

# **Promotion of Self-help in Development & Social Change**

## **Constructing Non Subject-Object Processes**

### **Proefschrift**

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit van Tilburg,  
op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. Ph. Eijlander,  
in het openbaar te verdedigen ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties  
aangewezen commissie

in de aula van de Universiteit op  
vrijdag 25 september 2009 om 10.15 uur

door

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geboren op 10 februari 1960 te Rajbari, Bangladesh

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## Summary

The thesis defends the idea that the promotion of self-help requires a shift in focus from building individual capacities to what we can do together, to genuine participation of the people and interaction, to space for multiplicity, for local creativity and different ways of learning, a learning culture that encourages the community and the change agents/workers to be co-learners and co-constructors, working together towards opening new possibilities. This is only possible through a non subject-object way of relating. The thesis asserts that the flaw of the existing self-help promotion endeavour is its residency in a subject-object discourse. Despite talks and emphasis on the principles of participation, the traditional self-help promotion conceptualises stakeholders (involved in self-help promotion) as autonomous change entities, so that the unit of analysis and actions are targeted toward those entities. This conceptualisation constructs a paradoxical relation and sustains a subject-object relationship in which one party tries to promote the independence of another. Through the exploration of the possible relevance of a relational constructionist discourse, the thesis advances the notion centering on interaction as both the ‘unit of analysis’ and as ‘locus of transformation’ offers us a way to promote self-help in development and social change. The thesis looked at both a problem solving (PS) approach and an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach with regard to how they create relational realities and, in particular, how they might construct subject-object versus non subject-object possibilities. The thesis shows that, as the problem solving process continued, individualistic constructions became more dominant, the participation gradually diminished, and negativity increased. This did not promote self-help. Appreciative inquiry, on the other hand, gradually constructed co-operative interactions and positive self-help. This did not happen in isolation, however, the particularities of the local communities and their history of relations played a major role. Variations in the local cultural-historical constructions and power issues differently constrained and resourced the interactions and performances of both PS and AI, but with regard to the question *‘what centres and fosters multiple interaction processes as unit of analysis and locus of self-help promotion’*, AI produced better performance than PS. However, the thesis defends the notion that not the method of AI in itself is sufficient, but that its effectiveness to promote self-help requires a co-constructive movement with non subject-object ways of relating. The possible success of AI to facilitate self-help in development and change seems to depend largely on our (the change workers) ability to construct non subject-object forms of participation.

## Samenvatting

Deze thesis verdedigt de idee dat het bevorderen van zelf-hulp veronderstelt dat het centrum van de aandacht verschuift van het bouwen van individuele vaardigheden naar wat we samen kunnen doen, naar oprechte vormen van participatie van de mensen en naar interactie, naar ruimte voor meervoudigheid, voor locale creativiteit en verschillende manieren van leren, naar een cultuur die de gemeenschap en de veranderaars stimuleert om samen te leren en samen te construeren, om te werken naar het openen van nieuwe mogelijkheden. Dat kan alleen maar door niet subject-object achtige manieren van omgaan met elkaar. De thesis stelt dat de zwakte van de bestaande inspanningen om zelf-hulp te promoten gelegen is in deze subject-object manier van discussieren. Ondanks het vele praten over en het benadrukken van de beginselen van participatie, worden in de traditionele zelf-hulp promotie campagnes de betrokkenen benaderd als autonome verander entiteiten, waardoor zowel de eenheid van analyse als de acties gericht worden op deze entiteiten. Dit leidt tot een paradoxale relatie waarin de subject-object relatie, waarmee de ene partij de onafhankelijkheid van de andere partij tracht te bevorderen, wordt onderhouden. Via het nader onderzoek van de mogelijke relevantie van de relationeel constructionistische discours, komen we tot de stelling dat door het centraal stellen van de interactie als ‘eenheid van analyse’ en als ‘plaats voor transformatie’ er mogelijkheden worden geboden voor het bevorderen van zelf-hulp in ontwikkeling en sociale verandering. De thesis onderzoekt zowel de probleem oplossende (PS) als de waarderende onderzoeks benadering (AI) voor wat betreft haar capaciteit om relationele werkelijkheden tot stand te brengen, en meer bepaald, in welke mate zij bijdragen aan het tot stand komen van subject-object versus niet subject-object mogelijkheden. De thesis stelt vast dat, naarmate de probleem oplossende benadering vordert, de individualistische constructies dominant worden, de participatie gestaag daalt, en negativisme toeneemt. Dat was niet bevorderlijk voor zelf-hulp. De AI-benadering, daarentegen, bracht wel geleidelijk co-operatieve interacties and positieve zelf-hulp tot stand. , maar de eigenaardigheden van de lokale gemeenschap en hun specifieke relationele geschiedenis speelden een belangrijke rol. De verschillende lokale cultureel-historische constructies en machtsaangelegenheden vormden elk op hun manier zowel een inperking als een versterking van de interacties en uitwerkingen van PS en AI. Echter, met betrekking tot de vraag *‘wat bevordert en stelt de meervoudige interactie processen meer centraal als eenheid van analyse en als plaats voor de bevordering van zelf-hulp’* gaf AI betere resultaten dan PS. De thesis verdedigt echter de notie dat de AI methode op zichzelf niet voldoende is, maar dat haar effectiviteit om zelf-hulp te bevorderen afhangt van de mate waarin ze een co-constructieve beweging op gang brengt met niet subject-object achtige manieren van met elkaar omgaan. Het succesvol gebruik van AI om zelf-hulp te faciliteren in ontwikkeling en sociale verandering hangt echt af van ons (d.w.z. de veranderaars) vermogen om niet subject-object manieren van participatie tot stand te brengen.

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# Chapter 1

## Making self with others: in this relational journey of learning

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### History of my relations in construction as self-help change worker

**A seed was sown by a photograph:** I was born on February 10, 1960 in a society where an individual is known by the family of origin. To know the identity of a person he or she would at the very first instance be asked ‘what is your father’s name?’ I am from a family of ten members including my father, mother, elder brother and his wife and sons, my younger brother, my wife and my son and I. I work in the Philippines. My wife and my son live with me. For reasons of work or other reasons I may move from place to place, but the permanent address is called Bap Dadar Vita<sup>1</sup>. I am also a member of the Baishmya<sup>2</sup> caste as institutionalized in the ancient caste system of Hinduism. I am a Bangladeshi national by birth and state and by ethnicity, I am a Bangali. My first name ‘Shayamal’ means the colour of nature – a mix of deep green and yellow.

My childhood was pleasant and we children, used to play in the courtyard enjoying the earth, water, trees and flowers. Every night before I fell asleep I loved to listen to my mother tell metaphorical stories, stories of personalities, and children’s poems by Rabindra Nath Tagore. Before I began school, my mother told me that I have to respect my teachers. She often taught me that ‘Swarswathi<sup>3</sup> never grants education to a person who does not respect and obey his/her teachers’.

Nineteen sixty-six was the first year of my schooling. After some years, when I was promoted to class six, the head master took me to his office and showed me a photograph hanging on the wall and asked ‘do you know who this is?’ The photograph was that of my grandfather who graduated from Calcutta (now named Kolkata, capital of State of West Bengal in India) University in the year 1912 – a time when very few people even completed high school. My grandfather came back to the village, founded a school, and served as the volunteer head master for a period of 40 years. His photograph is kept in the school and every

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<sup>1</sup> *Bap* means father and *Dadar* mean grandfather *Vita* means the homestead they constructed. In Bengal, cultural identity of a person is deeply rooted with this sense of permanency of settlement.

<sup>2</sup> The caste system of Hinduism classified all Hindus into four classes as Brahmin, *Khatriya*, *Baishmya* and *Shudra*. The *Baishmyas* were responsible for trading. Within Baishmya, *Saha* is a particular segment for controlling kinship networks within it.

<sup>3</sup> *Swarsathi* is the goddess of education according to Bengali Hindu mythology.

year a day is observed in his memory. I could feel that my teachers and class-mates gave me extra love and care because I was a grandson of the founder of the school. I started to feel proud of my grandfather. The positive image of my grandfather expressed through my teachers and villagers implanted in me the seeds of altruism that one should always do good work for others in the village.

**First inspiration to be a change worker:** The year 1971 is historic for every Bangladeshi. It was the year that Bangladesh emerged as a newly independent nation following a nine-month war of liberation against Pakistan. After the war, the new country faced a severe famine. After completing my Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination in 1975, I had two months of vacation whilst waiting for the result. Some dilapidated classrooms of the old building of our village school were in danger of collapse. The school management committee tried its best to get government assistance but other priorities of post-war rehabilitation meant that it was unsuccessful. The head master convened a student's-guardians meeting and appealed for help to repair the school building. In a separate meeting with students who had recently completed the secondary school certificate (SSC) , our former head master told us 'all of you have two months of vacation now. You studied at this school. I ask you to go from door to door and collect paddy, jute, whatever people can donate.' Even today I recall the face and eyes of my head master, Mr. Monotos Kumar Maytra; the way he looked at me and said 'Shayamal you must go to every house, older people still remember your grandfather and will donate.'

I was 16; jolly but yet shy; I was willing to go but at the same time was worried. It took me two days to allay my fears and to strengthen my resolve. Finally, my student friends and I started going from door to door collecting agricultural produce. At first it was a small group, however the group became larger and larger and finally about 40 friends continued the collection drive for 20 days. We got unbelievable responses from our own and neighbouring villages. The drive eventually turned into a big mobilization. We sold the collected produce worth Taka 33,000<sup>4</sup>.

School teachers, traditional social workers and village leaders were all praises for my friends and me. The campaign did not stop at successful crop collection. It inspired local community leaders, ex-students of our school (who by then had become business persons, university teachers, and government officers) to come together and to generate further

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<sup>4</sup> Taka is the currency of Bangladesh; in 1975 One Dollar was equivalent to Taka 15.00

thoughts and actions. School teachers, local community leaders, ex-students, and youths thought of using the proceeds from the sale of crops for generating additional money. We organized a village fair in the school grounds and folk theatre-Jatra<sup>5</sup> for seven days. The collection from the shops at the fair and sale of tickets for the folk theatre amounted to Taka 300,000. Since 1975 the fair has become a regular event, a virtual festival, and a source of income for our school. This success was accomplished because of the active cooperation and participation of the people. This was a great inspiration and learning for my friends and me. We learnt that even in a famine, if people cooperate with each other for a common cause, problems can be solved without being dependent on outsider help.

Engagement with such activities became something of an addiction. Success fired my friends and me to undertake more activities of similar nature. We collected bamboo for the construction of a bamboo bridge over a small canal; arranged subscription to buy a television for our sporting club; collected donation to help a poor father pay dowry for his daughter's marriage and many other activities. The more the success, more the laurels and further we wanted to go. Since then, for me there was no turning back. I want to continue being involved in working for the common good.

**Joining with party political activities:** I spend the period of 1977- 1984 studying first at college and then at the university. I remained actively involved in traditional social work in our village. During the vacations I stayed in my village and worked with friends. Staying in my own village has a kind of attraction and affection for me. In my village I felt cared for and was loved by everyone. When I was a university student, people from my village often visited me, particularly when they accompanied the very sick to the hospitals in the city. They sought my help in getting hospital admission and for arranging accommodation. Whilst helping poor people from my village it was common to see government officers and medical doctors, instead of cooperating and supporting people, abusing their power and authority especially when people are vulnerable. Such injustice was common in every corner of our

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<sup>5</sup> Jatra is a brand of popular plays with characters and plots. Acts and scenes to the accompaniment of songs, sung in folk tunes, are masterfully crafted and presented to rural people in a simple yet gorgeous manner. The traveling Jatra groups of Bengal perform under the open sky. They are essentially in the form of an opera with definite characteristics. Jatra is an integral part of folk life. The fee for each show varies between Taka 5000/- and Taka.30, 000/- per day. The average audience strength per performance could be anything between 5000 and 20,000 people depending upon the play and the reputation of the company.



society. It made me wonder whether there is any country in the world where human beings have honour and justice.

In the year 1978 as a freshman at the university, I came in contact with the members of the 'communist party of Bangladesh' and listened to them talking on establishing socialism. I was inspired to join the communist party, wishing to change the unjust social structure and establish socialism. Besides working with the student branch of the communist party in the university, I also worked with the landless agricultural labourers in our own district. The party wanted to mobilize the landless agricultural labourers against the landed gentry. I thought this was a noble work to bring justice to poor. In the year 1979 I was able to mobilize the landless agricultural labourers in my locality to a movement for the 'payment of minimum wage rate' (as per government law) equivalent to 3 kilograms of rice per day. The achievement of this movement was short lived. It lasted only for a month because the supply of the landless agricultural labourer outstripped the demand by three to one. My political views and activities made me a friend of the landless but also an enemy of the rural landed gentry who saw me as a trouble-maker.

The failure of the minimum wage movement did not deter me. Geographically my village, together with many others, is located in the Padma<sup>6</sup> river belt. Due to its geographical location, land erosion and land formation due to siltation is a common phenomenon. Government land-laws mandate that newly emergent land be distributed among the landless poor but this rarely happens. The landless poor seldom, if ever, get access to these lands or *chars* as they are locally called. The rural landed gentry, in connivance with government officers, occupy and control the land using the names of supposed landless relations as applicants and owners. In 1979 a huge piece of alluvial land surfaced in the river-bed of Padma. I, and other party colleagues, decided to organize a landless labourers' movement to occupy this land and use it for the wellbeing of the landless. The failure of the wage movement, we thought, was the result of an imbalance between the demand and supply of labour. But this time - since the land would go to the landless families - it was destined to succeed. We started to organize the movement.

It took us about a year and a half to mobilize the landless people around the issue. In the middle of 1981 thousands of landless agricultural labourers got that land and declared 'from now on this land belongs to us'. Following government rules and procedures, about 1500 landless households filed applications with the land office. Government officers from

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<sup>6</sup> Ganges is called Padma in Bangladesh

the district land office, however, did not cooperate with the applicants. To deal with the non-cooperation of the government officers, we organized a convention of landless people and invited the district commissioner to listen to their voices. About 20,000 landless people got together and demanded of the district commissioner legal ownership for the applicants.

**Emergence of thinking about how to eliminate greed:** The 'land movement' enjoyed a certain level of success. However, by 1982 financial constraints forced most of the land recipients to give up cultivation. Around 100 leaders of the landless movement started to grab land for their own, personal benefit. Eventually the one time leaders of the landless movement grabbed the land – creating a new elite within the landless. I was flabbergasted – how could the one-time leaders subsequently turn into exploiters. I wondered why it is that people change, I wondered about ways of building and sustaining leaders who will not seek personal benefit but rather, who will serve the interests of people in need.

In the communist party I learnt a simplistic construction of relationships – as being between landless and the landed. From this leadership turn around, I realized that relationships are not so simple and singular. People, be they landless, landed gentry or landless leaders, do not fit into a single exclusive class such as 'landless'. Rather, people maintain multiple and different kinds of relationships with different persons at different times in relation to different issues. Further, these multiple relationships are dynamic. This was very different from what I had learnt in the Communist party and its talk of capital and labour and simple, fixed relations between the two. In this context, I could not understand how so many landless leaders could switch from what I thought was commitment to the landless and to social change - to personal greed. Indeed, I was left with no explanation.

When I compared the failures of the landless movement with the successes of our village school efforts in 1975 I began to think about what makes one approach to community development better than another. Is it better to approach community development the way we did in the case of our school - where every villager contributed despite imminent starvation - or to engage in conflict in the ways we tried whilst building the landless movement?' Being involved in both taught me that, in the life of a community, cooperation and conflict are two sides of the same coin and are inseparable. My continuing political activity brought me in contact with really dedicated political workers who sacrificed their time and effort for the wellbeing of the poor. However, the activities of the communist party started to frustrate me. I was not convinced of the value of a conflict strategy that did not involve locals in decision-making or attempt to facilitate their learning.

**Getting to know about an NGO, coming back to my village and starting self-help:** On March 11, 1982, a violent conflict occurred between the student branch of the Islamic fundamentalist party (Islamic Chatra Shibir) and other student organizations at the University of Rajshahi. I was the vice president of the Student Union. Four supporters of Chatra Shibir were killed in the conflict. On 24<sup>th</sup> March 1982, the chief of the Bangladesh army, Hussain Md. Ershad, seized state power and declared himself President. He then imposed martial law and issued a warrant for the arrest of fourteen student leaders – myself included. We went into hiding and, after 11 months, a movement by political parties resulted in a fortunate and unconditional withdrawal of the arrest warrant. My life in hiding brought me close to an international NGO, the United Towns Organizations – a Dutch NGO working in the Kushtia district of Bangladesh. For my own safety and in order to avoid the police, I took shelter in the NGO offices. During the day I was unable to go out but in the evening I sometimes accompanied NGO field staff to the villages and saw how they conducted meetings of self-help groups. I observed that self-help groups of landless men and women were mobilizing their savings as a collective fund for solving immediate problems. In addition, regular discussion sessions raised villagers' consciousness about ways of changing their unjust social situation. This way of helping people appealed to me as it allowed people to think in their own way. I decided to leave my political party and to try a different approach to community development in my own village.

In 1984, on completion of my Master's degree at the University of Rajshahi-Bangladesh, I returned to my village and formed the Voluntary Organization for Rural Development (VORD). I was able to organize some educated youths who were willing to work with me to form an organization of villagers and to facilitate them to undertake self-help development activities. They selected me as the chairman of the executive board of the organization. We opted for a cooperative approach supported by discussions on human values and cooperation instead of one based on class conflict.

VORD started to work with a cluster of 10 villages – including my own. In each we selected one man and one woman as volunteer self-help facilitators. In my own village we took an abandoned house as an office and used an old table and five chairs which someone donated. Our approach was to form a village development committee (VDC) in each village. There were no set rules about who should join a village development committee - membership was open to all who were willing to give time to development activities. In each of the villages we were able to form a village development committee (VDC) of 20 to 30 members who were students, traditional social workers and school teachers. We had no

formal or written agenda for development, nor did we work within uniform guidelines. We facilitated each village development committee (VDC) to prepare a yearly action plan and to implement village development activities based on the principle of 'doing what we can do for the benefit of our village community'. One village thought of organizing poor men and women into savings groups another of establishing a night literacy centre for the illiterate adults, while others thought of planting papaya trees or of health education. Regular meetings (mostly monthly) of the village development committees took the form of simple reviews of development activities. By 1987 this process enlarged the circle of community participation in each of the villages.

Our self-help activity was making good progress when we began to face problems. The demands on the village facilitators began to mount, but guardians were reluctant to allow their wards to spend time on voluntary work that did not contribute to the family income. Furthermore, by this time we felt the need for systematic record keeping and monitoring. This required regular meetings of volunteers, stationery, bicycles for transport and so on - but we did not have enough money.

**When so-called professionalism and projects expanded - but not self-help:** By 1987 it was difficult to run our organization only by collecting local subscriptions. None of us (youth friends) had an income to provide monetary support. Of all my friends, only I had a Masters degree. Friends suggested that I get a job and provide financial support from my income. I got a job as assistant program officer for training with the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) – a national networking body of NGOs. I started my first formal job on July 1, 1987 at a monthly salary of 3000 Taka (at that time, equivalent to 100 US \$). My work place was Dhaka (the capital of Bangladesh) and since I had two day weekends I could easily hop on a bus and reach my village in about five hours. Joining Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh widened my understanding of ways to build a development organization (as a formal NGO) and to gain funds from donor agencies. I communicated this to my friends in the village so that they could formalise Voluntary Organisation for Rural Development (VORD) as a nongovernmental organization (NGO); VORD was registered with the department of social services in 1987. For the next 9 years (1987-95) I continued as the Chair of its executive board, participated as a volunteer, and performed my job with Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) in Dhaka. From 1987 to 1991, Voluntary Organisation for Rural Development (VORD)

continued to operate as a voluntary organization without any funding support from any external donor agency.

In 1990, the Swiss Red Cross sponsored a group of Swiss journalists to visit development agencies and their programs in Bangladesh. They visited Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, and other national scale development programmes supported by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC). The journalists expressed their interest in visiting a community-based, voluntary program. The program officer of the Swiss Red Cross knew about the Voluntary Organisation for Rural Development (VORD) and its voluntary self-help activities and so he got in touch with me. The journalists went to our village and visited various voluntary activities. They were impressed to see that we were doing good work in 20 villages without any external funding. After their visit they published an article in Switzerland titled 'The Youth the Hope of Bangladesh', illustrated with several photographs of our work. In 1991, a team of high officials including the head of international cooperation of the Swiss Red Cross visited Voluntary Organisation for Rural Development (VORD) and expressed its willingness to pilot a small program with VORD. During the 1992-1994 periods, with funding from Swiss Red Cross, VORD implemented a pilot project entitled 'Self-Mobilized Community Health Improvement'. Financial support from the Swiss Red Cross to VORD continued until 2002.

In 1994, encouraged by the outcome of its partnership with VORD and other partner nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), the Swiss Red Cross decided to try a similar approach with other NGOs in Bangladesh. They provided funding and technical support to 20 local NGOs to implement projects of similar nature. My leadership and activities with Voluntary Organisation for Rural Development (VORD) drew their attention to me. They proposed that I join them to develop a Red Cross-mandated NGO in Bangladesh and to provide technical support to about 20 partner NGOs. Happily, I accepted the proposal. In January to July of 1995 I worked with the Swiss Red Cross delegate in Bangladesh to institute the Development Association for Self-Reliance, Communication and Health (DASCOH). On August 1st, I left Association of Development agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) and joined DASCOH where I worked as the national chief, a position next to the delegate of Swiss Red Cross. I had the full-time use of an official jeep and an attractive salary. I was so happy that, after a decade, the self-help approach we began in our village would be replicated by many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with Swiss Red Cross funding.

From 1994 to 1999 the Swiss Red Cross, in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), provided financial support to about 30 NGOs - including VORD - to replicate the Village Development Committee model of self-help. Despite provision of capacity-building training for VDCs and partner NGOs, the formers' dependency on the latter seemed to increase. My colleagues and I thought that we must enhance staff skills in participatory methodology - so we provided more training. We also gave increasing attention to augmenting their skills in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) - using tools such as participatory planning and monitoring, and techniques of conflict resolution. Consultants were hired to help all partner NGOs prepare strategic plans to achieve sustainable village development committees and to foster community participation and cooperation.

Despite all our efforts, when the funding ceased, most village development committees became inactive. In our endeavour to prepare a good strategy for sustainability we collected cases of many other organizations that had tried to establish self-reliant people's organizations and processes – only to find that they had similar experiences. This increased my frustration. I thought perhaps we had failed to build self-help attitudes such that, after phasing out our involvement, people did not care about the process continuing. Sometimes I thought that I did not have the answer and felt lost.

### **Emergence of interaction process of reconstruction**

**An opportunity to listen and my eagerness to learn Appreciative Inquiry:** In 1999 I got an opportunity to do a postgraduate diploma and thereafter a Masters degree under the 'global partnership program' run by the School for International Training (SIT) in Vermont, USA and by Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in Bangladesh. I thought of conducting a study with village development committee members – to explore their ideas about promoting self-reliant people's organizations – ones that would not become psychologically dependent on external facilitating organizations. My Master's research topic was called 'promoting self-reliant community organizations at the village level: Perceptions of VDC members and field-level facilitators'.

This study, together with many others, taught me two important things. First, people are dependent on each other e.g., for meeting material needs - no one can be fully self-reliant. Thus, the promotion of self-help is basically the promotion of a self-reliant psychology in a

community – one in which a community gets on with things without waiting for external support. Second, I learned that to start with a focus on problems may not be a good way to promote self-reliance. From the many focus group discussions I had with VDC members, the following remarks are illustrative<sup>7</sup>:

“Our village development committee (VDC) started work to improve the village water and sanitation situation. During the last two years we have gained knowledge and skills in implementing water sanitation activities. But now many villagers are asking for income generation activities and for education for children - for which we do not have good knowledge and skills. As days go by, more and more new demands come in to the village development committee. We solve one problem and then another comes. Doing work with the people is not easy. The person who is supportive today may not support the next day. I think it will not stop and always we have to learn new things.”

Abdul Hamid, Member Paikartala village development committee, Mohipur Nawabganj

And Ms. Rokhsana Begum, a member of Dharmahata village development committee observed:

“When you come then you ask us what our problems are. We have so many problems; when we see them all we become afraid. We see that we have no capacity to solve them - so we want you to help us. We cannot start what we don't have. We started our village development committee in a small way. Over a period of time with your help we grew like the Banana tree. Now you are not here so the tree fell down. However big it is, no-one can make a pillar of room from the banana tree. But one can do so even if it is a small Shal<sup>8</sup> tree. Self-reliant village development committee needs seeds that can grow a strong tree like the Shal.”

A slightly different point was made by Mokles Uddin, a member of the Milik Gowra Village Development Committee:

“Irrespective of rich and poor if all people of this village are united and free from conflict then to make a village development committee self-reliant it is not a big matter.”

On completion of my master's presentation and before my departure from School for International Training (SIT) USA, I shared an uneasy feeling with Professor Jeff Unsicker, the secretary of the global partnership programme and the dean of SIT. I told him that whilst working for my Master's degree I realized and strongly felt that psychological dimensions rarely get attention in theories and practices of development. Despite the use of participatory methods, the whole approach to planning and managing development creates a psychological and material dependency of the community that eventually results in the creation of a top-down structure both at local and global levels. For real development we need to challenge this

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<sup>7</sup> I made notes of things people said as the meetings went along.

<sup>8</sup> 'Shal' is called by the local people, a tree of good quality timber

approach and to investigate whether it is possible to apply a prospect-centred approach as opposed to a problem-centred.

Dr. Unsicker suggested that I study appreciative inquiry (AI). I bought and read a book on the subject. (Cooperrider et. al., 2000). I could see that appreciative inquiry is a prospects-oriented approach to development and gives better attention to psychological aspects. However, I was also sceptical. First, I wondered how appreciative inquiry could work in communities like my village where human life is a struggle to meet daily needs. Should one ignore those problems and issues of daily life when appreciative inquiry does not want to talk of problems? And how will AI's positive orientation cope with individualism and greed? Furthermore, funding agencies impose their already-set priorities on communities - how can AI work with this?

This said, I thought that I should learn about an approach that tries to ensure the inclusion of material, relational and psychological dimensions of community development. I believed there must be ways to change human attitude that care for collective well being but had no idea about 'how'. Although I was gloomy I thought it is worth trying to use AI with a community struggling for daily existence - to learn how it can work to create a sustainable self-help people's organization – one that does not become dependent on external agency.

On completion of my study in May 2001, I returned to my job. For the next six months, I tried to find an organization using appreciative inquiry in Bangladesh or in India, so that I could go to see and learn more; I failed. Further, I was looking for training courses or an academic program in India or in Nepal in which I could afford to participate but I did not find any. Always I was thinking about how to learn more about appreciative inquiry. In January 2002, I joined the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)-Philippines. I did so because I knew this organization pioneered training and research on participatory approaches to development. Since I first started as change worker the image of IIRR and its credo<sup>9</sup> led me to think that this is the organization to which I should go. Now I would have the opportunity to learn AI.

**Getting into the Taos-Tilburg PhD program:** After joining IIRR-Philippines, the year 2002 passed quickly. It was my first job in a foreign country and with colleagues from different nationalities and different cultures. I continued looking for an opportunity to study AI. One

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<sup>9</sup> IIRR Credo: Go the people, Live among them, Learn from them, Plan with them, Start with what they know, Build on what they have, Teach by showing-learn by doing , Not a showcase but a pattern, Not to conform but to transform, not odds and ends but a system, Not piecemeal but integrated approach, Not relief but realize.



day I found the Taos-Tilburg PhD program. In middle of 2003 I wrote a concept paper for my PhD study and sent it to Professor Kenneth Gergen - the Chairperson of the Taos Institute. I knew this name from reading about AI where I learnt that AI is grounded in a 'social constructionist meta theory' - with which Kenneth Gergen is strongly associated. I am a grassroots development practitioner and not very learnt. Perhaps my concept paper based on my grassroots experience would not seem very interesting to an eminent academic. Nonetheless I did not lose hope of getting a positive response. On October 26, 2003 I received an email from professor Kenneth Gergen in which he wrote,

Dear Mr. Saha, Thank you very much for sending on all the materials relevant to entering the PhD program. Your work is indeed impressive, even inspiring, and I would like to continue the dialogue with you regarding possible participation in the program.

This response was a great inspiration for me. I decided that, if accepted for the PhD program, I would endure whatever struggle (mostly financial) I might face. I was accepted as a PhD student and started in September 2004.

Initially I thought I would go back to my own country and village to do my research. I discussed this intention with my supervisor at IIRR - Dr. Scott Killough (Director of IIRR-Asia). After going through my research plan, my supervisor thought that my proposed research (which was interventionist) would be beneficial for IIRR's program development and learning about AI. With this understanding, he encouraged me to conduct my study in two villages in the Philippines. IIRR could then base its future programs on the results. Considering my financial situation and the hardship of shifting and resettling my family, I thought that it made sense to continue in Philippines. With the help of my IIRR colleagues, and the two villages in Philippines, I was able to conduct this research that joins inquiry and intervention.

**Doing, learning, rethinking, and adjusting: an ongoing PhD journey to make and remake self-with others:** Writing this now, many faces and facts are alive and with me. The face of my mother; a picture of one of my grand fathers; the memory of collecting donations together with my village friends; friends in traditional social work in our village; joining party-political activities and comrades; working with many friends in establishing a small local NGO in our own village; colleagues in organizations for which I once worked; people engaged in my Master degree study. Together they generated the question 'is there a better way of doing things?' Jeff Unsicker; the teacher from SIT from whom I first knew those

words ‘appreciative inquiry’ and who inspired me to do this higher study; Professor Kenneth J. Gergen, from whom I got the inspiration and the suggestion to study ‘social construction’ (words which I never heard before); my present colleagues and community of this research. Dian Marie Hosking – my adviser of this PhD research – added another two words ‘relational construction’. Taos Institute awarded me 1000 US \$ which helped me to buy the air ticket; go to the Netherlands and work with my adviser. However, I still had monetary problems to buy food and pay for my accommodation in Netherlands. My adviser Dian Marie Hosking not only provided me accommodation in her house in Heusden village, but also food. Support she provided to me simply cannot be seen as a teacher-student relationship. Knowing the financial situation, my other adviser John B. Rijsman collected financial assistance of 3000 Euro from a Dutch company and made it easy for me to publish this thesis and travel another time in the Netherlands while defending this thesis. My IIRR colleague Sammy Operio worked with me when I was working with the barangay community. Another colleague Philip Penaflor read my chapters as reader and made comments to help me. Md. Haroon –Ur-Rashid, one of my well wishers who voluntarily gave me input in correcting my English while writing this thesis. Once the head teacher of International British Academy in Philippines and teacher of my son Mr. John C. Wraith; our family friend in Philippines, kindly did proof reading of the thesis. My wife and son allowed me to cut part of my time which I am supposed to give them.

With all these participants I feel I cannot claim that it is me, making myself, telling ‘my’ story. Through the remaining chapters I shall assert that ‘my story is not mine at all’ but rather, is constructed and reconstructed in relationships with many others. Thinking back, at the age of 16 I did not think of going from house to house with friends to collect donations for our village school - but the situation made it happen. I had no idea that this story, constructed so many years ago, would continue its journey in collaboration with so many other stories to join with the story of this dissertation research. Every day and every moment we make and remake ourselves and our thoughts in connection with others. In this story of constructing and reconstructing myself I could reflect on this ongoing journey of self-changing and my contributions to changing others as they have changed me.

When I was first thinking of pursuing this PhD, I simply thought that AI is good for creating a ‘co-operative individual mind’ - so why not try. Engaged in this PhD, through study and interaction with my adviser, I constantly renewed my perspective. Now I no longer consider the individual as a ‘container of mind’. Instead, I have come to see this as the view of an ‘entitative epistemology’ that attempts to shape individual minds and fuels

individualism. I (re)learned that ‘many selves’ are made and remade in ongoing processes of multiple interactions and relationships (and realized that my self-story fits well with this view). Therefore, achieving social change is a process of constructing relational processes. Now I think of interactions and relational process in the community as my unit of analysis and action - for development and social change. Further, I see that methods for facilitating development and social change are not freestanding but are better seen as co-genetic and co-constructive (see e.g., Hosking, 2004:16).

This study provided me a valuable opportunity to conduct research in communities that are engaged in a daily struggle to meet their basic needs. I very much empathise with the following remark of Reason & Bradbury:

The central purpose of action research is to address issues and concerns to individuals and communities in the everyday conduct of their lives. A wider purpose is to contribute to the increased well-being- economic, political, psychological, spiritual- of community, and to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet of which we are an intrinsic part (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:2)

I believe that development research should generate benefits for the community participants. I am happy that, however small, this research has contributed something to the communities with whom I worked – by integrating inquiry and intervention. Two villages thought through, planned and implemented a good number of activities that they thought good for them and I was part of that doing, learning, and making. As I will try to show, this kind of self-help reflects a very particular value for ‘going on’ together in multi-voiced, different but equal relations that create and re-create ‘power to’ (Hosking, 2004: 11; Dorieke & Hosking, 2004: 10-12). This is very different from other approaches to development – including those that use the language of ‘self help’ and ‘participation’ – and yet reproduce more ‘power over’ (Hosking, 2004: 1) others.

## Chapter 2

### Relational constructionism: It's potential to promote self-help

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#### Two discourses of self-help

**A question from my observations:** I was born and brought up in Habashpur, a remote village in Bangladesh. In Habashpur, people built their own village school, library, sporting club, and village market. Such community initiative still survives. The villagers did these things by themselves without reliance on outsider development organisations. As I described in Chapter 1, my experience was that 'self-help' initiatives often collapse when international development organisations get involved. I have since found out that many development projects in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Philippines and other countries seem to have suffered the same fate. It seems it is rare to find a self-help people's organisation that has not become dependent on one external agency or the other (see e.g., Berner & Philips, 2005; Biggs, 1995; Schmitz, 1995; Johnson, 1996; Moore, 1995; Rehnema, 1990). Verhagen (1987) puts it clearly,

During past decades the status of the poor has been reduced to that of 'beneficiaries' of development projects, 'adopters' of new technologies, plantation or factory workers etc., situations which all imply a high degree of dependence on the benevolence, entrepreneurial capacities and economic means of other than themselves (Verhagen, 1987: 3).

Reflecting on my own personal experience and being aware of what has happened in other cases, I found myself asking:

When a local community joins in the self-help promotion projects of a professional development organisation, why does the achievement of self-help become unlikely?

**Striving to learn from the 'Rural Reconstruction' concepts and principles:** In the first chapter, I described my frustration at our failure to promote sustainable self-help organizations in Bangladesh. However, I began to feel some sense of hope when I read an article entitled 'Self-help: Jimmy<sup>10</sup> Yen's Proven Aid for Developing Nations'. The article states:

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. Y.C James Yen is a Chinese American who initiated rural reconstruction movement in China in 1923 and the Philippines Rural Reconstruction Movement in 1952. This Movement spread in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the year 1960 he established the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction in Philippines. He is also called Jimmy Yen.

There are now 150 pilot villages of the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, sparked by Jimmy Yen but run by Filipinos. I saw scores of villages, formerly primitive and tumbledown, now transformed into healthy and prosperous communities. I saw thousands of people who had languished long in squalor, disheartened and disease-ridden, now joyfully accomplishing their own uplift. Significant and spectacular advances have been made in self-government. The *barrios* (villages) are now, for the first time in their history electing their own officials, making and enforcing their own law. This remarkable success is not only 150 villages but also in the spread of its influence throughout the Philippines. Dramatizing the plight and potentials of the *barrio* dwellers, it provided the thrust that put rural reconstruction into orbit of all over the islands. Its emphasis on reconstructing a nation from the bottom up has made the Philippines a cheering rarity among Asian countries. No other formula has been so conclusively tried and proven because it enlists people's own aspirations and mobilizes their own initiatives for their own reform. Already it has produced in Philippines what the President, Carlos Garcia, recently called a 'silent but glorious revolution' (Davidson, 1961:5).

The above seems to reflect ideas similar to those of IIRR's credo:

Go to the people  
Live among them  
Learn from them  
Plan with them  
Work with them  
Start with what they know  
Build on what they have  
Teach by showing  
Learn by doing  
Not a showcase but a pattern  
Not to conform but to transform  
Not piecemeal but integrated approach  
Not odds and ends but a system  
Not relief, but release  
(IIRR-Plan, 2000)

The credo sounded to me to be different from the traditional concept of participatory development. For example, the credo did not stipulate outcomes but rather speaks of how a development worker can be a partner in community learning and doing. Furthermore, it urges the development worker to start with people's knowledge and to build on '*what people have*'. It did not separate learning from doing and seems to take a holistic approach.

When I heard what IIRR was promoting I wanted to work with them. Fortunately, the chance came in 2002. In my first two weeks I was introduced to their rural reconstruction

philosophy and approach, had discussions with colleagues, saw video presentations and read various publications on rural reconstruction. Following further reading and reflection, I developed the following synthesis of what I had read and heard:

*Believe in self-help and self-governance:* People have productive, intellectual, physical and political powers for self-governance (see e.g., Buck, 1984).

*Development is internally driven:* To be sustainable, development has to be internally driven rather than externally imposed (see e.g., Davidson, 1961).

*Four Mutuals:* Mutual knowledge, mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual help (see e.g., IIRR-Plan, 2000).

*Four Cs:* The rural reconstruction worker believes in Character, Competence, Commitment and Creativity (see e.g., IIRR-Plan, 2000).

*Many disciplines:* Rural reconstruction represents many disciplines (see e.g., IIRR-Plan, 2000).

*Agents of learning:* Change workers are not agents of change, but agents of learning. Rural reconstruction workers and the community should form an equal partnership and should share the journey of learning. 'Learning by doing' should be the focus. Research must link with the practical needs of the people (see e.g., James Yen, 1934; Hersey, 1987).

*Education for doing new things:* Education should transform people's way of doing things and their way of thinking; into new practices that are innovative, efficient and can effectively influence other people's lives in the communities (see e.g., Hall, 1968).

Despite all these interesting possibilities, I felt very frustrated by what I observed in IIRR's actual practices. I did not hear my colleagues talk of self-help - and yet this was what IIRR was known for. It seemed just as I had experienced with NGOs in Bangladesh - that IIRR's credo was largely confined to rhetoric and documents. I returned to reading and exploring Rabindra Nath Tagore's life and work – first introduced to me by my mother – who read me some of his stories and poems. I was beginning more and more to think that, when compared with the rural reconstruction philosophy, Tagore's approach to self-help was much the more profound.

**Tagore's approach and works on self-help:** Rabindra Nath Tagore<sup>11</sup> pioneered a self-help approach to development and social change in Bengal in the 1890's (see e.g., Bhattacharya, undated; Bose, 1997; Kripalini, 1980; Roy, 1985; Mukhopadhyay, 1998; Rahman, 2001). Tagore used the term *Sawraj* meaning 'self-governance'. His many works included: establishing Santiniketan (home of peace) in the year 1901; founding a cooperative rural bank

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<sup>11</sup> Tagore was one of the greatest Bengali who was at once great poet, a great composer of songs, a great writer of short stories, an accomplished novelist, a dramatist, an essayist, a literary critic, a polemicist, a writer of delightful travelogues and memoirs, a great letter writer, an inimitable writer for children and an author of classic text books, singer and musician.

with the participation of local peasants in the year 1905, and; establishing a university called Visvabharati in 1921. At Potisar in Bengal, Tagore started an agricultural bank with prize money from his Nobel Prize. In 1922, he established Sriniketan (an institute for rural reconstruction). His other work included the establishment of a night school for adults in a village of 'the untouchables', along with cooperative farming, a common water supply and a network of roads. His idea was to develop villages as self-supporting units with schools, workshops, granaries, co-operative stores and banks.

The stories, poems, novels, plays and the wonderful songs he composed gave me a profound respect for Tagore. Every year our school celebrated a day in honour of this great man. Teachers and students listened to, and recited his poems, discussed his life and works and sang his songs. I still remember the time we had a children's play adapted from a story written by Tagore. I found it thrilling to recall and to reflect on its possible connections to his self-help approach to development and social change. The story goes like this:

**'The Parrot's Training'**  
(Rabindra Nath Tagore)

Once upon a time there was a bird, it was ignorant. It sang well but never recited the scriptures. It hopped frequently but lacked manners.

Said the Raja (king) to the bird; "self - ignorance is costly in the long run".

The pundits (educationists) were summoned and at once got to work and identified the root cause of the matter. They decided that the ignorance of the bird was due to its natural habit of living in a poor nest. Therefore, the first thing necessary for the bird's education was a suitable cage.

Then the pundits decided on proper text books for the bird. Scribes were called in to copy from books and copy from copies. Manuscripts were piled sky high. At length, the Raja summoned his education department to see how things were going. They came to the great hall with conch shells, gongs, horns, bugles, trumpets, cymbals, drums, kettle-drums, tomtoms, tambourines, flutes, fifes, barrel organs and bag-pipes. The pundits chanted mantras, while the goldsmiths, scribes, supervisors and countless cousins all cheered. The Raja was impressed with what sounded like a very sound principle of education.

Finally, some fault-finder asked the Raja whether his majesty had seen the bird. The Raja admits that he had totally forgotten about it. Turning to the pundits, he enquired about the method they followed in instructing the bird. The pundits gave a demonstration. The Raja was so elated that the bird looked ridiculously unimportant in comparison. By then, the bird's throat had choked from the pages of books and it could not complain. At times, it would flutter its wings in the morning light. Such insolence was not to be tolerated. The blacksmith was called in to forge a chain and clip the bird's wings. Finally the bird died.

The Raja's nephew came and informed his majesty that the bird's education had been completed.

"Does it hop"? The Raja enquired.

"Never" said the nephew.

"Does it fly"?

"No"

"Bring the bird" said the Raja.

The bird was brought; the Raja pushed and nudged its body: Only its inner stuffing of leaves from books rustled, while the murmur of spring breeze amongst the new buds of Asoka (tree) leaves outside made the April morning wistful.

The story of 'The Parrot's Training' suggests a different way to promote self-help. Firstly, it challenges the traditional concept of the educated. More often than not development professionals view themselves as educated and the community as ignorant. Nothing could be more wrong. A farmer may not have gone to school and may be illiterate but he is not necessarily ignorant. Professionals may consider ignorance as being costly in the long run – and hence may want to educate the locals. Is it possible to promote self-help on the basis of this 'educated/ignorant' paradigm? The story of the parrot teaches us a lesson about the relationship between development professionals and the community. This relationship can be one of dominance or equality depending on how development professionals learn and prepare themselves. Learning in isolation from the life and practice of common people separates professionals from people and encourages imposition of their ideas and thoughts.

Tagore suggested that we should encourage '*freedom for many ways of learning*' (Jain, undated: 7-10). He suggested that there should be space for '*many ideas to emerge from many*'. His thinking emphasized convergence of the human soul and divine/nature, love, simplicity and goodness, freedom of learning and creativity (see e.g., Jain: undated, 1-51). According to Tagore, self-help or self-governance starts with building a new vision of a prosperous life in the community. Over-emphasis, he thought, on any one vision is not good for promotion of self-help. He believed that villagers should construct their own vision - which could be different from that of another village. The process of developing self-help should facilitate and encourage local people to think of development according to their own situation and to take actions relevant to their own culture.

**Two discourses of self-help:** My own involvement in successful and failed development projects led to my early views on self-help and the role of change workers. My reflections later on rural reconstruction and on Tagore's approach suggest two quite different discourses on self-help. I began to see that development can create dominance relations - a relation that ultimately serves the agenda of development agencies - but not of communities (see e.g., Hosking, 2004). I have had direct experience of this in at least three contexts: (1) in the



development sector – where professional development workers can dominate the community (2) in the land movement (mentioned in chapter 1) where the former landless leaders later on dominated the landless community, and, 3) in Russia, where comrade-leaders also came to dominate the masses. It occurred to me that the leading discourse of self-help did not touch on why and how this happens but rather, positions change workers as knowing ‘subjects’ who must *act on* communities as knowable and formable ‘objects’ (Hosking, 2004). Tagore’s approach and the rural reconstruction themes I outlined earlier seemed to offer a different discourse – one of learning *with* the community. In this discourse, change workers seemed to be viewed as equal partners with the community – learning from, acting with and changing each other. I wanted to learn more. As I began my PhD I explored other writings that helped me to further articulate the first discourse, which some have called a subject-object construction, and a possible alternative.

**A subject-object (S-O) discourse of change work:** This discourse positions ‘professional change workers’ and the objects of their efforts, as autonomous entities. As a result, its concept of ‘relationships’ or ‘relating’ is about what goes on between independently existing entities (see e.g., Dachler & Hosking, 1995). Such a discourse indicates that external development agencies will organize interventions that reflect their own knowledge, values and priorities. When development workers enter a community they already know what they want the community to become - but have no idea that the change workers might change themselves or about their own becoming. This suggests a hierarchical relationship in which the expertise of the change workers dominates local knowledge and voice of the community contradicting the basic tenets of self-help (see e.g., Kaplan, 2000). The following personal experience illustrates the Subject-Object discourse in practice.

I was working as a program officer for a Swiss NGO - the *Development Association for Self Reliance, Communication and Health* (DASCOH). During 1995–1999, DASCOH supported 30 local partner NGOs in Bangladesh to promote self-help by developing sustainable Village Development Committees (VDCs). There was no shortage of support for the VDCs and partner NGOs. But as the days went by their dependence on the NGOs and their staff increased. The staff of the partner NGOs received more training in order to deal with the situation. My colleagues and I thought that we must enhance the skill of the partner NGOs in participatory methodology. We worked hard to develop their skills in Participatory Rural Appraisal using tools such as participatory planning, monitoring and techniques of conflict resolution. In addition, we hired consultants to help partner NGOs prepare strategic plans to achieve sustainability of the village development committees (VDCs). Despite all our efforts, most VDCs became inactive within a short period of cessation of funding. In our attempts to prepare a good sustainability strategy we collected cases of many other organizations who also tried to establish self-reliant people’s organizations and processes – only to find similar unsuccessful experiences.

In retrospect, perhaps we over-emphasised stable and bounded entities and their characteristics to the neglect of ongoing relational processes as they continually make and remake the interacting parties. The Subject-Object discourse is also reflected in assumptions about the characteristics of entities when considering actions, relationships and outcomes. The following are from unpublished reports on our (DASCOH) attempts at self-help.

The Association of Village Advancement (AVA), a local NGO in Bangladesh, was supported by a Swiss NGO named Development Association for Self Reliance, Communication and Health (DASCOH) to promote self-help. DASCOH organized a 3-day workshop in which each of its partner NGOs presented papers. The coordinator of AVA, Mr. Dileep K. Karmaker, presented a paper entitled '*People's Mobilization through Self-help Organization(s)*'. In conclusion the paper states —

“Self-help organization(s) and their federation can serve as independent people's institutions to promote knowledge and skill of human resources in a planned way and can also act as a pressure group or a parallel structure of the disadvantaged group to defend and protect their rights and interests, if they are properly handled by the intermediary organization(s). The NGO program must adapt its helping methods to the emerging needs of its partner i.e. self-help groups so that after a certain period of time they can scrupulously take decision(s) for their own sustainable and equitable development, as a result of which the external input may not be required in future.” (Karmaker, 1995).

And another illustration:

The Voluntary Organization for Rural Development (VORD) was a local partner NGO of a Swiss NGO named Development Association for Self Reliance, Communication and Health (DASCOH). After successful completion of the first two phases of a program, VORD prepared the third phase to last four years (January 1, 1997 to December 31, 2000). VORD felt the need to organize a workshop to develop tools for participatory monitoring and evaluation; they asked DASCOH to facilitate it. At the beginning of the workshop, VORD staff developed the following description of the attributes which a Village Development Committee (VDC) should supposedly have.

"The Village Development Committee (VDC) will act as a basic organization in a village to plan, implement, and monitor and evaluate self-help activities in the four-year (97-2000) plan. The VDC should have its office in their village where a traditional birth attendant and a literacy centre teacher will act as their volunteer staff. A VDC can be organized with 20/25 members. The structure of the VDC will constitute a Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary, Cashier, Health Secretary, Organizing Secretary and others will be members. VDC will hold meeting once a month but, if necessary, VDC can hold meetings more frequently. For any economic activity such as savings, VDC funds, and credit VDC will keep proper accounts of transaction through a bank account. The rules and regulation of bank account will be in accordance with the resolution of the VDC. The bank accounts will be operated by the joint signature of Chairman, Secretary and Cashier. The teacher of literacy centre will help VDC in keeping it office record.” (Saha, 1997)

And the third example:

On November 2, 2000, The Swiss Red Cross funded local NGO partners in Bangladesh to hold an exchange workshop on the sustainability of self-help organizations. 6 local NGO representatives, 3 staff of a Swiss NGO named Development Association for Self Reliance,

Communication and Health (DASCOH) and a German expert participated in this workshop. At the end of the workshop participants synthesized the following learning and recommendations.

“Sustainability needs to be defined by a specific standard. It does not necessarily mean that after achieving certain standards a self help organization will stop further growth of capacity. After achieving sustainability as per defined standard in a particular area the self-help organization can move forward for achieving sustainability for other areas. Achievements of sustainability need to be well planned even before the starting of a project which has to be clear to all staff of the facilitating organizations. Criteria wise phasing out is a gradual process thus phasing out should be done phase wise. Local partner NGO’s should have long-term perspective plan that has clear approach and well-defined strategies for phasing out and achieving sustainability. Related technical and management (including fund and finance) capacity development of self help organizations need to be well planed from the beginning of the project. Clearly defined long-term donor support is crucial for phasing out and sustainability. A local NGO need its own sustainability and find out income generating activities for its own which do not create barriers for achieving sustainability of self-help community organizations.” (Saha, 2000)

These examples suggest that at least some of us (development professionals) positioned ourselves as active agents and the community as the passive objects. We assumed that we were the ones to enquire, to know, to design and to implement necessary interventions. Citing my own case, I took upon myself to design and conduct capacity development training for the local partner NGOs. I hired Tobias Scutch, a German expert, to design and conduct training in participatory monitoring and evaluation. Ram Krishna Newpane, a Nepalese expert studied the financial sustainability needs of village development committees. Using so-called participatory methods and techniques yet acting as knowing and influencing subjects (see e.g., Hosking, 2004: 4-5), we, the development workers, tried to change and develop others as our object.

I now turn to another example<sup>12</sup> that illustrates the possible significance of an ongoing relational process in making and remaking the interacting parties.

Md. Abdur Razzaque had worked with me since the beginning of Voluntary Organisation for Rural Development. We believed in the principle that we should behave politely and respectfully with the villagers and the field staff. Among us, Razzaque was clearly the best in good behaviour. Sometime in 1997 I went to my village from Dhaka, and then went to Razzaque’s office in VORD and talked to him. After a few minutes, a field worker, Kadijatul Kobra, entered Razzaque’s room. A few days earlier, while visiting a women’s group, Razzaque received complaints that Kobra behaved very badly with the members who were unable to repay their weekly credit instalments. When asked by Razzaque why she had misbehaved, Kobra replied: that she had not behaved like that before – that she had always behaved politely and respectfully. But ever since VORD involved them in the credit program, she and the field staff of VORD talked about nothing but repayment. Kobra said that this was

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<sup>12</sup> Example cited is the collation from my daily learning diary which as a development worker I had to maintain at that time as staff of a Swiss NGO named Development Association for Self-reliance Communication and Health (DASCOH).

because the finance department instructed them to be strict and not to tolerate defaulters. None of them had the time to discuss anything else. To my surprise, while suggesting to Kobra that she behave respectfully with the villagers, the usually polite Razzaque was rather rude. Later I asked Razzaque about the behaviour of the other field staff with whom I had worked years ago and whom I had known as polite and respectful to villagers. Razzaque replied that the field staff had changed; they were now so preoccupied with conforming to rules and procedures that they no longer valued the necessity of politeness and good behaviour.

The Subject-Object discourse of relations assumes that language represents ‘the world as it is’ – such as ‘the state of the village development committee’, ‘the state of villagers participation’, ‘the state of local partner NGOs’ and so on. In discussions and analyses, the relationship among entities often gets centred - rather than the processes of constructing entities and relations. In the case above, we discussed what had happened to Razzaque - why has he changed - or what has happened to the women’s group - why did they now complain about the behaviour of the field staff? We wanted to find out what is going on. We think only of the entities that should be the target for change; we analyze the relationships between the entities as we understand them, but not the construction process.

It is my considered opinion that in the years between 1995 and 1999, DASCOH and other like-minded organisations failed to promote self-help. We assumed that the capacity of individual NGO staff and the capacities of village development committee (VDC) leaders were the key to generating more rational actions that would create greater efficiency (Gergen & Thatchenkekry, 1996). Based on this assumption we designed interventions to develop individual capacity of partner-NGOs and village development committees. Often our discourse was along lines such as ‘this village development committee is not doing well because the leader is not active’, or, ‘most village development committees of that partner NGO are good because the staffs are educated and skilled.’ Guided by our implicit assumptions about ourselves and the world, we were very eager to generate rational actions in relation to our pre-determined criteria - to move a village development committee (as autonomous entity) from an (already known) unsustainable state to (what we defined as) a sustainable state. In our view, we had to be as objective as possible in relation to our criteria. In order to promote self-help we (DASCOH, local Partner NGOs, External Experts, SRC, SDC) positioned ourselves as thinkers and sense-makers for the village development committees and village communities while we continued to consider ourselves as the knowing subject in Subject-Object relation. It is possible that this Subject-Object relation fostered individualism among the members/leaders of village development committees (VDCs) and the staff of partner NGOs and that such individualism limited the possibility of

self-help-promoting collectivism. The following story which I recorded as ‘notes of observation of my field visit’ as part of my job with a Swiss NGO illustrates the point.

In our endeavour to make VDCs sustainable, we designed training courses including one in ‘conflict management and resolution’. We thought that a VDC would not be sustainable if village and VDC leaders did not know how to resolve and manage village conflict efficiently. We did not even consider the possibility of village leaders being more able to resolve village conflicts than we. Anyway, using books and training manuals we designed the course. Staffs of Partner NGOs were trained and they conducted training for village and VDC leaders. In 1999, as part of my regular monitoring activities I was observing a training course in the Chapai Nwabganj district of northern Bangladesh. About 20 village and VDC leaders participated. The venue of this training was the office of a partner NGO and two of their staff members were conducting the course. I felt that the effort of the trainers to make the training sessions interactive totally failed. In the evening, in an informal atmosphere, I listened to the participants talk about the training. About five or six participants told me that the training was good but the situation in their village were different. They said that every case of conflict was different and that they had to resolve them case by case. I sought their suggestions on making the training more useful. They said that they were villagers – just simple farmers – and did not feel comfortable sitting for hours in a training room with Helal Bhai and Nahar Apa (the two trainers) showing them pictures and talking of examples. They confessed that most of them had never studied in a school or a college and found it difficult to understand. They believed that, for them, it would be better if each told of their experience in resolving conflict in their village – that they had experience of conflict resolution.’ I asked as to why they had not mentioned this to the trainers?’ They replied ‘no-no’. They said that Helal Bhai and Nahar Apa were educated, - that they go to many places - and so must know more than them. In a separate discussion I listened to the two trainers discuss the nature of the training - that it was new and complex - and beyond the capacity of these people with poor education to comprehend. They suggested that, in the future, only participants who have a minimum level of education and who are able to read writing on the board should be chosen for training.

The story suggests that the program created an unequal power relationship between the change workers and the community – one that Hosking (2004) termed power *over*. In my experience, this relationship characterises current development practices of NGOs, government development agencies, and many other international development organizations (see e.g., Long, 1977). This power-over discourse and the perceived status of change agents mean that communities perceive themselves as inferior to the development experts/change workers. This kind of top-down relationship may well encourage communities to be silent and passive recipients of development knowledge and services. I believe that, despite talks of principles of self help, the subject-object discourse positions the change organization/worker to act and influence the community as a formable object (see e.g., Hosking, 1999 and 2004; Shotter, 2002; Gergen, 1998 and 1997). Perhaps scholars and practitioners of development should recognize that it is not possible to promote self-help in a subject-object modal relationship. On the contrary it necessarily (re)produces more dependence. This brings me to my second discourse on self-help.

**A relational constructionist discourse of change work:** In recent years, scholars have brought a variety of long existing themes together in a meta-theory<sup>13</sup> or discourse of relational constructionism (see e.g., Hosking et. al., 1995; Gergen, 1997). Gergen describes it as a discourse which holds that all claims of knowledge, truth, identity, objectivity, reality<sup>14</sup> and values are the products of communal relationships and the communal interpretation of meaning; it places relationship at the core of all that we experience as truth, reality, and values. Relational constructionist theory sets out how local-historical, local-cultural, language-based processes make multiple local relational realities. Relational processes are said to (re)construct local knowledge or, more generally, to construct people and worlds as local ontology (see e.g., Hosking& Bass, 2001; Hosking& Morley, 2004; Hosking, 2004.a, 2004.b, 2004.c, 2004.d, 2004.e, 2004.f). Given this line of thinking, language is viewed as action and as key to processes of co-constructing realities.

Instead of entities and individual action, the present view of relational construction centres inter-action as both the ‘unit of analysis’ and the ‘locus of transformation’ (see Hosking, 2004). Put very briefly, this is because an action supplements some preceding action and so becomes available for further supplementation – influencing how the process progresses. This places ‘the forming or shaping’ of realities in ongoing processes and not in individual actions or in individual's characteristics. Hence, when it comes to theorizing development projects, a relational constructionist discourse suggests that external change workers and the local community *co-construct* local realities. In this view, the process is also the product - the ‘tools’ are also the ‘results’ (Newman & Holtzman, 1997: 78). Earlier I suggested that my experience of development work was that the process/product is often subject-object relations – but it does not have to be that way. Relational constructionist theory allows ‘relating’ to go on in ways that give equal weight to *multiple local* knowledges and, in ways that depart from subject-object constructions (see e. g., Dachler and Hosking, 1995; Hosking, 2002; 2004; Hosking and Bass, 2002).

Returning to my earlier account of self-help, it is now possible to understand how subject-object relations can be so easily and so commonly constructed. The subject-object relationship is made and re-made in the many acts that position the change-workers’ own

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<sup>13</sup> Metatheory: A theory about theories.

<sup>14</sup> The Oxford American Dictionary defines reality as ‘the quality of being real, resemblance to the original; the real world as distinct from imagination or fantasy.’ In social constructionism, reality is what we create relationally within our significant and relevant social groups, including the cultures in which we live. Realities are socially constructed in community and can never be fully objective. Some versions of social constructionism speak of reality construction only as epistemology – others (postmodern) speak of constructing realities as ontology. In this thesis we have taken the position that neither epistemology nor the ontology separately defines the meaning of reality but the ongoing-interaction process between these two does.

(local) knowledge over the other (different) local knowledges of the communities where change workers work. This 'hard differentiation' becomes robust in continued application of standards and practices associated with objective knowledge and with mainstream methods for evaluation of development 'interventions'. Peter Reason (1994) and others have suggested that the search for objectivity reinforces a tendency to think in terms of parts rather than interrelatedness and of things rather than of processes. This reminds me of the work I described earlier where the Swiss NGO - Development Association for Self-reliance Communication and Health (DASCOH) and its partner NGOs in Bangladesh tried to facilitate self-reliant village development committees. From the notes of my field learning journal of those days I cite that when we were trying to promote self reliant village development committees (VDC's) in Bangladesh we invited a German expert to teach us how to design a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the VDCs' progress towards sustainability. We were taught how to be as objective as possible, focusing on the VDC as autonomous entity about which we could learn through detached study. We developed uniform objectives and indicators to measure the sustainability of all the VDC's. We centered our whole focus in the subsequent years on achieving those objectives and indicators. Perhaps, we separated ourselves from the community through our 'expert' development of a standard monitoring and evaluation framework and by positioning ourselves in responsibility of monitoring and evaluation of the other, the community. I believe, most professionals engaged in development work would agree with me that biasness to so-called objectivity is very common when it comes to monitoring and evaluation of development activities/projects/programme; a very common instrument used to see things in parts rather than interrelatedness of parts in a whole.

It should add that, in my experience, development research and intervention are often theorized and organised as different activities. Many organizations exist only to do research such as agricultural research councils, institutes of social studies. I was becoming more and more convinced that those of us who wish to facilitate sustainable self-help must create ways to join inquiry, intervention and evaluation and to avoid subject-object constructions (see e.g., Hosking, 2002). This is an issue even when development organizations design and implement what they think of as participatory action research projects. In my experience, the primary ideas of those action research projects are often those of the staff – whose aim is to change the community – whilst they themselves remain unchanged.

## **Constructing non subject-object processes**

### **Constructing self-help in non Subject-Object processes:** As Hosking notes,

Subject-object relations and 'power over' are just possible but not necessary relationship constructions. Inclusive non-hierarchical ways of relating can be constructed in processes that treat multiple different relational realities as different but equal. Non- hierarchical ways of relating can construct 'power-to' in the sense of power to sustain multiple interdependent local ways of 'going on' in 'different but equal' relation (Hosking, 2004:12)

As I explored the possible relevance of the relational constructionist discourse, I began to increasingly think that the promotion of self-help requires a relational meta-theory. This is the only way we can break away from the paradoxical relation in which one party tries to promote independence of another through dominance. This led me to revise my earlier outlined principles of rural reconstruction' together with Tagore's approach. My growing understanding of relational constructionism, subject-object relations and possible alternatives led me to the belief that the promotion of self-help requires:

- non subject-object ways of relating
- a shift in focus from building individual capacity to what we can do together
- genuine people's participation and interaction
- space for multiplicity - for local creativity and for different ways of learning
- a learning culture that encourages community and change agents/ workers to be co-learners and co-constructors
- working towards opening-up new possibilities

I began to think that efforts to promote self-help should centre around questions such as:

- What processes produce and stabilize the dependence of a community organisation on external agency? and
- What other processes might make a community organization independent in a self-sustaining way, and what would the latter mean in this context?

I looked for methods that centre on inter-action processes as the unit of analysis and action for development and social change. It was my desire to learn how to facilitate development in non subject-object ways of relating.

**Constructing non subject-object processes: problem solving (PS) and appreciative inquiry (AI):** I came to understand that, from a relational constructionist perspective, all methods contribute to the processes of constructing realities (Hosking, 2004; Doreke &



Hosking, 2004). Two methods have been extensively discussed in the development literature, namely problem solving (PS) and appreciative inquiry (AI). So, I decided to explore them further in relation to how they construct relational realities and, in particular, how they might construct subject-object and non subject-object possibilities.

Problem solving (PS) approaches have been said to suffer from certain disadvantages (see e.g., Bushe, 2000; Cooperrider and Whitney, 2000, Cooperrider and Srivastva, 2000; Ludema, 2000, Thatchenkery, 1999, 2005). First, and in recognition of the constitutive functions of language, some have argued that PS generates deficit vocabularies (the method starts by identifying a problem), talks of failure, and practices blaming. All of these contribute to the construction of the individual as an autonomous entity with defining characteristics that provide the reason(s) for failure and/or the source of some solution; making a departure from S-O constructions difficult.

It has also been argued that a problem solving approach fails to encourage a conversational climate (see Ludema et. al., 2000); it does not encourage communities and change workers to learn to improvise and to figure out new ways of going together (see Hosking and Morley, 2004; Gergen, K., 1998). Instead of opening up, problem-solving approaches close down (that's their job) which may well discourage participants from voicing their differing community-based constructions (see e.g., Gergen, K. & Gergen, M., 2004; Hosking, 2002, 2004; Doreke & Hosking, 2004; Hosking and Morley, 2004).

Appreciative Inquiry, in contrast to PS, is grounded in the assumption that every living system has many untapped, rich and inspiring accounts of the positive. Recognizing the constitutive power of language, AI centres discussion on what is locally viewed as positive, what works, what is energizing. Cooperrider & Whitney (2002) claim that AI is developed on the following principles:

- The constructionist principle: All claims of knowledge, truth, identity, objectivity, reality and values are the product of communal relationship and the communal interpretation of meaning. We create our own reality through pattern of communication and storytelling.
- The principle of simultaneity: Recognizes that inquiry and change are not separate but are simultaneous movements. Inquiry is intervention. Learning and change happen simultaneously.
- The poetic principle: Metaphor that human systems are stories; open to interpretation by the local culture and context.
- The anticipatory principle: Our collective imagination and discourse about future is infinite human resources we have for generating social change. What we anticipate is what we enact.

- The positive principle: Our positive image of the future leads to our positive actions: What should be, rather than what is wrong.

The principles above are put to work in a process referred to as a *4-D cycle*.

- Discovery: discover our strengths, exceptional/peak moments
- Dream: envision what might be if the peak moments were the norm, not the exception;
- the image of the future that emerges is grounded in the 'positive present'
- Design: develop 'provocative propositions' to achieve the vision, and the strategies to implement them
- Destiny/Delivery: act on the provocative propositions, established new relationships. (See e.g., Cooperrider & Whitney: 2002).

Writers note that, as a method, AI emphasizes process rather than content and diversity rather than consensus. The four-D's are viewed as a continuous cycle in which the destiny phase leads to new discovery of community strengthening, thereby beginning the process anew (see e.g., Doreke & Hosking 2004). Cooperrider & Whitney (2000) claim that AI can facilitate an appreciative discourse with positive changes in mind-set, positive relationships and cooperative attitudes. Thatchenkery (2005) suggests that prospective knowledge sharing (e.g., how can we have more peak moments) facilitates '*learned optimism*' when compared with retrospective knowledge sharing (e.g., of what went wrong) and '*learned helplessness*'. The former helps people to reframe their reality into possibilities thereby acting hopefully; and the latter leads people to believe in their inability resulting in a loss of motivation and failure to act. Many practitioners are emphatic that retrospective knowledge sharing creates defensive routines intended to prevent embarrassment, threat, and awkward situation, thereby maintaining the status quo and avoiding unwanted change. In contrast, they argue that prospective or appreciative knowledge sharing focuses on harmony that allows flow or open sharing. Advocates of Appreciative Inquiry claim that it releases the empowering potential of vocabularies of hope - which act as a source of social and organisational transformation (Ludema, 2000).

In summary, AI has been suggested to facilitate:

A sense of commonality which eventually fosters cooperative morals and action; a sense of being valued, encourages active dialogue and participation among community thus generating motivational effects for common good; better involvement of adult learning principles and affective domain of learning; collective hopes and inspirations which enhance relational connectedness among community;

collective imagination of better future emerges which generates inspirations for collective actions; affirmation of each others' positive aspects generates feeling of reward which contributes to foster cooperative morals; the positive Pygmalion<sup>15</sup> dynamic emerges and makes people cooperative response provider to each other; and prosper learning of social helpfulness which generates a sense of optimism, increases feeling of solidarity and makes persons altruistic. (see e.g., Bushe, 2000; Cooperrider, 2000; Cooperrider & Diana Whitney, 2000; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 2000; Gergen, McNamee & Barrett, 2001; Cottor et. al., 2004; Muthayya, 1996; Rudolf , 1956; Sandra , 2003 ; Thatchenkery, 1999, 2005).

**Looking forward:** To conclude this chapter, I would say that it would be useful to employ problem solving (PS) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and explore the ways in which they promote Subject-Object relation - or some alternative. However, reviewing literature and picking up ideas is one thing whilst learning through practical application is another. As a development worker, I had previously used problem-solving methods but I had no experience with AI. I decided to try it out and learn. Together with two villages, I decided on a multi-voiced, participatory program of development. This was a major departure from my earlier idea to conducting research on already completed interventions.

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<sup>15</sup> The Pygmalion effects means one's expectations shape another person's behaviour ( see e.g., Thatchenkery, 2005)

## Chapter 3

### Learning and doing together with the community

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#### Abandoning my early design

Before being accepted in the Taos-Tilburg PhD programme I was required to submit a plan. At that time, I had little experience in translating social constructionist ideas into development practices. In particular, I had not thought through the implications of starting my development work on the basis of an already worked out plan or "blueprint", so to speak. Further, I was unable to make a link between this way of working and the likelihood of constructing subject-object relations between myself and community members. I prepared a research plan sketching a road-map to a level of detail I could think of, including a range of so called 'participatory tools'. I sent my plan to my research adviser who suggested that I allow the methodology to develop as an integral part of a process of doing and learning. She also suggested that I try to work with as large a number of community members as possible - perhaps through some sort of large group interventions. Reflecting on these ideas I could see how they conformed to my interest in promoting self-help through an emergent, multi-voiced design – trying to avoid subject-object relations rather than reproducing them. I decided to abandon my detailed design and instead to initiate discussions and explorations with the communities with which I would finally work.

I also began to review the literature on large group interventions (LGI). I visited my adviser's website and was able to learn the following:

A characteristic of LGI is that the whole organization (or a representation of the organization) is involved in the change process. Also it is not uncommon for a LGI that other stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, financiers, and governments to participate in the process<sup>16</sup>.

While I liked the general idea, I was not sure how a large group intervention would be possible when working with a community consisting of thousands of people, including all the residents and council members, municipal government agencies, people's organizations and other NGOs and civil society organizations. I felt uneasy merely thinking about ways to bring all the stakeholders into the process of dialogue within the limited time and resources.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.geocities.com/dian\\_marie\\_hosking/largegroupinterventions.html](http://www.geocities.com/dian_marie_hosking/largegroupinterventions.html)

Moreover, except for the Open Space Technology<sup>17</sup>, I had no previous experience of using other large group intervention methods and tools such as Future Search, Appreciative Inquiry, Real Time Strategic Change, and Simu Real. The best I could do was share the idea of a large group intervention; discuss and decide with members of a community. That is exactly what I did.

My departure from a blueprint approach became obvious when all of us (community, IIRR, my colleagues and I) worked together to generate practical utilities for the locals - rather than generalisable knowledge for some scientific community.

**A community to work with:** By this time, I had become familiar with literature on problem solving methods (PS) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI). I was anxious to learn more in the face of the crucial question I seemed to be facing. My question was:

In a community where meeting basic needs are a daily struggle, how can PS and AI create and support multiple but equal voices and creativity; how can they promote genuine and lasting self-help development and social change?

After submitting my research proposal, on January 16, 2004, Professor Kenneth G. Gergen (Chair of the Taos Institute) sent me an email in which he wrote:

“Dear Shayamal, Thank you very much for sending on the quite thoughtful and challenging paper on how you would wish to proceed. I am now going to send this on to Prof. Rijsman in Tilburg, and will consult further with him about your entering the program. In the meantime, it would be very useful to learn from you a little about the practicability of your project. Do you have a community you can work with in this way; do you have the resources in terms of connections and rapport that will enable you to carry out the work successfully. Let's be absolutely sure that everything can be done successfully before you make the sacrifice required to enter the program. All best wishes, Ken Gergen”

By that time, I was working for IIRR in the Philippines. IIRR had a program in the community called ‘Learning Community Program (LCP)’. Its general approach favoured ‘learning by doing’ together with a community. I was working with the training section - which meant that I had no direct work with any community. I forwarded Professor Gergen's email to Mr. Scott A. Killough, the Regional Director of IIRR at that time with a request to let me to work with communities. On the same day (January 16, 20004), the Regional Director got back to me. He wrote:

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<sup>17</sup> Open Space Technology is developed by Harrison Owen. In Open Space, a facilitator explains the process and then participants are invited to co-create the agenda and host their own discussion groups. Discussions are held in designated areas or separate places known as ‘breakout spaces’ and participants are free to move amongst the discussion groups. At the end of breakout space the full group reconvenes for comments and reflection. The essential core that determines whether something is ‘open space or not’ is the invitation to take responsibility for discussing your passion.’ When participants do so, the needs of both the individual and the collective are supposedly met. Web collection: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_Space\\_Technology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Space_Technology)

“Shayamal: As I had mentioned when we discussed this the other day, I can see their concern and the need to ensure that you – as the researcher – have the adequate skills, networks, cultural understanding, social capital, etc. to complete this piece of research. This is a legitimate set of concerns that you need to address. As we discussed in our meeting, we envision you – as a member of a wider IIRR team – being able to undertake this research within our learning community (LC) program areas in Bicol. As part of our own LC program efforts, we will need to accomplish many of the community entry, participatory planning, people’s organization (PO) mobilization, etc. steps that you have envisioned in your research. Working with the Bicol team, this can be accomplished to meet our own program objectives in Bicol, and you can provide some leadership to the particular piece of research that you would complete for your Ph.D. (This is, I believe, quite similar to the way that Marise and the Bicol team was able to work to undertake Marise’s M.S. research work.) Therefore, as we also discussed in our meeting, one of the next steps would be for you to discuss with Ed Sabio (the head of LC program of IIRR) and other members of the Bicol (the community program location in Philippines) team the general idea that you have outlined for your research, and if in agreement to the idea, to begin to work out the practical details involved. I am willing to join in any discussions that this might entail. Once we have some internal agreement about some of the specifics, then you should be able to respond to the specific concerns raised by Prof. Gergen and the others at the university. Thanks, Scott”

I noticed from these exchanges that different parties had rather different concerns. Professor Gergens’s concern, as chair of the PhD programme, was *whether I would be able to do this work*; my boss's concern was *would this research make a positive contribution to IIRR’s program development*. My concern was to get an affirmative response from IIRR so that I had a community to work with and the financial support for the field-work. IIRR made it clear that if I needed financial support for the field-work then my PhD research would have to be a component of its development program. IIRR provided me a great resource in the form of the continual support of my field colleague, Samuel Operio. Not only was he an experienced community worker but he was also born and brought up in Bicol - the area where I might do my field-work. From the start to the end, my good colleague accompanied me as a local mentor.

Following the suggestions of the IIRR’s Regional Director, and in a meeting with my IIRR colleagues, in March 2004 I shared my ideas of research on self-help. In this meeting some colleagues suggested that I work in two neighbouring barangays<sup>18</sup> within the Mount Masaraga-Quinale watershed. IIRR had a programme in the area and some colleagues were already working with these communities. Samuel Operio, Field Coordinator of IIRR’s Bicol Programme, kindly took responsibility to find two barangay for the self-help work. From March through mid-May 2004, Samuel Operio, and other field colleagues, discussed the

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<sup>18</sup> A village is called barangay in Philippines. On an average a rural barangay is composed of about 200 to 500 families. Each of the barangays has the lowest local government body called barangay council.

matter with barangay communities/council members and by the end of May 2004 had found two villages, Balinad and Napo<sup>19</sup> for my research.

The time had come for me to begin to build my relationship with the communities. For me it was a mixed feeling of excitement and tension because it was the first time I would be working directly with communities outside my own culture and country. However, by that time I was sure that my work and learning of self-help promotion did not require the discovery of a 'truth', nor the imposition of a mono-logical construction (see e.g., Hosking 2004: 17) , so I was not worried. I was not going to start with any preconceived target nor did I feel any pressure to conform to a set design. I just had to go to the community; to make friends and to 'do and learn together' whatever was possible. Furthermore, my colleagues would be an integral part of the process.

I was fortunate that my IIRR colleagues gave their support and guidance from the outset. They became a part and parcel in the process and I always had many suggestions and guidance. Just a few days after identifying the two communities I received the following email from my immediate work supervisor, IIRR's Deputy Director, Marissa Espineli:

'Shayamal, based on our discussion with Scott (*Scott A. Killough, Regional Director of Asia of IIRR*), and Noel (*Noel C. Icatlo, Human Resource Director of IIRR*), basically we agreed that IIRR is ready to make your research happen in the communities in Bicol and they will be in the new Masaraga-Quinale watershed. I hope by this time you have gotten the message of Sammy (*Samuel Operio, IIRR's field coordinator*) that you will be working in barangay Balinad and Napo. I think Scott's challenge to you is to be prepared to take advantage of the opportunity we have now which may not be available to you next year or later. This means preparing the tools as soon as possible so that we would be able to start the community work following the AI approach. -- Marise'

I was in my office reading this email when Marise walked in and said that before going to the communities I should learn something about the history of the Philippines in general and some background information on the two barangays; Balinad and Napo. Philip Penaflor, the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of IIRR, gave me three books<sup>20</sup> and some reports of assessments which IIRR field colleagues conducted in 2002 and 2003. The reports gave an account of the past and present socio-economic conditions with very little idea of the interaction processes responsible for construction and perpetuation of those situations. Anyway, it was good to study these documents.

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<sup>19</sup> The villages are located in the Polangui municipality under Albay province of the Bicol region of Philippines. The map in Appendix-1 shows the villages, the research location.

<sup>20</sup> Landa Jocano, 1998; Juanito Ortiz, 1992; and the 1991 Local Government Code of Philippines.

**Building relationships with the barangay communities:** Just before starting my field-work I attended an IIRR workshop in which some barangay officials were participants. My field colleagues who already knew these officials (from past IIRR programs) introduced me to them. During the workshop I spent most of my time talking with the barangay capitans (village chiefs), and the council members, responding to their many queries about my family life and my feelings about being in the Philippines. On day one the workshop session ended at 4:30 in the afternoon. The capitans of Balinad (Mr. Nestor Awayan) and Napo (Ms. Gladina Andrada) invited me to accompany them to a small market in Legaspi city where I could find locally produced crafts.

We returned at around seven in the evening. After dinner the capitans of the two barangays, some barangay council members, my field colleagues and I, spent a few hours talking in the comfortable lounge of the *Carlos Hotel*- the venue of the workshop. My friendship with these key members from the two barangay gradually evolved and deepened. By the second day of the workshop, we became so close that the other workshop participants started referring to us as the 'Balinad-Napo' group. We started walking together, meeting together, and spending leisure time together. The workshop ended at 5:30 in the afternoon on June 22, 2004.

On June 23, 2004 after breakfast, we departed for the barangay. I shared a motorcycle with the Capitan of Napo. After a one and a half hour drive we reached the municipal town of Polangui. I was excited but nervous. Excited, because it was my first opportunity to work directly with a rural community in a foreign country and culture; and nervous because I was not sure whether or not it would be possible to do the work with the community within the limited time and resources. At the same time I was drawn to the great natural beauty of the area: the Mayon– the world's best cone-shaped volcano, fields of green crops encircled by deep green mountains, the mountain spring of Anislag that looks like it is wearing a crown of cloud – spring water from the upland flowing to the crops field with its own music.

During my first visit I tried my best to build a good rapport with barangay council members and other key persons. It was a great privilege to see the barangays, its people, and trees, houses, roads, shops and crops field. I talked with many people, visited their homes and ate with them. My eyes and ears were open as I visited council members in their offices, had informal discussions with different groups in the two barangays, visited the Polangui municipality and met the municipal development officers. I also listened to what the elders had to say about the history of the barangays. In the barangays I walked hand in hand with capitans and council members. I would often hear the capitan, while introducing me to other



barangay residents, say; “*Saha is a Bangladeshi national and not a Bombay. He is a good man and will work with us*”. I learnt, later that the locals call Indians living in the Philippines ‘Bombay’, as the Indians who initially set foot in the Philippines were from Bombay in India. However, the term Bombay, (pronounced “bumbai”) in the Philippines, is used in a derogatory sense as most Indians are engaged in lending money at exorbitant interest rates. They are also called ‘*Five-Six*’ because when they lend 5 peso the borrower has to repay 6 peso after a week. People do not like them. As I look like an Indian so, the captain at the very outset made it clear that I am not a ‘*Bombay*’. From then on I would always introduce myself by saying that ‘*I am a Bangladeshi*’.

My financial situation did not permit me to stay in a hotel. During our work in the barangays, the Balinad community provided me, and my colleague Samuel Operio, free accommodation in the barangay hall; this was a great community contribution made to us.



Barangay hall of  
Balinad

Staying in the barangay helped me in more ways than one. In addition to the capitans and the council members, I got to know the caretaker of the barangay hall and the children who would be amused to see me – a foreigner. A home bakery in front of the hall gave me the chance to eat biscuits with the children and befriend them. I could also play basketball with youngsters on the court in front of the hall.

Barangay captains and council members asked me many a times why I was not staying in a hotel - like other development professionals. At the beginning of my stay in the barangay hall people often asked me; ‘don’t you or your organization have money to keep you in a good hotel- what does your organization do?’ ‘What project are you going to implement’. The Credo of IIRR helped me with my response to them. So, I referred to the lines of IIRR credo that stated ‘go to the people – live among them- learn from them-plan with them-work with them-start with what they know’ (see page 16). I added something along the lines of ‘my organization sent me here to work with you to promote self-help in the

barangay. My organization thinks that, together with the community, we can do much good work without any external financial or material assistance. It also said that to be able to work with you I must live with you and learn from you; that's why I am staying in the barangay hall'.

In response to peoples' questions about the project I am going to implement, I said that I had no project – except to invite people to get together; to think together - and I would like to contribute. I saw that, after listening to this, people looked unhappy. In exploring why this might be so, I heard a variety of reasons expressed. The *first* was that I cannot be very knowledgeable if I cannot provide recipes for development. *Second*, people found it difficult to see how I was going to contribute to their development when I was not offering material and monetary support. *Third* – where was the project?! They expected that, as a foreign development worker, I would go there with a big project in hand. Their history of relations with previous professional development workers was that they came with projects and suggested what to learn and what to do. Fortunately, I felt this frustration about me did not last long; I shall return to this point.

Altogether, my field colleague and I lived (on and off) in the Balinad barangay hall<sup>21</sup> for 62 days. At the time, I was very aware that the relationships we built, and how the locals saw me, were of critical importance to my project. I felt that my staying in the Barangay hall contributed to our gradual construction of a relationship of equals<sup>22</sup>. Living in the barangay also gave me the opportunity to build my local knowledge. Whenever I did not understand something I went to the people who gladly explained. It was then that I realized the value of a 'not-knowing' approach - the locals were proud to teach me – it was not I but they who were the experts on their local practices and situation. I also felt that, whilst our relating went on in many ways, perhaps the most critical one was through my living in the community. This is something very different from using mere techniques and methods of rapport building – practices that are common in programs of development and social change. My past experience has been that, despite my attempts at rapport building, it was not possible for me to build a non-hierarchical relationship with the local community when I had to implement a pre-set development project - even when it was described as a participatory approach.

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<sup>21</sup>Our staying place at the Balinad barangay hall was jointly decided by the barangay council members of both barangays Balinad and Napo. It was the secretary of Balinad barangay who first proposed Balinad barangay hall as our staying place then considering the physical provisions capitans of Baliand and Napo discussed together and decided we stay in Balinad barangay hall.

<sup>22</sup> Later I shall develop this theme using the language of subject-object relations.



Not just these five - about 20 children became my friends when I was staying at the Balinad barangay hall

In our first meeting with the council members of the two barangays, my colleague, Samuel Operio and I asked if they thought it would be good for the community to initiate self-help activities. While some responded affirmatively, others wanted to know what kind of financial and material support we could provide. After some discussion the council officials suggested that during our next visit we should share ideas on self-help with the barangay youths, students and ordinary residents (particularly those who economically poor). They thought that we should find out from the people whether they were willing to give their time and effort. Sammy asked did they think it would be good to nominate one person per barangay who could act as the focal person for self-help activities. The barangay secretary Amador Silerio (Balinad) and one of the Barangay Council members Teresita Buban (Napo) were nominated for this role.

The first meeting with barangay council officials where I asked them whether they thought it was good to do self-help activities in their barangay.



When it came to departure, after completion of the first visit, about 12 people came to the bus station to see me off. My bus was on time. I shook hands with all of them as they told me to visit again. As the bus rolled out I thought that the process of my becoming a part of the community had begun – it felt like a good start to our future relations and work together; I reached Manila at 7:30 in the evening.

## **An evolving process of dialogue and participation**

**Emergence of a small team:** Following the suggestion of the barangay council officials, my field colleague (Sammy), and I went on our next visit to Balinad and Napo between October 25 and November 2 of the same year. I took a night bus and reached the bus terminal in Legaspi City (the capital of Albay province) at six o'clock in the morning of October 25. Sammy was already waiting for me when I arrived. We were supposed to travel together to the municipal town of Polangui and then go on to Balinad. The distance between Legaspi and Polangui is about 40 miles. We looked for local buses but found out that there would be no buses that day because of a strike organized by the transport union. Finding no other alternative, Sammy, who had a very old jeep, kindly offered to drive us and off we went. We reached Polangui at around nine in the morning.

Sammy felt that he urgently needed to fix a few problems with his jeep so that we would not get stuck if we had to use it again. So we went to a motor mechanic and had those problems fixed and then bought some bed mats and other essential stuff from Polangui market. We reached the barangay hall of Balinad at eleven that morning. The Balinad barangay hall, which is the office of the barangay council, was equipped with a table and chair for the barangay capitan, a round table and several chairs for the council meetings, a chalk board, a small store room, a small bathroom and a kitchen. It had electricity – a few electric lights and fans. We laid our beds in a corner of the hall.

At around noon, the focal person for self-help, Mr. Amador M. Selerio (Dory), came and we exchanged pleasantries. Sammy asked Dory if there was a restaurant where we could have our lunch. As there was none, Dory suggested that we go to Polangui and have our lunch there. He told us that their barangay hall had a small kitchen and that, if we wished, the caretaker could cook for us - from dinner that night, we would have no need to go to the town for food. We willingly accepted the offer. As we were about to go to the town, Dory asked Sammy what we would do after lunch. I wanted to have a good sleep as I had not slept well in the bus the previous night. But Sammy said that we would be back by two o'clock and asked Dory to contact Teresita Buban, the focal person for self-help in Napo, to ask if we could have a meeting in the hall at 2:30.

Sammy and I went to town about four miles away and had lunch at the restaurant named Bastian. By two o'clock we were back at Balinad. After few minutes, four persons from the two barangays came into the hall. They were:

1. *Teresita Buban*, Napo council member and focal person for self-help promotion in Napo;

2. *Ma. Caroline Benares*, youth council chairperson of Napo;
3. *Amador M. Selerio*, Barangay Secretary and focal person for self help in Balinad; and
4. *Elvie S. Deleon*, Council Member of Balinad.

Once again we exchanged greetings. Teresita told us that they discussed our first visit with barangay council members, local youth, and friends. She expressed her hope that they might engage in self-help activities in Napo. Caroline stated that most members of the youth council of Napo were interested in participating. Dory voiced a concern in Balinad - the barangay Capitan thinks that IIRR will bring good projects to their barangay - such as farm-to-market road construction and a potable water supply. He also reported that he had discussions with some barangay youth - who said that they were interested self-help activities - whether or not IIRR brings particular projects for them.

At one point, Elvie (from Balinad) wanted to know about the plan to listen to barangay residents about their willingness and interest in participating in self-help activities – as suggested by the barangay council officials during our first visit. In response, I invited suggestions about how we could do that. It came out that we would have a meeting once again with the respective captains and council members of the two barangay - to solicit their suggestions and support. I asked our friends about the possibility of organizing such a meeting for the following day. All four emphatically replied ‘no’ - because (they said) the captains and council members are very busy and it would be difficult to organize a meeting with them on such short notice. Together, we finally decided that we would organize the meeting for two days time.

With our barangay friends, Sammy and I planned how to contact council members about the meeting. I asked what we could do the following day. Our friends told us that we could do many things such as study the barangay profile, the barangay development plan, or get to know the barangay by walking around and having informal meet-talk-listen sessions with local youth and council members. We decided to spend the first half of the day in Balinad and the second half in Napo.

**Understanding barangay councils’ development work:** The next day - October 26<sup>th</sup> - was spent as planned. We contacted barangay captains and council members about the meeting planned for the following day. We went through some documents - including barangay profiles, barangay development plans, and the roles and functions of Barangay Implementation Teams (BIT) – provided by the secretary of each barangay. I was impressed

to see how these councils prepared and kept updated barangay profiles. I asked a council secretary how and why they did so. The secretary told me that it was government policy – and each barangay council had to comply. Using a standard information guide, each barangay had to prepare and update their profile, including basic information about land area, local population (by sex and age), students (by education level), crops and cultivable land, land use, peoples' occupations, child health and nutrition, shops, market places, schools and so on. Each year the barangay council must update the profile.

In addition, we looked at and discussed other materials related to development. For example, the barangay offices of both Balinad and Napo had calendars and posters on display.

**‘Progress is our only future’** A 2004 wall calendar with a picture of Congressman Joye Sarte Salseda who printed and distributed it - displayed in the Balinad barangay hall. The 2003 calendar distributed by the congressman showed physical resources in the picture and a message written in Bicol.

**“Gabos Para Sa Indo”** - meaning **“all of this is for you”**

A hand written poster was displayed on the wall of the barangay council office of Napo  
Barangay Napo:

#### **Specific Development Objectives**

- Promote sustainable management of farms and the use of barangay resources through implementation of appropriate farming system models based on the agro-ecological attributes of the sites and the socio economic potentials of Agrarian Reform Communities (ARC) farmers and their communities.
- Provide critical support - required specifically for local infrastructures to lessen production costs and to hasten delivery of agricultural products.
- Support community based livelihood projects to increase on-farm and off-farm productivity and income.
- Institutionalize and/or strengthen management structure and farmers organizations.
- Promote eco-tourism projects anchored on strong partnership between the LGU and the community or Pos.
- Encourage strong participatory involvement of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in the conduct of development activities under the program. and
- Provide basic needs of people.

In the barangay council office of Napo there was another poster:

### **Community vision**

“progressive way of living where every member of a family actively participates in all endeavours with good health , with literate children who are the country’s hope and future, with adequate facilities, GOD loving and serving their fellowmen, united in preserving the beauty of nature and environment- the source of livelihood, and living not only for themselves but also serving as model citizens of the nation”

and in the local language - Bicol:

“Asensadong kamogtakan kan mga familia, na an lambang sarong miembro may aktibong participation, may marhay na salud, may inadalan an mga aki na magsisirbing futuro kan nasyon, marhay na facilidades, namomoot sa Dios asin kapuwa- tabang sa pagpauswag kan kominidad asin pagpresirbar kan kabuhayan, asin mabuhay bako para sa sadiri iamang kundi maging ehemplong ciudadano kan nacióng Filipinas’

I was surprised to see this poster - but then I found that some of the barangay council members were unable to explain it. I asked barangay council and youth council members how the poster was developed and written. They told me that in the year 2002, after being elected for the second time, the Mayor ordered the Municipal Planning and Development office to conduct a one-day vision workshop with each barangay council. The poster was written during the workshop.

As we walked around and got into informal discussions we observed various development related materials in the council offices and in other places; we got to meet more people and heard more views on development and self-help. A large part of our discussions focused on who is doing what in the way of development activities in the barangay. Most council members and community participants told us that the main local development organization was the barangay council - guided by the Municipal Planning and Development Office. In addition, the barangay council members mentioned the following governmental, non-governmental, and people’s organizations.

#### **Government agencies:**

- DAR- Department of Agrarian Reforms: Certificate of land transfer (CLT), animal dispersal, seedlings and fertilizer , farmers’ training and training on food processing;
- DOH-BHW (9), One Mid wife: Distributes vitamin A, Immunization, Philhealth card, Philhealth weekly 3 days check up clinic;
- Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD): Skills training for women, handicraft making for women;
- DTI: Department of Trade and Industry: Training and seminars;

- PCA: Philippine Coconut Authority: Training on food processing on coconut;
- LGU (Municipal fund): Financial support for all projects of barangay council; and
- Municipal Planning and Development Council (MPDC): Provides technical assistance to prepare barangay development and action planning.

**Nongovernmental organizations:**

- CFCA: Christian Formation for Children Ageing: Children education, counselling & financial assistance to meet the basic needs of the poor.

**People's organizations:**

- Hibiga River System Irrigators Association Inc.: This is a cooperative society in Balinad. It has 13 Board members, 5 administrative officers and 11 staff.

Senior citizen association: Takes care of cleanliness in the barangay.

**Getting to know the municipal level development actors:** The next day, October 27<sup>th</sup>, we had our meeting with the council members of the two barangay in the Balinad barangay hall. The meeting was scheduled to start at 9 AM. Just on the hour, Sammy and I were joined by Teresita Buban (Napo council member and self-help focal person) and Caroline Benares (Napo youth council chairperson), along with four youths from Napo. After a few minutes more arrived: Amador M. Silerio (Balinad secretary and point person) and Elvie S. De Leon (Balinad council member) accompanied by five more youths from the barangay. We introduced ourselves. Amador and Teresita informed us that the capitans and other council members would come but that, as they were busy persons, we may have to wait for an hour. This did not surprise me - in my home country (Bangladesh) this is a common practice - perhaps as a way for elected public representatives to demonstrate the power and status.

Before the capitans and council members arrived, around 15 of us engaged in informal discussions. We heard young people say they were very interested in taking part in self-help activities. These included college students, some of whom had already graduated but were still unemployed. Amador and Teresita had invited them to join the meeting. At one point I asked why they were interested in self-help activities in their barangay. They said they thought it was good for their community and that the practical experience of doing community development work would help them get a job with NGOs or other development organizations in the future. Others voiced different interests. Caroline Benares (the youth council chairperson) wanted to be involved because, as elected leader, she was obliged to do something good for the barangay youth. Amador, Teresita, and Elvie thought that self-help activities would improve their goodwill and popularity in the community. It was clear that people had very different interests in participating in the proposed work.



The capitans and other barangay council officials finally arrived and we started our meeting at 10:30 AM. In all we were about 30 persons. Many participants (especially the barangay youths) started suggesting ways of going to the people and listening to them, and they expressed their interest in participating in these activities. On the other hand, the barangay captains and some council members asked about the kind of projects they could expect from IIRR, particularly those related to potable water supply, construction of waste water drainage, livelihood projects, and so on. At this point, the youths stopped talking, and suddenly there was a heavy silence.

Besides taking part in the discussions, I was taking notes about who was saying what. Caroline Benares broke the silence. She said, *'when we are talking of Sariding Pagksisikap (self-help,) why are we asking for projects from IIRR. Let us try by ourselves. We can do something'*. Discussions again became lively and many supported Carol. Then the Napo Capitan asserted: *'It's okay to do self-help but we cannot start any kind of development activities in our barangays without consulting the municipal planning and development coordinator (MPDC), and without the permission of the municipal mayor'*. It was then decided that, Sammy and I, together with capitans of the two barangay, would have to have a meeting with the municipal mayor and the MPDC. With this decision the meeting ended at about 12:30 PM. Amador and Teresita contacted the mayor and scheduled a meeting with him and the MPDC the following day.

The following day we sat in a meeting with the Polangui Municipal Mayor and the development council. After only a few minutes, the mayor asked me to explain the kind of financial support IIRR could provide to the municipality. I said that we were not there to provide money or to deliver service, but to undertake a mutual inquiry and action process in the two barangays to promote self-help in community development. As I took notes, the Mayor added that they had the technical experts to prepare project proposals, but would like to send the proposals to the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR – my employer organization). He further asked if IIRR would take the responsibility to get funds from the donors. We replied that we could not take that responsibility but it is up to the barangay and municipal councils to take that challenge.

Then the Municipal Planning and Development Officer (MPDO) asked us to explain what we would like to do in the barangays. I explained our intention to promote self-help activities. The mayor seemed unhappy and said that I must know that his municipality is poor and that the resource allocation is less than they need. He further advised me that, with an expert from Manila, he had prepared a proposal worth 65 million pesos for water supply.

Development of the plan cost one million pesos. But when they discussed it with the people they said they didn't want the plan to be implemented because it would raise the cost of water. I asked why people had not been asked before the proposal was prepared. The mayor did not respond but continued by saying: *'I need road construction, industries, but where can I get resources? In Polangui I have 44 barangays – so many needs - but little resources'*. After the mayor finished, the MPDO (Municipal Planning and Development Council) said to me that what we were proposing was not so much a development project as small-scale research. He added that, as this was not harmful for their community, and as he didn't see the need for any involvement of the MPDC, we could go ahead. But he asked that we provide reports of the activities. I assured them that we would and added that, they could also participate in some events - to see what is happening.

Such were the discourses at the municipal level development actors - the people who provide major support and resources for barangay development. For them, development was a technical issue that could only be brought out by technical people from the municipal office. The mayor was of the view that he was the one who had to bring all change and development by virtue of his position as the town-mayor. And the MPDO did not perceive our endeavour as a development intervention but only a kind of small research. Anyway, in that meeting we became acquainted with the municipal mayor and other municipal officials and presented the objectives and ideas of self-help. The mayor gave his permission to go ahead with self-help activities in the two barangays.



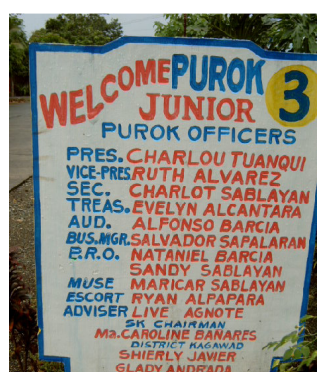
On the suggestion of my colleague, Samuel Operio, I presented a copy of the IIRR credo to the municipal mayor of Polangui at the end of our meeting with him.

**Dialogue with wider barangay community: Discovering purok organizations and the emergence of the barangay self-promotion facilitators' team:** The news, that we had obtained permission from the MPDC and the mayor, spread fast. It generated such inspiration and enthusiasm that, no sooner than Sammy and I reached the barangay hall, Amador, Elvie,

Teresita, Caroline and the youths who had joined the previous day's meeting got together to decide what could be done next. Elvie proposed a community meeting in the barangay hall. However, Teresita did not like the idea, because she thought it will be difficult to get many people, as they were very busy with the rice harvest. Instead, she suggested that we meet people informally and listen to them; her proposal was accepted. Caroline suggested that since (by that stage) we were about 21 persons (from the two barangay) each of us could take the next three days to talk with at least 20 people – including farmers, youth, student and council members, men and women. She suggested that students can meet with people during their leisure time in the playground or in their homes after school. Everybody cheered Caroline for her idea. We agreed that this informal way of hearing from the barangay people would centre around three areas of questioning concerning: peoples' development aspirations; their feelings about self-help in the barangay; and their suggestions about ways to undertake self-help activities.

When we finished at around three in the afternoon, it looked as though we would not be able to start the next day because it had begun to rain heavily. I felt tense, contemplating what would happen if the rain continued for several days and we were unable to move. But luckily, at around 4:30, the rain stopped. Caroline invited all of us to the Napo barangay pavilion to watch a basketball game between the youth councils of Napo and Ponso, a neighbouring barangay. Around 21 of us started to walk there – along a straight road - about two kilometres long. As we walked we saw several signs by the road-side referring to the local purok<sup>23</sup>, its number and the names of the officers. I asked our barangay friends to tell us about the "purok", the purok officers' organization and their functions.

Sign boards of purok officers' organization posted by the Binad-Napo roadside



Standing besides the sign board, gave us an orientation – which I noted in my daily note book:

<sup>23</sup> A purok is both a residential cluster in a barangay and a social organization anchored by family and kinship ties. It is the basic building block of barangay society above the family.

Balinad and Napo each have six puroks, each with its own purok officers' organization consisting of 20 officers. The latter are drawn from both senior and junior residents and include President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor, Business Manager, Public Relation Officer, Muse, Escort and Adviser. An elected barangay council member serves as adviser to each purok. The purok are traditional but not official organizations. They do not have regular duties but during fiestas and religious occasions purok members play an active role.

Laila Restun, a youth from Napo, and a graduate student, proposed the idea of doing the self-help activities through the purok officer's organizations. Caroline, Amador, Elvie, and the other youths all thought Laila's idea was a great one and, then and there, we all decided to include the puroks in our questioning and listening activities.

For the next three days (October 29-31st) we listened to the communities of the two barangays. One could say that we had created a series of moving and multiple 'open space' dialogues. In each of the two barangay we were able to meet about 200 people including men and women, council members, purok officers, municipal government agencies, cooperative members, members of peoples' organizations and other development professionals. We visited people in the fields, in their homes, in small shops or in waiting sheds. During those three days of informal listening, more and more people and youths joined with us and participated actively. The phrase 'Sariding Pagsisikap-Self-help' became popular in the two barangays. A group of Barangay Health Workers (BHWs), whom my field colleague already knew from training sessions on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) joined in. Together with the youths, they conducted several PRA<sup>24</sup> sessions with the poor, youths and council members. Amador Silerio, being the chairperson, conducted meetings with the teachers-parents associations and discussed self-help activities with them. Edgar Lativo, a member of the *Linkod-Masa* (a credit cooperative), engaged women credit groups in discussion. The free flow of listening not only encouraged many people but also generated much enthusiasm among the barangay youth. By the end of the third day, a total of 22 youths from the two barangay formed self-help volunteer's teams.

**Sharing what we heard from the communities: The first extended public meeting:** After the three days of listening to people from different groups we had a discussion-meeting at the Balinad barangay hall<sup>25</sup>. A total of 55 persons from the two barangays participated including

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<sup>24</sup> Chambers, R. (1992: 2) describes 'PRA is a growing combination of approaches and methods, which enable local people to share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act. It is a "handing over the stick to the insider" in method and action. The outsider's role is that of a catalyst; a facilitator of processes within the community which is prepared to alter their situation.

<sup>25</sup> On November 1

the local self-help volunteers, the barangay captains and council officials, purok officers and local youth. In this meeting, the local volunteers were asked to share with the barangay council all that they had heard. Some of the volunteers used the notes they had made whilst others spoke from memory.



Amador M. Silerio, The Secretary of  
Barangay Balinad synthesizing  
listening to the local volunteer.

The barangay capitan of Balinad suggested that we start by listening to people about their willingness to undertake self-help activities. In contrast, and at an early point, the barangay Capitan of Napo asked people to tell about the "problems" they found. This made me uneasy. The discussions and sharing were supposed to be about the three areas of concern we agreed earlier. But at the same time I reflected on the fact that this can happen when the professional development worker does not try to control everything. But then there is a dilemma – participation must mean making space for multiple voices – but, at the same time, opening-up this space may invite domination by an existing elite. After the Capitan's question, the volunteers spoke of the many problems they had heard. As they spoke, the barangay secretary of Balinad, Amador Silerio, synthesized what was said (in their own local, language) using poster paper and marker. Later, with Amador's help, I translated the notes on the flipcharts. I arrived at the lists of points summarised below.

#### ***Problems of barangay community***

- Lack of employment and income
- High prevalence of cold, cough, fever, viral infections, TB, diarrhoea and gastro intestinal tract infections
- Lack of access to medical services and medicines
- Over-population
- Tuberculosis among some community members
- About 20% of the households have no access to safe water and sanitation services
- About 80% families cannot afford to support college education for their sons and daughters
- About 30% families has no good house to stay
- 20% families do not have food security<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Based upon my translated list of points, using the summary flip charts.

After listing the "problems" on the flipchart, we turned to the barangay's development aspirations. Listening to the volunteers and using the same approach as before, Amador listed the points on a flip chart. Later, with Amador's help, I translated the notes on the flipcharts, to produce the summary below.

### ***Development and change aspirations***

The barangay communities expressed the following aspirations:

Improved security of employment, income and food: Secure, year-round employment giving an income of 400 Peso<sup>27</sup> to 500 Peso per day, per family would enable them to meet their basic needs. Having adequate food and food security, production of more crops and improved access to safe drinking water are aspirations expressed by the barangay community.

Wider educational opportunities: Communities wanted their children to obtain higher qualifications so that they could have good jobs in the future. This included good schooling facilities for their children together with affordable college facilities provided by the government or some private organization.

Clean and green barangay: People wanted many trees in the barangays and wanted waste to be properly cleared and not abandoned in the barangay.

Improved house, street lights and sports facilities: Having good housing was expressed as another aspiration. With the exception of the main road, barangays have no street-lights. Young people expressed their desire to improve the sports ground such that many could come and participate in different kinds of games.

Improved community cooperation and peace: People aspired to less conflict in the barangay community, and less alcohol and drug taking by the youths<sup>28</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> point of sharing concerned the barangay's willingness to engage in self-help activities in the barangay and ways to do that. Listening to the volunteers; using the same approach as before, points were listed on a flip chart. Again, what follows is my later summary.

- Most barangay officials thought that the poor people had no time to participate in development activities because they would lose earning opportunities.
- Farmers, carpenters, and small traders expressed their willingness to do self-help activities if it is directly beneficial for them.
- Most purok officers (particularly junior officers) expressed their willingness to contribute if given guidance by the barangay council.
- Residents of purok 2 of barangay Balinad did not want self-help activities in their purok.
- Most poor men and women expressed their willingness to do self help activities through purok officers organisations if those activities could be implemented without money.
- Barangay council members suggested that unemployed youths can work as self-help volunteers.<sup>29</sup>

Just before the end, when all the local volunteers had spoken, the barangay captain of Balinad asked me to share about what I had learnt. I went on to say that I heard very much the same things as had already been reported. In addition, I volunteered some remarks about what

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<sup>27</sup> The name of Philippines currency

<sup>28</sup> See footnote 11.

<sup>29</sup> See footnote 11.

people had said on the subject of from whom and from where they had heard about development. This is what I reported:

Educated youth listen and learn of development from barangay officials, TV, radio, school and college teachers. Barangay council members and officials listen and learn of development from TV, newspaper, assembly, national provincial and municipal level political leaders, government officer and NGOs. While economically marginalized male and female of the barangays listen and learn of development from the barangay council members, and municipal level government officers. The educated youth listened and learned that 'development is achieving goals of our life; changing oneself for a better life; development is improved road/infrastructure, water facilities, and agriculture. Barangay council members listened and learned that development is 'doing businesses and increasing income, having television, developing skills, have more and more projects, infrastructure development, improve water system, establish market, set up business enterprises. Similarly, economically poor listen and learnt that development is improved road water system, agriculture, population control, peace for the barangay and development is about happiness of life through helping each other.

Sometime later in the meeting Sammy asked the barangay council officials why they did not try to listen to and learn from people in the barangay. In response, they stated that the municipal council and its staff, and other government and non-government organizations know better than the community about how to develop communities - so it is they who should teach the barangay community about development and social change. The officials further added that following the Local Government Code 1991 (see e.g., Ortiz 1992: 72-75), barangay councils are required to prepare their yearly development plan and budget in a prescribed format provided by the national government. The capitan of Balinad stated that resistance to participating in barangay development activities by the economically poor was a major challenge. Most barangay council members said that the poor of the barangay do not want to take the time because they might lose employment opportunities and income.

#### **Conversation while having lunch with the barangay Capitan<sup>30</sup>**

On October 29, 2004 as part of our open space dialogue and listening to the barangay community, Samuel Operio and I went to meet the captain of barangay Balinad at his house. It was then lunch-time. The captain invited us to have lunch with him. At lunch I had a conversation with the captain that went along the following lines:

**Capitan:** Saha next time you come you will see that we have a TV and computer in our barangay hall. Within next few days we will have a computer

**Shayamal:** That would be great. Mr. Captain; but do you think that had you asked the poor in your barangay their priority would be on TV and computer in the barangay hall?

**Capitan:** Maybe not but they have a program from the Department of Agriculture, they get seeds, fertilizers, seedlings through livelihood program.

**Shayamal:** What about their participation, most farmers, carpenters, labourer with whom I had a dialogue said that they have no participation in barangay development



activities.

**Capitan:** Poor people do not participate because when they participate in meetings, in workshops and training then they lose the opportunity to earn - they cannot give time during the day.

**Shayamal:** If they see that participation in meeting, training and workshop do not benefit them, why should they participate?

Sharing our stories from those three days was done; the points of synthesis were listed on the flipcharts in front of the participants. Now what? I was always asking myself '*what next – where do we go from here*'. I was feeling a bit worried. I knew I could not go and stay in the community whenever required; neither could I think of staying longer than the days allocated for me by IIRR. I asked Samuel Operio to ask the meeting participants what they felt we should do next and how would they facilitate self-help promotion activities in the barangays.

Again we heard the same things from the barangay capitans and council officials- - that I and IIRR should have project of self-help. They expected me to tell them what I was going to do for self-help in their barangay. I wondered where these barangay officials were coming from. They were so familiar with the word 'project'. For them any kind of development and social change endeavour is implementing a project offered by the external agencies. I again explained that I and my organization (IIRR) have no project. Instead, I believe people of barangay can be helped to undertake self-help. The youths (who were engaged in mass listening activities) countered the opinions of barangay officials and instead argued it would be good to do self-help activities through purok officers' organizations.

Caroline Baneres (the youth council chairperson of barangay Napo) and Marvin (a youth of Barangay Balinad)<sup>31</sup> became more vocal and explained about why they thought it important to activate the non-functioning purok officers' organizations through self-help activities. A few purok officers began to voice their support. Gradually the discussion shifted. All the youth, purok officers and common residents said that they would like to do self-help activities with purok officer's organizations; the barangay officials fell silent. The capitans of Balinad and Napo were sitting beside each other and I observed them talking to one another. After a while, the Capitan of Napo (Ms. Galdina Andrada) added that the barangay council has no problem if youth and purok officers are willing to do self-help activities through the purok officers' organizations. At this point, most of the barangay council officials changed their position and spoke in favour of self-help without any project form IIRR. Finally, all the participants agreed that the purok officers' organizations - which were inactive at that time -



could be activated through the self-help activities. Hence, it was decided that the purok officers' organizations would be facilitated do self-help activities in each of the two barangays.

After this decision was made, someone in the meeting raised the question of how to link the purok officers' organisations to the barangay council. Capitans of two barangays said that the barangay council officials who were advisers to the purok officers' organisation would take an active part in the purok officer's self-help activities. In the regular monthly barangay council meetings self-help would be an agenda for discussion with the concerned barangay council official sharing the experience of self-help activities of his/her purok. I asked my field colleague to ask the barangay council officials whether or not they were amenable to the proposal of barangay capitans. Sammy intervened and asked if the council officials were willing to provide guidance and take part in the self-help activities of purok officers' organizations. All the council officials were present in the meeting and they unanimously responded that they were ready to do so. I felt animated and energized by these dialogues and the decision for self-help in the barangays.

Sammy and I, we were always sitting beside each other in meetings because he acted as my translator. I asked him now to ask *who is going to facilitate 12 purok officers organizations of two barangays* and *how*. After posing this question to the meeting barangay council capitans and council officials proposed that, when trained by "Mr. Saha" and "Mr. Sammy", the barangay youth could work as self-help volunteers to facilitate the purok officers' organizations to do self-help activities. The youths participants (who also had engaged in the 'mass listening' exercise) strongly expressed their willingness to do so.

By the end of the meeting the how of the process was looking more certain. Participation became increasingly lively and gloomy turned to smiles. Participants talked of many things they could do to make self-help work. They talked about having inter-purok meetings from time to time - to share their experiences. It was a critical learning for me. I was learning how to do research together *with* a community, joining learning/research and intervention, developing the methodology as we went along – in ways that were locally relevant and valued.

This brings me back to my earlier intention – outlined in chapter two - to attempt to promote self-help through processes that allow creativity, multiplicity, and avoid subject-object relations. At the beginning, my general intention was explore the possibilities of problem solving and appreciative inquiry as ways of promoting self-help. But I wanted to avoid imposing these methodologies on people. In the meeting, I asked Sammy what he

thought about how to decide which barangay would use which approach. He promptly suggested that we discuss this with the participants now and let them decide. I agreed and asked him to initiate the discussion.

At first, the participants expressed an interest to use both approaches, one in each barangay. Some asked my colleague briefly to introduce each approach. In very simple terms Sammy explained that a problem solving approach, first finds the problem, assesses the causes and then plans actions for solving the problem. In contrast, he said, appreciative inquiry does not talk about problems but starts with assessment of strengths. The majority of the council members of Balinad remarked that they had many problems in their barangay - so they wanted to solve them. Napo participants asked that if they used AI did this mean that they would not solve any problems. In reply, Sammy gave the following example. He invited people to suppose that, in Napo, they had five good carpenters who get work every day and make good money – this is strength of the barangay. Now, if it was possible to train another 10 persons as carpenters – then they might also be able to get jobs and income. You could say that this also solves the problem of unemployment and income. So AI does not speak of problems but solves problems in life. Through this interaction and sharing Balinad finally chose PS and Napo AI.

The emergence of the local self-help facilitator teams from the open dialogues and listening, the process by which local people decided on a methodology of self-help, were all new to me. I began to realize that, instead of the change-worker pre-determining 'the what' and 'how' of development, self-help can be co-constructed simultaneously as an ongoing process of dialogue and action.

### **The emergence of some learning issues**

Reflecting on the talks and views of the barangay, council officials, youths, purok officers, and municipal development actors whom I referred to earlier, I began to realise that the discourse of development in barangay Balinad and Napo was not conducive to self-help approaches. For example, people from Balinad and Napo commonly talked of development as making the individual's life better by upgrading physical facilities or basic services. They saw material well-being as achievable through individual effort. In other words, it seemed to me that their constructions of self, other, and relations were those of 'self-contained individualism' (Sampson, 1995) – a view of persons as fundamentally separated rather than

fundamentally inter-related. Furthermore, barangay officials spoke of development workers as active, knowing, and responsible subjects, who rightly should relate to others in the community as knowable and formable objects. In addition, barangay council members and officials, under guidance from the government agencies, must plan and implement development activities. In this context, most barangay members do not participate in any knowing and influencing ways. In both barangay, development projects and initiatives are dependent on intervention of external agencies and are not anchored in the strengths of barangay communities.

With this realization, I set some key learning questions: In what ways, if any, do PS and/or AI help to:

- shift development vocabularies from individual capacity and individual action to centre relational processes and inter-relatedness;
- transform subject-object relationships e.g., between the barangay community and barangay council, into non subject-object relationships;
- promote processes of development that:
  - foster multiple local creativities by barangay communities ;
  - enhance multiple but equal voices;
  - encourage generation and exploration of possibilities and positive values;
  - do not try to separate inquiry and intervention.

For my learning with the community, in cooperation with the barangay council members, local volunteers, my organization and my local field colleague I implemented a one year program of self-help in these two barangays. Barangay Balinad tried a problem solving approach while Napo tried Appreciative Inquiry. In chapter 4, I present the stories of problem solving in barangay Balinad while, in Chapter 5, I tell the story of the Appreciative Inquiry in barangay Napo.

## Chapter 4

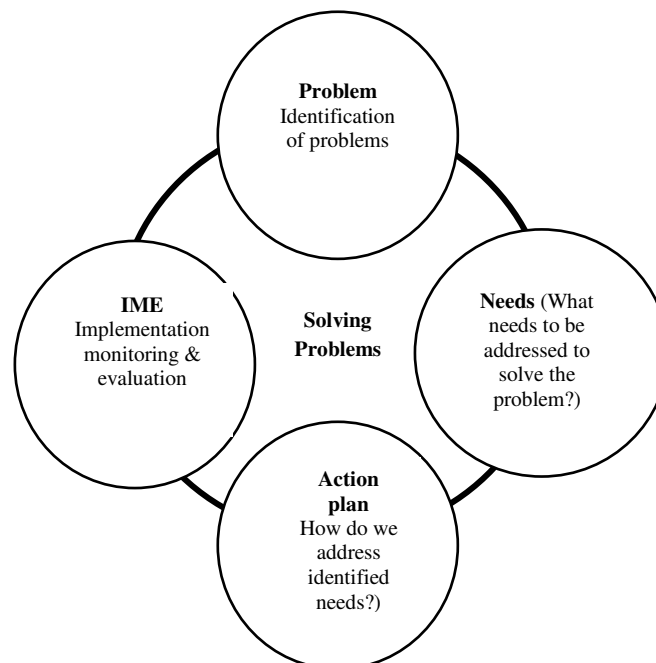
### Problem Solving (PS) in barangay Balinad

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#### A brief overview of the problem solving cycle in all the five purok

My experience as a professional NGO worker has always been through the implementation of projects whose content was fait accompli. This was not the case in Balinad. I had no compulsion to follow any project or achieve preset targets; instead I had decided to work with the community and other relevant stakeholders around the problems *they* identified. I was only one of many participants in an on-going mutual action and learning process together with barangay council members, purok officers, barangay community, self-help volunteers, municipal officials, and my field colleagues. Six puroks make up barangay Balinad. Purok 2 decided not to participate; informal meetings and discussions with the key persons failed to motivate them. Thus, the problem-solving cycle was implemented by five purok officers' organisations.

#### Exhibit 1: Problem Solving (PS) cycle applied in Balinad



**November, 2004: The formation and training of local self-help volunteer groups:** In chapter 3 I stated that when I started building relationships and rapport I had only Amador Silerio - as the barangay self-help point person - and Elvie. At the time Sammy (my field

colleague) and I had no idea about who would facilitate the self-help activities in the barangay - or how? Our 'mass listening activities' created a group of people who were willing to take an active and leading role in conducting self-help activities. The idea to form a fully-fledged barangay self-help volunteers' team emerged from dialogues between these volunteers, Sammy and me. It was really exciting to see how interactions, new ideas, and a methodology were generated simultaneously. We went ahead and formed a 12-member self-help volunteers' group (see appendix 8) under the leadership of Amador Silerio, the barangay secretary and nominated barangay self-help point-person. This volunteers' group was composed of 2 to 3 persons from each of the puroks who would be trained to facilitate the purok officers' organizations to plan and implement self-help activities. Sammy and I provided the training and orientation, not through class-room training, but by demonstration. Sammy and I, together with the local volunteer group, would go to a selected purok where the local volunteers could observe Sammy and me facilitating. When we came to a new step in the problem solving cycle we would repeat the training by demonstration – for each group of local volunteers. We decided on this approach, for reasons of difference in language, because the 'off-the-job' classroom training would have access to resources we did not have, and finally because we felt that people we were working with needed to see how to do things in a context and would not take well to a formal classroom approach.



Local self-help volunteers group of barangay Balinad. Starting from the left: Ruel Monasterial, Michelle Benamira, Catherine Cultario, Marvin A. Sarion, Jesus Bondice, Arly S. Besin, Elvie S. De Leon, Amador M. Silerio, Steve. At the right end is the Barangay Capitan. Another three facilitators not included in this photograph were Leo C. Sarte, Roy San Pascual, and Airon Resgonio. Person sitting in the middle is myself.

**Step 1: Purok problems and needs selection:** I was happy to think that I now had a group of local people to work together with Sammy and me to facilitate the problem-solving cycle in each purok. We had already worked together and had built relationships but now I had a local

platform to think and work with. Until this point I was not at all sure what I was going to do or how? In the absence of a planned project, the situation felt very chaotic. I felt much more confident that we had what we needed and that the process would go on – with Sammy and me taking a back seat. I worked on a joint time schedule to help volunteers to conduct the purok-based problem and need selection activities. Each of the five purok officers' organizations had a workshop – facilitated by local volunteers - with Sammy and I standing by to help the volunteers if necessary. In these workshops, each purok officers' organization decided on the problems and needs on which they would like to prepare a self-help action plan. On completion of these workshops we (all 12 self-help volunteers, Sammy and me) had a joint session in which we reflected on the process and drew lessons. This was the end of the first step of the problem solving cycle. We then decided on the time-frame for the next step.

**Step 2: Action planning, introduction of self-monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems/tools:** Again, Sammy and I had to 'train' the local volunteers on ways to facilitate the purok officers – in this case - to prepare their action plans. We had agreed on a schedule of action planning workshops for all the volunteers. We went to purok 6 where Sammy facilitated and simultaneously demonstrated how to facilitate an action-planning workshop. All local volunteers observed and in the evening we had clarification session. It was really a team work — working, reflecting and deciding together. I felt lucky that I had Sammy - a good local colleague who spoke the local language besides being an experienced and skilled facilitator. Without him it would have been difficult for me to train the volunteers. The local volunteers facilitated each of the remaining four purok officers' organization – each of which had a workshop to prepare their self-help action plan. Sammy and I were always 'in the background' to contribute as needed. As a result of these workshops, each of the purok officers' organizations developed their 10-month (March 2005-December 2005) action plans. When all the action planning was completed, the volunteers proposed an inter-purok workshop for purok officers, barangay council officials and invited municipal government officers. They were eager to find out what the other puroks were going to do. This workshop provided each purok with the opportunity to present their action plans. I was increasingly excited at observing the puroks as they started building relationships with other puroks. I thought to myself that if development workers were a bit patient and listened rather than talk, people would contribute their ideas and thoughts to ongoing dialogue. From an initial apparent chaos order gradually emerges, moves and grows.

**Step 3: Self-monitoring and reflection:** March – September 2005, during this seven-month period participatory monitoring, reflection and learning included the following activities:

Purok monthly review and planning meeting: At the end of each month, purok officers and the purok self-help volunteers conducted a review meeting. In this meeting participants discussed what had done, the problems they faced, and prepared the activity plan for the following month.

Barangay monthly review, reflection and planning meeting of local volunteers: In a monthly review meeting local volunteers shared and reflected on the findings of the monthly purok officers' review and planning meeting<sup>32</sup>. Local facilitators updated and consolidated monitoring and reflection records at the level of barangay. Further, using a monthly stakeholders' participation tracking tool they reflected on the participation of the stakeholders. At the end of the meeting, local volunteers prepared their facilitation plan for the next month. Simple minutes of meetings were written and preserved at the barangay council office.

Quarterly and mid-year multi-stakeholders review, reflection and lessons learnt workshop: In the months of June and September 2005 a quarterly review and a mid-year reflection workshop took place. Purok officers, local volunteers group, barangay council members, few municipal government officials, and my field colleague and I participated in these day-long workshops. The general objective of these workshops was to review and reflect on self-help activities, draw lessons for the future and recommend actions for improvement. There were no preset agenda for review and reflection. The participants decided on the agenda at the workshop. Facilitators helped participants in reviewing and reflecting on the agenda, drawing lessons, developing recommendations and action steps. The idea of this mid-year review workshop was a result of the purok officers' organizations eagerness to share their own activities, achievement and challenges with others puroks involved in self-help activities and learn from each other. I personally participated in all these workshops; took notes and reflected. Common people have deep enthusiasm to share with others their own experiences. This is more so if in people who own and take pride in the achievement and drive the process. I and my field colleague never thought that such a big event with a day-long participation of 50 to 60 people would be possible. It was the enthusiasm and commitment of purok officers that made it possible.

Multi-stakeholders' informal reflection sessions: During the period of June- September 2005, whenever my field colleague and I were in the barangay, we conducted informal reflection sessions with the purok officers, local volunteers and barangay council members. These sessions were wider but informal discussions for reflections and mobilizations with many people in the barangay. We had no preset questions and, in the course of the process several points of dialogues and discussion emerged. Visit to purok officers' organisations to know about what and how they are doing, was our regular practices. On listening to them, if there was a need to talk with barangay officials or anybody else at the municipal office or barangay youth council, we went and talked with them.

**Step 4: November - year-end evaluation and action planning workshop:** This was the last activity in which Sammy and I participated in the problem-solving cycle in Balinad. It was originally planned for December (end-of-year review). However the Barangay, in their mid-year review, decided to prepare the action plan for 2006 in the first week of November 2005, rather than in December as was usual the case. This made it possible to integrate the purok action plans into the barangay's next annual action plan<sup>33</sup>. Purok officers, local volunteers, and designated barangay council members engaged in a series of exercises. To start with the participants prepared a list of self-

help activities implemented in the purok. In the second exercise, participants identified what they felt to be the results of those activities in their purok. Finally, they identified what they thought were the most significant changes. Plenary presentations afforded people the opportunity for questions, answers, or clarifications. The methodology, tools and activities related to monitoring, evaluation and learning emerged from collective discussions and actions between local volunteers<sup>34</sup>, Sammy and me. For example, the purok officers proposed monthly purok meeting and it was they who maintained the minutes. Napo's self-help point person proposed a monthly meeting of local volunteers - and this idea was also adopted by Balinad. The youth council Chair Person of Napo, Caroline Benares, recorded purok wise monthly achievement in a chart that was displayed in the barangay hall; barangay Balinad also adopted this tool. The ideas and inspiration of developing stakeholders participation tracking tool was generated out of the inter-purok action plan sharing workshop in Napo. Reflections on my past experiences show that monitoring and evaluation of participation usually remain with development professionals. The local people owning and directing the process was very new and exciting to me. I thought that such practices could help us avoid yet again reconstructing subject-object relations between professional development workers and the people.

I took notes in detail on each of the events in which I participated. Besides, I collected and collated findings from following documents that the process generated.

- Local volunteers' reports (5 reports) on 'problem selection sessions in puroks.
- Action plans of puroks ( 5 action plans)
- Minutes of the inter-puroks plans sharing workshop prepared by Amador M. Silerio-the barangay self-help point person.
- Minutes of the monthly reflection meetings of local volunteers.
- Minutes of quarterly and mid-year multi-stakeholders review, reflection and lessons learnt workshop prepared by Amador Silerio, the barangay self-help point person.
- Copy of the monthly stakeholders' participation tracking flipchart.
- Copy of the consolidated self-help activity achievement chart of barangay self-help activities.
- Report of the final evaluation prepared by Amador Silerio, and
- Notes taken by my field colleague, Sammy.

These formed the basis for a detailed report on my field work - which I had to submit and discuss with IIRR colleagues. They also provide the material for constructing a retrospective narrative of the development process and the account that follows. The above is just a sketch



of the general 'problem-solving cycle'. In the next section I have presented several stories of problem solving in barangay Balinad. These stories show that as problem-solving process continued, individualistic constructions became increasingly dominant, participation gradually diminished, and increased negativity. Furthermore, the stories suggest that the context of the local community and its history of relations play a major role.

### **Stories of problem solving**

**From smiles to gloom: selecting problems in purok 1:** It was December 13, 2004. My colleague Samuel Operio (Sammy) and I went to purok 1 to participate in the problem selection and needs identification workshop. This half-day workshop took place in the

courtyard of a barangay council member. A total of 19 senior and junior purok officers participated and two local volunteers - Marvin and Jun - facilitated it.



One of two local volunteers – Marvin, conducting session with the purok officers

The purpose of this workshop, in the context of the problem-solving cycle, was to select problems to be solved through self-help efforts. It was scheduled to start at 4 pm and to end at 8. Sammy and I reached at the venue a bit early - at about 3:30 – with a desire to talk with people before the workshop starts. We spoke with some purok officers about what their responsibility as purok officers. We asked the president of the purok officers' organization about the purok organization and role in the well-being of the purok community. The president remained silent whilst other purok officers looked at each other's faces and finally said '*wala*' (nothing) and smiled - a humble expression of excuse mixed with frustration. In our earlier stage of listening to the barangay community and to the local youths (who joined Sammy and me) we learned that the purok officers' organizations were formed without any clear roles and functions. They had no program, no plan, no regular meeting, but office bearers including president, secretary, treasurer, business manager, auditor and others.

The workshop started. When the participants learned that Marvin and Jun would facilitate the workshop their smiles grew broader and they spoke words of encouragement to them. All were lively and smiling. Marvin and Jun had prepared the workshop well. They brought sticky-tape; Marvin's father and mother brought flipcharts; together they had already worked out a good venue and where to fix the flip-charts for the exercise. Marvin, Jun, and Marvin's father and mother acted as a team of facilitators for the session. The workshop included a

welcome to the participants; discussion and clarification of workshop objectives; identification of the problems of the purok community; discussion and selection of problems and prioritization criteria; and assessment of all the identified problems, selecting just one as the basis for the one-year self-help action plan.

Marvin and Jun asked participants to identify problems which they listed on a flip chart. After listing all the problems, I asked Marvin to ask if the participants thought that all the problems could be addressed in the ten-month (March –December) action plan. Marvin posed the question and the participants said that they would have to prioritize and select. This led to a discussion on how the participants would select one problem among the many they listed. Within a short time, the participants came up with the following criteria:

- The solution must be directly beneficial to the economically poor and marginalized families in the puork;
- The solution must contribute to solving other related problems;
- The purok officers' must have the capacity to address the problem; and
- It should be possible to get support from government agencies and NGOs to address the problem.

After the purok officers identified the criteria, Sammy and I, together with Marvin and Jun we prepared a flipchart for the problem prioritization and selection on which the purok officers copied their list of problems and thereafter selected one through the prioritization exercise. Besides providing support to Marvin and June, I was noting peoples' expressions and gestures and whatever was written on the flip chart. I observed the smiles gradually vanish during the process of problem identification.

Few minutes before, their faces were full of smiles. The moment the list of problems was displayed their smiles disappeared.



Though the lowest score was '1' some participants gave '0' for two identified problems. For the problem '*Ang presyo ng lahat ng bilihin ay tumataas* – 'the price of everything is increasing' participants verbally added '*we know it will never be solved so why should we think about it*' (recorded in my note book). Frustration among participants seemed to increase. One added: '*these are all problems but what about solutions?*' On reflection on the problems their smiles disappeared. They withdrew from the discussions and became increasingly silent. Faces became gloomy. Some asserted that they had many problems and let out a sigh; a few put their hands over their face and head. They became increasingly as they reflected on little they have and their inability to solve some of the problems they listed.

The participants selected '*rapid population growth*' as the problem they wanted to address. *Creating community awareness on health and family planning* was an activity on which they would like to prepare self-help action plan of the purok. In the last part of the workshop Marvin and Jun explained the objectives of the next workshop which was to prepare the action plan. The flip charts from the workshop were given to the president of the purok officers' organization with a reminder to keep them safely for use in the next step. By then it was about 9:30 in the evening; the workshop closed with a vote of thanks. Participants arrived at the workshop smiling but left gloomy!

**Constructing them and us: problem-solving in purok 4:** As with the other puroks in barangay Balinad, at the outset of the self-help process the purok officer's organization was moribund. Roy Pascual, an "out-of-school youth"<sup>35</sup> and Steve, an undergraduate, were selected as the local facilitators. In the first meeting, on December 13, 2004, twelve purok residents (6 male and 6 female) met together and identified two problems, which were: (1) most families have no land title on their holding from the DAR<sup>36</sup>, and, (2) some families have no access road to their homes. Carrying heavy goods home is very difficult. In addition, people and domestic animals have to trespass land belonging to others leading to quarrels and conflicts.

On the *public right of way* an idea was for private landowners to transfer their lands to the barangay council who could construct access roads. Shortly after this meeting Steve, one of the two self-help facilitators, withdrew from participation. According to the barangay self-help point person, Amador M. Silerio (Dory), Steve withdrew when he realized that his input was a voluntary with no chance of compensation. Another facilitator, Roy Pascual, kept on requesting the barangay self-help point person (who was a closed relative of the Congressman), to get him a scholarship to study at the Polangui Community College.

Notwithstanding the situation, the action-planning workshop took place on February 28, 2005. Three local volunteers namely: Roy Pascual, Amador Silerio and Arly Bessin (local facilitator of purok 3) facilitated the workshop. Sammy and I also participated and supported the local facilitators' team in conducting action planning workshop - helping them to pose appropriate questions, guiding them to ensure participation of all participants; helping them to prepare required materials and tools. I, with interpretation from Sammy, continued taking notes on what people said and did. All 20 purok officers, and 11 purok residents, actively participated and planned the following activities which were later presented in the inter-purok action plans sharing workshop on March 2, 2005 at the barangay chapel:

- A survey to identify those having a copy of a deed of sale of land;
- A joint meeting of families involved and the purok officers;
- Prepare deed of sale;
- Provide proposal to the land owners to sell their lands for the rights of way;
- Conduct land surveys by hiring a surveyor; and
- Organize and conduct a total of 9 monthly meetings of their organization.

However, between April and October, except for one meeting in April, nothing happened. People started blaming each other for not implementing the action plans.

- Roy Pascual, in the monthly local facilitators' reflection meeting (in June), stated that except for the president, the purok officers were inactive; he concluded that nothing would happen unless new officers were elected.
- In another reflection workshop on August 11th, the president and vice president of the purok officers' organization complained of lack of support and participation of barangay council as the reason for their inability to conduct self-help activities. In response, Rodolfo Siervo, a barangay council official, argued that he was never a part of the planning and thinking and was unaware of anything. He blamed the purok officers for not informing him.
- In the reflection meeting on August 2005, Amador Silerio, the barangay secretary and self-help coordinator said that he had proposed discussions on self-help activities several times in the barangay council meeting. But the Capitan did not consider this agenda. Moreover, as he had arranged the Congressman's scholarship for Roy, he was in college and could no longer participate as a facilitator. Now except for the purok president and vice president no other purok officer was still active.



In the joint reflection meeting, designated barangay kagawad (barangay council member) Rodolfo Siervo (centre), after listening all became so frustrated that he could not participate in the meeting actively.

The purok officers, barangay council members and residents of purok 4, could do nothing to solve their identified problem. Reflections on their failure to implement their self-help action

plan produced many individualistic constructions. For example, the purok officers claimed that the failure was because of inaction of the barangay council member; the barangay council member assigned the failure to the purok officers who did not involve him. The local facilitators associated the failure with the inactions of both the purok officers and the barangay council member. Each of the stakeholder groups positioned themselves as blame-free and was increasingly defensive.

**Fault-finding and blaming in barangay-wide meetings:** Sammy and I participated in both the quarterly and mid-year review and reflection meetings in barangay Balinad (see overview at start of this chapter). These meetings were with leaders of all purok officers' organisations, all local volunteers and some barangay council officials. The self-help volunteers, some purok officers and barangay council members, Sammy and I met for the quarterly reflection meeting on June 11, 2005 in the Balinad barangay hall. Shortly after the start of the meeting, discussion turned to the failures to implement self-help action plans. I took notes upon which I base the following account:

Amador Silerio, as the barangay self-help point person and barangay secretary reported that he did not feel comfortable because since March 2005, self-help activities in the barangay had declined. He noted that, from the very beginning, purok 2 did not join in the process. In his view, the rich people of purok 2 did not care about our small self-help endeavour. He asserted that the barangay council members and the Capitan were not actively participating and encouraging people. The barangay capitan and kagawads (barangay council members) seem not interested in supporting self-help initiative. Mr. Silerio claimed that of the five participating puroks, 4, 3, and, 1 were almost inactive. Purok 4 had prepared an action plan for negotiating private land distribution. However, this had created mistrust amongst families living in the purok and led to the purok officers' organization ceasing to be active. The idea of holding new election of purok officers had been talked of, he said, but nothing had happened. Since then, there had been no meetings and no initiative to implement the plan prepared in March.

Mr. Silerio said that only purok 5 (Garayon) conducted regular monthly meetings and implemented most activities as per plan. Purok 3 and 1 had not even succeeded in organizing monthly meetings with all the purok officers. Furthermore, since purok 6 was mountainous and far away the designated purok kagawad did not return after preparation of the action plan and had no follow-up. Though the barangay council officials decided that in every monthly

meeting of the council reporting on self-help activities would be a common agenda, but this never happened because the barangay capitan and the other kagawads were not interested.

Another local facilitator, Ruel Monesterial, added that there was no support from the barangay council members. Instead, they discouraged people saying that they were getting nothing from the self-help activities. Marvin Sarion, another local facilitator, claimed that the barangay council members and purok officers had expected that IIRR would provide some material support. As this did not happen, they were not interested in participating. The meeting continued to discuss what went wrong and who was responsible. The focus was on particular individuals with eventual conclusion that unless those individuals actively participated, problem solving through self-help would not gain momentum.

In the mid-year joint review and reflection workshop on September 11, 2005, self-help volunteers, purok officers and barangay council members participated. The meeting started with Amador Silerio, the barangay self-help point person, presenting a report on overall picture of self-help activities (see appendix 4). This report shows that at that time most puroks had not implemented their planned self-help activities. Majority of the purok officers did not participate in regular meetings. Four of the twelve members of the local volunteers' group already withdrew themselves. Majority of the barangay council officials did not care about self-help.

The whole day, I listened to the conversations of participants very attentively and took notes. Michle Benamira (one of the local volunteers) took the minutes of the meeting. On the evening of same day with the assistance with my field colleague I synthesised own notes and the minutes of the workshop. The synthesis provided a picture of declining self-help activities in the barangay Balinad similar to the report that Amador Silerio shared at the beginning of the workshop.

I observed that the task of reflecting on the "*problems in making progress*" provoked discussion on things that went wrong to the total neglect of the achievements. The mood was increasingly negative. Participants embarked on a blame game on everything that went wrong. Questions like '*what were the problems in making progress?*' generated a relational dance of '*what was wrong?*' and '*who caused it?*' For instance, at one point the president and vice president of purok 4 said; '*our purok kagawad is inactive - he does not participate in the meetings. If he had participated we would have had regular meetings*'. In response the barangay council member retorted, '*I was not aware of this self-help plan and situation. You (president and vice president of the purok 4) should have informed and involved me earlier*'.



**The IIRR is the key to barangay self-help promotion:** Day-by-day attitude of dependency in expectation of projects and incentives from IIRR grew among purok officers, local volunteers and the barangay council members of Balinad. I noticed it when I took part in the annual action planning workshop of purok 6. The annual action-planning workshop of purok 6 (an upland community) took place in a Bahay Kubo (hut made of bamboo and leaves) on February 25, 2006. I participated in this action-planning workshop and took notes on the proceedings and my conversation with participants. Including the purok officers, 10 purok residents; there were 25 persons in all. At the start of the session Sammy asked the participants what need they had selected last December for their self-help action plan. Most participants were unaware and some said it was micro credit. My colleague continued asking why they had selected that particular need. The participants said that they thought that IIRR would give them money for credit programme in their community. They added that last December, when Dory (Amador's nick name - the barangay self-help point person) and Catherine (one of the self-help volunteers) conducted the needs assessment session, the participants thought Dory and Catherine were representatives of IIRR and so would be able to implement a micro credit project for them. My colleague further asked them if Dory or Catherine had made that claim to which the participants replied in the affirmative. We also came to know that it was not the community but Catherine who selected credit as a need. It further transpired that instead of developing a spirit of self-help, some local facilitators suggested that the needs assessment was just the start of better things to come – services from IIRR. The minutes<sup>37</sup> of the quarterly review meeting of self-help volunteers held on June 11, 2005, and mid-year joint review workshop on September 11, 2005 tell the same story.



On completion of the session, the purok president, the secretary treasurer and other officers of purok 6 of barangay Balinad

Except for the secretary of the Balinad barangay council, who was selected by the council as the barangay self-help point person, no other barangay council members and officials (including the barangay Capitan), promoted self-help. The barangay self-help point person Amador Silerio added: *'Our Capitan mentioned to the Municipal Mayor that we are not getting anything from this self-help activity'*. It was also pointed out that though it was decided in the monthly barangay council meeting, that there would be reporting of self-help activities, it did not happen due to the lack of interest of the barangay Capitan and the other kagawads (barangay council members). There was no encouragement and support from the barangay members. Some even discouraged people by saying; *"we are not getting anything from these self-help activities"*. Though Elvie Deleon was selected as one of the two leaders of local facilitators she did not give time to these self-help initiatives. Steve, Jun, Leo, Roy



and Iron who joined as local facilitators, became totally inactive after March 2005. Barangay council members and purok officers all expected that IIRR would provide material support or projects. As this did not happen they lost interest. In May and June, five local facilitators dropped out - they wanted an honorarium or incentives from IIRR. Amador added that local facilitators expected that theirs was a job like the barangay health workers and would have some kind of incentives from IIRR. Some of them wanted IIRR T-shirts and caps. In general all facilitators had expected to get IIRR T-Shirts and caps.

From June to September 2005, Sammy and I took part in several informal discussions with local volunteers, purok officers, and barangay council officials. One of the questions we asked was on who they thought was most important in promoting self-help in the barangay. Purok officers mentioned IIRR because they believed that IIRR showed them the way and provided the systems; barangay council members said the same - because IIRR was the master; and so did the local volunteers - because it is an international organization, with many knowledgeable and educated staff who knows how to solve problems.

**‘We’ and ‘They’ are different.** As I have described earlier, 12 local volunteers from barangay Balinad were engaged in facilitating self-help through problem-solving. After eight months I began to wonder about what would happen when I would no longer participate. Would the volunteers continue their activities? I noted in my notebook:

"If only the volunteers and barangay council members would recognize that they are an indivisible part of the whole barangay community and that solving problems of others is solving problems for themselves too - then they would continue the self-help promotion process. Continuation of this process would also depend on the awareness of the common barangay residents".

Most of the time I believed that neither the volunteers nor the barangay council members would carry on the self help activities. Then again, I thought ‘who knows - it could happen’.

From September to October 2005, in my several discussions with the volunteers I asked them: “being involved in processes of self-help *what did you learn* which you think is very important for people working as self-help facilitators? What *knowledge and awareness* have developed in the community that you think is most important?” I noted their response:

They learned:

- How to be concerned about the problems of other people in the barangay;
- How to interview poor people and identify their needs;
- Barangay council is not working to address the needs of poor people in our barangay;
- Knowledge and awareness:
- Belief in self-help: people themselves can solve their problems;
- Volunteers can help people plan and solve problems;
- For success the participation of barangay council members with barangay community is very important

I also asked them whether they saw any *changes in themselves* as facilitators. I noted:

We are now more confident than before;  
Little by little we can solve problems by gathering experience.  
We have acquired skills in facilitating people for planning.  
In the future we can apply these skills to get jobs.

Further, I listened to both local facilitators and barangay council members as they described 'how they view their *future role* as self-help change workers in the barangay. Barangay council members said; 'we can help local facilitators to continue their work', and 'we can supervise the work of purok officers' organizations. The local volunteers said 'we shall continue to work for the progress of people' and 'we shall continue our self-help activity for the people'. The volunteers of barangay Balinad identified: (1) how to face and tackle *their* problems: (2) how to plan solving problems on *their* own: (3) why training is important for *their* development; and (4) why and how to use family planning methods as the most important areas of knowledge enhancement among the barangay community? Explanations of volunteers on perceiving these areas of knowledge as important also reflects and implicit assumption that they have started to see themselves as the subject of change and development of the barangay community. First of all they assumed; 'people do not know- how to think and prepare good plan so the external experts have to train and teach them'.

In the course of our dialogue and interactions several other points emerged, such as in '*planning and decision- making with people, proposals of barangay council members, and self-help volunteers get the highest importance? What was the reason for giving importance to that category of participants?*' Responses suggest that instead of seeing them as equal, the local volunteers, purok officers and barangay council officials viewed themselves as the subject; as autonomous entities responsible for change and development for people's lives in the barangay.

In relation to *change of self*, volunteers of barangay Balinad perceived of themselves as being separate and apart from others in the barangay (people are 'they', and we are 'we'). They perceived self-changes in terms of enhancing their individual technical capacity but not in terms being a part of better interaction processes to construct better relationships with other barangay community. Barangay council members thought of their role as supervisors of the people, local volunteers and purok officers. The barangay council members got to see themselves in independent positions; being superior and subject of development where barangay community is object. Similarly, local facilitators themselves in a role of encouraging people and did not see themselves to be co-constructive with others. In the

continual use of *'they'*, *'people'*, indicated that the self-help volunteers and barangay council members separated themselves from the communities encouraging a 'we' - *'they'* divide.

Reflecting on the responses I began to realize that despite much talk and discussion on the principle of self-help, problem solving method and discourses maintained a subject-object relationship, with the barangay council and IIRR remaining a 'subject' in relation to the people of the barangay, seen as the 'object' of development and social change.

**We see a hopeless barangay community in the future.** As mentioned earlier I was interested in learning more about problem-solving and appreciative inquiry (chapter 5) but I had no pre-set points of dialogue. The agenda evolved in the process of interaction. A barangay resident, a local volunteer, barangay council officials, my field colleague or I threw in ideas as they occurred. Once all agreed to have a *'dialogue and learn about this'* we started to listen and discuss with relevant groups in the barangay. During June - September 2005, in our continual informal dialogue and discussions, one of the ideas of learning was *'how the people of barangay see the future of their barangay'*. We started dialogue with purok officers, barangay officials and barangay self-help volunteers. I summarized the following from my own notes on dialogue and notes of my field colleagues and local volunteers.

**Purok officers of barangay Balinad:** The purok officers of Balinad saw a widening divide in the future between rich and poor in the barangay. Rich people would not care about the others; and life for the poor would be more difficult. People of the barangay would stop helping each other; would become more selfish; and would not care for others.

**Barangay officials of Balinad:** The barangay officials of Balinad too saw a future Balinad with greater gap between the rich and the poor. The poor would become poorer; there would be no social harmony; and the rich would corrupt the barangay election and political system. The rich people would become more selfishness and would not care about the poor majority. However, the poor would cooperate among themselves.

**Local self-help volunteers:** The local self-help volunteers (most of them were youth) also believed that people would not care for each other in the future. People would be selfish and there would be no trust, sharing and caring about each other.

Reflecting on the summary I began to realize that after being involved in problem-solving method and discourses, the stakeholders perceive the future of barangay Balinad as community with un-cooperative and self-centred people. The rich, the poor and the middle class were identified a mutually non-cooperative and antagonistic groups. Being guided by a negative worldview, most categories of stakeholders believed that the negative community relationship would create negative results in the future of the barangay community. They imagined of a future of the barangay with increased economic disparity, deteriorating social

relationship, declining morals among the youths and decaying political institutions. This negative perception influenced people of Balinad to see people as rich and poor and to blame others. This resulted in a sense of frustrations and helplessness blinding people to any possibilities.

**No creation of a wider climate for participation and possibilities.** In the introduction of this chapter I have mentioned that following the practices of barangay Napo, Balinad also tracked stakeholders' participation in self-help activities (see appendix 3). Going through this stakeholders' participation tracking I could easily learn that since March to October 2005 participation of stakeholders did not grow but declined. For me it was not just doing research and gaining learning but good work with the people that can add some benefit in the life of barangay community. However, observing these sliding situations of self-help through problem solving in barangay Balinad my field colleague, barangay self help point person Amador Silerio, and myself – all of us became frustrated.

In the month of December 2004 Balinad formed a twelve-member volunteer group but starting from the month of February 2005 up to May 2005, six volunteers dropped out. This rapid drop-out of local volunteers was one of the major problems we faced in Balinad. As an attempt to take corrective measures, on September 15, 2005 I had an opportunity to discuss with available volunteers about reasons of this drop out. In that reflection session I noted that volunteers dropped out because *most volunteers felt they are not rewarded*'. The barangay self-help point person Amador Silerio added:

In general all facilitators expected to get IIRR T-Shirts, caps, or doing some camping. Most of them had expectations of getting incentives. Even though Saha (referring to me), said that it is purely voluntary, but they thought they will receive some incentives. But when it did not happen then they became inactive.

Most facilitators viewed that the only means of being rewarded is to get T-shirts, honorarium, scholarships – material incentives from IIRR. They did not see any other kind of reward such as being recognized and being praised by the community. Talks of problems and discourse of blaming each other locked-up the attention of the barangay community as such that it did not allow them to praise those local volunteers (who worked voluntarily), which could have been the reward for them to continue.

We had the similar frustration in participation and cooperation of barangay council members. As I narrated earlier being engaged in vocabularies of problems and individual identity, the purok officers, barangay council members and local volunteers of barangay

Balinad continued to blame each other. It was almost common for the local facilitators and purok officers not to see any positive contribution of barangay council members but to blame them. As a result, except for a few, most barangay council members did not participate in the process and did not cooperate. With the local volunteers available I had a conversation on the *participation and collaboration of barangay council members*; identify that of the 8 council officials 6 did not participate in the self-help activities in the barangay.

The consolidated findings of the mid-year review and year-end evaluation (appendix 4) would tell us that problem-solving did not further self-help in barangay Balinad. Application of the participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation process in the problem-solving framework remained fasten with,

- discourse of autonomous individual identity in development and social change thus failed to bring relational interaction process as unit of analysis;
- Subject-Object relationship between development professionals/actors and the barangay community.

The effect of the above-mentioned constructions was the failure to foster wider conversational climate among different stakeholders and cooperative participation in the barangay.

**Purok 5 where local cultural constructions made problem-solving exceptionally successful:** Rural Philippines has thousands of upland communities and Garayon is one such community – the purok 5 of barangay Balinad. Garayon has a total of 47 families with a total population of 381. The livelihood of this population is solely dependent on agro-farming on the hilly land the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) allocated. Garayon has no electricity; and the only way to get around is by walking and trekking the hilly pathways. Children and young students have to trek 8 km every day to reach school located on the plain. Access to drinking water is also a problem. A few families use buffalo to haul water but generally people themselves to carry the water. When my colleague and I together with Amador Silerio first went to Garayon they claimed that I was the first foreigner ever to set foot in their purok. Taking on their problems people of Garayon mentioned poor income; decreasing soil fertility and increasing costs of agriculture; poor access to health, education and other services, access to drinking water and difficult communications.



Drinking water collection in Garayon



Natural beauties of Garayon

Like the other puroks in Balinad, the purok officers' organization in Garayon was facilitated to apply problem-solving through self-help. In terms of collective initiatives, implementation of activities and achievements, Garayon proved to be the best among all the puroks, including the six in Napo where we applied the appreciative inquiry approach. In Garayon successful collective actions and achievements weakened problem-solving vocabularies to generate and centre autonomous individual entity discourse.

As a beginning step on December 14, in a session purok officers of Garayon identified *over population* and *non practice of birth control method by active couples* as the problem to be addressed. Among other reasons, non-availability of contraceptives in the purok was identified as main problem. Participants claimed that to get or buy a condom or pills one has to trek hilly trails for 3 hours (going and coming) and spend 10 pesos on a tricycle to the barangay health centre or the Mercury Drug Store in Polangui municipal town. The idea of setting up a birth control contraceptive depot at the purok secretary's house stemmed from the discussion. On December 20/2004 with the help of the purok officers and Barangay Health Centre, the secretary of Garayon purok officers' organization successfully established a contraceptive depot that dramatically increased contraceptive users in the purok. On



December 14, 2004: Trained local self-help volunteer (Michele Benamira and Ruel) facilitating Garayon purok officers to select problem and need to be addressed by the action plan

March 1, 2005, I went to Garayon again to observe the yearly action-planning workshop and spoke with the secretary of senior purok officers who was managing the contraceptive depot.



Lutgarda Benamira (Lut) Secretary of Purok Officers of Purok 5, (Garayon), Balinad with the help of the Barangay health centre has established a birth control contraceptive depot at her house



Purok secretary Lut displayed a poster (drawn by the barangay secretary) in the front door of her house. The poster was announced as the purok contraceptive depot and also conveyed a message on family planning.

Community created poster displayed at purok contraceptive depot



The members of the Garayon purok committee did not stop here. On March 1, 2005, all purok officers had a workshop to prepare a self-help development action plan.

March 1, 2005  
After completion of Purok Action Plan Preparation.

President of senior purok officers with other members holding the file of action plan along with monthly monitoring and year-end evaluation tools



Their plan, targeted several activities including strengthening the purok officers' organizations, creation of a savings and credit fund, organizing and conducting health and family planning awareness sessions, and mass display of family planning posters. For the reflection they decided to hold regular monthly meetings, identified changes they would like to see by the end of the year.

The success of the contraceptive depot encouraged the purok officers to surge ahead. Of the 11 purok officers' organisations including those in Balinad and Napo, by August 2005, Garayon was the best in implementation of planned and unplanned self-help activities. The following are its major achievements:

- Implemented 90% of the activities they planned;
- Conducted all regular monthly meetings of purok officers with 100% participation;
- With the cooperation of the barangay health centre and the health worker, the purok contraceptive depot succeeded in increase contraceptive use from 5 to 25 active couples;
- Sr. Secretary participated in health and family planning training the municipal health office conducted;
- Established a cock fighting centre, volley ball cum basket ball court through the *bayanihan* approach;
- Established contract with the Balogo Mission to provide quarterly health check up services for 5 poorest families in the purok; and
- Created a purok development fund amounting of peso 5000 through purok officers' regular savings, income from cock fighting centre and volley ball playing ground.

Establishing cock-fighting and volleyball cum basketball play ground were not planned in the annual self-help action plan but the purok officers added: *'we have no need to be confined within the action plan. We sit together; think together and try to do what we think would be beneficial and possible.'* In a regular meeting of purok officers, the idea of establishing a cock-fighting ground and volley/basket ball ground came up firstly because Garayon had no communal play and recreation centre for its people; and the youths had no space for playing or and spending time together. Secondly, the officers thought these to be a good source of income for the purok. Cock-fighting in rural Philippines is very popular and is an age old tradition. Though laws do not encourage cock fighting, informally it continues to thrive. The purok officers of Garayon obtain permission from the barangay council to establish the cockfighting ground. They used the *bayanihan* approach: a family gave the land; others donated bamboos and other materials; and labour was provided free. On June 30, 2005 the purok officers formally established the cock-fighting ground.



Cock-fighting ground in Garayon established on June 30, 2005 through bayanihan



This volleyball cum basketball court is also established by the initiative of purok officers. One land owner has given land for use, net was bought from financial assistance of the Vice Mayor, other materials and labour was provided by the community. They have generated some fund by renting-out this play-ground

The purok officers organised cock-fighting on Monday of the week; spent about 65 peso but earn about 600. By June 2005 they made an income of 4460 peso (equivalent to about 90 US \$) to fund for construction of main door of the purok chapel, which is also used as a day-care centre.

A purok officer learnt that the Balogo Parish of Oas (Neighbouring Municipality) provides health check-up services for the poorest of the poor. At the monthly meeting in June the purok officers discussed whether the service could be made available for the poor families of Garayon. The Secretary, Luthgarda Benamira, was given the responsibility to contact the Balogo Parish to request this service for the poor families of Garayon. With the help of the chairman of the Barangay Health Committee (Elvie S. Deleon) contacted Father Balute of the Balogo Parish and were able to establish a service contract. In each quarter, the purok officers' organization selected 5 poorest families in Garayon, and sent them to Balogo Parish Health Centre where they received free check up services with some basic medicines and vitamins.

The monthly facilitators' meeting, quarterly facilitators' reflection meeting (June-05), the joint reflection meeting (September 11, 2005), and a separate meeting with 10 Garayon purok officers (September 13), discussed following reasons behind the success:

Encouragement from the first success of establishing contraceptive depot: Purok officers affirmed that the success of the purok contraceptive depot was a driving force for them. The secretary, president and other purok officers discussed that the success of establishing contraceptive depot gave them two things: First it gave confidence and encouragement that as purok officers they can do something for the betterment of the

purok population, and second; the purok population recognised purok officers' organization that works for the wellbeing of the community. They started feeling very proud. These encouraged them to be more active for next activities and achievement. They became hopeful of doing many other good activities.

Meeting was the only recreational and social activity for them: On the reason for regular meetings with almost 100% participation of its members, the purok officers reflected that the monthly meeting of purok officers was a recreational social activity. In Garayon they had no electricity, no television to watch in homes, no cell phones to text or chat with distant relatives or friends. Houses are scattered and unlike plain; they seldom meet other people moving around and going to the municipal town to see something was difficult and costly. Meetings offered a form of recreation, getting together, and talking to one another (people refer here as *chika-chika*). This meeting was for them, was a social gathering for recreation. In these meeting they not only talked about their self-help activities, they said hello to each other, they had joke, *chika-chika*, fun, use humours, and after the meeting they felt relaxed. After seven months of regular meetings they felt very close to each other.

Appreciation from the community and other stakeholders that they were doing well and going ahead: The appreciation of the good work from the community, self-help volunteers, and barangay council officials was another reason for the success of the purok officers of Garayon. While explaining successful implementation and achievements in self-help activities, on August 11, in the mid-year (2005) Joint Reflection Workshop, the purok officers of Garayon explained that they had no way but to do good work together. Whenever they came in meetings, the barangay self-help point person and the barangay council members told them to share their success with other participants. They felt very proud of that. Often in the meeting, with other participants, IIRR staff, barangay council members, they got recognition as the best in self-help activities. On hearing praises and also what people expected from them, they tried to keep this goodwill and do even better. When their secretary participated in the health and family planning training the Municipal Health Office organised, the success of Garayon was projected as a good example. They were given big recognition by the participants of that training course. After the establishment of the purok contraceptive depot, the cock-fighting ground, the volley cum basket ball court, and providing health check-up services for the poor families, the people of their purok gave them much honour and love. They felt they are affected by the love and recognition. They had to keep it up.

Direct dependency on each other for livelihood: Purok officers explained that In Garayon they are 47 families dependent solely on agricultural for livelihood. Gathering and collecting food like several types of vegetable (Lubi-Lubi, Pilinut) from the forestland that the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) owns is common. This farming community, in their existing mode of production shares a cooperative culture in cultivating lands together, sharing seeds, and harvesting crops. Local people term it as '*bayanihan*' culture - in time of one family's need, others give their labour and other available agricultural equipments. These practices are stronger in Garayon than in other plain land communities that have other livelihood options including agriculture, petty business and jobs. The agricultural mode of production and livelihood systems in Garayon offered better conditions for sustaining collective bondages among them. In homes in times of festivities, it is a tradition to serving food

on big banana leaves around which everybody sits together to share. This is viewed as prestigious gestures of Garayon.



Eating together on one banana leaf



While gathering, preparing and eating Linobak is another culture any one can eat if he/she comes

Positive support from other stakeholders: Purok officers of Garayon reflected: While doing self-help activities they received support and encouragement from the barangay council, barangay health committee, municipal health office, landowner of their purok and the Balogo Mission. They received the support because they took the first initiative for the support for the purok community. Moral and material support from others increased their confidence and encouragement for greater initiatives and actions. They discovered that if they take initiative there are opportunities to tap for the betterment of people.

The story tells us that the cooperative mode of life and culture of this upland community disabled problem-solving method from generating individual identity discourses. While planning and monitoring of self-help activities, the purok community used problem-solving vocabularies, the vocabularies became superficial and powerless against the vocabularies of hope on successful implementation of activities through collective actions. Successful actions were the crucial factor to promote collective actions among the people. The success brought appreciation for this purok community from many corners. Appreciation included not only oral vocabularies but also positive actions in which vocabularies became actions and actions vocabularies. Story of Garayon tells that different historical-cultural constructions in local communities influence a particular method to produce different results in generating vocabularies/discourses and creating results. While language construct the world, local cultures and traditions offer different possibilities to language in establishing different processes for development and social changes.

## Chapter 5

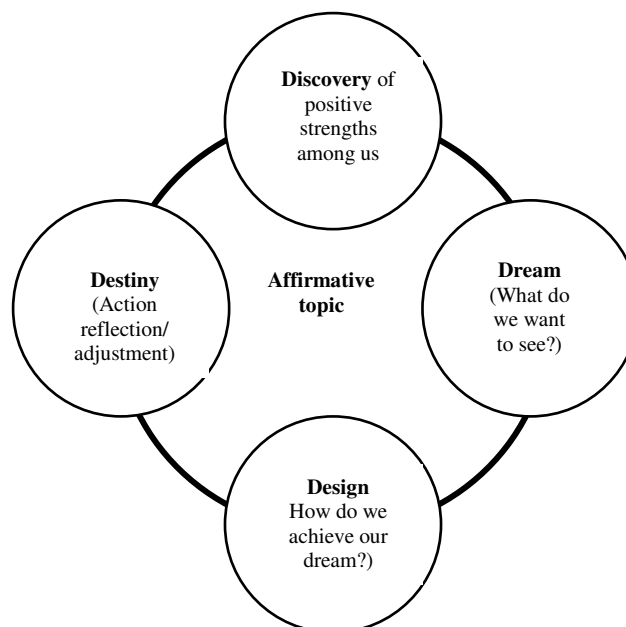
### Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in barangay Napo

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#### A brief overview of the appreciative inquiry cycle in all six purok

Like Balinad, barangay Napo has six puroks. We used the 4D cycle<sup>38</sup> of appreciative inquiry (AI) method with all six purok officers' organizations.

#### Exhibit 2: 4D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry (AI)



At first, I assumed that self-help in Balinad and Napo would remain separate. But after formation of the self-help volunteers groups – volunteers of the two barangay continuously interacted with each other. The formation and training of local volunteers, inter-purok action plans sharing, quarterly and mid-year multi-stakeholders review and reflections workshops, monthly and quarterly local volunteers' reflection meetings, year-end evaluation workshop were adopted in both barangay – often as a result of informal and unplanned interactions and sharing of news and ideas. Exeption was, Napo followed the appreciative inquiry cycle in which positive storytelling and listening were central activities.

**The formation and training of barangay self-help volunteers group:** With the help of the barangay council and the nominated barangay self-help person representing all 6 puroks, a ten-member barangay self-help volunteer (appendix 8) group was formed. Like Balinad, most volunteers were young people who joined Sammy and me in the 'mass listening' (chapter 3). The training of the self –help volunteers followed the same lines as Balinad - for the same reasons. For the whole period local volunteers were provided orientation and training, using an approach of step-by-step joint orientation- action- and post application reflection.



Local volunteers group in barangay Napo. From the left: Teresita M. Buban, (Barangay council member and nominated self-help point person), Jovita Imperial (Vita), Teresa Belis, Marceline Castelo, Salvador S. Sablayan (Dong), Richard B. Cariso, Caroline Benares (youth council chairperson), Laila R. Restum and Riza Q. Sabucor. Another local facilitator Edger Lotivo is not included in the photograph.

**December 11-18, 2004: Purok-wise strengths discovery and dream selection:** I had no previous experience of facilitating communities and organizations in the use of appreciative inquiry (AI). At the suggestion of my adviser - Dian Marie Hosking - I did a web search; downloaded a practitioners' manual (Ashford & Patkar, 2001) for using AI with self-help organizations in rural India. Going through the collected readings and manuals, I designed the *discovery story listening and vision tree exercise*. First, Sammy and I, together with the entire Napo volunteer group, organized and conducted a day-long workshop to discuss, field test, and finalize this exercise. Then, together with the barangay council and the local volunteers group, Sammy and I facilitated six purok officers' organizations in the first two steps of the AI cycle (discovering and dreaming) around an affirmative topic<sup>39</sup> selected by each of the purok officers' organizations. Sammy and I conducted the first workshop (in purok 4) in which all barangay self-help volunteers participated as observers - as part of their training and orientation. In the other five puroks the local volunteers conducted the exercise whilst Sammy and I provided 'backstop' support. After a story was told participants were facilitated to draw lessons and strengths from the story; each of the purok officers' organizations selected one dream as a priority.





After we demonstrated the exercise in purok 4, Teresita M. Buban, barangay self-help point person conducting the reflection and clarification session with other local volunteers.

After completion of all the workshops, all the facilitators had a dialogue session, reflecting on the process and drawing lessons. Collecting and collating the reports of the exercise I noted that the six workshops were attended by a total of 108 barangay residents and a total of fifty-five stories were shared.

#### **Dreams selected by purok officers' organizations in barangay Napo**

**Purok 1:** Create livelihood opportunities for the purok residents.

**Purok 2:** *Immediate:* Painting of street-side flower pots in the purok. *Long term:* Foster cleanliness and green in the purok.

**Purok 3:** Building self-help organizations for livelihood in the purok

**Purok 4:** Create livelihood opportunities for purok households.

**Purok 5:** Create livelihood opportunities for purok households.

**Purok 6:** Having a concrete bridge on the Hibiga River.



On completion of the day long workshop in purok 6. Purok officers with vision tree in which they have selected a dream to design activities.

**Action planning (Design), and introducing appreciative self-monitoring, evaluation, learning (Destiny):** From February 24 to March 5, 2005 we conducted the design and destiny parts of the cycle. We did not use the word 'design' because, when I was providing an orientation for Sammy<sup>40</sup> on the appreciative inquiry cycle he suggested we choose a word which is familiar and understandable to the purok officers and local community. We decided to speak of 'action plan for dream achievement'. Together with the local volunteers Sammy and I had to think about and come up with a way of facilitating the 'action plan for dream achievement'. Sammy and I drafted a set of questions (what are we going to do, who is going to do it, what resources), checked them out with some of the local volunteers, and piloted it with some community members.<sup>41</sup> Next, we facilitated each of the six purok officers'

organizations in a workshop to prepare '*dream achievement action plan*' for their purok. Each officers' organization then developed their 10-month (March 2005-December 2005) action plan.

Inspired by the experiences of Balinad, the local volunteers of Napo proposed an inter-purok action-plan-sharing workshop – which was held in the barangay Chapel. Purok officers, barangay council members and invited municipal government officers participated. I discussed with Ms. Galdina Andrada – the Napo barangay Capitan - to invite the municipal mayor. The mayor came and gave a talk and each purok presented their action plans.



← The municipal mayor of Polangui Mr. Salseda giving his address to the participants of Inter-purok action plan sharing workshop of Napo in the barangay chapel.

**March –September-2005: appreciative self-monitoring and reflection:** During this period, activities related to appreciative monitoring, reflection and learning activities were:

Purok meetings: monthly sharing of stories, review, reflection and planning. My literature search on appreciative inquiry taught me that the focus of the "destiny" stage should be on continuous empowerment, learning, adjustment and improvisation (Cooperrider et. al., 2000). However, I had no past experience of AI to draw upon. I had little idea about how to use the positive story telling method in the destiny stage. In discussion with local self-help volunteers we decided on monthly meetings in which purok officers, after the review of monthly plans and activities, shared stories, identified the 'success of the month' and the story of how that success happened. During the eight-months each purok officers' organization identified about six success stories from their self-help activities. I asked the local volunteers if they could document those stories in some simple way. Some local volunteers wrote some down in the local language - which I collected - and translated with the help of Sammy and local volunteers (translated copy of those stories is in appendix 2).

Barangay-wide monthly review, reflection and planning meeting of local self-help volunteers/facilitators. The local self-help volunteers also met to share with one another the stories told in each of their officers' meetings and to reflect on the officer's review and planning. They also updated and consolidated the monitoring and reflection records at the level of barangay and used the monthly stakeholders' participation tracking tool to reflect on stakeholder participation in the AI-related activities. At the end of the meeting, local volunteers prepared their facilitation plans for next month. Simple minutes of meetings were written and kept at the barangay council office by the barangay self-help point person. My field colleague participated in all these meetings and I participated in some.

Quarterly and mid-year multi-stakeholders review: In June and again in September day-long workshops were held involving purok officers, local volunteers' group, barangay council members, few municipal government officials, Sammy and myself. The general objective of

these workshops was to review and reflect on self-help activities, draw lessons for the future and recommend actions for improvement. I participated in all these workshops.

Informal conversations with multiple stakeholders: From June to September 2005, I talked with many community members - taking the opportunity wherever it arose. This might be through dinning with different households, drinking in the Bahay Kubo<sup>42</sup> with barangay council officials or talking people sitting in front of a small shop in the barangay. This helped me to keep in touch with how things were going and strengthened my relations with the community.

Final evaluation workshop: In the first week of November 2005, we had a year-end evaluation workshop and action planning for the following year. In this one day workshop, participating purok officers, local volunteers and barangay council officials were engaged in group exercise (by purok) followed by a plenary presentation. At the first step, participants prepared a list of self-help activities implemented in their purok; the second step identified results of those activities in the purok. Last, they determined the most significant changes. Questions, answers and clarifications took place during the plenary presentation.

Each of the events in which I participated, I took intensive notes on discussions, noting who said what<sup>43</sup>. This note taking included both taking notes as I understood and recording words and sentences people said. Further, I collected and collated findings from the following documents that were generated throughout the process.

- Local volunteers' reports (6 reports) on 'discovery story listening and vision tree exercise' with the purok officers.
- Action plans of puroks (6 action plans).
- Minutes of the inter-puroks plans sharing workshop prepared by Caroline Benares; one of the local volunteers.
- Some success stories of self –help actions shared in the monthly meetings of purok officers' organizations - written by some local volunteers (appendix 2).
- Minutes of the monthly meetings of the local volunteers.
- Minutes of quarterly and midyear multi-stakeholders review, prepared by Teresita Buban, the barangay self-help point person.
- Copy of the monthly stakeholders' participation tracking flipchart.
- Copy of the consolidated self-help activity achievement chart of barangay self-help activities.
- Report of the final evaluation prepared by Teresita Buban. and
- Notes taken by my field colleague, Sammy.

The next section presents selected cases of appreciative inquiry in barangay Napo. Based on my own notes and the above-mentioned documents I bring out some of the ways in which our AI process gradually constructed co-operative interactions and positive self-help rather than individual responsibility, failure and blaming – as in the PS cycle in Balinad. In addition, some cases seem clearly to illustrate the important role of local-cultural, local-historical factors in the particularities of the ways the 4-step cycle played out. Relatedly, some cases also suggest that what is 'positive' and what is 'negative' is locally constructed; they are



defined in relationship with each other. The language of hope and deficit is defined by the locals in relation to their local – historical culture.

### **Stories of appreciative inquiry**

**Being storied -being connected:** Before we began the AI cycle with the puroks, Sammy and I and all the local volunteers got together in Napo barangay hall and had an orientation session on facilitating the Discovery and Vision Tree Exercise. We started by telling our own success stories to get the feeling of how positive story works. Everyone shared a success story; it was wonderful to listen to each other. Afterwards we reflected on the question: ‘how do we feel about telling our stories<sup>44</sup>?’ We went on to draw lessons on the use of positive story telling. One by one we said what we had learned and I listed these on a flip chart; then through discussing the points we synthesized following learning.

When we identify and share positive stories of our life then we engage ourselves in self-reflection and discover ‘*I am not alone*’. Many friends, relatives help us to create pride in our life. We also find that each of us has some resources to contribute to others in our community. When others listen to our proud story of life and praise us by gestures and postures then we feel more willing to do the same kind of good work and create good stories of life. When we listen to the proud stories of others then we can relate those with our own similar stories, it goes in our heart then we become attentive to listen and become emotional. By telling and listening positive stories we feel strong and energetic to do good work in our community.

I shared the best success story of my life of founding and developing a small NGO in my village with other friends when I was young. Telling that story I myself felt so happy and became emotional. Nonetheless I listened to others emphatically. Through sharing of our success stories of life, my field colleague, 10 local volunteers and I made a greater sense of unity as a team.

Next day, and for the following week, we conducted the "discovery and vision tree exercise" with the six purok officers’ organisations (Poos). The first exercise was in purok 2

where Sammy facilitated and all the local volunteers participated, observed and learned how to run the facilitation themselves. The remaining five Poos (see above) were facilitated by the local volunteers while Sammy and I participated as learners, as note-takers, and as 'backstop' support. To help with our learning we agreed to document the process and findings of each of session. The local facilitators prepared the reports; Sammy and I collected them and translated into English (appendix 5). Feedback provided by more than hundreds of people (participated) commonly tells that use of success story sharing generated:

- inspirations, hopefulness and positive emotion in the barangay community;
- feeling of honour that 'my voice is listened – (particularly poor people who felt 'no-body listen to them'); and
- feeling of unity that one cannot do alone but if the community work together then they can make progress.

Another day, it was on December 17, 2004, the discovery story listening and vision tree workshop of purok 5 took place on a family courtyard. The workshop went well. Around the affirmative topic, about 10 stories of success were shared by the participants. My attention was caught by one participant - Samuel Lativo - a young agricultural labourer. He did not tell a story as did the others in the workshop, but he seemed to listen very attentively to all stories with a proud face and glittering eyes. Just before the end of the meeting I took the following notes of my conversation with him. I asked him '*did you like stories told by others?*' In reply he said '*maraming-(very much)*' then he added '*I knew all these stories because they happened here among us in our purok.*' Further I asked '*if you knew all those stories then why did you listen to those further with great attention?*' He replied '*we knew those but did not share in this way. I liked it very much because when Tess Buban (elected barangay council member and baragay self-help point person) told the story then she mentioned my name in recognition that I did good work during last barangay fiesta. I feel very happy that I was mentioned in the story because I was part of the activity. I am a labourer –a poor person; people do not listen to me but now 14 people here in our purok, you and Sir Sammy (my field colleague) heard that I also did good work- I feel very happy now.*' When he was telling this then each and every participant's facial expressions were full of emotion and joy. When he finished he was awarded by a spontaneous clap by all.

Positive and success story telling and sharing method of AI cycle generated greater sense of unity, connectedness, feeling of participation and self-worth among the barangay

community. All these inspired purok officers, local volunteers, and barangay officials to participate and cooperate with each other.

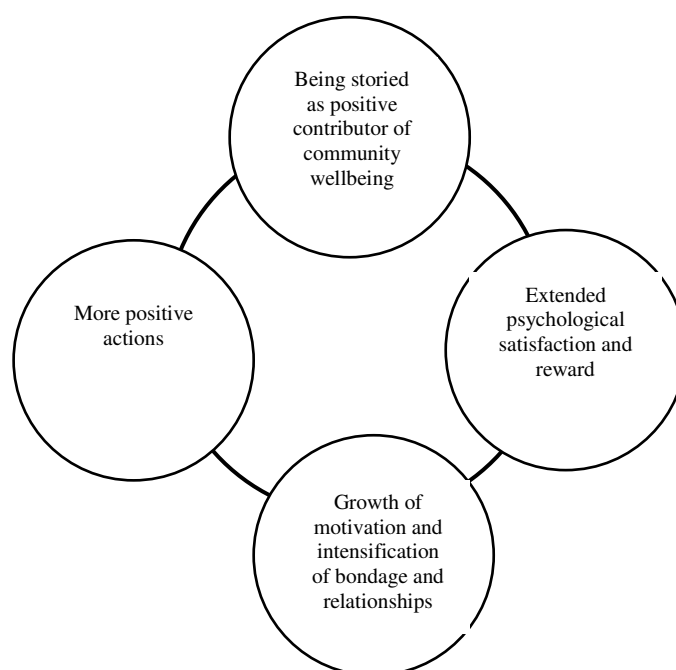
Reflecting on myself I felt that connecting self with others seemed require change worker to be a bit emotional. I recalled my past years of engagement in facilitating community development and strived to remember whether I was asked to be emotional as development worker. The answer was – ‘no’. Instead, by means of training, education and readings I was told to be rational; as objective as possible. May be there are exceptions but as far as I saw, usually in our development and social change work we always facilitate us and the community to be rational and objective. This endeavour of being rational and objective divides us (change worker) and the community and perhaps prohibits being genuine co-constructive part with each other. I think many development workers like me would agree that in our day to day work with policies, procedures, techniques and tools we continue to make ourselves as technocrats and gradually forget to sing songs with the community, talking with them without any agenda, doing fun and feeling each other. Instead, we try to learn more and more techniques (such as PRA, PLA, PPMEL, Strategic Planning and so many others) of ensuring community participation. We start to view participation in terms of methods and techniques. We became now experts of participation out there; we become separate as subject--- and the community as formable object.

**Going hand in hand: appreciation and dependency reduction:** Over a period of time, Sammy and I noticed that the Napo volunteers became more active as the Balinad volunteers became less so. Yet they were similar in age, economy, culture and social situation. At the beginning of the process, barangay Napo selected ten local self-help facilitators of which seven continued to the end. Marceline Castillo left in June 2005 to go to a new job in Manila. Teresa Belis and Jovita Imperial left in February 2005 when they and the group decided that, being older, it would be difficult for them to fully participate. Sammy and I spoke with the Napo volunteers in the middle of September. I asked ‘*what motivated you to do this self-help work continuously and voluntarily without any material and monetary incentives*’. Note I took on what Teresita Buban added in that meeting,

In the monthly purok meetings while sharing stories of success, people recognise our contribution; they praise us; we feel rewarded. Further in each monthly facilitator meeting, we always start by identifying good work of a facilitator for the month and reflecting on his/her good qualities which we also find rewarding - hearing good things about one-self from other friends. We want to continue.

Being praised for their contributions gave the volunteers energy to continue their voluntary activities without looking to external agencies for rewards – unlike the volunteers working with the problem-solving approach. This also confirms what I read in the AI literatures about the value of a positive (rather than problem-solving) orientation.

**Exhibit 3: Reinforcing cycle of reward, motivation, relation and action**



**Discovery to destiny: a growing appreciation of interaction process:** During the period December 11-18 of 2004; each of the 6 purok officers' organizations of barangay Napo was engaged in sharing their *discovery stories* of success. Sitting in a circle, participants shared success stories related to the affirmative topic they had selected for self-help promotion in their purok. At the beginning, participants seemed a bit shy but this soon changed. After storytelling, participants drew lessons and principles – identifying the discovered strengths of the purok community. The facilitator listed these on a flipchart.

I was able to participate in all those interesting and exciting story telling/listening sessions. I took notes of talks with the help of my field colleague and local volunteers. With the help of local volunteer teams, later I translated and collated all flip charts produced by 6 puroks. Consolidating my own notes and those of my field colleague as well as notes and flipcharts of local self-help facilitators I summarized (appendix 6) the participants' identified principles and key strengths of purok community. From the summary I could see that people had much

to say about the importance of relations and community but also spoke of individuals and their capacities.

In each of the puroks, after completion of discovery stage story telling-listening; dreams were set and action plan was prepared. Starting March 2005 the destiny stage of AI cycle continued up to September 2005. In this seven months period, at the end of each month, each of the purok officers' organizations and local facilitators group shared the best success story of their actions and drew lessons out of those action stories. I was able to participate in some of those destiny story-sharing meetings and felt so interesting an exciting listening to the success and cooperative interactions of barangay community. Some stories were documented (appendix 2) by the local self-help volunteers. In addition to my own notes, I collected all the documented stories, studied and collated community identified lessons, and prepared a summary. It seemed to me that the *destiny stage* of the AI cycle produced yet more talk of cooperative interaction processes and less was said about individuals.

In exploring the reasons for these changes, through informal dialogue with local self-help volunteers/facilitators, purok officers, and barangay council officials, people told me that the purok officer's organisations (Poos) gradually became better organised and actively involved in planning, implementing and analyzing self-help activities. As a result, destiny stage stories were about the current actions of the purok officers' organizations thus the central character of those stories was successful collective actions imparted by purok officers' organizations.

**Post-mortem to possibilities: Learned-helplessness to learned-optimism:** The action-planning workshop of purok 6 took place on February 27, 2005 at 1:30 PM. Among the fifteen persons who participated, five were purok officers. Most junior purok officers could not participate because they were staying out of the barangay. At the outset of the workshop participants decided to change their previously selected dream '*having a bridge over the Hibiga River*' because, by that time, the barangay council had included the bridge building scheme in their 2005 action plan. Participants articulated another dream - to have a better portable water system in the purok - but they soon saw that they could not do it by self-help if the purok officers' organization was not strong enough. At the time of this workshop it was inactive: no program, no meetings, some members were unaware of their position in the organization. After some reflection, participants changed their dream to '*a strong and active purok officers' organization*' and prepared an action plan accordingly.

The workshop was facilitated by the three local facilitators (Laila, Dong, Tess), plus Sammy and myself. Though we were using appreciative inquiry but participants started by discussing a problem: *'50% of the purok officers were living out of the locality and it was really difficult to get them to the meeting.'* Though we did not intend to talk about problems, at this point we could not avoid this discussion. An old purok officer talked emotionally about problems in the style of a post-mortem and dominated the discussions. I was thinking of what to do.



While design workshop in purok 6 of Napo an aged purok officer sitting closed with the tree, was speaking emotionally that the purok officers' organization does not comply with its obligation to the purok residents.

Being caught-up in this deficit based vocabulary, the local facilitators Laila and Dong repeatedly asked participants *'how can you now solve this problem of 50% purok officers are unable to join the meeting as they live outside the locality for various reasons?'* Observing the gestures, postures, and voice tones of participants I had the feeling that participants were not discussing about *'what they want'*. I went up to Tess and asked her *'what are they talking about?'* Tess told me that they were blaming the designated kagawad (barangay council member) and the barangay council who, without discussion with the purok residents, nominated purok officers who cannot afford to stay in the purok. Suddenly an older participant started shouting. I asked Tess *'what is he saying?'* Tess replied *'now this man telling that he did not know he had been selected as the adviser to the purok officers'*. Other people were saying that *'people who do not live here they should not continue on the list of purok officers'*. Discussion was lively and vocal but not heading towards a vision or solution; instead people were adding more and more negatives, blaming, and looking helpless.

I asked Tess to pose following question to the participants:

*'What kind of members and participation do you want to see in future?'*

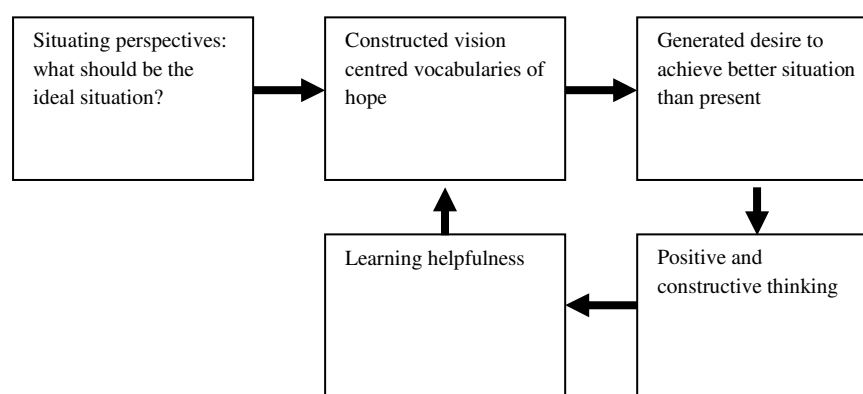
Tess threw the question open to the group and participants responded,

We want purok officers who can participate in meetings. We understand all members may not be able to attain all meetings; for various reasons one may be absent for one or two times but at present we see around 50% of the names are people who stay month after month in Manila

or other provinces for their study or for their job. It is really difficult for them to take active part in purok officers' meetings and other activities of the organization.

Tess then asked what could be done to have those kinds of purok officers in board. Participants replied that, in consultation with the designated kagawad of the purok, they could organize a meeting of senior and junior purok residents, discuss the matter and have re-election of purok officers who can actively take part. After this, participants had a constructive discussion and prepared their design which included a purok residents meeting and new elections for purok officers. The moment the question changed from *'how can we solve the problem?'* to *'what better situation do we want to see?'* participants shifted from blaming to formulating constructive actions. Replacement of perspective from *'what is the present problem'* to *'what should be the ideal'* paved the ground for constructing vision centred vocabularies of hope. Vocabularies of hope generated the desire amongst participants to make their purok organization better; positive thinking changed faces of helplessness into faces of helpfulness.

#### Exhibit 4: Vision centred positive questions and learning helpfulness



**We co-construct who we are and our lives together:** My experience of the self-help process in Napo was that people did not talk about people and characteristics - *who* is good and *who* is bad - but about the kind of cooperation, the kinds of relationships that worked for them. I observed day by day closeness and cooperation among barangay council officials, local volunteers and purok officers continued to grow. Instead of talking about entities and individual, talks of cooperative interaction processes seemed putting across a realization among them that they were not different and separated from each other but attached. At the outset, I listened to the barangay council officials made defensive argument against youth who spoke of self-help but after few months these two groups of people continued to share ideas and actions being supportive to each other. Looking in to the stakeholder participation

chart (appendix 3) and the minutes of the mid-year review (appendix 4) I became amazed to see that within 7 months Napo self-help reached to a number of stakeholder participation which was 4 times bigger than the beginning of the self-help process. I witnessed the significant participation-growth of purok officers, common residents and barangay council officials. I would like to humbly submit that this rapid growth of stakeholder participation had not been possible if relationship would not move from subject –object to non subject-object between the barangay council officials and the barangay community. Probably it happened, because barangay council officials, purok officers, common residents and local volunteers; all thought '*we co-construct who we are and our lives together*'. I read that this promotion of non-subject-object relationship is also reflected in the minutes of midyear review which stated,

Participants discussed that since March to August, 2005 participation of barangay community and purok officers continued to increase. Contributory factors to enhanced community participation recognized were (1) appreciative story telling drawn from practical implementation of self-help activities , (2) involvement of barangay kagawads (council members) and some purok leaders as local facilitators , (3) participation and support of barangay capitan and most kagawads (4) active participation and support of youth council chairperson, (5) active participation of local volunteers, (5) active participation of Linkon Masa (a credit cooperative) and volunteers of Social Action Centre ( an NGO has program intervention in the barangay) (6) '*do whatever needed and what can we do*' attitude of purok officers and not to be confined within planned activities but act on situational needs (7) inclusion of cultural, recreational (like play, fiesta decoration) activities as part of self-help development activities, (8) active participation of barangay health workers (BHWs).

Reading the minutes of the midyear review I realized that promotion of non subject-object relationship began to make a journey with multi-voicing and creativities; other NGOs, change workers, community organisations became part. Further, I studied the summary of the final evaluation (appendix 3) in which found following description supported inclusive relationship and cooperation between barangay residents and officials,

Contact and communication between 8 barangay officials and 5 purok officers' organizations was intensified. A significant number of self-help activities were conducted jointly by the purok officers and barangay council. A significant numbers (about 200) of people in the barangay became aware of the barangay development action plan and budget. Discussions about the barangay action plan and a budget based on the needs of the majority (poor people) became intensive both in the barangay council and in the purok officers' organizations.

Despite all these good happenings I remained sceptical about what would happen when Sammy and I stopped our involvement. This scepticism probably reflected my many experiences of seeing self-help organizations collapse with the withdrawal of external support (as described in chapter 1). I talk about this with the local volunteers and the barangay



council officials. I had several conversations of this sort. On one occasion, we were sitting in a circle on the basket ball ground in front of the barangay council office; on another - in the courtyard of one volunteer's home. I asked, for example, *'Carol tell us - being involved in the process what did you learn that you think important for development of the barangay community?'* Further, I listened to both local facilitators and barangay council members tell about *'how they view their future role as self-help change workers in the barangay'*. I summarised what people said (appendix 7). In relation to change of *'self'* local volunteers of barangay Napo perceived themselves as integral part of the barangay community. Utterance of word *'we'* became so central in each of the responses showed progress in construction of collective image. Responses related to *'important learning and self-changes'* expressed by the local volunteers are mostly related to cooperative relationship.

I could see that being involved in AI both local facilitators and barangay council members identified themselves more attached to similarities than differences among each other. Instead of seeing them as a separate entity local volunteers were persuaded to see themselves as part of whole barangay community. Volunteers of Napo perceived changes on themselves mainly from the perspective of their improved identity in terms of enhanced cooperative relationship with others. Affirmative recognition to each other as positive contributors enhanced collective morals among local volunteers and barangay council members that eventually helped dissolving one's identity as separate entity but made part of community. Perception regarding roles of the barangay council members and local facilitators as change agents supported that both barangay council members and local volunteers did not separate themselves as subject of changing community as formable object. Barangay council members and local facilitators; both categories of stakeholders assumed themselves as part of purok community and their role is to participate. This kind of positioning expresses a sense of collective identity construction of barangay council members and local volunteers as equal part - a more equal relationship; open to be co-constructed with each other. Talks of interaction processes as both unit of analysis and locus of self-help gradually proceeded towards non subject-object relationship promotion between the barangay council officials and community.

**We see a prosperous barangay community in the future:** I had no doubt that positive vision of life serves as driving force for moving ahead. However, until I saw in barangay Napo, it had been always a question for me about *'how poor people - involved in severe daily life struggle would see possibilities of a prosperous future'*. Recalling my past experiences of

working with poor people in Bangladesh I thought it is not really possible for those people to dream prosperous tomorrow when today's basic needs of life is unmet.

Similar like barangay Balinad, I and my field colleague had several informal conversation sessions and dialogue with purok officers, barangay officials and barangay self-help volunteers about how they saw the future of their barangay community.

I listen to the **purok officers**. They said 'barangay residents will improve in terms of material wellbeing; they will be kind hearted to each other. We feel we will have improvement of our barangay through unity and cooperation; closed to each other; cooperative to each other; harmonious relationship; sharing and caring; helping each other; supportive to each other; it will be much better in terms of closed relationship between barangay council members and common people.'

I listen to the **barangay officials**. They said 'may be money wise we will not be rich but we are sure that the cooperative relationship among barangay community will enhance. Barangay community will be closed to each other; open to each other, share their problem with each other, people will not view us (barangay council officials) we are superior but friends. We will live with harmonious relationship, helping attitudes, responsive sharing and caring to each other.'

I listen to the **self-help volunteers**. They said 'more unity, more concern to each other, more cooperation between barangay council and residents. Close ties, helpful to each other, more cooperation between barangay council and barangay residents.'

Reflecting on the talks of people I could realize that being involved in appreciate inquiry, all categories of stakeholders in barangay Napo imagined a prosperous barangay community in future. Being guided by positive worldview they perceived that positive community relationship will create positive results in terms of more unity, cooperation and harmony among communities. This positive vision seemed worked as deriving force among the community to participate, cooperate and give momentum to the self-help activities. Eliminating my doubt, the people of Napo proved that whatever struggle they had in their life – still they could see an image of a prosperous barangay community. I began to realize that despite struggle of meeting material needs of the life- if today people are facilitated with sharing their success (whatever they think is success) then a positive *tomorrow* approach to the door as a dream --- people see possibilities; become hopeful. This hope for the future positively acts on the present; make people more cooperative and participative. In my past work as community development worker, I could rarely recall of anything I did to discuss or create hopes and positive imaginations among them. My years of involvement with the communist party often gave me caution about 'not to talk utopia'. Same caution I had from senior colleagues of professional development. But going through this observation I began to realize that creation of positive dreams and imaginations of life can make very important

contribution to the community development. However, with regards to the ways of creating this hopes and imagination I would think of a caution. My caution would be it is not just the ‘vision exercise’ we usually do for our organization (using mechanistic procedures), that places entities over relational interactions and collective wellbeing. I would think of creating hopes and imagination through story telling - narrative way that centres relational interaction process and collective wellbeing. Success story sharing of life around community chosen affirmative topic seemed did so in barangay Napo.

**In relationship with each other: meanings of ‘positive’ & ‘negative’ in the local-social context of Napo:** I went through the note of Cooperrider - *‘Don’t get me wrong. I’m not advocating mindless happy talk. Appreciative Inquiry is a complex science designed to make things better. We cannot ignore problems-we just need to approach them from the other side.* (Cooperrider, 2000: 9). I could realize the core of AI is approaching from the positive side. Some advocates of AI (see e.g., Frank & Ronald, 2005: 35-38, 83) termed this as *unconditional positive*. I could also realize that although AI is approached from the positive side but it does not ignore other (the negative) side. However, until I facilitated AI in barangay Napo I did not learn how one side (positive or negative) gets meaning in relation with the other side. In barangay Napo, when community members discovered their stories of success, then the inclusion of a negative side became an integral part of their story. The success story of Edger Lotivo’s, cited below, is one <sup>45</sup> of the many stories which show how positive and negative sides formed a relationship with each other to create meaning.

**Success story of Edger Lotivo of purok 6 on the affirmative topic ‘having employment and income’**

I was working as a labour in the glass factory as only earning member of my family. My wife and three children all were dependents on me. One day I got accident in the factory and lost my two hands. I was jobless then. The whole world became dark to me, my wife and children. How do we survive then?

Seeing the catastrophic situation of our life, other families of the purok extended their hands of help to us. What can I do – I had no hand. My wife started washing clothes of others in the purok and barangay. Purok families helped us. Kagwad Ernesto Restum helped us to set up a small laundry shop. Now I help my wife running the laundry-shop, we have regular income for our family.

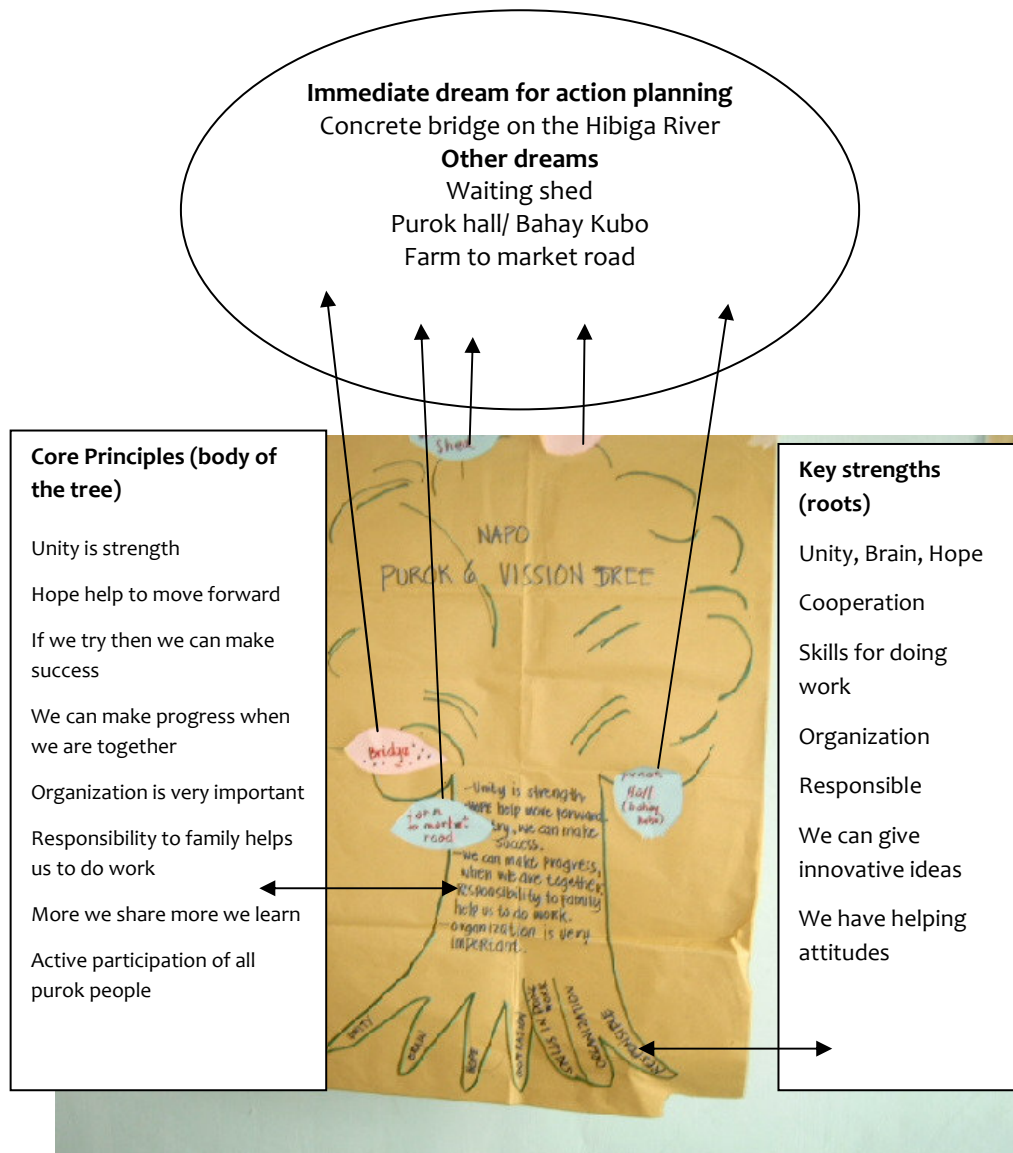
While the first part of Lotivo's story depicted the negative; crisis/difficult situations at the personal and family-level, the second part told how that difficult situation was overcome. In a community where the livelihood security is a struggle, positive/ success stories are about overcoming the struggle of life.

At the discovery stage of AI cycle, people of Napo shared a total of 55 success stories of their life (appendix 5). Most success stories were about how they overcame negative situations of their life. In these stories, the positive was constructed in relationship with a negative situation, and the negative in relation with a positive one.

**A dream without ground: Vision tree exercise in purok 6:** Ms. Lila Restum is a resident of purok 6 in Napo. She graduated in nursing from the provincial city of Legaspi. On December 17, 2004, together with two other facilitators Salvador Sablayan (Dong) and Teresita Buban (Tess), she facilitated the '*Discovery Story Listening and Vision Tree*' workshop. As usual, Sammy and I participated as co-learners who could also provide support to the local team; I took notes of what people said. The workshop took place in a mango garden. Most of the participants were poor (financially) farmers who had been selected as either senior (older) or junior (under 18 years old) purok officers.

In explaining the background and objectives of the session Laila said '*today in this session, we will begin by selecting a vision (an affirmative topic) for our purok. Then we will share our past success stories related to that vision and thereafter we will select a dream for our purok that we want to achieve in the next year*'. Laila asked people to each give their name and say what their position in the purok officer's organisation was. After a short discussion, participants chose the vision '*all families in our purok should have enough food, should have jobs, and should have sufficient income*' as their affirmative topic.

### Exhibit 5: Vision tree of purok 6



Eight success stories were told by the participants around their affirmative topic. From those stories participants (purok officers) identified principles and strengths (pointed out in the exhibit) of the purok community to have ‘food, jobs and income’. Next the workshop facilitators asked the participants *‘if we have these strengths and life principles then what could be the dream that we want to realize during next year for the betterment of the purok community?’* Very quickly, participants proposed a dream quite similar to the traditional development activities supported by the government agencies through the barangay council. The dream was ‘having a concrete bridge over the Hibiga River’. When they heard this, the facilitators turned to me for advice – they were confused over what to do next. I asked Laila to ask the participants how the dream connected with their affirmative topic. I thought why

would they suddenly produce this dream, a 'dream' that was impossible to achieve in the nine months we had for this process, and which would require an impossible sum of money. Laila asked them about the connection between the dream and their affirmative topic. They replied that they could see that there was no connection – but that this was their dream!

During the lunch break I asked participants why they selected having the bridge as their number one dream. They told me that this dream was very much on their minds because, for the last three years, they had seen this kind of work going on in other puroks. As a result, they had persuaded the barangay council to adopt a similar project for their purok. Further, they had been told by the barangay council member (Ernesto Restum) that the municipal office already approved the project and the barangay council was about to implement it.

In sum, the vision tree exercise did not produce a dream that could be worked on by the purok officers by themselves. Further, it is the local-historical context of purok 6 restricted their dream to be free. I began to realize *'freedom of dream construction by a community is not limitless but limited by the local-historical construct'* which brings variation in performance of a particular method (like AI) depending on the situation of the local community.

**Language game in local context: Changing non-democratic decision making in Napo barangay council:** When I studied literature of appreciative inquiry, I could hardly find cases of appreciative inquiry that showed how it worked when affirmative topic was chosen by the local community about land reforms, or eliminating political injustice which encompasses local power issues. This was a case in Napo where people challenged the barangay capitan for her undemocratic decision-making practices. As per Local Government Code 1991 of Philippines, the Barangay Development Council (BDC) is the main organization to prepare yearly development action plan and budget through active participation of barangay community. This BDC should be composed of barangay council members, NGOs and people's organizations (POs). Before preparation of the yearly action plan the BDC should consult and listen to the common residents of the barangay to determine priority needs. Though in papers and resolutions, it was falsely shown that the planning process followed the policy guide but barangay council of Napo did not comply in practices. The barangay capitan did not take initiative to develop an active BDC. Instead of listening to the common residents of the barangay, the capitan used to tell the barangay kagawads<sup>46</sup>, secretary and treasurer about what should be included in the action plan to utilize the barangay development fund.

Since the beginning of the appreciative inquiry process in many formal and informal meeting '*barangay council and its development activities*' became a common point of discussions and reflections. These discussions and reflections began to raise awareness among the community. By March 2005 a majority (seven among ten) of the barangay council members realised that the barangay council is not at all accountable to the barangay community in terms of planning and implementation of development activities. They also began to reflect that the decisions-making process of the barangay council is not democratic. These growing realizations encouraged barangay council members to challenge the barangay capitan. For example, Teresita M. Buban (who acted as barangay self-help point person) reported,

Without any meeting and discussion in the council, the capitan started to implement a project sponsored by the department of agrarian reforms (DAR). In the council meeting of April 2005, it was the first time for her when she challenged the capitan by asking 'how did it happen'. She said to the capitan be transparent about any project implementation. Most other council members supported Teresita Buban. That was the start; thereafter most kagawads started challenging the non-democratic and non-participatory practices of barangay capitan.

In June 2005 when I went Napo to participate quarterly reflection meeting, I had a separate informal meeting with the capitan. The capitan added,

Mr. Saha, how all of the local facilitators doing; you know they all are selected by Teresita Buban.

I could sense that capitan was not happy with the popularity growth of Teresita Buban and her challenging question that she posed in the council meeting.

September 2005, again I went Napo to participate in the midyear joint reflection. On September 14, 2005, in the afternoon, I had a meeting with purok 6 to discuss about re-election of purok officers and implementation of self-help activities. It was at about 12:30 PM, on our (purok kagawad Ernesto Restum, barangay self help point person kagawad Teresita Buban and me) way to purok 6, due to sudden rainfall we had to enter in a bahay-kubo<sup>47</sup>. We found 4 kagawads (Kgd. Amado Sabido, Kgd. Edgar M. Lotivo, Kgd. Domingos Cariso and Kgd. Felix Novino) already talking with each other sitting in the bahay-kubo. Until the rain stopped; for an hour and half, in this informal dialogue session I had been listening; and taking notes about their talks of reactions on the situation.

**Kgd. Amado Sabido added:** You know Saha (my last name), since April 2005 in our regular council meeting we started speaking about people's participation and democratic decision-making process in our barangay council. Since then capitan Gladina Andrada became a bit isolated. Most of us; include Kgd. Amado Sabido, Kgd. Edgar M Lotivo, Kgd. Domingos Cariso, Kgd. Teresita Buban, and Kgd. Ernesto Restum, Kgd. Felix Novino, and Kgd. Caroline Benares we were not happy with the way the capitan was running the council. We

were divided in two groups in our barangay officials. Capitan met had a grouping with Kgd. Shirley Javier, barangay secretary and treasurer. In our group we were seven kagawads including the SK<sup>48</sup>. Well, there was no bad relationship or conflict among these two groups but our view towards barangay development and barangay council decision-making process was different from the capitan.

**Kgd. Edgar M Lotivo added:** Our capitan was not transparent. She did not help us to make decision democratically in the council. From past projects she took personal benefit. During budget and planning meeting she just worked with the secretary and treasurer. In meetings she just used to give her idea and expected that we just say 'yes'. We have Barangay Development Council (BDC) but on paper. Capitan did not think that we can really make it functional according to LG code 1991. Her attitude was very dominating. In the present BDC there is no people's representative. Whatever BDC that we have is not functional, the secretary prepared false resolution of meetings and took our sign on that. Various subcommittees are also nonfunctional but shown on papers and procedures. We did not follow proper policies and rules to form the BDC. Now we say and discuss in our council that we need to include all purok presidents in the BDC as people's organizations representatives because it will be more participatory and democratic.

**Kgd. Domingos Cariso added:** There was weakness from our side too. First of all, we were not aware about the local government policies and procedures. Second, we did not understand the importance of peoples participation in our barangay development; we had little communication and contact with our constituency who gave us vote to be elected as kagawads, and finally because of our less awareness and experiences of participatory development process and the strengths of our purok officers we did not feel confident and were unable to challenge the capitan in the council meeting. Now we are challenging each other to make things right.

After listening to all these I became interested to learn about *'what contributed a majority of the kagawads to construct their participative and democratic views and attitudes?'* For reflecting more on that I added *'last three years all of you are elected as barangay kagawads, before April 2005 as per your information all of you viewed these were usual and normal practices to be accepted. But what happened that you changed your past views?'* Six kagawads explained and talked – I took notes of their talks and later summarized as follows:

Our growing awareness through discussions that we were not following proper policies and procedures: Most kagawads reflected and added that being involved in the process, particularly in the dream exercise, participatory purok planning and sharing they became aware about differences between the thoughts of barangay residents and the barangay development activities. They realized that they were not following the proper policies and guidelines provided by the LG code 91 in terms for planning and budgeting barangay development activities according to the needs of the people of the barangay. When they became aware about the policies of LG code then they could compare between what should be doing and what they were doing. These realizations created thinking among them *'how do they correct themselves* and follow the right way. At past they were not aware about these gaps. They saw a picture of gaps between people's need and their responses through barangay council as well as their existing practices of barangay development planning and suggested policy guidelines by the LG code. This created a tension among them about how do they minimize these gaps. They were always thinking. Whenever they got together either two or more kagawads they were talking about these.



Growing demands from the purok officers to participate with the self-help activities: Previously as responsible purok kagawads and advisers to the purok officers' organization they were not clear about what to do. Purok officers were also not clear about their roles. But after preparation of purok action plans they got basis of performing their roles. After each of the puroks prepared their self-help action plans new things started to happen. Besides invitation to the regular monthly meeting, for many activities purok officers started calling them to participate, provide suggestions and supports whenever required. It became responsibility for them to give responses otherwise soon they would lose popularity. After all people are voters. This is not only simple that now they are to give more time to people but also it made them aware that now people (purok officers) has gotten awareness to judge them which was not the case at past. Teresita Buban added, "Saha (my last name) some purok officers started challenging barangay council. Purok 3 officers said that our kagawad Shirley Javier comes to us only 3 times: before election when she wants vote; when she wants subscription during fiesta and Christmas and when someone passed way to take part in funeral. We are asking her to come and join our monthly purok meeting regularly. So you see now people are becoming active to secure participation of purok kagawads. Now most of us feel happy that we are called to act on the need of the people."

Self-reflection and motivation by appreciation: Awareness regarding gaps between '*what should be*' and '*what are they doing*' pursued them to do self-reflection. In each month, whenever they took part in regular purok meeting, the success story telling by the participants made them so proud. Often purok officers praised them for their support and participation in the meeting. This appreciation catalised self-reflection that if they could do the work through the barangay council like the way they are doing through this self-help process then they could be given much more appreciation and love by the people. Before the self-help activities, it was not that they did not participate in any meetings or responded to the needs of the people but this was first time for them to be proud of by listening many good things about themselves. It created willingness among them but tension too about how they act rightly by which they can make return to the barangay residents in exchange of the honour they are receiving. More they participated by the call of purok officers - further they were receiving appreciation; felt they must be accountable to the people for their work. They never felt this kind of honoured and accountability to the people after they were elected since 2002. Initially, they were reactive to participate on the call of people, but since June 2005 most of them started giving pro-active response to the purok officers by encouraging the facilitators, purok leaders. Now it is like affection that they go to the regular meetings of purok officers. Their increased popularity, acceptance and closeness with the purok officers and community created mental obligation among them to participate and be responsive more and more to the community. Admiration, and appreciation by the purok officers and community to their participation and work gave them a feeling of affinity with them and they started feeling more and more obligated to participate, listen and act accordingly.

Examples in our home: Kagawad Domingos Cariso reported, after March 2005 when all purok officers' organizations started to conduct regular meetings since then council members observed a culture of discussions and decision-making different then their barangay council's discussions and decision-making process. In each of the monthly regular meetings purok officers discussed their progress in a very participatory manner; there was no domination by the purok president or secretary. The most fascinating thing was the telling and sharing of the best success story of the month and identifying lessons from the story. Often they (kagawads) got together in group compared the way purok officers accept, praise each other and make decisions. It gave them learning by seeing on the ground which was residing in our barangay. It gave them inspiration that if the purok officers can do then why not their barangay council. Even in their barangay council meeting they shared those examples as reference of their reflection. They started challenging themselves and the capitan that if purok officers can practice democratic decision-making then why not the barangay council.

I asked about whether challenges they posed created any impact on capitan's behaviour; did they see any changes. Now Teresita Buban added,

At the beginning she was angry with us because we started criticizing her wrong behaviour so she did not feel comfortable with that. As designated purok kagawads now we have active participation and closed relationship with the purok officers. Our closeness with the people day by day made us more popular. Sometimes issues related to barangay council decision-making became part of discussions in purok officers' meeting and those discussions went against the capitan. The capitan got that information and felt threatened that she was becoming non-popular among the barangay communities. This feeling of threat created a good impact in her behaviour. She started visiting meetings of purok officers. Since June (2005), we were experiencing that whenever invited to join purok officers meeting, joint reflection meetings she never failed to participate. Further, in the council meeting she always asked us to say about the situation of self-help activities in our barangay. Recently barangay council has received a standing order from the government to form a barangay disaster preparedness committee. This is first time she did not propose the name of committee members but set this agenda in the June meeting; asked us to think and decide how best we can form the committee that can act effectively. Kagawad Ernesto Restum added, Saha you can notice that during this midyear joint reflection meeting she participated first to last very actively. She also said barangay self-help point person Teresita Buban to make a flip chart mentioning the name of facilitator, purok kagawads and purok wise achievement tracking and display that in the barangay office by which we can review during our regular council meeting. Well she is not our personal enemy. The moment she started changing we started giving her recognition and our honour to her. We don't want that we should have groupings in our barangay council. Tess Buban added 'you know Saha, on September 11 during our joint reflection meeting, while reporting the progress of our self-help activities several times I mentioned that our capitan helped us a lot to make these achievements. I said it intentionally after observing her positive participation and changes in behaviour since June 2005. Since the council selected me as Barangay Self-help Point Person and as I was the first one among all kagawads to raise question about her transparency in decision-making she thought I am the main culprit going against her. But I think she realized it was not personal. The moment she started changing her behaviour from autocratic to democratic I started praising her. My criticism was constructive and now we see positive changes in her so we give due recognition. Now it has created a good atmosphere; the capitan is participating more and more which is also encouraging for us to participate more actively. Now in our council I think we have made significant progress towards achieving a culture of open discussion and accepting each other's ideas rather rejecting and remaining passive which was the situation before.

Listening to all those reflections by 6 barangay council members made me curious to learn why they brought forward the capitan's negative aspects and applied criticism as a means to change her behaviour when all kagawads experienced changes of themselves by appreciation of the purok officers. I asked '*why did you use negative when we thought not to say anything negative but positive aspects –?*' Reflecting on this question they added,

**Kgd. Felix Novino:** There is no denying that we changed a lot by the appreciation given to us by the purok officers during meetings, discussions, reflections and other activities. It was possible as we took part by being called by the purok officers. At past we remained passive because of our lack of awareness about how important it is to have active participation of community in our barangay development activities, how to do that and what role to play from our side. Before we were not engaged in this process, we were not even aware about favourable policies provided by the local government (LG) code 1991. We remained incorrect

by not knowing. For us - 7 kagawads the moment we became aware about what should be the ideal situation, experienced with the positive result of community participation, and identified us to make positive contribution by the community then and there we changed. Appreciation came to us as big reward which we did not expect.

**Kgd. Edgar Lotivo:** For the capitan we thought that though she has not experienced with the positive results of community participation, but she was aware about what should be the ideal situation in terms of community participation and decision-making in the barangay council. Further, we thought in many occasions, either real or artificial she received lot of praise from the barangay residents while completion of a project or other accomplishments. We as kagawads have given much appreciation to her at past but those did not cause her to change from autocratic person to a democratic. December 2004 - April 2005 for this period without any negative criticism we tried to make her understand but it did not work. We realized she is not going to change in this way because she was securing undue financial and material benefit for her personal and family gain. In this circumstance how do we appreciate her and what to appreciate? We found that when she was already involved in gaining undue individual benefit and we gave scope for that by not raising our voice, then she did not listen any good suggestions neither did she care for her goodwill among the community.

**Teresita Buban:** At the beginning, we tried to change her by appreciation but we faced two difficulties. *First*, it was very difficult for us to find out what to appreciate for her as there was no positive action and example from her side that can be cited as her democratic behaviours and action. *Second*, though we said something good for her she perceived it quite normal what is very usual that kagawads are used to praise (though artificial) capitan to become closed to her. We learnt that though we were trying to praise her so called positive sides but she perceived it differently that we wanted to please her and be closed with her to get share of personal benefit. She started behaving more autocratic. This is very normal; if you as kagawad praise or truly cite some good behaviour of the capitan then she would perceive you want personal gain from her. Established understanding and local culture of praising a capitan or a political leader by his/her closed allies or colleagues is always perceived as buttering than that of accepting and feeling it as changing self by being proud of those. In local vocabulary it's called '*sip-sip*' meaning someone praises someone to get personal benefit. The leader and other community perceive that the underlying motivation of this praising is obtaining personal gain from the leaders. This caused the capitan to feel more powerful than others. We gave up and opened up our voice with negative criticism.

**Kgd. Amado Sabido:** A real friend is one who really wants better for you but openly says when you are going wrong. This is also appreciation. Appreciation does not necessarily mean that you just say 'good' even when you are doing wrong. We did not want bad thing to happen for our capitan. Our intension behind negative criticism was positive – can be seen as appreciation to our capitan. When we were sure that she was doing wrong then how it is possible to give affirmation to those wrong things. Our constructive criticizes to her inappropriate behaviour changed our capitan from an autocrat to a democrat. By this time we have started giving her appreciation to this change. It is just putting iron in the fire and water to shape it.

Listening to the talks of these barangay council members of Napo, I began to realize that it is not the words and sentences themsleves could be seen as appreciative but the menaing they create being related with local culture and history of relations. Napo case of changing non-democratic behaviour of the capitan tells that depending on the local culture and history of relations, even affirmative words and sentences can generate negative meanings. Though most barangay council members were changed by the appreciation of community people but for changing capitan's autocratic behaviour to a democratic, barangay council members at

the first instance challenged the capitan by bringing forward negative aspects of her behaviours. The story discloses --- creation of positive or negative meanings is not the words in themselves, but instead receive meaning being related with the local context; local-social conventions determine the ways in which words could 'go on'. Chaging unjust power relationship to a just may require right mix of critisizm and appreciation.

## Chapter 6

### Reflecting concepts with learning from the ground

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#### Prologue

In chapter two I stated that the promotion of self-help requires: a shift in focus from building individual capacity to what we can do together; genuine people's participation and interaction; space for multiplicity - for local creativity and for different ways of learning; a learning culture that encourages community and change agents/ workers to be co-learners and co-constructors, and; working towards opening-up new possibilities. This is only possible through non subject-object ways of relating. Based on my experiences of past practices and on published studies I have suggested that the flaw of existing self-help promotion endeavours is its residency in a subject-object discourse. Despite talks and emphasis on the principles of participation, traditional self-help promotion conceptualises stakeholders (involved in self-help promotion) as autonomous change entities so that the unit of analysis and actions are targeted towards those entities. This conceptualisation constructs a paradoxical relation and sustains a subject-object relationship in which one party tries to promote the independence of another. After exploring the possible relevance of a relational constructionist discourse, I concluded that by its centering on inter-action as both the 'unit of analysis' and the 'locus of transformation', it offers us a way to promote self-help in development and social change.

I strived to learn how to facilitate self-help in development in a non subject-object way of relating. I explored both problem solving and appreciative inquiry in relation to how they construct relational realities and, in particular, how they might construct subject-object and non subject-object possibilities. The lessons and learning which I got through working with two barangay (village) communities are summarised in the remainder of this chapter.

#### Appreciative Inquiry and Problem Solving compared

**Shifting vocabularies:** In chapter 3 I told that our journey of self-help promotion through problem solving (PS) and appreciative inquiry (AI) began in two barangays where the dominant development discourse was subject-object. Government ministries and

departments, municipal development council and barangay council acted as subject towards the barangay as objects and passive recipients of standard development prescriptions and recipes. There was little discussion of the collective capacities of the barangay or how those could be fostered. Instead, talks were largely in terms of the capacities of individuals such as the barangay capitans, council members, mayor, congress person, and individual community members.

In my view a shift from individualistic constructions to interaction processes was critically important. Two stories illustrate this: *Constructing them and us: problem-solving in purok 4* (chapter 4, page 63 - 65) and - *Fault-finding and blaming in barangay-wide meetings* (chapter 4, pages 65 - 66). They showed that problem solving (PS) did not help the desired shift but rather strengthened the discourse of individualism. In contrast, the story *Discovery to destiny: a growing appreciation of interaction process* (chapter 5, page 87- 88) suggested that, through the AI process, the communities of Napo gradually moved from talk of individual capacities to cooperative interactions. Conversations of this sort generated collective actions which furthered the growth of vocabularies of cooperative interaction. Another story - *Being storied-being connected* (chapter 5, page 84 - 86) showed that the sharing of positive stories gave group members the sense that success is made through the cooperative contribution of all members. Sharing stories of change generated a discourse that made the people of barangay Napo see the centre of development and social change as lying in the community cooperative interaction processes. In a socio-political and cultural context where many poor feel that *no one listens to them*, their telling and sharing positive stories may ease such negative feelings.

**Transforming subject-object relationships:** Our self-help promotion began when the relations between barangay council officials, external development organizations/agencies and common residents of barangay Balinad and Napo were still subject-object. There was little participation of common and marginalized people in development dialogue and decision making processes. Two stories of PS - *The IIRR is the key to barangay self-help promotion* (chapter 4, page 67- 68), and - *We' and 'They' are different* (chapter 4, page 68 - 70) show that PS contributed to the sustenance and extension of subject-object relations between stakeholders. In contrast, two stories of AI in barangay Napo: *Being storied -being connected* (chapter 5, page 84 - 86), and - *We co-construct who we are and our lives together* (chapter 5, pages 91 - 93) suggest that whilst being involved in the AI effort, local facilitators and barangay council members began to reconstruct a more equal relationships with the barangay.

The effects of PS and AI are summarised below.

**Sustaining or changing S-O relationship: Differential effects generated by PS and AI**

<b>PS in barangay Balinad</b>	<b>AI in barangay Napo</b>
The community continued with their previous construction that external agents (barangay council and IIRR) are the main actors for community's self help promotion.	The barangay reconstructed the new conception that the community is the main actor of self-help promotion.
Were stuck with previous construction of individualistic capacity (barangay council members and staff of IIRR).	Generated an enlarged conception of community capability.
Led the barangay community into perceiving themselves as recipient of development service from external agency.	Convinced the barangay to move away from perceiving themselves merely as recipient of development service from external agency.
In relation to change of ' <i>self</i> ' local facilitators perceived of themselves as separate from the barangay community.	In relation to change of ' <i>self</i> ' local facilitators perceived themselves as integral part of the barangay community.
Local facilitators, barangay council members and purok officers identified themselves by the differences rather than the similarities among themselves.	Local facilitators, barangay council members and purok officers identified themselves more by the similarities rather than the differences among themselves.
Important learning and self-changes by the local facilitators perceived related mostly to technical procedures, methodology and tools.	Important learning and self-changes the local facilitators perceived related mostly to human relationship.
Instead of seeing them as a part of the barangay community local facilitators were persuaded to see themselves as separate entities.	Instead of seeing them as separate entities, the local facilitators were persuaded to see themselves as part of whole barangay community.
The barangay council members and local facilitators perceived their roles as change agents, separate as subject from the changing community as formable object.	The barangay council members and the local facilitators perceived their role as part of community and to change together.

Despite the application of participatory methods and tools; talks and discussions about the principles of self-help; engagement with the problem solving approach kept the people of

barangay Balinad confined within the subject-object construction of relationship. PS did not help the community to change their mindset of dependency on the external agency. This dependency encouraged a clear division between development actors on the one hand and the community on the other hand as separate entities reinforcing the sustenance of the status quo of individuals of power and position. In contrast, the application of AI in barangay Napo began to shift subject-object relationships and to reconstruct a non subject-object relationship among barangay officials, local volunteers, external agencies and the community.

**Promoting and failing participative processes:** The story *No creation of a wider climate for participation and possibilities* (chapter 4, page 71 - 72) indicates that the problem solving method failed to foster multiple voicing and a wider conversational climate among different stakeholders. Because of this failure, participation of the community and other stakeholders continued to decline. Stakeholders were not encouraged to participate and bring their voices in different but equal relationships, inhibiting multiple thinking and creativity.

A feeling of futility led many to drop out from being local self-help volunteers/facilitators. Moreover, the generation of a culture of blame-games made stakeholders reluctant to cooperate. The story - *The IIRR is the key to barangay self-help promotion* (chapter 4, page 67 - 68) illustrates that PS was associated with an incentive-seeking mind-set amongst most of the local facilitator who expected some incentive from IIRR as the only means of being rewarded. *Constructing them and us: problem-solving in purok 4* (chapter 4, page 63 - 65) and *Fault-finding and blaming in barangay-wide meeting* (chapter 4, page 65 - 66) showed that PS was associated with a strong tendency to blame others for everything that went wrong. 'We' blamed 'Them', with a tendency to make sure 'we' are right. These blame-games pointed a finger at individuals (such as the barangay capitan, one council member, one local facilitator, Amador M. Silerio) and fostered an individualistic construction of responsibility.

The story *From smiles to gloom: selecting problems in purok 1* (chapter 4, page 60 - 63) provides one example that the application of PS fostered a sense of helplessness in the barangay community. Many problems were identified that most believed they could do nothing about. This seemed to jeopardize their self-confidence in thinking and acting to address problems. The problem solving approach not only created 'learned helplessness' but also a defensive attitude of 'not to discuss/think/ learn'. This situation of learned-helplessness and learning-disability largely contributed to generating regressive discussions (Thatchenkery, 1999: 5; Gergen 1998: 5, 13). This did not help communities of barangay



Balinad to improvise and imagine new ways of going together (Hosking and Morley, 2004: 12), nor did it facilitate them in constructing a cooperative relationship from which properties which were already present in the community could be generated.

The AI effort in barangay Napo seemed to generate very different processes. For example, the story, *Discovery to destiny: a growing appreciation of interaction process* (chapter 5, page 87 - 88) offers a picture of AI as fostering multi-voicing and a wider conversational climate among different stakeholders in barangay Napo. As a result, participation of the community and other stakeholders continued to grow. The story *We co-construct who we are and our lives together* (chapter 5, page 91 - 93) clearly illustrates that when people and all stakeholders in barangay Napo were encouraged to participate and were able to bring in their own voices, multiple thinking and creativity prospered. The generation of a culture of appreciating one another created a feeling of reward among local self-help volunteers/facilitators, barangay council members and purok officers. Affirmation of each other's positive aspects generated feelings of reward that enhanced cooperative relationships, morale and actions.

The story *We co-construct who we are and our lives together* (chapter 5, page 91 - 93) shows that AI helped barangay council members to be supportive of the peoples' self-help initiatives, and enhanced cooperation among barangay council members, local volunteers and purok officers. AI's capacity to reduce the we-they divide and to construct a sense of 'we' is clearly exemplified in many stories. The stories *Being storied -being connected* (chapter 5, page 84 - 86), *Post-mortem to possibilities: learned-helplessness to learned-optimism* (see chapter 5, page 88 - 90) and *We see a prosperous barangay community in future* (chapter 5, page 93 - 94), all tell us that the positive story telling/listening/sharing approach of AI generated feelings of proud, strong, energetic, affinity to each other, among the Napo community.

*Being storied-being connected* affirms that stories of one's life are often linked to similar stories of others. This experienced *affinity of stories* made people listen to others with empathy. The realization of collective strengths over individual capacity nurtured collective hopes, inspirations and desire for collective wellbeing. Barangay residents, council members and local volunteers all repeatedly asserted that they became hopeful of overcoming struggles in their lives and of achieving a better future. The story *From post-mortem to possibilities: from learned-helpless to learned-optimism* (chapter 5, page 88 - 90) indicates that AI and resulting vocabularies of hope generated learned-optimism. The story further reinforces that the generation of learnt-helplessness or learnt-optimism largely depends upon

the way we frame questions. The story reconfirms and reasserts that the question ‘what is the present problem?’ generates learned-helplessness, whereas the question ‘what should be the ideal situation’ generates learnt-optimism. AI generated hopeful positive future images as shown by the story *We see a prosperous barangay community in future* (chapter 5, page 93 - 94). The people imagined a prosperous community characterized by cooperative relationships.

### **Appreciative Inquiry-PS co-construction with local culture and history of relations**

We have seen that, as the problem-solving process continued, individualistic constructions became more dominant, participation gradually diminished, and negativity increased; this did not promote self-help. On the other hand, AI gradually constructed co-operative interactions and positive self-help. This said, some stories indicate that the particularities of the local community and its history of relations played a major role. Five stories in particular seem to suggest this and I shall say a little about each.

**Language-action-local historical relationship and co-construction:** The story *Purok 5: Where local cultural constructions made problem solving exceptionally successful* speaks of why and how a cooperative mode of life in an upland community meant that PS did not foster individualistic constructions. Further, the story *Freedom of dream was not free: Vision tree exercise in purok 6* provides an example of a local cultural-context where AI was unable to persuade people to create a new vision. Both stories narrate that words are not in themselves meaningful, but instead receive their meaning in relation to other words and within the (social) context of relating actors (Gergen and Gergen, 2004:14).

**What is positive and what negative is also relational construction:** The story *Multiple meanings of ‘positive’ & ‘negative’: Stories in the local-social context of Napo* shows us that perceptions of *positive* and *negative* are also local-social constructs which are on-going and multiple and may vary from context to context. Being saturated with the local context people of barangay Napo constructed and used positive stories which embodied a unity of positive and negative. In other places and communities, it might be different. The story raises two questions:

1<sup>st</sup> question: Advocates of AI (Frank & Fry, 2005: 35-38, 83) talk of using

‘*unconditional positive*’ but can *positive be unconditional*’? And  
2<sup>nd</sup> question: Irrespective of variations in local-cultural constructions, is the journey of AI and its discourse always absolutely positive, or can AI, depending on the local context, form an interactive relationship with the negative?

With regards to the first question, Peter Reason (2000: 8) notes that, *appreciative inquiry teaches us about the power of the unconditional positive stories*. The story of Napo makes clear that the construction of positive stories by the people was not unconditional, but conditioned by comparison with negative situations. Though AI assumes that the use of positive questions would lead to unconditional and absolute positive stories and vocabularies of strengths, the Napo experience tells us that it may or may not, depending on how a local community and context defines positive and negative.

On the second question, Peter Reason quoting Fox states,

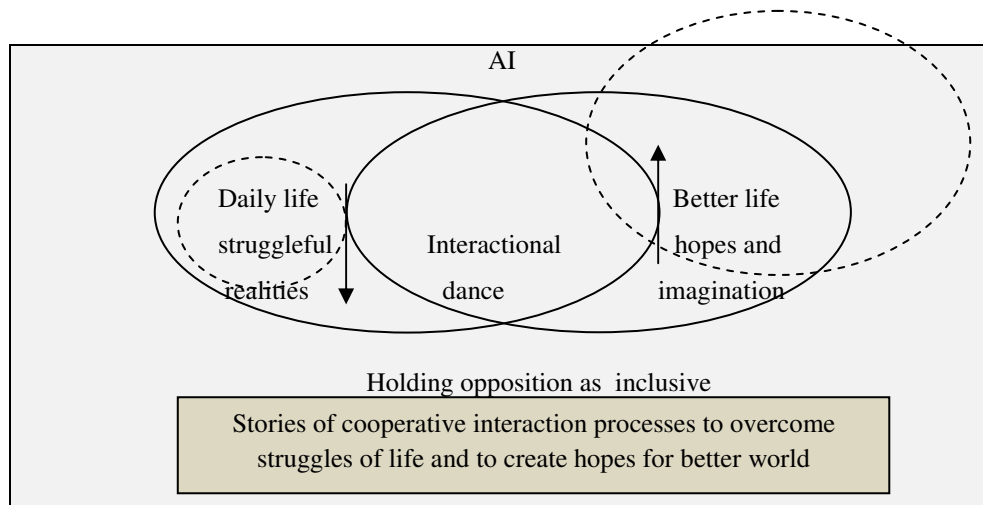
Appreciative inquiry teaches much about searching for what gives life and creativity to situations rather than for problems to overcome. However, it is difficult not to conclude that in its emphasis on the positive appreciative inquiry is in danger of ignoring the shadow, When the via Negativa is ignored, the prophetic voice is invariably silences. Life becomes superficial, easily manipulated, and ultimately boring. For while the Via Positiva teaches us the cosmic breath of living, of our blessed bodiliness, the Via Negativa opens us to our divine depths. (Peter Reason, 2000: 8)

Cooperrider responds,

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not advocating mindless happy talk. Appreciative Inquiry is a complex science designed to make things better. We cannot ignore problems-we just need to approach them from the other side. (Cooperrider, 2000: 9)

The story *Multiple meanings of ‘positive’ & ‘negative’: Stories in the local-social context of Napo* shows that in meetings, discussions and reflections people talked about a better future, hopes, imagination, but the mode of life and struggles of meeting daily livelihoods unavoidably created a dialectical relationship between the imagination-hope based dialogue and the struggle for life. The AI process encompassed both the negative realities of life and the hopes of creating a life.

## Exhibit 6: Application of AI: Realities-Hopes-Imaginations dialectical interactions



**AI, local power structures and locally relevant language games:** Transforming unjust power relationships into just ones is one of the fundamental issues in development and social change. I have found little discussion of how AI deals with unjust power relationships. My experience was that, in the course of changing power relationships, language and actions were not always appreciative. The story *Language game in local context: Changing non-democratic decision making in Napo Barangay Council* showed that Napo council members criticized what they saw as the negative side of the barangay capitan. Barangay council members held the view that the meaning of appreciation is not just born out of words or vocabularies in themselves, but stands in relation to local understandings, culture and relationships. The case tells that, irrespective of vocabularies (either positive or negative), the Napo barangay council members, being guided by their local tradition, determined that the basis of appreciation is the positive intention, the cultural interpretation of words, and the particular context of relationships.

### **Facilitating AI with non subject-object ways of relating: An invitation to change workers**

Stories of barangay Balinad and Napo resolutely support the view of relational constructionists (see e.g., Dachler and Hosking, 1995: 4; Hosking and Bass, 2001; Hosking, 1999: 4; 2000: 2; 2002: 9; Doreke & Hosking, 2004:6) that each and every local community is different in terms of its socio-cultural history and ongoing relational processes. The

different local-cultural background of communities makes and remakes the development and social change a matter of multiple local realities. The stories of Balinad and Napo tell that neither the PS nor the AI method worked in isolation. Being related with different local cultural and historical constructions, both methods led to different interactions with the local community and, accordingly, created differential effects. Variations in local cultural-historical constructions and power issues differently constrained and resourced (Doreke & Hosking, 2004: 8) the interactions and performances of both PS and AI. However, in relation to the question *‘what centers and fosters multiple interaction processes as unit of analysis and locus of self-help promotion’*; I have experienced that AI demonstrated better performance than PS. I would like to tell change workers who are committed to promote self-help, to apply AI instead of PS. However, it is my humble submission that it is not the method in itself, in separation, which works, but that the effectiveness of AI to promote self-help requires a co-constructive movement with non-subject-object ways of relating. A successful facilitation of AI towards self-help in development and social change depends largely upon our (the change workers) ability to construct a non subject-object participation, which I believe is the most important. If we forget about this non-subject-object way of relating, then even in AI processes there may be the danger of a subject-object construction, we may become AI experts and expect people to shape themselves towards us, and forget to co-change ourselves. Based on the experiences which I have got through this learning journey, I propose the following ways of facilitating AI with non-subject-object ways of relating.

### **Apply learning by doing method as continuous co-construction process of interactions:**

In chapter 3, I have narrated that, in avoiding the construction of a subject-object relationship between me and the community, I abandoned my early design of conducting research. If I were not departed from that pre-set design, then I would have applied AI in barangay Napo, but according to my own design in which I would have acted as subject to guide the community about ways of learning and doing. Well, even then I would have claimed that I have learned by doing, and yet I would have produced a subject-object relationship in the application of AI. In development work, it is rare to come across a research without a pre-set design. This pre-set research design invites change workers to rigidity, to impose their ways of doing and learning on the people. We can see this domination even in the practice of participatory action research. As I had no idea of doing research without a set design, it looked impossible at the outset, but I have learned that it is possible. In both the communities

I worked with, through meetings and discussions together, we were able to develop ideas on ‘how we are going to do self-help activities’. I have experienced that, when the research needed to be accountable for the generation of practical utilities to the barangay community (in ways that are locally relevant and valued), the inclusion of newly emerging ideas and the adjustment of the research method became a continuing process. Our (we all stakeholders involved) learning by doing had to be an approach of continually working together, of reviewing and adjusting the methodology as an on-going process of reconstruction. This kind of learning and doing without pre-set design helped us in the construction of a non subject-object relationship. I think that the application of AI in a non subject-object way requires the learning and doing together with the community as such, which allows the continued construction of a methodology which creates better interactions and practical value to the community, as an ongoing process of dialogue and action.

**Valuing not-knowing and acting flexibly:** Until the community determined the ways of doing self-help in their barangay, I did not know *‘how I was going to be part to facilitate self-help’*. In barangay Balinad and Napo, the community determined to facilitate the purok officers’ organization through local volunteers. Another community might determine differently. This diversity in the local context of the community does not allow a particular approach to be applied everywhere in the same way. It is impossible for a change worker to know in which way a particular approach can be applied without being an active part of the dialogue with the community. Another lesson I learned is that, even in a local community, the application of a particular methodology requires a continual articulation of the changes which emerge from the continually constructed and reconstructed multiple interactions. This was very common in the application of AI in barangay Napo. Although at the beginning we decided on a particular way of applying the AI-cycle in the barangay, the continual flux of multiple relationships often demanded for changes and adjustments in the ways of doing self-help through AI. Barangay council members, local volunteers and purok officers thought that the articulation of all those changes were crucially important to create better value for the community. It was impossible for me to know what would be those changes and how to articulate them without dialogue and discussions with the community. As I had no pressure of doing self-help within a pre-designed project of IIRR, I was able to say to the community *“I don’t know –let us discuss together”*. I had no fear of failing which might result in my organization calling me back. Unfortunately the usual practices in development among most development organisations (even organisations which talk of participatory development) tend

to apply a single approach in several communities. Conducting so called needs assessment, organisations prepare 3 to 5 years projects in which the project operation methodology is set as a common guideline for hundreds of communities. The articulation of required changes in methodology (which may emerge from ongoing process of interactions) becomes impossible. These practices force change workers to act as knowing subjects -- an act of deceiving oneself and the others. When we (change workers) do not know, but we are forced to say '*we know*'; we cannot learn and co-construct ourselves with the community.

I invite self-help workers not to offer AI as another pre-conceived recipe under a project. We (change workers) need to tell firmly that there are so many different localities, and that we do not know how differently the AI-cycle should be applied in different communities. Facilitating AI in non-subject ways of relating requires us (change organisations and workers) to find out ways of asserting our ignorance and say '*we don't know, let us discuss and learn together*'. This would enable us to work flexibly, so as to be continually responsive in adjusting our methodology to demands of changes that emerge out of on-going interaction processes in the communities.

**Facilitating AI beyond traditional project approach:** Project proposal is the common tool for most government agencies and NGOs to design and conduct development programmes. This project method of development work cannot ignore the establishment of a subject-object relationship between the development professionals and the community. Among many other development thinkers, Fowler offers us a lot of literature (e.g., Fowler, 2005; 2003; and 1997) telling us how the project method of development contributes to the establishment of a domination of the development professionals and policy makers over the community. If I had to offer a pre-set AI project of IIRR to promote self-help, then I would imagine every possibility of forming a subject-object relationship between me and the barangay communities. Now, the moot question is whether hundreds and thousands of development workers who are engaged in government development agencies and NGOs, are in a position to approach development and social change without the application of a project method? I think that, given the present situation of resources and financial dependency on many governments and NGOs, it would be difficult (though not in all, but in most cases) to approach development and social change without the preparation and approval of a project proposal. However, I do not think that it is impossible to design and implement projects through multi-voicing and creativity in the communities. Instead of project proposals, we can think of development *process proposals*.

I humbly urge government agencies, NGOs, and other groups committed to promote self-help, to explore possibilities of developing and implementing AI process proposals. Such proposals should do not target the change of entities or of moving from one stable state to another, but should focus on facilitating a process of multi-voicing of appreciative interactions among communities and stakeholders.

**Not just application of techniques but listening by being part of the community:** The history of top-down relationships encourages communities to see change workers as recipe providers and themselves as recipients. I have learned that, before anything else, the relationships we (change workers) build, and the way local community perceive us, is of critical importance to the non-subject ways of relating. An effort to build this non subject-object way of relating is about being a part of the people, of living among them and listening to them as such, so that the change workers, together with the community, determine ways of doing; not just using mere techniques of listening after entering a community with an already decided project. Advancing myself as a case, I recall the time when I had no project and could not afford to stay in a hotel, so that I had to stay in the community. As I had no project to announce, it was obvious for me to listen to the barangay community. I had to tell the community that I have nothing to offer, except being part of their thinking and acting together. At the beginning, when the barangay council members and the community listened and learned that I represented no project, they were frustrated and did not show any interest to participate. This was a common situation in both barangays (Balinad and Napo). Balinad, with a problem solving approach, could not overcome this problem, but Napo, with AI, gradually changed. The lesson I learned is that this change took place because, instead of telling them what to do, I was able to listen, by being part of the community, not just using so called techniques of listening in making a pre-set project functional. Living in the community exposed me to the lifestyle of the community; I ate the way they eat, bathed the way they did, was part of the way they got together and talked with each other. As this was the local lifestyle, it helped me to establish a non-hierarchical relationship between the barangay community and me. However, if I had been there (in barangay Napo) with a standard project on the application of the AI-cycle for self-help promotion, then I would either have told the people what to do, or have listened to them in such a way that the community would have no chance to discuss and decide how they wanted to apply AI for self-help promotion in their community. I would have applied AI, and yet I would have produced a subject-object relationship between the barangay community and myself.



**Not to provide a standard set of rules and norms of talking appreciatively:** The promotion of a non subject-object discourse requires the facilitation of multi-voicing. At the beginning, when we started AI in barangay Napo, I was apprehensive about the flow of different kind of ideas and voices. I thought it was going to be difficult for the community to make any decision. However, I soon realized that this chaos of talking and throwing ideas by the people was very helpful to create a wider conversational climate, of multi-voicing and taking initiatives. Initially, this multi-voicing appeared very chaotic to me, but soon I realised that different ideas and opinions started to blend together and to create a locally relevant order. This chaotic talking of the people of the Napo barangay Napo determined the way in which the AI-cycle should be applied in their community, and made multi-voicing a norm. In the usual practice, change workers guide people's talk within a pre-set order, which does not encourage people to speak openly or to share ideas. In order to avoid chaos and make our (change workers) life easy, we usually provide precise rules of discussions and interactions (such as questions for telling success stories) to the local community, so that, even in an AI approach, multiple voicing is in jeopardy. The lesson that I have drawn from my Napo experience with AI is that, as a self-help facilitator, we do not need to impose any pre-set rules for talking appreciatively. Instead, people should be encouraged to speak of their successes and pride in the way they see fit. Initially it may look like chaos, but this chaos of talking and taking initiatives is very important for the establishment of norms of open sharing and dialogue in the community, especially for the marginalized men and women whose voices are usually muted.

**Special attention to ensure participation of marginalized people:** My experience with facilitating AI in Napo showed that, at the design stage of the AI-cycle, people planned self-help activities, but that for the implementation of those plans, a continuous effort from me was required, especially to ensure the active participation of the marginalized men and women. Despite the positive support from the barangay council members and other elite persons in the barangay, the pressure of securing employment and income made it very difficult for the economically most marginalized people to participate. This required a continuous encouragement of the marginalized people to participate, otherwise the AI process in Napo would have been confined in the hands of a few elite people and would have taken place in a subject-object relationship between barangay elites and marginalized people. To ensure their continuous participation in the AI process, we (my local colleagues, local

volunteers and me) had to encourage the marginalized men and women through visits, talk, and individual contact.

**Adding emotions in dialogue and actions:** As already explained in the AI literature, I too have seen and experienced that, when the people of Napo shared their success stories, they were emotionally attached to each other. Instead of differences, people started to see similarities among them. My field colleague and I had a similar experiences when we shared our positive stories with the local volunteers. Feelings of affinity among people get better when they are emotionally related to one another. The lesson I draw from this experience is that connecting oneself with others cannot be achieved through a mechanistic path of rationality and objectivity. Usually in our development and social change work, we facilitate ourselves and the community to be rational and objective. Attempts to be rational and objective divide us (change worker) and the community and inhibits the emergence of non-subject-object ways of relating. Approaching AI with non subject-object ways of relating requires change workers and the community to be emotionally attached to each other. Besides the sharing of positive stories from life, theatre, songs, art works, etc. need to be integrated in the activities, to so prevent the community participation from becoming mechanistic and be confined to rules and procedures.

**Facilitate local community to define their own positive:** What is positive and what is negative, and how a word, a sentence and action takes on positive or negative meaning depends on the local community context and on their history of relationships. In the application of AI in barangay Napo, the use of negative, but constructive criticism, became obvious for the barangay council members in the changing of the non-democratic behaviour of the barangay capitan. I learned that in development and social change it is unlikely to find a common interpretation of positive and negative. Depending on the local context, different communities may define positive and negative very differently. I think of not using any more any standard view or definition of positive and negative. The imposition of a standard view of positive/appreciative would not help us to create non subject-object ways of relating. Furthermore, I have learned that a positive is only positive by comparison with a negative. To be compared, positives require the building of a relationship with the opposite – the negatives. In barangay Napo, the people's positive stories of overcoming their struggles in life obviously included negatives. Community members expressed negative/difficult situations in life together with the better ones to assign meaning to the positive. This may be

the case for many poverty-stricken communities. However, I experienced that, irrespective of the negatives, if the story ended in a victory and in overcoming problems of life or solutions, then the local community viewed it as a positive. I think that, while facilitating positive story sharing, change workers should use a kind of open questions which allow people to construct their own positive, the way they value.

**Mixing appreciation and criticism while dealing power issues:** If we (change worker) facilitate the community in changing the power relationship in such a way that one party wins and another loses. then the positions of parties may change, but the domination of power will remain unchanged. This win-lose approach invites power over culture; but cannot resolve the we-they divide. Hence, the change of unjust power relationships into just ones, warrants the minimisation of this we-they divide. During the application of AI, when talks and actions emerged towards changing the unjust power relationship between the barangay captain and the other council members, it became, at one point, important for the other council members to criticize the Captain. However, the distinction was between criticism of the captain and an appreciation of the good aspects. If there had only been criticism, the captain would have withdrawn from participating in the dialogue, at the risk of widening the divide between her and the other council members. I would like to draw the attention of change workers to the fact that, in resolving issues of power relationship, criticism not balanced with appreciation might disrupt the dialogue, making the matter even worse. In this circumstance, self-help facilitators and change workers need to facilitate the community in keeping the dialogue going. The lesson I learned is that, even in a challenging situation of changing power relationships, continuation of the dialogue is possible if criticism of shortcomings are complemented with an exploration of the positive. A good mix of criticisms and appreciation is useful to minimize the us-they divide, thus transforming the vertical power relationship into a horizontal one.

**We need to practice, spread on the ground and learn continuously:** Going through this journey of learning, I have learned that, rather than entities, bringing interaction processes as both unit of analysis and locus of change is fundamental in the promotion of self-help. Unfortunately, not many organizations, institutions and practitioners in the field of development and social change are aware of this. I have the impression that there is a lot of literature on social construction for academicians, but not so much on the relational processes of social construction. Little is known to practitioners in communities about how to

approach and facilitate this concept of relational construction processes in the field of development and social change. As a grassroots development practitioner, I think that it is important to have a critical understanding of the intellectual discourse, but that it is even more important to spread the practice among the practitioners of development and social change. A linkage between concepts, practices, and better results for the life of the community needs to be established. I believe that a relational constructionist approach to development and social change offers us a vista of opportunities in finding better ways of doing things and learning continuously. I dream of a situations in which thousands of grassroots social change workers are engaged in learning and practicing AI with relational constructionist ways of doing. I urge scholars, development thinkers and practitioners, policy makers and donor agencies, to extend their hand of cooperation towards a better construction in development and social change.

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# Appendices

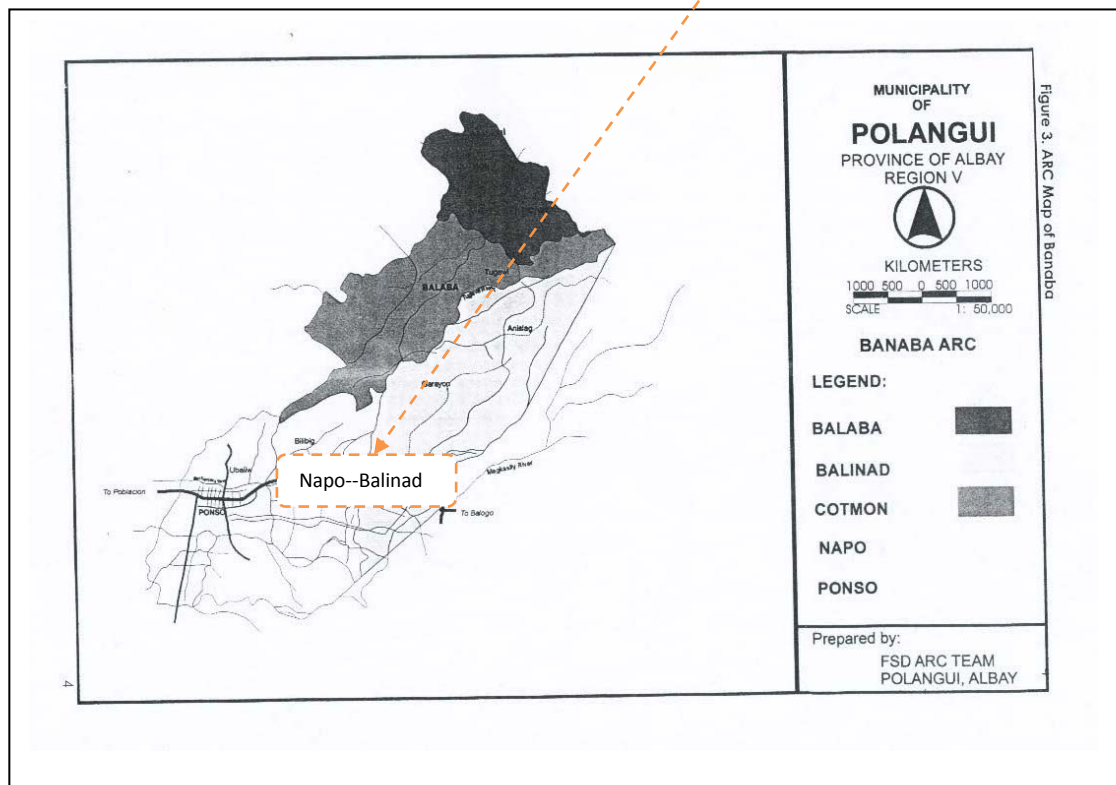
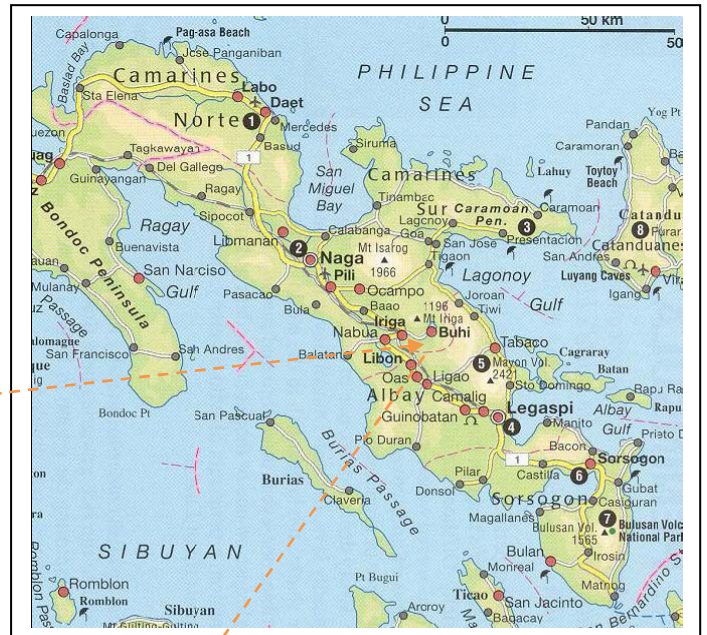
## Appendix-1

Map showing barangay Balinad and Napo and their general background

Philippines



Bicol Region



**Barangay Balinad and Napo:** A barangay refers to a village that has a territory, people and community, and a local government unit (see e.g., Juanito Ortiz, 1992). Barangay Balinad and Napo together have 1109 households (Balinad 577 and Napo 532), with a population of about 10,000. In these barangays, 10% of the households are rich and own 70% of the cultivable land. They are also absentee landlords. 20% of the households are tenant farmers. 70% of the households fall below the poverty line of which 25% lives with extreme poverty. Major livelihood options and sources of income are farming. Ninety percent of the population is involved in agro-based occupations, while 10% are employed as construction labour, drivers, artisans and the like. Families earned an average monthly income of about 3500 pesos from farming. Income of 70% of the agricultural labourer is the lowest. Wage rate for agriculture labourer is 150 pesos and the average employment days per year were estimated to be 50%. During periods of unemployment a family of agricultural labourer has to maintain an eight-member family on 75 pesos a day - equivalent to 1.339 US \$. Power structure and relationships encompass three bases in both barangays which are ownership and control on economic resources as well as income, families and kinship ties and public administration authority gained through elections. These three bases are linked to each other. As mentioned earlier, the 10% who are rich, owning 70% of land resources of the barangay, are absentee landlords who also have their additional income bases in urban cities; they are stakeholders of business and capital economy. These economically powerful people do not directly hold administrative political power in the barangay, but they finance their favourite candidate. The local social and political powers rest on the family-kinship ties. Family-kinship ties were mentioned as both social and political power. The social power of a person is linked to kinship, thus, 'the bigger the kinship the greater the power'. Powerlessness is evident among the economically poor in terms of their participation in the development decision-making process. Cooperation and conflict are integral part of community life. Cooperation with each other is intensive among members of family kinship in the purok. Most conflicts are political in nature and evolve around capturing political and administrative power. Factions and groupings among economically middle and rich class people are higher than among poor communities. National to barangay level elections were reported as major sources of creating factions and conflicts among barangay communities. Besides the purok and its kinship ties, both barangays have a good number of people and families bonded by ritual kinship which is built through ceremonial occasions like baptism and marriage. In the local language, this mutual kinship system is known as '*compadrazgo*' meaning 'god parenthood' or sponsorship. From a godparent one can expect help in the way of favours, such as jobs, loans, or just simple gifts on special occasions. Patron-client bonds are also very much a part of community life in the two barangays, particularly between tenant-farmers and their landlords. Maintaining good relationships with each other in the barangay community is highly valued and practiced; anything that might hurt another person is generally avoided. Both male and female go to church and pray together. The *Fiesta* is the main yearly social celebration when as a matter of custom people visit relatives and friends and share good food. Street parades, fireworks, beauty and dance contests, and cockfighting tournaments are celebrated during fiestas.

People wear western clothes. In informal gathering, people use humour and laughter. In any celebration and in informal social events, singing is a common practice. Use of various religious pictures and messages in homes and small shops is common. Special honour and respect are shown to elder members of the family. Having ones head touched by a senior is a gesture of respect to senior person. Visiting relatives' house is frequent. The *Videoke* is the most popular recreational evening activity for men where middle class men go and sing songs. Most people are used to singing modern English songs. Cockfighting is very popular. Many houses are proud of rearing fighting cocks and exhibit them in their courtyard. Often one can see cock-fight everywhere amidst gatherings of 100 to 200 men. Basketball is a very popular game for the youths. Barangay women find pleasure in '*Chika-Chika*' meaning in groups they talk about their lives and share stories. And then, in marriage ceremonies the families involved invite all relatives and friends

**Barangay council:** A *barangay council* is the lowest tier of the local government body in the Philippines. As per Local Government Code 1991, a barangay council is composed of a total of 11 members which include a *punong barangay* (barangay captain or chairperson), *seven sangguniang barangay members* (barangay council members), the *sangguniang kabataan chairman* (barangay

youth council chairman), a *barangay secretary* and a *barangay treasurer*. Among these 11 council members, the secretary and the treasurer are appointed while the rest are elected by direct public vote for a 3-year term. As per section 15 of the Local Government Code of 1991, a barangay council exercises powers as a political subdivision of the national government and as a corporate entity representing the inhabitants of the barangay territory. As per section 391 of the Local Government Code, a barangay council is also the legislative body of the barangay; has authority to enact ordinances including tax as may be necessary to discharge the responsibilities conferred upon it by law or ordinance. For meeting expenditure of personnel, administrative, and development projects in the barangay *first* a barangay council is eligible to utilize 40 percent of the national internal revenue taxes. *Second*, it receives national assistance to local government units (NALGU) which is a mandatory appropriation in the national budget. *Third*, it is mandatory for higher local government units including province and municipality to allocate an annual budget assistance or aid of not less than Peso (Philippines currency) 1,000 each per year to their barangays. *Fourth*, development projects sponsored and supported by different government agencies include agriculture, health, natural resource etc.. Further, other income includes share from proceeds of basic real property tax, share from proceeds of tax on sand, gravel and other quarry resources, share from the proceeds of residence tax. A barangay council has taxation power on 10 types of businesses, charges for barangay clearance- if any national scale business is going to be situated in the barangay territory. On a yearly basis (January-December), a barangay development plan and budget is prepared. The 1991 Local Government Code provides policies to ensure people's participation in barangay development activities and other functions which include the *barangay assembly (section 398)*: a gathering of barangay residents who are at least 15 years old and serves as forum wherein they can participate directly in barangay affairs. The assembly should meet at least twice a year to hear and discuss the semester report of the barangay council, as well as problems affecting the barangay. *Public hearing*: conduct of a public hearing is required prior to the enactment of any ordinance or resolution. *Local initiative*: registered voters of the barangay may directly propose, enact or amend any ordinance. In the barangay, a local initiative is valid if signed by at least ten percent of the registered voters. If the proposition is approved by a majority of votes cast, it shall take effect. *Referendum*: Through a referendum, registered voters of the barangay may approve, amend or reject any enactment of the barangay council. *Barangay Development Council (LG code 1991 sec. 114)*: The barangay development council (BDC) is headed by the barangay captain and composed of all barangay council members and officials, a representative of the congressman, and representatives of non-governmental organizations and people's organizations operating in the barangay who shall constitute not less than one-fourth of the members of the fully constituted council. Functions of a BDC include (a) mobilize people's participation in local development efforts, (b) prepare annual barangay development plans based on local requirements (c) monitor and evaluate the implementation of barangay development plan by organizing review meeting at least once in every six months or as often as may be necessary. During the period of this research was conducted, Balinad and Napo barangay councils started its 2<sup>nd</sup> year of three-year term.

**Purok:** A purok is both a residential cluster in a barangay and a social organization anchored to family and kinship ties; is the basic building block of barangay society above the family. Kinship in a purok is a bilateral extension of both the father's and the mother's ancestral lines which is further broadened by fictive kinship beyond the ties of blood and marriage. In a purok, familial and residential ties are intermixed and closeness of kinship is very much maintained on physical proximity of households in which kin ties serves as basis for family relationships. A resident of a purok feels a strong obligation to help other families of the purok-- whether in granting a small loan or providing jobs for children, or expecting to be included in neighbourhood work projects, such as rebuilding or re-roofing a house and clearing new land. Many disputes between families in a purok are resolved by relatives (see e.g., Landa Jocano, 1998). This purok is also called *citio* to refer to its land territory. In a barangay, there are 6 to 7 puroks depending on the size of territory, population, and geographical pattern. Both barangay Balinad and Napo consists of six puroks and each purok comprised averagely 80 to 100 households.

***Purok officers' organization:*** In each of the purok there are 20 persons designated as purok officers who are organized into two *purok officers' organizations*; one is *senior purok officers' organization* and another is *junior purok officers' organization*. Each of the organization is composed of officers include President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor, Business Manager, Public Relation Officer, Muse, Escort and Adviser. For the senior purok officers' organization one of the elected barangay council members provides supervision while for all junior organizations, it would be the youth council chairperson. Purok officers' organizations are traditional organizations. They are not recognized as formal organizations as part of the 1991 Local Government Code but have their existence throughout the Philippines. In barangays Balinad and Napo, the names of purok officers are very much visible; displayed on name-boards which are posted on road sides. Before the conduct of this research, all purok officers' organizations in these two barangays were non-functional, without clarity of roles, functions and regular programmes.

## Appendix-2

### **Some community action-stories of success shared at destiny stage of AI in Napo**

#### **STORY 1**

##### **Sharing Our Own Little Way**

Written by: Riza Sabucor, Self-help Volunteer, Barangay Napo

As self-help facilitator of purok 4, the good stories I found out very successful in this self-help program is that we have learned to share our own effort not only financially but our strengths to help our barangay by means of unity and cooperation. Our big effort to realized our yearly activities (refers to the yearly purok action plan) hand in hand we shared in our single way (refers to unity cooperation and love to each other). Few years ago I joined as volunteer for the Social Action Centre ( an NGO working in Napo in the field of credit), I was taught by SAC that it is not about only be part of a lending institution but how to be a good Samaritan. Love of our own self, members and most specially to love god. I am very encouraged being part of this self-help program by seeing the way we are helping and respecting each other by sharing our own little way. This encourages me to join with the organization and helping each other for the improvement of livelihood situation.

##### ***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

Unity, cooperation, respects and love to each other is the most valuable for bringing progress and happiness of our life.

#### **STORY 2**

##### **Respect others to be respected**

Written By: Teresita Buban, Barangay Self-help Point Person, Napo

Last year (October 2004) when our barangay capitan Gladina Andrada told me attend a meeting in barangay Balinad as one of the kagawad (barangay council member), I did not hesitate. The other reason why I attended the said meeting was that I wanted to know what the meeting is all about. Three barangays attended the meeting. I was so worried when I learned that the facilitator was a foreigner --- Saha Shayamal. When he explained the purpose of the meeting I listened very carefully, because I knew that it would open us (not only the people who attended the meeting, but specially for the constituents of our barangay) for a new hope and a progress to our barangay. When we conducted

participatory story listening I found out that if there is a problem there is also way to solve it. When I heard the story of Edger who lost his right hand and how he and his wife fought only to meet their daily needs. His wife used to wash cloths of other families only to earn money for their rice and allowances of their children in school. I saw the other listeners were mostly orange eyes after hearing the story for they really know personally Edger, a responsible father and husband until now; even he lost the right hand. As one of the barangay self-help facilitator I gained some respect and friends. When Saha conducted volunteers meeting in Anislag (refers to the plan facilitation orientation session for the volunteers that we conducted in one upland purok namely Anislag) all facilitators of barangay become close to each other. I am the eldest among the volunteers for that they call me 'ate' (loosely translated: elder sister). When we went home all boys helped the girls carrying their things going down the hills from Anislag down to Balinad. All these activities and respect of volunteers helped me to become more confident and more aware on what each purok needs. I owe all of these to Saha and Sammy.

***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

- To be hopeful always gives us courage and energy to work for better life
- Even in difficult situation in our life if we do not lose our courage then ways come forward to solve that difficult situation
- In a family if both husband and wife we are responsible to each other and our children then whatever struggle we have to do but we can reach our goal
- When we work together we become close to each other, help each other and gain confidence from each other
- When we respect others then we become respectful, when we listen to other's life we respect him or her

**STORY 3**

**We Can Do It**

Written By: Ma Caroline Bañares, Self-help Volunteer and SK, Barangay Napo

The best story I shared during our April volunteers meeting & purok 4 officer's meeting was the time when volunteers of Napo and Balinad joined to come at Anislag with Saha and Sammy. Anislag is on the top of the mountain, we all facilitators of two barangay went there to meet and discuss with purok officers. All together we were 15 persons; went there, had our lunch, dinner, we stayed overnight and slept at the house of purok officers; we were treated very well. I was in doubt that "how this mountain purok, where there is no electricity, no good road communication, and families are really poor and have no good houses will be able to manage food and accommodation for all of us?" But we were treated very well; there was no single problem that we encountered. Activities related to food, accommodation, meetings, evening social, all were nicely managed by the cooperation of all purok officers of Anislag. We had meeting and conversation with all senior and junior purok officers of Anislag; everybody participated in the discussion of what is their priority need that they want to meet. They were very open in their comments and opinions. It became like a festival there where we all volunteers, purok officers participated and enjoyed. The best thing that I would like to be done in other purok especially here in Napo, to have cooperation as what Anislag purok officers showed us.

***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

- If there is cooperation among the community, whatever big it is all works can be done successfully.

## **STORY 4**

### **Cooperation of All Purok Officers and Residents to Clean and Decorate Purok 1**

Written By: Ma Caroline Bañares, Self-help Volunteer and SK, Barangay Napo.

The officers of purok 1 in their yearly self-help action plan (that they prepared in March 2005) included one of the activities was to “clean and decorate their purok” before the barangay Fiesta. In the monthly meeting of April, purok officers thought how they would do that and prepared a budget for buying decoration materials. They thought that labour required to clean garbage and thereafter decoration will be done by the purok officers themselves in participation with other purok residents. Purok officers applied to sanggunian kaabatan (youth council chairperson) of the barangay council for covering cost of buying decoration materials and were able to get some financial support. Further, each of them provided some subscription and collected subscription from the other residents of the purok. Approximately all together they were able to mobilize 1000 Pesos for buying decoration materials. During first week of May, all purok officers and other barangay residents (it was altogether about 50 people) started cleaning of the purok by their own physical labour –it was like a movement of cleaning and beautification of the purok where we live. Further, decoration was done so nicely that all barangay community of Napo and neighbouring barangays lauded purok officers. This successful activity not only established more friendly relationship among the purok officers but also between barangay council and purok officers as well as purok officers and common barangay residents. It has also created inspirations among the purok officers to do more and more self-help activities in the purok. Further, this has created awareness and concerns among the purok residents to maintain cleanliness and beauty in the purok.

#### ***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

- Our small contribution can solve resource problem for any good work for the community
- If the purok officers, barangay council and purok residents work hand in hand then we can launch movement for our progress
- When we have active organization and plan of work then we can do good work
- Many good work we can do collectively by providing our physical labour
- Cooperation to each other help us working together which bring closeness and cooperation among us
- Success of any good work encourages us to do more good work
- When we do good work for the community then other people praise us and we feel very happy
- Our good work make us aware and concerns about taking care of others

## **STORY 5**

### **Painting of Flower Pots in Purok 2**

Written By: Ma Caroline Bañares, Self-help Volunteer and SK, Barangay Napo

Because of the initiative of barangay kagawad (barangay council member) Edger M. Lotivo, the purok 2 of Napo barangay have gotten internal street side flower pots. As per self-help action plan of the purok, purok officers took initiative to paint all flower pots. This was done in April. In the meeting of purok officers it was decided that the president of junior purok officers Mr. Abraham Satiada will prepare the budget; that he did. All purok officers contributed subscription and collected 600 peso. On May 14 all purok officers worked; first they cleaned all flower pots and then painted those. Now they look beautiful.

#### ***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

- Our small contribution can solve resource problem for any good work for the community and we can do that.
- Cooperation among each other is the most important for attending the goal.



## **STORY 6**

### **Reorganization of Purok Officers in Purok 3**

Written By: Ma Caroline Bañares, Self-help Volunteer and SK, Barangay Napo.

Due to continuous absences and inactiveness of the president and some other officers of senior purok, officers in purok 3, in March 2005 during self-help action planning exercise purok residents together with the junior purok officers (who were present in the action planning workshop) planned one of the activities; they will have re-election and reorganization of the purok officer's organization including those persons who are active and can give time. On March 9, by the initiative of active purok officers, a meeting of all purok residents was organized. This meeting was participated by at least one adult member per households of the purok. On the spot in that meeting, election was conducted. Some senior purok residents presided over the election. In that election Mr. Arman Barcia was elected as the new president of senior purok officers and Ms. Ruth Awareg as the new president of junior purok officers. The election was successful to elect active persons as members. Now by the leadership of new president, purok 3 officers have successfully implemented all self-help activities they targeted during the period of March-May 2005.

#### ***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

- Unity and collective initiative of purok residents is the power

## **STORY 7**

### **Active Participation of all Purok Officers Cleaning and Decorating Purok 4**

Written By: Ma Caroline Bañares, Self-help Volunteer and SK, Barangay Napo

We are celebrating annual Fiesta 2005 in our barangay. Every purok officers are obliged to clean and decorate the purok as they planned this self-help activity. The purok president of junior and senior called for a meeting, then they decided that the senior officers would take charge for the cleaning of roadside while the junior officers for the decoration. On May 10, 2005, since 6 to 11:30 AM all senior purok officers started cleaning the road sides in the purok and finished their task, thereafter in the afternoon all junior purok officers decorated the purok. One resident of the purok cooked snacks for all purok officers; the Sanggunian Kaabatan shouldered expenses for snacks. All purok officers recognised that this activity completion was very much coordinated and joyful that happened due to collective plan and active participation of all purok officers. Planned activity completion of this type has created a sense among the purok officers that they are member of a responsible organization.

#### ***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

- Senior and junior purok officers can work unitedly for good work
- Planning and action together gives us feeling that we are part of a responsible organization
- Active participation of all help us accomplishment of tasks very easily

## **STORY 8**

### **Self-help Saving Collection and Fund Creation in Purok 5**

Written By: Ma Caroline Bañares, Self-help Volunteer and SK, Barangay Napo

In its self-help action plan 2005, one of the activities planned by the purok officers to create purok officers fund by members subscription collection. In the March meeting all purok officers selected Mrs. Flor Cariso as the person to deposit monthly savings of purok officers. Since March –May 2005, purok officers have successfully collected an amount of 900 peso. By this time purok officers have discussed to open a joint bank account to keep the money save. Further, they are in discussion with Linkon Masa (a peoples’ credit cooperative) to develop saving and credit policy. Purok officers think that continuation of this savings activity would be great help for the purok residents in need of meeting any emergency financial crisis.

***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

- If together we start small savings then altogether it is big, if we walk together then we can go miles that we cannot do alone.

**STORY 9**

**Purok 5: The cleaning and barangay basket ball game**

Written By: Ma Caroline Bañares, Self-help Volunteer and SK, Barangay Napo

On May 8, 2004, all junior and senior purok officers together cleaned and decorate the purok. It was planned as self-help activity by the purok officers as part of celebrating yearly barangay Fiesta-2005. Purok officers did this cleaning and decorating activities very successful by the active cooperation of all purok residents. For this work, all purok households provided resources either in kind, labour or money. Since March 2005, in the barangay Napo, all purok officers’ organization become active and conducting their regular meeting in participation with designated barangay kagawad (barangay council member). After demonstration of this success of purok cleaning and decoration all purok officers were inspired to form a purok basket ball team for barangay basketball competition-sponsored by the sanggunian kaabatan. Purok officers selected players of this basketball league. The team represented the purok 5. Registration fee was collected by the purok officers and given to the sanggunian kaabatan fund. This activity of purok 5 has encouraged other purok to do so in future.

***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

- Close and cooperative relationship between purok officers and residents and respect for each other can inspire us to take successful new initiatives

**STORY 10**

**Purok 6: Does not matter how far we are physically we can be united**

Written By: Ma Caroline Bañare, Self-help Volunteer and SK, Barangay Napo

Purok 6 is an upland place of Napo barangay. Due to upland physical settings house of residents are scattered and far from each other. Often it is very hard to organize meetings in this purok. Though in March-2005 self-help action plan targated to re-elect purok officers but it did not happen yet and there remains weakness of conducting regular meeting of purok officers. But being inspired by the cleaning activities of all other puroks, the purok residents decided anyhow we have to clean and decorate our purok too. One day the designated kagawad of the purok 6 Ernesto Restum and all senior purok officers had a meeting through which they planned that “whatever scattered the residents are they we have to clean and decorate their purok” This decisions was conveyed to all households. On May 24, many purok residents gathered together and cleaned all areas of the purok. More interestingly, instead of buying from the market place, women of this purok prepared all decoration

materials using natural and local resources available in their houses and in the nature. Finally the cleaning and decoration was beautiful.

***Lessons identified and discussed from the story***

- No, matter how far physically we are if we are determined and work together then we can even accomplish hard work
- Cooperative relationship and active participation of male and female together is vital
- We have many skills within us (in the purok residents) we can make use of those for the welfare of our purok people.
- For the welfare activity of the purok or barangay people we can be united
- Successful activities of one purok inspire another purok to do that

## Appendix-3

### **Month wise participation of stakeholders in self -help activities**

Month	Number of stakeholders participated in barangay Balinad applied PS	Number of stakeholders participated in barangay Napo applied AI
April , 2005	174	158
May , 2005	117	400
June , 2005	184	416
July , 2005	176	424
August , 2005	164	456
September , 2005	174	422
October , 2005	162	494

Sakhodres included: self-help volunteers, purok officers, common residents, baragay council members, barangay level government staff, municipal government staff and political leaders, representatives of business organisations, and staff of NGO. Consolidation is done through gathering data form the monthly stakeholders' participation tarcking chart used by each barangay.

## Appendix-4

### **Collated summary from mid-year review, and year-end evaluation**

***Self-help through problem solving in barangay Balinad***

*Mid-year joint review and reflection workshop*

*Dany's Spring Resort, Balinad, September, 11, 2005*

***Report of the barangay self-help point person, Amador M. Silerio on the overall picture of self-help in the barangay***

In general, in the barangay, about 60% purok officers are not participating in this process. In purok 1, 50% purok officers are inactive and do not participate in the meetings. Some of them are shy and don't speak in the meeting. In purok 3 only the president is active and 20% of the members participate in regular meetings. In purok 4 only the *president and vice president* are active and no meetings were held after April 2005. 100% purok officers in purok 5 are active participants but in purok 6 only about 30 %. Among 5 barangay health workers, only 1 (one) is actively participating and giving response to the call of puroks 1 and 5. During December 2004, we started with 12 facilitators but by June 2005 local facilitators- Leo, Roy, Ilene, and Iron have become inactive. They wanted honorarium and incentives from IIRR but when it did not happen then they became inactive.' Barangay kagawads

(council members) are not actively involved. Some kagawads do not know about what is happening and don't feel that they are part of the process. Barangay council members Rodolfo Siervo of purok 4, Rodel Awayan of purok 6, and Elvie S. De Leon of purok 3 are not active to organize and participate in purok meetings. Kagawad Renato Sablayan for purok 1 and Nestor Sarion for purok 5 are active and these two purok facilitators are also good and working well.

***Self-help through problem solving in barangay Balinad***  
***Summary findings of final evaluation<sup>49</sup>***

5 puroks altogether implemented only 30% of self-help activities which were targeted in the yearly action plans. Implementations of unplanned activities were few (9 Nos.). Roughly, estimated economic value of community resources contribution was Peso 82,400 which is equivalent to U S \$ 1500. At the end of October 2005, 2 among 5 participating purok officers' organizations became functional with regular meetings and program implementation. Around 50 among 120 purok officers actively engaged in development thinking and action. Number of common residents actively involved in the process was about 100. 4 among 11 barangay officials were actively involved in the process. 1 among 5 barangay health workers (BHWs) actively involved in the process. Monthly average participation of stakeholders in general was about 160. Trends of community and stakeholders participation from March 2005-October 2005 continuously went down. With regards to improvements of inclusive relationship and cooperation between barangay residents and officials, contact and communication between 3 barangay officials and 2 purok officers' organizations was intensified. Only one activity (setting purok contraceptive depot in Garayon) was conducted jointly by the purok officers and barangay council. A few numbers (about 50) of people in the barangay became aware about barangay development action plan and budget. Discussions related to preparing barangay action plan and budget based on majority poor people's need was rare both at the barangay council and purok officers' organizations. Demand by the community and purok officers to barangay officials to be responsive to people's call was rare. No challenge was posed to the barangay capitan to apply participatory leadership styles and decision-making process in the barangay. Activities implemented show community to community response in time of crisis was negligible. A few number of poor (economically) people believed about themselves that they are not empty-brain and they have strengths if they think and act together. 2 among 11 barangay officials expressed reward feelings being involved in the process. A few number of purok officers expressed feeling of being proud that they are active agents of barangay community development. Coordination between purok officer's organizations, barangay council and other actors in implementing self-help activities was weak. 5 among 6 purok officers' organizations were able to prepare self-help action plan-2005 with the facilitation of IIRR staff. 2 among 12 local facilitators continued their active participation for the whole period. None of the local facilitators demonstrated attitudes promising towards reducing dependency on external agency. 3 among 5 participating puroks were not able to prepare action plan for the year 2006 without assistance of IIRR staff.

***Self-help through AI in barangay Napo***

*September 12, Barangay hall, Napo*

***Part of the minutes of the mid-year review and reflection workshop of Self-help in barangay Napo***

After listening to the purok leaders who expressed their satisfaction of community participation in self-help activities, the barangay self-help point persons Teresita M. Buban presented the accounts of monthly stakeholders' participation drawn from barangay self-help monitoring and evaluation chart. Participants discussed that since March to August, 2005, participation of barangay community and purok officers continued to increase. Contributory factors which enhanced community participation recognized were (1) appreciative story telling drawn from practical implementation of self-help activities, (2) involvement of barangay kagawads (council members) and some purok leaders as local facilitators, (3) participation and support of barangay capitan and most kagawads (4) active participation and support of youth council chairperson, (5) active participation of local volunteers, (5)

active participation of Linkon Masa ( a credit cooperative) and volunteers of Social Action Centre ( an NGO has program intervention in the barangay) (6) *'do whatever needed and what can we do'* attitude of purok officers and not to be confined within planned activities but act on situational needs (7) inclusion of cultural, recreational (like play, fiesta decoration) activities as part of self-help development activities, (8) active participation of barangay health workers (BHWs).

For identification of the results the barangay self help point person posed a question to the workshop participants *'whether this self-help activity has created any good result for our barangay community?'* In response participants unanimously replied *'yes it has created good results in the life of barangay community.'* Participants identified following positive results of self help activities in the barangay community:

- It has fostered confidence among purok officers that we can do good work by our own
- Created more unity , cooperative and caring relationship among purok officers
- Many people of the barangay now actively participating in development thinking and action
- Relationship between purok officers and community has become more cooperative
- Knowledge and skills among purok officers and facilitators has increased in self-help development planning , implementing, monitoring and learning
- Barangay health workers have become more active and regular to communicate and provide services to the communities
- Relationship between barangay council members and purok officers have been intensified; now barangay capitan and council members have to give more and more response to the call of purok officers which has created better supportive relationship
- Most purok leaders are now aware about barangay development activities and budget
- Purok officers' organizations have become more active in planning and implementing development activities
- Mobilization and use of local resources for barangay development activities has increased
- Bayanihan<sup>50</sup> activities among barangay community has increased
- Purok officers now feel rewarded that they are doing some good work for the community.
- Participation of purok officers has increased in decision making of effective use of youth council fund
- Reward feeling among the barangay council members has increased that they are now more intimate to their constituency
- Hopes and inspiration of making progress has immersed among purok officers, barangay council members and common residents of the barangay

### ***Self-help through AI in barangay Napo***

#### ***Summary findings of final evaluation of self-help in barangay Napo***

Participating 6 puroks altogether were able to implement 80% of self help activities which they planned. A significant numbers (45) of unplanned and additional activities were also organized and implemented by the Napo barangay community. Roughly estimated economic value of community resources contribution was 1, 19, 400 Peso which is equivalent to U S \$ 2300.

At the end of October 2005, 5 among 6 participating purok officers' organizations became functional with regular meetings and program implementation. More than 80 among 120 purok officers were actively engaged in development thinking and action. Average number of common residents actively involved in the process was about 300. 8 among 11 barangay officials were actively involved in the process. 5 among 5 barangay health workers (BHW) actively involved in the process. Monthly average participation of stakeholders in general was about 400. Trends of community and stakeholders participation from March 2005-October 2005 continuously grew up.

With regards to improvements of inclusive relationship and cooperation between barangay residents and officials, contact and communication between 8 barangay officials and 5 purok officers'

organizations was intensified. A total of 15 activities were conducted jointly by the purok officers and barangay council. A significant numbers (about 200) of people in the barangay became aware of the barangay development action plan and budget. Discussions about the barangay action plan and a budget based on the needs of the majority (poor people) became intensive both in the barangay council and in the purok officers' organizations. Demands by the community and purok officers for barangay officials to respond to peoples wishes were intensive. The barangay Capitan was challenged to apply a participatory leadership style and participatory decision making process in the barangay.

Activities implemented show community to community responses in time of crisis in families and community were significant. All poor (economically) people believed about themselves that they are not ignorant and they have strengths if they think and act together. All (11) barangay officials express reward feelings being involved in the process. All purok officers expressed feeling of proud that they are active agents of barangay community development. Coordination between purok officer's organizations, barangay council and other actors in implementing self-help activities was remarkable.

6 among 6 purok officers' organizations were able to prepare self-help action plan-2005 with the facilitation of IIRR staff. 8 among 10 local facilitators continued their active participation for the whole period. All local facilitators demonstrated attitudes promising towards reducing dependency on external agency. 6 among 6 participating puroks were able to prepare action plan for the year 2006 without assistance of IIRR staff.

## Appendix-5

### Stories shared at the discovery stage of AI cycle in Napo and community expression about story listening

At the discovery stage of AI cycle applied in barangay Napo, a total of 6 'discovery story listening and vision tree' sessions (one in each pork) were organized in which 55 success stories of their life were told by the community members. Themes of these stories are shown below.

Main theme of the story	Number of stories told
Overcoming crisis after death of family especially conducting funeral ceremony.	3
Collecting subscriptions from the community and helping poor families for health and medical care.	7
Help of purok officers/ organizations to the barangay community in overcoming economic difficulties at family.	36
Recognition of good work and services to the community.	4
Purok officers' activities related to Fiesta and Christmas festivals.	4
Building a bamboo bridge through collective endeavour of purok community.	1

Participants of these story telling-listening sessions expressed following about story telling listening

**Purok 1:** We like it very much. We were inspired listening to success stories. We felt emotional listening to stories of how one could overcome crisis of life. After listening we recognized that one is not alone in trying to make his /her life better - all have strengths to share to make life beautiful. We liked this workshop very much. For many of us this was the first time to share our stories of life in this kind of meeting. Listening to success stories of others made us feel happy. But some of us came late and we were hesitant to tell our story.

**Purok 2:** At the beginning we were not clear about the objectives of this meeting/workshop. We thought the meeting may be related to forthcoming Christmas. We are happy to get together and listening good stories of our life. We are poor nobody even listen to us. In this workshop we could say and listen to other's good stories about how we can be successful in overcoming struggle for our life. We liked it very much. Stories gave us hope that one day we will be happy. We learnt that in our purok we all are like relatives; helping each other to make success in our families. We have many

good things among us. If we work together then we can make progress. We selected our dream that we want to achieve in the year 2005. Now we are hopeful that we (purok officers) will work together and be able to achieve our dream.

**Purok 3:** When few days ago Marceline (self-help volunteer) said us that we will have a meeting of telling good stories we were thinking about what kind of stories, who will say story, but now we learnt it was sharing facts of our life. In this workshop we have listened 13 stories and we liked those so much. Through those stories we learnt that cooperation to each other is essential for betterment of our life. We felt sad about listening to the struggle of life but finally we became happy to listen that we have power to overcome those. We learnt from stories that we have much knowledge and skills to make success. We felt very proud that we have unity among us; we are cooperative and helpful to each other. At past we never thought together and shared successes and strengths among us. We are hopeful to make our purok organization strong and functional in our purok and be able to do good work. In future we should have this workshop at evening then male could participate. Day time they were busy in the field. So they could not participate. Some of us felt shy to tell stories.

**Purok 4:** We like the workshop and good story telling by some participants. From those stories we knew that hope for good future help us to make progress in life and we can make better life through unity. Most people in our purok are poor we don't have money and regular job but if we try together we can have money and job. We cannot do it alone but together. From stories we saw that we have strengths of unity and cooperation among us. We feel happy about this workshop.

**Purok 5:** We feel very happy about this workshop. Stories which we shared in this workshop are known to us because they are stories of our purok. After listening to those success stories we feel inspired to do good work; we feel affinity to each other. We are really surprised to see good attitudes, success of life among us. To strengthen unity among the purok officers, and to build good attitudes to do good work for the purok community, this session was very good. This workshop has created a hope to reach the goal.

**Purok 6:** Through this workshop we met and spend time with each other. We feel very happy after sharing good stories of our life. We found we have strengths. Good success stories gave us hope. We feel unity among us and proud. We feel inspired to do good work in future.

## Appendix-6

### Community identified principles and strengths drawn from discovery story listening in Napo

Resonated with cooperative processes	Resonated with individualistic construction
PRINCIPLES	PRINCIPLES
<p>(*) Cooperation makes one's work easy so cooperation is important in each group/purok (*) Unity can make a strong community so we need to foster unity for our development (*) Willingness and active participation make things easier and possible (*) Unity and cooperation is the main strength (*) Charity starts at home, family is a strong community (*) We have many strengths and good examples among us which is our hope for future (*) Self-help is helping each other in our purok/ community (*) Unity of members make the group strong (*) Cooperation to each other is essential for the betterment of our life (*) We can make better life through unity (*) Cooperation is the key for making progress in life (*) Sharing of each other's opinion gives us education (*) Getting together make us inspired (*) Cooperation of each other makes the work easy (*) Sharing each other's strengths motivate us to do good work (*) Unity is strength (*) We can make progress when we are together (*) Organization is very important (*) Responsibility to family helps us to do work (*) More we share more we learn (*) Active participation of all purok people</p>	<p>(*) Hardworking makes one successful (*) Skills of one person is a big help for self-help development (*) For self-help development one need to be patient (*) A leader should be a good follower so that members follow the plans and decision of the group (*) Strong believe is the key to move forward (*) Hope for good future help one to make progress in life (*) Bad habits make unhappy (*) Be closer to god makes one happy (*) Regular employment makes one happy (*) One should have money for everyday life (*) Praying gives us hope (*) Hope helps moving forward (*) If one try then he can make success</p>
STRENGTHS	STRENGTHS
<p>(*) Cooperation, Cooperation, Cooperation, Cooperation, Cooperation, (*) We have helping attitudes, Helpful to others (*), (*) Strong unity, Unity, Unity, Unity in purok, Unity, Unity, (*) Organization (*) Active youth (*) We can give innovative ideas</p>	<p>(*) Strong Leadership, Leadership, Leadership, (*) Tolerance (*) Skills, Livelihood skills, Skills for doing work (*) Hard work, (*) Motivation, (*) Strong believe/faith, self-help attitude, (*) Strong believe in god (*) Belief (*) Inspiration, (*) Motivation (*) Brain, (*) Hope (*) Responsible, (*) Non-formal scholarship grant</p>



## Appendix-7

### On self-learning, changes, and their future roles: Utterances of local volunteers' engaged in AI

<b>Responses of local volunteers about important self-learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We can overcome our struggle of life and make success if we work together</li><li>• Use of good story for developing ourselves</li><li>• How to make our action plans</li><li>• If we build on our strengths then we can make progress</li><li>• All of us has successes in our life to share</li><li>• When we say and listen good story it makes us happy; this is good thing</li><li>• We can now do monitoring and evaluation for learning for our progress</li></ul>											
<b>Perceived changes of self as facilitator engaged in appreciative inquiry method in barangay Napo</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our popularity among the barangay community has increased than before</li><li>• We have more work but we are happy</li><li>• Many people now give us thanks and we feel so happy</li><li>• Our self-confidence has increased</li><li>• Now we believe that together we can do good development work though self-help that we did not believe before</li><li>• We ( local facilitators) are now more closed to each other than before now we care more to each other</li><li>• We get good recognition from the barangay council officials and form the mayor that we are doing good work</li><li>• We feel very happy when we listen good story from the people-this is so good</li><li>• We now seriously think that we need to be good model in our barangay to respect our barangay residents and to do good work</li></ul>											
<table><tr><td colspan="3"><b>Future role perceived as facilitator of self-help promotion in the barangay Napo</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Barangay council members</b></td><td></td><td><b>Local facilitators</b></td></tr><tr><td>In cooperation with all purok residents we will make our purok officers' organization strong. We all barangay council members will participate in the designated purok meetings and self-help activities in the barangay .Form the next year we will first prepare our purok action plan then in joint meeting of purok officers and barangay council we will prepare yearly barangay development action plan.</td><td></td><td>We will continue this work in our purok with the help of barangay council members. Barangay council officials, purok officers and we will work hand in hands. Now we have learnt how to share our good stories.</td></tr></table>			<b>Future role perceived as facilitator of self-help promotion in the barangay Napo</b>			<b>Barangay council members</b>		<b>Local facilitators</b>	In cooperation with all purok residents we will make our purok officers' organization strong. We all barangay council members will participate in the designated purok meetings and self-help activities in the barangay .Form the next year we will first prepare our purok action plan then in joint meeting of purok officers and barangay council we will prepare yearly barangay development action plan.		We will continue this work in our purok with the help of barangay council members. Barangay council officials, purok officers and we will work hand in hands. Now we have learnt how to share our good stories.
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<b>Utterances in informal reflection sessions in recognizing changes in community participation and discussion processes</b>											
<b>Purok Officers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More cooperative and organized participation</li><li>• More sharing about what to do, more active</li><li>• More participation of barangay council members</li><li>• Better relationship between barangay officials and purok people</li><li>• More and more people are joining now</li></ul>	<b>Barangay council members</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More and more people are joining</li><li>• More open to share</li><li>• Rich, poor, middle class people activity joining and supporting each other</li><li>• Les shyness among poor people to speak and participate</li><li>• All BHWs have become active to work collaboratively</li></ul>	<b>Local volunteers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participation of people has increased</li><li>• Purok officers are more active</li><li>• More responses from the barangay council officials</li><li>• Both male and female participate</li><li>• More coordinated and collaborative participation of other NGOs and BHWs at purok level</li><li>• Youths are more active</li></ul>									

## Appendix-8

### Profile of self-help volunteers

Barangay Balinad	Barangay Napo
<p><b>Amador M. Silerio (Male)</b> Barangay secretary 1977-to date. Since 1994 secretary of barangay secretaries' association of Polangui municipality. A teacher of Balinad elementary school and president of parent-teachers association of Balinad elementary school. A Bachelor of Education.</p> <p><b>Elvie S. De Leon (Female)</b> Barangay council member 2002-2006; Barangay health worker: 1988- to date; Chairperson, barangay agrarian reform committee (BARC); Women's facilitator: 1998-2000 for every barangays under DSWD Polangui. College graduate.</p> <p><b>Leo C. Sarte (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 3, a college graduate, unemployed youth, member of barangay sports committee.</p> <p><b>Marvin A. Sarion (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 1, a Highschool graduate.</p> <p><b>Ruel Monasterial (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 5, a College graduate, (Bachelor of Hotel Management).</p> <p><b>Arly S. Besin (Male)</b> Resident of the purok 3. A student studying high school (second year).</p> <p><b>Roy San Pascual (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 4. Highschool graduate.</p> <p><b>Steve (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 4, a College student, member of barangay youth council</p> <p><b>Catherine Cultario (Female)</b> Resident of the purok No. 6, a highschool graduate.</p> <p><b>Michelle Benamira (Female)</b> Resident of the purok No. 5, Highschool graduate.</p> <p><b>Jesus Bondice Jr. (Jun) (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 1, Highschool graduate.</p> <p><b>Airon Resgonio (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 6, Elementary grade qualification.</p>	<p><b>Teresita M. Buban (Female)</b> Barangay council member 2002-2006. Barangay secretary 1994, Barangay health worker 1988- to date, Chairperson of barangay agrarian reform committee (BARC). Barangay Coordinator, Christian Foundation for Children and Aging (CFCA). Highschool graduate.</p> <p><b>Edger Lotivo (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 2, Barangay Council member 2002-2006, member Linkon Massa (a credit cooperative).</p> <p><b>Caroline Banares (Female)</b> Resident of the purok No. 4, a college student, Chairperson of barangay youth council, Secretary, - Napo civic and youth organization.</p> <p><b>Riza Q. Sabucor (Female)</b> Resident of the purok No. 2, a highschool graduate, purok secretary, volunteer of Social Action Centre (a faith based NGO).</p> <p><b>Laila R. Restum (female)</b> Resident of the purok No. 4, College student; studying nursing, member of Napo barangay civic and youth organization.</p> <p><b>Marcelino Castelo (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 3. Elementary grade qualification.</p> <p><b>Richard B. Coriso (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 5, Highschool graduate.</p> <p><b>Salvador S. Sablayan (Male)</b> Resident of the purok No. 5, a college student, president of junior purok officers' organisation, member of barangay youth council.</p> <p><b>Teresa Belis (Female)</b> Resident of the purok No. 4, Elementary grade qualification, Religious leader.</p> <p><b>Jovita Imperial (Female)</b> Resident of the purok No. 4, Elementary grade qualification.</p>

