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Making Our Own Path: Facilitator Training for Alternative Development

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MAKING OUR OWN PATH:

FACILITATOR TRAINING FOR ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN HONDURAS

A Master's Degree Project

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The path to development in Honduras has long been paved by the many obstacles laid before it: the historical legacy of colonization, the dependency on multi-national corporations, the manipulation of external financing, and overpoweringly so, the imposition of the meaning of development. As a small nation dependent on the good will of the rich nations, Honduras has unquestionably accepted and internalized the image of development defined in terms of the economic success of the First World. However, after struggling through many years of development programs and strategies, it is clear that development is not the simple path to success it seems to imply. In Honduras, as in most of the Third World, development has often been a path of empty promises and unfulfilled progress. Development economist Serge Latouche says: "The debate over the word 'development' is not merely a question of words. Whether one likes it or not, one can't make development different from what it has been. Development has been and still is the Westernization of the world" (1993, p.160).

My own journey on the path of "development" began nearly ten years ago within the context of Honduras' non-governmental organizations (NGOs). I became involved in development programs initially because of my background in sociology and my interest in alleviating the problems of poverty and oppression that affect the majority of our population. I gradually became aware that I had very few answers for the difficult,

complex problems that burden our society. I began to understand that it was not possible for me to be "the savior" of the poor and oppressed, although I wanted very much to help provide solutions. In this quest, I worked for several years with a small Honduran NGO writing grant proposals, which involved planning development projects with the NGO's field staff as well as monitoring and evaluating the projects. After some time I noticed the discrepancy between what I wrote in the project proposals, the project plans made with the staff, and the actual work carried out.

Most of our field staff were local facilitators who were hired by the NGO to carry out community level training in agriculture, health, education, and sanitation. Observing their work and that of other facilitators from various NGOs I had contact with, I became interested in the connection between development and nonformal education as a key to longer-lasting success at the community level. Hence, I started working mostly in facilitator training, hoping to affect the long-term goals of community development programs. Whether my efforts in training had any great impact or not, I have carried one lesson through my journey with me: development is about people's participation, first and foremost. The people involved have the right to determine their own destinies, through their own choices and their own efforts. They have the capability of making their own path.

Thus, I initiated this project with a critical view of the process of development I have observed and been a part of. The first section of this study is directed towards

understanding the phenomena of development in Honduras from a historical,

socio-cultural, and economic standpoint, as well as reviewing some of the major critiques

which have been made with respect to the development discourse. This discourse is used

so commonly that it often seems there is no other option but to follow the prescriptions

laid down for development. The following section of this study reviews alternative forms

of authentic progress and human growth: people making their own paths of development.

These alternatives are immersed in the cultural context of the grassroots and in many cases

are being strengthened by the support and solidarity of new kinds of grassroots leaders

and professionals. Thus, the last two sections of this study are directed towards

understanding the role of grassroots leaders and facilitators, and how they can be

supported through an alternative training strategy.

The strategy proposed is oriented mainly towards the rural context of Honduras in

which most development programs are currently being carried out by both government

and non-governmental organizations. It is a strategy which emphasizes facilitator training

through critical thinking, deliberation, and decision-making as a way of modeling the

process which facilitators will lead in their own communities and cultural contexts.

The present project is not an attempt to be the final word on alternative development

and facilitator training. Rather, it is a starting point through which future efforts can be

guided. The research and strategy proposed have many limitations, mostly due to the fact

that I have not been in Honduras for two years, and hence am separated from the reality

being experienced by my fellow countrywomen and men. Furthermore, my professional experience has been at the level of NGOs; I have not participated directly with grassroots movements in Honduras, although I have seen glimpses of these initiatives through local farmers' cooperatives, women's groups, and Christian base communities supported by the Catholic church. Also, I did not have the opportunity to talk directly with the local leaders and facilitators who are carrying out tremendous efforts on behalf of their communities. In order to propose any strategy realistically, I believe it is necessary to hear the voices of the participants, validate their experience, and provide the support necessary to formulate a strategy that truly meets their needs. Thus, the training strategy presented is meant mainly as a generator for discussion and decision-making with the participants: local facilitators, leaders, and NGO staff.

I believe that this study is timely because throughout Latin America the problems caused by "development" are becoming more acute. Our governments are struggling with huge economic crisis, inflation, devaluation and debt servicing which blinds their intentions towards the great majority who are living on the very brink of survival. My hope is that this project will contribute in some measure to opening new paths of commitment to the poor as well as paths in which the people will determine their own destiny.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF DEVELOPMENT IN HONDURAS

A. Development Theory and Social Change

A prosperous society whose members are manipulated by an impersonal system is not developed, but distorted. A society has "anti-development" if its "development" breeds new oppressions and structural servitudes. - Goulet, The Cruel Choice, 1971

In Mexico, you must be either numb or very rich if you fail to notice that "development" stinks. - Gustavo Esteva, Regenerating People's Space, 1987.

1. The History of Development in the Third World

The term "development" is used almost universally to name the task facing the Third World. Rich countries are seen as "developed", and the poor as "underdeveloped", or in some cases "less developed" or even "developing". Regardless of the context or situation, the goal is development - economic, political, or social development. However, the goal of "development" is both pretentious and problematic because of its prescriptive and ideological implications. Development rhetoric seems to imply that there is a single path, and that the rich countries offer to the poor countries an image of what they can be if they are successful (Arndt, 1987). Unfortunately, most poor countries accept this image as their road to "success". As A. Escobar said:

> For 40 years now, much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America has been known as the "Third World" or "underdeveloped", while the price for joining the ranks of the First "developed" world has precisely been to follow the prescriptions laid down for them by those already developed. These prescriptions took the form of Development, a powerful and encompassing discourse which has ruled most social designs and actions of those countries since the early post-World War II period. (1992, p. 411).

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Development theory and practice has undoubtedly experienced many changes during the last 50 years since the term began to be used in relation to the Third World. These changes have reflected the world's shifting economic and political relationships between the powerful countries of the Northern hemisphere in association with the poorer, less powerful countries of the South. Even so, most governments and international financing institutions continue to define development in terms of maximum economic growth and mass consumption, and they continually seek the advancement of "development" even at the cost of social, cultural, and environmental damage to entire communities and nations (Goulet, 1992). Thus, it is crucial to understand where and how development theory originated, and why it has been and continues to be imposed on the Third World.

Approximately one decade after World War II, international institutions established by the rich countries such as the World Bank, began to turn their attention from a fully recovered Europe to the plight of the Third World. Motivated by the cold war competition between the western and Soviet blocs, foreign aid was vastly increased and inspiring promises were made by economists and politicians that the rich nations would work together with the poor nations for economic and industrial development (Arndt, 1987). Thus, some theorists argue, development was merely the ideological expansion of post-World War II capitalism as a result of the cold war; as well as the expansion of knowledge, science, and technology that were intended to be put to use in the non-industrialized world, regardless of the wealth of local knowledge and survival technology found there already (Escobar, 1992; Rahman, 1993). In the decades since, the

promises clearly have not been fulfilled, and problems not only not remain unresolved, but in many cases have increased and extended. Today, about 15 percent of the world's population living in the north, enjoy a standard of living that is extraordinarily more affluent than that of the world's majority (Tisch & Wallace, 1993).

The "development" discourse includes the use of the term "Third World", a label which encompasses the vast majority of the world's population. Interestingly enough, the term Third World was coined in the 1950's by French intellectuals in reference to pre-revolutionary France's bourgeoisie or commercial class (the third estate). The Third World was actually a revolutionary slogan, having the connotation of the majority, the dispossessed, the excluded; it was the banner of the hungry and oppressed. It was a call for a change, for an extension of liberty and equality to those who did not have it. The term "Third World", as coined in the 1950's drew attention to modern-day colonialism and imperialism in a world of oppression and unequal power. As in the French Revolution, "Third World" carried with it the promise of change, the promise that those who are currently oppressed will eventually overcome their oppression and enjoy vastly better lives. (Isbister, 1993).

Ironically, the historical descendents of the third estate created a new class system: capitalism. It is this capitalist, industrial world, created by the third estate, that now confronts the Third World. In the Third World today, whole communities recognize themselves as underdeveloped, as unfinished manifestations of a European ideal (Escobar,

1992) Having internalized this image of inferiority, these communities have become

subservient to the "development" effort, surrendering their own values, traditions, and

knowledge. It seems the time has come to recapture the banner of hope from the "Third

World."

2. The Effects of Development on Third World Poverty

Chronic poverty is a cruel kind of hell; and one cannot understand how cruel that hell is merely by gazing upon poverty as an object. - Goulet, The Cruel Choice, 1971

For me the saddest thing is a man who works in the fields in May, June, and July, and yet doesn't have corn or beans. He doesn't have enough to eat in his home. He has to sell everything. - Don Fernando Andrade, Honduran Peasant Farmer (quoted in Smith, The Human Farm, 1994)

The urgency of the problems brought about by "development" cannot be negated in

the face of the escalating trend of worldwide poverty and the growing gap between the

rich and the poor. The number of poor people in the world is increasing, not decreasing.

About one-third of the Third World's population now lives in poverty, more than in the

period just after the Second World War. According to Isbister:

> Income is not the heart of poverty, nevertheless, it is revealing to reflect upon the staggering differences in income that exist in today's world. In the US, average income per person in 1990 was $21,790, while in the poorest 37 countries with more than half of the world's population, the average income was $350. Income figures show that a typical person in the industrialized world is forty to sixty times better off, in terms of access to goods and services, than a typical person in the Third World. The gap is so huge it is almost beyond understanding (1993, pp. 18-19).

Development statistics are usually compared in terms of income rather than in other

dimensions of quality of life such as education, health, environmental quality, and political

freedom; perhaps because income per capita is easier to measure and compare (Tisch &

Wallace, 1994). Although income only provides a limited view of an individual's well-being or a country's quality of life, it does tell a story. Oxfam America, a non-governmental organization working to fight global poverty and hunger provides some grim statistics on world poverty: "One billion people are hungry. One person in four lives in poverty. One person in five worldwide earns less than $1 per day. And this situation is only getting worse."

Common to most development theories is the concept that changes from the status quo are needed to advance countries more quickly along paths to development (Tisch & Wallace, 1994). However, these changes have been dictated and enforced by the First World's rhetoric and "financial assistance". The traditional ways of subsistence, viewed as backward and undeveloped, have been transformed into poor imitations of industrialized nations. Thus, contrary to what many people think, the poverty of the Third World is not "traditional"; it is not an ancient way of life. The traditional cultures of the Third World are rich and various; the philosophies and customs that developed over hundreds of generations led to a sense of belonging for people, not a sense of exclusion. The widespread poverty found today is the consequence of modern phenomena: endless urban slums; population explosion; oppressed and exploited laborers producing for prosperous markets in the U.S. and Europe. "For hundreds of millions of people, rural poverty, which while hard, was imbedded in a rich cultural network, has been replaced by the dislocation and alienation of urban poverty" (Isbister, 1993, p. 3).

According to Escobar, poverty has become more acute and intractable than ever, and

so has the social and cultural crisis that inevitably and irremediably has come with it. He

stated that one pathetic sign of the failure of "development" is the present economic crisis

found in the Third World: "little, if anything, has 'trickled down', life conditions for most

have deteriorated enormously, and the damage to persons and the environment has

reached such unprecedented levels that it 'can now be seen, touched, and smelled', while

whole countries have amassed such staggering debts that even the future of coming

generations is gravely imperilled." (1992, p.419). In the face of this crisis, critical

responses and actions are urgently needed. But it would seem that the response is not

"development" as it has been proposed in the past.

3.   The Development Problem

*Development has damaged, perhaps irreparably in many cases, the immune
system of many Third World communities, namely their local cultures and
local subsistence systems. - Rahnema, The Myth and Reality of Development,
1986.*

It would be difficult to disagree with French agronomist Rene Dumont when he calls the

last forty years an "epidemic of misdevelopment". Latin America has been a part of the

creation of great wealth, ranging from electronic industries to skyscraper cities, but at the

price of massive pollution, urban congestion, and enormous waste and mismanagement of

resources. Furthermore, the majority of the population has not benefitted (Goulet, 1992).

Some of the reasons for this "epidemic in misdevelopment" are the industrialization and

the impact of technology; the seduction of modernization; and the destruction of local

cultural identity and knowledge.

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· **Industrialization and the impact of technology:** In Latin America and the Caribbean, as in most of the Third World, the cheap labor force and lack of environmental protection has been exploited by local and foreign corporations seeking greater profits. Factories, industrial and assembly plants, and powerful financial institutions have been at the forefront promoting industrialization during the past two decades. It has been argued that the increase in employment is a notable benefit, but the low wages earned and the unprotected conditions in which most laborers are forced to work are not weighed against it (Deere, et al., 1990). Furthermore, the waste of natural resources, such as water, timber, minerals, and plant life, as well as the daily pollution of air, water, and forests is not taken into account. These factors slowly but surely work against long-term regional and national development.

· **The seduction of "modernization":** Through the influence of mass media, foreign presence, and importation of consumer goods, people seek a "better life" in the Western sense for themselves and their families. In this pursuit, the middle and upper classes are eager to conduct business with foreign corporations, seeking profit in foreign currency which will enhance their possibilities of upward mobility and consumption of goods. The poorest majority, meanwhile seek their mobility through a constant migration from rural areas to the larger towns and cities. Due to their lack of education and industrial skills, they are forced to work at menial jobs and often turn to delinquency when their needs are not met. The massive influx of the rural poor to the urban slums represents an enormous problem of sanitation, housing, health services and education - the very problems of

development and the antithesis of modernization. In reference to this phenomena, Arizpe said: "there are kinds of cultures which enhance a hunger for power and domination, and also modes of culture, bred out of the colonial past, which reiterate patterns of submission which lead to divisiveness, opportunism and corruption among oppressed peoples." (1988, p.17).

· **Destruction of local cultural identity and knowledge:** One other aspect in the production of misdevelopment which cannot be overlooked is the change which has occurred in traditional institutions and local practices with the move towards industrialization and urban migration. Fals Borda argued, "Development is a model of exploitation alien to our context and without support among our people, introduced without realizing that this model impoverished our cultural roots and sources, destroying our historical identity and impairing the creative and productive possibilities of most people" (1986, p.209). Rahman echoed the same sentiment when he said, "...the most fundamental problem [of development] has been the obstruction of the evolution of indigenous alternatives for societal self-expression and authentic progress." (1993, p.213). In an effort to stop the undermining of local knowledge, Arizpe analyzed the cost of international development to Third World cultures. Already there is widespread destruction in all areas of traditional knowledge including pharmacopeia, botany, zoology, agronomy, subsistence techniques of all kinds such as hunting, collecting, fishing; as well as knowledge about physiological and psychological therapy. She believed that the present conditions of the international system are not only making people in countries of

the South poorer in economic resources and knowledge, but even worse, poorer in the confidence with which they could continue to create knowledge. Furthermore, this loss of knowledge represents the loss of a livelihood especially in rural areas of the South. Millions of farmers are finding their age-old knowledge useless in a market dominated by large-scale, mechanized farming while rural women, traditionally the respected sources of practical knowledge, wisdom, and resilience find that their capabilities and skills are undermined. As poverty sweeps over them, these are the people that find no recourse but to flock to the cities (Arizpe, 1988).

In summary, the problem with "development" as it has been advanced in the last five decades is that it has been based on a First World model of progress. This model is both inappropriate and unattainable in most Third World countries. Esteva believed that, "Every development 'strategy' or 'approach' has been tested, again and again, under widely different conditions but with the same frustrating results." (1987, p.136). As Escobar said:

> After 40 years, many argue, the dream is over. Development as it was
> promised in the midst of post-World War II euphoria, has not happened.
> Moreover, the Third World is more underdeveloped now than it was initially
> discovered to be so. But still Development is a powerful and hegemonic form
> of representation, and the Third World is still referred to as underdeveloped.
> Despite its apparent failure, these countries have to resign themselves to their
> third-class status and their dependence on the good will of the First World, its
> multinationals and development agencies, its capital and technology, its
> truth....More development would surely be needed even to avert, certainly to
> reverse, the worsening of life conditions. Yet the necessity for negating this
> view is today greater than ever before. (1992, p. 412).

B. THE EXPERIENCE OF DEVELOPMENT IN HONDURAS

1. Overview of Historical and Socio-political Factors in Honduran Development

Honduras is a small Central American country of about 112,000 km^2 and a population of approximately 6 million. Currently, the average annual growth rate of the population is 3.3% and close to 55% of the population lives in the rural areas (IADB, 1993). Honduras has long been known as the second poorest country in the Western hemisphere, although this changed during the last decade when other Latin American and Caribbean countries were devastated by the economic crisis and political struggles of the '80s. Nonetheless, in 1991, 2.4 million people in Honduras were living in absolute poverty as compared to 1.8 million in 1987 (UNDP, 1990 & 1993).

Honduras shares a common colonial history with the rest of Central America, gaining independence in 1821, and becoming its own nation in 1838. In the early 1900's, Honduras' rich Atlantic coast attracted the U.S. banana companies that later became Standard Fruit and United Fruit. Because of Honduras' weak and decentralized government, the banana companies installed and removed governments at their convenience, even helping dictator Tiburcio Carias Andino come to power in 1931, who for the next 16 years fashioned the central institutions and infrastructure that made Honduras a modern state (Barry, et al., 1982).

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In the 1950's the traditional balance of power maintained by large landowners and banana companies began to be challenged as workers and peasants started to speak out and organize. A successful strike in 1954 by banana workers of United Fruit sparked widespread organizing for the first time among the country's other workers. By the end of the decade, the campesinos, the peasant farmers, also organized to demand agrarian reform and better wages. The struggle of the campesinos in the last three decades has focused on having the country's 1962 and 1975 agrarian reform laws enforced since the government has never vigorously enforced the provisions of the land reform. In March, 1982, an ex-minister of finance reported that only 5% of the population controls 60% of the land and 10% of the population receives 80% of the gross national product (Barry, et.al, 1982).

During the 1970's, Honduras went through a period of strong economic growth based on favorable international trade, a relatively good balance in price and demand of basic exports (bananas, coffee, lumber, beef), and access to international markets. At this time, the national deficit was a manageable $183 m. Between 1976-79 the growth rate of the GDP rose nearly 9%. However during these years, external financing also began to play a major role. Whereas before Honduras had been very cautious with debt, by 1980 it had become another debtor country of Latin America, owing $1,388 m in foreign debt. During the 80's it doubled again reaching $3,045 m by 1988 (Walker, 1990).

The first major economic crisis began in 1979 with the abrupt change in the world economy due to the second rise in oil prices. A deterioration in the price of coffee, the second largest export, was not compensated by an increase in the volume of the exportation. Furthermore, despite changes in price, Honduras retained an imbalance in imports. Nonetheless, Honduras was able to obtain major sources of financing from the U.S., increasing its debt from $1,388 m to $2,794 m between 1980 and 1985. This was due to the strategic geographic location of Honduras during the political conflicts in the Central American region. Direct funds were provided for the Armed Forces (a staggering $850 m), for "development" programs, and to support the balance of payment (Walker, 1990).

By 1986, the grace periods on accumulated debt had come to an end. As interest rates increased and the value of the currency depreciated the total external debt grew from $2,794 m in 1985 to $3,045 m in 1988. Due to the increasing economic crisis and in the face of increasing pressure from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a structural reform program was launched in March 1990, soon after the installation of the newly elected president, Rafael Callejas (IADB, 1993). The structural reform package was quite typical of IMF agreements; it included devaluation of currency, liberalization of imports, cuts in subsidized credits and price support, and diversification of exports. Another aspect of the reform package was the new investment law, giving equal treatment to national and foreign capital and unlimited participation in the capital of Honduran companies. Also,

privatization measures in 1992 transferred ten government-owned enterprises to local investors (IADB, 1993; EIU Country Report, 1990).

Although Honduras has struggled to stabilize its GDP per capita during the last decade and a half, the Economic Intelligence Unit Country Report (1st Quarter, 1995) indicates that by 1994, GDP growth rate fell to -1.9% and GDP per capita was at barely over $400, falling from over $700 in the 70's as a result of the devaluation. To cushion the impact of the structural adjustment program, the government has supported the establishment of the Honduran Social Investment Fund (Fondo Hondureño de Inversión Social), a "development" program involved in providing credit assistance to the informal sector and constructing social and economic infrastructure in the most disadvantaged sectors. A Family Assistance Program and Social Housing Fund were established as well. The "Family Assistance" basically consists of a $3.50/month handout for nutritional aid available to single women and children. The Social Housing Fund provides low-income housing for the most disadvantaged sectors of the population. (IADB, 1993). From a personal perspective, however, these short-term "band-aid" measures have been truly weak and ineffective in the long run, leading to unproductivity, cyclical poverty, and further dependence on the government's charity.

2. A Perspective on the Government's Development Efforts

The brief review of Honduran history above demonstrates that Honduras, like many Third World countries, has never instigated its own development. At the turn of the

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century, US multi-national corporations became the main instigators of "development". Honduras became dependent on the production of an export monoculture oriented to foreign investment and growth. This rigid specialization did not create the basis for a sustainable internal economy nor for equitable growth, as peasant workers received only subsistence wages for their arduous labor on foreign-owned banana plantations. Politically, it also created an unequal share in power, as Honduras was dependent on the whims of US foreign policy: between 1911-1925, the US intervened six times in Honduras alone. Since then, the US has continued to intervene in domestic affairs for many different reasons (such as the Contra War), but always with the power of providing or withholding financial assistance.

After WWII, Honduras invested heavily in "development plans" using intermediate technology and industrialization as a basis to compete in international trade and capital markets, thus moving away from an agrarian based economy. This investment, as well as fluctuation in prices, quotas, and inflation in the world market, has necessarily led to increased foreign financing with the resulting debt crisis of the '80s mentioned previously. Thus, a single mandate now guides Honduran national development strategies: to achieve "structural adjustment" by squeezing the surplus from the population. Structural adjustment, in conjunction with neo-liberal economics calls for free markets based on comparative advantage for national economic growth. The distribution of the predicted economic growth is founded on the principle of "trickle down" (Deere, et al., 1990).

In the past decade, Honduras has been obligated to accept "development" plans from major international financing institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the IMF. The alternative to accepting these plans would result in a loss of international credit and consequently, the ability to repay the foreign debt. In other words, Honduras' policy makers have limited choices in determining the course of "development". Instead of improving such necessary services as health care and education facilities, the government is compelled to implement adjustment measures in order to attempt a favorable balance of trade and maintain good standing with the IFIs. Revenues obtained through structural adjustment measures are mainly destined to meet the payment of the monumental debt which hangs over Honduras like a permanent storm cloud. Recently the Honduran Central Bank published the national budget indicating that 60% of the budget is destined towards paying the foreign debt. Thus, even though the rhetoric of development is still used, in reality it appears but a euphemism of survival, to avoid sinking in a sea of debt, recession, and inflation. "Development" in actuality means debt servicing, stabilization and crisis management. (Goulet, 1992; Stallings, 1992).

In spite of the politicians' and economists' glib speech of restoring a healthy economy through a period of economic adjustments, the only health which seems to have been affected is that of the people who can least afford cuts from the government. The impact on the lives of the poor has been devastating: The gap between the rich and the poor has increased dramatically: basic standards of living have gone down; unemployment and employment in the informal sector has increased; social services such as health, education,

and transportation have been curtailed; and the basket of consumer goods has been drastically reduced. Having lived through a period of adjustment in the early '90s, I can attest to the fact that inflation, devaluation, and privatization measures place masses of people who are already on the brink of subsistence to the point of starvation and truly, in a state of inhuman poverty. The popular uprisals and protests all over Latin America have been well documented, and yet the response has been to continue adjustment, but "with a human face" (Deere, et. al., 1990).

Apart from international economic pressures, the government is already burdened by bureaucratic corruption, greed, and misplaced priorities which hamper any real efforts to establish justice and social change. The colonial legacy from the Spanish and European conquerors left an example and pattern of power and domination. National leaders and landowners have continually fought for power since independence was won, leaving the country with weak and decentralized governments, incapable of making good decisions for national development. The domination of the wealthy classes over others is clearly seen. This is especially evident in the power of the military in Honduras, which is not even under presidential rule and until recently has controlled many public services, including the telephone service. Obviously, this level of power and domination has lent itself easily to corruption and infringement of human rights.

3. A Perspective on Private Development Efforts

Given the external pressures and internal obstacles mentioned above, it is quite unlikely that intervention at the level of the State will succeed in producing authentic development. However, another option to State-directed intervention does exist. Many non-governmental organizations and private agencies are working in "development" at a regional or local level. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been acclaimed as the solution for carrying out significant efforts in community development and thus, international funding has been targeted towards such NGOs during the past two decades. This has led to a literal proliferation of private development organizations and agencies, with "development experts" appearing from a wide variety of professional disciplines. There are currently over 200 such NGOs in Honduras, representing all kinds of practices and beliefs about "relief" and "development". Millions of dollars have been poured into rural and urban marginal communities in the past two decades via NGO administration and staff. Although certain successful efforts have been documented, a visit to any rural area in Honduras can confirm that NGOs have done very little which is long-term and sustainable, especially after an NGO has left an area.

Although NGOs have fewer external pressures than the State at managing local development, they also face major obstacles. One critical issue that NGOs deal with is their funding instability and dependence on donors. Most NGOs do not have guaranteed incomes to finance their institutional operations. This often leads to increasing rivalry and competition for international resources. NGOs competing for the same funding tend to

become redundant in the communities by offering the same "services" in the same place.

In many cases, communities must not only decide which NGO to participate with, but they

must at times split their loyalties between organizations in order to receive some benefits.

The result has been a created response of dependency on outside assistance, reinforcing

many NGOs' use of quick, short-term solutions, paternalistic hand-outs, and

environmentally damaging practices. Instead of fostering self-reliance, many NGOs have

deepened the problem of passivity and resignation in the face of seemingly insurmountable

problems.

Also, NGOs as a whole have been unable to consolidate a stronger theoretical basis

for their practice. Because development theory and practice is not based on a single

discipline, but is rather, a multi-disciplinary field, the richness and variety of human life and

culture is often narrowly perceived and affected. NGOs tend to focus on specific aspects

or problems of a community, and when they are confronted by the complexities of social

reality, their response falls short of their "theory". With regards to this issue, Eloy Anello

wrote:

> The potency of NGO impact will continue to be limited, relative to the
> magnitude of the problems, until their diverse and multiple efforts converge
> into a synergistic effect ...NGOs must begin conscious efforts to formulate a
> development lexicon that is capable of articulating their visions and their
> alternative development strategies. It is possible that a common language may
> not emerge until the theoretical basis of NGO development work has been
> more rigorously conceptualized and some degree of consensus reached as to
> its validity (1991, p. 7).

Furthermore, many NGOs formulate inaccurate assumptions about people's needs and

wants based on outsiders' perceptions, which often result in an irrelevant practice in the

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field. Their projects tend to correpond more to the changing trends and fads of donor funding rather than to well formulated institutional values, visions, and goals. Thus, NGOs often lose their autonomy and become extended instruments of donor agencies that seek to fulfill their own agendas. NGOs that cater to the needs of the donors end up sacrificing their potential role as articulators of the needs and aspirations of the poor and catalysts of alternative development paths (Anello, 1991).

Although some development agencies have already started rethinking their theory and practice, it is urgent that the NGO movement in Honduras begin formulating a coherent strategy through a process of solidarity, accompanying the communities and populations they serve. Ideally, NGOs can serve to strengthen crucial linkages for a true development practice at various levels. In the first place, an NGO can strengthen linkages *within* a community; to help build a sense of community while accompanying community members in creating a better world for themselves using their own resources, knowledge, and skills. Secondly, an NGO can help create linkages *among* communities, opening possibilities and opportunities for mutual exchanges, resource sharing, and learning experiences. Finally, NGOs have the potential for creating linkages *between* communities and structures at a higher level; helping provide access to financial, technical and political power that normally would be outside of their reach.

In conclusion, all those who are working for "development" in Honduras, including NGOs, the government, and international donors, must first come to an understanding that

"development" efforts can only succeed if these efforts are initiated from the bottom-up, from the people who have the capacity to transform their own destinies as the subjects of their own authentic development, whatever shape or form that may take.

The following chapter will analyze the alternatives which are rising from the grassroots in direct opposition to the dominant models of development. As previously mentioned, the government is unlikely to support alternatives to conventional development programs due to the existing economic and political pressures. Thus, the following section is directed to those who, like myself, are working through non-governmental efforts to help improve the conditions and the quality of life of the most marginalized people in Honduran society.

CHAPTER III

AN ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

In design and implementation we have only intentions, since our knowledge of how to improve the productivity and well-being of the poor majority is limited. -Uphoff, Putting People First, 1985

Development is a process of displacement - good ideas displacing bad ones. -Elias Sanchez, Honduran Agricultural Development Trainer

A. Re-Defining Development for an Alternative Practice

1. Towards a New Goal: Participation, Self-Reliance and Empowerment

In a world of finite resources and growing population, most development experts agree that to work towards a development goal similar to the standard of living now enjoyed by the inhabitants of the richest countries is literally impossible. Indeed, many progressive development thinkers find the goal of economic development as it has been proposed in the past obsolete. Nevertheless the fact remains that the majority of the world's population desperately seeks to meet their most basic needs today: decent shelter and clothing, sufficient nutritious food, public health, and elementary education. Apart from these obvious physical and material needs, we cannot forget those needs that are essential for preserving human dignity and cultural self-reliance. These include securing freedom from the violation of basic human rights, the respect for ethnic and religious differences, and the capacity to participate in political forms that allow people to express their differences (Isbister, 1993)

Although these goals may not seem different from the ones which have been proposed in the past, the outstanding difference in formulating new development goals is the transfer

of power from those who have been dictating the development discourse to those who have been its recipients. According to L.Arizpe, mobilization, self-reliance, and initiatives for poverty alleviation have to be backed by confidence in what people know and have learned to do. She believes that focusing development efforts on validating people's culture and on the preservation of people's knowledge must be central in the fight against poverty (Arizpe, 1988).

Thus, I believe that "authentic" development is a **multidimensional, participatory, sustainable, and empowering process** in which people's cultural and contextual sense of well-being is used as the measure of success. At the risk of prescribing my understanding of development on others, I would like to expand on my view of some key concepts. By the word **"multidimensional"** I am referring to the integration of the following basic factors:

- **Seeking alternative economic change:** includes the creation and access to sources of production and income, improved conditions of material life, and increased purchasing power for the most poor. At the level of the state, this includes advocating for a more equitable distribution of the nation's public resources, applied land reform, and fair wage guarantees.
- **Looking beyond basic needs:** authentic development establishes people's access to health care, education, housing, and other services, in response to their felt needs and with respect to traditional cultural practices and forms of sustenance.

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• **Regenerating political growth:** includes a consideration and restoration of basic human rights, as well as the political freedom to have a voice in deciding issues of social justice, social organization, and public order. Likewise, it is the freedom to seek peace through a contextual concept of cooperation, a better understanding of public issues, and sharing power on a broader basis. It is finding appropriate ways to reinforce norms, laws and regulations which are meant to benefit the most vulnerable members of society.

• **Restoring cultural knowledge:** implies affirming, validating, and restoring people's own identity and self-worth, as well as supporting people's search for their traditional values - meaning systems, beliefs and symbols which provide a purpose for life and history and help people move beyond a passive, fatalistic stance.

These dimensions of authentic progress must be accompanied by an understanding of genuine participation. By the term **"participatory"**, I am referring to a process in which people can gain or improve their capacity to recognize their own problems, their options, and make their own decisions about appropriate solutions. In this sense, participation is a transforming, liberating process; a process which seeks self-reliance and cooperation rather than dependence and domination. "The essence of participatory development is self-management...participatory development is permanent change and ever growing individual freedom" (Gran, 1983, p.169-170).

Participation is an inclusive process, in which the most marginalized can find a voice and a space. This includes women, the elderly, and children for "a participatory process forbids the exclusion of any set of disadvantages for any reason, be it of age, sex, race or creed" (Gran, 1983, p.158). Participatory development finds its strength in the capacity of communities to organize for social action. This is a "grassroots" approach to development, in which the people who are seeking to change their lives also control the way in which change will be brought about.

This type of socio-cultural process is necessarily long-term, and the effects probably cannot be measured in economic terms, although once applied, there will ultimately be definite economic and social repercussions at all levels of society. Development which initiates on the micro "grassroots" level, may hope to affect the macro level eventually and radically, but not initially as a main focus or starting point.

The third aspect of an authentic development process is sustainability. The term "sustainable", refers specifically to environmental and ecological soundness in the practice of development. As mentioned previously, traditional development plans have mismanaged Latin America's valuable and finite natural resources. In 1950, three-quarters of Central America was still covered with forest, whereas today only 30% of forest covers the area. It is estimated that the annual rate of deforestation is 376,000 hectares per year while reforestation is barely 70,000 hectares per year, half of which does not survive due to lack of maintenance (Barzetti and Rovinski, 1992). The consequences of loss of soil,

water and energy sources are devastating to the poor majority who must make their living from the land. The practice of authentic development must not only attempt to counter but also reverse this alarming devastation.

In the past, the proposed objectives of development undermined ecological sustainability. In the '60s and '70s, Central American policies spoke of "incorporating the jungle into the national economy" because tropical forests were seen as an obstacle to development, uncultivated wastelands, and a symbol of national backwardness (Barzetti and Rovinski, 1992). Newer views on ecological sustainability propose that the objectives of development and sustainability be mutually reinforcing; meeting essential needs for food, energy, water, and sanitation while strengthening a cultural awareness and respect for the value of their natural resources. The problem of world hunger cannot be resolved effectively until it is dealt with by local people as a set of local problems of ecology, agriculture, and culture. (Berry, 1981)

The primary emphasis in this view of development is forming solidarity with individual people and entire communities as they seek the reduction of vast economic disparities, the equitable access to life-sustaining goods and resources, and the peaceful support of human life in its many dimensions. For some theorists, the essence of this kind of alternative development is found in the idea of **empowerment**. Empowerment is a *process* that goes beyond participation. This empowering process was described clearly by S. Kindervatter as "people gaining an understanding of and control over social, economic,

and/or political forces in order to improve their standing in society. An empowering process is a means to bring about such understanding and control" (1979, p.150).

Empowerment helps people to liberate themselves from mental and physical dependence. It encompasses people making critical decisions about their own lives, based on self-reliance and sharing of power. It is a real change in the ability of the people to live fuller lives and to have power over their own destinies. It is found in people hearing and validating each others' voices, in providing the weak and the marginalized access to the tools and the materials they need to forge their own destinies. Empowerment embraces the possibility of becoming the producer of one's own welfare, rather than a consumer of others' charity (Gajanayake, 1993).

2.   Conceptualizing an Alternative Development Practice

Having "re-defined" development on the basis of people's participation, self-reliance, and empowerment, the question becomes: how does this development happen? If local people are the subjects and creators of their own development process, what role do the outsiders have? How can people's understanding of development be transformed from the bottom-up?

Indeed, these are crucial questions upon considering how deeply the "development" ideology has permeated most Third World societies. Escobar believes that the first step for the Third World, is to shake off the meanings imposed on them by the "development"

discourse, to open up in a more explicit manner the possibility for a different regime of truth and perception within which a new practice of concern and action is possible. Rather than the prescribed "development", there is an acute need to assert the difference of cultures, the relativity of history, and the plurality of perceptions. Furthermore, he believes that this possibility is already emerging out of the very dynamics of social change happening in the Third World and elsewhere. "Grassroots movements and social movements are appearing, along with powerful critiques of development which are being articulated for the first time in connection with these grassroots forces" (1992, p.412).

These critiques, which have been summarized in the previous chapter, are gathering momentum from a relatively small group of Third World scholars, who from various social science disciplines are engaged in a systematic reflection of the new movements which they see as an alternative to conventional development. Some of these "de-professionalized intellectuals", as they call themselves, include Gustavo Esteva, Vandana Shiva, Majid Rahnema, and Orlando Fals Borda, to name a few (Escobar, 1992; Rahman, 1993). They all belong to this generation who believed at one time, that development could be an answer to colonial forms of domination. Later, as they began to share the people's fate and to perceive many of the destructive effects of development on their lives, they found out that the "remedy" had become in many ways more dangerous than the traditional forms of domination. As Fritjof Capra says to economists:

> What economists need to do most urgently is re-evaluate the entire conceptual foundation and redesign their basic models and theories accordingly. The current economic crisis will be overcome only if economists are willing to participate in the paradigm shift that is now ocurring in all fields. (quoted in Rahman, 1993, p.212)

What Capra, along with other "anti-development" thinkers are primarily concerned with is trying to visualize alternatives to "development". They see their role as trying to develop a critical stance with respect to established scientific discourses, and to understand, articulate, and promote the messages trickling up from the grassroots. Furthermore, in contrast to the conventional development paradigm, these thinkers want to preserve the diversity of cultures and local knowledge. Instead of knowledge created in laboratories in the Northern hemisphere, which in any case cannot possibly be applied successfully to all local situations, local knowledge, local skills and local adaptations are taken into account according to their cultural heritage. Arizpe stresses that "new technologies and industries must be readapted and reinterpreted in different cultural settings. People must be given the confidence so that they can appropriate, discard, mix, remould or create new adaptations of such technologies and industries." (1988, pp.18-19).

Thus, this alternative view of development does not provide "answers" delivered from "above". Alternative development is an organic process, depending on people's healthy growth and creativity, and therefore what works for one group may not work for another except for inspiration. Rahman states: "Development is endogenous - there are no "front runners" to be followed...any attempt to force it towards external standards can only result in maiming it." (1993, p.217). Considering that each one of these grassroots experiences and movements is unique, there is no single term that is used to name them. However, for the purposes of the following discussions, the term "alternative development" will be used in reference to this newer understanding of authentic social change.

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B. The Grassroots Experience

1. What does Alternative Development from the Grassroots Look Like?

Due to new social and political conditions in the Third World, many kinds of grassroots organizations are proliferating and acquiring a force capable of far-reaching social and political transformations. These organizations are essentially local movements, concerned with the day-to day experience of people. The aim of their struggle is not power or economic progress per se, but the establishment of conditions in which they can have greater autonomy over the decisions that affect their lives. Some of these organizations have been more important than others and many are the result of people organizing themselves to prevent or repair the damage done by "development" and to deal with their current problems, creating along the way new political spaces for popular causes (Escobar, 1992). Many conventional development agencies have started to recognize these popular initiatives, and in reaction have begun to use "participatory development" rhetoric without necessarily understanding the basic aspiration and message of local movements; such movements cannot be "coopted" into the conventional development paradigm without being disoriented (Rahman, 1993).

Grassroots movements are not organized around a single issue. Rather, some are constructed around specific problems and hence they tend to disappear as the problem is solved or dealt with; others last longer, resulting in more permanent organizations; a few are actually leading to the formation of important regional movements, becoming in turn a

coalition of many grassroots movements. Many of these movements are aided by a brand

new type of grassroots activist, namely popular leaders, middle-class educated youth,

intellectuals, professionals, and church people who in the past decade have started to work

in considerable numbers with various groups of local people, using novel methods and

advocating new goals (Escobar, 1992).

Although the experience of each one of these movements is unique, and cannot be

applied systematically to each cultural community, it is worthwhile to review a few of

these movements in order to highlight the implications of development by people who are

the subjects of their own actions.

2. Women's Popular Education in Bolivia

Capacitacion Integral de la Mujer Campesina (CIMCA), "Integrated Training of

Peasant Women", is a grassroots women's organization which uses popular education

methods to produce problem-solving leaders and self-confident community organizations

to address the needs of rural villagers of Oruro, Bolivia. CIMCA was founded by two

Bolivian educators, Evelyn Barron and Rita Murillo, who were frustrated with other

development efforts being implemented in Bolivia. Barron, CIMCA's director, pointed

out:

> Women are the great untapped resource of Latin America. Things are
> beginning to change in Oruro because we clearly cannot afford to waste the
> energies of more than half the people. If women are limited to looking after
> kids, tending livestock, and passing out food baskets from overseas aid
> programs, we will never touch the roots of rural poverty (Healy, 1991, p.26)

CIMCA initiated its work in Oruro by going to the different communities and explaining their interest in women's issues and popular education to curious groups who gathered to listen to the outsiders. In each community they would usually find one or two candidates who would be interested in attending a training session to learn to become an educadora popular. However, this approach had many obstacles as it was difficult to provide follow-up to the women educators scattered all over the department. When they were able to visit the newly trained facilitators, the staff was discouraged to see that few families had changed their behavior, and many of the facilitators had abandoned their work. Some women were not allowed to participate by their husbands. Attempts to integrate the men also backfired. Barron concluded that "our early efforts fell short...because our women trainees did not truly value themselves, or have a sense of their own dignity" (Healy, 1991, p.30). This forced CIMCA to get at the motivational factors, the beliefs that form a person's self-image and place in society.

Following those initial experiences, CIMCA synthesized their learning into a three-stage training process. The first stage is a micro-regional training at a centrally located site. This strategy allows for the formation of a mutual support network and for follow-up monitoring. The main technique used during the training for dialogue and consciousness-raising is a rotafolio, a flipchart with drawings conveying experiences from the peasant women's lives. The channel for change is directed toward community organizations. Before the first phase of training is over, the trainees trace the rotafolios to take back home for nine weeks of work with a local organization. The second stage is a

second set of workshops for those educadoras who show special promise. These

workshops take the concepts learned initially to the regional and national level, focusing

on such issues as "marginality" and effective action. The third stage is training on

technical subjects such as community health, animal husbandry and agronomy. CIMCA's

cadre of popular educators have a firm sense of self and society, and are highly motivated

to work with their communities and to learn new skills. One educadora even put a clause

in her wedding vows obligating her spouse to support her work as an educadora popular.

CIMCA uses four core staff members for trainings, although it is unclear from the

documentation whether they are educated professionals. However, they also use

educadoras, paraprofessionals who have gone through the process already to do parts of

the training. This work, and the work of the other village educadoras is apparently

voluntary, there is no remuneration apart from the self-fulfillment and high motivation that

comes from the trainings. Peasant women are able to break out of traditional roles to

assume positions of leadership and organization that were denied to them before. A

unique strategy in this grassroots movement was the possibility of identification, selection,

motivation, and support for such non-traditional staff (Healy, 1991).

3.   "Learning from each other" - Inspiration and Example from Nicaragua

After the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua in 1979, there was a general

determination to promote "health as a right"; to equip local communities to identify their

own needs, and to support them in organizing themselves to meet these needs as best they

could. The emphasis was on people actively participating in the development of their own health programs. In a relatively short time, with very few resources, many achievements were noted in the health sector, including the establishment of a national health system; the vast reduction of infant mortality rate, and the success of mass immunisation programs against killer diseases like polio and measles. The World Health Organization acclaimed Nicaragua as a model for developing countries (Chamberlain, 1993, p.31)

The Sandinistas saw community development as a means of getting local people involved in solving their own problems. Seeing the results confirmed how very effective learning from each other and taking action together can be, even under very difficult political and economic conditions. The present case study is based on the observations of a study tour group who visited three regions of the country: the municipality of Santa Lucia, the city of Leon, and the city of Managua. In Santa Lucia, the study tour visited the "health brigadistas" or volunteers who learned basic health skills at seminars, passed these skills on to others, and made themselves available to help their local communities, sometimes going house to house, or visiting parents with children at school, or attending religious meetings. No formal education was necessary to be a brigadistas, and the youngest members were only 16 years old. Because malnutrition was a common problem, a women's family garden cooperative was started through the initiative of the women. They were able to obtain support from different international groups and 29 women began to work the land collectively. At first the men were skeptical about the women producing,

but upon seeing the results they began to provide support. The women are growing all kinds of vegetables and are hoping to organize more women, especially the younger ones.

In Leon, women have organized themselves into a collective movement called AMLAE (the Luisa Espinosa Association of Nicaraguan Women). This agency provides a variety of services to women, offering a space for women to gain awareness of their problems so they can become part of the struggle to change attitudes. There are training meetings to share ideas on legal aid, birth control, delivering babies, and various issues that arise locally. Their motto is: "There is always a solution!" In Managua, the tour group visited a wheelchair repair workshop run by people with disabilities. It originated from the need for more mechanics, and it seemed obvious to train the wheelchair users. The workshop teaches basic self-help, so when people come in for repair, they teach them how to maintain their wheelchairs in optimum condition. People who come in are asked for a contribution only, and the rest is subsidized through donations and bicycle repairs. Due to their success, the workshop has plans for future expansion through a mobile workshop which would visit the entire country.

Through these local movements, people learned from each other by sharing basic skills within their local communities through a "multiplier effect". This community based method of development provides information and knowledge which is accessible and clearly presented. For example, the training of the "health brigadistas" takes place where they live. Thus, the health brigadistas become a support service for their own friends,

neighbors, and family. These people are empowered without sacrificing their homes, cultural values, or relationships. As one Nicaraguan expressed: "This is the legacy of the revolution, to be able to work in community action." (Chamberlain, 1993).

In conclusion, these cases illustrate how diverse methods create local solutions to local problems. The process used in the cases above combines consciousness-raising, self-motivation, and learning technical skills. Furthermore, it appears that training and support can be most influential when the participants have an active role in the dissemination of knowledge. The results in both these case studies confirm how very effective learning from each other and taking action together can be. Perhaps the essential aspect of a grassroots movement is to provide the initial space in which the people themselves can come together to learn and take action according to their needs.

C. The Basis for an Alternative Development Practice

1. From Beneficiary to Participant: Building People's Self-Esteem

If the world over local people are made to feel proud of their cultural heritage, then we will not end this century as the Millennium of the Lost Traditions. - Arizpe, Culture in International Development, p.19

One of the characteristics of conventional development programs is the subtly demeaning labels that are often used in reference to the people who are the objects of such programs. These labels include such negative terms as: "the poor", "the needy", "the marginalized", "the beneficiaries", and so on. These terms are problematic because they

tend to establish a dichotomy in which people view themselves as either haves or have

nots. Because this is a very narrow, simplistic, and paternalistic view of the world, it

places the majority of the people in an inferior, incapable role. Unfortunately, this

message continues to reinforce a passive and fatalistic outlook on life, as people internalize

and equate the image of "poor" with "incompetent", "beneficiary" with "dependent",

"marginalized" with "unskilled".

In contrast, an alternative development practice must be based on individuals who are

direct participants: creators and actors in their own process. As such, the participants are

the ones who define the goals, control the resources, and direct the processes affecting

their lives. Once people recognize their capabilities and potential for change, the cloak of

dependency and resignation can begin to lift, and a sense of self-esteem may be

heightened. With self-esteem, people are more likely to initiate a process of change and

to continue and persist in this process even when results cannot be seen in the short-term.

This is the essence of a sustainable process of social change. As the previously discussed

case of Bolivian women's education demonstrated, once the women who participated in

the program began to value themselves and have a sense of their own dignity and place in

society, the popular education program continued with great success.

One of the most important ways of building self-esteem is to validate people's

knowledge. Self-esteem stems from placing value on the things people know and

understand; their life experience, their skills, their traditional knowledge, and their physical

strength. Arizpe stated: "Knowledge is the backbone of a culture: if this is undermined, the whole social fabric of that culture will fall apart. And it is knowledge evolved during thousands of years..." (1988, p.18). Thus, an alternative development practice must begin by validating people's knowledge and building their self-esteem.

2. Leadership and Organization for Mobilization

Local leadership and organization are two other essential aspects of a successful grassroots movement. Individuals must create groups to enhance their power and ability to deal with external agents, bureaucratic imperatives and elite economic interests (Gran, 1983). However, the issues of leadership and organization may be some of the most difficult issues confronted since these concepts are so value-laden and culture-bound. Different communities and groups of people perceive and practice leadership, decision-making, power sharing and organizing in very different terms, some which may not fit at all with an outsider's sense of fairness, participation, and democracy. As was referred to previously, Escobar indicated that many Third World professionals are now accompanying endogenous social movements, to hear their voices, validate their messages, and articulate it for the powerful elites. But what happens when those voices enter in conflict with ones' personal values stance? For example, in Honduras, traditional village structure includes a *cacique*, a sort of unofficial male chief, who everyone recognizes as the leader and main decision-maker. If the *cacique* is the only one making decisions for mobilizing the village, there is obviously no sense of shared leadership and participation.

Undoubtedly there are many equally valid ways to achieve human growth and progress. We have mentioned that an alternative development will take many different shapes and forms. But I believe that whatever form it takes, there are certain values that must be critically analyzed and agreed upon by the members of a community or group. These values must guide the process, including the essential tasks of organizing for action and promoting leadership. In the next chapter, these values will be discussed more closely as an important aspect in training leaders and facilitators.

Among the various types of leadership that can emerge from a social movement, the one that may be most significant is the facilitator. The facilitator will be the one who will help the people be consistent with their expressed needs and goals. A good facilitator will also help build-up people's self-esteem by promoting a deeper level of commitment and participation. The local facilitator will be sensitive and attuned to local conditions, and when serving as a link with other communities and outside institutions, will make sure that the people's issues are given priority.

The task and role of a facilitator is an immense challenge. Although it is one of the most essential elements for leadership in alternative development processes, it is often overlooked as an important issue to understand and support. I believe that one of the reasons that conventional development programs are not sustained and even have outright failures, is because not enough attention and support is provided to the facilitators who are at the forefront of a development effort. Therefore, private organizations and individuals

interested in collaborating with an alternative development process should encourage and help strengthen the facilitators as part of the local leadership. This must include listening to their needs, building upon their skills and knowledge, and forming networks in which solidarity with other leaders and facilitators can be found. Because alternative development is people-centered, taking time and energy to form a solid human infrastructure is the best possible investment that can be made.

Being mindful that leadership in grassroots movements is defined in many different ways by local communities, the remaining chapters will focus on the issues of selecting and training leaders as facilitators for alternative development processes.

CHAPTER IV

THE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT FACILITATOR

A. The Role of the Local Facilitator

1. A Crucial Definition: What is a Facilitator?

Development programs of all kinds have long made use of facilitators at the local

level to implement their projects and plans. From a brief review of development literature,

it is apparent that facilitators have been defined, selected, and recruited from a wide

variety of sources, depending on the development program's philosophy, purpose, and

practice (Bennett, 1986; Etling, 1975; Werner, 1982; Rahman, 1993). However, certain

kinds of facilitators have met with greater success than others, and it would be useful to

consider their local level strategies and experiences, as these lessons can be valuable in

conceptualizing and proposing an alternative development process. Drawing from past

experience, I believe that the facilitators working for an authentic development process are

crucial elements of social change which cannot be overlooked. This chapter will consider

the work of facilitators from the perspective of various thinkers, including professionals

and colleagues who have worked closely with local level facilitators, as well as from

personal experience.

What is the meaning of the term "facilitator"? The word itself obviously comes from

the verb "to facilitate" which literally means to make easier, to assist. So, what does a

person working for alternative development facilitate or make easier? This is perhaps the

hardest question to answer, due to the differing points of view on alternative development

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and the uniqueness of each experience. As mentioned before, development arises from a variety of theoretical fields, hence a single definition for a development facilitator is unlikely to be found; in fact, many different labels are used in conventional development programs to describe aspects of community work, such as: "promoter", "extensionist", "trainer", "technician", "animator", "volunteer", and so on. Hence, differing labels and definitions reflect different approaches to development and social change. The term "facilitator", however, is proposed for an alternative development practice and will be used in the present discussion because it conveys a broader meaning of working *with* the community in facilitating a process that is authentically the people's as opposed to taking charge of the process.

One view of a facilitator found in the literature (Bennett, 1986, p.34-38) is that the facilitator is a temporary community member who works as a consultant by helping people examine their problems before undertaking a problem-solving approach. Furthermore, the facilitator is a "process technician", a person who brings knowledge, skills, and outside resources to the community. This view of the facilitator is clearly from an outsider perspective, as an "expert" who will lead the community to take the necessary steps for their continued progress and development. Some examples of this type of facilitator include Peace Corps volunteers, agricultural extensionists or specialists, and professionals hired as consultants for a specific task.

An alternative perspective of facilitators is found in a large number of grassroots program descriptions. One example of this perspective sees facilitators as: "people from the community itself, trained by the program, who are not teachers in the traditional sense, but serve as resources that promote, catalyze, and stimulate learning..." (Etling, 1975, p.61). This view emphasizes the role of the "insiders", the local community members as leaders and organizers, as well as owners of a community process. This view is also advocated by a program in Ghana supported by the University of Massachusetts, Center for International Education: "A facilitator can be any local leader who has an interest in and a commitment to assisting his or her community in improving its economic, educational, health or other condition and in solving related problems" (Kinsey & Bing, 1978).

For me, the essential aspects of a definition for a local facilitator can be found in the words "resource", "commitment", and "leader". As a resource, the local facilitator serves as a crucial link among the members of the community, identifying and mobilizing people's time, talents, material goods, and infrastructure. The facilitator also serves as a link between community members and outside structures. Commitment is a belief in the people's possibilities; in accompanying rather than directing, in raising questions rather than providing answers, in self reliance rather than dependence. Commitment is reflected in both the facilitator's behavior and attitude. Such commitment comes from a person who is personally invested in the community's well-being as a local community member. As a leader, the facilitator continually seeks to create spaces of dialogue and opportunities of

service for the most needy members of the community. This is a different conception of leadership, one which values the talents and opinions of all community members equally. The facilitator-leader motivates people to learn and is a vital role model for new leaders and facilitators.

In essence, an alternative development facilitator is a local person who is involved in the community's process of growth and demonstrates commitment to being a leader and serving as a resource for his or her community in the resolution of its own problems.

2. Selection Criteria: Who can Serve as a Facilitator?

After at least two decades of experiences in alternative development and grassroots organizing, is there any formed consensus about finding and recruiting good facilitators? The *Handbook on Training for Post-Literacy and Basic Education* (Ouane, 1990) sites several sources from which adult education programs have selected or recruited their grassroots level personnel. They state that priority is given in most countries to school teachers, usually primary school teachers, in spite of the ongoing debate as to whether or not they are competent to teach young people and adults within nonformal education settings. Also mentioned are students and other volunteers, such as community leaders, soldiers, housewives, extension workers, and neoliterates willing to share newly acquired knowledge. For most of these people, work in adult education is a part-time activity, taken on as a responsibility which is additional to their normal occupation.

In Helping Health Workers Learn, Werner (1982) said theory demonstrates that community health work is easier for the local person than for an outsider, because people know and trust the person, and he or she knows the community. However, experience shows that at first it is often harder for the local person since the people do not really believe that someone they have known all their lives can teach them something new. But in time, health workers from the community can do more to help build people's self-confidence and self-reliance. A stranger to a community, no matter how well he or she works, perpetuates dependency on outside help. Only when a health worker is from the community can his or her example show "what we people in this village can do for ourselves" (1982, p.2). Hence, if the goal of alternative development is self-reliance and authentic development, it would seem that local facilitators are more capable of achieving these goals in the long run.

If facilitators are preferentially selected from the villages, by and for the villagers, is there any place for educated or professional development workers? Very few cases are cited of programs which use highly educated facilitators. Werner believes that the educational gap between highly educated professionals and those who experience the wisdom, hardships, strengths and weaknesses of the people who still live close to the land, the seasons, and physical work is usually too large to overcome (1982). This does not imply that it is impossible for an educated outsider to become part of the community; I have known several cases where professionals from the United States have become a part of a rural community, living with the people and sharing their social reality with solidarity

and commitment. This is an issue that needs further reflection based on experiences of current alternative development movements and their link with outsiders in the process.

Apart from being selected from the community, are there other selection criteria that should be considered? Some programs require basic literacy from their facilitators, some require three to six years of schooling, others require completion of secondary school (Ouane, 1990; Werner, 1982; Etling, 1975). However, educational requirements may be a pitfall since persons who have completed secondary school tend to leave development programs quickly as they are more interested in getting "higher education" or "better jobs" in the city (Werner, 1982). It may be that other criteria which point to the more subtle qualities needed in facilitation are more essential. Willingness and commitment seem to be two such essential criteria. A report on the Nicaraguan literacy crusade stated: "The success of training programs rests on the willingness of the people to participate... essentially it depends on their commitment or potential commitment to the program. This commitment is not always present in the case of students and soldiers whose participation is compulsory" (Ouane, 1990, p.22).

While conducting several informal interviews on the subject of facilitation, I asked several colleagues to recall what criteria was used to select facilitators in their experience[1]. Rita Raboin, who worked for sixteen years among Christian base communities in Brazil,

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[1]   In an effort to include different experiences and current points of view, I conducted several informal interviews with colleagues at the Center for International Education: Rita Raboin, Joan Cohen, and Elias Moning. Their complete responses to the interviews can be found in Appendix A.

explained that different leaders were selected to work in teams according to the needs of the moment and for different purposes, such as to teach catechism or to lead the Celebration of the Word. People were asked to serve according to their personal qualities and characteristics. In her words: "[We chose] those who knew how to listen well, who could discern and make questions at the right time."

Joan Cohen who worked training grassroots facilitators for ACOGIPRI, a Salvadoran organization working with disabled women, indicated that the women facilitators were identified by the group and self-selected, depending on the skills they had. Those skills included such things as experience in administration, advocacy, and so forth. The group of six women were selected because they were considered vocal. They were outspoken in different, necessary ways; some through sign language! Elias Moning, an Indonesian trainer who conducted three-month intensive trainings for facilitators in Jakarta, Indonesia, said that the organization which conducted the training based its selection criteria on people who had experience working at the grassroots level and had the capacity for carrying out a democratic process. They also selected people who had been trainees in a process before becoming trainers, thus participating in a training of trainers was a requirement.

Because of the monumental effort facilitators confront daily in their work, it is not an easy task to find the appropriate persons who can meet the demands of the role they must play, and who also possess most of the characteristics or qualities which programs and

communities expect of a development worker. Thus, a brief analysis of the role of

facilitators, their functions and characteristics will be undertaken in the following section.

3. Functions and Characteristics of a Facilitator

An alternative development process involves eliciting relevant skills, knowledge, and

attitudes among the members of the community. Since this process comes from the

community itself, the facilitator must remain aware of his or her role which is a response

to the people's initiatives and creative self-action. The facilitator should also think about

the personal characteristics that can assist him or her in eliciting skills and knowledge from

the people. Too often this is not the case, as little time is devoted to analyzing the

functions and characteristics essential to facilitation.

Although a facilitator assumes a variety of roles, the aspect which ties them all

together is the ability to analyze and create new approaches to action in community

problem solving (Bennett, 1986). Thus, the role of the facilitator as a catalyst in this

process could be referred to as a central function. According to Rahman (1993), the

central spirit behind facilitation in grassroots work is the view of men and women as

creative beings and a desire to see the creative possibilities of the people released. A

facilitator encourages the people to regard themselves with self-esteem, as principle actors

in their lives and as persons capable of understanding their reality and looking for solutions

to their problems through concrete actions. Facilitation also involves generating a spirit of

solidarity and collective action among the people since "the scope of creative action to

solve problems and face difficult situations is enhanced through the collective rather than through individual action." (1993, p.156).

Through the short interviews held with my colleagues, I also encountered very specific functions that were carried out by facilitators according to the uniqueness of their roles. For R. Raboin, working with the base community leaders, the role of the the lay leaders was to help the people in their perception of reality, and to organize around an issue on the people's own terms. The process which the lay leaders were expected to facilitate included helping the people to listen to the word of God, linking it with reality, conducting a social analysis, determining tasks and steps to take, and evaluating the process. The facilitator was to insure that the whole community learned through this process.

In the case of ACOGIPRI, J. Cohen said that the six women facilitators formed part of the coordinating committee for the institute. Although they were involved in the training, they each worked on the part of the project that was comfortable to them. Their role was to make sure that the participant's needs were met and to use their particular skills for training. In the Indonesian training, E.Moning mentioned that the role that was expected from the facilitators was to use an alternative approach for conducting training. This approach was to be based on enhancing discussion, not just expecting people to be passive listeners. The facilitators were expected to help people recognize the value found

within themselves and help them express it through participation so they could gradually

gain confidence.

In summary, some of the functions mentioned which are essential to the facilitator's

role include the following:

- Increasing the participants' self-confidence and self-esteem
- Increasing community collaboration
- Promoting greater participation in family and community decision-making
- Developing the desire and ability to take advantage of existing resources
- Participating in monitoring and evaluating processes
- Generating awareness of the socio-economic and political situation
- Securing help from outside development structures and organizations for the economic improvement of the learners and the community. (Etling, 1975, p.63; Ouane, 1990, pp.24-25).

We cannot disregard the fact that the role of the facilitator is centered around

working with real women and men, their families, their kinship and organizational

structures, and the essence of their daily lives. Thus, a facilitator must be able to relate

well to people, to have a human quality which opens up the possibility of close interaction

among community members. While holding a dialogue with a group of facilitators about

four years ago, I asked them what qualities they would like to have in a facilitator if they

were the community members. Their responses echo the sentiments of other development

workers I found in the literature reviewed (Bennett, 1990; Etling, 1975; Werner, 1982;

Galbraith, 1994). The following list is quite representative of their perceptions:

A facilitator should be:
- friendly, kind, and sensitive
- responsible and dependable
- honest; have good judgement
- interested in and committed to community work
- accepted and respected by all
- a user of simple language

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- open to new ideas; creative and dynamic
- a good leader and organizer
- someone who understands and respects people's beliefs
- not individualistic; involves people in decisions
- identified with and protective of the interests of those in greatest need
- someone preferably with experience in the area of work: health, literacy, etc.
- an example, demonstrating the behavior he/she is trying to teach

Needless to say, the demands and challenges of the facilitator's role is immense.

Likewise, no single person can be expected to meet all the qualities mentioned above.

However, the aim of a good facilitator should be to strive for those characteristics which

will enhance his role as a catalyst and leader among the people, and will serve as an

inspiration of motivation, commitment, and self-esteem.

B. A Basis for Facilitating an Alternative Development

Having looked at the characteristics and functions a local facilitator might have, it is

worthwhile to turn to certain fundamental skills and theoretical knowledge I consider

meaningful for facilitating grassroots or alternative development movements. These skills

and knowledge include three basic aspects: the conceptual base, the people skills, and the

values and motivation for alternative development. These aspects are not exclusive; there

are many other skills and experiences which are necessary, and are discussed in community

development literature. However, I have focused on these aspects which based on the

literature reviewed, the discussions with fellow colleagues, and personal experience have

seemed most important for the success of a facilitator as well as the most neglected areas

in training and support.

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1. A Conceptual Base for Alternative Development

Reflection without action is mere verbalism.
Action without reflection is pure activism. - A. Hope and S. Timmel, Training
for Transformation, 1984.

During the years I spent working with facilitators of several Honduran development

programs, I learned that very few facilitators had a clear understanding of the conceptual

aspects of their work, even those with years of experience. Their understanding was

mostly limited to the transfer of rural technology and practical skills. Although consistent

training enhanced their understanding of their work, it was not sufficient to have a great

impact on their community work. They continued to do the same kinds of things, using

basically the same methods as before.

Perhaps one of the first steps towards alternative development is for people at the

grassroots to understand and reflect on various aspects of development and social change.

By this I am not referring to university level studies in history, economics, and political

science. Rather I am visualizing local facilitators and community leaders who can utilize a

simple recounting and understanding of the history of the region and the country, as well

as an in-depth reflection on the social, economic, and political forces that shape their

community and society. According to Bennett (1986), an important element which

enhances the effectiveness of the facilitator's role is an understanding of the social systems

that operate in the communities, along with the skill and flexibility in applying this

knowledge to existing problems in communities. I agree with his appraisal and would add

to this a basic understanding of the social systems that operate *outside* of the community

itself, and which have an impact on the community's social situation and reality. This

would include comprehending simple, but relevant aspects of history, politics and international economics and how they impact the lives of the community members.

A conceptual base for alternative development must also include a critical review of development theories and practices which have been actively promoted and attempted in the past few decades, as well as a look at the results of those theories and practices in real life. Even though some of these theories can be quite complex and difficult to understand, even for highly educated scholars, development theory can be simplified through concrete examples, critical analysis, and simulations. I believe that grassroots facilitators who have a clearer understanding of those factors which affect them and their communities will also have a deeper commitment as well as a sense of purpose and vision for change.

A conceptual base for alternative development as described above can provide the tools for understanding social reality as it evolves. Thus, it is important that facilitators keep working at this conceptual base, continually expanding on it, and incorporating new elements that become relevant or important to reflect upon. Perhaps the biggest challenge is to look at all the complex pieces of social reality and figure out how they interrelate and how they fit together to create a whole. If people can begin to see themselves as necessary elements for a healthy society, their sense of self-esteem and self-confidence can be greatly enhanced. Local facilitators can be crucial in elevating people's confidence and in reversing the damaging effects of a cultural passivity and resignation handed down from

past generations and of development programs which have viewed people mostly as objects of pity and charity.

Furthermore, I see this construction of a conceptual base as a process of analysis and reflection that is essential for a meaningful *praxis*. By *praxis* I am referring to the integration of theory and practice as has been described by the well-known educator and activist, Paulo Freire. Freire wrote: "Consciousness of and action upon reality are therefore inseparable constituents of the transforming act by which people become beings of relation" (1993, p. 53). Praxis is an acquired skill for facilitators, community leaders, and other involved members of the community that will carry over to many other local initiatives. It is also an inclusive process through which facilitators seek to integrate the vast and useful knowledge, experience, and common sense of the participating community members for the resolution of the people's real issues. These are the crucial elements involved in authentic development and human growth.

2. People skills

How can I teach but to a friend? - Aristotle

As previously discussed, facilitators working with grassroots communities in an alternative development process are essentially leaders and catalysts for resolving people's real problems. As such, facilitators must be able to model an alternative leadership which is culturally sensitive, but also based on cooperation, participation, and non-hierarchical decision-making. This is a type of leadership in direct contrast to the one practiced as a

norm in Honduras: the traditional *cacique* (village chief), the authoritarian teacher, the manipulative politician, the powerful and fearful military. These kinds of traditional leaders have rarely demonstrated interest in consulting opinions or validating other's experiences or knowledge; rather these are the leaders who have promoted their own interests, a culture of silence, resignation, and passivity.

An alternative development facilitator must therefore focus on reversing these conditions by creating a caring environment in which everyone feels accepted and included. In effect, most facilitators need to "re-learn" concepts of leadership and teaching, perhaps initially from seeing or being exposed to different models, and then by having the opportunity to practice the skills needed for a different kind of facilitation and leadership. Undoubtedly, this is a process in human growth that takes much time, dedicated practice, and continual self-assessment. In reference to leadership, J. Cohen said that in her experience, it is important to let the facilitators decide which pieces they want to tackle rather than trying to change an entire oppressive system all at once. Participation is not an all or nothing proposition. Facilitators can begin by negotiating change in the leadership style in stages while holding onto those structures they are familiar with already.

Facilitators should also learn how to create an appropriate space and climate for discussion and learning among people. Thus, it is important that facilitators reflect on their own learning experiences and define for themselves what are the specific attitudes

and behaviors that have helped them the most in the past as well as those that hindered their learning, so that they can center their skills around those things they have identified. It is quite probable that they will discover that effective learning involves building trust, communicating respect, and sharing interests with participating groups of people. Although it is easier for some people to build trusting and respectful relationships than for others, these are also people skills which can be acquired through experiential learning and continual self-assessment. In practicing these skills, it is important to keep in mind that respect and trust are cultural attitudes that are understood through socialization, thus facilitators need to be consistent in how respect and trust are transmitted, practiced and perceived.

Another important skill a facilitator needs is to be able to listen well. If a facilitator really listens to people's concerns and issues, there will be a growing confidence from the people towards the facilitator, as they will see someone who is truly interested in their well-being and growth. Listening seems to be such a simple thing; nonetheless, it is an acquired skill which takes great effort and energy. There are no "shortcuts" possible when we are truly listening to people.

A related "people skill" is the art of questioning. Critical questioning is learning to ask the appropriate questions at the right time. It is delving deeper into people's concerns in order to get at the root causes of the problems. By learning to question, facilitators can orally research a problem in any informal, popular setting and thus verify the problem of

the people. Once verified, facilitators can attest that the problem is credible and viable in

the sense that it is generated from the people's real interest. Questioning combined with

listening will form the foundation for social action. Otherwise solving problems would be

imposed from top to bottom and thus be oppressive. As R. Raboin said in our

conversation:

> "People are already resourceful, intelligent people. We just need to bring it to
> the surface more, to bring out an attitude of learning from the people by
> asking questions. One question generates another, until the questioning spirit
> remains in people."

E. Moning also reflected similar opinions about people skills. In his experience he

believed that the most important skills a facilitator can have are: the skill of being a

discussion starter to encourage people to speak. He felt this was essential because "when

you speak you think; and when you think you gain confidence as well as a value of self".

He also said that facilitators need the skill of being good listeners, and the skill of being

"confirmers", people who confirm and affirm what other people say. Finally, he said that

facilitators need to be colleagues; friends rather than experts in a certain field of

knowledge. "Facilitators need to focus on the *process* so the people are ready to take the

knowledge when they ask for it. A facilitator needs patience."

The three basic skills mentioned above: participatory leadership; building a climate of

trust and respect; and listening and questioning are important because they are the basis

for other related "people skills" including such skills as using appropriate training methods,

facilitating healthy group dynamics, negotiation and advocacy. These skills can gradually

build upon each other and eventually become integrated into a holistic lifestyle that will be

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the most appropriate and relevant facilitation style for the people of the community. The most important outcome for a good "people" facilitator is that the people become aware of their own strengths, work towards their own goals, and discover what they have learned about themselves from the process.

3. Personal Values and Individual Motivation

If we only plant seeds in the ground, not in people's hearts, then what have we done? - Camilo Mejía, Honduran farmer

Facilitators are influenced in their actions by the same kinds of attitudes, values, and motivations that affect all human beings. In order to be effective in grassroots organizations and social change, facilitators should develop an understanding of their own values and beliefs and how these influence their actions (Bennett, 1986). This is obviously a great challenge, as most of us tend to go about our daily lives without paying much attention to what we believe and how this influences our actions and decisions. We are often oblivious to the lens that we wear, the lens of values and beliefs which tint our perceptions of social reality. Thus, facilitators must learn to take off their lens in order to "see" these values and beliefs and understand them from a different perspective. Although not an easy task, this can be accomplished through a process of critical reflection and action as described previously, but turned towards themselves as individuals and inner beings; towards an analysis of the thought processes that shape a person's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. By understanding themselves better, facilitators will be able to screen out influences that are not genuinely arising from the community.

Furthermore, I believe that facilitators must also develop an awareness of the values, assumptions, and ideologies implied in the methodology used for community work if the process is to be a transformative one. This is greatly related to the conceptual basis for development described in the previous discussion. Whether conscious of it or not, local facilitators transmit the values and ideology of a social change effort. Thus, facilitators must be clear about what their development program is based on, as well as the implications of what is being proposed to meet the needs of the people. If facilitators remain conscious of these implications, it is more likely that their own personal value stance will be consistent and supportive of the values and ideology implicit in the community efforts being carried out.

Although values and beliefs are usually grounded on cultural premises and socialization, I believe that there are certain values and attitudes that are worth cultivating in alternative development facilitators. One specific value is related to group participation. I believe that facilitators cannot really function effectively if they believe that there is a leadership elite, or that people are incapable of making their own decisions and prefer to be told what to do. Rather, facilitators must work under the conviction that people do have motivation to act and that their role is to find ways to mobilize people to take action (Bennett, 1986).

Also, as mentioned before, many facilitators and development workers come from a background of giving technical information or advice in which they play the role of the

"expert" or the "authority". However, alternative development facilitators should come to value their roles as *enablers* of a process (Srinivasan, 1992). It may be difficult initially for a facilitator to perceive the difference between being the expert and being the enabler, and it may require greater support and training to develop the skills required. But if the goal is to empower people for self-reliance, then people must have a sense of ownership which comes from sharing and discussing together, and not by steering people into the "right answers". Thus a high value on participation and empowerment of the community members should be encouraged in alternative development workers.

A third value I would further include is the explicit affirmation and belief in the value and sacredness of life in all shapes and forms. This includes recognizing and encouraging the uniqueness and potential of each person, as well as affirming each one's intrinsic human dignity and worth. It also includes respecting and placing value on other living creatures and plant life found in nature, as these sustain human life. In Honduras, it is crucial to rescue these cultural values in sight of the widespread destruction and devastation of our non-renewable natural resources as well as the violence and destruction to human life so prevalent in our communities. Although undoubtedly there are many complex social causes for the destruction and violence found in Honduras, we must at least begin by affirming life in every way.

For local and outside people involved with supporting alternative development facilitators, it is important to keep in mind that facilitators need a profound sense of

motivation in order to sustain the physical, mental, and emotional hardships that they must endure in the difficult and arduous task of mobilizing people for effective change. Because working with people is an unpredictable and risky job, facilitators often face disappointment, frustration, and discord among the different factions of a community. Thus, facilitators must be constantly re-charged by their own vision as well as through external affirmation of their efforts. To this end, I believe that a deeper understanding of what motivates facilitators on the long-term should be attempted.

C. Considerations for Training Facilitators

The integration of the skills, knowledge, and values mentioned above into the lives of alternative development facilitators is not an easy process. Much of the learning of the necessary skills must be done "hands-on" and usually through much trial and error. However, I do believe that training can play an important role for facilitators, mostly because it can create the space for reflection and dialogue that is so necessary for internalizing critical concepts. Thus, training may be considered an educational process in a purposeful, directed sense. It involves the acquisition of knowledge, awareness, attitudes and skills related to the roles and tasks of facilitators. Training provides the opportunity for facilitators to enhance their level of competence not only in their area of technical expertise, but also in shaping their attitudes and behaviors. "Training for facilitators is not related solely to acquiring practical skills and methods, but also to the

conceptual frameworks and intellectual commitment facilitators need to put those skills and methods to use" (Ouane, 1990, p.30).

The training of facilitators is never a neutral undertaking. There are many different models of training programs being implemented already for community development workers and facilitators, from hands-on training to professional training. Jones (1992), who conducted research on these kinds of training programs, criticizes this latter movement to "professionalize community development" as a means of preventing change and maintaining the status quo rather than questioning the system which keeps the people powerless. For Jones, one of the greatest benefits of intensive, short courses is that they can be based in the community rather than taking participants out. In this way, a cadre of community workers who learn from and teach each other can be established more closely (1992, pp.211-219).

Because alternative development is based on the premise that people must carry out their own decisions based on their own local knowledge, I believe that the training of grassroots facilitators must be immersed in the context of their daily lives. Facilitators, as leaders and members of a real community must deal with the same struggles, sorrows, and triumphs that the people they work with do. A highly respected colleague in Honduras, Milton Flores, director of an agricultural training and information clearinghouse expressed his beliefs to me in this regard:

> "I am convinced that we learn by doing. I believe that it does not matter how
> well structured a training workshop is; if it is only a workshop and does not
> respond to a real *vivencia* (real life experience), if it is only a laboratory, if it is

not a real situation, truly the people are not able to internalize, to make their own the importance of what has been learned. Thus, things will change if instead of taking time out of their busy schedules, facilitators can learn these skills during the course of their work."

My experience with training also suggests that it is not possible to internalize the abstract concepts and value-systems required for an alternative practice of development simply through short-term training sessions and workshops. We cannot expect that grassroots level facilitators and development workers will be able to demonstrate a distinct methodology that reflects a critical understanding of the social system which surrounds them unless they become part of a training process planned as a long-term learning, promoting a cumulative effect. Srinivasan (1992) also voiced these sentiments, stating that some program planners are under the mistaken impression that one training workshop is all that is needed for their experienced community leaders to become facilitators. Unfortunately, one or two workshops, no matter how excellent they may be, can never develop the level of skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to be a good development worker or facilitator. Facilitators must keep working at it until concepts and skills are internalized. Since the nurturing and supporting of people's growth is an important and necessary task, she believed that anyone who works directly at the village level should receive facilitative training. (Srinivasan, 1992).

Although there are many cultural and contextual forms in which training and follow-up support could be conducted, some guiding principles for training facilitators might include the following aspects:

- The active participation of facilitators in all aspects of the training
- Learning in the training programs should be based on the learner's experience
- Mutual learning opportunities should be provided
- Learning how to learn should be promoted
- Learning by doing is essential in training
- Exposure to a variety of field situations is necessary in the training of facilitators
- Training should reflect the integration of theory and practice
- Training should use a variety of methods and materials
- Training should be personally satisfying to the facilitators (Ouane, 1990, pp.32-33).

One other important aspect of training which should not be overlooked is the natural process of learning which occurs spontaneously through interaction among participants. A substantial amount of nonformal learning takes place when people become involved in their community's development activities; perhaps more than they or community development facilitators realize. The experimental knowledge and skills base that adults have is substantial, imaginative, and practical. It is a rich resource to draw upon. (Lackey, 1992, pp.220-233).

The trainers of community development workers and facilitators have a key role to perform in reflecting the attitudes and values promoted through alternative development processes. Srinivasan believed that participatory approaches, like any innovation, involves taking risks. A new vision and a new style of leadership is also needed at the managerial level of programs. Therefore, training programs for trainers, supervisors, technical personnel and field staff must be grounded in the same principles which underlie community level learning (Srinivasan, 1992).

The final aim of training facilitators is to contribute to the attainment of the people's goals for their community, since the effectiveness of the facilitators can greatly influence the process carried out, consequently playing an important role in the community's success. Training is thus a process of acquiring the tools that will help people attain self-reliance through participation and local empowerment. The following chapter will propose a training strategy for local facilitators of alternative development movements.

Chapter V

A Facilitator Training Strategy for Alternative Development
in Honduras

Since an alternative development process begins at the grassroots level, a training

strategy for local facilitators must also start at the community level so that training

becomes an integral part of the grassroots movement itself. The goals of the training

strategy must be the same ones as the community's; that is, the establishment of conditions

in which the community members can have greater autonomy over the decisions that affect

their lives. Therefore, this alternative view of training cannot provide "answers" delivered

from "above" but rather will depend on the organic growth and creativity of the people.

Thus, the proposed training strategy is not a model nor a curriculum; it is a guideline to

help facilitators to think and make decisions about what they need to learn in order to

enhance their work in their particular community and cultural context. As stated in the

section on grassroots development, what works for one group may not work for another

except for inspiration (Rahman, 1993).

The present training strategy is a strategy to be formed, designed, and implemented

with the active participation of the facilitators themselves. However, it is also a strategy

directed towards NGOs and other outside development organizations. Because NGOs are

already present and involved in Honduran communities, it is impossible to ignore their

influence and their role in development. Nonetheless, their role and influence can be

re-defined and re-directed. I believe NGOs can be very important in helping communities

have access to a number of resources and to assist in opportunities for networking, while

understanding that the process must be of the people. It is a challenge to the NGO community to let go of their power so that it may be placed in the hands of the people.

The present chapter is structured to address the three different levels in which I see the proposed training strategy to be most useful: the local community level; the regional level; and the NGO level. The section on NGOs is purposely intended for the NGO community as well as for outsiders, people like myself, who are interested in participating in a meaningful way in the grassroots process of Honduran people's authentic development. The last section is a representation of what a training strategy might look like if it were to be implemented at these three levels, as well as recommendations for future application.

A. Facilitator Training at the Community Level

During the past two decades, many rural and urban communities in Honduras have participated with a wide variety of development programs including training activities in areas such as health, nutrition, literacy, agriculture, sanitation, microenterprise, women's issues, and community organization. Thus, many communities have already identified local leaders and facilitators who have been involved in past or present development efforts initiated by NGO or state-funded programs. However, very few of these leaders or facilitators are involved in grassroots movements in which they act on their own on behalf of the community. Their training has mostly been directed to the technical areas or knowledge base of the development programs they lead; those skills and behaviors they are expected to instill onto other community members in order to meet the goals of the program.

An alternative strategy for training local facilitators is to open spaces for dialogue and reflection during the course of their work with the community. This dialogue must be based on a process or methodology of critical thinking, deliberation, and decision-making which may ultimately lead to a specific action. **Critical thinking** is a term taken from Freire's consciousness-raising methodology in which critical thinking is a process used to describe the concrete reality of the people, and to explore relationships between culture and individual, society and culture, society and individual, and so forth. This exploration of relationships leads to discovering the contradictions in their reality, from which deliberation arises.

> Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to the challenge. Because they apprehend the challenge as interrelated to other problems within a total context, not as a theoretical question, the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated. (Freire, 1993, p.68).

Deliberation is a term which comes from Decker Walker's naturalistic model of curriculum development (1971). Deliberation involves formulating decision points, devising alternative choices at these decision points, considering arguments for and against, and finally, choosing the most defensible alternative. In the process of deliberation, people must try to identify what facts may be relevant to then generate alternative solutions. "[Deliberation] must then weigh alternatives and their costs and consequences against one another, and choose, not the right alternative for there *is* no such thing, but the best one" (Walker, 1971, pp.2-3).

Decision-making is therefore the result of critical thinking and deliberation. Decision-making is a crucial point in the process, as this is when action must be defined

and committed to. This is not to say that action must always be the end result of this process; there are times when a decision of non-action is the most appropriate, according to the importance of the deliberations to the learner's reality and priorities. This element is unpredictable since only the participants in the process can justify their actions. From experience, I know that learning can take place without visible actions or reactions, but which affects future learning and future actions. In a sense, the process described above parallels the reflection and action referred to as *praxis*: the reflection corresponding to the critical thinking and deliberation, and the action corresponding to decision-making and subsequent action. The following figure illustrates this process.
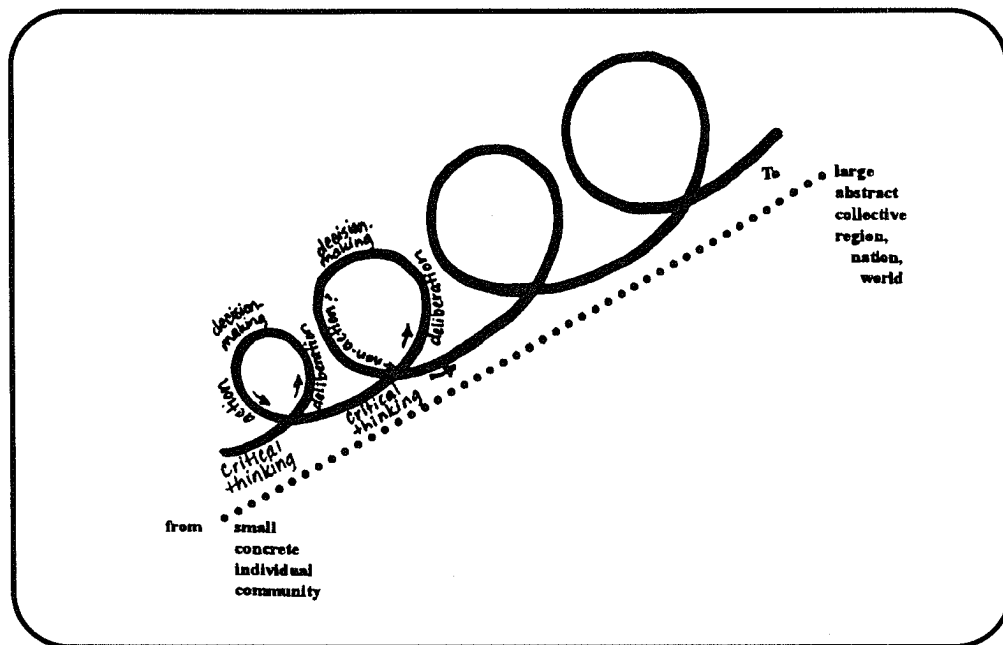
Figure 1: Learning Process and Praxis

This is a training process that should be initiated by people who are committed to enhancing the skills of the local community's leaders and facilitators. The persons or catalyst may be a local facilitator who has experienced and benefitted from this kind of training process, or it could be an outside facilitator, someone who is familiar with the community, the culture, and the goals of faciilitation described in the previous chapter.

This outside facilitator may possibly be a member of an NGO's field personnel, but both the NGO and the facilitator need to be clear that it is a temporary role; an outside facilitator must be willing and committed to strengthen the community's human infrastructure and thus, work him or herself out of a job. Thus, one option might be to form a team of facilitators including local people and outsiders willing to participate in the community's training process.

The graphic illustration above also demonstrates the order in which the content of the training is proposed to flow and expand: from small problems and needs to large; from concrete reality to abstract; from individual perception to collective; from community issues to regional, national and finally global. The rationale for this is that learning should begin where the people are, with what they understand and experience in their everyday lives. As they acquire skills of critical thinking and deliberation they can gradually expand to larger and more abstract issues that might not be so easy to grasp and deal with at first. Also, if facilitators have learned using this process, they will be more likely to model community training in the same way.

On the basis of the previous chapter's discussion about the role of facilitators and the necessary skills for facilitation, I propose that the following six concepts are important to include in the process of training facilitators for an alternative development practice:
1. The facilitator's role
2. The group process
3. The community's needs and problems
4. The geographical region
5. The country's social reality
6. Development theories and practice

In order to be effective, the training must be practical and hands-on. As adults, we remember mostly what we practice and discover for ourselves (Werner, 1982). Therefore each of these content pieces must be linked to the learners' reality and to work that the facilitators are already carrying out. Each facilitator must identify at the beginning of the training process a concrete project which can be used as a basis for his or her praxis.

Keeping in mind that training for alternative development can never be prescribed, and that each training experience will be unique according to the people's participation and input in the process, the following description is an example of how the training might progress through the expanding cycle of critical thinking, deliberation, decision-making, and action.

1. The facilitator's role

Critical thinking:
- Analyze who and what is a facilitator
- Analyze what facilitation means in contrast to directing
- Analyze experience in facilitation

Deliberation:
- What are characteristics and qualities of a facilitator
- What are attitudes, behaviors, and climates that facilitate learning

Decision-making -> Action:
- Form a facilitator profile for the community
- Select community members to help facilitate a community project
- Evaluate the facilitation process carried out, decide what changes if any need to be made to assist facilitators

2. The group process

Critical thinking:
- Analyze groups participants belong to; what is a group?
- Analyze how different groups are organized
- Analyze leadership and the influence of leadership on groups

Deliberation:
- What are alternatives for organizing a group with respect to the community's project they are working on
- How can groups organize themselves with respect to tasks and decision-making
- What are the most appropriate forms of leadership

Decision-making -> Action:
- Form a group to work on the selected project with interested community members
- Establish a set of group guidelines for organization, decision-making, and sharing responsibilities, including leadership.
- Evaluate process with the group, reformulate guidelines according to the group's decisions.

3. The community's needs and problems and strengths

Critical thinking:
- Does the community have needs and problems?
- Are the needs experienced by the majority of the community?
- Do people have an interest and commitment to the problem or need?

Deliberation:
- How can the facilitators find out what the real problems and needs of the community are?
- How can the needs or problems be addressed? Can they be prioritized?
- How can the community be involved in forming a plan of action?

Decision-making -> Action:
- Decide how the community's problems and needs will be investigated and validated.
- Decide how to prioritize the needs, select criteria for prioritizing.
- Decide how to form a plan of action with the community and the participating group members.
- Evaluate process: Were the problems selected the most feasible to work on? Were the problems selected a felt need? Was the selection process adequate? Was the plan of action appropriate, and how could it be improved? Is there another problem that the community wants to address?

4. The geographical region

Critical Thinking
- Analyze the population of the region, including history, culture, demographics
- Analyze resources as well as obstacles for growth

Deliberation
- What are some common problems faced by the region?
- How can the resources be used to benefit the entire region?
- How can the obstacles be overcome through the collective strength of the region's communities?

Decision-making -> Action
- Organize a coalition around a common problem identified by the group
- Coordinate resources appropriately and effectively
- Take steps to form a network of community organizations for collective action
- Evaluate and review process, make decisions about the future of regional collaboration

5. The country's social reality

Critical Thinking:
- Analyze the history of the country
- Analyze the social, political, and economic forces that are presently acting in the country
- Analyze the country's position with respect to other countries and powers

Deliberation:
- What are the most pressing social, political, and economic forces that are affecting the community and why?
- What are courses of action that are available to local government?

Decision-making -> Action:
- Select a course of action on an issue that can be solved at the local level
- Influence the local government (municipality and congressment) on the issue that has been selected
- Evaluate process and decide what further actions can be taken

6. Development theories and practice

Critical Thinking:
- Analyze the major theories of development which have been practiced in the country
- Analyze how these practices have affected the country, the region, and the community

Deliberation:
- Which development practices have been the most helpful for the country, the region, the community? Which have been the most harmful?
- What are alternatives at different levels- local, regional, national - to the development theories which have been proposed?

Decision-making -> Action:
- Create an alternative definition of development according to their own values, experience, and culture
- Decide how this alternative view of development can be put in practice in the community and how the community can be mobilized to become involved in the process.
- Evaluate the process and continue to refine ideas on development according to changing perspectives reflecting the current practice.

The process described above is by necessity a long-term process. It is a gradual building up of people's confidence in their knowledge and skills which will be reflected in the projects which they undertake. Because this kind of training should be a dynamic and non-linear process, there is no set order to which themes will be analyzed and acted upon. The facilitators involved in guiding the process need to remain sensitive to the issues that arise in the community and address them at the best moment. Thus, several "content pieces" may be going on at the same time, each facilitator dealing perhaps with those issues that are closest to the interest and reality of the groups of people he or she is working with. The expanding learning cycles will begin to overlap and inter-relate as communities begin to work with each other and become aware of the possibilities for collective organizing.

Helping facilitators recognize their capacity to think about their reality and work with the community to resolve its own problems, one of the major goals of this training strategy will be met: to build the facilitators' confidence in themselves, to help them see their value and worth in society, and to reflect their own dignity and self-esteem in their work with their fellow community members. As they grow, they will be able to open more spaces for growth in other members of the community. The community's growth will in

turn have a decided impact on the authentic development of the entire region and even the country.

B. Facilitator Training at the Regional Level

Facilitation can be a very lonely and frustrating experience. Attempting to mobilize and organize people day after day is an arduous, challenging task which does not always provide the expected results. Thus, community facilitators need a strong support system which can help them stay motivated and enthusiastic, as well as reinforce and build up their knowledge and skills, allowing new opportunities for growth. One way in which facilitators from different communities can support each other and create a larger, regional grassroots movement is by participating together in training. Thus, a training strategy for alternative development at the regional level should involve at least three components:

a. Forming a basis for support
b. Forming a basis for networking
c. Forming a basis for expansion

The strategy proposed is to hold a quarterly two-day workshop in which facilitators from different communities of a *municipio* (a municipality, a geographical division in Honduras) can meet to participate in the training. The training can be sponsored by selected teams of facilitators from one or two communities on a rotating basis. The selected facilitators and their respective communities would be responsible for the logistics of the workshop: providing simple housing, food, and transportation; as well as for the training itself: setting up the workshop agenda, sharing facilitation responsibilities, and

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providing materials. The participating communities can help to provide funds for the training by sharing part of the cost, holding fund-raisers, and seeking outside support from NGOs in the area or the municipal government. The experience of organizing, leading, and financing a training workshop can be in itself a tremendous opportunity for learning and growth. Therefore, all the decisions involved in carrying out the workshop should be in the hands of the participants and selected facilitators, with the support of regional community members and groups involved.

The regional training should help provide some sequence and follow-up to the facilitator training being carried out at the community level. It should be used mostly as a reference point and for reinforcement, since a two-day workshop cannot be expected to fulfill the training needs of a large group of facilitators. Rather it should help to provide a basis for continuing work at the village level where training can be internalized by continued action and reflection at a later time. With respect to content and methodology, the three components mentioned above should be addressed in some way during the course of the regional training:

1. **Forming a basis for support.** During the course of the training workshop, facilitators should have the opportunity to formally and informally share their experiences from working in their own communities. By sharing their experiences they will be able to learn from each other as well as receive encouragement and support regarding difficult issues they are currently facing. This validation of their experience can be very

constructive; it reinforces the knowledge and skills of each facilitator as well as building the self-esteem of each individual as the group seeks solutions to individual facilitation problems. By feeling accompanied by their peers in their own process, facilitators will be more willing to accompany others, thus building the basis for long-term support and solidarity. Furthermore, this kind of experience can help facilitators move beyond the traditional teacher or leadership roles they are accustomed to because they will be placed in the position of being both teacher and learner at the same time, having some experience and knowledge but not all the answers or solutions to problems.

One other important aspect of a support system is that facilitators will look forward to getting together periodically as a means for renewal and reinforcement. As mentioned before, facilitation can be very lonely, especially in rural Honduras where long walks between villages is the only means of communication. Facilitators are likely to be motivated by a variety of personal interests, but one common point of motivation can be these weekends of sharing with people like themselves.

2. Forming a basis for networking. While facilitators have a chance to interact and support each other, they will also begin to recognize the value of locating resources beyond their immediate community which can help them become more effective in their work. Facilitators should seek to discuss how collaboration can become important among communities and facilitators, and analyze ways in which collaboration can be strengthened

and how resources can be made available. This can include brainstorming about problems

with the projects they are currently working on, for instance:

- a vehicle for transportation
- a telegraph/telephone service
- a copy machine
- a cook
- daycare for children

- a secretary or a typewriter
- a bookkeeper
- legal assistance
- someone with experience in banking procedures
- an expert "bargainer" at the marketplace, etc.

In this way, facilitators will be able to recognize and experience the necessity of

cooperation instead of rivalry, which is so common between neighboring communities due

to differences in politics, religion, and access to goods and services. When they realize

that "we're in the same thing together", they may be more willing to lay down the

differences and concentrate on forming an effective regional network which will help to

resolve common difficulties and obstacles to authentic development.

3. Forming a basis for expansion. The workshops should also provide opportunities

for sharing community and regional issues in order to gain a sense for the "broader

picture". These issues need to be common to the majority of the communities

represented, so that the interest of the participants will be maintained. Thus, some

exploratory "research work" must be done beforehand by the facilitators in charge of the

workshop. Alternative research methods have been tried with success in many rural

communities as a way of forming knowledge and gaining access to power (Rahman,

1993). The experience of creating a source for regional information and knowledge can

be very empowering to the participating facilitators and communities. Deliberating and

deciding together on the steps that might follow their initial investigation can form the basis for future expansion.

In the previous chapter on alternative development, a reference was made to how grassroots movements are constructed around specific problems. Some movements disappear when the problem is solved; others last longer, resulting in more permanent organizations and even leading to the formation of important regional movements (Escobar, 1992). In order to form a regional movement, I believe that it is important to have leaders with experience in project and group facilitation, networking, and creating alternatives to the local knowledge and power structure. Even so, the obstacles facing community leaders and facilitators may be overwhelming, especially when a grassroots movement is starting out. Therefore, a regional movement can benefit by having "allies" on its side: people and organizations who have access to the dominant structure and can help advocate for the causes of the movement. The following section will describe how NGOs can play a valuable role for regional expansion and support.

C. Training at the NGO Level

During the six years I worked with a Honduran NGO, I became aware of the vast quantity of resources, time, and energy NGOs spend in facilitator training. Invitations to participate in training events flooded the office of our small organization, and many staff meetings were spent deciding who would attend which training. Participating in training

was almost like participating in an NGO subculture. Facilitators became familiar with the training "routine", providing the expected answers, playing the expected icebreakers, and producing the expected results. Unfortunately, very little follow-up was provided to the majority of the trainings, the notes and hand-outs were filed away, and the most lasting impressions were used mainly to provide guidelines for a new training workshop.

For NGOs to use their limited resources in the most effective manner, there needs to be a major shift in the concept of training. NGOs should begin by seriously analyzing their current role in development, especially if their goal is an alternative development like the one described in this study. If NGOs are willing to become committed to the goal of alternative development, they will be willing to espouse the goals of the communities they are involved in, and therefore will advocate for decision-making by and for the people. This must include decisions about training: what training is needed, where it will be done, who will attend, and who will facilitate.

When NGOs espouse the vision of an alternative development, they can play an important role in the communities, especially in training local leaders and facilitators. In the first place, NGOs can provide the necessary training resources. Many NGOs already have a large amount of audio-visual materials and training equipment which is usually guarded zeolously for selective use. Even when these resources are requested by other NGOs, the materials and equipment are rented or sold at high costs, thus limiting its use to those who can afford it. These training resources can be consciously placed at the

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disposal of the communities with whom the NGOs are involved. Instead of having piles of

materials and training equipment gathering dust behind locked closets, local leaders and

facilitators can be shown how to use and care for the equipment with little effort. The

benefit of demonstrating confidence and trust in the people will be worth much more than

the risk of damaging these replaceable items.

In the second place, NGOs can channel outside funding to provide for the logistics of

a training event. Because funds are important to help provide transportation, lodging, and

food for the participants, it is more difficult for the communities to sponsor training events

on their own resources. Funds are also necessary to provide simple materials like

chalkboards, newsprint, markers, printed materials, flanelgraphs, and puppets. Funds are

also important for communication. For events to come together for large groups of

people, much time and effort must be spent to provide adequate communication for all

those who are involved. NGOs can be of great assistance in providing these resources.

Nonetheless, NGOs must continually be aware that their role is to facilitate these means;

communities committed to this purpose would be able to accomplish their training through

their own means, although perhaps at a slower rate. NGOs must not believe in the illusion

that their importance surpasses that of the people for whom they are working and the

grassroots movements they are supporting.

A third area in which NGOs can play a role is to collaborate with facilitators in

providing support and follow-up to the training in progress. Many NGOs have a

significant number of field staff, usually well-educated professionals doing "development" work. If these staff members are reoriented and mobilized to provide support and follow-up to short-term training, the effects of the these initial training sessions will undoubtedly be maintained and multiplied. Although local facilitators are also involved in continuing training and support, their time is also limited by the fact that they must also work to support their own households. They do not have the "extra" time to spend in providing careful follow-up and daily training to all local leaders who participate in training sessions. NGO staff, on the other hand, are paid for this job. They can spend their entire time participating closely with the facilitators so that they can continue to reinforce in daily situations and in the people's daily context the essence of the process discussed in a training event.

Another role NGOs can play is to provide the benefit of an outsider perspective without the disadvantage of imposing solutions or decisions onto the process of the participating communities. By this I am referring to the possibility of increasing opportunities for networking and coordination through access to a larger range of information from a larger geographical area. NGOs can be instrumental in contacting the right people for specific training events or in connecting people from various communities who are working on similar community efforts. On a larger scale, NGOs can help to articulate and validate the learning processes that are happening within the communities to those outside people and institutions interested in the messages from the grassroots. By helping to disseminate people's authentic learning and knowledge, community people can

be empowered to interact in circles that would normally not be open to them. NGOs can also seek ways to make dissemination an important part of the learning process by analyzing with facilitators and community members alternative ways of dissemination through which people's voices would be better heard without interfering in the process itself.
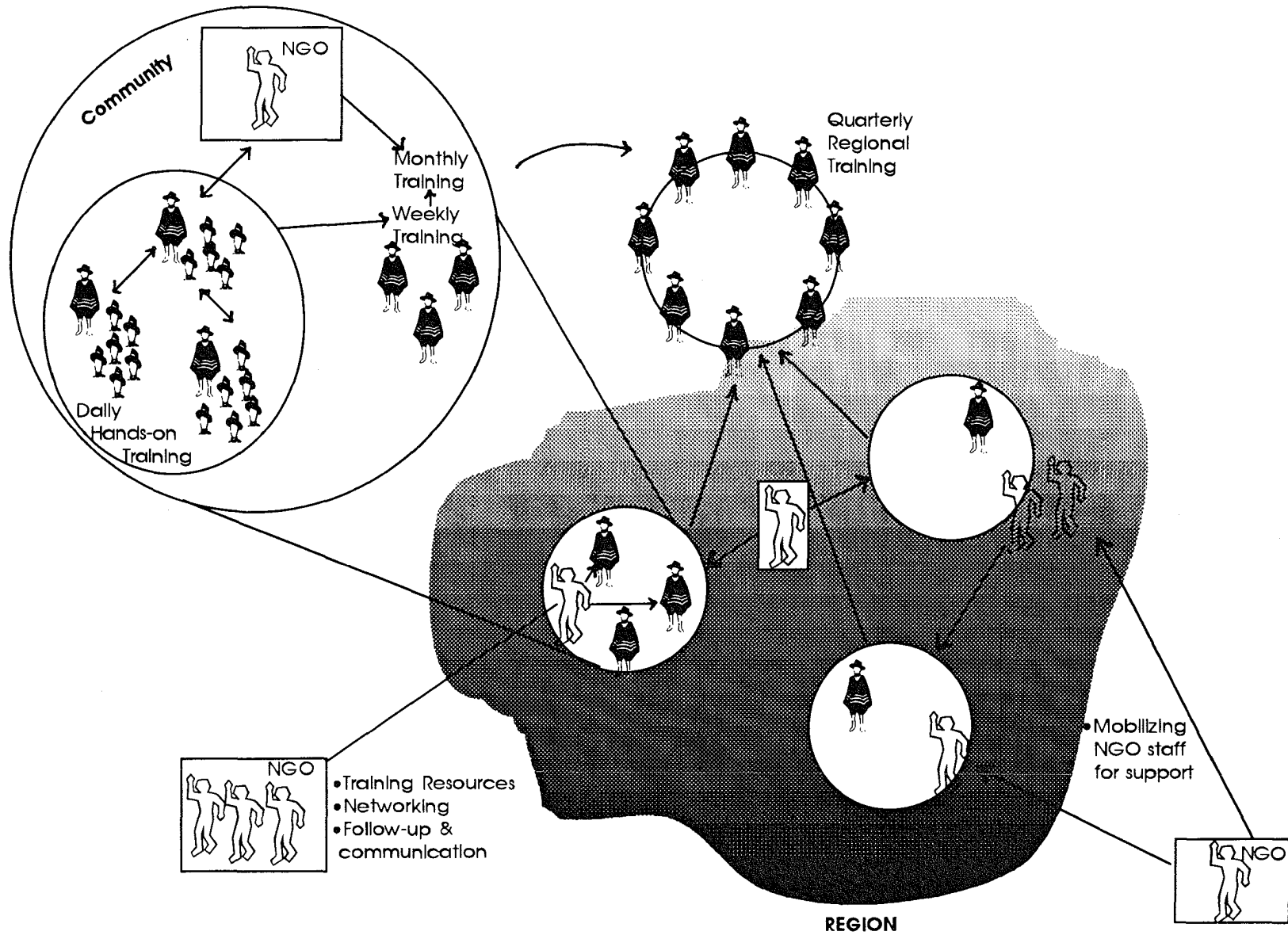
Lastly, I believe NGOs should play the role of placing a "foot in the door" for the people who are marginalized and powerless, while remaining committed to a policy of non-interference. Having participated with various NGOs in different times and capacities, I am aware of the powerful circles that NGOs have access to including government ministries, embassies, bi-lateral funding agencies, the European Economic Community, the World Bank and other international financing institutions. These are the circles where economic and political decisions are made that ultimately have major repercussions on the majority of the country's population. NGOs can be instrumental in making sure that the people's voices are heard by opening spaces of dialogue with these powerful interest groups and inviting them to share in the people's process. A personal invitation to a key person might have enough influence to make a difference between a hurtful economic policy and a policy that will benefit hundreds of people. Although NGOs do not have the power to change the current economic and political structures of the country, they should seek opportunities to advocate for the people they intend to benefit by opening doors and windows through which the voiceless can finally be heard. Ideologically this is a major challenge for the NGO community because they have often

been eager to be alligned with those in power in order to obtain access to major funding sources. However, if NGOs become committed to an alternative practice of development they must also become willing to share their access to power.

D. Example of Possible Training Activities at Three Different Levels

The training strategy described at the three different levels above is basically a description of learning relationships between people. These learning relationships occur between local facilitators and community members working together on community problems; facilitators supporting each other in training activities; communities relating with neighboring communities to form coallitions; and communities relating with outside structures, including NGOs. These relationships create the foundation for a learning climate where training is viewed as a process and not as an end product. The learning climate created by facilitators' attitudes and behaviors must reflect the nature of these non-hierarchichal relationships which are essential for an alternative development practice. The following page (figure 2) is a graphic representation of the learning relationships which can occur within a community and a region, along with an example of how training activities can be implemented at these different levels.

Figure 2
Example of Training Activities at Three Different Levels

Community

NGO

Monthly
Training

Weekly
Training

Daily
Hands-on
Training

Quarterly
Regional
Training

NGO
- Training Resources
- Networking
- Follow-up &
  communication

- Mobilizing
  NGO staff
  for support

NGO

REGION

To expand the example of how learning relationships can occur at different levels of facilitator training, the concept of "development theories and practice" from the content areas specified in community level training (refer to page 73) will be developed through an imaginary community scenario throughout the three levels described with a brief explanation of training activities and methodology. In this scenario, the community already has a team of three facilitators working on various development projects initiated by a small NGO. The NGO is interested in supporting community based initiatives, but is still working out what their role should be.

Scenario of Learning Activities and Training on: *Development theories and practice*

    C = COMMUNITY   **R** = REGION   **N** = NGO

C • Team of facilitators meets weekly to discuss their projects. Each facilitator works in a different area promoting community health care and nutrition, literacy, gardening.

C • One of them brings up the question: *We put a lot of effort into this and sometimes it seems like the people could care less. Are we really helping the community? Is this development?*

C • Each facilitator talks about his or her idea on development. They resolve to bring it up with the NGO staff in their community that sponsors their work.

N • The NGO staff supporting the facilitators' work in the communities agree that it is important to think about development. They believe there might be other leaders in the community who would be interested in learning about development.

C • The facilitators invite interested community members to discuss ideas on development. The facilitators organize an evening activity with skits and songs about development. They hold a discussion on their community's development: *What things are important to develop? What do we want our community to look like? What do we really want for our children? Where does the idea of development come from?* The activities and discussion sparks much interest in participating members.

C • Facilitators continue to meet periodically with interested community members, and their projects gradually become more attuned to the people's real interests.

C · Team of facilitators is interested in learning more about development "theory". They talk to people who might be interested in facilitating a workshop: the local priest, a Peace Corps Volunteer, a staff member from the NGO.

R · Team of facilitators organizes a workshop and invites facilitators from other communities in the region. The title of the workshop is "Perspectives on Development". The workshop is carried out with participatory methods and techniques: role plays, short presentations, discussions, games, personal reflection.

R · Facilitators from each community make a list of things they learned about development and a list of questions they still have, and ideas on how they might go about answering them back at their own communities.

R · Facilitators spend informal time talking before heading back to their communities, building their friendships and talking about their work.

C · In the community, facilitators continue to analyze their daily actions with respect to their new ideas on development.

C · At their weekly meeting, one facilitator says that she thinks development is not the best term for her work. She wants people to improve their health and to have better crops, but most of all she wants people to work together and to be united.

C · Facilitators decide it is important for their work to create their own definition of development based on their experience working with the community and participating in the training events these past few months. They use the term "*community action*" instead of development.

N · The NGO uses the facilitators' learning process on development to write a grant proposal for the community's projects to an international funding agency, demonstrating that the people really do know what they want. They encourage the facilitators to continue their process of learning and discovery which has greatly benefitted the members of the community and the region.

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Although the scenario above is quite idealistic with respect to the positive and

non-hierarchical relationships between NGO and facilitators, as well as between

facilitators themselves, it does provide an idea of how training based on critical thinking,

deliberation and decision-making can look like in practice. It also provides a glimpse at

how regional movements can gradually be built and strengthened. Although the NGO had

a minimal role, its presence was important to provide suggestions, resources, and contacts

for the people at the grassroots.

E. Recommendations and Applications

This study has proposed that an alternative development is more appropriate for social

change and progress than the conventional development theories which have been

practiced in the past five decades throughout the Third World. An alternative

development is one which establishes conditions in which community members have

greater autonomy over the decisions and actions that affect their lives. It is a shift in

perception of how social change will occur: not from the top-down but from the

bottom-up. In this alternative process of social change, local leaders or facilitators can be

crucial elements for mobilizing the creativity and growth of the people. Thus, facilitator

training and support must reflect the same premises upon which an alternative

development movement can be built.

With respect to the implementation of training for alternative development facilitators

in Honduras, the following recommendations may be useful for further consideration:

1. The role of a local facilitator is that of being a resource for the people and a

committed leader. It is ideal if facilitators selected by their communities become

committed to a longer-term process in which their training and community work can

become part of a regional movement. Thus, it is important to consider the factor of motivation: how can facilitators be motivated for a long-term process in community leadership? What are some appropriate incentives for local facilitators that the community can provide? These questions should be discussed initially with the community in order to think of possibilities for reimbursing facilitators' time and effort, which does not need to include money. Depending on the context, community members might be willing to share their time and work with the facilitator, such as: cooking, cleaning, washing, childcare, gardening, plowing, planting, or harvesting. The community may also want to come up with their own stipend system in which the community provides staple crops to the facilitator. These initial ideas should be explored at the community level.

2. People skills such as listening and questioning appropriately were mentioned as important aspects of facilitation. Thus, these skills must be modeled and emphasized in facilitator training regardless of the content which is being covered. All the trainers involved in this process must be clear on the importance of transmitting these skills through their own attitudes and behaviors. This includes NGO personnel at the local level as well as outside professionals and consultants. The aim of training must not be forgotten, which is to stimulate true self-esteem by enhancing people's own knowledge and skills.

3. One question that facilitators must ask themselves is how to help the people in their perception of reality without creating or shaping their perception on basis of the facilitator's own views. As mentioned previously, training is not a neutral process, and this is clearly so with such political and ideological concepts as development theory and social

change. Facilitators must start by understanding their own perceptions and beliefs about society and social change. It is important for facilitators to be upfront about what their beliefs are so that they can make a conscious effort not to impose their agenda on the community people. This is not always possible and perhaps not always desireable; however, facilitators as well as outsiders involved in the process need to strive for eliciting the people's own critical thinking, deliberation, and decision-making.

4. Training activities must be kept simple enough so that facilitators can reproduce the activities with confidence. This does not imply that facilitators cannot move towards more complex issues in their training, but it is a process that must be carried out at the pace of the learners. However, training activities should be varied, stimulating, and fun. The activities should also be participatory, with the learners taking turns to facilitate the process. There should be plenty of time within the training to talk about the training process itself: what works the best, what can be improved, how participation can be enhanced, how learners can become more involved in the process of self-discovery, etc.

5. In an effort to provide reinforcement and follow-up on the training process, a series of training materials should be prepared from the workshops and other training events in which facilitators have participated. These materials can be put together by the facilitators themselves in a very simple and graphic form, using the creative talents of the participants. The materials should highlight the main activities, the process that was followed, the important points brought up, and other relevant information. Learner generated materials such as these can be a way of documenting the training process as well as an important source for validating the participant's experience, knowledge, and skills. Examples of

materials developed from training community based facilitators in different cultural contexts can be found in Appendix B.

6. The focus of NGOs working for alternative development should be partnership and support. NGOs must think critically about how their partnership with grassroots movements can best meet the goals of not only individual communities but also the region. NGOs can play an important part in regional development if they are truly committed to working themselves out of a job. This includes sharing their resources, their sources of information, their access to funding, and their belief in the people without hesitation. This will only be possible if NGOs take a step back to look at themselves critically and redefine their role in the process of development and social change. NGOs could actually benefit greatly by entering a similar learning process along with community members and facilitators.

7. Finally, NGOs should seek opportunities to work collaboratively within a geographical region. Too much time and resources have already been spent by competing for the communities' participation only to justify their existence to outside funders. NGOs have often asked for community collaboration and cooperation, but in reality they must start by practicing themselves at their own level of interaction. If NGOs collaborate with one another, their strengths will be maximized and their impact will be multiplied so that a greater number of people will benefit from their efforts.

These initial recommendations are some ideas that need to be considered for the application of a facilitator training process which will support alternative development

development movements in Honduras. It is possible that once people define their own paths of growth these ideas will no longer be viable. However, the stance of grassroots facilitators and other people involved in working for authentic change must remain the same: to support the creation of a society where the poor and marginalized find within themselves the resources, skills, and knowledge needed to bring about the changes that will help them live fuller, more decent lives according to the paths they choose.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES AND RESPONSES

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Interview with Rita Raboin
Nov. 15, 1995

*Facilitator Context: Rita Raboin worked with a group a sisters in three dioceses of Brazil with Christian base communities for over 16 years.

1. Did the organization have a clear definition of facilitator?
- ◆ The term facilitator wasn't used, but the actions carried out by the villagers was facilitation.

2. What selection criteria was used for facilitators?
- ◆ Depended on the needs of the moment, but teams were used for different purposes: to teach catechism, to celebrate the Word of God.
- ◆ People were asked according to their qualities and characters. Those who knew how to listen well, could discern and make questions at the right time. Those who could speak well were not necessarily selected, who are probably the first selection of the masses.

3. What was expected from the facilitators? What was their role?
- ◆ Determined by the needs of the community.
- ◆ The role of the lay leader was to help the people in their perception of reality, and to organize around an issue on their own terms. The process was to listen to the word of God, link it with reality, conduct a social anaylisis, determine tasks and steps to take, and evaluate the process. Faith was the motivation for social change. The whole community learned.
- ◆ The role of the group of sisters was to accompany the people in their process, believe in the potential of the people to do this, and work themselves out of a job.

4. What skills do you think facilitators need the most for an alternative development practice?
- ◆ Dialogical skills
- ◆ How to make an agenda for meetings, call a meeting, feed back the agenda to the people, let people decide what to do - not give speeches.
- ◆ Skill of listening well
- ◆ Skill of questioning
- ◆ How to research a problem orally in a popular setting (cooking, washing), verifying it is a gut issue, a real problem of the people; otherwise it would be imposed from top to bottom becoming oppressive. Make sure the problem is credible and viable (ex: land rent too high)
- ◆ How to use the tools of consciousness raising
- ◆ Organization skills: dividing the tasks so they are inclusive, evaluating what took place, help people see their own strengths: "even if we didn't win, what did we learn of ourselves"

People are already resourceful, intelligent people because God is there. We just need to bring it to the surface more. To bring out an attitute of learning from the people. One question generates another: the questioning spirit remains.

In many of these people their gospel and political vision exceeded that of educated leaders and priests, their perceptiveness, keeness, potential for search was enhanced. Then time to move on.

5. What works in training facilitators? What doesn't work?
   * It is a whole style of working with people. Basically it is an attitude which says "I know that you know the answers, I am only here to help you search for those answers."
   * To be immersed, inserted in their lives, living shoulder to shoulder - this generates trust
   * Calling forth their gifts
   * Staying in a questioning mode
   * Mutually forming one another, it is a growth experience
   * Constantly eliciting from them the answers needed for life, from the most trivial to the most significant
   * Believing in the potential of the people, people know when we believe in them.
   * Asking the right questions at the right time, questions which are pertinent to the lives of the people and faithful to the process which is unfolding.

Doesn't work:
   * Watch out for new forms of domination, for example being directive rather than questioning
   * Forms of exclusion
   * To be a trainer vs. helping each other grow

This stuff works!! Their leaders were seen as valuable leaders in other sectors such as in trade because they were seen as honest people, caring for the rights of the oppressed. This worked for us, it was authentically of the people - they discovered what worked best for them; ways of working with each other. Change comes in the minds and the hearts of people, this is where change can occur.

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Interview with Joan Cohen
Nov. 19, 1995

*Facilitator Context: Joan Cohen worked for a year as a technical trainer and facilitator for ACOGIPRI, a Salvadoran grassroots organization for disabled women.

1. **Did the organization have a clear definition of facilitator?**
   - The women created their own definition of facilitator through a training workshop on facilitation

2. **What selection criteria was used for facilitators?**
   - They were self-selected, identified by the group, depending on the skills they had: administration, advocacy, etc.
   - They were six vocal women, vocal in the sense that they were outspoken in different ways.

3. **What was expected from the facilitators? What was their role?**
   - They formed part of the coordinating committee for the institute.
   - They each worked on the part that was comfortable to them. Their role was to make sure everyone's needs were met and to use their particular skills for training.

4. **What skills do you think facilitators need the most for an alternative development practice?**
   - They need to listen: especially to people who don't usually get heard
   - They need patience
   - They can't be judgmental
   - They need some level of education, basic reading and writing skills

5. **What works in training facilitators? What doesn't work?**
   - Giving people control
   - Creating a situation where they can build a coalition
   - People participating at everything, have them do it as soon as possible
   - The opportunity to see immediately what they learned; otherwise it's frustrating
   - They experience change and want to change, therefore must have support from institution

What hinders:
   - Competition, in-fighting and resentment between leaders
   - Having to learn to be group-oriented
   - Too empowered "demasiada auto-estima": perceived threat to supervisors
     Egalitarian leadership is nearly impossible; we must let group decide which piece they want to tackle, perhaps not the entire oppressive system. They can slowly negotiate the activities, it's not an all or nothing proposition. People need something familiar to hold onto.

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Interview with Elias Moning
Nov. 27, 1995

*Facilitator Context: Elias Moning worked in Jakarta, Indonesia as a facilitator for Training of Trainers workshops directed towards facilitators of Indonesian development organizations.

1. **Did the organization have a clear definition of facilitator?**
   - Used several different labels depending on their position with the organization: motivator, community worker, health workers.
   - A facilitator was defined as someone who facilitates a process so that participants can learn from one another.
   - A facilitator is someone who is a catalyst enhancing a process. What is important is the process not just the content.

2. **What selection criteria was used for facilitators?**
   - Someone with experience at the grassroots level
   - Someone with capacity for a democratic process
   - People who have been trainees in a process before becoming trainers
   - Training of Trainers is a requirement

3. **What was expected from the facilitators? What was their role?**
   - An alternative approach for conducting training: discussion enhancement, not just passively listening.
   - To help people recognize the value within themselves and help them express it through participation so they can gain confidence.

4. **What skills do you think facilitators need the most for an alternative development practice?**
   - The skill of being a discussion starter, to encourage people to speak: when you speak you think, when you think you gain confidence, and a value of self.
   - The skill of being a good listener.
   - The skill of being a confirmer, to confirm what people say.
   - To be a colleague, a friend rather than an expert of a certain knowledge. Facilitators need to go to the process so the people are ready to take the knowledge when they ask for it. A facilitator needs patience.

5. **What works in training facilitators? What doesn't work?**
   - To understand participants
   - At the beginning people are hesitant to take control of their thoughts, but when they start doing it they get excited and enthusiastic about the process because they feel valued as a human being when you run the training with them.

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• Be sensitive to the group situation. Every group has differences, and you need to find out what works better based on early interaction.

• There is no generalization of what works and what doesn't work. Whatever works at the time do it for that particular situation.

• Be aware of cultural influences. Example: In Indonesia, women don't sit with men. So it creates a conflict when the facilitator says they must be together because it's a democratic process. A facilitator should not be an ideologue for the people. They might change eventually, but you can't push, you must be sensitive.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE MATERIALS DEVELOPED FROM
FACILITATOR TRAINING:

1. Sample from *Participación Comunal para el Desarrollo Integral: Un Manual para Facilitadores (Community Participation for Integrated Development: A Manual for Facilitators)* by J. VerBeek, K. VerBeek, and L. Pacheco. Consejo de Instituciones Evangelicas de Desarrollo, Honduras, 1992.

2. Sample from *Metodología Participativa en Educación Popular: Una Experiencia en el Noreste Argentino de Capacitación de Promotores de Base (Training of Grassroots Promoters)*. Hvnmanitas-Indes, Argentina, 1988.

3. Sample from CIRCLE Project, *Collective Leadership Training - Module I: Group Process and Communication* by J. Cohen and L. Pacheco, University of Massachusetts, 1995.

Appendix B.1.

COMO EL FACILITADOR PUEDE HACER MAS VIVA LA CAPACITACION

A veces nos quejamos de que la gente de las comunidades no muestra interés en la capacitación que promovemos. Decimos que la gente no puede captar las ideas o está demasiada ocupada y no participa. Pero antes de echarle la culpa debemos ver como podemos hacer la capacitación más interesante, basada en los intereses que tiene esta gente.

Podemos hacer más viva la capacitación si...

- Animamos a la gente a participar
- Aceptamos las críticas o sugerencias del grupo
- Comenzamos con lo que ya saben
- Somos creativos
- Trabajamos con amor
- Planificamos la capacitación con la gente

CARACTERISTICAS DE UN BUEN FACILITADOR

Una pregunta que debemos de hacernos constantemente en nuestro trabajo es:

¿HASTA QUE PUNTO LO QUE YO HAGO, AYUDA A LOS NECESITADOS A TENER MAS CONTROL SOBRE SUS VIDAS?

SU TITULO

El nombre con que llama a la persona que va a trabajar al campo influye en la imagen que proyecta. Si le dicen supervisor tiene otro significado a que si le dicen técnico. Algunos títulos más comunes son: facilitador, promotor, extensionista, auxiliar de distrito, técnico, guardián, educador, asesor, motivador y moderador.

Nosotros creemos que un titulo bastante adecuado es FACILITADOR porque dá la sensación que la persona está facilitando un proceso, pero que ese proceso no es de él. Así es el desarrollo participativo. El proceso es de la comunidad. Si el facilitador se encarga del proceso, la gente no se está desarrollando. El trabajo es facilitar un proceso en el que la gente aprenda a reconocer y resolver sus propios problemas.

CUALIDADES DE UN BUEN FACILITADOR

En una ocasión le preguntamos a un grupo **¿Cuáles son las cualidades que les gustaría tener en un facilitador?** Esta es la lista de respuestas que dieron:

Queremos un facilitador que sea:

activo	responsable	amistoso,
puntual	dinámico	de lenguaje sencillo
no individualista	ejemplar	honesto
creativo	sabio	comprensivo
capaz	comprometido	no paternalista
humilde	seguro en lo que enseña	prudente
respetuoso	unido a su familia	sugerencias
abierto a escuchar y aceptar		

Nadie puede cumplir con todos los "requisitos;" por eso vemos que el trabajo de facilitador requiere, personas muy especiales y comprometidas con la gente.

PREGUNTAS COMUNES SOBRE LOS FACILITADORES:

¿Es mejor trabajar con una persona del mismo lugar o alguien de fuera?

En ambos casos hay ventajas y desventajas. A veces es difícil que la gente crea en alguien de la misma comunidad; pero al llegar a confiar en él, pueden con más aprecio descubrir sus valores. Con una persona de fuera, ésta puede tener dificultades en ganarse la confianza y en comunicarse. Lo más importante es **la persona**. Si esa persona tiene o puede ganarse la confianza de la gente va a tener éxito.

¿Es mejor una mujer o un hombre?

Depende mucho de la actividad que se va a realizar. Por ejemplo, si el trabajo es mayormente con mujeres o hombres. Pueden influir también las costumbres o la idiosincracia que tienen en la comunidad.

¿Es mejor un joven o un adulto?

Por lo general un joven aprende más rápido y es más abierto; pero, la gente no siempre confía en él. El joven puede llevar al fracaso por decisiones que va tomando (como cambio de estado civil) y depende mucho de su grado de madurez. Un adulto tiene mayor experiencia y es más estable pero el adulto puede ser muy conservador y quizás no quiera implementar conocimientos nuevos.

¿Es mejor un campesino o un profesional?

Todo depende de la capacitación porque ambos pueden servir por igual. Quizás hay mayor sentido de servicio en el campesino. El campesino puede hacer las cosas sin técnicas o una metodología moderna y lo que necesita es enriquecer su conocimiento. El profesional tal vez no puede relacionarse bien con la gente pero tiene más conocimientos teóricos.

CONCLUSION

No hay respuestas tan claras. Mucho depende de la persona, de sus actitudes y sus conocimientos. **La agencia y la comunidad tienen que aprender a evaluar y apreciar cada persona como individuo.**

Appendix B.2.

En octubre, después de
dos meses nos volvimos
a encontrar...
esta vez en Resistencia,
Chaco.

Hicimos una presentación muy
rápida, en forma individual, para "refrescar"
la memoria de los nombres de todos e incorporar
a algunos compañeros que no habían podido venir al
primer taller.

• Con un grupo de mujeres haciendo chipá
  para vender en la escuela y juntar plata.
  Por eso algunos nos dicen comunistas.
• Tratando de organizar a la gente.

Después, los coordinadores nos pidieron que
hiciéramos un dibujo en una hoja de cuaderno.
El tema se podía elegir sobre lo que pasó durante
estos dos últimos meses, cómo nos fue con la encuesta
y qué queremos hacer ahora.
Cuando terminamos el dibujo, pegamos la hoja en
el pecho e hicimos una ronda apretada para ver qué
habían hecho cada compañero.
Luego, de a uno fuimos explicando la idea que quisimos
representar.

Cuando terminamos, la coordinación nos explicó que esta técnica
es útil para conocer cuáles son las inquietudes que trae la gente
y cuáles son los temas que sería bueno tratar en este Taller.

Y seguimos recordando todo lo que trabajamos
en el Taller anterior.
Nos dividimos en grupos y leímos la cartilla
que nos entregó la Coordinación que tenía todo
lo que habíamos hecho.

Esto fue apareciendo:

• Ganas de aprender
• El camino recorrido al hacer las encuestas
  me hizo aprender más de mi comunidad.
• Dibujé lo que aprendí entre la gente.
• Soy agricultor y estoy carpiendo la chacra.
• Estoy con el arado y lo dejo con ganas para
  venir al curso.
• Le explico que hacer a la gente.
• El sello de la Cooperativa al lado mío.
• Con el bolso viniendo para no perder el
  curso y la lengua castellana.

sigue

- Presentación
  (Refranes)
- Acuerdo de trabajo
  (octetos y represen-
  tantes),
- Dibujos (que pasa en mi
  comunidad).
- Cortocircuito
- Principales Problemas
- Porque están los problemas.
- Quién los resuelve.

En Plenario y sobre un papel afiche
pusimos los pasos realizados, las
técnicas que habíamos usado y los
objetivos de cada actividad.

Entonces, pasamos a hacer el "*Acuerdo de Trabajo*"
de este segundo Taller.

> Decidimos continuar con el Diagnóstico
> de las comunidades, pero esta vez anali-
> zando los datos que teníamos en las en-
> cuestas que habíamos hecho cada uno
> de nosotros.

La Vida En Teatro!

Divididos en cuatro grupos, con nombres
de animales, hicimos representaciones sobre
¿qué nos pasó en la realización de la encuesta?

MiaU

La idea nos gustó mucho
y dos de los grupos pre-
pararon hasta 4 repre-
sentaciones diferentes

Vecino: ¿Qué quiere?, yo no me fío de la gente.

Promotor: Ustedes me eligieron como Promotor de Base para hacer un curso.

Vecino: Yo no elegí nada.
¿Qué es el curso?

Promotor: Poco puedo decir, recién comencé.
Es para beneficio de la comunidad.

Vecino: ¡Já! ¡...la comunidad!
Vino un tipo el otro día que hizo un censo y se lo llevó a Alfonsín.

Promotor: Vos me conocés, yo no ando en nada de eso.

Vecino: ¿Qué es el INDES?

Promotor: Recién me inicié y conozco poco.

Vecino: ¿No preguntaste?

Promotor: Sí, pero en cuatro días todavía no entendí bien, así que menos vas a entender vos ahora.

Vecino: Puede irse, mejor no contesto nada.

Vecino: ¿Qué anda haciendo acá?

Promotor: Estudio de Promotor de Base, con el INDES.

Vecino: Vos siempre haciendo bien a la comunidad.

Vos conocés, sos buena persona, dale preguntá.

Promotor: Bueno, esto sirve para ver si podemos hacer huerta, o un taller de costura, mejorar la educación o la salud.

Promotor: Vengo para hacer una encuesta.
Estoy estudiando para Promotor de Base.

Vecino: ¿Qué datos son?

Promotor: Son varios, si me presta un minuto...

Vecino: No es hora de charlar, hay que trabajar.
Esto es para un partido político.
No quiero contestar.

Vecinos: ¿Cómo le va Doctor?

Político: Bien, y ustedes ¿qué cuentan?

Vecinos: Los otros días vinieron a hacernos preguntas, una encuesta, dijeron que es para beneficio nuestro. ¿Será así?

Político: Hay que saber quién es el que viene.
Ustedes nos conocen, nosotros no les vamos a fallar.
Siempre cumplimos.
Como ustedes saben lo que prometemos lo hacemos.

Cuando terminamos las representaciones analizamos en plenario lo que habíamos hecho y cómo nos sentimos...

LEARNING ACTIVITY 1

GROUP BUILDING

TIME: 2 hours

OBJECTIVES:
☞ To familiarize partici-
pants with some theories of
groups.

☞ To familiarize partici-
pants with the overall struc-
ture of our two-day training
workshop design.

MATERIALS:
• flip chart paper
• markers

STEPS:

A. "Most Important Events": Each
participant shares with the group
something exciting or discouraging that
has happened to him or her since we
were last together as a group. Ask the
participants how they feel about this
checking in and how it makes them
feel as group members.

B. Explain that team work is important
but that we must also build the spirit of
community by taking the time to get in
touch with what is important and pressing for each person at that moment. This is an impor-
tant step towards building group cohesion.

Ask the group: *Why groups/teams? What functions do groups/teams play?*

C. Review Jack Gibbs' group needs (see Talk Notes #1 below)
Ask the group: *Do you agree with his definitions/explanations? Why or why not? Do they
apply to your situations?*

D. Talk about learning climates such as: participation, room arrangement, and size of group
(see Talk Notes #2). Review these issues with the group, asking them for their opinions,
experiences, etc. Ask participants if, in their experiences working in different cultures, people
react in different ways to learning climates, room arrangements, etc.
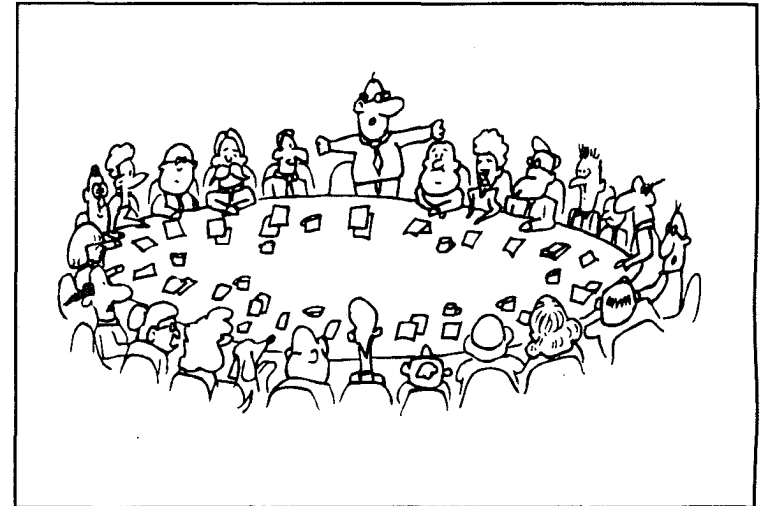
Talk Notes # 1

JACK GIBBS' THEORY OF THE FOUR NEEDS OF GROUPS

- **Acceptance**

People need assurance that they are truly accepted as they are and that it is safe to say in the group what they really think and feel. Unless there is this spirit of respect and acceptance, people will not be free to learn or think, to rethink some of their old opinions, to grow and change, or to share fully their thoughts and feelings.

- **Sharing information and concerns**

People working in groups need information:
- about each other, their experiences, ideas, values, and opinions
- about the issues which they consider to be important in their lives

They also need to work out for themsleves what they need to know. Information poured out randomly will not seem useful unless the participants can relate it to their lives.

- **Setting goals**

Gibbs' third need is to set clear goals. Unless the group sets the goals, people will not be interested in or committed to carrying them out. Unless the goals are clear to all, people become frustrated.

- **Organizing for action**

Once goals have been set by the group, the group needs to make definite plans to reach these goals and carry them out. The group needs to define who will take responsibility and be accountable to the group to get things done. There needs to be some sort of structure which is appropriate for the group and which will ensure that people in the group will share the responsabilities. Evaluation is another important part. It is essential to check how participants feel about a meeting and the plans made immediately after a decision has been reached. Additionally, evaluation is important later after actions are taken.

Gibbs points out that although these needs are ideally met in this order, it is not always so cut and dry. Any one of these needs can occur again at any point in a meeting (or training), and facilitators need to be sensitive enough to recognize this.

Talk Notes #2

NOT THIS	BUT THIS
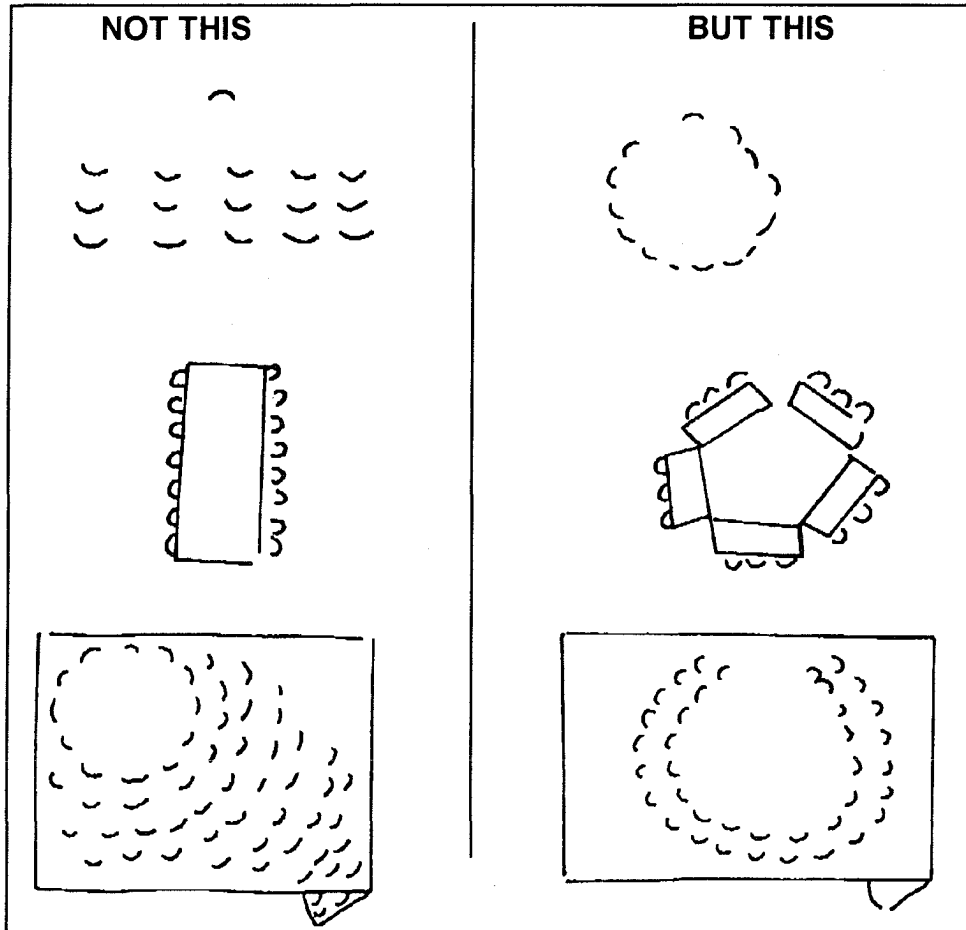
ROOM ARRANGEMENT

Research has shown that the arrangement of a room has a strong effect on the participation in a discussion. Those who can see all the other faces are at an advantage and those who cannot are at a disadvantage. If people are sitting in straight rows, it is very unlikely that a good discussion will develop between them because they cannot see one another's faces. Most questions and comments will be directed to those facing the group.

Every effort should be made to enable the participants to sit in one circle where everyone can see everyone else's face. If the circle becomes so big that people cannot hear each other, it is better to have two concentric circles (or horseshoes, if they need to see something on the wall).

SOURCE: Adapted from *Training for Transformation, Vol 2*, by A. Hope & S. Timmel, page 9.

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