She presents her side but is always open to alternatives and the ideas of other people. But she is persistent and relentless in following up promises and commitments. She would call, make small talks, and then remind people of the agreement. She would call as many as 20 to 25 times until she gets an answer. Norman Jiao added that already articulate and good-looking, Marissa still makes requests with grace and feminine charm. It is almost impossible to say no to her.

4. Learning along the way as challenges are being faced

Cesar Mayo was amazed at what a quick study Marisa was. She was transformed in a span of less than a year from being an "NGO beggar" to an investment banker. In no time, she could

already explain to the business community in their own language. She honed her skills in public speaking, looked at the trading in the stock market, and learned how backroom deals are made prior to official negotiations. During the time of the Senate investigation, she became an instant plunder case expert. Now that she is free from the controversy of the Peace Bonds, she is seriously thinking of helping in the entrepreneurship development of Mindanao. Capitalizing on their experience of the PEACe Bonds, Cesar Mayo and Marissa have also been discussing how the mortgage lending sector of the capital market can also help in the housing problem in the country.

5. Team leadership in a multi-stakeholder setting

Veronica Villavicencio noted that ever since she was in high school, Marissa stood out already as a networker and had the canny ability to make different groups sit together around the discussion table. In the PEACe Bonds team, the role of Marissa was to make sure that the activities were undertaken by those responsible, she need not be the head of the group in order to work, she can take the back seat and enjoy the food. Marissa considered it lucky for her to work with this top caliber team and she was awed at how top notch the members were. It was really a case of team leadership and they contributed each own's talent and comparative advantage to get things done and to push the papers. Marissa also discovered that among the people in the business community whom they work with, there were those who helped because they also believed in raising money for the poor.

6. Sharing the vision with others and testing it with competing views

Marissa could only credit herself for the germ of the idea of raising money from the capital market. The scheme had undergone several makeovers as it was discussed with others from the business and government sector. She felt that the impressive record of NGOs in social development gave CODE-NGO the legitimacy to secure funding for development activities. She was curious why there was so much political interest in the PEACe Bonds business arrangement

that was completely legal. It was because in the Philippines, P500 million can change election results, how much more for P1.4 billion. There was suspicion that since CODE-NGO was linked with the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, this might be used as campaign kitty. It was difficult to imagine that money of that magnitude can be raised from the government and not payoff someone. The Senate investigation only stopped when they were satisfied to know that all the money went to the PEF to support NGO or people's organization projects and could not be diverted for political agenda.

7. Tackling problems that challenge one's values

The Senate investigation and the trial-by-publicity that Marissa and the team faced were very tough and insulting. They joked among themselves by saying that perhaps they were already celebrities to merit such attention. The daily coverage of the case calling them scams, plunderers, cheats were very difficult to bear especially if questions regarding their innocence were asked by her two sons. There were times when she wanted to give up but she could not bear the thought of depriving the communities with the benefits that PEF can bring. What was inspiring was that there were farmers and people's organizations who went to see them and assured them that the farmers and the urban poor were in their side. She also believed that if she was doing something good, then God would be in her side.

It was clear that the politicians did not want anyone in the NGOs with known connection to Malacanang would control the PEF so she resigned from CODE-NGO and with anything concerning PEF but only when the funds were already secured. Cesar Mayo saw the contrast between how the commercial sector and the NGO sector operated. It was very inspiring for him to see that people can put aside their own personal interests and be driven to achieve goals for no monetary consideration. Vicky Pagsanghan and Norman Jiao attested to the fact that Marissa and Dan did not get a centavo for their work, all the gains went to the endowment funds. Cesar Mayo said that now he understood that kind of feeling because everytime he receives a

report about the project that PEF is doing, he feels genuinely satisfied and happy that he was instrumental in making that development come true.

8. Willing to share the art and tactics of leadership

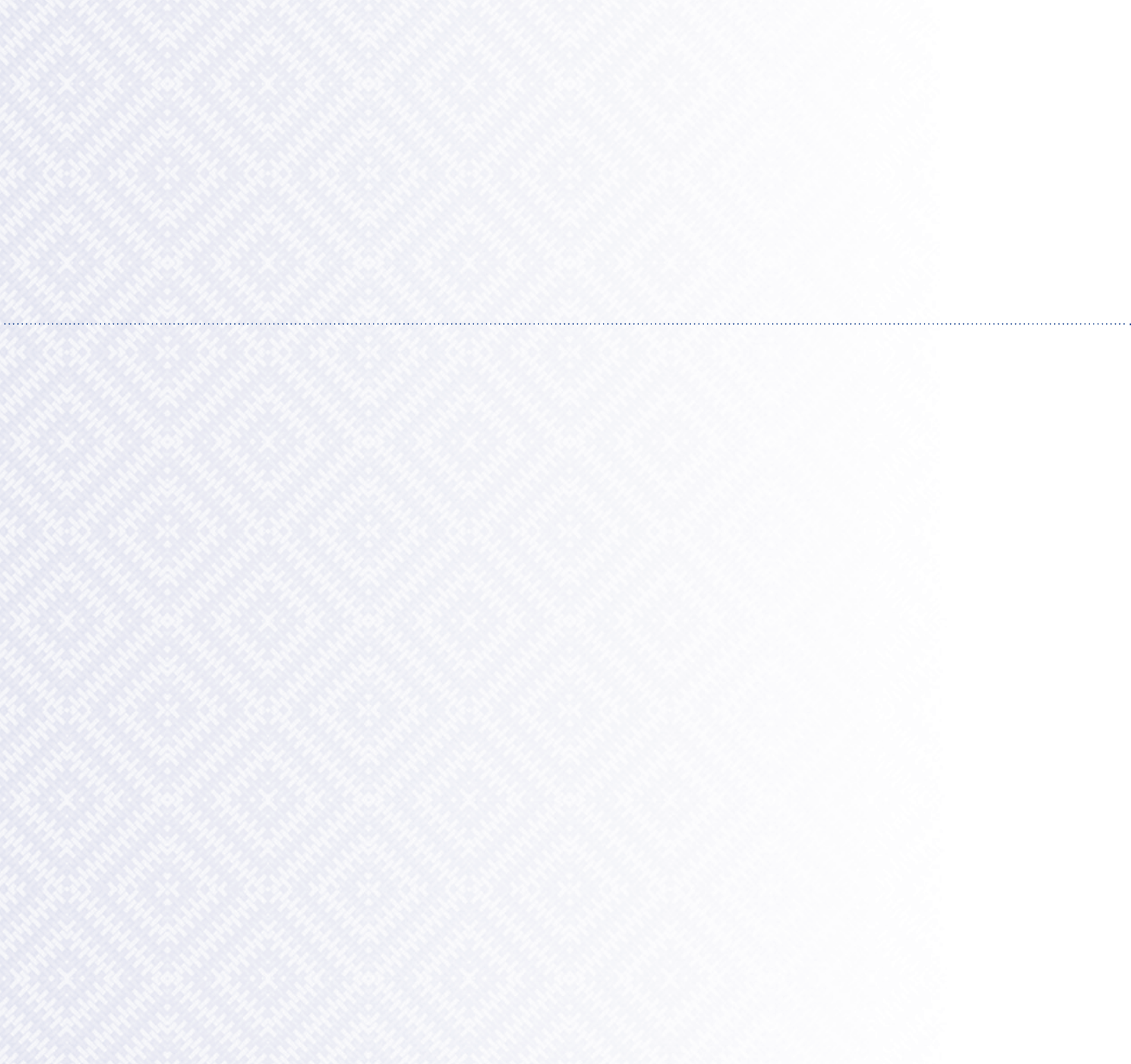
Marissa sees the need to develop new leaders and this can be done by providing our young people with systematic input about leadership experiences accompanied with the opportunity to practice. The leaders should give freedom to the young to develop their own brand of leadership, allow them to make mistakes to learn from. There is no one absolute correct answer to the social, political, and economic problems, we should all try to shape the solutions from the ideas of everyone. She would like to pass on what her mother taught her – to work with good people, to believe in something and go for it, cultivate a positive attitude and concentrate on the good side of life, practice what one preaches, and take herbal medicine. She also wanted to remind the young that there is a cost to leadership and the cost has to be borne personally with a pain that sometimes cannot be shared. So one should not forget oneself, one's God, the family, friends, and the constituency because they provide company when the senate and the media are after one's neck.

There is a term for the kind of leadership that Marissa manifests. It is the kind of leadership that dares to tackle very hard questions, to face problems by developing the capacity to learn to meet these problems based on one's values and those of others. It is the kind of leadership that admits that collective discussion and action are better ways of handling a situation and mobilizes every sector to take the community to a higher level. This kind of leader engages people to face the challenge, adjust their values, change perspectives, and develop new ways of learning. This is called adaptive leadership.²⁴

Endnotes

- ¹ EDSA I and EDSA II were the political movements that ousted the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986 and the corrupt and inept government of the Estrada Administration in January 2001. These movements culminated in the Epifanio de los Santos (EDSA) St. in Manila, thus the name EDSA.
- ² This is an estimate taken from the study done by the Association of Foundations published in Donor Trends: A Resource Book of Development Assistance in the Philippines, 2000
- ³ As reported by the Center for Agricultural Development in their annual report.
- ⁴ Hanap Buhay means livelihood or source of income
- ⁵ Marissa was able to convince the 14 members Board of Advisers of AF to donate P1 million each to seed the endowment fund for AF.
- ⁶ Mr. Joseph Estrada, a well-known local movie actor, was elected as President of the Philippines in 1998 and his term was up to 2004. Allegations of corruption, cronyism, incompetence etc. prompted a move to impeach him in 2000. The impeachment process was biased in his favor from the votes of senators who were beholden to him. A popular movement issued to finally replace him with the then Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
- ⁷ KOMPIL I was the citizen's movement that ushered the first people power revolt in EDSA I that ousted President Ferdinand Marcos and installed Pres. Corazon Aquino as the seventh President of the Republic of the Philippines
- ⁸ Cesar Mayo was one of the financial advisers hired by CODE-NGO for the Peace Bonds venture. He was the one who introduced the idea of making use of zero coupon bonds as a product that could be purchased from the government and sold in the secondary market and the difference can be used as endowment for the poverty alleviation project.
- ⁹ Zero coupon bonds are sold at the current value but would be redeemed by the government say ten years later by a lump sum equal to the original amount multiplied by the interest compounded semi-annually but all the interest payments would be accumulated and paid only upon the maturation of the bond.
- ¹⁰ Zeros are very attractive legal tender especially to insurance companies and also because they are tax free and can be used as bank reserves/securities using their maturation values
- ¹¹ PEACe Bonds stands for Poverty Eradication and Alleviation Certificates Bonds.
- ¹² Summarized from "CODE-NGO's PEACe Bonds: Financing Civil Society's Fight Against Poverty" by Danilo Songco, National Coordinator of CODE-NGO published by the IPD Reader, February 2002.
- ¹³ This is the Money Trail flow chart made by Albert Rodrigues and Ernie Sambao published by the Philippine Daily Inquirer last February 17,2002 to accompany the article on "Peace Bonds: Legal, Moral" in Juan V. Sarmiento Jr. opinion column "Talk of the Town".
- ¹⁴ Rent-seeking behaviour is defined as a resource-wasting activity of individual in seeking transfer of wealth through the aegis of the state for example by non-transparent use of influence or corrupt methods of securing privilege
- ¹⁵ Summarized from "A Positive-Sum Game" by Solita Collas-Monsod, an article in her column entitled Get Real published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on January 5, 2002.
- ¹⁶ Cost-Benefit analysis done by the students of the Southeast Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN) on projects show a 3 to 10 times conversion to social benefits.

- ¹⁷ Extensive information about the Philippine Center for Population Development is found in the website <http://www.pcpd.ph/>
- ¹⁸ The PHILIPPINE FOUNDATION CENTER (PFC) is a one stop resource and information center on non-government organizations (NGOs), foundations and the civil society sector in general. It was established by the Association of Foundations (AF) and can be visited in URL: <http://www.pfconline.org/>
- ¹⁹ Based on the 2003 Annual Report of CODE-NGO, an amount of P 925, 000 for PO advocacy initiatives and P 3,823,694 to support the strengthening activities of the ten networks under its umbrella .
- ²⁰ The full name of Peace and Equity Foundation is Peace Equity Access for Community Empowerment Foundation, Inc.
- ²¹ The other members of the Board were Mr. Fidel Rancio representing the Urban Poor, Marietta Paragas (Luzon), Mr. Martiniano Magdolot (Mindanao), Mr. Cresente Paez (national networks), Ms. Teresa Fernandez (women sector), Ms Marlene Ramirez (for agrarian reform). Ex-Officio members are the Corporate Secretary/Legal Counsel Atty Anna Lea Uy and the PEF Executive Director Ms. Veronica Villavicencio who succeeded the late Rico Garde as Executive Director.
- ²² Based on the financial report of PEF for August 2004.
- ²³ The website of PEF is <http://www.peacefdn.org>
- ²⁴ Based from the article “Leadership Without Easy Answers” by Ronald E. Heifetz. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994.





Mobilizing Community Resources for Development: The Visionary Leadership of Supachai Srisupa-aksorn

by Dulce Carandang-Simmanivong

Beginnings

It was a typical Thai upbringing. As a child, Supachai stayed in the temple for his education. He had a scholarship until high school and being in the constant presence of monks, he became a devout Buddhist dedicated to living a merit-filled life. After completing his secondary studies, he worked to support himself and attended college at the same time. He eventually earned a law degree from Ramkhamheang University in 1980. Supachai was a student leader who constantly questioned existing norms in the society. When he graduated in 1980, he launched a successful high-paying professional career¹ but soon found himself faced with difficult questions. He observed that people in his neighborhood in

Chumchon Kolongchan were losing their homes because of heavy mortgages and pernicious moneylenders who got them only deeper in debt. It was largely ironic because they were all availing of the government's low-cost apartment housing project. Supachai at that time was an active volunteer under the Social Welfare Department of the Ministry of Interior.

As an educated man, Supachai was a recognized and respected leader in the community. People in his village kept confiding in him their financial woes especially since most faced eviction from their humble homes. Deeply troubled but not knowing what to do, he kept challenging the Housing Authority to present options for their struggling community. In 1983, he attended a seminar on credit union sponsored by the National Housing Authority and the Credit Union of Thailand Ltd. (CULT). The four-day seminar included an exposure visit to the site of Thailand's first credit union that was located in Bangkok's shantytown district and was established in 1965². Amazed and impressed by the success of the credit union in improving the economic situation and social relations of the previously impoverished community, Supachai began to wonder whether such a feat is possible in his own poor neighborhood.

Immediately after the seminar, Supachai shared with some of the village members his experiences and observations from the course. He highlighted the successful credit union they visited and posed to them his question regarding the probability of replicating its success in Chumchon Kolongchan. Sharing a strong belief that a credit union will help them in their financial problems, Supachai, with the help of two more prominent community leaders, organized the Sahakorn Credit Union Chumchon Kolongchan with twenty-two villagers as members on December 4, 1983. They were able to mobilize 1,260 baht as initial share capital.

Six months after their credit union was established, Supachai's leadership in the community became formalized when the village members voted for him as a "phouyaybaan" (village chief). According to him, he realized an elected position recognized by the government would be helpful in getting the assistance and resources needed by the poor people in his community.

Of Leadership and the Five Merits

As an informal community leader, Supachai already influenced the villagers in a major way. For instance, he was able to influence and convince them on the merits of a credit union. Under his guidance the credit union members were able to mobilize meager resources to start operation. Through role modeling, he was able to get more leaders to volunteer and work for the credit union with much dedication and at the same time expand its membership in a short period of time.

When asked why he decided to seek a formal leadership role as a phouyaybaan, Supachai candidly admitted he wanted to facilitate a favorable environment for the credit union by building up people's confidence in it through his elective position. People joining the credit union because of their trustworthy and hardworking phouyaybaan later on reinforced such assumption. Besides, according to him, he also wanted to cover other community needs that the credit union will not be able to respond to. Among these needs included clean water and security.

A phouyaybaan is something like a broker and a mediator between the community and the government. This is how Supachai described his roles. Sworn to develop and protect the community, he put in time and resources to his work. In all seriousness he said that his job also included giving official recognition to newborns whose mothers gave birth at home and at the same time certifying the death of community members who died at their own residence. Even petty criminals in need of a dependable guarantor fell under his jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, as Khun Supachai worked hard being a good phouyaybaan, he did not forget his commitment to the credit union. Under his leadership and guidance, the Chumchon Klongchan Credit Union grew and flourished. It eventually set up its own office after staying in its leaders'

homes. From an initial share of 1,260 baht, the credit union presently has a total share of 122,216,660 baht. Its total asset is estimated to be at 632,575,428.55 baht. Membership doubled and it currently stands at 2,810 members and 579 affiliates.

Supachai's leadership in the credit union movement naturally reached the national level when he eventually became a Vice President of CULT in 1986. When the Chumchon Klongchan Credit Union became registered with the government, it affiliated itself with CULT. As a good member in standing, Chumchon Klongchan Credit Union's most prominent leader soon found himself taking on bigger tasks.

As the leading national alliance of credit unions all over Thailand, CULT⁴ presented a bigger and more challenging opportunity to Khun Supachai. However, leadership at CULT also presented him with more learning opportunities which he eagerly participated in. He cited all those training on cooperatives and management as most helpful to him as a leader.

Supachai is a good and eager learner. CULT staff members who work closely with him attest to this. Mr. Sahaphon Sangmek, General Manager of CULT, said that Khun Supachai would often come to him and share this new idea that he learned about from a recent training or trip he just came from. He would be so full of excitement and constantly pose questions on how to adapt such ideas to help the credit union movement do its job better. According to Khun Sahaphon, he often finds himself thinking of ways to respond to Supachai's challenging questions.

According to Supachai, his leadership was honed by the training he underwent as a credit union leader. Given all those exposures and learning opportunities, he was challenged to pick out the good ideas and adapt these in his own organization and community. He also constantly challenged people around him to think and suggest ways on applying the lessons learned from these training opportunities. It is his nature he said and he believes if others can do something to improve their situation, so can his own community and organization.

Taking inspiration from a credit union leader with great physical disabilities, Supachai said that a person's limitations should not hinder his/her ability to improve his/her situation in life. He believes that one can help oneself despite of the difficulties being faced in life. This particular credit union leader he cited as a source of inspiration continues to be an active and dedicated leader in his community and organization today.

Another inspiring figure for him is a respected "achan" or professor. Achan Vera spends his free time and holidays teaching people about the credit union movement. According to Supachai, this particular inspiring role model devotes his time to the movement instead of spending his free time resting and merry-making.

The countless and sometimes faceless people who helped him in his education in the temple also inspire Supachai. According to him, their generosity enabled him to get a good education and he wants to return the favor by helping others out through the credit union.

Education in the temple shaped his well-grounded faith but it also deeply influenced his character and lifestyle. Being a devout Buddhist, he constantly goes back to his religion and its teachings when asked about his concept of leadership. He cites the five merits as the foundation of his understanding of leadership. These merits are honesty, sacrifice, responsibility, sympathy and trustworthiness. According to Supachai, these merits are simple values but living up to it is challenging. A leader, he explains, needs to be a living example of the five merits and this is done both in action and in words. Once he said, he wanted so much to join a small group of men who were drinking so that he can integrate with them and explain the work of the credit union. He however hesitated because he knew people in the community know him as a credit union leader and a phouyaybaan who constantly speaks of the five merits. He was worried that his actions will be misconstrued and it will put his being a role model in a bad light.

Supachai admits that aside from the five merits, he also understands leadership in terms of having a good vision, genuine commitment, and decision-making skills that include risk taking. He also said it is important for a leader to be open minded since it takes time to convince and influence people about the things that need to be done. Summarizing his concept of leadership, he went back to the tag line his own credit union uses and which he helped formulate. He said leadership is simply all about “people helping people.”

Being a leader however can be difficult according to Khun Supachai. For him, the most difficult period was when their credit union was just starting out. He narrated that he found it hard to convince people that the credit union can help with their financial problems. People were naturally reticent to trust someone else with their meager and hard-earned funds explained Supachai. He also mentioned that some of the community members chose to watch first and observe – not only the credit union, but also its core leaders and their lifestyles. That’s why, according to him, it is important that leaders like him live as they preach. In his own words, “people will not believe in what you talk about but in what you do.”

At present time, Supachai’s list of worries includes the urgent problem of succession. He said he is constantly thinking of who will take over from their generation of leaders. This is a major challenge now according to him and so far the credit union is focusing on getting the attention of the younger generation so that more will join the movement.

A Legacy in the Making

“He is not afraid to dream big dreams,” said Khun Sahaphon. Described by his staff as a self-sacrificing visionary, there is acknowledgement that Supachai is quite determined to accomplish CULT’s goals and that he would live each day by it. His commitment to the credit union has never been put into question. According to Ms. Kruewan Boonrin, CULT’s Education Department Manager, Khun Supachai’s commitment to the credit union movement is very evident in his

willingness and ability to talk and talk and talk about it. She said he seems not to tire and can be very convincing and motivating as a speaker. “He speaks from his heart,” according to Khun Kruewan. Supachai indeed is a very charismatic speaker as most CULT staff agreed. There is another general but silent agreement too. He is CULT’s best President so far.

Khun Supachai is also now an author. He just came out with his book entitled “Everyday Life Enhanced by Credit Union.”⁵ In it he traced his own personal involvement in the credit union movement and how, in his own eyes, other people’s lives changed for the better after joining it. According to him, the book is one of the many means he thought of to achieve his goal of reaching a bigger public and sharing the good work of the credit union.

When he took over the reins of leadership in CULT, it was very clear to Supachai that his main contribution to the credit union would be its mass dissemination. He also wants a clear policy or law on credit union from the Thai government since it does not distinguish it from savings and credit cooperatives. During his term, CULT targeted a big expansion in terms of membership and an aggressive public information campaign that would reach at least 10% of the Thai population. The first had been achieved while the latter is now going on.

For Khun Supachai, it is not difficult to speak about the credit union movement given its glorious history in Thailand. CULT traces its roots to the very first credit union organized in 1965 in a shantytown in Bangkok. From there it grew and expanded to other provinces that heard of its good work. CULT is currently made up of 866 members of which 347 are regular members, 351 are affiliates and 168 are savings groups. Of Thailand’s 62 million population, CULT’s membership reach is approximately .69% at the moment. It has presence in 71 out of the 76 provinces in the country and its current share capital amounts to 58.25 million baht.⁶

CULT's Executive Assistant, Khun Veerayut Ruchirek, explained that the national alliance envisions itself as "an apex organization for community base credit unions, the center for financial services, information technology and education, to promote and strengthen credit unions as sustainable community based financial institution." According to him, it has a four-fold mission:

- To promote credit unions as sustainable community based financial institutions serving the basic needs of its members applying the principles and philosophy of cooperatives,
- To assist credit unions to develop its professional management in order to fulfill its objective as center for people's socioeconomic development and community development,
- To develop the league as an effective and efficient organization as center of financial services, education and information technology, and
- To represent the credit unions in and outside country as network among NGOs, GOs and other credit unions movements and also maintain good image of the credit union movement.

CULT members receive good services and Khun Supachai is equally proud of its programs that include education and training; accounting, auditing and field; dormitory and meeting room services; supplies and publications; credit union chapter promotion; women and youth income generating program; inter-lending program; and organization mutual aid in credit union. When talking about the credit union, Supachai's effusiveness can be infectious and this is attested to by Khun Kruewan who said she cannot help but be proud and excited about the work when she listens to his speeches.

However, Supachai admits that there are major challenges being faced by CULT. According to him, one of the challenges is to reach its membership target of 10% of the total population. Only a small percentage of the Thai population have heard or know about credit unions. This

is not helped by the government's perception that credit union is not different from saving and credit cooperatives which it considers as full of resources and not in need of assistance. Thus, according to him, massive information and education campaign is important and necessary if CULT is to reach its goal.

According to Supachai, he spends most of his time talking about the credit union movement and considers all activities as opportunities for promotion and education. His tactics are not so different from those of politicians – births, deaths, sport tournaments, weddings, etc. are all good opportunities to promote the credit union movement. For someone who breathes and lives credit unions, Supachai indeed is a good role model.

In his leadership at CULT, Supachai acknowledges that there are facilitating factors that help in making innovations within the organization. For instance, he cited the PEARL monitoring tool which is internationally known and utilized by credit unions and cooperatives alike. He said that through this system, he is aided with reliable information about CULT and thus able to check on its progress. It also helps monitor the maintenance of the credit union's good image with the public since it is able to properly account for its work and responsibilities. It also helps, according to him, that he has efficient people working with him who are able to constantly rise up to the challenges he throws at them.

There are however bumps on the road. According to Khun Supachai, he finds it difficult to deal with the government and its bureaucracy. First, he explained that the government is taking its time in trying to understand CULT's advocacy that credit unions are different from savings and credit cooperatives and therefore requires its own policy or law. He also cited as difficult the circuitous route one has to take in relating with the proper government agency. He is hopeful though that soon their message will get through and the government will do the necessary actions.

A Learning Leadership

Supachai's leadership roles in the credit union had been stable – and for some kind of predictable already. Given his gift of gab, he is acknowledged as the best representative of the movement and thus often sent to speak about it to members and non-members alike. He is however more than an effective and passionate speaker and campaigner. He is also a learning leader for he himself admits that he still finds many things to learn about.

Not one to be easily discouraged by new challenges, Supachai sees these as his chance to gain a deeper understanding of the situation and of people. He explained that challenges are mere learning opportunities to be creative especially if it involves engaging people to do something for their own good.

Going back to the five merits, Supachai said that these also represent areas for improvement and self-development. He explained that he also refers to the merits as his basis for mobilizing the goodness among people and he believes that the community members responded to him because of what he has learned and what he is learning from the five merits per se.

“Learning and studying is a continuous process;” according to Khun Supachai. He explained that if there is one thing to remember about leadership, it is that learning and improving oneself is necessary. He underscored though that this learning process is done to promote goodness in one's life and in the society.

Using the game of football, his favorite past time, as an example, Khun Supachai explained that leadership is a lot like playing a crucial game. He said that it is not only one's individual score that should occupy your mind but one also needs to motivate the other members of the team to play well and win. As he said in his book, “working together allows us to achieve larger goals.”

Endnotes

- ¹ Supachai worked for Amway and an import-export company before focusing on the credit union movement.
- ² In 1965, Fr. Alfred Bonninque SJ provided consultation support to the establishment of a credit union in the slums of Huay Kwang. A volunteer was sent to SEARSOLIN to study and afterwards he guided the organizing process of the community's credit union with the guidance of priests from the SELA office.
- ³ These are the Y2004 figures provided by the staff of the credit union.
- ⁴ CULT was set up in August 1972 and presently has a membership of 866 credit unions all over Thailand. In the '70s, the savings stood at 1.4 million baht and this had risen to 428 million baht by 1992. Its current asset stands at 198.4 million and is 100% fully self-sufficient.
- ⁵ The book is in the Thai language and no English version is available at the moment.
- ⁶ Source: CULT presentation material dated 2003

chapter 2



Asian NGO Leadership Stories

introduction

"stories have to be told, to be expressed, for they are part of the narrative quality of existence that can be shared and that therefore compensate for all that cannot be shared. When we tell our stories, we give away our souls. Ours is a culture that lives in the midst of many stories. We are our stories". - William Doty (1975)

We are surrounded by so much information and it is becoming increasingly difficult to absorb this deluge of numbers, facts, concepts, figures and so on. However, the key to effectively disseminating information, that will impact people and help them understand it, is in presenting it in a way that will absorb them and catch their attention. Stories have the power to communicate the abstract, the simple, the factual, and even the mundane. By weaving these elements together in the context of one's struggle for rural development it become a source of inspiration during moments of tiredness..

Everyone has heard stories of some sort ever since they were children and we can all identify with this art form's ability to move and inspire. In a world where we believe reason to be all-powerful we tend to forget that a simple tale can move people far more than rationale.

Stories mend the fabric of our lives. Reading or listening to the stories of those in our community deepens our solidarity. Writing or telling our story is also liberating. It is in this light that we encouraged NGO leaders who participated in the Asian NGO leaders' dialogue to write their own stories. Indeed they expressed that it helped them to reflect upon his/her experience and discover greater meaning and joy.

In the next pages is a collection of stories of Asian NGO leaders, we hope that through their stories we will be more inspired to continue our own journey and to make our own story towards a more just, empowered, humane, happy, and prosperous rural Asia.



Learning Leadership

**Bambang
Ismawan**

Deciding the Choice

Since I was a child, I tended to choose activities that attracted others less. The choice arose from my feelings. When my friends had interests on the city, I was interested in the rural areas. I chose agriculture, while the others chose industry. I was interested in social issues, while the others preferred economic issues. However, I have always been a leader since I was a student in junior high school, senior high school, and as a university student –inter and extra university activities as well as in the university students’ dormitory. In those activities, I was involved more on social concerns and student politics. These activities influenced my interest on political issues so much.

Although I studied at the Faculty of Economy at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, I was not interested in business, neither was I interested in politics though my activities were directed to political affairs. The end of my studies was filled with reflections and considerations to help me decide on the course of my life.

Then, I met a priest from the Netherlands named Father John Dijkstra, SJ. He attracted me with his words and activities. Father Dijkstra’s words were so different from other priests. Generally, priests talked about religion and evangelization. Father Dijkstra on the other hand, talked more on social economy, empowerment, about helping “those who have little”, and “why and how poverty happened”.

I was interested on his thoughts and activities. I got involved in his activities and journeys. Finally, I expressed that I wanted to join the community empowerment movement and promised to get involved totally in such activities after my study.

However, before finishing my studies, I was assigned to participate in the Community Development and Credit Union training in Bangkok, Thailand in August 1963. This training strongly pushed me in the direction of my upcoming activities. I was then designated to be fully involved in Ikatan Usahawan Pancasila (Pancasila Businessmen Association) located in Semarang while finishing my studies there. It was the beginning of my participation in the community development movement. At that time, the term NGO did not yet exist.

In March 1965, I was appointed as the chairman of Ikatan Petani Pancasila (IPP) or Pancasila Farmers' Association at the central office. It was a rapid promotion considering that my involvement in this movement was just recent. I was the youngest in the national board of this movement.

In IPP, some friends and I initiated the establishment of Yayasan Sosial Tani Membangun (YSTM), a development farmers' foundation, on 24 May 1967, that is now called Bina Swadaya. Much like the times in university, there were many new things in community development that I had to listen to and learn. The learning process has not ended up to now, after more than 40 years involvement.

Faithful to the Preference

Many friends thought that the profession I chose was crazy; there were few prospects, and much less the opportunity to earn a higher income. Yet, I was becoming more concerned with

the wide dimension of problems that many people had to suffer. Even so, there remained in me a strong belief, that in each problem lies also the solution to that problem.

I have always found joy in my profession, it always bring me incomparable pleasure. Any little achievement of a work could delight me. For instance, when there is a meeting in a village, there is a problem and the people can find a solution. From such a meeting, an initiative to promote life and empower the community exists, like how to farm more efficiently, save money and manage effective business effectively. I enjoy such things, and I want to enjoy again and again. I believe that there is always a way out if we involve more people to solve the problem. In this process, I have a strong belief that if I strive for the peoples' welfare sincerely; my interest will stay there.

My enthusiasm to strive for community empowerment might explain why I refused an offer to become one of the legislators at the DPR/Indonesian Legislative Assembly in the end of 1960s and early 1970's. I was not interested either to accept the offers to work overseas at CIRDAP (Bangladesh) or FAO (Roma).

Achievements

Until now, Bina Swadaya has collaborated with other parties such as NGOs, the government and the business sector. From these partnerships, many more persons became interested in Bina Swadaya's vision and became involved in this community development movement. Eventually, through those partnerships, we hope we can have an effect on government policies. It becomes a strategic effort as Indonesia is a developing country with 200 millions citizens. Our work will provide more impact to more people if government participates.

We envision our work as a social laboratory, and then we apply it in a wider scale, i.e., government. Some areas of co-operation with government are the following:

1. Formation of 650 thousand groups of UPPKS (Usaha Peningkatan Pendapatan Keluarga Sejahtera) or income generation for families' welfare with a total membership of around 13.5 million persons, as a result of facilitating BKKBN/ National Family Planning Coordinating Board in 6 years since 1984.
2. In the poverty alleviation program, we assisted Bappenas (National Development Planning Agency) and Depdagri (Department of Internal Affairs) in designing programs and conducting training for the implementers; accordingly 120 thousand self-help groups consisting of 3.6 million families actively managed the revolving fund from government.
3. In the social forestry program, we invited approximately 50 NGOs to cooperate with Perum Perhutani (National Forestry Corporation) to solve forest farmers' problems in Java Island.
4. Inviting Bank Indonesia (Central Bank) and Bank Rakyat Indonesia (People's Bank of Indonesia) sponsored by GTZ to implement the program Pola Hubungan Bank and Kelompok Swadaya Masyarakat (PHBK) or Bank-Self Help Groups Linkage Program since 1987. This program covered 23 provinces (of 27 existed provinces), more than 1000 banks participated, 257 LPUM (Self-Reliance Development Institutions) involved, serving 34.227 Self-Help Groups (1.026.810 households), with accumulated credit of Rp. 331 billion, accumulated savings of Rp. 29.5 billion, and repayment rate of 97.3% (September 2001)
5. In collaboration with Departemen Pekerjaan Umum (public works department) conducted Integrated Irrigation Program in North Sumatera and with Pemda (local government) of Subang district and Banten district, West Java.
6. In co-operation with Departemen Pertanian (Agriculture Department) in formulating groups of small farmers-fishermen (P4K) totalling 60 thousand groups, with each group consisting of 20 – 30 persons.

7. Another achievement was the establishment of Gema PKM (The Indonesian Movement for Micro Finance Development) presented before the President of Indonesia on 10 March 2000. It is a forum of micro-finance stakeholders involving government, finance institutions, NGOs, mass organizations, academicians/researchers private/business sector, mass media and funding institutions. Gema PKM is intended to give services to 10 million micro-entrepreneurs by 2005. Up to October 2004, it has served 9,4 million micro-entrepreneurs.

I feel pleased in inviting many more people to participate in our community empowerment efforts. It is proved with around 800 participating persons as full time staff in Bina Swadaya. Through its site offices, Bina Swadaya directly serves 100.000 poor families. Meanwhile, the Training and Education Center of Bina Swadaya has trained around 5000 NGO leaders and community empowerment program managers of government and private institutions.

As an NGO, Bina Swadaya has reached financial sufficiency by conducting diversification of activities that recently cover 5 fields:

1. Micro Finance
2. Civil Society Empowerment
3. Development of Agribusiness
4. Development of Media Communication: magazines and books publication,, television program, etc.
5. Alternative Tourism

Presently, publication of Trubus magazine has been carried out for 35 years, reaching a monthly circulation of 65,000 copies. Meanwhile, agriculture books publication has been running for 20 years publishing 1000 titles. We have also published 500 titles of books on

health, skills, and languages in 10 years. Our Agriculture stores (8 stores) have operated in Jakarta, Semarang and Surabaya. And we are now designing a franchise system to be launched in May 2005.

In the field of cadres' promotion, of the 800 staff, 22 cadres function as directors of various fields, with an average age of 40 years old. In the meantime, the New Regulation on Foundation (valid since 2002), the Foundation Boards have been reorganized with personnel based on the regulation, acted by those who greatly value social development, ready to spend their time and energies voluntarily.

I wish that Bina Swadaya continues to grow and remain a strong foundation even without me. Last year, a management workshop to formulate 10 years strategic planning was completed. Bina Swadaya will become a stronger NGO with total staff 5000 persons by 2015 and directly serve 1 million poor families. In planning the phasing out of Bina Swadaya, a management and organization system has been prepared to be sustainable.

Challenges and Opportunities

In participating in this community empowerment movement, we encountered many obstacles. In the early stages of the organization, we faced lack of funds and skilled human resources; we disliked and were suspicious of government's intentions. In the process, we had to manage tension with regard to the social economy approach and people's over-expectations. It was worsened by the social political condition and we had to face a government attitude that was intolerant of the people's initiatives.

To overcome such problems, we should respond to them as challenges, and then find opportunities to solve existing problems. Inviting more friends to get involved would lessen the

time spent disputing on problems. To solve the problems, the staff should be empowered by giving them the responsibility and authority to do an assignment.

With this approach, with all the different fields of activity done in this foundation, I become less competent to run things alone. I do not fully understand the management of the training center, micro-finance, magazine publication, printing and marketing of books. All must be trusted to more professional staff. As a result, the staff takes their responsibilities well and feel the support. They may mistakes but they do not repeat them. A staff is given a chance to develop based on their personal character by handling an activity we assign to them.

A Leader is A Learner

To develop a commitment and to improve leadership capacity, dialogue is important. Indonesia has a good phrase for that: Saling Asah, Asih and Asuh (mutual sharpening/improving, compassion, and educating). Up to this moment, I keep on learning in a participatory manner and always try to find new things I did not understand before. I focus on directing Bina Swadaya as a learning organization with shared objectives and constantly find new dimensions to problems. A leader is a person who always needs to learn together with his associates.

If one is asking about the quality of leadership, I will say self-reliance is important. The capacity to be financially self-reliant is essential. Therefore, it is important to develop entrepreneurship with every activity; this renews it and enables an inspired work dynamics.

Young leaders may be advised that to be a community empowering NGO leader, one should ensure that it becomes their way of life. If we want to be successful living in a remote island, we should burn down the ship we use to reach the island. The point is that there must be a spirit and commitment to empower the people consistently and in a sustainable way.

A leader should also develop a like-minded working team. At Bina Swadaya there are around 10 persons who have been working together over 30 years. We should also develop transparent and trustful climate within the working team. Again, a leader should be able to see the problems as challenges.

In conclusion, I remember the advice of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, a national hero of Indonesian education, concerning leadership, he stated: “Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo, Ing Madyo Mangun Karso, Tut Wuri Handayani”. It means that when a leader is in front, he should be an example, in the middle he should develop initiative, and from the end he should give support and endorsement. This advice is important to become a leader.

Bambang Ismawan
Jakarta, January 2005



A Servant Leader

Soetrisno Kusomohadi

Indonesia

Roots

Soetrisno was born to an elite and respected family in their village. He was on top of his class since his grades school. During his university years, he was a working student. He later became a teacher. He taught Chemistry and Mathematics. Most of his student considered him as their best and favorite teacher.

Soetrisno's preference for developmental work was triggered by his involvement to a team that conducted socio-economic survey that investigated why patients never get cured; quite a tight spot on his mind, the answer was simply because the people were poor. It was then that he was challenged and motivated to work in rural development work. His appreciation was further influenced by words of Dr. Gunawon who told him that faith should be translated to action.

Thus, in 1967 he joined Christian Foundation for Public Health where he dignified social development work. Because of this, he gained recognitions and realizations as well. In one of his reflections, he thought, that leadership is not the position, because position makes people jealous. He believes that leadership should not be based on positions since it has a term which will end, influence should be based on how you articulate your issues. Leaders should have the capacity to influence and motivate others. A leader must have skills

to translate vision into more operational terms. The strength of a good leader-developmental worker is the ability to articulate things in a very clear & convenient way. It made him realized and appreciated further the value of service to the people. He vouched on participatory approach to training as a successful element in the development work.

Dr. Gunawon played a major influence in his decision to engage in development work. When Dr. Gunawon ,resigned, his dilemmas was whether to follow him or stay and face the challenge of leadership for the foundation. Imbued by strong sense community service, he took on the challenge and they continued to be good friends.

Having been part of the Interfaith leadership also and being the only layman in Synod since 1990, he influenced some of its values and perspectives which he considered big accomplishments for him. Religion should not only be ritual but should be expressed in a concrete translation of action-and he initiated for the adoption of health as the entry point of service. They also developed networks and forums for cooperation for Public Health and eventually the construction of hospital and devoted developmental work for the health sector.

When asked about his tips for young leaders, he mentioned the following points:

1. Total commitment in whatever you do
2. Remember that position is dangerous and tempting, at times it leads people to be overwhelmed by the prestige attached to the position which later cloud the intention for genuine service
3. Always think of win-win solution of any conflict

According to Soetrisno, some of the factors that sustain his commitment to development work are family support, his being open to different ideas and capacity to accept varied views, become sensitive to other point of view, capacity to simplify and articulate and allow the guidance of Holy Spirit guidance.

Some of the hindering factors he mentioned that affects most NGO workers were those related to financial sustainability (e.g. no pension for NGO workers when they retire, etc.) and the struggle with own's ego vis-a-vis focusing on the goal.

Most people who knew Soetrisno would describe him as someone who is like a gentle breeze. He is able to facilitate and mediate due to his ability to listen and provide balanced view point leading to a win-win solution. From his exercise of leadership, one can see the hands of God work, he is a leader who allowed the grace of the Holy Spirit to flow through him. He allowed himself to be God's instrument for dialogue. Because of these, Soetrisno is respected by his colleagues and friends as an effective bridge among people, the musyawarah spirit – dialogue of life is very much alive in his approach.

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Soetrisno Kusumohadi, 63 is currently the Chairperson of AsiaDHRRRA and an active Board member of InDHRRRA. An active leader for national and regional civil society networks working for children and education. He is also the present chairperson of the Indonesian NGO Forum on Deprived Children. Soetrisno leadership role expands to providing technical support and consulting services to CSOs and various international institutions in Indonesia on various development concerns.

Other than his position in AsiaDHRRRA and Indonesian Forum on Deprived Children, Mr. Soetrisno Kusumohadi, have the following affiliations also:

National Level Affiliations:

Founding Board Member (1980 – present) of the Sekretariat BINA DESA
Execom Coordinator (1988-1995) of the FK PKM (Inter Faith Forum on public Health
Board and Chair (1995 -2005) of the LOPS (autonomous body under National Council of Churches in Indonesia)
Member then Chair of Witnessing and Service (1998 – present) of the Synod of GKJ
Board member then Chair (1996 –present) of the FK PPAI
Vice Secretary General (1990-1995) of the Indonesian Red Cross
Executive Secretary of the Yayasan Indonesia Sejahtera
Executive Secretary of the Indonesia Sejahtera Foundation (YIS)

Regional Level Affiliations:

Board Member (1988 – 1998) of ANGOC
ExeCom (1990-1995) of ACHAN
ExeCom (1990-1995) of IRED
Secretary General of SEA-JAN (Southeast Asia-Japan NGO Network for Deprived children)



Integration and Leadership

**Paul
Sinnappan**

The Leadership Story of Paul Sinnappan

I have been involved in community development work in Malaysia for almost 30 plus years. From 1990 onwards I began working with rural communities in Asia. My work has been primarily focused on the area of Poverty Alleviation through organizing Credit Unions, Co-Operatives and Micro Credit Programs for the rural poor including farmers, indigenous people, and elderly in the rural communities. Through these grassroots economic initiatives, I began introducing an integrated human development concept with a three-pronged approach. i.e.-

- Need based approach (addressing the basic needs of the rural communities such as for economic education (formal and non formal), health, transportation etc.
- Rights based approach (addressing the rights of the rural communities such as land rights, basic wage rights, consumer rights, human rights, women rights political rights, citizen rights, farmer's rights).
- Alternative model building approach (people owned and controlled community economic institutions, gender responsive families / communities / institutions, value based families / communities, people centered governance / policies, moral business, responsible world order

I have been sharing this approach now with local NGOs, International NGOs, Government bodies, and international donor agencies.

How did you start your involvement in rural development work? What motivated you to enter into NGO work?

Personal experience of Poverty in home and community

I was born and brought up in a family of 12. My family lived in Minyak Estate (a palm oil plantation), which is about 70 kilometers from Kuala Lumpur. A multinational company called Socfin Company owned the plantation. My father worked as palm oil fruit harvester and my mother worked as palm oil fruit collector. They worked hard but their wages were very low. So, our family and other families in the community lived under poverty. The experience of the lack of good food and adequate clothing was a daily affair. Money to meet health and education related needs was not there. My family incurred heavy debts. So I had many personal experiences of poverty while growing up as a child and youth.

Reasons for poverty (Exploitation from the Company)

My personal observations of life in my community made me realize the causes of poverty. The workers drank unclean water while the management staff had distilled water to drink and had a swimming pool that was regularly cleaned. When my friends and I used to bike to secondary school on days when we had no money to go on a bus, the children of the management staff were provided free transport. When the workers' children had to pay RM 15.00 per month as school fees, the Company paid the fees of the children of the management staff. There were times I had to stand up on the table in my classroom for not paying the school fees in time. The workers' children had to buy their own books for school while the company provided scholarships for the children of the management staff.

These personal experiences taught me something about the reasons for poverty. It is linked with the unjust and unequal economic situation. Here was a big multinational company making big

profits but paying very little to its workers. Thus the workers had barely enough money to make ends meet.

Reason for Poverty (Exploitation within the community)

When I was a teenager living in the palm oil plantation, I also began to notice some of the weaknesses of my Tamil Community. When my Grandparents migrated from South India to Malaysia in the 1900s their generation brought along the attitudes, behavior, and beliefs that were exploitative in nature. The practice of the caste system, belief in fatalism, the inferiority of women, master worship, religious rites and rituals, superstitions were some of these beliefs. I was placed in the low caste category. A low caste teacher taught me. The houses of the workers were arranged according to caste. There were even temples, cemeteries, shops for high caste and low caste. As a low caste person I could play with my high caste friends but I couldn't enter their houses and eat in those houses. Political leaders were all high caste. They were not keen on helping the lower caste.

Examples of my family members in helping the poor

My father was a Trade Union leader. He fought for the rights of the workers in my community. He used to tell me stories of how he fought with the management even to the extent of trashing the office and hitting a supervisor. My Grandfather told me stories of his fight with management. Once he was chased away from one estate he previously lived in for hitting a supervisor who tried to molest a female worker in that estate. People with problems used to come to my house to meet my father. My mother and grandmother took care of them. When they didn't have money they used to give the little jewels they had to help the poor. My father was also one of the leaders of the local church. Through my own family members I began to understand the meaning of helping the poor.

Concepts and Ideology for Social Work

My personal experiences at home and in my community were sharpened by my involvement in my Parish. I became more enlightenment with the following encounters:

- Coming into contact with my Parish Priest Fr.Caroff O.M.I at the age of 15 helped me to understand the Bible, the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church, Liberation Theology and basic social work concepts. Before that my faith was limited to saint worship and community religious celebrations.
- Joining the Young Christian Students Movement (YCS). Using the See, Judge and Act framework to organize students in the Secondary School to help themselves. Organizing tuition classes for poor student and savings groups among poor students. Discussions with the YCS Chaplains such as Fr. Micheal Pinto, Fr. Lequane.
- Joining the Parish Social Action Group started by Fr. Caroff O.M.I. to help the poor and to organize the women, youths and children in the rural areas.
- Growing with the French Missions who started the Social Workers Network among the Plantation Tamil Communities in Malaysia
- Lessons conducted by Fr.Anthony Selvanayagan (now Bishop of Penang) on the Bible and Basic Christian Community Building.
- Seminars conducted by Fr. Anthony Naden on organizing the community on rights based approaches. (Fr.Naden studied in EAPI of Ateneo Manila)
- Work experience with the Gabriel Brothers in Monfort Boys Town (a vocational school for youths)
- Understanding the Tamil Community based on the Dravidian Social Reform Movement which went against all the Brahmin Teaching which exploited the Tamil Community (Mr. R.S.Parasuraman helped me by discussing these issues and providing me with books)
- Participating in the promotion of Credit Unions in three communities.

The above experiences helped me to analyze community issues and introduced a basic methodology for organizing communities.

The Study in SEARSOLIN, Philippines

Due to the above work experience in the Parish Social Action Group of my hometown I was selected to go the Philippines to study in the South East Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN). My class was for 8 months in 1972-1973. In SEARSOLIN my knowledge of ideology and methodology in community organizing was expanded. The following concept and ideologies were sharpened for me:

- Deepening the study of Bible and Social Teachings of the Catholic Church
- Liberation Theology and the works of Fr.Gutarez and Fr.Boff and the Latin American Experiences
- Marxist – Leninist and communist Ideologies
- Paulo Friere’s concept of community organizing (Pedagogy of the Oppressed)
- Antigonish Principles of Coady International Institute, Canada.
- Inter Faith Approach in Community Organizing

What has been your most fulfilling accomplishment?

Organizing Credit Unions for the Poor in Malaysia

I joined the Credit Union promoters team in my hometown Batang Berjuntai, Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, Sungai Patani, Bagan Serai, Sibul (Larawak), Kampar and Tasik Chini and contributed my knowledge and skills to promote credit unions for the Indian poor and indigenous poor. My notable contributions to the Credit Union Promotion Center were as follows:

- Development of analytical tools to understand community problems
- Development of Basic Education and Training materials on Credit Unions
- Training of Trainers and Promoters in the Credit Union network
- Development of Vision, Mission, Goals for the Credit Union movement
- Developed spirituality, ideology, philosophy, guidelines for the Credit Unions
- Development of accounting and management systems in the Credit Unions
- Development of ideological based leaders in the Credit Unions
- Help in developing monitoring – evaluation tools, strategic planning, implementation systems.
- Development of women and youth leaders in the Credit Unions
- Helped in the registration and writing of the by-laws for the Credit Unions
- Promotion of Credit Unions in rural areas (plantation workers, indigenous people and farmers)
- Integrated Gender, Sustainable agriculture, interfaith in the Credit Unions

I was personally involved in the formation of NGOs and Networks in Malaysia

- Credit Union Promotion Club, Malaysia
- Peoples Credit Co-Operative, Batang Berjuntai
- Workers Credit Co-Operative, Kuala Lumpur
- Peoples Service Organization, Selangor
- Masdhrra (Malaysian Secretariat of Human Resource Development in Rural Areas)
- Belingian Credit Co-Operative (Sarawak)

Inter Faith Work

Even though my work started with the Tamil Community in Malaysia working on the Church Front helped me to understand the interracial and interfaith dimension. I promoted work with

the Malays, Chinese, Indians and Indigenous people in Malaysia. I also promoted work where Muslims, Christian, Hindus, Buddhist came to gather to help and serve the poor. I saw this as one way of promoting inter-racial and inter religions communities in Malaysia in the midst of racial and religious polarization.

My work with International NGO Communities

From the year 1990 onwards I began working as a free lance consultant and training for some international NGO communities such as Asian Confederation of Credit Unions, Canadian Co-Operative Association, International Co-Operative Association, International Labor Organization, Asian Women In Co-Operative Development Forum, Asian Partnership For Human Development, Center for Asian Women in Politics.

What sustained you in continuing NGO work and what is your source of inspiration

I would consider the following factors as those sustained me in continuing my work in community Development for more than 30 years: -

Relating my personal experience of Poverty with Communities I worked

Since I have experienced poverty in my home and community during my childhood and youth hood I was able to relate to communities who lived in poverty. My heart would fill with compassion for the poor.

As a result I continued to maintain a good portion of my time to going direct to the community and doing fieldwork. Staying in a community, living in the homes of the poor, holding dialogues with the poor have sustained me throughout my NGO work.

Deep rootedness in Spirituality

The Christian formation I went through during my young age brought the understanding of the Bible, Social Teaching of the Catholic Church, Liberation Theology that formed my foundation. The priests and religious persons with whom I grew up with still motivate me. I still continue to grow with Church Teachings through the Papal Encyclicals, Documents of Federation of Asian Bishops Conference. I also get opportunities to attend workshops organized by the Asian Church on subjects such as Faith Encounter in Social Action, Promotion of Justice and Peace through Social Work, Interfaith Context in Social Work. I still continue to read books written by priests who work with the poor, especially in India.

During the course of my work I continued to search for basic spirituality of other faiths such as (Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Indigenous knowledge). Lately due to the work of the promotion of Sustainable Agriculture my search in understanding men – women and nature led me to understand Cosmic Theology, Integrity of Creation, Pancha Bootha concept (5 element) of Indian and Indonesian Traditions and the four elements concept of Thailand and Cambodia. My ongoing study, search and experiencing of Earth Centers and People Centered GURUS is constantly giving me the needed inspiration for my work.

Continuous updating on ideologies and concepts on Social Work

At an early age I was given an opportunity to grow with ideologies such as Liberation Theology, Marxist – Leninist ideologies, “Pedagogy of the oppressed ideology “ of Paulo Freire, Antiginish Principles of Fr. Moses Coady and Tomkins, Co-Operative concepts and principles by the founders of Co-Operatives.

During the course of my work I began to test and understand these ideologies and principle on how they relate with the organizing work of the poor. Integrating Gender in my work during

the beginning of the 90s made me analyze the above ideologies from gender and feminist perspectives. This gave me a new inspiration .The workshops organized by AWCF were very helpful in this respect. I learned new concepts, ideas and frameworks in my work.

Growing with like minded leaders

Since I believed in teamwork right from the beginning of my community development work I began to grow with the leaders of this team and looked to them for sustenance and inspiration. We would have discussions; share stories of success and failures .We shared our lives and our works in these discussions. By listening to the joys and sorrows of my friends I gained power. Some of the teams I grew with were:

- The credit union promoters teams in Batang Berjuntai (Peoples Credit Union), Kuala Lumpur (Workers Credit Union), Kampar (Malaysian Care Team) Tasik Chini (Foundation for Community Studies)
- Staff of National Office for Human Development
- Leaders in NGOs such as KOMAS, Plantation Support Group, Women Development Committee, All Women Action Committee, Era Consumer
- Friends in AWCF, Asia DHRRA, SEARSOLIN, CCA, ACCU, ICA etc.
- Priests and other individuals

Growth with my family members

My wife has been a sustained source of inspiration. She is active in the Credit Unions and Gender related programs. We used to have lots of sharing and discussion about our lives and work. During times of difficulties and frustrations we help each other.

Direct Field Work

With all the activity in National and International work I still maintain direct contact with farmers, plantation workers, indigenous people, squatter communities from time to time. Presently I spend more time with the indigenous communities and women's group. This personal contact with communities still continues to give inspiration to my work.

Seeing stories of success

As the years went by I began to see changes in families and communities I worked with. They had improved their personal, family and community lives. From all the training we conducted they are now able to analyze their problems by themselves and find their own ways and means to solve them. They have learned on how to get help from outside to solve them. They have now some clear perspective regarding culture, economics and politics. Relationships between husband and wife have improved. Families give importance to raising their children. Old people in the communities are taken care of. Violence against women has reduced. Communities now have organized their own credit programs to help one another. Seeing these results slowly taking place in individuals and their families and communities continues to give me inspiration to work with rural communities, especially the poor.

What were the difficulties you have encountered as NGO leader? What are your frustrations as rural leader? What were your dilemmas?

Accepting the time factor involved in bringing about CHANGE in Community

After my studies from SEARSOLIN, I returned home full of energy and dreams. I was equipped with ideologies and methodologies. I promised myself that I could change the rural communities

in Malaysia within a matter of time. But when the realities of the community and their level of understanding and their responses to development were not tallying with my expectations set I began to feel frustrated and down. It took some time to reconcile with this. I began to slow down and started to grow with the pace of the communities I worked with. When the results were not fast enough I also started to feel frustrated. Late Fr.Gauthier M.E.P. (the director of NOHD then) clarified one point to me. I am only an instrument in the Hands of God; God will finally make things happen.

Living a simple life

Due to my early formation in the Church and admiring the simple life style of Jesus and Mahatma Gandhi I decided that as a community development worker I must live a simple live. I had certain principles in dress code, food, house etc. But to satisfy family members, friends and certain organizational expectations I was making adjustments in those principles. Until now I am struggling in this respect. I feel there are times I am living simple life but there are others time I feel I am becoming a victim of consumerism and materialism.

Family life and community work

I got married at the age of 25. By then I was very active in Community Development work. So I began to believe that my community work is the priority. My wife and children became secondary. I even blamed my family for my failure in community work.

My involvement with the women's movement, attending gender studies and family life education were turning points in my life. As a feminist and gender promoter my wife helped me a lot in understanding my role as a good husband and father apart from my community work.

Going against Culture and Tradition

The rural community I worked with needed a lot of transformation in their way of life. This needed a critical look at culture, religion and traditions and the will to eliminate elements that obstruct good development. When I began to introduce new concepts on religion, culture, community living and gender relationships I faced a lots of opposition from community leaders and leaders of institutions. Articles I wrote and trainings I conducted became controversial. But it took many years for people in the community to realize the importance of these changes.

Confronting the Capitalist and their systems

Using tools like liberation theology and Marxist Leninist Ideology I took a preferential option for the poor against the capitalist system and the Government that supports this system. I still maintain this stand. So, sometimes I am misunderstood in the Church and community. People want me to go slow on this. They want me to compromise sometimes with politicians and institutions. But I am still having difficulty changing my position. Lately I am having difficulty in working with NGOs and their leaders who are beginning to compromise with capitalist groups.

Betrayal of Leaders

The most frustrating time in my life is when leaders whom I trained begin to betray the movement and people. Some have left the movement. Some were trying to repent and change. I have difficulty in accepting and working with these leaders. Following the principle of hating the sin and not the sinner I still maintain good relationships with these people giving them more time to grow and understand.

Changing from my own behavior

Even though I was very conscious of upholding good values in my personal life and work I find that there are times I am failing. Getting angry, making decisions without much consultation, not being gender sensitive all the time are some of my failures. Changing these tendencies is one of my dilemmas. I am working very hard on it. But I have failed at times due to human weakness. The constructive criticism sessions I go through with my family and with my leaders have been very helpful to me. I do speak to Priests and Religious to help me to change.

Understanding the new society

It seems to me that I understood my community and work well in the 70s and 80s and early 90s. But now I am having some difficulty in understanding the new society. Lots of changes are taking place and they are happening fast. Society is becoming more complex, complicated and sophisticated. The impact of globalization is very powerful. I cannot understand the present youth and their behavior. Society is becoming more self-centered. There are less people interested in community development work.

Am I indispensable

Until mid 80s I had this problem. Even though I was able to reduce my role in the movement but I was not able to let go completely. While handing over responsibilities to other leaders I was not satisfied with their work. I still thought that I was the best. But I was reminded by others all the while that I cannot be there for ever and need to hand over to young leaders. With AWCF's program for placing women in leadership positions and ACCU's program on training 2nd and 3rd generation leadership I began to become more comfortable with this matter. I don't look for perfection from the work of new leaders. I am able to accept their mistakes. I give more time for them to grow. Because it also took me time to grow in leadership.

What is your suggestion on how to nurture the commitment of rural NGO dilemma?

Based on my experiences I feel the following can be considered as suggestions to nurture the commitment of rural NGO leaders:

- Grow with certain spirituality (This does not mean religion, but establishing a value system for yourself.)
- Continuously analyze the issues of the community you work with
- Grow with a team. Share with them your joys, sorrows and frustrations
- Have a clear vision, mission and goals (VMG) for your work. (Based on certain ideologies, gender)
- Keep constant touch with the poor by going and staying in the community
- Evaluate your work constantly (with your team and the community itself)
- Keep updated with development trends
- Listen to stories of success and failures in community development work
- Keep your own mentors and communicate with them regularly
- Continue reading. Do some research work

6. What do you think is your most important quality as an NGO leader?

Based on my experiences I feel these are my important qualities as a NGO leader:

- Spiritually formed
- Ideologically directed
- Work in Teams
- Direct work with grassroots community
- Consultative leader

- Gender responsive leader at home and in community
- Good listener
- Works with clear objective, vision, mission and goals
- Tries to live simple live
- Evaluates working in teams

7. If you are asked to give advice to young NGO leaders, what will it be?

Are young leaders doing good work in their new context and environment? They are mostly trying to respond to new realities. They have less understanding of old times. So if they add these elements in their work I hope their work can be better:

- Understand the history of the community they are working with
- Have basic socio, economic, political analysis of the country and the community they work with
- Understand the new realities of the community and develop Vision, Mission and Goals
- Grow with some spirituality (from religion, culture, nature or indigenous knowledge)
- Grow with teams
- Grow with older mentors so that they can give you perspective
- Minimize addiction to consumerism and materialism
- While growing as experts in ICT also learn human relations, human communication
- Understand generation gap and learn how to manage that
- Go for exposure in the community

*Case story written for the Leadership Project of AsiaDHRRA by Dr. Paul Sinnappan, Malaysia
November 2004*



Reflections on Leadership

Anselmo Mercado

My Life in Verses

Since I turned sixty last April 2003, I have often thought and reflected about my life, its past, what I have become, and where I am going. In short, I have been reflective about the meaning of life as it relates to me, as I relate with other people in my life and with my Good Lord.

I have put some of my thoughts, ideas and reflections into some kind of poetry.

*I'm now sixty, past my middies,
a time to reflect on life's goodies.
Somehow, life must carry on and move on.
I shouldn't let age bother or slow me down.
For life is more than the aging process.
It is a lifetime of blessings and graces.*

I am not a poet, but putting ideas and thoughts into verses have been very helpful for me to think logically, systematically and to be imaginative in describing real life experiences and sentiments. It is also a form of prayer for me.

To Be Positive in Outlook

In recent years (going into the New Millennium) I have made great efforts to change my outlook in life and how I view “development.” To me, this is a radical change that I hope will shape my life hereon and provides it a positive direction.

Let me explain briefly. For the great part of my sixty years I think I have been very much oriented to and influenced by the “traditional” mentality or approach to development. The traditional approach to development usually begins with diagnosing “problems,” “deficiencies” and “needs”. For example, we have a “problem child” or “family problems” or “interlocking deficiencies and problems of a community” or “problems of a country” or “problems of the world community”. The problems can be overwhelming, discouraging, frustrating. In a sense, such a feeling weakens the spirit. I have called this traditional approach as the “DCBA” (Deficiency of Community-based Approach).

In contrast, I have learned about an alternative approach, called the “ABCD” (Asset-based Community Development), an approach that initiates the development process with identification and a mapping of assets (resources) however small or big they may be. Various assets (e.g. people, physical, livelihood or economic, organizations, etc.) are analyzed and planned for mobilization and development. This generates a much more positive, motivational, encouraging and hopeful spirit and stimulus for development. It is an outlook that is first and foremost internally driven.

Hence, the main guiding themes or principles I have decided to adopt hereon in my life as a person, or as a leader, is first of all to have a positive outlook. Along with this is an appreciation of resources (e.g. various assets, blessings, graces, etc.), internal and external, that are waiting to be tapped, pooled, mobilized, shared and linked together for growth and development

of peoples and communities. I am striving (and at times struggling) to veer away from the traditional problem-oriented mentality. Secondly, I believe the greatest resource we can tap is the Good Lord himself, the Original Source of all resources. He said: “Without me you can do nothing.” He is always there to help those who help themselves.

A Personal Mission Statement

Actions, however, are not just for the sake of actions. In his article “Five Moments of Truth in Becoming a Leader,” D.H. Groberg says the first three consist of: 1) A leader must define his/her core values and principles which give the leader a sense of purpose or a mission or a sense of destiny; 2) A leader must be deeply committed to the core values and principles which results in inner power; and 3) A leader must align his/her actions to the core values and principles. This consistency establishes and strengthens integrity and trust in the leader.

Not too long ago I wrote “The Way to Go” to provide me with some directions in how to go about doing things in a systematic way with a sense of purpose.

The Way to Go

Where are we going?

*For this, we define our Vision, Values and Motivation
that we keep renewing.*

Vision...

*gives us direction,
without it only confusion.*

*Values...
define our character and principles to use
to inculcate discipline and stay in focus.*

Total Fitness:

Life as I have experienced it, is a continuous developmental process. It is very demanding. It is full of actions. It is very challenging.

For example, being a “family man” (i.e., a father, a husband, a relative) presents an on-going demand, concern and many challenges. Beyond the family are the relationships with my associates, colleagues and co-workers. To be a “team player” and to help in team building is no easy task considering the “human factor” and personalities in the organizational milieu.

Finally, but not the least, development work is a work of service, to be of help to people specially “the least, the lost, the last and the lowest,” which is beautifully expressed in God’s dual commandment “Love God, love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31), “to bring the Good News to others” - - all these are very demanding and challenging.

As such, these require no less than “total fitness” of a person (or a leader) to cope with them. Put simply, “total fitness” means “being able to live most and serve best” (Fitness: The New Wave, 1986), which means to take care of oneself holistically or to develop oneself to become a “total person” that one can be by being healthy as one can fully be: physically, psychologically (mental and emotional), socially and spiritually.

Socially, my priorities are clearly: first, to maintain a healthy relationship with my family, enjoying a picnic or an “outing” with them. Secondly, I try to relax with friends I feel comfortable

with. Thirdly, I attend functions (formal and informal) of a few select organizations I belong to.

To be physically, psychologically and socially healthy is great, but it is incomplete without spiritual wellness.

Globalization:

For me, “Globalization,” first of all, reflects a vision - - the world’s global “oneness,” “one world,” “one global village,” “a global community.” There is a lot of diversity in the world but ultimately everyone must recognize and accept this vision of “unity in diversity.”

Secondly, this concept of “unity in diversity” implies relationships of peoples and communities within and across national boundaries. Globalization is not a new phenomenon. Various relationships have existed, evolved and developed with increasing sophistication and complexity over time. It will continue to develop and envelope the whole world whether we like it or not. It is a tide that cannot turn back.

Thirdly, Globalization is a resource to tap, to exploit, to use to improve and to innovate. As such, this resource should be available, owned, and managed such that its benefits will accrue and redound to all peoples, all communities and all nations, rich and poor, weak and powerful, with equitable fairness and with greater consideration for the “the least, the last, the lost and the lowest” (“4 L’s”). This implies “leveling the playing field” and “dismantling the barriers between peoples across nations technically and politically” (Dr. John Clark in his talk on “The Globalization and Rural Development: Limits and Possibilities,” Cyberjaya, Malaysia, October 28, 2003). He also said: “The problem is the selective way by which globalization has been managed and not globalization per se.” Among the recommendations Dr. Clark suggested were:

- To work for and chart the path for ethical globalization;
- To campaign for better management of globalization;
- To campaign for true trade partnerships, fairer trade policies and practices, etc. .

The “Dialogue of Leaders’ at Cyberjaya, Malaysia was a wonderful learning experience and opportunity for me. I was certainly impressed by the openness and sincerity of the participants who were in dialogue sharing reflections, ideas, viewpoints, sentiments, stories, experiences, biases, uncertainties, confusions, various positions, concerns, and challenges especially as we confronted the issues related to Globalization and our leadership amidst this phenomenon. At the end, I came out of the dialogue with mixed feelings of hope and concern and anxiety for the future but much enriched with - -

1. New insights and awareness about the negative and positive impacts of globalization;
2. Greater sensitivity to the perspectives and sentiments of other people particularly the disadvantaged whose lives are most adversely affected by globalization; and
3. Greater motivation and vigor to pursue with consistency my outlook to be positive and to be an asset in my relationships and leadership acts.

Conclusion

My reflections herein are indeed very personal. They are meant to be personal. Although personal I also want to share them with others for whatever value and good they may give to others.

The Second Asian NGO Leaders’ Dialogue was a “re-charging” and a very enriching experience for me. In my reflections during that Dialogue, I recalled a poem I wrote about “Sustainability” which I shared with the other participants.

“Sustainability”

On one hand --

*If we start wrongly on something,
the wrong will be continuing,
unless we do some correcting,
and strive to do the right thing,
to prevent further damaging.*

On the other hand --

*We may begin something rightly,
or do something correctly,
which may possibly go awry,
during a long run journey,
unless we aim for sustainability.*

To be on the upper hand --

*We must consistently be productive,
also be pro-active and innovative;
with an outlook that's positive,
qualities we should strive to live by and to give
in a world becoming more competitive.*

Ultimately, we put ourselves in God's hand --

*The Lord of creation, The Source of our motivation.
Sustainability, we know, looks for that long term vision,
not merely with shortsighted immediate gratification.
God surely provides us guidance and direction,
to the end of creation -- our Eternal Salvation.*

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**Leadership as a Function of Credibility,
Risk-Taking and Passion**

**Cresente
Paez**

Philippines

I was educated as an agriculturist but now and for the last thirty years, I am working as a practitioner and advocate of the cooperative movement. Much of what I know and apply in cooperatives, I gained by learning by doing and by attending seminars and conferences that were made available to me along the way. I have taken on various responsibilities for jobs that applied to me and where I have exercised what I call my brand of management leadership. Reflecting on my experiences, I realized that my ability to get things done depended on my credibility based on my previous successes, my confidence to take risks, and my commitment to see things through.

I started as a very active member of a primary cooperative in Cebu, a southern island in the Philippines known for its history and for the creative entrepreneurship of the people who have to grapple with meager natural resources. I was catapulted into the network mode of cooperative activities when I was asked to take over the management of the Visayas Cooperative Training Organization (VICTO) during the time when its morale was at its lowest and its asset was down to only P1,000.

I rallied the membership to capitalize on its talents and formulated a “survival kit” that raised VICTO from a Cebu-based cooperative to become the largest federation of cooperatives with branches in all the major islands of the Visayas. For this tremendous growth in membership, assets, and services, VICTO was recognized by the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) with the Development Management Award.

When the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) was restructured to implement the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of the newly installed administration of President Corazon Aquino, I was asked to become the Assistant Secretary for Support Services. This is because one of the main strategies for expediting the implementation of agrarian reform under this program was to organize agrarian reform beneficiaries into cooperatives. My work was to convince the farmers that cooperativism was the most effective way to access and to generate support services to develop the newly distributed land and to make sure that government programs are in tune with this strategy.

My position in DAR was however a political issue based on my association with the then Secretary of DAR, Florencio Abad who was very committed to implement a pro-small-farmer agrarian reform. When it was clear to me that the Government was making compromises in the implementation of this kind of agrarian reform by not confirming Sec. Abad as the DAR Secretary, I did not stay long in DAR and moved back to NGO work.

At that time, the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in the Rural Areas (PhilDHRRRA) was looking for a new National Coordinator. I have been a founding member of PhilDHRRRA through my base-organization, VICTO. I have served PhilDHRRRA in many capacities both for the Visayas PhilDHRRRA membership and for the national level. So it was my pleasure to be involved with this network as the National Coordinator and be working closely with kindred spirits. I saw and convinced the PhilDHRRRA Board and Assembly that it was necessary for PhilDHRRRA to have its own building and with expanded projects, that

PhilDHERRA should regionalize and decentralize. MISEREOR, one of the main funding partners of PhilDHERRA, agreed to fund the P6 million office building that is now still the current address of the network. The decentralization process sent the national staff to Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao and also developed local network staff. Each region was able to access their own funding and expanded their activities that were more relevant to the local priorities.

Then the cooperative movement called me again, this time as the National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO) Party-list representative of the cooperative sector in Congress. Coming from the cooperative and NGO sector, this was a challenge for me to be wheeling-and-dealing with politicians, especially with the traditional kind.

In my term in Congress, I succeeded in revamping the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) and set up policies that ensured its regulatory function and increased the budget for primary cooperative strengthening. This policy, although very providential for cooperatives, proved to be very unpopular with CDA and so I lost the support of CDA in subsequent congressional coop-related deliberations. In the next elections, CDA questioned the legitimacy of NATCCO as a cooperative sector and for a time, NATCCO lost the Party-list seat in Congress.

What was lost because of CDA discomfort, was a gain for my family. I was a little bit tired from all the verbal battles and I went back to Cebu to develop our four-hectare farm. I planted mangoes, developed a mini-forest, and raised chickens. I became a chicken-trader and become engaged as a sasso-chicken farmer. I had more time to see my children graduate in college and helped them try to get good employment. One of my two daughters is now a hospital nurse and the other one is a community nursing aide in Chicago, and my son is working as accountant in California. I also had more time to accompany my wife to doctor's appointments and joined her in her social circles. Every now and then, I met friends and associates who asked me to be a consultant for their farms, cooperatives, or policy advocacy concerns.

Then NATCCO hatched the Central Fund Plan and got me interested in the scheme. I left my chickens to the care of my wife and worked in Manila again to establish the Central Fund of NATCCO. The idea of the Central Fund was to pool together the hard-earned surplus of the cooperatives and invest it together to get a better profit margin. I asked for one month to study the scheme and visited similar set-ups in Thailand and other countries. In the second month, I was ready with the program. I hired an investment banker and set up a Board from the top five investors of the Central Fund. In the first month, I was able to mobilize P60 million pesos from cooperatives and NGOs. Now, the Central Fund, after two years has a combined investment of P300 million pesos. The investors have already earned their first dividends and are adding on to their investments. We hope to reach the target of P1Billion investment in five years.

When I convince the cooperatives and NGOs to invest in the Central Fund, I only have a simple message. We invest our money together so that we have a larger capital pool and get a higher return. The money will be invested in government securities so there is no risk in the investment. It is invested in a way with the proviso that should the investor decide to pull out the capital in any given time, it is able to do so. We should be proud of this venture because the money gained come from our own savings, not from debt swaps with other countries or by government bonds traded in the capital market. This Central Fund venture is new to me and even myself is surprised by its success. The Canadian International Development Agency that evaluated this project said that the success of the Central Fund operations was mainly due to the management leadership of this project.

While I am trying to raise the P1Billion mark for the Central Fund, there were many changes in the NATCCO network. We regained our status as a Party-list in Congress and we gained a seat as a representative of the cooperative sector during the 2004 election. The then incumbent CEO of NATCCO, Mr. Guil Cua became the Coop Sector representative to Congress and I was asked to serve as concurrent CEO of NATCCO and of the Central Fund. The Central Fund is

well established now and it is not difficult anymore to get others to invest in it so I have more time to see how NATCCO can be made more responsive to the needs of its members and to the Philippine economy.

This is one of those junctures when my mind is spinning with many ideas. Many discussions and consultations with members and others point to the need to restructure NATCCO. With modern information communication technology, it is very easy to communicate, transfer money and services with primary cooperatives and so maybe there is no more need for secondary or regional apex coops. There are also various innovations now how to do business.

For example, NATCCO has contracted the cooperatives to provide e-loads to cellphones selling close to P2 million a month from this venture. It has also perfected how to build-operate-and-transfer certain cooperative enterprises like Coop Mart, Coop Funeral, Workers' Coop, Micro-health Insurance and agribusinesses. These enterprises are replicated through franchise arrangements. We are also now in business partnership with Visa Credit Card and in the process of negotiation with Megalink/Bancnet for ATM services and Western Union for money transfers. There are so many opportunities now open for cooperatives, especially the primary cooperatives to engage in.

I believe that for NATCCO to become a world-class network of cooperatives owned by the ordinary people, it has to continually transform itself towards integration and sharper focus in cooperative banking and enterprise innovations. I am excited with this idea and it is crystal-clear to me that NATCCO's membership of 1,000 cooperatives will have to chart a common destiny. I can see it and almost touch this as reality and luckily I have the gift of gab to let others see and touch this as something already existent. I also have to convince the general public that this is something beneficial to them and so in NATCCO we coined a new business slogan that says "Your Satisfaction, Our Passion". This is the long and short of what we are.



**Partnerships and Dialogues..
the way forward**

**Marlene
Ramirez**

Philippines

I grew up in a predominantly rural and agricultural community in the southern part of the Philippines. My childhood and teenage life was nurtured by a simple family of six, in an environment of natural beauty – seas and paddy fields. Early on, I learned what it meant to be a leader in many fields – scouting, dance troupe, science teams, and academics. Girls in my batch have shown that they naturally excel, if they choose to and are given the opportunity to do so. The necessity of higher education brought me to Manila at the age of fifteen. I then had my first real view of television and access to a telephone line (my province was nestled behind mountains, thus technologically challenged). I took up Management and Industrial Engineering in one of the oldest engineering schools in the country. My college days were a rigorous exposure to technical education and approaches. It was also marked by my spiritual search and growth leading me to a peaceful understanding of my own spirituality and Christian faith life.

Graduating one semester ahead of my classmates, I found employment as an Industrial Engineer in a manufacturing corporation. I immersed myself in the daily grind of machines and dealing with skilled and unskilled laborers. Leadership by example there meant showing workers how to literally count nuts and bolts (never mind the grease and grime), calibrating machine settings and measuring distances from the port of entry of raw materials to finished product warehouse. I started then to appreciate my background as a “jack of all trades” engineer. In two years, I left a legacy of systems (inventory, warehousing, maintenance, operations and administration) in a rather family-oriented, and Chinese owned business. But there too I learned about humility, industry, and discipline from my Chinese employers:

lessons kept well in my treasure chest. My search for a “bigger world” however has led me to search for more fertile soil.

My search led to the choice of joining a multi-national company as an inventory analyst in their animal breeding and production farm or continuing my week-long job in a national NGO network devoted to human resource development in rural areas, with a salary thrice lower than what the corporate world offered me. I chose to work with and for the people. From then on I never looked back, finding working in the social development community a living expression of my faith life; believing that in this “bigger world”, professional and responsible individuals are needed, and can grow, if they choose to.

As a project officer, I found myself in remote villages in all parts of the country seeking to understand what community-based projects are, why groups fail or succeed, and getting inspired in the process. I took up some community development courses to provide me with just enough of an academic foundation, since most of the lessons were taught (very well) in the field. After three (3) years I became the head of my own department, learning the ways and means of being in a network. My work in resource accessing gave me confidence in dealing with resource groups (donors, NGO partners, government, etc.) critical to achieving our organization’s agenda. My team’s goal was to mobilize resources for the network, and we performed well.

Technical skills, hard work, and creativity combined were our trademark. Organizational circumstances forced me to head the whole organization in 1993. At the age of 29 years, I felt I

was too young (inexperienced) for it. But I accepted, and worked my way through with a strong program team, to head the organization for six (6) fruitful years. We saw the organization move up to higher planes, with me simply providing the style of leadership needed at that particular juncture. As the Executive Director of a national network, I became part of the bigger social development community in the Philippines, in continuous dialogue with one another, and always in pursuit of new development paradigms and tools given local and global shifts and a changing development context. I also became engrossed in north-south, south-south partnership as a consequence.

My first 12 years in development work provided me with all the personal and professional growth that I needed to become the development worker, manager, and activist, leader that I am now. I moved up naturally from the ranks, my growth evolving alongside my most treasured role of being a mother to three wonderful sons (of ages 15, 13, and 11 years) and daughter (17 months) and a partner/wife to a fellow development colleague. In 1999, I was offered the leadership and anchoring role of the Asian network of my national organization. The challenge of bringing people and groups together for dialogue, exchange, and action was enough to keep me interested, and my previous regional exposure and good Asian relations helped me to move on.

I am a true believer in networks and networking and this has been a core strategy in my work for the past fifteen years. Today, our team is expected to ensure that we build capacities of partner organizations in 10 countries in Asia, leading to become more relevant members of civil society, especially supportive of strengthening solidarity and cooperation among grassroots organizations in Asia. We catalyze and promote, beyond our own network, venues and opportunities for exchange and common action. I have gained a respectable level of expertise in network management and in forging development partnerships. This is a relevant position that I hope to play well in Asia. I see a challenging future for CSO action in the region and the future prospects encourages me to learn more, do more, and be unabashedly imaginative.



**From Physics Teaching to
Development Modeling**

**Rachel
Polestico**

Philippines

I have always wanted to be party to any effort that would expand the opportunities of the poor and to uphold the wealth of values that the poor live by. This sort of personal mission did not start when I studied at Xavier University for my undergraduate degree and when I worked there as a physics instructor or when I joined the Appropriate Technology Center and the Southeast Asia Rural Social Leadership (SEARSOLIN) of the College of Agriculture. I must have been born with the genes that marked the soft spots for the poorer sector of our society. I was born to a family and in a town where almost everyone was related to everyone else so I could claim lineage from one who made it to the presidency of the Philippines, the professionals, and to those who lived ordinary lives in Talibon, Bohol.

The opportunities in Bohol were very limited and the income that my father got as a school teacher could not support a growing family. So when I was about two years old and the fifth of ten children, my father decided to find employment in Del Monte and moved the family in Agusan, Phillips, Bukidnon, Philippines. In Del Monte, my father did not stay as a regular laborer but got himself involved in organizing the workers' union against the company. My memories of childhood was our unfinished two-storey house in Agusan which was constantly full of people looking for jobs or settling some labor cases.

As a union leader, my father was blacklisted from the company so he never regained his permanent job but continued on all throughout his life to work for the union. My mother was very active in the religious activities of our community. My memory of my mother was

her multicolored church dresses which she wore in honor of different saints - brown for St. Anthony, red for St. Jude, blue for Our Lady of Perpetual Help, green for St. Joseph, and black when she led the novena prayers for those who were dearly departed of our neighbors.

I was lucky with my education because I had scholarships that covered my tuition since elementary, high school, college and all through graduate school. In elementary and high school, I odd jobbed to supplement my family income. In college, I had free tuition but worked as physics laboratory assistant for my daily needs and made a gentleman's agreement with my cousin that if she gives me free board and lodging, I would help one of her children after I graduate. In graduate school, my scholarship had a stipend which I divided between my school needs and my family.

I lived very frugally as a student and the reason why I was very popular in campus was because I only had two sets of clothes for school which I wore all the time. Fortunately, this was also fashionable during the late 60's and early 70's activism and hippie days. When I finished my studies and found work, I helped my five younger brothers and sisters finish school and they graduated as teacher, engineer, chemist, nurse, and lawyer. Recognizing that education is the best investment for human resource development, I contribute to scholarship programs whenever I have extra money.

In 1976 to 1979, I won a Fullbright Scholarship grant for graduate work in biophysics at the University of California, Berkeley and in 1981, I got a fellowship from USAID to study Alternative Energy Technologies at the University of Florida, Gainesville. There were two other Filipinos who were in Berkeley with me during this time and they stayed in the United States to work for Citibank and the World Bank. But I woke up one morning and thought that there was a greater need for me at home so I came back and joined the Appropriate Technology Center and SEARSOLIN. Over the period of almost twenty years, I built up a career and a niche in appropriate technology, gender and development, and participatory approaches to development because these were fields that were very helpful in addressing the concerns of the poor.

After ten years of teaching physics and joining the extension service to promote appropriate technology, I became very active in the NGO sector. I guess, I have gained some degree of recognition in the development field because aside from my official duties as the Deputy Director of SEARSOLIN and the Director of the Appropriate Technology Center, I serve other NGOs in many capacities. I am a member of the board of many agencies such as the Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP), Asian NGO Coalition (ANGOC), the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE), the Kasanyangan Foundation Incorporated (KFI), the Bukidnon Organic Products, Inc. As the Director of the Appropriate Technology Center, I am one of the founding members of the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in the Rural Areas (PhilDHRRRA), and an affiliate member of APPROTECH-Asia.

I started to work in development issues under the tutelage of Bishop Antonio Ledesma, S.J, D.D. who at that time was the Director of SEARSOLIN. The Appropriate Technology Center was one of the NGO partners of the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas in piloting the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology in community education. PhilDHRRRA had a project, which I headed, with the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada in pioneering the Community Information and

Planning (CIPS) model of participatory action research with ten other NGOs in the Philippines and covering thirty villages all over the country. CIPS turned out to be an effective approach for the empowerment of communities. It consisted of the community getting organized for a common goal, and involving them in participatory research, planning, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

I was also conceptualizing a more advanced version of CIPS that incorporated the approaches of how the communities can have sustainable access and control of resources. The work in this project showed the importance of involving the social institutions like the government agencies, the church, the business sector, the media, the development agencies, and others to work in tandem with the interest of the people. In 1993 and 1994, I joined a team of development scholars –Dr. Barbara Thomas Slater, Elvina Mutua, Andrea Esser, and Octavia Taylor - at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts to develop the model and approaches of what is now known as the Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEGA) Model. The SEGA Model incorporated the CIPS intervention of organizing, participatory planning, implementation, and evaluation, and leadership formation in the community level and expand that to include the participation of community leaders in the decision-making processes of the social institutions in order to influence paradigms, policies, laws, programs, and resource allocation that are pro-poor.

Building on CIPS, and the SEGA Models, I am now working with Dr. Anselmo Mercado in SEARSOLIN and with Dr. Allison Mathie and Gordon Cunningham at the Coady International Institute in Canada to pilot and study the Asset-Based Community Driven (ABCD) approaches to development. In this approach, the community draws inspiration from the successes that they have achieved in the past, builds a positive vision of their community, and mobilize their human, physical, and institutional assets to achieve this vision. SEARSOLIN is currently using this approach in its community work and training of development workers . The process is

being documented and studied along with the other partner organizations of Coady Institute in Africa, Latin America, and other parts of Asia to see the merits of this model.

I have written on the topics on appropriate technology, gender and development, and participatory approaches in development. With Approtech Asia, I co-edited the book “Technology As If People Mattered”. With PhilDHRRRA, I published the “Framework and Operations of the Community Information and Planning System” and the “CIPS on Trial”. With Clark University, I co-authored the book “Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis” with Barbara Thomas-Slayter, Andrea Esser, Elvina Mutua, and Octavia Taylor. Many of the papers I read in conferences on various topics are web-published. Most of the papers I wrote are distillations and analysis of on-ground development work.

The CIPS model was developed from the work with thirty communities in the Philippines. The model was later replicated in ten countries in Asia by the Center for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific for the CIRDAP Model Village Project. CIPS also became the key model used in the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARC) Project covering 1,000 villages of the Department of Agrarian Reform in the Philippines. The SEGA Model was based in the analysis of several international projects and the model now serves as a framework or roadmap for doing development work in almost any area. It is a very effective conceptual tool for understanding the power dynamics in development and is used as a basic development model taught in a number of academic institutions. The ABCD approach is also very promising as it is being tested in several villages in different countries with Coady Institute partners and by the more than eighty graduates of SEARSOLIN coming from Africa, the Pacific, and Asia.

I have often wondered myself why I drifted from science to development. I remembered a quote that I read from one of the e-mails from Samuel Chacko that I got sometime ago that said “Energy begets physics, physics begets particles, particles beget chemistry, chemistry begets

cells, cells beget organisms, organisms beget brains, brains beget tools, tools beget societies, and societies beget ????. There is a big question mark as to where society is going when it is characterized by so much poverty and scandalous gap between the powerful and the poor. I take clue from Mahatma Gandhi's analysis of society that he summarized as the Seven Social Sins and transform that into Seven Social Virtues. This will be society distinguished by "politics with principles, wealth with work, pleasure with conscience, knowledge with character, science with humanity, commerce with morality, and religion with self-sacrifice" It is to transform the seven social sins into to seven social virtues that I hope the CIPS, SEGA, and ABCD models can contribute towards.



**A Reluctant Leader amidst
Plentiful Opportunities**

**Cezar
Belangel**

Philippines

I never believed that I am a leader. In the past, I always avoided becoming a leader. I was afraid of assuming big responsibilities. But I feel that time had pushed me to some sort of leadership role. People around me would look at me as a leader. I am a reluctant leader.

I come from a poor coconut-producing family in Bicol – one of the most depressed regions in the Philippines today. Early in my childhood, my father who is Chinese man was deported to Hong Kong, leaving my mother alone to take care of my three siblings. In elementary, she sent me to a Chinese school believing that by learning the Chinese language I could gain enormous economic advantage in my future.

According to my mother, education is the only way we can ensure a bright future. For high school, she labored very hard to send me to Ateneo de Naga – one of the best schools for boys in the region. I was made to believe that in Ateneo zeal is an important armor for me to face the economic and social combat in the future. I stuck to my mothers' advice. I did not want to toil in hardship in the coconut fields.

Encouraged by my classmates, I applied to the cadet officer corps of the Citizens Army Training (CAT) during our fourth year – a requirement course in high school at that time. I was assigned to a team who would provide lectures and lessons to our cadets. It was the first school-wide responsibility that I ever assumed. Our commandant gave our team the task to prepare a teaching program, which required the preparation of stencil-printed handouts.

At nighttime and over the weekend, I was the one who worked hard preparing our handouts for over 200 students. I never got any academic awards then, but perhaps my commandant was impressed with my work including the style of my lectures, I was given the “duty award” during our high school graduation – recognition of a judicious performance of responsibility and dedication to duty. Excellent performance of duty became a paramount value to me.

In college, I enrolled in the same school – this time proud to be an Ateneo high school boy. Events turned out differently. Indeed, there were fun and games; but not for too long. It was not all light either. But the fun and games were instilling serious values in each one of the members. The Jesuit Fathers were talking about values - justice, love of neighbor, spiritual life, and social mission. They are as heavy as our lessons in the classrooms, but they enlightened and invigorated my life in school. The spiritual awakening was not limited to personal piety and salvation that had been the usual focus of my catechism. I gained spiritual relevance because the process introduced me to a faith that challenges the real condition of the world.

The Bicol region is one of the poorest regions in the country. Like the whole country, its vast and rich resources were owned and exploited by only few rich families. The majority languished in poverty. I noticed that every student like me was pushing each other, competing and acquiring for personal gains and security. Students were preparing to work for large companies and businesses. Very few wanted to work for the poor.

One of the things that influenced me was the celebration of the Ateneo de Naga Day - the feast of St. Francis Xavier – the patron saint of the school. He was a brilliant and popular student of his university but had recognized the call of serve the world. “What does it profits a man if he gains the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul” was the verse that flashed so often to me. He became my favorite saint.

When the older ones graduated from college, I was forced to assume the chairperson position of the school organization. So, I began to lead a batch of joyful boys and girls in school activities – helping the orientation for freshmen, conducting retreats and seminars, competing in inter organizational sports, organizing and directing school one act plays, and training our contestants for oratorical contests. Win or lose, I enjoyed. Aside from my usual academic studies, I began to get involved in apostolic work – some community work outside the school. I was introduced to the national issues and the cause oriented groups that worked against the dictatorship of the Marcos Regime. In the process, I got to know the Director of the Social Action Center of the Archdiocese of Caceres that would later play an important role in my introduction to social development work.

The peak of school activities came during my last year. I was elected as Vice-President of the Student Council. I was also elected President of my graduating class. For one year, I was practically staying in the school being responsible for a number of school-wide activities. I could not believe it; but time had shaped me to be a leader.

During graduation in college, the school conferred on me the “Bro. Adriatico Award” – the simplicity and dedication to duty as exemplified by the late Bro. Adriatico, a Jesuit brother who spent his life of simple service at the Ateneo de Naga. My focus was to be excellent in my dedication to performance and duty.

A few months before our graduation, the Director of the Social Action Center in the Archdiocese invited me to work with him. Immediately, together with one classmate, we were sent to take a two-month course in community organizing at the Asian Social Institute. After that I was assigned as a community organizer in a remote fishing village; then to two other farming villages the following year. Later on, I got involved in the training and formation program for farmer/fishers leaders – a talent, which I believe, was harnessed during my student

years. I organized cooperatives at the barangay level. After three years, I became the supervisor of new community organizers and our mission was to consolidate the organized groups into a provincial federation of farmers. Two years later, I became the Federation coordinator and one of the major issues that we were involved in was the promulgation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law.

In 1986, at the height of the campaign during the snap election, I persuade the whole Social Action Center to openly campaign against the Marcos presidential candidacy. To my frustration, the SAC management stood by its commitment to stay neutral until the CBCP declared massive electoral fraud. A few months after the EDSA revolution, while initiating a project in one remote barangay, one of our staff was murdered by some members of the New Peoples Army. It raised fear and anxiety in my colleagues. But he became a model of faith and courage.

A year after that, I joined and at one time became the chairperson of the Hearts of Peace – a coalition of groups calling for the cessation of hostilities brought about by the contending forces of the Military and the rebel groups in Bicol. The Hearts of Peace was affiliated with the Peace Zone Campaign at the national level. Such involvement was carried through until the launching of the National Unification Committee of the Aquino Administration that led to the peace talks between the government and the CPP/NPA/NDF.

In 1987 to 1989, my colleagues at SAC started to find new jobs due to increasing economic pressure as family persons. It was a hard to choose between the social mission and family welfare. At that time, we felt that the SAC structure was already a limiting factor in our common desire to respond to the new challenges. It was difficult to see my colleagues transferring to other institutions without any way of organizing them to serve our aspirations. At that point, the idea of creating a separate non-government organization emerged. I started to draft discussion papers that eventually led to the formation of a new NGO in Bicol called PAGBICOL.

I worked in PAGBICOL from 1990 to 1993 managing its first project – the Community Forestry Program in an upland community. It involved organizing the upland communities to replant a certain portion of the denuded forest, and to control the proliferation of illegal logging in the area.

In 1993, when my first child was born, I began to feel the economic pressure. I had to search for better paying work. Leaving my Region, I transferred to Metro Manila to work with PhilDHRRA.

My life in PhilDHRRA was the most exciting stage. I was assigned to monitor the project - Tripartite Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (TriPARRD) Project – the biggest project of PhilDHRRA at that time. Within the framework of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of the Philippine Government, the TriPARRD project aimed to facilitate land transfer, organize farmer beneficiaries and provide the necessary support services. As Program Manager, I had to handle the over-all management of the project covering around 57 peoples’ organizations (POs) in 4 provinces in the country with a total of 25 staff including the national personnel. I learned on the job the art of managing social development programs. It expanded my horizon from provincial to national. I was always conscious to do my work to the best of my abilities.

In 1998, Marlene Ramirez invited to take on the National Coordinator position. I vehemently refused. However, in 2001, when most of the seniors in PhilDHRRA transferred to other institutions, I reluctantly accepted the National Coordinator position. I became in charge of the over-all management of the National Secretariat, coordinated the operations of the three Regional Offices in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao I learned more about networking because I had met and worked with many people coming from various organizations and networks. I had to deal with government officials and agencies.

Time has gone too fast. From a small poor “less confident” province boy, now I am part of the exciting world of social development. I wanted a high paying career, but I ended without economic security. However, I feel I have a fulfilling career with wide array of opportunities for growth – I exercise leadership as I confront the day-to-day challenges of life. That was a path that I had not dreamt about, but I never regret. My secret - strive for excellent performance and dedication to duty.



Unanswered Question

**Bui Quang
Toan**

Am I a leader, after 60 plus years of living with communities?

Vietnam has two biggest deltaic areas: the Red River delta in the North and the Mekong River delta in the South. These two areas are also the most populated and intensively rice growing places of the country. The situation of farmers, farming and rural life in the two deltas is quite different compared with the time before 1945 when the country was still part of the French and Japanese colonies. In the year 1945 more than two million people died of hunger the Red River delta but now with triple the population it can export 1.5-2.0 million tonnes of rice per year. I was born to a poor farmer family, in the Thai Binh province, in the middle of the red River Delta, in 1939. When I was a child of 6, I witnessed a time of great sorrow, the worst situation of food insecurity for the people in Vietnam's history. Together with some other poor children of the village I followed my parents to the field where they buried those who died from hunger. We formed groups of children who made dramas of these terrible funerals. I was often the head of these groups.

The struggle of the Vietnamese people against the French to gain independence during the August Revolution in 1945 lasted 9 years, from 1945 to 1954. The war was so brutal that nearly all infrastructure of rural life was destroyed including schools, hospitals, temples, pagodas, churches, road, waterways, canals and sluices. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed including children and elderly people. To support the front of the people's war, people of all walks of life formed themselves into different groups. As a child of around 10

years of age I joined one group of rural boys and girls of the village to help bring information between the fighting villagers and those providing shelter and keeping small children. I was team leader of my group. The group sometimes had 20-30 members of boys and girls.

When the North Vietnam was completely liberated in 1954 the new regime, the socialist one, was built up. The South was still under the French and afterward the US. We poor children in the rural areas had the opportunity to go to school and enjoy our childhood together. We were brought up in freedom by our new socialist regime. At the age of 16 I was accepted to be a member of the Vietnam Communist Youth Union for 4 years running. I was chosen as head of the Union of my class and my secondary school.

Having finished my basic education (ten years of primary and secondary level) I went to the Hanoi Agricultural University to study cultivation. My parents and I were very happy that despite being a son of a very poor farmer I sat at the classrooms of a State University. For four years at the University I was again chosen head of the Student Union of my class and member of the Executive Committee of the Student Union of the University. Together with my student colleagues I was trying to organize many campaigns promoting students being involved with action programs for the poor people and for the South people.

When I graduated from the Hanoi Agricultural University I was sent by the government to work in the National Agricultural Research Institute and the Institute sent me to the Western

part of the country that was 4-5 hours by car from Hanoi. This was an undeveloped mountainous region where more than 75% of the population was ethnic minorities consisting of Thai, H'Mong, Xa, Tay and Muong peoples. They were so poor; many families did not have enough daily sustenance for their small children. Some groups of H'Mong people did nomadic herding along forest and practiced shifting cultivation on sloping lands. These poor communities were illiterate and could not speak Vietnamese. My colleagues and I were assigned to conduct surveys of specific conditions of the localities and experiment on new and advanced farming techniques to show the people a way for bettering their life. We had to stay with them in their hamlets, learn to speak their languages and understand their customs and traditions. This was the turning point of my life, living with the poor and undeveloped people, with our ethnic minorities. After some years my colleagues and I became familiar with the people's living conditions there. Each one of us was member of the local young communities. I was again appointed as leader of the working team for nearly ten years.

Side by side with the people at the grassroots level we helped them to organize themselves together, strengthening their community by building a co-operative and improving their living condition by applying new and advanced techniques. When we left the locality after 10 years all communities there had enough food to eat. They did not have to slash and burn the forest for food security. All of their children could go to school. The permanent cultivation of rice fields and industrial crops (tea, coffee, and fruit trees) in these areas successfully made our first lesson on how to be with the people. In 1967 I became a member of the Communist Party when I was among those poor and sincere people and I was head of the young-research-working team.

In 1975 the Southern part of the country was liberated and in 1976 the country was reunified. With some colleagues of mine who had been with me in the Western Mountainous region we were sent to the newly liberated South. One more time we were surveying the living conditions of the poor and ethnic minority communities in the Central Highlands. We helped the people

reorganize their production, built co-operatives, set service systems for themselves and conserved natural resources including forestry. Once again we had to stay in those remote villages with the people, learning to speak their languages and understand their traditional cultures. We also became members of their communities in a very short time, as we had learned during our first time in the West-North. I was promoted to Vice-Director of the National Institute for Land Reclamation. More than 300 of my staff and I continued our community development work with the poor and newly liberated people in localities in the South, in the Central Highland, in the Southmost Coastline for another 10 years until the time I was brought back to Hanoi to join research institutes and universities.

The past 15 years, since 1990, have been a time of de-collectivization and renovation of our national economy. One very important change was the recognition of a multi sector approach that included the private sector. NGOs, POs, CSOs and other non-state bodies were given the opportunity to organize. While being busy with leading work at the National Institute for Agricultural Planning and Projection (NIAPP) and teaching work at four different universities I, together with 58 colleagues of mine, requested for permission to organize the first NGO working in the field of agriculture. We succeeded, and in 1991 the Center of Agricultural Extension Volunteers (CAEV) was formed with 65 founding members. I was chosen to be director of the center. CAEV became known for its mandate to work directly with farmers and their community at the grassroots level.

CAEV's activities aim at community development through poverty alleviation done with people's participation. Poor and ethnic minority communities in the rural areas throughout Vietnam quickly welcomed CAEV. But during this period I faced a dilemma. As a member of the Communist Party I should not go too far from the existing centralized mechanism yet community development work needed people to be empowered. Together with other members and collaborators I had to work on people starting at the grassroots level and going up to make

change happen. Many NGOs abroad were willing to support us among them were ICA, CCA, AWCF, SEARSOLIN, APPROTECH ASIA, FERTESON. The National network of co-operative development for rural areas was set up in 1993 by CAEV. With the support of ICA and CCA the network spread from 2 pilot areas to 8 in only 6 years from 1993 to 1999. At that time CAEV had already more than 190 members and 3,200 collaborators throughout the country.

Many newly set up NGOs and some mass organization wanted to cooperate with CAEV for the purpose of rural community development.

In 1996 CAEV was invited to attend the annual meeting of AsiaDHRRA held in Jakarta, Indonesia. At the meeting CAEV was officially accepted to join AsiaDHRRA as full regular member. After 3 year from that very important event in 1999 the national network of rural human resource development with 9 organization members was formed and CAEV was made coordinator member. The network has taken the name VietDHRRA. The board of VietDHRRA was voted on and consisted of 5 standing members. I was appointed Chairperson of VietDHRRA at that first general assembly and then was reelected to the same position in two other general assemblies of the network.

In the year 2003, the second general assembly of AsiaDHRRA selected me to be the Vice-Chairman of AsiaDHRRA responsible for the Mekong subregion.

For the past more or less 60 years of my life I have been with communities, my poor farmer communities, my ethnic rural communities, my comrade extension working teams, my governmental staffed institution, taking different roles of leading work but always in my mind exists the unanswered question: "Am I a leader? "

Hanoi April 2005



A Journey Starts with a Step

**Ouch
Ngak**

Cambodia

As a young graduate from the Cambodian Institute of Technology, faculty of Genie Rural, I found myself inexperienced in doing something especially with the rural development work. By seeing the announcement of Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambogien or Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC), looking for a young graduate student for the apprentice program, it came up with the idea of improving the capacity of young graduates who have no experiences in doing the field work as well as practicing the theories where we learnt from the university. During that time there are very few NGOs who provided such kind of training or improving the capacity of young graduates especially in the rural development work.

Without hesitating with this program, I applied and passed the test. I had started to involve with the program during 6 months with the conceptual training in rural development as well as practicing how to work with farmers in the rural area. By seeing the theories and the way that CEDAC work in rural development, which I found it was interesting for me and then I applied to be the field worker of CEDAC while most of the young graduates applied as well. This was the success story which I was the one of all candidates who had been selected as the field worker of CEDAC.

From time to time CEDAC face with new challenges, we could adopt and adapt these challenges to be our strength. Lately, CEDAC become one of the most successful NGOs who work in the rural development. Our dilemmas, strategies and the ways we act with the rural

people have been adopted and adapted. Our good and bad experiences have been capitalized and improved so that from time to time our successful story comes up and our target areas have increased from 3 villages to more than one thousand villages during 5 years.

As a NGO leader, CEDAC is not only play an important role in the development strategies but it can cope with the new challenges and turning points of its internal affairs. Firstly, it faces with the challenge of finding out the most reasonable strategic point for the rural development as well as helping farmers to help themselves especially the strategies to set up, strengthen and sustain the farmer organization. And secondly, our turning point which is the most important internal affair to cope with all challenges from external. In order to cope with the challenges, CEDAC need to have strong and most productive middle managers where most of the local NGOs always faced. The good leadership in the management level, clear vision, and commitment of the staff leads us to be the NGO leader in the rural development.

Even though, we are a NGO leader but we encounter with a lot of difficulties. Firstly is the construction of the development strategic foundation and secondly is the construction of organization foundation. Sometimes, strong organization doesn't mean strong development strategy. On the other hand, strong development strategy it doesn't mean strong organization. So, we need to balance all of these things.

The commitment doesn't come up with the reality it doesn't mean the real commitment. It is not the only verbal but the action where we devote ourselves in the real task and real action. As a proverb of a British business executive, Robin Sieger said that "When enthusiasm and commitment take root within a project, that project comes to life". Sometime our commitment comes out with the result but sometime not. In order to nurture the commitment of rural NGO we need to have the good seed of commitment. How can we find the good seed of commitment? Following are the ideas to be considered for nurturing the commitment. Firstly, the commitment comes from the heart and the soul of a person who interested on a single action. Then, it comes from the practice of this single action. And lately, when s/he sees a good result of her/his effort they will continue the commitment.

Before we start to talk about the leadership we need to know who the leader is. In short the leader is a person who has the positive impress with the other. And to be the best leader, the most important qualities an NGO leader should have are to consider the common properties than the individual properties; openness; flexibility; and last but not the least to work towards the achievement of the common goal

Finally, if we want to be the NGO leader we should consider on one proverb "If you want to walk ten thousand steps you need to start from the first step."



Stepping Up to the Challenges

Sil Vineth

Cambodia

I started my rural development activities since I was a refugee along the Cambodian -Thailand border with refugees in the camps. When I was in the camp, I was sent to SEARSOLIN by JRS of Thailand to study in rural development leadership with sponsored of MISEREOR. After repatriated homeland, I established one NGO in order to help refugee returnees, poor villagers and my family. This NGO name, Socio-Economic Development organization of Cambodia (SEDOC) which strongly focusing in rural development in field of agriculture and community base financial institution. There was no anyone motivate me to do the rural development jobs, but myself think that I was former a poor family in rural which I created this jobs by myself in order to participate to help the rural poor and urban. I started with my personal money for 18 months before I got grants.

My attitude and my inclination to serve people in poverty tie me to continue to do rural development base in NGO works as NGO leader. Work hard with happy and never tired of mind or feeling.

My most fulfilling accomplishment as NGO leader were the following:

1. The reforested 30,000 free seedlings;
2. Trained 30 core local NOO leaders about community organizing and leadership, management, repairing secondary road, dig well, rice bank;
3. Organized/trained how to repairing motorbike, water pump, generator, sewing machine, raising cow and pig and chicken, planting vegetables, etc;

4. Repaired 32 kms of secondary road. Benefit to 27 villages which there are more than 5,000 families (approximately 26,500 beneficiary peoples);
5. Dug 50 watery wells;
6. Distributed second hand clothes to 500 families;
7. Established 7 provincial branches of SEDOC;
8. Established 35 rice banks (more than 8000 beneficiary peoples);
9. Established 25 community base financial institutions (2513 members);
10. Trained to 678 core leaders of government from provincial level down to district, commune and village levels; and
11. Established the network alliance of local NGOs, Cambodian NGO Alliance for Cooperation (CNAC)

I went through some frustrations, dilemmas, and difficulties. For one, finance is dependent on external sources, who controls the funding of projects. Second, a lot of staffs were poorly skilled, does not have the will to serve and are poorly disciplined. Lastly, I had a “personal dilemma.” I will explain this further in the next few paragraphs.

On the financial problems, my main dilemma was concerning the (1) dependence on external aid, (2) transfer late, (3) not enough fund for administration, (4) limited fund. We solve this problem by creating the income generation projects which generate some fund from target groups, reduce size of administration but transfer fund late we cannot blame donor, just waiting.

On the poor staff skills, will and discipline, I met with many staffs who have low skill but they have high commitment, some staffs have high skills but who work less and are selfish interms of not giving the desired output from them due to the lack of discipline. Solving to this problem I held discussion with board of organization, setup new criteria for re-screen staff, lay off lazy staff and work less, checklist, select new staff as testing and select qualify staff with proper salary.

On my “personal dillema,” I was establishing SEDOC, 3 of my 4 children were died by flooding. Three days after my 3 children died, my family was robbed by 3 military staffs took money (money of project) and some my valuable things on way while we came from rural area to Phnom Penh. In addition, when I reached Phnom Penh, my expatriate advisor report to country’s leaders and donor that I was selfish and cheated donor. After donors checked and asked the police to investigated to robbing place every thing was solve and that advisor ran to her country. So, it was not dilemma, but it was triple dilemma.

To enchance one’s capacity for leadership, a leader must be able to:

1. Do capacity building by starting from training need assessment and training; 2) rural NGO exchange concept, experiment in meeting or/and field visit
2. Information exchange, network via e-communication;
3. Tell where the donors; and
4. Send technical advisor to member or member to member

The qualities I think that one should have to be an effective NGO leader is to have a sense of honor towards your work and the people you associate with; self satisfying in jobs; and social recognize



Making a Commitment for Change

**John
Ferchak**

Laos

My interest in rural development work began over 30 years ago, after my first trip to India, where I observed the most wretched living conditions. I also developed strong environmental convictions. As a graduate student in science, I felt that I could make a contribution through work in appropriate technology. At first, I worked in the university for some years, completing my Ph.D. in Biophysics. I then began research on alternative fuels, so that in the future we would be energy independent and not be reliant on fossil fuels, which I saw as a flashpoint for conflict in the future.

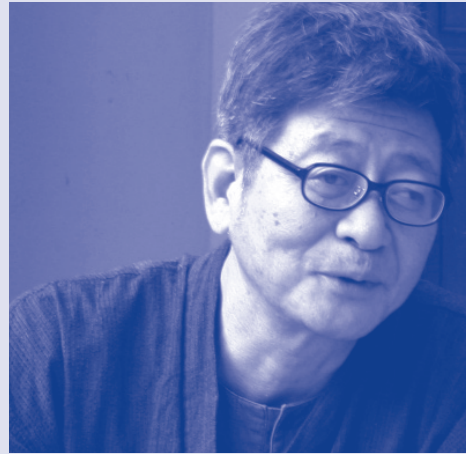
This work on alternative fuels, together with work on technologies that would help farmers, such as plant tissue culture, I began to lecture in a program at the University that was called the Appropriate Technology Center, and which enrolled mid-level managers from developing countries for 6 months of training. Afterwards, I served as faculty advisor to a group of students for study and research abroad in China for one term. This was followed, after 1988, by continuous work on developing country technologies and issues.

My greatest motivation is the inspiration I get from villagers whose lives are immeasurably improved by what seem the smallest of interventions – clean drinking water systems, primary schools, latrines, small scale irrigation, animal revolving funds, rice banks, and trainings in both social and technical areas which improve relationships and generate income for poor families.

Perhaps the main difficulties that one encounters is the relationship with donors, with convincing developed country people of the needs of developing countries, with raising money and report writing, and with changing development paradigms (usually at the inspiration of the multilateral lenders).

The most important qualities as an NGO leader are: sensitivity to the needs of staff; listening well, and as well as knowing when to make decisions; watching for opportunities; and seeing interventions creatively that can make a big difference, i.e., problem solving.

To young NGO leaders, my best advice is to be patient, to observe closely, and... Hard work and flexibility are also obviously quite necessary.



Opening Up to the World

Yoshikuni
Yatani

Japan

I started my engagement to Ja-Dhrra Activity in 1979, when I studied in West Germany where I met Prof. Takuya Marumoto and was asked to join Ja-Dhrra because there was no social scientist member in it.

What sustains my continuing NGO work is the wish to create a better world in which human beings of different cultural and religious backgrounds live together in peace and justice and in harmony with ecology. My source of joy as an NGO worker is to make direct person-to-person friendships with people who also carry out NGO activities.

My most fulfilling accomplishment as NGO Leader was the successful acceptance of “AFA Farmers Exchange Visit” in Japan, which was attained through cooperation with ARI. This also signaled the start of JaDhrra in 2003.

My difficulty and frustration as NGO Leader centers on the financial sustainability and the lack of public interest on North-South problems and development work. My dilemma as a NGO Leader is that I am not paid by the NGO where I work and I have a full time job in my University. Because of this, I can't devote full time to NGO Activities.

As I am a part time NGO leader, I cannot advise full time workers on how to nurture the commitment to their work. But I have been continuously making efforts to relate my job as a university professor with JaDhrra activity by putting up a class on farming and camping.

This is important because I think that to make a direct mutual relationship between nature and persons is a fundamental source of learning.

My most important quality as a NGO Leader is perhaps my understanding of the mechanism of “original sin” or “karma” of human being and how to over come them with love.

The world is wide and deep. Open up your mind and body to the world. The goal is to live fresh and lively (pichi pichi) as a living being. Starting from the original point, live again. A life without moving impressions is not worth living.



Facing the Challenges of Practicality

**Wenchi
Huang**

Taiwan

My family background played a vital role in my interest in rural development issues. I come from a farming family in a rural town. Many of the people I know were in agricultural related fields. My great grandparents were farmers; my grandfather was a veterinarian working for the local township government. My maternal grandparents were farmers. My father was not a farmer, but he was with the Forestry Bureau. I never had the experience of working on the farm, but had always felt quite close to farmers or people who live in the rural area. As a kid, I enjoyed the chance to visit people who live on the farm. Being the eldest child in my generation, I had the opportunity of always following my grand parents to visit relatives who live on the farms.

When the time came to choose a career after graduation from high school, since biology was my favorite subject area, the choice was quite clear. However, to pick agricultural economics as my major field amongst all biological/agricultural fields involved other influences. One of the key persons that affected my entering into the field was my uncle, who was a general manager in the local Farmers' Association. I took counsel from all my family members in the living room of my grandparent's house. While looking at the likely departments on the listing of the departments, my uncle made his recommendation and said he knew one professor in the National Taiwan University personally because the professor had been the Director of the Bureau of the Agriculture and Forestry in the Taiwan Provincial Government, which was the government office that oversaw the operation of

Farmers' Associations. He also said that he admired the director very much, and if I had the chance to enter National Taiwan University, the department of Agricultural Economics should be worthy of consideration. I admired my uncle's work as the general manager for the association very much and took his words seriously. I was lucky enough to be admitted to the Agricultural Economics Department in National Taiwan University later on, and I think this was the biggest turning point in my life.

The discipline of agricultural economics was far from what I imagined. Instead of dealing with the actual farm production, we were dealing with numbers—farm budgeting, economic indicators, and welfare indicators. I started to realize the importance of management and the importance of organizations: both government and non-government. I start to look at the content of my uncle's work in the farmers' organization. I had first hand experience in watching what a great job and contribution my uncle, through his position as the general manager of the Farmers' Association, was able to bring into rural society.

I was lucky enough to witness what he/the Farmers' Association contributed: constructing roads in the rural community to make the delivery of agricultural inputs and products swifter, the processing and storage tanks for paddy rice, the supplies and marketing branch that acts as the intermediary to offer farm supplies and daily utensils for a low cost, and the financing and banking (credit department) system in the farmers' association that made profitable agricultural development in the rural community.

Agricultural economics is an applied field, while abstraction in building economic behavior models is important; however, the empirical application always faces the challenges of practicality. Therefore, it was natural that I had to go back into reality to seek the real problem or questions to be answered. I had been trying hard to keep close watch with the industry, avoiding to be criticized of hiding behind the ivory tower of the academics. This is what motivated my close interaction with rural society.

chapter 3



The Chonburi Dialogue: Proceedings of the 2nd Asian NGO Leaders' Dialogue

day one: 1 march 2005

Gearing up to Influence Government's Position on WTO Agricultural Trade

Disposition of Gratitude: Opening Activities

Day One of the five-day workshop began with an attitude of gratitude. Old friends were thankful to meet once again and new faces were welcomed into the circle of dialogue. Fifty-six NGO and CSO leaders gathered in Chonburi Province in Thailand for a five-day learning process.

The Opening Prayers led by Mr. Sambito (API) and Dr. Boy Mercado (SEARSOLIN) were said in Bahasa and English respectively. Both echoed the voices of gratitude for the opportunity to learn from each other once again.

The Welcome Remarks from Mr. Soetrisno Kusumohadi (AsiaDHRRRA Chairperson) commenced with words of gratitude too. Thanking all the participants for joining the dialogue, he explained how this particular workshop responds to the calls and challenges of the first ALD workshop in Cyberjaya in 2003. He explained the need expressed then for a mechanism that will sustain the dialogue on urgent concerns for CSO and farmer's groups' leadership in such issues as globalization and world trade. This second dialogue is a spirited attempt towards such a sustained effort. It is hoped that it will further strengthen solidarity among Asian NGO leaders especially as they face the demand for stronger advocacy.

Echoing Soetrisno's message of thanks, Ms Sudaporn Sittisathapornkul (AFA Vice Chairperson) also welcomed the participants to Thailand. She shared So Kor Por's appreciation for the opportunity to play host to an important network event and expressed her intentions to contribute to the success of the workshop.

The second ALD was divided into three major parts, each one dealing with specific leadership concerns. Ms. Marlene Ramirez (AsiaDHRRA Secretary General) explained that the first workshop would focus on agriculture in WTO. This serves as a response to a key issue raised during the first ALD – the need to bridge the gap between government trade negotiators and the people. In line with this, some time would be devoted to learning about the latest developments in the WTO round of talks scheduled for December 2005. The participants would also hear updates from countries where CSO and Farmers' groups have engaged their own government trade negotiators in dialogue and consultation. From these inputs, the participants are tasked to draft proposals to be presented to trade negotiators coming from four countries.

Marlene further shared that the second part of the ALD would focus on the natural disaster that hit Asia in December 2004. She noted how disasters such as the tsunami that devastated Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, etc. present overwhelming challenges to Asian NGO leaders. The poorest of the poor are usually the hardest hit by natural disasters as the tsunami clearly showed how struggling communities were almost completely wiped out. Because of the tragic loss of lives and properties, NGO leaders are challenged to respond to



these natural disasters. The output of the second part of the workshop will be options and strategies identified by the participants on how civil society organizations could work in solidarity with disaster victims.

Finally, Marlene stated that the third and last part of the workshop would be about leadership. According to her, our understanding and appreciation of the concept of leadership is largely shaped by events and trends unfolding around us.

Whether this is on global trade, tragic disasters or new and emerging theories, there is a need to look into oneself and in our colleagues' experiences to grapple with the concept and practice leadership today. For this workshop, each participant will have the chance to learn from each other's rich leadership experiences and use these as guides for defining NGO leadership.

Gears up: Influencing Government Positions on WTO Agricultural Trade

To provide the context for the day's activities, Ms. Esther Penunia (AsiaDHRRA Program Officer) explained the session objectives and schedule. Most of the day will be devoted to preparing for the next day's dialogue with trade negotiators. According to her, there are three main session objectives:

1. To increase Asian farmers and NGO leader's awareness of developments in the WTO round of talks leading to the next WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong;
2. To engage the government trade negotiators in firming up governmental positions in WTO; and

3. To bring together like-minded trade negotiators and civil society leaders at the regional level to strategize how to best approach trade talks so that small farmers can be better protected.

To start off the process, Esther shared that under the SEACA cooperation, country consultations and dialogue with government trade negotiators were conducted in Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines. The results of these would be presented and shared. South Korea and Vietnam reported they also have on-going processes with their governments and would also be sharing some of the highlights of their dialogue.

Country Reports

Mr. Sil Vineth (CNAC) shared the following highlights of the consultation process in Cambodia. According to their analysis of the sharing with trade negotiators, the Cambodian Government looks at its participation in WTO as an opportunity to push trade with the outside world and bring in the much-needed capital especially for the food production industry. As the second least developed country (LDC) to be a member of the WTO, Cambodia is quite active in complying with WTO requirements such as policy reforms. While the government has a positive perception of the country's benefits from WTO, NGO leaders note the continuing abject poverty in the country. There is a strong belief that as a poor country, Cambodia is not in a position to compete with better but less expensive quality goods pouring in from other countries.

They have also noticed that farmers are selling their lands and migrating to the urban centers that are already blighted. During their consultations, NGOs presented their own alternatives such as self-help groups involving themselves in rice banks, animal/poultry banks, model farms, and other community-based efforts to counteract the negative effects of the global trade. The

Cambodian Government received their request to consider the negative consequences of the WTO agricultural trade and to explore means for farmers to mitigate these effects. The NGOs also encouraged AsiaDHRRRA to play a role in negotiations with the concerned governments.

In the Philippines, PhilDHRRRA and PAKISAMA regularly engage the trade negotiators in formal and informal consultations. According to Mr. Rene Cerilla, they learned that there are negotiating blocks, which the Philippines belong to. The chief agricultural negotiator is an Undersecretary from the Department of Agriculture and the Office of the President clears all of the negotiation points. Their group however came up with several criticisms of the Philippines Government's position. One of these criticisms is of the prevalence of high agricultural subsidies in developed countries. They encouraged the government to push for the setting of a clear deadline for the removal of all forms of export subsidies. Several action points were identified and these included the need to further study the impact of WTO and popularize such information. They also shared on the issue of whether they really against all forms of agricultural subsidies.

Meanwhile, KAFF in South Korea shared that its dialogue with the trade negotiators from the Ministry of Agriculture is on a need-basis. The past year alone witnessed four such consultations taking place. Last November 2004, KAFF organized a nationwide farmers' meeting to protest the Korean Government's position on rice trade. The government trade negotiators hardly attend their organized consultations because of the need to concentrate on finalizing the negotiation for rice trade with nine major exporters that include USA, China, and Thailand. Meanwhile, farmers still have difficulty understanding WTO and are poorly prepared for trade negotiations.

As for Vietnam, representatives from VNFU shared that their country is not yet a member of WTO. However, given its ASEAN membership, Vietnam is implementing its commitments vis-à-vis AFTA. The farmers' union observed that the prices of agricultural products are increasing,

albeit very slowly. The prices of agricultural inputs on the other hand have increased quite rapidly. Another observation is of the lack of markets for the farmers' produce. The farmer's union however is addressing these challenges. According to them, propaganda and communication are used to increase members' awareness of the WTO and AoA. Furthermore, the farmers' organizations capacities for technology transfer and marketing are being developed. At present, VNFU has a 25 million dong fund dedicated to loan support for farmers.

Regional and International Developments on the WTO Agricultural Trade Talks

Before the holding of buzz groups and the open forum, Esther shared some relevant updates related to the forthcoming WTO Ministerial Meeting scheduled on December 13 to 18, 2005 in Hong Kong. A few days before the ALD, the International Consultation Meeting on Civil Society Actions towards WTO was held in Hong Kong. The main objectives include coming up with plans for common civil society mobilization activities before and during the ministerial meeting. Two, other important updates were also shared. One, the drafting in Geneva of full agricultural modalities according to the July framework is on going. Two, negotiations are proceeding for civil society participation in the meeting.

Because of the diversity in positions and approaches, the common agreement is that there will only be two key strategies. One is to engage from the inside – participating in the consultations and meetings – and the other is to participate outside in the streets in the form of protests, mobilizations and through media liaison.

Specific action points are posed to the group: Will the group participate or not? If the answer is yes, in what form will they take part? What does it intend to do during the open space scheduled?

Synthesis and Summary

From the country reports and the international updates presented, they concluded that:

Government positions on WTO generally include the following:

- The view that WTO membership and participation in global trade are crucial factors for attaining national development.
- National commitments are being pursued actively on a full scale (for non-members, preparation on going).
- There is openness to further negotiation and dialogue with civil society as negotiations within WTO also take place.

Civil Society on the other hand has the following positions:

- WTO membership does not benefit the rural poor rather, many farming communities are vanishing, resulting in an increase in massive urban migration
- There are no clear economic gains attributable to WTO accession.
- Government policy changes related to WTO commitments are not being communicated clearly to the affected sectors.

There are three main bodies of specific national proposals:

- Civil society offers good viable on-ground alternative development models and governments are asked to recognize and learn from these in the context of their policy reviews and changes.
- The Government should engage civil society in dialogue, consultations, and negotiations before pursuing policy changes in trade.
- Government should support farmers in their efforts to prepare for WTO engagement.

Country Buzz Groups and Open Forum Highlights

Each country, using the information shared, was asked to discuss the summary proposals. They were asked to identify which points reinforce the specific national proposals and which points contradict. The group was encouraged to include in their sharing any suggested action points.

- It was noted that local farmers in Indonesia have a difficult time competing with cheap, imported Thai rice. However, in Thailand itself, Thai rice is even cheaper. According to the Thai participants, because of heavy government subsidies for inputs, the price of rice is down. This does not mean though that Thai farmers are not suffering from the effects of WTO because they encounter the same concerns faced by farmers from Indonesia, the Philippines, etc.



- There is a need for a more comprehensive study on rice given the complex issues affecting it. In Malaysia, the government allocated specific areas for rice farming that are heavily subsidized. Meanwhile, other Malaysian farmers bear the brunt of the reduction of subsidies that the government did impose. People are aware that governments hide existing subsidies through the use of different and sometimes local terms.
- In Japan, the current challenges are not limited to protecting agriculture but also include how to promote farming. Very few now engage in farming and this population is also ageing. The question is how to increase the farming population. The country also faces

the effect of the massive use of chemicals in farming to which the rise in cancer cases is being attributed. AinoKai is into organic farming to protect people's lives and is active in educating the public about the need to preserve farming.



- While it is important to affirm the process of engaging government trade negotiators in dialogue and consultation, there is also the challenge of facing the contradictions in our own positions. NGOs are often criticized for looking at the whole debate from a narrow or very sectoral perspective. For instance, in the Philippines, the debate on what products should be included in the sensitive list encounters multi-sector concerns that pit the interest of one sector against that of another (e.g. sugar farmers vs. sugar consumers). The government always claims it needs to balance the interest of both producers and consumers. There is a need to discuss food security issues in the country and clarify if people want to subject food to market forces or protect it in the interest of self-sufficiency.
- Government's position on WTO seems too positive and this is alarming. Meanwhile, farmers are either uninformed or misinformed about WTO.
- Good governance is important to manage the challenging situation arising from global trade. The government should be encouraged to ensure distribution of resources and benefits while seeing to it that representatives from civil society and farmers' groups are participating in the consultations and decision-making.

- The exploitation of farmers is a problem found everywhere and is common in all countries. The issues of farmers need to be linked to other concerns such as gender and health. It is possible, if the situation worsens, for food scarcity and related problems brought about by WTO to lead to conflicts and war.

Preparation for the Dialogue with Trade Negotiators

In anticipation of the dialogue with trade negotiators the next day, a list of national and regional proposals was prepared. A small group with representatives from each country will review a draft by the secretariat. The final version will be ready for the next day.

A Fruitful Day

Concluding the day, Mr. Bui Quang Toan (AsiaDHRRA Vice Chairperson for Mekong) and Sudaporn gave their closing remarks using a common metaphor. Both mentioned how the sharing by different countries had given everybody a wider perspective on the situation. The day was described as very fruitful and at the same time challenging given the questions that also arose. Thanking everybody for their contributions to making the day a very productive one, both called the session adjourned.

day two: 2 march 2005

Civil Society-Government Dialogue: Possibilities of Working Together for Fairer Agricultural Trade for Asian Peasants

Learning and Listening: The Other Side Speaks

After the brief welcome remarks from Mr. Chaiwat Suravichai (Sor Kor Por), the guests were welcomed and oriented on the day's objectives by Marlene. Four government trade negotiators attended the dialogue and were given the task of presenting their governments' perspectives on the prospects and challenges for WTO to support fairer trade.

Highlights of the Report from the Philippine Trade Negotiator

By Mr. Noel Padre, Department of Agriculture

The presenter started by stating that negotiations cannot be left to government trade negotiators alone. In the case of the Philippines, a task force composed of experts and civil society representatives gives technical inputs and feedback to the government. It was also mentioned that full trust between the political leadership and stakeholders is necessary for the process to work.

The government has its priorities for the negotiations that is backed-up by a well-defined agenda and objectives. During the negotiations, it is important that effective and working broad

alliances are made with like-minded governments. It is a challenge to manage and prevail as a united front in very detailed, technical discussions. Thus, civil society must play a significant role beyond holding parallel discussions to the negotiations. The united front of civil society must be able to define, in consultation with developing country blocs, a framework of engagement covering all the issues, including substantive technical support.

Highlights of the Report from Cambodian Trade Negotiator

By Mr. Tuot Saravuth, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Cambodia is only the second least developed country to be accepted as a member of WTO. The country applied for membership in October 1994 with the signing of protocol of accession was done in September 2003.

The country has a clear set of negotiation objectives and agenda especially vis-à-vis its agricultural priorities. Targeting the development of its agro-industry, the government defined its action points given the WTO commitments. The strategies for the future include: export diversification; basis for upgrading production; development of Agro-Industry; improving and increasing agricultural productivity; and promoting and providing incentives to private sector for export.

Highlights of the Report from South Korean Trade Negotiator

By Mr. Han Young Jeon, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

South Korea is part of the G33. As such, it advocates for balance and equity during negotiations. The government's position includes having rice, its staple food, included as a special product measure. It believes that the special product list is more flexible than the sensitive product list. It also thinks that SSM is important and should be adapted to all special products but there are no details yet in the framework. It. Among the government priorities is the protection of small farmers through subsidy under the green box.

Highlights of the Report from Thai Trade Negotiator

By Mr. Phadol Panthaworn, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

It is the view of the Thai Government that trade liberalization resulting from the WTO negotiations will benefit farmers in developing countries like Thailand. In particular, there will be an increase of prices on agricultural commodities under the fairer agriculture trade.

In line with the technical negotiations, the ministry is tasked to arrange meetings involving all line agencies under it, representatives from the private sector and stakeholders. It's objective is to give updates on the current round of the negotiation. In addition, its also arranges the "single-commodity-approach" public hearing to get feedbacks/solutions from all stakeholders, including small-scale marginal farmers. With careful consideration of the advice and feedbacks received, the analysis and results are forwarded to the trade negotiators for further action.

We Speak: Proposals put forward to Governments in Asia

After listening to the trade negotiators' presentations, the participants informed them of the earlier process that resulted in some proposals. Based on the previous day's discussions, the group presented the following to the trade negotiators:

1. Civil society (farmers and fishers groups and NGOs working for rural development) offers viable on-ground alternative development models. We ask governments to recognize and learn from these in the context of policy reviews and changes.
 - Promote agricultural projects supported by farmers' associations and self-help groups while providing support to the organizations themselves.
 - Support crop-based groups with capacity to negotiate with government.
 - Develop and promote models on sustainable development and mainstream community based agriculture.
 - Conduct studies on (1) policies and its implications on the lives of farming communities and (2) civil society on-ground rural development initiatives.
 - Be open to collaboration and cooperation with other countries.
2. We urge governments to engage civil society in dialogue, consultations, and negotiations before pursuing policy changes in trade.



- Discuss food security issues and clarify priorities related to it
 - Support the sensitive list after detailed discussion on what main products to be included in the list for protection.
 - Trade negotiators should hold meaningful, broad, and regular dialogue sessions with civil society and see through the implementation of the recommendations.
 - Need for more debate and discussion of whether agricultural subsidies should be removed.
 - Activate membership of civil society in task forces and committees engaged by governments in trade policy formulation and reviews.
 - Increase access to timely and proper information by civil society.
 - Show transparency and trustworthiness in the preparations for and actual negotiations and encourage CSO to participate in the negotiation process.
3. We ask governments to support farmers in their efforts to face the effects of WTO engagement.
- Look into the negative effects of the AoA and related agreements on the lives of the poor farmers and identify means of relieving pressure and putting them on a competitive footing.
 - Provide accurate, relevant, and timely information on AoA and related agreements so that farmers are fully informed of the effects of the policy changes.
 - Prioritize agrarian reform, protecting farmer's right to own land; and with adequate land tenure instruments such as communal land certification.
 - Set up agricultural policy and food policy including food market policy that protects farmers from the negative effects of the trade policies.
 - Provide capital and technology that would equip the farmers facing the effects of the trade agreements.

- Promote farming among the youth and encourage an increase in farming population
 - Relate the trade debate to other concerns such as gender, health, environment, and conflicts and peace.
 - Build support facilities, infrastructure and access to credit necessary for agricultural development.
4. We urge governments to be cautious in approaching the issues of GATS while ensuring the appropriate consultations with stakeholders are adequately conducted.

Open Forum

- WTO is not a perfect system but it is the only one we have right now. The civil society is encouraged to engage their governments in dialogue so that the WTO's vision and roles can be changed. As for the forthcoming ministerial meeting, given all the diverse positions, there is a need to build alliances with like-minded nations without necessarily compromising country positions. It is also true that developed countries are not yet agreeable to the reduction of trade distorting subsidies; developing countries are pushing for quick action.
- Participation in the December Hong Kong ministerial meeting is important. CSOs should explore opportunities at the national level so that CSO representatives and farmers can be included in the dialogue and meetings prior to and during the meeting.
- The proposals presented are described as general and trade negotiators need specific ones. In spite of this, the trade negotiators were reminded that they need to take on the "spirit" of the proposals and not be bogged down in the details. The main point is that the farmers' interests need to be protected during negotiations with countries, particularly the developed ones, who do protect their own.

- While promoting agriculture among the youth, one encounters not just the financial issue (low income) but also the problems of image and perception. Government and civil society need to work together to manage and transform the image of farming.
- During ministerial meetings and national consultations related to WTO matters, large and sometimes violent protests are organized. The governments are asked to respond and yet the public often hears the WTO citing the need to balance the interests of the various stakeholders. Government trade negotiators are often left to consider the option with least negative impact. In the past, trade negotiators were unprepared and technically limited. Today, there are inputs coming in from various sectors of the society and negotiators are often reminded to keep in mind (and in their hearts) the interests of the farmers.



Summary

Given the exchanges, it is acknowledged that government representatives are asked to encourage CSOs to help in the negotiation process by providing concrete suggestions and proposals. CSOs request that the negotiators look into the perspectives proposed. Both CSO and governments are encouraged to be proactive and open to continuous dialogue with civil society. Lastly, in the process of reforming WTO, we should always be clear on who benefits from globalization and safeguard the preferential option for the poor.

Sharing the Same Dream

Thanking everybody for their active participation, Soetrisno reminded the group that from the presentations and sharing of the trade negotiators, it seems that we all share a common dream of a more prosperous and just society. He emphasized the importance of sustaining the dialogue and engaging each other in the interest of safeguarding the legacy of agriculture in Asia.

Leadership Challenges Amidst Disasters and Emergency Situations

Day Two, Afternoon: 2 March 2005

Taking over the facilitator reins, Ms. Angge Gregorio-Medel explained that Part Two of the ALD is devoted to looking into an area of concern that is near to our hearts and which seriously affected some of our partners in the DHRRA family. Citing the devastating December 2004 earthquake and tsunami that hit several Indian Ocean countries and resulted in the death of more than 170,000 people, she spoke of the challenges disaster management pose to NGO leaders. As much as WTO and global trade affect our lives now and therefore need to be understood, natural disasters also demand such attention. In fact, Angge further explained, the history of NGOs is closely related to calamities because of the earlier work emphasis on relief and welfare.

In Remembrance: Of Flowers, Water and Light

Paul Sinnapan (DHRRA Network Malaysia) started off by sharing how his son immediately packed his bags and left for Aceh after receiving a call from a distressed friend there. While helping out with the relief and recovery, his son took some footages of the situation and later on managed to convince more people to come and help. From then on, groups of volunteers take turn in going to Aceh to provide much-needed assistance.

Amidst silence, the footages of the devastation and emotional distress experienced by the Indonesian people were then showed.

As the participants silently grappled with the moving images of mothers crying over their dead children and of hundreds of dead bodies spread out in the streets, Paul guided the group in a ritual of remembrance and prayer. Each participant was asked to take a flower, remembering those who lost their lives in the tragedy. The flower was then put into a bowl of water, which symbolizes the power of cleansing. When all had finished, Paul lit a candle and explained that it is believed that in death, the departed ones become part of the cosmos in which the sun (as represented by the candle) is the most powerful symbol. The participants were then asked to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of those who died.

The Life After: Challenges being faced

As part of the situationer on the work being done in the affected areas, Paul, Bambang Ismawan (Binaswadaya), Soetrisno, and Vineth shared some of their experiences.

- While cameras around the world have shown how the tragedy affected people, being there personally and having a direct on-hand view was a humbling experience. To witness communities that were completely wiped out, struggling with their loss and people who lost their loved ones scrounging for food can be overwhelming.
- In Malaysia, forty-five volunteers working in Aceh, India and Sri Lanka were gathered for a reflection and sharing session. People's hearts were moved by the tragedy and the phenomenal response in terms of relief goods and services (e.g. medical aid). There were several difficulties encountered in the relief work. One was where to send the donations

and another was how to get these to those in need. Bad roads and political barriers seriously hampered relief work and these were exacerbated by terrible problems such as smuggling of children and corruption. To overcome some of the problems, NGOs and volunteer groups used the “adopt a village” approach and did people-to-people work. NGOs coordinated directly with a local NGO in helping people rebuild and re-establish their lives.

- The response to calls for emergency assistance was very good. In Indonesia, the pouring of aid and donations was massive. NGOs and church groups are working overtime to help the affected communities. Medical teams were sent and the work continues as we speak. Livelihoods were destroyed and helping communities get up on their feet is on going. But as mentioned, problems do exist. With the massive donations came the challenge of coordination. Government had to ensure that aid was distributed well and in a clear, transparent manner.

NGO Leaders’ Response

Ange guided the group in a reflection and sharing session. Although guide questions were given, the participants were encouraged to share their thoughts.

- The ritual put us in a prayerful mode and using the flower that symbolizes the beauty of God’s creation and the solidarity among people is a powerful one. Life like the water has to go on and the personal prayer we had is a source of strength. Through personal contacts, we can put people in need in contact with people who want to and can help.
- There is clear emotional distress for having witnessed these things. Tragedies experienced in the past made people more sympathetic and supportive. The feeling of helplessness can

overwhelm one at first since there is the realization that there are really things beyond one's personal capacity. There is a clear need for education on disaster management.

- The tsunami disaster reminded us of our helplessness amidst natural disasters. It was also an opportunity for solidarity building. In the past, our government had an experience related to disaster but since our government then was still young; the response capacity was not yet as efficient. At the organizational level, assistance was made available to children affected by the disaster through scholarships. This is important because in losing their parents, they also lost the opportunity to be educated.
- A day after the tsunami, board meeting was held and there was an agreement to disseminate the information and mobilize member organizations to help. Government staff contributed one-month salary amounting to 100 million dong and some organizations like the VNFU donated 23 million dong. The people took the disaster as an opportunity to build community spirit and solidarity.
- After the tsunami there was a realization of unfamiliarity and lack of knowledge of one's immediate environment – the home, the community. There is lack of understanding of the types of disasters that our specific environment is prey to. The assumption is that this is also true for the people who were affected by the disaster. Did they understand the cause of the earthquake and how it leads to deadly waves from the ocean? We can plan better if we are aware of the characteristics of our area. It will help if we educate our people and it should be included in the curriculum for students. City and area planning should consider the dangers in our area and utilize local knowledge so that ignorance does not cause tragic consequences again.

- There is a need to go back to basic science and study nature (e.g. conduct inventory on what species were lost) while at the same time ensuring the relaying of information. The tragedy made us realize the need to protect our environment. With the Kyoto Protocol, many corporations are now signing on to protect the environment. We need to raise consciousness on how to use this event to mobilize communities. We also need to collect survivor's stories to uplift our spirits.



- In tragedies like this, it is children who are most affected. In Thailand one of the emerging issues is the property rights of children who lose their parents and have lost documents too.
- Cooperatives in the Philippines have a system of advancing funds then later collecting the pledges of each member so that the response to disaster is immediate and efficient. Civil society usually does the rehabilitation work while government does relief work. The challenge is how to capitalize on our network advantage (of both NGOs and Cooperatives). Another option is to build up a Disaster Solidarity Fund we can tap for emergency situations.
- In Thailand, the credit union movement used all forms of communication to mobilize resources and donation. At present, rehabilitation work is on going especially in the area

of housing. The importance of a tsunami warning system in the region is uppermost in everybody's minds.

- Due to the challenging political situation, some countries experienced difficulties in assessing the extent of the damage in their areas. The government is guilty of hindering relief efforts because of its fear of external intervention. NGOs and church groups had to rely on their local network to learn about the effects of the tsunami and the assistance needed. We need to pray together and be strengthened by faith. Moral support is important as well as letting victims know we are here for them.
- The massive inflow of resources has both positive and negative sides to it. While the resources needed are present, the challenge is how to manage the deluge of funds and donated goods. The preparedness of NGOs is important and the current call is embodied in musyawarah with communities as starting point for the rehabilitation work.
- The news of the tsunami can be seen and heard everyday in Indonesia and around the world. We do our rehabilitation work based on our own organizational mandate and so far efforts included organizing volunteers, linking with big corporations for food relief and establishing centers in Aceh to coordinate the relief and rehabilitation work. A suggestion to AsiaDHRRA is to set-up a website on tsunami updates. It can also track the work and efforts involved and share information of both material and moral support.

Thanking everybody for their heartfelt sharing and creative ideas, Angge noted the following major agreements and suggestions to the network:

1. AsiaDHRRRA can add a section in its website and devote it to updates on the tsunami relief and rehabilitation efforts and how people can further help. Related to this is the sustained information dissemination and exchange on topics such as disaster management and natural science. The website can also be a venue to build and strengthen linkages and make people aware that there are individuals and communities ready to help.
2. The network can set up a solidarity fund that can be used for disasters such as the tsunami.

In the spirit of the second agreement, the participants ended the session by donating cash to start up the disaster solidarity fund.

day three: 3 march 2005

Defining and Nurturing Asian NGO Leadership Amidst Globalization: Leadership Stories

Part Three of the ALD began with a prayer and ritual by Mr. Supachai Srisupa-aksorn (CULT). It involved focusing and meditation, of emptying one's mind and relaxing. After several minutes, the participants were guided to end the meditation.

Angge then explained that the ALD 1 focused on leadership in the context of globalization. In Cyberjaya, globalization in the beginning was a big unknown monster but after the session it was not any more. The desire to demystify globalization was accomplished and the participants felt more able to grasp the concept and its realities. For ALD 2, the focus was to define the concept of leadership in the midst of globalization. Angge also explained that to aid the process, two leadership stories were to be highlighted. The cases were chosen specifically because the leadership stories took place in the context of civil societies unsure and undefined relationship with the financial market and resource mobilization.

The participants viewed a video presentation of ALD 1 and it was followed by the video presentations of the leadership stories of Supachai and Ms. Marissa Reyes (Association of Foundations).

Their Leadership Stories

Supachai is the current President of the Credit Union League of Thailand, Ltd. (CULT). The case study traced his development as a leader and how under his guidance, the community developed and the credit union became a stable and reliable financial institution. Marissa on the other hand used to be the Chairperson of CODE NGO, the biggest umbrella group of NGO networks in the Philippines that managed to take advantage of the capital market to make itself financially self-sufficient. Under her leadership, the network raised more than enough funds to support NGOs in their development efforts. For the full stories, refer to the attachment on leadership stories.

Open Forum and Dialogue

After the video presentations, the participants were given the chance to pose questions (Q) or share their thoughts (T). Supachai (S) and Marissa (M) were asked to respond and if possible, do more sharing.

Q: From the presentations and the case studies, the conclusion I arrived at refers to how these two leaders realized their visions. They both had strong focus and this was linked to execution. Both propelled the execution by mobilizing people around them and harnessing their technical strengths. Through their leadership they transformed their organizations. What about their personal lives? Was there any transformation? What are the parallel transformations at the personal level?



M: When the idea of tapping the capital market first came, I thought of it as a simple fundraising effort. I was inspired by the work on the ground but because of the limitation of funds and donor restrictions, many things could not be done. So I thought of fundraising as my own contribution. Maybe because of my lack of political ideology and naiveté, I crossed the boundary to deal with businesses that raised money as an ordinary effort. After the big controversy I withdrew to my own foundation but later on found myself excited

about another initiative with national focus again. The transformation came in the aspect of strengthening me as a person, becoming more rooted in my values after much introspection, and realizing my capacity to help.

S: I remember the children when I used to live in the temple. I thought when I grow up I will help take care of the people who are poor. So when I came into the city, I became a volunteer and later on chief of the village. I found more opportunities in the credit union and I realized that I could help the community by introducing them to this idea. In Thailand, if there is a strong credit union movement, the economic status of the people will be better. In my life, I share with more people the idea and the capacity of the credit union to help with the problem of poverty. If I see a problem I try to use my experience in the credit union to help them see the potential for development. My life is clean and I avoid bad habits so as to be consistent with my leadership.

T: In Supachai's case, the concept of servant leadership is very dominant. Only in wanting to do better and help others can leadership come about. He is using power to convince different people. His behavior is consistent with what he is advocating.

T: These are very interesting persons working with different sectors with varying approaches. One mobilized community resources and the other resources from outside (the capital market) to empower local communities. I have seen Marisa explaining her idea of being donor free. There was the innovative approach and the persistent impatience – believing in something that can be done.

T: I used to think the work of civil society and the government is not too different. But given the stories of Supachai and Marissa, I know we work because of the people. We work for the people because we love to do this. We do not do this for power or money but as an extension of oneself.

Q: What is interesting is the concept of power. Leaders are leaders because they have power. It is not just about raising money but also because of the people. What has been your experience of the power you have gained after your achievements? What are the joys and pains of power as a leader?

M: I never looked at myself as a person with power. In CODE NGO, we practiced collegial leadership and being the Chairperson meant ensuring that everybody's voice was heard. I realized the power of the position only after the money came and that CODE NGO has the power to do more. I was told money is power in this country. Anybody with 500 million pesos is like a blinking light to politicians. An NGO with a billion pesos can influence the presidency. Realizing this, power can also be an opportunity for humility. The realization of what power can do should make one humble because one realizes the responsibilities to do good. I also realized one's role can be enabling to move others to help too.

S: My vision and new ideas are my sources of power. People have different beliefs and are able to share different experiences.

Q: Why did the bank invest through CODE NGO and not just do it by itself to earn?

M: From the experience working with the bank came the realization that NGOs do not have a monopoly of the desire to help the poor. In this case, we learned that businesses want to help but within the confines of their specialization. All the while, CODE NGO also kept examining itself if it is still agreeable with the technical transaction and processes.

T: The technical side of the execution of the vision amazes me. The partnership (with the bank) is also crucial in this case.

T: While listening to the answers, the idea of expertise was at the back of my mind. The two leaders achieved a lot because of expertise. Yesterday during the discussion with the trade negotiators, we were told that our proposals are too general. When we explained about the value side of the proposals and how they need to listen to with heart too, they still saw the technical side only. But on our part, we need to have the technical expertise too. The WTO secretariat is made up of lawyers and economists, highly technical people that the trade negotiators talk to. We need to bring our values system to bear on the complicated technicalities involved. It is a challenge to bring values to those areas. At our end we need to understand the technical side.

T: In the Heifetz book on adaptive leadership, partners see the discrepancy between the values systems and the technical side. The challenging call is to mirror to the technical side the lack of or absence of values.

T: Our work in formation especially for the youth is important because it lays the foundation for sensitivity to the issue of poverty and later on it aids them when they gain technical expertise.

M: To echo what has been said, most NGO leaders are guilty of thinking that because we are doing something good, we leave the highly technical part of life to others. During the process of raising the funds, we had to study the technical side and that I think makes us better leaders. There is this story behind one of the bankers. He came from a very poor family and was given a scholarship by the Jesuits. After graduating, he worked in a bank and because of his technical excellence, rose up the ranks. In the midst of the success, he never forgot where he came from. Even with what he has now, he saw the process of working with NGOs as his opportunity to return the graces he received.

Q: I have learned so much from the guests and my co-participants. In my case, I am old now with nearly 45 years of experiences first as a government leader. In spite of this I still I ask myself if I can be a leader. I am a teacher who has trained many young people who are now leaders and some who I thought would be leaders. What are the values involved and how do we develop leaders?

T: There are three elements in trying to form leaders. These are the symbols of the heart, head and leg. The heart is the value system, the relationships, and spirituality. The head covers information, expertise and knowledge. We need these two to work with the people. The leg means we walk with the people. We work with people. If we can build on this we can be transformed leaders. Now our current challenge is getting involved in the mainstream business especially in the context of globalization. Business people have in their hearts the desire to help but they want to do this within their areas of expertise and competence. All leaders, regardless of the sector they are in, need to be rooted in values.

T: We started off with the need for and appreciation of technical expertise. Aside from the appreciation of technical expertise is the element of partnership. There are experts who want to help and be of service too.

T: I am reminded of an ancient Chinese saying. Confucius says if you are a learned person; you must become a servant of the people. Maybe there is not much difference between NGO and GO leaders in terms of values but more in terms of priorities. Even with the learned person, one is not a leader if one's learning is not translated into action. When in the field, we are often respected by the community because of our academic background. But I feel that I am not a leader because I lack their expertise. When people grow older, one develops one's own frameworks and circle of relationships and it is difficult to see other perspectives. We need to start early in creating the awareness that one should not be limited to one's comfort zones. Young students are to be exposed to different aspects of the community that builds the awareness and compassion in the kids at a young age.

Q: I don't know if I am a leader. I witnessed Marissa's struggle during the controversy and saw the emotional distress. I cannot imagine if I have the courage to face the agonies she went through. It is easier said and even understood than done. My struggle is regarding the leadership qualities and expertise needed especially if there will be situations that can be a cause of great distress. How did you handle the emotional distress and how did you surpass the agonies? What forces can make you say you can face such a situation again?

M: I am not a brave person at all and was not prepared for the controversy. It was clear to me that I did not do anything wrong and I know that I did not break any rule or law. My family was there and my mom was a great source of strength. At the height of the controversy, the knowledge that constant support is there from people who sometimes I don't even know helped. A leader needs a spirituality that says there is a Higher Being.

Angge thanked everybody for their sharing. She explained how when we do something we do not think of positions of power but are propelled by the desire to help others. When we do something – an activity – we do not really think of the cost first but of the things that need to be

done. Leadership is a response to a call to love and call to serve. Later on when the effects come out, we have the bank of rich experiences to support us. Nobody can say what leadership is now. What we can have are handles in understanding leadership.

Asked for their last remarks, Supachai shared that attitude is everything. When we want to succeed, the question is how long can one walk. If one can walk, success will come. Everybody can as long as one wants to develop. Marissa on the other hand shared that life is a work in progress and we do not really reach the end until we pass away. Dreams are cheap and do not cost much so dream big dreams but make sure you can follow on making the dreams come true.



Tokens of appreciation were then given to Supachai and Marissa.

After listening to the stories of Marissa and Supachai, the participants were then asked to share their reflections in small groups. Angge explained the guide questions and the group organized themselves into four breakout groups.

The outputs are as follows:

Group 1. Members: Rezki Khainidar, Cres Paez, John Ferchack, Ouch Ngak, Lorna David, Wenchi Huang

Q1/2: What struck me most from the stories and the sharing this morning? Which resonate to my own story? How could such stories and dialogue be of real value/use to leadership development in my family/organization/community of NGO leaders in the region?

- Power of influence to give positive result
- Having a belief system and conviction, clear vision and mission and the commitment to follow through
- Moving on inspite of pressure, the stories were energizing
- Belief in God, passion
- Hard work, persistence, determination

Q3/4: What concrete steps should we take towards nurturing the community of leaders? How immediate or urgent are these actions?

- Continue with the exchanges and dialogue: leadership circles for sharing, value-based leadership development program
- Write stories and learn from others
- Start with existing activities – meetings, workshops

Group 2. Members: Sil Vineth, Gil Gua, Nguyen Que Anh, Rachel Polectico, Supachai Srisupaksorn, Veerayut Ruchirek, Lany Rebagay, Banjong

Q1: What struck me most from the stories and the sharing this morning? Which resonate to my own story?

- A person who becomes a good leader would be “attractive”
- Roles of women, can do a lot of things in the society if given a chance and opportunity
- Spirituality and leadership of women
- Leadership must have personal values, initiative, gender perspective, experience, understanding and ability to adapt with the environment

- A leader must have focus for their intentions
- Power of new ideas, initiative, solidarity, and ability to communicate

Q2: How could such stories and dialogue be of real value/use to leadership development in my family/organization/community of NGO leaders in the region?

- Mobilisation of fund internally from the people
- Daring to make a decision, taking full responsibility of what had been done
- Train the young leaders and young generation and be inspired by the example of good leaders
- Looking for alliances, we cannot be alone

Q3/4: What concrete steps should we take towards nurturing the community of leaders? How immediate or urgent are these actions?

- Promote and support social development leaders through fellowship
- Transformation of leadership by updating; relevance to the external environment
- Exchange programs
- Do beyond what AsiaDHRRA is doing
- Classify the characteristics of good leadership to distinguish from the government and business kind of leadership
- Develop formal leadership training programs
- Make concrete activities for the formation of grassroots leaders

Group 3. Members: Ryoko Tsuboi, Marl Ramirez, Paul Sinnapan, Ange Belangel, Bambang Ismawan, Nana Maneewong

Q1: What struck me most from the stories and the sharing this morning? Which resonate to my own story?

- Struck by the paradox of emptiness: being empty is being full
- Payback effort of people: helping back the community
- Attitude and expertise
- Everyone can be leader because all of us can serve

Q2: How could such stories and dialogue be of real value/use to leadership development in my family/organization/community of NGO leaders in the region?

- Gender sensitivity in story-telling in our homes
- Role modeling

Q3/4: What concrete steps should we take towards nurturing the community of leaders? How immediate or urgent are these actions?

- Replicate the experience of dialogue at the local level
- Theme of celebration can focus on leadership; need to document stories
- Difficulty of getting out from “founder’s syndrome”; systematizing program on leadership development e.g. retreat, reflection session
- Important to look after to our elderly leaders e.g. invest or mobilize resources on how to support elderly leaders
- Sustain leaders’ dialogue at local and regional levels – it provides venue for building fellowship
- Family retreat

Group 4. Members: Bui Quang Toan, Boy Mercado, Sri Rahayu Wartonu, Kanyarat Ekkachaijindawat, Ma Kya Mu, Soetrisno Kusumohadi, Dulce Carandang



Q1: What struck me most from the stories and the sharing this morning? Which resonate to my own story?

- Leaders as product of one's environment (family, school, work)
- Power can be dangerous and harmful but can be put to good use for the good of the communities we work with
- Leadership by example: people look at my behavior and action
- Leaders need expertise and cannot just be do-gooders
- Leadership and modeling: learning from parents and striving to do better as parents, but sometimes confronted with contradictions
- Leadership is also a learning process
- There are invisible and visible aspects to leadership
- Clarity of vision and ability to see it through
- Humility and sincerity in leadership
- BUT still a strong festering question of whether one is a leader

Q2: How could such stories and dialogue be of real value/use to leadership development in my family/organization/community of NGO leaders in the region?

- Realization that it is not possible for me to answer all questions but that I know of others with the capacity to do so and I can facilitate the partnership

- The stories used as guide in living one's life and teaching own children/grandchildren and colleagues; as mode of influencing, teaching, and inspiring others
- As powerful tools in guiding a future generation of critical and good leaders who gain wisdom from stories passed on from generation to generation
- Sources of wisdom and inspiration that re-energizes

A challenge: faced with the complexity of power structures that are political in structure, how to adapt and overcome hindrances

Q3/4: What concrete steps should we take towards nurturing the community of leaders? How immediate or urgent are these actions?

- Continue with the story telling technologies: continue the talk, talk, talk which comes about from past leadership actions
- Raise level of awareness of and then use the resources available – tap oneself, others and mobilize through partnerships
- Use existing tools such as reports to include such powerful stories (qualitative)

BUT the process of nurturing and developing leaders takes time!

- Actions related to families can be done immediately (i.e. revive story-telling in the family circle)
- At the community level, national context needs to be considered

For the synthesis, Angge explained that we were able to relate to what we heard from Marissa and Supachai because each can resonate with their struggles, hard work and passion. It is significant to emphasize the passion, the sense of work and its meaning. The group also attempted to ensure that the story telling goes on especially in the context of our families and

own organizations. It would be great if as soon as we arrive home, each one tells the stories of the ALD to both family and colleagues. We also had the opportunity to come up with concrete proposals and what is being attempted at is to systematize the story telling because it will be integrated in our regular meetings and activities.

Their Stories, My Story

Each one in the group is an acknowledged leader and therefore has his or her own stories to tell too. For the next session, Ange asked each one to share their story, focusing on one's most painful leadership dilemma and in resolving it, what were the costs.

Sharing of Participants

- Historically, people believed that when one works to support the community, God takes care of that person's family needs. However with social changes especially in gender roles, one is required to overcome such strong patriarchal practices. My dilemma was how to balance my responsibilities and chores at home and those I have at work. I may be into developing community leaders but it is difficult to give them the reins because of my unhappiness with the quality of work done. Meanwhile, my own work at home suffers with my wife unhappy with the quality too. Another dilemma relates to being dispensable. I have questions whether I can retire and let go especially since I am being called back into the fold consistently.
- Several years ago, I was challenged by activist friends to do community based work instead of academic work. I made a choice (academic work) and reasoned out that we all have roles to play in the society. I do not know the cost of my choice and do not know whether the decision is correct. My 2nd dilemma is related to a paradigm shift due to a reading of a newsletter. I

made a transition to having a positive outlook. Another dilemma is the competition for time between work and family amidst other hobbies and engagements. My choice is to put family first in times of great conflict.

- The accidental death of three of my children was a great tragedy for me. It was made worst when the military robbed my family and an expatriate adviser gave extremely negative comments about my leadership. It was a deluge of bad events in my life, a big tragedy that defies analysis.
- I am known to be very efficient and effective in my work. I maintain a high standard and people working with me knows this. My dilemma is whether one's standard should be lowered because I don't want others to be forced to adjust to me. The cost of one choice is a lower quality of work done and I am not sure if I am okay with this.
- One dilemma faced pertained to the choice whether the center of the movement should be moved to Jakarta or stay in Semarang. Being in Jakarta means being in the center of power and info while Semarang means community rootedness. Later on the decision was to put the head office in Jakarta while maintaining a field office in the province. Another dilemma was related to a newsletter being not effective although it was meant to provide farmers with information. The question I faced was should we serve the poor or the interest of the better off. The resolution was to change format and target the middle class.
- Taking on the leadership of PhilDHRRRA was a big dilemma then with its old and reliable vanguards and management staff leaving. And then there were the changes in the cooperative movement that involved changing the logo, ways of doing things, vision, etc. That was emotional because the pioneers were so comfortable with the old ways. At present, being

in the field of politics provided many dilemmas. One is the movement from the consultative democratic process to a debate and division of the house mode.

- One dilemma started with discussions to help the socio-economic program of a group that later on progressed. My dilemma was whether to stop or continue with the involvement with that particular group given other important factors that demand my departure. I thought to myself if I remain in the organization, I will have supportive colleagues and if I leave I will be jobless.
- When we started to organize cooperatives using the CCA principles, we encountered challenges in how things are done. As good party member, I follow the policies and procedures. We all know a genuine cooperative advocates that people make the decision themselves but this goes against the party principles. It was difficult because I was a party member while at the same time was working for the establishment of genuine coops. My choices were either party membership or the community project with CCA. I talked to the district party leaders who were convinced to join the cooperative but was told they cannot (as party officials) interfere in the cooperative's decision-making process.

Due to time constraints, Angge asked the rest to hold on to their stories because the story telling will go on. Story telling is very powerful and not only because of the technical aspects but also because leadership is a complex concept. It is not a linear thing but concentric circle swirling. By telling stories, the positive force bounces back to us and then we achieve self-awareness and self control. Persistence is important – don't stop no matter how tired you are, how difficult things are.

For the field trip scheduled the next day, Mr. Veerayut Ruchirek (CULT) gave a brief orientation on the program and some important instructions.

day four: 4 march 2005

Defining and Nurturing Asian NGO Leadership Amidst Globalization: Evolution of Leadership Theories

The group spent the morning in the office of CULT in Bangkok to witness how the organization functions given the leadership of Supachai. A brief orientation on the credit union movement and CULT was presided over by Veerayut and it was followed by an overview of the movement at the regional level. An open forum was also held and it focused mainly on the operations of credit unions in Thailand along with the challenges they face.

From Great Man to the Transcendent: Tracing the Development of Leadership Theories

After lunch, the group went back to Pinnacle to resume the discussion on leadership. Angge informed the group that the field trip was meant to deepen our understanding and appreciation of Supachai's leadership. She also encouraged the participants to look at leadership from an institutional leadership perspective and not only as that of an individual.

The afternoon session then commenced with a discussion on the evolution of leadership theories. The objective of looking at these theories is to have common reference points for leadership. But before sharing the existing leadership theories, Angge asked each one to draw his or her symbol of leadership given the past days' discussions and one's own experiences.

After everyone had done so, Angge then guided the group in tracing how the concept of leadership started and what the current studies say now.

According to her, leadership theories started with a collection of stories about heroes, especially stories about war heroes. From these stories leadership theories developed.



1. The great man theory came about because of the old notion that history is the story of great men and their impact on society.
2. The trait theories are closely related to the first in the sense that characteristics of these great men were largely referred to particular traits. The theories posit that the rise to power is rooted in a set of traits such as talents, skills and personal characteristics.
3. The behavior theories consist of the well-known leadership roles and management grid.
4. The situational and contingent theories arose as reactions to the great man theory. Situationalists argue that extraordinary times produce the leader and that the situation calls for persons with various talents and skills. Contingency theory on the other hand

says that appropriate leadership styles depend on the requirements of the particular situation.

5. The relational and reciprocal theories focus on the elements of participation and influence in leadership. Leadership is seen as an influence relationship and followers who intend real changes that reflect their shared purposes.
6. The transactional theories look into the specific interactions between leaders and followers. Based on reciprocity, leaders not only influence their followers but are under their influence too.
7. The transformational leadership theory looks at a leader as a person who can guide, direct and influence others to bring about a fundamental change not only of the external world but also of internal processes.
8. The transcendental leadership is defined by a contribution-exchange relationship wherein the leader promotes unity by providing fair extrinsic rewards, appealing to the intrinsic motivation of the collaborators and developing their transcendent motivation.

Open Forum

- The question of whether there is a best leadership styles is answered by the situational theory that says that it depends on the situation. In the need to be people focused or task focused, the situation or context is the basis. In most NGOs, leaders choose to be people focused as opposed to business leaders for whom the bottom line (profit) is more important. The latter situation provides for less tolerance.

- Some theorists differentiate leadership from management. The first focuses more on vision and integration while the latter is on operations and execution.
- In our successor generation efforts, when we design our curricula we look back at our experiences and design according to old contexts. However, the new generation might not have the same situation and context. For example the changes in technology then and now presents an important element in the curriculum design.



Our Leadership Concepts

With the theoretical discussion done, Angge directed the attention back to the drawings of the participants. Each was asked to explain their drawing which represents their concept of leadership.

- Ryoko – I drew a natural farmer who knows well his own resources and the environment and nature. It also represents decision-making and maximizing of resources.
- Boy – I chose the symbol of the cross, which is made up of the vertical and horizontal lines. Leaders are also of vertical and horizontal lines. Their source of motivation can be from above or below. The horizontal ways can be physical, whether I use my head or foot. I also want an Asian context, a cultural element.

- Rezki – I drew water as represented by the river. Water is clear. Leadership is making a clear picture of a dream and how to get there together.
- Bambang –The drawing of faces of men and women represents my idea of leadership. The symbols are from the clear to the very clear, the processes of self-reliance, participation and solidarity.
- Rahayu – I chose an arrow. Leadership is about dreams and potential. The tip of the arrow is a symbol of leadership, which changes in thickness depending on the journey. It is always moving.
- Wenchu – The circle is not two-dimensional. People emerge from the circle as leaders. It comes out gradually because mobilizing of resources takes place in phases.
- Paul – I chose the coconut tree because the tree symbolizes spirituality. By giving of oneself, one grows. The coconut tree is versatile – all of its parts can be used. It generates new life – in giving I also receive.
- Toan –Rice is a product of the grassroots. The earth and ground are symbols of where things are planted and grown. A notebook and pen represent lessons that are written out and passed on.
- Soetrisno – I chose the soil because a leader gives opportunities for plants to grow, to develop. It can absorb all materials and digest it to give back to the plant. The soil doesn't choose the plant but provides to all.

- Anh – I drew a computer with a big capacity. In it one can be creative and multi-level. It has a set of programs that run and can solve problems autonomously.



- Ouk – Mine is a crooked arrow for leadership is a process depending on abilities. If we want to achieve goals start from the very first step, we need to hard work through coaching.

- Kya Mu – I drew a small ant. I heard that before the tsunami, people witnessed ants coming out of the ground. Ants have wisdom; they are sensitive to the environment. Leadership sometimes cannot be seen but the work is going on even though the leader is not visible.

- Vineth – I chose people as a symbol of solidarity and working together for the common good.

- Ange – My symbol is a river because for me leadership is about the achievement of results. There is a process and just like the river, it has direction – from source to destination. The process gives life to people and it can evade problems. With hindrances, if it has to be violent or cruel it can be by destroying those in its path.

- Rachel – I chose a round table. For me, leadership is a function of analyzing a problem and situation and coming up with solution through participatory processes - involving many people with diverse capacities.

- Marl – I drew a happy face because leadership exudes confidence and positive outlook. There is also clarity in direction and knowing you can deliver. The outlook is borne of inner strength and the ability to build good relationships.
- Dulce – I drew a happy face beside that of Marl's. First I believe leadership is something you do that generates goodness and happiness. Drawing it near another face symbolizes that leadership can involve more than just one individual.
- John – I drew a flock of birds in flight. There is a leader that has sense of direction but there are changes that happen that create disequilibrium and natural leaders emerge. There is wisdom in nature and from experiences we get lessons in life.
- Gil – I chose the logo of NATCCO because it represents people with common vision who have the inspiration to achieve their goal.
- Cres – My drawing refers to the exercise of leadership. The environment where now there are clouds and later there will be none. Behind a thick cloud is the sun but on the other side is the start of thunder and lightning. Leadership is as natural as the chemistry of forces inter-acting with each other. And because it is natural, there is a tendency for friction and then there is lightning or rain. In a day I may practice more of management than leadership depending on the forces of nature – the call of the times.



- Lany – I drew a lamp with a moth nearby. Jose Rizal, a Philippine hero, inspires it. Leadership as both being a lamp giving light, but can also be the moth that is ready to be burned and consumed because of its passion.
- Angge – I chose a dot. A dot ends a sentence and yet it also starts something new. It is a hole made up of an atom that makes all things. It is simple, naturally subtle and not grand, but can hold together and also stand-alone. One can be a leader because of who you are.

Thanking each one for their sharing, Angge explained that the sharing outputs are our reference points in developing our own leadership concepts. The next step is to synthesize these to come up with our own common reference points.

To cap the night, Angge asked the participants to do an exercise for the night – to share about one's favorite leader and a personal dilemma.

day five: 5 march 2005

**Defining and Nurturing Asian NGO Leadership Amidst Globalization:
Sketching our Leadership Framework**

To start the last day of the workshop, Mr. Boy Mercado (SEARSOLIN) shared a poem he was inspired to write.

SUSTAINABILITY

By Dr. Anselmo B. Mercado

On one hand –
If we do wrong in something
We should do the correcting
To prevent further damaging

On the other hand –
Things we do correctly
They may go awry
Unless we strive for sustainability

To be on the upper hand
Be productive

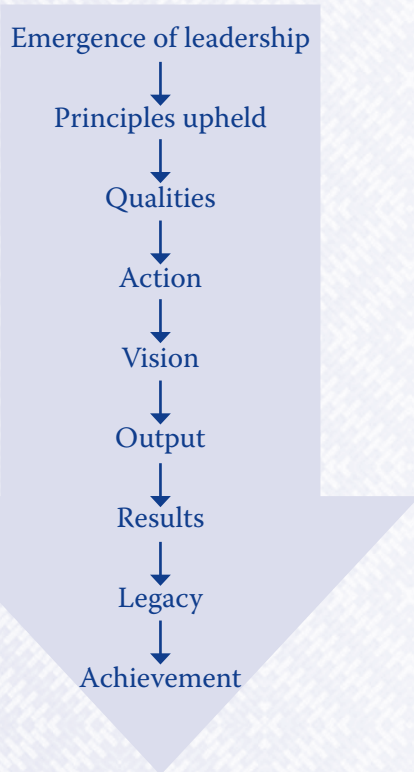
Be creative and innovative,
With an outlook that's developmental and positive

Ultimately, we put ourselves in God's hand –
The good Lord of creation, the source of our motivation,
Knowing that sustainability is a long term vision
Not merely immediate gratification

This provides us guidance and direction
In our choice and decisions
Through life's journey towards the end of creation,
Our eternal salvation.

Working on a Sketch

Today is about moving forward, explained Angge. She presented a summary of the action points from day one to four to situate the forthcoming task of day five. The task of day five is to come up with common starting points in leveling how we understand and how we use leadership. Angge also explained that Ms Rachel Polestico (SEARSOLIN) has a suggestion about the process. One option is to cut up the drawings and, using the arising dominant themes as basis, arrange the symbols accordingly. The proposed continuum or themes are as follows:



According to Rachel, her suggestion came about from the previous day's sharing. She saw the emerging pattern in what was being shared – from how the concept emerges, the principles and qualities being upheld, etc. She explained that the structure or synthesis is important if we are interested in developing leaders – whether for the future or for today.

As rejoinders, Paul and Boy shared that they have issues that are divergent. For Paul, lately he had been focused on addressing issues of globalization but at same time he is being pulled back to own his base organization. For him there are many issues and each intersects with a variety of cultural practices. As much as he would like to address globalization he cannot move out of his own organization's demands. Boy on the other hand shared that he came to the workshop to learn how to facilitate ideas on leadership that can be shared when he goes back to teaching. He also wants to use the Asian context given its unique leadership context. In our Asian culture, we observe that in big groups people don't talk but once outside of it, many ideas are shared that are not included in the plenary discussion.

Given these inputs, Angge clarified that the suggestion is to identify the issues and set up the boundaries of what we want to do by discussing the problems we want to address. We do have a diversity of issues needing to be addressed. So now, let us move into issues identification. To do this, four small groups were organized with the first one made up of participants who

have shared their leadership dilemmas already. Angge explained that a dilemma has competing values and there are clear costs that are painful. An issue is that which you want to respond to? It is an issue if it is a burning question and does not fall easily into categories but needs to be addressed. It is an issue because there is no formula and one cannot run to experts. It touches your very being as a leader.

The highlights of the dilemmas and issues identified per group are as follows:

Group 1: Boy, Gil, Toan, Soetrisno, Bambang, Paul, Vineth

- Successor generation and the sharing of vision and mission by all generations
- Leadership: professionalization and commercialization vs. volunteerism
- Networking: strengthen NGOs and network leaders, pursue principles of networking

Group 2: Kya Mu, Rachel, Rahayu, Ange, Dulce

- Task vs. relationship dilemma: both organizational and personal
- Focusing and balancing: work responsibilities vs. family/personal needs, juggling act of many work commitments
- Conflict between legal requirements and organizational sustainability or project profitability
- After the pain and dilemma, learning and healing follows

Group 3: Rezki, Wenchi, Marl, John

- Professionalism of NGOs, setting of standards, transparency and accountability vs. solidarity, friendships and internal processes, informality and old traditions
- Conflict: work vs. family

Group 4: Ryoko, Ouch Ngak, Anh, Lany
Situation of Young leaders

- Hesitant to become a leader
- Prefer to be a part of the whole dynamics not necessarily to take the leadership role
- Want to be further developed and be good at what we are doing
- Some colleagues do not trust our capabilities
- Fellow young people feel envious of the training opportunities we get
- Bothered by financial sustainability concerns of our organization

Needs/ Concerns of Young leaders

- Situations calling for leadership from the people we trust
- Opportunities and situation for learning
- Trust
- Coaching / mentoring / consultation with pioneers
- More community exposure / rootedness
- Funding support

From the reports, Angge pointed out the following dominant themes:

- New leaders: attracting and developing and not limiting to “successors” but focus on increasing the tribe
- Professionalism and standards of performance versus vision-mission, solidarity, spirituality
- Managerial accountability versus accountability due to integrity (movement kind)
- Striking a balance yes but when not possible due to choosing between two good values, make a choice and then manage effects and learn from it. Healing is important.

- Focusing and balancing and time management
- The divide is getting bigger in spite of our efforts on solidarity: in institutionalizing, demarcations are created and we have limited ourselves. Since we are missing the resource of diversity, we open up and expand because it is in the nature of the environment.
- Leadership with position and without position: cannot lose a leadership just because of losing the position but because it is integrated in the character
- New ways of infusing vision-mission, the heart of our values in the new leaders
- What kind of leadership is exercised in networking?
- Conflict among leaders: conflict has a positive side and can help but conflict that erodes is bad; how to manage bad conflicts that destroy
- Before there was non-collaboration with government and mainstream business but this is not applicable anymore and the challenge is to learn and engage
- Young leaders can be in awe of the pioneers; the challenge of the young is to focus on technical aspects and therefore the need for grounding and exposure. The young generation lacks the chance for long-term community exposure.



Open Forum

- The framework can be used to come up with a common reference on leadership and as a basis for capacity building at the grassroots. Community immersion is still important but

the challenge is to a wider community now and that includes a bigger and more diverse stakeholders base.

- The issue now on sustainability is somehow diminishing the importance of community immersion, community organizing, and formation work. Resources are being put into projects that focus on sustainability. Regarding stakeholders, there is a need for open and effective engagement especially with government.
- When we communicate we do it from the heart and not be limited to concerns like how to “Asianize”. We use words that are alien to the community’s culture and they adapt it without fully understanding it and yet they know the concept from own understanding. The end in mind is there and we need to look at the process; there is value both in the end and the process.
- Be conscious of several things: like the 3C’s: Conscience – personal and social values that guide us in doing what is right; Competence – not just be a do-gooder but being able to do something; and Commitment – the vision, the legacy of founders and see through the process. The 3Cs are actually pertaining to personal mastery; the challenge of de-individualizing: talk about personhood but it is not limited to the self.
- We adjust. Everything we try to mobilize and plans must be seen and not just heard. Leadership must bear fruits that are seen. Leadership is not just a person but also a system where there is interaction and agreement on things to do and how to bring the organization and community to a favorable situation.



- What is important is leadership in the environment of a movement and the challenge is to bring dynamism. We need leadership that combines different styles. The next step is defining the common values and principles that will guide the development of leadership at the NGO and community levels. The values need to deepen as the environment evolves. It is not successor generation but multiplication. The challenge is pinpointing the new dilemmas and advocating for it; advocate for a brand and type of leadership.

Before the synthesis, Rachel went back to her proposed framework and tried to capture the drawings according to the emerging themes. She presented the following:

Emergence

Flock of birds: nature, gradual emergence of a leader
comes out of friction

Principles and qualities

Motivated by higher values
Confidence
Generates goodness
Skills
commitment

Action

Arrow – beginning and direction
What leaders do – participation, process, action that benefits the poor
River – has direction, achieve results

Vision

Tree of life – gives and receives, recreate and reinvent

Working together

Solidarity, linking

people who are empowered

Thanking everybody for the fruitful discussion, Angge presented the following synthesis:

- Creating bonds of solidarity
- Replicate in country / in networks
- Communicate the experience (paper, materials, cases leadership principles and advocate solidarity building)
- Mechanism for expansion
- Sustain dialogue
- Institution based propagation
- Context-based leadership and how the context will affect future leadership
- Link the results of the leadership dialogue and the WTO call to action especially the December 2005 Ministerial Meeting
- Regional networking

Angge explained that the group's movement is an advocacy on globalization given a leadership concept that is uniquely ours. We participate in negotiation and dialogue and at the same time engage farmers at the regional level. The timing is good especially in the context of the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting. As for the possibility of participating in that meeting, Marlene explained that the suggestion came about already but there is a need to keep in mind

the preparation. There are many things to prepare and there are logistical considerations too. Angge reminded the group that the dialogue can be a continuing one in the sense that time is devoted to examining leadership after an activity and examine it in the context of that activity.

With the workshop over, Angge conducted the closing ritual. Taking off from Supachai's emptiness exercise early on, the participants were asked to stand in a circle and keep quiet. They were asked to feel the presence of the persons around, looking into one's mind and sense one's breath and nothingness. The group was guided to focus inside and empty oneself – nothing, emptying, breathing, emptying and feeling the goodness of life. Letting go of the stress and enjoying the goodness of life, in emptying we become full. After a few minutes, each was asked to open their eyes, look around and share the goodness and bounty of the world.

People went around shaking hands and thanking each other for their participation of the past days. But before separating, Bambang presented a token of appreciation to Angge and thanked her for a job well done. He shared his appreciation for Angge's expertise and emotionally intelligent facilitation of the workshop. Marlene also said thank you to everybody especially the workshop secretariat for the hard work.

Last but not the least, Soetrisno shared that the fruitful outcome of the past days is not an accident and that the blessings from God to learn and move forward at the levels of our own family and organizations are something we need to be thankful for.

The workshop formally ended at 1:00 PM.

annexes



ANNEX ONE

Civil Society Proposal to Asian Governments' WTO Agri Negotiators

1. Civil society offers viable on-ground alternative development models.

We ask governments to recognize and learn from these in the context of your policy reviews and changes.

- Promote agricultural projects supported by farmers' associations and self-help groups.
 - Support crop-based groups with capacity to negotiate with government.
 - Develop models on sustainable development and mainstream community based agriculture.
 - Conduct studies on (1) policies and its implications on the lives of farming communities and (2) civil society on-ground rural development initiatives.
2. We urge governments to engage civil society in dialogue, consultations, and negotiations before pursuing policy changes in trade
 - Discuss food security issues and clarify priorities related to it.
 - Support the sensitive list to be protected after detailed discussion on what the main products to be included in the list.
 - Trade negotiators should hold regular dialogue sessions with civil society.
 - Need for more debate and discussion whether agricultural subsidies should be removed.
 - Activate membership of civil society in task forces and committees engaged by governments in trade policy formulation and reviews.

- Increase access to timely information by civil society.
- Show transparency in the negotiations.

3. We ask governments to support farmers in their efforts to prepare for WTO accession and engagement

- Look into the negative effects of the AoA and related agreements on the lives of the poor farmers and identify means of relieving pressure and putting them in a competitive standing.
- Hold information campaign on AoA and related agreements so that farmers are fully informed of the effects of the policy changes.
- Set up agricultural policy and food policy that protect farmers from the negative effects of the trade policies.
- Provide capital and technology that would equip the farmers before facing the effects of the trade agreements.
- Promote farming and encourage the increase in farming population.
- Relate trade debate to other concerns such as gender, health, and conflicts and peace.
- Build support facilities and infrastructure necessary in agricultural development.

Presented by 63 leaders of farmers organizations and rural-based non-government organizations from 11 countries, during the Civil Society-Government Dialogue: Possibilities of Working Together for Fairer Agricultural Trade”, held 02 March 2005, at Pinnacle Resort Hotel, Chonburi, Thailand. The participants came from the countries of Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Burma/Myanmar, Vietnam, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. The dialogue was organized by AsiaDHRRA and AFA, with the support of Agritererra, SEACA and OSI.

ANNEX TWO

Summary of Agreements re WTO and Tsunami Discussions

Re WTO

Discussion Highlights:

1. Governments in Asia generally believe in the economic benefits of WTO membership and are pursuing and complying with the agreements and commitments made. Some of them do engage civil society in dialogues and remain open to concrete proposals.
2. Civil society on the other hand does not see WTO membership as benefiting the rural poor and have so far resulted in further marginalization of farmers and the vanishing of farming communities. Furthermore, there are no clear economic gains that can be attributed to WTO accession. Meanwhile, as governments continue to make policy changes to comply with its commitments, the absence and delay of information dissemination about such changes worsen the situation.
3. Civil society offers good viable on-ground alternative development models and governments in Asia are asked to recognize and learn from these in the context of their policy reviews and changes. Governments should engage civil society in dialogue, consultations, and negotiations before pursuing policy changes in trade while ensuring support for farmers in their efforts to prepare for WTO engagement.

Main Agreements:

1. The proposals put forward by the group (national and regional levels) will be shared to country trade negotiators at the national levels. Whenever possible, more concrete suggestions will be

made but the trade negotiators will be encouraged to be guided by the spirit of the proposals – to safeguard the interests of small farmers in Asia.

2. Participate in the December HK meeting. Try to explore opportunities at the national level so that CSO reps and farmers can be included in the HK meeting.

Re Tsunami

Discussion Highlights:

The distressing effects of the tsunami could be felt everywhere. Some felt helplessness but there were those who were galvanized into action. Volunteers from different parts of the world have come to extend help to the communities affected by the disaster. NGOs and cooperatives in Indonesia and Thailand are working double time given the vast resources pouring in. This however also present problems related to corruption and lack of coordination. The desire to help is present but there are questions on how to go about it considering that many people have come forward to assist and donations are pouring in.

Main Agreements:

1. AsiaDHRRA can add a section in its website and devote it to updates on the tsunami relief and rehabilitation efforts and how people can further help. Related to this is the sustained information dissemination and exchange on topics such disaster management and natural science. The website can also be the way to build and strengthen linkages and make people aware that there are individuals and communities ready to help.
2. The network can set up a solidarity fund that can be used for disasters such as the tsunami.

ANNEX THREE

Suggested Reflection Guide For Your Leadership Story:

Amidst, your busy schedule, we hope you can find some quiet time to reflect. Try to answer the following guide questions and make your own leadership story.

1. How did you start your involvement in rural development work? What motivated you to enter NGO work?
2. What sustain you in continuing NGO work or What are your sources of joy and inspiration as a rural NGO Leader?
3. What has been your most fulfilling accomplishment as NGO leader?
4. What were the difficulties you encountered as NGO leader? What are your frustration as rural NGO leader? What were your dilemmas or turning points? How did you respond to those difficulties, frustration, dilemmas?
5. What is your suggestion on how to nurture the commitment of rural NGO leaders and enhance their leadership capacities?
6. What do you think is your most important quality as an NGO leader?
7. If you are asked to give advise to young NGO leaders, what will it be?

ANNEX THREE

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The Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA) is a regional partnership of eleven social development networks and organizations in eleven Asian nations. It envisions Asian rural communities that are just, free, prosperous, living in peace and working in solidarity towards self-reliance. Its mission is to be an effective promoter and catalyst of partnership relations, facilitator of human resource development processes in the rural areas and mobilizer of expertise and opportunities for the strengthening of solidarity and kinship among Asian rural communities. AsiaDHRRA's regional policy advocacy work has always been anchored on its commitment to bring forward the voices of its partner peasant organizations to the frontline of the advocacy arena. AsiaDHRRA organized the five Farmers' Exchange Visits which eventually led to the formation of AFA.

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