TIPS (Tools, Insights and Practices) are articles that draw from the experiences of civil society organizations and projects in Asia on building rural poor organizations (RPOs). Written for development practitioners, these articles aim to encourage innovation and effective practice in organizing and strengthening RPOs – with the end goal of reducing poverty.

Published by:

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TIPS: Tools, Insights and Practices on Strengthening RPOs in Asia

TIPS

Tools, Insights and Practices on Strengthening RPOs in Asia

SCOPE stands for *"Strengthening Capacities of Organizations of the Poor: Experiences in Asia"*. The overall goal of SCOPE is to "enable the rural poor to form strong and sustainable coalitions and federations." It aims to contribute to enhancing the capacity of IFAD and its partners to: (a) design and implement sustainable development actions of community-based organizations [CBOs]; and (b) promote upscaling and policy linkages of CBOs through their clusters and federations. SCOPE is a project supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and is jointly implemented by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) and the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP).

TIPS: Tools, Insights and Practices on Strengthening RPOs in Asia

ANGOC

CIRDAP

IFAD

Citation:

ANGOC, CIRDAP and IFAD. 2007. TIPS: TOOLS, INSIGHTS AND PRACTICES ON STRENGTHENING RPOs IN ASIA. Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). 94 pages.

Published in 2007

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FOREWORD

TIPS: Tools, Insights and Practices on Strengthening RPOs in Asia is the third output of a three and a half-year collaboration between IFAD, the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) whose objective is to contribute towards enabling the rural poor to form strong and sustainable coalitions and federations.

The empowerment of poor rural people constitutes one of IFAD's six principles of engagement as identified by its Strategic Framework 2007-2010, *Enabling the rural poor to overcome poverty*. IFAD is committed to work with, and help strengthen the capacity of, a range of organizations formed by, and of, poor rural people. The Strategic Framework acknowledges that taken individually, poor rural people remain marginalized; by building their own collective organizations they can better manage assets, negotiate with market intermediaries, and access economic opportunities, service providers and government officials.

The TIPS publication offers a variety of tools, insights and practices on strengthening rural poor organizations (RPOs) in Asia. The tools, insights and practices offered in the publication range from providing recommendations for building and strengthening RPOs; to presenting indicators to monitor and assess the sustainability of RPOs, as well as examples on community organizing for empowerment in the Philippines and community-managed resource centers in India. The TIPS publication also presents tools for participatory self-monitoring of self-help groups and for community empowering.

This publication is therefore an addition to the work so far carried out by CIRDAP and ANGOC as it highlights the lessons learned by civil society organizations (CSOs) and projects on organizing and building rural people's organizations in Asia.

We hope that practitioners in the wider poverty reduction community will find this publication useful especially because it presents concise and practical articles and points out to institutions that may be able to provide additional information.

I would like to thank Carla De Gregorio, Grants Coordinator, and Ganesh Thapa, Regional Economist, IFAD for their guidance, the SCOPE Steering Committee Members, CIRDAP, and to Antonio Quizon, Don Marquez, Cristina Liamzon, Francis Lucas, Rachel Polestico, and Raul Gonzalez of ANGOC for their hard work in bringing out this publication.

Thomas Elhaut
Director
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PREFACE

Increasingly, international donors are coming to recognize the importance of "empowering the poor as a crucial requirement of a sustainable solution to poverty and hunger". Empowerment entails building the capacity of poor and excluded groups to participate, and to negotiate with, change and hold accountable those institutions that have caused their poverty and otherwise affect their well-being.

A recent review of IFAD project experiences in building rural poor organizations (RPOs) in Asia has shown that RPOs assisted by IFAD projects still tend to function mainly as conduits for project benefits and resources, and, as a result, their post-project viability is undermined. This publication – the third of a series produced by the SCOPE Project *(Strengthening Capacities of Organizations of the Poor – Experiences in Asia)* – attempts to assess and capture the learnings of civil society organizations (CSOs) and projects and to contribute to a more responsive and effective delivery of donor-led interventions – both at the project and institutional or policy level.

Tools, Insights and Practices on Strengthening RPOs in Asia, or ***TIPS,*** are best practices, social innovations, approaches, tools and techniques which serve as reminders for development practitioners engaged in building institutions of the poor. They are drawn from lessons from selected experiences of CSOs and projects in Asia in working with the poor – developing their capacities through self-governing institutions, scaling up RPOs through coalitions and federations, and mediating the access of the poor to assets, technologies, policies and markets. TIPS aim to encourage innovation and promote effective implementation of tasks in organizing, building and mobilizing RPOs with the end goal of poverty reduction.

Each TIPS article is written and presented as a stand-alone reference material – providing the context or background in which a particular approach has been applied, and pointing to specific persons, groups or institutions that may be able to provide – upon request – additional information on a given topic.

ANGOC expresses its gratitude to IFAD, CIRDAP, SCOPE Steering Committee Members, and to our colleagues in the following CSOs and projects who have generously shared their experiences in strengthening RPOs:

- AIM Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides, Philippines
- Community Organizers (CO) Multiversity, Philippines

- ENRAP e-discussion group
- Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN), Nepal
- Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal Ltd. (MAVIM), India
- Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA), India
- National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD), India
- North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCRMP), India
- Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource Management Programme (NMCIREMP), Philippines
- Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Programme (OTELP), India
- Participatory Integrated Development in Rainfed Areas (PIDRA), Indonesia
- Philippine Association for Intercultural Development (PAFID), Philippines
- Rural Poverty Reduction Programme (RPRP), Mongolia
- Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), India
- Sunamganj Community-Based Resource Management Programme (SCBRMP), Bangladesh

ANGOC is indebted to Antonio B. Quizon for providing overall guidance and direction to this publication as well as editing the articles. Our gratitude to the writers: Teresa Lingan-Debuque, Melissa Moran and Meynardo Mendoza; to Katti Sta. Ana for providing the artwork; and to Gerard Jerome Dumlao for the publication design and layout.

Finally, my sincere thanks to Fr. Francis Lucas, ANGOC Chairperson, and to the rest of the publication team, namely: Flory Tabio, Maricel Tolentino, Catherine Ordona, Teresito Elumba and Joseph Onesa.

Nathaniel Don E. Marquez
Executive *Director*
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Common Problems Faced by Rural Poor Organizations in the Post-Project Period

Rural Poor Organizations (RPOs) struggling to function and survive on their own in the post-project period face a number of common problems. What follows is a list of such problems that was drawn up following an e-discussion on RPO sustainability supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development through its Knowledge Networking for Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific Region (ENRAP) Program, and convened and moderated by ANGOC from 26 February to 16 April 2007[1].

1. Lack of Exit/Handing Over Strategies

■ Inadequate and frequently belated provisions for an exit/handing over strategy constitute a major obstacle to efforts to promote the sustainability of RPOs.

An exit or handing over strategy anticipates the needs of the RPO in the immediate post-project period and provides for a plan to meet such needs, including how to pay for them. Unfortunately, few RPOs emerging from the project cloister are armed with such provisions.

■ To be effective, an exit/handing over strategy has to be defined in the project design or as early on in the project as possible, and be formulated with the involvement of the agencies that are expected to be part of the post-project support mechanism. Corresponding budget allocations must also be provided for the various components of such exit/handing over strategies.

■ Other components of an exit/handing over strategy are as follows:

i. Adequate incentive systems to build and maintain organizational capacities, including

[1] Over 300 participants of ENRAP, representing a variety of IFAD partners and institutions involved in IFAD projects, along with international and local government and non-government organizations, signed up for this e-discussion. A record of this e-discussion may be found at http://www.enrap.org.

assisting RPOs to generate their own resources and thereby sustain themselves;

ii. Efforts to get governments to adopt policies that are favorable to RPOs and to support these RPOs after the project period.

2. Ill-preparedness of RPOs for the Post-Project Period

Most assessments of RPOs that have been weaned from project support invariably find these groups ill-prepared to take on many of the tasks and responsibilities of an independent organization. This is the result of a tendency to use RPOs as mere conduits for project benefits and resources.

Extending the project timeframe has often been touted as a solution, along with augmenting the capacity-building component of projects. However, a number of factors ought to be considered if such modifications are to have the desired effect. These are as follows:

- Capacity-building among the poorest of the poor, which constitutes a large number of RPOs formed, takes longer than generally programmed for. Low literacy levels among this sector are a big part of the problem. Community organizers have also observed that capacity-building among the poorest of the poor entails a process that goes beyond mere transfer of technology or skills. Rather, it emphasizes aspects of institution-building.

- Capacity-building among women, especially in the case of women-constituted RPOs, is hindered by societal constraints on women's participation in activities outside the home. Domestic duties take precedence over project-related work. Furthermore, in many societies, the idea of women being preoccupied with non-domestic concerns is still frowned upon. In some Muslim communities, for instance, women's involvement in projects has been denounced as "unIslamic".

- RPOs have been observed to regress in their performance from time to time and for reasons not completely accounted for. If this backsliding happens within the project period, despite project support and oversight, what more once all external assistance ceases.

- The frequent turn-over of project staff has also been observed to undermine the effectivity of capacity-building efforts during the project period.

3. Lack of Follow-up Support

- Another part of capacity-building is the provision of some degree of external follow-up support. It may seem a contradiction to say that the sustainability of an organization is greatly helped by continuing external facilitation. After all, isn't it a hallmark of sustainability that a group is able to go it alone without outside help?

However, in regard to certain types of organizations, some agencies are lately realizing that most groups can only go so far without some form of external support.[2]

■ Newly independent RPOs have recourse to at least four types of "support mechanism":

i. A government agency, which takes on the role of "executing agency" at the end of the project. The problem with this arrangement springs from government agencies' general unfamiliarity with participatory processes that should underlie collaborative relations with RPOs.

ii. Where NGOs or a core team of facilitators are given the task of "staying behind", the question remains as to how these support providers would be compensated for their efforts.

iii. Where volunteers / organizers / activists residing in the community have been trained to do the follow-up facilitation work, there is a greater likelihood of persistence in the task, but these would need to be supported to some degree.

iv. Institutions formed and managed by RPOs themselves appear to be the most viable option. An example of such institutions are the Community Managed Resource Centers put up by the NGO partner, MYRADA. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) contract services (e.g., training, marketing, audit, etc.) from such resource centers for a fee.

■ Possible sources of funding for post-project facilitation are contributions from RPOs (in the form of fees for services), government, corporate, and other donors.

4. Unfavorable Policy Framework

■ It is sometimes taken for granted that governments would be supportive of the continued development of RPOs. While most democratically electedgovernments may not actively hinder, if not promote, the activities of RPOs at the start, they have been known to change their minds once the RPO begins to demand reforms.

In non-democratic regimes, the situation simply does not support such optimism.

Is a Legal Personality Indispensable to Rural Poor Organizations?

SHGs may have no need to secure a legal personality or identity at its inception or even in the early years of its life. Besides the difficulty and expense involved in the process of registration, being registered itself entails compliance with a host of other legal requirements, which could hamper rather than aid the development of the fledgling group.

[2] Lockwood, Harold (2003). "Post-Project Sustainability: Follow-up Support to Communities (Literature Review and Desk Review of RWSS Project Documents). http://www.trend.watsan.net/page/437

■ Where the political environment is favorable, other obstacles may still impede the RPO's growth. For instance, small SHGs find themselves cut off from formal sources of credit, especially banks, because they have not complied with certain government requirements (such as legal registration) or because of the lack of collateral for a loan.

5. The Hurdles of Scaling Up

■ Scaling up, or seeking membership in coalitions, federations, or networks, could help enhance the sustainability of RPOs because doing so generally increases a group's bargaining power with institutions from which it can access resources, including credit, information and technical assistance. It could also help to bring about changes (i.e., policy/institutional reforms, concessions from a local government unit) that are favorable to the development of the RPO.

■ However, the advantages of scaling up may be offset by the problems that come with it. Larger numbers pose a bigger management problem, tending to make operations unwieldy and resulting in deterioration in the quality of the service provided. Leaders of RPOs, not to mention their staff, are also often ill-prepared (e.g., in terms of education) for their new tasks and roles as leaders/members of a larger group.

■ Capacity-building is therefore indispensable to the formation of federations, coalitions and networks. Capacity-building towards the formation of federations and coalitions should focus on the following:

i. Transition from membership in an unaffiliated RPO towards membership in a coalition/federation/network;

ii. Preparedness of the RPO to take on its changing/evolving role/s as member of a coalition/federation/network;

iii. Management of coalitions, federations and networks, as opposed to that of unaffiliated RPOs;

iv. Strengthening of RPOs to ensure their autonomy from its federation/coalition/network partners;

v. Management and resolution of conflict. ❐

by **Teresa Lingan-Debuque**

References:

E-discussion on RPO sustainability supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development through its Knowledge Networking for Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific Region (ENRAP) Program, and convened and moderated by ANGOC from 26 February to 16 April 2007. (A record of this e-discussion may be found at http://www.enrap.org).

Lockwood, Harold (2003). "Post-Project Sustainability: Follow-up Support to Communities (Literature Review and Desk Review of RWSS Project Documents). http://www.trend.watsan.net/page/437

Indicators to Monitor and Assess the Sustainability of Rural Poor Organizations

The "sustainability" of Rural Poor Organizations (RPOs) refers to the likelihood that these groups would be able to continue to operate efficiently following the cessation of the flow of financial, technical and other forms of support that had previously been made available by a project. RPO sustainability hinges on the installation and continued effective functioning of organizational systems that regulate the following:

A. Governance;
B. Management;
C. Financial Management, Viability and Sustainability;
D. Service Delivery;
E. External Relations; and
F. Nurturance of Organizational Culture.

Indicators of RPO Sustainability

The following indicators of RPO sustainability were identified during a series of meetings from 2006 to 2007 among Project Directors (PDs) of five IFAD Projects in Asia from 2006 to 2007 in regard to the implementation of the Strengthening Capacities of Organizations of the Poor: Experiences in Asia (SCOPE) Project.

An e-discussion on RPO sustainability supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development through its Knowledge Networking for Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific Region (ENRAP) Program, and convened and moderated by ANGOC from 26 February to 16 April 2007, also served to clarify a number of these indicators.[1]

[1] Over 300 members of ENRAP, representing a variety of IFAD partners and institutions involved in IFAD projects, along with international and local government organizations and NGOs, signed up for this e-discussion. A record of this e-discussion may be found at http://www.enrap.org.

A. **Good Governance** refers to processes, mechanisms, or tools that ensure the continual competent management of the RPO, and that facilitate organizational oversight, promote transparency, and exact accountability from the RPO's leaders and members.

1. Pool of committed and capable leaders
   - Recruitment policy that the organization's leaders should have both the requisite expertise (including forms and degree of expertise) and a personal network that is relevant to the organization's vision, mission and goals;
   - Clarity/clear policies in regard to: (i) the number of leaders, both first- and second-line, that are required by the project; and (ii) the proportion of men vs. women leaders, and to ensuring that there is no gender imbalance in the leadership.

2. Continued development/build-up of capacities of leaders and members
   - Mechanism for regular rotation of leadership;
   - Documented annual plan for capacity-building of the RPO's leaders and members, including programmed allocation of time and resources for the purpose.

3. Written vision, mission and goal statements, and by-laws
   - A formal document stating the RPO's vision, mission, goals and by-laws;
   - Ability of members, not just the leadership, to articulate the organization's vision, mission and goals. This ensures that the membership is not only aware, but has a sense of ownership of what the organization purports to do.

4. Legal status and/or registration
   - Registration of the organization with the appropriate government body/ies;
   - Documented policies, processes, and guidelines for the selection/election of leaders/office bearers (whether traditional/customary or formal), including rotation of leadership, beneficiary selection and participation, and distribution of benefits (Such document to be included in the organization's By-Laws).

However, the smallest unit of RPOs, such as the self-help group (SHG), may have no need to secure a legal personality or identity at its inception or even in the early years of its life. Besides the difficulty and expense involved in the process of registration, being registered itself entails compliance with a host of other legal requirements, which could hamper rather than aid the development of the fledgling group. Nonetheless, as the group develops and as its organizational needs and interactions expand, especially with

government, it will have to formalize its status. Meanwhile, it might be difficult to reconcile the need for formal government recognition with the norms of tribal governance, in the case of RPOs formed among indigenous communities.

5. Clear and functioning accountability mechanisms and systems
   - Clearly defined and strictly enforced roles and responsibilities of leaders and members. This is made possible through a number of instruments and processes, such as (i) sanctions that are formally acknowledged/agreed upon by the members, stated clearly in the organization's By-Laws, and scrupulously enforced; (ii) regular reporting to members; (iii) agreed policies and resolutions that are written down and disseminated; (iv) proper documentation of meetings (including provisions to ensure that there is capacity within the organization to do the documentation, e.g., through capacity-building); and (v) regular internal assessments among members.

6. Clear criteria for membership, and explicitly defined contribution/s expected of members (time, effort, money), as well as the parameters of participation by members, especially the women, all of which are stated in the organization's By-Laws

7. Regular meetings among officers and members to discuss organizational and program directions and policies
   - A regular schedule for organization meetings;
   - Membership attendance-taking;
   - Active participation of the majority of members in decision-making.

8. Proper documentation of all meetings and transparency of operations
   - Provision for capacity building for documentation;
   - Circulation of minutes of meetings to members.

9. Capacity to solve internal conflicts
   - Clearly written and agreed upon policies and procedures for solving internal conflicts, including conflicts among members;
   - Provision for capacity building for the resolution of internal conflicts.

10. Provision for intensive and effective communication within the organization and externally.
    - A flowchart detailing the flow of communication within the organization.

11. Written policy of non-interference by external facilitators in group decision-making.

B. **Management** pertains to the various measures undertaken by the RPO to guarantee the smooth functioning of the organization on a day-to-day basis and to continually improve its operations through regular and participatory monitoring and assessment.

12. Well-established and efficiently/effectively functioning organizational structure
    - An organizational chart that clearly indicates lines of authority and communication, work flow and accountability, checks and balance.

13. Written organizational/program plan
    - Written organizational/program plan that is flexible (especially where newly formed RPOs are concerned) and is based on the organization's stated commitments, e.g., its vision, mission and goals; and that includes: (i) a business plan, (ii) a list of proposed projects/activities, including the required training for one year and the target fund sources, and (iii) plans for recruiting the needed staff and/or volunteers who would implement the proposed programs/projects.

14. A built-in and operational monitoring and evaluation system for the organization
    - Indicators of success are developed, agreed, stated in a Monitoring & Evaluation Manual, and measured and assessed with the participation of target beneficiaries, including women;
    - Regular schedule of Monitoring and Evaluation activities.

15. Proper documentation and reporting of transactions, especially those undertaken in compliance with government, donor, and member-requirements. The reporting system is based on the agreed time and content.
    - Preparation and dissemination to members of process documentation reports.

16. Capacity to develop and manage organizational activities/initiatives, including knowledge and information management, and disaster and risk management
    - A Planning Manual;
    - A schedule for planning activities;
    - Dissemination to members of details of prepared plans.

17. Capacity of administrative and technical staff and/or volunteers to undertake project-related tasks

C. **Financial Management, Viability and Sustainability** pertains to processes conducted to ensure financial oversight of the RPO and to build up its financial self-reliance.

18. Written policies and procedures that adhere to generally accepted principles of accounting and internal control; transparency in financial transactions

19. Written policies and procedures promoting financial prudence (e.g., rotating the task of handling bank transactions)

20. Diverse sources of funds for the organization and organizational capacity to generate funds/income outside those afforded by project grants/assistance
    - Record of funds sources;
    - Proposals for income generation.

21. Conduct of an annual audit by an independent auditor and a regular and timely mechanism for disclosure in regard to resource allocation, resource use, and fundraising activities

22. Capacity of the leaders/members of the Board to undertake financial analysis and management
    - Credentials demonstrating Board leaders' and members' capacity.

23. Commitment to attaining financial self-reliance of the organization
    - Short- to medium-term financial sustainability plans, including an annual budget plan, towards building financial self-reliance
    - Plans to establish a profitable enterprise;
    - Plans to implement a fee-for-service scheme.

D. **Service Delivery** refers to building up the RPO's various capacities in aid of improving its service to its members and beneficiary communities.

24. Capability of the organization to access and/or develop technical expertise internally and externally
    - Plans/schedule for skills training activities.

25. Capability to deliver organizational and emergency services according to members' needs and interests, including the possibility of developing a special skill or niche

26. Capability to regularly assess the organization's service delivery to its members, particularly its usefulness and impact

27. Equitable sharing of economic and other benefits among members

E. **External Relations** concern the RPO's efforts and activities to build partnerships that would enhance its access to needed resources, to increase its political clout in the community and at other levels, and

to broaden the constituency for its development agenda.

28. Effective networking and linkages
    - Membership of the organization in an NGO, a network of RPOs and/or other networks, including multi-stakeholder alliances;
    - Good relationships and partner-ship with other sectors like government (permanent line departments/agencies, local government units), and business, among others.

29. Increased political participation and advocacy in processes that have an impact on the organization, such as participation in local government councils/bodies

30. Ability to negotiate and access resources, whether human, natural, financial, or technical

31. Autonomy from external agents/actors in decision-making and other processes, and in the use of resources

32. Awareness among the local government and community of the RPO's vision, mission, goals and activities

33. Active involvement in community activities (e.g., sanitation/beautification drive; local political exercises, etc.)

F. **Nurturance of the Organizational Culture** involves a range of practices and ritual observances which have the effect of reinforcing the members' commitment to the RPO, and as such are central to the development, growth and impact of the group. It also includes the ways in which an organization builds up the stock of social capital, on which it continually draws to sustain itself in ways other than those identified in the foregoing but are no less crucial to its long-term viability as an organization.

28. Regular observance of celebrations, festivals, anniversaries related to events that are significant to the organization

29. Periodic review of the organization's vision, mission, and goals and of how these relate to the members' core values and culture

30. Commitment to the principles of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, caste, or race, and integrity in all internal and external dealings/transactions

31. Mutual help among members and a spirit of volunteerism

32. Positive reputation or image of the organization among the local community

33. Formal recognition of the contributions of members and support organizations

34. Regular collegial feedback among members and leaders as conducted through committees or task forces.

All RPOs must aspire to conform with the "spirit", if not the letter, of all these indicators, and according to an agreed timeframe rather than on an ad hoc basis, if they are to approach the task of achieving sustainability in a coherent and strategic manner. ❐

by **Teresa Lingan-Debuque**

REFERENCES:

E-discussion on RPO sustainability supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development through its Knowledge Networking for Rural Development for Asia/Pacific Region (ENRAP) Program, and convened and moderated by ANGOC from 26 February to 16 April 2007. (A record of this e-discussion may be found at http://www.enrap.org).

Minutes of meetings from 2006 to 2007 among Project Directors (PDs) of five IFAD Projects in Asia in regard to the implementation of the Strengthening Capacities of Organizations of the Poor: Experiences in Asia (SCOPE) Project.

Recommendations for Building and Strengthening Rural Poor Organizations

Rural poor organizations (RPOs) refer to a wide variety of community- or village-based groups that are formed in the course, or in aid of implementing particular components of development projects. RPOs generally go through distinct stages in their development. At each of these stages, and especially towards the end of the project, certain interventions are necessary to help sustain their continued growth and to enhance their prospects for sustaining themselves after project support ceases.

RPOs range from small groups of 10 to 15 members to federations or coalitions of such groups within the same community or beyond it. Within projects implemented by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a wide variety of RPOs have been created in the course of project implementation. In her Review of IFAD Projects[1], Cristina Liamzon identified two broad types of RPOs: participatory organizations, in which all beneficiaries take part; and representative organizations, whose members are elected by the beneficiaries to represent them. The Self-Help Groups (SHGs), gram sabhas, and various users' associations are the most common participatory organizations, while the Village Implementation Groups and Committees (VIGs and VACs) typify representative institutions *(see Tables 1 and 2)*.

In the same review, Liamzon also identified the following stages[2] that generally characterize the development of IFAD-supported RPOs:

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[1] Liamzon, Cristina, 2006, STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS OF THE POOR: EXPERIENCES IN ASIA, IFAD's Experience in Building and Strengthening Rural Poor Organizations in Asia, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), and Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), page 18-20.

[2] Ibid., pages 23-24

Table 1. Predominant Types of RPOs/Village Institutions in Selected Asian Countries

COUNTRY	PREDOMINANT TYPE OF RPO/VILLAGE INSTITUTION
Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Philippines	Direct participation/membership in RPOs: e.g., SHGs, Women's Organizations, Water Users' Organizations
China, Laos, Vietnam, India	Representational participation: e.g., VIG, VAC, VDC, VDB

Source: Liamzon, Cristina (2006), page 19.

1. *Struggling Phase.* RPOs build up their organizational capabilities and begin to receive various resources through the project, including credit and technical assistance. Group members receive initial orientation on the project as well as on the objectives and vision of the group. Members and leaders are trained in organizational and financial tasks.

2. *Emerging Phase.* RPOs gain access to more resources at this stage but their organizational capacities may not have developed apace. The capacity to monitor the progress of projects is usually not fully developed at this point, nor are financial systems securely in place. At the same time, members and leaders do not yet fully understand their roles and obligations nor fulfill them accordingly. As a result, groups in Phase 2 tend to become dependent on project resources even as they lack the maturity to effectively and efficiently handle such resources. Many such groups, SHGs and non-SHGs included, are unable to move beyond this phase and eventually become inactive.

3. *Maturing Phase.* RPOs have been able to build up themselves sufficiently to manage project resources while avoiding the traps that befall groups that do not have proper systems in place. The focus at this stage is to ensure that members and leaders are fully aware of their group's vision, objectives, and potential as a tool for empowerment. Links are formed with other RPOs, government agencies, NGOs and other sectors that can help them to obtain better information and more resources, etc. Thus, even if these groups do not have immediate access to project funds, they are able to mobilize resources through their linkages. Systems are in place to ensure that financial resources are properly monitored and that leadership is regularly rotated among the members.

4. *Generating Phase.* RPOs are able to mobilize their resources and have leaders able to expand and consolidate the group's capacities and resources. This organizational capability, coupled with strong links with other stakeholders and actors, gives the group a degree of credibility to access resources, to make claims, or to advocate for their rights and interests, if and when needed. Networking among similar groups for the purpose of federation or coalition-building becomes an important concern at this stage. Further, groups at this level of development are able to integrate their concerns and plans with those of local government units so that these become mainstreamed. Groups that have attained this level of maturity and development are most likely to survive and to become sustainable beyond the project *(see Table 3)*.

Recommendations for Building and Strengthening RPOs

The challenges and constraints that RPOs face at various stages of development also point to the factors that can help build and strengthen these groups. The following recommendations for building and strengthening RPOs is drawn from Liamzon's Review of IFAD Projects and from the results of an e-discussion on RPO sustainability supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development through its Knowledge Networking for Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific Region (ENRAP) Program, and convened and moderated by ANGOC from 26 February to 16 April 2007[3].

1. For Project Funders

   - Project design which incorporates a clear and doable exit strategy for RPOs, which is defined as early as possible in the design of projects, and which comes with adequate budget allocations. This exit strategy must provide for:

     i. Adequate incentive systems to build and maintain organizational capacities, including assisting RPOs to generate their own resources and thereby sustain themselves;

     ii. Development of dynamic and effective social mobilizers from within the community who can continue to assist the RPOs in their organizational processes once the project ends; and

[3] Over 300 members of ENRAP, representing a variety of IFAD partners and institutions involved in IFAD projects, along with international and local government and non-government organizations, signed up for this e-discussion. A record of this e-discussion may be found at http://www.enrap.org.

Table 2. Different Types of RPOs/Institutions Established through the Intervention of IFAD Projects in Selected Countries

COUNTRY	TYPES OF RPOs/ VILLAGE INSTITUTIONS	COUNTRY	TYPES OF RPOs/ VILLAGE INSTITUTIONS
Bangladesh	Community Development Groups; Pond Aquaculture Groups; Lake Fishing Groups; Fingerling Producer Groups; Labor Contracting Societies; Marginal and Landless Groups; Small Farmers Groups; Marginal Farmers Groups; Market Operating Groups; Savings/Credit Groups	**Mongolia**	Women's Associations; Cooperatives; Rangeland Management and Monitoring Committees
Cambodia	Farmers Organizations; Village Animal Health Workers Associations	**Nepal**	Community Organizations
China	Village Implementation Groups	**Pakistan**	Village Organizations; Women's Organizations
India	SHGs; Gram Sabhas; Milk Cooperative Societies; Cluster Groups; Associations of Cluster Groups; Natural Resource Management Groups; Village Development Committees; Watershed Development Committees; Dairy Cooperatives; District Associations	**Philippines**	People's Organizations; Irrigators Associations; Reforestation Groups; Barangay Development Teams
Indonesia	SHGs; Village Infrastructure Development Associations; Watershed Management Associations; Farmer-Led Research Groups; Federations of SHGs	**Vietnam**	Users Groups; Village Development Boards; Savings and Credit Groups; Self-Management Boards
Laos	Village Development Committees; Village Administrative Committees		

Source: Liamzon, Cristina (2006), page 20.

support for these mobilizers/ facilitators during the transition period;

iii. Lobbying governments to adopt policies that are favorable to RPOs and to support these RPOs after the project period;

- Project design that provides for:
  i. Timely and sufficient provision of resources to support the organizational processes of RPOs;

  ii. Inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable in credit and microfinance activities;

  iii. Closer and more responsive supervision of Flexible Lending Mechanism (FLM) projects, thus ensuring quick project response.

- Support for capacity-building of project staff to increase their awareness of the importance of RPOs to reducing poverty and sustaining project gains. This can take the form of exposure programs that demonstrate the effective functioning of these RPOs.

2. For Rural Poor Organizations:

- Regular and closely spaced meetings (e.g., weekly);
- Clear organizational vision, mission and goals which are known and understood by all members;
- Clear set of rules which are known and understood by all members;
- Programs to build and enhance group cohesion;
- Capacity building of leaders and members towards the following goals:
  i. Levelling off of basic information on the organization;
  ii. Development of basic organizational skills;
  iii. Improvement of governance mechanisms;
  iv. Conflict resolution;
  v. Leadership rotation/formation, etc.

3. For Project Staff and Community Development Facilitators:
   - Full-time presence in the community/ village, or recruit-ment of facilitators/ community mobilizers who can live in the community, to ensure timely response to problems of the RPO;
   - Deployment of more women facilitators, especially when forming women's groups;
   - Provision of training programs and capacity-building based on the actual needs of the RPO, at particular stages of its development, and to help it move to the next organizational phase, rather than according to a set curriculum;

Table 3. Phases of Development of RPOs and Major Indicators of Organizational Development and Level of Resources

INDICATORS	PHASE			
	STRUGGLING	EMERGING	MATURING	GENERATING
Membership	Start-up	Fluctuating membership	Stable membership	Active and knowledgeable of VMGs, policies, etc.
Meetings/ activities; participation	Start-up	Uneven participation	More stable participation	Active/regular participation
Systems/Books	Start-up	Develops adequate systems and mechanisms	Maintains and enforces adequate systems and mechanisms	Rules, systems in place and enforced, with sanctions if needed
Leadership	Identification of group leaders	Training of leaders	Leaders gain experience and confidence	Expanded and effective rotating leadership
Savings/Assets	Starts savings	Develops adequate systems and mechanisms	Continues savings/ initiates loans	Builds asset base; expands loan base
Funding	Relies on external sources	Relies on external sources	Explores internal sources	Generates internal and external sources
Linkages	Relies on external help for links, e.g., NGOs	Develops, maintains links with other RPOs or resource agencies	Develops, maintains links even without external help; forms networks/ alliances	Active search/ maintenance; forms and maintains networks/alliances
Training/Capacity-building	Start-up; more organizational	Project-driven; more technical	More technical	Ongoing, based on needs

Source: Liamzon, Cristina (2006), page 23.

- Building linkages to community institutions, government agencies, NGOs, the private sector and other groups that can improve the RPO's access to financial resources and that can eventually wean the RPO from its dependence on project funds;
- Facilitating linkages to other RPOs in preparation for federation or coalition-building; and
- Development of indicators of RPO growth and development which the RPOs themselves can use to monitor and assess themselves regularly.

Issues Related to Federation- and Coalition-Building

Smaller RPOs that federate, form coalitions, or network with other RPOs and/or other organizations and insitutions do so generally to increase their bargaining power with institutions from which they access resources, including credit, information and technical assistance, or to "create a critical mass to induce change—whether that change is physical (as in building a road) or policy/political (as in policy or institutional reforms[4]". Such external linkages greatly enhance their prospects for sustaining themselves beyond the project.

However, not many RPOs develop far enough or fast enough to move on to this higher level of organization. The socio-political environment also determines the likelihood of such RPO expansion and consolidation.

Capacity-building is indispensable to the formation of federations, coalitions and networks. Beyond the training which the RPOs had undergone in their respective formation processes, capacity-building towards the formation of federations and coalitions should focus on the following:

- Orientation on the differences between membership in an unaffiliated RPO and membership in a coalition/federation/network;
- Orientation on the changing/evolving role of the RPO as member of a coalition/federation/network;
- Management of coalitions, federations and networks, as opposed to that of unaffiliated RPOs;
- Negotiation with partner organizations, including external institutions, like government agencies, to ensure the autonomy of individual RPO members;
- Conflict resolution. ❐

by **Teresa Lingan-Debuque**

[4] Moran, Melissa Y., "Scaling Up: Forming Coalitions, Federations and Networks of the Poor," IFAD, ANGOC and CIRDAP. 2006. CSO EXPERIENCES IN STRENGTHENING RURAL POOR ORGANIZATIONS IN ASIA. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), and Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), page 49.

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E-discussion on RPO sustainability supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development through its Knowledge Networking for Rural Development for Asia/Pacific Region (ENRAP) Program, and convened and moderated by ANGOC from 26 February to 16 April 2007. (A record of this e-discussion may be found at http://www.enrap.org.

"Going to Scale: Can we bring more benefits to more people more quickly?" Workshop highlights (Philippines: International Institute for Rural Reconstruction, 2000).

Liamzon, Cristina (2006). STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS OF THE POOR: EXPERIENCES IN ASIA, IFAD's Experience in Building and Strengthening Rural Poor Organizations in Asia, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), and Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP).

Moran, Melissa Y. (2006). "Scaling Up: Forming Coalitions, Federations and Networks of the Poor," IFAD, ANGOC and CIRDAP. 2006. CSO EXPERIENCES IN STRENGTHENING RURAL POOR ORGANIZATIONS IN ASIA. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), and Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP).

Capacity-Building in the Sunamganj Community Based Resource Management Project, Bangladesh

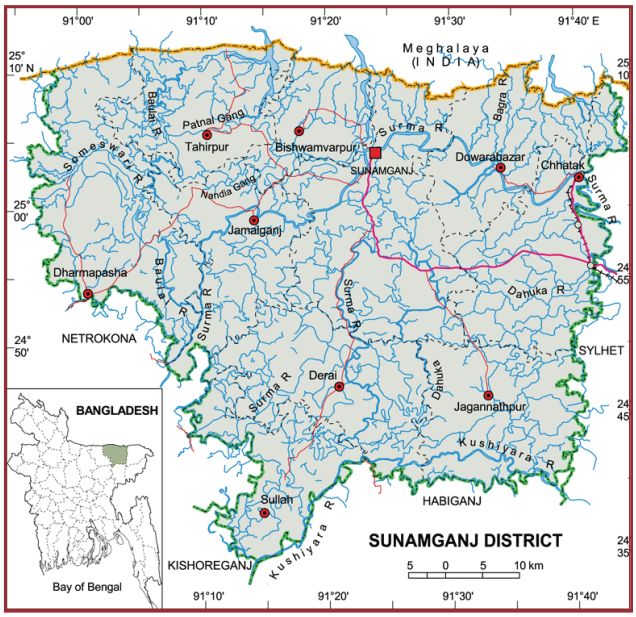
The Sunamganj Community Based Resource Management Project (SCBRMP) illustrates the importance of incorporating capacity building interventions among the project beneficiaries and community organizers as a component of a project's exit strategy.

The SCBRMP, which is being implemented in the Sunamganj District of Bangladesh, focuses on building capacity of rural poor and giving secure access to public water bodies (such as *beels, khals,* and *khas* ponds) for fishers and other beel user groups dependent on or living in the area.

In the past, leases to the beels and other public water bodies had been auctioned off by the local administration to the highest bidder. As a result, the beels have traditionally been controlled by elite groups. Thus, the SCBRMP has been working towards transferring such leases to fishing groups, as well as to non-fishers, such as farmers use beel water for crop cultivation living around the beel, and women who make subsistence fishing and dry fish.

Through community management of the beels, the project hopes to improve incomes among the beneficiary groups as well as to rehabilitate the water bodies.

The project entails the formation of Community Organizations (COs), which are composed of land–poor people. Beel User Group will



thereafter be formed mostly taking from COs. Credit is critical to ensuring that the BUG members are able to get access to water-bodies giving lease value. Without such access to credit, fishers would have to resort to high interest loans from local money lenders.

The SCBRMP and the local administration jointly conduct a resource mapping to determine the number of the water bodies that could be taken by the Project. The Project Director would then coordinate with the concerned Ministry and local administration to transfer the water bodies to the project. Apart from getting access to the water bodies, the BUG members need to cultivate the support of local administrative and fishery officials to forestall opposition from local or external power elites to illegal access to beels, as well as to ensure that any policies do not undermine the project's objectives.

The BUGs face other challenges once the leases have been transferred to them. These are as follows:

- Sustained access to technical support to maximize production in the water bodies;
- Effective management of production, protection of sanctuaries, conservation of water bodies and fisheries, harvesting, and income sharing;
- Consolidation of access to and control of the water bodies;
- Conflict management, especially to forestall infighting and factionalism;

BEELS are topographic depressions produced by erosion which accumulate surface water runoff. Many of the beels dry up in the winter but during the rains expand into broad and shallow sheets of water, which may be described as fresh water lagoons. The total area of beels in the dry season has been estimated at 177 square kilometers. This may increase to 1,500 square kilometers in the wet season.

KHALS is the local term for water canals.

KHAS PONDS are small water bodies on government owned lands.

- Poaching by members and outsiders; and
- High lease values (endangering the groups' continued user rights), interference and harassment from elite groups and their henchmen, etc.

Capacity Building Interventions in the SCBRMP

The success of the COs (the main primary group) would depend on how well they are able to hold up against many social challenges. Considering the limited preparation afforded by the project in this regard and the magnitude of the responsibility that the COs must take on once weaned from project support, the prospects for sustainability of the COs would greatly depend on continuing, community-based follow-on support. There were no provisions for such in the project design. Through the SCOPE (*Strengthening Capacities of Organizations of the Poor: Experiences in*

Figure 1. Implementation of the SCBRMP Exit Strategy

SOs & CDFs receive training under SCOPE Grant

↓

SOs & CDFs disseminate knowledge to CO members SOs & CDFs disseminate knowledge to CO members

↓

SOs & CDFs share the responsibilities (2nd phase of SCBRMP)

↓

3rd phase is to be linked up with Exit strategy (Training/ networking are very important at this stage)

↓

Knowledge is completely transferred to CDFs & CO members

↓

CDFs & CO members take up the responsibility for all organizational tasks

Source: Report on the First Monitoring Visit to SCOPE Grant Project under Sunamganj Community Based Resource Management Project in Connection with SCOPE Project, 26 April – 3 May 2007, Pilot Projects Division, CIRDAP, May 2007.

Asia) Project, the SCBRMP has been able to train and deploy Community Development Facilitators (CDFs) that would eventually take over the tasks of Project Staff, specifically the Social Organizers (SOs).

Training in the following areas has been provided for the SOs and the CDFs:

A. Human Resource Development at Grassroots Level

- Familiarization with PRA Tools and Practice
- Participatory Needs Assessment and Monitoring
- Gender and Development
- Good Governance Practice
- People's Institution Development
- Conflict Resolution Techniques

B. Natural Resource Management

- Awareness Raising on Rights to Access Natural Resources and Institutional Approach for Natural Resources Management
- Fish Habitat Restoration and Conservation
- Participatory Fish Catch and Consumption Survey and Reporting

C. Institution Building

- Capacity Building of Self Help Group (SHG) Management
- Developing People's Institutions and Networking
- Exposure Visit

D. Research and Development

- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

E. **Participatory Technology and Participatory Extension Approach**
   - Appropriate Technology and Participatory Extension Approach

Upon the completion of their training, the SOs and CDFs would extend the same training to the COs.

As the SCBRMP Project goes into Phase II (July 2007 – June 2011), gaining hold of beels and other water bodies, along with the development of community infrastructure, such as roads and multipurpose village center, the SOs and the CDFs would share the responsibilities for project implementation.

As the Project begins to implement its exit strategy at Phase III (July 2011 – June 2014) of the Project, training becomes more intensive so as to completely transfer know-how to the CDFs and the CO members. Networking is also crucial at this Phase. In fact, the Project envisions the merger of the COs under "a strong Apex body." The SCBRMP selected the project areas on the assumption that the COs would eventually share resources and tackle common problems as a group.

In the post-project period, the CDFs and CO members are expected to jointly undertake all tasks related to the management of the water bodies.

The Exit Strategy proposed to be undertaken by the SCBRMP is illustrated as follows:

Sustainability and the CDFs

The deployment of the CDFs in the SCBRMP has yielded gains in the following areas, thus enhancing the COs' prospects for sustainability:

1. **Building Primary Organizations**
   Through the CDFs' constant interaction with the COs, the process of building up the latter has been strengthened. Leaders of the COs have become more skilled at group management, articulate in dispute resolution, and able to critically analyze social issues. Gender relationships have improved, such that women's role in decision-making has increased and women are more inclined to participate in good governance practices.

2. **Building Coalitions, Federations or Networks of the Poor**
   The CDFs are playing a vital role in the development of coalitions of BUGs by mobilizing them on issues of common interest, such as access to public water bodies; building and maintaining rural roads; etc. The process of CO federation building has also received a boost from the interventions of the CDFs.

3. **Local Governance**

   The CDFs have been able to improve the linkages between the COs and local government institutions, thus enhancing community participation in local development activities. Many COs are now working towards getting their representatives elected to local government bodies.

4. **Building External Linkages, Support Groups and Negotiation**

   The CDFs have been able to facilitate the building of linkages between the COs and external agencies, from which the COs can tap resources and between the COs and government agencies, thus promoting better service delivery. Through such linkages, the community has been able to access training and services, such as free vaccines for their livestock, etc. Local officials have also provided assistance to the community in natural resource conservation. ❐

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SCOPE In-Country Intervention Grant Proposal submitted by SCBRMP on 15 February 2006.

A Focus on Bridging Leadership: Coalition Building in NMCIREMP, Philippines

The Northern Mindanao Community Initiative and Resource Management Project (NMCIREMP) is a six-year IFAD-funded project (2003-09) that aims to reduce vulnerability and enhance food security for 58,000 low-income households in 270 barangays (villages) in southern Philippines. The Project focuses on agrarian reform farmers, indigenous peoples, marginal fishing families, upland farmers and rural women.

NMCIREMP's mid-term review (2005) revealed a number of gaps in capacity development, including the need for "further training on coalition building." Thus, a proposal was submitted to SCOPE for the conduct of training workshops on "Building Coalitions through Bridging Leadership"—with the ultimate objective of forming five provincial coalitions of multi-stakeholders.

NMCIREMP Project Components:

- **Community Institutions and Participatory Development (CIPD) – establish and strengthen self-help groups (SHGs) and community institutions (CI); manage a poverty alleviation fund.**
- **Community Investment (CI) – construct or rehabilitate rural infrastructure (e.g., potable water systems and livelihood-related infrastructure); establish viable micro-finance services.**
- **Natural Resource Management (NRM) – develop the capabilities of local government units (LGUs) and communities to plan and execute integrated watershed management; appropriate farming systems and technologies and fishery enterprise with people's participation.**
- **Support Services and Studies (SSS) – provide advisory, research counseling and marketing information services to community enterprises; improve the delivery of health, nutrition and functional education.**
- **Support to Indigenous Peoples (SIP) – facilitate the membership of IP tribal leaders in local development councils, assure the security of IP ancestral domains and lands, and integrate the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP) with local development plans and budgets.**

Why the Need for Coalition Building?

Based on the original Project design, the responsibility for continuing the services and management of subprojects after NMCIREMP's phase-out would be turned over to the LGUs that were already handling them—including natural resource management, agriculture and fisheries, community planning, health, rural infrastructure and social work projects.[1]

This arrangement, however, was foreseen as inadequate. Thus the need for an exit strategy that would involve not just the LGUs, but also line agencies, NGOs, and community-based organizations (CBOs) with some "coalition mechanisms" to enable the coordination of efforts. One feature of the resulting provincial coalitions would be the link between CBOs and market outlets and traders to ensure better prices for community produce. Another feature would be "support groups" that would continually provide community organizations with technical and marketing services.

The question then faced was how such provincial coalitions would be formed. The Project thus sought the assistance of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides, which recommended Bridging Leadership

What is a Bridge Leader?

The qualities of bridging leaders include the ability to:

- **Listen and understand deeply and from the perspective of the person sending the message**
- **Engender trust and help to build trusting relationships among others**
- **Respect and be able to relate to and be respected by individuals and groups from a wide variety of cultural, national, and social backgrounds**
- **Help to identify and develop common ground among diverse individuals and groups**
- **Inspire and facilitate joint concrete actions, in response to difficult situations, sometimes on the part of individuals and groups who have never before acted in concert**
- **Build and help others to build networks of people and groups toward common goals**
- **Grasp complex situations and help others understand and cope with them**
- **Be aware of and in-charge of one's own feelings, interests and behavior in complex and difficult situations**

– Garilao, Ernesto D., Dinky Juliano-Soliman, Evangeline Lopez, Pamela Asis, and Marge Barro. "Bridging Leadership Framework" in Building Coalitions Through Bridging Leadership – Reading Materials. AIM Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides, NMCIREMP and Asian NGO Coalition, 2006.

[1] NMCIREMP progress report to SCOPE on preparations for Bridging Leadership Training, June 2006.

as an effective approach to the coalition building.

What is Bridging Leadership?

Bridging leadership is a style of leadership that focuses on creating and sustaining effective working relationships among key partners and stakeholders. By "bridging" different perspectives and opinions often found among a wide range of stakeholders, a common agenda can begin to be developed and shared in order to find solutions to social and economic problems.[2]

Training Implementation

Four training activities were designed as building blocks towards coalition building among the different stakeholders in the five provinces covered by the NMCIREMP (Figure 1).

Activity 1: Reflection Sessions on "Bridging Leadership Influences on Coalition Building"

Prior to the training proper, two-day reflection sessions were conducted in June 2007 involving 41 representatives from communities, LGUs and NGOs in the five provinces covered by NMCIREMP.

This first activity resulted in:

- Identification of the most pressing issues and concerns per province, including the root causes, concrete manifestations of the effects on the people in the community, and degree of response;
- Recognition of community coping mechanisms, sectoral responses, limitations and breakthroughs;
- Acknowledgment of collaborative partnerships and alliances existing in the community as well as their respective unifying and common issues; and
- Formation of the provincial core coalition builders (PCCBs).

Activity 2: Training on Coalition Building

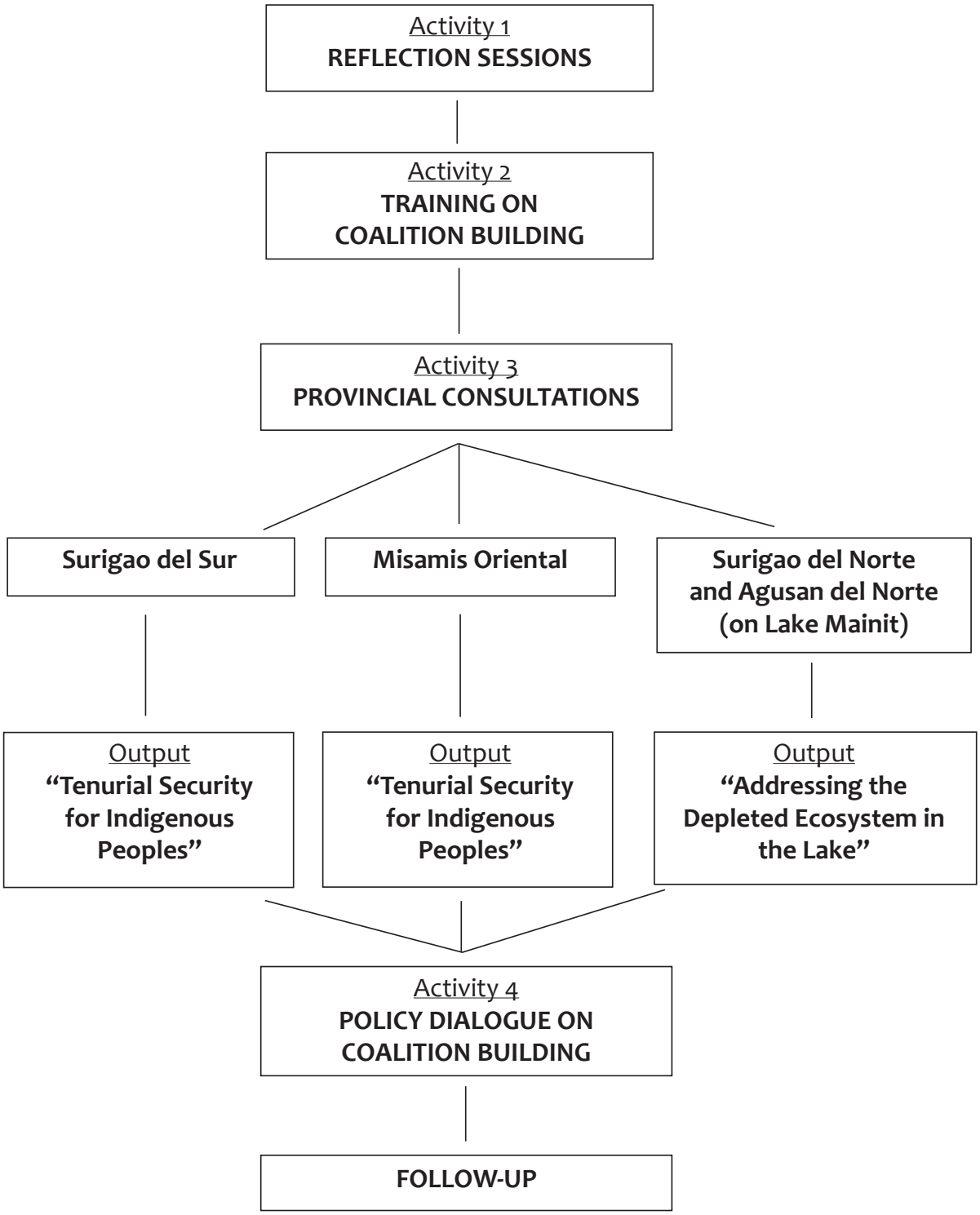
A three-day technical training was then conducted in July 2007 to systematically guide the participants through a step-by-step process in building a coalition among relevant stakeholders. Anchored on the outputs of the first activity and drawing on concrete experiences of the participants, the training discussed the issues that cause division and explored possibilities of healing.

The training outputs per province were:

- bridging leadership capital
- identification and understand-ing of the divide/main issue
- action plans

[2] The Synergos Institute, http://www.synergos.org/

Figure 1. Bridging Leadership Activities



- stakeholder analysis
- a stakeholders engagement plan.

Activity 3: Provincial Consultations on Coalition Building

Provincial consultations were then held to solidify efforts for the building of the coalition among the various stakeholders The main challenge that the Provincial Core Builders (PCB) encountered was that some of the issues identified reflected the perspective of localgovernments rather than that of the poor. To correct this, it was suggested that the consultations be expanded to ensure that the resulting coalition shall be of and for the poor.[3]

a. Surigao del Sur

A total of 27 participants attended – 12 from IP communities and 15 from agencies concerned with the situation of IPs seeking tenurial security.

Tribal leaders were appointed as the interim officers of the coalition, meant to function prior to the formal establishment of a coalition for the IPs. Their immediate task was to prepare for audiences with: (i) the Sangguniang Panlalawigan[4] to push the demand of IPs to be part of the legislative body of the province; and (ii) the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in light of conflicts among agencies related to issuance of tenurial instruments affecting the processing of Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs)[5] – problems that the group understood could only be resolved by key persons at the top level of mandated agencies.

To manifest their commitment to agreements arrived at during the consultation, the IPs, support agencies and LGU representatives put their hand imprints on the statement of support they had formulated.

b. Misamis Oriental

The Misamis Oriental consultation had 20 participants from IP communities and 34 from support groups and agencies. The discussions focused on the problems related to the long process of ancestral domain titles (ADT) application.

[3] NMCIREMP progress report to SCOPE on outcomes of Coalition Building project, October 2006.

[4] Provincial Council

[5] A Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT)—as provided for in the Philippines' Republic Act 8371 (1997), otherwise known as the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA)—refers to a title formally recognizing the rights of possession and ownership of ICCs/IPs over their ancestral domains identified and delineated in accordance with this law. It differs from a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC) which merely declares and certifies the claims of ICCs over corresponding territories identified and delineated as ancestral domain. Hence the eagerness of ICCs/IPs to convert their existing CADCs to CADTs, or to apply for CADTs directly.

However, the IP leaders were not able to define mechanisms for follow-up action. They expressed that they were not yet ready for a formal coalition structure (see box *"Same Issue, Different Approach"*). To them, the assistance of the NCIP in converting their Certificates of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADCs) to CADTs was sufficient. The internal division within and among tribes was apparently so pronounced that tribal leaders have to confront and resolve it among themselves—if possible, with less intervention by outsiders.

Faced with the challenge to do something about this divide, other participants expressed willingness to share their technical expertise, services and programs. In the absence of a mechanism among IP communities, it was agreed that the NCIP would liaise between the IP communities and other development players to facilitate their CADT processing. A formation composed of development players for the IPs is in the offing, with members committed to support the IPs' efforts to achieve tenurial security of their ancestral domains.

c. Joint Provincial Consultation among Lake Mainit stakeholders

The plight of the depleting resources of the Lake Mainit ecosystem – an issue common to both Agusan del Norte and Surigao del Norte provinces – brought about this joint provincial consultation. Fifty participants represented fisherfolk, farmers, IPs, NGOs, LGUs, government line agencies, business, the church, media, and NMCIREMP.

The consultation resulted in an enhanced strategic plan as well as an engagement plan to preserve the depleting resources of the Lake Mainit Ecosystem—including identifying relevant stakeholders and their possible contributions to the plan's implementation.

The presentation of a proposed coalition structure then led to discussions on the role of the coalition, its leaders, the mechanics to incorporate the structure within the local government (LGU), and sources of funding. The participants urged that the alliance involve fisherfolk, women, farmers and other sectors and groups earning a living from Lake Mainit. Finally, the group agreed to harmonize different development efforts related to the protection of Lake Mainit in the next two years.

***Activity 4:* Policy Dialogue on Coalition Building**

The final activity, held on September 13, 2007 in Butuan City, was a dialogue with policy makers. This involved the presentation of the following policy papers:

Same Issue, Different Approach

The provincial consultations in both Surigao del Sur and Misamis Oriental involved IPs whose main concern was the security of ownership of their respective ancestral domains.

In Surigao del Sur, security of land tenure among indigenous peoples (IPs) - particularly the conversion of CADCs to CADTs - was consistently focused on the training on Bridging Leadership and finally validated with the IPs themselves during the provincial consultation. Stakeholders were initially assessed, using the stakeholder analysis tool, as to their position on the issue of conversion of CADCs to CADTs. As a result, stakeholders who were identified as for the resolution of the issue were invited as participants to the provincial consultations. Those who were identified as against, the PCCB decided yo deal with later.

In the Misamis Oriental consultation, participants discerned two basic issues confronting the IPs. First is the internal weakening of the IP communities, as shown in the gradual disappearance of a distinct culture that their younger generation can identify with and live according to its norms and mores. Then, there are the external conflicts among and between tribes regarding boundaries, as the perspective on communal ownership is continually muddled by the influence of lowlanders. Further, tribal elders and leaders, who for years have stood for the political, economic and social life for the tribe, are now ignored. The zeal to defend the tribe, its culture, and its ancestral domains against big businesses and politicians has weakened.

Different approach – Although the identified issues confronting the IPs were similar in these two provinces, the training designs were different. Surigao del Sur had a one-day consultation, while Misamis Oriental and Bulidnon held theirs for two days. The series of pre-work done by the PCCB expedited the process in Surigao del Sur so that, when invited stakeholders and IP leaders came for the consultation, they were prepared and had clear expectations. For Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon, the absence of pre-work made it necessary for the PCCB to validate the issues with the IPs and then process their positions and expected responses from other development players who joined them the next day.

Realities to consider – The consultations in the two provinces revealed two realities for consideration in the formation of a coalition.

The pace of life in IP communities. Living in simplicity, the IPs may sometimes be confused by the complexity of situations and the interplay of different systems. Thus, outside interventions with a set framework and timetable may be more harmful than beneficial to their needs.

The IPs are focused on an immediate concerns. To date, the IPs are engrossed with processing the conversion of their CADCs to CADTs; resolution of internal conflicts; and struggling for their daily subsistence. The concept of a coalition was appreciated, but the formation of one was not yet a priority for them. ❑

– NMCIREMP. *SCOPE-August 2007 Update*

- Tenurial Security for the Indigenous Peoples of Misamis Oriental
- Agusan Marsh Siltation and River Bank Protection
- Addressing the Depleted Ecosystem in Lake Mainit
- Tenurial Security of Indigenous Peoples in Surigao del Sur

Outcomes of the "Bridging Leadership" Training[6]

The initial reflection sessions by the multi-stakeholder groups generated the urgency to work together and to bridge differences among the different stakeholders. Back in their provinces, they were able to convene sectoral bridging leadership consultations that focused on particular issues: (i) ancestral domains in Surigao del Sur, (ii) development of Lake Mainit for Agusan del Norte and Surigao del Norte, and (iii) IP empowerment for Misamis Oriental. These consultations brought forward certain policy recommendations emerged that will be discussed in the upcoming Policy Dialogues.

As a result of the project, there is now a core of "bridging leaders" who can facilitate sectoral consultations aimed at engaging the different stakeholders in addressing an issue. These are the provincial core groups that could continue the discussion and implementation of solutions. These groups have already achieved initial successes:

- The Surigao del Sur tribal leaders were able to level off with local governments and other agencies regarding the demands and requirements that would enable them to safeguard their culture and way of life.

- The Lake Mainit Development Alliance has been able to formulate fishing laws, eco-tourism plans, protection of forests and regulation of small mining activities in a manner acceptable and binding to all the seven municipalities in the two provinces (Surigao del Norte and Agusan del Norte) that border the lake.

- In Misamis Oriental, progress has been made in minimizing the distrust of the indigenous communities of the NGOs and non-IPs who are working for ancestral domain rights in behalf of IPs (e.g., through an economic program aimed at promoting their abaca and banana marketing).

- For Agusan del Sur, participants focused on the Agusan River Basin Development – a hitherto difficult issue because of the various conflicting stakeholders involved, including the presence of "armed groups."

[6] Polestico, Rachel. NMCIREMP Monitoring Report. August 2, 2007.

While the project aimed at building five provincial coalitions, only three emerged: (i) Surigao del Sur for IPs, (ii) the Lake Mainit Development Alliance taken up jointly by Agusan del Norte and Surigao del Norte, and (iii) Misamis Oriental also for IP concerns. It is interesting to note that these coalitions focused on the main challenges of NMCIREMP as pointed out by the MTR and the supervision missions – addressing IP issues and natural resource management – two key issues that will most likely persist even after NMCIREMP.

Lessons Learned[7]

The strategy of gradual change – There was wisdom in adopting a strategy of gradual change in trying to make different groups agree on a common program and course of action. The stakeholders were allowed to discover for themselves the need for coalition building, then they were provided with appropriate training that responded to that need, and finally they designed their own course of action. This made them own the process and the program, and thereby become committed to pursuing the solution. As a result, the idea of forming coalitions – initially unacceptable – emerged as an attractive strategy for addressing persistent issues of the different provinces. All the stakeholders needed to learn were the system and the methodology of "Bridging Leadership."

Systems thinking – As evidenced by the documentation, the participants of the provincial sectoral consultations now have a method of looking at issues using systems thinking and the tools learned during the Bridging Leadership training. They looked at their bridging leadership capital, examined different divides, made causal loop diagrams and multi-stakeholder analyses, created a coalition structure and proposed dialogues to co-create solutions and bridge the different divides—skills and attitudes that can actually be used in many other applications.

The role of the SCOPE grant – The SCOPE grant was a critical intervention for the entire project. It reminded the Project Facilitation Office (PFO) that vertical coalition building of the basic sectors (especially the IPs) was an expected output of the project. It also made them take stock of their preoccupation with meeting project targets and made them focus on post-project sustainability (i.e., an exit strategy) as well. The funds provided gave them the means to involve multi-stakeholders in looking at this issue and zeroed in on "Bridging Leadership" as the strategy to ensure post-project sustainability.

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[7] Polestico, Rachel. Lessons Learned: NMCIREMP SCOPE Project, "Bridging Leadership Influences in Coalition Building," August 8, 2007.

When to Build Coalitions?

At particular times, circumstances help to move the formation of coalitions:

- **When dramatic or disturbing events occur in a community**
- **When new information becomes available**
- **When circumstances or the rules change**
- **When new funding becomes available**
- **Where there is an outside threat to the community**
- **When a group wishes to create broad, significant community change**
- **When you have not only a good reason for starting a coalition, but also the possibility that one can be started successfully in the community. This important issue is dependent upon a number of factors:**
  - **Is the issue or problem clear enough that everyone can agree on what it is?**
  - **Is there some level of trust among the individuals and orgnaizations who would make up the coalition?**
  - **Is a coalition in fact the best response to the issue?**

– Coalition Building: Starting a coalition, from Community tool box, www. ctb.ku.edu. In building coalitions Through bridging leadership - reading materials, AIM Mirant center, 2006.

Recommendations[8]

The activities raised ome recommendations for policy advocacy:

1. Existing laws (e.g., the Indigenous People's Rights Act, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, and various laws that protect watershed, forest, and fishing areas) should be enforced based on the primacy of these laws over local laws which are very often enacted to protect vested interests of powerful blocs.

2. The most common source of conflict in most of the issues discussed was the primacy of private or individual rights over community rights, or the rights of those who "have less in life." More than the formulation of laws, it is the integration of values—as promoted in Bridging Leadership—that will rectify this imbalance.

3. Upon the phase-out of NMCIREMP, the Provincial and the Municipal Governments should provide resources to continue pursuing the issues and activities already started in this project. NGOs still operating in CARAGA and Region X should also be urged to assist in this effort.

8 Ibid.

4. "Bridging Leadership" may be introduced to other IFAD-supported projects. NMCIREMP has excellent documentation of the process undertaken and a cadre of people who could attest to how effective the methodology is in addressing an issue.

5. The Bridging Leadership framework and methodology can be simplified and made more adaptable to grassroots settings. While the concept has been tested among provincial and municipal officers, with NGOs and other development agents, the challenge is how the Bridging Leadership way of looking at things and resolving issues can be made a habit not only among village leaders, but even among ordinary farmers, fisherfolk, women, and indigenous communities. ❐

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SEWA Pushes Ahead With Sajeevika: Picking Up Where Partner Leaves Off

The Jeevika ("Livelihood Security Project for Earthquake Affected Households) Project was implemented in three districts of the Indian State of Gujarat following an earthquake which killed some 20,000 people, injured 167,000 others, and left a total of 1.7 million people homeless. The Project, which is worth US$25 million, was a partnership among the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), the Government of India (GOI), the Government of Gujarat (GOG), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP).

SEWA has long been working in the three districts of Kutch, Patan and Surendranagar, having made its mark as an organization assisting women by building self-help groups (SHGs) among them. Jeevika, which aimed to promote the economic recovery of some 40,000 rural households, was an opportunity for SEWA to expand the coverage of its services to include the other members of the community. Jeevika was also the first time that a local grassroots organization had entered into partnership with a global multilateral agency such as IFAD. Even before Jeevika was launched in April 2002, it was being touted as a model for future such partnerships. Unfortunately, just two years into implementation, things began to fall spectacularly apart.

When Interests Diverge

In October 2004, cracks appeared in the relationship between the state government and SEWA. Controlled by the Hindu Nationalist Party—the Bharatiya Janata Party—the GOG accused SEWA of overly benefiting Muslims and demanded that more project resources be used towards assisting Hindus and that Hindu businesses be prioritized in the award of contracts and other project expenditures. The GOG also expressed displeasure that Jeevika had not produced "more visible" results, meaning infrastructure projects that were one of the components of Jeevika.

The Inconvenience of a Project's Untimely Demise

When Jeevika funding stopped, most of the large capital-intensive infrastructure projects were discontinued. In some cases, they sit waiting for funding to be completed. In other cases, incomplete projects have caused severe problems.

In Vachhrajpar, the village used Jeevika funds to begin the repair of their only accessible clean water well. To repair the well, they needed to demolish the existing well, but Jeevika funds were suspended before the well was completed, leaving the village without access to clean water. Today, they must travel on foot to a neighboring village to access and transport the clean water back to their village, leaving them worse off than before Jeevika began.

Similarly, the village of Bhalgam has no access to clean water and must walk water from the neighboring village every day. Under Jeevika, they began the construction of 30 household roof rainwater retention reservoirs, which required them to dig pits for the retention ponds. Jeevika ended before the ponds were completed and when the monsoon season hit, the unfinished pits spread and broadened, damaging the walls of the houses. The unfinished pits also created indirect costs since children and cattle fell into them and injured themselves, resulting in higher healthcare costs, thus further reducing family income.

- From: Morrison, Dan. "Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Situation Assessment: SEWA Following the Suspension of Jeevika, March 2005 – Present". January 8, 2007.

SEWA denied favoring the Muslim beneficiaries and refused to give in to the GOG's demands. SEWA argued that it does not discriminate on the basis of religion, caste, or any other factor, and that is was committed to helping both Muslim and Hindu alike.

SEWA conceded that Jeevika thus far had concentrated on capacity-building interventions and so did not have much to show in the way of notable accomplishments. There were two types of projects that were to be implemented under Jeevika: (1) Large infrastructure improvement projects (including water wells, water pipes, pond and lake deepening, chack dams, sanitation facilities, roof rainwater retention reservoirs, field flattening, etc.); and (2) Social programs (including healthcare, literacy training, cleanliness programs, savings and credit programs, grain banks, tool and equipment libraries, etc.). SEWA's strategy was to train the beneficiaries to undertake the infrastructure projects themselves – thus making them the primary recipients of all project benefits, including employment – rather than contracting the job to outsiders. Hence, in the first 18 months of the project, SEWA focused on planning, budgeting, training and capacity-building, which strategy the GOG had been earlier apprised of.

Nevertheless, the GOG proceeded to make life difficult for SEWA. In early 2005, meetings of the Project Review Committee (PRC), the main forum in which SEWA and the GOG jointly managed and assessed Jeevika, were stopped and never resumed. As a result, Jeevika plans and budgets were no longer approved and the GOG stopped allocating project funds. The GOG also conducted a special audit of the project, and thereafter demanded detailed accounting, bookkeeping and progress reports on each of the villages. These were over and above the documentation requirements agreed on at the inception of Jeevika. The GOG also started visiting the villages unannounced and without SEWA in attendance. SEWA felt that the government's monitoring and audit activities were intended not so much to provide helpful feedback as to dredge up something that could prove damaging to SEWA. In fact, the GOG lost no opportunity to discredit SEWA to the media.

On October 5, 2005 SEWA withdrew from Jeevika. The breakdown in relations between the project partners proved to be disastrous for the beneficiaries. Villagers, who had already put in a lot of work on the projects, could not be paid. Others, who had opted to stay put in the village rather than migrating to other places in search of employment as was their custom, faced an entire season without work. At the time of SEWA's withdrawal from Jeevika, village workers were owed Rs. 40,000,00 (approximately US$910,000) in unpaid wages. In addition, the GOG demanded the return of properties (e.g., vehicles) acquired during Jeevika and that Jeevika funds, as well as state government grants awarded previous to Jeevika, be refunded.

With a gaping hole in its pocket and a slew of unfinished projects, SEWA was left to face a horde of angry, disaffected villagers.

Moving On

At the end of Jeevika, SEWA decided that it must find another way to push ahead and to finish what it had started, despite the lack of Jeevika funds. Thus, Sajeevika ("Continuing Livelihood") was born.

SEWA undertook the following steps towards implementing Sajeevika:

1. SEWA's leaders visited all of the SEWA districts to discuss options for moving forward.

2. SEWA went to each village to explain the situation they were all in, while expressing its intention to continue working with the villagers. Where the latter were receptive to the idea of continuing the projects, SEWA reviewed the village plans and identified with the villagers which projects they would most like to resume work on; which projects could be completed given the financial constraints; and which projects would have to be put

on hold. In some cases, villagers took the initiative to request funding from the state and national government by way of other government programs and schemes.

3. SEWA took out a loan (worth Rs. 70 million) to put up a Revolving Fund to keep critical social, infrastructure and employment creation projects operating.

4. SEWA undertook measures to cut costs, and to prioritize and consolidate its activities. SEWA and its district offices adopted a more integrated management approach. Rather than attending to programs in a compartmentalized manner, which results in multiple visits to each village for training and implementation, each coordinator took on all tasks related to the different projects being implemented in her/his assigned area or areas. This not only saved on costs but also improved project coordination.

5. SEWA focused on implementing two types of activities for Sajeevika: (1) social services, such as childcare, healthcare, literacy and cleanliness programs; and (2) alternative employment creation.

   In meetings with the villagers, social service programs were identified as the most critical and also the most feasible under the circumstances. Nonetheless, the lack of funds posed a serious obstacle to implementing even such activities that do not require much capital investment. Teachers and workers had to be paid. Where they could not, they

Self-Help Groups Push Ahead

Self-Help Groups played a critical role in providing micro-loans and seed funding to members to start their enterprise.

A woman from the village of Valabhi normally needed to borrow from moneylenders to buy cumin seed for the annual harvest. But under Sajeevika, she took a loan from her SHG to buy a 15-kilogram tin of ghee (processed butter) from a trader and sold it from her doorstep to other villagers. She sold the tin of ghee in 15 days. She bought a second tin and sold the entire tin to one customer. The third time, she bought 45 kilos (3 tins) and sold all of it in 30 days. She is making 1200 Rupees per 15 kilograms of ghee sold. Now she can buy her cumin without taking a loan and gives small loans to other villagers. Her goal is to double her income by selling ghee.

Another woman from the village of Kuda took a loan for Rs 34,473 at 2% interest per month from the SEWA Surendranagar district. She bough 20 bicycles and rented them to salt workers for Rs 200 per month at 5% interest who needed to ride out to the salt fields in the desert. Her rental recoveries were 100%. Based on this success, she took a second loan from the Bank of Baroda (a private Indian bank) and bought another 21 bicycles. The first loan was completely paid off in December 2006.

– From: Morrison, Dan. "Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Situation Assessment: SEWA Following the Suspension of Jeevika, March 2005 – Present". January 8, 2007.

simply deferred their wages until funds became available. Families pitched in contributions of grain to ensure that the teacher or worker could feed herself and her family. Children enrolled in daycare facilities were supplied with lunch so that the facility would not have to spend on feeding them at school.

SEWA and the villages together assessed the skills the villagers had acquired during the implementation of Jeevika and identified alternative employment options. The Self-Help Groups (SHGs) proved to be vital in such job creation efforts. The women took out loans from the savings group and used the money to start a business, paying back the loan from their earnings. In other cases, the women used the savings group account as collateral to apply for loans from private banks or moneylenders. While the loans were nowhere near as large as those given out by Jeevika, they were enough to provide the women with funds to pursue livelihood generating activites.

Under Jeevika, the villagers were required to contribute 10 to 20 per cent of their income earned from Jeevika projects to a capital fund. At the end of Jeevika, many of the villagers decided to keep their money in the fund rather than withdrawing it. And where the villagers had found alternative employment, these resumed paying their contributions to the fund, on the condition that once SEWA had put up a bridge fund, the contributions would be used to resume work on the larger capital-intensive projects.

Moving Forward

As of November 2006, 7,000 households are receiving support from SEWA's Revolving Fund, particularly in setting up job creation activities. Nevertheless, SEWA still needs some Rs. 20 million (approximately US$460,000) to pay the back wages of Jeevika workers. It is also seeking a bridge fund of Rs. 70 million to repay the loan it took out to set up its Revolving Fund. SEWA regards this bridge funding as critical to the sustainability of Sajeevika. ❐

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FECOFUN's Community Forest Users' Groups: From Collective Empowerment to a Democratic Force in Nepal

Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) have existed in Nepal since the 1970s, with a number of state laws, acts, and plans strictly regulating their formation, registration, and activities. A major turning-point, however, was the federation of these groups in the mid-1990s. The formation of the Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) exposed its member-CFUGs to emerging concepts of the rights based approach (RBA), environmental consciousness, and sustainable development; while at the same time giving a voice to the women, dalits, and the poorest of the poor. What was unforeseen—but perhaps inevitable—was the result of such organization, consciousness-raising, and voicing of needs. Not only did the CFUGs attain influence on policies and practices involving community forestry, they became a major force in the democratic movement of Nepal that reversed the absolute rule of the King in 2006. It was a clear example of empowerment of the poor, 30 years in the making.

Community Forests and CFUGs

Much of forest management in Nepal focuses on community forests—especially in the hill districts. The legal basis for designating community forests is the National Forestry Master Plan of 1976. Community forests encompass those parts of "national forest" that have been "handed over" to a Community Forest User Group (CFUG) for its development, conservation, and utilization for the collective interest.[1] The CFUG is likewise entitled to sell and distribute forest produce, subject to strict regulations.[2] Moreover, any plantation of public land can also be granted recognition as community forests by the District Forest Officer.[3]

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1 *Forest Act 2049* (1993), S.2 (h)

2 *Forest Regulation 2051* (1995, 2nd Amendment Aug. 12, 2002), S.28-35

3 *Forest Regulation 2051* (1995, 2nd Amendment Aug. 12, 2002), S.26 (2)

As of 2004, community forests covered approximately 15 percent of the forest area in Nepal, with 13,078 CFUGs having been granted user rights to these community forests.[4]

A Reversal in Policies: Emergence of Participatory Forest Management

In the latter half of the 1970s, Nepal sought to reverse the existing top-down natural resource management policies. Recognition of peoples' rights to natural resource management and use was a key component of this reversal.[5] This was particularly significant in a country where indigenous management practices based on collective use rights widely endure in local communities despite persistent efforts by some powerful sectors in the national government to subjugate and undermine their legal recognition.[6]

By the late 1970s, it had become clear that Nepal's forest resources were fast dwindling. Against this backdrop, the governing ideology for the forestry sector began to change. The National Forestry Plan of 1976 was the first official document that acknowledged the need to rectify past mistakes. It admitted that the protection, maintenance and development of Nepal's forests were neither possible nor even practicable through government efforts alone.[7] The Plan thus called for involving the citizens of Nepal in all aspects of forest protection, production and proper utilization, and also for recognizing the forest as the inalienable property of society.

The Plan, for the first time, categorized forests according to ownership and level of possible participation, into five types—government forest, panchayat forest, private forest, leasehold forest and religious forest.[8] When later taken up for implementation with necessary legislative enactments, the Plan facilitated people's participation in all aspects of forest management except within government forests. This 1976 Plan and the subsequent enactments can be viewed as heralding a paradigm shift in the management of Nepal's forests. However, from 1976 through 1987, only a very small area of forest (36,376 hectares out of a targeted 1,835,000 hectares) was "handed over" to local communities.[9]

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4 Bhattarai, Dr. Ananda Mohan and Dil Raj Khanal. Communities, Forests and Law of Nepal: Present State and Challenges. Kathmandu, Nepal: FECOFUN, Forum for Protection of Public Interest (Pro-Public), and Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL). 2005, p. 38.

5 Bhattarai and Khanal, p. 1.

6 Schmidt, Donald A. Messer, 1993, cited in Bhattarai and Khanal, p. 1.

7 Bajracharya, D., 1983, cited in Bhattarai and Khanal, p. 23.

8 The 1978 Amendment to the 1961 Forest Act added a sixth category, "Panchayat Protected Forest."

9 Bhattarai and Khanal, p. 24.

Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, 1988

The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) in 1988 pushed the participatory management trend further – perhaps fueled as well by the rise in environmental consciousness and the concept of sustainable development that began in the 1970s (see box). It gave emphasis to recognizing community rights over forest resources, addressing wider environmental issues, as well as meeting people's basic needs for fuel-wood, fodder, timber, and other forest products.[10]

The organization of the growing number of CFUGs into a federation was primarily to carry out the spirit of the Master Plan—but unintentionally it also laid the groundwork for the CFUGs' eventual role as a democratic force in Nepal.

Grassroots Federation to National Player

The Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) emerged after four years (1991-1995) of discussions, interactions and workshops on how to assist the CFUGs of Nepal. FECOFUN greatly expanded its organization from the grassroots to the national level. Out of a total of 14,000 government-recognized CFUGs in the country, more than 10,000 became affiliated with FECOFUN through its 74 district chapters. Nine million people, managing more than 25% of the national forest as community forests, became directly involved in the FECOFUN movement.

FECOFUN strives to promote self-reliance among CFUGs through institutional capacity building to capitalize on the resources in order to meet their diverse needs.[11] Its objectives are to initiate efforts towards the preservation of natural resources by protecting the rights of CFUGs; creating awareness and imparting knowledge on forest-related policies, rules and regulations among uninformed users; developing a sense of community; and bringing dynamism to the research and development of forest management technology. FECOFUN conducts various programs to upgrade the economic and social status of women and disadvantaged communities, and contributes to the government's poverty alleviation program through community processes.

FECOFUN helps CFUGs by providing training and other support – such as boundary dispute settlement; preparation, revision and renewal of constitutions and operational plans with wider people's participation, reflecting the needs and

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[10] HMG/N/ADB/FINNIDA, 1988, Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, Nepal, Kathmandu, His Majesty's Government.

[11] IIDS, 2005: report on assessment of FECOFUN and its programs and strategies.

aspirations of the users, particularly women, the poor and dalits.[12]

FECOFUN's Policy Advocacy Campaign

A new program that FECOFUN entered into in 2005 was its Policy Advocacy Campaign (PAC), which was implemented in 24 districts. The objectives of the PAC were to develop common understanding on governance, the rights-based approach (RBA) and advocacy; to increase the capacity of NRM-based federations, other CSOs and political parties at the district and national levels; and to form and strengthen advocacy forums at the district and national levels to effectively mobilize constituencies to influence policies, such as.

- *Contribution to the restoration of democracy* – The most important contribution of the project was its role in restoring democracy in Nepal through a people's movement in 2006. FECOFUN concluded that, unless democratic rights were established, people's rights to sustainable and equitable natural resource management (including community forestry) would not be secure. Thus, the program utilized mass demonstrations against the King's rule. Being a people-based organization, FECOFUN enjoyed the comparative advantage of people support to gather hundreds of thousands of people in the streets. Various district reports and media agencies announced that FECOFUN organized the largest demonstrations during the democratic movement. It was estimated that over 500,000 people (half of whom were women) took part in 43 FECOFUN/CFUG-led mass rallies.

- *Initiation of dialogue with government* – Dialogue and negotiation were used to resolve issues with the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (Mo FSC) in June 2006. An eight-point agreement was signed to resolve CF issues. Following this central-level agreement, about 30 FECOFUN district chapters also negotiated with their respective District Forest Officers. Meanwhile, FECOFUN is actively participating in a task force formed by the Mo FSC to resolve forestry-related issues. Such dialogue has eased common understanding and joint action among the various stakeholders, and will hopefully dispel the belief that advocacy means confrontation.

- *Constituency building in support of community forestry* – As a result of program activities, the critical mass supporting community forestry was significantly increased. Out of a total of 17,000 participants in such activities, a large percentage were representatives from

[12] IIDS, 2005: report on assessment of FECOFUN and its programs and strategies.

non-FECOFUN/CFUG organizations. Expressions of solidarity from other CSOs likewise reflected the increased support for community forestry. For example, in the central PAF meeting, political parties and CSOs arrived at a common understanding on people's rights in NRM and CF and prepared a joint declaration in favor of community forestry.

- *Formation and mobilization of Policy Advocacy Forums* – Policy Advocacy Forums (PAFs) at the district and national level emerged as a common platform for various CSOs and political parties to identify, prioritize, and advocate district and national level issues. It was also recognized by the general public as a vehicle for reporting complaints involving inequity and injustice. The PAFs provided a common ground for communications, information sharing, and discussions on relevant issues and have helped promote understanding and consensus among key stakeholders and service providers. The PAFs even addressed issues beyond natural resource management and community forestry. For example, they successfully raised issues of disabled persons and of students needing transportation discounts.

- *Training and media exposure* – Within the one-year duration of the PAC (September 2005-September 2006), FECOFUN conducted 533 events and

Major features/premises of the MPFS

1. Four imperatives of development are as follows:
   - Fulfillment of basic needs
   - Sustainable use of forest resources
   - People's participation in the benefit sharing and decision-making process
   - Social and economic progress
2. Prerequisites of national development, like peace and security, can be fulfilled only if the basic needs of the people are satisfied.
3. Over-centralization of the decision-making authority would weaken the morale and confidence of the people.
4. Abundant local resources and power of local communities may be creatively managed and mobilized through a community forestry development program.
5. If the right of decision making was decentralized to the level of the user groups dependent on the forests, their decisions would be more action oriented.
6. Key to sustainable development of forest resources of the country is the involvement of the user groups in the process of decision-making and benefit sharing.
7. The major responsibility of the government field workers shall be to facilitate and to support the people in the sustainable use and management of the forest.
8. The people's traditional accepted right to make decisions on fuel wood and fodder collection free of cost shall be systematized.
9. Information dissemination will be emphasized so that women and wood cutters may take active part in decision making and benefit sharing.
10. The livelihood of poor and landless people will be maintained by forest-related activities.
11. In line with the principle of decentralization, community forestry plans shall be formulated and implemented immediately.
12. Local users should be made aware that they shall receive the direct benefit from the conservation of natural resources and plantation areas.

activities (workshops, seminars, and field visits) at the district and national level—involving a total of 17,000 participants. It also conducted media advocacy through television and radio programs, field visits, a video documentary, website updating, and IEC materials production.

Success in Policy Influence

Owing to the above efforts and accomplishments, the PAC program was successful in influencing policies in favor of community forestry. Perhaps its most significant achievement was the handing over of the Terai forest to the local community. Others were: (i) the safeguarding of CFUGs' autonomy and rights, assuring that the government would not interfere with their bank accounts; (ii) the abolishing of the 15% tax imposed on certain forest products; (iii) the removal of "double hammering" practices; and (iv) assisting local communities to stop the declaration of certain conservation areas.

Three major policy analysis documents also resulted from the PAC: one on the restructuring of the forestry sector, a second on the prospects of the Policy Advocacy Forum, and a third on community forestry policy.

Conclusion

FECOFUN's experience has allowed for the formulation of an advocacy plan for all participating districts as well as for the national level. It has also proven that a common forum is possible for all stakeholders to lobby in favor of the poor and marginalized. Finally, the CFUGs' experience has shown how collective empowerment has emerged as a major force in Nepal's democratic movement. ❐

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MYRADA's Community Managed Resource Centers: A Promising Withdrawal Strategy Vehicle

One of the most critical components of any Program is an effective exit strategy to ensure that services and institutions are sustained, even after external management and support is withdrawn. MYRADA[1], a large NGO working directly with 1.5 million poor in Southern India, has instituted Community Managed Resource Centres (CMRCs, or simply RCs) since late 2002 as the appropriate institutions to manage affairs where it has withdrawn—or is in the process of withdrawing—from its project areas.

An Aggrupation of CBOs

An RC is essentially an aggrupation of Community Based Organizations (CBOs)—mainly SAGs[2]—that provides a range of services like training, counselling, secretarial support, and information dissemination to its member-CBOs for a fee.[3] The features which distinguish the MYRADA RCs are: (i) self reliance; (ii) rating of CBOs before they are admitted as RC members and annual ratings thereafter; (iii) an RC Management

[1] Myrada is a large NGO with 450 staff working directly with 1.5 million poor in Southern India. "Building poor people's institutions" is its short mission statement. Its major activities are promoting self-help affinity groups (SAGs); watershed, water and wasteland management; forestry; community management of sanitation and drinking water; housing and habitat; improvement of primary school education; technical skills for school dropouts; micro enterprise generation; preventative health care; and HIV/AIDS prevention.

[2] Self-help affinity groups (SAGs) consist of 10-20 members drawn from a relatively homogeneous economic class (i.e., poor), self-selected on the basis of existing affinities and mutual trust; members meet regularly at a fixed time and pool their savings into a common fund from which they take need-based loans. The objectives of the SAGs go beyond thrift and credit—to include the overall development of members in the social, political, cultural and economic arena, i.e., SAGs are 'credit plus institutions'.

[3] Patkar, Saleela. 2005.

Committee comprising members from the CBOs; and (iv) a separate account managed by the RC Committee.

In MYRADA's program, the RC is managed by a Board called the RC Management Committee, comprising representatives of CBOs who govern and are governed by a set of rules and conventions which the CBOs have decided are the most appropriate to run an institution which can achieve their own vision and mission. Each RC covers a specific geographic area and a limited number of CBOs (around 120) who apply to become members. Each application is reviewed by the RC Board to determine the CBO's level of performance and organizational maturity. This assessment is repeated annually.

Any CBO which is a participatory body (as distinct from a representative one)[4] and which has evolved as an institution is eligible to apply for RC membership. In general, CBOs require at least 18 to 24 months of operation to achieve the required level of performance to be approved for membership.

With regard to financial support, the RCs share MYRADA's strong commitment to self-sufficiency. Accordingly, member-CBOs pay a monthly fee to retain membership and are assessed or rated yearly to ensure that their standards have not declined to a level where they lose RC membership. The RCs have a separate office and their own bank account. They have a financial management system, and present their Annual Reports before the General Body. Each RC has a full-time staff, RC Manager, who reports to the RC Management Committee. The Manager performs an executive function and is supported by several Community Resource Persons selected by the CBOs.

While most RCs have features in common *(see Box 1)*, they often differ in management policy and functions. There is no standardized framework that all the RCs have to fit into.

A Response to Impending Withdrawal

The RCs were instituted following the decision of MYRADA to withdraw from areas where it had worked for several years. One of several recommended withdrawal strategies was the formation of a new institution in which MYRADA would continue to provide an experienced and competent staff, as well as support the institution financially during a transition period (3-4 years) until it was

[4] The exclusion of CBOs which are representative bodies (namely, bodies formed through elections) is largely a Myrada suggestion based on the belief that, given the present scenario in the rural areas, the representative bodies reflect (and often strengthen) the feudal, caste and oppressive relations in society. Besides, election to these bodies requires money, and is therefore considered to be an investment for which there must be an adequate return—the means adopted to achieve this return often being questionable.

Box 1: CORE FEATURES OF MYRADA'S RCS

1. Only institutions (CBOs) are eligible for membership, not individuals.
2. Membership in the RC depends on the quality of the CBO which is assessed by the RC in a participatory manner. A CBO's existence in the "service area" of the RC does not make it automatically eligible for membership.
3. Each member CBO pays a monthly membership fee (Rs 50 has become the norm) to the RC which entitles it to certain services decided by the RC Management Committee.
4. All other services are paid for on an ad hoc basis.
5. The RC is managed by a Management Committee elected from the CBOs.
6. One RC can serve around 120 CBOs only. If more CBOs emerge, another RC is to be formed to support them.
7. The RC Manager must be competent, committed and with entrepreneurial skills, and must be trusted by the people. He/she reports to the RC Management Committee, but continues to remain a staff of MYRADA.
8. The functions of each RC will be determined by the demand coming from the CBO members. Each RC will decide whether to respond to non-CBO members and, if they decide to respond, on what terms.
9. RCs should not lend money to the SAGs (as per MYRADA's recommendation) - this is the role of the Financial Institutions.
10. In areas from where MYRADA has still not fully withdrawn, the RC should not implement any program which is a part of the MYRADA budget as this will undermine the independent image of the RC.

able to manage its own affairs. Hence, the emergence of the RCs.

Underlying MYRADA's Mission was an ideology to promote institutional and financial self-reliance at various levels: institutional self-reliance through investment in upgrading staff skills and constantly reviewing the organizational structure and culture; financial self-reliance through responding to the demand for services and being paid for services provided. This corporate culture supported and nurtured the birth of RCs. Their formation and subsequent performance have shown that self reliance is achievable within the context of NGO-initiated programs.

SAGs: The First RC Members

The self affinity groups (SAGs) were identified as the most appropriate institutions to take the lead in developing the early RCs. Other CBOs could follow as the idea caught on. The SAGs were recognized as having managed their institutions well, raised resources through savings and from the Banks, settled problems when they arose, and lobbied for better management of government institutions and programs as well as for their rights. Most of the SAGs had the additional experience of forming and managing federations.

In late 2002, MYRADA staff met with the SAGs and proposed the idea of an RC. Within

eighteen months, 53 RCs emerged (as of May 2004) in nine MYRADA Projects which were scaling down their programs at the time.

Thus, early membership in RCs was largely of SAGs. Gradually, however, resource user groups (e.g., Watershed Management Associations covering micro catchments of 150-200 hectares, with about 35 families) also joined in. Among the strengths of these two categories of CBOs were: (i) their members included all castes and creeds; and (ii) they were united by a degree of affinity among their members who are from the poorer sectors.

A general observation was that the emergence and strength of the RCs depended to a large extent on the quality of the SAGs that formed them. Where the SAGs had already been functioning well, the RCs emerged quickly and likewise functioned well. In contrast, where the nature of the programs had been conditioned largely by donor priorities and systems, it took some time for the people to respond to the change required to prioritize self reliance *(see Box 2)*.

RC Facilities: Separate, Accessible, and Visitor-Friendly

The RC office must be separate from MYRADA's infrastructure. If the Myrada Project wishes to donate its Sector office to the RC as it withdraws from the area, it can do so. The office should be centrally located within the RC service area, and be easily accessible by a regular bus service. It should preferably be close to a Bank and a market place.

The RC office should have at least one large common room and two additional rooms with electricity. It must have a telephone, one or two computers, internet access, and a motor bike. Optional items are a fax machine and a camera.

RC Activities: "Customer Satisfaction" and "Value for Money"

The priority of the Resource Centres is to ensure "customer satisfaction" of its member CBOs. As these members pay for their services, they must receive "value for money." Among the needs that have to be addressed are:

- To support small and marginal farmers
  - With information (e.g., prices prevailing in local markets) and possible linkages (e.g., to promoters of new technologies and opportunities related to contract farming in agriculture and horticulture)
  - With attitudinal change, i.e., to introduce a culture of "business and entrepreneurship" among the farmers
  - By promoting a culture of efficiency and management of scarce resources (water and good land); "Every drop must produce a crop"

Box 2: THE RC MANAGER: QUALIFICATIONS AND FUNCTIONS

The RC Manager functions like an executive who is responsible to the RC Management Committee. He/She is considered to be part of the core staff of MYRADA.

Qualifications:

- Is a middle level MYRADA staff (Sector Officer and above) with at least 10 years experience in the organization
- Has exhibited consistently good performance
- Is a good communicator
- Has good rapport with and is able to bring people together
- Is honest and transparent in dealings
- Is aware of the latest developments related to services provided by Government and of the general political-economic scenario
- Has a grasp of accounting systems and procedures
- Has basic computer skills and is able to write reports

Functions:

- Call for a monthly meeting of the RC Management Committee
- Submit a monthly report of activities to the RC Management Committee with a critical analysis and suggestions for improvement and new initiatives
- Submit a monthly income and expenditure statement to the RC management Committee with a critical analysis and suggestions of how to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency
- Monitor the performance of the Community Resource Persons and the CBOs
- Introduce the latest MYRADA computer package to collect SAG data and ensure that data is collected
- Analyze the SAG data monthly to identify patterns of loans taken for various purposes to see if the RC can provide services to add value to products or services through technical support or marketing (if the RC cannot provide this support, the RC Manager needs to approach MYRADA for it)
- Visit member CBOs at least once in 3 months
- Visit CBOs which are not approaching the RC for services
- Build a corpus fund for the RC
- Open and operate one Bank account, the signatories of which are the RC Manager and one (or two) members of the RC Management Committee
- Audit the account twice yearly
- Prepare an annual report and present it to the Annual General Body Meeting of all CBO members

- By providing or ensuring quality inputs in agriculture (seed, fertilizers, pesticides); making farmers aware of what to buy and how much; helping them to assess the result of using inputs from different traders, create a black list of those traders who regularly indulge in malpractices.

- To support marginal farmers and the landless to take up off-farm activities including training in job-related skills; to

collect information regarding the types of skills required in the job market, the institutions which can provide these skills, and the sources from which funds can be obtained to support trainees.

- To respond to people approaching the RC for counselling support related to domestic problems (violence, rape, drunkenness, dowry, abandoned women); possibly linking with professionals or even experienced local people for their services; setting up a legal cell; establishing ties with the local police station.

- To work out a strategy to help those who are sick and have health-related problems; mobilizing a team of doctors who are willing to be contacted for their advice.

- To evolve a strategy to cater to the market in the RC's service area. With 120 CBOs as members, each RC has contact with at least 8,000-10,000 people; plus at least 25,000 people in the service area who are not members of the CBOs. The SAG members are producing and trading homemade products (processed foods, poultry products, as well as household items such as cloth, mats, plates, ropes, pots, etc). The RC can help its members to add value in terms of quality and packaging so that they can cater to this internal market and compete with major brands.

- To promote proper storage practices, local markets (with adequate water, storage, and sanitation facilities) and "small is beautiful" (mini tractors, threshers, mini units for processing, storing, packaging, etc.) where technology is concerned.

How Do RCs Prove Their Sustainability?

Unless the RC has the potential to achieve both financial and organizational sustainability, it will soon collapse. Financial sustainability requires that the RC is capable of raising—not immediately, but over a period—Rs 18,000 to Rs 20,000 per month to cover all costs (including the salary of the RC Manager, payments to the Community Resource Persons, rents, postage, telephone, stationery, transport, etc.). Those RCs who have managed to achieve this admittedly have some advantages: their proximity to towns, membership of well-established SAGs, good location near markets, donations of land and computers from private persons, Panchayat and Government.

Organizational sustainability is more difficult to achieve and to assess. Attempts have been made, however, to assess the level of organizational sustainability that each RC has achieved—through six indicators namely: Vision/Mission, Organizational Management Systems, Financial Management,

Organizational Accountability, Linkages and Learning/Evaluation efforts.[5]

Fulfilling the Post-Withdrawal Promise?

In a 2005 update,[6] the number of such Resource Centres had risen to 80, with a combined membership of over 8,000 CBOs (about 120,000 individual members). Between July and September 2004 alone, these RCs had conducted over 15,000 training programs for their members and other paying institutions through trained local resource persons—mostly members of SAGs, over 75% of whom are women. From their tentative beginnings in 2002, RCs have enabled SAGs access to a range of inputs that support the overall development of members and their communities. These RCs are taking a central role in initiating pro-poor development activities in geographies that coincide with Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and it is hoped that they would make local government institutions more effective, accountable and just.

Given this performance record, the promise of RCs as appropriate institutions to sustain programs post-Project withdrawal appears promising. At the same time, there is also a realization that much still has to be done to develop: (i) a capacity building training package for the RC Management Committee, (ii) criteria for assessing the RC, (iii) staff and systems that will respond more proactively to emerging needs, and (iv) new skills. ❐

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Tools for Participatory Self-Monitoring of Self-Help Groups

Women in India are still under-represented in their country's political institutions despite laws that seek to address this imbalance. Through their membership in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) however Indian women may have found a good start at empowering themselves not just politically but economically, as they generally comprise a significant percentage of the membership. Unfortunately, women continue to defer to the men or to outsiders in regard to taking leadership of their organizations because of their lack of education.

Two participatory self-assessment tools may help women members of SHGs to take greater control of the running of their groups. These tools were the subject of an e-discussion on RPO sustainability that was supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through its Knowledge Networking for Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific Region (ENRAP) Program, and convened and moderated by ANGOC from 26 February to 16 April 2007[1].

Participatory Assessment of Self-Help Groups

Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM), a project being implemented in India by the IFAD, has developed a training module to teach self-help groups (SHGs), typically composed of 12-13 members, to conduct participatory self-assessment. This assessment method grades the performance of SHGs as "good", "average", or "poor" by counting the number of months in a year that the SHG was observed to have complied with predetermined performance indicators.

These indicators are as follows:

i. Regularity in putting away savings;

1 Over 300 members of ENRAP, representing a variety of IFAD partners and institutions involved in IFAD projects, along with international and local government and non-government organizations, signed up for this e-discussion. A record of this e-discussion may be found at http://www.enrap.org.

ii. Regularity in attendance of members;
iii. Regularity in holding meetings;
iv. Equitability in holding meetings (not always in one member's house but changing the venue);
v. Regularity in repayment of loans by members (this includes loans taken out of the group's funds as well as loans from banks);
vi. Maintenance of accounts of the SHG;
vii. Rotation of leadership;
viii. Initiatives taken in addressing problems of group members;
ix. Initiatives taken in addressing problems of the village;
x. Improvement in status of women in the village as seen from –
    - Participation in decision making in village matters, women sit in the meeting on equal footing with men;
    - Participation in the village government;
    - Participation in flag hoisting and other village level functions;
    - Active participation of women panchayat members in the village panchayat;
    - Improvement in attendance of girls in schools and increase in number of girls going on to higher grades;
    - Access to trained doctors for child birth, reduction in maternal mortality;
    - Improvement in nutritional levels of women and girls;
    - Reduced tendency to insist on having only male children.

The SHG members jointly grade themselves, i.e., their group, by ticking the box below the months of the year (as shown on the following chart) to indicate the frequency with which they have complied with EACH of the above-listed indicators. (The tool does not indicate what constitutes "regularity," i.e., whether perfect compliance is required or whether mere preponderance of "hits" versus "misses" is adequate.) Tick marks on eight or more months mean that the SHG has performed "well" on the particular indicator. Five to seven tick marks indicate "average" performance. While one to four tick marks show "poor" performance.

To help the SHG keep track of its performance, indicators on which they performed well are marked by a green dot; indicators where they turned in average performance are marked by a yellow dot; and indicators where they did badly are marked by a red dot.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Tool for Monthly and Annual Self-Monitoring of SHGs

Under the SHG-Bank Linkage Program of the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development in India (NABARD), SHGs are being promoted by a large number of promoting institutions like Government departments, NGOs, banks, Farmers' Clubs. Each one of them has evolved and adopted – based on NABARD's guidelines – SHG assessment tools that are suited to local conditions and practices.

The following is an example of a tool designed to help SHGs to do their self-monitoring monthly and annually. Rather than accounting for the frequency of compliance, SHGs rate their performance on set parameters as "good" (marked green), "average" (marked yellow), or "bad"(marked red) according to concrete indicators provided by NABARD, as follows:

MONTHLY SELF MONITORING PARAMETERS

Parameters	Good (Green)	Average (Yellow)	Bad (Red)
Preparation for meeting	All necessary arrangements made	More than half the arrangements made	No preparations at all for the meeting
Holding meetings regularly	Meetings held as per pre-determined dates	Meetings held on day other than pre-determined dates	No meeting was held
Meetings on scheduled time	Meetings start on scheduled time	Meeting starts late	Meeting starts late by more than two hours
Attendance in meetings	All members attend the meeting	More than 75% attendance	Less than 75% attendance
Proceedings (minutes) of meetings	Proceedings are recorded and read in the next meeting	Proceedings are recorded but not read in the next meeting	Proceedings are not recorded
Savings	All members deposit their savings on a fixed date	More than 90% members deposit their savings on a fixed date	Less than 90% members deposit their savings on a fixed date
Account keeping	Recording of all accounts completed at the meeting itself	Accounts are completed after the meeting	Accounts are incomplete or not kept at all
Collective decision making	Collective decisions are made	Only a few members participate in the discussion and decision making	Decisions are made without discussion

MONTHLY SELF MONITORING PARAMETERS (contiued)			
Parameters	Good (Green)	Average (Yellow)	Bad (Red)
Repayment	All members repay loans on time	95% pay on time	Less than 95% pay on time
Lending	Loan disbursements up to 95% of available resources	Loan disbursements less than 95% of available resources	No loan disbursements at all
Petty cash	No cash is kept more than the fixed limit	More cash kept than the fixed limit	Entire amount of the saving is kept in cash
Insurance	Insurance of members and assets acquired by them through group loan and its renewal	Insurance of some members and assets	No insurance
Communities: discussion and action	Community development activities are discussed and undertaken	Community development activities are discussed	No discussion and no action on community development
Sharing of responsibilities	More than 50% of members share responsibilities	Up to 50% of members share responsibilities	No sharing of responsibilities
Common Fund	Common fund is created	No Common fund	-
Lending	More than 60% of members' loan needs met	Loan needs of 30 to 60% of members met	Less than 30% of members loan needs met
Income generation	More than 50% increase in income of members who have taken loan	25 to 50% increase in income in case of members who have taken loan	Less than 25% increase in income in case of members who have taken loan
Outside financial assistance	Outside financial assistance taken	No outside financial assistance taken	-
Insurance	Insurance of members and assets acquired by them through group loan and its renewal	Insurance of some members and assets	-

MONTHLY SELF MONITORING PARAMETERS (contiued)			
Parameters	**Good (Green)**	**Average (Yellow)**	**Bad (Red)**
Training	As decided by Group, 4 or more trainings in a year	As decided by group, 2 to 3 or more trainings in a year	No training
Inter Group lending	Inter group lending is resorted to	No inter-group lending is resorted to	-

Source: Meenai Z (2003) Empowering Rural Women, An Approach to Empowering women through credit based, self help groups.

ANNUAL SELF MONITORING PARAMETERS			
Parameters	**Good (Green)**	**Average (Yellow)**	**Bad (Red)**
Audit	Accounts of group audited	-	Accounts of group not audited
Formation of new groups	Help is extended for formation of new groups	No help is extended for formation of new groups	-
Appointment of record keeper	-	Record keeper appointed	Record keeper is not appointed
Repayment	100% repayment as scheduled	95 to 99% repayment as scheduled	Less than 95% repayment
Formation of clusters	Participation in cluster	No participation in cluster	-
Representation on local bodies	Members of group elected on local bodies	No members of group elected on local bodies	-
Community development	4 or more community development programs undertaken	1-3 community development programs undertaken	No community development programs undertaken
Annual meeting	Annual meeting is held	No annual meeting is held	-

Source: Meenai Z (2003) Empowering Rural Women, An Approach to Empowering women through credit based, self help groups.

NABARD also helps SHGs monitor their progress as organizations by listing the capacities and/or accomplishments which are generally expected of SHGs at particular stages of development, and by providing both quantitative and qualitative indicators for compliance with or attainment of such capacities/accomplishments, as follows:

Stage of the Group/Age of SHG	Characteristics/ Inputs/Activities	MONITORABLE OUTPUTS	
		Quantitative	Qualitative or Empowerment Indicators
Group Formation – 6 months	Formation of group Start of savings - members start to save regularly Opening of bank account Start of inter-lending Establishment of identity of group Selection of group's representatives Decision on date, time and place of meetings Meetings held according to schedule Records like attendance register, minutes book, etc., maintained	Number of groups with defined and stable membership Number of groups that have started savings Number of groups that have started inter-lending Number of groups that have given themselves a name Number of groups that have decided on regular meetings, on fixed dates, time and place Number of groups that have started to maintain records	Process of group formation Issues discussed in the meetings Mutual trust among members Problem identification skills Analysis and arriving at solutions Democratic, free and fair selection process Involvement of weaker members in decision making process Transparency and smooth information flow
Group Stabilization – 7 to 12 months	Regular savings and inter-lending Decisions on rate of savings, timing of loans, schedule of payments, etc., crystallize Attendance is over 80% in regular meetings Repayments average 90%	Number of groups, members saving regularly Number of groups inter-lending regularly Average attendance per meeting Rate of repayments	Process followed by groups that have decided on rate of savings, selection of loan applicants, timing of loans, schedule of payments etc. Sanctions for default and deviance imposed, accepted and the process followed

Stage of the Group/Age of SHG	Characteristics/ Inputs/Activities	MONITORABLE OUTPUTS	
		Quantitative	Qualitative or Empowerment Indicators
Group Stabilization – 7 to 12 months	Sanctions for default and deviance imposed and accepted Issues concerning women raised and discussed Literacy classes started Training of group members and representatives Linking of group to lending institution	Loans given to members and its distribution-consumption, on- and off-farm Records concerning loans, etc., being maintained Increase in group's line of credit Proportion of loans to savings Number of groups with defined and stable membership Number of groups that have started savings Number of groups that have started inter-lending Number of groups that have given themselves a name Number of groups that have decided on regular meetings, on fixed dates, time and place	Issues discussed in the meetings Members' confidence to act in public life Group's commitment to mutual support Members' ability to relate with other institutions and government as a group Group's involvement in community actions Small and significant actions taken by members at home and in public Acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills
Self reliance – 13 months to 18 months	Groups are able to handle their routine activities, savings and lending operations without external assistance Regular recovery Improved linkages with banks Initiation of micro-enterprise activities Formation of new groups without project assistance	Number of groups that have started to maintain records Recovery rate on loans Access to credit from banks and MFIs Number of members involved in micro-enterprise activities, number of other schemes accessed Number of activities initiated by SHGs	Freedom from exploitation, moneylenders and landlords Role in other bodies like PRI Awareness of basic legal rights Awareness of own problems and options Critical consciousness of the electoral process, societal analysis and gender issues

Stage of the Group/Age of SHG	Characteristics/ Inputs/Activities	MONITORABLE OUTPUTS	
		Quantitative	Qualitative or Empowerment Indicators
Self reliance – 13 months to 18 months	Coverage with other schemes Involvement of SHG in social/community matters Formation of cluster level; network	Number of formal and informal cluster associations formed	Perception of self, social status Conflict identification and resolution Extent of dependence on field worker Capacity to mobilize external resources Future oriented actions like preventive health, education, saving, productive investment, etc. Acquisition of new skills and knowledge
Institutionalization – 19-24 months	Group takes responsibility for managing own affairs and is willing to pay for services Skill enhancement training to members Stabilization of medical activities Strengthening of cluster level, network Involvement in quality of life of project members	Number of visits made by the field worker Number of skill enhancement programs initiated Enhancement of income through income generating activities Amount of external credit assessed and its quality (terms, average amount, source, etc.) Number of formal cluster level networks formed Number of training programs initiated for clusters Visits to and from PRIs	Ensuring literacy of girl child Decision making within the house-hold Group's support systems Leverage of other development initiatives Influence in local institutions like school, PHC, etc. Strength of networking Conflict management Solidarity with other women Group actions to make the system work against domestic violence, cheating, opposition, gain access to productive resources, etc.

Source: Meenai Z (2003) Empowering Rural Women, An Approach to Empowering women through credit based, self help groups.

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3-D Mapping: A Tool for Community Empowerment

In the context of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of the Philippines passed in 1997, 3-D mapping has served as a crucial enabling tool for indigenous peoples (IPs) to self-delineate their ancestral domains and to file claims over their lands and resources. 3D mapping has also helped IPs make operable the provision in the IPRA law that states: "Under the principle of self-determination, ICCs/IPs shall formulate their own sustainable development and management plans for the land and natural resources within their ancestral domains based on their indigenous knowledge and practices." *(see boxed article)*

What, How, What For?

A 3-D map is essentially a scale model of an area under study, reflecting its topographical contours; bodies of water; residential, agricultural, and timber land; and other important land and water features. It is the concrete output of an entire participatory information-gathering process – merging the indigenous knowledge of the community with scientific mapping technology. The 3-D map is usually kept in the local community.

The implementation of a participatory 3-D mapping tool in community resource assessment and planning involves practically everyone in the community. The larger the number of participants, the better—as the output of the process depends on the participants' combined knowledge of the area being assessed. The process is also known as a Participatory Geographic Information System (PGIS) or Participatory 3-D Mapping (P3DM).

In general, 3-D mapping may be employed in conducting community resource assessment and planning. Its more specific uses include: strengthening land tenure for indigenous peoples, delineating their ancestral domains, and *supporting community forestry projects*. In a conference sponsored by the International Land Coalition in Nairobi in September 2005, the following benefits of 3-D mapping

and PGIS were also highlighted: promotion of equity (ethnicity, culture, gender); amelioration of (territorial and resource) conflicts; and providing a creative means for communities to affirm their historical, cultural, social, ecological and spiritual assets.[1]

3-D Mapping Supports an Ancestral Domain Claim

One success story is that of the Calamian Tagbanwa people of Coron, Northern Palawan whose claim to their ancestral lands and waters was supported by the 3-D mapping output.[2]

In the 1980s, after thousands of years of settlement, eight Calamian Tagbanwa communities in northern Palawan faced imminent disenfranchisement because of unabated, wholesale destruction of local marine resources. Despite coordination with village, municipal and law enforcement authorities, the communities' past efforts to contain illegal fishing and large-scale commercial fishing had been hampered by a lack of legal recognition over their right to utilize, regulate, and manage customary land and marine resources. It was not until the Philippine Constitution of 1987 that "Native Title" or the traditional ascription of territories to indigenous ethnolinguistic communities "since time immemorial" became part of the law.

Key Provisions of the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) R.A. 8371, 1997

- Seeks to recognize, promote and protect the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/ Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs): right to ancestral domain and lands; self-governance; and the right to cultural integrity
- Recognizes prior rights, including pre-conquest rights, of IPs
- Promotes the principle of self-determination, whereby ICCs/IPs formulate their own sustainable development and management plans for the land and natural resources within their ancestral domains based on their indigenous knowledge systems and practices
- Provides for Free and Prior Informed Consent of the IP community as a requirement for the granting or renewal of any contracts, licenses, concessions, leases and permits within the ancestral domains

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[1] "Mapping for Change" in *Advancing Together* (Newsletter of the International Land Coalition), Vol. 2 No. 3, September-December 2005, page 12

[2] Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA), in cooperation with PAFID and Tagbanwa Federation of Coron Island (TFCI), 2000. *Mapping the Ancestral Lands and Waters of the Calamian Tagbanwa in Coron, Northern Palawan: A Showcase of the Philippine Association for Intercultural Development's (PAFID) Land Tenure Improvement Project Using 3-Dimensional Mapping Tool in Community Resource Assessing and Planning.*

In a historic step in 1993, the Calamian Tagbanwas in Coron, Palawan filed the first formal legal claim in the Philippines over "ancestral waters." Five years later, on June 12, 1998, their claim for ancestral domain, consisting of 22,400 hectares of land and waters, was finally granted by the Philippine government.

While historic, this victory was not easily won.

Tagbanwa Foundation of Coron Islands: A True People's Initiative

In 1985, the Tagbanwa Foundation of Coron Islands (TFCI) was formed by the residents of barangays (villages) Banwang Daan and Cabugao. This was in response to three problems: (i) the public bidding of the Tagbanwa clan caves (used as sacred burial sites) carried out by the municipal government; (ii) the influx of migrant settlers in Coron Islands; and (iii) the issuance of tax declarations on parcels of Tagbanwa land to outsiders by the municipal assessor.

Having learned of the awarding of a Community Forest Stewardship Agreement (CFSA) to another group of Tagbanwa in central Palawan, the Tagbanwas of Coron contacted PAFID to gain more information about securing a CFSA as well. They had heard that a CFSA was a legal instrument that could guarantee tenure for a limited period in exchange for the management of forest resources.

After much discussion about the application for a CFSA, the assembly chose the officials for the TFCI by consensus, and appointed 12 community elders to act as an advisory board. The officials then prepared a census, a sketch map, the organization's by-laws, and a development plan for Coron Island.

After four years of follow-up, the CFSA was finally awarded in 1990. As a result, the public bidding of clan caves was stopped, the entry of outsiders ceased, and all tax declarations issued by the municipal assessor on Coron Island were cancelled.

Hearing of this success, other Calamian Tagbanwa clans in the outlying islands, as well as community leaders from other barangays in Coron began to exchange information with TFCI. Each barangay took steps to form a community organization focused on securing tenure over its own area. TFCI's success thus helped bring the different Tagbanwa clans together to support each other's ancestral domain claims.

Seeking a More Comprehensive Claim

Soon after the granting of the CFSA, however, it became clear that the Tagbanwas' domain included not only their ancestral lands but also their traditional fishing grounds, fish

3-D Mapping Success Stories

In the Philippines - Three-dimensional mapping as a consensus-building mechanism was used by the Philippine Association for Intercultural Development (PAFID) in the implementation of its Land Tenure Improvement Program, aimed at helping indigenous communities secure tenurial rights over their ancestral domain. It was then utilized in the implementation of the IPRA, in support of numerous ancestral domain claims by indigenous peoples—among them the Calamian Tagbanwa of Palawan, Philippines.

In Northeast India – The PAFID experience and mapping tools were then introduced in two projects in Northeast India assisted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). In May 2003, within the context of the North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas Project (NERCRMP), the West Garo Hills Community Resource Management Society (WGRHCRMS) hosted a training on P3DM facilitated by PAFID. The event was supported by IFAD and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The P3DM method was tried out in Sasatgre village, which lies in the Nokrek Biosphere Reserve. The output was a 1:5,000-scale model of the West Garo Hills, Tura and Sasatgre, Meghalaya, India.

In addition to enhancement of natural resource management planning and livelihoods goals, P3DM is envisioned to assist in developing a model, which would be replicable for other Protected Areas. The objective is to ensure that local plans developed by communities are included in larger management plans for Nokrek National Park and the buffer zone area. Currently, drafting and development of a buffer zone management plan is high in the priority of the Forestry Department. However, initial efforts by the Forestry Department to draft such a plan have given limited attention to the actual resource management and utilization initiatives of the communities. This situation is due to lack of updated information on current resource utilization and management activities. Later, when more villages will be able to come up with P3DM, recommendations could be formulated on a workable policy for participatory buffer zone management and guidelines developed.

– Source: Integrated Approaches to Participatory Development website – (http://www.iapad.org/whats_new.html

sanctuaries, diving areas for marine products, and other submerged areas that were being threatened with destruction. They realized that the CFSA was not sufficient to protect these vital areas, as it granted only temporary tenure and only for land resources. After studying the legal options open to them, a consensus was reached to take advantage of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development's (PCSD) founding charter, Republic Act 7611 passed in June 1992, that expanded the definition of ancestral domains in Palawan to include coastal zones and other submerged areas. Thus, in February 1993,

seven barangays in Coron filed an application for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC).

Four years later, the seven Tagbanwa foundations federated into the Saragpunta (from saragpun, meaning "let us gather") to support each other's ancestral domain claims. The community then sought PAFID's assistance to come up with supporting documents to strengthen their claim.

PAFID's and the Communities' Roles

The external intervention of PAFID provided the impetus for the communities to pursue their ancestral domain claims. PAFID's role involved clarifying legal policies and documentation requirements (such as position papers, 3-D mapping, etc.).
Prior to PAFID's intervention, however, the communities had already conducted a series of informal consultations among themselves, through the initiative of their elders. They identified issues, such as government plans to push tourism projects in the area which could threaten their ancestral domain and resources. Through a series of clan and village meetings, a consensus emerged that a CADC was needed, but one that would include marine as well as land areas. As Chairman Ben Calix of Bulalacao put it: "If the claim has land, then it should have seas. Without the seas, the Tagbanwa will not be able to survive." (translated) A set of officers was thus formed to represent the communities before various government agencies involved with the CADC application process. Selection was through voting or by consensus among elders and barangay officials, considering factors such as age, education, experience in barangay affairs and skills in negotiation. Persistence and a proven track record in following up meetings were also valued.

Mapping Activities: A Community Undertaking

In January 1996, PAFID began work on the mapping requirements, with the direct participation of the Tagbanwa Foundations and the community leaders and residents:

- **Community sketch maps** – PAFID's field worker assisted the communities in preparing community sketch maps to accompany the petitions filed. TFCI officers, with the aid of clan representatives and village elders, indicated the relative location of houses, Tagbanwa sitios, water sources, mangrove areas, burial sites, coral reefs, fishing grounds, kaingin, cashew groves, etc. These sketch maps provided the needed information for the preparation of base maps used in the on-ground survey of the ancestral domain.

- **Consolidation of boundaries** – PAFID undertook the boundary survey accompanied by members of multi-sectoral groups (NGOs, local government

representatives, and the DENR). The pre-survey process included collating sworn statements of village elders and documenting other evidence of long-term use and occupation of the territory.

- **Survey of boundaries** – The method used in the marine survey involved Trimble GPS receivers switched to the GPS marine setting. In the mapping activities, a motorized banca was used to trace the edges of the communal fishing area and important marine resources. A Tagbanwa boat captain familiar with the area steered the banca and directed the position of the GPS receiver on board. In this way, community members were assured that the surveyed boundaries were the exact points they had indicated.

- **Map validation** – Technical experts applied differential correction to the survey results before preparing a GPS map. They then digitized several features from maps from the Coast and Geodetic Survey—namely the rivers, lakes, island coastlines, peaks and coral reefs. Next, they overlaid the corrected boundary points and the corrected outline of major coral reefs on these features and culled the place names from the community sketch maps. From the sketch maps, they also created a layer featuring the relative location of swiftlet caves, burial caves, fishing grounds, villages and sitios, coconut and bamboo groves, and other indigenous uses of the territory.

  The resulting maps were presented to meetings of the different Tagbanwa Foundations, as well as leaders and residents. Several revisions were made, and the validation map was annotated to indicate spelling corrections for Tagbanwa place names, data for deletion, and additional information on certain key sites. The maps were then re-drawn to incorporate the corrections and turned over to the Saragpunta Board Members for inclusion in their CADC application.

The Provincial Special Task Force for Ancestral Domains (PSTFAD) then conducted a validation of the Calamian Tagbanwa's claim—with the validation report containing several contentious points that Saragpunta protested against. In the end—despite the protests—barangays Bulalacao and Tala were excluded from the claim and the area approved as ancestral waters was confined to 100 meters from the shoreline, an arbitrary criterion with no basis in traditional law.

GPS Technology Meets Traditional Knowledge

Merging the information gleaned from the Calamian Tagbanwas' local knowledge of the area and the navigational skills of their boat captain with GPS technology produced maps of exceptional accuracy in terms of position and content. The initial community

sketch maps also corrected many place names and, more significantly, enriched the GIS (Geographic Information System) maps by overlaying the traditional use of the landscape and seascape. The information contained in Saragpunta's maps easily surpass other land and water use maps of the same areas for several reasons:

1. They locate the major coral reefs in the area and identify each by name;
2. They show the actual, current use of the resources in the ancestral domain (including sensitive or taboo sites, labeled as "Restricted Areas");
3. They indicate the place names of mountain peaks, inland lakes, beaches, coves and other features which were nameless in circa 1980s government maps; since the names are in the Calamian Tagbanwa language, the maps communicate the historical fact that these areas were explored, established and named by their ancestors;
4. They indicate important natural resources with their value or use to the community, showing that the area is clearly not uninhabited, unexplored, nor free from prior rights;
5. They indicate burial caves and other important ritual sites that evidence long-term occupation and use of the territory; and
6. Indigenous knowledge of the ancestral domain is tied to accurate geographic information, thereby facilitating verification of the status of land and marine areas, and confirming the information gathered from community sources.

Reflections

While the linking of 3-D mapping to GPS technology is scientifically impressive, it is the "human factor" of collective empowerment that was the key to success. The victory of the Tagbanwa communities' legal claim over their ancestral domain can be attributed to the following:

1. the people's great interest and commitment in conserving and protecting their natural environment;
2. the consistently participatory approach employed throughout the process;
3. the strong leadership of the Tagbanwa Foundations, guided by clan elders;
4. the strategy of "strength in numbers," as seen in the Tagbanwa Foundations and then in their federation Saragpunta; and
5. external linkages and technical support provided by a committed community-development NGO (PAFID).

In the words of the TFCI chairperson, Rodolfo Aguilar: *The 3-D map has helped strengthen more our unity because we see on it our very own homes and our source of living. It*

also guides us in making a decent plan for our ancestral domain because, with it, we could easily locate our forests, lakes, and other important landmarks of our place. (translated) ❑

by **Melissa Moran**

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Community Organizing for Empowerment: Practice and Theory from the Philippine Experience

Brief History of CO in the Philippines

Community organizing or CO refers to the framework and methodology used by social development workers in the Philippines in empowering peoples organizations as a way of addressing poverty and social inequality. CO may be defined as a social development approach that aims to transform the powerless and voiceless poor into a dynamic, participatory and politically responsive community. Another way of defining CO is that it is a participatory, systematic and sustained process of building people's organizations by enhancing the capabilities and resources of the people for the resolution of their issues and concerns (1994 National Rural Community Organizing Conference).

CO had its roots in the radicalism and turmoil of the late 1960's and 1970's in the Philippines. While there was a genuine desire especially among young people to immerse in and to serve the poor communities, there was a dearth of systematic approaches to working with poor communities other than traditional dole-outs and charity on the one hand, and political agitation and radical action on the other. CO traces its roots to the arrival of Rev. Herb White, an American Protestant pastor, who introduced Alinsky's methodology and organized the Philippine Ecumenical Center for Community Organizing (or PECCO). Its initial efforts were devoted to organizing the urban poor in Manila's slums. Its success was replicated in many urban and rural areas and in the birth of many NGOs doing CO work. An important element in CO came with the entry of the radical and innovative ideas of Paolo Freire *(see box on next page)*. Freire's approach was an ideal complement to that of Alinsky's.

However, PECCO was soon to be divided between two tendencies – those who believed that organizing people's organizations was an end in itself, and those who believed that organizing work in communities should be coupled with ideology and should lead to political action at the national level. It was reflective of the dilemma that social

development workers faced during the Martial Law era. CO as an approach was used by many NGOs until the late 1980s and early 1990s when social development work underwent a paradigm shift and its thrust turned towards advocacy and collaboration vis-a-vis the state and with more technical expertise expected from NGOs.

What does CO hope to achieve?

1. Build organizations of the poor
2. Raise critical, creative and collective consciousness
3. Prepare people's organizations for coalition advocacy work
4. Overcome gender, class and race biases
5. Work for the attainment of basic services and infrastructure
6. Improve resource tenure
7. Build and strengthen economic self-reliance
8. Develop agriculture and protect the environment
9. Build and strengthen democratic participation and governance

Different entry points for organizing poor communities

1. *Issue–based approach* – This approach revolves around issues and problems that are felt by a significant number of people in the community, such as the lack of basic services like health or infrastructure, tenurial rights or impending threats to the environment and livelihoods. Many organizers believe that the issue selected should have a high probability of success. This is the "conflict confrontation approach" or the Alinsky approach to community organizing. This approach is seen as effective in helping the poor

Two streams of CO praxis

Saul Alinsky – American community and labor organizer in the Chicago area. His long experience and methodology in organizing the marginalized led to what became known as the "conflict-confrontation" type of organizing or the "issue-based" approach. Alinsky stresses community or participative action towards social transformation.

Paulo Freire – Brazilian educator and social activist who worked with illiterate peasants in Recife and urban poor dwellers in Rio de Janeiro. His seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, inspired a generation of social activists in the 1970s and 1980s. For Freire, traditional education perpetuates oppression. Instead, Freire proposes a process of dialogue which focuses attention to the student and in the process empowers the people. Liberating education serves to empower people through the process of dialogue which leads to what is called conscienticization. Education has a political purpose and that is to liberate the masses from oppressive structures.

The synthesis of both schools led to two important features of community organizing. One is the "action-reflection-action" cycle which stresses the importance of reflection after every action and action as a result of serious reflection. The second is to educate or conscienticize the people on the root causes of local or community problems. ❑

overcome their feeling of inferiority and helplessness, as it easily agitates/motivates people towards community action. However, there is a tendency that the community becomes lax once the issue is resolved.

2. *Project-based approach* – This approach centers around the introduction of socio-economic projects – income generating projects, enterprise development, cooperative formation, health care, etc. – that were identified either by the organizer after a study of the felt needs of the community or pre-packaged by the funding source based on its perceived needs of the community. While much of the funds may come from external sources, organizers using this approach recommend that as much as possible, internal resources are also mobilized in order to develop among the people a sense of pride and ownership. This approach appears to be easier than the issue-based approach because it is not adversarial and the people easily see the benefits that will accrue them. However, communities organized using this approach tends to be averse towards more radical forms of collective action.

The Roles of the Community Organizer (CO)

1. *Facilitator* – provides a process that will help the community discuss their situation, identify issues or problems, solutions or plans of action and implement them.
2. *Animator* – assists the community to discover and use its innate potentials for creative and constructive team work; stimulates people to think critically and motivate them for action.
3. *Enabler* – initiates or helps release the creative initiatives of the people; must ensure that CO principles are observed i.e., that decisions are not imposed on them and that dependency is reduced through collective action and social education.

10 Basic Steps in Community Organizing

In 1985, a national workshop among urban and rural CO practitioners was held in Manila to discuss an assessment of community organizing praxis over the past several years, and its prospect in the years to come. Though called by other names or sometimes not strictly followed, there was consensus among the participants that the following set of activities constitute the steps necessary in organizing communities for empowerment.

Step 1 – Integration

In this process the organizer immerses herself/himself with the local community and undergoes the same experiences of local people so as to build mutual respect, trust and cooperation. This can be done in many ways such as: participation in direct production

activities, house visitations, congregating and conversing with the people in communal areas and attending social functions like birthdays, weddings, feasts, wakes, etc. In Asia, kinship is based not only on blood but also by ritual relations. By being a sponsor or witness to an occasion or ritual like marriage and baptism, the organizer gains acceptance by the community. Through integration, the organizer unlearns some of his/her own class biases, overcomes his/her limitations, and becomes more understanding and tolerant of others.

Step 2 – Social Investigation (SI) or Community Study

This is the process of systematically learning and analyzing the various structures and forces in the community as well as the problems and issues that need immediate or long-term solutions. The organizer determines the community's interests and attitudes to the issues, identifies potential leaders, and comes up with a tentative approach to organizing. SI methods may include interviews or dialogues with people, personal observations of the organizer, examination and review of secondary data or a participatory approach such as focus group discussions (or FGD) or participatory research. SI is a continuous, on-going process.

Step 3 – Issue Identification and Analysis

This is the process of defining, analyzing and ranking community problems according to their importance, the urgency of solving them, the number of people affected and the probability of resolving them through community mobilization. It aims to identify the common felt needs (not perceived needs) of the community. These issues or needs are often addressed through self-help or externally-assisted socio-economic projects either because people tend to shun confrontation with authorities thru negotiations and/or pressure tactics, or people's traditional concept of community action is through socio-economic projects.

Step 4 – Core Group Formation

This means involving the more advanced local leaders who have been spotted by the organizer during the integration process. They are then constituted as the core group. They may be informal or temporary leaders, i.e. until a formal set of leaders are elected or chosen by the community. This process is necessary for the next stages of organizing – mobilization and organization building. Good community leaders are usually those who belong to the poorer sections of the community; are well-respected and influential members of the community; possess a critical perspective; are desirous of change and are willing to work for change; value collective leadership and democratic participation; can communicate effectively and can find time to perform the necessary tasks.

Step 5 – Ground Work and Community Meeting

Groundwork means to motivate people

on a one-on-one basis or through informal group discussions towards collective action, sometimes with the aid of the core group. It aims to bring about the emotional, mental and physical energies of the people and raise them to the level that they are willing to take collective action. After this is achieved, a community meeting is held to arrive at an agreement on the necessary actions and to delineate tasks to be undertaken to resolve the issue or problem. In some cases, it is the core group who handles the meeting, with the organizer staying in the background.

Step 6 – Role Playing

This is a simulation practice for the community members who are tasked to negotiate with persons of authority or even the adversary. In this session, the organizer envisions every scenario that may take place during "confrontation" or "dialogue" between the community and the "target." It aims to prepare the leaders for the actual process of negotiation and anticipates possible outcomes to ensure victory for the community. This process is usually done in issue-based organizing.

Step 7– Mobilization or Action

This is the high point of the organizing process. Action may mean engaging in a dialogue or protest under issue–based organizing, starting a livelihood project or a cooperative under project-based organizing. Mobilization or action is the community's expression of power while confronting the powerful.

Step 8 – Evaluation and/or Reflection

This is an activity conducted after every action or mobilization to extract lessons learned on how to improve future mobilizations, and constitutes a vital part in the training of the core group and the community. The people take note of what has been and what has not been accomplished, and what remains to be done. It is also an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the community's mobilization. It can also be a self-assessment of all the participants.

Step 9 – Formalization of the Community-based Organization

Lessons from the Philippine experience shows that forming the people's organization is best done after the community undergoes a mobilization or action phase and has gone through an evaluation or reflection process. Some principles in setting up the organization are: ensure the maximum number of membership; a collective or shared leadership; and, emphasize simplicity of structure.

Step 10 – Phase out

Because CO is an enabling process, there comes a time when the organizer becomes dispensable and the POs take over. When the indicators for success set by the NGO have been significantly met, e.g. high levels of socio-political awareness, sustained membership participation, a vibrant pool of trained community leaders, clear plans and goals set by the community, etc. the

organizing process may be turned over. The turn-over includes the transfer of community organizing roles and responsibilities as well as documents. Hoever, this does not necessarily mean a complete pull out from the community as the NGO may be able to assist the PO in a new role, such as helping community organizations form groups or federations or engage in national advocacies.

Critical issues / dilemmas in CO

1. *The balance between local and national issues.* While CO revolves around concrete local issues, they are also rooted in larger national structures or problems. While the national issues provide the perspective, local issues provide the concrete example. The organizer should be able to distinguish the balance between the need for local action with that of consciousness-raising to address larger national issues.
2. *Economic projects as entry point for CO.* Ideally, socio-economic projects should be done only after the people's organization has been established. Some, however, argue that socio-economic projects could serve as an entry point. Whatever the case may be, economic projects must be undertaken within the context of supporting or sustaining the community's goals, elevating the awareness and consciousness of the people and inculcating the values that the organizing process wishes to achieve.
3. *Sustaining Peoples Organizations (POs).* Although POs undergo highs and lows, what is important is that the PO is viewed by the people as integral to their development. Other prerequisites would be continuing education and training programs, clear organizational structure and rules, and alliances with other people's organizations.
4. *Phase Out / Pull Out.* Even after the organizing process, the relationship between the NGO and the PO should not end but should shift to other roles, such as on monitoring, consultation and other follow–up activities. ❑

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Coming Together, Searching for Common Ground: The CPAR Experience in the Philippines

In the aftermath of a popular revolt in 1986 that toppled the Marcos authoritarian regime in the Philippines, several stakeholders in the peasant sector banded together to push for a new legislation on land reform. Thus was born the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform or CPAR. It was historic, as it marked the first time that peasant federations of all political persuasions came together for a singular issue – the passage of a land reform law that was acceptable to peasants. Confronted with diverse ideological orientations and a history of animosity among them, peasant groups within CPAR would have to work together and find common ground if they were to succeed. Yet, up to what point would groups be willing to compromise, to achieve a common goal. In hindsight, the CPAR experience showed that coalition building entails a constant search for common ground.

Brief History

The Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (or CPAR) was a coalition that was made up of 13 peasant, fisherfolk and rural women's federations. It represented the widest or most diverse coalition building effort working for agrarian reform in terms of ideological beliefs and traditions, a first in the history of the Philippine social movements. CPAR was born on May 1987 to push for a more acceptable land reform law based on a seven-point program that also served as the basis of unity (see box). Land reform was both a historic and emotional issue, the cause of many uprisings and even revolutions. Along with other reform bills and measures, the enactment of a new land reform law was necessary to address the widespread discontent that toppled the previous authoritarian regime under Marcos. Thus, the passage of a new land reform law was a priority thrust of the new government. The democratic space or environment created under the new regime challenged CPAR to use and test other methods and strategies for engaging the state, such as consultations, dialogue and congressional lobby action.

When Congress convened on June 1987, CPAR immediately lobbied for an agrarian reform law. The landlord-dominated Congress

People's Declaration of Principles on Agrarian Reform, May 1987

CPAR's 7-point agenda served as the basis for unity among peasant federations during its inception:

1. Land to the tiller and the complete abolition of absentee land ownership, access of small fisherfolk to water resources and the abolition of absentee proprietorship.
2. Comprehensive coverage of all agricultural lands regardless of classification, crops planted, existing tenurial form or farm size, water and natural resources.
3. The terms and conditions of land transfer must not be made burdensome to beneficiaries.
4. Full and genuine participation of agrarian reform beneficiaries in program planning, implementation and monitoring.
5. Full provision of adequate, timely and appropriate services for agrarian reform beneficiaries
6. Compensation to landowners should be based on selective and progressive schemes.
7. Preferential option for cooperatives and collective farms in the production, marketing and credit levels wherever and whenever possible.

however, while amenable to the passage of a new agrarian reform law, sought to block radical provisions forwarded by CPAR so as not to undermine their interests. The result was Republic Act 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (or CARL), a law that was felt by many in the coalition to be below the expectations of the peasants. Others however believe that some radical provisions were inserted into the law, thus viewing CARL as a "compromise" law.

Over time, a number of peasant federations could not accept the new law and were back in confrontation with the state. On 25 June 1988, just two weeks after the passage of the CARL, the CPAR convened the "Multi-Sectoral Conference for a Genuine Agrarian Reform Program" at the Miriam College (then Maryknoll) Auditorium in Quezon City. The participants of the two-day conference, more than 600 from peasant and political formations, cause-oriented groups and NGOs, approved the People's Agrarian Reform Code (PARCODE), the draft bill developed by the CPAR as the rightful alternative to CARL. Among others, the Joint Declaration called for the: (a) adoption and pledge to carry out the PARCODE; (b) launching a signature campaign with the purpose of conducting a massive education drive on the issue of agrarian reform and mobilizing the Filipino people; (c) supporting all forms of peasant initiatives to render the PARCODE effective such as land and fishpond occupation, rent and planting boycott, and other non-violent mechanisms.

In the next few months, CPAR would undertake a massive campaign to gather a million signatures to overturn CARL and ask Congress to enact PARCODE. But at the 1st anniversary of CARL the following year, where CPAR planned to present it to Congress, the

signatures amounted to about 60,000. With organizational problems besetting some of CPAR's member-federations and with public support for agrarian reform waning, some peasant federations contented themselves with the fact that its provisions were probably the best that could be achieved given the limitations of the landlord-dominated Congress. They focused their attention instead on the implementation of the law.

Factors for the success of CPAR

External:

1. *Atmosphere of democratization* – CPAR was created at a time when the Philippines was undergoing a process of democratization. State-supported social reforms were seen as crucial in healing social wounds brought about by repression, elitism and insensible modernity that characterized authoritarian regimes. Along with the pursuit of peace with armed political groups and the creation of a new Constitution, pursuing a land reform law was crucial in the social reform agenda of the new government.
2. *Popular support* – an offshoot of the democratization process was the tremendous popular support that agrarian reform advocates received immediately after the EDSA People Power Revolt in 1986. Aside from traditional allies like labor and the studentry, the peasantry drew support even from those in high society, the academe, various churches, business groups and government in support of the passage of an agrarian reform law. Thus, CPAR's campaign for an agrarian reform law –such as mobilizations, a caravan ("Agrarian Reform Express), Congressional lobbying – were supported by many groups outside its ranks.
3. *Funding support* - many funders, both local and foreign, supported much of CPAR's activities. Aside from the fact that the coalition was unique and the first of its kind, the personalities involved in the coalition were credible and enjoyed the trust of the donor community.

Internal:

4. *CPAR's organizational structure* - **t**he leaders of each federation made up the National Consultative Council (NCC), its highest decision making body. To backstop the NCC with its technical, funding and other requirements were 14 NGOs that constituted the Secretariat. It was the peasant leaders who made the decisions and the NGOs who implemented them, thus empowering the peasants in the true sense of the word.
5. *Leveling off* - the necessity for caucus discussions before major decisions were made enabled peasant leaders to level off and discuss other options. Because peasant leaders came from varied backgrounds, these sessions ensured that

they appreciated and understood the viewpoints and orientations of the other leaders and organizations in the coalition. This minimized stalemate or gridlock situations because leaders were able to craft alternative options during such caucus discussions.

6. *Consensus-building* – There was the culture of consensus building. CPAR made sure that the decisions the peasant leaders took was, to a large extent, agreeable to all and that respective members were consulted. CPAR avoided making any decision without consensus, otherwise the issue was not acted upon. This culture of consensus building pushed the leaders look for a common ground and thus achieve "unity in diversity."

What CPAR achieved for the peasant movement

1. *Increased institutionalization of peasant participation* – one of the biggest contributions CPAR achieved was that it brought to the fore the issue of agrarian reform in the Philippines. CPAR, through, its peasant leaders such as Jimmy Tadeo and Oca Castillo, personified the plight of landless peasants and their struggle for land reform. Likewise, CPAR placed land reform as the central focus of many developmental projects of the government, thereby instituting peasant participation in consultations on issues and projects that would affect them. Even after CPAR folded up, peasant participation in inter-agency dialogues and consultations became a prerequisite for many government programs and projects .
2. *Valuable training and experience of peasant leaders* – The coalition work, advocacy and lobbying that CPAR undertook provided valuable training ground for peasant leaders. One, it enriched the experience of their leaders in attempting to unify the peasantry at the national and local levels. Two, it gave leaders an understanding of the ideological persuasions among peasant federations and the actions needed to build consensus and unity. Corollary to this, peasant leaders learned that engaging the state required them not just to articulate what they were against, but to precisely define those alternatives that they stood for. They entailed a lot of technical inputs, consultations among peasant federations and a common platform that would stand up to public scrutiny and be able to convince other partners especially from within the government.
3. *Recognition of fisherfolk issues* – An off-shoot of CPAR was a coalition of fisherfolk called the Nationwide Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reforms (NACFAR). They were able to raise awareness to the plight of fisher folk which was distinct to those of

peasants. The leaders were able to make the public recognize that fisherfolk was distinct from those of farmers.

Folding up

Ironically, the factors that led to CPAR's success were also the factors that led to its demise. Having the broadest political spectrum underneath its wings also brought the ideological differences that became too much to bear. Because of their success in advocating agrarian concerns, many peasant leaders soon found themselves engaged heavily in government-sponsored consultations, technical working groups, inter-agency committees and in the preparation of summits meetings. While some peasant leaders saw these as a way of advancing peasant interests, others saw it as cooptation by the state.

During the Philippine presidential elections of 1992, CPAR was divided by different political positions and support for certain candidates that was simply unacceptable to others. This also erased the notion that there was a peasant vote in the country. While some peasant federations stood on the basis of principles, others chose on the basis of the candidates' "winability" as a way of advancing peasant interests. The brewing ideological differences were aggravated.

After the presidential election of 1992, CPAR's leaders called for a second congress to determine the coalition's future directions. One federation, identified with the more radical elements of the Left, issued an open letter (*Pahayag ng Pagkabahala* or Statement of Concern) criticizing other federations for being: (a) collaborationist with the state by participating needlessly on the many consultative bodies created by the state; (b) receiving dole-outs such as livelihood funds and even asking to be appointed to government bodies that were implementing CARL. For them, concessions coming from the state should be the result of popular mass struggles.

Before the conflict could get any worse, CPAR decided to fold up in 1993. At the final meeting of the NSC, the peasant federations and leaders issued a joint statement declaring that they would keep open their communication lines and remain open to the idea of coalescing again in the future. ❑

by **Meynardo Mendoza**

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ANGOC

The Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development is a regional association of 21 national and regional networks of non-government organizations (NGOs) from 11 Asian coutnries actively engaged in food security, agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture and rural development activities. Its member-networks have an effective reach of some 3,000 NGOs throughout the region. ANGOC was founded in Bangkok in February 1979, following a two-year series of village and national level consultations in 10 Asian coutnries, leading to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), Rome, 1979.

The complexity of Asian realities and the diversity of NGOs highlight the need for development leadership to service the poor of Asia - providing a forum for articulating their needs and aspirations as well as expression as Asian values and perspectives. ANGOC seeks to address the key issues related to agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture and rural development in the region.

CIRDAP

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) is a regional, intergovernmetnal and autonomous organization. It was established on July 6, 1979 at the initiative of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the Untied Nations with support from several other UN bodies and donors. The Centre came into being to meet the felt needs of the developing countries at that time as an institution for promoting integrated rural development in the region.

From the original six members, CIRDAP has now grown as a Centre of 14 member countries. The member-countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh (Host State), India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The main objectives of the Centre are to: (i) assist national action, (ii) promote regional cooperation, and (iii) act as servicing institution for its member countries for promotion of integrated rural development through research, action research/pilot projects, training and information dissemination.

IFAD

The International Fund for Agricultural Development is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to enabling rural poor people to overcome poverty. It began operations in 1978 in response to a resolution adopted by the 1974 World Food Conference calling for the establishment of an international fund to finance agricultural development programmes and projects primarily in developing countries. IFAD provides financing and mobilizes additional resources for programmes and project sthat promote the economic advancement of rural poor people. The organization's activities are guided by three strategic objectives: to strengthen the capacity of rural poor people and their oganizations; to improve equitable access to productive natural resources and technologies; and to increase rural poor people's access to financial services and markets.