

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT :

THE SURADPU EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

The Silliman University Research Action Development Program in the Uplands (SURADPU) has been in operation since 1981. In the beginning of the sixth year, an integral approach was introduced. This was the only time when the Social Work Department got involved in the area. To take off on the given day the following activities were undertaken:

- a. Review of existing documents — the annual report and Constitution and By-Laws of the association;
- b. Interview with the present community organization work-
- c. Field visits and interview with people in two upland areas — Balinsasayao and Cangguhub.

The same set of activities were undertaken in both project areas. Such activities were instrumental in providing the research team with insights as to the status and level of leadership development and community involvement of people in both areas. The field visits included research as well as action components to redirect the community organizing efforts.

Problems

The field activities were aimed at determining the leadership levels of the two community associations organized — BANAG BANAG in Balinsasayao and ALAYON in Cangguhub. Specifically, the following problems were raised:

1. Are the people aware of the existing project?
2. Are they aware and involved in the activities undertaken by the association?
3. If so, what is the level of their community involvement?
4. Do officers pass the leadership qualities that are needed for an effective organization?
5. In what manner are meetings conducted?
6. How are decisions made?
7. In project implementation, are there committees? Are they mobilized?
8. What is the quality of committee work?
9. Have members participated in the making of the Constitution and By-Laws?
10. How do people relate to the Community organizer and project staff?
11. Do they have proper recording of minutes of their meetings?
12. What are the association members' problem-solving skills?

Theoretical Framework

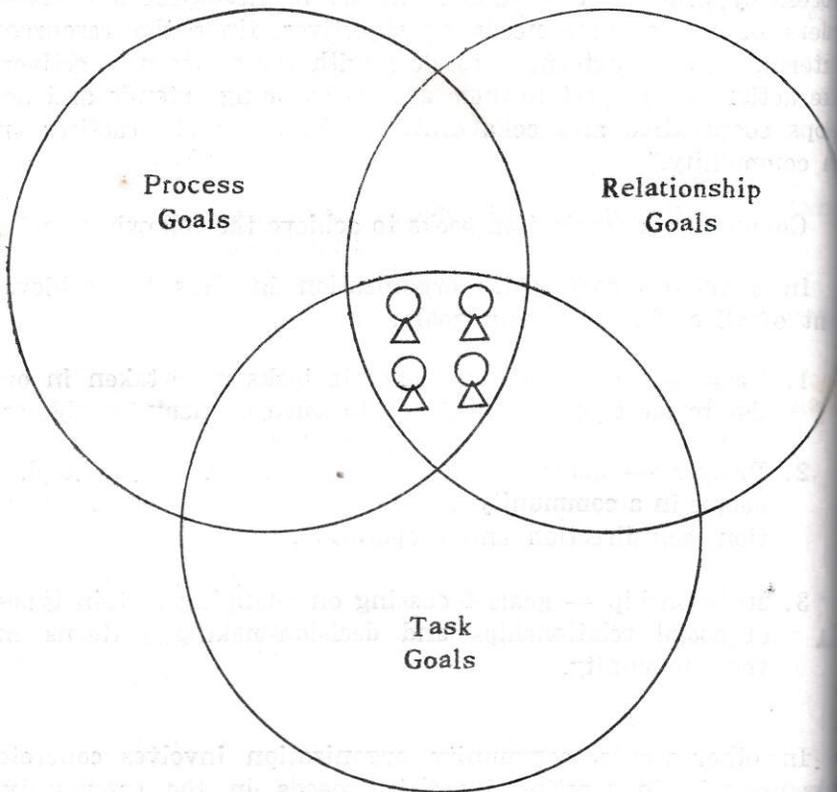
This study adopts the definition of community organization by Ross and Lappin (1967). "Community organization is the process by which a community identifies its needs for objectives, ranks these needs or objectives, finds the resources (internal and/or external) to deal with these needs/objectives, and action in respect to them and in so doing extends and develops cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community."

Community organization seeks to achieve the following goals:

In summary, community organization involves the achievement of all of the following goals:

1. Task — concerned with concrete tasks undertaken in order to meet specific needs or to solve particular problems.
2. Process — goals concerned with the process of helping people in a community strengthened qualities of participation, self-direction and cooperation.
3. Relationship — goals focussing on changing certain types of social relationships and decision-making patterns in the community.

In other words, community organization involves concrete projects in meeting identified needs in the community. However, in the process of identifying these needs and the corresponding tasks/project to be undertaken, the people are already involved. In the process of doing these tasks with people's participation, there is enhancement of people's competence and problem-solving skills. These will lead to change in social relationships of people — e. g. they are no longer dependent on external agents. Paternalistic relationship is abolished. People become group-oriented rather than individualistic. The diagram below shows the interlocking of these goals:



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Assumptions

1. Man is the center of all development efforts.
2. Participation is the key to development.
3. Community organization is rooted in the local indigenous leadership — the local organizations. In short, the local people, if not leaders at the beginning, can be developed into leaders.
4. Energy is generated by the self-interest of the local residents for the welfare of their families.
5. Its program and action develop hand in hand with the organization of the community council.
6. Any community organizing effort should move toward the goal of self-financing. Local residents support their own organization financially. At the same time, it ensures the local council the acid test of independence: "the ability to pay one's way."

Field Method

Home visits and interviews of household members were employed. Interviews were conducted in an informal manner. A structured data collection instrument was not employed.

Data and Discussion

Balinsasayao is an upland community belonging to the municipality of Sibulan. Silliman University came in with the SUPU program. It was able to organize BANAGBANAG, an organization composed of 64 members — 32 of whom are from the project site while the remaining 32 have decided to live outside the site due to insurgency problem.

There are three working groups. These are in Danao, in Kabilin-an and in Mahilum. The working groups in each area are the following:

Danao — *Alayon*

Kabilin-an — *Tambayayong*

Mahilum — *Bolhon*

People in Balinsasayao and Cangguhub are aware of the existence of the project. However, not all the people are aware of the project's objectives. This could be the reason to some of the people's responses toward project activities — e. g. low attendance in meetings, lack of participation in group discussions. In development work, awareness is not enough, there must be active involvement of people in all activities.

From the records reviewed as well as conducted interviews, Balinsasayao, as a community organization project, did not have the necessary social education and leadership training seminars. We only see a few people responding positively to the project's activities. Of the few who are involved, leadership qualities are still needed to be developed.

There is a general feeling that the community organization component of the project has been merely reduced to the putting up of an association. Such is not what we call Community Organization (CO) in development work. While it is the structure through which the CO inputs are channeled, the formation of an association is just the beginning and not the end.

Looking at the association, there were scheduled regular meetings, but because people's initiative was not developed, the scheduled meetings most of the time did not materialize. If ever there were meetings, these were called by the CO worker and the agenda were prepared by her. This was shown by the association leader's dependency on the CO worker in terms of decision-making and mere scheduling of meetings and preparation of the agenda.

The CO worker's records are needed for monitoring and periodic evaluation for subsequent planning and redirection of change efforts. However, the CO worker is not keeping such files. She may have reasons for this.

The association is still in its beginning stage — depends on the CO worker. It has not taken off despite the number of years the project has spent in the sites.

Committees have been created like the three working groups mentioned earlier and other *ad hoc* committees. Committee work is an integral element in a democratic process in community

ization. This calls for 'committee members' responsibility. Committee mobilization depends on the sense of responsibility of those concerned. This aspect needs improvement.

The association has been able to come up with its Constitution and By-Laws.

In terms of funds, the association has ₱1,700 deposited in the bank. This amount includes ₱5 membership fee, ₱1 monthly dues and ₱2 annual fees. The total income of the association is very small considering the number of years the association has been operating. We can generalize that not all members are paying regularly. The basic reason is the survival level of people's economic living condition and possibly they have not developed the will to work at the objectives that they have set for themselves.

The last aspect that we would like to look into is the problem-solving capacity of members — their making plans of action. Looking back at the theoretical framework, the definition by Ross and Martin says, CO is a problem-solving process itself with the people taking initiative in all the steps in the process. This experience, from the very beginning was already consciously provided to the people, it would develop their confidence and will to work on their projects and it would prepare them for independent problem-solving during phase-out. This is the essence of CO, the impact every CO project would want to see achieved at the end. This is the qualitative impact of any development endeavor and it has to be the underlying philosophy which starts at the onset of the same effort and consciously built into the day to day processes. This aspect is not very visible in the Balinsasayao and Cangguayan projects.

Actions Taken

Some actions taken in the project areas in the duration of the research period:

1. Balinsasayao

A review of the Constitution and By-Laws was made. It was found that the association was not meeting regularly as provided in the by-laws.

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The team found it logical to begin with needs identification since there was no ongoing activity in the community. The following needs were expressed:

a. Peace and Order Situation — This made difficult the holding of regular meetings. Some members have relocated themselves to safer grounds. Thus, quorum is always a problem. Some people are afraid to drop by the center for fear of a clash between the military and the NPA.

b. Plan of Action — The BANAGBANAG association does not have a concrete development plan of action. There were no activities undertaken by the association in relation to a plan. The team feels the need for the association to come up with at least three-year development plans. A development planning session is scheduled with an anticipated good attendance. This is where the team left off in the action component of its work.

2. Cangguhub

In a community assembly, the people were asked about the pressing needs. The following were presented:

a. Need to be able to read and write which calls for an adult literacy program.

b. Distance from the barangay elementary school — The children find it very far. This has affected their regular attendance and enthusiasm for school. During rainy season, the path is impassable and dangerous to the children. The community, with the research team's facilitation, thought of presenting a proposal to the municipality of Mabinay to conduct classes in Cangguhub.

c. Need for income-generating activities to augment income from farming. The people express that during lean months — June-July — families literally go hungry. Some family heads will go as far as the boundary of Sta. Catalina to offer farm labor in exchange for some shares in the harvest and take home some for the family. The people feel that something has to be done about this. Further brainstorming has revealed the existence of a potential resource for the community — the Office of Southern Cultural Communities (OSCC). One community leader has informed

The OSCC offers loan assistance for any income-generating activity upon submission of a viable community proposal. The people feel eager to take the opportunity offered by the agency. Proposal writing has been scheduled to develop such. The team will have to follow this up.

Recommendations

1. On the method, if community organization has to be the project's philosophy, it should be built into the daily activities undertaken by the CO worker with the people.

2. For the Canggub project, the team strongly feels the need for a full-time CO worker. Once a worker is hired, with some supervisions, he can pursue the action plans arrived at by the research and action team.

3. For the Balinsasayao project, the social worker has to do more community organizing work. Closer supervision is needed where the team left off, the social worker should pursue the association's formulation of a development plan which shall serve as a guide for the next year's activities.

4. On the integration approach, the attempt is a laudable and refreshing effort. The multi-faceted nature of problems of communities really need an integrated approach. We notice, however, that the units involved are operating on its own. Integration calls for the weaving in of the different efforts to be systematically delivered to the communities, not on the basis of "to each his own."

References Cited

1. A. (1970) *The new community organization*. New York. Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

2. M. G. and B. W. Lappin (1967) *Community organization: Theory, principles and practice*. New-York: Harper and Row.