

IDEAS IN ACTION

FOR LAND RIGHTS ADVOCACY



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Foreword

Although the livelihoods of the rural poor hinge on secure access to land, the reality is that in Asia, majority of the poor remain landless or do not have access to productive land. These landless poor comprise marginalized farmers and tenants, indigenous peoples, pastoralists and herders, women, *dalits* and fishers. The struggle for land rights of the rural poor throughout Asia has been prolonged and fraught with challenges, which range from landowners' resistance, corporate interests and poor land governance.

Civil society organizations are actively engaged in advocacy to achieve development objectives, including enhancing the rural poor's access and control to land using a rights-based approach. Advocacy is essential to effect policy change and institutional reform to uphold the poor's rights to land. Recognizing the need to enhance knowledge and skills amidst the new challenges in promoting land rights, ANGOCC co-organized a regional Training of Trainers (ToT) on 16-21 September 2009 in Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao, Philippines, where 22 land rights activists from 8 Asian countries not only lived, breathed, shared on, learned about and enjoyed land rights advocacy, but also fostered a sense of friendship and family.

This publication is an assortment of articles on various advocacy themes that may be of practical interest to those engaged in enhancing the poor's access to land. Many of the articles are fruits of the ToT – lectures, papers submitted, and discussions. But other articles were culled beyond the regional training as a supplement.

We would like to thank those who have made the regional training and this publication possible.

To the Resource Persons – Atty. Normie Batula, Faina Diola, Gari Lazaro, Fr. Francis Lucas, Rachel Polestico, Antonio Quizon, Roel Ravanera and Maricel Tolentino – for generously sharing their knowledge and insights.

To our co-organizers – International Land Coalition (ILC), Center for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (CARRD), the People's Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network (AR Now!), the Philippine Association for Intercultural Development (PAFID), and Task Force Mapalad (TFM) – without whom the event would not have been possible.

To our local hosts – Balaod Mindanaw, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Philippines Country Office, Northern Mindanao Community Initiative and Resource Management Project (NMCIREMP), South East Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN), Xavier University College of Agriculture (XU-CA) – for graciously accommodating us and making our stay memorable.

And especially to our participants, who were resource persons in their own right, for generously sharing their time and experiences.

ANGOC expresses its gratitude to Teresa Lingan-Debuque for helping in the documentation, writing some of the content and initial layout; to Shem Toledo for assisting in the documentation; and to Gerard Jerome Dumlaog, for completing the editing and layout of this publication. We also thank the organizations and individuals who shared their photographs with us which we included in this publication.

My sincere thanks to Catherine Liamzon for providing overall management of the regional training and this publication; to Rolando Modina, former ILC Asia Regional Node Coordinator for providing support in the organization of the training; and the rest of the ANGOCC staff who helped at various stages: Maricel Tolentino, Feliz Corazon Benedicto, Lennie Rose Cahusay, Teresito Elumba and Joseph Onesa.

Finally, in deep appreciation of the unwavering commitment of land rights advocates in the prolonged struggle to enhance access to land for the rural poor, we dedicate this publication to them.

Nathaniel Don E. Marquez
Executive Director, ANGOCC

Exploring the Changing Terrain of Land Rights Advocacy*

Throughout Asia, land is the main source of livelihood and employment among rural communities. A large portion of the population is involved in agriculture, and many livelihoods remain dependent on subsistence farming and access to resources managed as common property, including forests, pastures and water. Secure access to land and other natural resources, however, remains elusive for many poor men and women, as the agrarian contexts of South and Southeast Asian countries are characterized by skewed distribution of private land ownership, with large areas of lands (as high as 80%) owned by minorities (from 5 to 20%) of the population.

Land and agrarian reform initiatives have been developed in many Asian countries, but the implementation of these has generally been wanting because of corruption, changing political leadership and priorities, and a lack of political will. In most countries, even where agrarian reform efforts have been undertaken or are underway, there are significant sectors that do not benefit in these programs such as rural women, indigenous peoples' communities, and youth. Particularly in South Asia, the marginalization of women and *dalits* is a key factor, as land access is often impeded by class/caste dynamics and gender discrimination; discrimination against indigenous peoples (IPs) is also a concern throughout the region.

Land rights advocacy has become more complex because land is increasingly being treated as a commodity. Being in short supply, land is in great demand in the global market.

The competition for land, especially in developing countries, has become even more intense in the last few years. This is clearly manifested by the slew of land deals, either between governments or between governments and private interests, whereby farmland in developing countries is bought or leased to produce food for the buyer or lessor country.

The New Landgrabbers

According to Olivier de Schutter, in the last three years, 40 million hectares of land in developing countries have been targeted for acquisition by foreign investors from countries such as China, South Korea, Japan, India and Saudi Arabia.

This phenomenon has been attributed mainly to the need to secure present and future food supplies. For instance,

GLOBAL TRENDS WITH IMPACT ON LAND RIGHTS

The following global trends are expected to have an impact on land rights advocacy:

- **Decisions are increasingly externalized and more complex** – by faceless, absent corporations with no direct systems of accountability to the community;
- **New opportunities are provided by new information technologies**, and the ability to establish direct information links between local and global actors;
- **Roles and powers of the state have been decreasing** due to increasing privatization and globalization; and
- **Vacuum in ideological frameworks** on property rights with the decline of socialism and the rise of unbridled capitalism.

These trends are exacerbated by:

- **Increasing pressures on land driven by global markets:** landgrabs, biofuels, carbon trading, special economic zones (SEZs);
- **Land increasingly treated as mere commodity**, and this is assisted by MDBs through land administration and land market projects.

– Excerpted from a presentation by Antonio Quizon, ANGOCC boardmember

China has 40% of the world's farmers but only 4% of the world's farmlands. India, which is seeking to acquire land in Burma and Indonesia, is investing in these countries because of declining agricultural productivity – the

* This article was excerpted from a presentation by DR. FAINA L. DIOLA, former ANGOCC deputy director

Land Issues in Bangladesh

Access to and distribution of *khas* land. Agricultural *khas* (government owned) land covers some 321,323 hectares, of which 139,691 or 43.47% has reportedly been distributed to landless households. Government policy states that *khas* lands are to be distributed to landless peasants dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, but leakage of *khas* land has been as much as 17.2%, as indicated by a 2001 report. *Khas* recipients are supposed to pay government a minimal fee of 1 Taka (US\$ 0.01 in 2008 prices) per acre of land received. However, in practice, they have to fork out bribes almost a thousand times more (US\$ 105-150) to various officials even at the lowest tiers of government.

Access to and distribution of non-agricultural land. Previously, no guidelines existed for the management of non-agricultural land. Influential and well-connected persons were thus able to claim ownership of non-agricultural land, usually with forged documents. When the government in 1995 issued detailed guidelines for the management and settlement of state land in urban areas, most of such lands had already been awarded to the rich and powerful.

Absentee ownership. Around 13% of households own more than half (58%) of the country's land. Many of these households do not engage in agriculture, but reside and make their living in urban areas, either by running their own businesses or by being employed in the government and private sector. This encourages rent-seeking behavior.

Commercialization of agriculture and forestry. Shrimp culture used to be practiced in the household and on fallow or marginal land to augment farm incomes. Because shrimp culture is more profitable than crop farming, various coastal land including rice farms, mangrove areas and marshes, were brought under shrimp cultivation, resulting in several serious environmental problems like water quality decline and loss of biodiversity. Also, rubber and fuel wood plantations have destroyed forests, displaced forest-dwelling communities and have caused conflict between forest-dependent groups and the government's forestry department.

Land conversion. Agricultural land has been considerably reduced due to forcible land acquisition to make way for export processing zones, residential development, infrastructure development and other government projects. Much of the land that has been converted is *khas* land which the government had committed to distributing to landless peasants.

Source: *Securing the Right to Land: A CSO Overview on Access to Land in Asia*, ANGOC & ILC, 2009

result of large-scale conversion of farmlands into Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

The major investors from Japan are private corporations Hitotsu and Sumitono, for instance, are leasing farmlands for organic food production.

Some reports indicate that Japanese firms have already leased 12 million hectares of farmland abroad for food production.

In the case of the Gulf States, a statement from Salim Allowzi, Director General of AOAD (Arab Organization for Agricultural Development) is indicative of private sector interest in Arab countries to step up investments in farming projects.

Allowzi said "sufficient investments in Sudan, which is the most fertile country in the region, could already meet the region's need of cereals and other basic food items. Further, if there is a real interest and seriousness for the investors in the farming sector, then all of the Arab world's requirements for cereal, sugar, and other essential foodstuffs could be met by Sudan alone."

Private Arab interests have made inroads into the Philippines. Reports have it that Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain have been securing lands in the Philippines to supply their food needs.

Apart from food crops, investors are interested in the money to be made from large-scale production of crops that would be converted to biofuels.

Developing countries that sign on to such land deals are enticed by the huge payouts, which presumably would go towards financing the country's infrastructure development.

Currently "idle" lands, for example, in Africa, would be "opened up;" the export market would get a boost from biofuel production; and new jobs would be created.

The downside is that most of the lands being "sold off" are tenanted lands. As a result, many farmers are being evicted from land that they have been cultivating. Water is another resource that is being commodified.

Contracts for these land deals rarely specify the obligations of the investors, but are generally clearly in their favor.

Moreover, the targeted countries usually have no legal or procedural mechanisms to protect the rights of the farmers and local communities whose access to land for local food production would likely be threatened.

In fact, many countries have begun to change their laws and policies in regard to land ownership to pave the way for land deals. In China, one major reform has made it easier for peasants to use their land rights as collateral for loans. In Kazakhstan, the government implements land share policies. Sudan allows foreigners to own land permanently.

Pressure on developing countries to enter into land deals is also coming from development agencies. Recent policies of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and even the FAO have been observed to encourage the flow of investment and to relax land ownership laws to facilitate such investments.

Frail Defense

How are the targeted countries dealing with investor incursions? The Thai government claims that its laws provide sufficient protection.

Land Issues in India

Forest Act and Wildlife Protection Act. These Acts emphasize conservation of forestlands and the establishment of “human free” wilderness sanctuaries and national parks. However, no survey was conducted prior to delineating these as protected areas; current occupants (numbering about 4 million) and their land rights were not considered. Thousands of communities have been displaced.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Land expropriation for establishing these SEZs is covered by the “public purpose” clause of the 1854 Land Acquisition Act. Seen as the necessity of the moment, SEZs are being actively promoted by the Indian government. However, much of the land set aside for SEZs is either tribal or prime agricultural land.

Corporate/contract farming. Several Indian states are promoting contract/corporate farming, as emphasized by the National Agriculture Policy (NAP). However, corporate farming threatens the food security of India’s farmers, most of whom are landless or own very small landholdings, because it pushes farmers and peasants from the land. The increasing cultivation of biofuels on scarce agricultural land is another threat to food security.

Source: Securing the Right to Land: A CSO Overview on Access to Land in Asia, ANGO & ILC, 2009

Land Issues in Cambodia

Rising demand for land as an economic asset.

Economic growth has spurred the privatization of public lands, mega-development projects, and the establishment of special economic zones (SEZs), in turn resulting in land grabbing in areas attractive for tourism, allocation of land to the military, land speculation and unregulated granting of land concessions. Demand for land has been thus increasing, and land values are skyrocketing.

Poor land governance. The Cadastral Commission set up in 2002 as a dispute resolution mechanism is plagued with bureaucracy and corruption, and has only been able to address small conflicts. Land registration has proceeded too slowly, and has tended to concentrate on non-disputed areas. Also, parallel and overlapping operations in the Cadastral Commission, the courts, and the National Authority of Land Dispute Resolution (NALDR) have resulted in many legal ambiguities.

Insufficient implementation of the Land Law of 2001. According to NGOs in Cambodia, only 10-20% of the Land Law has actually been enforced. In several cases, government itself has violated Land Law decrees, particularly regarding protection against eviction, fair compensation for eviction, and ceilings for economic concessions. Also, a sub decree of the Land Law yet to be adopted by the government is that which recognizes and provides for the registration of land rights of indigenous peoples.

Source: Securing the Right to Land: A CSO Overview on Access to Land in Asia, ANGO & ILC, 2009

Thailand’s Foreign Business Act allows foreigners to set up shop in the country but requires that nationals own 51% of the company. The government further claims that it does not need foreigners to invest in the country, particularly to grow rice, because Thailand can meet its export requirements.

In Brazil, the legislature is considering a draft law to make land deals more transparent. The draft legislation mandates the government to determine how much foreign ownership is involved in agri-business contracts, for instance.

Paraguay enforced a law in October 2008 prohibiting foreigners from buying domestic farmlands.

Land Issues in Indonesia

Expansion of plantations. Since Indonesian independence, the control of plantation areas has passed back and forth from the Dutch colonizers to peasants. In 2003, President Wahid declared that some plantation companies were guilty of grabbing land from peasants and demanded the return of lands to their former owners as well as restructuring of companies. Unfortunately, his reforms never materialized due to formidable opposition from plantation owners. The “partnership model” promoted by the government is contract farming, intended to diffuse tension between plantation companies and peasants. However, the model has benefited only plantation owners and foreign investors; the conditions of the poor have barely improved.

Indiscriminate awarding of forest and timber concessions. The rapid rate of deforestation in Indonesia is largely attributed to exploitative practices of forest and timber concessionaires. By virtue of the Basic Forestry Law (Law No. 5) of 1967 and Government Regulation No. 21 of 1970, large-scale investments in the forestry sector have been facilitated and all commercial forestry has become the preserve of private investors holding forest concessions. Communities living in or around forest areas are prohibited from logging within concession areas, and can do so only if they have a permit from the concessionaire. Conflicts have erupted between communities and forest concession holders.

Mining on indigenous peoples’ lands. Article 33 of the 1945 Indonesian Constitution grants the State exclusive rights to the country’s mineral resources. Law No. 11 of 1967 or the Law on Mining provides that all mineral deposits are State-controlled assets. These two laws have given the State blanket authority to conduct its own mining operations or grant mining concessions. Such mining operations encroach on IP lands and have had injurious effects on IP communities.

Source: Securing the Right to Land: A CSO Overview on Access to Land in Asia, ANGO & ILC, 2009

Nevertheless, the trend of private-government ventures to buy up farmlands in developing countries appears to be unstoppable. This is already undermining efforts to promote agrarian reform and indigenous peoples’ rights.

What Can Be Done?

Civil society organizations (CSOs) that are monitoring this trend could intervene at different levels.

1. Make an inventory of overseas investments, for example, investments covering over 500 hectares.
2. Examine these agri-business contracts in the light of national and international laws/policies. Look into domestic laws governing foreign investments, taxation, labor, natural resource use, etc., and whether or not these contracts comply with such laws. Find out if there are international investment contracts that govern these types of businesses.
3. Lobby for legislation that provides for transparency in regard to foreign investments on land; obliges land operators who purchase land to declare the amount of foreign participation in their ownership; prohibits foreigners from buying domestic farmlands.
4. Conduct policy review. Aside from examining existing contracts, investigate contracts that are still being negotiated.
5. Conduct financial and economic analyses of these types of agreements.
6. Conduct environmental impact assessment as well as social impact assessment to make sure safeguards are in place. ■

Land Issues in Nepal

Centralized land governance. Decisions related to land management are made at Ministry level. In effect, people in remote areas either have to bring their case all the way to Kathmandu, or wait for the Ministry’s decision to be handed down to district offices. However, local government agencies usually do not have authority to settle issues and are frequently biased against the poor. Land administration is procedurally complex and poor people cannot deal with the formalities it requires.

Abolition of collective rights. Indigenous and ethnic groups are rapidly being displaced from their land, as a result of State-supported lucrative activities such as oil exploration, mining, construction of dams, logging, cash crop cultivation, cattle ranches, and development of tourism infrastructure.

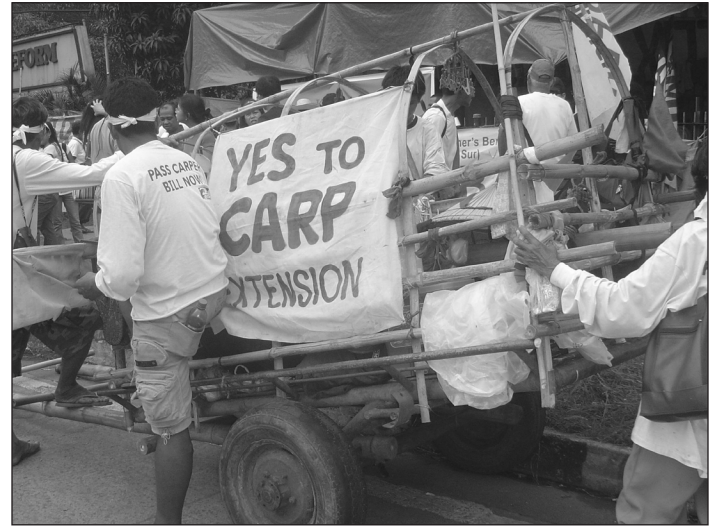
Source: Securing the Right to Land: A CSO Overview on Access to Land in Asia, ANGO & ILC, 2009

Land Issues in the Philippines

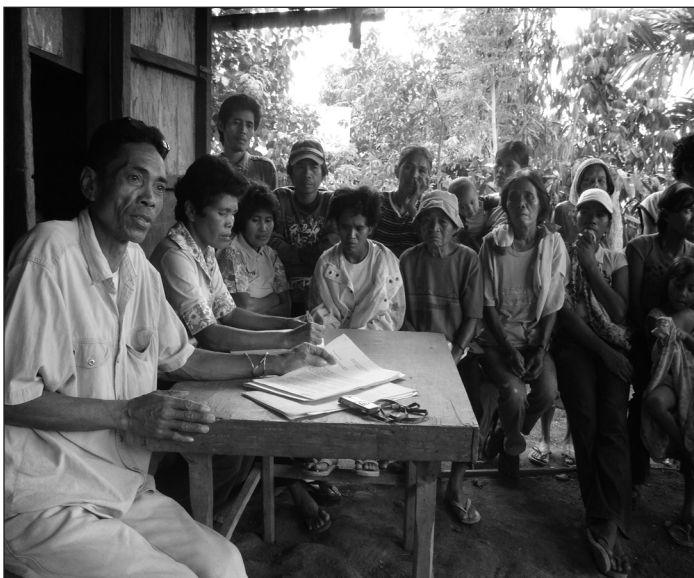
Limited funding for support services. Support service delivery has been insufficient, due to limited funding. Quality support services have only reached a quarter of the 2 million agrarian reform beneficiaries.

Snail-paced ancestral domain titling. Ten years after the passage of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA), only 20% of the targeted area has been awarded to IP communities and limited support has been given thereafter. The IPRA lacks support from government. Meanwhile, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) has been inefficient in fighting for the rights of the IPs.

Overlapping land claims. IP claims over their ancestral lands are being contested by the agrarian reform claims of lowland farmers (with the support of the Department of Agrarian Reform or DAR). In a growing number of areas, this has resulted in conflicts between indigenous communities and farmers. Local Government Units (LGUs) represent another group of competitors to IP community land claims.



Source: AR Now!



Source: ANGOC Photobank

Extractive industries. The current administration has anchored the country's economic development on extraction – timber production from forests and mining exploration. This is a sharp departure from the social reform and asset reform agenda of previous administrations and has increased pressure on the remaining natural resources of the country.

Market-oriented tenurial schemes. Various arrangements designed to circumvent actual land transfer to farmers are being promoted, like the "leaseback" arrangement whereby AR beneficiaries (ARBs) turn over control of the awarded land (via a lease contract) to agribusiness corporations or former landowners, as a precondition for the release of the Certificate of Land Ownership Award. Another dubious arrangement is the "corporative" scheme wherein ARBs are given shares of stock in the agricultural corporation of the landowner in lieu of actual land transfer. Conversion of agricultural land to commercial, residential and industrial uses is also prevalent, further reducing the scope of land reform.

Source: *Securing the Right to Land: A CSO Overview on Access to Land in Asia*, ANGOC & ILC, 2009



Land Watch Asia National Campaigns

Initiated in 2007 by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Land Watch Asia (LWA) is an NGO-initiated regional campaign geared towards ensuring that issues of access to land, agrarian reform, and equitable and sustainable development in rural areas are addressed in the national and regional development agenda. It maps the rural poor's access to land in the region by reviewing existing political and legal frameworks; initiatives and mechanisms for participation by various stakeholders in governance processes. It aims to contribute to existing country campaigns across Asia by identifying, through consensus building, the context, challenges and opportunities of access to land and agrarian reform campaigns at regional and national levels.

At the regional level, the campaign engages regional and intergovernmental institutions such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Centre for Integrated Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) to influence policies on access to land that affect access to land of rural poor sectors.

At the national level, LWA focal points and partners in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines are doing policy advocacy, capacity building, networking and information sharing to help improve the poor's access to land. The following describes the country contexts on access to land and campaign updates under Land Watch Asia.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh has elected a new President and Parliament that has retained its legitimacy, thus opening up potential spaces for CSOs to advocate for reforms. In 2009, the Land Watch campaign as led by country focal point Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), focused on developing educational materials to popularize land issues. ALRD and its network partners also conducted training activities on agrarian related policies with government agencies and CSOs. Specifically, they have worked on raising awareness of char dwellers on their land rights, as well as conducting activities to upscale small-scale farming through promotion of local seed varieties.



Source: ILC-Asia Photobank

ALRD also elevates the findings of its Land Watch country paper to regional and international levels. It provided inputs to CIRDAP's country study on agrarian reform and rural development, raising concerns and recommendations on improving tenure security, pro-poor and redistributive land reform, and the governance of land, water and forest resources, among others.

The campaign was able to score a significant victory in the 2008 parliamentary elections with land issues put into the election manifesto of the Awami League and Grand Alliance forces. Critical now is post-election follow-up for implementation of promises especially at policy level to improve land rights of the rural poor in Bangladesh. ALRD seeks to bring the campaign to climate change and its potential impact on coastal areas, follow-up of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord implementation and the Land Commission for IP lands, and establishing a law for IP lands.

Cambodia

STAR Kampuchea (SK), together with NGO Forum on Cambodia and other partner NGOs, implemented a one-year project titled "Land Issue Consultation in Cambodia" to engage the national government and international donor agencies working in Cambodia specifically on land issues: land grabbing, social land concessions and land conflicts. The project is set in an environment where the government's development agenda often comes at the expense of the poor. Moreover, because land issues in

Cambodia are deemed controversial, NGOs themselves are hesitant to advocate or dialogue with government because of their own security.

SK has conducted two training workshops to raise awareness of some 50 beneficiaries regarding their rights to land. The topics have ranged from land management, to legal parlance, social land concessions (SLC), and land registration. Through these workshops, SK has also been able to collect cases depicting the experiences of communities facing challenges in securing their rights to land.

The abridged version of the Cambodia country paper “Overcoming a Failure of Law and Political Will” has been already translated into Khmer and is being prepared for printing.

India

The Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD), with the South Asia Rural Reconstruction Association (SARRA) and Ekta Parishad jointly work on the Land Watch campaign in India, focusing efforts in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

AVARD, SARRA and EP have campaigned for the implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006, a law that provides scope for enhancing access of the rural poor to forest land, and which has been enacted largely because of democratic pressure from civil society. The Ministers of each state have taken interest in the issue for priority action. In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, almost 10% of claims were accepted due to the high role of bureaucracy and pressure from CSOs.

AVARD has been working on the implementation of recommendations the Bihar Land Reforms Commission (BLRC) forwarded to the Bihar government. One recommendation was the time-bound distribution of *Bhoodan* land, and addressing issues that include the computerization of *Bhoodan* land records, restoration of possession of land awardees in cases of eviction, and support in making the awarded land productive. AVARD has been in active contact with the Chair of the Bihar *Bhoodan* Committee. Consequently, records in two districts have been computerized. Further, around 240,000 acres were distributed from 2007 to 2009 with major distribution of *Bhoodan* land in 2009. Ninety percent of beneficiaries in 2009 were women. Three of Bihar’s 38 districts, namely Muzzafarpur, Samastipur and West Champaran have been selected for land distribution on a priority basis.

The second recommendation was the allotment of homestead to the rural poor landless households under

the Privileged Persons Homestead Act, which is being pursued in collaboration with JSV and local NGOs.

Lastly, Land Watch members in India have engaged the National Land Reforms Council and Expert Committee on the state of agrarian relations, and more importantly, to complete hitherto unfinished tasks in land reforms. These two bodies were constituted to expedite land reforms, following democratic pressure by civil society NGOs through the Janadesh March in 2007.

Indonesia

The Consortium of Agrarian Reform (KPA) recorded at least 89 cases of agrarian conflicts covering some 133,000 hectares. The government has been intimidating activists working on solving agrarian conflicts – resorting to actions like torture and kidnapping. In this vein, KPA, together with Sajogyo Institute, the National Land Agency and Bogor University, initiated the “INFORM” project, which aims to pilot agrarian reform in 34 districts in Southern Java. Although only eight districts have been covered so far, the initiative has already strengthened the link between activists and the academe, as well as resulted in a direct and positive mode of engagement with government.

Directly responding to land cases and conflicts is a regular feature of Land Watch partners’ work in Indonesia. But beyond reactive work, partners like KPA and JKPP are proactively involved in mapping and community organizing, and specifically getting long term land leases for occupants and other dwellers in surrounding areas.

Nepal

The Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC) convenes the Land Watch Nepal campaign, working with the Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal (FECOFUN) and its other alliance partners in the land rights movement to influence policy through dialogues at national and intergovernmental levels. CSRC was at the heart of the land rights lobby, coordinating the campaign of the National Land Rights Forum, which involved social movements and community-based organizations in 42 districts.

The victory of the People’s Movement in 2006 to install a democratic government has presented a highly significant opportunity for the land rights movement to influence Constituent Assembly (CA) members to prioritize the land reform agenda as they frame the new Constitution. Sustaining peace in Nepal requires secure rights to land for the poor farmers.

In view of this, the Land Watch national campaign has organized dialogues between CSOs and the CA to prioritize security of land tenure of the poor and marginalized sectors. It has also held discussions with the CA and the Natural Resource and Fundamental Rights Committees on the issue of landowner compensation for offering excess lands above the prescribed land ceiling. The Land Watch campaign has also organized dialogues with ADB, IFAD, the World Bank and other intergovernmental agencies, sharing policy positions on land reform and coordinating support for activities on improving tenure security, including the agrarian reform campaign. This has culminated in a Memorandum of Understanding between seven organizations for collective support the campaign.

The campaign has also established a platform of interaction between land rights and community forest-users movements, to formulate a more integrated position for implementing land reform and ensuring sustainable land use and resource management. Finally, it has expanded and strengthened the Land and Agricultural Rights Campaign to 50 districts; this has brought discussions from the community to national level.



Source: CSRC

In the next years, the campaign will continue ongoing policy advocacy, capacity development, and supporting agriculture cooperatives and land management activities, but plans to focus on pressuring and influencing the CA on land issues and policies, as well as working with the Land Commission and supporting the process of writing the People's Report to the Commission.

Philippines

The Land Watch Philippines campaign functions as an intersectoral platform for land issues of small landless farmers, IPs, forest users and fisherfolk. The campaign's greatest victory is the extension of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), with a new law passed and signed in August 2009. Land Watch Philippines member the People's Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network (AR Now!) led in the intense lobbying efforts

for the passage of Republic Act 9700 which provides the funding to extend CARP and make essential reforms to the existing Agrarian Reform Law. The new law breathed life to CARP's Land Acquisition and Distribution component, allowing the continued redistribution of some two million hectares of mostly private agricultural lands to identified beneficiaries.

The campaign has organized cross-sectoral discussions between IPs and farmers to tackle new policies affecting land reform implementation. For example, the 2nd Land Watch Conference was held last August, gathering representatives from the four sectors to discuss challenges to advocacy on land – the CARP extension with reforms (CARPER) law, land grabbing, land conflicts due to overlapping policies and confused mandates, the Alternative Mining Bill, and the National Land Use Act (NLUA) campaign. The Land Watch convenors have been assessing and rethinking strategies to push the passage of NLUA in the next Congress after the May 2010 elections.

A mechanism for the campaign to engage high-level stakeholders, the Philippine Development Forum (PDF) comprises government agencies and donors, and now CSOs, to discuss development priorities. ANGOC actively sits in the Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) working group and its sub-working groups on Land, Upland and Agribusiness. ANGOC brought in the Land Watch Philippines convenors, and collectively they have raised community issues and perspectives on agrarian reform, resource management, mining, and IP rights. Additionally, last May 2009, ANGOC, Land Watch Philippines and the PDF-SRD engaged the World Bank in a roundtable discussion on the Bank's study and positions on CARP.

The campaign's project on "Intensifying the common pursuit for land, justice and food security of IPs and Farmers in Mindoro and Bukidnon" has provided a forum for common advocacy of IP and support groups. Land Watch has helped convene dialogues between the Buhid Mangyans of Mindoro and DAR, which issued agrarian reform titles on the IPs' ancestral domain. The Manobos in Don Carlos, Bukidnon were unsuccessful in lobbying for their ancestral domain claim of 700 hectares of land within an estate distributed under CARP; they decided to take DAR's offer of settlement of 10 hectares of land for some 200 families. Support for the Manobos has consisted of food security and small livelihood projects, with Land Watch partners orienting them as CARP beneficiaries and following up on the processing of their CARP land titles. In sum, the project has enabled a stronger partnership between farmers and IP groups advocating for the land rights of Manobos in Bukidnon and Mangyans in Mindoro, while unraveling the policy complications from conflicting land laws.

Old Style Landgrabbing & Lessons for Today's Activists

FTF in Ex-Dutch Estates

(West Java, Indonesia)

From 1965 to 1968 – a period infamously remembered in Indonesia for the brutal anti-communist purge undertaken by the military – some 1,110 hectares of land in West Java were seized by the armed forces and civilian officials of the Suharto government.

The land consisted of two former Dutch-run tea plantations called the Ganjartemu and Pasirpadang estates, which former plantation workers had “seized” from the Japanese in 1945, with the help of Indonesian freedom fighters. The farmers formed themselves into a group called “First Tiller Farmers” (FTF).

FTF asked help from the *Forum Kerakyatan Indonesia* (FORKI), which participated in the fight to overthrow the military regime in 1978. An advocacy team was put together to conduct thorough research at the location. Then followed three years of struggle that resulted in the return of 400 (out of 600) hectares of tilled FTF lands.

The FTF Struggle

FORKI responded to FTF’s appeal for help by first holding an internal forum discussion which included students from various universities. A visit was made to the areas; various data and findings were noted down, then discussed among the members of the Advocacy Team.

Each village formed an organization with a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and a General Assistant. A Coordinator was appointed by the five village leaders in a democratic manner.

After seven years of hard struggle, 60% of FTF lands have been reclaimed, although attacks and various dirty tactics have been used by the landgrabbers to retake the lands. It is significant to note, however, that they avoided direct violations of the law in order not to be hated, and to win the sympathy of the authorities and the community.

Impact of the Struggle

- Around 2,400 poor people who had no land at all and the ex-hard laborers of both plantations now have land to cultivate for their own needs.
- The movement had awakened an awareness of the people’s potentials and rights and raised their confidence and courage.
- The success of the struggle inspired similar cases nationwide, as well as attracted both local and national media attention – benefiting not only the FTF but also the poor farmers in the country.
- The FTF became a sustainable and self-governing organization, as a response to the conditions of the struggle to reclaim their land.

- By Noviar Safari, General-Secretary, Bina Desa

Conflict in Kraing Ta Seim

(Pursat, Cambodia)

In 1999, 47 families in the village of Kraing Ta Seim, just south of the town of Pursat, in Western Central Cambodia, were issued a land certificate in nearby Prey Roleap commune.

In 2002-2003, after the villagers had begun clearing the land, a group of soldiers from the Cambodian army confronted the villagers and informed them that the land belonged to them and that the people would have to move off it. Despite producing no official documents to substantiate their claims, the soldiers insisted that they were perfectly within their rights to assume the land for themselves, and told the community that their captain had authorized the acquisition.

Finding a Solution to the Conflict

In 2004, local NGO Alliance Association for Rural Restoration (AARR) began investigating the case to find a resolution to the land conflict that would be satisfactory to the needs of the Kraing Ta Seim community.

After building up a good understanding of the case AARR began establishing an advocacy community of 47 families involved in the conflict.

AARR then set about organizing discussions and negotiations between various key stakeholders in the dispute.

The next step for AARR after the initial discussions was to investigate the precise legal situation of the case. It was discovered that while both the commune chief and the military captain were both able to issue land certificates to individuals and communities they represented, in the case of Kraing Ta Seim, it was the community’s certificate that was legally the strongest.

Upon establishing the legal situation of the conflict, AARR arranged for further discussions with all involved parties, with the aim of implementing a preliminary solution to the conflict, in the form of a land division between Kraing Ta Seim and the military.

However, even this solution was met with some discontent, as 7 of the 47 families that made up Kraing Ta Seim disagreed with some aspects of the land division. Subsequently, these families decided to part from Kraing Ta Seim and cultivate by themselves.

Steps for the Future

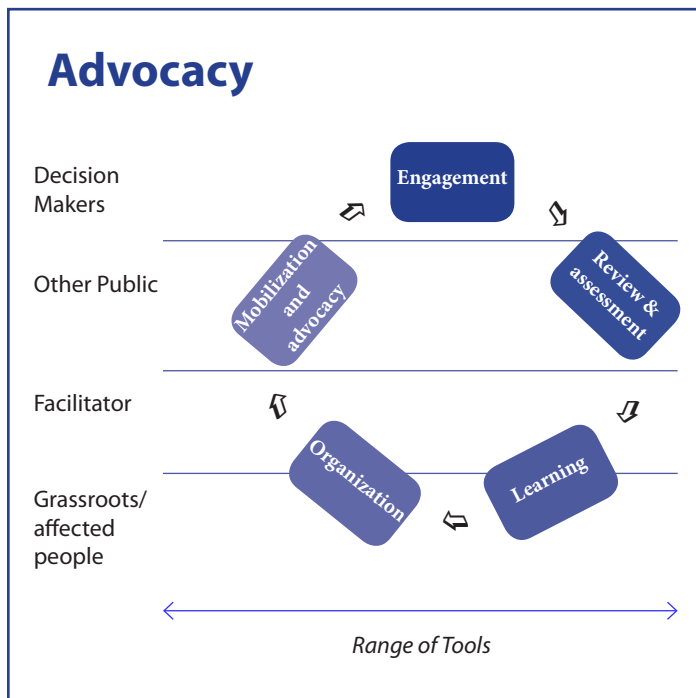
What is now necessary is for both parties to sign a written agreement, confirming the position of each group with regard to the division of the land and hopefully prevent future disagreement or conflict over its ownership. In order to achieve this, AARR is planning a roundtable meeting of all involved parties, so as to set out a legally binding agreement regarding the land division.

- By Chet Charya, Executive Director, Star Kampuchea

The A-B-Cs of Advocacy*

Advocacy generally starts with “organization,” and proceeds to “mobilization,” and culminates in “engagement.”

Advocacy does not end here however, but is followed by “review and assessment” in order to facilitate “learning.” The diagram below presents this cycle of advocacy in greater detail:



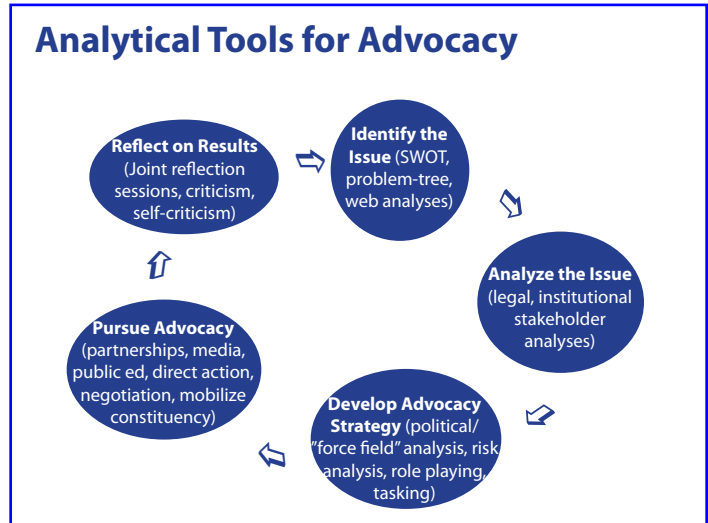
Advocacy can be better understood by classifying its activities into essentially two kinds. *Upstream* advocacy pertains to the initiatives made to publicize issues that need to be addressed. This is the high-visibility part of advocacy.

Meanwhile, *downstream* advocacy involves building consensus and forging alliances and networks, lobbying and attending meetings.

What Campaigners Should Not Do...

The following are the most common mistakes in undertaking advocacy campaigns:

1. Talking to the wrong person or group... or the wrong target;



2. Singing to the choir or talking to the converted – instead of those who need convincing;
3. Addressing an issue that is TOO BIG or TOO COMPLICATED to handle;
4. Not knowing what the people really want;
5. Not having any **concrete** demands, alternative proposals – all complaints, but no solutions;
6. Having too many mixed messages;
7. Having too many meetings, but NO ACTION!; and
8. PARALYSIS from too much ANALYSIS.

Checklist for Campaigners

Advocates should ask themselves the following questions before embarking on their campaigns:

- Is the issue based on the **felt needs** of the poor?
- Does the issue have a **constituency**?
- Do we have a **counter-proposal** or an **alternative**?
- Have we identified the **right targets** for our advocacy?
- Do we know exactly **what results** we want?
- Are these **achievable**?
- Do we have a high **chance of winning** what we want?
- Can we afford the **risks** involved?
- Can we **sustain our efforts**?

* Excerpted from a presentation by ANTONIO B. QUIZON, former ANGOC executive director and current ANGOC boardmember

How to Use Mass Media for Advocacy*

Mass media refers to the entire array of the media specifically envisioned and designed to reach a large audience, like radio, television, magazines, newspapers and the World Wide Web.

The “traditional” media are traditional means of communication and expression that have existed since before the advent of the new medium of the Internet. Industries that are generally considered part of the old media are broadcast and cable television, radio, movie and music studios, newspapers, magazines, books and most print publications. Many of those industries are now less profitable than they used to be and this has been attributed to the growth of the new media.

The new media usually refer to internet-based communication tools. The latest of these are called Web 2.0 technologies, which include social networking sites, blogs, channels, feeds, readers, browsers and others.

Regardless of these categories, media serve the following purposes in relation to advocacy:

- Provide information;
- Make people decide in your favor;
- Change perception; and
- Change behavior.

Advocacy as Advertising

All advocacy would profit from the “tricks” of advertising. The word advertising is derived from the Latin “ad vertere,” or “to turn the mind around.”

Campaigners would do well to adopt the following basic principles of the advertising trade:

1. Always take the point of view of the audience (i.e., receiver of the message);
2. Deliver your message like a salesman making a sales pitch;



Source: Ekta Parishad

3. Strive to change your audience’s perception of her/himself; her/his needs; if you’re successful at this, the desired behavior will follow;
4. Persuade your audience that s/he has much or everything to gain from thinking or acting as you would have her/him do. For your audience, the deciding question is: *what’s in it for me?*

Campaigner, Know Thy Audience

Before you formulate your message, you must first have a clear picture of who your audience is.

The following guidelines will help.

A - AUDIENCE

- ⇒ Who are they?
- ⇒ How big are they?

U - UNDERSTANDING

- ⇒ What is the level of their knowledge of the issue/s, information, data, ideas being communicated?

D - DEMOGRAPHICS

- ⇒ What is their age, sex and educational background?

* by FR. FRANCIS B. LUCAS, president and chief executive officer of the Philippine Catholic Media Network (CMN), and ANGOC chairperson

I - INTEREST

- ⇒ Why are they predisposed to the message?
- ⇒ Who introduced the message to them?

E - ENVIRONMENT

- ⇒ How will the message be disseminated?
- ⇒ What outlets will you use, e.g., marches, press releases, interviews, programs, movies, web sites, web 2.0 based materials, social networking sites, TV, radio, newspapers, newsletters, posters?

N - NEEDS

- ⇒ What are the needs of the people?
- ⇒ What are your needs as communicator?

C - CUSTOMIZATION

- ⇒ What specific needs should be addressed?

E - EXPECTATIONS

- ⇒ What are they expected to learn or hear from the message that will motivate them to act in the desired fashion?

Once you've determined all you need to know about your audience, you are ready to prepare your message. The following section provides tips to help increase your chances of getting your message across. Let's start with traditional mass media.

Dealing with Traditional Media

Newspapers, television networks and radio stations are ever-hungry for news. Thus, to make sure they "take the bite," your story must be "newsworthy."

A story is newsworthy if it is:

- New/fresh;
- Current/has just happened;
- Affects many people;
- Interesting;
- Involves popular culture
- True, verifiable; and
- Holds human interest.

Writing for Traditional Media

The following are simple rules for writing for and dealing with traditional media.

Head-turning Headlines

What makes a head-turning headline? Here are a few rules:

1. Use the present tense of the verb.

Example: Arroyo gov't. declares Martial Law

2. Keep your headline short and succinct, without leaving out details that catch attention, such as number of fatalities, amounts of money involved, place of occurrence, etc.

Example: 3 million die in Jakarta plane crash

3. Use simple action words. Avoid "big" words that are not used in everyday language.

Example: Court in Mumbai Taking Time to Decide on Case of Act of Lasciviousness Filed Against Member of Parliament Arundhati Rajapaksa

Instead say: Mumbai Court delays ruling on sex scandal case vs. MP Rajapaksa

4. Look for the most interesting angle in your story and highlight it in your headline

Example: "Dog bites man" creates no stir.

On the other hand, "Man bites dog" is a sure-fire hit.

Newspapers

- ⇒ Write your story the way you would want it to be published.
- ⇒ Decide on the slant (perspective, angle) you want to take and develop your story accordingly.
- ⇒ Focus on 3 or 4 main messages, and use as few words as possible.
- ⇒ Write your story in the past tense, but your headline, in the present tense (see sidebar)
- ⇒ Use an attention-grabbing headline (see sidebar).
- ⇒ Include a Contact Name and contact details.
- ⇒ KNOW WHO CALLS THE SHOTS:
 - Beat Reporters are assigned to a specific topic or place;
 - General Assignment Reporters go wherever they are needed;
 - Features Reporters are assigned to write longer pieces, profiles, etc., that are often not time-sensitive;
 - News Editors decide whether your story is publication-worthy and slants and edits it

according to the newspaper's editorial policies and style guide.

- Deadline for submissions to major newspapers: 4-6pm.

Television Stations

Besides the general rules for writing a newsworthy story, the following rules apply in pitching stories to TV stations:

- ⇒ Provide a visual (footage or still photographs).
- ⇒ Make sure that your story has **sound bites** (a 5 minute interview is likely to be reduced to a 15-second quote; make sure that your story has such quotable material).
- ⇒ Deadline for news submissions to local television stations: Noon, 4, 5, 6 and 9pm. National television stations accept news submissions 24 hours a day, seven times a week.

Radio Stations

- ⇒ For live interviews, make sure that you have your story straight.
- ⇒ If you want to get airtime for free, approach local/rural radio stations. They are always on the lookout for well-produced segments.

Following Up with the Media

- ⇒ Be polite but persistent; media is your ally
- ⇒ The best time to call is in the morning
- ⇒ E-mail is often more effective than phone calls. But it is better to do both.
- ⇒ Cultivate friendly relationships with the media without paying them. Help them to understand your advocacy and win them over to your cause. A media ally is a powerful weapon. ■

RADIO RULES!

There has been much talk about the end of radio. Yet statistics show that radio is "still lord of the airwaves" in the digital age.

A market research study shows that in the Philippines:

- ⇒ Listeners in Metro Manila and Cebu (the two largest urban centers in the country) are tuned in to the radio at an average of 10 hours a week;
- ⇒ Listeners tune in to radio daily and the rate of listenership is uniformly high across all income classes and age groups;
- ⇒ TV watchers catch the same news or programs on radio.

Why radio remains relevant

- ⇒ All media use sound.
- ⇒ All electronic pulses are radio waves.
- ⇒ The ear receives information even when the listener is beyond visual range of a television or other visual media.
- ⇒ Sound is accessible anytime, anyplace, anywhere, especially with the new portable devices, like Ipods.

Enter New Media*

Web 2.0 Technologies

Web 2.0 technologies refer to the latest generation of Internet-based tools, such as social networking sites, blogs, channels, feeds, readers, browsers and others, which are designed to enhance the ease, speed, and reach of “connecting” via the internet.

Web 2.0 technologies, used as tools to support/undertake a campaign, are most effective where:

- ⇒ There is a clear and consistent message;
- ⇒ There’s a legitimate public clamor for, and a groundswell of support and co-ownership of the cause;
- ⇒ Stakeholders have exhausted all legal and metalegal means possible as well as non-violent strategies and tactics to pursue the advocacy.

The goal of an online campaign is to popularize an issue; establish an online presence; provide a concrete expression of support; and to reach out to young people.

An online campaign generally uses the following strategies:

- ⇒ **Create an online advocacy hub**, which is a conventional website and blog.
- ⇒ **Connect with supporters** via email list, using social networking sites, RSS feed, Twitter and text messaging;
- ⇒ **Influence online discourse/discussion** in your space.

Using New Media for Campaigns

The following “tips and tactics” have been shown to work in online campaigns, such as that which lobbied to extend the Philippine agrarian reform program (CARPER):

- ⇒ Make sure that the website/weblog is purposive, easy to find, relevant and current.
- ⇒ Use blogs as a (a) news source, or (b) a quick response tool. Blogs work best for organizations that have a strong policy unit (and hence, produce a good stream of content) or a wide following.

- ⇒ Blog your cause at <http://blogger.com>, <http://tumblr.com>, <http://wordpress.com>, and <http://multiply.com>, <http://myspace.com> or create your own domain name and get a hosting plan.
- ⇒ Organize a Blog Action Day or blogging memes related to your cause such as badges, buttons, widgets and other content snippets that supporters can place on their own sites. A meme is a catchphrase or concept that spreads quickly from person to person via the Internet.
- ⇒ Build an e-mail list, and maintain and update it.
 - Use “BCC” (Blind Carbon Copy) to keep recipients’ addresses confidential;
 - A personally written e-mail message is more effective than mass mails.
- ⇒ Use social networking sites to reach a new audience. Social networking sites are websites on which people and organizations set up profile pages with basic information about themselves and then linked to other people’s pages. Facebook is the most popular and widely used social networking site.
- ⇒ Use social media, or tools used to disseminate content that is created by random internet users rather than by a central person or group. Examples are Youtube, Podcasting, and Short Messaging System: Plurk, Twitter and Text Messages.

Facebook is a social networking website launched in February 2004 and operated and privately owned by Facebook, Inc. Users can add people as friends and send them messages, and update their personal profiles to notify friends about themselves.

Facebook has many applications that may be useful to advocates. For example, its Causes application helps people mobilize their networks to expand their selected cause, such as a foot march or a particular organization. Causes have enormous potential to help in fundraising, awareness raising and recruiting supporters.

One excellent reason to use Facebook is that it has become one of the more recognized information channels on the web today. Most information sharing websites have integrated functions to readily transmit pre-published info from Facebook, and vice-versa.

* by GARI LAZARO, former campaign officer, AR Now!

The screenshot shows the Facebook profile of WALHI. The cover photo has the text "THERE'S NO PLANET B" and "Pulihkan Indonesia". The main content area shows two posts. The first post is titled "Pernyataan Sikap WALHI" and discusses the arrest of 17 activists and farmers in Sulawesi. The second post is titled "Perlawanan Rakyat Talaga Raya atas Pertambangan Nikel dan Hak Veto Rakyat" and discusses a protest in Talaga Raya against nickel mining.

Plurk is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to send updates (otherwise known as **plurks**) through short messages or links, which can be up to 140 text characters in length. Updates are then shown on the user's home page using a timeline which lists all the updates received in chronological order, and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. Users can respond to other users' updates from their timeline through the Plurk.com website, by instant messaging, or by text messaging.

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as *tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as *followers*. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (SMS) or external applications.

The effectiveness of the use of social media may be gauged by:

- ⇒ The number of friends, fans or followers;
- ⇒ Using trackable URLs when posting information;
- ⇒ The amount of discussions generated within;
- ⇒ The amount of photo and video views/comments;
- ⇒ The amount of comments on the profile page;
- ⇒ The number of tweets and retweets;
- ⇒ The number of downloads;
- ⇒ The number of questions asked and answered on a site;
- ⇒ The size of your network;
- ⇒ The number of "fans" your page has. ■

Role of the Media in the CARPER Campaign: Of Media Bites, Snapshots and Spreads of Stories*

Three years of intense campaigning for the CARP Extension with Reforms (CARPER) Law paved the way for local and international media to place the controversial legislation in the public consciousness.

This historic campaign united farmers, agrarian reform advocates, students, church personalities, laborers, and other sectors pushing for CARPER. The intense campaign for CARPER called for equally intense media coverage to realize the farmers' triumph for land ownership and social justice.

But getting media coverage for the campaign was not always easy, and there were always concerns like whether the message was being communicated correctly, if the provisions of the law that confused other groups were sufficiently explained, and whether the issue was discussed extensively.

Peasant-related Stories, Challenges and Media Fatigue

Even at the onset of the CARPER campaign, it already enjoyed much media coverage. The march of the Sumilao, Banasi and Calatagan farmers to Manila and the hunger strike by farmers at the gates of the House of Representatives all made history.

However, despite the significance of the achievements by the farmers, these did not always land in the mainstream media. There was a stage in the CARPER campaign when it was difficult to understand why, despite the issue's urgency and relevance, it was not getting enough media coverage. It became apparent that the farmers' actions had to go beyond the ordinary to become "newsworthy" in the eyes of the media. Ultimately it was the farmers' extreme sacrifices which landed the campaign in the mainstream tri-media.

The CARPER campaign, no matter how urgent and relevant, still competed with thousands of other national

* by Murin Velasco, Media Officer of *Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN)* (Lifted from: *CARPER: The Triumph of the Filipino Peasantry. AR Now! The People's Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network, Inc., 2009*)

political and social issues. At the time of the campaign, it was the issue of charter change or amendment of the Philippine Constitution that occupied the media's attention. Charter change bombarded the media despite less creative and less active mass movements as compared to the CARPER campaign. This indicated that CARPER was not yet a national issue.

In the course of the campaign, hundreds of farmers left their families behind in the provinces and trekked to Metro Manila. These actions won some media mileage. With the media centered mainly in Manila, local struggles had to be brought to Manila to gain greater media coverage.

Another challenge was the anti-CARPER groups' defiance of the farmers' initiative. The issue of land reform is highly political and economic, and he who has these powers has the power to influence media reports.

The individual biases and perceptions of editors and publishers also shaped the media's perspective on CARPER. Also, reporters who cover the land reform beat also cover the entire agriculture sector, spanning the concerns of big industries and the peasant class.

Lights, Camera, Action: Farmers Trailblazing in the Campaign Fashion

What captured the media's attention, apart from the campaign's relevance, timeliness and urgency, was its entertainment value. In this era of "infotainment", where getting information should be appealingly structured, the campaign's entertainment value came to the fore as well.

Stories on CARP are attention catchers for readers, listeners or viewers. Compared to issues on violence, politics, tragedies, and show business, CARP is a complete story in itself. It covers violence (land-related, landowner harassment), politics (landlord-dominated policy makers), and tragedies.

The issues of farmers and land reform also have a very personal appeal to many Filipinos. Majority of the Filipino population is engaged in farming. Thus, some media personalities took the issue as a personal engagement as they themselves had similar experiences as the

campaigning farmers. Some of the media personalities either came from a farming family or had relatives who were farmers.

Despite the prevalence of “envelopmental journalism”, or the practice of giving cash (usually contained in envelopes, hence the term) to reporters in exchange for favorable media coverage, majority of the media workers believed in the heart of the campaign, that is, social justice and the equitable distribution of land. The media also believed that the Philippines is a predominantly agricultural country and that production need not come only from the commercial sector but also from the small producers.

Information and Communication Technology as a Media Tool

Aside from television, radio, and print media, the farmers maximized the internet through social networking sites such as Multiply, Friendster, Facebook with Cause applications where one can create his/her own Cause and recruit members/supporters who share the same advocacy.

Yoyong Merida, a Sumilao farmer, had mastered the use of Facebook with his network expanding from students, media, politicians, celebrities, agrarian reform advocates and church leaders. Yoyong maximized Facebook as a tool to maintain and expand contacts, keep up with political and media events, and shout out positions when provided no space in the mainstream media.

Social networking sites also provide their users the liberty to share their thoughts, announce activities and expand their network of supporters. These sites are accessible to and frequented by almost all generations of internet users. Whatever their intentions, people have their own accounts that they want others to know about and access to the internet is available anytime almost anywhere in Metro Manila.

Lessons Learned: The Power of Media in CARPER's Passage

If there is one lesson worth remembering from the CARPER campaign, it is that advocacies, no matter how relevant and urgent, need media to hasten the process of getting things done. The travails of the campaign made CARP newsworthy and these should be documented as a guide on how policy in the country can be shaped in favor of the marginalized sectors.

The campaign enjoyed frequent coverage on television, radio and print media. The media provided good venues for different perspectives to flourish into healthy debates in perfecting the imperfect old law. The media coverage gave the public a blow-by-blow account of what was happening with CARPER. Media also helped shape the government's position to later side with the farmers. With the different faces of CARPER having been caught on camera and print, supporters elevated CARPER from a sectoral or local concern to a national issue.

The CARPER coverage also exposed how the landowner-dominated House of Representatives sashayed around the law. Some Representatives could not hide their personal agenda to exclude their properties from land reform. It has been 21 years since the effectivity of the first law on CARP, yet there remain a considerable number of landless farmers. Landlords and politicians have succeeded in legally maneuvering around the very law that is supposed to uphold the farmers' rights.

The CARPER coverage also intended to inform the people on how the government put landlord interests ahead of farmers' rights and food security.

Republic Act (R.A.) 9700 of the CARPER Law was signed on 7 August 2009, thanks to the farmers' blood, sweat and tears in campaigning for their cause and also to the support and influence of the media. ■

Campaigns Combining Traditional and New Media may consist of:

- Sending letters to the editor by the thousands
- Text brigade
- Parliament-of-the-streets sessions, including songs, dances, etc.
- Organized phone-in opinions/ commentary
- Forums putting together prominent personalities to argue the pros and cons of a specific issue
- Guest appearance in highly-rated TV shows; being interviewed in radio programs
- Blogging

Research for Advocacy*

Research is a method of inquiry to obtain facts in response to questions we raise. The diagram below illustrates the research process:



The approach is the researcher's general perspective in raising questions and defining methodologies for gathering data. There are two general approaches to research – quantitative and qualitative.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a process of inquiry to understand a social or human problem. Its objective is to derive patterns to formulate concepts and argue interrelationships among concepts. As the event is observed, possible explanations for its occurrence are derived as an insight. Qualitative research is usually used when the research focus is on strategies adopted in the implementation of a program.

Instead of quantifying the output of the program, the focus is on what the program has accomplished. The following describe the characteristics of qualitative research:

- ⇒ Concerned primarily with **process**, rather than outcomes or products.
- ⇒ Interested in **meaning** – how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world.
- ⇒ The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
- ⇒ Data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines.
- ⇒ Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site or institution to observe behavior in its natural setting.
- ⇒ Qualitative research is descriptive. The researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures.
- ⇒ The process of qualitative research is inductive. The researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details.

Quantitative Research

Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in the following ways:

- ⇒ While qualitative research focuses on details of the process of events, quantitative research focuses on outcomes or products, which can normally be counted.
- ⇒ Emphasis is given on the importance of individuals who share their experiences rather than combine their experience in aggregate form where the person loses identity.

There are two types of quantitative research: case studies and historical research.

Case Studies

Normally entails the selection of a particular level of analytical interest (person; organization; a group in a duly organized public institution such as one unit or an office department; a social unit that evolves without the benefit of

* by MA. FAINA L. DIOLA, former deputy director, ANGOC

a formal process; or an informal network wanting to lobby for reassessment of programs or projects);

Where its focus is an organization:

- ⇒ Its usual objective is to capture how an organization has evolved, how it is constituted, and how it normally performs its regular activities. Its thrust is how to characterize how it operates in reality.
- ⇒ Aspects of the organization research will focus on have to be spelled out.
- ⇒ The level of analysis depends on the variables of the study and the theoretical basis for focusing on this set of variables.

Where its focus is an individual:

- ⇒ The objective may be to disclose how the person is performing, the specific approaches to techniques adopted in the performance of a particular role, and the problems and difficulties that may have been encountered in performing this role.
- ⇒ It draws lessons learned from the nature of leadership or service delivery.

Where the focus is a program:

- ⇒ It concentrates on the organizational structure, people, resources, and approaches and how the program operates in a certain setting.

Historical Research

- ⇒ Systematic collection and evaluation of data related to past occurrences in order to describe causes, effects, or trends that may help to explain present events and anticipate the future (Gay 1996).
- ⇒ Variables in the theoretical framework explain why the focus should be the historical context.
- ⇒ Commences always from the past, not just on a particular moment.
- ⇒ The researcher must make sure that there is something new to be discovered in applying the approach or that it will clarify, correct or expand existing knowledge; not undertaken to retell what is already known.

The Research Framework

The research framework is primarily based on:

- ⇒ Your statement of the problem;

Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is as an experiential methodology for the acquisition of serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power, or countervailing power, for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups and social classes – the grassroots – and for their authentic organizations and movements. Its purpose is to enable the oppressed groups and classes to acquire sufficient creative and transforming leverage as expressed in specific projects, acts and struggles to achieve goals of social transformation. PAR involves collective research, critical recovery of history, valuing and applying folk culture, production and diffusion of new knowledge and combines this research with education and socio-political action.

PAR evolved as an adaptation of agricultural action research that moved out of the laboratory to farmers' land to test new agricultural technologies, a practice that became popular among agricultural researchers in the 1950s and 1960s. It led to the realization that the insights of the farmers improved the quality of the product while the utility of the research validated the usefulness of folk wisdom or indigenous knowledge systems gained from centuries of observation and guiding the farmers in their sustained use of local resources for livelihood. The conscientizing power of PAR and the highly scientific way in which the community progresses from situational diagnosis, to creative planning, to collective action combined Freirean passion with conventional project cycle management.

Source: From Promoting Participation in Development Projects: IFAD's experience in promoting participatory approaches in development projects in Asia, IFAD, ANGO and SEARSOLIN, 2000

- ⇒ Identification of the concepts and variables you will investigate; along with indicators;
- ⇒ Your goals and objectives.

1. Formulating the problem

The following is a checklist for problem formulation:

- √ Are my variables/concepts for the study clear?
- √ Do I have a tentative hypothesis?
- √ Do I have a clear theoretical/conceptual/operational research framework? A road map?

A Study of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)'s position on land rights may involve the following variables:

- What ASEAN policies and structures facilitate rights to land for farmers?
- What ASEAN policies and structures hinder rights to land for farmers?
- What priority issues can a land rights movement address?
- Which ASEAN structures should be engaged?

In studying the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)'s position on land rights, the research problem may be formulated as follows:

- What SAARC structures and processes/policies are working towards food security, land rights, rural development?
- What SAARC structures and processes/policies are working against food security, land rights, rural development?
- What are the Actions/Talking Points for SAARC?

- √ Do I have operational definitions for the variables or concepts you will study? Are my indicators clear?
- √ Am I confident about the significance of my study?
- √ Have I done enough reading and prior investigation before I have stated my research problem?

2. Identifying the Variables

The variables are factors that we focus on in the study.

In quantitative research, these are the measurable aspects. In qualitative research, these are the attributes observed or classified. e.g., the nature of participation by farmers, facilitating aspects of the law towards food security.

Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)

3. Stating the Goals and Objectives of the Research

This entails:

- ⇒ Stating your goals clearly. What is/are your guiding star(s)?
- ⇒ Stating what you want to find out
- ⇒ Stating your objectives as clearly as possible and making sure they all respond to your objectives
- ⇒ If possible, dissecting your problems into objectives/research areas. ■

Major findings of the Action Research facilitated by SARRA in Veeranamalai Village Cluster in Andhra Pradesh, India:

1. 72% of families had migrated to Bangalore and nearby cities in search of employment. Drought and famine compelled the families to migrate.
2. Women, the elderly, and young children were left at home. The migrants used to visit once every two months and spend 10-15 days during the rainy season so they could plough the fields.
3. School-age children from 43% of families were enrolled in primary schools in two villages.
4. Women used to go to the forest to collect firewood, which they sell in nearby towns to earn money.
5. Only 12% of children attend high school, the nearest high school being 25 kilometers from the village.
6. Only 31% of families own land of which only 6% had clear titles to the lands they are cultivating.
7. The villagers used to grow only food crops. The maximum employment in the agriculture sector was less than 80 days in a year.
8. Alcoholism was very high, which drain the villagers' earnings.
9. The produce from their land was only good for three months.
10. Children and women suffered from malnutrition.

- By Rohini Reddy, Executive Director, South Asia Rural Reconstruction Association (SARRA), 2009.

Networking: Taking Advocacy to the Next Level*

Your campaign strategy may involve linking up with other organizations that carry a similar advocacy. Building critical mass for your campaign can spell the difference between success and failure.

Why Form Networks?

Networks are formed for the following objectives:

- ⇒ To address social change;
- ⇒ To promote institutional sustainability;
- ⇒ To promote sharing of resources;
- ⇒ To gain higher profile for programs of research, advocacy and action;
- ⇒ To achieve greater administrative efficiency; and
- ⇒ To mobilize public interest on issues.

What Makes Good Networks?

Networks have the following characteristics:

- ⇒ Provide venues for social interaction;
- ⇒ Flexible, not rigid institutions, not hierarchical/bureaucratic;
- ⇒ Based on interpersonal commitment, shared goals;
- ⇒ Build on diversity and respects independence of members;
- ⇒ Have many “leaders”; networks move according to shared values and agreed strategies, rather than by specific decisions.

Successful networks are characterized by:

- ⇒ Flexible internal management;
- ⇒ A sense of “ownership” – a sense of members working *within* a network, and not *for* it;
- ⇒ Diversity;
- ⇒ Shared agreement, clear goals and focus;
- ⇒ Ability to manage change; and
- ⇒ Continuity of membership, networking tools (negotiation, management).

Why Do Networks Fail?

Networks fail when they:

- ⇒ Become donor-driven;
- ⇒ Impose too much control over members;

- ⇒ Undergo frequent changes in members and staff; and
- ⇒ Are burdened by complicated, and multiple products and processes.

The Cost of Joining Networks

Organizations that become part of networks take the following risks:

- ⇒ Additional costs;
- ⇒ Donor expectations of clear, immediate impact;
- ⇒ High labor requirements;
- ⇒ Exclusivity: members wanting to corner resources;
- ⇒ Taking too broad a focus in order to accommodate members;
- ⇒ Formation of cliques;
- ⇒ Center-to-member orientation, rather than the other way around;
- ⇒ Perception of networks chasing too few people, organizations;
- ⇒ Setting of standards, which stunts innovation; and
- ⇒ Distortion of local agendas.

Lessons in Networking

The following lessons have been culled from various experiences of networking:

- ⇒ Beyond institutional, it is important not to forget person-to-person interaction;
- ⇒ Always share credit, praise and achievements;
- ⇒ Build networks around common goals, tasks
- ⇒ Recognize the central role of information and communication;
- ⇒ Have strong secretariats;
- ⇒ Keep a direct “window to the ground”;
- ⇒ Keep linkages non-exclusive;
- ⇒ Build network values and a culture of working together; and
- ⇒ When structuring networks, build upon natural groupings. ■

* Excerpted from a presentation by ANTONIO B. QUIZON, former ANGOC executive director and current ANGOC boardmember

CARRD's INTER-AGENCY DIALOGUE

Promoting Collective Responsibility and Transparency

In 2005, when the Center for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (CARRD) decided to expand its Land Tenure Improvement (LTI) program in the Visayas, Philippines, it meant intensifying its tripartism strategy to promote partnership among major CARP implementers: NGOs, people's organizations (POs), and the government.

CARRD then decided to institutionalize the Inter-Agency Dialogues (IAD). This tool brings together the regional/provincial/municipal offices of Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources - City Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-CENRO), Land Bank of the Philippines – Agrarian Operations Chief (LBP-AOC), Local Chief Executive, Municipal Assessor/Treasurer, the concerned landowner and the agrarian reform beneficiaries in a formal but non-intimidating venue to thresh out LTI-related issues. A Memorandum of Agreement among these stakeholders was executed to formalize the action.

The IAD has become an effective tool in facilitating CARRD's LTI program. The reason for this is that among others, it INFORMS.

In - Informative dialogue. CARP implementing agencies report to Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) on-site regarding problems encountered and matters arising during the IAD process. Appropriate measures and concrete actions are decided and immediately undertaken, such as conducting the final survey for the issuance of individual titles by DAR and an ocular inspection by the Municipal Assessor's office to validate actual land use or conduct land tax survey.

F - Fosters transparency and accountability among CARP implementing agencies and LGUs.

O - One-stop shop. The IAD provides ARBs, land owners and the concerned agencies a venue to provide updates, voice out grievances and other related matters.

R - A Relationship that is more harmonious is developed among the different stakeholders.

M - Monitoring and evaluation of the status of the LTI process from land acquisition to distribution are undertaken. The agreed upon measures or actions are followed up through meetings and/or lobbying for the subsequent IAD.

S - Synchronizes the plans and operations of the various implementing agencies especially DAR and Land Bank in land distribution information schedule.

- By Edwin Nerva, Executive Director, Center for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (CARRD)

ALRD's International Advocacy Campaign

Sometimes, pressure from within a country is not enough. International pressure can help the advocacy campaign influence policy makers in establishing land rights for the poor, implying the need to build effective international linkages.

The Bangladesh government signed the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord in 1997 to end two decades of insurgency and establish permanent peace in the region. Indigenous peoples in the CHT were promised, among others: land rights; the revival of their cultural identities; rehabilitation of internally displaced people and repatriated refugees; withdrawal of the military from the CHT, excluding permanent military establishments; self-government through regional and district councils; and the establishment of a Land Commission to arbitrate on land ownership issues.

Though the CHT Peace Accord showed great promise, implementation has stalled, without meaningful steps taken on key peace and confidence building initiatives. Human rights violations –arbitrary arrests, unlawful detentions, torture, rape, killings, attacks, harassment, religious persecution, and lack of access to socio-economic rights and freedom of expression – have persisted.

Aware of the critical need to bring the CHT issues to international attention by exposing ongoing human rights violations, including land alienation, the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) re-established the CHT Commission (CHTC) of 1990-2001. The CHTC was originally set up by the Amsterdam-based Organising Committee CHT Campaign (OCCHTC) and the Copenhagen-based International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). The reconstituted CHTC is an independent human rights watchdog that aims to put pressure on the government to implement the Peace Accord with international support and help build confidence with IPs in the CHT, and comprises eleven members from Bangladesh and other countries like Denmark, Japan, Philippines, Sweden, the UK, and the USA. ALRD hosts the national secretariat of CHTC. These members represent prominent institutions such as the British House of Lords and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Since then, the CHTC has organized missions to Bangladesh, holding meetings with the new government led by the Awami League, the Prime Minister, Attorney General, Army Chief, MPs, political parties, civil society representatives, and other important stakeholders. Moreover, the CHTC has facilitated peace building initiatives through mediation dialogues on pertinent issues between the government and CHT peoples. ALRD and the CHTC, networking with national and international actors and donors, seek to step up the pressure on the Bangladesh government towards full-scale implementation of the Peace Accord once and for all.

- By Rowshan Jahan Moni, Deputy Director, ALRD

Marching to be Heard: The Foot March



* Source: Ekta Parishad

A foot march basically involves a group of people walking a considerable distance with a clear purpose. Various social movements in Asia have turned to the foot march as a tool to peacefully protest recognition of communities' land rights. Some of the defining characteristics of a foot march are: peaceful, non-violent, rights-based, people-centered, and involving marginalized communities.

The days are long, the end unknown.

WHY do a foot march?

- ⇒ **Visibility**
- ⇒ **Commands media attention**
- ⇒ **Highlights importance of land and livelihood issues but with specificity**
 - Raises the *specific* issues of *specific* communities in *specific* areas
- ⇒ **Raises awareness and understanding on people's rights to land and natural resources**
 - At grassroots level, raises awareness on people's rights
 - Brings land rights back into the public arena for debates and discussions
- ⇒ **Raises the voices of the poor**
- ⇒ **Establishes a "building block of freedom, dignity and livelihoods for the people" [NGO Federation of Nepal]**

- ⇒ **Brings people together, builds consensus, creates a common vision**
 - Unifies the commitment of the landless poor
 - "Inspired the consolidation of farmers, unified commitment of farmers and allied groups advocacies for tenurial security"
 - Sometimes, forms surprise allies e.g., Church
- ⇒ **Scope and reach**
 - Your direct action covers a large area
 - Social network expands
- ⇒ **Builds and intensifies pressure on the State/ governments; compels government to act on the land reform agenda**
- ⇒ **Opens the floodgates for dialogue**
- ⇒ **It is a chance for real change**
 - At the community level, a foot march yields *powerful impact* on the march's participants. It empowers participants, boosts morale, and boosts the people's faith in attaining justice through non-violence.
 - It triggers a *chain reaction* – participants gain confidence and are empowered *to lead and* initiate communities to solve their problems
 - For CSOs, mass mobilization helps in collecting information and conducting case studies of communities.

* By CATHERINE LIAMZON, ANGOC

⇒ Exposure and learning

- Many flashes of insights and profound lessons can only be learned by walking with others for a common cause. True empathy – sincerely understanding the plight of the marchers – is a natural effect a foot march has on its participants.

How to conduct a foot march?

Planning and Preparation

- ⇒ Building social organizations through training and building cadres of young people, forming traditional *panchayats* and forming larger organizations at the cluster level
- ⇒ Resistance or struggle tools through developing mini campaigns, using cultural activism, occupying the land, blockades, sit-ins and public hearings
- ⇒ Planning done with many rounds of discussions with local activists and other stakeholders at various levels, to work concrete action plan, logistics and issues
- ⇒ In all cases, a committee is formed, which lists down the critical issues and areas of the region, and plans the optimal route that will connect the issues and public meetings in all these areas [e.g., SDF – foot march routed in a way that allowed the marchers to interact with almost all tribes and communities along the Nepal-India border]
- ⇒ Identifying the local administration
- ⇒ Mapping and contacting media representatives
- ⇒ Conducting preparatory meetings with leaders from various mass based organizations at grassroots and central level [e.g., more than 200 organizations for NFN]
- ⇒ Holding district and state level demonstrations

During the foot march

- ⇒ Conducting social audits of various villages, addressing village community meetings, talking to students in different colleges and schools
- ⇒ Inviting local people to participate in activities [e.g., NFN, Ekta Parishad – locals requesting janayatras to pass on their demands to government, and performing cultural shows, organizing cultural programs]
- ⇒ Holding mass meetings, demonstrations and rallies

Culmination

The march converges in a massive public meeting, wherein people from all over the country gather, participate and share experiences. In some foot marches, this also entails gathering people's posters, memorandums, letters, articles, pamphlets, and formulating a neat set of recommendations, which will be submitted to the government (local and national levels).

Follow-up strategy

*The work is far from over when the march ends. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of **following through** and **following up** after the foot march.*

- ⇒ Critical reflection, asking what went right? This reflection should inform future activities.
- ⇒ Warning to Government [Before one year and 100 days – Ekta Parishad]
- ⇒ Tools for scaling up campaigns – reach out to people through *padayatra* or spiritual pilgrimages
- ⇒ Create a task force

What are the success factors?

⇒ People's Mobilization

- People's participation
- Strong organization
- Leadership development
- Engaging the young
- Effective mobilization is the principal tool of organizing! [Ekta Parishad]

⇒ Resource Mobilization

- Collective effort from CSOs' internal resources
- Major contribution not from donors –but from people themselves who shared food and shelter with the marchers
- Many foot marches have been successfully organized despite small budgets.
- With more funding more meetings can be organized, and would allow more people from other parts of the country, region and the world to express their solidarity more concretely by joining the march.

⇒ Government

- Engaging the government
- Convincing the government

⇒ Media as ally

- Knowing how to deal with and establishing rapport with a wide range of media

- Using social media or web 2.0 technologies
- ⇒ **Research – creating and sharing knowledge**
 - Knowing your audience. Funding organizations may have already carried out research – these may be helpful.
 - Reading on studies of various aspects of land, different perspectives on land rights and new approaches towards land reforms.
 - If you have something new to share, produce publications and disseminate these.
- ⇒ **Networking**
 - Building alliances with network organisations like *Wada Na Todo Abhiyan* [G-CAP campaign]
 - Working with new or other partners and sectors – religious institutions [e.g., Church], academe, labor groups, etc.
 - Involving international participants – for better exposure, support and solidarity
 - Engaging international networks by providing regular updates etc
- ⇒ **Satyagraha (holding on to truth through action)**
 - The poor have to take up *satyagraha* to demonstrate their capacity to endure difficult conditions; moral power prevails over brute force or money.
- ⇒ **Documentation**
 - Documenting the experiences on a day-to-day basis will serve organizers well in the future – especially when the time comes for reflecting on the event.
 - In SDF's case, rapporteurs walked with the marchers to document every moment of the march, and to facilitate analysis. They collected different kinds of legal documents to show the plight of the people.
- ⇒ *Foot march fatigue*

The media lose interest, the government think it's just one of them foot marches. The bottom line is: you run the risk of your cause simply being ignored. Rights to land and natural resources and livelihoods are fundamental rights – but if you are not reaching your target audiences by using the right medium, then your efforts may be in vain.
- ⇒ *Arriving at a common agenda with people from diverse backgrounds*

Building consensus is never easy, but is the truest heart of advocacy. Arguably the most time should be spent in building consensus.
- ⇒ *Advocacy without enough mobilization; or mobilization without enough advocacy*

These two go hand in hand and must be calibrated to each other to maximise impact. [Ekta Parishad]
- ⇒ *The foot march is a means to an end, not an end in itself.*

It is a tool that doesn't work in isolation; it should be used simultaneously with other approaches and methodologies. Foot march is not the solution but a tool to create a just society. [SDF]
- ⇒ *Managing high expectations of people*

The stakes are high, with everyone contributing something. We all will give it our best, but still remember to level off expectations before getting started. People should know what they are getting into (and what they might get into) before they participate.
- ⇒ *Understand the politics – understand who you are dealing with.*

In SDF's foot march 2008 – media all but vanished from the scene on the *last* day of the foot march. In India, media is always present to collect information and publish this, so long as their newspapers are not threatened. But because the rich people threatened the media for inadvertently exposing them, the foot march suffered from lack of media coverage at a highly critical moment.
- ⇒ *Sustainability*

The march is over – now what? How do you keep the momentum rolling? How do you build on

Should we? Caveats and challenges

Foot marches may yield many benefits, but some considerations should be made before deciding on organizing a foot march.

- ⇒ *Foot marches take time.*

Foot marches are necessarily long – “But what are e.g. 60 days compared to 10 years of waiting (and more years of waiting)?”

- ⇒ *Sustainability*

The march is over – now what? How do you keep the momentum rolling? How do you build on

the success of your march? End with a high note – and with a clearly defined sustainability plan, including clear demands on government, and clear next steps. Some of these campaigns have birthed networks of voluntary organizations.

⇒ *Resource management*

Managing resources – human and material – is never easy. But being conscious about your *accountability* to various groups who have shown support in your initiative – donors, partners, and above all, the people who participated in your march – is the first step to managing resources. Moreover, at the planning stage, ensure that resources are sufficient before deciding to embark on the foot march.

⇒ *Language*

Are you using the language freely communicated by your constituents? Are you clear on terminologies? Are you aware of the nuances and connotations some words might have? E.g. in some states in India, land rights advocates talking about rights-based approaches would be termed as “Naxalites” or “terrorists.”

⇒ *Context*

While others will argue that a foot march would work successfully in almost all countries except those in a State of Emergency or non-democratic contexts, bear in mind the context. For example, in India a foot march coincides with the ancient and deep-set notion that abstinence is a means to achieve liberation. Thus, long marches (padyatras) have a persuasive power in India that may not echo in other countries.

⇒ *Geographic situation*

Know your terrain, plot accordingly.

- “Janayatra 2007. People’s March: A People’s Campaign for Natural Resources and Land Rights” Arjun Bhattarai. 2009.
- “Learnings and Lessons on Sumilao Walk.” Balaod Mindanaw. 2009.
- “Tools and Techniques on Land Rights Advocacy.” Anil Kumar Gupta, Ekta Parishad. 2009.

Padyatras in India

(India)

In June 2007, under the banner of Uttar Pradesh Land Alliance, land rights activists undertook a *Padyatra*, from Gughali block of Maharjganj district bordering Nepal to the historic town of Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur district. In 2008, a foot march was organized along the tribal belt of Uttar Pradesh, Nepal and Uttarakhand, another Northern State of India. It began from Golbohji forest village in Palia district of Uttar Pradesh on 13 December 2008, and culminated at Harinagar village in Kundeswari (Kashipur), Shaheed Udham Singh Nagar today, 15 days later on 28 December 2008. People travelled an average of 20-25 km. a day.

Each foot march took about 15-20 days, covering approximately 450 km. During these days, the marchers conducted social audits of various villages, addressed village community meetings and talked to students from different colleges and schools.

These foot marches sought to highlight the importance of land and livelihood issues of the Dalit-tribal communities in the tribal region of Uttarakhand and Uttar-Pradesh. Communities such as *Tharus*, *Boxas*, *Tongiyas* are a matter of great concern as they remain isolated and excluded in the general set up of both states. The condition of these communities is particularly alarming in Uttarakhand because of the lack of understanding of Dalit-tribal culture and popular mass support. In the Terai region the sale-purchase of tribal land is prohibited, yet most the tribal land today has been transferred to dominant communities here. The tense conditions exist here, as these communities are oppressed to the extent that they find it difficult to explain their conditions to outsiders for fear of being spied on by and land mafias. Both the *Tharus* and *Boxas* are victims of the forest department and the border police.

Source: Leena Dabiru, Assistant Director, SDF, September 2009.

Sources:

This article is a synthesis of the insights and lessons of ToT participants and resource persons. The points were lifted from various papers and presentations for the ToT:

- “Land Rights Advocacy Techniques used and practiced by Social Development Foundation, India” Dabiru Leena. 2009.

People's March Succeeds in Reforming Policies for India's Landless*

Ekta Parishad, a people's organization which for 18 years has been working to enhance people's access and control over natural resources – like land, forest and water resources – through its land rights campaign via people's participation, has succeeded in communicating and pressuring the Indian central government to set up the “National Land Reform Council” and “Committee on State Agrarian Relations and the Unfinished Task In Land Reforms”.

The strategy? A people's verdict (Janadesh), wherein 25,000 landless and deprived people undertook a 28-day foot march from Gwalior to New Delhi, a distance of 350 kilometers, from September to October, 2007.

Janadesh had a deep impact on the *Satyagrahis* (participants). It boosted their morale and they became confident of leading, initiating communities to solve their problems.

Ekta Parishad, which has operations in 10 states – Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu – has been involved in non-violent actions like rallies, sit-ins, demonstrations, foot marches, studies, research projects, collection of grievances, etc., for creating pressure on government for land and livelihood rights of marginalized communities.

The objective of Janadesh 2007 is to mainstream the land reform agenda by building up pressure and compel the government to act on it. Janadesh 2007 is people-centered and rights-based, and is deeply rooted in non-violent action.

While the march took 28 days, preparation for it and build-up activities began as early as December 2005. It began with a warning to government one year and 100 days before the actual march, and was sustained with district and state level demonstrations.

The initiative was also not without risks. During the preparations prior to the march, the organizers hoped and prayed that:



* Source: Ekta Parishad

- The political climate would not have any other distraction;
- They would be able to mobilize enough resources (financial and skilled human resources, including the critical target of 25,000 marchers);

* Excerpted from a presentation by ANIL KUMAR GUPTA, Communication and Documentation Coordinator, Bhopal National Office, Ekta Parishad

- Internal discipline of the organization would be maintained;
- Weather would not become erratic; and
- There would be no tragic accidents or incidents.

Four types of tools have been broadly used by the Ekta Parishad for its non-violent actions:

1. Tools for building social organizations: training and building cadres of young men and women, formation of traditional *Panchayats*, and forming larger organizations at the cluster level.
2. Resistance or struggle tools: developing mini campaigns, using cultural activism, land occupation, blockades, sit-ins, public hearings, etc.
3. Tools for scaling up campaigns: reaching out to the people through *padayatra*, collecting of grievances in writing, working with media, international networking, cultural programs, rallies, and working out the follow up strategy.
4. Dialogue and advocacy tools: public opinion making tools, creation of task forces.

These four sets of tools show the progression in building up a campaign. The struggle tools reinforce the social organizational tools and vice versa, and the advocacy tools bring the whole approach into a bottom-up struggle which is met with an advocacy aimed at the decision makers, and legitimization – giving space and a fair hearing to the grievances that are otherwise ignored. These tools were used to the fore during Janadesh 2007. Such a large action gave the organization the strength to stand against the might of the state and be counted and heard.

Various stakeholders were involved in the process. Ekta Parishad took initiative in forming the National Campaign on Land & Livelihood (NCLL), which several voluntary organizations joined. Alliances were also built with networks like *Wada Na Todo Abhiyan* (Keep the promise campaign), VANI, CNI, among others.

They participated in a postcard writing campaign, land survey, and collection of grievances, participation in the foot march and other activities. Several national and international meetings were held. Government officials were also invited in seminars, workshops, and national consultations organized by the movement.

The media provided extensive coverage of Janadesh activities. The mobilization came out in news and feature articles and live-telecasts.

Documentation and research tools like case study, focus group discussion in the review meetings were used. Independent reviewers were also appointed by various associated groups such as Ekta Europe etc.

The inputs and the research carried out by the funding organizations became useful tools for making an analysis of the march's impact.

Funds for the march and its accompanying activities, which cost US\$ 1.3 million, were sourced from:

- People's contribution, in cash and in kind;
- Individual and associated non-formal groups in India and abroad; and
- Donor agencies like Christian Aid, DFID, Ford Foundation, among others.

The advocacy tools used in Janadesh 2007 can be applied in another community, society or country. But applying these tools blindly would lead to disaster. Understanding of the tools first is important.

The dialogue-struggle tools can be used by anyone who has power in the elite structures politically or administratively, using that power to give space in which to operate. If one puts both of them together, it is a combination that the state cannot ignore.

By using all four tools in combination, one can develop a large-scale campaign that both mobilizes people at the grassroots level and brings the issues to the notice of political decision-makers at the top level. The coming together of diverse individuals and groups on one platform with a broad and non-hierarchical formation is likely to have the highest impact and the greatest sustainability. All tools need to be framed keeping these campaign-building exigencies in mind.

These tools don't work in isolation. The other approaches and methodologies need to be used simultaneously.

Beyond this, the tools themselves have to be diverse to meet a variety of situations, yet used in some sort

of succession – with social organization tools usually preceding struggle and advocacy tools. A common mistake is that advocacy is often carried out without sufficient mobilization, or alternatively, mobilization is carried out without sufficient advocacy. Both are essential and must be calibrated to each other for maximum impact.

The principle tool of organizing must be effective mobilization. Poor people themselves have to take up the *satyagraha* ('holding on to truth' through action) to demonstrate their capacity to endure difficult conditions, with staying power or endurance. This has to be seen within and by outsiders as moral power more important than financial power or brute force.

In India, this coincides with the very ancient and deep-set notion that abstinence is a means for achieving liberation. For this reason long marches (*padyatras*) have a persuasive power in India that may not echo in other countries.

Non-violence means that the struggle should never be an end in itself. One is enduring struggle to disarm the opposition, not to destroy it. This is borne out of the notion that social relations are dynamic and that the struggle is never "one-time". Moreover the struggle is facing a system, not a set of individuals. The objective of the struggle is not replacing one group of people with another; rather it is about changing the political culture (the prevailing economy of thought) completely.

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Janayatra 2007 in Nepal

The NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) organized, together with various rights-based networks, associations and federations, a 13-day People's March or Janayatra in September 2007. The march aimed to: heighten marginalized communities' awareness on their rights to land and natural resources, and put pressure on Nepal's political parties and leaders to ensure that the new Constitution would safeguard the people's rights.

After more than 200 preparatory meetings with leaders from mass based organizations at the grassroots and central levels, Janayatra kicked off on 9 September from 3 strategically located districts: Ilam, Ramechhap and Baitadi. Distinguished personalities from the house of legislative parliament, the National Human Rights Commission, and civil society inaugurated the march. It converged in Butwal on 21 September, World Peace Day.

More than 1 million people were directly involved in the march. Actively participating in the march were the poor, *dalits*, indigenous peoples, women, Madhesis, the youth, students, peasants, laborers, and other marginalized communities. Throughout the march, local people welcomed the Janayatris, offering them food and shelter, performing cultural shows, and requesting the marchers to pass on their demands to government. People presented symbolic protests and handed over hundreds of letters of demands, sorrows and grievances to the Janayatris. Mass meetings were also held, witnessing to the marchers being welcomed with folk music, dance and rallies, and to the enthusiastic presentations of poor and marginalized groups.

Janayatra drew much public attention. Media mobilization was a success, with national and local media – from TV channels to radio including BBC Nepali services, from print to electronic media – continually covering the march. It was able to secure commitment of political parties towards including scientific land reform in their manifesto. The interim constitution highlighted land rights issues. But challenges remain ahead – as political instability continues to threaten the country.

Source: *Janayatra 2007*, Arjun Bhattarai, Board Member, NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN)

10 Basic Steps in Community Organizing*

Community organizing or CO refers to the framework and methodology used by social development workers in empowering people's 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, Philippines).

In 1985, a national workshop among urban and rural CO practitioners was held in Manila, Philippines 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 a consensus among participants that the following set of activities constitute the steps necessary in organizing communities for empowerment.

Organizing Indigenous Communities in Tharparkar

In Pakistan, indigenous peoples are severely disadvantaged. They are often forced to live on the least productive terrain, denied rights to land, forests and other natural resources that they have managed sustainably since time immemorial, and are marginalized by modern society.

The worsening condition of indigenous communities of Tharparkar led the Society for the Conservation and Protection of Environment (SCOPE) to organize efforts to secure the land rights of communities. SCOPE undertook different techniques to meet the actual objectives of land rights advocacy movement in Tharparkar:

- Face to face meetings: After identification of some leaders of the Kolhi community, SCOPE conducted meetings with them and interviewed in detail for the collection of ideas for the betterment of the community and discussed their right over the land.
- Organizing satsangs: It was difficult to gather the community in big public seminars, because they felt threatened and isolated. Using traditional knowledge by organizing their satsangs (i.e., celebrating religious days and songs at nighttime), SCOPE was able to mobilize males, females and children to gather at religious places. Different sessions on self esteem, rights, and alternative livelihood options such as cooperatives and natural resources management were arranged. Satsang was the only way to reach these people as they are religious.
- Organizing cooperatives: The Kolhi community was isolated by Muslims and other Hindus communities as untouchables. Members of the community were treated as slaves; their women and children had no social security. Therefore, SCOPE mobilized 2,000 like-minded community activists throughout

80 villages to organize cooperatives. All members enjoyed equal rights. During the meetings the land issues of Kolhis were discussed in detail.

- Capacity building: SCOPE also focused on the capacity building of the Kolhi community in social mobilization, livestock management and skills for alternative livelihoods. During the trainings, land and human rights case studies of different countries and land reforms movements were discussed with the Kolhi communities for their self development.
- Establish rapport with "powerful" people in the community. Previous land rights movements wherein farmers were mobilized against powerful landlords bred enmity between the poor and rich. If a single poor being crushed by any landlord, the others are threatened for years. It is important to maintain respectful relations even if you are adversaries. In this way, the Kolhi and landlords came to know better each others' issues.
- Organizing Kolhi conferences: To attract the attention of the government, media, intellectuals, donors, communities, and human rights activists and NGOs, SCOPE organized two Kolhi conferences at District level and one during the World Social Forum in Pakistan.

SCOPE interventions helped the Kolhi community to establish their own organizations for their social security and social welfare. The practice brought visible changes among the behavior of Kolhi community and they started to send their children to schools. The women in the community started to feel more empowered, in terms of interacting with Muslim and Hindu communities and have developed skills in embroidery and other technical skills. The Kolhi community has also begun to receive assistance in legal processes particularly for their land rights.

Source: Abdul Waheed Jamali, Coordinator, Monitoring and Evaluation, Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment (SCOPE)

* Excerpted from "Community Organizing for Empowerment: Practice and Theory from the Philippine Experience", by Meynardo Mendoza, in TIPS: Tools, Insights and Practices on Strengthening RPOs in Asia, published by ANGOC, CIRDAP and IFAD, 2007)

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.

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 (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 through 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 a 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 a core group.

Legal Empowerment of Communities from the Grassroots Level Upwards

The Sarvodaya Legal Services Movement (SLSM) is the legal arm of the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya operates in more than 15,000 villages, offering a holistic approach to grassroots communities; the SLSM offers a legal empowerment process through awareness building, social support, legal advice, representation and counselling, mediation of conflicts at the village level, and nationwide advocacy for legal reforms. Targeted populations are those disadvantaged by poverty, lack of legal knowledge, prejudice and inequities.

At the community level, many do not have access to justice, nor a proper forum to reach consensus on community problems and disputes. But given that litigation costs, consumes time and affects the poor adversely, there is real need for legal empowerment. To address these, the SLSM has established paralegal groups at the village level, which also act as lobby advocacy groups, mediators and watchdogs to resolve village conflicts through consensus. Commonly known as Village Legal Services Committees (VLSC), they operate in all parts of Sri Lanka.

SLSM uses three main tools to promote legal services in the villages and make villagers aware of the program, which complement each other: through the composition of the VLSC, with leaders of the village societies and the head man being the members, informing their respective groups; through the initial legal clinics where legal advice is provided on the spot to the villagers; and through awareness trainings offered for the whole village.

- By Shevon Goooneratne, Director, Sarvodaya Legal Services Movement

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 or 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; practice 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 People’s Organizations (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. However, 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. ■

3-D Mapping: A Tool for Community Empowerment*

3-D Mapping is an invaluable basic research tool used for resource valuation of agricultural land of indigenous peoples (IPs). It has served as a crucial enabling tool for IPs to self-delineate their ancestral domains and to file claims over their lands and resources.

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 timberland; 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 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



* Source: ANGOC Photobank

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

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 Ancestral Lands and Waters of the Calamian Tagbanwa in Coron, Northern Palawan: A Showcase of the Philippine Association of Intercultural Development's (PAFID) Land Tenure Improvement Project Using 3-Dimensional Mapping Tool in Community Resource Assessment and Planning*

* by Melissa Moran (lifted from *TIPS: Tools, Insights and Practices on Strengthening RPOs in Asia*, published by ANGOC, CIRDAP and IFAD, 2007)

of 1987 that “Native Title” or traditional ascription of territories to indigenous ethnolinguistic communities “since time immemorial” became part of the law.

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 Tagbanwa’s domain not only included their ancestral lands but also their traditional fishing grounds, fish 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 puts 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 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 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 Tagbanwa’s 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 actual, current use of the resources in the ancestral domain (including sensitive of 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 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). ■

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Founded in 1979, ANGOC is a regional association of 20 national and regional networks of non-government organizations (NGOs) in Asia actively engaged in food security, agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, participatory governance and rural development activities. ANGOC member networks and partners work in 14 Asian countries with an effective reach of some 3,000 NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). ANGOC actively engages in joint field programs and policy debates with national governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and international financial institutions (IFIs).

The complexity of Asian realities and the diversity of NGOs highlight the need for a development leadership to service the poor in Asia – providing a forum for articulation of their needs and aspirations as well as expression of Asian values and perspectives.

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